



IBEW LOCAL 21

FRONTLINE



Volume 8, Number 2 • April 2005

Workers Memorial Day



Workers Memorial in Springfield, IL.

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

The first Workers Memorial Day was observed in 1989. April 28 was chosen because it is the anniversary of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration and the day of a similar remembrance in Canada. Every year, people in hundreds of communities and at worksites recognize workers who have been killed or injured on the job. Trade unionists around the world now mark April 28 as an International Day of Mourning.

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FRONTLINE

IBEW Local 21

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

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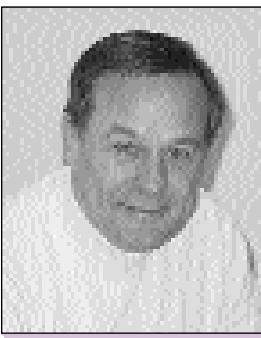
Comments and articles are welcome and should be sent to the editors. Local 21 reserves the right to edit letters and articles, and to use items as space allows.

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



Watching the Details

By Rick Gessler, Vice President /Assistant Business Manager



In March we were happy to get about 35 of our laid off members back to work. That was a good thing; the bad thing is that the recall rights

have run out for the remainder of the members on layoff. As you remember, the Union was successful in getting SBC to extend those rights by three months. We continue to have discussions with the company on rehiring the remainder of the laid off members.

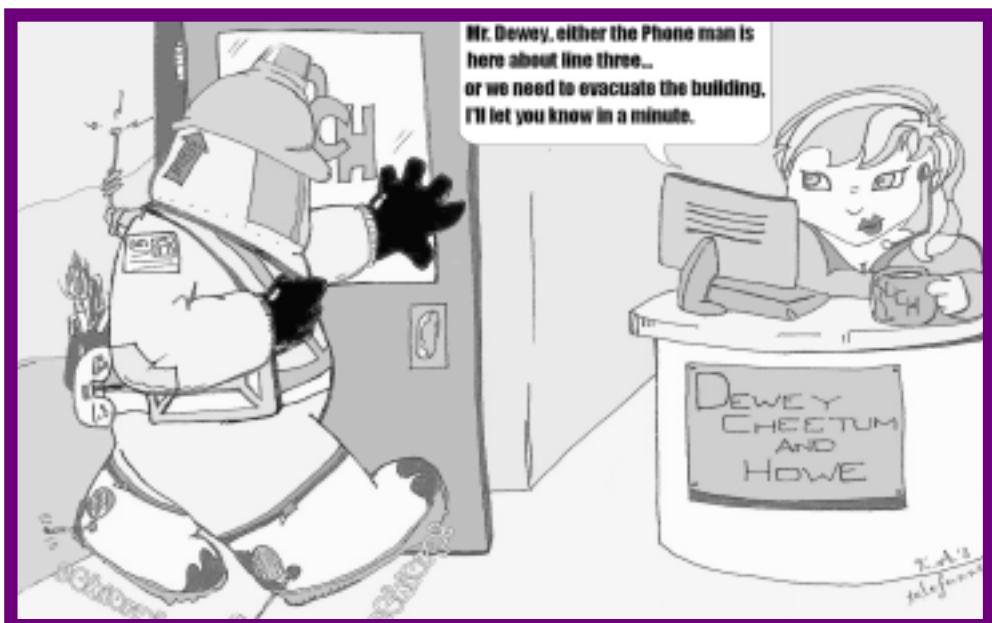
Our weekend scheduling in network has gone down in most locations. I've heard that the Stewards had to keep after the managers to supply the run rates and data. The managers weren't happy with the lowered numbers on the weekends. In April we had the first day of hearings on the Holiday scheduling dispute.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

differences before the next hearing date in May.

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

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

Summer is coming and I hope all of you take time to enjoy some time off with your families and attend a Unit Meeting.



Repair Jobs Stay at the Lakewood Office in Hoffman Estates

By Melanie Probst, Business Representative



NCSC (Repair Center- Lakewood)

In November
2004

Maintenance
Administrators
in the Repair
Center were
told that their
work was

going to Brecksville, Ohio but the MA's would be guaranteed jobs in the NDC (Network Dispatch Center.) The Repair Center was due to close in Illinois the 4th Quarter of 2005 according to the Network Consolidation Plan.

Recently SBC announced that they have changed the Network Consolidation Plan and have decided **to keep the Lakewood Repair Center open and keep the work here in Illinois**. This was great news to our members and Local 21 – keeping the work and jobs in Illinois. We asked the company if this is permanent or if they have a projected date of closing. They answered that at this time there is no information on closing this center.

