To get a picture of just how much snow fell on Lake Tahoe in January 2017 you’d need NBA legend Shaquille O’Neal; and then another to stand on his shoulders; and one more. Two elephants stacked one atop the other would come close.

Vacaville, Calif., Local 1245 member Nicholas Rains and three of his IBEW brothers standing on one another’s heads would still have been buried three feet from view.

“From New Year’s Day to Feb. 1, more than 25 feet of crystal mountain powder fell out of the sky, burying everything, including the electrical grid connecting South Lake Tahoe’s 21,000 residents to the rest of the world.”

“Everyone made the best of it,” he said. “We were really loving our job.”

Nicolas Rains’ image of that moment created an avalanche of support that won him the 20th Annual IBEW Photo Contest.

Over the last 20 years, hundreds of images capturing the life and work, the people and places of the IBEW have been submitted, first to the Journal and now The Electrical Worker. They show the artistic vision and skill of our members behind the camera and document their varied lives and interests.

PHOTO CONTEST: RESULTS continued on page 3
We Stand Up

This year started in the worst possible way for many of our brothers and sisters who work for the federal government. Faced with no paycheck and no idea how long it would be until the next one, these women and men could have stayed quiet and waited for the very politicians who caused the mess to fix it. But I’m proud to say they did no such thing. Over the course of the record 35 days the federal government was partially shut down, members of this union and others stood up and demanded an end to the impasse. I was proud to join them marching outside the White House, but that wasn’t the end of their activism.

Members of this Brotherhood called members of Congress, wrote letters to the editor, told their own stories of hardship and demanded an end to the practice of using government workers as pawns in political squabbles.

And most importantly, they reached out and helped one another. All across the U.S., from California to Texas to Pennsylvania, we heard stories of IBEW members and locals — even those with no federal workers — reaching out to their communities.

Whether it was feeding workers and families impacted by the shutdown, opening their halls and wallets to donate food and supplies, or simply offering a supportive word to those being forced to work without pay, our members stepped up.

When the politicians wouldn’t act, we did. As I look back on those ridiculous 35 days, I’m filled with hope for the future of workers in America, because workers — not politicians — ended the shutdown.

That fact was pointed out by columnists in prominent newspapers and pundits on cable news, but those of us in the labor movement knew it was always going to be that way. We know firsthand that real change — whether it’s inside a company or in the halls of Congress — comes when working people stand together and demand action.

By the time you read this column, the Feb. 15, deadline for another extension of government funding will have come and gone. I can’t predict whether there will be another shutdown. But I can tell you that I have faith in the working men and women of the IBEW and that they will again stand up and be heard if the need arises.

I also promise you that we’ll work with other unions that represent federal employees to end the practice of holding working families hostage over petty political disputes. A fair day’s pay for a fair day’s work is a bedrock principle of our society and this union, and we’ll never stand quietly by and watch our sisters and brothers be forced to work without paychecks again.

Thank you for all of you did to stand up and send that message to Washington.

Better Benefits, Lower Costs

Rising costs continue to make health care one the toughest issues we face at the bargaining table.

According to the Economic Policy Institute, the total annual cost of an employer-sponsored plan rose from $5,791 in 1998 to $18,142 in 2016. And it is only going to keep going up in the years to come.

For the IBEW, ensuring quality coverage for our members and their families has always been one of our top priorities as a union. But in these days of spiraling costs, many locals and signatory employers are finding it harder and harder to provide the health care their members and employees deserve.

That is why we started the IBEW/NECA Family Medical Care Plan. First launched in 2006, the FMCP today covers close to 100,000 IBEW and NECA members, and that number keeps growing. In 2018, 16 new groups joined.

And as of the first of the year, we’ve already recruited two more.

Altogether, we’ve got approximately 1,000 companies participating in the plan, including some of the most successful companies in the industry. And their benefits tie directly to our members’ contributions.

One of the plan’s biggest draws is that it provides comprehensive benefits at a lower cost. Since the end of 2007, healthcare prices across the nation have rocketed by 21.6 percent. But for Family Medical Care plan members, rates have gone up by less than 5 percent over that same time period.

The FMCP, which the IBEW runs in conjunction with the National Electrical Contractors Association, saves money because it operates without the need for profits. It also doesn’t rely on advertising or have extensive overhead like most for-profit insurers do.

We also save money through innovative new programs that cuts costs while giving participants access to more convenient care; programs like Live Health Online. (See our story on page 7 of this issue.)

With the Live Health Online app, Family Medical Care plan members can videoconference with a licensed doctor in just minutes. They’ll answer your questions and even write you a prescription, all from your home, using your own phone or any smartphone device.

This is not only convenient for our members. Since we started Live Health Online, we’ve saved nearly $100,000 in just the first few months because a videochat is a lot cheaper than an in-person appointment or a trip to the emergency room.

FMCP members can download it for free either at the app store or Google. They can also go to www.livehealthonline.com.

For those locals who are not part of the Family Medical Care plan, I would strongly recommend checking it out. It is a great tool to help meet our obligation to provide comprehensive health care at a competitive rate.

Feel free to contact me and my office at any time for more information on how the FMCP can work for your members. My door is always open when it comes to helping make your jobs easier.
We hope these images have inspired you to pull out your camera at work or play. Not everyone works within sight of a Pacific sunset or fairy tale winter kingdom a mile above the sea, but everyone knows someone who can turn to the camera and smile. We look forward to seeing what you can do in the next 12 months.

Look for next year’s photo contest to be announced here in The Electrical Worker later this spring.

**20th Annual Photo Contest Winners**

*Continued from page 1*

**SECOND PLACE**

**Christina Daniels**  
Portland, Ore., Local 48

June 9 was the first time Portland, Ore., Local 48 members joined the city’s Rose Festival 4-mile Grand Floral Parade. The parade has a “Salute to Service” section dedicated to those who have served in the U.S. Armed Forces.

“Our idea was to have a group of tradeswomen marching near veterans,” said Christina Daniels. Nearly four dozen women, about 10 percent of the local’s female membership, dressed up as the iconic motivational World War II poster model commonly known as “Rosie the Riveter.”

The Rosies were going through a pre-parade warmup at Portland’s Memorial Coliseum when Daniels snapped this shot of an enthusiastic Jessica Hill, a Local 48 member who, at the time, was gearing up to finish her apprenticeship and has since been a regular fixture at the local’s meetings.

“This event really opened things up for us,” Daniels said. “It helped us connect with members we don’t usually connect with and it really jump-started their participation.”

**HONORABLE MENTION**

**Jordan Skarda**  
Vacaville, Calif., Local 1245

The first honorable mention captures the end of the day and 30-hour shift that started long before that day began. Vacaville, Calif., Local 1245 members Jordan Skarda, KC Nancolas and Kevin Claggett were on their final job, repairing an open jumper on a pole in the foothills near Cayucos, Calif. As the sun went down and the helicopter lifted off, Skarda scampered up a hill to try and take it all in. The California sun — peeking between the fog and the clouds setting Whale Rock Reservoir aglow — has a way of bewitching people.

**THIRD PLACE**

**Joseph Kelly**  
Boston Local 103

This year’s third-place winner shifts back into the cold. When Boston Local 103 member Joseph Kelly snapped this picture of Journeyman wiremen Robert DeLeo, Steve Illingworth and Gary Rowe, they were 40 feet off the ground at the Salem Harbor Energy Center. Kelly said it was close to 20 below zero with the wind chill when he asked his three brothers to turn toward the bright winter light and flash a smile. His popular picture brought a smile to hundreds of voters.

**Joe Sergi**  
New York Local 3

The final award goes to New York Local 3 member Joe Sergi, who worked for more than a year on the Throgs Neck Bridge, the city’s easternmost connection to Long Island. Sergi’s picture of brothers Ernest Cordero and Todd Kim upgrading the bridge’s security system shows a side of New York that isn’t often seen. No skyline; just the tree line. No blacktop or chrome; just blues, whites and greens for miles, with only Cordero’s taxi yellow hardhat a not-so-subtle reminder of the city hustle a few miles away.
ne year ago, we wrote in these pages about a crisis in our democracy. The picture was dark. Tens of millions of American citizens live in gerrymandered electoral districts with borders surgically created to keep incumbent politicians in office. Millions more voters are locked out of the voting booth entirely.

Nevertheless, in the 2018 midterm election, hundreds of politicians at all levels of government were tossed out of office — many in districts purposely drawn to prevent just that. The stakes were enormous. New legislative maps will be drawn in 2021 after the next census, but if there was to be any hope that working people wouldn’t lose another decade to the banks and the bosses, single-party control in states had to be smashed.

The nation’s democratic future is much brighter today than it was before Election Day. In addition to all the new faces, nearly a dozen states passed ballot initiatives that throw open voting booths to millions of disenfranchised citizens and take the mapmaking tools out of the hands of party hacks.

But the details matter, and when examined closely, some of the clouds retained their dark linings.

For example, 40 congressional seats flipped red to blue, delivering an activist caucus of progressive, pro-union representatives to offices that had been filled with corporate sympathizers seemingly hand-picked by Wall Street executives.

But of the new faces, less than a quarter won in districts drawn by elected officials. More than 75 percent were in districts drawn by nonpartisan commissions or courts after legal challenges.

“...we still live in a country where a politician has a better chance of choosing their pool of voters than the other way around,” said International President Lonnie R. Stephenson.

More than half of states are still under the unitary control of a single party. It is true that Republicans have been much more aggressively anti-union, but when only one party is in charge, neither party does especially well for organized labor or working people.

“The headlines in Congress were welcome news, but below that we see a tremendously mixed bag,” said Political and Legislative Director Austin Keyser. “Life gets better for working people when politicians of both parties have to compete for our allegiance. You’d be hard pressed to look around and see that yet.”

First, the Bad News

At least 23 states passed new voter restrictions since the 2016 election, and hundreds of polling places have been closed since 2013, mostly in the right-to-work South.

Millions of voters were purged from voting rolls: Florida purged 7 percent of all eligible voters, Georgia more than 10 percent and North Carolina more than 12 percent, according to a 2016 report from the Leadership Conference Education Fund.

The result, Keyser said, were states where voters went one direction, but you’d never know it by who showed up in statehouses in January.

