Decades of struggle by workers and their unions have resulted in significant improvements in working conditions. But the toll of workplace injuries, illnesses and deaths remains enormous. Each year more than 60,000 workers die from job injuries and illnesses and another 6 million are injured. The unions of the AFL-CIO remember these workers on April 28, Workers Memorial Day.

The first Workers Memorial Day was observed in 1989. April 28 was chosen because it is the anniversary of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration and the day of a similar remembrance in Canada. Every year, people in hundreds of communities and at worksites recognize workers who have been killed or injured on the job. Trade unionists around the world now mark April 28 as an International Day of Mourning.
In March we were happy to get about 35 of our laid off members back to work. That was a good thing; the bad thing is that the recall rights have run out for the remainder of the members on layoff. As you remember, the Union was successful in getting SBC to extend those rights by three months. We continue to have discussions with the company on rehiring the remainder of the laid off members.

Our weekend scheduling in network has gone down in most locations. I’ve heard that the Stewards had to keep after the managers to supply the run rates and data. The managers weren’t happy with the lowered numbers on the weekends. In April we had the first day of hearings on the Holiday scheduling dispute. The Arbitrator asked both parties to sit down one more time and try and resolve our differences before the next hearing date in May.

The Network Center consolidation plan continues. In March we were hit with yet more surpluses throughout the state, including the job titles of Telecommunication Specialists, Provisioning Specialists, Plant Assigners, Administrative Specialists, Field Support Administrators, and Coin Collectors. All of these surplus members were offered SIPP and the Union continues to work with the company to find jobs for those who don’t wish to accept SIPP. Many Maintenance Administrator jobs have been moved into the Lakewood Center from throughout the Midwest region. This counter balances some of our losses.

We also have been trying to get more information on Project Light Speed as this could have a large impact on our members in the way of more work. Local 21 continues to be watchful in all areas: the centers, the field, network and marketing.

Summer is coming and I hope all of you take time to enjoy some time off with your families and attend a Unit Meeting.
The Network Consolidation Plan is in effect at the NDC, Indiana dispatch work is here now and we are expecting Wisconsin the 4th quarter of 2005. With the consolidation of centers, the NDC decided to restructure their organization from geographic locations to functional based. With this restructure a preference sheet was sent to the 300+ MA’s based on work functions and hours of center operations. The MA’s fought back and insisted to have the shifts added to the preference sheet. The Union and company sat down and came to agreement on one preference sheet containing shifts and job functions. This way the MA’s can preference for shifts or job functions whichever is of most concern to the individual. The office restructure is expected to be completed by 5/1/05.

The NDC installed a new call monitoring system on 3/31/05. This new system records 100% of incoming and outgoing calls to the center. When asked if this would be used for discipline the company responded, “Yes, if we need to and it will also be used as a tool for performance management.” FYI—beware techs and MA’s, if you thought you were already being watched with every move you make, now you are being monitored for everything you say.

**JULIE, Inc**

At JULIE we would like to welcome our summer/term employees. No one wants to cut a power line, or a phone line when they dig, so the locate call center takes thousands of calls in the summer months and the additional help is needed. In recent meetings with the company Local 21 has discussed scheduling of summer hires vs. permanent part time employees, ways to run the business more efficiently, bringing in more work and keeping contracting out.

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**A Living Will**

_By Rosratta Shinn, Chief Steward_

A Living Will can speak for you when you can no longer speak for yourself. We have all watched the media coverage of Terri Schiavo and the pitched battle fought between her husband and her parents. No matter what side you took in this matter, you have probably started to think about what YOU would want to happen if you were in a comparable medical state. You can have your wishes carried out in a living will. You can prepare one without an attorney and at no cost. The Living Will forms for Illinois can be downloaded at the following url at the web site for the Illinois Hospital Association:

http://www.ihatoday.org/consumer/directives/advdirq_a.html

You can also download a related document known as a Health Care Power of Attorney and designate an “agent” to carry out health care decisions on your behalf. Please be aware that these are legal documents, and if you do not change or revoke them, they will be used to determine your wishes concerning your health care when you cannot do so for yourself. Instructions on revocation of these documents are also found at the url for the web site printed above. This site also has explanations of the terms used and includes a “Questions and Answers” section to help educate you on the use of these forms. You can also obtain the forms at either:

The Illinois Department On Aging, 421 East Capitol Avenue, Springfield, IL 62701
(1-800-252-2518)

The Illinois Attorney General, 500 South Second Street, Springfield, IL 62706
(1-800-252-2518)

Another web site www.uslivingwillregistry.com has links to advance directive forms used in states other than Illinois, and can even store your advance directives and organ donor info online. This preparation can be a great gift to your family in the event a tragedy requires life and death decisions to be made. It can also be a great gift to your own peace of mind, knowing that your wishes are clear and your loved ones won’t need to guess what you would want them to do.
Committee on Political Education

By Dennis McCafferty,
Committee where they will attempt to
amended to include critical provisions of
State House. In Indiana, SB 381 was
they now await possible approval from the
1700 (in Illinois) and SB 381 (in Indiana)
were still very much up in the air. Despite
the efforts of our Union’s Officers, Staff
and C.O.P.E. Department, both bills passed
thru their respective State Senates, where
they now await possible approval from the
State House. In Indiana, SB 381 was
amended to include critical provisions of
HB 1518. It currently sits in a Conference
Committee where they will attempt to
create a compromise draft that can be sent
to the Governor’s desk.

