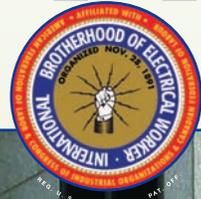


# FRONTLINE

IBEW LOCAL 21



Volume 14, No. 2 • May 2009



PHOTO: ERIC SLATTERY

## INSIDE

Business Manager . . . . .pg 2  
Curran's Report . . . . .pg 3  
Gast's Report . . . . .pg 4  
Benefit Report . . . . .pg 4

Scholarship Winners . . .pg 5  
COPE . . . . .pg 6  
Stewards Conference . .pg 7  
Comcast/OEMC 911 . . .pg 8

Safety . . . . .pg 9  
News Across the Local .pg 10  
Retirees . . . . .pg 18  
Meetings . . . . .pg 19

## **We are up for this Fight**

By Ronald Kastner



**A**s we prepare to send this issue of *Frontline* to the printers, our brothers and sisters who belong to the CWA have been working without a contract with AT&T since April 4th. Their negotiations continue as I write this, but the report from their negotiating team is that all company proposals have become increasingly retrogressive in nature since the beginning of their

talks. Furthermore, the proposed benefits package and contract language are totally unacceptable. I do applaud the CWA for their diligence during these negotiations; obviously they have determined their members deserve more than is currently being offered. Their battle will soon become ours.

AT&T would like us all to think their position in corporate America is similar to the position of the auto industry or any other unprofitable corporation. Nothing could be further from the truth. The company made 12.9 billion dollars in profit last year. Their ranking in the S&P 500 continues to move up, and they paid out record dividends to their shareholders. This is not an industry under duress. And they continue to use doublespeak. They justify cutting our benefits by saying the wire line organization is losing lines and their profits come from wireless, internet and video organizations. However, if you look at the contracts offered to those organizations, you can see that there is little reward given. The truth is that the wire line organization supports these other services. Whatever happened to the team work that this company has preached throughout my entire career? Holding one part of our union up against another is appalling to me. There is no reason to justify this degrading behavior.

Of course, the biggest obstacle remaining is health care.

Agreeing to their management health care plan is not the answer. Doing so would only support the broken health care system in this country. The company's managers and non-union employees currently pay outrageous amounts of money toward their health care. This is exactly what President Obama and his administration will change during his time in office. It makes much more sense to work together with the current system and drive down the costs. Furthermore, how dare this company forget that we all gave up wages over our careers because this

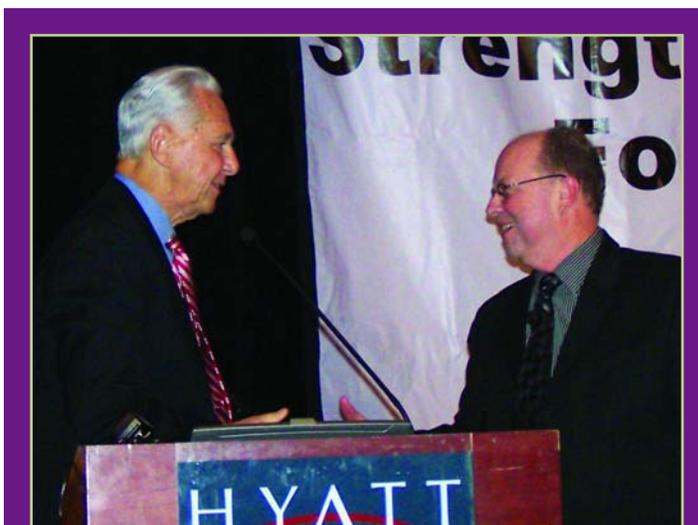
company was known for providing lifelong benefits? This is a betrayal to all of us. And, it is necessary to think about the retirees and their health care benefits. Will they be next on the chopping block? I'm proud to say our active members say that they will do whatever it takes to save the retirees. Due to the efforts of our retiree coordinator, Larry Moeller, over 1,000 retirees have become an army ready to fight for our rights. All indications from the CWA proposals specific to the U-verse/Prem Tech organization are far from encouraging. It seems AT&T intends to treat the rest of us like them instead of improving the working conditions and wages of these hard working members to be more like the rest of us. This is totally unacceptable! We worked with the company to allow their entrance into the video product. And, now, while AT&T admits this organization is making them profitable, they simultaneously refuse to improve their standard of living.

The news on the lump sum pension isn't any better. AT&T's intention is to lower the amount by changing the manner of calculation. If the company has their way active members who wish to retire will receive a significantly lower amount of money than in the past even though the current cost of living has increased dramatically.

As we get closer to the contract deadline, I need to remind all active and retired members that this company will undoubtedly continue to feed you an abundance of false information. They will also attempt to play mind games with you; perhaps send emails containing inflammatory language and such. Please remember the only sources of real information during the contract negotiations are the union hot line, and website. We will also send out email and text alerts. Do not let AT&T management manipulate your emotions during this time. If you have any questions or concerns, ask your union steward for an answer.

When I said this will be the toughest contract negotiation ever, I also went to work putting a plan together to position

ourselves for this fight. We will be using all our resources, including our political clout. We will enjoy an immense strength from the sheer number of members affected by these negotiations because of a joint bargaining agreement with the SCT-3. And, we will have the presence of our International Union at our bargaining sessions. Yes, Sisters and Brothers, we are up for this fight. Now it is your job to show this company you are willing to do whatever it takes to maintain our standard of living. If you show them we will strike if provoked, we won't have to.



*President Kastner greets International President Ed Hill at the Stewards Seminar.*

# Courage today, Victory Tomorrow!

By Kevin Curran, Vice President/Assistant Business Manager Marketing



In February, Local 21 held our Mobilization Seminar. It was a truly phenomenal experience. I wish all of our members could've been there to see the unity and energy of Union Stewards, Staff members, and Mobilization Coordinators. I wanted to share some excerpts of the speech I gave on our upcoming battle with AT&T.

You have a part in the battle our Union has long been preparing for. You will be on the front lines in the fight for dignity, respect, and a fair contract. It's on the front lines where this war will be won or lost. Make no mistake about it **THIS IS A WAR.**

These negotiations will be unlike any we've seen before. Midnight, June 27, 2009, will be a defining moment for this union and its members. And when you are confronted with a defining moment, **you either define the moment, or the moment defines you.**

In *The Art of War* ancient military strategist Sun Zu said, "In any major battle knowing yourself is far more important than knowing the enemy."

So who are we? Just who is IBEW Local 21? We are Service Reps, Prem Techs, Customer Consultants, and Wage Group 1 Techs. You can find us working from the rural areas downstate up to Rockford and beyond, from Moline to Northwest Indiana and in the hustle and bustle of downtown Chicago. We are men and women, young and old. We are seasoned veterans as well as green new hires. We come from every cultural and racial background. There are certainly differences among us, but what unites us **is far more powerful** than what could divide us. At its core, IBEW Local 21 is a group of 11,000 workers who have united together to fight for better wages, benefits, and working conditions. We must never lose sight of that, we must always remember **we hold each other's futures in our hands.**

If we are to survive this battle, we need every member to understand we are all part of something much bigger than ourselves because our solidarity will be our strongest weapon against AT&T in the battle for a fair and just contract. Believe me; I know it's hard to be focused on solidarity when you're getting beaten down by **unjust corporate policies, dim-witted management decisions, and immoral executives** who will eliminate a thousand jobs if it saves the company just one nickel. Every member must understand our solidarity is the key to victory.



PHOTO: NANCY NORTH

Over the last few months, I've traveled to many locations and usually the first things I'm asked by our rank and file members are "What's it look like for our contract?" "What are we going to get?" "What are we going to lose?"

I've thought a lot about these questions, and this is the answer. In a perfect world, we would all get what we hope and dream for. In a fair world, we would at least get what we deserve. But Brothers and Sisters, you and I live in the real world. **In the real world, you get ONLY what you fight, and struggle, and sacrifice for.**

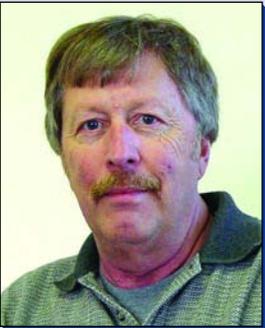
Workers rights are not and have never been defined by law or by contract. Our rights are defined by struggle and sacrifice. You and I will win only what we are willing to fight for nothing more. If you want to know who's going to decide what we will get in the upcoming negotiations, just take a look in the mirror. It's you, and me, and all of us who will determine what we get, or what we lose.