In North Carolina, for example, Democrats won nearly 50 percent of all votes cast, but Republicans won 20 of 13 U.S. House seats. In Ohio, Republicans won only 52 percent of all votes but took 12 of 16 House elections and 73 of 116 statehouse races.

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There Was Good News

One of the most positive signs was that more people ran this time. Safe politicians, no matter their party, rarely listen to working people. This doesn’t have to be true, but politicians on the right with no challenger settle comfortably into the silk-lined pockets of the Chamber of Commerce, and Democrats end up talking about everything but decent jobs.

More than 6,000 seats were up in 2018 in 87 of the 99 state legislative bodies. At least 30 governors, lieutenant governors and attorneys general were up along with 27 secretaries of state.

New Democratic governors will play an enormous role in the coming years as states enter the post-2020-census redistricting process. After 2020, elected leaders in many states stacked the deck against working people, drawing unconscionable state legislative and congressional districts that effectively disenfranchised millions of voters. New governors, supported by the IBEW and others in the labor movement, have the opportunity to undo some of the damage thanks to gains made in last November’s elections.

New Governors Could Help Restore Balance

GoV. Gretchen Whitmer Michigan
Gov. Tony Evers Wisconsin
Gov. Laura Kelly Kansas
Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham New Mexico
New Governors Could Help Restore Balance

In every state, at every level, more incumbents faced an opponent. In Texas, 14 of 15 state Senate seats and 133 of 150 state House seats were contested, a near 50 percent increase since the last midterm election.

In Pennsylvania, Democrats ran in 180 of 203 state legislative districts, the most in almost two decades.

Before the 2018 election, Republicans controlled both legislative chambers and the governorship in 26 states — a scenario known as a trifecta. Democrats similarly controlled eight states.

After the election Republicans lost four trifectas — Kansas, Michigan, Wisconsin and New Hampshire — and gained only Alaska in return.

Democrats also broke Republican supermajorities in North Carolina, Michigan and Pennsylvania.

Voters broke one-party GOP control of state executive offices (governor, secretary of state and attorney general) in four states — sometimes called a triplex — winning secretary of state offices in Colorado, Michigan and Arizona and attorneys general in Colorado, Michigan and Nevada.

“This gives me hope that for the first time in close to a decade — especially in the key swing states in the upper Midwest — voters will be heard, and we can start reversing some of the catastrophic decisions made by now-former governors like Scott Walker and Bruce Rauner,” Keyser said.

Ballot Measures and the Courts

Still, sometimes voters have to take matters into their own hands and claw back the power from representatives by directly putting the question to the people.

From 2010 to 2017, there were only five measures that expanded access to the ballot, reported the Brennan Center for Justice, a non-partisan public policy institute based at the New York University Law School.

In the 2018 election alone, 10 ballot-expansion measures passed. Ohio, Michigan, Missouri, Utah and Colorado all reformed their redistricting laws, taking some or all power from elected officials and injecting some sunlight into the democratic process.

A new-voter-approved redistricting commission in Michigan will take map-drawing power away from elected officials and put it in the hands of a bipartisan commission, and in Florida, voters overwhelmingly approved a constitutional amendment to restore voting rights to many nonviolent felons upon completion of their sentences.

In one final bit of potentially good news, just one day after the new Democratic majority took over in the House, the Supreme Court agreed to hear two cases challenging particularly egregious gerrymandering in Maryland and North Carolina. For the first time, the Supreme Court could rule that a partisan gerrymander is so skewed that it violates the Constitution.

It or might not.

“It’s hard to put a great deal of hope in a court that is this conservative, but I think Chief Justice John Roberts is eager to show that the Supreme Court can rise above this darkly partisan time,” Keyser said. “But even if they rule against us this time, that won’t change the truth that people are taking gerrymandering seriously in a way they weren’t 10 years ago.”

“We’re grateful to all our union brothers and sisters who have taken this issue so seriously,” Stephenson said. “In less than two years, we’ll have another chance to put representatives in place who will stand up for fairness in elections. The 2018 strides were a great start, and I’m excited to work even harder to level the playing field for the next decade and make sure working families have an equal voice in our democracy.”
New Law in Ontario Threatens Jobs, Worker Safety

"Bill 47, the so-called 'Making Ontario Open for Business Act,' is actually a gift to open-shop contractors. ... What they were really after was maximizing contractors' profits."

— First District International Vice President Tom Reid

The Electrical Worker | March 2019

La nouvelle loi en Ontario menace les emplois et la sécurité des travailleurs

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The Electrical Worker | March 2019
Agency Created to Protect Federal Workers’ Rights Slams Door on Staff Union

A little-known federal agency charged with protecting the right of government workers to organize is refusing to recognize its own union.

Colleen Kiko, who was appointed by President Trump in 2017 to chair the Federal Labor Relations Authority, unilaterally terminated the union’s contract upon its Dec. 21, 2018, expiration.

“The FLRA will not negotiate or enter into a successor agreement,” Kiko said in a letter to the Union of Authority Employees, underscoring that the agency, “will not recognize the USW or any other labor organization as an exclusive representative of the employees.”

The UAW represents about 50 agency workers, mostly lawyers who handle labor-management disputes for 23 million non-postal federal workers, a figure that includes thousands of IBEW members employed by the federal government.

Two years after the Civil Service Reform Act of 1978 established the FLRA, the agency recognized and began bargaining with the UAW. Nearly 40 years later, Kiko has seized on language in the statute permitting federal unions, arguing that it “categorically exempts” FLRA employees from the same rights that protect employees in other executive branch agencies.

“This is yet another assault on workers by an administration that has attacked unions from Day One and has abused executive orders to derail protections for federal employees,” International President Lonnie R. Stephenson said.

“It’s a level of contempt for workers — from the White House to Mitch McConnell and his grip on Republican senators — that led us to January’s government shutdown that left 800,000 federal workers, FLRA included, panicking about paying their bills and taking care of their families.”

The FLRA’s work had been hampered long before the shutdown by the Trump administration’s failure to nominate a general counsel, leaving the agency without anyone to prosecute unfair labor practice complaints through the agency, which was seen as a conflict of interest. But the union could take certain disputes to nonbinding arbitration.

One of the pitfalls, William Wiley, a former FLRA general counsel, told Bloomberg, is that the union had no way to enforce those decisions if agency leaders refused to abide by them. “It’s like me recognizing my kids in a union,” he said. “I can take it away from them at any time.”

Still, the union has been able to win better benefits and protections for its members. In recent years, for example, the FLRA has agreed to cover lawyers’ bar fees and update performance review standards.

Emett DuBester, the only Democrat on the three-member FLRA board, told Bloomberg that while the agency isn’t required by law to negotiate with the union, doing so is a matter of “modeling good behavior.”

“This is not a question about whether we are mandated to recognize the union,” DuBester said. “But that’s a different question than, as the federal agency charged with overseeing labor management relations, why we would say we’re not going to recognize the union.”

Canada’s Building Trades Unions Pushes for Expanded Maternity Leave

A lot of attention is being paid to getting more women into construction, including a new effort in Parliament supported by Canada’s Building Trades Unions.

CBTU Director of Canadian Affairs Robert R. Blakely spoke before a Senate committee in December on the importance of maternity leave for women in the building trades, where the jobs are often labor intensive.

“We want to see if there are some more effective ways to help the bright young women who opt for the trades get a fair shake when it comes to maternity issues,” Blakely said.

The committee hearing was for Bill C-241, an Act Respecting the Development of a National Maternity Assistance Program Strategy. The Act aims to create a dialogue among stakeholders, including the CBTU and members like the IBEW, on what women need in order to balance maternal health and their job responsibilities. That dialogue will ultimately inform legislation to improve the leave Canada already provides.

The inspiration for the bill comes from a woman welder, Melodie Ballard, who had to stop working early into her pregnancy because of the job hazards. It ultimately led her without any income for more than two months, reported the CBC.

“This is much-needed legislation that will improve the lives of both workers and nonunion workers. It’s good for all Canadians,” said First District Vice President Tom Reid.

Canada currently offers 15 weeks of maternity benefits for pregnant women, 13 of which can be paid before the expected due date, according to the government’s website. Benefits can also be paid as late as 27 weeks after. Additionally, new parents can get 13 paid weeks within a year of either giving birth or adoption purposes, with the option of extended benefits for a maximum of 65 weeks.

Employers are required to accept employees back into their jobs, or the equivalent, at the end of their leave at the same rate of pay and with the same benefits.

As more and more baby boomers retire, there’s an increasing demand for more tradespeople. Currently, women only comprise about 4 percent of the skilled trades in Canada, reported the Journal of Commerce.

But unlike many other jobs, construction trades are often physically demanding and can involve exposure to toxic chemicals and gases, making them inhospitable for someone who’s pregnant.

Dr. Nicola Cherry, a professor at the University of Alberta, presented findings from studies with pregnant women in the welding and electrical trades.

“It is very suggestive that women working in the trades are more likely to have a spontaneous abortion and that is true for both trades and particularly in fact for women in Alberta working in welding where the type of work they do is rather different than in perhaps Ontario,” Cherry said. “Having said that, we don’t find any evidence that women working in these trades have smaller babies, more premature babies, so if they get through the first three months the babies they produce seem to be just as healthy as those who are not working in those trades or who stopped work.”

Matt Wayland, First District executive assistant to the vice president and director of government relations, says this is a great opportunity for women’s committees to get involved and support the legislation. He encourages IBEW members to contact their members of Parliament.

“This is an opportunity for the government to set an example of good policy for our sisters in the workforce,” Wayland said. “No one should have to choose between their health and a paycheck.”

“One policy that will likely be considered is that of the Iron Workers. The union, which has members in the U.S. and Canada, announced in 2017 that it was offering six months of leave that can be taken prior to delivery followed by six weeks post-delivery, or eight weeks for a cesarean delivery. The policy is the first of its kind in the building trades, according to a statement by the union.

“No one should have to choose between their health and a paycheck.”

— Matt Wayland, First District Director of Government Relations

“When we first started talking about it, I wasn’t sure how we’d pull it off and what it would cost, but we realized that it’s an investment because we want our well-trained ironworker women to come back to work,” said Ben Hur Construction Co. CEO Bill Brown in the Iron Workers statement.

In the U.S., maternity leave is much harder to come by and primarily left to individual employers and states. At the federal level, most women can use the Family Medical Leave Act, which provides 12 weeks of unpaid leave.

