



New Website Coming Soon

We have had numerous problems with our internet host over the past year which has resulted in our not being able to update the local website for months and caused problems with our e-mail.

We have found a new host and will have an updated site with a fresh look available soon. You will be able to access the current site for forms and contracts in the meantime but you will have to wait for new content.

Delegate Nominations

Nominations for the at large delegate and alternate to the 2007 CWA Convention will be taken at the February membership meetings.

In the event that there is more than one nominee, candidates will have the opportunity to submit an ad for the March newsletter of no more than 200 words total and no pictures. The ads will not be edited although they will be rejected if they are offensive or if they are over 200 words.

The deadline for the ads is noon on February 12th. We will not type your ad so submit it by e-mail to newsletter@cwa-2107.org.

Techs Prove Concerted Action Works Schedules Change as a Result

by Ray Pomeroy

Our Verizon FiOS techs banded together over scheduling changes instituted by their new District Manager, Manny Sampedro, that would require 50% of the force to be assigned to work on Saturday. Meaning you'd work every other Saturday.

These guys have been listening to what we preach because techs from 3 CWA Locals talked among themselves and decided they would work 8 and hit the gate until the issue

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ATT..Cingular..I Mean AT&T.. no wait, at&t

by Ray Pomeroy

If Ed Whiteacre's team put as much thought into how to treat employees as they put into the "new" logo for the company, which Cingular will be sharing with the landline side of the house, we would have happier employees. Wait maybe he does, reportedly the internal struggle over the "new" name/logo was somewhere between agonizing and epic depending on where you get your information, and look at that decision.

A recipe for disaster:

Take one fairly hip company with a cool name and improving service, spend a fortune to add an old fogie of a company who's reputation in the wireless world is horrendous, spend another fortune converting and absorbing the old company, (continue all the while improving the network and reputation of the original ingredient)

Now take the hip young company you spent all that time getting in front of the customer give it the old fogie's name, but change the letters from upper case to lower (it'll fool people and it's "hipper") and hope it's sorry reputation doesn't come back to haunt you and your employees. Even in the corporate cookbooks the employee gets it in the end.

We can't control what Ed and his marketing team do but we can control what we do. Stick together, observe black Fridays or whatever the new color is, and don't help the company stick it to you in the end. Security's been busy lately but it's easy to stay out of their sights if you're doing what you should be and not what you shouldn't.

The new comp plan has started (we don't like it) and we will cover it when we have more information from our representative on the committee, Jim Richmond. Jim did submit something but we need more details.

Pensions and 401(k)'s

by Sandi Burch

Denise Burns and I attended the 16th Annual Leadership Conference sponsored by the Metropolitan Baltimore Council AFL-CIO from January 10th, to the 12th where the focus was "The Pension Protection Act of 2006" and how it affects working families and retirees.

I learned several very important things. If we want to maintain our standard of living after we retire, we need to have income equal to 70% of our pre-retirement income. The typical American family will need over \$300,000 in a 401K to maintain their standard of living when they retire, if that is only savings they have.

Pension vs. 401(k)

The speakers explained that a pension is provided by the employer and will be there whether the company is or not, regardless of what happens in the stock market or to interest rates. It will last your lifetime. Pension funds are professionally managed and there is a fee for that but the company foots the bill. It was stated several times that a pension is both money and insurance since you know it will be there.

A 401K may have a portion matched by the employer (a bargained for 82% match at Verizon) but the majority of the funds come from the employee. A 401(k) lasts as long as there is money in the account and the employee is responsible for managing the account, making financial decisions most of us aren't qualified to make and don't have the time to research. Each employee pays a service fee and 401K managers are making a lot of money.

One lesson that kept getting repeated by the various speakers in the workshops are that savings are not a replacement for pensions, they are a supplement.

If you work for Verizon right now, in a bargained for position, you have a pension and an option to participate in a 401K. However, the company has frozen management pensions. They will come after ours in 2008 with the next contract, along with health benefits, and most every other part of our contract that those that have come before worked so hard to get for us.

We need to unite now in preparation for contract negotiations. We can't wait for 2008.

Union Plus Home Heating Oil Discount. Save on your home heating oil bills. For information on how you can begin saving on your home heating oil bills, visit unionplus.org/heatingoil or call 1-800-660-0691. WEB-02/06

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President's Point of View.....

Denise Burns

What can you expect this year? This year your officers will make a better attempt at getting out to the work locations and visiting with the members. We will be building our mobilization network to better inform you of issues and events that are happening.

We will also be training "an army of stewards" to help in our mobilization efforts. This will take place throughout the year and we will have dedicated trainers to do the training. We are also looking at building up our "regular" steward base. We have several applications on file and are accepting more before putting together a training class. If you are interested in either position please contact the local office and submit the steward application that can be obtained from our website.

