



Welcome Our New "Blue Team" Members

by Ray Pomeroy

The Retail Sales employees of the former AT&T Wireless, now Cingular "Blue Team", in Maryland are the latest addition to CWA Local 2107. This adds approximately 130 members to our Local.

These members became ours on Monday September 19th and we are very happy to have them. The decision they made to join a Union increases their power in the workplace and strengthens the current Cingular members' position as well as everyone else's in CWA.

Lynette Snell, our full time organizer has been visiting these people explaining the benefits of being Union and working to get them to sign cards to join the Union

Cingular employees all over the country have been eager to join a Union and have been doing so by the thousands under the neutrality and card check policy of the company, compare that to Verizon who never honored their neutrality agreement.

The Cingular "Blue Team", formerly AT&T Wireless, technicians have also expressed an interest in Union representation and those workers will add another 20 to 30 to our membership.

We hope that some of these members as well as some of our existing ones are interested in being involved and active. The best people to represent you in the workplace is someone who is familiar with whatever it is that you do and is also familiar with the practices and policies of your workplace.

Cingular Wireless is the Unions choice of Wireless providers because they are a Union Company and because they do honor their agreements.

From Labor Relations

The Potomac volunteers assisting Bell South with Hurricane Katrina recovery will receive full meal allowances even if Bell South provides certain meals.

This adjustment to Article 28 is applicable only to the employees working on this special hurricane recovery effort.

Union Wins in Verizon Vacation Case

by Ray Pomeroy

In the 1998 Contract negotiations with Verizon, CWA gained a "17% rule" on scheduling vacation which was in the Memorandum Of Understanding (MOU) but did not appear in the General Agreement that the members get. The 17% was upgraded to 18% in the 2000 contract and appeared in the Letter of Understanding section. The agreement continues in the current 2003 agreement and currently reads;

This will confirm our understanding of August 3, 2003 that at least 18% of the employees in each vacation administrative work group shall be permitted to schedule off in a given week.



Where the application of the percentage specified above results in other than a whole number, the number yielded will be rounded up to the next whole number.

Regarding vacation availability during traditional fall hunting season and the December holiday season, management will make a

reasonable effort to consider the need for higher vacation availability.

Those work groups whose vacation availability is currently greater than the percentages specified above, will not be required to reduce their vacation scheduling availability.

From the outset Verizon has violated the agreement. They have alternately claimed that the rule only applies to the vacation scheduling process that our members go through at the beginning of each year, that the rule only applies to full weeks and finally that they are entitled to 24 hours or more notice when an employee requests a day. Depending on where you are you may have been subjected to one or more of these claims.

The Union processed a multitude of grievances on the issue which went before an Arbitrator in early 2000. The Arbitrator ruled in the Unions favor and issued the Opinion and Award on May 1, 2000.

The Opinion stated, in short, that the Company shall cease and desist from denying vacation or rescheduling of vacation when less than 17% of a workgroup is off. The award states "that there is nothing in the [MOU] that requires a specific time period

(see Win 3)

Help CWA Members Devastated by Hurricane Katrina

from the National

Many of our brothers and sisters have lost everything they own in the world - but they still have their union.

Through the CWA Disaster Relief Fund, you will have a tremendous impact on the lives of members and retirees who have been affected by the hurricane. Your valuable financial support will be given directly to CWA members and retirees trying to rebuild their lives - at a time when many have little to build on.

The CWA Disaster Relief Fund is chartered as a 501(c)(3) organization separate from CWA's operating funds. One hundred percent of your donation will go directly to CWA members and retirees.

Contributions are being accepted by credit

card over a secure website at https://secure.ga3.org/08/cwa_katrina_relief. Or send a check to CWA Disaster Relief Fund, c/o Janine Brown, 501 Third St., N.W., Washington, DC 20001-2797. Be sure and include your name address and local number for proper credit.

Verizon employees and retirees who contribute to the CWA Disaster Relief Fund are eligible to receive matching funds by using a form on the Verizon Foundation web page: https://secure.ga3.org/08/cwa_katrina_relief. After you register or sign in, you should find "Communications Workers of America Disaster Relief Fund, Tax ID: 5222128973." Fill out the form "Matching Incentive Program Coupon."

E-mail Addresses

President: Denise Burns
 dburns@cwa-2107.org
EVP: Ray Pomeroy
 rpomeroy@cwa-2107.org
Sec-Treas: Donna Blanchard
 dblanchard@cwa-2107.org
Northern VP: Al Schuitema
 aschuitema@cwa-2107.org
Southern VP: James Padgett
 jpadgett@cwa-2107.org
Cingular VP: Dutchin Webster
 Cingular@cwa-2107.org
Editor: Ray Pomeroy
 newsletter@cwa-2107.org
General Mailbox
 2107@cwa-2107.org



LOCAL 2107 NEWS
 Published Monthly By
Communications Workers
Of America
Local 2107

Affiliated with the AFL-CIO

Officers:
President-Denise Burns
Secretary/Treasurer-Donna Blanchard
Executive Vice President-Ray Pomeroy
Vice President South-James Padgett
Vice President North-Al Schuitema
Cingular VP-Dutchin Webster
Editor-Ray Pomeroy
Assistant Editor-Matt Dement

(ISSN 0890-8532) Periodical Postage
 Paid at Annapolis, MD. 21401
 Office Located at:
 2441 Holly Ave
 Annapolis MD 21401-3116
 Phone: 410-224-0166
 Fax: 410-224-0165

Postmaster, send changes to:
 Local 2107 NEWS
 2441 Holly Ave.
 Annapolis, MD. 21401-3116



President's Point of View.....