IBEW Collaborates with Entertainment Unions To Fight Harassment on the Job

In support of broadcast members, the IBEW has joined with about a dozen other unions within the entertainment industry to share resources as part of a pledge to combat workplace harassment.

The IBEW and other unions are members of the Department for Professional Employees, a coalition of 24 member organizations representing professional, technical and highly skilled workers. The 12-union group working to battle harassment includes leading entertainment unions such as SAG-AFTRA, Actors Equity, Directors Guild of America and the American Federation of Musicians. It represents about 500,000 workers.

Most IBEW broadcast members in the entertainment industry work as camera operators and technicians, with the most high-profile members nationally working at Fox Sports and CBS.

“Every leader within the IBEW has been saddened by revelations of sexual harassment within the entertainment industry,” International President Lonnie R. Stephenson said. “They’ve been heartbreaking. We’ve listened closely to our members working in the field and they tell us more needs to be done to secure a safe environment where threatening behavior is not tolerated.”

“Sharing our resources and working with other unions is the best way to achieve meaningful results for our members and the industry at large.”

The IBEW is joining with labor partners to put a stop to sexual harassment in the entertainment industry.
CIRCUITS
Continued

that. The IBEW has been an active part of this coalition from the outset and will continue to support its work.”

The topic became part of the national conversation in October 2017, when the New York Times and The New Yorker reported sexual harassment allegations against powerful Hollywood producer Harvey Weinstein, along with charges that Weinstein had paid off women for decades to keep their allegations quiet.

The Weinstein Company’s board of directors fired him from his position as head of the company soon after. The news sparked the Me Too movement and Weinstein, who has denied the allegations, was arrested by New York police and released on bail in May 2018. He is awaiting trial on rape and sex abuse charges.

“Individual unions have done a lot of great work before and after the Harvey Weinstein revelations to protect and support their members,” Department for Professional Employees President Jennifer Dorning said. “With all the individual efforts, we felt like it was the right time to come together and support our members in shared workplaces.”

“[Sexual harassment] is a difficult subject to address, but it’s vitally important. Every IBEW member is entitled to a safe place to work.”

— Broadcasting & Telecommunications Director Morath Pultar

The agreement was formally approved by participating unions during a Dec. 13 meeting. Other unions that are part of the coalition include the American Guild of Musical Artists, American Guild of Variety Artists, Guild of Italian American Artists, International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees, Office and Professional Employees International Union, Stage Directors and Choreographers Society and Writers Guild of America East.

Dorning said initiatives are still being developed, but the unions are expected to share information on how to prevent harassment, including sharing union codes of conduct and training resources for members and leaders.

“Change usually starts with our members,” Broadcasting & Telecommunications Director Martha Pultar said. “We encourage anyone who has experienced or witnessed harassment of any kind to contact their steward or business manager. Members also can reach out to the Broadcasting Department at the International Office for guidance.

“This is a difficult subject to address, but it’s vitally important. Every IBEW member is entitled to a safe place to work.”

Live Health Online, a new service for IBEW/NECA Family Medical Care Plan participants, allows patients to bypass the doctor’s office and video chat directly with a provider at no cost.

Same Care, Less Time and Money

You have the flu.

Modern medicine’s solution is for you to drag yourself to the car, try not to kill anyone as you drive through a pounding headache, then wait hours on a cheap plastic couch to see a doctor you don’t know for a prescription. And you’ll pay for the privilege.

It’s even worse if your only option is an emergency room where an out-of-network doctor might walk through the door, ask five questions and hand you a $2,000 hospital bill.

There is now an easier way. In less than the time it takes the average person to close the front door and drive to a nearby walk-in clinic, members of the IBEW’s Family Medical Care Plan can launch the Live Health Online app on their phone, videoconference with a licensed doctor and have a prescription sent to an in-network pharmacy — for free.

You don’t even have to get out of bed, which you never wanted to leave in the first place.

The service not only saves you time and money and keeps vulnerable you out of a room filled with sick people, it saves the IBEW money too. The service is so much cheaper than urgent care and emergency room visits that the plan has saved nearly $90,000 in just the first few months it’s been active with only a few hundred users. There are more than 85,000 members eligible, said International Secretary-Treasurer Kenny Cooper.

“When you’re sick, the last thing you want is to surround yourself with people worse off than you,” he said.

“Doctors don’t do house calls anymore, but this is a pretty close second and a heck of a lot cheaper.”

And popular. When the FMCP trustees surveyed members that used the program, the average rating was a perfect 5 out of 5.

“Less money, less time, less sick people, more satisfied customers,” Cooper said. “That’s about as easy as it gets.”

Of course, the service isn’t for everyone. If you are having chest pains or trouble breathing, skip the videoconference and dial 911. But for that case of poison ivy that is running out of control, a dose of prednisone may be all you need, and an online visit might do the trick. The same goes for allergies, rashes, minor infections or any other sort of malady that might be fixed with a quick trip to the doctor.

To sign up simply create an account at https://startlivehealthonline.com. Have your insurance card handy, or at least your FMCP member ID. Sign-up takes only a few minutes. If you run into problems, the customer support line is (888) 348-5342.

The trustees of the IBEW’s health insurance plan are constantly adding innovative services for members, Cooper said. Another example is bestdoctors.com, which offers expert second opinions before major medical decisions, also free for members.

The best way to know what your health insurance does for you is to subscribe to the FMCP newsletter at nfmcp.com. Local unions interested in getting a quote for FMCP coverage can visit the website or contact the plan at (312) 556-4300.

“We started the FMCP not just to lower costs for our members and employers, but to improve your lives,” Cooper said.

“The advantage of running our own health plan is that we focus on health, not the plan’s profits or margins. It’s all part of our mission to be the best union in the world.”

ORGANIZING WIRE

Longtime Illinois Member Tells New Southern Colleagues: We Need the IBEW

After 38 years in the telecom industry and 35 years as an IBEW member in his native Illinois, Randy Phillips wasn’t quite ready to call it a retirement when he left AT&T in 2011.

He got his chance in the Deep South. After Phillips’ wife successfully beat cancer, he and the couple decided to move to Georgia, thinking warmer weather would be good for her health. He landed a job as a technician for Frontier Communications in Statesboro, about 55 miles west of Savannah, in 2015.

The job paid well, but it was nonunion and offered little protection in case of layoffs or if Frontier was sold or merged with another company, a scenario all too common in the telecommunications industry. So, Phillips had some advice for his colleagues.

“We need a union and the IBEW is the best fit for us,” he said.

“I told them, ‘The writing is on the wall, guys; now is the time to do it.’ … The average age for us is right around 50 years old. You need to protect yourself. The company can come in any day and say, ‘We don’t need you anymore. You have no recourse.’”

It also didn’t hurt when a co-worker saw Phillips at his desk one day writing out his IBEW membership dues check so he remained eligible for a pension program. That was a visible sign of the value of union representation.

“If you decide to vote this in, which I am heavily recommending you do, you will have a voice at work,” he told his fellow technicians.

Those workers voted 14-0 to seek IBEW representation in 2017 and then voted 14-0 late in 2018 for a first contract, becoming members of Savannah Local 508. Phillips is now the steward for the 14 workers, who are based in Statesboro and at another Frontier location in suburban Atlanta. Fellow Frontier technician Josh Parker handled many of the organizing duties at the suburban Atlanta location.

Fifth District International Representative Clay Leon, the lead negotiator with Frontier, said the new contract guarantees improvements in company-administered health care plans. The biggest win, however, came with the addition of an arbitration system, which allows employees to file a grievance if they feel like they have been unfairly disciplined. Language also was included on how to handle potential layoffs.

“That was very important to them,” Leon said. “They wanted the right to a grievance procedure and arbitration. As a nonunion company, they had no recourse against discipline.”

Local 508 is primarily an inside local, the newly organized Frontier employees its first telecommunications members. Business Manager Alton Mosley said he was happy to welcome them to the IBEW. He will rely heavily on Phillips for guidance.

“It’s an adjustment, but when you have a chance to grow the Brotherhood, you don’t say ‘no,’” Mosley said. “I’m thankful I had Clay to lean on during contract negotiations. He’s popular. When the FMCP trustees surveyed members that used the program, the average rating was a perfect 5 out of 5.

“Less money, less time, less sick people, more satisfied customers,” Cooper said. “That’s about as easy as it gets.”

Of course, the service isn’t for everyone. If you are having chest pains or trouble breathing, skip the videoconference and dial 911. But for that case of poison ivy that is running out of control, a dose of prednisone may be all you need, and an online visit might do the trick. The same goes for allergies, rashes, minor infections or any other sort of malady that might be fixed with a quick trip to the doctor.

To sign up simply create an account at https://startlivehealthonline.com. Have your insurance card handy, or at least your FMCP member ID. Sign-up takes only a few minutes. If you run into problems, the customer support line is (888) 348-5342.

The trustees of the IBEW’s health insurance plan are constantly adding innovative services for members, Cooper said. Another example is bestdoctors.com, which offers expert second opinions before major medical decisions, also free for members.

The best way to know what your health insurance does for you is to subscribe to the FMCP newsletter at nfmcp.com. Local unions interested in getting a quote for FMCP coverage can visit the website or contact the plan at (312) 556-4300.

“We started the FMCP not just to lower costs for our members and employers, but to improve your lives,” Cooper said.

“The advantage of running our own health plan is that we focus on health, not the plan’s profits or margins. It’s all part of our mission to be the best union in the world.”

Frontier Communications workers in right-to-work Georgia are some of the newest members of the IBEW after a successful organizing drive and a signed first contract.

To welcome them to the IBEW. He will rely heavily on Phillips for guidance.

“It’s an adjustment, but when you have a chance to grow the Brotherhood, you don’t say ‘no,’” Mosley said. “I’m thankful I had Clay to lean on during contract negotiations. He’s been through this before. Having a steward like Randy who knows the value of IBEW membership and how to deal with management on site will make my job easier, too.”

It was the third win in as many years at Frontier for IBEW members in the Deep South.

Last April, a group of 26 technicians in southern Alabama and the Florida Panhandle approved a first contract and became members of Pensacola, Fla., Local 616. In 2016, a group of 15 Frontier technicians became members of Cookeville, Tenn., Local 987.

