



# IBEW LOCAL 21 FRONTLINE

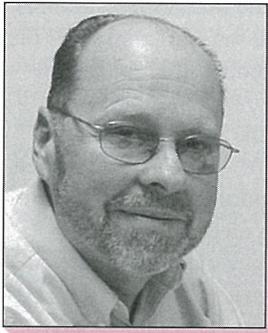


Volume 7, Number 4 • August 2004

*President/Business Manager's Report*

## **We Proved Solidarity Equals Victory**

By Ron Kastner



In my last two reports I focused on issues that are critical to improving the lives of each and every member of our union—improved

communications, political education, member involvement, union solidarity and the growing power we can demonstrate when we work together towards our common goals.

I am proud that Local 21 members at SBC stood up to the challenge, reaching and ratifying **a new 5-year agreement** that resolved all of the membership's key bargaining concerns. Collectively, we improved job security and beat back SBC's demands to pay monthly health care premiums, for both our active and retired members. By standing together we gained fair improvements in wages and pensions without having to resort to a strike, and without having to accept any major concessions from the company. Comparing our contract with negotiations now completed at Bell South, it is extremely rewarding to know that Local 21's agreement is the best contract in the country bargained with any of the former Regional Bell Operating Company's.

We knew from the first day of SBC bargaining that a contract victory was going to be a major uphill fight. However, the company didn't realize that we were not the same union that they had come to know. **We were a stronger union who would not just lie down and accept second best.** We had an experienced and

effective bargaining team in place. We had a committed and dedicated staff and Steward base. We had an effective strategy backed by solid and consistent communications. But most importantly—we had an engaged and educated membership who stood with us all the way to achieving a contract victory. Together, we prevented company proposals from getting into the contract which would have eliminated hundreds of jobs out of the bargaining unit and allowed outside contractors to do traditional bargaining unit work.

This contract was won by the sheer determination of our bargaining team and leveraged by a highly creative and effective strategy where we held SBC accountable to its promise of investing in our skilled and experienced workers to improve its customer service. We did this through radio advertising, direct mail and an online petition drive that just four days after its launch recorded close to 3,000 letters sent to Illinois Representatives and Senators—telling them to stop the bailout of SBC until the company treated its workers and its customers with respect. In addition to the online petition drive, we kept you – our members – informed daily of our bargaining activity through e-mail alerts, hotline messages and new SBC web pages. In fact, throughout this entire bargaining process, we had over 13,000 visitors to our new web pages and sent out more than two-dozen electronic alerts. The bottom line is that we engaged you from day one in this campaign, just as we promised, and it yielded positive planned results. **I want to thank everyone for their support of our Union's bargaining team**, and for all the demonstrations of solidarity and the mobilization actions during the

negotiations. They had a tremendous impact at the bargaining table.

With one major 2004 battle now over, another is already under way. Walter Reuther, the great labor leader and long time President of the United Auto Workers once said, "There's a direct relationship between the bread box and the ballot box, and what the union fights for and wins at the bargaining table can be taken away in the legislative halls."

We all know the **2004 National General Election** is fast approaching, actually just weeks away. I highly encourage every Local 21 member to make sure that you and any eligible family members are registered to vote for this 2004 National Election. Working families are under attack. **We have a unique opportunity to change what is happening in our country.** We must show George W. Bush the door in 2004.

Winning the upcoming National Election is very possible if we all participate. Winning is important so we have candidates who stand up for working families instead of those who represent the powerful corporations that only care about getting fatter on the sweat of our labor. I also encourage you to help out in the weeks ahead, by filling out our political activist volunteer form found on page 14 of this newsletter, and then sending it back to Local 21.

We must do all that we can to win the upcoming election. We can do this by discussing the issues and educating ourselves on the choice of candidates and which ones are truly on our side. We can do this by volunteering. We win when we are all involved, when we are educated, and most important - **when we vote.**

# FRONTLINE

## IBEW LOCAL 21

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Local 21, AFL-CIO/CLC

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Comments and articles are welcome and should be sent to the editors. Local 21 reserves the right to edit letters and articles, and to use items as space allows.

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

## Where Has the Summer Gone?

By Rick Gessler, Vice President / Assistant Business Manager



At SBC we negotiated a new agreement that gives us increased job security for the next five years. It will guarantee access to jobs of the future for

our members as the business evolves and changes. As we all know, technology in our industry continues to move at a frantic pace. IBEW 21 members are going to be there, ready to be trained and perform this work. We will be the ones moving into the new technologies, thanks to the bargaining that took place this summer. We need to be ready to move into developing technologies, or we will be left behind.

It's not too soon to think about bargaining in 2009. Local 21's leadership plans to keep abreast of changes, trends and advancements in the industry. I often reminded you of the number of paydays left prior to bargaining. I'm going to continue, by telling you to be prepared for 2009 by putting away a small amount every payday – beginning today.

The company continues to consolidate operations. Most recently the largest groups of people being impacted by consolidations are the MA's who are being relocated to the Lakewood Center in Hoffman Estates from Dorchester and Cicero. This causes a huge burden on some of our members as they may have to relocate their homes and families to keep their jobs. Thankfully, there is a "move package" that was bargained that compensates our members who have to relocate.

With few exceptions, SBC has not been replacing retiring members. We are hopeful that this will change. In bargaining we were successful in extending recall rights for laid off members through the end of March 2005. This is significant since most of our members who retire do so in the first month or two of the year. Retirements should open up jobs for those on the recall list.

The arbitration on contracting out

after layoff was decided in favor of the Union. However, as of this writing the company has not been cooperative in implementing the award. We have begun the process of going back to the arbitrator for enforcement of the decision, We are anxious to get members recalled from the layoff list and back on the job.

Our Union has also filed charges with the National Labor Relations Board against SBC for stalling the grievance and arbitration process. One of our members' biggest complaints has been the length of time it takes for a grievance to be resolved. We can't disagree, the time to resolution is excessive, and when the company stalls the process it makes it impossible to resolve disputes. Hopefully, we will obtain a resolution through the National Labor Relations Board. We will keep you posted.

The economy continues to suffer even though we are in an election year. I hope that all of you will pay close attention to the issues in the presidential election and make the right choice. Our futures have been on hold for four years. We can't afford another four years of waiting!

Attendance has been up at the Unit meetings, if you haven't been to one lately, check the schedule on your Union board and come on out. We are trying to keep the meetings short enough so members can come out for a few hours and keep up to date on what's going on. I look forward to seeing you at the Unit meetings

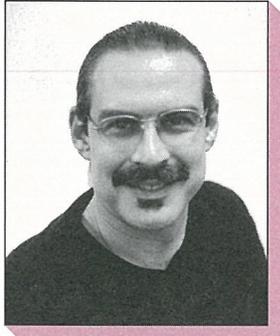
I hope everyone took some time to enjoy this summer!