Denise Burns

It's been another busy month. Ray, Donna and I attended the 67th Annual CWA Convention in Chicago in August. At convention we elected our new International Officers, they are Larry Cohen-President, Barabara Easterling-Secretary-Treasurer and Jeff Rechenbach-Executive Vice President Morty Bahr, our president of twenty years has retired. He is going to stay active as a retiree. He has informed, Verizon's CEO, Ivan Sidenberg, that he will remain vigilant as a union organizer until Verizon Wireless is UN-ION.

This convention also elected Vice Presidents in each District. Pete Catucci remains our Vice President in District 2. Most of the Sector and District Vice Presidents were unopposed.

Convention is an important part of our Union. We, the delegates, vote on issues that affect us as a Union and as members. This year there were several appeals from members that we overturned so that they will be taken to arbitration. This is democracy in action.

I have attended several meetings since convention. All the Presidents met with Chris Creager and Dave Magnant. They presented us with the projection for FTTP. There were several issues brought to them about what really happens in the field.

Our CWA Local 2107 Retirees met at the local for their September meeting. We discussed their benefits and pensions. We can't

wait until 2008 for the retirees to get together to support their issues. Verizon will be coming for their benefits as well as the active employees' benefits. We have asked the members of the club that attended to reach out to others to either get them to join the club or educate them on what is at stake.

Our next big issue is going to be focusing on the next couple of elections to make sure that people that represent our issues are put into office. We will be doing voter registration drives and COPE drives. If you are interested in assisting with our Legislative Committee please call the local office to become involved.

We have added the Retail Sales, former AT&T, now Cingular folks in Maryland to our local. Lynette Snell is our full time organizer and she does a tremendous job. We are in the process of filing for the former AT&T technicians to our local as well. This is adding approximately 150 members to our local. We welcome them and hope to have some active members from their group become involved as stewards and on our committees. If you know of any potential groups wanting to be organized please let us know.

"With their faults, trade unions have done more for humanity than any other organization that ever existed. They have done more for decency, for honesty, for education, for the betterment of the race, for the development of character in man, than any other association of men." Clarence Darrow

Help Chart CWA's Future

What are we doing right? What could we do better? What needs updating? Your union wants to know.

"CWA: Ready for the Future," the first resolution adopted by delegates to the union's 67th annual convention, sets out an ambitious plan to gather the "collective wisdom" of all locals, members, staff and officers to build on what is already a strong, successful and diverse union.

Meetings at every level will take place between now and the end of March to "examine our union thoroughly and thoughtfully from top to bottom in order to best represent our members."

A discussion guide is being prepared at national headquarters. A website will allow further discussion and be a place for locals to

post their progress. The CWA Executive Board will draft a strategic plan based on the input by June 1, and will present it at the July 2006 convention in Las Vegas.

"We returned from convention running at full speed to take up the challenge of Resolution 1," CWA President Larry Cohen, Secretary-Treasurer Barbara Easterling and Executive Vice President Jeff Rechenbach said "We are excited about the future of our union and our potential to work together to face our challenges. Working together is our best hope, and we are all dedicated to working with you as we build CWA."

The resolution notes the transformation CWA has gone through in the past 20 years, changing from a union comprising mainly

CWA Gavel Passes to Cohen at Annual Convention

from the National

For only the fourth time in its history, CWA has a new president: Former Executive Vice President Larry Cohen.



Larry Cohen

Cohen succeeds 20-year CWA President Morton Bahr, an internationally respected labor leader whose many accomplishments include bringing new sectors and their tens of thousands of members into the union. Convention delegates passed a resolution honoring Bahr and naming him CWA President Emeritus.

CWA's new leadership team of Cohen, along with Secretary-Treasurer Barbara Easterling

and Executive Vice President Jeff Rechenbach, promises to energize a membership drawn from every segment of working America to confront the most anti-worker administration in history, and to build a stronger labor movement and the strongest-ever CWA.

In response to Resolution 1, CWA: Ready for the Future, Cohen established a theme for his presidency calling for every element of CWA to work together for "A common vision of our future." That means, he said: "All of us together, using our diversity and understanding it to make us stronger – young members and retired members, minorities, women and men, straight and gay, all sectors – diversity of leadership as well as membership, all working together. That is our strength and that will be the source of our success."

