

FRONTLINE

IBEW LOCAL 21



Volume 13, No. 1 • March 2008

Connecting You To Safety



Local 21 member Val Caprio answers emergency calls at the Chicago 911 Center.



INSIDE

Business Managerpg 2
Curran's Reportpg 3
Benefit Reportpg 4
Gast's Reportpg 4
Comcastpg 5

COPEpg 6
911 Centerpg 7
News Across The Local .pg 8
Union Buttonpg 11
Prem Techspg 12

Datacomm Contract . . .pg 13
Retireespg 14
Bulls Ticketspg 14
Meetingspg 15
Paradepg 16

Educate - Organize - Act!

By Ronald Kastner



Workplaces across America are becoming increasingly hostile for working people, including those where workers are represented by a Union. Corporate America has declared war on working people, demanding more while at the same time paying less. They are supported by a political climate that reaches all the way to the White House. This fight continues beyond our workplaces. It is focused on our

nation's seniors, our children, and the entire middle class, but more importantly this war is aimed directly on those struggling day in and day out in workplaces across our country – the working men and women that make up today's American Labor Movement.

At its peak in the mid-1950's, one of every three or about 34% of all workers in the United States belonged to a Union. Today, overall union density in our country is only 12.1%, and it's even worse in the private sector, where union membership is now only 7.5%.

If our labor movement is to survive and be powerful again like we were in our glory days, we must make fundamental changes in the way we operate. Unions across America are making these changes. **Some 311,000 new members joined Unions in 2007**, the largest single-year increase since 1979. Overall, the rate of union membership increased slightly last year, reversing a trend of decline in recent years.

Local 21 must make the necessary changes needed to gain more power to deal with our employers and those who are working against us. That's why I continue to talk about Internal Organizing at unit meetings, during worksite visits and at our union hall. I appointed a working group from my staff to develop an Internal Organizing Program for our current membership, one designed to strengthen our Union for the future. The goal is to reach the silent majority – the 90% of union members who rarely come to monthly unit meetings, who don't understand or don't care about our union, and don't participate in worksite collective actions or our country's political process.

You will soon hear about union stewards and other activists our union recently trained as Worksite Mobilization Coordinators. You may be asked to become a Group Coordinator in your workplace. You might ask – who are these people and what do they do? I strongly encourage you to get involved. Ask questions, find out what we

are doing, and help be part of the solution.

Through one-on-one contacts and collective actions, mobilization helps to inform and involve every member in matters that affect them, while lending additional support to the stewards, staff, and officers in our Union. In addition to building the power of Local 21, mobilization will help minimize anxiety and frustration members may feel as each contract violation takes place, and as each contract expiration date approaches.

Mobilization and dispute resolution move along parallel timelines. Mobilization activities are aimed to complement and support what is going on in grievance meetings and at the bargaining table. Since its inception, the labor movement has sought tools to level the playing field with management. Coordinated actions at work sites and rallies, both large and small, effectively draw attention to our issues and can bring pressure on management. The strategic training and implementation of this program will make us a stronger Union. Local 21 will have a better educated and better organized membership who are willing to take action to assist in resolving disputes in our workplaces, help bargain better contracts, get more politically involved, organize externally and grow our Union.

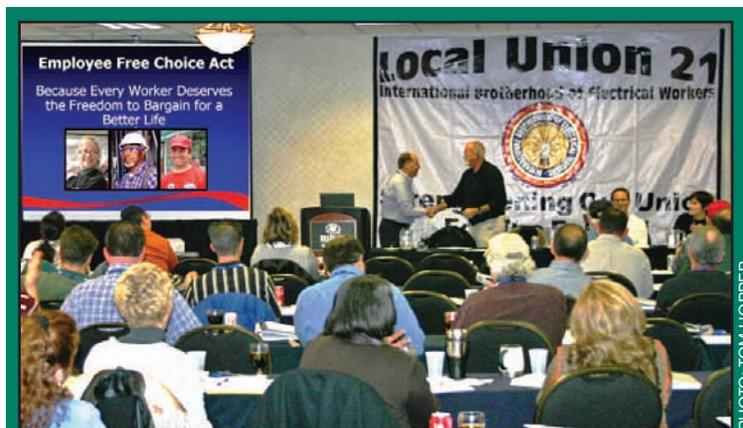
You will hear much more about making our Union stronger in the months ahead. The next issue of *Frontline* will focus on many of the details, the structure, and the specific reasons for establishing the new Internal Organizing Program throughout our local Union. We will all have a better understanding of where Local 21 is going, how we will get there and what the gains will be, as we work collectively to strengthen our Union for the future.

IBEW Local Union 21's vision is to be informed, educated, and mobilized – ready, willing and able to quickly take action to assist in resolving disputes from the individual workplace all the way to the bargaining table. Through a higher level of member involvement, our membership gains a greater voice in the political process, grows the Union by organizing the unorganized throughout our jurisdiction, and creates a more prepared and powerful union – one that acts in the best interest of all IBEW

Local Union 21 members, their families, and the communities in which we live and work.

By working together we can bring justice, dignity and respect to the 11,000 plus IBEW Local 21 members working throughout our jurisdiction.

The sudden passing of Business Representative Mike Kunas on January 4th was a shock to everyone who knew him. Mike was not only an up and coming union leader, but also a good friend. The Brotherhood and organized labor lost a great friend and leader. He will surely be missed.



AFL-CIO Organizing Director Stewart Acuff is welcomed by President-Business Manager Ron Kastner at a January 2008 Internal Organizing Training Session held for rank-n-file activists. **Look for more in-depth coverage of the Local 21 Internal Organizing Program in the next issue of Frontline!**

PHOTO: TOM HOPPER



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Local 21, AFL-CIO/CLC

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

Profits Before Patriotism?

By Kevin Curran, Vice President/Assistant Business Manager Marketing



Military Leave Battle -

Local 21 is in a major dispute with AT&T over Military Leave Pay being denied to our members. Just a few months ago, AT&T bragged

to the media that they "...have always had a long history of supporting the military..." At the same time, they were secretly changing their Military Leave Policy to the detriment of our members serving in the military. Essentially, the changes cheat our members out of pay we believe they have coming to them. This change was made without any notice to the Union. We believe this action is an illegal diminishment of benefits and a violation of the Collective Bargaining Agreement. The Union has sent this case to arbitration and we are currently reviewing the potential of other legal actions against the company over this issue. It is very disappointing to see AT&T attempt to increase its profits on the backs of the men and women who are serving and protecting this country during a time of war.