"Ms. Preble, if anyone should inquire I'll be in negotiations with the union."

# Addicted to Overtime II, and Other Random News

By Michael Sacco, Business Representative



Last issue, I wrote about some of our brothers and sisters' **addiction to overtime** and how our lack of personal self-discipline hurts our solidarity

when we fight over scraps of overtime. I expected a firestorm of anger from the guilty parties, but the tally is zero people tried to lynch me or have me removed from office. In fact, I received 8 voice mail, e-mail and personal comments from people who agreed with me. If you have any suggestions, please e-mail me at [mjsacco@mindspring.com](mailto:mjsacco@mindspring.com)...

As you probably know, **our union won a great victory** when two arbitrators ruled that ten Local 21 members who were fired almost a year and a half ago for having employee background check problems should be returned to their jobs with all back pay and seniority. These "Audit Cases" as they are called, occurred because the company's contractor doing background checks failed in its duties. In our area, we welcome back **Sean Roby to the Humboldt Plant Center, Clarence Mc Gee to Kedzie and Byron Young to Irving/Montrose**. At this printing, all of these brothers should be back on the job.

I hate to sound callous or aloof, but **what part of "COMPANY PROPERTY" don't we understand?** If you take or use company property for personal advantage, the company will fire you! If you say you gassed your company vehicle up at 11:00 at night, the company can pull GPS records to confirm it or disprove it. SBC can prove you accessed your telephone records or sent an e-mail to your grandma. They can search your truck, desk and lockers. We hear now that they are **bringing dogs into the garage**. Can you spell Gestapo? I know it all sounds trivial sometimes, but if you've taken a box of towels home – they'll use it against you. Don't use company property for anything but company business. If you think gas is too expensive and it won't hurt to have the company pay for a tank every now and then, think again, that \$20 you save is nothing compared to the millions of dollars

you can earn over 30 years! Think!

**Driver's Licenses:** We have had two very senior members (25 and 34 years) fired in the last month or so for invalid driver's licenses because of "Air Team" expirations. Please remember that even if you junked or sold a vehicle, you must notify the Secretary of State's office of the vehicle's disposition. This can be done on the Air Team notification card. **Under no circumstances, should mail from the Secretary of State or the Air Team ever be ignored! The company will fire you if you drive a vehicle without a license, even if you are not aware of it!** We may get these members back, but it may take two years!

**Changes to report:** Brother **Tom Oliva** of Roscoe Cable Repair has resigned as steward after many years of service to members at Roscoe and points north. Brother Oliva will be missed as he pursues some personal goals in his life, Brother **Herman Worley** has been appointed by Business Manager Ron Kastner to fill the slot...**Jeff Zajkowski**, steward at Edgewater Plant Center has resigned as steward and SBC employee to enter graduate school. Jeff hopes to earn graduate degree(s) in Psychology. Good luck brother! No replacement has been

named and **Juan Andrade** will hold the fort down at Edgewater...Lastly, Sister **Dilecta Jenkins** has been appointed steward in the Humboldt Plant Center, joining **David Smith** in serving Local 21 members...

You may have noticed that we are always trying to get e-mails and checking mailing addresses. This is a constant struggle for our union. **Please remember, sisters and brothers, that the company does not give address changes to us,** you must call or write in to update our database. Our e-mail database now covers almost one fourth of our membership. We are exploring exciting new ways to communicate quickly and efficiently to our members. We need to continue to build this group. Please pitch in...

Mobilization is a way of life. It is a way to get everyone involved in our Union AND get and hold the bosses' attention. It is what won the day at bargaining. It will continue to keep things in line with our bosses if we all stay alert and involved with what's happening at our workplaces. Also, please remind our co-workers every day that **"no job is so important and no service so urgent, that we cannot take time to do the job safely."**  
**WORK SAFE!**

## Contest Winner for Traveling the Longest Distance to Attend a Union Meeting

By Tom Hopper and Bill Henny

First of all – there never was an actual contest; we were just looking for a title that would get you to read this article. Why you ask?

To recognize Sergeant Jon Franzen, a current IBEW Local 21 member currently stationed in Iraq. During one evening of his very short two-week leave in August, Brother Franzen attended the Unit 4 meeting in Moline, Illinois so he could stay current on union news and events. Prior to his leave for duty, Franzen was working as a Service Representative in SBC's Rock Island, Illinois Business Office. Jon is also the son of former IBEW Local 336 President-Business Manager Albert Franzen.



## Benefit Report

# Changes Impact Open Enrollment

By Linda Cox, Recording Secretary & Business



**O**pen enrollment is coming up fast, it's time to study your family's benefit needs and make the choices best for you.

Effective 8-1-04 St. Francis Hospital in Blue Island is back in the United HealthCare network. Additionally, 5 of the 9 doctors who terminated their contract with UHC have also signed new contracts with United HealthCare. If you had previously used St. Francis and their doctors, call the hospital and ask if your prior doctor is back in the plan.

You may have heard that social security numbers will no longer be used to identify you in your medical plan. New medical cards have been issued with **new ID**

**numbers.** If you haven't received them, call your medical administrator.

SBC Connect is also moving toward a new enhanced security model. First, as of July 1st, passwords will no longer be printed on participant communications pieces, including the most important communication piece, Open Enrollment. Second, on or after 8-26-04, you will need to establish a user ID, in place of your SSN, to access your account with SBC Connect, whether by the WEB, IVR or the Benefit Center. We just received notification that they've changed their minds and a new password won't be necessary.

**Full-time student certification** began 8-9-04 and will continue through 8-27-04. This affects any dependents who are over 19 years of age. Your dependents 19 years or older must be full-time students and be enrolled in 12 credit hours or more – or equivalent – per semester, quarter or trimester, in order to continue the company paid coverage. Anyone affected by this

should have already received a letter.

The newest company communications headline is "Eliminate the Benefits Paper Trail with SBC eBenefits." (And save SBC lots of money.) By signing up, you are able to access company-generated **benefit information** such as Benefits Updates, Summary Plan Descriptions, and educational resources, **online** instead of in the mail. This is to help you from becoming overwhelmed with paper clutter that gets filed away, never to be found again. Yet, SBC states, for now, you will continue to receive the same printed materials anyway. If you signed up before August 16, you will receive your open enrollment information electronically – but will NOT receive a copy in the mail. Additionally, you'll receive emails either at work or home that alert you when new or revised benefit information is available online. Whatever happened to when you left work at the end of the day, you were done?

## Indiana COPE Report

# Local 21 Presenting Candidate Night

By Dennis McCafferty, Committee on Political Education



**H**ello Hoosiers, now that our contract struggle is behind us, I would like to thank our bargaining team members for the outstanding

job they've done. And thanks to you, the rank and file, for your tremendous show of support. It was a great feeling to know you were out there, ready to do whatever it was going to take, to get us a fair contract. Be proud of yourselves. It couldn't have been done without you.

