

FRONTLINE

IBEW LOCAL 21



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Local 21 Members Lend Helping Hands in New Orleans.



Photo Credit: Bob Smith

IBEW member Mark Schonwise stops on the road between jobs on the outskirts of New Orleans. See photo spread pages 6 and 7.

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Of Electrical Workers
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

On the Road with the VP

By Kevin Curran, Vice President/Assistant Business Manager Marketing



With my new position in our Union, I felt it was important to get out in the field and visit as many of our members as possible. Over

the past several weeks, I've had the pleasure of visiting many of the Marketing work locations throughout our jurisdiction. So far, I've visited 27 different work groups in numerous locations across the state including: downtown Chicago, Springfield, Peoria, Oakbrook, Arlington Heights, Rosemont, Rock Island, and Peoria. I would like to thank all the members I met on my travels for the warm reception I received. I was also very encouraged by the solidarity and strong support for the Union present at all of the locations I visited. 2006 will no doubt be a year in which we will need to band together as one to fight against the assault on workers' rights going on not just at AT&T/SBC and Comcast, but throughout our industry and this country.

I would also like to report on news in some of our Marketing centers:

Consumer

Effective January 1, 2006, the company has instituted a new performance

management plan which includes sales objectives for DSL, Dish, Cingular, and Long Distance. This is significant because there haven't been any sales objectives in Consumer for over 13 years. We've also reviewed the objectives Consumer established effective January 1, 2006, and compared them to actual results. In some categories, over 80% of our members fall below the company's unrealistic objectives. AT&T/SBC has advised us that if our members don't meet these numbers, they plan on taking disciplinary action.

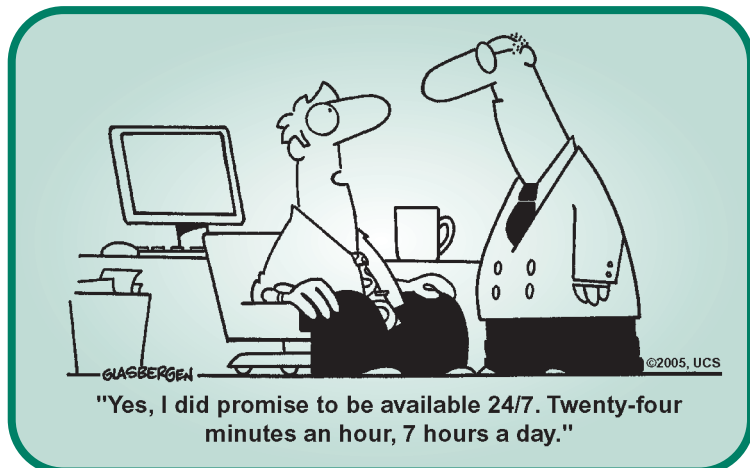
Any company policy which involves discipline **must** adhere to the "just cause" provisions contained in the Collective Bargaining Agreement. This policy is clearly not consistent with the just cause standards of our contract. Therefore, the Union filed a third step grievance against this unjust plan. In addition, the Union has placed the company on official notice that we reserve the right to grieve and arbitrate **any** discipline meted out under this plan.

Credit and Collections

The Union has reached an agreement with the company on the incentive plan through December 31, 2006.

BCS

The Union has reached an agreement to extend the Make-Up Time Memorandum of Agreement through December 31, 2006.



New Year, New Start

By Ronald Kastner



On January 12th, the Local was proud to host the first of many unit meetings in the new conference center in our own union office. We had a standing room only crowd that night. I was thrilled with the high turnout, and I encourage everyone to attend meetings not only in this central location but everywhere that we have meetings.

The staffing for AT&T's **Project Lightspeed** was completed through a union negotiated process called preferencing. During this procedure, over 700 union employees stated their preference for a work location where they will begin their new duties. The process was completed with relatively few problems. After the network technicians made their choices known, other techs who had accepted marketing and coin positions after the layoffs also preferred for positions. Finally, some of the techs who were displaced by the Ameritech New Media sale several years ago made their choices. It is very gratifying to know that some former union members will once again be employed. Furthermore, the end result of this process will be about 250 new union jobs! This truly is cause for us to celebrate our union solidarity.

Also at AT&T, **Consumer**, one of the business units in Marketing, implemented a performance plan (PAR) based on sales objectives. After 13 years without any type of demands, management is suddenly insisting on unattainable and ludicrous goals for our employees. Based on their numbers, 80% of the current sales reps would fail to meet these objectives. The plan also eliminates management responsibility for training and development.

Vice President Curran and I met with the president of this business unit in the beginning of February in an attempt to rectify this situation. We made it clear that the Union membership was outraged with this plan. It was agreed that the Union and the company would continue to meet and discuss this issue.

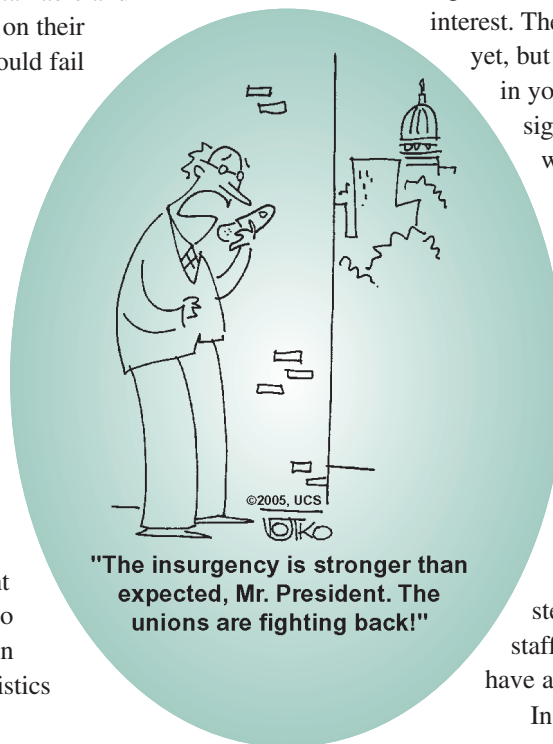
The **2006 elections** are rapidly approaching. Local 21's COPE department is coordinating a voter registration drive so that all members have their voices heard in both Illinois and Indiana. Our current statistics

show that close to 5,000 members may not be registered. If you recently moved, you may be one of them. To register to vote, please contact either Larry Moeller at extension 221 or Rosetta Shin at extension 327 as soon as possible. Both of these people will help you to register quickly.

The process of endorsing candidates starts early. The state AFL-CIO endorses incumbents of either party based on his or her 60% pro-labor voting record. We will be endorsing three Republicans this year. If you are wondering who the endorsed candidates are in your district or area, please call the union office for the complete listing.

There is a **new early voting process** that makes it easier than ever to make our voice heard in the political arena. Prior to the March 21 primary, early voting will take place from Monday, February 27th through Thursday, March 16th. Chicago residents can call 312 269-7900 for information. Suburban Cook County residents can vote at local village or township halls. Hours vary, so call your local offices for hours. For more information call 312 603-0906 or visit www.voterinfonet.com. If you live in another county, call your local county clerk's office. No explanation or reason to vote early is required.

As often as we encourage political involvement, our members sometimes question it. A good example of the need for this exists right now in the area of **pension reform**, specifically the rate used to calculate the lump sum amount. Local 21's COPE department is watching Senate Bill 1783 and House Bill 2880 with much interest. These two bills have NOT been signed into law yet, but if they are, the amount of money you receive in your lump sum upon retirement could significantly be altered. Needless to say, you would not want to be voting for someone who has just cheated you out of thousands of dollars, would you? Local 21 is constantly monitoring the progress of these bills by observing the committees from both chambers who are working on it. As *Frontline* goes to press, the situation is fluid, and we must be vigilant to any adverse effects this may have upon our membership. Individual members should also be interested in this process.



Please feel free to call your steward, our COPE department or any of my staff including myself with any questions you may have about any issues mentioned here.
In solidarity.

Our Day in Court

By Jerry Gast, Assistant Business Manager Network



On the contracting out after lay off, we are still in the **federal court** system. The Local completed an arbitration on phase one of two on whether the company had the right to continue to contract out construction work after the lay-off, work that the Union is trained and equipped to do. The case is completed.

The ruling is in on phase one. The arbitrator ruled in phase one no violation for the company. Phase two of the hearing is still to be heard.

Phase two of the hearing deals with the question, "Did the company's contracting out of the subject construction work after December 27, 2002, prevent the rehiring of employees with seniority standing within the meaning of section 1.03 as adopted by the arbitrator in answer to question one?" Phase one dealt with the meaning of the phrase "prevent the rehiring of employees with seniority standing" as used in section 1.03. We have met with our attorney and will be going back to the federal mediator to have the Kasher award implemented. The Kasher award says that the company has to meet with Union to review the work being contracted out, the man hours, to determine what work

we are equipped and trained to perform. The company has refused to live up to that award.

The company and Union have agreed on the **clothing plan** for 2006. The clothing will have the AT&T and IBEW logos on the clothes. The Union does have an agreement with labor relations that there will be no discipline and no tech will be sent home to change clothing for non-compliance. We do recommend the members wear the clothing. All the departments have to order the 'expeditions jacket,' it does have the IBEW logo on it.

The preference to construction for **Project Lightspeed** is complete. We were able to allow recalled techs who were in other business units a chance to preference to these jobs along with fifteen former New Media techs. We are also working on allowing some coin techs a chance to preference to Project Lightspeed.

Grievances that were heard in January for network include: work up from TA to MA, a 25 day suspension of a tech in the central office world, and an over-time case out of Peoria in central offices. The case of the building of a plant school for training with contractors instead of Local 21 construction techs, was settled at the hearing for \$4,500 to be paid to the Peoria construction techs. Also we are waiting for the rulings in two dismissal cases. In February we have already scheduled four dismissal cases, three neutral eval cases, and one case of management doing conduit inspection work.

The Lifespan of a Grievance, part 2

By Jacquie Fields, Treasurer



Thank-you for your comments on this series the Lifespan of a Grievance. I am very honored with the feedback I've received regarding this subject.

The grievance process starts when you, the member, fill out the "Grievance Fact Sheet." This is a union document and is never read by the company. Most of the information is very basic—your name, address and phone numbers. It includes the date of the event in question.

It's not hard to fully describe the grievance. Start with the who, what, when and where of the actual event. Attach an extra sheet if you need to cover more history, or include additional details. Not all questions on the back of the form apply to every grievance. Don't panic about them. Be sure to sign and date the grievance.

The Steward will request a meeting with the first level manager and make a verbal presentation of your grievance. If the manager denies it, the Steward moves

the grievance up to the Area/Chief Steward. The paperwork now includes the Grievance/Arbitration form with any and all notes the Steward made regarding the first step. This will give the Area/Chief Steward information needed to effectively present the grievance at the second step.

At the second step of the grievance process, the Area/Chief Steward requests a meeting with the second level manager in the work location where the grievance was filed. They present the grievance verbally, with a Steward note-taker. There are grievances that are settled at first or second step. It does happen, and when it does the grievance is filed at the Union office into our Grievance Data Base system. When they are not settled at first or second step, the Area/Chief Steward will refer the

grievance to the Business Representative to go to the third step of the grievance process. The next issue of *Frontline* will cover that step.

At the Steward Seminar Renault Pettis brought up a very good point. My first article said that you would file a grievance when your rights in the contract have been violated. He pointed out that you could also file when safety issues or city laws have been violated. I do agree that you can file for safety issues, but it is included in the contract in Article 31, therefore making safety a right that has been violated. As for violation of the law, the contract doesn't cover it; you may consider filing charges within the legal system, only if necessary.

Remember the \$1,500 Success Sharing payout was negotiated in your Union Contract. Now it's a Memorandum called The Midwest Team Performance Award TPA, in Appendix A on page 157.

They Watch Everything

By Kurt Schmidt, Business Representative

Verint is AT&T/SBC's system for recording 100% of calls both incoming and outgoing for several different Business Units. The screen shot activity on your PC is captured on 25% of all calls. This is not just the company systems but anything that you have open on your PC at the time of the call. What does that mean? If you are in your email, either official company or personal, it will be seen. If you are on the AT&T/SBC intranet, or the non-company internet, it will be seen. Therefore, when you are ordering shoes, train tickets or responding to a personal email about dinner arrangements for the weekend - IT IS SEEN. These calls can now be stored for up to 45 days from the date of the contact.

In Consumer the monitoring group, CQC, looks at the screen shot calls to verify the employee is following proper customer handling procedures. They will see any system you have open, and if you are in the wrong system when handling a call, they will send a write up to your local management team. **This can lead to a customer mistreat** and depending on the seriousness—possible suspension pending dismissal. Finally, if you put a customer on hold to look up information and DO NOT access any of the needed systems, the recording will show the lack of due process on your part in handling the call. Also, any outgoing call number will be displayed. So be sure to transfer calls properly and to the correct department.

So, stay off of any system other than those required to do business for the customer during your open line time. Go on the internet prior to your start, on lunch or breaks or after your tour is completed.

In the Business sector, the managers use the stored calls to complete the observations required for the performance plan every month. Many times the managers come in on Saturdays, retrieve the stored contacts of the past week, and listen to calls. Again, 25% of those calls have screen shot captures.

When you are being covered on the observations by management, **request to hear and see the call**. Don't forget to ask if this could lead to discipline and demand your Union steward for the meeting.

Members In The News

Tech George Butler was installing home phone service in Gurnee on December 9th. He was working in the basement about 1PM. The customer was holding a light for George, when he collapsed. George caught him, called for his wife, helped him upstairs, and calmed him down. The tech had the wife call 911 and stayed with them until help arrived. The customer feels George saved her husband's life because he had a stroke, and she was not calm. She feels that if George had not been there her husband would have died. George Butler is the IBEW 21 Steward in Gurnee.



David Blanks, a CST out of the Lyons garage, and his wife Leslie celebrated the birth of their son Colin Allen Blanks on 10-14-05.

To have your news posted please send a short email to the editors nancy.north@comcast.net and ljm336@ameritech.net with "Frontline Members in the News" as the subject line.

Union Representation

We have a steward from the 134 Local, His name is Dan and he is very vocal.

We also have a steward from the 21 Local, His name is Ken and he is very focal.

They are always talking Union stuff, And to some it's just a lot of fluff.

They go to a lot of meetings, And I'm sure they suffer some beatings.

They will card their own mother, And at times even their brother.

They will card the mailman, Or even the guy with the garbage can.

But if it wasn't guys like Dan or Ken, We phone guys would probably all be garbagemen.



Report from New Orleans

Thirty-three IBEW technicians volunteered for a three month tour helping restore phone service in Slidell LA on the outskirts of New Orleans after the devastation on Hurricane Katrina. There are crews from North Suburban, South Suburban and Outstate. For now the work is chiefly replacing pedestals, bonding them. Everybody is terrific. The team did visit the French Quarter—nothing on television conveys how bad it still smells.

By Ron Opalinski



South Suburban Crew

Front row L to R: John Krapil, Ron Opalinski, Mark Shonwise, Alec Lifschultz (mgr), James Harper, Brian Tiemans, Guido Decaro, Roger Ehret
Back row L to R: Tom Hartnet, Bob Smith, Roy Lang, Woody Winkel



IBEW member Woody Winkel is ready to tackle any job.





North Suburban Crew

*Front row L to R: Don Webb, Chris Dineen (mgr), Dave Krone
 Second row L to R: Doug Theis, Don Hibner, Tom Ruszkowski, Robert Sandholm
 Third row L to R: Mike Ohler, Dave Faydash, George Gates, Bill Cooper, Kevin Douglas*

Two technicians from the Loves Park IL garage, Robert VanSpankeren and Tom Schmidt were working to restore service in Slidell, LA on the outskirts of New Orleans. They were properly using their 188A Test Equipment and discovered that facilities were "energized" that served a mobile home. Their discovery efforts led to the realization that the Local Power Company had reversed the electrical feed when they restored electrical service to the mobile home. Our technicians' thorough work and adherence to good safety practices helped to avoid a potentially disastrous situation.

PHOTO CREDIT: Bob Smith



Outstate Crew

*Front row L to R: Paul Terrell, John Whitney, Tim Dillman, Jim Scott, Bob Spankeren, Tom Heckel, Tom Schmidt
 Back row L to R: Brian Rippelmeyer, Bill Lavelle, Chris Koudelka, Durk Cruz, Bill Holman, Troy Carlson
 Not shown: Carlo Haifa, Chuck Flucas, Craig Armstrong, Jerry Neece*





NEWS ACROSS

• • • **Rock Island Consumer** managers told Service Reps to either sign in early, or to work overtime and not report it in order to get their handle time down. Working off the clock is prohibited by federal law. It can impact headcount because management thinks it only takes eight hours to get the work done, so they need fewer people. If you have been pressured to work off the clock, contact your union steward or call the office of Illinois Attorney General Lisa Madigan.

...**Gallatin River Communications**— Pekin District, the members ratified the new five year contract.

By Vickie Burroughs, Business Representative



• • • Installer Laura Tashke, who suffered an aneurysm on the job in November, was able to go home before Christmas. Sadly, she suffered a relapse before the New Year and is back in Evanston Hospital.

...Total Grace, the **Chicago North Consumer** office, will hold Solidarity Days, one day every week until we can come to some kind of agreement on the unrealistic performance plan.

By Michael Cohns, Business Representative



• • • **Downstate** preferencing seemed to go well, not just in Construction, but it went smoothly in IM and I&R also.

...The conduit inspector arbitration is scheduled to go on February 28th unless we can settle it beforehand. We will keep you advised.

...**Vermillion County** just completed its first ever non-judicial arbitration as of January 9th. We should have a ruling by the end of February or early March on funeral leave Article 13. The Vermillion County contract expires at the end of 2006. No bargaining meetings are scheduled yet, but they should begin in August or September. The County is in bad financial straits, so it doesn't create a good bargaining climate.

By Jim Foster, Business Representative

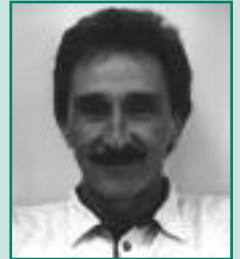


• • • **Avaya** members are gearing up for national bargaining this summer. The Local has begun gathering information, and so far it seems job security is a major concern. Avaya members should look for bargaining surveys in the future.

...Speaking of job security, Local 21 tech's achieved just that at recently concluded national bargaining with **AT&T**. This too, was a major concern to those tech's because of the SBC AT&T merger.

...Memory loss at AT&T/SBC in regards to long standing past practices on vacation and work schedules are a problem throughout my area. The only time the company respects a past practice is if it benefits them.

By Dan Gruenich, Business Representative



• • • First, I'd like to publicly thank my stewards, who are on the front lines every day. An extra special thank you goes to Chief Steward Cheryl Crooks and Area Steward Charles Snipes for their dedication. It takes hard work, but they make it look easy to keep peace and harmony between the members and management.

...When Project Coordinators in downtown Chicago had a cut outside normal hours, the company was granting ETO (equivalent time off.) This is not in the contract. We have finally resolved the issue that PC's are to be paid overtime not ETO.

...In the downtown Network centers, management has started Performance Improvement Plans. However, they have not discussed the details and discipline process of the PIP's with the Union.

By Liz Hodges, Business Representative



• • • On the **South side of Chicago** the Special Service crews are still dealing with unfair scheduling. Union members showed the company that the DOG crew is strong when they are together. The Union continues to work on the scheduling problems.

...Preferencing went well. Construction picked up the Project Lightspeed work, so the techs had little opportunity for movement to another garage. Many I&R techs preferenced into Construction. Some techs had worked in Construction before the layoff and are glad to be going back to their original work.

By CJ-Cleveland Johnson, Business Representative



• • • At **Altura** I recently participated in a 3 hour conference call with company HR. The following topics were discussed.

- 1) Stand-By in California vs. Michigan
- 2) New Mexico qualifications
- 3) Cell phone usage
- 4) Dartmouth detail
- 5) Background checks
- 6) Vacation time vs. Workman's Comp
- 7) Scheduling of shifts
- 8) Developmental questionnaire form, it doesn't have to be signed by our techs
- 9) The Bank of New York issue

...At **Gallatin River Communications**, Bill Henne and I would like to send a big thank you to stewards Leon Ullrich and Dave Cottrall for their help during bargaining. The members voted "yes" unanimously on the contract.

...**Citizens Utility** Bill Henne and I will be heading to Washington D.C. to participate in talks regarding upcoming contract negotiations.

...The recent **SBC/AT&T** preferencing has concluded, yet some techs are still being detailed to C&E. This appears to be an ongoing battle with the company. In Rock Island I & R techs are hearing from Media Com workers that they are interested in our Union.

By Mike McCormick, Business Representative



• • • Happy New Year to everyone. 2006 will bring several challenges in **Marketing** in the areas of attendance and job performance. All business units are tightening the numbers. In attendance disciplinary action is taken sooner—there is a reduction in the amount of time you take off before action is taken. In performance, management is "**raising the bar**" on the percentage of attainment in many areas to 97%.

...I have some good news already for 2006, the Union won two dismissal panels. One included a Back to Work Agreement. The other was for full back pay of 21 days for a total of over \$4,000.00 in addition to the FMLA being corrected. Unfortunately this short year has seen two dismissals. So watch your numbers, keep focused on the job and attend Union meetings, especially the new location in the Downers Grove Union office.

By Kurt Schmidt, Business Representative



• • • The Union stands strong at the Network Dispatch Center in **Hoffman Estates**, the company rolled out their 2006 office policy changes and the MA's weren't happy. They currently have the ability to request NS days and the company wanted to remove NS requests and have the MA's trade shifts with each other if changes needed to be made to their schedule.

