

# FRONTLINE

Volume 7, Number 6 • December 2004

President/Business Manager's Report

## Always New Challenges on the Horizon

By Ronald Kastner



**A**s the calendar year reaches its end, it is appropriate to look back over the past twelve months in our Local and try to put into capsule form

what has taken place. Additionally, what the City of Chicago is attempting to force on our members at the Office of Emergency Communication is a travesty. The City needs to step up to the plate and bargain a fair contract with our members.

Eighty-two percent of our members voted to accept a five-year contract after some extremely tough negotiations on our flagship agreement with **SBC**. After careful analysis, Local 21's contract turns out to be the best overall when compared to all other major telecommunication companies. We maintained a premium-free environment for active members and retirees. We answered the mandate put out by our members.

I would be remiss if I didn't comment on the **November election**. Although disappointed with the outcome at the Presidential level and in the Governor's race in Indiana, we are elated with our success in Illinois. Maintaining control of

both the House and Senate will enable Labor to get aggressive with our agenda in Springfield. This will be very important in an upcoming year that will see the Telecom Rewrite as one of this Local's most important priorities. Local 21 is now a player at the State house because our membership got involved, and most importantly voted. Thanks again to all who made this possible, not only by voting yourself, but by also supporting the endorsed candidates.

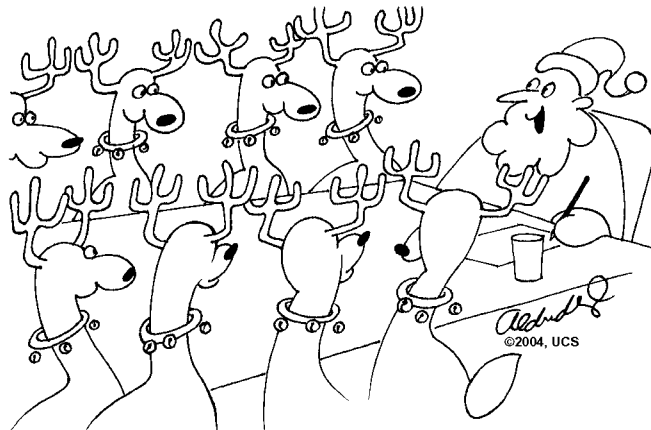
**Best wishes for a holiday season filled with joy and peace.** I look forward to seeing all of you at our regular monthly meetings starting again in January, 2005!

In solidarity,  
Ron

what has taken place.

I'll begin with our long and continuous battle with **Comcast**. We continue to work hard everyday to reach a fair agreement with this employer. As most of you know, the necessity of reaching an agreement with this company gains more importance everyday as competition for high-speed internet increases along with the many other new technologies that constantly appear. It is paramount that we maintain the industry standard for the telecommunications market, and we intend to do so

We've had problems reaching fair agreements with some of our **public sector employers** this past year also. In fact, it took a two week battle with Vermillion County, before we finally reached an agreement. The struggle still continues at the Bel-wood Nursing home Peoria County where we hope to reach a fair agreement soon.



"It's agreed then. Six percent over three years, plus air miles."

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# FRONTLINE

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## Can you say "BIG BROTHER?"

By Rick Gessler, Vice President /Assistant Business Manager



Too many times we have a member who gets themselves into trouble because they don't think that they will be caught for not following

work rules. Let me make something perfectly clear. **If you are a technician, you are monitored from the time you turn the key on in your truck until the time you return to the garage.** That means you are tracked by where you drive, how fast you drive, how long you sat each time you stopped and if you went out of route. If you frequent the same location more than five times in a thirty day period, this is also tracked. If you visit a Central Office or if there are two or more trucks at a location (coffee?), this is tracked. The last stop and overtime taken are compared. These are some of the things that red flag you. Much of this is above your supervisor since he is monitored the same way.

If you are a Maintenance Administrator, Service Representative, Marketing Support Specialist, or Customer Advocate **in a center you are monitored by a system called "Ultra/Verint" which records every call** and twenty-five percent of the computer screens you have up during the calls.

As President Kastner says, "Forewarned is forearmed."

As I reported in the last issue of *Frontline* about SBC being poor losers, **SBC has taken us to court on the issue of contracting out after layoff.** (Even though the Arbitrator ruled in the Union's favor which is "final and binding.") We continue to pursue the case on our laid off members and on November 22nd had a status hearing in Federal court where we both have agreed to a summary judgment. This means that written arguments will be forwarded to the judge and he will base his decision on such. We hope for a decision before summer. At the same time we continue to investigate alternative means

of pursuing this matter.

In the case of the Data Com layoff we also had a status hearing the same day and the company couldn't tell the court what their defense will be. There is now a December 21st status call hearing scheduled.

The company has made several press releases concerning project light speed, IP television service and voice over IP. However, they haven't felt the need to tell the Union anything on these subjects. We have requested a meeting with the company to discuss project light speed and its impact on our members for future work. We will keep you posted.

We have been given an overview of the company's **continuing network center consolidation plans** for 2005 and 2006, and the first of those consolations begins in January. We feel at this time we will not lose head count, but will see some movement between centers and some job title changes. We will be closely monitoring this situation.

As of December 1st, in 2004 IBEW Local 21 processed **one thousand one hundred eight second step and above grievances against SBC.** This does not include the hundreds or thousands of grievances filed and resolved by your Stewards at the first step of the grievance procedure!

Want some interesting reading? Go to: <http://finance.yahoo.com/q/it?s=sbc> and click on some of the links.

**Happy Holidays!**



**"Even with my cost of living increase I can still cash my check on the bus."**

# 2004: A Look Back

By Michael Sacco, Business Representative



**Y**ear-in-review columns can be very cheesy, in my humble opinion, but they do serve a couple of purposes: 1) To reflect on

things that we were successful in and those that we should have done differently; 2) To remember and reinforce our own history so that we don't repeat it. Without further ado, these are the events that made 2004 memorable...

In January Jim Kassing retired, and I volunteered to be reassigned by President Kastner as the Business Rep for the **North and West sides of Chicago**. This was an exciting return for me to the place where I started with Ma Bell; the place where I grew up and learned some of my most important lessons. I love being back and seeing old faces and new ones too; learning new lessons from a great and diverse group of stewards and members...

In February the Union reached a new agreement with **Johnson Controls** that was successful in light of the continuing cuts brought on by SBC. Unfortunately, those cuts included the remaining housekeeping people at both SBC and Johnson.

In the spring I was one of the trainers in our Union's first ever **Mobilization Training**, designed to support SBC bargaining. These exciting sessions helped to develop the often-hidden talents and militancy of our stewards, activists and rank & file members. Sessions tapped a rich vein of ideas on how our Union can be made stronger. I believe our Union has been forever changed by this new path.

The summer, of course, brought SBC bargaining. But first, the Local had to bargain the **SBC Datacomm** agreement. The bargaining of the "big contract" complicated this effort and we negotiated a healthy raise, negotiated a settlement of the per-diem arbitration worth about

\$30,000.00 and signed an extension until February 2005, when we'll complete what we started in June.

**SBC bargaining** turned out to be the usual drama. The company's outrageous demands, in spite of record profits, made everyone both mad and uneasy. When CWA went on strike and IBEW members in Illinois honored their picket lines, the company got a hard dose of reality--IBEW members were serious about getting a fair contract. In the end, we did get a fair contract that maintained the 50 years of hard-fought contract language and made significant economic progress. Members ratified this deal in record numbers.

Around the same time, our Union received the news that the arbitrator ruled that we have the right to the documentation about contractors in the contracting-out arbitration against SBC. This victory put the lie to the company's argument that they could lay off people even as they used contractors to do our work. Sadly, the company is dragging its feet and challenging this ruling in court, while hundreds of laid-off members and their families continue to suffer.