Cavalier Bargaining line
866 900-2107

Local Elections

The Local held nominations for Local Officers at the September 13th Membership meeting. Nominated and elected by acclamation (there were no multiple nominees for any office) were Denise Burns, President; Ray Pomeroy, Executive Vice President; Dutchin Webster, Secretary/Treasurer; Jeff Savin, Northern Area VP; Jimmy Padgett, Southern Area VP; and Al Schuitema to the new position of Assistant Secretary/Treasurer. A Cingular Vice President will be appointed in January.

The New Officers will take their oath in January and the terms are for 3 years.

(future from page 2)

telephone workers to one representing workers from nearly every walk of life – public employees, newspaper staff, broadcasters, nurses, police, manufacturing workers, customer service representatives, flight attendants and others.

The resolution urges "creative and visionary" discussions that could include such issues as the union structure, multi-district employers, the relationship of members and bargaining units to districts and sectors, roles and responsibilities of locals, the structure of union assets and resources, ways to engage members and other topics. "No part of this union can or should be left out of the discussion, and every level of the union should be examined," the resolution states. "In this far-reaching review, there are no sacred cows."

(Win from page 1)

for scheduling (or rescheduling) vacation" and that "up to 17% of the employees in each work group can take vacation based on the earliest request on any day. The company may deny vacation based on force and load only after 17% has been reached."

Verizon continued (until now) to deny vacation requests made with less than 24 hours notice. Based on their actions the Union requested that the Arbitrator accept remand on the issue of whether Verizon can require advance notice for vacation requests. Verizon claimed that this was a new issue and the Arbitrator declined to rule.

At this point the issue went to the legal system where it ended up at the DC District Court. The Honorable Colleen Kollar-Kotelly issued her order on August 30th, 2005 granting the Union Summary Judgment and denying the company the same on their request, and stating that the arbitration award was sufficiently clear and that the issue was neither separate and requiring a new arbitration case or in need of remanding to the original Arbitrator for clarification.

What all this means is that you can request, and should receive, vacation when the full 18% has not yet been reached based on the earliest request(s).

For Our Cavalier Members

We have had some limited response from the company on phone calls and received some information we had requested. They have been given dates when we are available to bargain and we hope to resume negotiations in the near future.

Our newest FutureLink Advocate is Catherine Burris-Gladney. Catherine can be reached on the 3rd flr at Riva Rd.

Meeting of the Joint Committee on Absence Control

On September 22 there was a meeting held at Pratt Street in Baltimore for Directors of Verizon and Presidents of CWA locals with call centers. The purpose of the meeting was to go over the results of the trials that took place as a result of the committee initiatives.

Some areas of improvement that were determined after focus group meeting in the trial offices were flexible scheduling, consistent administration, better understanding and administration of policies like FMLA and RAP, better communication between management

and associates, more recognition of good attendance and more emphasis on wellness.

It was determined that where the Union and the Verizon had a good working relationship the trials had better results.

The year to date progress report shows that having some improvement has helped with employee morale, communications have improved, less grievances, improved relationships and more time on the job, productivity gains, employees have more flexibility in schedule personal appointments, gaining

trust and mutual respect for fellow workers, creating an environment of Awareness, Recognition and Respect...attendance results are beginning to show improvement.

It is our job as local leaders to work with management in the areas that need improvement on excessive absence. While we can't solve all the issues that cause absence we can work to create a better less stressful work environment. We will be asking local management to see if they are interested in trying some of these ideas.

Sympathies to:

Patty Bowers on the death of her father
Michele Casey on the death of her mother
Karen Holland on the death of her mother
Tom Sherman and on the death of his father

Get Well to:

Larry Batson recovering from a motorcycle accident

Welcome Back to:

Norm Thompson

Congratulations to:

Ron Robey on the birth of his daughter
Amy Turner on the birth of her Grandson

Cingular Wireless

NetBenefits	877-421-5225
Prescription Service Caremark	800-388-2085
VSP Vision Care	800-524-0910
Dental DHMO Cigna	888-010-5225
Tuition Assistance	866-242-6587
Disability MetLife (STD or LTD)	888-430-2630
EAP	800-287-9009
Pensions and 401K	877-421-5225
FMLA	877 421-5225
Payroll	800 345-6211

Dates to Remember

Membership meetings

10-03	Northern Area –Annapolis
10-04	Southern Area -LaPlata
11-07	Northern Area
11-08	Sothern Area

Other Meetings

09-23	Presidents Meeting	
10-13	Stewards meeting	6:30
11-07	MD state council meeting	

Other

10-13 thru 10-15	Steward training
10-18	Newsletter deadline
11-15	Newsletter deadline

Retirees Corner

RMC meetings are held on the second Monday in January, February, March, April, May, September, October, November and December. Unless otherwise noted all meetings are held at the Local 2107 office at 2441 Holly Ave, Annapolis and begin at 10AM.

The next meeting will be on October 10th.

Community Services

We will be asking for craft donations for our December Craft and Poinsettia sale to be held on the 10th.

Periodical Mail
POSTAGE
PAID
at
Annapolis MD
ISSN 0890-8532

THE COMMUNICATIONS WORKERS OF AMERICA LOCAL 2107
2441 Holly Ave
Annapolis MD 21401-3116
ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED