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 WWW.IBEW159.ORG

# The Sparkie Sentinel

IBEW 159

DECEMBER 2013

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## Business Manager's Report

Robert Doyle

Brothers and Sisters,

As the holidays approach, I am reminded of the things in life that have value: celebrating with family and friends, and sharing with those less fortunate.

Driving through Olin Park, I was delighted to see how the lights add such cheer! I am grateful to all our apprentices, retirees and special projects members; and to the contractors who supported the project.

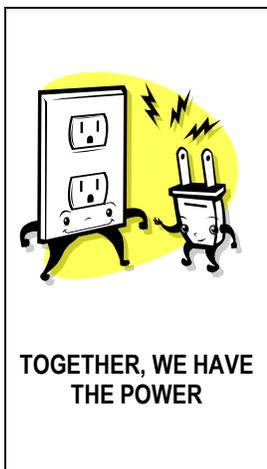
And thank you to all the business agents for their hard work and dedication. Thanks to you all, more than 100,000 vehicles will make their way through the fifty displays this year. Fantasy in Lights began 25 years ago when labor and management joined forces to create a unique electrical display for our community. At first, it took place in Warner Park and had only 12 displays. Today, touring Olin Park is a tradition for many in and around Madison.

Over the next few months, the staff at Local 159 will hold several forums. These group discussions will give you an opportunity to meet and discuss issues with your union leadership. The meetings will be casual. Your input is crucial to their success. Topics will include: Education – what you think of it, how we can improve it and your involvement to make it happen. Building – how should we do things differently, and should we consider relocating to a new building?

Together, let's develop a strategy that will place Local 159 in a position of power both educationally and strategically. We have obstacles to overcome including a diminished market share and fewer contractors, but when we work together we can create a legacy – just as we did 25 years ago.

I wish you all a Happy Thanksgiving, Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. I am looking forward to our progress in 2014.

Fraternally,  
 Robert Doyle



## Referral Agent

### Jeff Crocker

We want to thank everyone who is helping with Fantasy in Lights this year; the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> year apprentices, and the other members and retirees who set up and have been involved in preparation over the past year. The lighting ceremony went well. Special thanks to substitute Santa Claus, Joe Spataro, for showing up on short notice.

We will need people to help take down Fantasy in Lights, January 2 - 4, 2014. Special Projects pay will be available. Call or email me to volunteer.

The no-dogs have arrived! Get yours at the office for \$13. Or, pay a full year of dues and get one for free.

**Remember, for all classifications, if you are on the out-of-work list, you must re-sign**

between the 10<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> of each month in person, by fax, U.S. Mail, or email [resign@ibew159.org](mailto:resign@ibew159.org). If you sign between the 1<sup>st</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> of the month, you need not re-sign until the 10<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> the following month. **This includes members who are out on short calls; you still have to re-sign.**

### No Strikes Now

When Local 159 unemployment is more than 7%, no strikes will be given if you don't accept a job.

At the November union meeting, Inside members voted to distribute an \$.80 raise as follows, effective December 1, 2013:

Wage + .62	34.07
Annuity + .16	8.52
H&W unchanged	8.73
NEBF + .02	1.02
Total package	\$52.34

According to Previant Law Firm, of Milwaukee: under the Affordable Care Act, if a person were un-insured for more than 90 days, they would be assessed a tax penalty. Members of 159 can use WEEBF Flex fund money for all eligible expenses, including making a WEEBF insurance self-payment. But you cannot use Flex fund money to purchase health insurance from anyone other than WEEBF.

The Business Manager and Agents have been making visits to job sites. If you are working on a job site that we haven't been to yet, please let me know, I'd like to stop by.

Finally, if you have the time, please try to attend a Member Forum. We want as much input as possible. If you can't attend in person, please send in your written comments, or give us a call. We'd be more than happy to talk with you. ☼

## Membership Development

### Casey Healy

Thanks to everyone who helped with planning, organizing, sponsorship, prep work, and installing the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary edition of Fantasy in Lights. Happy Thanksgiving, Merry Christmas, and happy holidays to you, and your family and friends. Enjoy a tour of the lights at Olin Park together.

