

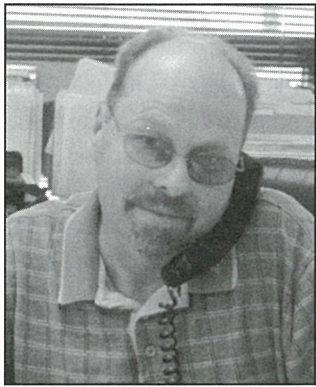
IBEW LOCAL 21 FRONTLINE



Volume 5, Number 2 • April 2002

President/Business Managers Report Organizing Takes Off at Local 21

By Ron Kastner



I'd like to thank all our members who took time to vote in the Illinois Primary. Almost all the Local 21 endorsed candidates were victorious.

The general election will be coming up in November, and as you have heard me say at meetings, this will be an opportunity for working families to improve conditions in Illinois. During the previous administrations we have been on the defensive all the time, without the opportunity for improvements. If our endorsed candidates win, we will control the Senate and the House of Representatives, plus—for the first time in 25 years—a Governor who cares about the working people of Illinois will be sitting in the mansion.

Why get involved in politics some of you may ask? As I write this article we just learned from Washington of HB 3919. If passed, this bill would have a negative affect on how Local 21 Ameritech members' lump sum pensions are calculated. Our early research reveals that five Republicans sponsored this bill. That's why we educate you on how your legislators vote on bills affecting working families. We would like to look beyond political parties, but sad to say, our research tells us that Democrats vote the correct way more often on issues that affect us. Need I say more? No, I trust that our members can think for themselves and will listen to their Union when we talk Political Education in the future. This one hits home doesn't it?

Regularly, you've heard us say at the Union meetings, "Anything won at the bargaining table can be lost in legislation."

This statement couldn't be truer in my opinion. In fact I feel that political involvement is what will ultimately help our Union gain strength for future dealings with all employers.

The Local is working vigorously in the area of organizing; we are currently involved in many campaigns. The ATT/Broadband campaign is the largest undertaking in the history of our local Union—a campaign that will bring some stability to the cable television industry. This is an industry that is now, in many geographic areas, reaching into Telephony and High Speed Internet access, and threatening the Industry Standard which Ameritech workers enjoy. We ask all members, from all employers, to take a moment to think if they know anyone who works for ATT/Broadband, and if you do please spend some time explaining to them how important it is to be Unionized.

With the recent organizing victory at Ameritech Advanced Data Services, Local 21 members in Illinois will do all High Speed Internet services performed by that employer. This success was a result of the card check agreement, and we intend to utilize it for more campaigns. The next target is the Engineering department, starting with the assistants and then the engineers.

Looking beyond Ameritech, we are organizing the Verizon Call Centers in Elgin and Schaumburg. In those areas we also ask your help—if you know anyone employed in those centers please contact the Union office.

In closing, we are cautiously optimistic that our relationship with Local 21's largest employer SBC/Ameritech is on the mend. The Union has met frequently with the company at very high levels explaining how bad labor relations really are. I have been quoted as saying "The grievance procedure is broken." Our Union has leverage that will get this fixed. Local 21 is being recognized in many other arenas such as

politics, special interest groups and the community—frankly speaking, with 15,000 members strong, why shouldn't we?

I am demanding more respect for my staff in the field including Business Representatives, Chief Stewards and Area Stewards. When they present grievances to management in the labor relations department not only do I expect your representative to be treated with respect, I also expect the company to settle cases when were right.

We also intend to fix the problems at the level of the local Stewards, who have not been able to settle any cases with field managers, by taking a page out of the company's book, "We need to save money." Guess what—settling cases at the local level saves money! The local level is where the grievances should be settled. The Steward has the authority to settle the case and I say, "So should the first level manager."

Of course, there will always be certain cases that will require Arbitration, but there's quite a bit of room for improvement. I feel that it's worth another try to repair this broken relationship. If I can be hopeful for a minute—I believe we have their attention, but I know hope doesn't cut it, what counts are results.

In Solidarity

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FRONTLINE

IBEW LOCAL 21

Official Bi-Monthly Publication

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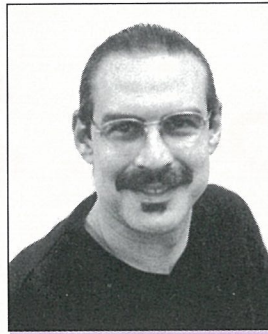
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Comments and articles are welcome and should be sent to the editors. Local 21 reserves the right to edit letters and articles, and to use items as space allows.

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



Who's Watchin' Your Dough

By Michael Sacco, Business Representative

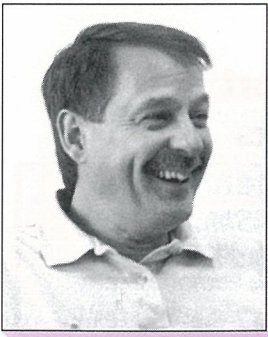
April 28th is Workers' Memorial Day, a day set aside to honor the 60,000 people who are killed on the job and who die from occupational disease every year. This is a horrendous toll and one that isn't going down. Safety training, education and awareness are not priorities for bosses or the government these days. It is up to each and every one of us to take the time to do the job safely. Sadly, many of us don't know all the ropes, so it's important that the more senior among us counsel the younger members on how to stay in one piece. **The bottom line is: the law gives you the right to refuse any job that puts you, your partner, or a member of the public in grave danger.** Use this if you have to. On April 28th, take the time to mourn for the dead—but everyday on the job please fight for the living!

SBC Datacomm has made several false starts on a lay-off. As of the third week in April, everyone is still working and things actually seem to be picking up a bit. This almost wasn't the case. The company wanted to lay-off in the worst way, but every time they notified us, Chief Steward Ken Stachon, his shop stewards, and many rank and file members found multiple instances of the company violating the contract and using outside contractors while they're trying to lay us off. It was a great example of everyone pitching in and looking out for each other. Great job sisters and brothers!

Speaking of looking out for things, who's watching out for your dough—cash that is? It better be you! And it better be every paycheck. Believe it or not, SBC/Ameritech and all of our other employers make payroll mistakes—tons of 'em—and they're usually in their favor. If you don't catch 'em, nobody else will. If the company pays you too much, one of their routine audits will normally catch it and they will be hot on your ass to get their money back.

They don't usually audit to see if they shorted anyone. That's every employee's job. This is not just a problem at SBC, but at every employer. Check your check; for hours worked, overtime, pay rate (they love to forget raises!) 401(k) deductions and contributions, proper tax rates, etc. Check your 401(k) statement when you get it and make sure you got everything you have comin' to you. I am not joking, an increasing amount of union staff time is spent chasing down money— including pensions— that our members are being shorted on. The only problems we can work on are the ones people call us about. Give it a look next time. One last thing—never throw out a pay stub—you never know when you might need them to prove when and where you worked!