The members need to understand our
Union’s position. Our Local came out
AGAINST these bills because they are NOT
in the best interests of our membership. Our
Union cannot support ANY legislation that
undermines service quality standards,
period. Because when you remove
regulatory oversight, (FCC, ICC or IURC)
and the fines that are imposed when existing
standards aren’t met, the job security of our
membership is jeopardized. This we cannot
allow. Our Union has always believed that
what is required is regulation that levels the
playing field for ALL providers with the
intention of raising the bar. Not UN-regulation,
that encourages non-conformance to
industry standards, thereby rewarding
companies willing to participate in the Wal-
Mart-ization of the Telecommunications
Industry.

Local 21 has been very active in getting
the word out to our elected officials.
President Kastner testified at a Senate
Committee Hearing. The Staff and C.O.P.E.
Department continue to lobby in both
Springfield and Indianapolis. The General
Assembly in both states have been made
aware of our opposition and were put on
notice that we will be monitoring their
actions.

You have read in this publication and
heard it said at meetings in the past that,
“What can be gained at the bargaining
table can be lost legislatively.” These two
pieces of legislation are THE perfect
elements.

From an Organized Labor standpoint,
this session of the Indiana General
Assembly had its share of successes. Many
anti-labor bills such as “right to
work” and the attempt to outlaw living
wage ordinances were either killed in
committee or voted down on the House
floor. Many thanks go out to our
members who participated in our e-
activist network. This is proof positive
that when you get involved you make a
difference. We need to keep up the good
fight because there are still many people
out there who would like to do us harm.
The Republican Speaker of the House
said, “It just wasn’t the right time” for
many of these anti-labor bills, so we can’t
afford to let our guard down. If you
haven’t already done so, PLEASE
register for e-activist updates. Visit
www.ibew21.org and find out how you
can get involved in the fight to protect our
livelihoods and our families. Thank You
and GOD Bless!

SBC’s first communication should be in
the mail soon. The certification process for
bargained-for employees and retirees will
begin April 20th and end May 20th. Once
you have completed certification, you will
receive a confirmation notice within 12
business days. **If you do not certify your
dependents, coverage for all healthcare
and life insurance will end.** A final notice
will be sent showing the dependent (s)
coverage has been canceled. You have 60
calendar days from the cancellation date
listed to re-enroll any dependents dropped
in error. Coverage would then be
retroactive to the date of cancellation.

After 60 days, the coverage will be
effective the first of the following month.

In August, SBC will be randomly
requesting proof of dependency such as
college records, tax records, birth
certificates, etc. Enrollment of any
ineligible dependent will be referred to
Asset Protection for further investigation
which could result in legal action, financial
consequences and employment disciplinary
action, up to and including dismissal.

**Here’s an update on the SBC Savings**
& **Security increases** for the newly
bargained basic allotment increases of $60
and $65. A Summary of Material
Modification (a modification to the plan)
will be sent out approximately April 18th.
The modification announces a one-time
only allotment that allows a participant to
make up any basic allotments not taken
from the last payroll period in December
through the 7th payroll period in 2005
(April 2nd or April 9th depending on which
pay cycle you are on.) Beginning April
25th and ending May 6th you can call the
SBC Savings Plan center. They will have
the amount you are eligible to make up.
All make up allotments will be deducted
over a period of 3 checks. You may choose
to make up all of the missed allotments or
just a portion of the amount, and you can
choose to have the allotments pre or post
tax. Anyone who could have elected the
higher allotments will have the opportunity
to make up the allotments, even if they
aren’t enrolled in the plan. The company
match will be given, provided you have
been in the plan for one year.

Watch for the modification notice at
your work location, read it and study the
examples to determine if you are eligible
and which steps you need to take for this
one-time make up allowance.

**Benefit Report**

**Dependent Certification Now**

By Linda Cox, Business Representative & Recording Secretary

As previously reported, SBC is moving forward on their Dependent Certification process. Even though SBC has not yet sent any communications, SBC Connect has their website up and running with a notice of "Action Needed, Certify Dependents, Deadline, 05-20-2005."

There are instructions with a variety of links that explain who is eligible to be a dependent. The site also lists all of the employee’s dependents by name, birthdates, gender, relationship, eligible and coverage end date. **Eligibility is pre-populated as "no" and the coverage end date shows 6-30-05.** If your dependent is eligible, you will need to change the "no" to "yes" for coverage to continue. The certification can be done via the Internet, intranet or by calling SBC Connect.

In the mail soon. The certification process for bargained-for employees and retirees will begin April 20th and end May 20th. Once you have completed certification, you will receive a confirmation notice within 12 business days. **If you do not certify your dependents, coverage for all healthcare and life insurance will end.** A final notice will be sent showing the dependent(s) coverage has been canceled. You have 60 calendar days from the cancellation date listed to re-enroll any dependents dropped in error. Coverage would then be retroactive to the date of cancellation.