I know we have a lot of younger members and there's a lot of fear and anxiety. That's ok. Frankly, anyone going into battle against a multi-billion dollar behemoth like AT&T who wasn't a little worried is just plain foolish. It's important to understand what courage is and what it is not. **Courage is not the absence of fear.** Courage is overcoming your fears to take the action needed for victory. I think John Wayne put it best when he said that "Courage is being scared shitless, but then saddling up anyway." We need all our members to "saddle up" and have the courage to take a stand with us, against our common enemies: corporate greed, injustice, and inequality.

**When all of us are united as one there is NO FORCE that can hope to stand against us.** God bless you all and God bless this great Union. **COURAGE TODAY, VICTORY TOMORROW!**

## High Level Network Meetings

By Jerry Gast, Assistant Business Manager Network



In early April President Ron Kastner and I met with Bill Smith President of Network, Kirk Brannock Vice President for Network, and Derrick Hamilton Vice

President for U-Verse. In this meeting President Kastner brought up several **problems related to the treatment of our U-Verse members.** He's concerned about the amount of hours they are being forced to work, how the managers treat the techs, and the fact that AT&T is not hiring enough prem techs to handle the work load. President Kastner raised the issue of U-Verse tickets being scheduled on weekends and off hours in **I&M.** A lot of

double dispatches could be resolved by using I&M techs to work all the repair cases. President Kastner and I will attend follow-up meetings with Vice Presidents Derrick Hamilton, Cindie Bucks and Joe DeMillis.

I have also met with Joe Dimelis from Construction regarding details and we have an agreement that management won't force techs out on details around holiday weeks. The company is developing a schedule of the agreed-to weeks so we can get it out to the stewards.

We also agreed to work with **Construction** on Safety issues. The union safety committee will be meeting with AT&T to resolve the safety problems.

**The arbitration on cable mining** in Construction has started and the first day of hearings is done and a second day is scheduled in July. The arbitration case on the assignment of **Prem Techs** to temporary work locations and not receiving

travel time and expenses concluded. It's in the arbitrator's hands for a decision.

At the union meetings we've reported on "The Seventh Day of Rest Law." We've been working with the Illinois Department of Labor for clarification and now we will be meeting with AT&T to resolve the issues.

As we prepare for our upcoming bargaining with AT&T, your Business Reps and Chief Stewards have been going through the contract and writing proposals. President Ron Kastner, Vice President Kevin Curran and I are reviewing in preparation to rewrite the contract to resolve today's problems. The bargaining committee needs all the members' support to get a fair contract from a company making huge profits. We should not have to take concessions on health care, pensions or job security.

## Benefit Report

### We All Benefitted

By Lynn Arwood, Chief Steward/Benefits Coordinator



How do you put a value on one person's contribution? Sometimes it is apparent that because one person cared enough and worked hard enough, things were better.

At Local 21 one such person is Linda Corcoran Cox.

Linda has been a proud union member since 1971. She began her union career with former IBEW Local 383 where she started as a steward

before being appointed to area steward. She served as a Chief Steward for Local 336 from 1991 until 1998. After the amalgamation Linda was promoted to Business Representative for Local 21.

She began her work with benefits issues in 1993 while at Local 383 and has continued as the Director of the Benefits Department at Local 21. She was elected Recording Secretary in August of 2000, holding both positions until her recent retirement.

Her credentials and years of experience are very impressive, but

they don't come close to defining Linda's contribution to the IBEW membership she proudly served. That is best defined by the stories our members can tell. Stories of the times when they were sick, short on pay, facing discipline, or confused about their pensions and they called Linda. When Linda took on their fight, win or lose, they always got her best. Our members could breathe a little easier knowing she was on their side.

Ralph Waldo Emerson describes the true meaning of success, "*winning the respect of intelligent people, to leave the world a little better, whether by a healthy child, a garden patch or a redeemed social condition, to know even one life breathed easier because you have lived.*"

Congratulations on your retirement Linda. Relax and enjoy yourself for you have been successful.



PHOTO: TOM HOPPER

## Wow, We Were Impressed

By Jacquie Fields, Treasurer



The Local 21 Scholarship committee, consisting of Jim Noble, Nancy North, Jim Nink, and I would like to thank everyone who participated this year. We have been awarding ten \$1,000 scholarships for the past four years and this year we received the highest number of entries. The theme of this year's essay was "How do unions impact the economy?" We were overwhelmed by the number of essays and the quality of the submissions was very impressive.

The committee reviews all the scholarship packages, but the essays have been removed and number coded. When we read the essays, the identity of the author is secret.

Congratulatory letters were sent and the winners are listed below. I encourage all members who are attending college or have a child in college to submit an essay next year. This has become a wonderful way for IBEW Local 21 to support higher education and to educate our young people on the importance of Unions.

### 2009 Scholarship Winners

Jason Braun  
Dominique Gibson  
John Hosty Jr .  
Kelsey Kanies  
Jonathan Marcus  
Taylor McAdams  
Colette Morgan  
Joseph Stancato  
Kyle Twomey  
Jim Wallace

## Great Job Brother

By Thomas Hopper,  
Business Representative

Brother Steve Yatsushiro, an AT&T employee, is a shop steward, activist, and leader. Steve has been named as a winner and co-recipient of the 2008 Founders Scholarship awarded by our IBEW International Union. He was recognized for this award in the Winter 2009 issue of the *IBEW Journal*.

The Founders Scholarship awards \$200 per semester hour to members attending any accredited college or university, studying towards an associates, bachelors, or postgraduate degree in an approved field, with a possible maximum distribution of \$24,000. President Ron Kastner commented on the award, "Steve's professional attitude, combined with a strong work ethic, self-motivation and commitment has contributed to his successful representation of our Local."

Two members out of nearly 800,000 IBEW members in all of North America won this award. Amazing! Brother Steve,

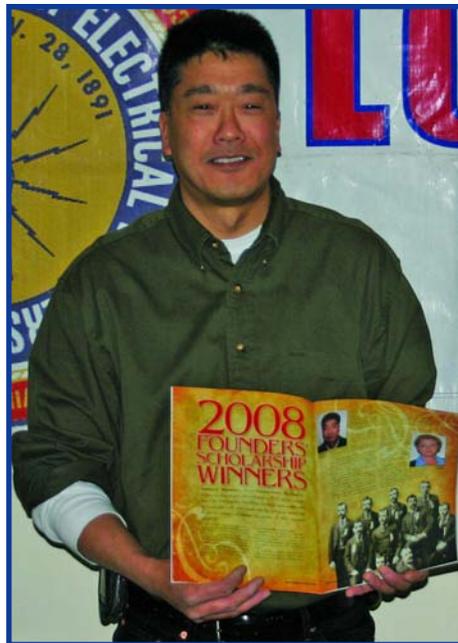


PHOTO: TOM HOPPER

we recognize you for your broad vision, underscored by a rock solid work ethic, and are proud you. Congratulations on this prestigious award that honors the wireman and lineman who, on November 28, 1891, organized the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers.

# FRONTLINE

IBEW LOCAL 21



Official Bi-Monthly Publication

International Brotherhood  
Of Electrical Workers  
Local 21, AFL-CIO/CLC

### IBEW Local 21

1307 W. Butterfield Road, Suite 422  
Downers Grove, Illinois 60515-5606  
Phone 630 960-4466 Fax 630 960-9607

Website [www.ibew21.org](http://www.ibew21.org)

Newswire hotlines  
630 415-2711 / 866 423-9582

### OFFICERS

Ronald E. Kastner, *President-Business  
Manager / Financial Secretary*

Kevin Curran, *Vice-President / Assistant  
Business Manager Marketing*

Jacquie Fields, *Treasurer*

Linda Cox, *Recording Secretary*

### EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBERS

Errick Houston Alison Watson  
Jim Sheehan Rosetta Shinn  
Jim Noble Erik Grigg  
Larry Schuler

### MANAGING EDITOR

Tom Hopper email: [thopper@ibew21.org](mailto:thopper@ibew21.org)  
Phone 630 960-4466 X223

### EDITORS

Nancy North email: [nnorth@ibew21.org](mailto:nnorth@ibew21.org)  
Bob Przybylinski email:  
[bobp@ibew21.org](mailto:bobp@ibew21.org)

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

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

All rights reserved to the entire content of the print or on-line versions of this publication. No content may be reproduced, reused or redistributed in any form without the express written consent of the IBEW. All requests must be submitted in writing to the editors of this publication. All violations of this policy will be prosecuted to the fullest extent under all applicable laws.

# Dirty Politics Repeats Itself

By Rosetta Shinn & Dennis McCaffery, Committee on Political Education



Political scandals have a long place in Illinois history. This is not the first time a Senate seat has been for sale in Illinois. One hundred years ago on January 19, 1909, politicians met behind closed doors trying to work out deals to get their candidate elected to a vacant Senate seat. Legislators cast ballots time and time again, but none of the candidates won a majority of the votes. On May 26th thirty-three

Democrats suddenly crossed party lines and voted for the Chicago Republican machine candidate. With 108 votes, Congressman William Lorimer became our junior Senator in Washington.

Eleven months after he took his Senate seat the Chicago Tribune front page headline said it all "Democratic Legislator Confesses He Was Bribed to Vote for Lorimer." Assembly member Charles A. White confessed to reporters his support for Lorimer was bought for \$1,000.

On July 13, 1912 the U.S Senate ruled that, "corrupt methods and practices were employed in the election of William Lorimer to the Senate of the United States from the state of Illinois, and

that his election therefore was invalid."

Illinois politics have not changed that much over this 100 year span. Even with the various reforms some politicians seem to find a way around the system. The Blagojevich scandal is not an exact replay of the Lorimer scandal, but it's easy to see Blagojevich as a classic Illinois politician. A politician who wants something in return for every job, contract, appointment and favor he doles out. That's the essence of Illinois politics.



National and local newscasts along with the late night comics made a laughing stock out of Illinois politics, then came the controversy surrounding Senator Roland Burris. Both parties created this mess. We have a one time Republican Governor making our front license plates and an impeached former Democratic Governor who just might be making our back plates. The voters in Illinois have had enough; don't get me wrong-- we have lots of good people in Springfield. However, reform is needed and needed now.

YES, IT'S TRUE -  
"UNION" BEGINS WITH "U"

©2009, UCS STEIN

YOUR UNION NEEDS YOU  
TO BE EFFECTIVE!

## Help Us Help You

By Rosetta Shinn & Dennis McCaffery, Committee on Political Education

We have been very busy in Springfield. **House Bill 2100** sponsored by our good friend Representative Lou Lang has our employers attention. The purpose of the legislation is to reduce excessive amounts of mandatory overtime, which places stress on family life, jeopardizes the health and safety of employees, and undermines the effectiveness of workplace operations.

Approximately twenty-two Senators have signed on to **Senate Bill 1360 the State Facility Overtime Act**. This bill will address overtime issues facing our brothers and sisters who work for the state. When will our employers get the message to ASK not Mandate?

Our members deal with essential public services everyday. They work in emergency **911 centers, hospitals, and nursing homes**. Of course most residents rely on our members working at **AT&T, Verizon, Avaya, Comcast, Century, and Citizens**, and others to connect them to the world. We may be asking for your help to get these bills and several others

passed. Please be ready to make those calls. If you have any questions or comments please call Executive Director Rosetta Shinn 630 960-4466 ext. 327 or Director Dennis McCaffery ext. 353.



"You should shut off your cellphone when we're in negotiations with the union. It's hard to cry poverty when your phone's playing 'We're in the money'"

**Saturday May 30, 2009**

Admission Price \$33

Includes admission to both parks

IBEW Solidarity Picnic 3-4:30 pm

All you can eat buffet & raffle for 4 season tickets

For more details & tickets call Union Hall

630-960-4466 ext. 527

# Stewards Conference



PHOTOS: BOB PRZYBYLINSKI



# EFCA Must Become Law

By Jerry Rankins, Business Representative



Recently, President Kastner arranged for Jose Hill a Shop Steward at Comcast to meet with Senator Roland Burris to explain the importance of

(EFCA) Employee Free Choice Act from a worker's point of view. Brother Hill, an Army veteran who fought in the Iraq war, clearly articulated his frustration with current Labor Law "I have fought to bring democracy to the Iraqi people now I fight a different war for democracy at home."

Senator Burris was enlightened with the facts, that EFCA does not seek to do away with the secret ballot as claimed by the Chamber of Commerce, and big businesses like Comcast. Instead EFCA would allow workers to have a choice: the secret ballot, or card check. Workers can then organize freely without intimidation and have a real chance to get a fair contract. Senator Burris thanked us all for better educating him on EFCA, and made clear he'll continue to co-sponsor the bill because it's the Unions who make the middle class. Please call Senator Burris to express our thanks.

## Union Agrees to Contract Extension at Comcast

With little hope of reaching a fair contract prior to the April 30, 2009 expiration of the Comcast West agreement, the Union has agreed to a contract extension. After weeks of meeting with the company very little progress has been made. Comcast made thirteen regressive proposals that seek to gut our current agreement. Comcast seeks to contract out more work, eliminate Sunday's premium pay at time and a half, reduce the number



of shop stewards, along with the Area/Chief Steward language. The Union's bargaining committee proposals seek to have all workers paid fairly with benefits, a pension plan, and job security. The company has not responded to any of the Union's economic proposals.

Currently, Comcast is the nation's third largest phone company providing video and internet services, but it refuses to pay its workers a fair wage. Each year Comcast raises health care premiums, and expects

more work from its employees while spending millions fighting EFCA. Once again, we are taking this fight to the shareholders' meeting in Philadelphia on May 13th.

## City of Chicago Continues to Cry Broke - OEMC 911 Center

After nearly two years of contract negotiations, the City has announced that they are not willing to offer Unit 2 the same wage package with retroactivity that was given to AFSME and the Trade Unions because they have no money. Local 21 is concerned that we have no contract and now Chicago is looking for concessions from all Unions except Police and Fire by way of furlough days, sick time, holidays, and threatening 1,600 layoffs primarily in jobs other than public safety. Since last October, this is a common theme for the City where over 600 employees were laid off, and others were forced to take non-pay furlough days none effecting the OEMC.

Brothers and Sisters, your bargaining committee will not resolve these on-going contract issues without you! In order to get a fair contract we must do what Unions do, come together! Our strength will be in our UNITY!



PHOTO: NANCY NORTH

Local 21 IBEW members hand bill in solidarity with CWA outside 10 S. Canal in downtown Chicago.



New Video Game  
Space Invasion: Management Attacks

# Be Part of the Solution not the Problem.

By Melanie Probst, Business Representative/Safety Chair

This report is similar to my last *Frontline* article, which means we have members who either didn't read it or just choose to ignore the "Life Threatening Procedures."

I again received a notice to appear at an OSHA hearing. This time, it was to discuss a serious violation an OSHA field agent observed while AT&T technicians were working in a manhole. The technicians were witnessed entering a manhole without testing the atmosphere for combustible gas and oxygen, and continuous forced ventilation was not provided. In the hearing I learned from the OSHA Field Agent that through his interview process at the job site, he inquired if the techs were supplied with monitors. The techs provided one which did not work, after a period of digging on the truck, the tech furnished a second monitor which did work. Their reason for not using the monitors was that they were just going in the manhole **for a minute** to check the cable's air pressure.

Through the hearing process I also learned that if there is a nitro tank in a manhole for air pressure, it's even more of a reason to test and ventilate. These techs had 19 and 12 years of service. The company furnished all of their training, re-training and observations as well as the discipline policy for violating the **Life Threatening Procedures**. AT&T was

finned for the non-compliance of violation of OSHA standards.

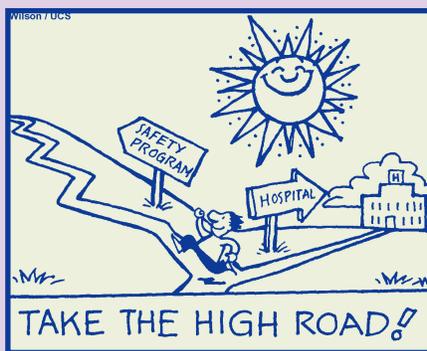
Again, I am not writing this to let you know OSHA fined AT&T. I am writing this to tell you to do your job safely, the way you were trained to do it. There is a reason for the training, to keep you ALIVE!

The safety committee will be working with AT&T to brainstorm how to get this ongoing problem resolved. I don't know why it even has to be addressed, I have told you before, if you don't have the proper equipment to do your job safely then don't do the job. If you have the proper equipment—THEN USE IT!!

Please make sure you are wearing your hard hat, body belts and securing your ladders. Focus and commitment from both management and union members is the key to a successful safety program. We have a great program in place. Let's use it to our advantage.

OSHA recently published their 2008 top 10 Violation List. Fall protection in residential services tops the list of safety standards violated in 2008, last year there were almost 109,000 OSHA violations cited with penalties reaching over \$35.2 million

If you have any safety issues or concerns, please contact your steward, Chief/Area Steward or Business Representative. They will work with the safety committee to address your concerns.



## Class is in Session

By Michael Sacco, Business Representative

Just finished reading *Staley: The Fight For A New American Labor Movement* by Steven Ashby and C.J. Hawking (2009 University of Illinois Press, Urbana and Chicago) and relived an important piece of recent labor history as well as my own personal history. I think in our own fights with our employers there are lessons for all of us to learn.

The book exhaustively recounts the 1992-1995 fight of 762 union members of Allied Industrial Workers (AIW) Local 837 in Decatur, Illinois against a giant multinational corporation to defend their union contract and their way of life.

A.E. Staley is a giant century-old corn processing company whose main product is high-fructose corn syrup. Workers organized into the AIW in 1943 and the union and the company enjoyed four decades of a largely-respectful relationship. However, in 1988 the operation was bought by multinational Tate & Lyle and things began to change as Tate & Lyle tried to squeeze maximum profits from its new property. Does this sound familiar to AT&T and Jones Cable members?

In response, the leadership shared control of the union with its rank & file who re-organized and invigorated their brothers and sisters. Workers educated themselves on labor history and its struggles, quintupled their union dues and began to fight the multinational on the shop floor with a "work-to-rule" campaign that caused members to deprive the company of their inside knowledge of the plant and threw the responsibility for production decisions back into the laps of ill-equipped managers.

As expected, without the workers' knowledge, production dropped and the company lost control of the plant. Staley locked the workers out of the plant, brought in scabs and contractors and AIW Local 837 was on the picket lines.

This is where the story really gets interesting. Instead of keeping their fight in Decatur, AIW members took their fight to the world as "Road Warriors" and told their story across the country soliciting help from unionists everywhere. I recall these brothers and sisters coming to our meetings in Local 336 and inspiring and

electrifying our members in the 90's. Many of us made trips to Decatur to support these brave workers.

Alas, the workers eventually lost when their union merged with another international union who wanted the fight to end and the workers to return to the plant.

My feeble thumbnail sketch here does no justice to the valiant struggle of the Staley workers and this fine and readable account of their story. As I read the book I thought about how common the story of workers being abused by corporations, like Tate & Lyle, AT&T and Comcast is. What isn't common is how this small local union fought back. I recommend this book so you can find out for yourself. You will see your daily struggle in this book.

By way of full disclosure, I was deeply involved in this fight for a couple of years and the book's authors, Steven Ashby and C.J. Hawking are friends of mine. That shouldn't discourage you from going to [www.staleybook.org](http://www.staleybook.org) and buying a copy of this great new book.

● ● ● **In Rock Island Consumer** the TACR survey process is being grieved at the third step of the grievance process.

Members, please stop declining union representation when you are called into a discipline meeting. Management uses a lack of requesting representation, and a failure to file a grievance against us in meetings. Also, arbitrators feel that not filing a grievance is the same as agreeing with the discipline.

In **Springfield Wholesale** the California calls were transitioned back to where they came from. This has eliminated the 6:30pm tour.

**Springfield BCS** has cut to a new phone system-CCTP. The members are trying to get used to it, it's a big change for them.

Members have completed training for the Alaska work that came to the **Peoria Credit and Collections Center**. Another Legacy T product--Execubill is very busy and more CA's need to be trained for that group.

At the **Belwood Nursing Home** the County is still working to determine if they will refurbish the building they are currently in or if they will build a new facility.

*Area Steward Donna Stoner & Chief Steward Alison Watson contributed to Vicki Burrough's report*



● ● ● It's important to work safely. Start before you leave the garages. First thing, do a safety check of your truck; remember it takes two techs to check the lights. Make sure you have enough cones and flags. Make this a habit everyday before you leave.

Be where you are supposed to be, always stop at the customer first. And stop cutting corners because the manager said that **AT&T** needs eight for eight. Do one job at a time, and do it right the first time. Don't work through your breaks and lunches. Your manager doesn't care about you. They just want their numbers.

So work safe and do it right the first time. We all should know the drill by now. If you have any questions you should go through the chain of command; your Steward, Chief Steward, Business Representative.

Know your Weingarten Rights. One of the vital functions of a union steward is to prevent management from intimidating employees. Nowhere is this more important than in closed door meetings when supervisors, often trained in interrogation techniques, attempt to coerce employees into confessing to wrongdoing.

The apprentice ratio is at 14% in director John Hudzik's area, for April.

*Michael Cohns, Business Representative*



● ● ● **In Northwest Indiana** members mourned the loss of a Brother who passed away from cancer, after 40 years of service. He had retired on a SIPP offer but he died the next day. Now the company is attacking his family by refusing to pay out the full service pension or the SIPP payment. We are fighting this travesty on multiple levels.

The company's unscrupulous behavior in this case serves as another reason members need to keep pension and beneficiary designations up to date.

The **Cable Mining Arbitration** held their first day of hearings; two more dates are scheduled in July.

We continue to address scheduling issues in the **I&R** organization.

*By Paul Wright, Business Representative*



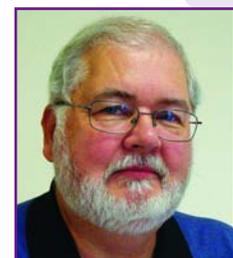
● ● ● The **Central Office** world was settling down after the preference was completed. However AT&T decided to change some of the manager's areas around again. Seems they can't figure out that despite changing areas and putting on off hour shifts management can still only get eight hours of work from each employee. We still need to meet on the scheduling trial and hopefully we can help them by proving that they only need to schedule off hours if the amount of work warrants the need.

The huge problem in **Construction**—the permanent moves of techs to locations near Chicago—was mutually resolved. Even though we started out on a rocky road, we were able to come to an agreement with AT&T that I believe will benefit our members. Everyone is aware that the Project LightSpeed build will cause the detailing of techs to other areas to perform the work. This has become a necessary part of our jobs but it's better than the alternative--being permanently moved to a garage near the work and then having to move again once the work is complete. I can only imagine the seniority issues that could arise if that happened. We also feel that a schedule of when details will start and end is beneficial. Both the techs and management can plan a little better throughout the year.

There is a serious issue with the off hour scheduling in **I&M in the south suburbs**. We will continue to oppose techs being scheduled on off hours for Special Service and helper tickets. Only a couple of tickets per week, or in some cases, a month, don't prove in the need to schedule evenings or nights. In one area we completed a study of the work and the company agreed to partner with the Union on the numbers and the scheduling. It looks like we will be expanding the program to the other areas in south suburban soon.

As always, remember, be where you're supposed to be, doing what you're supposed to do. Do the job the right way and by all means WORK SAFELY.

*By Steve Unterfranz, Business Representative*



• • • In **Downtown Chicago** at 311 W. Washington there's been a morale issue in the LNP-AIN center related to the work distribution. Management wants our members to assign themselves work. However, when they do so, management harasses and badgers them, claiming the members didn't assign enough work, nor are they working as a team to get all the work done.

The department expects that everything be done even though the teams are not evenly matched. We've met with management and we're working to correct the problem.

At 225 W. Randolph, the Federal group which handles government accounts has been working intermittently on a project to correct records. Incorrect records prevented new orders from updating and billing. The recession increased the pressure to collect the revenue. Managers wanted to force mandatory overtime to complete the work, even though people volunteered. Then AT&T backed off from forcing mandatory overtime, but sent the work out to another state.

By *Liz Hodges, Business Representative*



• • • In **Construction** the number of details has kicked up in Chicago in preparation for U-Verse. Right now it's mostly cable mining work. The garages are at capacity and AT&T wants to use night shifts to deal with overcrowding and regulations in the city. We are in discussions with the company about the night shifts to make sure they don't violate our contract.

In **I&M** the biggest trouble is with the overtime lists. With more people being trained for cable repair, hicap, DSL, and now U-Verse helper tickets, it's important to make sure the overtime lists are maintained properly. We had incidental overtime lists placed in all locations and they were zeroed out on the first of the year. The problem has been making sure the lists are updated and maintained properly. We didn't use incidental lists in Chicago before, so it's been a struggle getting the bosses to manage the overtime so that the lists are correct. We'll continue to work to make sure the lists are properly maintained.

In the **Central offices** the company has been making changes to the organizational structure by combining city locations with suburban locations. They wanted to combine the schedules and the overtime lists. They thought it would give them the ability to move people between offices. The problem for them is they cannot force across exhibits. So, we will see what they come up with next.

By *CJ-Cleveland Johnson, Business Representative*



• • • **Please, please**, remember what we've constantly told everyone. When a manager requests to talk to you, remember to ask, "*Can anything from this conversation be used towards discipline, either now or in the future?*" Despite our warnings, U-Verse techs keep going into meetings where they are disciplined. Later they call us, asking what we can do for them. Your Weingarten Rights are on the back of your union card; make sure you use them!

Questions came to the Union's attention at two recent accident investigations. In the first case a tech was outside working along side a house, when he felt something pop in his neck. The coax line that he was working on was approximately head high. This tech received a one day suspension because management decided that he was over-reaching and should have used a step ladder to perform the work.

