

THE INFO CHANNEL

RADIO AND TELEVISION BROADCAST ENGINEERS NEWSLETTER

INTERNATIONAL BROTHERHOOD OF ELECTRICAL WORKERS, LOCAL 1220

FEBRUARY 2009

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Sisters and Brothers:

Financial Relief

For the past two years I have been trying to convince the Executive Board to relax their policy on administrative service charges. At the January 26 Executive Board meeting the Chairman, Paul Rodriguez, and I, proposed a moratorium on administrative service charges to help our struggling members get dues current. This action was tabled by request of one of the members of the Board. One week later, at our regular Union meeting, the same motion was made, and it passed. You have a window of time to become current in your dues without an administrative service charge and we hope you will take advantage of it. Please remember that this action reverses a motion made by members voting at a previous meeting. The dues structure of YOUR Local Union is set by members' motions at regular Union meetings and By Laws are voted into effect by all members of the Local in a mail ballot. The staff of your Union is charged with enforcing the rules and motions and with enforcing the By Laws that have been voted into law by our members. Right now, your dues receipt should say March 2009 or greater. Call our office with any questions.

Negotiations Begin

Our members, both staff and freelance, at WGN Radio have submitted their wishes and requests and we will begin bargaining for a new agreement for them this month. With the parent company involved in bankruptcy proceedings, we have retained counsel with special expertise in bankruptcy law, and will take advantage of his advice as we proceed. With the eyes and ears of many upon us, we must strive to maintain the utmost professional attitude and work ethic at all times. We are valuable and experienced members of the broadcast workforce and as such, have a strong position at the table.

Negotiations Upcoming

Our members at WGN TV and at WYCC TV will begin negotiations for a new agreement this Spring. Surveys have been distributed by our Union Steward at WYCC and have been sent out this week via USPS to our members at WGN. The same counsel we consult with for WGN Radio will assist with bankruptcy questions as we meet and talk with management for WGN. We expect to hear the company's position regarding the upcoming move in of CLTV at Bradley Place early on and will keep you informed through a series of communications methods.

Rumors Abound

Mark Twain said "Rumors of my death have been greatly exaggerated." I know how he felt because 5 or 6 members have told me recently that they have heard I was retiring. So I want to tell you that rumors of my retirement have been completely fabricated. I am not retiring. If you have outstanding business with the Union you can expect that it will be handled quickly, professionally and with the best interests of the Local Union in mind.

In Solidarity,

Madeleine Monaco,
Business Manager/Financial Secretary

NEXT MEETING DATE WEDNESDAY, March 11, 7:00 PM

At the Union office
8605 W Bryn Mawr Ave #309, Chicago

You are the Union!

Join in conducting the business of your Local. Your input is valuable.



INFO CHANNEL FEBRUARY 2009

This Newsletter is published monthly by the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, Local Union 1220, Radio and Television Broadcast Engineers, of Chicago, Illinois.

Anything you might expect to read in a business letter or see in a telegram that pertains to this Local and your part in it will be communicated to you through this channel of information. Consider this your dues invoice, your by-laws update, your meeting notice, and your call to participate.

Any article submitted for publication should be sent by mail, Fax or email to:

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Radio + TV Broadcast Engineers
8605 W Bryn Mawr Suite 309
Chicago, IL 60631
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A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

Any member wishing to bring an issue of concern to the attention of the Executive Board of this Local Union may submit a request in writing to the Board at any time, stating the reason for the request.



**REMEMBER TO NOTIFY
YOUR UNION OF ANY
CHANGE OF ADDRESS,
PHONE OR EMAIL**

NAME _____
STREET _____
CITY, ST, ZIP _____
PHONE _____
EMAIL _____

COPIES OF ANY IBEW 1220 AGREEMENT MAY BE OBTAINED UPON REQUEST AT THE UNION OFFICE
Our contractors are listed on the web site—www.ibew1220.org

YOU UNION NEWS

MEETING INFORMATION AVAILABLE

Members can view the agenda, bills and copies of the correspondence 30 minutes prior to the meeting by appointment.

SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE

The application for IBEW Founders' Scholarship is now available on the IBEW web site, along with additional information that is helpful to the process. Log on to www.ibew.org, or call the Union office for an application.

The application for Union Plus Scholarships available to members and child dependents can now be accessed online at: www.unionplus.org/benefits/education/scholarships/up.cfm

The William A Lee Memorial Scholarship, also available to members and their children, has also been announced. 10 will be given—5 academic based and 5 by random-drawings. Obtain your app online at www.chicagolabor.org

SPECIAL REQUEST FROM A BROTHER IN NEED:

IBEW Local 16 member John Brenner has been diagnosed with a rare form of liver cancer and is in need of a partial liver donor. Our 6th District Vice President has forwarded this request for a Type A+ or O+ donor. The Mayo Clinic will perform the surgery if a donor is found. Possible donors should be between 18 and 55 and in good health. Contact Kristen on the Liver Transplant Team at 866-227-7501, select option 1, reference John Brenner.