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**COPE Report**

**Legislative Updates**

By Dennis McCafferty,
Committee on Political Education

Hello Brothers and Sisters, much has happened legislatively on both sides of the border since our last issue. As of press time, the futures of SB 1700 (in Illinois) and SB 381 (in Indiana) were still very much up in the air. Despite the efforts of our Union’s Officers, Staff and C.O.P.E. Department, both bills passed thru their respective State Senates, where they now await possible approval from the State House. In Indiana, SB 381 was amended to include critical provisions of HB 1518. It currently sits in a Conference Committee where they will attempt to create a compromise draft that can be sent to the Governor’s desk.

The members need to understand our Union’s position. Our Local came out AGAINST these bills because they are NOT in the best interests of our membership. Our Union cannot support ANY legislation that undermines service quality standards, period. Because when you remove regulatory oversight, (FCC, ICC or IURC) and the fines that are imposed when existing standards aren’t met, the job security of our membership is jeopardized. This we cannot allow. Our Union has always believed that what is required is regulation that levels the playing field for ALL providers with the intent of raising the bar. Not UN-regulation, that encourages non-conformance to industry standards, thereby rewarding companies willing to participate in the Wal-Mart-ization of the Telecommunications Industry.

Local 21 has been very active in getting the word out to our elected officials. President Kastner testified at a Senate Committee Hearing. The Staff and C.O.P.E. Department continue to lobby in both Springfield and Indianapolis. The General Assembly in both states have been made aware of our opposition and were put on notice that we will be monitoring their actions.
This month I’d like to share some ideas regarding the future of the telecommunication industry. As you probably know, there are two real roads to the Internet - DSL and the cable modem. In my opinion, both offer quality opportunities and longevity. Even though the cable modem had a head start, DSL is making a strong charge through Project Light Speed. Neither product is superior enough to knock the other out business; consequently, each has about 50 per cent of the market.

DSL is offered by the Regional Bell Operating Companies (RBOCs) and the cable modem is offered by cable TV companies. Local 21 represents members in both technologies but currently DSL has more Union density than the cable modem. Organizing and contract negotiations are very slow with cable companies. Another difference involves regulatory agencies. DSL is regulated and must meet high service quality standards, which equate to jobs and job security. On the other hand, cable has little to no regulations and no service quality standards resulting in few jobs and little job security.

The RBOC’s want to compete with the cable companies by lowering standards down to those of the cable companies. Local 21 has grave concerns with this concept. In fact, we are lobbying for the exact opposite. For reasons of both job security and consumer satisfaction, we want the cable companies to rise to the phone company standards. Quite simply, those concepts that we as unionists hold most dear, a salary commensurate with a day of quality work, job security, adequate healthcare and other benefits, and the opportunity to be part of organized labor, are widely available on the regulated side of the industry.

Until now there was no way to regulate cable. But with Voice Over Internet Protocol (VOIP) on the horizon, there is hope to bring the cable companies into the real world. If the cable company wants to be like a phone company and offer telephony, then they must compete fairly and be subject to the service quality standards like the other telephone companies.

Cable companies and the telephone companies both see the same pot at the end of the rainbow - Video. Both will compete for video, and both will need high speed broadband service to compete. Video promises huge financial profits for both companies, and I fear that phone service through VOIP will become a throw-in with little to no service quality standards bestowed upon either.

There lies the problem, Sisters and Brothers. Will either company employ the numbers of our members that they do today if there are no agencies like the Illinois Commerce Commission monitoring service quality standards? I think not. As a matter of fact, both SBC and Comcast, the major companies that play in our world of Telecommunications are headquartered outside of Illinois and Indiana. Furthermore, Texas is a right-to-work state, which means that any type of service quality standards can be ignored.

Some will say that this is a fight for the FCC, and we should trust that agency to fix this issue. Unfortunately, the FCC is leaning towards no regulations on VOIP. Many challenges have been brought forward disagreeing with this, and we have been earnestly lobbying for the benefit of union workers.

We must continue to make our voice heard. We must be sure that local and state governments hear and understand the importance of service quality standards on VOIP or any other new technology in the future that provides telephone service. When VOIP overcomes the technology problems it has with features like 911 capabilities, we must insure to the customer that the phone, in fact, works. Without service quality standards, will the phone work? Let’s not take that chance. Right now, it is our responsibility to force the standards on all companies, both cable and telephone.

The United Way of Metropolitan Chicago awarded IBEW Local 21 and CWA 4250 with its highest tribute to labor unions this year for their active role in the 2004 SBC workplace campaign.

IBEW Local 21 President Ron Kastner (L.) and CWA Local 4250 Executive Vice President Liz Van Der Woude (R.) proudly accepted the Leo Perlis Labor Participation Award at the United Way’s annual luncheon, co-sponsored this year by the Chicago Federation of Labor, AFL-CIO and the LaSalle Bank, on March 11, 2005.

