



New Website Is Up!

The new website is up and running. The important stuff like our contact info and the forms page and a few other items are working. The other pages as well as new and (finally) updated content will be coming online over the next few weeks.

The site has a different look and some of the graphics may not display correctly on your browser or monitor. If you see errors or something doesn't display properly please email webmaster@cwa-2107.org and please let us know what browser and version you were using at the time. It would be helpful if we knew what size monitor you were using and what the screen resolution are set to also.

The website is there for our members' benefit and we just want it to look and work as well as possible.

See Delegate Election information on page 3.

H1b Visas, Who's Doing Our Work?

by Ray Pomeroy

Thousands of foreign nationals are in the United States right now working jobs in science, engineering and other highly skilled fields on what is known as an H1b visa. The Bush administration has continually pushed for more of the H1b's to be issued and it must stop.

Corporate America clamored for these claiming a shortage of skilled Americans.

To Qualify for the H1B Visa Program, you must work in a 'specialty occupation':

The core Specialty Occupations include: IT, Computing, Finance, Accounting, Banking, Marketing, Advertising, PR, Sales, Recruiting, Engineering (all types), Teaching, HealthCare/Medical, Legal, Lawyers, Networking, Telecoms, Business, Management.

In order to qualify for an H1b you must be sponsored by the company that is going to hire you. H1b holders are supposed to be paid the prevailing wage for what they do but seldom are.

If you think this can't affect you you're

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Safety Talk!

by Denise Burns

Don't just talk about safety, live it. Life is precious, protect yourself.

Whether you work at Cingular or Verizon, inside or outside, you are in control of your safety. While accidents do happen you should be doing everything you can to remain safe on the job.

If it's a matter of being safe or rushing to do a job, what do you do? Think of all the people that care about you and count on you. Should you take a minute to put on your hard hat or safety glasses? Put a cone out or use your 188 to do a preliminary check? How many people does it really hurt if something happens to you? Do your safety checks on your vehicles and your equipment if you work outside. If you run across an unsafe condition while working outside stop what you are doing and report it.

Inside workers need to take precautions as well. Make sure you are aware of your surroundings. Are there wires across the floor, stuff hanging from the ceiling, unstable boxes piled up, the floor wet, or things piled in front of an exit?

If you see something unsafe at a work location report it to a supervisor and let your steward know. The company should correct the situation promptly. If they don't, please contact our Safety Chairperson, Gary Waters on 410 271-8788.

If a supervisor tells you to do something unsafe you had better question them and get the Union involved. You have the right to refuse to do something that can be harmful to you.

Think about yourself and your co-workers safety. It's the only life you have, take care of it.

Thoughts From an Organizer

by Lynette Snell, 2107 Organizer

Most members of Local 2107, especially those working for Verizon, take for granted their contractual rights, job security, health benefits and pension plan. But what we have forgotten are the struggles of those before us that fought the fight to get us such great benefits.

As an organizer I am reminded on a daily basis of those struggles. Cingular members have only been unionized for about 7 years. Workers had to step up and work diligently to make their goal of a better life for their families.

The former AT&T, now Cingular members (now at&t again, *ed*), also had to unionize after the merger. Although these campaigns are always difficult CWA had a neutrality agreement in effect that contributed to their success.

Then there is Verizon Wireless and Verizon Business. The majority of the workers I talk to at these units want to know how they can get a job in the 'core' company. It's not the positions they covet. It's the benefits and guarantees our core members receive.

At Verizon Wireless the Company has had

an anti-union position from the start. Now we have Verizon Business and no doubt management will launch an anti-union campaign. They will tell the employees how the union is an outside party, how the union only wants dues, and how a union will somehow make things worse. They may try to drive a wedge between union members at the core company and Verizon Business workers and claim that we are in competition with each other.

Verizon should know that we are together. Together in our vision of a future that provides us all with the job security, high wages and superior benefits that are the end result of a union tradition established over many years.

We are asking all of you that interact with Verizon Wireless or Verizon Business workers to tell them how much better their life will be with the union. We would also request that you forward any names and contact information to the Local so that we can follow up with these employees.

We are much stronger together.

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President's Point of View.....

Denise Burns

I need to deliver this very serious message to all Verizon members. Verizon is making good on their threat to shrink our union. Since some of what they are doing doesn't affect you directly you may not be aware of just how hard they are coming after us. My "president's point of view" article from July 2006 included a pie chart that was given to Wall Street Analysts by Larry Babbio, Vice Chairman and President of Verizon, indicating their idea of just how few union jobs will be left at Verizon by 2007 vs. 2002.