“This is another sign the IBEW can organize in southern states,” said Robert Prunn, an international representative in the Broadcasting & Telecommunications Department. “Workers are seeking out IBEW representation more and more across the country. Clay, Alton and Randy worked hard to reach an agreement that provides added security for our new members well into the future.”

Phillips is pleased his co-workers will learn what he’s known for decades: that IBEW representation makes things better for the job for everyone.

“The IBEW has always protected their people and their membership,” said Phillips, who had been a member of Alton, Ill., Local 649. “It’s a big win for our guys.”
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New Year, New Look —
Major Renovation of Union Hall
L.U. 1 (ars,cm,em,es,et,lm,c,lt,rs,se,spa,slb,wo), ST. LOUIS, MO — The IBEW Local 1 union hall is located at 5860 Elizabeth Ave. in St. Louis. Built in 1959, our building was designed by award-winning architect W.A. Sarmiento. His designs changed the public personality of banks and created modern landmarks.
“Sarmiento buildings reflected America’s post-war optimism and his own zestful view of the future,” said noted preservationist Chris Nichols, a Los Angeles Magazine editor.
Sixty years later, the building is in the midst of a much-needed total transformation. Bus. Mgr. Frank Jacobs said, “The goal of the renovation is to restore the building to its original luster, along with upgrades to energy efficiency and state-of-the-art technology that will make the membership proud.”
Improvements include: all new plumbing, heating and cooling systems, lights - LED accent lighting, solar panels for energy efficiency, sound system upgrades in the hall, roof and parking lot. “The $8 million renovation is expected to be completed by October,” said Jacobs.
In addition, the Cultural Resources Office of the St. Louis Planning and Urban Design Agency recently completed an extensive inventory of the city's mid-century modern, nonresidential architecture built between 1946 and 1975. Over 2,300 structures — commercial, institutional, educational, governmental and industrial buildings — within St. Louis City limits were surveyed. Of these, the IBEW Local 1 union hall is one of 45 to be considered for the National Register nomination as a landmark. The Missouri Advisory Council for Historic Preservation will make a decision this spring.
Jan Bresnan, P.S.

2018 Midterm Election Wins
L.U. 21 (ars), DOWNERS GROVE, IL — For the past six years, Local 21 members have been more involved in community service activities and fundraising. In November, we learned that members working at the AT&T Chicago Cottage Grove garage were donating Thanksgiving meals to needy families in the community where they work. In 2017 they fed 100 families, and in 2018 they wanted to double that number. To expand on their previous success, our members covered all of their bases. They worked with local managers, went to other garages, union meetings, and asked that our local reach out to all our members for donations. The organizers found needy families by working with area churches and asking maintenance men in buildings where their customers live to let residents know about the Thanksgiving meals they were providing.
On the day of the event, our members blessed the food then greeted families lined up outside of the garage workplace.
In the governor’s race, Rauner lost to J.B. Pritzker by 660,000 votes and dragged down the entire Republican ticket. Democrats swept the statewide offices and won super-majorities in the General Assembly, picking up three seats in the Senate and five in the House. They won super-majorities in the General Assembly, picking up two anti-labor U.S. congressmen.

Thanksgiving Meals Provided —
IBEW Community Service
L.U. 21 (ars,cm,em,es,et,lm,c,lt,rs,se,spa,slb,wo), ST. LOUIS, MO — The IBEW Local 1 union hall is located at 5860 Elizabeth Ave. in St. Louis. Built in 1959, our building was designed by award-winning architect W.A. Sarmiento. His designs changed the public personality of banks and created modern landmarks. “Sarmiento buildings reflected America’s post-war optimism and his own zestful view of the future,” said noted preservationist Chris Nichols, a Los Angeles Magazine editor.
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Trade Classifications
Trade Classifications
pounds of food to the Syracuse Rescue Mission’s Food Service Center, which provides three free meals a day every day of the year for anyone who needs one. Local 47’s annual Christmas party was a great success. A local 113 Bus. Mgr. Brian Bradley (left) presents retirement watches to: Ignacio Barron, Steve Johnson, Hammarlund “August” Low, Tim Sittes, and Salvador Munguia.

**Optimistic for 2019**

**Politically Active & Aware**

L.U. 113 (en,em,mo,mo&), COLORADO SPRINGS, CO — On Dec. 7, Local 113 hosted its annual Christmas party at a very packed house. It was wonderful to see so many people, new members and “old-timers” alike, having a grand time! The holiday party is a time when we can reacquaint with fellow brothers and sisters, some of whom we may not have an opportunity to see very often.

Not too surprisingly is that after a good few years, we seem to have some not-so-good ones; as of this writing, there seems to be somewhat of a slowdown with a couple of the larger jobs winding down. We are still optimistic for a good 2019.

It was mentioned a while back that we all need to be more politically aware, and that is never more important than right now. Recently there have been attacks on our pensions, multiemployer-type pension plans, like the one we the IBEW have in place. The attacks are baseless and appear to single out unions in general. Let’s all stay on top of this issue. [Editor’s Note:]

To read more, see December 2018 news article, “IBEW Leaders Mobilize on Capitol Hill to Kill Pension Attack, For Now,” posted on the IBEW website at www.ibew.org/media-center/articles..

As 2018 came to a close, we were able to give out a few more retirement watches. Congratulations to the following brothers on their retirement: Ignacio Barron, Steve Johnson, Hammarlund “August” Low, Tim Sittes and Salvador Munguia.

**Holiday Festivities**

L.U. 145 (mo,um,um&), ROCK ISLAND, IL — Our local hosted a very merry December festivities last year! The 2nd Annual Breakfast with Santa was held Dec. 8. The event took over the union hall and was a huge success! Fresh pancakes, eggs, bacon and sausage were served by our wonderful “elves” (aka: volunteers). When Santa Class arrived, he was greeted by lots of excited children! The boys and girls waited in line for their turn to sit with Santa to share their Christmas wishes, and then they received a special wrapped toy! Pictures were taken with Santa, and even moms, dads, grandmas and grandpas took part in a family picture! The kids also enjoyed a coloring contest. You won’t want to miss the 3rd Annual Breakfast with Santa in 2019!

After the successful Breakfast with Santa event, the local hosted a Retiree Christmas Luncheon at the union hall on Dec. 10 and it was a huge success! In total, 200 retirees and their guests came together at a beautiful winter afternoon at the union hall to enjoy food and fellowship! We were also fortunate to have Int. Pres. Lonnie R. Stephenson and his wife, Dawn, attend the luncheon. Retirees reminisced about the
LOCAL LINES

past, got caught up with one another and took photos with their past tool partners. We hope everyone who attended had as much fun as we did serving you that day! It was our pleasure!

In solidarity,
Cory Bergfeld, B.M.

‘All In - To Win’ Rally
L.U. 139 (I), MADISON, WI — Gearing up for 2018 mid-term elections last year, Local 139 Bus. Mgr. Mike Grassly hosted the “All In — To Win” political rally organized by Int. Rep. Shawn Reents and IBEW head organizer Kim Moon. Volunteers were enlisted from IBEW locals all across the state to support the function.


Each focused on the importance of getting our members out to vote in order to preserve our union values by supporting union-friendly candidates. Afterward, door-to-door canvassing was led by Int. Pres. Lonnie Stephenson, phone banking was led by Int. Vice Pres. Ruhmkorff, and other volunteers participated with the “honk and wave” events.

Thank you to all who participated in making this event a huge success!

[Editor’s Note: Newly elected Wisconsin Gov. Tony Evers and Lt. Gov. Mandela Barnes won election to office on Nov. 6, 2018. To read more, see Nov. 7 news story, “Election 2018: A Message from International President Lonnie R. Stephenson,” posted on the IBEW website at www.ibew.org/media-center/Articles/]

Mike Grassly, B.M./F.S.

IBEW Members Win Election To Seat on County Board
L.U. 309 (I,u,mt,m,s,ots,spa), COLLINSVILLE, IL — Local 309 organizer Chris Hanksins was elected on Nov. 6, 2018, to the Madison County Board. He won an election with 65 percent of the vote. Chris had to resign from the Pontoon Beach Village Board after serving for almost eight years. Chris and Mayor Mike Pagano (a retired Local 309 wireman) have been instrumental in securing practically all electrical work within the village to be done as union work.

A big thank you to the Illinois State Conference for its financial support for Chris’ election campaign. Also, thanks to the many locals that helped with the campaign. We can only hope that this is merely a stepping stone to higher office.

Work on the Inside Branch has slowed somewhat while Outside Construction remains steady. The upcoming year looks to remain solid.

Have a healthy, happy and safe 2019.

Scott Tweedy, A.B.M.

Participation is Key — Strength in Solidarity
L.U. 313 (I,spa), WILMINGTON, DE — A huge group of retired members came out in force for their December Retirees Meeting. Keeping up with each other and the happenings of the local help make us strong and unified. We owe the retired men and women a lot of credit, and when they stay involved, we all benefit.

Last year, we helped squash a right-to-work proposal, lowered hours to qualify for Health & Welfare benefits, and helped keep everyone working who wanted to work. This year, we hope the work picture will stay strong and will look for more ways to improve.

Our property will be going through some changes in 2019. Interested teams will need to be put into play in 2019. Interested parties are invited to inquire for further information.

Mike Raikes, Pres.

IBEW Members Win Election To Seat on County Board
L.U. 309 (I,u,mt,m,s,ots,spa), COLLINSVILLE, IL — Local 309 organizer Chris Hanksins was elected on Nov. 6, 2018, to the Madison County Board. He won an election with 65 percent of the vote. Chris had to resign from the Pontoon Beach Village Board after serving for almost eight years. Chris and Mayor Mike Pagano (a retired Local 309 wireman) have been instrumental in securing practically all electrical work within the village to be done as union work.

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Mike Raikes, Pres.

Community Service Activities
L.U. 347 (I,mts,m,rt,ts,spa), DES MOINES, IOWA — Well, here in Iowa we are in a political lull in the action. The 2018 midterm elections are over with no meaningful results that we can take to the bank. Shortly, we expect to be inundated with candidates running for the 2020 elections. So, it’s quiet at the moment. Enough on that.

Autumn of 2018 was busy with: political events, arranging and connecting the Jolly Holiday Lights display, collecting 15 boxes of gifts for Toys for Tots, and throwing a Christmas Party for the kids. Local 347 likes to keep busy socially, with community service projects, and on the job. It’s been a long time coming, but there is some recognition in the community that IBEW 347 is invested in Iowa for the long term. This is all well and good but there is a lot more work to do. Rather than put ourselves on the back, we roll up our sleeves and get to work on the next project.

