

The Contactor

The Union for the Information Age

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**CWA Local 6310
AFL-CIO, CLC**

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Verizon's Health Care Proposal Drowns In Its Own Arrogance

By Debbie Williams, Secretary Local 6310

VERIZON EAST COAST BARGAINING IS THE FIRST OF MANY LARGE CONTRACTS, AND IT SETS THE TONE FOR ALL THE BARGAINING THAT FOLLOWS

Verizon District One on the east coast and CWA agreed to early bargaining last fall in preparation for this year's contract negotiations. On Tuesday, December 11th CWA

District One Vice-President Chris Shelton notified Verizon Labor Relations that CWA was formally breaking off early negotiation. Shelton said, "there was just no possibility of going further based on the onerous proposal Verizon put on the table." Mr. Shelton went on to point out that, "the CWA Bargaining Teams have an interest in negotiating a fair and equitable contract and we are always available to listen to reasonable proposals, but we can never agree to the retrogressive demands Verizon put on the table."

Unofficial reports indicate that Verizon's proposal would have forced union members to pay for health benefits which they currently enjoy free of charge, with premiums varying from those for a single insured estimated to averaging around \$20 per week, and with family plans averaging about \$31 dollars per week. Weekly premium deductions would only be the beginning. Higher co-pays, additional co-pays for referrals, higher

Letter From the President	Page 2
We need to do a better job	Page 3
Legal Advice	Page 4
Freeman-Kortkamp Award	Page 5
Think before you Ink	Page 6
Local 6310 Scholarship	Page 7
Retirees' Corner	Page 8

In This Issue:

costs for HMO coverage versus Managed Care Network charges, higher deductibles, caps on retiree payouts, and exclusion of new hires from receiving retiree health benefits altogether, are just some of the additional conditions included in Verizon's demands. Penalties were being added for failing to pre-certify hospital visits. The MEP-PPO was being eliminated and costs passed on to HMO participants. Additional costs were being added to prescriptions whether the prescriptions were being filled by mail order, in network, or out of network.

According to company negotiators, none of the conditions were subject to bargaining. Whenever CWA or IBEW negotiators asked the company for data relative to the proposals, none was provided outside the initial informational packets distributed at the first session of bargaining back on November 20th. Clearly, this was a case take it or leave it. That the Verizon management team could have gone into negotiations believing that the unions would be agreeable to such unrealistic demands is unlikely. Why, then, did they do it? That question has yet to be answered. Perhaps the answer will come in the next round of bargaining, tentatively scheduled for spring, 2008. If so, District One will be ready with one of their own.



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"You are suffering from low wage, low self esteem, low value service job depression. I prescribe 'You are not alone' therapy with the strongest union you can find."

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

-BY TONY ELLEBRACHT

What's Wrong with America's Health Care System?

America is facing a health care crisis. As of 2006, 47 million U.S. residents have no health insurance, and the number keeps rising. By 2010, the number of uninsured Americans will grow to more than 50 million. That's 50 million people who face bankruptcy if they get sick—or who might avoid seeking treatment altogether.

Exploding health costs are devastating working families

One in four American say their family has had a problem paying for medical care during the past year—and two-thirds of them had insurance.

Nearly 30 percent say someone in their family has delayed medical care in the past year.

Health care costs contribute to an estimated 25 percent of housing problems.

Health costs are a factor in half of personal bankruptcies. Since 2000, an estimated 5 million families have filed for bankruptcy in the aftermath of serious medical problems. In fact, every 30 seconds in the United States someone files for "medical bankruptcy."

Premiums for family health coverage have surged.

More than one-third of people who have health insurance worry about losing it.

Health care is a major issue in every union contract negotiation.

As costs rise, more lose insurance

As the expense of insurance skyrockets, more and more people are becoming uninsured. In 2006, 47 million Americans had no health insurance, 8.6 million more than lacked insurance in 2000. Nearly 8.7 million of America's uninsured are children. More than eight in 10 uninsured people lived in working households in 2006. One in every eight nonelderly veterans also is uninsured.

