

INTERNATIONAL BROTHERHOOD OF ELECTRICAL WORKERS
LOCAL UNION 953 NEWS – DECEMBER 2021

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Timothy Hemenway, Asst. Bus Mgr

Michael Mountin, Asst. Bus. Mgr.

Nick Webber, Organizer

Connie Bremer, Office Mgr

Grace Malone, Accountant

OUR ADDRESS

2206 Highland Avenue

Eau Claire, WI 54701

TEL: 715-834-4911

INTERNET WEB PAGE

www.ibew953.org

E-mail Staff, see Web Page

For "Contact Us" link.

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

This will be my last newsletter to you as I will be retiring on December 10, 2021. My goal was to leave when I hit my rule of 90 with Xcel. That happened on August 1. With all of the contracts due between then and the end of the year, I decided to hang on a bit longer to help the rest of the staff.

It has been an honor and privilege to serve the membership of Local 953 the last eleven and a half years. Six years as an assistant and the past 5 ½ as the Business Manager. During that time, we have seen many attacks on labor unions. From Wisconsin's attack on the public sector (Act 10), prevailing wage, and then the private sector (right to work) to the national attacks on the public sector (Janis Act) and the weakening of the NLRB and OSHA. The approach of divide and conquer. That approach can only be successful if you let it divide you. Right to work is designed to break apart unions, to weaken them, to divide the membership by creating freeloaders at every instance that someone doesn't get their way. You must stick together in solidarity to protect the rights you have as a union member and when you decide to join in solidarity you must make sure that your actions are not a violation of the labor agreement or the law.

Being part of a union is a way of life. It provides better wages, benefits, and working conditions for all of us. Some take this for granted or believe they are entitled to everything. If you think the Union hasn't done anything for you lately, then I suggest you go out and work non-union, which will give you a clearer understanding of exactly what the union does do for you. Pick up your contracts, review the work rules and benefits that you receive because of that contract. Speak to the members that organized from a non-union setting to see what things were like for them before they became union. Many people fought before us, with us, and will continue to fight after us for a better way of life for all working families.

I encourage you to attend union meetings and to get involved in your local. There is a lot of misinformation out there and the best way to stay informed is to be involved. There is a big difference between civil law and labor law and what your union can do for you clearly falls under labor law. Union leaders' base decisions off of facts, not conspiracy theories, and then apply labor law to determine the best course of action.

Local 953 has been around for over 102 years. The IBEW has been in existence for 130 years. How many organizations or employers have been around that long? To be able to say we are a part of such a great organization is an honor and a blessing. Thank you to all that have fought for us. It is only due



to the fact that this union has provided me a great wage, benefits, and yes, a pension, that I am able to fully retire at the age of 55.

Someone once told me that sometimes you need to save the membership from themselves. For those that only want to be a member when they get their way, thank God that Local Union 953 and the IBEW are here to fight for you. For all the rest of the great members, continue your fight and working together to improve your way of life. My hope is that my children and grandchildren can experience the same benefits of being a member that I was afforded.

Again, it is an honor to be a part of this union and to have represented you. May God bless this Local, the IBEW, and the United States of America.

Yours in Solidarity (forever),

Martin Sandberg

Martin Sandberg, Business Manager

Brothers and Sisters,

I hope as you read this, you and your family are having a safe and healthy holiday season. No matter what our opinions and views are, at the end of the day, we need to stay safe and focused so we can return everyday home to our families.

Included with this newsletter are a list of Regional and Xcel tailgate meeting schedules. If your group is not on this list, please call me and we will set up a meeting. Hopefully we can get back to some form of "normalcy". I look forward to getting back on the road to visit with you soon.

The last few months have been challenging to say the least. We have had many obstacles to address, and we have had several "heated" conversations. With all the negativity that is in the air, I wanted to reach out to all members that have been supportive of me and the rest of this Union Hall. The phone calls we have received recently from our loyal, dues paying, contract obeying members has been overwhelming. The conversations we have been having with these folks are the reason we come to work every day. I cannot emphasize enough how important you folks have been to us during these challenging times. It makes us proud to be your sole bargaining representatives.

Please be safe and take care of each other and hopefully we will see you soon!

As always, if you have any questions or concerns, please contact me.

In Solidarity,

Tim Hemenway

Tim Hemenway
Assistant Business Manager

Brothers and Sisters,

Just recently, as I was working my way through some ancient files in the basement of the union hall, I came across a document that is not only top-notch content I, but also relevant for any member of our local to page through.