Please help us confirm whether you are in the Residential Reclassification program. We want to compile an updated list of who is enrolled, and their current status. Without this information we cannot determine what classes we need to offer, or how many instructors it will take. If you are in the program, please send your name, address, phone number, and email address if you have one. Email information to [chealy@ibew159.org](mailto:chealy@ibew159.org), or fax to (608) 255-3014 "Attention Casey," or call me at the Hall, (608) 255-2989.

As mentioned at the November union meeting, we have scheduled forums to discuss what changes and direction we want our local to take. Your input is very important, and we encourage all members to try and attend at least one to share your thoughts, ideas, and/or concerns. If you're not one to speak in front of people, write your ideas on a piece of paper and hand them to the person running the discussion. Even if you don't have any ideas, attending a forum and listening to other people might trigger a thought or question. If nothing else you will be better informed. ☼

***Your present circumstances don't determine where you can go; they merely determine where you start.***

## Organizer's Update

If you have driven through downtown Madison recently, you would have seen a few tower cranes in place for new high-rise apartments. Currently, none of these are "our" jobs. By the late spring 2014, there could be as many as 15 to 23 tower cranes in the downtown area alone; only a couple of those jobs are "ours." There is a strong non-union force taking over the areas we are used to working in. We are walking jobs, both union and non-union, and making our presence known. The general contractors have no "usual guys" anymore. The jobs are being bid with lower and lower-priced, sub-standard "electricians." We have to give the employer 8 for 8, give good quality work, and we have to work safely.

In your travels, when you pass by a field where a building will be constructed, please call the Hall and tell us where it is and, if you can write it down, what the sign says. With your help, we will regain market share and have a brighter future.

Upcoming events include, but are not limited to, an organizing meeting in Janesville, a job fair in McFarland, a School for Workers training in Madison, a local organizing meeting with other trades, as well as contacting non-union shops to be organized. Also coming up is a seminar in Wisconsin Dells, where I look forward to learning more about asbestos, scaffolds and fall protection; as well as meeting the wide range of attendees including consultants, project managers, real estate developers, firefighters, general contractors, government agencies, inspectors and other union representatives.

The second Thursday of every month at 5:30 p.m. in room 201, at 1602 South Park Street, you have a voice in the future of your union. I encourage all of you to attend and make a difference in what happens in our lives.

In Brotherhood Everybody Wins,

Jeremy Waugh. ✿

## Office Manager's Report Sue Blue

Union dues for 2014

Monthly	\$ 33.75
Quarterly	\$101.25
Six Months	\$202.50
Yearly	\$405.00
At press time, we are on death benefit 201	

### December Office Hours

If you plan to make a dues payment in December, please keep in mind the last two weeks of the month will be short weeks with the holidays. Please call the office ahead of time if you want a total on what you owe for dues and death benefits for any time frame.

If you are paying dues for the full year and sending your payment by mail, we will send you a coupon for a free gift. You do not have to pay in person. Dues payments may be made by check, money order, cashiers check, or cash. Paypal is no longer an option. Please feel free to contact the office at (608) 255-2989.

New t-shirts are here. New hats and caps are on the way. Stop by early in December to get yourself an early Christmas present. We have:

Hooded sweatshirts	\$40
Long-sleeved t-shirts	\$25
Short-sleeved t-shirts	\$20
Baseball caps	\$15
Knit hats	\$10
AC sensors (hot sticks)	\$15
No-dogs	\$13
Code book tabs	\$15
Pocket savers (measuring tape holders)	\$ 5

### Agreement Updates

The new Inside wage/benefit package goes into effect December 1, 2013. The current Inside and Residential agreements expire in 2014. **Now** is the time to offer input and suggestions for the upcoming negotiations. If you need a copy of your agreement, please let the office know and we can either email or mail it to you.