IBEW Local 21 and CWA Local 4250 made 160 presentations detailing the value of this charitable organization to over 8,400 union members last year. Their combined efforts resulted in a 3 percent increase in union participation and an 8 percent increase in United Way contributions for the overall SBC campaign.

About 400 health and human service care agencies across metropolitan Chicago rely on United Way funding to provide the programs that help people in crisis, help children and youth succeed and help adults toward self-sufficiency.
Local 21 maintains that the company is responsible to pay back wages to 2002. Despite the company's continuing bad faith, Local 21 continues discussions on a regular basis and is determined to reach fair agreements for members in all bargaining units.

As many workers already know, an NLRB election was held late last month in the Park Forest and Orland Park shops. A majority of workers in the bargaining unit there voted to end union representation. In early 2005, in clear violation of the collective bargaining agreement, Comcast laid off three CSSR's who were working at the Park Forest front desk and moved their work outside of the bargaining unit to be performed by employees of currency exchanges and grocery stores.

Contractually, the company could not lay-off any worker for the sole purpose of contracting out. Based on the grievance and arbitration procedure in the contract, the CSSR's will soon get their day before an arbitrator, even though the workers have now voted to end representation. This is due to the fact that the grievance was filed prior to the vote. The arbitrator has the authority to order Comcast to reinstate the CSSR's.

Sadly though, the tactics of layoffs and propaganda just before the vote led many workers to believe they would have better job security and a chance for a job at the new Homewood Mega Tech Center without a union contract, not with one. Local 21 has filed post election objections based on company conduct directly related to the vote. If the NLRB rules against the Union, and we choose to not appeal, the workers will have relinquished their rights, will officially become non-represented. They become "employees at will", and Comcast will be able to pick and choose who will get jobs at the new Homewood facility. In addition, the company can then terminate anyone for any reason at any time, and can change rules, pay rates and other working conditions at any time, for any reason. Since Comcast took over, they have closed 3 payment centers in union areas. Their goal is to close them all and do away with all front counter workers.

Comcast is using the same tactics as TCI in 1999, when twenty-six Jones workers were wrongfully fired and brought back whole. In 2003, seven workers were wrongfully laid-off by Comcast and also brought back by the Union – made whole with 64 weeks of back pay, 401K and sick time. Other workers have been brought back after being wrongfully terminated and were made whole by the arbitrator. So if you hear you can do better without being union, make sure to investigate and get all the facts, not just half-truths.

Workers are not the only ones who’ve found Comcast difficult to do business with. A 2004 American Customer Satisfaction Index survey found that Comcast has the worst customer satisfaction rating of any company or government agency in the country, including the IRS. So why is business still booming? Deregulation and a set of favorable FCC policies – in large part, the result of the cable industry's lobbying muscle and healthy campaign contributions – have granted Comcast near monopoly power in 8 of the country's top 10 markets.

Here in Illinois, they are now vulnerable as the state's telecommunication act is now being re-written. Every member is encouraged to get active with the governor and their state legislator by going to the Local21 website at www.IBEW21.org and clicking on to the get ACTIVE LIST! We will always fight one day longer, as we have for the last 115 years.
Members In The News

Lori Davis, IBEW LOCAL 21 organizer, gave birth to a 7 lb. baby boy — Elijah Reginald Davis on 3-7-05

John Comstock and his wife celebrated the birth of a new baby girl. John is the Union Steward at Comcast in Merrillville, IN.

Donna Kalsow, an MA at the Lakewood Center, and family are celebrating the 2nd NCAA DIV III National Championship in Men's Basketball for UW-Stephens Point. Donna's sons Jason, a senior, and Brad, a freshman, BOTH play for the Pointers. Jason now owns school scoring record and was named Most Outstanding Player in tournament.

SUPPORT OUR TROOPS
Kim Sak, a cable splicing technician Dundee Garage is stationed in Iraq.

WELCOME HOME
Steward Chris Lechocki of the NCSC (Repair Center) at Lakewood has come home after serving in Iraq for over a year. Sadly, he was injured and will not be returning to work for a while. We keep him in our thoughts and prayers.

The Kirk Lazarus Family increased by two more gifts from God on 3-16-05, twins Bryce and Berlyn. Kirk is a CA at Oakbrook BCS.

GOOD LUCK IN ELGIN
Jeff Kerber Sr. is off to Elgin DAVAR after many years in Dundee. The Dundee garage will miss you.

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.
Employees are being terminated for email use on company time in some Downstate SBC offices like Rock Island Consumer, Peoria Credit & Collections, Springfield network centers AFRC & MLAC, central offices, and marketing BCS, and the Access Service Center. Yes, despite the fact that the Code of Business Conduct permits, "limited personal use" of the internet and email. Employees are using email back and forth like an instant message system, not even going outside the firewall. Protect yourself; don't use company resources for personal use.

At Gallatin River Communications LLC, the Pekin contract expires 9-30-05 and the Dixon contract expires sixty days later on 11-30-05. Local 21 is trying to secure the Direct TV work for our technicians and service reps. We want the company to grow, creating more Union jobs.