(U.S. Census Bureau, 2006; Kaiser Commission on Medicaid and the Uninsured, 10/07; Associated Press, 10/30/07)

In addition to the uninsured, 24 percent of Americans are underinsured, with insufficient, bare-bones coverage. Altogether, 40 percent of adults younger than 65 have no

health coverage or inadequate coverage. (Consumer Reports, 9/07)

If we don't change our current system and these trends continue, the number of uninsured will keep spiraling upward. It's projected that the number of uninsured will hit 56 million if nothing changes in the current trend.

It Costs Dearly to Lack Insurance

Lack of health insurance leads to roughly 18,000 unnecessary deaths every year in the United States. People without insurance, and people with insurance that saddles them with heavy cost-sharing burdens, are less likely to get preventive care. When preventable or controllable illnesses aren't treated early, they become far more costly to treat.

Preventive Care Saves Lives and Money...

Prevention Measure	Result
Improved blood sugar control for people with diabetes	40% reduction in risk of eye, kidney and nerve disease
Blood pressure control	33-50% reduction in risk of heart disease and strokes
10% reduction in cholesterol levels	30% reduction in risk of heart attacks and strokes

But People Without Insurance Are Less Likely to Get It.

	Insured All Year	Uninsured
50- to 63-year-old women who received mammogram in past two years	75%	48%
50- to 64-year-olds who had colon cancer screening in past five years	56%	18%



Tony Ellebracht—President

Employers and small businesses are hurting, too

As employers put money into health care instead of wages, health care costs are taking bigger and bigger bites out of our paychecks.

Employer Health Coverage Is Drying Up—For Workers and Retirees

In 2007, just 60 percent of firms offered health benefits, compared with 69 percent in 2000.

Employer-provided retiree coverage is dwindling even more

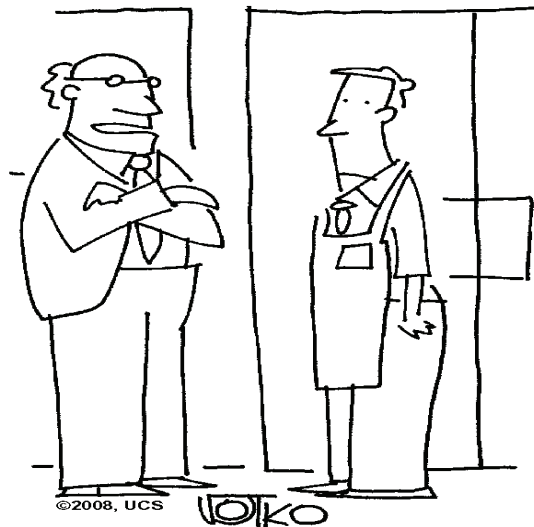
For those who retire before age 65, when Medicare becomes available, there are virtually no other affordable options for health care coverage. But in 2007, only 33 percent of large private firms (with 200 or more workers) that offered health benefits to employees also offered them to retirees, compared with 66 percent in 1988.

For more information about our current health care crisis, please visit [In American No One Should Go Without Health Care](http://www.aflcio.org/issues/healthcare), a campaign of the AFL-CIO. (<http://www.aflcio.org/issues/healthcare>)

We Need To Do a Better Job

By: Jason Vellmer Vice President ASI

As your elected representative and coworker I understand that overtime and calls can be stressful. I applaud the hard work of everyone who is doing what they should to continue to help secure our future here at AT&T. It is also important that I share with you the other side of the coin. There are union members who are not working towards the goal of maintaining our job security. I ask that you Please Stop and think about the affects of your action to others. Please bear in mind that if the company should ever correct the 30% of misdirected calls into the center, we will have no more work to fall back on and may result in workforce reductions. Our union has been continuously involved in meetings with the company regarding new work into our center to increase job security.



"You'll like working here or you're fired."

Less than great customer service is a reason why the company may not select the Earth City location to expand the jobs of the future too. The company has reviewed several calls with us and we need to ensure that we are treating the customers with the same satisfactory customer service we would expect for

This will put us in position to take on jobs of the future. However, in many meetings with the company we hear their concerns about the quality of customer service we are providing.

ourselves. I have listed a few examples below that are affecting our reputation:

NCT received phone call from customer and immediately placed person on hold for 10 minutes just to come back and say "Trouble on line need a dispatch."

NCT received phone call from customer that was receiving 4 and 5 digit errors on the line after a thunderstorm and NCT advised must be a spyware issue and referred back to Tier 1.