In the second case, a tech was on a repair case, where the customer's TV was over a mantle, approximately 9 feet high. There was a large pot on the mantle with fake vines coming out of it, wrapped around the wires going up to the TV. To change the ends of the wire, to test, the tech had to disconnect the lead. He was off the ladder when the pot fell on him, cutting the tech above the eye, where he received five stitches. This tech also received a 1 day suspension. During the investigation, the tech explained how the pot probably fell down. The AT&T safety person claimed he had a physics degree and knew how to determine why the pot fell. Company statements included, "You should not have done this until the customer had disconnected and untangled the line for you." "You should have had the customer remove the pot from the mantle before you started." "Wasn't there a jack you could have tested from?"

We are grieving both cases, but they definitely make you think of a few things that all techs should do! Before starting, have the customer remove ALL objects that could be in your way. In the second case, the tech could have jipped the job until the vines and the pot were removed. He wanted to help the customer, who was home alone with a new baby. By the way, the customer was more concerned for the tech than the pot. Remember that company safety personnel have Physics Degrees! Always go back to your truck to get a step ladder because you should only work under eye level.

Finally, managers at the end of both meetings stated that the decision to give one day suspensions was already made above them.

**And remember this most of all.** Even if you take the time to do the job right, **your manager won't stick up for you.** Don't take the extra step for the customer. It's SPEED, SPEED, SPEED. Then it is the manager's BONUS, BONUS, BONUS.

We've met weekly, writing proposals for the upcoming AT&T contract negotiations. We will be in for the fight of our lives.

By *Mike McCormick, Business Representative*



• • • I'd like to start by welcoming our new Chief Steward, Mark Fulcer. He has made his way through most of the area and will continue until he meets everyone

In I&M, Dan Grueneich, Rick Mobley, Mark and I meet with Al Johnson and achieved an **on-call agreement** for Hi-Cap tickets in his area.

In **Construction**, it's DETAILS!! The preference is over, but with the agreement we reached, the details will continue. You are following the work for the LightSpeed build. Prior to each detail, we discuss it with the company, but they have stopped doing the work in the suburban area and are concentrating on Chicago.

Lake Villa Steward Jason Jorgensen and our members stuck together and were able to get the local managers to agree to do training locally for the U-Verse tickets. All volunteers will get the opportunity to be trained. This agreement helps eliminate the unfair distribution of overtime.

Another success story is out of Rockford. The Stewards, Brad Taylor and Dave Phillips along with solid support from all our members, stuck together and were able to schedule a meeting for the Union to work on several issues with the area manager.

Hopefully by now CWA has settled their contract with AT&T, but we must all prepare for our negotiations. If you haven't started, it's time to start showing our solidarity. Don't forget to wear your red solidarity wristband. Don't forget this is a company that continues to make money, it's not GM or Chrysler.

Keep informed and be ready, the next couple of months will be fun! If you haven't already done so, go to [www.ibew21.org](http://www.ibew21.org) and register for the action alerts. It's the easiest way to stay informed on our Local's issues.

*By Jim McLaughlan, Business Representative*



• • • We met with Joe Dimilis on March 11th, regarding problems in the **construction department**. We set when the upcoming details would start and how long the details would last. At first AT&T wanted 12 week details. In the end they agreed to 3 to 6 week details for the remainder of the year with a moratorium week in the middle, generally around a holiday. You will have the option to go home or stay and work the detail.

By now the **C&E** force adjustment in fiber, splicing, and first mile should be complete. Everyone should be in place by now.

We are setting up meetings with management to do a deep dive into the data they want to use to schedule off hour **Central Office** shifts. We met at the end of April and will meet again to go through the data. Hopefully this will fix the scheduling problems in the Central Offices!

In a lot of **I&R** areas we are starting to have problems with off hour scheduling. We've had a few meetings on this with Brian Breedlove and his managers. Some issues have been worked out in some areas, in other areas discussions are still on going.

In some garages we are having problems getting the managers to use the OT list like they should. In these particular garages, "pets" are getting the jobs that seem to always lead into OT. Yes, we grieve this and the issues are usually settled at the first step, costing AT&T double or triple what it would cost if managers did it the right way!

I would think everyone in all the garages would want all overtime work distributed fairly. It takes UNITY in your garage if you want something to work. **YOU ARE THE UNION**. Your union stewards need EVERYONE to back them up. There's no limit to what we can do as a Union when we fight together. We all must play by the rules that were established to ensure everyone is treated equally.

*By Terry Sheehan, Business Representative*



• • • Contract negotiations are complete at **Verizon**. Congratulations to Bill Henne, Roger Nickerson, and the rest of the bargaining team. They were able to negotiate a fair contract, despite the "tough economic times." Our brothers and sisters at Verizon will receive a 7.5% increase in wages over the life of the three year agreement. They also will receive an additional paid day off each year. The lifetime maximums on health care doubled for both active members and retirees. There will be no premiums for current members and our retirees will see premium reductions

As reported, we have intervened in Illinois with the ICC on the merger of **Century Telephone** with Embarq. Several other locals in other states followed the same strategy. That sparked negotiations between the **IBEW International, Century Telephone, and Embarq**. The negotiations resulted in an agreement for employment levels to be guaranteed for 18 months, and Embarq's commitment to invest in new technologies. In return, of course we agreed to rescind our petition with the ICC.

**Frontier Communication** is trying to be creative in their

battle against line loss and a tough economy by asking employees to take 12 days off per year. While that may be a creative idea, it's not contractual. They are doing nothing more than trying to negotiate a temporary layoff. If that is the case, then all contractors must be removed prior to any layoff. At this time we are still in talks with the company.

Details, Details, Details... AT&T continues to detail techs at will. The company is not using this contract language as it was intended. We will have to address this in bargaining. Make sure you are letting your Stewards and Chief Stewards know when there is no work in the locations where you have been detailed. We battle daily when there is not enough work to justify the assignment. Make sure you are filling out the Service Quality Reporting Forms (on your own time) and get them to your Steward or the Union office.

*By Michael Roach, Business Representative*



• • • First off I'd like to say thanks for all the encouragement from members regarding my out-patient surgery for Basal Cell skin cancer. Everything went well and I was given thumbs up by the doctor. My own case illustrates the great benefits we have in our current health care plan. I only paid the \$150 annual deductible. It's obvious I do not want the consumer driven management plan. We must all stand strong for the benefits that we maintained over the years by giving up larger wage increases. Does anybody want a possible \$7,000 per year out of pocket expense?

I want to say GREAT JOB to the **WLACC** Union staff who distributed a huge order for the new solidarity shirts for blue Thursdays. When they called to place an order, they were originally directed to the web until the caller mentioned that the first order was for over \$900. It was taken immediately over the phone. Hats off to the WLACC staff and all the members at 61st and Kedzie for their support. Your solidarity will be needed in our contract negotiations.

The upcoming negotiations DO have an impact on the members in the **Long Distance Group in Rosemont**. In your 2005 contract AT&T agreed to provide the benefits of the Core contract to LD employees through 2010. Since benefits will be a major issue on the table during the bargaining of the Core contract which ends on June 27, 2009, your support will be needed to protect those benefits. Visit our website [www.ibew21.org](http://www.ibew21.org) to keep up to date on negotiations.

In **Arlington Heights Consumer** the managers seems to be on a rampage of discipline. In a business unit with constant mandatory OT, hoping to avoid ICC fines, while still wanting its Service Reps and Customer Consultants to sell, management has now initiated a **new discipline letter for WORK RULES** only. Now you can be stepped for average hold time, adherence, failure to check if the address is U-Verse eligible in TCS, not to mention the three minute tardy. Local management wonders why the employees don't have good morale and don't come to work with a smile. I ask, "How could you with a HOT POKER in the eye?"

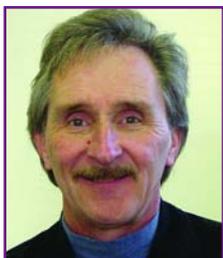
By Kurt Schmidt, Business Representative



• • • We won a high profile arbitration case. Our member was reinstated an after a three year fight. There were multiple prep meetings in the year before the arbitration. Several stewards testified during the seven hearing dates that stretched into a second year. Once the hearings concluded, the arbitrator deliberated for another year. Our member was reinstated with full back pay, overtime, and benefits. Thanks to everyone who helped in this marathon case: our Stewards, Chief Stewards, and Business Reps. Special thanks to then Chief Steward Jim McLauchlan and Attorney Robert Bloch.

I'd also like to welcome new Chief Steward Rick Mobley.

By Dan Gruenich, Business Representative



• • • At **Johnson Controls**, management has made outrageous and illegal threats against our members if they honor legal picket lines. We have tried to set the company straight about our right to honor picket lines, to no avail. We have brought charges against them with the National Labor Relations Board. Stay tuned...