Late summer brought the news of more shenanigans by SBC when they **laid-off 16 Datacomm workers illegally** two ways: violating established contract language forbidding lay-offs when using contractors and violating the newly-signed letter on Evolving Technologies that guaranteed no layoffs at Datacomm. This pattern of dishonesty has become the norm for SBC as they continue to do whatever they damn well please with the protection of the Republican administration.

Fall brought us the all-important general **elections**. Record numbers of Local 21 members volunteered, joining thousands of other unionists nationwide in trying to get George Bush out of an office he illegitimately held and had used to wreck havoc on working people and the poor. Alas, he apparently stole another election. There is a bright side; millions of people who supported John Kerry have built lasting structures that will help to

beat back Bush's plans. This means we will all have to stay vigilant and involved and keep fighting for the things we have worked for. We can put a silver lining on this dark cloud!

After years of suffering the consequences of bad management decisions on the 2002 layoffs, SBC engaged our Union in an initiative to reassign 105 Chicago outside techs to the suburbs. The **preferencing** went smoothly for the most part, with only nine people being forced to a location they had not asked for. Eight techs still have a fairly close drive and only one required a move package.

Sadly, throughout the year the **grievance process continues to be broken**, but does show signs of improving at this writing. I've participated in many dismissal panels for workers who ignored the company's often-silly rules or came upon rough personal times that the company has little sympathy for. Some folks out and out stole from the company, and when caught seemed surprised when they were fired. In most cases all of these folks are gone for good. For a few, we will pursue justice through the arbitration process.

**Scheduling** weekends and holidays continues to be a central drama, but we have made significant progress on agreeing with the company with what yardsticks these demands are measured. With continuing negotiations, we hope to improve the situation.

In summary, I'm glad to have the opportunity to serve and get to know my new stewards and members. I hope I have met your expectations as your Business Rep and promise to work hard for your interests in 2005. To those who have left, I pray **Godspeed for you and your families**. I look forward to serving you all in 2005. I hope and pray that we will all continue to do our jobs safely. **From my family to yours, I wish you all peace and joy for the holidays and the New Year.**



# More Than a Bandana

By *Jacque Fields, Treasurer*



A story about fellow employees who rally around a co-worker who didn't ask for support, but needed it, has to be shared with

everyone. This was the case of our member of 34 years, Judy Curtin, a Maintenance Administrator in the Hoffman Estates NDC. She was negatively diagnosed with breast cancer in February this year. She needed help from others, but didn't ask for it. Judy shared the information with those closest to her, but carried on, had the lumpectomy, and on March 24th she started chemo.

She will never forget this date because on March 17th her dad passed away; on March 23rd her granddaughter Ashley Elizabeth was born. Judy was told to expect to lose her hair, but as I discovered when I talked with her, she didn't dwell on it; she cut her hair and started wearing a nice wig, which no one seemed to notice. The days

got warmer and by July, Judy stopped wearing a wig and started wearing bandanas.

Those who were close to Judy, and were aware of what she was going through were very supportive, giving Judy things to lift her spirits, such as silk flowers with pink ribbons, cards, little presents. Her boss, Bill Bartwell, along with her co-worker Janine Schramm got together and organized a "Bandana Day." Everyone wore bandanas!

Kim Phillips decided to collect the bandanas and sew a quilt out of them. When Judy received the quilt, she couldn't believe it!! It still brings tears to her eyes to remember the generous and loving things that helped her through the radiation treatments that had started by then. She would have treatment on Wednesday, and because of exhaustion, would rest Thursday and Friday. She would carry the quilt with



her to her appointments, and share the story of what her co-workers had done. Her daughter has nicknamed her "Linus," because she doesn't go out without the quilt.

Judy has now completed the radiation treatments, had a follow-up mammogram, and is awaiting the results, which will confirm she is completely healed. At this time of year we need to remember why we celebrate. It is to give thanks, to be kind, loving, forgiving. We need each other, brothers and sisters, let's keep each other in prayer.

# Thanks Beyond Measure

By *Linda Cox, Business Representative & Recording Secretary*



As I sit and reflect back on this year, so many thoughts race through my mind. I wonder how to measure our successes in the benefit

department. How do you measure someone's gratefulness that we were willing to help resolve an unpaid bill, a denied disability or FMLA claim? How do you measure the time spent with surviving spouses or children of a member or retiree who has just passed away? How do you

measure the time spent explaining to a member, who is dying, the benefit choices they need to make to protect their family after they are gone? How do you measure the teamwork the benefit department shares with the Area Stewards, Chief Stewards and Business Representatives when someone is suspended? The answer is, of course, immeasurable.

I could put a dollar figure down and someone would think WOW! But I don't want to do that. I don't think the successes can be measured in just dollars and cents. I think our successes are measured by what we give of ourselves with nothing asked for in return. We have a job to do and we do it. The same way you do yours. Sure, a thank you is welcomed. That's something you

don't hear a lot. Two simple words. Have you spoke them today?

Taking time to thank people only takes a few minutes. Here's my list. My thanks to President Ron Kastner for entrusting me to sit at the bargaining table this year. I'm grateful that we were able to bring home a contract that allows us to maintain our level of medical benefits without a monthly premium cost.

To my staff, Mary Jo Hinds and Lynn Arwood, this year could not have happened without your hard work and dedication. You are the backbone of this department. You kept the department running before and during bargaining and have continued to do so during my illnesses this year.

# Was it a Happy New Year 2004?

By Mike McCormick, Business Representative



**I**t has been a frustrating and busy year. Many things have occurred, some for the good and some for the bad. Let me first talk about the

**ALTURA** side of the business. I took over this contract right after the first of the year, and many issues needed immediate attention. With the help of Will Thornberg, from the Chicago area, we got started. We became involved with the problem of why the contract is not printed yet. We discovered that the International never approved it. Then we found out that some language within the contract had to be changed. What I mean by that is some language (words) under the NEBF (National Electrical Benefit Fund) section, had to be changed.

We also dealt with the New Mexico area and the movement within it. The Union went to arbitration over the Healthcare Issue and we have just received the arbitrator's ruling. It's not good. The arbitrator ruled that:

- (1) The employer did not violate the Agreement by changes it made to health care benefits between 2003 and 2004.
- (2) The employer did violate Section 9 by not discussing detail changes prior to the plan being presented to employees.
- (3) The employer shall discuss with the Union any further detail changes that may occur during the term of the Agreement.

This means the arbitrator believed that it was unreasonable for the Union to argue that the addition of the phrase "change in the coverage details" indicated a mutual understanding that the plan benefit levels would remain constant from year to year when the employer had earlier rejected any such explicit guarantee. ALTURA was being purchased at the time by Platinum, which had its own comprehensive benefit plan.

I dealt with some other issues: a dismissal case in Michigan, grievances in

New Jersey and California, letters put in technicians' files. I would like to talk about the "zipper" clause language. This is Article 2 of the contract, the Waiver Clause. It states that by this contract the parties agree that prior agreements, be it oral or written, and practices that will be imposed are by this contract only. My thought about past practices is that if they were used before they would have to be discussed either by the steward or me to keep them intact. There is also the issue of the Stand-by process. What has come to light is that this process is done differently from area to area. I discovered that this issue was negotiated years back by Randell Scotty. I'd also like to thank Jeff Stewart, Bob Knieffel, Dave Alonzo, and Jim Wallach for their help during my transition time. I will keep you abreast of these issues and others in the future.

On the **SBC** side, we've seen many changes this year. First of all, we received good news when the arbitration ruling came back on the Audit cases. In our area we welcomed back Nelson Stewart,

Therron Wilson, and Mike Willis. Each person received full back pay.