When a member has a special need, the word "Brotherhood" comes into play. Brother Brenner needs our help.

HONORARY WITHDRAWAL GRANTED TO:

The following members have met the requirements for receiving this status:

LISA KUBAN – HOME WITH KIDS NOT WORKING
VANESSA BORING – HOME WITH BABY NOT WORKING,
MOVING TO NORTH CAROLINA

FIRST READINGS:

WILLIAM HOLMES – FOX (MI) BILL BOLTE – VISIONS
MATT HOOCZKO – PROGRAM
PHELAN POWELL – WGN TV
ELIZABETH ANSTEY - WCIU

NEW MEMBERS APPROVED:

ALEX LYONS – WCIU (now unemployed)
MICHAEL RUHLMAN – CBS FL
JAY SANTIAGO - WCIU

UNION SHIRTS AVAILABLE:

There are just a few IBEW Local 1220 shirts still available in the union office. For \$20.00 one could be yours.

Sizes and colors (Navy or White) are limited.

Call or email the Union office and let us know.



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

It is with sadness that I announce the retirement of a dear friend and union volunteer of many years, Rich Well from WTTW. Rich has been an employee of WTTW since 1969 so he was already on staff working in the film department when I started in 1973. Rich migrated to engineering and served in many roles but he is best known for that of Technical Director at WTTW most recently switching and overseeing the tech operation for Chicago Tonight. Rich has always been a good union member serving in various roles including a long stint as Chairman of the Executive Board. During his tenure, Rich continued a tradition on the Executive Board that helped drive the local policy and direction for many years. As a coworker, Rich was always lighthearted and someone who I could turn to for ideas and contract input during negotiations. He kept me aware of possible contract issues and thoughts on how they could be avoided. Always one with a joke, he kept the crews under him working at their best and technical standards high. Many of WTTW's most successful productions achieved that status with Rich's expertise and quiet management. WTTW and Local 1220 are losing a dear friend and asset. I can only wish Rich all the best in his retirement.

As financial issues become more pronounced, work is drying up for many of our members. It is imperative that we assist freelance members by watching out for potential work and reporting it to the office. Most of the stations in town are reducing their use of per-diem workers as commercial money dries up and local production is in hiatus. As you have heard by now, a motion made at the February meeting has called for a moratorium to the Administrative Service Charge for those members who are behind in their dues payments. The membership acted on an issue that was already in discussion before the executive board as proposed by BM Madeleine Monaco. There also was a motion to reduce the service charge in the future from \$55 to \$25. Another motion relating to service charges for dues check off payments was also made. However, many members new to dues check off are unaware that the monies collected from their check for union dues are not paid until the following quarter. Therefore, members wishing to take advantage of this company benefit will still need to pay their first quarter dues. Dues are paid quarterly in advance per the IBEW Constitution and the Local By Laws. Members on dues check off will not be assessed Service charges due to the late payment of their employers. The office understands that dues payments from employers are subject in part to the relation between pay period and the start and end of the quarter in which dues are paid or owed. It remains the members' obligation to meet the requirements of our By Laws and be paid quarterly in advance.

I have been informed by the IBEW Sixth District that our election this year will be conducted by a representative from their office. I have been informed as to the representative and will be meeting with him in the future to receive instructions and assist with this duty. He has already met with the Executive Board and Business Manager. These are the first of several meetings that officers will be involved in over the next several months.

In Solidarity,

Alan J. Skierkiewicz

UTILITY TRAINING

Another successful Utility Class thanks to Joseph Electronics, WTTW, the Fletcher family of Chicago, and especially to Rich Lanza instructor and Andrea Randall, assistant instructor. Local 1220's utility workers have been given additional instruction with their help.

The class was held on Jan. 26 in Studio D at WTTW.. There were the usual 'old hands' and some new faces. We have had some problem calls during the year about our utilities so the Business Manager thought it best to call everyone together for a refresher course. "We have this work because we do the best job. If we don't provide consistent quality, we can lose it."

This training emphasizes the cooperative effort of union members. They help each other complete their tasks. These values were evident in the class as the newcomers or less seasoned were helped by the more experienced.

One of the newer participants was quite impressed with the number of facilitators who were really doing a good job and really going out of their way to demonstrate and work with others on what is really a tricky subject. Members with vast experience in our business can still learn when attempting new tasks.

