



Campaign Donors Rep is Guest at Veto Ceremony

by Ray Pomeroy

In April the Maryland Legislature approved a bill, titled the Fair Share Health Care Act that would require all companies with more than 10,000 employees to spend at least 8 percent of their payroll on health care benefits or pay more into the state Medicaid fund; currently in Maryland, only Wal-Mart meets that criteria. It also would force nonprofit organizations of the same size to spend at least 6 percent of their payroll. Only Johns Hopkins University is large enough to qualify, and the institution already spends more than the required amount.

(see Erlich page 3)

Ethics Policy Not For Execs?

A member recently inquired as to whether working for Verizon and Verizon Wireless at the same time was a conflict of interest under the Code of Business Conduct. According to the ethics experts at Verizon, it is a conflict.

How is it then that Verizon Wireless CEO Denny Strigl is directly employed by Verizon? That change that was made recently in order to give Strigl better benefits than he had been receiving at Wireless.

Sign up to read about this and other Verizon shenanigans at www.unionvoice.org

Cavalier Bargaining line 866 900-2107

Local 2107 Loses a Member

Our condolences to the family of Mike Waldrop, a nineteen year member at the Laurel garage, who passed away on Monday May 16th at the age of 44.

Mike is survived by his wife Elaine, daughters Kristen and Jenna, son Shawn and his new granddaughter Madison.

Those of us who worked with Mike will never forget him or his antics. We have spent the last few days reminiscing about our time with Mike and he will be missed very much.



R.I.P.

Still Spending Your Money at Wal-Mart?

by Ray Pomeroy

Why? Low prices? When asked why they shop at Wal-Mart some of our members say "you can't beat them on price".

What if Verizon and Cingular customers only shopped on price? Where would we be? It costs a little more to shop Union for a reason, look at your check on payday and think about all the benefits you have to see what that reason is.

Does mainstream America shop at Verizon or Cingular because they are Union companies? For the majority the answer is probably no but they aren't shopping on price either. Our members however are not just mainstream Americans, they are Union members. One of the things we should all be doing is supporting other Union members and our communities. We should be standing up for the rights of workers who want to belong to Unions. We need to support the mom and pop stores that are the pillars of our communities.

Why shouldn't a Union member shop at Wal-Mart? Not because the workers aren't Union members but because the company is anti-Union. They go to great lengths to keep the Union out.

In early 2000, seven Wal-Mart meat cutters in Jacksonville, Texas voted to join the United Food and Commercial Workers. This was the first toe in the door for Unions anywhere in the Wal-Mart empire. Rather than allow this travesty Wal-Mart announced 11 days later that all in-store meat cutting at 700 super centers would cease and prepackaged meat would be sold instead. The meat cutters were then reassigned.

In February 2005 Wal-Mart said it was closing it's store in Jonquiere, Quebec, on May 6th in response to unreasonable demands from Union negotiators that would make it impossible for the store to sustain itself. Over three months the store had only met with the The United Food & Commercial Workers, Canada nine times! Wal-Mart subsequently snuck out in the night on April 29th and there are new allegations that the former long time vice-chairman of Wal-Mart condoned a slush fund to finance anti-union activities.

Wal-Mart would be, according to the AFL-CIO, the 18th largest economy in the world if it were a country, up from 22nd a year ago. Of the 10 richest people in the world, five are Waltons—the ruling family of the Wal-Mart empire. Yet state and local governments routinely dole out corporate welfare in the form of tax breaks and subsidies to get a Wal-Mart in their state or town.

That's not the only way your tax dollars are supporting Wal-Mart either.



According to the public relations ad campaign that Wal-Mart initiated in January 2005 it pays the average "associate" in Maryland \$9.60 an hour.

48% of Wal-Mart employees are covered by the company's health plan while 38% are covered by other means (spouse, parents insurance or plan from a previous job in the case of a retiree) and 14% have no coverage.

The employees who are eligible for healthcare must contribute 38% of the cost (the national average is 19%) and subsequently many don't subscribe to the plan. Guess what happens when those uncovered or under-covered people are sick. Medicaid, that you pay for, is picking up much of those costs.

How much do you suppose a 28 hour a week employee (what Wal-Mart considers full time) making \$9.60 an hour and paying 38% of their healthcare costs is spending on DSL and cellular service a month? I wouldn't think they have enough left over to pay for the luxuries we are selling. I would however think that these employees of a company whose tag line is "always low prices, always" are doing their shopping on price.

Wages that low mean low disposable income which hurt our communities. Healthcare that poor means we are subsidizing Wal-Marts healthcare plan.

What else happens when Wal-Mart comes to town? They start out with what appears to be a large advertising budget and predatory pricing that applies heavy pressure to local businesses that compete with them. For

(see Wal-Mart page 3)

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**President's Point of View.....**

*Denise Burns*

We've been extremely busy. We have sent stewards to advanced training. We have people scheduled to go to conferences or they have attended them already. In August we will be sending several stewards to leadership training.