There were many dismissal cases again this year but we did see movement on the company's side. This was quite a change from last year. There are some new stewards in place, in different departments, both CJ and myself thank you for stepping up to the plate, to make your area a better place to come to work. Because of the new contract we have been able to put many cases (dismissals) in for neutral evaluation. This will definitely speed up the backlog of cases. I've been involved in many arbitrations this year--contract interpretation or suspensions or dismissals.

I would like everyone to **think about GPS**. The company constantly uses this process whenever anyone gets in trouble. This process doesn't miss a beat. GPS is being used to look at all trucks from 3:00pm. to 5:00pm. Are they grouped together? Are they just sitting a block or two away from the garage? Basically, are the trucks where they are supposed to be? **BE AWARE.**

Finally, CJ and I wish that you and your families have a great and safe holiday season and let's hope that next year only gets better.

## Incentive Grievances Won

By Kevin Curran, Business Representative



**W**e had a major issue at the Total Grace Customer Care Center which concerned members who had their

incentive checks withheld because their customer service measurement was too low. Under the incentive plan, a Service Rep has the right to challenge these ratings and is to be allowed to listen to the calls which caused them to have a low rating. The members in this case were denied the ability to review the recordings of these calls, so the Union filed a grievance on this violation. During the investigation of the grievance, it was determined that the

reason these members weren't allowed to review their calls was because **the recordings no longer existed.**

SBC management initially took the position that it wasn't relevant that the recordings no longer existed because they were erased inadvertently, and a manager had reviewed the recordings before they were erased and scored them appropriately. Our position was that whether the company allowed these recordings to be erased through negligence or if they intentionally deleted them, the bottom line was that **management was responsible** for the recordings and now they don't exist. Due to the hard work of the stewards at Total Grace as well as Chief Steward Deb Maples, the Union ultimately was able to require the Company to pay all of the Service Reps involved their **full incentive payout.**

# Look ... up in the sky... is it a bird? ... Is it a plane? ... No it's 2005

By Larry Moeller, Area Steward



**T**raditionally, end of the year articles contain a review of the past year and an optimistic look into the future. This task has been bouncing

around my head for days, especially during the one hour plus commutes to the Union hall. I'll start with the successes the Local 21 COPE department achieved in 2004. Our Local raised \$29,275.56 in voluntary donations and paid out \$26,273.12 to pro-worker politicians from both parties in Illinois and Indiana. It was the largest sum collected in the history of our Local. These dollars, along with the lobbying efforts of Rosetta Shinn and Dennis McCafferty, go a long way to establishing our clout in Springfield and Indianapolis.

Of course, the lion's share of the COPE donations went to Democrats, but interestingly enough four Illinois Republicans were endorsed by Labor. Why? They earned it. A million union members in Illinois get the attention of all politicians; let's not forget they all want to be re-elected. It is our hope that some day in the future we can endorse members of both parties based on their commitment to workers' issues.

Thanks to a concentrated effort at Union meetings, via mail and individual staff member's efforts to register Local 21 members, we successfully added over **300 new voters** to the rolls. Again this was the most successful registration drive in our history.

Local 21 provided 52 volunteers who

worked for deserving candidates prior to and on November 2nd. They performed a variety of mundane tasks key to any successful campaign including, out-of-state bus trips to go door-to-door campaigning, phone banking, stuffing envelopes, poll watching, and passing out palm cards.

In Illinois we helped elected Barak Obama, a man with a lifetime 90 % pro-labor voting record, to the U.S. Senate. We helped Melissa Bean defeat Illinois 8th district U.S. Congressman Phil Crane, who in 36 years had a 0 % pro-labor voting record. We also contributed to retaining control of the Illinois House and Senate.

These successes would be impossible without our most important asset, you the Local 21 members who voted on November 2nd. Thank you, because when the Speaker of the Illinois House personally calls our President Ron Kastner, Mike Madigan knows we vote, he knows we provided workers and donations. Brothers and Sisters, this is political capital we intend to spend when it comes time to consider the 2005 Illinois Telecom Rewrite Act. **SBC AND COMCAST CAN CONSIDER THEMSELVES WARNED!**

Gazing into the crystal ball is daunting task; our political fortunes in Illinois look promising. We know we have friends in high places, and we intend to be part of the Illinois Telecom Rewrite Act of 2005. Looking at Indiana the crystal ball grows cloudy. We lost pro-worker control of the Indiana House and the governorship. Workers rights are vulnerable. We can only monitor the situation and seek alliances with moderate Republicans who have large labor constituencies in their districts.

It goes without saying, we are disappointed in the results of the Federal election. It is certain the Bush administration will continue its assault on workers and their Unions. These assaults are subtle, such as stacking the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) with anti-union members. They'll continue to allow Union busting and out-sourcing of jobs as a business strategy. Beware of further diminishment of overtime rights and protection of a defined pension.

Here's an example of how the Federal government can subtly change our lives. Back in the 80's there was a phenomenon known as "**the corporate raider.**" They were strictly greed-driven, and targeted corporations whose assets exceeded their debt, often those assets included a fully or over-funded defined pension plan. Once the raider purchased enough stock, they began a hostile take over of the Board of Directors. If they succeeded, **they replaced the old board and paid for the takeover using the corporation's own assets to pay for it all.** Everyone made money; well not everyone. Profitable divisions were sold off or run into the ground. Worst of all, when workers reported to work one day, they discovered the gate padlocked--no job and their pension worthless. To stop this abuse the Clinton administration, with bi-partisan support, established the Pension Benefit Guarantee Corporate Trust (PBGC.) The PBGC was funded by a corporate tax and workers pensions were protected.

Fast forward to the current Bush administration. They decided a corporate tax to fund the PBGC was unfair to corporations, so now the PBGC is funded by guess who... we the people...we the taxpayers. Combine this with the "What me worry?" economic policies of the Bush administration, and huge federal deficits, is it any wonder that once again corporations like United Airlines are defaulting on their pension obligations. The pity of this is the PBGC is under-funded, and unfortunately recent corporate defined **pension defaults have resulted in PBGC settlements at half the original value.** Once again workers take it in the neck and the CEO gets a raise.

Politics doesn't go away when the election is over. Politics affects the day-to-day functions of government. The Local 21 COPE department will monitor developments in Washington D.C. when we spot one of those subtle changes that is bad for workers, we will place it on the Local's web site, the information hot line, or *Frontline*. Keep exercising those new political muscles and contact your representatives in Washington to let them know how you feel.

**HAVE A HAPPY AND BLESSED HOLIDAY SEASON**

## Do you have a News Story?

We need your contributions – on disk in Word format at the Union office (paper copy backup is a good idea) or simply paper copy. Or you could email an attachment in Word to both addresses as insurance.

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## Now Begins the Time for Vigilance

By Dennis McCafferty, Committee on Political Education



Well, the votes have been cast and counted and the citizens of our nation have spoken. And despite a massive effort on the part

of organized labor, the results were disheartening to say the least. But, optimist that I am, the silver lining in this big dark election-day cloud is this: Record numbers of working-class people came out to voice their displeasure towards this administration's policies.

I would like to thank all the members of our Local, especially Business Unit Recording Secretary Janet Pierce and Area Steward Bev Goncher, who worked the phone lines and beat down doors here in Northwest Indiana, for all their hard work this election season. Despite the outcome, you did make a difference, so be proud of yourselves.

If this election has proven anything, it's that there are STILL many things that divide us and unless we start seeing some of this "compassion" that President Bush

claims to possess, there can be little reason to expect anything other than more of the same bull\*\*\*\* treatment. I don't know about you, but where I come from **51% DOES NOT make a mandate**, and the rest of us are sick of being jerked around! And now this guy is walking around talking about spending this newfound "political capital" he claims to have – like a drunken sailor on payday. His arrogance would be funny if it weren't so potentially tragic.

Personally, the most crushing blow of this election was losing the Governor's seat and a Democratic Statehouse majority in Indiana. Unlike our neighbors to the west, once you get outside of Lake County and the city of Indianapolis, Indiana is basically a Republican state. The



"Isn't it wonderful that America gives people like me the right to speak freely."

Governor-elect, "NOT my man" Mitch Daniels, promises there will be change, and from a Labor perspective, this can only mean trouble. "Right to Work" legislation is on its way. That, coupled with President Bush and the Republican Congress' killing of Overtime Pay Protection, can only add to the misery.

One thing I can promise is that we will not go down without a fight! So now the questions we should ask ourselves: Where do we go from here? Do we meekly accept defeat and run away with our tails between our legs? **HELL NO!** Do we get back up, brush ourselves off, and remain defiant in the face of adversity and get back into the fight for political, social, and economic justice? **You're damn right we do!**

Brothers and Sisters, life has just become even more difficult than it already was, and it's time to get back to work. And with the leadership our Local, the International, and the rest of Organized Labor will provide, we can, will, and **MUST** get the job done!

**I want to wish each and every one of our Members, Officers and Staff the Most Blessed Holiday Season Ever and May GOD Bless Us, Everyone!**

## Election Day at the Polls

By K.C. Coates, Area Steward

If anyone has ever been involved with election day, I wonder if "excitement" is the correct word. A crowd at the racetrack feels a surge of energy that is missing when you watch a race on the television alone in your living room. I hoped that being actively involved would give me a little of that same excitement, more than just watching the results on television after supper. When I was asked to be a pollwatcher for a Democratic candidate, I expected a certain feeling of excitement.

It's pretty hysterical when you show

up at the polls and the election judge freaks because in their training class they are all told that someone "might" just show up. So here's a book if you forget anything. I think they were afraid to speak to us at first. We couldn't touch anything, and I felt a little like I was invading when I tried to overhear the name of a voter.

As a pollwatcher it doesn't matter how a citizen voted...**Just did people vote.** Since this was the first time I'd done this, I appreciated the opportunity to be a little close to the inside. Yes, there was a lot of energy when we heard

the election judges say that they had never had a turnout like this before. From where we watched, it looked like the younger generation stepped up to have their voice heard. By the end of a very long day, the election judges, whether they were Republican or Democrat, realized that we were not the bad guys. I have a new-found appreciation for the responsibilities of an election judge, and how seriously they take that responsibility and the election process as a whole.

## The Oakbrook Shuffle

By Nancy North, Area Steward



**M**ost people thought it was just taking way too long. The news was out that more accounts were moving from BCS to Global because

these businesses have presence across the country, in all the states served by SBC. What did this mean in terms of people? How many people, and where?

Rumors flew. The story changed by the time a person walked from one end of the football-field-and-a-half long office to the other. The people going to Global would move to downtown Chicago, no wait Hoffman Estates. All of Global was moving out to Oakbrook, and the people who stayed with BCS would go downtown, no wait Hoffman, or wait, wait Texas. The company would close our building altogether. Why couldn't they just tell us now?

I wasn't in any hurry. I can wait for bad news. The company delayed because they weren't finished with their calculations. The move would impact centers in all five states. The Union met with the company to make sure the process was fair.

On October 15th management made office-wide announcements. All thirty-seven points. In the end, all the panic had been wasted. The employees going to Global would stay right here in the same Oakbrook building. Forty-seven Customer Advocates on the Customer Loyalty Teams (CLT) and one Project Co-ordinator with assigned accounts would follow their work and move to Global. Members in the Expert Resource Group (ERG, also known as the back room) would preference or be forced by inverse seniority to Global. Ten Customer Advocates, four Service Order Writer A's, and three Technical Associates would move. In the ISDN Center, the Marketing Support Specialists would preference, and thirty-five would go to Global. One Technical Associate would go.

The official date of the moves kept changing. The latest news says that December 18th is the date everyone moves their desks. December 26th is the date employees actually report to Global.

And, despite the fact that there is no room at the 225 Randolph building in downtown Chicago, or the Lakewood building in Hoffman Estates, the rumors fly again that having Global employees located in Oakbrook is only temporary and they will be moving....

## In A Time of Need... ...Local 21 Members Come to the Rescue

By Bob Przybylinski,  
Area Steward



**I**n the beginning of November I received an email from Cathy Bester a Comcast Steward working in the

Park Forest office. She wanted to reach out to a co-worker in her shop who lost everything when her house burnt down. As Cathy put it *"Her house caught on fire today and they have lost everything. The only things they have are the clothes that were on their backs. She has 3 kids ages 10, 15, 17 all girls now without clothes for school, not to mention herself and her husband."*

I sent out an email requesting help. With the assistance of the Local 21 staff and organizers we took up collections after the November unit meetings. I was amazed at the response. The membership turned out in a big way. As of press time, we collected nearly \$1,000 to help our Sister in need. I am still receiving calls and messages offering support. I would like to personally thank all those who donated and offered assistance. A special thanks goes out to the Local 21 staff, volunteer organizers and the UFCW Local 881 office staff who contributed and helped in the collection. Mutual aid and protection of a member in a time of need is truly what union membership is all about.

## 911 Town Hall Meeting

**A**ll the Unions representing the City of Chicago workers have joined the "Working for Chicago" campaign. City workers have been without a contract since June 30, 2003 with little progress at the bargaining table. They sponsored five town hall meetings in November, taking their case directly to alderman and local citizens. IBEW member Natisha Zinus represented 911 workers on one of the panels.





# Great Things are Happening at Gallatin River?

By Rosetta Shinn, Chief Steward



This has been a year of strange and stressful events at Gallatin River Communications LLC. But mixed in with the bad were a lot of good and even

groundbreaking happenings.

We had the good fortune to get a just arbitrator assigned in our **layoff arbitration**. His ruling, which upheld the Union position in nearly every aspect, was a great validation of all the hard work that went into fighting for those unfairly laid off and reassigned by the company. The grievances occurred because we failed to reach complete agreement during the original layoff negotiations. In a strange twist, the arbitrator required the parties to renegotiate the layoffs instead of ruling on the remedy himself. With the ruling upholding the Union position and the arbitrator retaining jurisdictional oversight, you can only imagine that this renegotiation was a whole lot different than the first! We were able to bargain a deal that included job upgrades and back pay. We won reinstatement for every grievant who wanted to return from layoff, and bargained reinstatement for another who didn't even file a grievance (This member hadn't been given any remedial consideration from the arbitrator's ruling.) It was pretty refreshing to have some real bargaining and not just have the company dictate their terms to us.

We had our **Random Drug Testing grievance** go to arbitration as well. We are awaiting that decision. Regardless of the outcome, the fact that Local 21 fought this arbitrary and unjustified invasion of our members' rights is a real morale booster. The whole practice of springing new, unilateral "policies" mid-contract is a favorite Gallatin tactic and they have used it over and over again. Maybe our willingness to fight this sort of policy will give them some pause in the future.

We have several issues and grievances that have arisen from **the company discontinuing benefits for people and firing them while they are off on sick leave**. We certainly hope to win these critical grievances, again probably forced to arbitration due to Gallatin's stubborn refusal to fairly settle and cease these unfair

practices. Our stewards have been threatened with their jobs and I have been told I could be arrested for my part in coming on to the property to post bulletin board notices the company did not want posted. We continue to fight these issues that threaten the seniority, livelihood and welfare of our brothers and sisters with the help of the Local, much to the amazement of Gallatin River management. They have been accustomed to getting their way and can't seem to understand why they haven't "broken" us yet.

Go to any unit meeting and listen to the members' concerns about SBC and you'll see, it's very much the same attitude as SBC – Gallatin River doesn't seem to want to partner with us, it **just seems they want to own us**. They have let us down time after time. They have been given chance after chance to keep their commitments. They constantly talk about working together with us but we are still waiting on the evidence and it just isn't there. Look at all the energy and resources they waste fighting with the very people who helped build their enterprise.

The great news is we remain resolute and hopeful that Gallatin River will eventually stop trying to control us and will realize that working together and treating us fairly is in their own self-interest. Surely they must now realize we will defend our members.

They absolutely must learn to respect the Union and the employees. Our members are people, and treating them as nothing more than a "resource" to be managed is the



**Business Rep Vickie Burroughs (L) with Judy Pokorny at a benefit held for Judy because her benefits were unjustly stopped by the company.**

wrong approach. A saying around Gallatin is, "The company succeeds in spite of their management, not because of it." The wisdom of that saying lies in the fact that Gallatin has dedicated, hard working front line employees who really care about their jobs and their customers. They always deliver the goods, no matter how rough it gets.

The company runs a real risk of losing that positive attitude and customer focus by continuing to subject our members to an onslaught of even more take aways, unfair practices and policies, and cost savings on the back of the employees. There are limits and I hope they are smart enough to realize that. In spite of these trends, we DO remain hopeful. In spite of all the bad, I see a lot of good. With the backing of the Local, I think we will see a lot more.

## A Quick Update

By Melanie Probst,  
Business Representative



**News at JULIE, Inc.** Congratulations to our JULIE members for ratifying a new 3-year contract. The new contract was voted in by an overwhelming majority and the

members will be enjoying wage increases each year and a 401K match increase. Thank you to all JULIE, Inc. members for your hard work and solidarity.

### News at Lakewood, Hoffman Estates

The NCSC-Repair Center was advised that their work would be going to Ohio. This is consistent with SBC's plan for the consolidation of centers. Although the work is moving, our members were happy to hear that they are not. The NDC-Dispatch Center will be taking on the dispatch work for all five states and with this additional work coming to Lakewood, the MA's in the Repair Center will be phased into the Dispatch Center.

This transfer of work will be done in phases and should be completed in the 3rd Quarter of 2005.

**I would like to take this time to wish everyone a safe and joyous holiday season. Best wishes to all.**

# Comcast members remain unpredictable in their fight

By Bob Przybylinski, Area Steward

On Wednesday October 27th a delegation of community and religious leaders went to the Comcast Headquarters in Schaumburg to meet with Joe Stackhouse the Senior Vice President of the Chicagoland Market. The delegation was led by Jennifer Barger the religious outreach organizer from the **Chicago Interfaith Committee** on Worker Issues, James Thindwa from **Jobs with Justice**, and Chirag Mehta from the **Chicago Workers Rights Board**. These organizations fight for justice in the workplace and in our communities. These leaders were joined by others from the religious community and Comcast workers.

The delegation came in peace to extend the olive branch to Mr. Stackhouse. They hoped to meet with him to discuss the hardships facing Comcast workers and how those inequities have a negative effect on the workers and their families.

The delegation brought a letter explaining the goal of their visit, but they were met with opposition. Joe Stackhouse's executive secretary took on the role of company scapegoat. She informed the delegation that Joe Stackhouse refused to meet with any community groups. The delegation handed her the letter requesting a meeting with upper level Comcast executives to be held no later that December 1, 2004. The Chicago Interfaith Committee is still waiting a response from Joe Stackhouse.



Copies of this letter can be viewed on our website [www.ibew21.org](http://www.ibew21.org) by clicking on the Comcast Link under the IBEW Local 21 News banner. It is the November 5, 2004 archived update.



# HEY JOE! What's Your Costume?

By Rick Mobley, Steward & Volunteer Organizer

**O**n a beautiful fall Halloween afternoon little did Comcast Senior VP of the Chicago market, Joe Stackhouse, ever imagine who would come trick or treating in his neighborhood.

After years of failing to reach a contract with Comcast, the loyal and dedicated employees of a carnivore of a corporation are taking it to the streets.

**HEY JOE! Workers are fed up and are not going to take it anymore!**

Comcast workers and activists staged a peaceful protest at Stackhouse's palatial estate in South Barrington. You can sure see he has a wonderful contract and has been getting his raises. Unlike the workers that are employed by him, some of whom are represented by **IBEW Local 21**, and the thousands of others who would love to be able to join our **UNION**. Employees who face intimidation and "Gestapo tactics," employees, who go to work

everyday afraid to exercise their legal rights of free speech and the right to organize. Employees who wonder why they can't get a fair contract when Comcast raises rates far surpassing the rate of inflation, amassing billions in profits.

**HEY JOE! Why can't we get a fair contract?**

Neighbors watched as the funeral procession walked to the home of the man who actively plots a way to bury his employee's rights, who could care less if his employees and their dependants have decent benefits or pensions. Comcast raises the rates to make huge profits but will not negotiate a fair contract.

Stackhouse lives a life of luxury with his family in South Barrington. **HEY JOE! Now your neighbors know!**

Neighbors came out of their houses, dogs barked, children were confused and they all wondered what was happening as the Grim Reaper and his band of henchmen held a death march and burial service. It was a symbolic burial of workers' rights on the front lawn of a man who presents himself as a pillar of the community. A man who claims, "**COMCAST CARES**" but when he takes off his workday costume, his true identity is revealed – **A RAT** – the worst of the vermin, carrier of the plague, spoiling everything it touches, including the lives of loyal, dedicated, hardworking people.

**HEY JOE! We can see your hairless tail!**

Eventually South Barrington's finest arrived and with the utmost respect asked the peaceful protesters to disperse. The funeral procession moved on and the neighbors watched, the dogs barked and the children asked questions. Will they ever hear the truth?

**HEY JOE! We will make sure that everyone knows what you really are!**

**UNITED WE BARGAIN –  
DIVIDED WE BEG**



*Pictures courtesy of Jim Nink and John Dolsen*



## Ready to Fight

By Rosetta Shinn & Larry Moeller,  
Committee on Political Education

The national elections are over and we return to doing business with State Capitols, Congress, the White House and the various regulatory agencies. While our candidate, John Kerry, did not win, we are proud that IBEW Local 21, along with the entire family of labor, united in an historic effort to fight for the interests of working families. More than 55 million people cast their votes for a progressive agenda. Local 21 will continue the fight for that agenda in the next Congress, and in state legislatures as we work hard to gain support for working families.

For the IBEW, this election marks the largest member mobilization effort in the history of the Union. Our members worked on the campaign in the field by distributing thousands of leaflets, manning phone banks, and joining member-to-member walks. The IBEW 21 membership has never been more involved in a Presidential election. We are proud that Local 21 members responded by turning out in overwhelming numbers for Senator Kerry.

Although our candidate didn't win on November 2, it's not the end of our fight to take back this country for working families. It is the beginning. This effort was never about one candidate, one political party, or a single election. We need a pro-worker agenda at the national level. IBEW 21 will continue the fight for fair trade, universal health care, worker rights, pension reform, and retirement security. We will continue to work with any Republican, Democrat or Independent who shares our agenda.

To every IBEW 21 member and family member who joined us in this cause, we thank you for your effort, sacrifices and commitment. Stay strong, engaged and work with us as we continue the fight on behalf of working families.

In Illinois we will begin work on the Telecom Rewrite Bill. Again, we will call upon our members for help and support.

Your legislative department wishes you Happy Holidays. You can contact us at the Union office 630 960-4466.

Rosetta Shinn ext. 327

Larry Moeller ext. 221

## Restoring the Right to Organize

### Part 4: What We're Doing About It

By Dave Webster, Business Representative



The Labor movement has 16 million members who must be the engine of the campaign to restore the right to organize in America. We must involve all union members and all workers to change the climate for organizing and restore the freedom to form a union and bargain collectively. It means educating and involving our communities. It's more important than ever to engage elected officials to pass national right to organize legislation-The Employee Free Choice Act. We must create a public debate on the freedom to form

unions and bargain collectively. Studies show **the number of workers who want unions is more than three times the number of workers who belong to unions now.**

So where do we begin? First, take this message back to your workplaces, homes and communities. IBEW Local 21 along with many other AFL-CIO affiliates will be sponsoring Voice @ Work workshops to help educate our members. Volunteer to help your union meet with community leaders. Contact elected officials and voice your support for the right-to-organize, and watch their voting records. As we know from labor history, many have fought and died for the rights that we enjoy. Now is the time to stand up and make sure that everyone, understands and gets involved in the struggle to keep what has been fought for in past decades from being completely eroded.

## Union Scholarships & Union Plus Programs

By Tom Hopper, Business Representative

### IBEW Local Union 21 Scholarships

Our union is proud to announce the IBEW Local Union 21 Scholarship Program, available to all Local Union 21 members and immediate family members. There will be a total of 10 winners of \$1,000 each. See pages 13-14 for the complete Scholarship Program rules and Application. All applications must be received by March 1, 2005.

### IBEW Founders' Scholarships

The IBEW Founders' Scholarships, to be used solely by IBEW members, honor the dedicated wiremen and linemen who organized the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers on November 28, 1891. The officers of the IBEW are pleased to offer its working members scholarships annually on a competitive basis. It is hoped that the awards will not only contribute to the personal development of our members, but also steward the electrical industry that our founders envisioned.

This award is for \$200 per semester credit hour toward an initial bachelor's degree in an approved field at any accredited college or university. The maximum distribution is \$24,000 over a period not to exceed eight years. For complete rules and a downloadable application form, go to: <http://ibew.org/library/scholarshipfounders.htm> or check the November 2004 issue of the *IBEW Journal*, which was recently mailed to all IBEW members. The

application is on the inside of the back page. The application and all related materials must be postmarked prior to May 1st of the scholarship year.

### Union Plus Scholarships and other Money Saving Programs

For more than 10 years, the Union Plus Scholarship program has supported working families pursuing post-secondary education. This program is offered through the Union Plus Education Foundation, and is available to all union members, spouses, and dependent children (as defined under IRS regulations). In 2004, over 75 people, including an IBEW 21 member, received scholarships ranging from \$1000 to \$4000. Since 1992, Union Plus has awarded more than \$1.8 million to students of working families. The Union Plus Education Services Program delivers free, practical online resources to help achieve your post-secondary education goals.

Union Privilege, founded by the AFL-CIO in 1986, develops and manages the Union Plus consumer benefit programs, designed to help the families of the 13 million union members of the AFL-CIO save time and money. Additional Union Plus programs include free and discounted legal services, credit cards, discounted health services, a home buying program, travel and recreation discounts, and much more. For more information visit [www.unionplus.org](http://www.unionplus.org) and [www.unionplus.org/scholarships](http://www.unionplus.org/scholarships).

# International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers

**RONALD E. KASTNER**  
President-Business Manager &  
Financial Secy

**RICK GESSLER**  
Vice President  
Assistant Business Manager



**LINDA COX**  
Recording Secretary

**JACQUIE FIELDS**  
Treasurer

## **IBEW Local Union 21 Scholarship Program**

### **APPLICATION PROCESS & ELIGIBILITY:**

All completed applications must be sent to:

IBEW LU 21  
Scholarship Committee  
1307 Butterfield Road, Suite 422  
Downers Grove, IL. 60515

All applications must be received by March 1, 2005.

1. Eligible applicants must be a member in continuous good standing and have paid dues without an Honorary Withdrawal. A member meeting the above requirements may sponsor an immediate family member.
2. All applicants must be attending, or accepted to an accredited college. Copies of all academic transcripts from high school, college, apprenticeship, or other educational and developmental programs must be submitted with application.
3. All applications must include an essay of not less than 250 or more than 500 words on "The importance of the labor movement in today's world." A complete personal resume is required. The resume should outline education and work history, military service, plus involvement in the union, local, civic, community and religious affairs. At least two additional letters of recommendation must be sent by individuals testifying to the attributes of the applicant.
4. There will be a total of 10 winners of \$1000.00 each.

### **SELECTION OF WINNERS:**

The IBEW LU 21 Scholarship Committee will examine the complete record of each scholarship applicant to choose the winners. All applicants will be notified. All submissions become the property of IBEW LU 21. Essays may be featured in the Frontline or on the IBEW LU 21 website.

FREE ACT OF THE IBEW LU 21:

The creation of this scholarship program is a free act of the IBEW LU 21. In addition, IBEW LU 21 retains the right to alter, suspend, cancel or halt the IBEW Scholarship Program at any time and without giving any reason.

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APPLICATION FORM:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Social Security Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Birth Date: \_\_\_\_\_

I wish to study for an initial bachelor's degree in: \_\_\_\_\_

---

Did you complete high school or the GED? Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_

If you are not an IBEW LU 21 member, please list the full name of the IBEW LU 21 member that is sponsoring you: \_\_\_\_\_

My signature below is evidence that I understand and agree to all rules governing the IBEW Local Union 21 Scholarship Program as listed on the eligibility sheet.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_



# Profit Mongers versus the Workers

By Michael O'Connor, Chief Steward



**A**t the end of December, our laid-off brothers and sisters will be enduring their second Christmas off of the SBC payroll. Keep them in

mind as you go about your holiday chores and errands. But the profit mongers keep right on rolling along at SBC. In the **Cingular wireless** division, the nation's largest cellular provider, the news hit just before Thanksgiving that the company wants to **lay off** 10 percent of its 68,000 workers. This is less than 4 months after our government approved the Cingular-AT&T wireless merger for \$41-Billion, the largest all cash merger in U. S. history.

Do our members understand that it's their hard work and commitment that made that merger offer possible? Don't think it's just Ed Whitacre and Joe Walkoviak who are building value in the company. Our sweat equity makes the money the company puts in its coffers. Our members build, maintain, service and sell the network and services from which SBC derives its revenue and profit.

SBC sat on the fence while our stock price dropped from significant highs, suspending and then dissolving the Project Pronto **fiber optic rollout**. Now, after FCC decisions make it more feasible, the company decides to make a new initiative to millions of subscribers eager for high-speed internet and broadband services. Great, you say. We have the best employees who can provision this new network. Oh, no, not so fast. You see SBC is in federal court right now, fighting an arbitration victory by our Union, a decision that could force the company to deploy in-house, work that it has given to contractors since the 2002 layoff.

That is our employer, which would rather give work to outsiders than its own, dedicated employees. It would rather spend thousands and thousands of dollars to fight a decision it should abide by, rather than spending that money to improve customer service.

**Regional consolidation** continues across the company, in the interest of economies of scale. There is no human component in these decisions. Hundreds of employees have been forced out of the city of Chicago to the Emerald City in Hoffman Estates. Many workers had their commutes doubled in distance and tripled in time. And their plight will continue because there is very little affordable housing in the Emerald City.

The company continues what amounts to a secondary layoff, using **draconian discipline** to dismiss employees for violations of work rules and attendance. Now many of our members have been guilty of infractions, but the company pays little heed to intent or mitigating circumstances, before putting people to the street. People in my own area have been fired for failing a smog test that caused their license to be suspended. Other incidents involved off-duty arrests, with charges subsequently dropped. None of these situations impacted the employee's ability to work or the company's liability. But in every incident, the company made the decision to terminate the member.

That is the company we work for: a heartless, corporate beast that takes its marching orders from speculators on Wall Street. Some of the **bosses** who have been treating us without dignity and humanity are going to reap what they have sown, as **their layoff notices** come down before this Christmas. No one likes to see anyone lose a job in this economy, but maybe that will enlighten some in the management ranks to look compassionately and see the light.