PAR Lawsuit Update - Local 21 is waiting to hear if the United States Supreme Court will hear AT&T's appeal on the lawsuit we filed against the company. The Union won the case at both the federal district level and the 7th Circuit Court of Appeals. The lawsuit concerns AT&T's

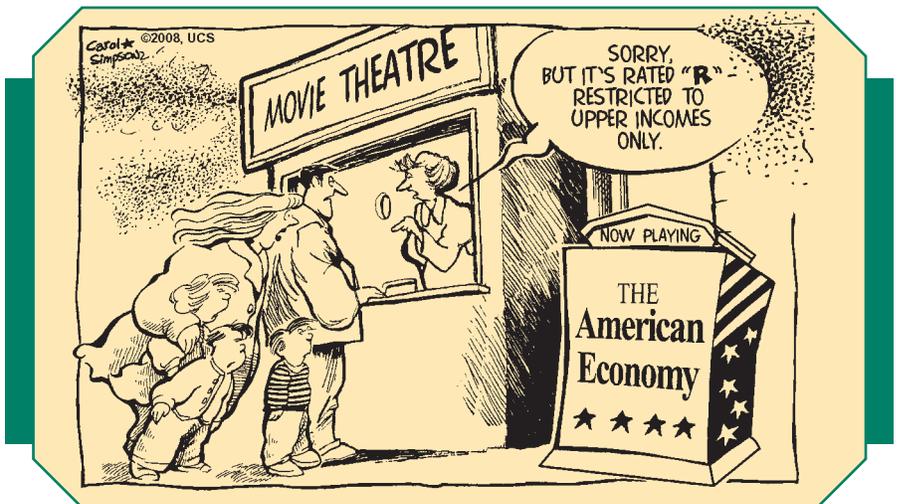
attempt to sidestep their requirement under the contract to arbitrate the grievance the Union filed regarding the introduction of an unjust performance management plan in Consumer (a.k.a. "PAR"). If the United States Supreme Court rejects AT&T's appeal, our victory at the 7th Circuit Court of Appeals will be confirmed.

Global Markets Arbitration Case -

The Union has received the Arbitrator's award in the Global Markets case. As you may recall, this case had two aspects to it. One concerned the movement of work out of our jurisdiction and the subsequent surplus/layoff of 137 of our members. The second aspect was the Union's challenge to AT&T's claim that this case involved a surplus and not a layoff. Unfortunately, the Arbitrator denied both aspects of the grievance.

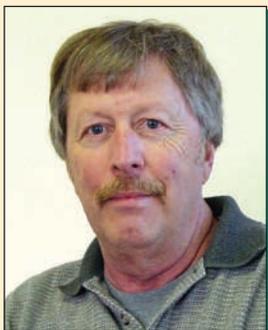
Two Week Scheduling Dispute in

Consumer - The Union is still in discussions with the company over the issue of 2-Week Scheduling. We believe AT&T's program as described to us would be in violation of Article 19 of the Collective Bargaining Agreement. The Union was successful in holding off the introduction of this program. We negotiated an extension of the existing tour package through the end of February as we continue our discussions with AT&T. Hopefully, we will work out a mutually acceptable solution to this dispute. The Union has made it clear to management that any scheduling program it introduces must conform to the scheduling provisions of the contract.



Dealing with Details

By Jerry Gast, Assistant Business Manager Network



Starting out the New Year we lost a good friend, Business Representative Mike Kunas. He will be missed by his family and

friends.

At **AT&T** details are starting back up. Business Representatives Mike Roach, Steve Unterfranz, Mike McCormick and I have been meeting with AT&T Vice President Joe DeMillis and his team from Construction. The goal is to improve the way the company is detailing our members. He is well aware of last year's problems is committed to fixing them.

A new process is now in place. Management and Union Business Reps will have a conference call one week prior to the beginning of the details. The Union will be provided with all data concerning the details prior to the call. This will give

us a chance to fix any problems before our members are detailed. The company and the Union will also inspect the hotels before technicians arrive to make sure the hotels are up to standards. All details will go through Ted Theodore's center to be approved and to determine which garages will send techs on details. The receiving managers will have a conference call with the Force and Load Center prior to the technicians arriving to make sure work is ready for them.

Term employees will be trained in regular splicing to relieve senior members from details. The qualification issue will be fixed. The Union committee will meet every month with Joe DeMillis and his team to resolve any problems.

President Kastner has assigned a team of Business Representatives to work on the movement of the **DOG Group** back to I&R. AT&T wants this completed in March. I am also meeting with the company on how to handle scheduling problems in I&R and Loop Electronics with the roll out of U-verse.

We are meeting with labor relations on

last year's parity issue in Construction. We are also looking into the loss of work in the **Technology Centers in Chicago where AT&T has declared a surplus of over 100 Telecommunication Specialists**. We are checking on the special service dispatch work moving to our M.A's in Lakewood. We have been preparing for up coming arbitration on central office scheduling problems.

This year has already been busy with the roll out of **U-verse**. Over 70 to 80 Premise Technicians are being hired each week. They have begun showing up in the garages. Make sure you welcome them into IBEW Local 21. They are in our contract under a special memorandum, Appendix C. All stewards need to contact their chief stewards to get a copy of the memorandum. I was in Collinsville for the Unit 7 meeting where four Prem Techs attended their first union meeting. It was great talking to them. They confirmed that U-verse is selling very well and the quality is excellent.

Benefit Report

Real Math Not Fuzzy Math Protects Benefits

By Linda Cox, Business Representative & Recording Secretary



On December 1, 2007 **Advocate hospitals** once again became "in network" providers with United Health Care.

The Treasury rate used to determine the amount of a lump sum pension decreased from 4.69% to 4.52% for 2008 retirements. This is good news. Pension amounts will increase. In addition, pension bands go up by 2.25% because the Union bargained those increases during the 2004 contract negotiations with SBC. After adding in last year's cost of living increase of .13% to the 2.25% there is a total pension band increase of 2.38% this year. In 2009, the new cost of living

allowance of 1.46% will be added to the bargained-for increase of 2.25%, resulting in a total increase of 3.71%.

As previously reported, AT&T directed **Fidelity** to use a different methodology to determine the value of lump sums creating lower pension amounts for older members and higher amounts for younger members. After several months of discussions, the company reluctantly agreed to pay out the missing higher amounts. As a result, over \$166,000 will be paid to 369 IBEW and CWA retirees; this doesn't include interest back to 2006. Additionally, the Union persuaded the company to back off requesting repayment from 858 retirees who were overpaid. That resulted in an additional \$51,358.

Due to a system/programming problem at Hewitt, the **AT&T Benefits Center**, there will be a delay in processing imputed

income for the benefit coverage of Legally Recognized Partners and/or the LRP children. Beginning in March and ending in June, one fourth of the imputed income amount owed for January and February will be added to the normal imputed income.

We continue to work on **open enrollment problems**. Issues include: dropped supplemental life insurance, paid spousal coverage drops, billing for medical insurance after achieving 6 months of service, placing a 15- visit limit on physical therapy and chiropractic visits.