I am sure that some of you know the origins of this and I would be happy to learn more about how it was created. The cover page is titled, "HISTORY-MEMORIES, ADVENTURES, MIS-ADVENTURES, TALES AND A FEW FACTS CONCERNING LOCAL UNION 953 INTERNATIONAL BROTHERHOOD OF ELECTRICAL WORKERS 1919-1993". Here are a couple of the highlights and lessons learned. In 1929 the linemen who worked in the NSP crew at Blair were paid \$90.00 per month, with no extra pay for overtime worked. "They were required to work with the temporary crew during regular working hours, and take care of the regular jobs after supper." As there was no Union at the time, so when they requested a meeting with the company Superintendent to discuss grievances they were told "if they didn't like the job, they could quit."

In 1935 a group of NSP employees in La Crosse applied for a charter with the International Union to form Local Union 749. Four Local 953 members agreed to make the trip to celebrate the initiation of the new members. As Highway 53 between Blair and Whitehall was under construction, the 953 members "negotiated a muddy detour through Arcadia" got turned around and the Plymouth firmly stuck in the mud. Following this two volunteered to walk to Blair in search of a phone, where they found members of the NSP line crew downtown patronizing local establishments eager to help pull the car out of the mud. As the story goes, the 953 members made it to the initiation late, but luckily there were "ample refreshments were available". The four made it back to Eau Claire by 6:00 AM, while still being required to work a short two hours later.

In 1940 the Business Manager at the time Sherman "Shorty" Preston took a vacation to the east coast and stopped at the IBEW Headquarters in Washington D.C. Along with other items, officers advised adamantly not to organize or even fraternize with people in REA Coops, TVA, and such "troublemakers". Shorty noted this as particularly awkward as Local 953 had been organizing cooperatives for years prior and had many personal friends employed by the area cooperatives. Obviously, we didn't take their advice.

While reading this, a few things became abundantly clear. First, we have had some EXCELLENT brothers and sisters in our past, as we do today, that got us through some tough years. Secondly, we know this year has been challenging to say the absolute least, but though this may be the most turbulent year for many, if not all of us, Local 953 as an institution has weathered these storms in the past, as we will continue to do. Finally, every bit of progress we have made as a Local has been the result of members (often with differing opinions) getting together and fulfilling our mission of enhancing the lives of working people.

Thank you to all who assisted with organizing efforts this past year, we have had tremendous success as a Local thanks to you, and I can't wait to see what the next year has in store.

In Solidarity,

Nick Webber

Nick Webber, Organizer



Congratulations to this year's IBEW Local 953 Scholarship Winners!

Winners of Local 953 Scholarship:

Austin Kopacz, child of Mark Kopacz (Xcel Energy)

Trevor Kopacz, child of Mark Kopacz (Xcel)

Craig Hansman, child of Michael Hansman (Xcel)

Kayla Steinmetz, child of Dean Steinmetz (Xcel)

Kylie Hodnefield, child of Kirk Hodnefield (Xcel)

Hello Fellow Union Members,

Hope you are all doing well and enjoyed a nice break to celebrate Thanksgiving with your family. Negotiations are currently underway at several distribution cooperatives I represent as well as work beginning on a first contract for the Dairyland Power Fleet Mechanics group that recently voted in favor of becoming union. I know the recent Covid mandate has caused much anger and frustration for many of you. It seems to be an unnecessary distraction from the task at hand. Building, maintaining, and restoring our electric distribution, transmission and generating systems is the work our members perform on a daily basis and have continued performing at a high level while doing so safely since the beginning of this pandemic. Before there were protective measures in place you were on the front lines every day as essential workers. Thank you all for your hard work and dedication and know that here at Local 953 we will continue to do everything we can to support our members. I also want to wish Business Manager Martin Sandberg a long and happy retirement and recognize him for his hard work and dedication to the members of 953 during his tenure here as well.

Hope to see you all at the Ice fishing contest this winter and I want to give a shout out to all the military personnel fighting to keep America Great this Holiday Season now and into the future! In closing I want to wish all of you a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!!

In Solidarity,

Mike Mountin

Mike Mountin

Asst. Business Manager

Dear Members,

I hope this letter finds you well. The latter part of 2021 has been a busy one here at Local 953 with contract negotiations wrapping up at Winona Lighting reaching one of the best contracts settlements reached in decades. This agreement builds in generous wage

increases, additional vacation increases, an additional paid holiday, emergency vacations day and the ability to use them more freely with less notice. Also, for the first time ever, a match was negotiated to the 401K retirement savings plan. Seniority rights were also addressed giving long-term employees more discretion to stay working in the event of a lay-off scenario.