We are having a lot of trouble in the **Central Office** world because there are not enough people left to do the work after the surplus. Stay calm and don't make yourself crazy trying to keep up with the work. The company will have to learn this lesson the hard way.

Finally, do not bring company laptops and cell phones home. They have GPS and the company knows where they're at. This could cost you your job!

By Michael Sacco, Business Representative



• • • A big "Welcome Back" goes out to our laid off members at **JULIE**. The part-timers and some peak employees have returned. You can always tell spring is in the air when our members have been returned to work and now the phones are ringing off the hook.

Management is getting creative, to say the least, in their scheduling bids but the operators seem to enjoy some of the new shifts. Construction will directly affect our operators at JULIE and hopefully with the weather breaking, we will have a prosperous year.

At the **NCS**-(Repair Center) in **Hoffman Estates** we are still arguing the 2009 Vacation Allotments at the 3rd step of the grievance procedure but the vacation selections are still moving forward. AT&T is looking at only allowing 15% in June, July and August, the other months they are only offering 10% to 14%, this of course is not acceptable and we will move forward if need be. Our first arbitration for AUX 4 is scheduled for May, we'll keep you posted.

Bill Smith the Network President recently visited the **NDC** (Dispatch Center.) It was nice to see the office finally get the cleaning it deserves along with the list of repairs that needed to be done.

Everyone seems to be settled in after the **CMC** (Construction) move to Hoffman. I would like to take the opportunity to wish our steward Denise Carson a happy retirement, she will be missed.

We are currently working with management on a flex time agreement in **EWO**. Members had flex time available, but now management wants to just pull it without discussion with the Union.

By Melanie Probst, Business Representative



## Questions to Ponder

By Mike McCormick, Business Representative

**W**hat would you think of a corporation firing technicians being paid \$9 an hour and rehiring them to be scabs? Well that's exactly what AT&T is doing. They are re-hiring them as scabs and offering them from \$30 to \$60 an hour, with benefits.

**Can we let AT&T take away our healthcare benefits and those of our retirees, who are on fixed incomes?** These are the same employees who helped build the company, line by line and call by call. These retired members may not have enough time, like many of us, to recoup the money lost in the stock market failure.

**Can we allow AT&T to continue to force "surplus employees" into no-pension low paying jobs?** It's happening. Just open your eyes or wait until it hits you. We could all be working under the conditions our brothers and sisters in U-Verse deal with on a daily basis. More

for less!

**What is going on is the ever changing world of technology?**

Phone service has evolved from Alexander Bell to the present. We've moved from party lines to private lines, from operators placing all your calls to dialing anywhere in the world. When computers first came out you dialed up the internet on you home phone line, now you use that same line for DSL and to watch television. We as union members have been involved in this technological evolution for a long time. From our retirees to our newest member, we have all seen changes and will continue to see them.

AT&T keeps crying the wire line business is declining and our network members are overpaid. U-Verse, High-speed Internet and DSL are all proven profit makers. **How do those services get to our customers? WIRE LINE.**

These are just a few things that

everyone will see in the near future. It shouldn't be a surprise to anyone. AT&T talks about the auto industry and claims it was the unions that brought them down. Check and see what their CEO's got paid. Then check and see what the Board of Directors at the almighty AT&T handed out to Ed Whitaker. The most ever handed out to a CEO. Who is management kidding?

Take a long look at **AT&T's annual report** read about the tremendous benefit packages the executives and their families are receiving. They have financial consultants to show them how to hide their money and stock options. They may say they are forgoing bonuses, it's just a scheme to make them look good in public; they are still receiving huge stock options.

Someone once told me once you become a manager; you mistakenly start to think that you alone have created the gains this company has enjoyed for many years. **Stay strong and Solidarity to all.**

## Barbarians At The Gate

By Mike O'Connor, Chief Steward



**A**s I rode in the ambulance after breaking my ankle the day after Christmas, I was uncertain about a lot of things in my immediate future. But I wasn't worried that my injuries would put me in financial dire straits, because I have a union contract.

After surgery at Northwestern Memorial, I was sent home to recuperate, off my feet for 6 weeks in a cast. During this time I spent hours

sitting at my kitchen table to avoid using my crutches on the stairs. Everyday, the mailman would bring a bill from a medical provider or a statement from Blue Cross and Blue Shield Insurance. But here's the thing, all together, out of pocket, this horrific bit of misfortune on the ice, cost me less than \$500.

Over 46 million Americans don't have health insurance. Suffocation under medical bills, most for chronic conditions or serious accidents is the top reason people in America declare bankruptcy. I didn't have to give that a thought, because of my union bargained for health insurance benefits. Over 86% of doctors in Illinois belong to my plan. I didn't need a referral to see a top orthopedic surgeon. I could seek treatment at one of the best hospitals in the region. My follow-up treatment was not restricted, so my doctor could send me for 16 weeks of physical therapy to regain the normal use of my ankle.

It means even more to have good insurance. You see, looking at all the bills and insurance statements, I noticed significant

reductions in the final amount paid to the providers. **Big insurance plans enforce discounts with the doctors and hospitals** they deal with, and those providers go along with the program. **People without insurance are billed the fullest amount the hospital or doctor charge.** This applies even to my Fire Department which billed me \$850 for the ambulance ride.

One of the key items on the bargaining table this June will be healthcare. Healthcare is less than 5 % of our World-Class employer's revenues of about \$135 billion, but they would like to reduce it by pushing 34% of that expense onto us. This could mean an average increase of \$7,000-\$8000 in out of pocket expenses for Local 21 members if AT&T gets its way.

That's somewhat ironic because the AT&T Board of Directors gave CEO Randall Stephenson, over \$9,000 in **supplemental insurance premiums** as part of his 2008 compensation. So, you see how they want this to work, don't you? We, the operators, clerks, testers, repairmen, installers, prem techs, linemen, service reps, and splicers, are the ones who build the value in the company. Without us, the infrastructure, the billing revenue, the customer service—it all comes to a dead stop. But the super-rich, who don't build value, who think growing the business means buying a competitor, who can't seem to bring U-verse television to Illinois in any meaningful way, think the best way to please Wall St. and concentrate their own wealth is to push a usurious, vicious, shift in healthcare costs on to the backs of the people who are the heart, soul and face of this faceless corporate entity.

# Walking and Talking

By Bob Przybylinski Chief Steward



The Local 21 bargaining team will do our talking at the table. However all of us have a lot of talking before they get to the table and before our contract expires on June 27th.

Set to talk means all of us: every member, steward, mobilization coordinator, and activist, needs to talk with our coworkers and educate them on the issues. AT&T began their misleading propaganda campaign last

year after Verizon settled their contract with our IBEW brothers and sisters on the East coast. We've already seen in the CWA negotiations it's going to intensify. We have to educate our coworkers on AT&T's shenanigans.

We'll talk by attending solidarity actions. It's important we participate because these actions affect negotiations. AT&T will test our solidarity. President Kastner and the team must be able to tell the company, "Our members are not backing down."

Next we must educate the public. In these difficult economic times it's challenging to get their support. Many will say we should be happy we have jobs. We are proud of the jobs we perform. AT&T is a very profitable company; we aren't in the same situation as the airline or auto industries.

Profitability means AT&T has a moral responsibility to ensure our jobs and benefits, not worsen the economic downturn. They should be part of the solution. We can win the public battle but we all must do our part educating them on the truth.

Set to talk also means we must be prepared to contact our elected officials. The Telecom Rewrite and mandatory overtime

talks are underway in Springfield. The politicians need to be on the right side of the issues. We might be asked to write, call or go to Springfield to gain legislators' support.

**We have to be ready to silence our enemies.** I can already hear the cries of the right wing air bags bemoaning, "Those ungrateful union people are the cause of the problems because they want higher wages and more benefits." If necessary we may need to call in to radio stations or write letters to the editor to prevent them from hijacking our issue.

Walking is only the end game if necessary. As we are talking we will be walking at the same time. In many different ways that won't just involve our feet.

We must walk by encouraging our co-workers to sign up for email and text alerts. It does us no good if we just call the union hotline (630-415-2711) without sharing the information with our brothers and sisters. We must be informed and ready to act on a moment's notice.

Ready to walk means we must start walking into more union meetings and encourage co-workers to walk in with us. It means we'll "practice" informational picketing. We'll walk in to work a little earlier and walk out a little later at night.

We have to let management know we are disgusted with their bargaining tactics. We have to walk into work and tell our bosses we were not happy. This may be tough for some of us who may actually like our bosses. This will be a war and they are in the wrong army. Give them hell every time we get hell at the bargaining table.