On February 1, 2008 Zyrtec and Zyrtec-D were eliminated from the list of drugs covered by **Caremark**; the drug is now available over the counter at all pharmacies. Per the FDA, prescriptions for syrups and 5mg chewable tablets for young children (0-6 years) will still be covered by Caremark.

Meet the Office Staff

By Jacquie Fields, Treasurer



Shhh! Read this article silently to yourself, be very very quiet... Why?

It's confidential! Many things that occur in an office should

stay within the confines of that office. Jean Sullivan is one of our two confidentials in the union office. Jean is the assistant to President Kastner, and that should help you understand the reason she has the title.

Jean also takes care of clerical support

for all non-AT&T Core Agreement grievances and arbitrations. One of the things that I personally feel takes up a huge amount of her time is processing AT&T memberships and dues. This task is huge considering the many changes going on within AT&T today.

The clerical staff really works together here and Jean is ready to help with anything that comes along. Many of the duties mentioned in previous articles Jean handles as well.

Jean has been with Local 21 since 1994, married to Ed Sullivan (okay not that one.) They have two lovely daughters, and her treasured yorkie, Fergi. One of the things I admire most about Jean is that she is very close to her sisters, and her friends.

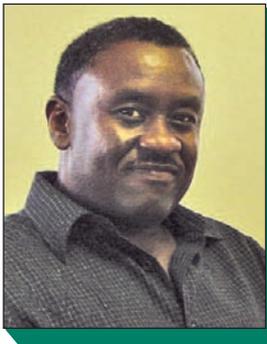
They travel together and Jean is the authority on shopping. Jean is another important part of the clerical staff at Local 21.



Jean Sullivan

Shareholders at Comcast are Piping Mad

By Jerry Rankins, Business Representative



There's an old saying that "you can be too smart for your own good." This describes Comcast best. Driven by greed they have completely lost

sight of workers and customers. Low wages, along with a lack of dignity in the workplace is the perfect combination to create a very unhappy employee. The effect will eventually impact the growth of a company.

That's exactly what is happening. Comcast is not growing and the shareholders are unhappy. Their stock prices are down over 60 percent. Analysts are predicting things will get worse for Comcast before they get better.

Workers are leaving in droves for the opportunity to work elsewhere, mostly at AT&T. There are finally opportunities for these brothers and sisters who have marketable skills, compliments of Comcast. The company wasn't smart enough to pay a competitive salary with benefits to sustain its workforce.

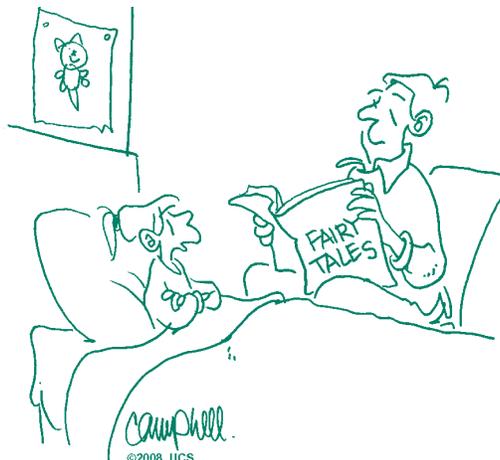
The upcoming shareholders meeting should be packed with irate shareholders prepared to unleash their anger on CEO Brian Roberts like never before. I can't wait! Are you a

shareholder? Let's start planning a trip to the City of Brotherly Love now!

At the **Merrillville Indiana** garage, congratulations to brothers Doug Brummett and Rodney English on their promotion to System Technician. This was only made possible due to a grievance filed by the Union claiming disparate treatment. Local 21 reached a settlement before the arbitration date. The two brothers were promoted and will be paid the System Technician pay back to January 2007.

Also, in Merrillville, the arbitration for the brothers who were wrongfully discharged for being on disability is scheduled for April 2008

Remember – where's strength there's unity!



"I don't want to hear a Cinderella story. I want to hear a Norma Rae story."

Lack of Staffing Still a Major Issue at OEMC 911

Inadequate staffing of Call-Takers/and Dispatchers at the OEMC is once again a topic of discussion in the media. Management is responsible for adequately staffing the center, not our members, who have no hiring power. It is wrong for the media to place the blame on our members. Local 21 has requested Sun Times reporter Fran Spellman to not personally identify our members, and print what they earn on overtime.

Mayor Daley has the power to improve the situation to prevent risk to the public. Executive Directors with the highest qualifications need to be appointed. When things go wrong at the OEMC, management never admits to the Union or the public that the OEMC is so understaffed that compensatory time, lunch and regular breaks are denied. This pace burns out employees.

Management never talks about inconsistent procedural policies on issues like radio assignment pending (RAP). Instead, the Executive Director goes on television and says, "If I could, I would fire the employee or employees." This type of leadership is unacceptable.

Before we can dream of hosting the Olympics here, try fixing the 911 Centers. It's the first line of defense for all of us!

In Solidarity.

Election 2008

By Rosetta Shinn & Dennis McCaffery, Committee on Political Education



The future of our country depends on union members showing up at the polls.

We should have learned from the 2000 Presidential race that your vote does count. In the past 25 years roughly half of all Americans who are eligible to cast a vote have not shown up at the polls. During the midterm elections those numbers drop even more. So why are so many union members staying away

from the voting booths? In the past, it's been said they are not drawn to any of the candidates. This may be the year of the union voter. For the first time in history we may have a woman President or African American President. Hopefully, your vote will not be based on sex, race or party. It is time for all union members to get out and vote for the man or woman, democrat or republican, black or white who shares our values. Your vote should be for the candidate who believes in working family issues.

In 2007 for the first time in the past quarter of a century, unions increased their share of membership among U.S. workers, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics' annual union membership report. Unions added about 310,000 members last year, raising the unionized share of the workforce to 12.1 percent from 12.0 percent in 2006. This may not seem like much, but every little bit will make a difference at the polls.

Let's talk issues. The Employee Free Choice Act, good jobs, trade & manufacturing, health care, retirement security and education are just a few issues that should concern all union

members. The Employee Free Choice Act (S.1041) is the critical workers' rights legislation that will hold anti-union employers accountable. It will guarantee workers a free and fair chance to form a union and prevent employers from dragging out contract negotiations.

From now until November we need to get all of our members and their families registered to vote. We need to educate them on the issues and how every member can make a difference. The Committee on Political Education department needs your help (COPE.) It may be in the form of working on an election campaign, phone banking, talking to your fellow workers or taking the time to check out the AFL-CIO endorsed candidates. Please contact the COPE Department to volunteer this election year. You can reach Rosetta Shinn at ext. 327 or Dennis McCaffery at ext. 353.