A final note; you should notice with this issue that *Frontline* is on a regular schedule and has an evolving and fresh look and it's packed with useful and interesting information. This is due to the hard work of editors Nancy North and Larry Moeller. They came on the *Frontline* staff last fall and have really turned things around at this rag! We all truly appreciate their work. Of course none of it would be possible without the commitment and support of Business Manager Ron Kastner, the rest of the officers and the Executive Board—they find the resources—dough— to make it all happen. Happy Spring.



What's Going ON?

By Rick Gessler,
Vice President/Assistant Business Manager

It's no surprise that problems continue at SBC/Ameritech, so the Union met jointly with some of the individual company presidents and the president of Labor Relations. We told them that the grievance and arbitration process is broken and we need Labor Relations to have the authority to respond to the needs of the Union members. We heard a lot of things that we liked, and we've had a few successes. We believe it's because of those meetings. We are cautiously optimistic and will continue to pursue ways to improve relations with SBC/Ameritech. On a humorous note, President/Business Manager Ron Kastner and I met with Ed Mueller, the president of Ameritech, on a Friday afternoon at his office; again we were told things that appeared to be what we needed to hear. The following Monday Ed Mueller announced his retirement. We aren't sure if this has a deeper meaning...

GPS continues to be abused by some managers in the field. We can only tell you at this point to C.Y.A. (please, no calls to me to define that.) Hopefully the company will soon realize that the cost of this "big brother" type of surveillance far outweighs any rewards they reap. The company has backed off weekend scheduling for Construction after our repeated attempts to point out that we do not have the same scheduling language as other states in Ameritech. The company is currently revising attendance policies in Consumer and we are in discussions with them to reduce its negative affect upon the membership.

We work in one of the fastest changing industries today. We make a good wage with good benefits. Remember that, when you see competition come in and offer lower cost service in our hometowns, and your friends or neighbors tell you they are getting their phone service for so much less per month. Why do you think the competition can offer that? I can tell you why. I just took a phone call from an ex-Ameritech employee, an engineer who is T-1 trained. He has been job hunting and was just offered a position with AT&T as an engineer to design and help build their new system. AT&T offered him \$11.09 per hour. He made \$68,000 last year at Ameritech. This is what the competition is trying to do with the wage standard in our industry. This is why your Union is trying to organize these non-union employers. Have a safe and healthy spring and summer.



Organizing At Verizon Wireless

By Melanie Probst, Business Representative

In today's economic climate, now more than ever workers need to join together. A Union creates a more level playing field with your employer. By joining together, we have more to say in our working lives. With a Union we can negotiate with our employers for better wages, benefits, fair treatment and safe working conditions.

In a major development The International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) and Verizon Wireless have signed a Memorandum of Agreement Regarding Neutrality and Card Check Recognition for Verizon Wireless employees. In this agreement, the IBEW and Verizon Wireless recognize that the Union's goal of growing membership and promoting collective bargaining is intrinsically linked to the successful growth of the business. Verizon Wireless also recognizes the valuable contribution the Union and its members can make to their company.

The Card Check Agreement covers employees working in call centers, network-technical and retail. IBEW Local 21 is in the beginning stages of organizing the Verizon Wireless employees in Illinois and Northwest Indiana.

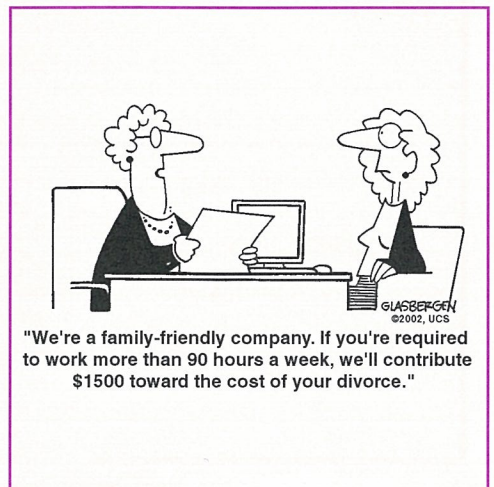
If you know of someone who is a Verizon Wireless employee, join together with us to improve their jobs by building a union, get involved in their future. Contact Melanie Probst, Business Representative at 630-960-4466 ext.444.

Benefit Report

By Linda Corcoran,
Benefits Coordinator & Recording Secretary

Just a reminder: The Ameritech Pension Plan was modified during bargaining to allow non-spousal beneficiaries for the pre-retirement survivor option. The pre-retirement survivor option pays your beneficiary 50% of the worth of your pension, either in the form of a monthly annuity, or a lump sum if you should die while an active employee. Any single members may now name a beneficiary, and married members may designate someone other than their spouse as beneficiary, provided they have spousal approval to do so. Make sure you call the Pension Service Center at 800 557-3640 for these new beneficiary forms. If you are married, and want your spouse as your beneficiary, no action is required. However, as always, the Union suggests beneficiary information should be routinely updated. Beneficiary forms for life insurance, and the saving plan are also available in the same package.

Additionally, if you are divorced and have a Qualified Domestic Relations Order (QDRO) providing for your ex-spouse to receive a portion of your pension, read the language carefully. If the language contains the word **subsidy**, the Pension Plan is required to provide interest to the ex-spouse over and above the amount shown for their distribution, reducing the amount you are expecting to receive. Please refer any legal questions to the attorney who handled your divorce.





April Cope Report Labor Turnout Lifts Blagojevich, Madigan

By Larry Moeller & Rosetta Shinn,
Committee on Political Education

The massive voter education and get-out-the-vote campaign waged by local unions around the state helped boost many of Labor's endorsed candidates to Primary Election victories.

Topping the ticket, Congressman Rod Blagojevich, who is running for governor and is endorsed by Local 21 and the Illinois AFL-CIO, won a three-way race in the Democratic primary. Also in a contested statewide primary, State Sen. Lisa Madigan easily won her primary for Attorney General.

"It was labor that made the difference," said Local 21 President Ron Kastner. "Union members supported Rod Blagojevich overwhelmingly and it showed with his victory. Especially with his numbers downstate. We can't stop now. We must register more voters and help working families understand the issues that are at stake and how important it is to elect people who will stand with us."

The General Election is November 5th.



Legislative Cope Report

By Larry Moeller & Rosetta Shinn

Politics is not optional. President Business Manager Ron Kastner is charged by the IBEW Constitution to keep the membership informed on candidates worthy of our support, and any pending legislation of vital importance to our members. This includes encouraging us to register to vote. He does this with the help of the IBEW in Washington DC the IBEW 6th district and 2 members of his staff who work part time. President/Business Manager Kastner has spoken at Union meetings on numerous occasions on the importance of having pro-union friends in Washington DC, Springfield, and Indianapolis.

The importance of this was never more evident than now. While

attending the IBEW State conference in Springfield in March we learned of a seemingly harmless Bill going through the system, HB #4468 the Crane Operators Licensing Act. The bill if passed would have required anyone operating hydraulic equipment to be licensed by the State of Illinois. Local 21 members who use a backhoe, a hoist, or a common bucket truck would have been required to submit a certified record showing at least 2000 hours of experience in the last 5 years, pass a written exam, pass a practical exam, take a drug test, and not have a revoked license from another state. The bill was mainly aimed at the operating engineers but clearly would affect IBEW members. The delegates to the conference immediately called the Speaker of the House Michael Madigan, who after some consultation agreed to stop the bill.

In Washington DC there is a bill that is expected to pass out of the US House of Representatives HR 3919 the Pension Interest Rate Relief Act of 2002. This bill would set a new standard for interest rates used for DEFINED LUMP SUM PENSIONS. It sets a variety of choices for

rates.... all higher than the current 30 year T-bond rate. The fact that Corporate America supports this should come as no surprise. Our problem as a Local Union with a defined lump sum option in our contract is that 30 year T-Bonds are no longer sold on the market hence no new T-Bill rate. President Business Manager Ron Kastner has bargained the current calculation rate of 5.12 % for plan year 2002. The bill, sponsored by 4 Republican Congressmen, is now in the House Ways and Means Committee. Local 21 has secured the help of the International, as well as the labor liaison of Illinois Congressman Lane Evans. COPE directors Rosetta Shinn and Larry Moeller will monitor the progress and intent of this bill.

2002 PRIMARY ELECTION RESULTS

District	Region	Winning Candidate (% of vote)
U.S. Senate (R) 2nd Congress (D) 4th Congress (D) 5th Congress (D) 19th Congress (D)	S Chicago/Cook W/NW Chicago) N Chicago/NW Cook S Illinois	St. Rep. Jim Durkin (44%). U.S. Rep. Jesse Jackson Jr. (85%) U.S. Rep. Luis Gutierrez (68%) Rahm Emanuel (50%) U.S. Rep. David Phelps (83%)
16th Senate (D) 18th Senate (D) 20th Senate (D) 21st Senate (R) 29th Senate (D) 41st Senate (R) 44th Senate (R) 52nd Senate (R) 53rd Senate (R)	S Chicago/W Cook SW Cook/S Chicago N Chicago E DuPage/W Cook NE Cook/SE Lake SE DuPage/NW Will C Illinois Champaign/Danville C/E Illinois	Jacqueline Collins (83%) Ed Maloney (67%) Iris Martinez (62%) Sen. Dan Cronin (62%) def. Sen. Tom Walsh (38%) Rep. Susan Garrett (66%) Sen. Christine Radogno (52%) def. Sen. Bill Mahar (48%) Bill Brady (66%) Rep. Rick Winkel (52%) def. Sen. Judy Myers (48%) Rep. Dan Rutherford (57%)
<i>NOTE: All incumbent legislators won their respective primaries unless otherwise indicated. Primaries winners in districts where the IL-AFL-CIO endorsed an incumbent are not listed</i>		
5th House (D) 6th House(D) 17th House(D) 28th House(D) 29th House(D) 30th HouseE(D) 38th House(D) 42nd House(R) 51st House(R) 55th House(R) 57th House(D) 57th House(R) 60th House(D) 62nd House(R) 67th House(D) 67th House(R) 78th House(D) 89th House(R) 96th House(R) 97th House(D) 99th House(D) 100th House(R) 103rd House(D) 106th House(R)(R) 110th House(R) 118th House(D)	Chicago Chicago NE Cook S Chicago/SW Cook S Cook S Cook S Cook C DuPage S Lake NW DuPage/NW Cook/E Kane N Cook N Cook Waukegan/N. Chicago N Lake Rockford Rockford W Cook NW Illinois SW DuPage W Illinois Springfield Sangamon/Menard Champaign/Urbana E Illinois E Illinois S Illinois	Ken Dunkin (41%) def. Rep. Howard Kenner (28%) Patricia Bailey (38%) Pat Hughes (116 votes) Robert Rita (38%) *Rep. David Miller (39%) def. Rep. Bob Ryan (24%) **William Davis (32%) Robin Kelly (56%) def. Rep. Harold Murphy (44%) Sandra Pihos (42%) Ed Sullivan Jr. (56%) John Millner (66%) Elaine Nekritz (66%) Mary Childers (56%) Eddie Washington (38%) Bob Churchill (46%) Rep. Chuck Jefferson (50%) Gloria Cudia (54%) Deborah Graham (6,934) & Dorothy Reid (6,934) TIED Jim Sacia (49%) Joe Dunn (55%) Steve Pohlman (41%) Don Craven (64%) Rich Brauer (53%) def. Rep. Gwenn Klingler (47%) Naomi Jakobsson (54%) Roger Eddy (43%) Chapin Rose (48%) Brandon Phelps (69%)
4th Supreme Ct. (R) 1st Appellate Ct. (D) 1st Appellate Ct. (D) 1st Appellate Ct. (D) 2nd Appellate Ct (R) 2nd Appellate Ct.(R) 3rd Appellate Ct. (D) 3rd Appellate Ct. (R) 5th Appellate Ct. (D)	(Buckley) (Cousins) (Rakowski) (Thomas) (Inglis) NC Illinois NC Illinois S Illinois	Rita Garman (63%) Neil Hartigan (100%) Denise O'Malley (52%) James Fitzgerald Smith (32%) Thomas Callum (51%) Barbara Gilleran Johnson (40%) Dawn Connolly (30%) David Schmidt (45%) *Melissa Chapman (46%)

Bold- denotes IL AFL-CIO Endorsed
*Italics-*denotes IL AFL-CIO endorsed opponent

*-denotes IL AFL-CIO found "equally qualified"
**-denotes IL AFL-CIO found two opponents "equally qualified"



Simply Spreading the Message

By Nancy North, Area Steward

Car trouble recently triggered the need to shop for a cell phone and call package for my son. We checked the internet and then made a couple of stops at the mall. At the Cingular kiosk I confirmed something I'd read—Cingular Wireless employees joined our Union Brothers and Sisters at the CWA. The young woman was excited about being in a Union and I welcomed her to the union movement. We shook hands a couple of times.

At the Verizon kiosk, the young woman confirmed what I already knew. Although the strike by east coast Verizon workers in early 2001 paved the way for all telcom contracts, the wireless employees are not Union. But she was a smart young woman studying business in college. In fact she's taking a Labor Relations class and she blurted out, "But we really need a union." She was learning that Unions are a good thing, providing job security, better wages, and better benefits. I gave her the number to our Union office.

When I made a purchase, I used my IBEW Mastercard as an extra reminder of Union benefits.

It never hurts to spread the Union message in a quiet way when we make our consumer choices. Nobody likes all those telemarketing calls to change your long distance carrier, and now local service, but when someone calls I'm polite, I use those phone skills developed at Ameritech, and ask ever so nicely, "What Union do you belong to? Where are you located? Have you had a chance to organize, and do you know that Union employees earn higher wages?" Usually they ask somebody next to them to make sure, but so far nobody has answered with a "Yes, IBEW or CWA." So, I politely inform them—often with a dramatic sob that drives my kids up the wall—that I couldn't possibly switch to a non-union company. Realizing there's no sale, some of the callers give up, others definitely sounded interested. You never know when the idea will land on fertile ground, so don't be shy, keep spreading the seed of Union benefits.

Congratulations to Local 21 Retirees

JANUARY 2002	FEB. 2002	MARCH 2002	APRIL 2002	MAY 2002
Charlene Gay Nancy Budzichowski	Judy Wright Marilyn Mc Carty Marty Nemanich Lillian King Tom Lois Linda Ebersol Dorthy Thompson Linda Jones Pat Seebock Joan Orr Barbara Slaughter Sue Zima Paul Yarberry Joe Corrigan Mike Halperin Joe Crumby	Pat Johnson Patrick Mc Mahon Jim Sullivan Marshall Erickson Don Lewis Sue Krapf Marvin Bringer	Connie Conerly Mike Mc Guire Loy Gietl John Newton Eugene Siemek Ron Melander	Lawrence Ertman Frances Sowa Carl Grabowski RoberetTruttman Tom Schuster James Combs

Information Alert

Local 21 members, who retire are eligible to receive a gift certificate. Providing the retiring member is in good standing and a Local 21 Representative requests the retirement certificate. Stewards, Area Stewards, Chief Stewards, and Business Reps can request applications by calling Nancy Kopydlowski on ext. 234 at the Local 21 office

St. Patrick's Day Parade



Over 60 members and their families joined the float.

President Kastner with the next Governor of Illinois Rod Blagojevich



Lisa Madigan (second from left), Democratic Attorney General Candidate stopped by to say hi.

Ready to roll on a brisk day.



All photos by Bill Haney and Nancy North.



The Wild, Wild Midwest

By Jim Kassing, Business Representative

No, there were no mechanical bulls, but there was plenty of excitement at the Safety Road-eos. Last year, Jim Gerber and his I&R staff asked Local 21 to partner with them on a project to promote safety, and we agreed. The major issue was motor vehicle safety. Mr. Gerber's area was running the highest for motor vehicle accidents in 2001 with 237 accidents. This means 11.71 accidents per every 100 vehicles. There's no doubt that this number needs improvement to assure the personal safety of our members.

It was agreed to increase awareness of driving safety by holding a Motor Vehicle Road-eo. Each garage would compete, then the winners would compete at the district level, and the winners there would compete in a state-wide competition.

The five events in the Road-eo are:

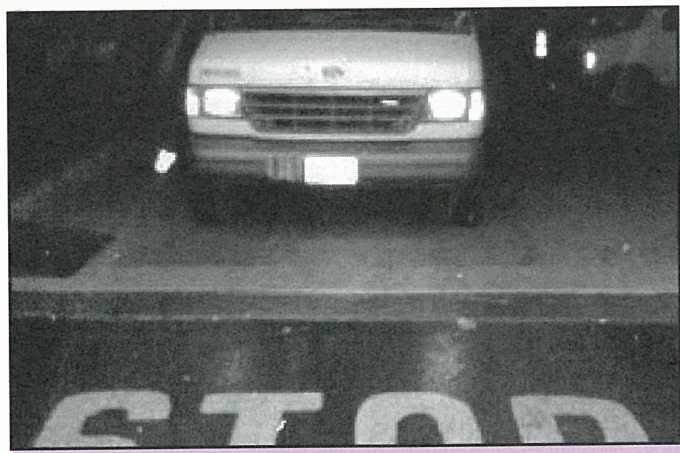
1. Drive the vehicle's front right tire through a row of 6 tennis balls (3 on one side, 3 on the other, each 6 inches apart.) without hitting any of them, 10 points deducted for each ball hit.
2. Pull in parking, which requires the driver to position and stop the vehicle as close as possible to a barricade without making contact with the front barricade or the two side barricades.
3. Back in parking, which has the same objective as the pull in parking, except the measurement is taken from the rear bumper instead of the front.
4. Parallel parking, which requires the driver to position and stop the vehicle as close as possible to the curb, without hitting any barricades in front or behind.
5. The final event is stopping the vehicle at a stop line without letting the front bumper go over the line.

Prizes to be awarded:

Garage winner	\$25.00 gift certificate.
Sub District	Expedition Jacket with IBEW and SBC emblem.
District	\$300.00 gift certificate.
State	\$500.00 gift certificate.

As of April 1st, not all garages have finished their competitions. Originally, all levels of competition were expected to be completed between January 7th and March 1st. No sub districts have been held, nor have any district Road-eos been held. The State competition was to be held on April 5, 2002. It appears that the local managers' commitment to safety is not as strong as expected. They will however, still suspend you for having motor vehicle accidents. If SBC managers ever renew their commitment to Safety and the Road-eo, we will publish the results here.

Local 21 President Ron Kastner found time to attend the Road-eo at the Superior garage at 469 Huron in Chicago. The winner was Adam Hously, congratulations brother.



POINT



From a letter to the editor:

Dear Mr. Moeller,

I am writing in response to Michael Sacco's comments in the February issue of *Frontline*. I have been a member of IBEW Local 336, now 21, for close to 35 years and have never been more disappointed by a business rep's comments. His blatant disrespect for President Bush and disinformation are a discredit to the union.

His comment that President Bush talked us into a recession is absurd. Most all economists agree the economy was in downturn at the end of President Clinton's term. All President Bush did was to address the issue. I also believe that unemployment benefits have been extended at least twice. Finally, regarding the tax cut, maybe Mr. Sacco would like to share with us what he did with his tax refund. Did he tear it up, send it back, or give it to someone without a job?

I'm not asking him to back the president "without question." I am asking him to disagree in a responsible and respectful way. He might be surprised to find out how many union members actually voted for President Bush for a variety of reasons, and how many he offended with his comments.

I feel that when you are writing in a publication such as *Frontline*, you need to be accurate, responsible, and respectful. These are my thoughts. I feel I have a "right" to them as well.

Sincerely,

Gerrit D. Vander Bent

Dear Brother Vander Bent:

You certainly do, like all Local 21 members, have a right to have a respectful airing of your thoughts in this publication. Brother Sacco also has a right to his opinion, which he expresses regularly along with his unit report. He has asked to respond to your letter, which he does below.

Larry Moeller

COUNTER POINT



Sacco Responds:

I enjoyed hearing from Brother Vander Bent on my op-ed piece in our February issue. I'm sorry he's disappointed in me personally, and I strenuously disagree with his views as you might guess.

First off, when Brother Vander Bent states that "Most all economists agree..." I must ask when he's ever seen economists agree on anything beyond the day of the week? I am also an economist. Economics is an inexact social science largely operative in the public discourse by talking heads with an "unclear" agenda and handpicked numbers promoting it on CNBC or CNN or any other number of large media corporations that control "the news" in our country and have vested interests in how they craft their message for us, the bleating sheep of business.

That having been said, I don't think I'm stretching too far when I say; markets are not always rational. Even the "Great" Greenspan complains about "irrational exuberance." (In fact some economists believe that Greenspan could have controlled the froth of asset-price inflation on the stock market back in 1996 by simply imposing higher margin requirements on stock investors instead of waiting and tightening credit for the entire economy.) When the President of the United States uses his bully pulpit, believe me, markets react and react emotionally. Here's my "Economists View" from the union hall: Employment continued to be strong for several quarters after the tax cut. In my business, when people are working the economy *is* strong. That didn't change until August, when the labor market began to soften and some irrationally priced telecom stocks began to slide.

Now we have 100 people out of work in our union. Many of our sister locals have hundreds more out of work. On 9/11, business had all the reason it needed to lay-off *millions*, or should I say about a million or so in the next quarter. This wasn't so much because there was no work in many indus-

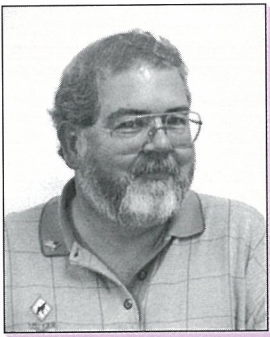
tries (except airline/travel), but rather because business had to make their blood sacrifice to please the emotional market gods. Companies like our own SBC, strong and growing, went through its downsizing dog and pony show, even though the company is still not staffed properly. This is a perfect example of how irrational markets AND businesses can be.

Trickle-down economics has been long discredited. What President Bush addressed in his tax-cut was a payback to the rich people who installed him. There have not been two unemployment extensions, only one, just passed recently in which the Republicans picked our pockets further for the business interests with more giveaways that outspend the new unemployment money by two or three to one.

Brother, I have no doubt that many of our sisters and brothers voted for Bush, because of non-economic issues, but it's time to wake up and see the reality of his pro-rich policies. In my job I get to see first-hand the effect that bad government policy and misplaced priorities do to working families and I take it seriously.

As for what I did with the "tax advance" from the President, I paid it back on April 15, like many of us. No refund, just a \$261 payment. Like many progressives I opposed the tax cut because it takes money away from necessary government programs for the poor and working classes. Since you asked, in protest I sent my "tax-cut" to some worthy non-profits that end up picking up the pieces when government walks away. Groups like my church, which does anti-poverty work and has a growing load of the un-rich to help, Planned Parenthood, The Southern Poverty Law Center and yes, the American Civil Liberties Union among others.

In closing, I'd like to point out that during the height of WW II, a 1943 Supreme Court decision affirmed our free speech rights—even of unpopular views—in our great nation by ruling that "Freedom to differ is not limited to those things that do not touch the heart—that would be a mere shadow of freedom." Thanks, on behalf of our democracy, for writing.



In The Field

By Steve Underfranz, Business Representative

We hear a lot of talk about the grievance procedure being broke, and it is. Too many grievances go to arbitration unnecessarily. There was a time when most disputes were solved at the steward-manager level. If no solution could be agreed upon, then the chief steward and the area or district manager would try to resolve the problem. If they failed, the grievance went to the business rep. and the appropriate labor relations case manager, where a solution could usually be reached. Simple enough, right?

Now-a-days, a manager can rarely come to an agreement with a steward without permission from his boss. Don't get me wrong, there are still some managers who can, but only because his boss trusts him, or he just doesn't tell him. This takes us to the next step, the area or district manager who made the decision in the first place. Don't expect him to reverse his own decision. So now it goes to the labor relations case manager who cannot overturn a field manager, even if that field manager is completely wrong. Herein lies the problem.

A case in point, T-10 vs lead. The Union had to arbitrate that the company could not use a lead person if the supervisor would be gone for a week or more, and that management would have to ask for a T-10er. Pretty simple, it's in Article 22 of the contract, but the district manager was from out of state and thought that he could interpret the contract his way. Both the Union and labor relations told him that he was wrong. The Union won the arbitration.

My point is the grievance procedure has gotten frustrating for a lot of people, Union reps, Union members, and some levels of management. It is slowed down by grievances that should and could be resolved in the field. It is small wonder that so many members take actions on their own. It is also sad that management misses the point when an action is taken. They need to wake up and realize that people are trying to draw attention to a major problem, not just tick them off. The grievance procedure is a good tool when it works. It is just sad that so many disputes get blown up just because the proper way to resolve a grievance has gotten bogged down. Let's hope it gets fixed soon. I would hate to see every dispute settled the way so many have in recent times. Remember that the grievance procedure was put into place as an alternative to a strike.

Apprenticeship Program

We receive a lot of questions on the apprenticeship program. For Customer System Techs, most districts are still under the ten to one ratio. In these districts any apprentice that takes and passes the test will likely be made a journeyman. The exceptions are the Brian Harris and Al Black districts where the ratio has been met.

In the central office world the Union has again requested that the TKT test be revised so that it more realistic and fair. At this point the company refuses.

DID YOU YOU KNOW ?

The Federal Fair Labor Standards Act requires that all work performed by hourly rate employees must be paid.

Safety Time Capsule

We recently received a copy of "Rules for Troublemakers" issued by the Chicago Telephone Company on October 28, 1911.

"Number 4: Don't pitch dry batteries into the bed of your wagon to be hauled around day after day with broken glass, bolts, wire, pole setups and what not. Don't forget to memorize the fact that the supply houses are not running charitable institutions for the benefit of the Company."

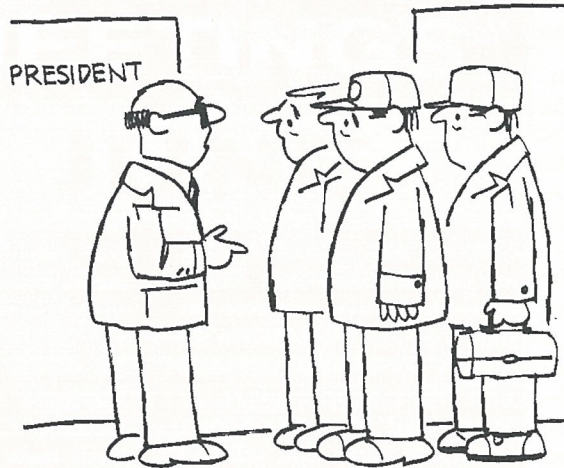


How Rich is Rich?

The income ratio of chief executives to average workers in major corporations has gone from about 40-to-1 in the 1970's to **531-to-1** today. The average pay of Chief Executive officers went from \$326,000 a year to \$20 million over that same period.

Today's big bucks champ is Jack Welch, the outgoing CEO of General Electric, who has cut G.E.'s domestic workforce by half, and nearly doubled the number of workers employed abroad since taking over in 1986. His take home pay in 2000 was an obscene \$231 million, plus another \$57 million in stock options—**that's four times the combined wages of 15,000 of G.E.'s Mexican factory workers.**

To find out more, go to www.aflcio.org and see their Executive Pay Watch site.



"But if I gave everyone a raise, then I wouldn't be rich."

Johnson Controls Update

By Jim Kassing and Harold Hess

Local 21 and Johnson Controls discussed several issues at the Joint Advisory meeting held March 27, 2002 at 425 W. Randolph in Chicago. These news items were resolved but some items discussed at the meeting are not released because no resolution has been reached on certain topics. Of notable interest is the number of recalled members from last years lay off. IBEW has only 5 members remaining on the recall list. Be assured that it is our intention to keep all of the Ameritech real estate work under local 21 jurisdiction. More specifically under the Johnson Controls contract.

SAFETY COMMITTEE

The Safety Award Program is the same as last year. The Joint Advisory Committee (JAC) will review the program and approve it by the next meeting.

VEHICLES

A proposal for phased fleet replacement has been given to SBC. Our recommendation is to replace approximately 50 vehicles in each replacement cycle.

CEVS

Our proposal for the CEV work is still in negotiations. A decision is forthcoming from SBC's Business Unit.

PAYROLL/PAYCHECK PROBLEMS

Elevate payroll/paycheck problems to your Operation Manager immediately, who will send them on to the Accountant. Any expenses incurred by the recent payroll mistake will be reimbursed.

KPI

Criteria for KPI's has been identified for 2002.

STATUS OF RECALL LIST

IBEW – 5 people recalled.

3 people rehired.

5 people remain on the Recall List

CWA – 6 people recalled.

1 person rehired.

7 people remain on the Recall List

(2 have indicated they do not want to come back)

GRIEVANCES

JC and IBEW are in the arbitration phase of the "contracting out" issues and are in the process of selecting an arbitrator and panel.

UPDATE ON SBC .

In his meetings with the SBC Managers, Bernie has seen an increase in their interest in including JC in their goal setting and decision-making. This may have long-term implications. Watch this space for news as it develops.

There's No Business Like Show Business

By Nancy North, Area Steward

Yes, Local 21's own Jerry Rankins unexpectedly found himself with a starring role at movie premiere of "10,000 Black Men Named George"—the story of A. Philip Randolph, founder of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters. Although the movie was created for the cable television channel Showtime, AT&T Broadband sponsored a live premiere on Tuesday, February 5th at the Museum of Science and Industry. Hollywood celebrities attended—Andre Brauer, who plays A. Philip Randolph, and director Robert Townsend, along with about 300 selected guests.

Much of the film is set in Chicago's Pullman District, where railroad baron George Pullman headquartered his entire operation. Ironically, AT&T Broadband has a location in that area, and their union-busting tactics would make Mr. Pullman proud. The irony made the premiere a perfect opportunity to tell the present day story of injustice.

Brother Rankins and another IBEW member rented porter costumes, and distributed "programs" to the guests. The "program" questioned why AT&T Broadband was hiding behind a mask of sponsorship? "Today, in the same Historic Pullman District where Pullman Car Porters struggled to overcome the vast power and ruthlessness of the Pullman Company, our brothers and sisters at AT&T Broadband fight a similar struggle for respect, dignity, and the right to organize. One hundred years has passed, yet little has changed. Like the hard-pressed porters in the town owned by Pullman, AT&T Broadband workers are fighting a valiant battle for equality with one of today's corporate giants...the legacy of A. Philip Randolph can best be honored by recognizing the desires of today's working fam-

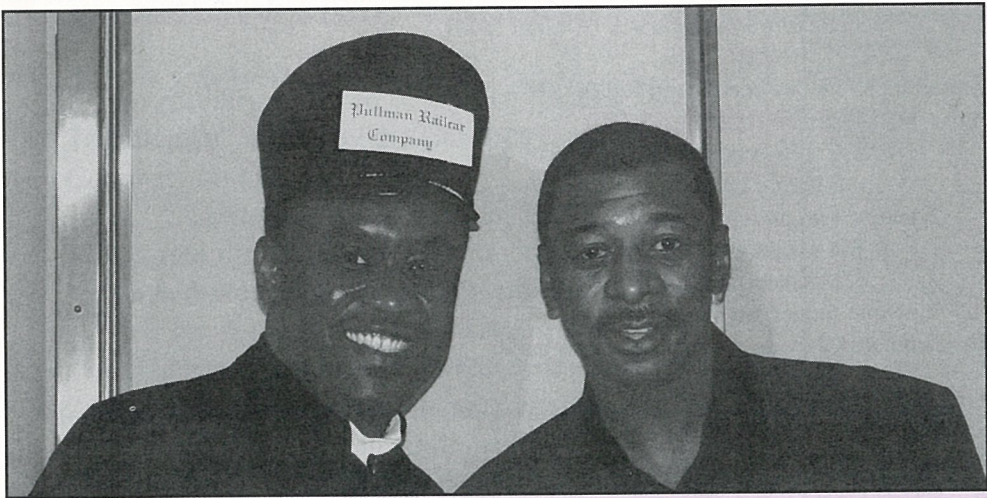
ilies in the Pullman District, as they collectively seek a voice at work and a higher standard of living."

Everyone thought the "porters" were part of the show. Brother Rankins was invited up to the VIP lounge, and his photo was taken with Robert Townsend. The media interviewed Jerry, "What did he think of the event?"

He amazed the reporters with his knowledge about Asa Philip Randolph. Randolph organized the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, the first successful black trade union in 1925, but they did not win their first contract with the Pullman Company until 1937. During WW II, Randolph pressured Franklin D. Roosevelt, who issued an Executive Order banning discrimination in defense industries, and federal bureaus, and creating the Fair Employment Practices Committee. In 1963 Randolph was a director of the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom where Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. gave his "I Have a Dream" speech.

Brother Rankins brought up Pullman's corporate greed and compared it with AT&T Broadband, especially the opposition to the right to organize. There has been no contract for three years. The media were amazed at the news of the Broadband struggle. Asa Philip Randolph's great work and legacy must go on, workers must continue to fight for a voice in the workplace.