Read your agreement cover to cover. Highlight any articles that need additions, deletions or clarifications. Contact the union office via email, phone, letter, in person, or via the 159 website under “contact us.” There will be ongoing discussions and information on contract issues in the coming months. Stay involved. Be safe out there hunting. ✿

Sparkie Sentinel	
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<b>Share your newsletter ideas, stories, feedback:</b> <a href="mailto:newsletter@ibew159.org">newsletter@ibew159.org</a> <i>Or call, or write.</i>	
<b>Newsletter Deadlines:</b> <u>December 17, January 24, February 21, March 24</u>	
<b>To receive the newsletter by U.S. Mail</b> contact the office to opt in. The Sparkie Sentinel is always available by email and online at <a href="http://www.ibew159.org">www.ibew159.org</a>	

## Member Forums

What’s up with these member forums, you ask? We want your input. There are many issues coming or already here that warrant serious planning if we are to survive as a Local. This is not an Office problem. This is a Member problem.

- What are your thoughts on our education process? What should the membership do next? What about long-term?
- Change usually involves money. What will the finances look like as we move forward?

The officers have been thinking about these issues; we have ideas. So do you; things we may not have considered. We gain nothing if we run over your input with our enthusiasm for our own ideas.

- Do you want to hear our ideas?
- What are your questions? What would you do differently?
- What can we do to get input from you and other members?

We invite you to attend one or more forums, on December 5, or January 7, at the Labor Temple. Everyone is welcome. Help shape our future. The discussion will cover these topics, and more: education programs, budgeting for the future, and considering future building/training facility needs. As November forum attendee Jon Seymour said, “It’s a good way to find out what’s going on in the Union. It’s a good way to meet people and to be heard.”

Background information will be presented about topics including the Wisconsin state licensure requirement and the educational needs of Journey-workers, Apprentices, and CE's/CW's who will need training and CEU's to keep current. Our current educational system is not geared up to meet the need.

If you can’t attend, please share your input by phone, fax, U.S. Mail, or telegram. Or visit [www.ibew159.org](http://www.ibew159.org), and click on the "contact us" tab. No need to sign in to the web site to do this.

To ensure enough food is on hand, please RSVP to Sue Blue by the end of the day December 4, and/or January 6. ✿

## Get into the Web

Keep an eye on our web site, [www.ibew159.org](http://www.ibew159.org). In the coming months, we will be improving the web site and adding more information. Do you visit the web site now? If not, why not? Would you like to contribute ideas, information or photos? Please share your web site feedback by mail, telephone, or via [newsletter@ibew159.org](mailto:newsletter@ibew159.org).

## Committee Corner

Tom Lemens reports that seats are still open on the following committees. All are welcome, including apprentices and retirees (and family members, on some committees). What we can accomplish is directly related to the number of people who get involved. Committee and Board members: your reports are always welcome in this space. To get involved, contact Tom Lemens at the office, or email [president@ibew159.org](mailto:president@ibew159.org).

- Audit Committee (one seat left)
- Building Committee
- Community Outreach
- Entertainment Committee (contact Jim Virnig)
- Examining Board (one seat left)
- Friends and Family Committee
- Legislative Committee  
(Andrew Traverse, [legislation@ibew159.org](mailto:legislation@ibew159.org))
- Safety Committee (one or two apprentices, contact Jeremy Waugh.)
- South Central Federation of Labor (SCFL)

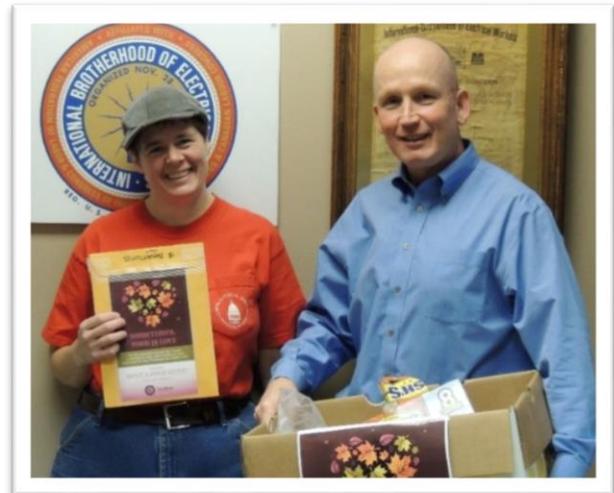
## LU 159 & Suchoman Scholarship Committee