Unfortunately, we don't have a whole lot of time to celebrate because now it's time to focus our energies on an even larger task – fighting back against the attack on working families and organized labor that started when the current presidential administration stole the

election nearly 4 years ago.

Growing up on the southwest side of Chicago, (where politics is a contact sport) I learned one very important lesson: all politics is local. With this in mind, our Union is putting together a "**Candidate Night**" which will take place at the Unit 2 regular monthly meeting on September 14th, 2004 at 7:00 PM at the Slovak Club, 6920 Broadway Avenue in Merrillville.

All candidates on the Indiana statewide November ballot have been invited – as of press time many have RSVP'd. The main purpose of this event is to help keep you, the membership informed on the issues of the day. Our hope is that it will also energize you to participate in the election process ( i.e. **get off your butts and Vote.**) It will also give you an opportunity to meet your State Representatives and a chance to tell them your concerns. It's election time folks, now is when they listen to you; now is when they'll be willing to help you. So take advantage of this golden opportunity. Come out and show the politicians that

you're unified and highly motivated to reward our friends and punish our enemies.

And remember, it's true what the officers of our union keep saying, "Whatever can be won at the bargaining table can be lost legislatively." **Now is not the time to be complacent.** We must make sure we elect candidates who put working families and their needs first. So don't be shy, come out and let your voices be heard! Till next time, good luck and God bless.

## **Do you have a News Story?**

We need your contributions – 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**  
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**Larry Moeller**  
[ljm336@ameritech.net](mailto:ljm336@ameritech.net)

**Complete information about all Union Privilege services is available online at [www.unionprivilege.org](http://www.unionprivilege.org).**

## Three Easy Steps

By Larry Moeller and Rosetta Shinn, Committee on Political Education



**L**ocal 21 members are no different than other working Americans—we come to work every day to make a better life for ourselves and

our families. In short, we just want our share of the American dream. It's not a lot to ask, but lately we have to work harder and longer to stay even.

There are many important issues for working families to consider when it comes to a National election, and **the number 1 issue should be how government affects your job.** The Bush administration has consistently shown its hostility toward Unions, by siding with corporations on more free trade agreements with no guaranteed right to organize a Union, a tax break that largely went to the wealthiest 1 percent of Americans, to taking away the right to overtime pay for 8 million workers, stacking the National Labor Relations Board with anti-union appointees making it almost impossible to organize, not to mention his latest proposal to replace overtime pay with comp time.

Closer to home, recent contract negotiations with every employer have hit a brick wall over health care benefits, 60 Vermilion County members of Local 21 have had enough and are on strike over an increase in their health care premiums. What is the Bush administration's plan to ease the health care crisis in this country...ask the insurance companies.

There are changes coming in the way pensions are protected and lump sums are calculated. All Local 21 members have a stake in this, especially ones close to retirement. Ask yourself if you trust the Bush administration to do the right thing for working families when they favor allowing traditional pension plans to be converted to Cash Balance Accounts which can result in the overall loss of value to workers close to retirement.

In the State of Illinois, 2005 will see

the rewrite of the Telecommunications Act. Fortunately, we have legislators in Illinois who are willing to take into account how changes in that act will effect telecommunications workers, but we must be vigilant and make sure Local 21 is represented at the hearings.

In Indiana, incumbent Governor Joe Kernan is pro-union so our Indiana members must re-elect him and retain control of the Indiana House or face the prospect of becoming a right to work for less state.

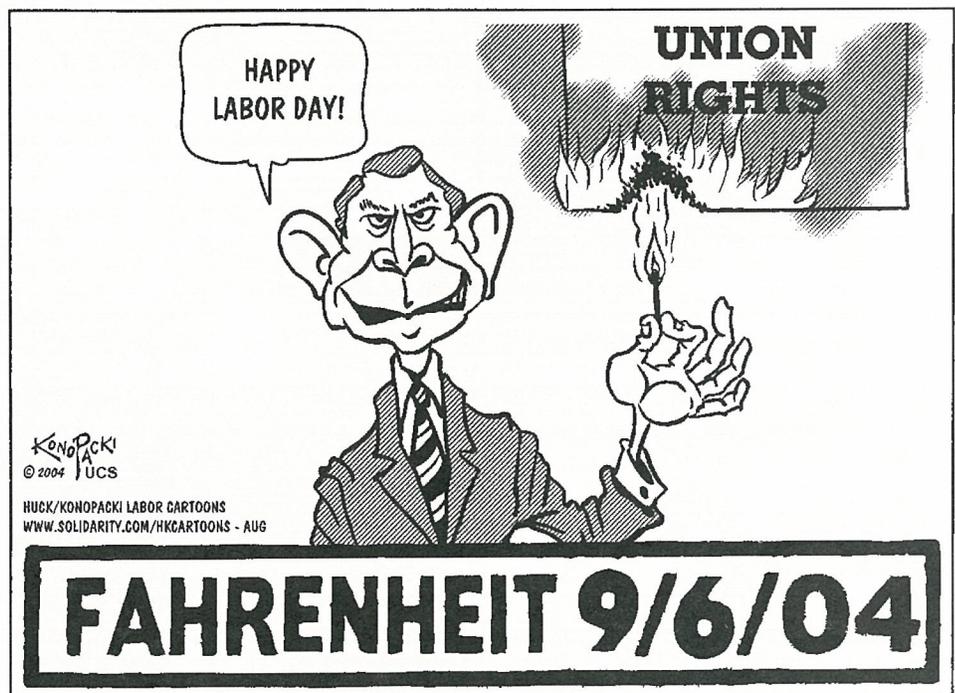
The easiest way to **HELP** is to **be a registered voter and go to the polls.** In the last election cycle 26 percent of the voters came from Union households. Local 21 can help you become a registered voter, it's really very easy, just call 630-960-4466 and leave your name and address on ext. 221. We will send you a motor voter registration form for the state you live in with instructions on how to fill it out. Then mail in the form and in a few weeks you will receive a voters card.

Another easy way, if you are a SBC member, is to **enroll in the COPE donation program**, then every payroll period a deduction will come out of your check and be sent to Local 21. Your donations are used to support deserving

local candidates and the political education of our members. No dues money is used for political purposes. It's a fact of life – it takes money to run for any political office, and in order to make our voices heard we must actively support our friends. The COPE deduction form can also be obtained by leaving a message at 630-960-4466 X 221.

Lastly, Local 21 members can join up to be a worker in the upcoming campaign by signing our **volunteer activist form**, on page 14, choosing an activity as easy as placing a lawn sign on your property, to actually working for a deserving candidate.