Union members will be out in full force at the polls this election year. Please go to www.ibew21.org for a list of primary election winners.

We must fight for our future and for the future of workers who will be doing these jobs long after we have left the workplace. Politics is about our future. The legislation passed this year will affect us for generations to come. As we have in the past, we will build our future through collective bargaining, organizing and political action.

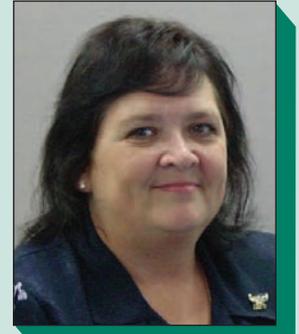


PHOTO: TOM HOPPER

*Union stewards and activists map out their workplaces to build worker power with an improved communication structure during Internal Organizing training for Mobilization Coordinators. **Look for more in-depth coverage of the Local 21 Internal Organizing Program in the next issue of Frontline!***

Focus on Indiana

The 2008 Indiana General Assembly convened this January with property tax reform at the top of the Legislature's list of "things to do". Bills that Labor will be monitoring include: Employee Classification (1099), Collective Bargaining for Public Employees, the formation of a Privatization Review Committee, and Cable Programming Arbitration. We will also be keeping an ever-watchful eye out for Right to Work and/or Paycheck Protection to make sure that neither one of these deceptively titled legislations is introduced. If all goes well, the current session will end on March 14th.

Super Tuesday has come and gone and much to the surprise of the "experts," no candidate from either political party has what can be considered a lock on their respective nominations. With the Texas, Pennsylvania and Ohio primaries coming up in March, its conceivable that (believe it or not) Indiana, who's primary is on May 6th, may play a very unfamiliar role in determining the nominees for BOTH parties.

All in the Family – World Class Members Who Really Care

Local 21 members are the backbone of the world class Office of Emergency Management & Communications 911 Center (OEMC) in the City of Chicago. Anthony Ruiz the Executive Director of the OEMC informed us that Chicago's 911 Center is the world model for emergency call centers. Dignitaries from Europe, Central America and the Middle East have visited the Center to study how the system works in order to model their centers after ours.

The OEMC call center is a huge softly lit room where the work stations are divided into thirteen zones, like the City itself. At peak times our members can handle 3,000 calls per hour and more than 6 million calls annually. Those calls range from bank robberies, high rise fires, assaults, pregnant mothers giving birth, shootings, and unfortunately prank calls.

The call comes in and the address pops up on the center screen. The call taker completes the "electronic event" with the who, what, when, and where information provided by the caller. The job is coded and sent to a call dispatcher. Another screen shows a map of the immediate area. An "event" can be sent for dispatch with a "D code" indicating details will follow so help is not delayed while the call taker asks more questions. The average call is answered within 1.2 seconds and completed in 45 seconds.

Call takers remain on the line while a call is transferred to the fire department. They also have the ability to transfer calls to suburban police departments. Our members have access to the language bank and reach an interpreter to assist callers in over 140 languages and dialects.

There are three shifts or watches and two power shifts. There is a half-hour roll call at the start of each shift.

Despite the hectic pace, the callers are always treated with respect by our members. When something goes wrong and there is a delay in emergency personal arriving on the scene, mainstream media is quick to blame our members. The media calls for

investigations, the public becomes outraged and government officials call for firings. When the dust settles and the cameras go away our members are usually cleared of all wrong doing.

Unfortunately that news seldom gets reported.

It's a testimony to our members' professionalism that they wanted us to write about **what you need to know when placing a 911 call**. All callers need to remain calm and answer all the questions the operators ask you. Our members said that callers get annoyed with the number of additional questions asked after the basic information is obtained. Callers just want the police or fire department to get to their emergency. Unknown to the caller the dispatchers have already alerted the police and fire departments while they continue to gather more information about your emergency. Your calls are not delayed and the additional information is forwarded to the units that are already on their way.

Our members also stressed that when making a call from a cell phone always speak clearly when giving your location. Unlike landlines, calls from cell phones are unable to immediately provide your exact location. They also urge parents to teach their children not to make prank calls to 911. They delay response times to people who actually have an emergency.

Clarence Cooper, a Chief Steward with Local 21, has been there since Emergency Communications first became operational in the City of Chicago in 1975. Clarence was asked if he wanted to serve the public and help those in emergencies by taking their calls and dispatching the appropriate emergency personal. He jumped at the



37 new calltakers graduated January 31st.

opportunity.

"Coop" remembers using the old punch cards with Illinois Bell caller ID technology that predicated the current high tech fiber optic system. Clarence was part of the organizing committee that was influential when the call takers organized with IBEW Local 165. In 1998 Local 165 was amalgamated with four other Locals into the present day Local 21.

Our members at the OEMC have the same gripes as union members that rest of us have. They take enough abuse from the public and could do without the electronic sweatshop conditions. They want more respect on the job. They use their best judgments when the public is at risk. In recent years they have faced increased job stress and burn out. We are proud to announce that the City hired 37 new call takers and they graduated from their 8 month training program on January 31st.

Local 21 also represents the call takers at Midway and O'Hare airports. They are responsible for monitoring all calls for police assistance, unauthorized door openings, improper gate passes and ambulance and fire dispatches at the airports. They also notify the proper departments when a "knuckle head" decides to take a jog on the runway. According to Coop there's a lot going on behind the scenes that public never sees.

Our members working for the City of Chicago have been working under an expired contract. They are hoping the City settles the contract soon. They deserve the same respect that the other trades received when they ratified their recent agreement. In "the city that works" our members are the ones who help protect us. They can rest assured that they have the solidarity of the entire Local ready to back them in their negotiations.



● ● ● In **Rock Island** Consumer the company's proposed 2-week scheduling process was not agreed upon by Local 21. The issue has been escalated to San Antonio. In the meantime, the current tours will be extended through the end of February.

...**Peoria** Credit & Collections did get two people's worth of legacy T work on the voice cpe side.

...The Union is working on numerous issues at the **Bel-wood Nursing Home**.

...After a three year battle and arbitration case, a **Vermilion County** employee was awarded her full time position back with all lost wages and benefits. She was brought back to work in her same position on February 4, 2008.

...The Union was able to get three employees from **Vermilion Manor Nursing Home** their jobs back after they were terminated unjustly.

Contributed by Area Stewards Donna Stoner, Alison Watson & Doris Halls

By Vickie Burroughs, Business Representative



● ● ● The Third step grievance meeting that I had scheduled in December was delayed until January because Labor needed to schedule their remaining vacation time. I will report on the results from that meeting as soon as I hear back from Labor Relations.

...I've been working on getting arbitration cases scheduled in 2008 to alleviate the backlog. **AT&T** has been waiting till the last minute to settle some of the cases before they are heard by an arbitrator.