Because the Union stood together, we not only kept our NS Requests but also had unlimited schedule trades added. A big **win** for the Dispatch Center.

...**JULIE's** management team has changed their policy on FMLA by requesting that members use their paid time (vacation) to run concurrent. The Union has met with the company and stated our position that the contract prohibits this new practice. The company of course is in disagreement, I guess we'll be seeing them at the grievance table.

By Melanie Probst, Business Representative



• • • At **SBC Datacomm**, the Union won the layoff arbitration in September, but it took time for the remedy settlement. Happily, right before Christmas, \$152,000.00 in back pay was delivered to eleven deserving, wrongfully-terminated members.

...In **Chicago**, one surplus coin collector got a job. Then there were two.

...Despite the blizzard on **Human Rights Day**, December 8th, 150 people attended the rally in Haymarket Square in downtown Chicago. About one fourth of the participants were from Local 21. It was a proud moment for our Union.

...An important reminder: a current **SBC/AT&T** employee is **never** required to take a drug/alcohol test unless they are on a back-to-work agreement for substance abuse or need a commercial drivers license for a vehicle 26,000 pounds or heavier. If a boss tells you otherwise, call the Union.

By Michael Sacco, Business Representative



... A Customer Account Specialist is back to work with full back pay after a three and a half week suspension. The Local was successful in saving the job by proving the member was innocent of company allegations.

...2006 Vacation schedules are still a problem in **Indiana I&R**. Composition is the sticking point, it seems the company refuses to follow the contract, until they see the light don't pick your 2006 vacation.

...Brian Jackson's Network Operations area is having the same trouble with composition, until the Local gets an agreement see above.

...There has been a partial settlement to vacation and scheduling problems in the **Southwest suburban DOG group**. The remaining problem has been escalated to Local 21's Assistant Business Manager for network Jerry Gast.
By Steve Tengblad, Business Representative



• • • The preferencing for "Project Lightspeed "is complete. All techs should be at their new report location under their new title.

...The DOG group is still experiencing problems with Vacation schedules, and off-hour shifts.

...In December 2005 Local 21 was approached by **SBC/AT&T** to send techs to help in the recovery effort in **New Orleans**. The job of restoring basic telephone service due to the devastation wrought by Hurricane Katrina began. President Ron Kastner who led this effort and after some minor problems an orientation meeting was held for the 33 volunteers. On January 4th a convoy proceeded to Slidell, Louisiana to begin a 3 month tour helping the recovery by restoring telephone service.



Union Sponsored Scholarships

By Tom Hopper, Business Representative

In the December issue of *Frontline*, we provided information about the 2006 IBEW Local 21 and the UnionPlus Scholarship Programs. The application for the \$1,000 Local 21 Scholarship can be downloaded from our website www.ibew21.org. It must be received by March 1st.

Members and their eligible children can apply for tens of thousands of dollars in scholarship money at this time of year. Recent studies have concluded that over a lifetime, the gap in earning potential between a high school diploma and a Bachelor of Arts degree or higher is more than \$1,000,000. Following is information about other scholarship programs:

William A. Lee Memorial Scholarship

The Chicago Federation of Labor, AFL-CIO offers ten students the chance to win a

\$1,500 cash scholarship award. Through the William A. Lee Memorial Scholarship, named after the late CFL president who devoted over sixty years to the cause of labor, civic and community service, applicants can choose to compete for one of five academic awards based on their grades, extra-curricular activities and college entrance exams, or be placed in a random drawing for one of the five remaining scholarship prizes. More information is available at www.cflonline.org. The deadline is March 1, 2006.

George Meany Center for Labor

Studies Earn your Bachelor of Arts degree while continuing your trade union work. Each year, the UnionPlus National Labor College Scholarship awards a total of \$25,000 to eligible students attending the National Labor College in Silver Spring, MD. To learn more about the college degree program, visit www.georgemeany.org. To request a scholarship application, call The National Labor College Office of Student Services at 301 431-5404.

The IBEW Founders' Scholarships

honor the dedicated wiremen and linemen who, on November 28, 1891, organized the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers. Each year the officers of the IBEW offer its working members scholarships on a competitive basis. It is hoped that the awards will not only contribute to the personal development of our members but also steward the electrical industry that our founders envisioned.

This award is for \$200 per semester credit hour at any accredited college or university toward an associate's, bachelors or postgraduate degree in an approved field. The maximum distribution is \$24,000 over a period not to exceed eight years. Look for details soon in the national IBEW Journal, mailed to homes of all current members.

If you have any related questions or need other assistance, contact Tom Hopper at the Union office at 630 960-4466, or by e-mail at thopper@ibew21.org.

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

Last Comcast Contract Inches Forward

By Jerry Rankins, Business Representative



At Comcast — bargaining continues for the former Jones 336 property, with less than five issues remaining. The Union is meeting

regularly with the company on 2nd and 3rd step grievances. Local 21 is also processing many to binding arbitration. Keep the faith, Solidarity.

City 911 Workers Need to Make a Stand

Now that the contract negotiations are over, and the members are enjoying the best contract ever, its time for workers to make a stand against the attack of the incompetent management in leadership at the Office Emergency of Management Communication (OEMC) or **(Often Emptied Mindless and Combative.)** How can I say these things after stating Local 21 just bargained the best contract ever a few months ago?

Management at the OEMC had nothing to do with what was bargained at the table. My counter-parts were the City's Chief Corporate Counsel and the Mayor's Assistant in the City of Chicago. The Mayor gives each department tremendous autonomy to succeed or fail at the OEMC.