There are many important reasons to be an active citizen. We all have issues we are concerned about, one of those issues surely must be our jobs. Our wages, benefits, pensions, and quality of life are directly affected by who we will elect in November. **Join the fight, get registered, get informed and vote.**



## **Part 8: The President/Business Manager**

By *Jacque Fields, Treasurer*



**M**series on the Union Structure has been a pleasure to write. In my travels, members have mentioned how these articles help them understand all

the work our staff does. I thought this would be the last article, but the editors have come up with more ideas to inform the members about the inner workings of Local 21, so I look forward to the future.

Our President, Business Manager, Financial Secretary is Ronald E. Kastner. The many titles should tell you how busy he is. I'll describe his many duties as per the constitution of the IBEW, but I know it's not possible to get across to you how Ron manages to fulfill all of the duties described. Yet, he does, and he is dedicated. He admits that he couldn't be our leader without the staff of Local 21. As one of those staff members, I can say we wouldn't be who we are without him.

**The President** presides at all unit meetings of Local 21, and sees that all rules are followed according to the IBEW constitution. He appoints all committees, making sure the assigned duties are performed. Every three months, he appoints an auditing committee of three members to audit the books and accounts of the Local. The president sees that all funds of the local are deposited in a reputable bank or banks in the name of the local. He has many duties described in the IBEW constitution regarding empowerment of the local's funds.

**The Business Manager** is the recognized local union representative when dealing with employers. The Business Manager appoints all stewards, Area Stewards, Chief Stewards, and Business Reps where needed and aids them in the discharge of their duties. The Business Manager has general jurisdiction over stewards and can remove a steward at any time. The Business Manager may conduct training programs for stewards when, in the officer's judgment, such instruction is necessary. The Business Manager is responsible for representing all members of local union and all employees within the appropriate bargaining unit. The Business Manager also:

- Is charged with enforcement of all terms of the collective bargaining agreement making every effort to establish friendly relations with the employers.

- Should investigate and resolve all grievances and disputes or cause same to be done through appointment of competent stewards, Area Stewards, Chief Stewards, and Business Reps.
- Is aware of all work in the local's jurisdiction and is responsible for organizing all workers within that jurisdiction.
- Shall attend all meetings of the Executive Board, giving a monthly report as given to the membership at monthly unit meetings. The Business Manager is empowered to call special meetings of the E-Board.
- Shall serve as local union delegate to local and state building and construction trades councils and metal trades councils and shall serve as a delegate to the state, territorial, or provincial federation, central body, or system council with which the local union is affiliated.
- Shall have authority and perform such other duties as are provided for in the Constitution and local union bylaws.

In addition to everything mentioned above, the Business Manager negotiates the contract with the office clerical staff, as well as oversees the entire office.

**The Financial Secretary** is responsible for all monies collected by the local union until such funds are turned over to the Treasurer or are deposited in the local union's bank account. Other duties include:

- Keeps the books and records and issues receipts as required or approved by the International Organization Secretary-Treasurer.
- Mails the per capita report and money due to the International Organization Secretary-Treasurer in Washington D.C. by the 10th of the month, unless special arrangements are made with the Secretary-Treasurer.
- Keeps records of member full name and address, and notifies the International Secretary-Treasurer of changes.
- Receives all monies and issues receipt for each transaction.
- Provides all information of such in a bookkeeping system approved by the International Secretary-Treasurer.

I know that this article is longer than usual, but I personally feel that much is still unsaid when it comes to Ron Kastner. I want to let you in on something that anyone who has met Ron already knows. He enjoys being your President, on the pleasant days – and on the unpleasant days, he is up to the task.

## **Rumors Come True**

By *Nancy North, Area Steward*



"Your office is moving to Hoffman," are the words no one wants to hear. But the Maintenance Administrators at the Cicero and Dorchester offices have been living with that probability

for over a year. Now it is happening.

Texas is a big state and SBC prefers big centers like the Lakewood Center in Hoffman Estates. The company has the power to move the work to one location, even though the government – the department of homeland security – advises companies to have multiple centers.

The one hundred fifteen MA's and two TA's at the Cicero Installation and Repair Dispatch Center are scheduled to move to the Lakewood Center on September 25th. Many already drive long distances from their homes in the south and southwest suburbs – some as far as Joliet, which is 72 miles from Hoffman Estates.

The ninety-six MA's and one TA at the Dorchester I&R Dispatch Center on Chicago's south side – 6050 S. Dorchester – are scheduled to move to Lakewood on October 2nd. Some members don't drive and there is no practical public transportation from their neighborhood to Hoffman Estates.

Many of the MA's have 20 years of service. Some of them are single moms. They face long, impossible commutes that would consume most of the time they now spend with their families, or they must uproot their families and move closer to work. Moving is not an easy choice, even when you qualify for the move package in the contract.

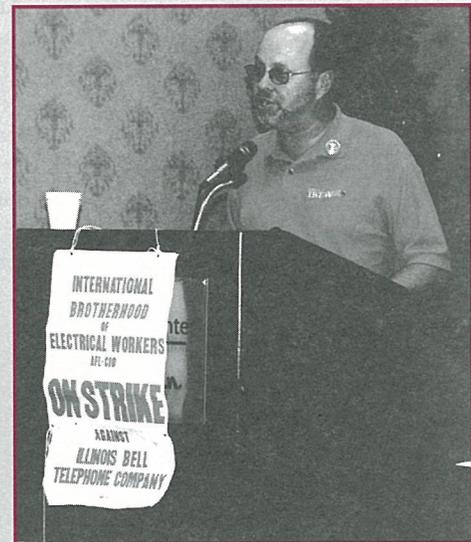
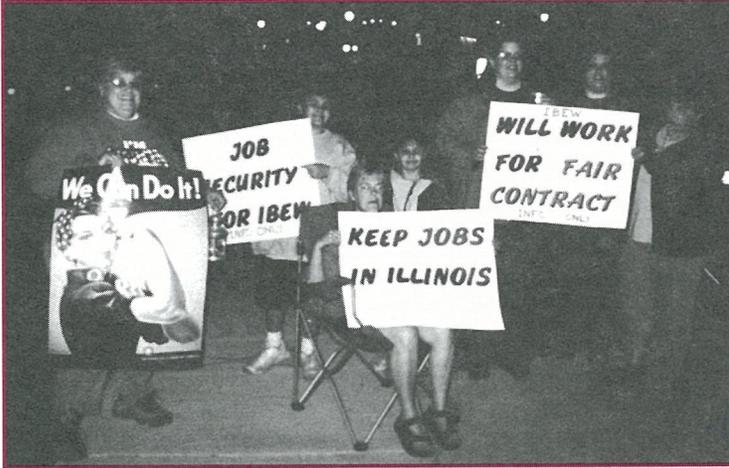
The MA's are angry. They've sent letters to local politicians, but no response. They were not given priority placement to transfer into other jobs closer to home. They must follow their work if they want a job.

