

## USWA Distance Learning Program



**By Irene Porras**

JobLink is now offering access to online courses. While Empire State College, part of the State University of New York system, offers a large number of courses through more traditional correspondence education modes, it is now expanding its course offerings on the worldwide web. Using a computer network for online course presentation is a new and challenging experience. Distance learning is for those

who because of work or home circumstances prefer a program that requires no classroom attendance or travel. Students study on their own, while regularly receiving guidance and support from a faculty advisor. They are able to take individual courses or pursue a degree. Empire allows students to add previously earned credits towards a degree.

Web courses require a modem and access to the Internet. You should also have word processing software so that you can create your written assignments off-line. As a student, you will be eligible to receive a VAX account, which will give you access to e-mail

to communicate with your classmates. You will also have access to online writing resources, libraries and academic databases.

Steelworkers are encouraged to take both Educational Planning 1 and 2 (2 credits each) as an introduction to the kind of independent learning involved in distance study. Students will develop study skills and communication skills, which are valuable in all learning situations. Many other courses are available such as Accounting 1, Personal Finance, Microcomputer Applications and

*(Continued on page 5)*

## Living Classroom Update

**By Tom Zmigrocki**

JobLink's Living Classroom has come a long way since it began on April 24th. The restoration of the former "crack house" on Olcott Avenue has progressed through several stages.

Tim Spanos' electrical class completed the first stage of the repairs. Next came Bob Seyforth with the framing, followed by the stair-building classes.

Now that the cold weather season has arrived, the heating and insulation people are working to complete their part of the restoration. Following the installation, the drywall will be added in the January class session.

These classes offer a unique opportunity for JobLink



*The Living Classroom (right) - Students frame a wall. (left) - The exterior still has a long way to go. The site is located at 4836 Olcott Avenue in East Chicago.*

students to gain real life experience in all aspects of the restoration.

As you can see from the above photos, there is still a great deal of work to be completed.

Any students, interested in

gaining construction experience, while helping "Christmas in April" make a difference in their community, should contact JobLink at 399-8136.



In cooperation with The School City of Hammond



**ISPAT INLAND INC.**

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Institute for Career Development



Local  
1010

**JobLink**  
Your link to lifelong learning



## From Diane's Desk

by Diane Lentz, JobLink Coordinator

## What would you attempt to do if you knew you could not fail?

Sometimes the biggest obstacle to success isn't real at all—it's only our imagined limitations. Somehow when looking at this phrase, it challenges all of us to look to the millenium as a time for re-evaluating ourselves and where we are in relation to our goals. This is something we all should do periodically, but New Year's Days, and milleniums seem to guide us in this direction.

I know that one of my challenges will be to look at JobLink and work with our subcommittee, Friends of JobLink, staff, Local 1010 members, the company and the union to ask this question: what should we do to continue meeting the needs of our participants while taking JobLink to a

higher plane? In this process of meeting new expectations, how can we each challenge ourselves to become the very best that we are capable of becoming?

Our primary mission is to assist our participants in overcoming obstacles so that success can be attained. That success might include earning a certificate in one of our new programs, learning a new computer skill, getting college credit, or achieving a new skill level that will open the door to a career opportunity. As we move together into the next millennium, we are linked to one another's success and failure. By overcoming our own obstacles we each become a stronger link and thus enable each other to move on to success.

**Special thanks** to Ed Soltys for his stained glass window donation. After completing a number of JobLink's stained glass classes taught by Char Gagnon, Ed designed and made a Welcome to JobLink window for JobLink's front door.

## ...Viewpoints...

### By Steve Wagner Local 1010 Representative

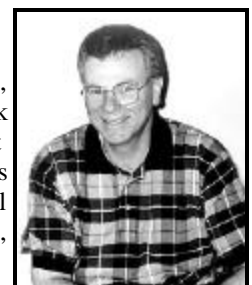
The Year 2000 and beyond provides challenges that will allow JobLink participants to engage in learning on a 24-hour basis. I believe that more learning will be available on computers. The Empire State Distance Learning Program mentioned in this issue is a good example of our expanding use of technology in education.