We have a lot on our agenda. Starting this month with the session in Annapolis and engaging our newly elected politicians with our issues. We need to get better protections on the job, make it easier to join unions, maintain pensions, and deal with health care issues, etc.

We have progressed in getting our membership signed up and will maintain a vigilant attitude to make sure it will be done in a timely manner. If you know of a new person that hasn't been approached please advise a steward or call the local office.

As our membership grows, and so far it has, it becomes more difficult for me to talk to each and every member about their individual issues. I am asking you to please first contact the steward in your location or if there is none please contact your vice president. If you are unable to reach anyone

please call the local office and we will find someone for you. If you do not get a response from anyone then please contact me so that I can step in. I regret that I can not handle each and every problem that comes about but I am finding that with everything going on I can not get back to some of you. We want to handle your problem as quickly as possible but we also run into road blocks. If you have a grievance, remember to get a statement of occurrence to us as soon as possible. We only have 30 days from the day of the occurrence to pursue the issue.

If your issue is not urgent then contacting us by email or fax is a great way to communicate and we hope that you will use these two avenues. If we do not respond to you within a day please put a call in to the office. Email us at 2107@cwa-2107.org and the fax number is 410 224-0165. This information is on the web and in every newsletter.

Please join one of our committees and let's get this year off to a great start. Our committees needing staffed are Community Services, Newsletter, Safety and Health, Election, Mobilizing, Organizing, Entertainment, Scholarship, Legislation, and Equity.

This year we need to be unyielding in our strength and unity. We need to put aside our individual differences and work towards the common good for us, our families and friends and our future generations.

"...a solid bloc of people united to one another by unbreakable bonds which give them power and status to deal with their employers' terms." Frances Perkins, pioneer of social security, Secretary of Labor, Franklin D Roosevelt Administration

CWA Leads Safety Push in Wake of Electrocutions

With four electrocution deaths among Verizon technicians since last May and a growing list of CWA telecom members nationwide badly injured by power lines, union leaders say electrical hazards are at a critical point and are demanding action from employers. CWA, along with the IBEW, met with Verizon last month to talk about changes in education, training, tools and equipment to try to ensure that no one else is killed or disabled by telecom workers' proximity to power lines. "They seem receptive to our concerns," said Ron Collins, assistant to District 2 Vice

President Pete Catucci. "But it's going to be up to the union leaders and union members at Verizon to hold management accountable, to follow through." Dave LeGrande, CWA safety and health director, said CWA fears the risk is growing in part because employers are cutting costs by hiring fewer workers and pushing existing technicians to work faster. "We are concerned that management's productivity demands are causing some workers to cut corners and not adhere to safety procedures," he said.

(Shocked on page 3)

Decline in Union Representation Petitions Under the Flawed NLRB System

from the Baltimore Metropolitan Council AFL-CIO

The announcement this week by the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) that union representation petitions dropped more than 25 percent in 2006 is further evidence that the current NLRB system is badly broken -- so broken that working people have been forced to abandon the system in an effort to find other ways to exercise their freedom to form unions and to bargain for better wages and benefits.

Under the current NLRB election system, workers are routinely subject to harassment, intimidation and even termination simply for exercising their freedom to join or form unions to improve their lives. According to a study released this week by the Center for Economic and Policy Research, illegal firings for union activity

have risen sharply since 2000, with about one in five union activists who tried to organize being fired since 2000. Working people should be free to make up their own minds about whether to join a union without threats and intimidation from their employer. Under the current system, workers are not free to make that choice.

It's crucial that we change the system to give workers and their families a fair shot at getting ahead, especially at a time when our middle class is shrinking, wages for workers are stagnant and retirement security and health care benefits are vanishing. That's why the new Congress must act quickly to pass the Employee Free Choice Act, a bill that strengthens protections for workers' freedom to choose unions.

On That Note, Cavalier De-Certification Petition

by Ray Pomeroy

One of the original technicians that wanted a Union at Cavalier Telephone has filed for de-certification with the NLRB.

Cavalier management has been dragging it's feet for 2 years while one of their main players has continued to complain that he doesn't see the need for a "third party" between himself and his employees.

He can't be that blind (or is it stupid?) can he? "The Union" is all of us. We elect representatives to go to the table and do our bargaining simply because we can't all go to the table together. The person we send to do anything is not "The Union", we are. That person speaks for us, "The Union".

(Action from page 1)

was resolved. It was a grass roots concerted effort that required no input from Local Officers whatsoever. We are very proud of our members, they were professional and they made their point.

For those that don't know Officers from Locals 2100, 2101, 2107 and 2108 met with Manny for almost 5 hours on the evening of Friday January 5th to discuss the issue. What he finally offered was 33% assigned on Saturday starting Feb 1st.