Our thanks to all who pitched in to get the job done. Within 24 hours, the rental equipment was back in their respective homes, clean and as neat as when it left. Another training class is being planned and notice will go to those who signed up but were unable to attend this one.

Jim Sterne, Business Representative

President Obama Wants You to Join the Union

I do not view the labor movement as part of the problem, to me it's part of the solution.
-- President Barack Obama, January 30, 2009

The great union leader John L. Lewis, who headed the United Mine Workers from the '30s through the '50s and helped organize millions of workers into the CIO, used to declare in organizing drives: "President Roosevelt wants you to join the union." Roosevelt never said that in so many words, but FDR did strongly back the Wagner Act, giving workers the clear right to organize.

During World War II, Roosevelt's War Labor Board made clear that corporations seeking war contracts needed to have good labor relations. In practice, that meant unions; and it meant "pattern bargaining" in which workers for different companies in the same industry got the same wages, so that companies could not play workers off against each other.

Roosevelt's wartime contracting policies, the Wagner Act, and the militancy of the labor movement laid the groundwork for the golden age of American unions during the postwar boom. Not coincidentally, this was also the one period in the past century when the economy became more equal, and more secure for working people.

So, while Roosevelt's words never quite urged workers to join unions, his deeds spoke volumes. John L. Lewis was well within the bounds of poetic license.

On Friday, President Obama, a onetime organizer, had more words to say about unions, and they were the kind of explicit endorsement that we literally haven't heard from a president since FDR's day.

"We need to level the playing field for workers and the unions that represent their interests, because we know that you cannot have a strong middle class without a strong labor movement," the President said. "When workers are prospering, they buy products that make businesses prosper. We can be competitive and lean and mean and still create a situation where workers are thriving in this country."

Wow!

And Obama offered deeds to match. This stunning declaration of support came at the White House announcement of a Task Force on Middle Class Working Families headed by Vice President Biden, with Jared Bernstein as its executive director. The idea was proposed last summer by Change to Win unions, who endorsed candidate Obama early in the primary season. He embraced the concept, and it was a commitment he kept. His remarks and actions were a dazzling example of the transformative power of a president to shift public opinion and the political center of gravity.

The task force, and the effusive and genuine embrace of the labor movement, came as a huge relief to union leaders, who have watched anxiously as nearly all the key economic posts went to centrist veterans of the Clinton administration, and the job of secretary of labor was not announced with the other senior economic officials. As it turned out, the appointment of Hilda Solis, a very pro-union member of Congress, was delayed because others had turned down the job first, but the delay sent an unfortunate signal.

Labor activists have also been worried about whether Obama will keep his pledge not just to sign the Employee Free Choice Act (EFCA) guaranteeing the right to join a union, but to work hard on its behalf with legislators, especially in the Senate. Since the election, the US Chamber of Commerce and allied anti-union business organizations have mounted a furious publicity and lobbying offensive with one message: Mr. President, you don't need this bruising fight right now.

But the Chamber's allies in the Republican House Caucus have beautifully undercut that logic. The Chamber's premise was that EFCA would be highly divisive, at a time then the new president was seeking unity. With the wall-to-wall Republican stonewalling on the Obama recovery package, that premise is up in smoke. And the Chamber's other allies, on Wall Street, have also done a service by inviting some salutary class warfare. Obama responded last week, calling Wall Street bonuses in the face of government bailouts "shameful," and seems to genuinely view the growth of unions as a necessary counterweight.

The task force itself will be a welcome counterweight to the outsized influence of Wall Street inside the Obama administration. Several weeks ago, Jared Bernstein, then a senior economist at the Economic Policy Institute, wrote a joint op-ed piece for the New York Times with Robert Rubin pointing out where they agreed. One issue where they pointedly disagreed was on the Employee Free Choice Act, which Rubin explicitly refused to endorse. The Biden operation now looks to be the go-to place for progressives seeking access to Obama's priorities. The Task Force will serve as the White House center to review all proposals, legislative and administrative, for their impact on the effort to raise wages and rebuild a middle class. Without Obama's strong personal engagement, EFCA will be anything but a legislative cakewalk. Democrats may have a working majority. But at least five business-oriented Democrats are not considered certain votes for EFCA, and Obama will need to let them know that the White House considers this bill a top priority.

Our last two Democrats went out of their way not to get close to organized labor. Jimmy Carter did not lift a finger when the last big push to put some teeth back in the Wagner Act's right to unionize went down to defeat by just two votes in the Senate in 1978.

On Friday, announcing the Task Force, Obama signed three executive orders. One will prevent federal contractors from discouraging their employees to join unions. Another will assure that workers keep their jobs when a contract changes hands. Down the road is an executive order to promote project agreements on construction contracts.