At Peoria County Bel-Wood Nursing Home approximately 20-25 grievances are stalled at the third step with no meetings scheduled. There are almost the same number of issues on the agenda of the next Union-management meeting, but no meeting is scheduled yet. The members did ratify the contract on 2-10-05.

By Vickie Burroughs, Business Representative

Downstate, SBC trotted out PIP. The company wants people to improve GJI8 (good jobs in 8 hours.) They claim the performance plan is designed to help members complete more good jobs in 8 hours. It includes coaching by the first level manager if the tech doesn't meet expectations. That raises the question, "Who's going to teach the supervisors how to do the job?"

Some Local 21 members are being detailed out of the Champaign garage and the Danville garage to garages in the South Suburbs and the South-side of Chicago. The detail can last from three weeks to indefinitely. It's a hardship on the techs and puts a strain on the remaining techs who have to pick up extra weekend coverage. Some members are working every other weekend.

SBC has increased the number of 9:30 to 6pm shifts, and the number of noon to 8pm shifts, without supplying the Union with any of the documentary proof we have requested.

Rumor has it that more detailing is in the works in the coming months.

By Jim Foster, Business Representative

Local 21 has been asking SBC for hands-on safety training for years. The first four-day class in Westmont started April 18th. There is no pass or fail grade. It's designed to be skills you can use.

The relationship between the Union and SBC outside in I&R is really bad. Is that a big surprise?

A second day of meetings took place April 22nd to discuss the apprentice to journeyman ratio.

Local 21 is challenging mandatory overtime for our members at Verizon.

The Union is close to an agreement with Citizens Frontier Telephone on the removal of contract workers and replacing them with union workers.

By Jerry Gast, Business Representative

An ongoing issue is the scheduling of off-hour shifts in I&R. In Construction, Local 21 Business Representatives are meeting with SBC on fiber to the curb. The Union and the company are studying preferencing to move techs back to construction. In the central offices the company is working on a preference plan to move people around.

By Dan Gruenich, Business Representative

In downtown Chicago surplus issues hit the IT business unit at 1 N. Dearborn. Their work is going to Michigan and Texas. Of sixty-eight members, all but fifteen have found other jobs within SBC.

By Liz Hodges, Business Representative
In February, while on a trouble job, Major Bestor and Steven Richardson of the Beverly garage noticed an apartment fire. The two quick-thinking Local 21 members used a two-piece ladder to rescue a woman trapped in the burning building. The two techs acted before the Chicago Fire Department arrived. They saved the woman while the ladder melted from the heat.

At the Hastings garage one of our members has been recently returned to work due to the support of his fellow workers and other Local 21 members.

The problems with scheduling in the Special Services Group (also known as the DOG Group) are coming to a head. The Union is holding meetings with the stewards to determine the best course of action.

In the Central Office world the Union and SBC are in discussions on how to go back to an office orbit within a smaller area-the way it used to be.

Vice-President Rick Gessler is looking into coin collector issues, to get them placed into another job title.

Why do the Consumer offices of Oakbrook and Arlington Heights only have a one month incentive plan? Because SBC wants to include attendance in the sales incentive plan. The company proposes that if a service rep is on a step for attendance, they miss the incentive payout that month, no matter how high their sales. The Union and the company will meet on May 6th to try and resolve the issue.

The Union had a recent win on the performance plan at Oakbrook BCS. The member was brought back after the management review board decision.

In the discussions on Construction preferencing, the Union is trying to get Indiana included in the possible preference process.

In Marketing there is a big push on Code of Conduct violations at the Chicago Heights BCS and Collections Center. Local 21 members are being walked out for any and all violations of the Business Code of Conduct.

Scheduling in I&R continues to be a constant fight because the company is not providing data the Union has requested.

Motor vehicle accidents are the source for the latest rash of suspensions and terminations. In a case at the DesPlaines garage, SBC management cannot even prove there was an accident, since there is no damage to the truck, and the tech denies any accident. SBC is serious about productivity. One tech in the Wheaton garage was suspended pending termination for working on a single job for an entire day. The Union and the company are studying Construction preferencing that would bring people who were force transferred into I&R back into Construction.

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By Mike McCormick, Business Representative

By Kurt Schmidt, Business Representative

By Steve Unterfranz, Business Representative

"As part of your long-term financial planning, I'd recommend a carefully thought out union organizing drive."

By Steve Tengblad, Business Representative
People In Peril
By Nancy North, Area Steward

PIIP is the hot new corporat e acronym at SBC. Pip is in the dictionary is, "the seed of an orange or apple." More like the seed of destruction.

Another meaning is, "the spot on a domino or dice." More like the spot on a previously unblemished record. PIP in corporatese stands for Performance Improvement Plan.

Measurements aren’t new. When management first rolled out measurements in Oakbrook BCS in the late 90’s, a lot of Customer Advocates were put on Performance Improvement Plans. People filed a lot of grievances and many cases were overturned because management rolled out the plan in May, but used results back to January. CA’s and Service Order Writers worked hard on the main metric – Service Order Accuracy. They attended weekly workshop sessions and diligently filed for exclusions on system problems.

