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WWW.IBEW159.ORG

# The Sparkie Sentinel

IBEW 159

JANUARY 2014

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## Business Manager's Report

Robert Doyle

Brothers and Sisters,

One of the greatest hockey players, Wayne Gretzky, once said, "You miss 100% of the shots you never take." Many of you are asking *why* things are the way they are, and some of you have joined a committee or attended a forum discussion to share your ideas. Over the past few months, the business agents and I have met with contractors, worked with various committees and visited many job sites to hear what you have to say. We appreciate your input; and as a result, together we are improving the position of IBEW Local 159.

A couple of items showing a positive trend include member involvement and the work outlook for 2014. Negotiations are the main focus now. Our Negotiating Committee attended a week of bargaining classes at the U.W. School for Workers, and gained insight and knowledge about the negotiating process. Again, we need your input to bargain for the best possible agreement. In addition to the Inside agreement, we will also negotiate the Residential agreement. ***If you are a residential wireman and want to be on a Negotiating Committee, please contact the Hall.***

Finally, the New Year offers us opportunities to be creative and move our agenda forward. Issues of concern continue to be market share, education, and the feasibility of a new building. If you haven't already done so, please get involved.

I wish you and your family a peaceful holiday season. Have a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

In Solidarity,

Robert Doyle

TAKE THE  
POLAR PLUNGE



FREEZIN' FOR  
A REASON

## Membership Development

Casey Healy

### **Residential Reclash Phone Home!**

Are you in the Residential Reclassification program? Please call the Hall. Help us update our list of those currently enrolled in Reclash. Without your information, we can't plan which classes we need to offer, or how many instructors are needed. Failing to contact us could slow your progress in the program. Also, a VDV Reclassification program is in the works.

### **We are still looking for instructors.**

If you have ever thought about teaching, here is your chance to get involved and give back to the Union. Send me your name and contact information, along with the subjects you would teach. We will connect



you with the resources you need to start teaching a night school class. Email your information to [chealy@ibew159.org](mailto:chealy@ibew159.org), fax it to (608) 255-3014, "attention Casey" or call me at the Hall (608) 255-2989.

## Referral Agent's Report

Jeff Crocker

Work at the Portage power plant is starting to slow down. Staff's East Side UW Hospital project is starting to put out calls. Nickles may start manning the Edgewater in February or March.

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

Want to travel? Work prospects around the country look good. For news about where to find work on the road, please feel free to contact me.

If you're wondering about work in Local 159, **check out the Job Line.**

Phone after 5 p.m. to hear about calls to be dispatched on the next work day (608) 255-0169. Updates are made daily.



"No strikes" continues. When Local 159's unemployment is greater than 7%, you won't get a strike if you reject a job offer.

Remember: **If you're on the out-of-work list,**

**all classifications 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.

**If you're on a short call, you must still re-sign.**



Please contact me with your input for Inside or Residential contract negotiations.

I'm going to be freezing at the Polar Plunge on February 8, and I hope you'll participate. If you don't want to jump in, why not write a check?

## Organizer's Report

Jeremy Waugh

Hello Brothers and Sisters, welcome to the New Year. I hope you all had a wonderful time with your families over the holiday.

There is much work to pursue in our area. Non-union contractors are coming out of the woodwork and gaining market share. More and more work is going non-union and we are all losing. We are losing work, pay, benefits, future jobs and retirement savings.

We can change this. You've heard it before; we need to be involved politically, before the shovels hit the dirt. By then, it's too late, the subs have already been selected.

I will be out there fighting for the rights of non-union workers to become union.

I, we, your union needs you to be involved. Attend city and county meetings (usually held at night). Help fight for that next job to be built with union trades, or even a PLA (Project Labor Agreement). Today, we need to fight for the Judge Doyle Square and Cabela's jobs.

If you want to travel for work, contact the Hall for information. You'll need to fill out the ERTS form, get a travel letter from the Local, and make sure your dues are paid. (The IBEW Electronic

Reciprocal Transfer System helps ensure proper crediting of travelers' pension and health and welfare benefits.) Some Locals require a state license, first-aid, CPR, OSHA 10, and so on. Always call first.

In Brotherhood Everybody Wins.

## Member Forums

by *Jeremy Waugh*

The first meeting was on short notice, and attendance small, but there was good conversation, and some good questions asked. The second forum had better attendance, and more questions asked.