The company uses various methods to shrink the union's power and membership. Things like term employees. The company thinks they will do whatever they have to just to land a permanent spot.

Under our contract no one hired after August 2003 is protected by the "no layoff" provision of the contract. We don't like it but it was what we could get at the time. As of January 1st, 2007 Local 2107 had 721 Verizon members, almost 38% or 272 of those members were hired after August 2003.

Through December 2006, Verizon was reporting 1393 term employees (6-30 months) in District 2 alone. District 2 covers Maryland, DC, Virginia and West Virginia. Beginning in February the company has sent out EISP's to try to get rid of 292 union members across the District and I hear more are coming.

While the company is issuing EISP's, they are freezing movement, downgrades and laterals, in most of those departments, keeping people who would like to do something else stuck where they are. On top of that they are seeking "an interest only" survey to see if anyone in the CSSC's (business offices) would like to go part time-where they have an enormous amount of term employees. If you go part time it means you will be paying for some of your benefits.

Verizon, regardless of what it tells us, is moving VPS (former Enterprise) work to Verizon Business (MCI). They are already non-union and the company continues to

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 wrong. Verizon has contract engineering firms that are hiring with H1b's. If you are an EA, that's where some of where your work is going. If you think you'd like to be an EA, and you know how difficult it is to get into this isn't going to make it any easier.

fight the union there. The company has Kiosks in the malls and in Verizon Wireless stores selling FiOS service while Wal-Mart and Direct TV are selling our DSL services. That's OUR WORK going elsewhere.

Are you starting to get the picture yet? I hope that this will wake up the members that think we can maintain the status quo. Verizon has launched a war on our jobs and on us.

Everyday there is another "rumor" about what building is going to be sold next and where people are going to be moved. Morale is down in most outside departments because the company constantly changes the crews and reporting locations, raises productivity targets, advertises (pays lip service to) good customer service while not allowing the techs to deliver it and putting all its resources and capital toward FiOS while employees who want to be a part of it are left to do more with nothing on the copper side.

How many times have you let the company slide by because "it wasn't worth the hassle" to correct a situation or maybe you are afraid they will come after you for looking out for your contract? Or maybe you just figure the union isn't doing what you think it should. To that I say WAKE UP-look at who is really doing you harm.

The only protections we have are in the contract and the UNION-*all of us*-need to protect it now more than ever. If you think you can idly sit by-you need to rethink your decision. Each and every one of us has a lot to lose. Don't be a part of the problem-be a part of the solution!

"Stripped to its essentials, what the labor movement is all about is power, the power for workers to confront management at the job site, across the bargaining table or in the political arena on equal footing. And it is that fundamental gaining of power, a power workers have only achieved through collective action, that is the basis of the union movement." Arthur Osborne

Corporations don't have to prove that there are no qualified Americans to take these jobs. They just have to hire someone and fill out the paperwork, or contract the job to someone who will.

Contact your congressman today, ask him or her to hold the line on H1b's.

Your Candidates for Delegate to the CWA National Convention

Jeff Savin

I am running for Delegate for Convention. I have been a member of Local 2107 for 17 years in good standing. I currently hold the position of Northern Area Vice President. I work at the Riva Road building in Engineering on the 6th Floor where I have been an EA for 10 years, prior to that I was a Cable Splicer in Annapolis. I was a steward for 5 of those years handling all types of grievances on all floors and departments at Riva Rd. I have been on the Legislative committee for the union and have been involved in voter registration drives throughout the local. I have attended the "Legislative conference" in Washington DC on three different occasions. The local sent me to Leadership training at WVU in Aug-04 & 05 to enhance my skills to better "Defend our Members in need of Representation". As a Delegate I feel I can Represent the Local in a Fair and consistent manner. Please Vote for Me for Delegate.
Jeff Savin

Eddie Miller

Hi, my name is Eddie Miller and I am running for alternate/at large delegate for the 2007 CWA Convention. I am a construction cable splicer in Annapolis and have been an active steward(s) in locals 2107 and 2100 for about 6 years.

I am also a Union electrician in Local 24 of the IBEW in Baltimore. I have over 15 years as a Union and labor activist. Both of my grandfathers were union members and retired comfortably, with good benefits. They fought hard to get and keep them. I am continuing the fight, for my family and yours.