WE all must do our part to support the bargaining team. WE all must find way to get involved. WE are ready to walk longer and farther to protect what is ours!

## Letter To The Editor



**M**y name is John Koslowski and I retired on February 6, 2009 after working for Illinois Bell, Ameritech, SBC and AT&T for over 35 years. I can't retire without thanking you, IBEW Local 21 and all my Union brothers and sisters.

When I started my career with Illinois Bell on January 10, 1974, I hate to admit it but, I took my Union membership for granted. Oh, sure I knew I would get regular raises, medical and disability benefits and

some day I would get seniority and the rights that came with it. I took for granted that union members that came before me had the will and the determination to fight for the wages, benefits and improved working conditions which I enjoyed. I didn't realize how really important Union representation was.

I also took my Union negotiated benefits for granted. Like most young people I never thought anything bad would happen to me. After all, I lead a very healthy lifestyle: I ran, mountain biked, weight trained, ate healthy and drank very little. In 1996 I was diagnosed with advanced colon cancer that had spread to my liver and lymph nodes. I endured multiple surgeries, months of chemotherapy and heart failure. I was on disability for 7 months in 1996 and 4 months in 1998. Through all of this I received full disability pay and virtually all my medical bills were paid.

While I lay in intensive care for weeks I had many worries, but thanks to the Union I wasn't worried about losing my job, being bankrupted by medical bills or not getting a disability paycheck. I no longer took my Union membership for granted!

All the benefits and rights that were vital to me were not given to me by the company. They were bargained for and fought for by my Union. These benefits and rights were won because union members were willing to stand strong, shoulder to shoulder and fight for them.

Thanks to my Union and my Union brothers and sisters I was able to keep my job (and work for another 11 years,) keep my house, send my 3 children to college, and retire with a full pension, a 401k and medical benefits.

I can't thank you enough. None of this would have been possible without the Union and my Union brothers and sisters.

# St. Patrick's Day Parade



PHOTOS: DENISE CARSON, PAUL HOWLETT, ROBERT SIMON

## Organizing Campaign at Charter Communications:

By Dave Webster & Rosetta Shinn

Local 21 has filed a petition with the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) for a representation election on behalf of the employees of Charter Communications in Maryville, Illinois.

It will be a tough, challenging organizing drive. The company is already using union-busting attorneys to fight the organizing effort, but the Charter workers are determined to stay together and want to be represented by IBEW 21. Union busting tactics started on day one, when we visited the Maryville office and asked management to recognize the majority of cards signed by the employees. When the company replied that they will only recognize an election conducted by the NLRB we filed a petition with the Board for a representation election. **Why does the employer get the option to deny the request of the majority?**

It's another example of why we need the **EMPLOYEE FREE CHOICE ACT**. We know that the decline in union representation has been a major cause of two disturbing trends in our economy: the rise in inequality and the failure of average working Americans to share in the benefits of rising productivity. By reducing the opportunity for employers to intimidate and discourage workers from unionizing after they have reached a collective decision to do so, the Employee Free Choice Act will help restore and spread the benefits that unions bring to workers and the economy.

IBEW local unions represent employees of Charter Communications nationwide. Charter Communications, Inc. is a leading broadband communications company and the fourth-largest cable operator in the United States. A Fortune 500



company, they are headquartered in St. Louis, Missouri. Charter began as a traditional cable television company, and now offers digital cable TV, video-on-demand, interactive video programming, Digital Voice and high-speed Internet access.

Charter employees have the same concerns as the rest of our members. Forced overtime, working conditions, wages, insurance, and respect are just a few of the struggles they face also. Keep them in your thoughts and prayers as they fight the same fight to better themselves and their families with the help of IBEW 21.

If you have any questions please contact Bus. Rep/Organizer Dave Webster (630) 960-4466 ext. 449 or Bus. Rep/Organizer Rosetta Shinn 630 960-4466 ext. 327.

## Regulation Lessons from FDR's first 100 Days

By Nancy North, Area Steward



In uncertain times we want answers and we want them quickly, but there are no fool-proof solutions. Even Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal was

not a tightly structured and organized agenda, certain of success. The process was almost always messy and rarely satisfied all the reformers.

Wall Street abuses were being highlighted in the Mitchell hearings on Capitol Hill. Aware of the public's disgust with the financiers, FDR assigned the task of writing a regulation bill first

to Sam Untermyer in early March 1933, a few days after he took office. When Roosevelt was dissatisfied with the plan to have the post office regulate the financial system by withholding speculators' mailing privileges, he assigned the legislation to Huston Thomas. When weaving the two versions together proved impossible, the President dumped the problem on the House committee chaired by Sam Rayburn.

The bill was written over a long weekend by three young Harvard Law School graduates, Tommy Corcoran, Ben Cohen and Jim Landis. Working almost around the clock, they wrote the first-ever federal law regulating stock market transactions. The Securities Act of 1933 required any company selling securities to the public to disclose its financial condition and register with the Federal

Trade Commission. This was the foundation of "financial transparency."

In his March 29th message introducing the bill, FDR wrote, "This proposal adds to the ancient rule of 'let the buyer beware' the further doctrine of 'let the seller beware.' It puts the burden of telling the whole truth upon the seller." The U.S. government was acknowledging a duty to try and protect investors from ruin at the hands of unscrupulous players in the market. The Securities Act passed both the House and Senate in the last week of May.

The actual crackdown on bankers and Wall Street speculators would come with the creation of the Securities and Exchange Commission in 1934. Without directly saying so, President Roosevelt was beginning to rewrite the American social contract.

# CONGRATULATIONS LOCAL 21 RETIREES

## April 2008

David Doornweerd

## May 2008

Kathleen Martinez  
Randall Johnson

## July 2008

Sophie Owczarek

## August 2008

Beverly Hill

## December 2008

James M. Bartel

## January 2009

Stephen M. Kelly  
Donna M. Schneider  
Donald Brush  
Lendora Brown-Jones  
Chuck Christopher

## February 2009

LaVonne "Bonnie"  
Purkey  
Carol Mason  
Henry Kopeika  
Richard Jursuis  
John Meteisis  
Cynthia Kramer  
Janice Adair  
Sylvia Torres  
Calvin L. Masee  
Lawrence Thomas  
Kathleen A. Williams  
Roger Lehmann  
Ron Wesner  
Elizabeth Sokolowski  
Judith M. Polcyn  
Thomas A. Thirion  
Steven C. Hilleshiem  
Bob Wilson  
BJ Hollis  
Judy Campbell  
Lisa O'Neil  
Raymond Lee  
Lillian Harris  
Michael P. Ryan  
Daniel Coleman  
Sherry Lederman  
George M. Goodall

Mikki Razor  
Allan Marquardt  
Michael M. Meeker  
Cynthia A. Schmitt  
Edward Y. Mante  
Barbara M. Thompson  
Kathy Simpson  
George M. Lane Jr.  
Edward R. Bertels  
Jeff Stager  
Mary E. Pickett  
Cynthia R. Griffith  
Stanley Lunskis  
Therese Napoli  
Al Mochon  
Maria Teresa Gardea  
Edgar L. Spikes  
Rowena Pughsley  
Paul L. Kruse  
John Motal  
John M. Norris  
Hermelinda "Linda"  
Griffin  
Don Stien  
Albert Ruiseco  
Nyquella Blankenship  
Doris W. McSwine  
Leonard Cukla  
Daniel M. Gallup  
Victoria Givens  
Gloria Charon  
Lawrence Blasi  
Jeanne M. Gierczak  
Robin L. Ducey  
Alfred Hoffman  
Robert W. Woodward  
Robert L. Crouch  
Elaine B. Echeverria  
Stanley Crawley  
Mary Jackson  
Alexander Brongel  
Maria I. Colon  
David B. Smith  
James Graefen

## March 2009

John Garrett  
Graciela Anaya  
Cheryl S. Manis  
Barbara Barnes  
Rafaela Rodriguez  
Susan M. Wagner

Anna Williams  
Philip M. Morales  
Morris Threewitt  
Sylvia P. Brown  
Margaret A. Sorg  
Lynda M. Fuller  
Mercedes E. Reyes  
Varghese Kuruvilla  
Patricia Frazier  
Mary Schwartz  
Bertha M. Johnson  
Patty Spencer  
Graciela Anaya  
Gary Shovers  
Dennis "Denny" Vogel  
Donna M. Schneider  
Patricia Flowers  
Katherine Clemons  
Pamela Gunderson  
Rose M. Louis-Moore  
Paul Hetman  
Donald Bolder  
Jimmy Rolling  
Dennis Elston  
Larry Shackmann  
Robert R. Mellies  
John V. Poulos  
Verness Streeter  
Bob Tusher

## April 2009

Denise E. Carson  
Caroline Tongson  
Shelia A. Benford  
Claudia A. Warren  
Ken Boyk  
Susan D. Galley  
Ken Boyk  
Larry Schackmann  
Barb Hohn  
Kenny A. Maxwell  
Kenneth Dammer

In order to appear on this page you must inform your steward you are retiring and a retiree gift application must be submitted. Without receipt of this application the *Frontline* editors are unaware of your retirement.