We don't want to see SBC fail. We want the company to do well and **we want to share in that success**, proportionate to our contributions toward that success. The company's enmity towards the Union is inherent. The Union's acrimony only manifests itself in defense of what is the worker's right under the contract.

Brothers and Sisters, I fear there will be more dark days ahead than sunny ones. But control over the workplace is in our hands. It is up to all of us, to **put the "U" in Unionism**, to take back our dignity and demand respect as equal partners in the workplace. Work to defend your fellow

workers. The steward or chief steward cannot do it alone. Don't let managers do an end-around on our rights of seniority, scheduling, overtime, lunches and breaks. Stand your ground in front of the manager or at the tailgate. They can't accuse everyone of insubordination. But be smart about choosing the battles you fight. Career suicide over a petty issue is not the smart-money move!

In closing, let me say that we are most fortunate to be employed in this economy. Our contract provides very generous wages, good benefits and a secure retirement. **This holiday season please take time to consider all those who do not have a Union to guarantee the same rights we enjoy.** And also remember those Union workers fighting passionately for a fair contract against enormous odds. They are our brothers and sisters in the trade union movement. Workers at the Congress Hotel in Chicago will have been on strike almost 20 months when you read this. Please be cognizant of our suffering brothers and sisters this season and share the providence God has conferred upon you with those less fortunate. Unionism is universal, inclusive and compassionate, and we must be militant in pursuit of those goals.

## Still Shopping?

[www.ShopUnionMade.org](http://www.ShopUnionMade.org)  
offers an array of  
union-made gifts, including:  
Clothing, Chocolates, Shoes &  
Accessories; Books &  
Magazines; Artwork & Posters;  
Greeting Cards & Gift Wrap;  
Computers; Flowers; Food &  
Beverages; Sports Equipment  
and Toys & Games.

*Complete information about all  
Union Privilege services is  
available online at  
[www.unionprivilege.org](http://www.unionprivilege.org).*

# IBEW Local 21 Nights!



**United Center • 1901 West Madison Street**

On these special nights all IBEW Local 21 members, family and friends can purchase tickets at a discount for the games listed below. Tickets priced at \$60, \$42, \$32 and \$26 are available for \$50, \$21, \$16 and \$13.

To order tickets, this form and payment must be received by the Chicago Bulls at least two weeks in advance of the first game ordered. Please note that tickets are subject to availability.

**Tuesday, Jan. 25 vs. Denver, 7:30 p.m.**

**Monday, Mar. 28 vs. Memphis, 7:30 p.m.**

**Friday, Feb. 25 vs. Washington, 7:30 p.m.**

**Saturday, Apr. 9 vs. Toronto, 7:30 p.m.**

## IBEW LOCAL 21 NIGHTS!

Mail this form with payment to:	Date(s)	# of Tickets	Ticket Price (Circle one)				Total Price
<b>Chicago Bulls</b> 1901 W. Madison St. Chicago, IL 60612-2459 Attn: Bru Mutebi  Or fax to 312.455.4191			\$50	\$21	\$16	\$13	
			\$50	\$21	\$16	\$13	
			\$50	\$21	\$16	\$13	
			\$50	\$21	\$16	\$13	
			<b>Total Enclosed</b>				\$

There are no refunds or exchanges. If a price preference is sold out, orders will be filled with the next best available seats. Tickets will be mailed to the address below approximately two weeks before the first game ordered.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Home phone (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ Work phone (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_

Please charge my:  Visa  MasterCard  Amex  Discover (Fax to 312.455.4191)

Acct. # \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Or:  Enclosed is a check or money order payable to the Chicago Bulls.

Sign me up for mybulls, my free access to exclusive Bulls news and entertainment.



THROUGH  
**THICK  
 & THIN**

# WHAT A YEAR!

By Jim McLauchlan, Chief Steward



It's hard to believe another year has gone by. It seems they fly by faster all the time.

Let me start by wishing you and your family a happy and safe

holiday season and an even a better 2005. Let's take a moment to remember our laid-off Brothers and Sisters who lost their jobs two years ago. Let's also take a moment to remember our own Union Brothers and Sisters serving in the Armed Forces, and everyone serving the country today. Let's pray for their safe return.

This last year was definitely was a hectic one. The high/low lights for the year were numerous. I still don't believe Bush won.

SBC decided to **detail and loan** everyone, everywhere to cover workloads in other departments. Because the layoff made the workforce so short, they borrowed from one group to cover the work in another. This ends up violating overtime lists and years of past practices.

Now they've created a system that is driven by budget and **budget alone** – not the customers' needs. SBC decided it needs 24 by 7 coverage almost everywhere. They think it's cheaper to have people sit with nothing to do, than pay the small amount of overtime it takes to cover the off-hours workload (that's a different budget.) Better yet, they try swing shifts to cover things that we traditionally covered by working a little OT.

In order to make "the budget" SBC decided to leave cut cables sit overnight with customers out of service. Managers even pulled people off the work, and had them return the next day to finish up. This reduces the overtime and helps managers make the budget. Still they claim, "The customer is important. Make every customer contact a positive one." Go figure.

Stockrooms are cleaned out, because the company can't afford to have **in-stock** what you actually need to do the job. It's much easier to have people driving all over to find the supplies. Who needs cable, jacks,

bonding straps, or CAC's?

Next the world is put on the new and improved **Performance Improvement Plan (PIP)**, not only is craft threatened, but the managers are all told to attack the craft like never before or the manager will be disciplined. (Happy Holiday) Everyone is told they need to be more productive. People were dragged into meetings and told to go faster, yet the manager can't tell you what to do to improve. Just do it! Wait, go to the report! What report? Any report! They have several to choose from to improve your productivity. **But, they can't tell you how to do the actual job faster.**

Which system is your roadblock? Is it the laptop that is slower than my first Atari game-Pong from 1976? Or one of the several hundred forms you **MUST** fill out on every job? I remember the "paperless environment" meetings of the early 80's. Let's fill out the form, **and** close out in the computer – that will prove we are more productive. Which of the zillion practices they've created to make you work more efficient then ever before?

With **PIP**, SBC spends thousands of dollars, with hundreds of managers going through reports of every kind to find the **one minute** the employee didn't do exactly what they were supposed to do. They look at everything from work rules to paperwork. The cry from above, "If it's not right get 'em!" We sit through hours of nonsense meetings, after they have done hours of investigating, only to discover we really are doing our job. If SBC got rid of all the people behind the scenes they use to spy on us, they might have enough money to finish the cut cable and not make people wait unnecessarily for their service to be restored.

Safety becomes a new tool at SBC. Hats off to the company for making sure we are all safe, everyday we are on the job. We need to remember every safety rule and regulation they have put in place. They are only looking out for your well-being and want to make sure we all make it through the day and return to our families. Sorry, I'm a little teary eyed at the moment. Can you say, "another tool to discipline?"

To save even more money, they came out with the new cell phones so that you

can't call each other. That made total sense to me, how about you? It's cheaper to call your manager, who calls a dispatcher, who pages the tech, who calls the manager, who calls you back. **GREAT IDEA!** After a few months of that nonsense, they decided you can call each other, but **DO NOT CALL HOME**. SBC can't afford to allow you to call your family and let them know you will be working late for them, working for the customer, whose service is down. I forgot, just go home, we can leave it until tomorrow, it saves the budget.

I came to realize after almost 27 years with the company, I'm an idiot. A manager with a degree in something, who has a couple years of service, knows the job much better then I ever will, just ask them

So, going into 2005, I think we all should start to follow SBC's lead and follow every rule they have put in place for us to be more productive and safe.