NCT received call placed on 8 minute holds three times just to comeback to say "Line tok need to go back to Tier 1."

When I took the office of Vice President AT&T/ASI I vowed and committed to help and protect the members of this union for years to come. Moving forward we are going to work jointly with the company with an emphasis on customer service. We did hear lots of good calls that made us realize that this issue can be corrected and we will succeed.

Where we are and how do we get there

Local 6310/6320

From hwy 270 North or South bound: Take page exit east to Schuetz Rd (the first stop light) make a left onto Schuets Rd, north bound, go to Westline (the first stop light on Schuetz) make a left, go to the first stop light on Westline, make a right You are now on Grissom, make a right at the first drive you are at 2258 grissom our office.

From Lindbergh North or South bound: take the Midland exit and go east 2.4 miles to Schuetz Rd. to, make a left onto Schuetz Rd.travel South bound to Westline, make a right turn go West, on Westline to the first stop light, make a right turn on Grissom go to the first drive, and make a right you are at 2258 grissom our office.

From Page East bound: East of Lindbergh make a right at Schuetz (the second stop light) to Westline, make a left go West on Westline to the first stoplight, make a right onto grissom go North to the first drive make a right you are at 2258 Grissom, our office.

From Dorset Rd: and 270 travel east on Dorset Rd. to Schuetz Rd. make a right, travel South on Schuetz Rd. to Westline make a right, go west bound, on Westline, to Grissom make a right on Grissom to the first drive on your right, turn right into our parking lot at 2258 grissom.

2258 Grissom Dr
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314-991-0200

CenturyTel Bargaining Begins

By Debbie Williams, Secretary Local 6310

On Wednesday February 20, 2008 CWA and CenturyTel will begin bargaining a new contract. We have sent out ballots for a strike vote to the 106 members of this bargaining unit. This does not mean there will be a strike at this time but is giving CWA authorization to call a strike should it become necessary. This strike vote will prove that we stand united and support CWA's Bargaining team.

Information will be available on Local 6310's website cwalo-cal6310.org as it become available. Mobilization activities will also be listed we ask and encourage all CWA members to participate.

The following are issues that based on the experiences at

other tables, we believe will be major issues: Pensions, Seniority Rights, Wages, Downgrades, Additional Job Duties Without Appropriate Compensation and Health Care.

**Remember
wear red on
Thursdays,
United we
Stand Divided
We Beg**

Legal Advice

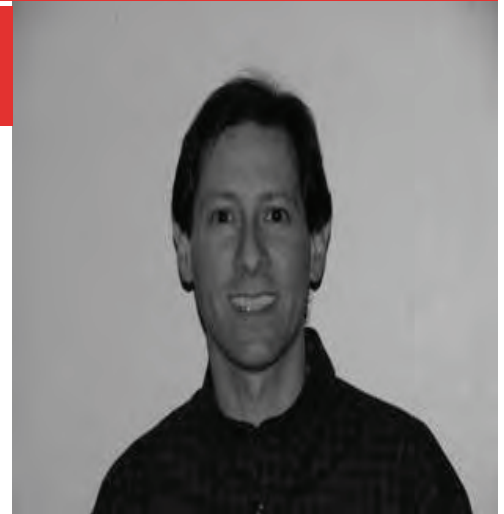
By Mike Goldberg, Attorney at Law

When you sustain an injury at work

When you sustain an injury at work, the first thing you want to do is rush out to your doctor to receive medical care. The problem with what you would normally do compared to what you have to do in a work situation is different. While you can go to whatever doctor you want even if you are hurt at work, you simply must understand that you are going to have to pay for any medical care that is not approved of by the employer or their insurance company. So what you say, you will simply submit it to your personal health insurance to pay. You can try that but the chances are that unless you deny you got hurt at work, your regular insurance is going to deny payment when presented by the doctor. That is because your personal health insurance has language in the policy that excludes any claim that they believe is work related. You may think that the bills are going to be paid and there may even be an initial payment by your health insurance company but as soon as they review the matter and discover that you may have been hurt at work, they will seek reimbursement for any payments made on your behalf.