We are working on our membership lists because at Verizon they have moved many members around and in Cingular they have hired people we haven't met yet. We are also bargaining a contract with Cavalier. The bargaining is not moving at a great pace and the company seems at a loss when it comes to the bargaining process. They will not allow their technicians to be off during company time so we meet on Sundays.

We have a steady flow of grievances. Vacation and SNEWD days seem to be a hot topic. Terminations are also happening in both Cingular and Verizon. We have been able to reduce suspensions or even lift them. At Verizon the vacation issue will be ongoing until the judge makes a decision. We are allowed at least 18% off for vacation. SNEWD days must be requested within 24 hours notice and there must be 80% of the workforce there. They can block up to four (4) SNEWD a month. If you are denied you should question why.

Article 41 for Verizon states the company must bargain with the Union over changes in working conditions, etc. We are asking you once again to be our eyes and ears. If Cingular or Verizon institutes new policies or changes existing ones please bring them to

our attention. We have found several violations at Verizon just recently. If you get copies of the policies get them to us.

We should not allow the companies to abuse the contracts or our members. When we see an injustice being done to one it will most likely continue on to another. We must stand up for each other. Be united in your work groups.

Verizon Wireless is still a hot topic. You can find out information about those issues at Unity@Verizon. We continue to try to organize them even though they have the anti-union mentality.

We resolved scheduling issues with the Construction FTTP splicers in Annapolis and Waldorf. The newest issue in FTTP is how they will handle overtime. Steve Holland, President Local 2100 and I have a meeting with Ralph Fleig scheduled on the issue.

We have to keep up with the legislative arena and who will be running for office. We have a governor race and a senate seat race that we need to watch. We need to elect politicians of any party that will fight for "working" family issues.

We are adding members to our safety committee and would like people from all our areas. If you are interested please call the local.

*"You are the ones who can say the word Solidarity. And call each other comrades. The oppressor can claim nothing-but his greed."* Mother Jones

**Early Results Encouraging For Attendance Pilots In Mid-Atlantic**

from Verizon (edited for length)

First-quarter attendance results were encouraging for pilot initiatives that were launched Jan. 1 by the Mid-Atlantic Joint Committee on Absence Control (JCAC). Midway through the six-month trial period, several of the pilot locations are seeing significant improvements in associate attendance.

The Consumer Sales & Service Center (CSSC) in Richmond, VA, was so pleased with its first-quarter results that on April 28th it issued a Certificate of Appreciation to every employee as part of a recognition day.

Each month during the first quarter the center saw its attendance improve on average by 40% year-over-year. For the quarter the center ran a 6.5% absence rate against an objec-

tive of 8.8%. "The pilot is working really well. Since it's been implemented, the office environment is much more positive and upbeat as relationships between supervisors and consultants and management and union have all improved," said Bonita Coins, an Administrative Team Leader who co-chairs a joint management-union committee that oversees the pilot. Coins credited two JCAC-developed initiatives – flexibility in granting excused time without pay for emergencies and flexibility in applying discipline under the Regional Attendance Plan (RAP) - as key reasons for the improvements, especially in reducing the average duration of incidental absences. And she noted that CCI's and sales

*(Continued on page 3)*

*(Wal-Mart from page 1)*

every 2 jobs they create the area loses 3. With local merchants losing customers to Wal-Mart and their "always low prices" (which isn't always true by the way) they start to apply downward pressure on the wages and benefits they pay and the ripple effect just continues.

Need more? There is much more information on the internet about this type of behavior from Wal-Mart, at sites such as:

www.wakeupwalwmrt.com  
www.walmartyrs.com  
www.wal-town.com  
www.walmartwatch.com  
www.walmartworkerslv.com

www.sprawl-busters.com  
www.nlcnet.org  
www.ufcw.org  
www.union-network.org

What can we do as unionists to stand up to Wal-Mart? Support those workers when they want to organize. Contact your representatives in government to protest a new store in your area. Write your congressman and your state legislators to support legislation that levels the playing field for anyone competing with Wal-Mart, talk to your friends and neighbors about what Wal-Mart is up to and above all STOP spending your money there.

*(Erlich from page 1)*

Governor Erlich, with Wal-Mart Chief Operating Officer Eduardo Castro-Wright by his side vetoed the bill May 19th in a ceremony in Somerset county, where Wal-Mart is planning a new distribution center.

Other states are also taking a look at laws that would force businesses like Wal-Mart to cover a larger share of their employees healthcare costs.

In New Jersey, Assemblyman Louis Greenwald introduced a bill that would require employers with more than 10,000 workers to increase the level of their health-

care coverage or pay an additional \$2.45 per worker hour into the state's Medicaid program. The target: Wal-Mart, which employs 12,000 people in New Jersey.

A bill has been introduced in Pennsylvania that would require companies with 20 or more employees to issue annual reports stating how many of them are receiving Medical Assistance. The bill is the first step, sponsors say, toward mandating that large companies pay their fair share of health-care costs.