- If Safety is what SBC wants – Do It.
- If Quality is what SBC wants – Do it.
- Be on the job doing what you're supposed to be doing – All the time.
- If you have a question, call your boss – The have all the answers.
- Check your brain at the door.
- **NEVER MAKE A DECISION, LIKE THE ADULT YOU ARE, BECAUSE AT SBC YOU'RE NOT!**
- **DO EVERYTHING AND FOLLOW EVERY RULE AND I'M WILLING TO BET SBC WILL NEED TO BRING BACK ALL THE LAID-OFF WORKERS AND HIRE MORE, BECAUSE WE WON'T GET ANYTHING DONE.**

**Again, Happy Holidays and here's to more fun in "05"!**





## Retiree Update

Over the past year we've worked hard to establish the IBEW Local 21 Retiree Club. We now have two established Charters meeting regularly. The Gurnee Charter and the Oak Forest Charter have elected their boards and have already planned or held several outings and special events. The Oak Forest Charter meets monthly; for information please contact Brenda Howington, Secretary, Oak Forest Charter, at 708-388-5910 or email Brenda at [brendahowington@aol.com](mailto:brendahowington@aol.com). The Gurnee Charter will meet regularly, for information please contact, Sue Davern at [davern@ameritech.net](mailto:davern@ameritech.net). As events come up we will notify everyone through the Local 21 Website, Frontline, and email updates.

Through everyone's efforts, we have managed to locate hundreds of retirees. We now have a large mailing and email list for future communications. We want to continue to grow our club. We are still looking for people and locations interested in establishing their own Charter. Please have anyone interested contact IBEW Local 21 at 630-960-4466 or 877-584-2121. You may also register on-line at [www.ibew21.org/events/retmaillist.htm](http://www.ibew21.org/events/retmaillist.htm).

Beginning January 2005, the Local will no longer be in charge of setting up

meeting dates and locations. This task will be turned over to the Charters. The intent of the Club is to be affiliated with Local 21, but each Charter should actually run itself. If you want to stay involved, and no Charter is in your area, please feel free to contact either charter and they will include you in their mailings. If you would like to establish a Charter in your area please contact Jim McLauchlan. You can reach Jim at the Union office on extension 354, or email him at [mac21@ibew21.org](mailto:mac21@ibew21.org).

With the health care crisis going on in America, we all need to be involved, prepared, and ready to react, when needed. Please get involved, help us grow and become a voice for your future. As stated by President Ron Kastner, "Without the involvement of the Retiree's Club members, it would have been harder to accomplish what we did, for our retirees, at the bargaining table. Your continued involvement will be necessary as we go forward with our fight for healthcare and retiree's benefits."

Thank you,  
IBEW Local 21 Retiree Club Committee  
Jim McLauchlan, Cheryl Crooks,  
and Michael Roach

## CONGRATULATIONS LOCAL 21 RETIREES

August

Kenneth Rhodenbaugh  
Jose Quintana

December 2004

Linda McCary

### 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 gift. These members must be severing their employment with the employer. Stewards, Area and Chief Stewards, and Business Reps can request applications by calling Nancy Kopydowski at the union office 630 960-4466 X234.

## Corporate Government? No, Thanks.

By Jim Hightower

Here's a new political slogan with some integrity and democratic gravitas to it: "Let's run government like a government."

This is, of course, the opposite of the tired, old, tried-and-failed slogan that politicians of both parties have been pushing for years: "We'll run government like a business." The Clintonites used this in the Nineties with their "re-inventing government" campaign, declaring that government agencies should become efficient business operations and treat people as "customers."

Oh? Efficient like – what? – the mammoth insurance-company bureaucracies, or maybe the military contractors who waste and defraud us of billions of our tax dollars? And, do they mean customer treatment like we get from don't-give-a-damn banks and telephone companies?

Today, we have a fully corporatized White House run by former CEOs, including BushCheneyRumsfeld & Co. They're literally running government through such standard corporate practices as operating in secret, twisting tax laws to benefit the elite, opposing public disclosure and right-to-know laws, shutting out dissenters, rigging the regulatory rules for corporate gain, stomping on labor, running roughshod over the environment, disempowering consumers and using advertising gimmicks to hide their deceptions.

It's time to get real. Government is not a business and we are not customers. We're citizens! Far from being passive consumers of government policies, we're the sovereign powers who can make or unmake those policies. Corporations, by their very nature, are exclusive, private empires that exist to serve the bottom line of the wealthiest investors – everyone else be damned. That's no model for a democracy.

America's founders created a framework to run government like a government. It's time to put those democratic principles into action again.

## Remember Summer?

By Mike Grindle, Steward

Late spring and early summer of this year were very stressful to most IBEW members employed by SBC. With a potentially-ugly contract negotiation looming at the end of June, piled on top of the every-day trials and tribulations of dealing



with the management at SBC, there was more than enough work to go around. On June 7th, as a way of saying "thank you" for the efforts of their stewards, Business Rep Jerry Gast and Chief Steward Terry Sheehan decided to take their stewards out to the ballgame. A large contingent of Local 21 stewards, officers, and staff took the opportunity to unwind while taking in a Joliet Jackhammers game at Silver Cross Field in downtown Joliet. A good time was had by all.

# UNIT MEETINGS 2005

## JANUARY

### **Unit 1**

Thursday, January 13, 7 PM  
Holiday Inn Hillside  
4400 Frontage Rd.  
Hillside IL  
708 544-9300

### **Unit 2**

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

### **Unit 3**

Thursday, January 20, 7 PM  
Holiday Inn Hotel & Suites  
495 Airport Rd.  
Elgin IL  
847 488-9000

### **Unit 4**

Wednesday, January 12, 7 PM  
American Legion Harwood Post #5  
705 S. Larkin  
Joliet IL  
815 725-4333

### **Unit 5**

Wednesday, January 19, 7 PM  
Danville Inn  
388 Eastgate Dr.  
Danville IL  
217 446-2400

### **Unit 6**

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

### **Unit 7**

Monday, January 17, 7 PM  
IBEW Local # 309  
2000A Mall St. (Rte 157)  
Collinsville IL  
618 345-5112

## FEBRUARY

### **Unit 1**

Thursday, February 10, 7 PM  
IBEW Local #134  
600 W. Washington Blvd.  
Chicago IL  
312 474-4186

### **Unit 2**

Tuesday February 8, 7 PM  
Lansing American Legion  
18255 Grant St.  
Lansing IL  
708 474-5906

### **Unit 3**

Thursday, February 17, 7 PM  
IBEW Local # 364  
6820 Mill Rd.  
Rockford IL  
815 398-6282

### **Unit 4**

Wednesday, February 9, 7 PM  
Lemont VFW  
15780 New Ave.  
Lemont IL  
630 257-9859

### **Unit 5**

Wednesday, February 16, 7 PM  
American Legion Post #979  
4501 S. Airport Rd.  
Bartonville IL  
309 697-2432

### **Unit 6**

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

### **Unit 7**

Monday, February 21, 7 PM  
Alton Sports Tap  
3812 College Ave.  
Alton IL  
618 465-2539

## MARCH

### **Unit 1**

Thursday, March 10, 7 PM  
Days Inn & Suites  
2175 E. Touhy  
DesPlaines IL  
847 635-1300

### **Unit 2**

Tuesday, March 8, 7 PM  
Gaelic Park Banquet Hall  
6119 W. 147th St.  
Oak Forest IL  
708 687-9323

### **Unit 3**

Thursday, March 17, 7 PM  
Gurnee American Legion  
749 Milwaukee Ave.  
Gurnee IL  
847 244-9282

### **Unit 4**

Wednesday, March 9, 7 PM  
IBEW Local #145  
1700 52nd Ave. Suite A  
Moline IL  
309 736-4239

### **Unit 5**

Wednesday, March 16, 7 PM  
VFW Post #630  
1303 E. Main St.  
Urbana IL  
217 367-4197

### **Unit 6**

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

### **Unit 7**

Monday, March 21, 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.

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Downers Grove, IL 60515-5601



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