Originally the “Hank and Freda Suchoman Scholarship,” and recently renamed “LU 159 & Suchoman,” the scholarship provides one full year of tuition, books and supplies at a two- or four-year college or technical school. Hank was a 159 member, and Freda an honorary member. In the 1980’s, they left an endowment fund to provide scholarships for Local 159 members, their spouses and their children. To be eligible, the student must be enrolled full time in something other than an art, music or P.E. major. Room and board are not included. Applications are due the Friday of the second full week of July, by 4 p.m. The scholarship is presented on Labor Day. Our challenge today is that tuition is very costly. The committee is planning several things to raise funds, but we need your help. Please lend a hand.

The Bob Palmer Classic is set for June 21, 2014, at Kestrel Ridge Golf Club in Columbus. For 18 holes, a meal, a cart and an 8 a.m. shotgun start, the early-bird fee is \$50, before May 1. Then, until June 1, the fee is \$70. Cancellations after May 31, will not be refunded. We’ll have a scramble, with a few twists thrown in. If there is enough interest, we will also offer single competition. Mark your calendar and come prepared to have a great time. (608) 513-1725, or [regocmit@yahoo.com](mailto:regocmit@yahoo.com). -Tim Coger

## Community Outreach Committee

The Thanksgiving Basket Drive was a success - thanks to you. Details follow below. We still need more committee members. Everyone is welcome. Contact Kathlean Wolf, [kt.wolf.96@facebook.com](mailto:kt.wolf.96@facebook.com), or Tom Lemens.



**Wolf and Doyle with donations.**

## Giving Back

Thanks to everyone who contributed food and/or funds to our November cause, the Goodman Community Center’s Thanksgiving Basket Drive. On November 21, we delivered a large crate of food and an envelope of cash. Our \$245 will buy a lot of Thanksgiving dinner ingredients. Your generosity is making a difference for families in Dane County. What causes would you like to see Local 159 support? Perhaps causes that have personal meaning to our members. Someone suggested we identify a local cause or organization that does autism-related research and/or support work. What do you think? Send your ideas to [newsletter@ibew159.org](mailto:newsletter@ibew159.org).

**For December, we are supporting the Wisconsin State Journal Empty Stocking Club.** Established in 1918, donations purchase holiday gifts for needy local children. [If you keep a jar for pennies and pocket change, here's your chance. One member raided hers for the Thanksgiving food drive, and found \$31.73]

**Please contribute generously at the Union meeting on December 12. Or at the office, until the meeting.**

### *Holiday Get Together*

**Saturday, December 7<sup>th</sup> • 11 a.m. - 3 p.m.**

Informal gathering for members and family. Drop in any time for snacks, face painting, and Santa. Want a table to sell crafts or re-sale? Let us know.

### **Are You Current? \*Update\***

In November, we reminded you to update your beneficiary information. Here are updates on those four forms, and where to file them:

**The first two forms come from Local 159** and should be returned there.

- 1) IBEW Local 159 Death Benefit Form
- 2) Authorization for Representation Form

**3) At the WEEBF web site [www.weebf.org](http://www.weebf.org)** click on "Electrical Workers Local 159 Retirement Plan" at lower left, and use the beneficiary form there. Or call WEEBF, (608) 276-9111. Return this form to WEEBF.

**4) At the International web site <http://www.ibew.org/IBEW/departments/pension.htm>** you'll find "Beneficiary Forms and Instructions," and then "USA Benefit Form 124." Or call the I.O.: (202) 833-7000. This form should be returned in good condition to the I.O. [The bar code is very important, and must be printed cleanly and squarely on the page.] ❄

### **Who Works for You?**

Some of the businesses Local 159 works with:

**Wells Print and Digital:** Each newsletter in 2013 has cost about \$1,000 to produce. Wells has been a Union workplace since 1936! We expect to see decreases in newsletter costs in the next

month's billing cycle, as many of you have shifted to the electronic version. Besides the newsletter, Wells prints updated booklets when our contracts or Bylaws change, as well as print jobs like letterhead paper, and election ballots.