The Union is meeting with SBC on the effects of moving to Lakewood. The Business Reps are working to insure that everyone who's entitled to a move package is offered one.

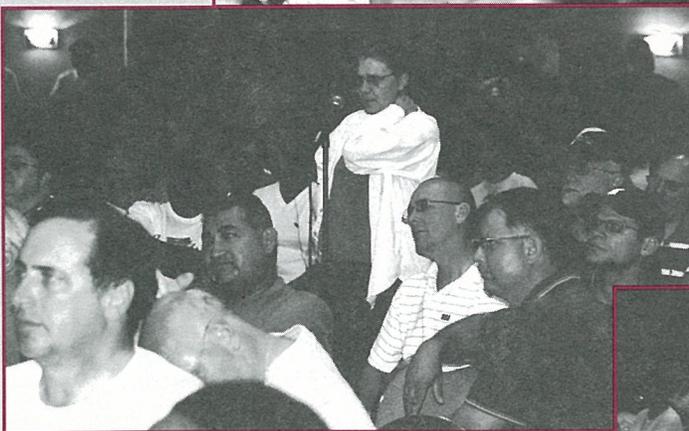
Texas is a big state, and maybe 75 miles flies by, but here in Chicago 75 miles changes your world.

# Solidarity

Members informational picket at the eleventh hour Saturday June 26th, ready to switch to "On Strike" signs at midnight.



President Kastner brought his old picket sign from the 1983 strike against Illinois Bell when he spoke at the Strike Authorization Meetings.

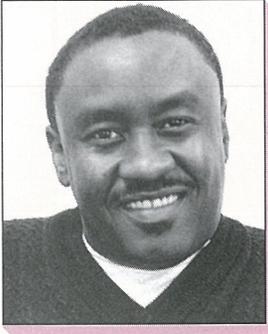


Local 21 members attended Strike Authorization meetings in record numbers to hear the negotiation news and cast their ballots.



## A Little Progress

By Jerry Rankins, Business Representative



Life at Comcast, this summer makes six consecutive years we have been bargaining, hoping to reach an agreement. This year in

November will be two years since Comcast purchased AT&T Broadband. The company claims that they do want to get the contract completed. Being the skeptic that I am, I must admit we are making **more progress in the last two months than in the last two years**, but I'm not holding my breath. What's that like working over five years without a contract? Workers answered the question, "It's hope, having a voice in the workplace, a grievance procedure, layoff and recall rules. Simply put a collective bargaining agreement with rights."

If you don't think that is much, consider this: only 8 percent of the workers in the private sector are unionized. In recent polls nearly 55 percent of the people polled stated they would join a union if they had a fair opportunity free of intimidation and harassment. Over 50 percent of today's employers hire union busting consultants once they discover the

workers want to organize. Employers undermine the workers' right to join the union and make the workers' life hell in the workplace.

This coming November, we must exercise our greatest right in America – the right to vote in the upcoming presidential election. If we do not end this current administration it will get worse for the working class. The working class is 95 percent of American population or better described as 95 percent who received 50 percent of President Bush's tax cut. The other 50 percent went to the 5 percent of the population who owns all the wealth.

Anyway, back to Comcast, the company is still reducing and consolidating jobs and work locations. **Recently, the Union got the company to back down on the closing of the Libertyville office.** It would have permanently displaced nine workers who currently service 13 towns in Lake County Illinois. All nine jobs were preserved. The same can't be said of a group of non-represented technicians known as "the project team." Many of these workers left the bargaining unit in 1999, and will lose their jobs in August when their work is handed to contractors. It's nice to have a voice.

Solidarity.

### CITY OF CHICAGO 911

#### City Rejects the Union Alliance to Bargain Healthcare

Local 21 joined forces with other unions to create an alliance for the purpose of bargaining healthcare. The city rejected this opportunity. Chicago has no legal obligation to bargain collectively with the alliance but would have been an effort to show good faith.

The city is seeking to raise premiums by 500%, propose only one HMO, increase out of pocket costs, prescription drugs, completely eliminate dental and vision plans. If that isn't enough, Chicago is proposing any increase made by the health care provider, during the terms of the agreement, shall be the burden of the employee. The city recently informed their retirees of their intent to eliminate payment into the healthcare for retirees by the year 2013. All of this, while proposing to eliminate holiday payments, overtime after eight hours, and the guarantee of a 40-hour work week. However, the mayor managed to build his Millennium Dream Park at a whopping price tag of close of 1/2 billion dollars with over half the money coming directly from the taxpayer. Clearly, the city that works has no interest in working on behalf of its employees and retirees. The Union met on bargaining dates-August 13th and August 25th.

Brothers and Sisters, we must stand strong in preserving our contract and moving forward and also to continue to show strong support to the bargaining team in remembering that someday you too will retire.

## Get To Work, America

By Jim Hightower

**Congratulations Americans... you're Number One!**

Not only are you a repeat winner, but you people keep extending your lead over your nearest competitors. Yesiree, no other industrial nation in the world can touch us Americans when it comes to putting in long hours on the job.

On average, U.S. workers are now at their tasks for a total of nearly 2000 hours a year, or about 50 weeks. That's up 36 hours since 1990, meaning we're now averaging almost a full week more at work now each year than we did back then. That literally beats the work pants off the Japanese, who were the world's Number One workaholics until we toppled them in the mid-nineties. Now, we're working three-and-a-half weeks per year longer than the Japanese, six-and-a-half weeks longer than the British, and twelve-and-a-half weeks longer the Germans.

Those softies have fallen behind in the work race because they've built their economy around the concept of citizens getting more time to recharge their batteries, be with their families, broaden themselves with vacations and sabbaticals, and, get this: enjoy life. Ha! What a bunch of slackers.

And while they're lollygagging around on vacation for a month, six weeks, or more, we're typically on the job 50 out of 52 weeks a year. Our ulcers are bigger than any of those foreigners' ulcers, by gollies!

America has jumped to the top of the work heap because those in charge in Washington and on Wall Street have built our economy around stagnant wages and constant downsizings, prompting our people to keep their noses to the grindstone, work extra hours, avoid unionizing, and take two or three jobs to make ends meet. Way to go! I'll bet you're just busting with pride to be at the top in terms of hours worked, even if we're at the bottom in terms of income paid, compared to the Japanese, British, Germans, and other industrial competitors.

Still, we Americans can't rest on our laurels. In fact, don't rest at all. Let's break that 2,000-hour-a-year barrier! Come on people, we can do it! Maybe you could get a part-time job on Sundays, instead of goofing off like you've been doing.

—This is an exclusive excerpt from Jim Hightower's new book, *Let's Stop Beating Around the Bush*.

# Solidarity Golf Outing

By Jim McLauchlan, Chief Steward

The north half of the IBEW Local 21 **Solidarity Golf Outing** was held on Sunday August 8, 2004 in Algonquin. The weather was beyond beautiful with a bright and sunny 80-degree day. Everyone enjoyed not only the golf course, but enjoyed the solidarity afterward with a nice dinner and raffle.