We, as program developers, must consistently stay informed of all current and future technologies to maximize educational opportunities for all future learners. I remember back nearly ten years ago that I was asked, "What is the target level of JobLink participation for Local 1010?" My answer is the same today as it was then- 100%. We must constantly maintain two-way communication with our 1010 members to insure that we are meeting everyone's needs in the new millennium.



### By J. Larry Rodimel ISPAT Inland Representative

January 1st is fast approaching, and soon it will be time again to think about New Years resolutions. But this is not just any old New Year; it is a new millennium. We have all heard enough about the millennium, and Y2K, and the like, to last us a lifetime (or maybe even a thousand years!), but there's at least one thing that bears repeating. If there is one word that best characterizes the past decade, it is **change**! Change in both our personal and our work lives. And from all indications, if it is possible, the rate of change is only going to continue to increase. So, from the standpoint of work, it behooves us to anticipate change, and to make a resolution that 2000 will be the year that we enroll in that JobLink class we have been thinking about - and putting off. It could be the difference between being ready for the future, and not!



### Editor's Note:

As the new editor of *Links*, I must thank all the *Links* staff for their efforts in the production of this special issue. *Links* is always in search of new talent, story ideas and contributing articles. Due to space restrictions, there is no guarantee that all submissions can be printed. Please email [wjbisn@inland.com](mailto:wjbisn@inland.com) or stop in at the Joblink office. J.B.



***Links*** is a publication of JobLink 2000

Student Staff: Irene Porras, Hollis Walker, Mickey Yelachich and Tom Zmigrocki.

Contributing Editors: Jon Bisnett and Marcia Taylor

# Y2K The Year of the Bug!



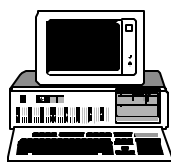
**By Tom Zmigrocki**

Man has waged war against bugs since biblical times. From plagues of locusts to the invasion of the Asian Longhorn Beetle, man has fought to protect himself from the ravages of the insect world. With the year 2000 almost upon us, we prepare to fight our most deadly foe, the "Millennium Bug". This invisible assassin is poised to strike, just as the new century begins, and it is impossible for us to be prepared for all its potential ramifications.

By now most people have prepared for the coming of Y2K and its possible effect on their lives. For those people who might not feel ready or who still have some questions we present the following questions and answers.

## **How can I tell if my computer is Y2K compliant?**

Most new computers purchased within the last 6 to 12 months are almost certain to be Y2K compliant. This is not written in stone. The only way to be sure is to test the computer and all hardware. There are several free Internet sites where you can download programs to test your computer hardware.



### **Y2K Resources on the Web:**

Viasoft OnMark 2000 Bios Test:

[www.onmark.viasoft.com](http://www.onmark.viasoft.com)

Ami2000.com:

[www.megatrends.com/y2k/](http://www.megatrends.com/y2k/)

Check 2000:

[www.gmt-uta.com](http://www.gmt-uta.com)

Microsoft:

[www.microsoft.com/y2k/](http://www.microsoft.com/y2k/)

## **My hardware checked out OK; is my computer ready for Y2K?**

Your computer is only half-ready for Y2K. Your software, operating system and BIOS all need to be checked. The best place to check your software is at the manufacturer's website. Updates and patches exist for all major software programs. Be sure to have the proper title and version number for your software.

Example: Microsoft Works ver. 4.5a for Windows 95.

## **I don't have Internet access; can I get my computer checked for Y2K?**

There are several good programs available on CD that will test for and correct Y2K problems on your computer. Network Associates and Symantec are two of the best-known companies and both offer complete diagnostic suites to deal with the Y2K problem. Microsoft offers a year 2000 resource CD that contains software updates for all of their programs and operating systems. You can order the CD by calling 1-888-MSFT-Y2K. Most of the major software manufacturers have updates and patches that they will gladly send to those who have registered their software. Check the documentation that came with your programs for technical support.