Work in the area is good at this time of writing. The agricultural sector, however, is all question marks at this point. The local has 140 travelers working with local hands on three data centers, three large projects in downtown Des Moines and a bounty of common commercial work. Looking ahead, there could be a new airport terminal project at the Des Moines International Airport.

On March 9, we’ll be seeing you at the Local 347 Pin Party. Let’s show up for our brothers and sisters celebrating these milestones.

Mike Schweiger, P.S.

At Local 313 retirees meeting in December.
WHERE UNIONS MEET THE OUTDOORS!

The Union Sportsmen’s Alliance (USA) unites union members who share a love of the great outdoors and a commitment to help preserve North America’s outdoor heritage.

USA MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS:
- 3 digital issues of the Union Sportsmen’s Journal
- Free shipping at UnionSportsmenStore.com
- 10% discount on Worldwide Trophy Adventures TAGS program
- Discounts on outdoor gear, services & trips
- Chances to win prizes and trips all year
- Chance to apply to be a guest on the USA’s outdoor TV series

ACTIVATE YOUR NO-COST USA MEMBERSHIP
VISIT UNIONSPORTSMEN.ORG/JOIN


delighted his audience. At the Local 375 children’s Christmas party, Santa delights his audience.

ibs 413 Community Volunteers

L.U. 413 (i&mo), SANTA BARBARA, CA — Local 413 members, including Local 413 retirees Peter Ryan, Steve Lopez, Brad Paola, Mike Fitts, Dan Smith and Barry White, have donated several weekends working on several Habitat for Humanity projects in the past several years. Our members and retirees continue for quite some time for both inside and outside construction. We have seen good growth this year. We would like to ask that we take the time to welcome our new members to the IBEW and show them what the Brotherhood is all about. Congratulations to our recently retired Bro. David Wadsworth.

With regret we report the passing of two members. In memoriam: Bros. Norman Hayball and Chris Arevell. These brothers will be truly missed. Our heartfelt condolences go out to their families and friends.

Craig McDonald
Local 569 membership made contributions worth nearly $5,000 to the Annual Diaper Drive to support families in need.

IBEW 569 Gives Back
To Support Working Families

L.U. 569 (lmar,mt,tskspa), SAN DIEGO, CA — IBEW 569 is proud of our efforts to give back and support working families. We recently supported families in need with a $10,000 contribution to the Labor Food & Toy Drive. Additionally, we supported the annual Diaper Drive with California Assembly member Lorena Gonzalez by making a contribution of diapers worth nearly $5,000! It was great to see so many generously participate in the season of giving.

We congratulate the Local 569 Alianza club for putting together our first Posada event — bringing together union families and community members in celebration and solidarity. Plans are to make this an annual event.

Also, IBEW 569 Bus. Mgr. Nick Segura spoke before the California Air Resources Board in favor of the Innovative Clean Transit (ICT) rule — which will advance clean air, IBEW jobs, and climate action! The board voted in our favor. This means additional infrastructure will be built to charge electric buses and will put thousands of IBEW electricians to work.

Finally, IBEW 569 welcomes Cristina Marquez as our new JATC apprenticeship outreach coordinator! Congratulations, Cristina — we look forward to your efforts to expand apprenticeship opportunities to more youth and community members.

We’re heading into 2019 as a stronger local thanks to you as members and your hard work! Together, we will continue to make a difference and build better communities.

Gretchen K. Newsom, P.S./Organizer

Apprenticeship Graduates; Holiday Spirit of Generosity

L.U. 625 (cees,em,lt,mar&mt), HALIFAX, NOVA SCOTIA, CANADA — We recently lost Bro. Alex Dotten, yet of 383 members and guests! I would like to thank all the members and travelers who man our work.

Membership participation in San Mateo Labor Council activities, labor and town council meetings, and career days keep us involved in our community.

Many thanks to our hard-working business manager, staff and administrators. Lastly, let us remember our brothers and sisters who have traveled on.

Let us stand strong as we move forward into 2019.

Kenny Perfitt, P.S.

Welcome to New Apprentices

L.U. 531 (i), LAPORTE, IN — I hope everyone enjoyed a Welcome to New Apprentices Day earlier this month! Des Moines, Iowa, Local 499 members reporting from Council Bluffs, and our members in Council Bluffs!

Norbert Borzych, Greg Rodgers, John Crakes and Alec Roland Morehouse, Gene “Bigfoot” Levendowski, and many others.

We had a moment of silence for those who passed in their lives. In the Christmas spirit prizes were raffled off and good food was served by the staff of Local 613. Much thanks to our hard-working business manager Harry Bexley, Bro. Bexley, a World War II veteran, was the business manager of Local 633 from 1955-1988. The local holds a retiree luncheon every quarter and all members are encouraged to attend and get to know these brothers and sisters and gain from their knowledge and experience.

James Williams, P.S.

Apprenticeship Graduates; Holiday Spirit of Generosity

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Kenny Perfitt, P.S.
2018 — Year in Review; IBEW Service to Community

L.U. 627 (u), FORT PIERCE, FL — Happy new year, brothers and sisters!

Looking back on 2018, our local is extremely proud of the membership’s commitment and support of our community affairs fundraising efforts and beneficence. Year after year, the contributions collected for our Community Affairs Fund have enabled the local to support various youth-based support programs as well as many sports, and skills-development organizations. In 2018 alone, over $18,000 was donated to area community programs in the name of IBEW Local 627.

We would like to thank all those individuals who have supported our efforts in the past, and we invite and encourage the continued support of these efforts in the future. This year we will be hosting our 23rd Annual Ironman Fundraising Tournament in May, our 7th Annual T-Shirt Sale fundraiser, and a few other fundraising events.

Brothers and sisters, here’s to a safe and productive 2019! Please continue to be your brothers’ and sisters’ keepers and represent our union’s Code of Excellence with pride, skill and solidarity. Safety & solidarity!

Suzanne Wallin, R.S.

Local 827 members employed by Verizon helped construct a monument to honor military veterans.

IBEW Members Volunteer — Habitat for Humanity Project

L.U. 839 (u), JASPER, AL — Members of Local 839, Local 841 and System Council U-19 recently partnered with Habitat for Humanity and Alabama Power Service Organization for a community service project.

The participating IBEW members volunteered for two days and were able to frame up and dry in the Habitat home. This effort allowed for a 50-day completion on the project. We are thankful that we could be a part of the Collins family achieving their goal of homeownership. (See photo, at bottom.)

Keith Gibbland, P.S. Pro Tem System Council U-19, A.B.M.

L.U. 915 (i&mt), TAMPA, FL — Members of Local 915 celebrated its 100th anniversary last year, Local 835 celebrated its 50th anniversary, and Local 855 celebrated its 80th anniversary. Our hard work and support helped seniors cope with three of the biggest threats of aging: hunger, isolation and loss of independence.

In an effort to give back to the community and make sure the Meals on Wheels facility can continue this mission, IBEW Local 697 signatory contractor Sweeney Electric purchased and donated 121 LED fixtures — and the members of Local 697 working for Sweeney donated approximately 60 hours of their time one evening to facilitate the lighting installation. The approximate value of the donated material and labor was just over $5,000, and was a cost savings for Meals on Wheels equal to producing 3,000 meals for north-west Indiana seniors in need. Additionally, the new LED upgrade will greatly reduce the nonprofit’s utility bills.

We hope to see everyone at our Spring Blood Drive on Friday, March 15, from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Ryan Reithel, B.M./F.S.

IBEW Members Dedicate Military Veterans Monument

L.U. 837 (catv&k), EAST WINDSOR, CT — On Veterans Day 2018, the Hudson Unit members joined with Verizon management in dedicating a military monument at the Passaic, NJ, garage job site.

The monument was constructed by Hudson Unit stewards Bros. Keith Henning, Lenny LaForgia and Lou Mermini, along with chief stewards Bros. Andy Newman and Pat Glover, as well as company management.

The monument was designed to honor members in the garage who served in the armed forces. Each branch of the military was represented with a decorative stone placed around a U.S. flagpole.

Suzanne Wallin, R.S.

Local 835 Pres., Benjamin Kelly (left) displays plaque presented to the local by Int. Vice Pres. David J. Ruhmkorff (at podium).

The Recreation Committee has been actively working for the past three years to provide many of the door prizes. The member-to-donor was treated to many fine prizes throughout the evening, thanks to these brothers’ efforts. One of the evening’s highlights was the presentation by Int. Vice Pres. Ruhmkorff of the international Centennial Plaque to Local 835 Pres. Benjamin Kelly. The plaque is now proudly displayed hanging in our union hall.

The local expresses our appreciation for all our brothers and sisters for their contributions and service during our local’s past 100 years.

Jeff Roddeffer, B.M./F.S.

Holiday Community Service; Newly Elected FEWA President

L.U. 915 (i&mt), TAMPA, FL — The cooler and rainy weather did not deter the membership from coming to the union hall for some Christmas brotherhood and sisterhood during the Local 915 Christmas party last year. We had close to 200-plus in attendance to dine on a traditional feast of ham, turkey and all the fixings. The fun activities included bouncy houses for the young and corn-hole games for the older kids — and Santa was there for a visit with the children to hear about all the toys he needed to make. I hope he has a big union shop!

The unwrapped gifts were gathered and taken to the local Shriners for distribution to the hospital for children. It always feels good to give back to the community we serve. Local 915 Pres., Dispatch/Larry Jenkins and Bus. Agent/E-Board member Shawn McDonnell made the presentation of the gifts.

We are proud to report that our Local 915 Bus. Mgr. Randall King was elected president of the Florida Electrical Workers Association (FEWA) for the 2019-2022 term. Local 915 is proud of the continued confidence bestowed upon Bus. Mgr. King. We know he will help lead this organization to better serve all our classifications for Florida’s future.

Theresa King, R.S.

Introducing Young Students To Electrical Trade Training

L.U. 1005 (em), WESLACO, TEXAS — IBEW Local 1005 wants to send out a big Texas “saludos” to our hard-working IBEW sister electricians all over the USA and Canada. Our IBEW sisters are not only hard-working electricians, but some are also mothers and providers, but most of all women who have what it takes to be out in the field alongside our IBEW brothers over the years.