Manny's goal is to get orders completed on Saturday equal to 80% of his daily average during the week. He wanted his weekend volunteers to give him 9 days notice (Thurs

The people we send out to bargain for us or to represent us at the grievance table or in an investigation is not a third party, they are *our voice*, the voice of "The Union".

I can't blame the employees for getting frustrated with the total lack of progress and I hope that the Cavalier members decide they aren't ready to give up yet or if they are that they try again, possibly under a friendlier National Labor Relations Board.

There aren't many of them but every single voice in the Labor Movement counts and every last body adds to our collective power at the grievance table, the bargaining table and at the polls.

of the preceding week) and the union will encourage volunteers.

That offer was taken to the members on the following Monday evening where the members rejected the 9 day plan. Manny has since agreed to having the volunteers commit on Tues the week of.

If the work complete isn't moving in the right direction the percentages assigned to work Saturday will start going higher so our folks aren't out of the woods yet.

They have however shown that they know what to do and when. The rest of us should learn something from that and we should all try to maintain that vision for 2008.

Scholarships

There are three different union scholarships available through the local office or online. Deadlines for each application are different so call today.

Union Plus Scholarship-deadline to apply January 31, 2007. Qualifications-accepted into or attending an accredited school. At least one year of good-standing membership in a union participating in the Union Plus Credit Card program. Graduate students are not eligible. <http://unionplus.org/benefits/education/scholarships/>

Joseph Anthony Beirne Memorial Foundation, Inc.-deadline to apply March 31, 2007. Eligibility-CWA members, their spouses and/or the sons or daughters of CWA members (active, retired, laid-off or deceased). High school graduates or who will graduate high school during the year in which they apply. Undergraduate and graduate students returning to school are also eligible. Prior winners may not reapply. <http://www.cwa-union.org/members/beirne/>

Roberta B. Mervine Scholarship Fund-deadline to apply May 30. Eligibility-dependent children (defined in contract) of Local 2107 members, (active, retired or deceased), age 25 or under. Must attend a properly accredited school. You can call the office or get the form at www.cwa-2107.org, hit the link for the forms page.

(Shocked from page 2)

Collins said he raised that issue with Verizon executives. "My question to them was, 'Do you tell your field managers to encourage your workers, our members, to perform all of their safety checks every day?' They said that they do. We said that's not happening, that there's a push to 'hurry hurry, hurry, let's get one more job done.'"

Collins said future meetings are expected between the unions and Verizon and that CWA wants to provide the company with concrete examples of supervisors failing to encourage safety checks and workers feeling forced to rush. He asked that members with such experiences tell their local leaders, and that those leaders contact CWA staff.

Retirees Corner

RMC meetings are held on the second Monday of every month. Unless otherwise noted all meetings are held at the Local 2107 office at 2441 Holly Ave, Annapolis and begin at 10AM.

Correction to the Blood Drive

February 22, 2007 – We need volunteers for the Blood Drive at 2510 Riva Road. The Blood Mobile will be there and we are looking for at least 30 volunteers. The Red Cross is advising there is a serious blood bank shortage and all donations would be greatly appreciated. Please contact Sandi Burch at 410 265-0471 to sign up, appointment times are every 15 minutes from 10am to 3pm so please just leave a message with your name, time you wish to donate and your contact number.

Sympathies to:

James Brenholz on the death of his father
Ann Crawford on the death of her mother-in-law
Wayde Deyarmin on the death of his father
David Downs on the death of his grandmother
Barry Hylton on the death of his father
Iris Mejia on the death of her brother
Shirley Milton on the death of her mother
Eddie Simpson on the death of his father
Brenda Wilkinson - death of father-in-law

Also the family of member Sandy Neal on her death.
Barry Hylton would like to extend his gratitude for the cards & prayers he received when his father passed away.

Verizon Members

CPS checks will be distributed on March 9, and if you would like to have the money put in your 401k account, you only have until Feb. 9th to make your designation thru the website. The minimum this year is \$650.

Dates to Remember

Membership meetings

02-05 Northern Area
02-06 Southern Area

Other Meetings

01-23 Executive Board 3pm
01-24 Community Service 4pm
01-25 Stewards
02-12 Retirees 10am
02-15 Baltimore Metro Council
01-29 CWA MD State Council
02-27 Executive Board tba

Other

01-25 Mobilization Activity
02-20 Newsletter deadline
02-22 Blood Drive Riva Road

Community Services

The CWA Local 2107 Christmas Craft and Poinsettia Sale raised \$893.81 for the Pediatric AIDs Foundation. Thanks to everyone who participated.

Get Well to:

Lynn Jenkins recovering from surgery.
Kenny Mangrum recovering from surgery
Paul Shipley a retired member diagnosed with cancer and doing well

Congratulations:

Heather Frye on the birth of her daughter
Jay Seymour on the birth of his son

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