What happens after you try and submit the bills to your health insurance company for a work condition? You will be expected to pay the bill yourself. You may think that is not fair but there are rules you are required to follow in regard to seeking medical treat-

ment for a work related injury. The first rule you must follow if you do not want to get stuck with a big medical bill is that you must get the permission of the employer/insurer to seek medical care. The employer will normally have a certain company doctor that they will authorize. While you and I know that the doctor is probably being selected because he/she is the cheapest one the employer can find, you still must go through the process. I understand that you may have doubts as to the interests and the qualifications of the doctor the employer selects but if you want to save yourself potentially thousands of dollars, you will follow the rules. You will probably have an option at some point of your treatment, especially if it is denied to seek medical care from your own doctor and have it paid for by your health



Mike C. Goldberg

insurance company or ultimately workers' compensation but you must play the game correctly. There are ways around these problems if you have gone through the process of seeking authorization from the employer.

It is a dangerous game to play to attempt to seek treatment on your own by claiming you did not get hurt at work even if you did. While you may get medical care taken care of under your health insurance, you must remember that you are not going to get any additional benefits under workers' compensation. Your problem will be listed as personal and you will have additional issues regarding attendance and work restrictions. Trying to then come back later and change the story to make it work related will only cause more problems. My suggestion is to not try and manipulate the system but to simply follow the rules even as limited as they are here in Missouri. Do not put yourself in financial difficulty by ignoring this advice and doing simply what you want.

Freeman-Kortkamp Award 2008 Honoring Mr. John Ebeling

John Ebeling has had a long and rewarding volunteer career. His involvement with United Way of Greater St. Louis began in 1977 through his relationships with Bob Kelley and Bob Kortkamp. Ebeling has served on the board of directors for United Way for 31 years. He has also been on the finance committee and serves as a labor liaison.

Ebeling's volunteering began long before his involvement with United Way. As a child he volunteered at the Mary Ryder Home, which his Great Aunt Mary Elizabeth Ryder founded with other concerned St. Louisans in 1930 as a place to provide shelter to indigent women. The Mary Ryder Home has been a United Way funded agency since 1955. Ebeling served as president of its board from 1988-2004. During his leadership, the Mary Ryder Home

was able to raise the funds to build its current location on Olive Street in the Central West End.

"From the beginning, " Ebeling said, "I have been so impressed with our United Way board members who give so much of their time, especially those in leadership roles. Each year the campaign chair does an increasingly better job, and they are impressive role models. You think you're busy until you see one of the chairs go to work organizing a big campaign."

When asked about his time involved with United Way, Ebeling respectfully gave the credit right back to the other board members involved.

For 32 years Ebeling has been President of the St. Louis Typographical Union #8/CWA 14616 Ebeling was married for 43 years (now widowed), has five children and 17 grandchildren.

Other honors include:

- St. Louis Labor Council Andy Owens Community Achievement Award – 1998
- St. Louis Labor Council, AFL_CIO, first vice president
- St Louis Allied Printing Trades Council, president
- Missouri State Allied Printing Trades Council, president
- CWA Printing Sector George P. McDonald Award for Outstanding Union Service – 2005

The Freeman_Kortkamp award honors outstanding service and performance of a United Way of Greater St. Louis Board member.

At the Meeting February 13, 2008

By Debbie Williams, Secretary

Motion made and seconded to send two to the AT&T Bargaining unit meeting March 19-20, in Oklahoma City., EVP Mehringer is running for a position on the bargaining committee and the election will take place at this time. Motion Carried

Motion made and seconded to send Legislative committee and any e board member interested in attending to the Missouri Legislative Conference March 30 – April 2 in Jefferson City. Motion Carried.

Motion made and seconded to send two to the National legislative conference April 6-9, in Washington DC. Conference fee 110.00 plus 80.00 for congressional reception, room 236.00 per night. Motion Carried.

Motion made and seconded to purchase an ad in the Tri-County Labor Club's Dance Ad Program book, full Page for \$125.00. Motion Carried

Motion made and seconded to purchase two tickets, cost \$125.00 each for the Andy Owens Community Services Award dinner. Recipient this year is Stephen Schoemehl, Business Manager of IBEW Local 1. Motion Carried.

Motion made and seconded to send two COE Committee members to the Civil Right and Equity Conference April 9-12 in Washington, DC. Motion Carried.

