



Scholarships

Joe Beirne Scholarship Information

Applications will be accepted between November 2003 and March 31, 2004, the final deadline. Early submission is encouraged. The winners will be chosen by lottery. (Web Only) <http://cwa-union.org/members/beirne/index.asp>

Roberta B Mervine Scholarship Fund

Call or email the local office if you want a scholarship form sent to you for the 2004-2005 school year.

We are going to need your support with fund raisers to keep the scholarship fund going. If you have any ideas, contact Donna or Denise. We will be announcing activities in the next few months.

Dates to Remember

Membership meetings

03-09	Combined north/south in Bowie	6:30 PM
04-05	Northern Area	
04-06	Southern Area	

Other Meetings

02-24	Executive Board meeting	1:00 PM
03-25	Executive Board meeting	TBA
03-25	Stewards Meeting	6:30 PM
04-27	Executive Board meeting	TBA

Other

02-24	Blood Drive in LaPlata	
03-16	Deadline for newsletter articles	
03-28 thru 03-31	Legislative Conference	
04-21 thru 04-23	District 2 Conference	
04-28	Deadline for newsletter articles	

Get Well to:

Gregg Green recovering from an illness
Darlene Holt recovering from surgery

Sympathies to:

Pam Boulter on the death of her grandmother
Kevin Pickens on the death of his mother
Karen Ward on the death of her husband

Community Service

The CSC made \$135.00 from the bake sale at Riva Rd Thanks to everyone for making it a success. We are taking orders for daffodoils for the American Cancer Society. If you would like to place an order call the hall. Leave Donna a message. Look for the next fund raiser from Current, Inc.

DOL Cites Verizon With FMLA Violations

by Denise Burns

Vicky Kinter, CWA/Verizon Health Care Coordinator District 13, sends us a big win in the battle of "ineligibility for work hours", the 1250 hour rule for certified chronic illness. The company has stated it does not recognize the opinion letter put out on September 11, 2000 by T. Michael Kerr, Administrator, US DOL, Employment Standards, Wage and Hour Division.

Language that is included in the opinion letter about the 1250 hour rule:

The following three examples will help to illustrate how an employee's eligibility is determined by FMLA's 1,250-hour test:

1. Assume an employee is diagnosed with an FMLA-qualifying chronic condition, such as MS, that results in an employee needing intermittent leave due to the episodic nature of the condition. For example, if an employee with MS who was eligible to take intermittent FMLA leave in April and May needed leave again when the episodes of incapacity recurred in July and again in October, the employee would be entitled to FMLA leave without having to re-qualify under the 1,250-hour eligibility test so long as the absences occurred within the same 12-month period and the employee had not exhausted the 12-week leave entitlement for this or any other FMLA-qualifying reason. If the employee needed leave for MS again in a new 12-month period, the employee would have to re-qualify under the 1,250-hour eligibility test to be entitled to take FMLA leave for the same chronic condition in the new 12-month period.

2. Assume the same facts as in the first example and, in addition, assume that the employee requests FMLA leave for up to six weeks for another serious health

condition that requires major surgery and a subsequent period of recovery (e.g., a hysterectomy). If, at the time of this second and different FMLA-qualifying circumstance, the employee met the 1,250-hour eligibility test, the employee would be entitled to FMLA leave for *that* (i.e., second) reason. In addition, the employee would also continue to be eligible for intermittent FMLA leave for the chronic serious health condition (i.e., MS) for the remainder of the current 12-month period or until the 12-week leave entitlement has been exhausted.

3. Assume the same facts as in the second example except, at the time of the second and different FMLA-qualifying circumstance; the employee does not meet the 1,250-hour eligibility test. In this situation, the employee would not be entitled to FMLA leave for *that* (i.e., second) reason. Thus, it is possible that an employee could remain eligible for leave for one FMLA-qualifying reason for which prior notice had been given when the employee met the 1,250-hour test (i.e., MS), but not be eligible for FMLA leave for a different FMLA-qualifying reason (i.e., surgery and recovery), due to the 1,250-hour test being re-calculated at the **commencement** of the subsequent and separate need for leave.

If you receive an ineligibility letter from ARC for an FMLA absence that fits under the 1250 hour chronic illness rule appeal the decision. Stewards and our website will have a sample letter you should use for the appeal. You should also be filing a complaint with the DOL.

If you need assistance or have questions please call the local office.

CWA Endorses Kerry for President

from the National

Sen. John Kerry is promising to make workers' rights, job creation, fair trade and health care reform some of his top priorities if elected president, and CWA is pledging to help him do it.

On Jan. 30, CWA became the first major union to endorse the Massachusetts senator for the Democratic presidential nomination.

"I'm thrilled to have the endorsement of CWA, and I know that your grassroots effort and your energy will make a big difference."