PRESIDENT OBAMA—continued..

If Obama is serious, he can take a leaf from FDR's book, and use government's extensive contracting power to actively promote unions. Late in the Clinton administration, then Vice President Al Gore led an effort called the Responsible Contractor Initiative. The idea was to reward federal contractors who took the high road by providing good jobs and not standing in the way of unions.

It remains to be seen just how much real power Obama will give Vice President Biden. But the task force is a superb beginning. If government can just use its influence to make sure employers stay neutral, it will be a new day for the labor movement--and for American progressivism.

Robert Kuttner is Co-Editor of The American Prospect. His new book is "Obama's Challenge: America's Economic Crisis and the Power of a Transformative Presidency."

HEALTH & RETIREMENT BENEFITS THROUGH THE ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRY BENEFIT PLANS

If you're a little bit (or a lot) confused about the benefits you receive through the Entertainment Industry Benefit Plans, read on: your confusion is likely to subside. First of all, benefits are available to you as a result of you working under contracts between your local Union and Participating employers for the purpose of providing benefits through the Entertainment Industry Flex Plan (health benefits) and the Entertainment Industry 401(k) Plan (retirement benefits). These monies go directly into accounts established on your behalf with the Plan(s) which are a result of your Union negotiating with participating employers; the benefits you receive are in addition to your wages (not a deduction from your pay). Best of all, you are not taxed on the payments which are made on your behalf to the Plans. Your health benefits through the Flex Plan are never taxed. Your retirement benefits, by law, are taxed when they are withdrawn. The Entertainment Industry Benefit Plans has a dedicated Member Services Department to assist you with any questions you may have about your Flex Plan or 401(k) account. In addition to 24-Hour access to your account information either on-line or over the phone, the Member Services Department is available at **888/FLEX-401K** between the hours of 7:30am-5:00pm PST (Monday through Friday).

The Flex Plan - www.flexplan.com: Everyone needs health benefits. Regardless of your insurance needs the Flex Plan allows you to customize the benefits to best suit your needs. Whether you are looking to get into a group health plan (the Flex Plan providers are required to provide coverage to all members regardless of your medical history), have your own policy you'd like to keep or are covered by another plan or through your spouse's employer, the Flex Plan provides many options to utilize the funds that are paid into your Flex Plan account. In addition to paying premiums (or getting reimbursed for them), these funds can be used to reimburse you for out-of-pocket expenses such as co-pays (for doctor visits), deductibles or prescription drugs or any other IRS approved item provided you have not been reimbursed from another source. A full list of Medical Expense Reimbursement items may be found at flexplan.com. Once the Flex Plan receives contributions on your behalf you will receive a welcome letter which will give you the option to receive your account information via US Mail or receive a discount on your quarterly administrative fees to receive it via e-mail. When your Flex Plan account reaches approximately \$100, you will receive enrollment materials. Once you receive your enrollment materials, you will have approximately 30 days to make your elections. More detailed information may be found in the Summary Plan Description on the Flex Plan web site or by speaking to a Member Services Representative.

The 401(k) Plan - www.entind-401kplan.com: This is a "self-directed" plan – which means that you have the ability to select which funds to participate in from the list of over 20 funds available to you. When the 401(k) Plan receives the first contributions on your behalf you will receive a notice from the Plan along with an Enrollment/Beneficiary Form. You will have the option to review the information on-line at entind-401kplan.com or have the information mailed to your home. The payments made on your behalf will remain in a US Treasuries account until you instruct the plan how to invest the monies on your behalf. The 401(k) Plan offers a wide variety of funds that range from conservative to aggressive as well as the Freedom Funds which allow you to select a target retirement date. All funds are class T (NAV) shares, which means that there are no fees charged when you purchase or sell or trade mutual funds in your account. There is a flat monthly administration fee which is based upon your account balance. All 401(k) Plan members have FREE access to an investment advisor at Merrill Lynch to help assess your individual retirement goals. This Plan has a specific group of advisors at Merrill Lynch that are familiar with the fund options which are available to the Entertainment Industry 401(k) Plan participants. You may add additional pre-tax contributions to your 401(k) Plan account. More detailed information may be found in the Summary Plan Description on the 401(k) Plan web site or by speaking to a Member Services Representative.

WOULD YOU LIKE TO REACH US BY EMAIL???

INFO@IBEW1220.ORG

THE NEXT REGULAR UNION MEETING WILL BE HELD ON
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 11TH AT 7:00 PM
AT THE UNION OFFICE
8605 W BRYN MAWR AVE #309 CHICAGO

PHONE (773) 714-1220

FAX (773) 693-0009

www.ibew1220.org

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