**Legal Counsel:** From 2001 to 2010, average legal expenses were approximately \$22,000 a year. In 2013, under the previous administration, Arellano & Phebus were paid \$5,254 for ongoing legal advice on contract law, arbitration, grievances, and other legal questions. Under this administration, the Marilyn Townsend Law Office has provided \$2,025 worth of legal services.

**Verizon Wireless:** How did that happen? Monthly expenses on our Verizon account have dropped since July, from an average of \$385, down to \$317 a month.

**Image Pointe:** T-shirts sold in the office are often produced by this Union shop, part of IUPAT Local 246, out of Des Moines, Iowa.

These businesses are hired by the office, but ultimately they work for you. We'll continue to strive to work with only the best-qualified and most labor-friendly businesses. If you know of any union-run businesses that we could be working with, please let us know! As always, if you have questions, feel free to call the office or stop in for a conversation. ❄

### **Retirees Club Elmer's Corner**



We met on November 11, at the Coliseum Bar in Madison. Present were: David Baltes, Donald Boe, David Conrad, Tom Corcoran, Ron Disch, Ron Dommershausen, Robert Doyle, Gary Gander, R. Scott Gomez, Rich Gorst, Roy Holm, Tom Junck, Tom Kepler, Bill Kracke, Dave Krey, Marvin Milleville, Elmer Racek, Don Small, Mike Stassi, Jim Virnig, Dennis Wiczorek.

We had a moment of silence for Brother Dennis

Stein. Business Manager Robert Doyle gave us an idea of the work situation, and invited retirees to volunteer for Local 159 committees and projects. Please help count Fantasy in Lights donations every Tuesday morning at 9:00, at the NECA office. Thanks to Dave Baltes again for helping out. Remember, next month will be at the Labor Temple, on December 9, at noon. Hope to see you then. Call or email Sue to make reservations. And let her know if you would rather receive this newsletter by email instead of U.S. Mail. ✿

### Here's What You Missed

Haven't been to a Union meeting lately? Or ever? Here's a brief sampling of topics mentioned at the November 14, 2013, membership meeting:

- New contractors organized in
- New phone system has been installed
- Members of 159 attended financial officer training at the U.W. School for Workers.
- Statistic: Of the 1,000 apprentices working in Wisconsin today, 450 are union, 550 non-union.

### A question from the floor

One member asked about the financial rewards for becoming an instructor. Member Ed Kroth offered one response. His reply from scripture is roughly paraphrased here: Let the teachers teach, let the preachers preach, and let all do what good they can. Ed said he doesn't do it for the money; that teaching brings its own rewards. He encouraged members to consider what they can offer, rather than ask, "What's in it for me?"

For those still wondering about the financial rewards, night school instructors who aren't under

contract with MATC earn hourly foreman scale from Local 159, with no benefits. ✿



Justin and Becky Young, along with big sister Macey, welcomed baby brother, Carson Ryan Young, born July 23, 2013. Congratulations!

~ Save the Dates ~	
<b>Dec 5</b>	Member Forum, 5:00 p.m. Labor Temple, Room 109 (RSVP by 4:30 p.m. Dec 4)
<b>Dec 7</b>	Holiday Get Together, 11:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m., Labor Temple
<b>Dec 9</b>	Retirees lunch, noon, Labor Temple
<b>Dec 12</b>	Union meeting, 5:30 p.m.
<b>Dec 17</b>	Deadline for Sparkie Sentinel
<b>Jan 7</b>	Member Forum, 4:30 p.m. Labor Temple, Room TBA (RSVP by 4:30 p.m. Jan 6)
<b>June 21</b>	Bob Palmer Classic, Kestrel Ridge Golf Club, Columbus. \$50/person. Hurry, early-bird deadline is May 1 (After May 1, cost is \$70)
<p><b>What else is going on?</b> Committee meetings and more <i>See the Upcoming Events calendar at</i> <a href="http://www.ibew159.org">www.ibew159.org</a></p>	

## Gain Visibility for Local 159 & Help Wisconsin Public TV

**Seeking 10 volunteers for Membership Drive • Bring your brightest IBEW t-shirt**

Do Local 159 proud • Take pledges during a live broadcast • Support a great cause

**Sunday, December 15, from 6:30 - 10:30 p.m.**

Are you: Comfortable on the phone and with computers? At least 16 years old? C'mon down! To volunteer, call (608) 265-4436 between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., or sign up online. Specify the date and time above. Mention you're with IBEW Local 159, or note it online under "comments."