Local 1005 is proud to announce that we have teamed up with Mission Options School for the training of a select group of young women and men, for the 2019 school year, in the electrical trade.

With our newest group of students, we have a young woman by the name of Cassandra Padilla. When she first started our classes, she did not know what conduit is nor how to measure it for bending purposes. With hard work and training from Bus. Mgr. Sergio A. Salinas, she has learned how to bend conduit and is working diligently with the other students.

Knowledge is the greatest tool that a young person can have today, which can help lead to a successful electrical career many dream about.

Tammy Casas, P.S.

IBEW Service to Community

2018 — Organizing Win & Negotiations

L.U. 1049 (lct,ct,up,ku), LONG ISLAND, NY — 2018 was another productive year for us at Local 1049. Under the leadership of Bus. Mgr. Ron Bauer, we negotiated five contracts and increased the membership by 350 members.

We renegotiated our Line Clearance Tree Trimming (LCTT) contract, our Full-Time and Temporary Flagger Agreements, our Home Service Agreement and, finally, an extension with National Grid. Each three-year agreement included an average 3 percent wage increase and increases in the benefit packages.

In December, after a long on-going, oft-again organizing campaign, Altice, formally known as Cablevision, both strong anti-union employers, agreed to card-check recognition. As of this writing, we are preparing to negotiate a first contract for the 119-tech...
We have risen to the challenge to keep this work IBEW. With Scott joining Tina in the Maine House, all work to her second term and Scott is a freshman legislator.

Local 1253 extends its sympathy to the family of the late Int. Pres. Emeritus Edwin D. Hill on his passing.

Chase Fraser, B.M.

Holiday Season Donations To Area Children’s Hospital

L.U. 1347 (ees,em&u), CINCINNATI, OHIO — For the third year in a row, IBEW Local 1347 put forth a tremendous effort into donating stuffed animals to all the children who were staying at the Cincinnati Children’s Hospital, located in downtown Cincinnati, during the 2018 holiday season. Local 1347 also gifted the hospital with an IBEW Local 1347 toy bear, who sported a T-shirt made by our very own Black Out Mgr. Bauer, Organizer Bill O’Leary and Vice Pres. Jim Ribbens (20 years), Richard Goetz (24 years), and Michael Tolliver (44 years), Anthony Stehman (4th year), and Zack Hayward (5th year). The winners for each apprenticeship competition were as follows: David Hayes (1st year class), Tyler Bean (2nd year), Chris Clark (3rd year), Kevin Goldman (44 years), Anthony Stevens (20 years), Rich Goetz (24 years), and Michael Knott (37 years). Best wishes to all on a long and healthy retirement.

In sadness, we report the passing of Bros. Dan Humphreys (20 years of service), Erman Tolliver (44 years), and Michael Knott (37 years). We extend congratulations to the brothers who have retired over the past year: Larry Brown (44 years), Randy Wyman (20 years), John McCormick, our vice president and business manager for the past several years, stepped down. We're always happy to do. The club also had a few officer changes recently as John McCormick, our chair for the past several years, stepped down. John did a wonderful job as leader of our club and we thank him sincerely for all his hard work and wish him all the best! Anthony DePaola, formerly vice chair- man, has assumed club chairmanship, and Les Ruthstein will be vice chairman.

We’re looking forward to another great year of camaraderie, accomplishments and fun! Again, we wish everyone a happy, healthy year!

John Kriston, P.S.

A New Union Hall & Advanced Training Center

L.U. 1249 (catt,lt), SYRACUSE, NY — The work picture in 2018 was one of the busiest in Local 1249 history, and it doesn’t show signs of slowing in 2019. We have risen to the challenge to keep this work IBEW. In 2018, the construction of our new training center was completed giving us the ability to provide our apprentices the state-of-the-art training expected from the IBEW and the Northeastern Joint Apprenticeship & Training (NEAT) program. We had 29 graduates from the NEAT apprenticeship program advance to become journeyman Linemen, and we indentured 37 new apprentices to the NEAT program. We have nearly 400 travelers working in our jurisdiction and can support more. Our organizing efforts continue to be fruitful.

Our new union hall will be completed soon, and we will be moved in by the spring of this year. The completion of the new union hall will help us better serve our membership and will put our training center and union hall all in one location.

Colby C. Cooij, A.B.M.

IBEW Members Elected to State Legislature in Maine

L.U. 1253 (bkmo), AUGUSTA, MAINE — December 5, 2018, was a proud day for Local 1253 as two of our members — Tina Riley, House District 74, and Scott Cuddy, House District 98 — were sworn into the Maine House of Representatives. Tina was re-elected to her second term and Scott is a freshman legislator. With Scott joining Tina in the Maine House, all workers, and electricians in particular, now have two strong advocates fighting for all workers’ rights every day in the Statehouse. Good luck, Tina and Scott, as you fight the forces that want low wages, no benefits and minimal safety for their employees.

The following Local 1253 brothers had their international pension approved in 2018: Eugene Hirst, Ray Steelman, Allen Thompson, Harry Lyons, John Alibs and former business manager Thomas Rencourt. If you see these retired members, wish them well.

And we’re always happy to do. The club also had a few officer changes recently as John McCormick, our chair for the past several years, stepped down. John did a wonderful job as leader of our club and we thank him sincerely for all his hard work and wish him all the best! Anthony DePaola, formerly vice chairman, has assumed club chairmanship, and Les Ruthstein will be vice chairman.

We’re looking forward to another great year of camaraderie, accomplishments and fun! Again, we wish everyone a happy, healthy year!

John Kriston, P.S.

Accolades for Volunteers

L.U. 2067 (bko), REGINA, SASKATCHEWAN, CANADA — Volunteering might sometimes be considered a thankless job; unfortunately, in some circumstances, that can be true. A recent exception is being embraced by IBEW Local 2067.

Everyone is aware of the April 2018 Humboldt bus crash tragedy. IBEW Local 2067 has been proud to recognize two IBEW members who attended the accident as volunteer first-responders. As earlier reported, the two members also received Significant Safety Achievement Awards from their employer.

Now, Bro. George St. Amant and Bro. Ryan Steinheuser are receiving additional recognition. On Oct. 22, 2018, IBEW Local 2067 Bus. Mgr. Jason Tibbs went on location to present IBEW Life Saving Awards to both men. Bus. Mgr. Tibbs stated: “We encourage the membership to be active in their communities; the selflessness of these two members saved lives.”

Bro. St. Amant believes volunteering is crucial.

"Especially in small towns, volunteering is essential," St. Amant said. “Someone is volunteering to coach kids in sports. Volunteer for the first-response team. If you aren’t giving back by volunteering, all you are doing is talking.”

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Bro. St. Amant believes volunteering is crucial.

On swearing-in day at the Maine Statehouse, two Local 1253 members were sworn into the Legislature. From left to right are: Local 1253 Pres./Organizer Nick Poquette; state Rep. Tina Riley (HD-74); state Rep. Scott Cuddy (HD-98); and Bus. Mgr. Chuck Fraser.

RETIREES

Festive Holiday Luncheon; Transition of Officers

RETIREES CLUB OF L.U. 3, NEW YORK, NY, NORTH NEW JERSEY CHAPTER — Greetings! Hope everyone had a wonderful holiday season and that everyone is enjoying a happy and healthy new year! Our club enjoyed a great, festive holiday luncheon at Seasons in Washington Township, NJ, complete with a four-course meal and a lively DJ. Everyone had a great time dancing and enjoying the delicious food! Attendance this year was at an all-time high!

We welcomed a few new club members, which we’re always happy to do. The club also had a few officer changes recently as John McCormick, our chairman for the past several years, stepped down. John did a wonderful job as leader of our club and we thank him sincerely for all his hard work and wish him all the best! Anthony DePaola, formerly vice chairman, has assumed club chairmanship, and Les Ruthstein will be vice chairman.

We’re looking forward to another great year of camaraderie, accomplishments and fun! Again, we wish everyone a happy, healthy year!

John Kriston, P.S.

Annual Holiday Party; Community Service Events

RETIREES CLUB OF L.U. 3, NEW YORK, NY, SUFFOLK CHAPTER — Our annual holiday party was a great success. There was plenty of food and music for dancing. It was great to see some old friends and to say hello to some new friends. We also had our door prizes, 50/50 raffle, and a basket of cheer. I can sadly report that my number was not called again. Thanks to our committee chairman John Schoenig and his wife, Cathy, and their wonderful committee for a great time. A big thank-you also to Eileen Crisitone for all the beautiful cards and party favors.

At our December meeting, after bagels, coffee and cake, our chapter chairman opened the meeting and called for all reports. John Schoenig reported that our Toys for Tots Drive was very successful. Harvey Goldman reported that our Annual Food Drive for Long Island Cares Food Bank was a great success. These community service drives happened because of the generosity of our members. Our chairman then spoke on the importance of supporting our club meetings and club functions.

Chapter Chair Sherry Goldman and her lovely wife, Patricia, wished everyone a happy holiday season and a very happy and healthy new year.

Harvey Goldman, P.S.
Holiday Party Well-Attended

RETIREES CLUB OF L. U. 99, PROVIDENCE, RI — The Local 99 Retirees Christmas Party was Dec. 18 last year, at Ralph’s Catering and Kitchen in Cranston, R.I. Over 100 members, friends and family were in attendance. All Local 99 retirees would like to wish everyone a happy, healthy and safe 2019.

Frank J. Colucci, P.S.

Club’s 30th Anniversary

RETIREES CLUB OF L. U. 134, CHICAGO, IL — We hope everyone had a great start to the new year. Flashing back to Dec. 12, at our Annual Holiday Party, we also celebrated the 30th anniversary of our Local 134 Retirees Club. Pres. Kevin Gibbons said a few words about our 30 years as an organization, and we all celebrated by enjoying the anniversar- ily cake — a delicious chocolate devil’s food cake, with custard filling and frosting.

Regarding our Retirees Club, I would like to mention a quote from our January 2019 Retirees Newsletter, written and edited by the club’s Executive Board member Mario Caletta and Pres. Kevin Gibbons: “The purpose of this organization shall be to carry out the spirit of our brotherhood. To aid and assist each other as necessary, and to promote the social, eco- nomic, health, welfare, the interest of its members and their families.” That’s an excellent description of what our club stands for, and I am proud to be a part of it.