The Center was a 24 hour, 7 day a week office, but effective April 3, 2005 their new hours are 6:00am to 11:00pm Monday thru Friday and 6:00am to 10:00pm Saturday & Sunday. Off-hour calls are being handled by the Brecksville, Ohio Repair Center.

NDC (Network Dispatch Center- Lakewood)

On 3/31/05 an IVR- (Interactive Voice Response) System was installed for incoming calls to the center. SBC claims the intent is to improve efficiencies and decrease unnecessary calls to the NDC. The system cares for automated technician simple close outs, automated basic pair changes and over run tech price updates. When calling the NDC the techs will be requested to key in their SBCUID and tech employee code. FYI-this will identify who is calling, at the individual level. **Outside techs beware**, the NDC doesn't want you calling in and they are determined to reduce the calls—including installing this system. The NDC is looking to standardizing the message techs hear when they call the center. I advised management that it is not the MA's job to question the techs, it's their manager's job. The company has also been put on record that this IVR system will not eliminate MA positions, as there is plenty of work for them to do.

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

The NDC installed a new call monitoring system on 3/31/05. **This new system records 100% of incoming and**

outgoing calls to the center. When asked if this would be used for discipline the company responded, "Yes, if we need to and it will also be used as a tool for performance management." FYI—beware techs and MA's, if you thought you were already being watched with every move you make, now you are being monitored for everything you say.

JULIE, Inc

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

A Living Will

By Rosrtta Shinn, Chief Steward



A Living Will can speak for you when you can no longer speak for yourself. We have all watched the media coverage of Terri Schiavo and the

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

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

You can also download a related document known as a **Health Care Power of Attorney** and designate an "agent" to carry out health care decisions on your

behalf. Please be aware that these are legal documents, and if you do not change or revoke them, they will be used to determine your wishes concerning your health care when you cannot do so for yourself. Instructions on revocation of these documents are also found at the url for the web site printed above. This site also has explanations of the terms used and includes a "Questions and Answers" section to help educate you on the use of these forms. You can also obtain the forms at either:

The Illinois Department On Aging, 421 East Capitol Avenue, Springfield, IL 62701 (1-800-252-8966)

or

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

Another web site

www.uslivingwillregistry.com has links to advance directive forms used in states other than Illinois, and can even store your advance directives and organ donor info online.

This preparation can be a great gift to your family in the event a tragedy requires life and death decisions to be made. It can also be a great gift to your own peace of mind, knowing that your wishes are clear and your loved ones won't need to guess what you would want them to do.

Benefit Report

Dependent Certification Now

By Linda Cox, Business Representative & Recording Secretary



has their website up and running with a notice of "**Action Needed, Certify Dependents, Deadline, 05-20-2005.**" There are instructions with a variety of links that explain who is eligible to be a dependent. The site also lists all of the employee's dependents by name, birthdates, gender, relationship, eligible and coverage end date. **Eligibility is pre-populated as "no" and the coverage end date shows 6-30-05.** If your dependent is eligible, you will need to change the "no" to "yes" for coverage to continue. The certification can be done via the Internet, intranet or by calling SBC Connect.

As previously reported, SBC is moving forward on their Dependent Certification process. Even though SBC has not yet sent any communications, SBC Connect

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

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

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

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

COPE Report

Legislative Updates

By Dennis McCafferty,
Committee on Political Education



Hello Brothers and Sisters, much has happened legislatively on both sides of the border since our last issue. As of press time, the futures of SB

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

The members need to understand our

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

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

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

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

Regulation Protects the Consumer...and our Future

By Ronald Kastner



This month I'd like to share some ideas regarding the future of the telecommunication industry. As you probably know, there are two real roads to the Internet - DSL and the cable modem. In my opinion, both offer quality opportunities and longevity. Even though the cable modem had a head start, DSL is making a strong charge through Project Light Speed.

Neither product is superior enough to knock the other out business; consequently, each has about 50 per cent of the market.

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

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

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

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

There lies the problem, Sisters and Brothers. **Will either company employ the numbers of our members that they do today if there are no agencies like the Illinois Commerce Commission monitoring service quality standards?** I think not. As a matter of fact, both SBC and Comcast, the major companies that

play in our world of Telecommunications are headquartered outside of Illinois and Indiana. Furthermore, Texas is a right-to-work state, which means that any type of service quality standards can be ignored.