## **I don't own a computer; am I safe from the Millennium Bug?**

The Millennium Bug in some way may affect almost everyone. Most of the effects that we may feel might be more of a nuisance than an actual physical threat. Be prepared to possibly experience delays and interruptions in services that we normally take for granted. Some products may be harder to get, especially those from other countries that are not as well prepared for Y2K.

## **What can I do to protect my home and family?**

Use a common sense approach to safeguarding your home! Be prepared for any interruption of power and other utilities. Keep a supply of candles, matches, flashlights and batteries on hand. Have an alternate method of preparing food. Keep a few extra blankets and warm clothes. Maintain a supply of bottled water and non-perishable foods. Keep some extra cash on hand for emergencies. Fill all prescriptions, especially those needed on a daily basis. Make copies of all-important papers especially bank statements, utilities, credit cards, house and car payments, insurance policies and any other bills you pay on a regular basis.

The American Red Cross has developed a comprehensive plan to help people beat the bug!



**Red Cross**

[www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org)

**American**

**American Red Cross of Northwest Indiana**

**219-756-5360**

# Y2K and the Three Bears

(A modern fairy-tale)

**T**was the night before New Years 2000, and all through the Bears' house not a creature was stirring except for a bug using a mouse. Out in the driveway, the Three Bears had just returned from a Millennium party given by their good friend Goldilocks. "Look", cried Baby Bear, "There is a light on in the house!" They sprang from their car and rushed in to see what was the matter. What to their wondrous eyes did appear but the Y2K bug drinking a beer. He spoke not a word but was busy at work, typing and clicking and doing his worst. When he finished his work he gave them a wink and quickly departed down the kitchen sink.

Papa Bear roared; he was not very happy. "O why, O why do things like this always happen to me?" he cried. Then he remembered he had nothing to fear. He had bought Y2K insurance just last year. Thank goodness I'm a survivor; I am prepared for the worst. I have stored and I have hoarded, I've plotted and planned now my family and I am safe in this land! Let the little bug do his worst, he thought to himself. A feeling of deep satisfaction came over Papa Bear and he gave a low growl of contentment.

Mama Bear thought, then shivered and cried. She wasn't as brave as Papa and besides it was her womanly right. Then through her tears her resolve started to grow. The more she thought about it, the stronger she became. "Nothing or no one is going to hurt my family," she growled. The strongest of all forces in the universe - a mother's love - grew and expanded until it protected her family. Mother Bear smiled and felt at peace with the world.

Baby Bear laughed, giggled and cooed. He couldn't understand what all the fuss was about. What's the big deal about a little bug anyway? Why do grownups have to make such a big deal out of everything? Can't they just have fun! Life is just too short to be serious all the time. Little Bear, who hadn't yet developed his parents fears and anxieties, said good night and went sleep in the bed he had gotten from his Godmother Goldilocks. Safe within the innocence of his youth, Baby Bear slept soundly while visions of Y2K toys danced through his head.

May the New Year find you all sleeping peacefully and dreaming of the great things to come in the next Millennium! Ready or not here it comes!

Tom Zmigrocki

**If the worst happens...**

**You'll want a good supply of**

**"Millennium Cookies"**

(Cinnamon Coated Cookies)

Preheat oven to 375° F.

Grease 2 baking sheets.

Cream ½ cup butter & 1 cup sugar & 1 teaspoon vanilla extract.

Beat in 2 eggs & ¼ cup milk.

Sift 3 cups all purpose flour &

1 teaspoon baking soda.

Stir in ½ cup chopped walnuts.

Chill for 15 minutes, then roll into balls.

Roll the balls in a 50/50 mixture of sugar & cinnamon.

Bake for 10 minutes, then cool.

Serving suggestion:

Garnish with zest for life.

Add pinch of hope.

Blend in a cup of kindness.

Stir in a dash of longevity.

Sprinkle with well being.

Divide all blessings.