For years there were no PIP’s.

The ISDN Center moved from network to BCS marketing, and in 2004 management rolled out a measurement plan. MSS’s were put on PIP’s with written warnings, and people filed grievances. The grievance process cracks along in BCS just like it does in the rest of the company. Grievances are up to the third step, waiting for answers. The Union did have one recent win on the performance plan, and the member was brought back after the management review board decision.

In 2005 upper management added new metrics, raised the acceptable numbers and accelerated the penalty for failure. In theory, an official program of how your manager is going to help you get the skills, the time, and the assistance you need to do a better job might be a good thing. BUT. The dark side is the penalty for failure to meet your numbers: discipline steps of written warning, final written warning with one day suspension, and suspension pending termination. There is NO verbal warning step. The Union DID NOT AGREE to these steps or these measurements.

PIP’s are back with a vengeance, creating stress and an atmosphere of fear.

“We must all hang together, or assuredly we shall all hang separately.”

Benjamin Franklin

Illegal Threats Defeated
By Kevin Curran, Business Representative

In March, local management at the Total Grace Center announced that unless the number of absences dramatically decreased, including approved FMLA and disability absences, employees at this Consumer office would be required to work the lion’s share of the late shifts and Saturday tours effective in May. The Union believes that this action was an illegal attempt by SBC to intimidate our members and interfere with their right to take FMLA time. Our attorneys sent a letter a few weeks ago to Total Grace General Manager Arlene Johnson detailing the illegal activity, and putting her and SBC on notice that Local 21 stands ready to take all appropriate legal action against SBC if they follow through on their threats. Even though the number of absences did not decrease, the company has backed down from their illegal threats and the normal, proportional schedules will continue with the new tours in May.

Quick Solution to the Social Security "Crisis"
Submitted by Dave Webster, Business Representative

We’ve all seen or heard something about the social security "crisis". What this administration seems to does best is create crises, with social security being the latest. Well, if the crisis is so important that we must make drastic changes now, I have the perfect plan.

What many Americans do not even realize is that our Senators and Congressmen do not pay into or collect from social security. When social security benefits were established they were not suitable for persons of their rare elevation in society. They felt that they should have a special plan for themselves. So, many years ago, they voted in their own benefit plan.

In more recent years, no congressperson has felt the need to change it. After all, it is a great plan. For all practical purposes their plan works like this: When they retire, they continue to draw the same pay until they die. With the exception that it may increase from time to time for cost of living adjustments.

For example, let’s calculate on the average life span for two dignitaries. Senator Byrd and Congressman White and their wives may expect to draw $7,700,000 during the last years of their lives.

Younger dignitaries who retire at an early age will receive much more during the rest of their lives. The cost for this outstanding plan.....? You guessed it, a big fat ZERO!!!

This little perk they voted for themselves is free to them. You and I pick up the tab for this wonderful little plan. The funds for this fine retirement plan come directly from the general funds.....OUR TAX DOLLARS AT WORK!

From our own social security plan, which we pay into every day until we retire, we can expect to get an average of $1,000 per month after retirement. In other words we would have to collect our average $1,000 in monthly benefits for over sixty-eight years to equal Senator Bill Bradley’s benefits.

So, with that being said, here’s how we fix the social security "crisis"....Put the Senators and Congressmen into the social security plan with the rest of us, then let’s see how bad the "crisis" is and how quickly it gets fixed!
Local 21 Will Be Extinct in 10 Years...

By Bob Przybylinski, Area Steward

Yeah, I'm saying it-- Local 21 will not be around in 10 years if we don't make changes. SBC, Comcast, the current political environment and member apathy will destroy our livelihood and this Union if we continue down the road we are traveling.

Is there hope for us? NO...

Unless we each wake up and educate ourselves on all the issues that affect our jobs, and become an active union membership who will force the changes that are necessary to ensure our survival.

If we don't do something as a membership we better prepare our families for life after the death of this Union.

Right now in Illinois and Indiana, SBC and Comcast are mounting an attack to change the Telecommunications Acts in both states. Under their plans these Wal-Mart like corporations are attempting to deceive politicians and the public into believing that deregulation will improve telecommunication and broadband service. The only ones that will benefit from the legislation are SBC and Comcast with higher profit margins obtained through job cuts and service reductions. Their profits will skyrocket while we suffer at home.

Local 21 has informed the legislators that we don't support the positions of SBC and Comcast to deregulate the industry. Allowing them to self-govern the industry could result in the loss of Union jobs. All of us will be asked to assist in the legislative fight. We can either help out when asked even if it's just sending a letter or making a phone call or we can do nothing and kiss our jobs good-bye.

As we lobby on the legislative front SBC and Comcast intensify their attacks in our workplaces as our leadership works to balance the resources of the Local to fight off the numerous assaults. How many times have you, the members at SBC uttered, "This Union hasn't done anything for me, my grievance has been scheduled for arbitration for 2 years." At the same time the Comcast members question their union existence while negotiations enter their sixth year in an attempt to reach a first contract with Comcast. Blaming the leadership is the easiest way to strengthen the power Comcast and SBC hold. Both companies are sitting back and laughing at you and our leaders. Their goal is to destroy our Union by having all of us fighting against each other instead of them.