You may remember in December 2005, ABC's Channel 7 reporter Chuck Gaudy did a special report on the City's 911 department. It featured a former at-will employee speaking about 911's ongoing problems due to a lack of staffing, which causes many calls to go unanswered. The Executive Director "lied" to ABC and flat out denied the truth. In fact, the current OEMC's staffing numbers are not close to what the City has budgeted for. The news report included an attorney who is representing a family in a lawsuit against the City for the tragic loss of family members in a fire. He aired the huge amounts of overtime that current OEMC staff is putting in.

This attorney has also court subpoenaed yours truly for the purpose of giving a deposition regarding these conditions/allegations. In 1998 an internal study was done at the 911 center revealing the main issue as "staffing." The study showed if the problem of staffing continued to go unnoticed a crisis would occur. There would surely be an escalation of mandatory overtime, cancellations of lunches and breaks, workers not being able to take compensatory time, more workers taking medical leave, low moral, and burnout. We are **living this moment today**. The job itself is highly stressful! Note this study was pre-9/11 and the call volume, primarily due to cell phones, has quadrupled, but the staffing numbers today are close to what they were when the study was done!

The Executive Director refuses to meet with me; instead he sends one of his assistants. An ex-police officer who did not appreciate my questions regarding working conditions at the OEMC, in a Labor/Management meeting had a flashback. Thinking he was working his tactical beat in the Robert Taylor Housing project, he adjourned the meeting and ordered the police officers working in building to throw me out. This is the second time this has happen in eight months.

It is time for Local 21's rat to eat cheese at the 911 center with the workers holding picket signs. Signs that express how fed-up they are about the working conditions at the OEMC, the electronic sweat-shop environment!

Its time for Solidarity! 630 222-9100

Join us on the



This year on Sunday May 7th The IBEW Local 21 team will participate in the annual **Walk against Multiple Sclerosis**. This fun and important event is three miles along Chicago's beautiful lakefront. There are 10 other locations across Illinois. If you would like to join the team, or provide monetary support to fight this debilitating disease, please email Business Rep Michael Sacco at mjsaccoibew21@sbcglobal.net or go to the MS Society website at <http://events.msillinois.org>.

Arghhh! Pension Reform

By Larry Moeller, Committee on Political Education



It's coming, it's coming, from those wonderful folks who brought us the lobbyist scandal, huge Federal deficits, and approved the Iraq war etc. etc. Yes the U.S. Congress is working on pension reform and informed people say it will become a reality by mid April 2006. Excuse me for sounding flippant because this is a serious subject and we are very concerned about it.

Just before the Christmas holidays the House passed HB 2880 and the Senate passed SB 1783; both these bills addressed pension reform, but they are not law as President Bush has not signed either of them. In fact, he threatened a veto. This means both bodies must meet and

put together a bill the President will sign. Committees from the House and Senate are meeting in conference right now to accomplish this. The most distressing aspect of these bills to SBC/AT&T members is how it may affect the rate used to calculate our lump sum pension payout. As written, the bills call for a change in the rate used to calculate the value of lump sum payouts from using the 30 year T-Bill to phasing in a corporate bond rate on 1/1/2007.

Bearing in mind the adverse effect this could have on our SBC/AT&T membership, we downloaded a summary of both bills and read them. We contacted two ERISA attorneys, and the IBEW COPE department in Washington D.C. **It is our opinion at this time that our contract protects us from any diminishment of benefits.** That said we will continue to monitor any revisions to SB 1783 and HB 2880 and share this information with you.

Impact Telcom Reform-Register to Vote

By Dennis McCafferty, Committee on Political Education



Telecommunications reform is on the 2006 Congressional agenda. Currently there are 26 bills in the House and Senate on this very issue.

The common goal of these bills is deregulation of the Telcom industry, thereby creating a market-driven environment. We agree there is a definite need for regulatory relief; technological advancements have made the Telecom Act of 1996 obsolete. **These bills are similar, removing much of the FCC's rule-making authority** and replacing it with oversight and enforcement responsibilities. The bills also provide each state a role in protecting consumers and public rights-of-way. They go a long way in creating a level playing field for all providers.

Our new parent company, AT&T has Senate Bill 245 under consideration in the Indiana General Assembly seeking telecom reform at the state level. Believe me when I tell you that AT&T prefers not to do legislative battle in each individual state, but I guess they got tired of waiting on Congress. This bill goes a few steps further than the rest, as it seeks to provide pricing flexibility based on the percentage of broadband availability, create tax incentives for infrastructure investment, and create ONE state franchising authority for video programming across ALL technologies. The current system requires a provider to obtain a franchise agreement in every municipality where it chooses to do business. Local 21 will be monitoring this and all other legislation very closely. The job security of our membership will be our first and foremost consideration.

Every year at the beginning of each legislative session, I find myself once

again shouting out warnings of gloom and doom. I wish it wasn't necessary, but I'd be remiss in my duty if I didn't keep the membership informed of the evil that lurks in the hearts of the Indiana Governor and the Republican controlled Legislature.

Once again we are on full alert for anti-labor legislation. The Governor spent a lot of time in NW Indiana in 2005, trying to con organized labor into believing that he does not want to hurt us. Well, all I can say to that is BULL! Try telling that to the 30,000 state employees whose collective bargaining rights he rescinded 48 hours after taking his oath of office. Now the Republicans are circulating a letter to various Chamber of Commerce groups around the state, GUARANTEEING passage of "Right to Work" this session! We're not going to take anymore of this nonsense from "compassionate conservatives."