We began with topics like licensing, continuing education units (CEUs), and where and how to teach those classes. From there we delved into whatever other issues, complaints, suggestions, or concerns came up. Help shape our future. Feel free to bring up anything you have on your mind, and we will discuss it. Keep in mind that with a complaint, a possible resolution or two is an aid to the conversation.

Everyone is welcome. Please RSVP by the day prior to the Forum, so we can arrange for food. Can't attend? Share your input by phone, fax, U.S. Mail, or telegram. Or visit [www.ibew159.org](http://www.ibew159.org), and click on "Contact Us."

*The next Forums will be January 7, and February 6, at 4:30 p.m., Local 159 office*

## How Electronic Are We?

Based on recent tallies, we're becoming more electronic all the time. In the past three months, the number of members who have registered at the Local 159 web site has grown from 257 to 275. The number of hits on web-archived Sparkie Sentinels has risen from a total of 153 views in 2012, to 236 views, so far in 2013. Thanks for tuning in.

More than 600 members have email addresses on file at the office. If you haven't shared your address, send it in today. Bookmark [www.ibew159.org](http://www.ibew159.org), and visit often. While you're there, click "Contact Us" and tell the web gurus how they are doing. Better yet, submit your own ideas and news items.

## Meanwhile Back at [www.ibew159.org](http://www.ibew159.org)

The web site continues to evolve, thanks to Casey Healy and second-year, inside apprentice and computer pro, Eric Proces. They aim to add more information, and make the site more accessible, useful and attractive. Proces has many years of experience building and programming computers.

In 2014, watch the web site for information that doesn't appear in the hard-copy version of the Sparkie Sentinel. (Don't worry, the essential news will still run in the paper newsletter.) But electronic communications are the quickest way to share updates. Watch the web site for news on upcoming events, contract negotiations, spring elections and more.

## Photo of the Week

We want to highlight Local 159 members' photographic skills. Send in your quality photos showing "a day in your life." Perhaps a child waving goodbye as you leave for work, an awe-inspiring sunrise, a pair of muddy boots, a co-worker's unusual lunch items, a cool decal on a hard hat. Capture the spirit of Local 159. Be creative. Keep it clean.

Please **stay safe** and follow all rules at your job site that prohibit use of phones or cameras while working.

Every week, we'll post the "Photo of the Week." Send your best JPEG images (with your name) to [newsletter@ibew159.org](mailto:newsletter@ibew159.org). And keep an eye on [www.ibew159.org](http://www.ibew159.org)



## Sparkie Sentinel

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**Share your newsletter ideas, stories, feedback**

[newsletter@ibew159.org](mailto:newsletter@ibew159.org) Or call, or write

### Deadlines for 2014 newsletters

January 24, February 21, March 24, 2014

**To receive the newsletter by U.S. Mail**

contact the office to opt in. The Sparkie

Sentinel is always available by email

or at [www.ibew159.org](http://www.ibew159.org)

## Committee Corner

Seats are still open on many committees, including Community Outreach, Entertainment, Friends and Family, SCFL, and Legislative (Andrew Traverse, [legislation@ibew159.org](mailto:legislation@ibew159.org))

All are welcome, including apprentices and retirees - and family members, on some committees. To get involved, contact Tom Lemens at the office, or email

[president@ibew159.org](mailto:president@ibew159.org).

## LU 159 & Suchoman Scholarship Committee

by Tim Coger

The Committee is grateful to Pat Anderson. Pat won the 50/50 raffle at the union meeting and donated the money back. Thank you for your generosity.

To set the story straight on the Committee and scholarship names, our scholarship is the Hank and Freda Suchoman Scholarship. That has always been the name and always will be. The Committee name has been changed to "LU 159 / Suchoman Scholarship Committee" because the Committee intends to start a second, less-restrictive scholarship that can be awarded more frequently. The new scholarship will be totally separate from the Suchoman scholarship. *[In the last newsletter, the editor inadvertently altered Tim's original meaning. Please excuse the misunderstanding, ΔL.]*

The Committee is selling union-made and American-made polo shirts and sweatshirts (and union-made jackets) by prepaid order. I have sweatshirts and a jacket on hand to see. All can have the bug embroidered on back, and your name on the front. There will be catalogs at the Hall. Sign up for the Bob Palmer Classic, June 21. [regocmit@yahoo.com](mailto:regocmit@yahoo.com) (608) 513-1725.