Then, please email [newsletter@ibew159.org](mailto:newsletter@ibew159.org), or call the office, so we know who to expect.

<http://wptschedule.org/Volunteer/event.php?iIDEvent=17>

## Welcome to Labor Dictionary!

Because a *complete knowledge* of labor union definitions is an asset to *all* union members and supporters.

**union maid** - A woman who organizes and/or joins labor unions and/or supports labor unions.

Watch the Academy Award-nominated documentary *Union Maids* (1976), on YouTube. Learn the stories of three woman who organized American industrial unions in the 1930's. From their gutsy stories, learn what it takes to fight for our unions now.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=74gvcvXlgnM>

Comments? Union Maid Stories? Send them to [newsletter@ibew159.org](mailto:newsletter@ibew159.org). Put "union maid" in the subject.

-Cindy Johnson, Union Maid,  
Blue Mounds, WI



## Union Maids

## Ever Consider Becoming a Union Contractor?

Maybe you've noticed the poster at the Hall for Pro Union Consulting ([prounionconsulting.com](http://prounionconsulting.com)). They offer a 3-day, 21-hour course on how to become a union contractor. Includes financial, legal and business topics, and information on local rebate programs, grants, and tax credits available to generate business. Milwaukee Local 494 has worked with Pro Union, and helped attendees with the training cost using their Industry Advancement Fund. (Cost is \$500 per member, spouses attend for free.)

**If Local 159 members are interested, we will look into offering this class.**

To learn more, contact Jeremy or Robert at the office.

## December 12<sup>th</sup> Membership Meeting Agenda

- . Proposed Bylaws change. Update to Article X, Section 7, pages 19 - 20

This proposal would remove "Badger Ordinance Works" members and their dues/working dues information. It would add "Business Manager, Assistant Business Manager, and all appointed assistants of Local 159" and their proposed dues/working dues rates. Full text is on the next page.

To submit an agenda item, see Tom Lemens before the meeting,  
email [president@ibew159.org](mailto:president@ibew159.org), or leave him a note at the Local 159 office

**IBEW LOCAL 159**

1602 S. Park Street

Madison, WI 53715

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**☞ Member Forums December 5, and January 7 ☛**

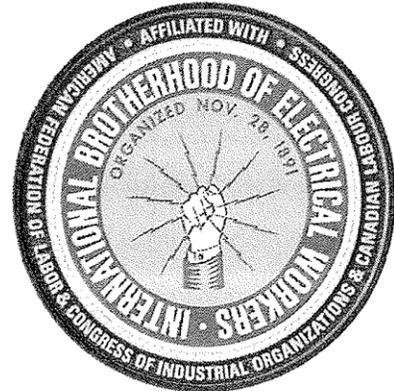
**☞ Union Meeting December 12 ☛**

**Please raid your piggy bank for the Empty Stocking Club**

**☞ Wisconsin Public TV Membership Drive ☛  
Sunday, December 15, 6:30 - 10:30 p.m.**



# WHICH ARE YOU?



Some members keep their Union Strong,  
While others join and just belong;  
Some dig right in; some serve with pride;  
Some go along just for the ride.

Some volunteer to do their share;  
While some lay back and just don't care;  
On meeting nights some always show,  
While there are those who never go.

Some always pay their dues ahead;  
Some get behind for months instead,  
Some do their best; some build; some make;  
Some never give, but always take.

Some lag behind; some let things go;  
Some never help their Union grow.  
Some drag; some pull; some don't, some do;  
Consider...WHICH OF THESE ARE YOU?