Fred Aguayo led all the golfers with the low gross score of 80, great round, Fred. Ron Flisnik was the winner of the low score with handicap. Brad Shoemaker won the prize for the longest putt, Paul Woolmer won the closest to the pin prize, and the big hitter of the day was Mark Pedersen, who won the prize for longest drive. Each chose a prize from a variety of golf items: golf clubs, bags, balls and a pull cart.

At the banquet after golf, everyone enjoyed the chicken dinner. I don't think anyone went away hungry. The grand

prizewinner of the raffle was Jim Binkley. Jim won a 2-night stay with 2 rounds of golf, and dinner for 2 donated by Christmas Mountain Village in the Wisconsin Dells. Enjoy your prize, Jim, and don't forget about me.

The outing was a great success and I would like to especially thank Rita Peterson, from the office, for helping make it a success. Thanks also go out to Paul Woolmer, for helping check in all the golfers and assisting me with the raffle.

*Frontline* goes to press as the south outing is scheduled for Sunday, August 22nd in Pana. I hope the weather

cooperates and the outing is as big a success as the first one.

We will be looking for places to hold the outing next year. If anyone has ideas please let me know. We would like to do another shotgun start on a Saturday or Sunday around the same time of year. Check with your local courses and let me know if anyone can accommodate us.

We'll cover the south outing in the next issue. Again, thanks to all who participated and see you next year.

*Rob Morris, Dan Kivi and the Zimbrowski's getting ready to tee it up on the 9th hole*



*Chuck Barley, low gross winner Ron Flisnik, Tom Porter and low net winner Fred Aguayo getting ready on the 17th hole*

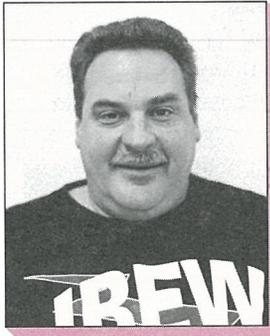


*Jim McLauchlan, Scott Fox and Chad Connell enjoying a break with closest to the pin winner Paul (Chad) Woolmer*

# Restoring the Right to Organize

## Part 2: Why America Needs Unions

By David Webster, Business Representative



**C**ollective bargaining doesn't just benefit union members. It is a public good. Collective bargaining raises wages for all working people, stimulates the

economy, reduces inequality and poverty, narrows race and gender gaps, promotes civic and political participation, strengthens our social safety net and counters excessive corporate power.

The labor movement helped create and expand the working **middle class**. When a large enough percentage of the workforce is unionized—all workers, union and nonunion alike, get higher wages. This is true because nonunion employers pay higher wages to avoid being unionized, and to prevent their employees from going to work at higher paying unionized jobs. The campaign our Local has been fighting against Comcast is a perfect example. Workers at the cable company were paid up to three dollars less before the union organizers started talking to the nonunion workers. Even though we continue to fight to get those workers into our Union, we have already raised their standard of living.

The gap between rich and poor in America is larger than in any other industrial country in the world. Today the top 1 percent owns as much wealth as the bottom 95 percent. **Concentrating wealth in fewer hands corrupts our democratic system.** 80 percent of all political contributions come from less than 1 percent of our population, which leaves politicians beholden to the money interests that help them get re-elected. Collective bargaining is the public good that leads to a more equitable distribution of wealth. It spurs economic growth because working people spend money on consumer goods.

Union members tend to be more politically engaged, educated about more issues that matter to working families, and more motivated to vote. More union members means more voters to motivate and mobilize. When union membership is declining our political voice is weakened. Higher levels of unionization and civic political participation strengthen our

democratic system and lead to better public policies that serve the needs and interests of working families.

In the ten strongest union states (New York, Hawaii, Alaska, Michigan, New Jersey, Washington, **Illinois**, Rhode Island, Ohio, and Minnesota) public policies that serve the needs and interests of working families – like education, unemployment insurance, and workers' compensations are stronger than the ten weakest union states. It is clear that social policies favorable to working people are more likely to be won when we have higher levels of union density. Organizing new members and increasing union density strengthens our political voice and can lead to better public policies. The labor movement has played a vital role in passing key federal legislation that provides benefits important to all working families. The popular bumper sticker **"The Labor Movement: The Folks That Brought You The Weekend"** captures the significant contribution unions make to the entire society. As unionization has declined, labor political influence has eroded – it has become more difficult to pass new legislation at the federal, state, and even local levels. Protections like overtime will continue to be at growing risk unless and until we elect politicians who are more responsive to the needs of working people.

**The following acts provide protections from which all Americans benefit:**

**Social Security Act – 1935** (Retirement insurance, disability assistance)

**Fair Labor Standards Act– 1938** (40-hour work week, minimum pay, overtime pay)

**Pension Disclosure Act– 1958** (Pension and health plan reporting)

**Equal Pay Act– 1963** (Prohibits wage discrimination based on gender)

**Civil Rights Act– 1964** (Prohibits discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin)

**Medicare– 1965** (Affordable, Comprehensive healthcare benefits for the elderly)

**Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA)– 1970** (Promotes safety and health standards)

**Employee Retirement Income Security Act (ERISA)– 1974** (Regulates and protects pension plans)

**Americans with Disabilities Act– 1990** (Prohibits discrimination based on disabilities)

### Family and Medical Leave Act– 1993

(Guarantees time off for medical and family Leave, whether paid or unpaid)

Collective Bargaining is a public good that counters excessive corporate power in our society. Today our society is increasingly dominated and driven by a **CORPORATE AGENDA** that hurts all working people and involves :

- Deregulating economy rather than protecting public interest.
- Free Trade rather than fair trade with solid labor and environmental standards.
- Tax Cuts for corporations and the rich rather than a fair and equitable tax system that adequately funds vital public services like education and healthcare.
- Declining corporate taxes are just one measure of excessive corporate power that grows as workers' power declines.

In today's environment CEO millionaires make obscene amounts of money; 20 years ago they made 40 times the workers' wages, now it's 500 times more on average! The irony is that these same CEO's deploy armies of lawyers to negotiate written contracts for themselves and then deploy armies of lawyers to prevent workers from winning collective bargaining rights, decent wages and benefits, and written contracts for themselves.

In Part three we will talk about what happens when workers try to organize a union to have a voice at work.



"We're taking up a collection to put a curse on the boss."

# It's Done...

## ...Now What are You Going to Do?

By Bob Przybylinski, Area Steward



**I**BEW Local 21 reached its primary objective this year by bargaining a new agreement with its flagship employer SBC. The Local and

its members have stability for the next five years. *Now what?*

*Does this mean we can all sit back for the next 4 1/2 years and wait for the contract to expire before we heed the call to action? No!*

Looking back at how hard we had to fight to preserve what we have today we cannot afford to sit back and do nothing for the duration of this contract. The time for preparation is **NOW!** We must stand together as a membership and fight for issues that affect us as workers and as Union Members.