Maybe instead of sitting at home on the night of a Union meeting with the remote in your hand, you should make plans with your co-workers and go to a Union meeting. Find out what's happening at the companies you work for and see how they are trying to take that dollar out of your pocket. Find out what the leadership is doing to fight on your behalf and how you're expected to help in the fight.

When you're at the meetings don't just go to complain about how bad life is, and how you think our leadership and staff are doing nothing for you. If you have legitimate representational issues bring them up and hold our feet to the fire. But, you can't blame your representative for the detrimental actions your employer has taken. SBC and Comcast have been stonewalling our leadership, attempting to make it look as if you could do better without them. Our employers are daring us to fight back against their policies.

It takes self-discipline to listen and accept that your problem is the fault of the company. It takes backbone to standup at a Union meeting and yell out, "How can I help? What can I do to prevent the injustices Comcast and SBC are handing down? How can I bring this information back to my work location so I can educate the other members? How can we stand together and beat the bosses and defeat the corporate attack?"

It was once said "The death of democracy is not likely to be an assassination from ambush. It will be a slow extinction from apathy, indifference and undernourishment."

Brothers and Sisters we have the power. We can beat back the attacks of those who are holding us down. But we have to want to fight. We have to want to change. We must change. We must fight. We must get involved and become an active powerful membership. We must fight to protect our jobs, benefits, retirement, and the industry standards we fought to establish. If we don't fight in unity our families will suffer and this Union will die.

I hope I'm wrong. I hope it doesn't happen in 5 years. I hope you all accept the challenge.

TEN WAYS TO KILL A UNION

1. Don't come to the meetings.
2. But if you do come — come late.
3. If the weather doesn't suit you — don't come.
4. If you do attend a meeting — find fault with the work of the officers and other members.
5. Never accept and office or position — it's easier to criticize than to do things.
6. Nevertheless get sore if you are not appointed on a committee but, if you are appointed - do not attend the committee meetings.
7. If asked by the president to give your opinion on an important matter, tell him you have nothing to say — after the meeting tell everyone how things should be done.
8. Do nothing more than is absolutely necessary, but when other members roll up their sleeves, willingly and selflessly using their ability to help matters along — howl that the Union is being run by a clique.
9. If your local is struggling from a financial standpoint to maintain offices on you behalf, be sure and muster all the help you can — to vote against a dues raise.
10. Don't bother about new members — let the other fellow do it.
**IBEW Local 21**

**Solidarity Day**

**Golf Outing & BBQ**

**WHEN:**  Sunday Aug. 7th, Shotgun Start at 1:30

**WHERE:**  Highland Woods Golf Course  
2775 N. Ela Rd., Hoffman Estates, IL.  
847-395-5850

**COST:**  $65.00 per person Includes 18 Holes of Golf & Cart along with a Buffet Dinner.

Monies must be paid to reserve your Tee Time and will be on a first come basis. Again this year there will be prizes and a raffle.

This year we will be doing a 4 man scramble format. For example, all four golfers will hit from the tee. As a group, you will select the tee shot you like best, pick up the other 3 balls, and all hit from the same spot. You will continue this process until your ball is in the cup. (No Gimmees) Your team will have one score at the end of the round.

RSVP no later than July 16th

Sponsored by: IBEW Local 21

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**Cut here and return with money to:**

IBEW Local 21, 1307 Butterfield Rd., Suite 422, Attn. Rita Peterson, Downers Grove, IL. 60515-5606

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Spring is here, a time when we are all easily distracted because of the weather. It's a great time to remember that there are more kids walking and playing on the streets, that sudden and violent storms bring increased risks of electrocution and dangerous flooding conditions. Put your sunglasses on, but adjust your safety attitude for the warm weather. Remember, April 28 is Worker's Memorial Day. "Mourn for the dead, fight like hell for the living!" Work safe!

Surpluses in the Chicago MLAC, RCMAC and LDRC continue to cause rumors and confusion. We wish we could answer all questions relating to surplus and center closings definitively, but the company has to provide us information and often they are more confused that we are. Please be patient.

If you are sitting at a wage rate less than top pay and are not held back by an apprentice ratio, it's because you probably haven't passed a required test. We have training materials to help people pass tests to make more money. Call Chief Steward Mike O'Connor or me, so we can help you possibly gain moneys you are entitled to.

The SBC Datacomm illegal layoff grievance goes to hearing in front of a neutral arbitrator on May 3, 2005. Hopefully we'll have a positive ruling in the next 90 days.

Have a safe summer!

For the first time SBC sponsored an I&R Safety Road-eo for the entire five state mid-west region. The five state winners met for the final round of competition at Griffith garage in Indiana on April 7, 2005. Two of the five competitors are IBEW Local 21 members. Indiana state winner Louie Rodriguez won second place regionally. Illinois state winner Joe Vilck IV won third place regionally.

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.