Tim Coger and Tom Lemens have been reviewing all the Suchoman files. In 1998, the Committee voted to start a second scholarship fund. Now the plan is being carried out.

## Community Outreach Committee

A small but determined crew turned out to help answer phones and serve food at Wisconsin Public TV's December membership drive. We laughed a lot and we met many interesting people, both by phone and in person. According to WPT's Emma Starzewski, 4,319 pledgers contributed more than \$560,000 this time, besting last year's December drive total. During our four-hour shift, we helped net about \$13,000. More committee members are always welcome. Contact [kt.wolf.96@facebook.com](mailto:kt.wolf.96@facebook.com), Kathleen Wolf; or Tom Lemens.



*by Kathlean Wolf, experienced Polar Bear Plunger, and first in line to be “Freezin’ for a Reason!”*

**Ever wanted to throw the Officers into a frozen lake?** Well now you can, while also supporting Wisconsin Special Olympics!

At the December Union Meeting, members voted to contribute \$50 toward the \$75 entry fee for each plunger (up to ten), and to provide an additional dollar-for-dollar match of any donations made by Members of Local 159!

<b>Who</b>	Officers, Members, and SUPPORTERS to cheer us on!
<b>What</b>	Jump into Lake Monona OR watch and cheer on the Plungers
<b>Where</b>	February 8 <sup>th</sup> (watch the newsletter and website for a time)
<b>Where</b>	Olin Park boat launch
<b>Why</b>	Benefit Special Olympics
<b>How</b>	Very, very quickly!

If you’d like to donate to the Polar Bear Plunge/ Special Olympics fund, and have the Local *match* your donation, please follow this [LINK](#) (if you’re reading the online version of the newsletter) or bring or send donations to the office.

Our team name is “Union Electricians Local 159,” and you can donate to any one of the jumpers by name. If you’re brave at heart, you’re also welcome to join the team!

## The Donation Dilemma

*by Kathlean Wolf, interim Chair  
Community Outreach Committee*

If you’ve been to a membership meeting recently, you’ve heard the requests for money from various charities. Usually these requests are approved with little discussion. Many members have noted the gaps in how we do charitable giving:

- We don’t keep track of how much we give at every meeting. We may approve two requests for \$100 each, a \$200 total. We may approve five requests for \$250, and give \$1,250. How much does the Local give in a year, and who do we give it to?
- We haven’t looked at what charities matter most to members of Local 159. Has the Alzheimers Association helped your grandmother? Do you volunteer with Salvation Army? Many organizations are worthy; but we might have a bigger impact by making larger donations to fewer organizations that really mean something to us.
- We have a rough system for keeping track of who we give to, and when we last gave to them, but this system doesn’t do anything except prevent us from donating at completely random intervals.
- We don’t know how much money goes to helping people, and how much goes to pay administrator salaries.
- Most importantly (in my view), this scatter-shot method of donations doesn’t give the maximum possible benefit to either the charity or the Local.

If we target specific charities and give larger amounts of money at once, they might do more with that one lump sum, than with random \$100 donations. And, it may sound selfish, but it’s true: every donation we make could help Local 159 increase its visibility in the community, as part of an overall strategy to increase union market share.

Last month at the union meeting, I proposed that the Community Outreach Committee and other members of Local 159 could come up with a plan for how Local 159 donates money to charity. It is my hope that the Committee and others can collaborate to have such a plan ready by the January meeting.

If you have suggestions to improve how the Local gives to charity, or criteria to use for evaluating organizations, please email [newsletter@ibew.org](mailto:newsletter@ibew.org).

*Also, please watch your email inbox for a request to take a survey from Survey Monkey; it's a fast, easy way for us to see what organizations you already donate to, and where you spend your volunteer time.*

## Retirees Club



by Lee Lemens

We had a very good turnout for the annual Retirees Luncheon, December 12<sup>th</sup> at the Labor Temple. The weather kept a few away but a great time was had by all who attended.

Angelo's catered the lunch and as usual it really hit the spot. Business Manager Robert Doyle welcomed the retirees, gave an update on the work situation, and shared some of his plans for the future. He stressed the importance of education and asked us to consider being more involved in the union in all capacities, to use the "extensive knowledge and wisdom" of our retirees to help move the local forward.