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

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



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

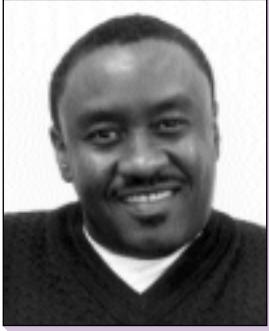
IBEW Local 21 President Ron Kastner (L.) and CWA Local 4250 Executive Vice President Liz Van Der Woude (R.) proudly accepted the Leo Perlis Labor Participation Award at the United Way's annual luncheon, co-sponsored this year by the Chicago Federation of Labor, AFL-CIO and the LaSalle Bank, on March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

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

About 400 health and human service care agencies across metropolitan Chicago rely on United Way funding to provide the programs that help people in crisis, help children and youth succeed and help adults toward self-sufficiency.

Comcast

By Jerry Rankins, Business Representative



First, in bargaining news at the Jones table – Comcast continues to stall the contract talks by making concessionary proposals.

Local 21 maintains that the company is responsible to pay back wages to 2002. Despite the company's continuing bad faith, Local 21 continues discussions on a regular basis and is determined to reach fair agreements for members in all bargaining units.

As many workers already know, an NLRB election was held late last month in the Park Forest and Orland Park shops. A majority of workers in the bargaining unit there voted to end union representation.

In early 2005, in clear violation of the collective bargaining agreement, Comcast laid off three CSSR's who were working at the Park Forest front desk and moved their work outside of the bargaining unit to be performed by employees of currency exchanges and grocery stores.

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

Sadly though, the tactics of layoffs and propaganda just before the vote led many workers to believe they would have better job security and a chance for a job at the new Homewood Mega Tech Center without a union contract, not with one. Local 21 has filed post election objections

based on company conduct directly related to the vote. If the NLRB rules against the Union, and we choose to not appeal, the workers will have relinquished their rights, will officially become non-represented. They become "employees at will", and Comcast will be able to pick and choose who will get jobs at the new Homewood facility. In addition, **the company can then terminate anyone for any reason at any time**, and can change rules, pay rates and other working conditions at any time, for any reason. Since Comcast took over, they have closed 3 payment centers in union areas. Their goal is to close them all and do away with all front counter workers.

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

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

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

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

City of Chicago 911

In bargaining news, The Fraternal Order of Police made the first break in the stone wall the City has presented in bargaining with all the Unions. The FOP's Lodge 7 "interest arbitration" decision was a huge win for the Police but it does not mean victory for the other 19,000 brothers and sisters working under an expired agreement since June 31, 2003. An impressive 16% wage increase over 4 years retroactive back to July 2003 with no change in Health-Care until July 2006. The Police and Fire departments have what is known as "Interested Arbitrating" not having the right to strike.

The other city units, including unit 2 that covers the 911-call takers/dispatch and Aviation, have a "No strike / No lockout" provision in the contract. While the contract is in effect the employer can not lock out the employees, nor can the members strike. Currently, unit 2 is working under a contract extension. With proper notification to the city the Union can strike, an option that has not been rule out.

We expect to get nothing less than what the Police negotiated. We also want a reduction in the wage progression that currently takes 25 years to top out. Fire call takers/dispatchers reach the top in just 3 years. We want grade increases for call takers and ACO'S at the airports. Currently, the city is only offering an 8% wage increase for 4 years with a 1% ratification increase and \$500 to employees who are on the payroll as of said date. The city Health-Care proposal is the same awarded by the arbitrator to the Police with the same terms/conditions. This is progress compared to the city's earlier proposal.

The city doesn't like to discuss the ever rising cost-of-living that impacts the workers, because of the residency ordinance requiring employees to reside in the City of Chicago. Can we believe Chicago is experiencing budget problems when they continue to pad on senior management? An example– Deputy Directors Assistants appointed to the Deputy at a whopping \$90,000 a year.

Since January local 21 has filed unfair labor practices with the state on over 80 arbitration cases, more than 20 years worth, needless to say the grievance procedure is broke! On-going FMLA violations caused the Union to file Department of Labor and Unfair Labor Board charges.

Members In The News



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

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

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

SUPPORT OUR TROOPS

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

CHAMPIONS

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

WELCOME HOME

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

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

GOOD LUCK IN ELGIN

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

HAPPY MOTHER'S DAY

©2005, UCS

WORKING MOMS, TAKE A BOW!