...Stewards should contact their Business Representatives or Chief Stewards and give them their email addresses or update their address on file if their email has changed.

Michael Cohns, Business Representative



● ● ● There was a battery acid spill in the Illinois Dearborn central office in downtown **Chicago**. The duty manager tried to discipline a member who didn't have the proper training or equipment for refusing to clean up the nine gallon spill. The member called Power & Environment to safely handle the spill. According to the decision in OSHA V. Whirlpool, employees have the right to refuse work that puts them, or their partner, or the public in imminent danger.

...The state law banning smoking within 15 feet of building entrances applies to all work locations including garages. Don't rat on your peers. Politely ask them to move from the entrance. If they refuse, talk to your steward.

By Michael Sacco, Business Representative



Network News

Starting the week of February 4th, AT&T made staggered announcements that they were declaring about 165 Local 21 members in **downtown Chicago technology centers surplus** due to a variety of reasons. On February 14th our Union met with the company to review this declared surplus. We did not reach any agreements, but our talks continue. The Union is grieving these moves by the company because they violate our contract in the tech change and movement of work out-of-state clauses.

● ● ● **JULIE**- It's been a long time since the members have seen so much movement in their office. The company opened a new management job title which started a domino effect for openings within the call center. Members are looking at openings in Data, Work at Home and possibly Chief positions. Late last year the part-timers were offered full time positions. A few members took advantage of the opportunity.

...**CHICAGO HEIGHTS**- Unfortunately the Credit and Collections Department has suffered under Mandatory Overtime in early January. Although it was for a short period of time, any period of time is too long when it comes to being forced to do something that prevents us from caring for our personal obligations. We are working through individual cases. The company requested one hour per day, per member. We were successful in negotiating with management that the hours could be worked either before or after their regular shifts.

...**LAKESWOOD, HOFFMAN ESTATES- Repair Center**- We are still arguing/negotiating with the company in regards to the 2008 Vacation Composition. AT&T is not willing to give the percentages/allotments allowed per the contract. We are expecting the company's final answer and are prepared to take this to arbitration if needed.

...**Dispatch Center**- With the company still consolidating work/centers, we are experiencing another change of work. They want to send Indiana Dispatch and Night Reporting work to another center and move in Special Service Dispatch for Illinois. We recently met with the company regarding the effects of the move and details will be released to the center.

...**EWO**- Welcome to our location, two EWO groups have moved to Hoffman with one more to come, again because of consolidation. We are currently arguing training issues.

...**New Member Committee**- We are still conducting New Member Union Orientation Seminars every Friday in Hoffman Estates. We have had the opportunity to talk to about 500 new members that will be working as U-verse Premise Technicians.

...Lastly, with the recent passing of Brother Kunas (may God be with him); I have been temporarily assigned to represent all IBEW Local 21 members working in our **Indiana AT&T** locations. I will be working with Byron Bonham your Chief Steward. I look forward to visiting you at your work locations in the very near future.

By Melanie Probst, Business Representative



● ● ● I regret to report that the Union lost the **Global Arbitration**. This means that the surplus employees won't be returning to AT&T. There are some former Global employees who have been hired on as contract employees working as Engineering Assistants. They have no benefits or pension plan.

...I have an upcoming arbitration regarding a surplus. AT&T did not offer SIPP to everyone within a 35-mile radius, only within the business unit. This is a violation of our contract, and we hope the arbitrator agrees, and rules in our favor. I will keep you updated as we proceed.



By Liz Hodges, Business Representative

● ● ● At **AT&T** it's the same old song and dance DETAILS, DETAILS, DETAILS. We have made some progress on the construction side of the house. For now, Exhibit 3 techs are detailed within exhibit 3, not to the City or Suburbs. This keeps techs closer to home when they drive home on their unassigned weekends.

...As most of you know, we completed the arbitration in December concerning whether or not travel time should be paid. We expect a ruling from the arbitrator some time in March.

...We are looking at some creative ways to give our members a break during these long-term details. In I&R, we are seeing more and more techs detailed to the City and Suburbs. Workload seems to dictate the numbers. Our workload downstate is atrocious, while the workload up North is higher. With video rolling out, I&R techs will be needed to take care of facility issues.

...I would like to make a special plea to our senior techs in both construction and I&R, give these junior techs a break by volunteering to take a detail. We are all Union brothers and sisters. Let's show some unity and some compassion for each other; isn't that what being a Union member is all about?

...I would like to welcome our new members in **Maryville**. There are 6 **prem-techs** there, with more to follow.

...At **Century Telephone**, we continue to work on bringing new work into the bargaining unit. As Gallatin River transitions into Century, it is imperative we work diligently towards keeping jobs. We have been able to make sure the service representative jobs stay in Illinois. We are now working towards keeping all splicing work in the bargaining unit - No contractors. I hope to see more of you at the next monthly meeting.



...The Unit 3 meeting on May 15th is being moved to DeKalb. This is to accommodate our **Verizon** members working in DeKalb.

By Michael Roach, Business Representative

● ● ● In the **AT&T Construction Department**, the Social Security Tax issue that caused some techs to have more taxes withheld from their 2007 earnings should have been corrected. The company agreed to work out a fix and all 2007 payroll errors should have been corrected. We started having meetings with the company to identify and hopefully take care of problem issues, such as training and details. The first meeting was encouraging and we hope to report on some progress soon.

...**Special Services**, otherwise known as the **DOG group** will be integrated back into the I&R department. We are working with the company to help make this a smooth transition.

...The **apprentice committee** met in January. All areas are in ratio at this time.

...The contracts are finally in the field for our **Johnson Controls** members. We will meet with the joint advisory committee on February 28th.



By Steve Unterfranz, Business Representative

● ● ● On the Southside of Chicago, after working on details for quite some time, most of the **construction forces** are back home. Hopefully, in the near future, AT&T will begin the Lightspeed build in the city. Fiber crews have work scheduled to begin the build, but there is no official start date on when the FTTN work will begin.

...The **I&R** world has been relatively quiet. We do have problems with cable work. There are cable techs working basic installation while other techs of questionable qualifications are doing cable work. We are in the process of checking qualifications to make sure the right people are doing the right work. In DOGG, we know it has been announced that it's going back to I & R, I am on the committee. As soon as I have something to report, I will be sure to get the information out to you.

...I realize it's winter time and it's cold. However, **you cannot leave your company vehicle running when you are not in it. Not even if you are standing next to it.** Take heed now, because the company is watching. Stay safe, stay warm, and we'll see you next month. Oh...don't forget to check your driver's license 217 768-2720.