The fight for all the working families of this Local continues. First and foremost on our agenda is to show the President the door. President Bush is determined to destroy the rights of working people and Union members across the country. He is leading the nation down a path where there will be no middle-class, only the haves and the have-nots. You will hear a lot about his

anti-worker tactics in the months ahead. Pay attention and be informed when you go to the polls this fall. It is our responsibility to elect the candidate who has vowed to protect the rights of Union members. That candidate is **not** George Bush.

Political involvement increases our future bargaining strength, but it's not the only duty we must shoulder in the next five years. All members must stand together and protect the industry standards we have fought to establish. All of the sisters and brothers of this Local must get involved in organizing those whose low wages threaten our standard. We are the leaders in the telecommunication/broadband industry. **We are the hunted.** The industry is changing with emergence of VOIP, WiFi, and the other rapidly developing technologies. We will get crushed at future bargaining tables with the influx of these new NON-UNION competitors. They perform our jobs at substandard rates. We must raise the living standards for our brothers and sisters who work at those non-union competitors.

Our primary target continues to be **Comcast**, the Wal-Mart of the telecommunications industry. They are our biggest threat. As the industry changes we cannot allow Comcast to continue to leave their employees behind. As Comcast has grown they continue to provide wages and

benefits that are far below the industry standard. The Local 21 members working at Comcast have been in contract negotiations for well over five years. Why? Because the small, unionized cable companies were swallowed up by non-union cable Goliath Comcast. The members of Local 21 who work at Comcast are looking to all of us who understand the importance of Union solidarity to help them organize the non-union shops in our Local's jurisdiction.

**Yes, You can help.** When you see a Comcast worker on the street or in a payment center, give them a honk, a wave, buy them a cup of coffee; take the time to stop and talk to them. Educate them on the values of being a Union member. Inform them the only reason your family enjoys what they have today is because of our Union, IBEW Local 21. The IBEW has fought on your behalf to protect your benefits and negotiated wages-the highest in the industry. IBEW Local 21 wants these workers to have the same job protections, and achieve the wages and benefits that you have at SBC. The time you take to talk to these workers will pay off. If you fail to fulfill your responsibilities as Union members you risk a future working under a new, lower industry standard created by a company determined to destroy the standards we have fought to achieve.

As we all take on larger roles with involvement in politics and organizing we must **continue building internal solidarity at SBC.** The fight with SBC is ongoing; it hasn't ended just because we have a new contract. We must show our managers we will not go on quietly just because our contract has been settled. We won't forget how they pushed us to fight for this contract and how they were out to destroy our livelihood. Our younger members have learned how to fight – united, all members will stand together.

By accomplishing all of this in the next five years, we will be stronger. SBC and our other employers will arrive at the bargaining table, knowing we have done our work as members. Our employers will have no other options but to put the best deal on the table. Solidarity!

### What the GOP Really Thinks About U.S. Workers

Washington (PAI)

**W**ant to know what Congress' ruling Republicans really think about U.S. workers? Read the *Congressional Record*, which details lawmakers' dulcet words.

Of course, they can leave you with excess stomach acid. Consider the money bill for the Departments of State, Commerce, Justice, and similar agencies that the GOP run House discussed on July 6. Its section 607 began: "It is the sense of Congress that, to the greatest extent practicable, all equipment and products purchased with funds made available in the act should be American made..."

"If it has been finally determined by a court or federal agency that any person

intentionally affixed a label bearing a 'Made In America' inscription, or any inscription with the same meaning, to any product sold in or shipped to the United States that is not made in the United States, the person shall be ineligible to receive any contract with funds made available in this act," the section concluded. So far so good.

Use taxpayers' money to buy products made in the U.S., right? According to the GOP wrong. Rep. Thomas Davis (R-VA.) called section 607 "legislating on an appropriations bill." He said that's not kosher under congressional rules and demanded that section 607 be axed. The response from House Speaker Dennis Hastert(R-IL)? "It was."

## Retiree Club Corner



*Elected Board members for the Oak Forest Retiree Charter # 15 (L-R) Vice-President Richard Ratzel, President, Leonard Trentz, and Secretary, Brenda Howington.*

**O**ak Forest Retiree Club Charter # 15 has elected its Board of Directors. They are up and running. In July they held a picnic and an outing at the Windy City Thunderbolts baseball game in Crestwood, IL. They will be meeting monthly and anyone interested in joining their Charter, or if you would like more information please contact Brenda Howington at [brendahowington@aol.com](mailto:brendahowington@aol.com).



*Members at the organizational meeting at The Orland Chateau on Tuesday, May 18th, 2004.*

**G**urnee Retiree Club Charter# 5 also has elected its Board of Directors.



*(L-R) Vice President, Donna Lill, President, Sue Davern, and Secretary, Tree Szwed.*



*Members at the organizational meeting at The American Legion on Thursday, May 20th, 2004. They will be meeting regularly and anyone interested in joining their Charter, or if you would like more information please contact, Sue Davern at [davern@ameritech.net](mailto:davern@ameritech.net).*

## Oak Forest Charter Update

*By Leonard Trentz, Oak Forest Charter 15 President*

**T**he Oak Forest Retiree Charter is planning several events for its members. They are hosting an Estate planning seminar on 10/12/04. Anyone interested should contact Len Trentz at 708-687-2199. Time and location information will be announced later. Other ideas include insurance needs, and leaving a legacy for your future descendants. As those dates and times are finalized, we will let everyone know through *Frontline* and e-mail. The first outing, to the baseball game, had over half of the registered members from the charter in attendance. It's a nice beginning.



*Members of the Retiree Club in Oak Forest enjoying their first outing to the Thunderboltz baseball game. This is the first outing for any IBEW 21 retiree charter.*

You can also contact the Union Office at 630-960-4466 ext.540 if you need help contacting anyone involved in the Charters.

We want to continue to grow our charters around the state. If you are interested in helping please contact, Jim McLauchlan at 630-960-4466 or 877-584-2121 ext.354.