On Feb. 12 this year, some of our club members spent a fun day at Drumy Lane enjoying a luncheon and the play “Miss Match.” And for March, we look for- ward to the 18th Annual Hockey Classic, featuring the Chicago police department team vs. the Chicago FBI team. This event is a fundraiser for the Honor Flight Chicago program, which transports veterans of World War II and the Korean War to Washington, DC, to visit war memorial sites. Vietnam War veterans will also be invited to join the Chicago “honors” flights in 2019.

Happy spring to all and be safe.

Sue Kieczka, P.S.

Newly Chartered Retirees Club

RETIREES CLUB OF L. U. 136, BIRMINGHAM, AL — Local 136 retirees have been active as a group for many years. We meet at the hall in Birmingham on the first Wednesday of each month at 9 a.m. for coffee and conversation.

Our local has sponsored the retirees group, which until recently was under the leadership of Bro. Tommy Trenor. Bro. Trenor would have received his IBEW 70-year service pin this year but, regrettably, he passed away on June 27 last year.

The retirees group has elected Bro. Frank Perryman as their new chairman, and the retirees requested that the club become chartered by the IBEW.

On Nov. 26, 2018, the IBEW Local 136 Retirees Club was officially chartered by the IBEW. We would like to thank Int. Pres. Lonnie R. Stephenson and recently retired former Int. Vice Pres. Joseph S. Davis for their support and help in making this happen. In brotherhood, everyone wins.

Ross Roberson, Pres., L. U. 136

Standing for Working Families

RETIREES CLUB OF L. U. 53, KANSAS CITY, MO — Well, another year has come and gone. Happy new year to all.

Best wishes for a happy and healthy 2019!

Kenneth R. White, P.S.

Christmas/Hanukkah Luncheon

RETIREES CLUB OF L. U. 3, NEW YORK, NY, WESTCHESTER/PUTNAM CHAPTER — On Dec. 12 last year, 75 members, their wives and guests attended the Westchester/Putnam Retirees’ 29th annual Christmas/Hanukkah luncheon, at the Leewood Golf Club. The room was beautifully decorated for Christmas, as it has been in recent years.

Once again, we were entertained by our own Steve DiDionato, on the accordion, who played a medley of holiday songs to the delight of all. The singing of Christmas carols was led by Sydney Berman and Carole Mills. Betty Malandro, Cathy Micka and Carole Mills handled the selling of the 50/50 raffle tickets. Our resident woodworker, Pete Snyder, brought handmade wooden Christmas tree ornaments as gifts for everyone attending.

We were able to present our best golfer trophy to Chet Maliszewski, and 80-year service plaque to Rich Alexander, Rich McCormick and Lenny Sassin; 80-year member Donald Schwer was unable to attend.

Everyone went home in a cheerful mood for the start of the Christmas season.

Dick Mills, Treas.

‘Welcome to All’

RETIREES CLUB OF L. U. 35, HARTFORD, CT — The Retirees Club had a great Christmas lunch meeting in December. We look forward to resuming our regular meeting schedule on March 13.

At this time of year, we would like to remember those members who passed away in 2018. Included in memoriam are: Greg Beck, Luis Calderon, Gary Chestone Jr., Thomas Cosgrove Jr., Robert Darling, Dick Mills, Robert Darling, Robert Kent, Francis Murphy, Dale Nielsen, John Rusconi and Patrick Minner. We would love to see more retirees attending meetings and bringing new ideas to the group. All are welcome.

For example, Euchre began Jan. 7, and bowling began Jan. 9. At the time of this writing, as this article went to press, the club was scheduled to enjoy the following activities. In January: breakfast at Michelangelo’s. In February — lunch at the Mandarin, Valentines Dinner/Dance at Michelange- lo’s, and a trip to the Toronto Aquarium, with stops at the St. Lawrence Market and The Dutch Mill. And in March: A Polish supper at Michelan- gelo’s. You can still join — guidelines specify that you have to be age 50 or older, and bring your ID. We have to convince our mem- bers to show themselves in the foot by voting for these anti-labor politicians.

The annual crappie tournament/Fish fry will be on May 4 this year, so mark your calendars. It will be a great time!

It is with great sadness that we report we lost two more retirees, Mike Wabs and John Turtle. Rest in peace, brothers.

Duane Pearce, P.S.

Local 60 Retirees Club Pres. Coy Rogers (left) accepts a check donated to the club, presented by organizer Rick Sisk.

Spirited of Brotherhood

RETIREES CLUB OF L. U. 60, SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS — Caring about the retirees of Local 60, the local union made a generous donation to the Retirees Club. As shown in the accompanying photo above, Retirees Club Pres. Coy Rogers accepted a check for the club, presented by organizer Rick Sisk. The funds will ensure the continuing success of the practice of brotherhood at the Retirees Club’s monthly meet- ings, providing meals and activities.

While we start out our new year with anticipation, we look back with sadness on the loss of several friends and members we lost in 2018: Bros. David Gonzalez, Richard Suggs, Daniel Blake, Donald Orlovsky, Charles Griffin, Robert L. Caldwell, Alvin McDonald, Robert F. Stuart, Joe V. Garcia, Fred Krause, Virgil King, Wayne Bulgerin, Rodolfo Lanes and Guy Kutz.

The Local 60 Retirees Club meets the second Thursday of each month for the months of September through May. The club takes the months of June, July and August off for summer. After a short business meeting starting at 12 noon, lunch is served followed by games. Meetings are held at the Plumbers and Pigteflaters train- ing building, 2560 Belgium Lane. Please join us.

Sandy Rogers, P.S.

Local 60 members enjoy a special custom-decorated chocolate cake.

Local 105 Retiree Cyril “Mack” McGregor (center) is honoured for 70 years of service. At left is Local 105 Bus. Mgr. Lorne Newick, and at right, Local 105 Pres. Brad Smith.
2018 Holiday Festivities; Upcoming Activities Planned

RETIREES CLUB OF L.U. 164, JERSEY CITY, NJ — The Local 164 Dinner Dance, on Dec. 1, 2018, at the Parsippany Sheridan was the gala event celebrating retirees. Over 500 attended, retired and active. Pictured in the accompanying photo below are 50-year members.

The Retirees Club had their own holiday party with over 100 brothers and sisters and significant others sharing stories, great food, music and gifts. Thanks again to Tom and Eileen Barry and their wonderful committee.

We will have a golf league in the spring and many more activities for 2019. We all worked very hard to get to this time in our lives to enjoy all the great things in life. And thanks to the IBEW Local 164, for making that possible.

David Judowin, P.S.

‘Thanks To IBEW’

RETIReES CLUB OF L.U. 212, CINCINNATI, OHIO — After our club’s January meeting, I noticed a car with the plate number ‘70-year’ parked there. Later, I learned that the car was the one purchased by Mr. Eben McGinty, who received his 70-year service pin! After speaking with Bro. McGinty, who was a 69-year IBEW member; Robert Holliday, 50-year member; and Ronald Menke, 35-year member. Our deepest sympathy to their family and friends. Rest in peace, brothers.

Thomas Foster, 45-year member; Rynold Altman, 39-year member; and Robert Rynyk, P.S.

70-Year Service Award

RETIReES CLUB OF L.U. 194, SHREVEPORT, LA — During our December 2018 Retirees Christmas Luncheon, many service pins were presented.

Among the award recipients was retiree Eben McGinty, who received his 70-year service pin! After graduating high school in 1942, Bro. McGinty chose to join the U.S. Marine Corps, and he served on the Western front in World War II. In 1948, he graduated from sign school while in New York. He then returned to Shreveport, LA, where he initiated into IBEW Local 194 in July 1948 as a sign journeyman. Over the next 40-plus years, Bro. McGinty worked for various signatory contractors throughout Louisiana, Texas, Mississippi and Oklahoma.

In April of 1992, he retired from the IBEW. Bro. McGinty is now 94 years old and drove himself from Oklahoma to the luncheon. From the membership of Local 194, we thank Bro. McGinty and all the award recipients for their many years of dedication to the IBEW.

Brent Moreland, B.M., L.U. 194

Christmas Dinner/Dance; 2019 Retirees Events Scheduled

RETIReES CLUB OF L.U. 353, TORONTO, ONTARIO, CANADA — On Sunday, Nov. 25, last year the Local 353 Retirees Club held its 33rd Christmas Dinner/Dance with over 200 retirees and guests present, including retirees from Locals 105, 303 and 804. This was our largest group ever and everyone thoroughly enjoyed themselves.

Plans for 2019 retiree events are well underway. First will be our annual trip to Niagara Falls, which includes Dinner/Theatre at “Oh Canada Eh!”

Next will be our Annual Pin/Award Breakfast on Wednesday, April 24, where 100 of our retirees are eligible for 50-year watches and 50-year pins. Thirty-six could receive 55-year pins, 39 could receive 60-year pins; and seven could receive 65-year pins. Totaling over 183 awards. Our list of living retired members with 50 years of service and more is now over 5,000.

Each year, we have approximately 40 percent of those eligible attend, plus their spouses and family members and interested Retirees Club members. We serve breakfast for over 200.

The retired members of our North Unit, South Unit and East Unit enjoy the planned events and benefits budgeted/organized by Local 353 Retiree Executive and provided by the Local 353 Sports, Entertainment & Retirees Fund.

Rober Rynyk, P.S.

Annual Luncheon in April

RETIReES CLUB OF L.U. 702, WEST FRANKFORT, IL — The Annual Retirees Club Luncheon will be held Tuesday, April 2, at Cedarhurst Center for the Arts, in Mt. Vernon, IL. Doors will open at 11 a.m.

The Retirees Club met on Oct. 4 and Dec. 6. At both meetings, the minutes from the previous meetings and the financial reports were read and approved. Pres. Gary King read the announce of deaths for the preceding months, followed by a moment of silence.

On behalf of the Henry Miller Museum in St. Louis we are still on hold due to health issues. Under “new business,” in October, Pres. King encouraged support for labor-endorsed candidates and issues. In December, updates were provided on the health of various members, and it was announced that a representative from the Illinois Alliance for Retired Members would speak at the February meeting.