Motion made and seconded to review the policy of removing stewards if they accept a PIN to look for management positions. Motion Defeated.



"Here's a suggestion that has some merit, sir. Should I throw it out?"

Good and Welfare

Retirements

- Marla Bumpers - 27yrs
- George Gholston - 20yrs
- Walter Harris - 29yrs
- Lenord Raney - 30yrs
- Deborah Wheeler - 26 yrs
- Dale R Woodson - 31yrs

Deaths

- M. Creech - Grandmother
- L. Dillingham-Phipps - Uncle
- Charlotte Douglas - Sister
- Brian Ebert - Father in law
- Ray Fitzjerald - Member
- S. Frey - Aunt
- Joyce Green - Sister
- Chasity Harris - Brother in law
- Debra Johnson - Sister
- Patricia Laustrup - Father in law
- Ed Keller - member
- Linda Mance - Sister
- Linda Minter - Sister
- L. Starks - Father in law
- Paula Storzer - Uncle
- P. Tucker - Aunt
- Barry Vandiver - Mother
- Deb Wheeler - Mother
- Debra Williams - Father

Disability

Robert sanders

Think Before you Ink!

CWA is partnering with Jobs with Justice to take action against an anti-civil right ballot imitative.

Ward Connerly, a rich California business man has been aggressively pushing an amendment to end affirmative action. This Constitutional amendment would end programs that level the playing field for women and minorities, which have allowed better access to public employment and public contracts. Be advised that his paid petitioners will be on the street claiming to end inequalities when the real aim is to end affirmative action. If you encounter or witness any "anti-affirmative action" petitioners, decline to sign and call 1-877-644-0466 to report them.

Why we are opposing this initiative. It's about Justice!

Affirmative action programs have lifted barriers faced by women, African Americans, Latinos and other ethnic minorities, giving them equal access to higher education, jobs and public contracts. This initiative seeks to reverse the progress we have made for minorities.

It's about making us stronger and diverse.

Affirmative action polices make sure

that women and minorities get real opportunities to make our communities and work places stronger and more diverse.

It's about protection our elections and our Constitution.

When outsiders come in and try to impose their agenda on Missourians, something is very wrong. Connerly is in Missouri trying to amend our Constitution for his own political purposes.

It's about turning back paid political operatives.

The so call "Civil Rights Initiative" will have to rely upon dozens of paid petitioners locally and outside of Missouri. They aggressively push to get signatures so they can get paid more money. That's not how Missouri voters should amend our Constitution!

What you can do:

Volunteer for "Decline to Sign."

Join hundreds of activists in working to prevent Ward Connerly from gathering the signatures needed to put this initiative on the November 2008 ballot. For more information call 1-877-644-0466.

Premise Techs ...the future of AT&T

AT&T recently rolled out U-Verse services in the Saint Louis market area and to date has hired approximately 150 permanent CWA members. AT&T plans to hire additional technicians in 2009. We would first like to welcome the new members into our CWA family. We have noticed that many of them are related to CWA members. Like any other new employee, we need to embrace them and do everything that we can to assist them in their new careers.

With the hiring of the premise techs, many current members feel that this threatens their future with the company as well as their wages because of the scale in which the premise techs are paid. To remove this threat, we need to do everything we can in the upcoming 2009 bargaining to ensure that they are paid at a comparable wage scale of AT&T technicians with the same benefits of every CWA technician.

It has always been our goal as a union to ensure a prosperous and safe work environment for all of our members. As it has been with new titles, it is our intention to address the deficiencies that were bargained into the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) that added this new title to our contract. As many of you have heard there are many issues that need to be corrected. Our goal is to address these items in the upcoming contract bargaining in 2009.

In closing, we extend our hands to our newest members and we wish you much success. To our brothers and sisters that work side by side with the new techs use your skills and expertise to help them succeed. And together we will fight to improve their quality of life in which current AT&T technicians are accustomed too.

Darryl Ivy
Chief Steward

Classes forming NOW...

CWA Local 6310 - DC/AC Circuits Analysis

How This Helps Your Career... In this course, you will learn the fundamental concepts underlying the entire spectrum of electronics. The knowledge you acquire may provide a quick path for career advancement, or even "Top Craft" pay rate. Enjoy the satisfaction of understanding the electronic world around you while you build your skill sets—become a part of the electronics revolution!