I am asking for your vote. By going to the International Convention, I will see CWA's Democracy in action. I will learn how our decisions are made and disputes settled. I will bring back the knowledge and put it to use.

Whether for me or my colleague, please send your ballot with a cast vote. We have fought hard for the right to vote; use it don't lose it.

Employee Free Choice Act of 2007

by Ray Pomeroy

The Employee Free Choice Act was introduced in the House on February 5th by Rep. George Miller (D-Calif.) with 229 co-sponsors. The EFCA's purpose is "To amend the National Labor Relations Act to establish an efficient system to enable employees to form, join, or assist labor organizations, to provide for mandatory injunctions for unfair labor practices during organizing efforts, and for other purposes.

The act would:

- Establish stronger penalties for violation of employee rights when workers seek to form a union and during first-contract negotiations.
- Provide mediation and arbitration for first-contract disputes.
- Allow employees to form unions by signing cards authorizing union representation. (Card Check)

This piece of legislation is needed by the working people in this country and deserves all of our support.

According to the AFL-CIO, government statistics show that working men and women who have a union today make 30 percent more than workers who do not have a union, and they are far more likely to have health insurance and retirement plans. In addition

some 60 million U.S. workers say they would join a union if they could, based on research conducted, for the AFL-CIO, by Peter D. Hart Research Associates in December 2006. The poll also showed a strong majority of the public, 65 percent, approves of unions, up from 55 percent in 1981.

Our members at Cingular know the importance of having neutrality and card check. Cingular has a card check and neutrality agreement with CWA and it was instrumental in them getting representation on the job.

The Cavalier Telephone unit we organized has been on the other side of the coin for the past few years and recently decertified their unit. They simply became frustrated after two years without being able to bring in a first contract, while watching the company thumb their noses at them, giving unorganized units raises etc.

Had the EFCA been in place there would have been some recourse when the company refused to bargain in good faith.

We would ask that you contact your representatives in the House and demand that they support it. Sign the petition at:

http://www.unionvoice.org/campaign/Support_EFCA

Scholarships

There are two union scholarships available through the local office or online. Deadlines for each application are different so call today. (The union plus deadline has passed)

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.

Have you picked your vacation for 2007?

In the Cingular contract you should have had the vacation schedule between November 1 and December 31. Verizon members have until March 31 to pick week-at-a time and day-at-a time. If this hasn't happened, please contact a steward.

**ATTENTION CINGULAR
Please send in your surveys by March 1.**

VOTE

Your candidates are above and your ballot will be there soon.

The CWA National Convention is the highest power in our union and it is important that we have good representation there. It is also important for you to help decide who that will be.

The convention approves the budget, hears appeals from Locals and members and decides on programs and priorities of the union. In election years it is where your District Vice President is Elected.....so vote already.

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.

See you on March 12.

Cingular Wireless

Payroll:	800-345-6211
Disability: Gates McDonald –	866-453-2837
Benefits, FMLA or 401K: Fidelity –	877-421-5225
Tuition Reimbursement: Acclaris –	866-203-9358
Employee Assistance Program:	800-287-9009
Prescription Service Caremark	800-388-2085
VSP Vision Care	800-524-0910
Tuition Assistance	866-242-6587

Verizon Members

The CPS Award is \$784.00, for Plan year 2006. The award will be pro-rated for part-time employees and those employees who participated for more than 3 months but less than 12 months in the plan year.

The award will be paid on March 9.

Congratulations to:

Jennifer Eichner on the birth of her daughter and Lynn Jenkins on her granddaughter.
Ray Pomeroy on the birth of his grandson.

Welcome Back to:

Kenny Mangrum returning from surgery.

Dates to Remember

Membership meetings

03-06 Combined meeting at the Union Hall
(If Anne Arundel County Schools are closed or close early due to inclement weather the meeting will be canceled.)

Other Meetings

01-29	CWA MD State Council	10:30 am
02-26	Executive Board	4:00 pm
02-26	CWA MD State Council Meeting	10:30 am
02-27	MD State & DC AFL-CIO meeting	10:00 am
03-09	Presidents meeting	10:30 am
03-12	Retiree meeting	10:00 am
03-19	CWA MD State Council meeting	10:30 am

Other

02-28	Train the trainer training	9:00 am
03-01	Ballot Mailout	
03-16	Daffodil Delivery	
03-20	Newsletter deadline	
03-20	Count Ballots	

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