By CJ-Cleveland Johnson, Business Representative

• • • The Arbitrator ruled in favor of Carla Tomter in the arbitration case on her dismissal. We are working with AT&T on a one-time cash settlement for her. Carla was an Administrative Specialist, who was terminated for attendance. At the time of her termination, Carla was diagnosed with breast cancer. Because of the termination, she lost all her benefits. Carla is at home fighting for her life.



...Many of you are aware of the sudden passing of Mike Kunas, on January 4th, 2008. I will miss Mike greatly. I would like to personally thank the New Lenox and Orland Hills garages for taking up collections for Mike's family.

...At the last Unit 4 meeting, Mike Grindle gave an update on Gary Marshall's recovery. Gary was the technician, from the Montgomery garage, who fell out of a bucket truck. Gary is going through physical rehab. He vows to return to work. Once again, I would like to thank the New Lenox, Orland Hills, and Montgomery garages for collecting money for Gary and his family.

PLEASE KEEP CARLA, MIKE, AND GARY IN YOUR THOUGHTS AND PRAYERS.

...Everyone should be aware of a recent ruling that came down from the NLRB (National Labor Relations Board). The board upheld that employees cannot use company e-mails for Union communications. Everyone should remember the company offers e-mail accounts to the employees to speed up and track work functions. Look at the big picture; you can now be tracked when and for how long you search the internet. Along with the GPS systems, we now can be disciplined for using the web. Why not just use your phone, but not the company cell phone, to communicate?

...**SAFETY ISSUE-** AT&T will be starting a massive replacement of Avestor manufactured **batteries primarily used in the VRADS**. After four equipment fires in two years, including a Christmas Day 2007 explosion in Wisconsin, AT&T is no longer comfortable with the batteries powering thousands of its equipment cabinets in neighborhoods all over the United States. The company projects that it will be replacing 17,000 of these batteries. If you are aware of these batteries in use out in the field, please create a list of locations and give it to your Chief Steward or Business Representative.

...We have been prepping the first of many cases, coming up for arbitration, on the **AT&T Central Office** side of the business. We are involved in the **Construction** payroll issues. In **DAVAR** we have been tracking overtime, both six tours and incidental. Hopefully, the 10% differential issue, for the holidays, has been corrected in DAVAR.

...Finally, we should all start seeing the Prem Techs out and about. If you get a chance to talk to them, welcome them to the trade as Union brothers and sisters. Remember they are covered under our contract but they have a carve outs with different working conditions.

Hopefully we will see you at the next unit meeting.

By Mike McCormick, Business Representative

• • • I want to remind everyone to go into **JOBS** and update your qualifications and skills with any new items, so you are prepared for any job posting. Go to the company intranet at <https://jobs.sbc.com>.

...This is the time of year for colds and illnesses. Eat well and get plenty of rest. Remember AT&T does not give us breaks for attendance or sympathize with us when we are ill.

... Finally The Sage Group is going to start training classes to prepare members to take the **CTKT test**. This training is paid through the CPDP (Career and Personal Development Plan page 113 in the AT&T contract.) Classes are held on your own time, not company time. For more information, and to get a copy of the registration form contact Chief Steward Charles Snipes at the Union office 630 960-4466 X255. If Charles is unavailable you can leave him a message or contact your own Chief Steward. Classes to start soon.



By Kurt Schmidt, Business Representative

• • • The DOG Group should have completed their preference back to I&R and as of March 1st they should be pulling out of their new garages.

...I was able to resolve a suspension case and our member received some of his time back before the case went to arbitration. The new back log agreement seems to be working.

...With the winter storms AT&T forced techs back on mandatory overtime. Techs in some of the garages I cover are upset with the company because has it has detailed members out of their garages which increased the need for mandatory overtime because they are now short on headcount. I&R has the lowest headcount in the company it's no wonder we can't keep up with the workload. Instead of "putting all hands on deck" to get our customers back into service AT&T is being selective and putting restrictions on construction techs who want to help out to reduce the workload.

...I've been with the phone company for over 42 years and we have had the same overtime language in our contract. It's a testimony to our Union that we have been able to hold off the company for all those years. We must remain positive and understand our leadership is doing all they can to eliminate the hardships mandatory overtime is causing. The company has created the problem and we must all deal with it together.



By Dan Gruenich, Business Representative

Martin Luther King Jr. – Visionary and Trade Unionist

By James Parks, AFL-CIO

We all know that Martin Luther King Jr. was a visionary. We know he was a champion for civil rights. But did you know that he also was a strong supporter of unions and workers' rights from Day One?

AFL-CIO Organizing Director Stewart Acuff spoke last year, before the IBEW Minority Caucus conference in St. Louis: "I would submit to you that Dr. King was a trade unionist. He believed in our movement and struggled for our movement. He knew and he preached that civil rights were inadequate without economic rights. Dr. King knew that our economic system allows a few to have too much power and wealth and workers to have too little, so he believed that we have a responsibility to struggle to push down wealth and power from those who have too much to those who have too little. That is why he was a trade unionist."

In 1961, King explained his belief that the civil rights and union movements were linked. He spoke before the AFL-CIO Convention:

"The two most dynamic and cohesive liberal forces in the country are the labor

movement and the Negro freedom movement... Together we can bring about the day when there will be no separate identification of Negroes and labor."

Four years later, he told the Illinois AFL-CIO convention:

"Negroes in the United States read the history of labor and find it mirrors their own experience. We are confronted by powerful forces telling us to rely on the goodwill and understanding of those who profit by exploiting us. They deplore our discontent, they resent our will to organize, so that we may guarantee that humanity will prevail and equality will be exacted."

And in 1967, one year before he died, King wrote in his book, *Where Do We Go From Here: Chaos or Community?* that unions are just as important as business in ensuring economic success for people of color: *"Our young people need to think of union careers as earnestly as they do business careers and professions."*

This year, the annual AFL-CIO King Day celebration was in Memphis, where he was assassinated while helping city sanitation workers gain a voice at work.

Michael Honey writes in *Going Down Jericho Road* that King always supported



the union movement as a means of bringing justice to the workplace.

King led a mass movement that joined working-class people to the middle class through the black church. In his first speech at the first mass meeting of the Montgomery Improvement Association, King put the struggle against segregation into a moral and world-historical context. *"There comes a time when people get tired of being trampled over by the iron feet of oppression... When labor all over this nation came to see that it would be trampled over by capitalistic power, it was nothing wrong with labor getting together organizing and protesting for its rights."*

Our Union Button What's it Really Worth?

By Jim McLaughlan, Chief Steward

I just spent two weeks delivering the new 2008 Union buttons. I am sure this is going to surprise most of you, but in almost every location someone commented, "Nice, this is what I get from my monthly union dues?"

Well, the more I thought about that comment, the more I wanted to share my thoughts with everyone. My question to those few is, "Do you really **not** understand what you have gotten for those union dues?" I'm sure the thought already in their head was "I get nothing at all." Guess again!!

