I would like to thank the members who took the time on a snowy January 8th to come out and vote in the special election for Business Agent. I would also like to thank the candidates for their interest in seeing Local 131 prosper. I’m sure you all join me in congratulating Steve and wishing both Tim and Randy well.

At the January 12th meeting the membership voted to increase the dues by $2 for all members that are not currently retired. The increase was needed to cover the $1 per capita increase from the UA as well as the other various per capita assessments Local 131 must pay to belong to the affiliations mandated by the UA Constitution and Local 131 By-Laws. The new rates take effect with the February dues payment.

Journeyman $30  Tradesmen $20
Apprentices $20  Residential $20

Since taking the office of Financial Secretary, I have noticed many members are 3 and more months behind on their dues. I have sent out letters to all members who are in danger of a reinstatement fee, members who already owe an R-fee and members who will be expelled by the end of January. Section 157 of the UA Constitution states “A member owing 3 months’ dues shall automatically be suspended from membership without notice of any kind. A suspended member is denied all rights and privileges and is not entitled to any monetary benefits.”

(continued page 3)
Office: 603-669-7516  
Cell: 603-486-9951  

- **Plumbing Seminars for 2005:**  
  February 7th, May 9th,  
  August 8th and November 7th.  
  *All seminars will start at 6:00 pm*

- **OSHA 10-hour training:**  
  Two Saturdays  
  March 12th and 19th / 8:00 am to 2:00 pm  
  Sign up by March 4th.  

- **UA Welding and Medical Gas Continuity sessions:**  
  Held the third Wednesday of each month at 6:00pm. Sign up in advance.  

- **UA Star Exams:** HVAC, Pipefitter and Plumber.  
  Study guides are available and the next exam date will be in May!  

- **State of Connecticut Licensing:** Plumbers and Pipefitters.  
  Study guides are available and testing is done in Springfield, MA.  

- **College on Demand and On-line courses** are available to all members interested in instructing Apprentice and Journeyman courses.  

---

**Office Odds & Ends**  
Mo Demers

It is at times like these that I am forced to remind ALL the membership of the IMPORTANCE of informing **Local Union 131** of changes in your personal data. This applies not only to address and phone number information, but most importantly, to the death of a member. It is crucial that you inform your families that they *must* contact this office to report your passing. For everything to go smoothly and for ALL your benefits to be processed correctly for your loved ones, it must be handled by us. Many beneficiaries have tried to contact the numerous pensions and other offices themselves. The result is that things get missed and payments are either delayed or overlooked altogether. I recently processed a claim for a widow whose husband had passed over 2 years ago! I got her the $2500 death benefit that she was entitled to, but what a regrettable shame that she waited so long! This week I discovered two more long passed members that were not reported to the UA.  

Please. You don’t want your loved ones to suffer the same. Make sure that your families know what to do. At the most difficult, saddest hour, the last thing they need is to be lost in a mess of business details. One phone call to Local Union 131 is all they need to do. That’s why we’re here - to serve our members AND their families.
Notices:

Deceased: Bertrand Boissonnault, Elroy Ekdahl, Clark W. Steere

Illness: Bob Wilder was recently admitted to Brigham’s & Women’s Hospital for an extended stay. Get Well Soon, Bob.

Notified Meeting: At the upcoming February meeting, nominations will be taken for one position on the Board of Trustees. This will be to fill the remaining term of the seat vacated by the election of Steve Lachance to Business Agent.

I am hopeful that members who are late on dues will be current and return to good standing. During the next month or two I will send letters and remind people in danger of an R-fee or expulsion. I hope not to have to continue monthly reminders for very long. Also we will be closing out the cash sheet at the end of every month and will no longer be able to back date dues. If on the first of the month you become over 3 months late you will be charged a reinstatement.

January 1st the new insurance cards went into effect. We will be utilizing the Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield Network. Members who are eligible for insurance should have received their new cards. If you haven’t, please call Insurance Programmers at (800) 446-8646.

If you are having problems with bills prior to January 1, 2005 in the HCVM Network, also contact Insurance Programmers. The Trustees are hopeful that the change in carriers and cost savings with BC/BS will alleviate the payment problems we have faced in the past.

It is important that I have the correct phone numbers to contact you and that you are available for work within 24 hours. Do not assume that the phone number we have on file is current and accurate. If I am unable to contact you, it will go down as a refused call. Each member is allowed only three refusals before losing their place on the out-of-work referral list.

You must be a member in “good standing” to maintain your position on the out-of-work list. That means you have to be current in your dues.

I would like to remind members that upon termination of employment, you should either report to the union hall in person or telephone to be placed on the out-of-work list. This will insure you’re available for work and put you on the referral list.

I believe that the membership needs to know this information because it is in our By-Laws and Constitution and I intend to follow them to be fair to all members.

Sincerely,
Steve Lachance