In our southern area, both Scenic Rivers Energy and Jo Carroll Energy reached contract settlements, including a five-year contract at Scenic Rivers with a general wage increase of 15% over the life of the agreement, the last agreement was also a five-year contract which truly as carried though some challenging times during this pandemic, and I'm hopeful this settlement will be the same. Jo-Carroll ratified a three-year deal with both the inside staff and outside workers. This settlement encompassed general wage increases and an increased to the 401K contribution match to 3% minimum.

In closing, at the November executive board meeting Business Manager Martin Sandberg announced his retirement effective December 10th at which time the board appoint me to serve out the remainder of his term. I would like the thank Marty for his steadfast leadership over the years, he and I have worked together for more than a decade through many challenging times his commitment to the labor movement has been remarkable, I will miss him as the leader of our Union but hope our friendship will endure. Please join me in wishing him a long, healthy, and happy retirement.

Best Wishes and Happy Holidays,

In Solidarity,
Brady Weiss

Brady Weiss
Asst. Business Manager

HAPPY HOLIDAYS!

*From the Officers and Staff of Local 953
Marty, Tim, Brady, Mike, Nick, Grace
and Connie*

LOCAL UNION 953 REGIONAL UNION MEETINGS 2022

WESTERN REGIONAL MEETINGS - THIRD WEDNESDAY

DAY	DATE	PLACE	TIME
Wednesday	January 19, 2022		4:00 PM
Wednesday	February 16, 2022		4:00 PM
Wednesday	March 16, 2022		4:00 PM
Wednesday	April 20, 2022		4:00 PM
Wednesday	May 18, 2022	All meetings held at:	4:00 PM
Wednesday	June 15, 2022		4:00 PM
Wednesday	July 20, 2022	Meister's Bar & Grill	4:00 PM
Wednesday	August 17, 2022	1402 Cty Road A	4:00 PM
Wednesday	September 21, 2022	Boardman, WI	4:00 PM
Wednesday	October 19, 2022		4:00 PM
Wednesday	November 16, 2022		4:00 PM
Wednesday	December 21, 2022		4:00 PM

FLOATING REGIONAL MEETING SCHEDULE

DAY	DATE	PLACE	TIME
Thursday	January 6, 2022	American Legion, Alma, WI	5:15 PM
Thursday	February 3, 2022	VFW, Barron, WI	5:00 PM
Thursday	March 17, 2022	Wolf's Grantland Graphics, Lancaster, WI	5:30 PM
Tuesday	April 5, 2022	VFW, Barron, WI	5:00 PM
Thursday	April 7, 2022	American Legion, Alma, WI	5:15 PM
Tuesday	April 12, 2022	Wolf's Grantland Graphics, Lancaster, WI	5:30 PM
Thursday	May 5, 2022	VFW, Barron, WI	5:00 PM
Thursday	June 16, 2022	Wolf's Grantland Graphics, Lancaster, WI	5:30 PM
Tuesday	July 7, 2022	American Legion, Alma, WI	5:15 PM
Thursday	August 4, 2022	VFW, Barron, WI	5:00 PM
Thursday	September 15, 2022	Wolf's Grantland Graphics, Lancaster, WI	5:30 PM
Thursday	October 6, 2022	American Legion, Alma, WI	5:15 PM
Thursday	November 3, 2022	VFW, Barron, WI	5:00 PM
Thursday	December 15, 2022	Wolf's Grantland Graphics, Lancaster, WI	5:30 PM

NORTHERN REGIONAL MEETINGS - FIRST WEDNESDAY

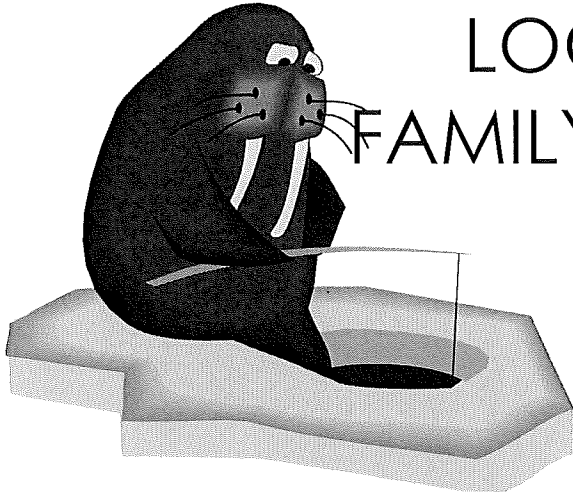
DAY	DATE	PLACE	TIME
Wednesday	January 5, 2022	Cancelled by Membership	4:00 PM
Wednesday	February 2, 2022		4:00 PM
Wednesday	March 2, 2022		4:00 PM
Wednesday	April 6, 2022		4:00 PM
Wednesday	May 4, 2022		4:00 PM
Wednesday	June 1, 2022	All meetings held at:	4:00 PM
Wednesday	July 6, 2022		4:00 PM
Wednesday	August 3, 2022	Airport Inn	4:00 PM
Wednesday	September 7, 2022	50954 Hwy 13	4:00 PM
Wednesday	October 5, 2022	Ashland, WI	4:00 PM
Wednesday	November 2, 2022		4:00 PM
Wednesday	December 7, 2022		4:00 PM