First, if you're reading this at home stop and look around the room you're sitting in. Do you enjoy the roof over your head? Guess what, **you bought it with the money you earned from your union-negotiated wages.** How about the furniture in your home, the clothes on your back, the car you drive to your union job, or the newspaper and cup of coffee you pick up every day? How were they paid for? You bought them with the money you earned from your union-negotiated wages. How about the Gameboy, IPOD, Nintendo Wii, golf clubs, vacations or that fishing gear you enjoy? How were they paid for? Bought with the money you earned from your union-negotiated wages. The food on your table or your children's college tuition are all paid for with the money earned from your union-negotiated wages.

Let's not forget about the medical insurance you receive. Where did it come from? Your benefits from your union-negotiated contract. I saved the best for last. How many of us had a co-worker retire in the past year or so? Well, did you know the average wage group one technician walks out of here with approximately **\$400,000?** Where did that come from? Your pension benefit from your union-negotiated contract. If they invested in the union-

negotiated 401K plan, an additional \$400,000 may be going with them. For a total that is somewhere in the vicinity of **\$800,000.**

Now that I have your attention, let's all think about this for a minute. Did one little button get you all that? Not really, but everyone who helped negotiate a contract, supported our cause, walked a picket line, or prepared for a strike helped you achieve the American dream, TOGETHER!

Did you know that lower level managers (your boss) in the same company, don't enjoy the same benefits we have? Do you know why? They don't get a button. They work for the same company that reduced their benefits, pensions, and wages while getting no overtime for the long hours they're expected to work.

That button you get as a union member protects all of us from the company's desire to rip away our benefits. If we didn't have that button, which represents our union, do you think the company would just give you what we all helped bargain for? Or, would they treat you like they treat their managers and take everything away? You would have no voice, no word and no one who cares!

The few of you, who think you only got a button, should get more involved in what the Union stands for. **Maybe you should get involved in your future,** before the company you work for tries to take it away. When that starts, those few will be the first to scream at the union leadership. They pay their dues and think that's all they have to do. I have a better idea, you need to get involved!

I invite all of you to prepare for June of 2009. It is not that far away and we will all need to be united for the job ahead.

I like my button and it's worth every penny it cost me. It's been a great investment.



Welcome Prem Techs



Crystal Lake



Orland Hills



Orland Hills



Prem techs reporting to their new garage locations and attending new member orientation in Hoffman Estates.



Loose Lips Sink Ships

By Mike O'Connor, Area Steward



So, has your 401K rebounded from AT&T executive Randall Stephenson's devastating gaff while speaking to Citibank

analysts in January? Here we were, chugging along, our company stock (you know, the value we build with our sweat and labor) finally recapturing its equity from the post 9-11 slump. It was up almost 16 percent in 2007. Then Stephenson, in a single brain-dead statement, sent the stock plunging from nearly \$42 per share to a flat \$36, a \$6 per share loss from Dec. 30. Thank you very much.

Stephenson told analysts the company is seeing an impact from the general economic slump on the broadband and traditional access business. Specifically,

nonpayer disconnects are up since the third quarter. What I hope he meant was that those negatives were up *FOR THE MONTH OF DECEMBER*. The Citigroup analysts took it to mean long term trouble for AT&T in terms of dollars. The stock sank to a two-year low on the second Monday of 2008. After the 500 point loss in European markets on Jan. 21st the stock is now in an industry-wide slump. Thanks a lot, Mr. CEO.

This is what happens when a business loses focus of its primary mission. We who work in manholes, on CO frames, or are tied to an ACD in a call center, think the mission of the company is to provide dial tone and desirable vertical services to our customer base. But the company knows only one thing—to wake up every day and look to Wall Street and ask, "How do you want me to run my company today?" Could it be that if the company gave its customers the same attention that it gives the bankers and speculators of the brokerage houses, we wouldn't be suffering so much line loss?

Creativity & Value

By Nancy North, Area Steward



We've lived through the writers' strike, the one strike that hit us all where it hurts the most, entertainment. It wasn't just the snow that gave

us the winter doldrums; there was nothing good on television as we huddled inside. The Writers Guild of America strike was most obvious in late night talk shows. First re-runs for two months, then a month of hosts fumbling with improv, proving the shows need writers.

The strike illustrated that it is the creativity of the worker, something inside, indefinable, un-measurable that keeps an industry in high gear. **This inner core of value applies to us too.**

The strike was not only about wages in

existing technology, but compensation for work in new technology--DVD and internet downloads. This applies to us as we fight for wages, benefits and the jobs that are emerging from new technologies at our employers, whether it's U-verse at AT&T, FiOS at Verizon, Digital Phone at Comcast, or new mapping technology used at JULIE. At all of our employers we must make sure we are protected and see the rewards from the fruits of our labor as our employers profit from our sweat equity.

On February 13th Jon Stewart of The Daily Show and Steven Colbert of The Colbert Report both thanked their writers and waived their scripts with wild enthusiasm. A dozen writers for The Colbert Report ran out on stage to thunderous applause. The shows had more bounce and tempo.

I hope corporate America saw that all workers need appreciation, recognition, and good wages.

Agreement Ratified at AT&T Business Services

By Michael Sacco, Business Representative

Local 21 members ratified by a wide margin a tentative agreement reached with AT&T Business Services (formerly SBC Datacomm) on a 2-year contract extension. The extension includes a 2.5% across the board pay increase effective February 3, 2008 and an additional across the board increase of 2.5% in February, 2009. The Union Bargaining Committee appointed by President/Business Manager Ron Kastner and lead by Business Michael Sacco and Chief Steward Ken Stachon had recommended a "yes" vote on the deal.

The extension also contains language concerning the possibility of Local 21 DataComm members joining with other IBEW Local's nationwide in an IBEW System Council to protect the interests of Local 21 members, should a System Council be formed.

Ballots were tallied on February 1, 2008 by Election Judges, Datacomm members Jim Grasz and Jim Hayes. Local 21's DataComm bargaining committee thanks all bargaining unit members for your help and active support. Solidarity!



"All this family needs is one more worker and we'll be middle class."