"Wal-Mart is the most notorious abuser of Medical Assistance programs nationwide based on states that have done studies," said Rep. Mike Veon, a cosponsor of the bill.

*(Continued from page 2)*

have improved along with attendance. Other JCAC initiatives in use at the center are tour slides, doctors' appointment time and four-day work week.

Tawana Demery, a union steward and consultant who co-chairs the committee with Coins, agreed. "Flexibility is what's really making a difference. The atmosphere is more relaxed and I've noticed less stress among the consultants because management is more willing to work with them," she said. Pointing out that she's observed improvements in morale and performance, Demery said, "I'm very pleased the company and union could work this out jointly through a partnership. It's good for all of us."

The Hamilton CSSC in New Jersey and the Scranton CSSC in Pennsylvania also are experiencing better attendance as a result of JCAC pilot initiatives. In the first quarter, the Hamilton West team was the best performer in its district with an absence rate of 7.0%, about 20% better than its 8.8% objective. Among the JCAC-developed trial initiatives that the Hamilton West team feels are having

a positive impact are; increased flexibility to schedule doctors' appointments and flex tours that grant employees up to 30 minutes to extend lunch or leave early. The trial in Hamilton also involves flexibility in applying discipline under RAP, four-day work weeks and disease management services, a health and wellness initiative.

A variety of JCAC initiatives are being trialed, with a different approach being used at each location. The initiatives are categorized as follows: Wellness Appointment Policy, Sliding Tours, Changing the Culture, Joint Committees, Disease Management Services, VZ Life Services, Four-Day Work Week and Recognition. Also, a joint local committee was established at each location with a company and union JCAC representative teamed up and assigned to each

While the approach of the committees in Richmond, Hamilton and Scranton are all slightly different, each has active involvement of consultants to ensure that the right issues are identified and the best possible solutions are put in place. And the results thus far indicate the joint committee process

## Business Code of Conduct

A contract instructor at the Odenton, Maryland training center was recently released back to his parent company with instructions that he not be sent to any Verizon location to train. The instructor was alleged to have made a number of sexist remarks toward female trainees in the pole climbing program.

Page 12 of the Code covers this behavior and page one specifically states that in-house contractors are expected to abide by the Code.

Mark Balsamo of Local 2100 and Ray Pomeroy from 2107 met with the area manager that oversees the training center to discuss problems with the climbing program and the actions of the instructor in question, who had already been released when the company became aware of his actions.

During the meeting we discovered that the contractors are not covered on the Code and we requested that all current and future instructors be trained on it.

If you are aware or become aware of any contractor not abiding by the Code report it to management right away. It is our belief that at least some of the women who did not pass climbing school were discouraged from doing a "mans" job by the instructor.

is meeting with success, with each of the CSSC's reporting that morale has improved along with attendance.

"One of the key findings of our research was that good working relationships between all parties were in place at work locations which had good attendance," said Ron Collins, Administrative Assistant - CWA District 2, who co-chairs the JCAC with Stephenson. "I am very encouraged by reports that associates have been actively engaged through many of these committees. This is critical for the initiatives to work as it helps to ensure that all parties - management and union members - embrace the efforts of local committees"

## New Hires

Hey new guy or girl, you know who you are. We wear RED here on Thursday to show our unity and to show the company that we are behind the people that represent us. Why Thursday? Most of us get paid that day. If you can wake up Thursday and remember it's payday then you can remember to break out something red and put it on.

**Sympathies to:**

The family of Mike Waldrop, a member who recently passed away.

Laraine Haughton on the death of her father in law.

Penny Johns on the death of her mother-in-law.

**Congratulations to:**

Jay Seymour on the birth of his daughter.

Elaine Alexander on her marriage.

Mike Topolski on the birth of his son.

**Get Well to:**

Nicole Clark

**Community Services**

Thanks to everyone that donated or helped with the Blood Drive.

We had 28 good pints. Our next Blood Drive is August 11<sup>th</sup>.

\$200 was donated to the Juvenile Diabetes Foundation.

**Dates to Remember**

**Membership meetings**

6-13 Combined at the Colony South Hotel in Clinton 6:30 pm

**Other Meetings**

5-24 Executive Board 3:00 pm  
6-9 Cingular Working Relations 1:00 pm  
6-17 Presidents Meeting 10:30 am

**Other**

5-30 Memorial Day  
6-1 thru 6-3 Occupational Safety & Health Conference  
6-01 thru 6-3 Take Back America Conference  
6-20 Creative Memory Fund Raiser 5:30 pm  
6-21 Newsletter deadline  
7-04 Independence Day  
7-21 ILCA Workshops  
7-30 thru 8-05 CWA Local Leadership Conference

**Roberta B. Mervine Scholarship Fund**  
**deadline changed to May 30, 2005.**

Eligibility-dependent children (defined in contract) of Local 2107 members, (active, retired or deceased), age 25 or under. Must attend a properly accredited school. Call or e-mail the office to get your application.

The Home Interior Candle fundraiser was a success. We raised \$624 towards the Scholarship Fund. A big Thank You to all who helped support this cause!

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