## AT&T you promised

By Larry Moeller, Retiree Liaison



March and April have been busy months for me. In my capacity as Local 21 retiree liaison it's been my privilege to meet or talk to many retirees.

In fact, at last count the retiree email activist group list includes over 600 angry Local 21 retirees. Additionally, almost 200 equally angry retirees belong to our snail mail call to action list.

Phase 1 is now close to completion. It's time to let AT&T CEO Randall Stephenson hear from us. The message should be clear, **"Leave our Health Care benefits alone, we have earned them."** That's right, we helped AT&T become the highly profitable corporation it is today. We accepted lower wages in order to preserve our health care benefits and help the company contain health care costs.

Retirees have repeated again and again "AT&T PROMISED." Former employees who were encouraged to retire early did so with the understanding their health care would remain as it was until they reached Medicare. AT&T did promise and we are in no mood for word games. The fact is every active and retired member of Local 21 paid for our health care benefits up front. Altering this promise would be an unethical breach of the contract between employer and employee.

Some retirees have already expressed their displeasure to AT&T, but the answer they received was, "AT&T has no plans to alter the retiree health care benefit at this time" ...weasel words. It's a simple question that begs a simple answer. We deserve that answer, so ask Randall Stephenson to plainly state what AT&T intends to do. CEO Stephenson's email address is [rs2982@att.net](mailto:rs2982@att.net).



"On your last day of work, you get to keep all the returnable cans and bottles in the break room. That's our retirement plan."

### 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.

# UNIT MEETINGS 2009

## MAY

### Unit 1

Thursday, May 14, 7 PM  
Irish-American Heritage Center  
4626 N. Knox Ave.  
Chicago IL  
773 282-7035

### Unit 2

Tuesday May 12, 7 PM  
Gaelic Park  
6119 W. 147TH  
Oak Forest IL  
708 687-9323

### Unit 3

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

### Unit 4

Wednesday, May 13, 7 PM  
American Legion Harwood #5  
705 S. Larkin  
Joliet IL  
815 725-4333

### Unit 5

Monday, May 4, 7 PM  
Rocky Point Club  
3603 Bonansinga Dr.  
Quincy IL  
217 224-1332

### Unit 6

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

### Unit 7

Wednesday, May 6, 7 PM  
IBEW Local # 309  
2000A Mall St. (Rte 157)  
Collinsville IL  
618 345-5112

## JUNE

### Unit 1

Thursday, June 11, 7 PM  
Best Western  
4400 Frontage Rd.  
Hillside, IL  
708-544-9300

### Unit 2

Tuesday, June 9, 7 PM  
Lansing American Legion #697  
18255 Grant St.  
Lansing IL  
708 474-5906

### Unit 3

Thursday, June 18, 7 PM  
Holiday Inn of Rockford  
7550 E State St.  
Rockford IL  
815 398-2200

### Unit 4

Wednesday, April 8, 7 PM  
Wednesday, June 10, 7 PM  
Lemont VFW  
15780 New Ave.  
Lemont IL  
630 257-9859

### Unit 5

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

### Unit 6

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

### Unit 7

Monday, June 15, 7 PM  
IBEW Local #649  
501 Humbert Rd.  
Alton IL

## JULY

### Unit 1

Thursday, July 9, 6 PM\*  
IBEW Local #134  
600 W. Washington Blvd.  
Chicago IL  
312 474-4186

### Unit 2

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

### Unit 3

Thursday, July 16, 7 PM  
Gurnee American Legion  
749 Milwaukee Ave.  
Gurnee IL  
847 244-9282

### Unit 4

Wednesday, July 8, 7 PM  
IBEW Local #145  
1700 52nd Ave, Suite A  
Moline IL  
309 736-4239

### Unit 5

Wednesday, July 15, 7 PM  
IBEW Local #146  
3390 N. Woodford St.  
Decatur IL  
217 877-4604

### Unit 6

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

### Unit 7

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

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.

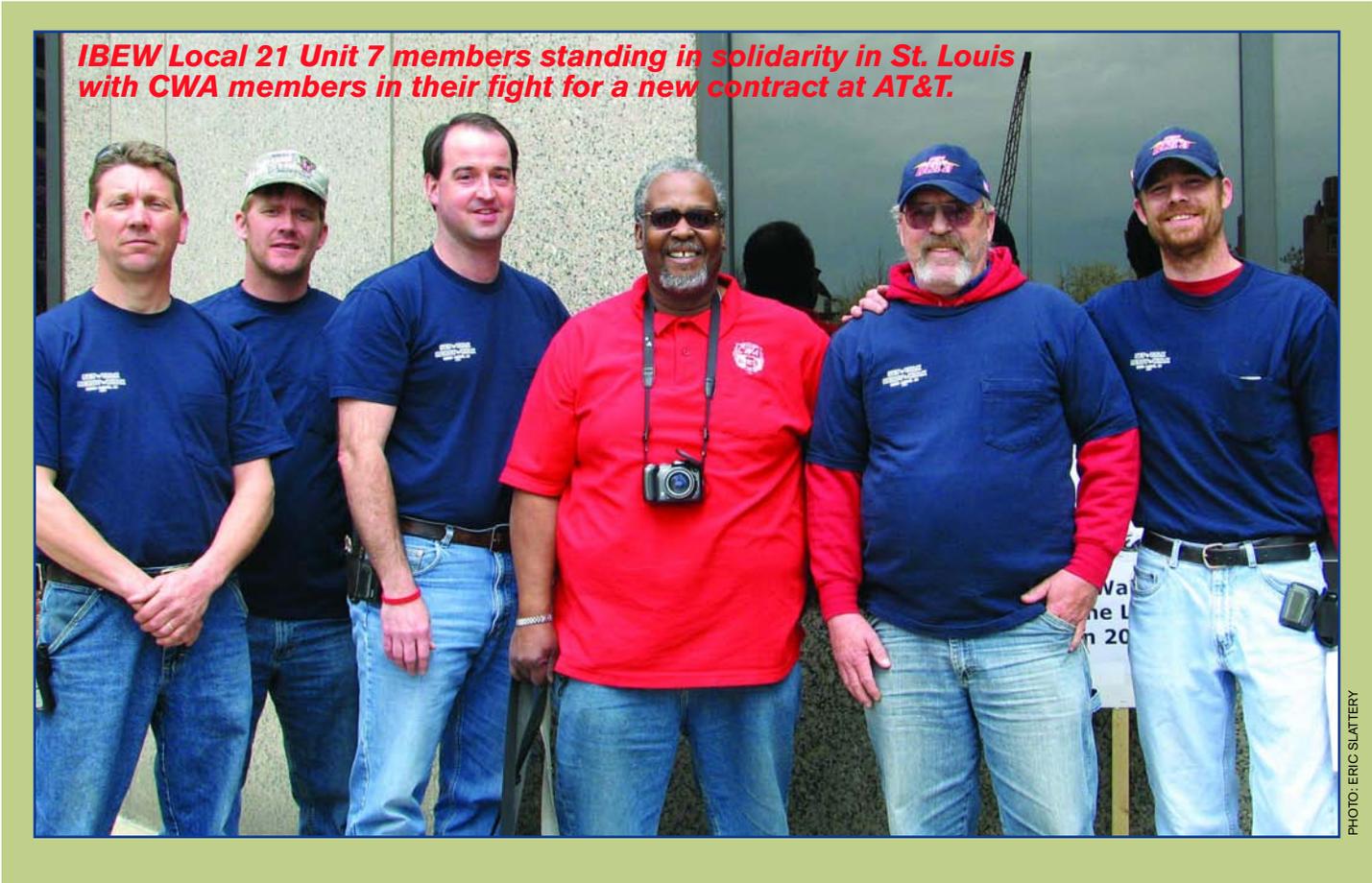
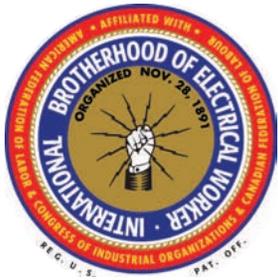
**IBEW LOCAL 21**

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



Non-Profit  
U.S. Postage  
**PAID**  
Melrose Park, IL  
Permit No. 50

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



***IBEW Local 21 Unit 7 members standing in solidarity in St. Louis with CWA members in their fight for a new contract at AT&T.***

PHOTO: ERIC SLATTERY