• • • N E W S A C R O S S

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

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

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

By Vickie Burroughs, Business Representative



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

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

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

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

By Jim Foster, Business Representative



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

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

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

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

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

By Jerry Gast, Business Representative



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

By Dan Gruenich, Business Representative



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

By Liz Hodges, Business Representative



S T H E S T A T E • • •

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

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

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

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

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

By Mike McCormick, Business Representative



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

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

By Kurt Schmidt, Business Representative



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

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

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

By Steve Tengblad, Business Representative



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

By Steve Unterfranz, Business Representative



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

People In Peril

By Nancy North, Area Steward



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

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

Measurements aren't new. When management first rolled out measurements in Oakbrook BCS in the late 90's, a lot of Customer Advocates were put on Performance Improvement Plans. People filed a lot of grievances and many cases were overturned because management rolled out the plan in May, but used results back to January. CA's

and Service Order Writers worked hard on the main metric – Service Order Accuracy. They attended weekly workshop sessions and diligently filed for exclusions on system problems.

For years there were no PIP's.

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

In 2005 upper management added new metrics, raised the acceptable numbers and accelerated the penalty for failure. In theory, an official program of how your manager is going to help you get the skills, the time, and the assistance you need to do a better job **might** be a



"My qualifications? I'm a single working mother, so I won't need any make-up."

good thing. BUT. The dark side is the penalty for failure to meet your numbers: **discipline steps of written warning, final written warning with one day suspension, and suspension pending termination**. There is NO verbal warning step. The Union DID NOT AGREE to these steps or these measurements.

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

"We must all hang together, or assuredly we shall all hang separately."
Benjamin Franklin

Illegal Threats Defeated

By Kevin Curran,
Business Representative



In March, local management at the Total Grace Center announced that unless the number of absences dramatically decreased, including

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

Quick Solution to the Social Security "Crisis"

Submitted by Dave Webster, Business Representative

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

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

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

For example, let's calculate on the average life span for two dignitaries. Senator Byrd and Congressman White and their wives may expect to draw \$7,700,000

with their wives drawing \$275,000 during the last years of their lives.

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

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

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

So, with that being said, here's how we fix the social security "crisis"....Put the Senators and Congressmen into the social security plan with the rest of us, then let's see how bad the "crisis" is and how quickly it gets fixed!

Local 21 Will Be Extinct in 10 Years...

By Bob Przybylinski, Area Steward



Yeah, I'm saying it-- Local 21 will not be around in 10 years if we don't make changes. **SBC, Comcast**, the current political environment

and member apathy will destroy our livelihood and this Union if we continue down the road we are traveling.

Is there hope for us? NO...

Unless we each wake up and educate ourselves on all the issues that affect our jobs, and become an active union membership who will force the changes that are necessary to ensure our survival. *If we don't do something as a membership we better prepare our families for life after the death of this Union.*

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

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

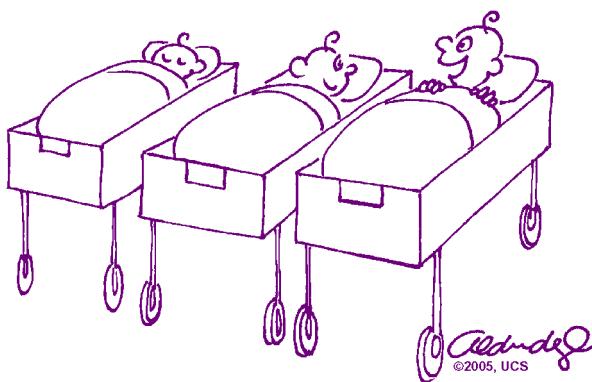
As we lobby on the legislative front **SBC and Comcast** intensify their attacks in our workplaces as our leadership works to balance the resources of the Local to fight off the numerous assaults. How many times have you, the members at **SBC** uttered, "This Union hasn't done anything for me, my grievance has been scheduled for arbitration for 2 years." At the same time the

Comcast members question their union existence while negotiations enter their sixth year in an attempt to reach a first contract with **Comcast**. Blaming the leadership is the easiest way to strengthen the power **Comcast and SBC** hold. Both companies are sitting back and laughing at you and our leaders. **Their goal is to destroy our Union by having all of us fighting against each other instead of them.**

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

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

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



"The first thing I'm gonna do is join the union and demand changes!"