Share with loved ones.

for a prosperous New Year!

*Special thanks to John Gonzalez.*

## Did you know???

If your VCR does not function on January 1, 2000,

Try setting the clock and date to display January 1, 1972.

This occurs because identical calendar years repeat on a 28-year cycle.

## Wacky Y2K Products:

Real ads for actual retail products

- 🐞 **M&M's** - Official Candy of the Millennium Collectible Box \$3.50 (Foil covered cardboard contains only 12 ounces - Series of 4)
- 🐞 **Y2K Firewood** - Guaranteed to Burn Jan. 1, 2000
- 🐞 **Y2K Garden Kit** - 48 varieties of seeds \$149
- 🐞 **Millennium Edition Humidor** \$499
- 🐞 **Dehydrated Water Packets** - Just add water!
- 🐞 **Y2K Bug Spray** \$9.95



January 1, 2000  
Re: Vacation Pay

Our records indicate that you have not used any vacation time over the past 100 year(s). As I'm sure you are aware, employees are granted 3 weeks of paid leave per year or pay in lieu of time off. One additional week is granted for every 5 years of service.

Please either take 9,400 days off work or notify our office and your next pay check will reflect payment of \$ 8,277,432.22 which will include all pay and interest for the past 1,200 months.

Sincerely,  
Automated Payroll Processing



# There's a MOUS in the House

By Jon Bisnett

Microsoft Office User Specialist certification is the only recognized standard for assessment of skills with the Microsoft Office suite of business applications.

JobLink will present two MOUS prep courses in the March session. MS Word and MS Excel "Proficient Level" classes will be offered.

Students should be prepared for the fast-paced curriculum and be willing

to spend substantial at-home study time.

These courses are *not* for the "faint of heart". Students who possess the willingness to work and study hard in and out of the classroom will have an opportunity to prove their skills at a Microsoft Certified Testing Facility.

The MOUS certification can serve as a strong attribute for career advancement.

## Staff News

### Who's Doing What At JobLink?

By Hollis Walker

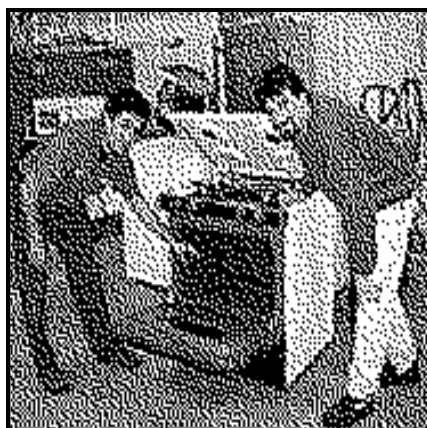
Since age 16 Roland Alvarez has been repairing appliances.

As JobLink's newest instructor, he brings his years of experience to the Major Appliance Repair class.

Roland was born in Texas and moved to Hammond 10 years ago with his wife and children. An avid sports fan, who played baseball in high school, he now gets most of his exercise from wrestling with washers, dryers, stoves and refrigerators.

As Roland says, "These are the big-ticket items that are worth the investment, as opposed to smaller items which cost more to repair than to replace." His start in the appliance business came as a helper to a friend of his family. He is now the owner of Appliance Discount Service in Hammond.

Roland has been an instructor for many of the local steel mills' career development programs. He enjoys



Roland Alvarez (left) instructs a student in the maintenance of a natural gas oven.

the atmosphere at JobLink and appreciates the students' willingness to learn all they can.

The class began in September and concentrates on the large appliances.

Stop in to welcome Roland or better yet sign-up for the next session of Major Appliance Repair.

(Empire State College Online from continued from p. 1)

College Writing.

ESC invites you to join them as they expand the learning experience through computer network technology. All active 1010 employees are encouraged to take advantage of the benefit. Students must register with JobLink first

before taking the courseware.

REGISTRATION FOR THE SPRING 2000 TERM IS IN PROGRESS NOW THROUGH JANUARY 14, 2000.