# CONGRATULATIONS LOCAL 21 RETIREES

## APRIL 2004

Larry Rippe  
William Swanson  
Kurt Mengal  
Joyce Gallick  
Dave Protis  
Randall Slaton

## MAY 2004

Earl Myhra  
Donna Hedrick  
George Benson  
Donna Benson  
Sunnie Ohl  
Janice Koehler  
John McCormick  
Julianne Henniger  
Susan Freely  
Lorenza Villegas  
Debbie Simon  
Erlinda Mante  
Samuel Boatner

## JUNE 2004

Fred Washausen  
Maxine Middleton  
Gloria Ulare  
Kristine Wells  
Michael Poniske  
Mary Sullivan  
Pat Nugent  
Donna Slieter  
Ricky Greding  
David DeWalt  
Carolyn Deming  
Gerald Styx  
William Kraus  
Bruce Steinke  
Richard Stewart  
Diane Duffy  
William Keener Jr  
Gary Jones  
Doris Strickland

Richard Stasch  
Bonita Renzi  
Isabell Aguirre  
Deborah Summer  
Robert Hall  
Janet Klausner  
William Scuderi  
Bobbie Hall  
Karen Mazzone  
Darlene Burmeister  
Sam Martino  
Julie Blomquist  
James Holt  
Terrance Gibson  
Barbara Gilboj  
Dorene Micek  
Denise Myers  
Patty Pietrzak

## JULY 2004

Lee Riley  
Marilyn Spencer  
Kathleen Springer  
Debra Griffin  
Clare Kramer  
Steven Bates

## AUGUST 11, 2004

Cynthia Glass  
Michele Riley

### Information Alert

Members must be in good standing for 10 consecutive years with IBEW Local 21 (or former Locals 165, 188, 336, 383, or 399) immediately preceding their retirement in order to receive a retirement from the Local Union. These members must be severing their employment with the employer. Stewards, Area Stewards, Chief Stewards, and Business Reps can request applications by calling Nancy Kopydlowski at the union office 630 960-4466 X234.



**"I worked days for 35 years and she worked nights for 35 years. When we retired we found out we couldn't stand each other."**

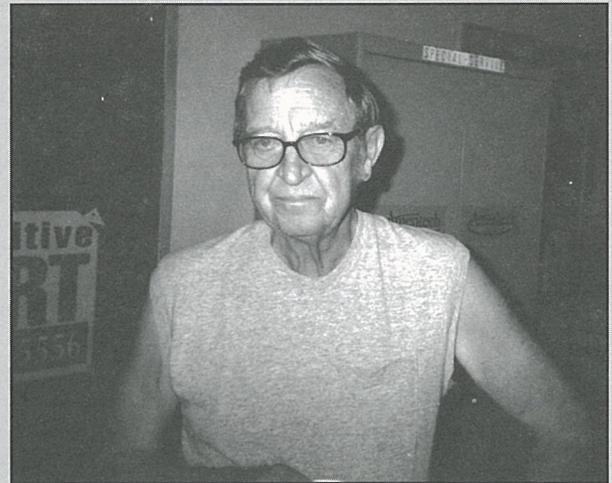


Photo by Bob Smith

*Brother James (Ole) Olson was a member of our Union nearly 45 years. He always knew whose side he was on and proved it on the picket line as well as the shop floor. Many happy years of retirement, Jim.*

## IBEW LU 21 POLITICAL ACTIVIST VOLUNTEER FORM

Yes! Contact me to help to do the following:

- Phone Banking
- Workplace Talks
- Voter Registration
- Get out the Vote on Election Day
- Work in a Candidate Campaign
- Distribute Lawn Signs
- Will Place Lawn Sign at my Home
- Other Grassroots Political Activities

---

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Home Telephone #: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Other Contact Numbers (cell, pager, etc.): \_\_\_\_\_

Best Time and place to be contacted: \_\_\_\_\_

IBEW Local 21 Unit#: \_\_\_\_\_ Area or Chief Steward/Business Rep: \_\_\_\_\_

Employer: \_\_\_\_\_ Job Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Personal E-mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

---

This form can be mailed or faxed to IBEW Local Union 21

Mail to:

IBEW Local Union 21  
1307 Butterfield RD, Suite 422  
Downers Grove, IL 60515

Fax to:

630.960.9607

# UNIT MEETINGS 2004

## September

### **Unit 1**

Thursday, September 9, 7 PM  
Holiday Inn Hillside  
4400 Frontage Rd  
Hillside IL  
708 544-9300

### **Unit 2**

Tuesday, September 14, 7 PM  
Slovak Club  
6920 Broadway  
Merrillville IN  
219 756-5101

### **Unit 3**

Thursday, September 16, 7 PM  
Best Western Elgin Plaza  
345 West River Rd  
Elgin IL  
847 695-5000

### **Unit 4**

September 8, 7 PM  
American Legion Harwood Post #5  
705 S. Larkin  
Joliet IL  
815 725-4333

### **Unit 5**

Wednesday, September 15, 7 PM  
The Rocky Point Club  
3603 Bonansinga Dr.  
Quincy IL  
217 224-1332

### **Unit 6**

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

### **Unit 7**

Monday, September 20, 7 PM  
IBEW Local # 309  
2000A Mall St (Rte 157)  
Collinsville IL  
618 345-5112

## October

### **Unit 1**

Thursday, October 14, 7 PM  
Habetler Bowl  
5250 N. Northwest Highway  
Chicago IL  
773 774-0500

### **Unit 2**

Tuesday October 12, 7 PM  
Lansing American Legion  
18255 Grant St  
Lansing IL  
708 474-5906

### **Unit 3**

Thursday, October 21, 7 PM  
IBEW Local # 364  
6820 Mill Rd  
Rockford IL  
815 398-6282

### **Unit 4**

Wednesday, October 13, 7 PM  
Lemont VFW  
15780 New Ave.  
Lemont IL  
630 257-9859

### **Unit 5**

Wednesday, October 20, 7 PM  
American Legion Post #979  
4501 S Airport Rd  
Bartonville IL  
309 697-2432

### **Unit 6**

Tuesday, October 19, 5:30 PM  
IBEW Local # 193  
3150 Wide Track Dr  
Springfield IL  
217 544-3479

### **Unit 7**

Monday, October 18, 7 PM  
Alton Sports Tap  
3812 College Ave  
Alton IL  
618 465-2539

## November

### **Unit 1**

Thursday, November 11, 7 PM  
Days Inn & Suites  
2175 E Touhy  
DesPlaines IL  
847 635-1300

### **Unit 2**

Tuesday, November 9, 7 PM  
Gaelic Park Banquet Hall  
6119 W 147th St.  
Oak Forest IL  
708 687-9323

### **Unit 3**

Thursday, November 18, 7 PM  
Gurnee American Legion  
749 Milwaukee Ave  
Gurnee IL  
847 244-9282

### **Unit 4**

Wednesday, November 10, 7 PM  
IBEW Local #145  
1700 52nd Ave Suite A  
Moline IL  
309 736-4239

### **Unit 5**

Wednesday, November 17, 7 PM  
VFW Post #630  
1303 E Main St  
Urbana IL  
217 367-4197

### **Unit 6**

Tuesday, November 16, 5:30 PM  
IBEW Local # 193  
3150 Wide Track Dr  
Springfield IL  
217 544-3479

### **Unit 7**

Monday, November 15, 7 PM  
American Legion Post #141  
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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