Bahr urged Kerry to keep health care reform on the front burner, noting that the threat of health care concessions is looming in upcoming talks with SBC and has been a central issue in many labor disputes. "This is the most contentious issue in collective bargaining today, and it's the biggest human problem in America," Bahr said.

A health care program "is the first bill that I will be presenting to the Congress when I'm president," Kerry said.

Bahr told reporters how Kerry recently stood up for CWA members by pressing for coverage of airline passenger agents under federal air rage legislation, and in sponsoring a bill to let the public know where call center workers are located to try to discourage overseas outsourcing.

VERIZON CONTRACT

The Company has notified the Union that the contracts should be printed and ready for delivery sometime in March.

Cingular to Acquire AT&T Wireless

Just Closed Dobson Deal

Cingular Wireless has announced an agreement to acquire AT&T Wireless in an all cash deal of about \$41 billion at \$15 per share of AT&T stock, creating the number one wireless carrier in the U.S.

The venture must still be approved by AT&T Wireless shareholders and federal regulators and is subject to other normal closing conditions. The deal is expected to be completed as soon as late 2004.

AT&T Wireless representatives were contacted for this article but we have yet to heard from them. It is not known at this time how many employees or properties are

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«first» «last» «suff»
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President's Point of View.....

Denise Burns

By now I am sure you have heard of the fight the UFCW is having with Safeway, Kroger and Albertson's major grocery chain in Southern California. 70,000 members are on strike to Hold the Line on Healthcare.

CWA across the nation is increasing their support in the community and monetarily. CWA has donated \$100,000 to assist the 70,000 strikers. In addition, CWA members and locals have made individual gifts to the United Food and Commercial Workers' strike fund. CWA has also joined other unions to walk picket lines and leaflet in support of the strikers in San Francisco, Portland, Seattle, Baltimore and Washington DC.

This is not just a fight for UFCW. Other Unions must join the fight to save healthcare. A Wall Street analyst said "Kroger, Albertson's and Safeway are setting the pattern (healthcare) for all negotiations across the country." "Their fight is our fight," CWA President Morton Bahr said. "The grocery chains are among many profitable companies that are slashing health benefits for working families across this country. There's no question that health care costs are rising,

but simply shifting more costs to workers does nothing to solve the problem. Today, too many workers have to choose between paying the lion's share of their health care coverage or feeding and housing their families, leaving them with no insurance at all. That's just unacceptable."

We are asking all members and their families to **NOT SHOP at Safeway stores in support of the strikers**. We have post cards that we want people to sign indicating they will not shop at Safeway in support of the strikers. These cards will be sent to the Metro Washington Council AFL-CIO to hold for the when the UFCW needs them.

What else can you do? You can keep updated by going to http://www.ufcw.org/hold_the_line/ or by sending a donation to: **UFCW Strike Hardship Fund**, Attn: Secretary-Treasurer Joe Hansen, 1775 K St. NW, Washington, D.C., 20006. or donate online through the AFL-CIO.

Today we say that when you pick a fight with any of us, you pick a fight with all of us! And that when you push us, we will push back.
Richard Trunka, secretary-treasurer, AFL-CIO, 10/26/95

Are you registered to vote?

If you aren't registered to vote in Maryland you will not be able to vote in the Primary Election on March 2, 2004. Registration will reopen on March 15. The last day to register before the General Election is October 12, 2004. The General Election is November 2, 2004.

To find out how to register you can visit the Maryland State Board of Elections website at <http://www.elections.state.md.us/> or call on 800 222-8683.

Are you interested in getting involved? Did you know that at election time there is a need for election judges and other volunteers? For more information on volunteering go to http://www.elections.state.md.us/citizens/county_boards.html. In our Verizon contract it is a paid excused absence if you serve as an election official. See Article 33, section 1, paragraph (c).

Are you aware of legislation affecting you and your family?

There are many websites you can visit to get information on bills, who sponsors them, where they stand in the process, etc. For Maryland go to <http://mlis.state.md.us/>, for the US House of Representatives go to <http://www.house.gov/>, and for the US Senate go to <http://www.senate.gov/>. To become more involved with legislation through the local you can join our Legislative Committee. CWA supports workers rights and stands behind working family legislation.

Do you participate in COPE? CWA-COPE is the political action committee for the working men and women of CWA, their families and retirees. CWA-COPE informs and mobilizes union families to encourage their participation in the political process. Through their political action committee, CWA men and women express their voice in politics and policy issues that affect their lives. (Continued next page)

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Funded by the voluntary contributions of CWA members, their family members and retirees, CWA-COPE provides financial contributions to worker-friendly candidates. CWA can only use voluntary dollars to contribute to an endorsed candidate for federal office. No union dues money of any kind can be given to a political candidate for federal office or national political party.