The 50/50 drawings were won by Bros. Logan Marlow and Rick Alegnani. In October, a cookbook donated by Carol and Jr. Marlow was won by Les Wolke; and in December, a pocket knife donated by Carol and Logan Marlow was won by Charlie May.

At the time of this writing, as this article went to press, the local Retirees Club meeting was scheduled to be held at Golden Corral in Carbondale on Thursday, Feb. 2, 2019, at 11:30 a.m.

Mark Baker, P.S.

Happy 2019!

RETIReES CLUB OF L.U. 756, DAYTONA BEACH, FL — We hope you had a merry Christmas and look forward to a happy and healthy 2019! We look forward to seeing more of you at all our upcoming meetings. We have been having good turnouts at our meetings and hope this trend keeps up. We love seeing all of you! The Christmas party put on by the local was very nice.

There was a great mix of ages, journeymen wiremen and retirees in attendance.

With sadness we report that, since our last article, we have had one member to pass away. We send our condolences to the family and friends of our late Bro. Frank M. “Buster” Crane Jr.

We invite any retired and unemployed brothers and sisters and their spouses who are in the area to come and join us. Our meetings are held the second Thursday of each month (September through May), at 11:30 a.m., at the Local 756 union hall, in Port Orange, FL.

Diane Gibbs, P.S.

Holiday Season & Fellowship

RETIReES CLUB OF L.U. 995, BATON ROUGE, LA — We had our 2018 Christmas luncheon at our union hall on the first Monday in December. About 35 members plus their wives attended. The food was good and so was the fellowship to start the holiday season.

As this article went to press, our next meeting was scheduled for the first Monday in March. If you are a retired member of the IBEW in the Baton Rouge area, come join us.

W. Roland Goetzman Sr., P.S.
The Rising Tide Lifting Women into Leadership

Members of New York Local 3’s women’s group, the Amber Light Society. A new project of the group is offering résumé help to women looking to move into leadership roles.

Sally McKleinfeld has been helping female friends with their résumés for years. Now she’s developed a program to help even more women within New York Local 3.

The Rising Tide Résumé Project is the latest effort from Local 3’s women’s club, the Amber Light Society, to help its sisters create professional résumés for leadership positions within the construction industry. McKleinfeld works with Club President Michele Belancourt-Maldonado to recruit interested women for the free service.

“I want to do what I can to make better use of our talents, get us the money we’re worth and bring vigor to our local by better use of our talents,” McKleinfeld said. “The industry needs us.”

Women only make up about 3 percent of construction workers nationally, with an even lower number occupying supervisory positions like foreman or contractor. The résumé project is designed to increase that number by helping women develop their résumé and think about all the things they’ve learned and how they can be applied to construction supervision. Extra-curricular activities like organizing a breast cancer walk, running the PTA or being the treasurer of a community group can also be beneficial.

“All of the office skills, all of the people skills, all of the inventory and record-keeping skills, all of that is really important,” McKleinfeld said.

“Pulling out all of that experience is something McKleinfeld really enjoys, she said. The process entails sending her sisters a long list of questions designed to help them write down as much as possible. After that, they have a phone call, usually about an hour long, where McKleinfeld gets more details.

“This is where I shine,” McKleinfeld said. “I love putting together the full picture of someone as a worker. You have to know their style and substance in order to describe them in a brief and compelling way. Are they a self-starter? Are they detail-oriented? You have to paint the picture of the person behind the page.”

The program began in 2017. Since then McKleinfeld said 13 sisters have completed the program, and eight have been successful in getting the positions they wanted. One is the first forewoman of color at the Jacob K. Javits Center, New York’s 1.8 million square foot convention center.

“It’s been heartwarming doing this work because many of the sisters’ reactions have been, ‘Really? You’re doing all this for me?’ You think I can do this? And my response is, ‘You’re already doing the work, you should be formally recognized for it,’” McKleinfeld said.

The project may spread to other trades as well. McKleinfeld says she’s talking to sisters with IATSE, the Plumbers and the Carpenters to help them develop their own projects.

For Ruiz, the project helped her become a forewoman. It also gave her something more intangible, but perhaps just as worthwhile.

“When I have those moments of impostor syndrome, I look back at my résumé and think about all the things I’ve done,” Ruiz said. “It’s really empowering.”

I want to do what I can to make better use of our [women members’] talents. … The industry needs us.”

– Sally McKleinfeld

If anyone is interested in starting their own résumé project, they can contact McKleinfeld at amberlightsociety3@gmail.com.
Closed Local’s Hall Gets a New Lease on Life

The union hall of a disbanded Ohio local is finding new life as a museum and learning center, thanks to an innovative partnership forged between the local’s former leaders and a nearby university.

North Canton, Ohio, Local 1985 was one year away from its 60th anniversary in 2016 when it was forced to disband after the area’s last remnants of the Hoover Company, where most of the local’s members had worked, closed down.

“The sad part is that we disbanded and that a lot of people lost their jobs,” Nick Tomey, Local 1985’s final business manager, told The Canton Repository.

“The silver lining is that our legacy will be preserved and continue on.”

That preservation is taking form as a new museum housing the local’s records and memorabilia under the care of the Museum Studies Program of North Canton’s Walsh University.

“Shortly after Hoover shut down operations, we asked the International Office if we could donate our union hall to Walsh, and they gave us the approval to proceed,” Tomey said. “The idea had garnered the backing of International Secretary-Treasurer Kenneth Cooper, who at the time was international vice president for the Fourth District, which covers Ohio.”

“The silver lining is that our legacy will be preserved and continue on.”
– Former Local 1985 Business Manager Nick Tomey

Just across North Canton’s Main Street from the Hoover plant, Local 1985’s hall had been an integral part of the community, the site of numerous events and social gatherings for members and their friends and neighbors.

“Walsh was a great fit, because this building has been a part of the community for a lot of years,” Tomey said. “We just hated to see it close up.”

Walsh University is a 3,000-student Roman Catholic liberal arts college founded in 1960 that operates Ohio’s only museum studies program, one of about a dozen in the United States. Installed in the university’s new Local 1985 museum is a mix of permanent and temporary displays exploring the IBEW’s place in North Canton’s history, providing researchers and other interested parties supervised access to some of the local’s files and photos.

Strategically placed throughout the museum are interactive stations called “maker spaces,” hands-on activity and teaching stations specially designed to give young people a taste of what working at Hoover might have been like.

For most of the 20th century, Hoover was among the most popular and profitable makers of vacuum cleaners in the world. Founded in 1907, in what was then called New Berlin, Hoover started making leather horse saddles and automobile seats. But after one of its employees invented an improved version of the “electric suction sweeper,” the company decided to put resources into producing and selling it.

By 1963, the company had become so successful in this new venture that it had to build a massive downtown factory to handle the ever-increasing demand for its products.

Although Hoover would go on to set up manufacturing facilities all over the world, North Canton (as the city would be called from 1928 onward) would remain the company’s headquarters for decades.

“This town probably would not be here if it wasn’t for the Hoover Company,” Tomey said. “They ran a really good company.”

Early on, various unions had represented employees at the plant, which Tomey said was Hoover’s only unionized operation. A year-long strike in the mid-1940s broke the union that was in place at the time, however, and not until 1957 was the IBEW able to successfully organize workers under Local 1985.

By the late 1970s, nearly two-thirds of Hoover’s 5,000 employees belonged to the local, working for the company as electricians, assembly-line workers, truck drivers, and so on. But within a few years, Hoover was struggling financially, and in 1985 it underwent the first of what would be a succession of corporate takeovers that too often were accompanied by episodes of downsizing.

By 2006, Hoover was under Whirlpool’s corporate umbrella when Local 1985’s leaders, fearing the appliance giant would try to oustsource what was left of the dwindling Hoover-division workforce, mounted an effort to buy the vacuum cleaner operations in an attempt to preserve the remaining jobs in North Canton.

Instead, Hoover’s product lines were sold that year to TTI Floor Care, a Hong Kong-based corporation that also owns the Oreck and Dirt Devil brands. It didn’t take long for TTI to lay off 600 of Local 1985’s remaining members and close the North Canton plant.

TTI also shut down Hoover’s bag-manufacturing facilities in 2012, and then in 2016 the company shut down Hoover’s nearby distribution center. The resulting job losses spelled the end of Local 1985, and it disbanded shortly afterward.

For most union locals, this would be the end of the story. But Tomey, who had been impressed with Walsh’s historical center and museum inside the Hoover family’s 19th-century home on the college’s campus about a mile and a half east of the factory, decided to do things differently. That center, he noted, barely mentioned workers and the IBEW, and that inspired the former business manager to approach Walsh about using Local 1985’s hall as a venue that would highlight union labor’s role in Hoover’s history.

“We also wanted to keep the legacy of Local 1985 alive for future generations, so you could bring your grandchildren here and tell them, ‘This was my union hall,’” Tomey said, a second-generation Hoover worker. His father, James, had worked there for nearly 42 years, and Nick started at the company when he turned 18 in 1976.

After several months of preparation, the museum was dedicated on Dec. 6 with a ceremony featuring several of the former local’s officials and board members, including workers who remained as honored guests, along with Fourth District International Vice President Brian Malloy, International Representative Bill Dietz, and officials from North Canton and from Walsh University.

“The IBEW museum has hit on a concept that will not only preserve the legacy of the Hoover worker, but build on it for the benefit of the entire community,” said Walsh Provost Douglas Palmer. “Hopefully, we will remind the young people in the community of the skills, the innovation, and most of all the spirit that goes into making something with one’s own hands.”

North Canton Area Chamber of Commerce President Doug Lane hopes the museum will help visitors learn what the Hoover Company meant to North Canton.

“It was a factory town,” Lane said. “Whether you lived here or worked here, the IBEW was a major player. I think it meant stability for a number of residents, and I think it had a place in a lot of people’s hearts. These were hard-working men and women that hopefully were getting better lives for their children.”

City officials anticipate that the hall-turned-museum will become a focal point of North Canton’s downtown revitalization efforts, as developers are transforming the former factory into a mixed-use, residential and commercial community called The Hoover District.

A plaque noting the Local 1985 union hall’s prominent place in North Canton’s history is to be placed on the Main Street-facing part of the building.

“That last day when I walked out of this building and locked it up, I just thought, ‘Wow, there was no one to say goodbye to. That was a lonely walk,’” Tomey said. “But I’m happy the lights are back on today.”