Course Description... Electronics impacts nearly every facet of our lives. Discover and explore this exciting world with Electronics for Telecommunications. This course also includes fundamental digital electronics and troubleshooting.

Objectives... You'll gain a workable understanding of the following concepts associated with electronics and telecommunications:

Class Structure... This class is a blended course that will incorporate on-site instructor lead training with additional on-line support. Class will meet at Local 6320 for 16 weeks. 5 college credits awarded.

- Electronic systems
- Measuring electricity
- Types of circuits
- Alternating current
- Semiconductors
- Digital electronics
- Microprocessors and computers
- Electricity in wireless telecom

Get Started Now... Contact Darryl Ivy at Local 6320. (314) 494.2060 or at di0271@cwalocal6320.com to get you name on the list.

*Seniority or date of hire not a factor in enrolling. All welcome, we will add sections as needed.

Local 6310 Scholarship Info

Local 6310 will offer college scholarships to six persons this year (active members, spouses and dependent children are eligible). The amount to be offered is \$1,000.

Eligibility requirements are:

1. All active dues-paying members, their spouses and their dependent children (graduating high school seniors or currently enrolled full-time with a minimum of 12 credit hours in a trade or technical school or college) are eligible.
 2. Limit of one entry per student.
 3. Limit of one scholarship per family.
 4. Previous winners not eligible.
 5. Money will be held in trust at the school or college of the winner's choice. A total of six scholarships will be offered. Each scholarship will be valued at \$1,000.
 6. Winning applicants must respond within 30 days, after receiving award letter.
 7. Scholarships won will be for the fall 2008 spring 2009 semesters only.
 8. Scholarships will be awarded to person named on application only.
 9. Scholarships will be awarded to alternates in the event that winners are ineligible to accept
- Winners will be selected by drawing at the June 2008 membership meeting.



Fill out this official entry form and return to:

Attn: Debbie Williams, Secretary
 2258 Grissom Dr
 St. Louis Mo 63116



Local 6310 College Scholarships Official Entry Blank

- I am an active dues-paying member of CWA Local 6310.
- I am a spouse or dependent child of a Local 6310 active dues-paying member (graduating high school senior or currently enrolled full-time with a minimum of 12 credit hours in a trade or technical school or college, in the fall or winter semester.)
- I have not previously received a scholarship from Local 6310.

APPLICANT INFORMATION

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ Zip _____

High School _____

College _____

MEMBER'S INFORMATION

Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

I am an active dues-paying member in good standing of the CWA Local 6310 and the above applicant is either myself or my child, either currently enrolled full-time with a minimum of 12 credit hours in a trade or technical school or college or graduating from high school in June 2008.

Member's Signature _____



Retirees' Corner

**FOR NEWS AND
UPDATES VISIT
US ON THE
WEB AT**

www.cwalocal6310.org

**Register for our
Forums to receive
Email updates!**



Greater St. Louis Retirees' Chapter Meeting
Monday, March 10, 2008
Graphic Communications Hall
105 Progress Parkway, Maryland Heights, MO

Meeting Time: 11:30 AM
Cost is: \$12/Person
(Guest Welcome)

Reservations are required! Please call Tony Hill (618) 541-9119, Bill Konecnik (636)225 -3174 or Mary Ostertag (618) 632-5456 by **Noon Thursday, before the meeting.**

Minutes from February 11th 2008:

- Due to inclement weather only 68 members and guest attended the meeting
- President Hill talked about two seminars he attended, one on voter registration and the other on anti-affirmative action. Bob Huss, President

local 6350, spoke on the Labor 2008 meeting he attended. Subjects were Universal Health Care and the Employee Free Choice Act. Both will be labor issues come November.

- Our next meeting will be March 10th 2008 Graphic Communications hall, 105Prospect Parkway, Maryland Heights, Mo. We will be voting on moving the retirees meeting to the new building for C.W.A Locals 6310 & 6320.
- If you havn't sent in your 2008 dues yet, please get them in, we have about 120 still out. Call Bill Konecnik at 636-225-3174 to get information or verify your status.

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