CONGRATULATIONS LOCAL 21 RETIREES

March 2007

Michael Garrigan

April 2007

Barbara Plovich

June 2007

Donald Tartaglia

July 2007

Dennis Mahoney

August 2007

Voncille Henderson

October 2007

Anita Andrews
Irma Gacsy

November 2007

Janice Hill

December 2007

Gail A. Hornbaker
Junior Matern
Rita Fleece

January 2008

Martin Venn
James R. Wolff
Patrick D. O'Brien
Jeffrey P. Sederberg
Charley E. Burnett
Barbara Rogers
Gerald S. Lenz
Barbaraly S. Fashing
Jim Barnes
Susan Lange
Tim Hull
Varniece Holcomb
David Borkman
Sandy Polk
Victor Stott
Russell Bright
Robert A. Wissing
Dorothy L. Allen
Burney C. Wilke
Theresa N. Muhammad
Robert E. Stearns

February 2008

Karen C. Bulanda
Wayne Stachura
Penny Gansbauer
Mary Brent
Albert DeSavien
Jean Wenthold
Ronald Sands
Sheila Goldsmith
Dave Sellars
Janis E. McFerren
Bill Roberts
Richard Slanicky
Francis Younkin
Brenda Sivels Cherek
William Cloonan
Theresa Lindstrom
Christine Clotfelter
James W. Harney

Information Alert

Members must be in good standing for 10 consecutive years with IBEW Local 21 immediately preceding their retirement in order to receive a retirement gift. These members must be severing their employment with the employer. Stewards can request applications by calling Nancy Kopydlowski at the union office 630 960-4466 X234.

Congratulations to Orland Hills I&R Retirees



L-R Bill Roberts, Richard Slanicky,
and soon to be retiree Steve Sours

PHOTO: BOB SMITH

IBEW Local 21 Solidarity Night with the Chicago Bulls

There are still tickets left for Local 21's next Union Solidarity Night scheduled for Tuesday, March 25, 2008. Local 21 has secured 250 seats in two side-by-side sections of Chicago's United Center where members and their families will have a great time watching the Chicago Bulls play the Atlanta Hawks.

All tickets are \$20.00 and include a free meal deal, free mini-posters and a chance to win other great prizes. Tickets are being sold through the union hall on a first come first serve basis.

Complete details and a ticket order form can be found on at www.ibew21.org. For more information, contact Lynn Arwood at the Union Hall at 630.960.4466 ext. 520. **Come on out, bring the kids, and join together with co-workers and friends at a great union-building event!**

In Memoriam Mike Kunas

We mourn the sudden passing of Business Representative Mike Kunas. He served as Local 21 Chief Steward in Northwest Indiana before being promoted to Business Rep in May 2007.

Michael McCormick reminds us that in any meeting, Mike Kunas would have your back, if there was a problem. Anyone who knew Mike would know when a smirk came on his face, that it would only be a couple of minutes until the explosion occurred. Mike loved to play cards, especially against Bill Henne, Kevin Curran, and Robert Taylor. He made it his personal mission to take their money. As far as golfing was concerned, the same held true, on the course he loved to beat Ron Kastner, Dennis McCafferty, and once again Bill Henne. Mike was always talking about his daughter, Zoie and his wife Amy. Few people come around like Mike Kunas. He will be missed

UNIT MEETINGS 2008

MARCH

Unit 1

Thursday, March 13, 6 PM
IBEW Local #134
600 W. Washington Blvd.
Chicago IL
312 474-4186

Unit 2

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

Unit 3

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

Unit 4

Wednesday, March 12, 7 PM
IBEW Local #145
1700 52nd Ave, Suite A
Moline IL
309 736-4239

Unit 5

Wednesday, March 19, 7 PM
IBEW Local #538
1290 N. Michigan Ave.
Danville IL
217 442-0996

Unit 6

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

Unit 7

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

APRIL

Unit 1

Thursday, April 10, 7 PM
Irish-American Heritage Center
4626 N. Knox Ave.
Chicago IL
773 282-7035

Unit 2

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

Unit 3

Thursday, April 17, 7 PM
Holiday Inn Hotel & Suites
495 Airport Rd.
Elgin IL
847 488-9000

Unit 4

Wednesday, April 9, 7 PM
American Legion Harwood Post #5
705 S. Larkin
Joliet IL
815 725-4333

Unit 5

Wednesday, April 16, 7 PM
Rocky Point Club
3603 Bonasinga Dr.
Quincy IL
217 224-1332

Unit 6

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

Unit 7

Monday, April 21, 7 PM
IBEW Local # 309
2000A Mall St. (Rte 157)
Collinsville IL
618 345-5112

MAY

Unit 1

Thursday, May 8, 7 PM
IBEW Local #21 Conference Center
1307 W. Butterfield Rd. Suite 424
Downers Grove IL
630 960-4466

Unit 2

Tuesday, May 13, 7 PM
Lansing American Legion Post #697
18255 Grant St.
Lansing IL
708 474-5906

Unit 3

Thursday, May 15, 7 PM
Best Western
1212 W. Lincoln Hwy.
DeKalb IL
815 758-8661

Unit 4

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

Unit 5

Wednesday, May 21, 7 PM
VFW Post #630
1303 E. Main St.
Urbana IL
217 367-4197

Unit 6

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

Unit 7

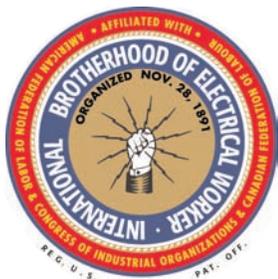
Monday, May 19, 7 PM
IBEW Local 649
4051 Humbert Rd.
Alton IL
618 462-1627

IBEW LOCAL 21

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

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Remembering Mike

This time last year as I was working on Local 21's annual entry in the Southside Irish Parade I had visions of a leprechaun leading our delegation, marching in front of our banner, waving at the crowd, you get the picture. So I began recruiting. You may find this hard to believe but getting a man to agree to wear a bright green suit with white tights while marching down Western Ave. was a little more difficult than I had originally thought. One day while I was begging/threatening my first choice to put on the suit, I heard from behind the voice of Michael Kunas, "I'll do it." I turned around to see Mike standing there, (all 6 foot 4 of him) grinning. Those of you who knew Mike know the face very well, the grin and the twinkle in his eye. I don't know about you but, I was never sure what was going to come next after the grin. I never knew if he was serious or not. He repeated, "I will do it." I made a call to the costume shop. I wasn't sure if they could costume a 6 foot 4 leprechaun.

When parade day came, the sun was shining, the temperature was mild and

our leprechaun was amazing. He wore the tights, painted his hair green and proudly marched in front of the Local 21 banner. We had close to one hundred members and their families participating. Mike took on the challenge with his usual enthusiasm and great sense of humor. He was even featured on the evening news!

As we plan this year's Local 21's parade entry I cannot envision another leprechaun leading our delegation. What I do see is our Union family coming together to celebrate Mike's life. I invite you all to come out with your families, and help us remember. I'm sure there will be some tears but, if you knew Mike Kunas there will be plenty of good stories and a lot of laughter.

The South Side Irish St. Patrick's Day Parade is Sunday March 9th.

Step off is at NOON at 103rd and Western Avenue in Chicago. Call the hotline 630 415-2711 before you leave home for the exact location of our float. If there are any questions, please contact me, Lynn Arwood 630 960-4466 ext 445.