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

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

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

TEN WAYS TO KILL A UNION

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



IBEW Local 21 Solidarity Day Golf Outing & BBQ



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

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

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

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

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

RSVP no later than July 16th

Sponsored by: IBEW Local 21

Cut here and return with money to:

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

Foursome

Golf Club of Illinois Outing

RSVP by July 16th

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

4) _____

Test Scores Can Mean Higher Wages

By Michael Sacco, Business Representative



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

Surpluses in the Chicago MLAC, RCMAC and LDRC continue to cause

rumors and confusion. We wish we could answer all questions relating to surplus and center closings definitively, but the company has to provide us information and often they are more confused than we are. Please be patient.

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

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

Have a safe summer!



"Do you have any openings in marauding or pillaging?"

Know Your Drivers License Status

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

Safety Road-eo Winner

By Tom Moran, Chief Steward

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

The five events in the Road-eo are:

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

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



Illinois L to R. Chief Steward Tom Moran, Winner Joe Vilck IV, Business Rep Steve Unterfranz



Indiana. L to R. Dad Louis Rodriguez, Steward Mark Petkowski, Winner Louie Rodriguez, Chief Steward Mike Kunas, Business Rep Steve Tengblad, Vice-president Rick Gessler.

CONGRATULATIONS LOCAL 21 RETIREES

December 2004

Latricia Riley
Sandra Howard

January 2005

Deb Moore
Sue Grams

February 2005

Denise Lehman
Connie Heller
Lou Gonzales
Roger Kennedy
Brenda Eddinger
Susan Carson
Yvonne Grace
Laurene Vorderbrubben
Gary Monson
Tessa Koncan
Pat Thompson
Marie Johnson

March 2005

Linda Szymczyk-Sak
Lydia Dominguez
Clenoid Spencer
Marlene Spizzirri
Andre Blanchard

April 2005

Judy Makay
Merrill Johnson
Ronald Butera
Gary Ricketts
Terri Williams
Terry Johnson

May 2005

Mary Lou Gardner

Information Alert

Members must be in good standing for 10 consecutive years with IBEW Local 21 (or former Locals 165, 188, 336, 383, or 399) immediately preceding their retirement in order to receive a retirement from the Local Union. These members must be severing their employment with the employer. Stewards, Area Stewards, Chief Stewards, and Business Reps can request applications by calling Nancy Kopydlowski at the union office 630 960-4466 X234.



What manager at a Northside garage has the privilege of keeping his Jaguar inside the garage all day without the keys in it as required?

Serving Corporate Power

by Jim Hightower

As Will Rogers once observed, "This country has come to feel the same when Congress is in session as when the baby gets hold of a hammer."

This Congress is especially terrifying because George W, Tom DeLay, and Bill Frist have decided that 2005 is payback time for their big business backers, and they've turned Washington into an assembly line for delivering corporate America's full wish list. This time they are going much further, rigging America's rules of fairness so that the balance of power in our society shifts overwhelmingly from We the People to They the Corporations.

CEOs have only dreamed about being handed these structural changes in the past, but now their campaign contributions and lobbying clout have altered the political dynamics, and their victories are coming hard and fast, with most of us totally unaware that we're getting hammered.

The first blow came barely a month after Congress convened. A new law was rammed through obliquely labeled "tort reform." Behind that arcane title is a "reform" that can really whap you. If you're harmed or killed by corporate malfeasance, good luck getting any justice, for this law moves class-action lawsuits against corporations out of

Local 21 Retiree Charters on the Move

By Jim McLaughlan, Chief Steward



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

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

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

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

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

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

state courts into corporate-friendly federal courts, re-stacking the scales of justice against you.

Now comes a law for "bankruptcy relief." It doesn't provide any relief for economically-strapped people, but for credit-card giants! If you're poor or middle-income and find yourself overwhelmed with debt, this bill forces you into a vindictive form of bankruptcy that lets bankers seize your wages, car and other essential assets you need to get back on your feet.

Many more blows are coming. To track and fight this corporate power grab, call Congress Watch: 202-588-7777.

-Jim Hightower is a best selling author.

UNIT MEETINGS 2005

MAY

Unit 1

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

Unit 2

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

Unit 3

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

Unit 4

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

Unit 5

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

Unit 6

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

Unit 7

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

JUNE

Unit 1

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

Unit 2

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

Unit 3

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

Unit 4

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

Unit 5

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

Unit 6

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

Unit 7

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

JULY

Unit 1

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

Unit 2

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

Unit 3

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

Unit 4

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

Unit 5

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

Unit 6

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

Unit 7

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

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

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