Jerry played his role for the entire premiere. He stood on stage next to Addie Wyatt of The Coalition of Labor Union Women, while she gave her speech on House Speaker Madigan's Resolution honoring Robert Townsend and Andre Brauer. After it was over Brother Rankins reiterated, "I just thank God for pioneers like Asa Philip Randolph."



Jerry Rankins with director Robert Townsend

Don't Give it Away! Job Security is Our Responsibility

By Mike Scime, Steward

In all areas of Ameritech it has become commonplace to observe employees working off the clock. Some of us may not even be aware that we're doing it. Many members haven't had it pointed out to them, and others don't see the harm. Well, the harm can be devastating. Here are some commonplace examples:

- An outside tech will get his IFD out of his locker and plug it in.
- An outside tech will start his truck (to warm up).
- An outside tech will pick up his supply order and put it away on his truck.
- A clerk, or M.A. or other inside employee will turn on their PC or fill the copier or fax etc.
- An inside employee will log in before starting time.
- A mechanic will order some parts as he waits to begin 2nd shift.
- A tech will order some supplies from his direct to tech book from home.
- A CO tech will pull some orders as he arrives in the morning.
- An inside employee doing "volunteer" committee work like decorating for work related parties

These are all being done with regularity in our workplaces—and more. You might say "big deal." Well let's see how big! Just 25% of Ameritech Union employees "donating" 5 minutes worth of this work daily, results in over 291 hours. That's 36 full time jobs! Believe it? You should because that's being conservative, considering the number of people who skip one or both of their 15 minute contractual breaks. Imagine the number of jobs potentially forfeited SBC-wide. Following the same scenario, it computes to 295 jobs lost.

It seems so trivial when we do the little freebies, because they become automatic, and we come to believe "it just makes my day easier." Remember how clean the buildings used to be, how items were repaired with one call, and contractors were rarely seen in our buildings. Let's not perpetuate the trend. There was a Union job waiting for you, and it's our job to make sure that we leave one behind us! **SOLIDARITY RULES!**

2002 UNIT MEETINGS

MAY

Unit 1

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

Unit 2

Tuesday, May 14
7 PM Slovak Club
6920 Broadway
Merrville, IN
219-756-5101

Unit 3

Thursday, May 16
7 PM American Legion
820 N Liberty St-Elgin, IL
847-741-168

Unit 4

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

Unit 5

Wednesday, May 15
7 PM VFW Post # 630
1303 E Main St Urbana, IL
217-367-4197

Unit 6

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

Unit 7

Monday, May 20
IBEW Local 309
2000A Mall St Collinsville, IL
618-345-5112

JUNE

Unit 1

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

Unit 2

Tuesday, June 11
7 PM VFW Post
9092 S Main
Hometown, IL
708-422-9800

Unit 3

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

Unit 4

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

Unit 5

Wednesday, June 19
7 PM American Legion
4501 S Airport RD
Bartonville, IL
309-697-2432

Unit 6

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

Unit 7

Monday, June 17
American Legion
916 Main St Mt.Vernon, IL
618-242-4561

Justice For None: The Rape of the Injured Worker

From CACOSH, The Chicago Area Committee on Occupational Safety and Health News

What ever happened to good ol' Charlie? He just disappeared after he got hurt on the job. Chances are, things aren't going well for Charlie. Chances are, trying to collect Workers' Compensation has driven him half mad. Chances are, he's been lied to, mistreated and cheated by the insurance company, his employer, doctors, and, maybe even his own lawyer. Chances are, your state government is helping stick it to Charlie.

Workers' Compensation was supposed to be a tradeoff. In exchange for limiting benefits to injured workers, employers agreed to pay up promptly and automatically—without going to court. In fact, the law says injured workers can't sue employers or insurers in a civil court—only Workers' Compensation benefits are available to them. It was supposed to be social legislation to prevent workers and their families from becoming destitute. Instead, it has become a litigation slugfest with injured workers on the losing end.

Employers and insurance companies devise many excuses to avoid paying benefits to injured workers. A study performed by NIOSH showed that only 60% of the Illinois workers with job-related injuries or disease actually receive Workers' Comp. That's outrageous, but it only scratches the surface of the betrayal of workers. Many who do receive benefits collect only a small fraction of what they are owed. The law is too complex and the system values legal technicalities over justice.

What Happens to the Injured? The Illinois Industrial Commission

Too often, employers/insurers dispute injury claims. Workers' disputes are the ultimate mismatch in power. The injured worker is often unaware of the law and has no income, while the insurers have many millions of dollars in assets and armies of attorneys and bureaucrats who earn their living (and often earn bonuses!) by keeping workers from getting benefits.

When workers aren't paid, they file a claim at a state agency called the Illinois Industrial Commission (IIC), which runs the Workers' Comp system. Illinois law requires the IIC to do several things, including resolving disputes through "a fair and timely process" and ensuring the law is followed and the rights of all parties are protected.

Your tax dollars fund the the Industrial Commission, but the underfunded and understaffed Commission clearly serves the interests of the insurance companies by doing so little. Since the insurers are so powerful, you might think the IIC would carefully watch them and track benefits paid to workers. But no system exists to track payments. Are insurers paying the worker at all? How much? Are payments on time? No one knows.

Unless a worker files a claim, the IIC assumes the employer/insurer is meeting their obligations. Workers fall through the cracks if they are:

***Unwilling or unable to pursue a claim because of language or cultural barriers;**

***Too sick, severely injured, or discouraged to pursue their claim (which may take years);**

***Or because their injury or disease killed them before their case was resolved.**

Workers weren't supposed to have to go to court. However, insurance companies deny so many claims (especially the most serious and expensive ones) that most workers still have to fight for their benefits. But they can't go to a real court where a jury might become angry at the mistreatment of the workers and slap the employer/insurer with a large damage award. Instead, they can only go to the kangaroo court at the Illinois Industrial Commission, where employers and insurers swindle workers every day – and few seem to care.

Who decides Disputes?

At the IIC, "arbitrators" settle disputes. Unlike real judges, who have to graduate law school, pass the state bar exam, and then be elected, arbitrators need only four years of college, plus two years professional labor relations experience (or equivalent). They are not elected but are political appointees. Many attorneys and workers are aghast at the lack of qualifications of some (not all) arbitrators, who have no background in law, medicine, or workplace safety.

Justice Delayed is Justice Denied

Each year, approximately 70,000 workers file claims. To resolve these disputed claims, the IIC has only 24 arbitrators (and four positions are currently vacant due to "budget constraints"!!!).

LONG DELAYS: Workers wait and wait while insurance companies earn interest on the workers' money. CACOSH has talked to workers who have been waiting five, six, even ten years (and counting) for the IIC to act on their case. Insurers grow rich from "starving out" workers – delaying payments until the worker: Gives up and instead starts collecting benefits from government programs like Social Security, (your tax dollars pay the insurance companies' bills); or Dies; or is so desperate for cash they accept a fraction of what the insurer owes.