Not everyone can be the state safety winner, but we can all work safe every day. Remember, the company will still suspend you for having motor vehicle accidents.

Know Your Drivers License Status
- The Illinois Driving Analysis Department 217 782-2720 is a NO COST interactive voice response system for license verification/validation.
- Call the above number and enter Option #1. Enter your social security number and drivers license number without the first letter. Drivers License validation status will be provided.

Test Scores Can Mean Higher Wages
By Michael Sacco, Business Representative

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The Gurnee and Oak Forest charters are up and running. We’ve almost finished the bi-laws and are planning some events throughout the year.

The Gurnee Charter is planning a picnic during the summer. The Oak Forest Charter will be very busy this year with several different events. Tentatively we have plans for a bowling party in June, another baseball game sometime this summer, an identity theft seminar this fall, and a theatre outing. There will be another Holiday party in December. Mark your calendars and come out and join us in the fun.

Election of officers for the second year will be held during the second quarter and hopefully we will have copies of the bi-laws for everyone to review at that time.

Just a reminder, Local 21 is having another golf outing this year (see page 12) and we’d love to see any retirees join us in the fun. You all are welcome. It was a good time last year and hopefully even better this year.

If you have questions or want to become a member of the Oak Forest Charter, please contact, President Len Trentz at 708-687-2199, ltrentz@ameritech.net or John Simon at 708-429-2779, john3817@sbcglobal.net. For the Gurnee Charter please contact Sue Davern at davern@ameritech.net.

If anyone has general questions please feel free to contact me at the Union office 630 960-4466 ext.354, or email me at mac21@ibew21.org.
## May

**Unit 1**  
Thursday, May 12, 7 PM  
Haebetler Bowl  
5250 N. Northwest Highway  
Chicago IL  
773 774-0500

**Unit 2**  
Tuesday, May 10, 7 PM  
Lansing American Legion  
18255 Grant St  
Lansing IL  
708 474-5906

**Unit 3**  
Thursday, May 19, 7 PM  
IBEW Local # 364  
6820 Mill Rd  
Rockford IL  
815 398-6282

**Unit 4**  
Wednesday, May 11, 7 PM  
Lemont VFW  
15780 New Ave.  
Lemont IL  
630 257-9859

**Unit 5**  
Wednesday, May 18, 7 PM  
American Legion Post #979  
4501 S Airport Rd  
Bartonville IL  
309 697-2432

**Unit 6**  
Tuesday, May 17, 5:30 PM  
IBEW Local # 193  
3150 Wide Track Dr  
Springfield IL  
217 544-3479

**Unit 7**  
Monday, May 16, 7 PM  
Alton Sports Tap  
3812 College Ave  
Alton IL  
618 465-2539

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## June

**Unit 1**  
Thursday, June 9, 7 PM  
Days Inn & Suites  
2175 E Touhy  
DesPlaines IL  
847 635-1300

**Unit 2**  
Tuesday, June 14, 7 PM  
Gaelic Park Banquet Hall  
6119 W 147th St.  
Oak Forest IL  
708 687-9323

**Unit 3**  
Thursday, June 16, 7 PM  
Gurnee American Legion  
749 Milwaukee Ave  
Gurnee IL  
847 244-9282

**Unit 4**  
Tuesday, June 7, 7 PM  
IBEW Local #145  
1700 52nd Ave Suite A  
Moline IL  
309 736-4239

**Unit 5**  
Wednesday, June 15, 7 PM  
The Rocky Point Club  
3603 Bonansinga Dr.  
Quincy IL  
217 224-1332

**Unit 6**  
Tuesday, June 21, 5:30 PM  
IBEW Local # 193  
3150 Wide Track Dr  
Springfield IL  
217 544-3479

**Unit 7**  
Monday, June 20, 7 PM  
American Legion Post #141  
916 Main St  
Mt Vernon IL  
618 242-4561

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## July

**Unit 1**  
Thursday, July 14, 7 PM  
Holiday Inn Hillside  
4400 Frontage Rd  
Hillside IL  
708 544-9300

**Unit 2**  
Tuesday, July 12, 7 PM  
Slovak Club  
6920 Broadway  
Merrillville IN  
219 756-5101

**Unit 3**  
Thursday, July 21, 7 PM  
Holiday Inn Hotel & Suites  
495 Airport Rd  
Elgin IL  
847 488-9000

**Unit 4**  
Wednesday, July 13, 7 PM  
American Legion Harwood Post #5  
705 S. Larkin  
Joliet IL  
815 725-4333

**Unit 5**  
Wednesday, July 20, 7 PM  
Danville Inn  
388 Eastgate Dr.  
Danville IL  
217 446-2400

**Unit 6**  
Tuesday, July 19, 5:30 PM  
IBEW Local # 193  
3150 Wide Track Dr  
Springfield IL  
217 544-3479

**Unit 7**  
Monday, July 18, 7 PM  
IBEW Local # 309  
2000A Mall St (Rte 157)  
Collinsville IL  
618 345-5112

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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.
Local 21 members, their families and friends rode on the float in the South-side St Patrick's Day's Parade on Sunday March 13th.