For further information, contact Diane Lentz or access the Empire

## Making the Grade!



Congratulations... to JobLink's first successful graduates of the Computer Technology Industry Association's A+ Certification Exam.

Mike Mysliwiec Jeff Moore  
Bill Robinson Earl Gronek

## Is Distance Learning Right for You?

By Irene Porras

Electronic and correspondence learning may sound like easy street, but distance learning requires lots of hard work. Consider the pros and cons before you take the first step.

### The Benefits:

- Earn a degree
- Enjoy flexible hours
- Prepare towards a career
- Learn at your own pace
- Choose delivery of lessons
- Work with a structured program
- Access faculty easily

### The Requirements:

- Self - motivation
- Lots of concentrated reading
- A distraction free environment
- Disciplined study
- Minimum of 10 hours of study per week for a 4 credit course

Technology can offer considerable promise in addressing the special concerns for those who wish to improve their knowledge, but do not have access to traditional programs.

## Reminder! JobLink Registration Policy



Visit the JobLink office, in person to register for all classes, on-site or off, **before** starting any class.

If you need information call **399-8136**.



## JobLink 2000

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Chris Balzer	[Plt. 4 Maint.]
Chuck Canty	[MHS]
Jesse Flores	[Plt. 4 Maint.]
Mike Florey	[Field Services.]
Brian Graska	[MMD]
Bob Guevara	[Plt. 1 Galv.]
Julian Gonzalez	[MHS]
Javier Guerrero	[Fab + Reclaim]
Jennifer Jones	[Utilities -Power]
Kenny Jones	[Shop Services]
Charlie Kestner	[Shop Services]
Herman Loyd	[Int Log\Oper Yd]
Jesse Martinez	[2A\21" Mill]
Roy Moss	[Shop Services]
Gail Richardson	[3 Cold Strip]
Bill Robinson	[Process Auto]
Phillip Rodriguez	[3 Cold Strip]
Wayne Shinkle	[2A\21" Mill]
John Shultz	[Maint.]
Don Simac	[MMD]
Bob Smiley	[MHS]
Ed Soltys	[MHS]
Gene Sufana	[MMD]
John Sumichrast	[76" Hot Strip]
Armando Valenzuela	[Galvanized]
Tom Zmigrocki	[Shop Services]

## JobLink Subcommittee:

Diane Lentz, Larry Rodimel, Steve Wagner

Visit JobLink on the Web: [www.joblink2000.org](http://www.joblink2000.org)

## Learning to Learn

with Marcia L. Taylor

### The Need for Speed

Interested in speed reading? One skill that lets you blaze through reading material is **scanning**. Scanning is a type of reading skill that is often used when you need to find specific information. You probably use it when you look up a word in the dictionary, a program in the TV guide, or a telephone number in a directory. But do you use it when you are using your computer?

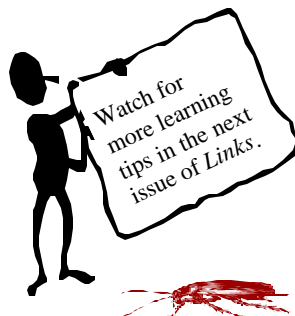
Do your eyes scan the monitor rapidly finding the



function you need? Do you use it successfully when you need to find a specific piece of

information in a manual or from the newspaper?

If not, go over the following tips and take the mini-quiz.



### Follow these steps:

Focus only on the information you need.

Block out everything else you see.

Don't get distracted by other information.

Run your eyes down the center of a text

Use your index finger to help you keep your place.  
(Use your mouse to keep place on your computer.)

Now...Try it out!

Check the second hand on your watch,  
and then **scan** this newsletter for the following:

What does MOUS stand for?	___seconds
Where was Roland born?	___seconds
Who are the Links student staff?	___seconds
Count the "bugs" in this issue.	___seconds

Compare your results:

50 seconds or less - You're an expert!

1 ½ minutes - Okay. Keep improving this skill.

2 minutes or more - Better get more practice!