Brothers and Sisters, being a Union member is advanced citizenship. You commit yourselves to the fight for dignity and respect everyday, not only in your workplace, but also in the cities and towns where you live. Primary elections are scheduled in Indiana this May and the deadline to register to vote is April 3rd. If we don't regain control of the State House, these people are prepared to run roughshod over the rights of ALL working people in Indiana. They aren't just hoping for your apathy, they're counting on it!

A lot of you ask, "What does politics have to do with me or my job?" There are 150 legislators down in Indianapolis right now who are going to determine how our industry will be regulated for the next 5 years or more. Demand a say in how that will be decided. If you or a member of your family are not registered to vote, please contact Local 21's C.O.P.E. Department at (630) 960-4466 ext.'s 221, 327, or for Indiana ext. 472 and we'll get you registered. Get in the fight people, the time is now! Until next time, take care and GOD Bless!

The Berghoff

By Nancy North, Area Steward



It's so easy to take good things for granted. Our family was eating dinner at The Berghoff on December 28th. When we saw the television news vans outside, I just thought they were covering a

story at the Federal Building next door. Maybe it was one of those human-interest stories on a slow news day-holiday crowds at The Berghoff. It wasn't until we turned on the radio in the car on the way home that we heard the news.

After 107 years The Berghoff Restaurant is closing February 28th. We couldn't believe it. The owners Herman and Jan Berghoff decided to retire. They would lease the space to their daughter Carlyn for her catering business, since her West Loop landlord decided to convert his property to residential condos.

At first I only thought about our own loss. The Berghoff has always been a place for happiness for our family. Sometimes it was a special occasion, a birthday or graduation; sometimes it was just a dinner where everybody would find something they liked. It wasn't expensive, but the oak-paneled dining room was warm and comfortable. It was an everyday kind of happiness I thought we would have forever.

After lonely years presenting the union jobs issue, I was jolted when I talked to my friend Virginia. Her first concern, "I'm worried about the union waiters losing their jobs." Yes the waiters at The Berghoff are members of HERE Local 1. They are career waiters, not out of work actors, or students for whom it is only a temporary job. Their professionalism is a big part of what makes dining at The Berghoff so wonderful.

In March the city will have only nine restaurants out of about 6,000 where the food service workers are represented by HERE. Fifty years ago, close to 70 restaurants were unionized. For the waiters, as for us, a union job means employer-paid health insurance, four weeks of paid vacation, and a pension. These good benefits led to a remarkably loyal workforce, where the average length of service is 18 years.

The remaining unionized restaurants are Gene & Gorgetti's, Italian Village, Navy Pier Beer Garden, Pizzeria Uno & Due, Riva, Signature Room on the 95th, Su Casa, Tony & Tina's Wedding.

But in the end, a spark of happiness will go out when they turn off the lights on February 28th.

Scavenger Hunt

On a Law & Order rerun, Detectives Brisco & Green are investigating the death of a factory owner. After talking to the workers inside, they go outside to talk to the Union organizers on an informational picket line, complete with a Rat. Detective Brisco's last question is, "Any success here?" The Union guy answers, "We pass out leaflets, but it's hard. Too many of the workers are undocumented."

By Sharon Alfirevic

Happy Techs

After the layoff of December 2002, most technicians hoped to get their old jobs back. During the next 18 months, about forty were rehired in Marketing or Consumer jobs. They hoped that once they had served time in title, they could transfer back to Network, but there were no jobs. Now with the roll-out of Project Lightspeed, Local 21 negotiated that after the network techs preferred, these members could preference back to network. Most of them have their network assignments. Their marketing co-workers are happy for them all, but sad for ourselves, we'll miss them.



I'm, looking forward to learning something new. After having done splicing, coming to the office, and now going back outside—it will be interesting. It goes without saying that I'm grateful for all the work the Union did to make sure techs who took marketing jobs were included in the preferencing. I can't wait to get back out because I'm not an indoor person. I will miss the people inside—they've got big hearts. I've learned how hard it is, what people have to deal with here in a center.

—Peter Tyrner



I'm ecstatic, very happy. I feel like the Union really came through for us at a time when we were unsure about what was going on. It shows they really stood behind us. I'm excited about a new year and positive things are happening. I'll be working closer to home, only about 15 miles away; most guys got something closer to home. When we heard we received our assignments, it was like you wanted to scream. Can I let it out now? I pinched myself to make sure because the process was so fast.

—Bill Harris

I feel wonderful. I kept holding out with anticipation, yet never letting myself fully believe. This will allow me to gain back two hours a day with my family. I'll be getting back to what I truly enjoy doing. I've enjoyed the office experience, but it's not what I wanted to be doing forever. I enjoy working with my hands and with my mind to accomplish the goal. I had faith the Union would come through with a deal, knowing the company wanted to get Project Lightspeed going.

—Perry Eppes



I'm glad we're going back out to be techs. It's what we're good at. It's what we expected to be doing for twenty or thirty years.

—Grant Fujisawa



Yes, I'm relieved, excited and relaxed. It feels great. The commute will be less than half the time. I didn't think about going back outside because I had to concentrate on the job I was doing. It's kinda like Christmas, believe me. We were three feet off the ground when we got the preference sheets.

—Tom Byrne



I feel good about it. It's an opportunity to do what I like to do. At times it looked bleak, at times hopeful. I kept following up, attending the unit meetings. All of us are just happy to go back doing what we started doing, why we came to this company.

—Jesse Villareal

It feels good. It's a chance to go back to what we like to do. It's good the Union was able to make that happen.