CWA-COPE also provides information to union families about the candidates and their positions on the issues affecting their lives. Decent health care, overtime pay, safe working conditions, family-friendly workplaces, retirement security, freedom to organize are among the concerns influenced by the political process.

CWA-COPE endorses candidates regardless of political party who supports working families.

Working families can never match the contributions of Corporate America or the wealthy. Together we can combine our financial and voluntary resources to make a real difference in hundreds of key elections at the federal, state and local level. CWA-COPE offers workers the power to gain the attention of lawmakers to their agenda.

To find out more about COPE visit: <http://www.cwa-cope.org/> To give to COPE please see your job steward or contact the Local.

(Cingular from page 1)

affected in the state of Maryland where CWA Local 2107 represents Cingular employees. It is possible that some AT&T Wireless workers will lose their jobs as Cingular consolidates networks, marketing etc. John D. Zeglis, Chairman and CEO of AT&T Wireless says **"For employees who become part of the combined company, this means more opportunities than they otherwise would have had with AT&T Wireless as a standalone company."**

Cingular also just closed on their acquisition of Dobson Communications with properties on the Eastern Shore and in Southern Maryland, where we will be picking up some members, and will welcome them to the Local very soon.

As Cingular Wireless continues to grow it will mean more members fighting for a good contract in February 2005 as well as a need for more stewards to help represent them.

FTTP and You

by Ray Pomeroy

Verizon's Fiber To The Premise (FTTP) project will be getting underway in Montgomery County in the near future and some of our members are likely to be involved. President Denise Burns and I attended a meeting on the subject at Local 2100 with Mike Hoover, the Director for construction in our area, as well as reps from Local's 2100 & 2105 who's members may also be affected.

The technology the company is using for FTTP is "passive" and limits the high tech electronics to the Central Office and the equipment used at the customer premise, which will be installed by I&M forces.

The construction phase will be basic line work and fiber splicing. A Backbone Fiber will be placed to "Fiber Distribution Hubs" (FDH) the same way any fiber is placed and spliced now. The "passive" part of the technology comes in at the FDH where the signal is split from 1 fiber off the backbone onto 32 fibers on the distribution side. This is not "Wave Division Multiplexing" where the light is separated out by wavelength, it is one wavelength going in 32 different directions.

The distribution side of the network will be done quite a bit differently. The details are still being worked out on many aspects of the project and engineering will be working on how the plant will be placed. What is known is that the distribution side won't have anyone (for the most part) pulling the fiber into a clean, air-conditioned/heated truck or trailer to splice it. It will be done in right of ways up poles in pedestals etc. under tents at best. It will be fiber splicing under copper conditions, often on ladders and possibly even on platforms.

We talked a little about how we would like to see the company get volunteers for the project and how they may go about assigning people to it. Everyone would like to see an all volunteer force but with the numbers that will be needed to get the project up and running it is almost inevitable that some people are going to be ...forced, for a lack of a better word.

Mr. Hoover has our ideas on the subject and we have his although it is too soon say we have anything concrete. We will keep you posted as we get more information, just be aware of exactly what kind of work you will be doing if you get involved.

Retirees Corner

by Patty Bowers, VP RMC

Local 2107's Retired Members Club met February 9, 2004 at 10 A.M. at the Union Hall. This was the second meeting of the year with new President Sonny Tucker. He is enthusiastic about giving retirees a voice concerning our pensions and health care.

We discussed active participation with the CWA retired members council and with the association of BellTel Retirees, Inc. as well as the following.

The mission statement of the club is to be able to take a strong and legitimate position, on behalf of all retirees of Local 2107, on issues concerning pensions, health insurance and any and all other benefits that were bargained for and that we are fully entitled to now and in the future.

Like our active union members, the Retiree Club's strength is in its numbers. Membership is the only way to let the company know we are here. Join to be counted and remember the company is counting.

Retirees: Mark Your Calendar!
Meeting dates for 2004 in Annapolis are: March 8, April 12, May 10; September 13, October 11, November 8. The December 13 meeting will be held at Pirates Cove in Galesville

There will be a speaker at every meeting discussing important issues. There will be luncheon meetings directly after the 10 A.M. business meetings in April, September and December.

Mike Vivirito will speak at the March 8 meeting on the retired member council. Helen Gibson has been invited to speak at the April luncheon meeting.

Southern Maryland members are trying to form their own 2107 retirees club and electing officers. This club will be officially known as the "CWA Retired Members Club of Southern Md., Local 2107". Future plans include northern and southern groups having at least one meeting a year together, probably the December 13 meeting at Pirates Cove, Galesville.

Any questions, please contact: Sonny Tucker at 410 798-1234, e-mail - Tuckair2@aol.com or Patty Bowers, 410 758-1969, e-mail - elise@dmv.com