CENTRAL REGIONAL MEETINGS - SECOND WEDNESDAY

DAY	DATE	PLACE	TIME
Wednesday	January 12, 2022	Central Christmas Party VFW Star Ave.	4:00 PM
Wednesday	February 9, 2022		4:00 PM
Wednesday	March 9, 2022		4:00 PM
Wednesday	April 13, 2022	All remaining meetings at:	4:00 PM
Wednesday	May 11, 2022		4:00 PM
Wednesday	June 8, 2022	Union Hall,	4:00 PM
Wednesday	July 13, 2022	2206 Highland Avenue	4:00 PM
Wednesday	August 10, 2022	Eau Claire, WI 54701	4:00 PM
Wednesday	September 14, 2022		4:00 PM
Wednesday	October 12, 2022		4:00 PM
Wednesday	November 9, 2022		4:00 PM
Wednesday	December 14, 2022		4:00 PM

SOUTHERN REGIONAL MEETINGS - SECOND THURSDAY

DAY	DATE	PLACE	TIME
Thursday	January 13, 2022		5:00 PM
Thursday	February 10, 2022		5:00 PM
Thursday	March 10, 2022		5:00 PM
Thursday	April 14, 2022		5:00 PM
Thursday	May 12, 2022	All meetings at:	5:00 PM
Thursday	June 9, 2022		5:00 PM
Thursday	July 14, 2022	American Legion Post 336	5:00 PM
Thursday	August 11, 2022	731 Sand Lake Road	5:00 PM
Thursday	September 8, 2022	Onalaska, WI	5:00 PM
Thursday	October 13, 2022		5:00 PM
Thursday	November 10, 2022	Stew Feed & Retiree's Night	5:00 PM
Thursday	December 8, 2022		5:00 PM



LOCAL 953 ANNUAL FAMILY ICE FISHING DERBY

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 5, 2022
11 AM to 3 PM – CHETEK, WI

POKEGAMA LAKESIDE CANTINA
(ADDRESS: 840 BANKS LANE, CHETEK)

IMMEDIATE FAMILY OF MEMBERS WELCOME!

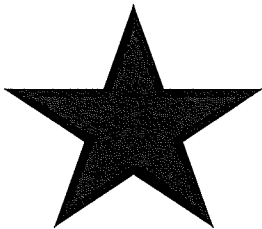
ENTRY FEES: \$10 PER PERSON.
BEER, POP and BRATS INCLUDED.

THE
PRIZES

1st PLACE GAME FISH
2nd PLACE GAME FISH
1st PLACE PAN FISH
2nd PLACE PAN FISH

THE FISH ARE JUDGED ON LENGTH ONLY.
ALL ENTRANT'S FISH MUST MEET MINIMUM LENGTH REQUIREMENTS SET FOR THE
LAKE.

PRIZES TO BE GIVEN AWAY INSIDE THE
POKEGAMA LAKESIDE TAVERN & GRILL



GUN RAFFLE

MUST BE PRESENT TO WIN

DETACH HERE



2022 ICE FISHING DERBY REGISTRATION FORM

**PLEASE RETURN THIS REGISTRATION AND FEE BY JANUARY 18, 2022 TO:
LOCAL UNION 953 IBEW, 2206 Highland Avenue; EAU CLAIRE, WI 54701**

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

IBEW LOCAL 953
2206 Highland Avenue
Eau Claire, WI 54701

• 63-C

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IBEW

...the right choice



**Integrity
is doing the
right thing, even when
no one is watching.**

C.S. Lewis



Weingarten Rights

I believe this discussion could lead to my being disciplined. I therefore request that my union representative or officer be present to assist me at the meeting. I further request reasonable time to consult with my union representative regarding the subject and purpose of the meeting. Please consider this a continuing request; without representation I shall not participate in the discussion. I shall not consent to any searches or tests affecting my person, property, or effects without first consulting with my union representatives. • 63-C