It is always good to get together with members, their spouses and guests, to share good food and conversation, and enjoy a nice meal provided by the Union. The next meeting will be at Toby's, on January 13, 2014, at noon. Hope to see you there.



Three boys, actually.

**Brother Adam Melka** and wife, Kara, welcomed their third child and first son, Van, on August 13, 2013. He joins sisters Zeva and Giana.

**Brother Josh Johnson** and wife, Tasha, added son Kaeson, born October 30, 2013. He joins big sister Raelynn, and Local 159 Brother and Grandfather, Mark Johnson, and Grandmother Terri.

**Brother Tim Passage** and wife, Trisha, greeted Jackson Timothy Passage, at 10:24 p.m. on December 12. He was 7 pounds, 5 ounces; and 19 inches. Sisters, Briana, Alyssa and Aubrey are very happy to have a baby brother.

## ~ Save the Dates ~

Jan 7	Member Forum, 4:30 p.m. Labor Temple, Room TBA (RSVP by 4:30 p.m. Jan 6)
Jan 9	Union meeting, 5:30 p.m.
Jan 13	Retirees lunch, noon, at Toby's
Jan 24	Mark Breslin speaks to apprentices Wisconsin Dells
Jan 24	Sparkie Sentinel deadline
Feb 6	Member Forum, 4:30 p.m., as above. (RSVP by 4:30 p.m. Feb. 5)
Feb 8	Polar Plunge, Olin Park, Madison
Feb 19	WEEBF Seminar: Health Care 5:00 p.m., Labor Temple, room TBA
Mar 19	WEEBF Seminar: Pension 5:00 p.m., Labor Temple, room TBA

## Welcome to Labor Dictionary!

by Cindy Johnson, Local 159 Union Maid

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

**Pinkertons:** The name given to operatives working for the Pinkerton Detective Agency who infiltrated unions as spies, disrupted union activities, beat and killed strikers, and performed services ranging from security guarding to military contract work. Most of their work fighting against labor happened during the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. They were hired by industrial corporations and by the U.S. Government. Pinkertons are well known for their involvement in the Pittsburgh Homestead Strike of 1892. Carnegie Steel's Henry Clay Frick called in 300 Pinkertons to attack strikers.

From 1936-1941, the La Follette Committee on Education and Labor - chaired by Robert M. La Follette, Jr., a Republican and Progressive Party Senator from Wisconsin - investigated the Pinkerton Agency. The findings: 1,228 Pinkerton operatives had infiltrated five major unions. The government and citizens were informed.

Comments? Pinkerton stories? Send them to [newsletter@ibew159.org](mailto:newsletter@ibew159.org)

### Union Dues for 2014

Monthly	\$ 33.75
Quarterly	\$101.25
Six Months	\$202.50
Yearly	\$405.00

Contact the office for the current death benefit

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, cashier's check, or cash. Please feel free to contact the office at (608) 255-2989.



## Mary Harris "Mother" Jones

part two in a series

by Cindy Johnson, Local 159 Spouse

After Mother Jones lost her family to Yellow Fever in Memphis, and then lost her seamstress shop to the 1871 Chicago Fire, her destitution led her to the Knights of Labor Hall. She took to the passionate fight for workers like a moth to a flame, cutting her organizer teeth right in the thick of it all.

The 1870's and 1880's brought enormous industrial growth, but dangerous, near-slavery conditions for workers, including women and children. Many worked 14-hour days all week. Strikes broke out, police and Pinkertons beat and killed workers in the street. Politicians divided people, pitting them against each other. Newspapers sided with the Industrialists.

On May 4, 1886, a street meeting was held by workers in the Haymarket in Chicago. Police arrived. Something exploded. Some cops were killed. Workers were blamed, some hung, some jailed, with no evidence to this day. Years later, some were pardoned. Just imagine, Mother Jones lived during these times, and she became a prominent agitator and organizer, and Mother to the working class.

*Look for part three in the next issue.*

**The Holiday Party was fabulous  
A good time was had by all  
Watch [www.ibew159.org](http://www.ibew159.org) for photos**

# IBEW LOCAL 159

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## Last One in is a Rotten Egg!



### ❄ 2014 Polar Plunge ❄

Freezin' for a Reason 💧 February 8, 2014 💧 Olin Park

🌀 Member Forums January 7, and February 6, 2014 🌀

🌀 Union Meeting January 9 🌀

Negotiations start soon • Seeking Residential wiremen for talks  
Send in your ideas