Many Arbitrators endlessly tolerate delay. If any insurer says they are short staffed and not ready for trial, they get a three month extension— and another and another.

UNFAIR SETTLEMENTS: Attorneys settle 85% of the claims without a decision from the arbitrator. Settlement implies compromise – Workers accepting less than they are owed because they can't get their day in court, or can't afford the wait and possible appeals.

INADEQUATE PENALTIES: Insurance companies and the employers hold great power over injured workers. They can refuse to pay for a worker's medical care and the cash benefits that may be a worker's only source of income. When they refuse to pay, they put extreme stress on workers. Workers suffer without medical care, their credit ratings get ruined, their marriages destroyed, and their homes taken away.

BURDEN ON THE INJURED WORKER: Employers and insurers do not have to justify stopping payments. It is always up to the injured worker to go to the Industrial Commission and prove he/she is entitled to benefits. Even then, the IIC doesn't enforce their own orders. If an insurer is ordered to pay, but stops payments a few months later, the worker must again appeal to the IIC— and wait and wait.

TIME FOR A CHANGE: Isn't it about time we did something about the Illinois Industrial Commission? The ease with which the injured can be simply cast aside is a disgrace by itself. Worse, it discourages employers and insurers from taking health and safety seriously. Hurting workers is so damn inexpensive.

Who Does the Work?

Supreme Court Hoffman Decision

By David Bacon

The recent decision of the Supreme Court in the case of Hoffman Plastics is not only another instance of class justice, or rather, injustice. The logic of Chief Justice Rehnquist makes it plain that the court's majority lives in denial of the social reality millions working people face every day.

The court began by making worse an already-bad precedent. In a previous decision in the Sure-Tan case, millions of undocumented immigrants already lost the right to be reinstated to their jobs if they were fired for joining a union. Now the Rehnquist court says they can forget about backpay too, for the time they were out of work.

The decision rewards employers who want to stop union organizing efforts among immigrant workers – the very people who've built a decade-long track record of labor activism, often organizing themselves even when unions showed little interest. Their bosses can now terminate undocumented workers without fear of any monetary consequences.

But the court's logic goes further, willfully ignoring social reality. Today one worker in every twenty participating in a union drive gets fired, immigrant and native born alike. Federal labor law may prohibit this, but companies already treat the cost of legal battles, reinstatement and back pay as a cost of doing business. Many consider it cheaper than signing a union contract.

So the real need is to strengthen protection for labor rights for all workers, not weaken it. But it's clear that retaliatory firings are not a serious violation of the law in the court's eyes.

William Gould III, former chair of the National Labor Relations Board, points out that "there's a basic conflict between US labor law and US immigration law." The court has held that the enforcement of employer sanctions, which makes it illegal for an undocumented immigrant to hold a job, is more important than the right of that worker to join a union and resist exploitation on the same job.

Jose Castro, the fired worker in the Hoffman case, committed the cardinal sin, according to Rehnquist. He lied to get a job, saying that he had legal status when he didn't.

This is a lie told by millions of workers every year, one conveniently believed by employers when they want to take advantage of their labor. It is only in the face of union activity that bosses suddenly awake to the reality that their workers have no papers (and usually then firing only the union-loving ones.)

But thank God workers are willing to tell those lies. If they weren't, who would do the work? Who would harvest the lettuce for the justices' lunchtime sandwiches, or cut up the cow for their dinner prime rib? Or care for the children of the lawyers who argued the case? Or clean their offices at night after it was argued?

This decision isn't about enforcing immigration law, despite Rehnquist's pious assertion that employers can already be fined for hiring people like Castro. And it's certainly not about enforcing their labor rights.

As always, it's about money. When it becomes more risky and difficult for workers to organize and join unions, or even to hold a job at all, then they settle for lower wages. And when the price of immigrant labor goes down as a result, so do the wages for everyone else. The famous market logic.

A recent study by the Pew trust counts almost 8 million undocumented people in the US – 4 percent of the urban workforce, and over half of all farmworkers. The flow of workers across the border into those jobs will not stop anytime soon. Over 120 million people already live outside their countries of origin. The National Population Council of Mexico reports that "migration between Mexico and the United States is a permanent structural phenomenon...the intense relationship between the two countries make it inevitable."

Even the sacrifice of the rights of those workers by blind justice will not stop people from crossing the border, nor end the need for the work they do. If they are to have legal status, then the door to legal immigration must be opened, and sanctions repealed. But come they will, regardless.

The court's message to them, however is know your place. Do the work, stay in the shadows, accept what your betters give you, and never think of organizing to challenge the structure, which holds you in chains.

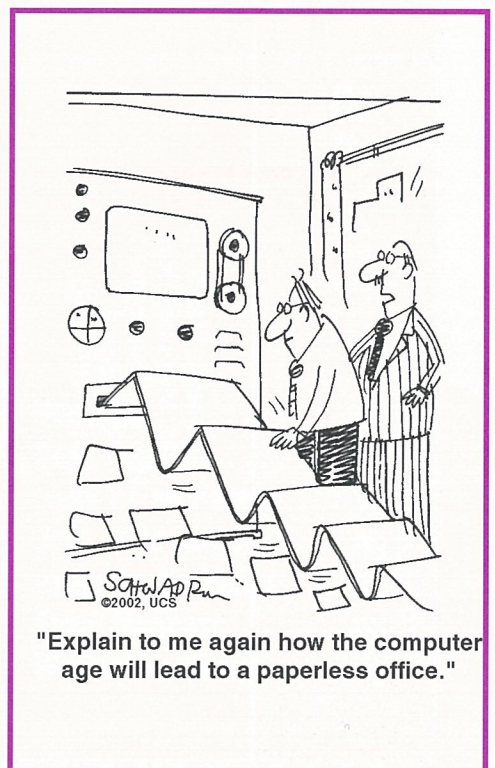
Look For The Union Label

By Rosetta Shinn, E-Board Unit 6

Did you know the Union Label and Service Trades Department, AFL-CIO, was founded in 1909 to promote the products and services produced in America by union members - especially those products and services identified by a union label, shop or store card or service button.

Be a wise shopper look for the union label. That label means several things to you. The label means quality goods and services. Promote jobs for justice by shopping for that union label. The union label shows that labor and management have signed a binding contract, with each side guaranteeing their best - their best work, their best compensation, their best benefits. It's a "win-win" arrangement for **everyone** - labor, management, consumers and the community, where the economy benefits from the paychecks and taxes of well-paid workers.

Check these Websites:
www.unionlabel.org
www.BuyUnionNow.com



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Thursday, May 9
7 PM Musicians Hall
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