—Phil Barone



I'm happy to go back to the type of work I have ten years experience with, something I'm comfortable with instead of something that continuously changes on me. It was a good experience to see what the people inside have to do. It will help back out in the field to understand and explain to a customer about the time it takes to get an order processed, Am I excited? It's a welcome change.

—Brian Leriger



CONGRATULATIONS LOCAL 21 RETIREES

June 2005

Mary Ellen Peter

August 2005

Marilyn Kloth

September 2005

Patricia Rowe
Richard Nelson

October 2005

Pamela Williams
Linda Bohde
Kent Erickson

November 2005

Barbara Krelle
Loretta Dahlman
Letha Steinhour Yazell
Jamie Barrios

December 2005

Dennis Goodman
John Scott
Rickie Krimmel
Stephen Wright
Jerry McCaw
Donald Hill
Carol Dunkel
Roberta Swance
James Justice
Ronald Medenblik
David Poland
Roger Flatt
Trudy Best
Donald McGinness
Jere Blundy
Thomas Cooper
Wayne Zera
Dean Alexander
Russ Chiovari

January 2006

Robert Korst
Shirley Linden
Donald Weingartner
Carol Ann Bailey
Shirley Bell
Lynn Rushing
Patricia Kondich
Rochelle Duncan
Ron Cavenaile
Dawn Koepen
Robert Fromm
Jo Ann Hull
Melinda Horton
Mamie Kindle

February 2006

Juana Puente
Carmen Lowry
William Bard Grosse
Judith Slotwinski
Bridget LeMonta
Linda Beyer
Joyce Hau
Mary Ann Kulick
James Reece
Barbara Zenisek
Georgio Mendoza
Maria Espinosa
Robert Witt

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.

Retiree Update

By Jim McLaughlan,
Chief Steward

The Oak Forest Chapter held several outings during the past year. In September, they took a Lake Michigan luncheon cruise with 20 people. October brought an identity theft seminar with the Orland Park Police. In November, they enjoyed a theater outing to a local collage production of South Pacific. The members celebrated their second Christmas party in December.

The New Year brought a genealogy overview session in January. In February they are planning a travel discussion night where members can tell their experiences in various vacation locales from around the world.

If you would like any information on events coming up throughout this year please contact Len Trentz @ ltrentz@ameritech.net or call the Union office at 630 960-4466 ext 540 if you have any questions or would like to join one of our charters.

In Memoriam



We mourn the death of Brother **Peter Fedulow** an 18-year member of the brotherhood found dead inside the Chicago Cortland Comcast office. The shocking news came on Sunday December 18th. Peter is survived by 2 brothers.

Peter was more than just a co-worker, rather a true brother and a friend. His family, and the union Brothers and Sisters shared many kind words. The great loss of Peter was over-whelming. As a worker, he gave it his all! Brother Peter is gone, he will certainly be missed but will never be forgotten! As one Brother stated, "He took his last breath working at Comcast." Rest in Peace Brother!

James Lockwood, a recent retiree from Local 21 passed away on December 31, 2005. Jim was a Steward, Chief Steward, and Business Representative for the old Local 336. Our sincere condolences go out to his family.

UNIT MEETINGS 2006

MARCH

Unit 1

Thursday, March 23, 6 PM*
IBEW Local #134
600 W. Washington Blvd.
Chicago IL
312 474-4186

Unit 2

Tuesday, March 14, 7 PM
Lansing American Legion
18255 Grant St.
Lansing IL
708 474-5906

Unit 3

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

Unit 4

Wednesday, March 29, 7 PM*
Lemont VFW
15780 New Ave.
Lemont IL
630 257-9859

Unit 5

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

Unit 6

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

Unit 7

Monday, March 20, 7 PM
Alton Sports Tap
3812 College Ave.
Alton IL
618 465-2539

APRIL

Unit 1

Thursday, April 13, 7 PM
IBEW Local #21 Conference Center
1307 W. Butterfield Rd. Suite 424
Downers Grove IL
630 960-4466

Unit 2

Tuesday April 11, 7 PM
Slovak Club
6920 Broadway.
Merrillville IN
219 756-5101

Unit 3

Thursday, April 20, 7 PM
Gurnee American Legion
749 Milwaukee Ave.
Gurnee IL
847 244-9282

Unit 4

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

Unit 5

Wednesday, April 19, 7 PM
The Rocky Point Club
3603 Bonansinga Dr.
Quincy IL
217 224-1332

Unit 6

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

Unit 7

Monday, April 17, 7 PM
American Legion Post #141
916 Main St.
Mt Vernon IL
618 242-4561

MAY

Unit 1

Thursday, May 11, 7 PM
IBEW Local 21 Conference Center
1307 W. Butterfield Rd. Suite 424
Downers Grove IL
630 960-4466

Unit 2

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

Unit 3

Thursday, May 18, 7 PM
Holiday Inn Hotel & Suites
495 Airport Rd.
Elgin IL
847 488-9000

Unit 4

Wednesday, May 10, 7 PM
American Legion Harwood Post #5
705 S. Larkin
Joliet IL
815 725-4333

Unit 5

Wednesday, May 17, 7 PM
Danville Inn
388 Eastgate Dr.
Danville IL
217 446-2400

Unit 6

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

Unit 7

Monday, May 15, 7 PM
IBEW Local # 309
2000A Mall St. (Rte 157)
Collinsville IL
618 345-5112

Information on attending your closest Local 21 Union meeting can be obtained by contacting the Union office at 630-960-4466 or ask your Steward.

*note date change, time change

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