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## Local Elections

Nominations for Local Officers will be taken at the September 30 membership meeting.

**The location has been CHANGED to the local office**, the meeting will **not** be in Bowie!

Elections and campaign rules were run in the September edition of the LOCAL 2107 NEWS, if you don't have your copy you can get it on the newsletter page at [www.cwa-2107.org](http://www.cwa-2107.org).

If there is space in the November newsletter, which is scheduled to publish at approximately the same time the ballots go out, candidates may submit a 200 word ad for the newsletter.

All ads or no ads will run depending on space available. They will not be edited but ads that contain profanity, derogatory remarks etc. will be discarded outright and the others will still run.

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## at&t mobility members

It's out –it's your chance don't let it go by. Your bargaining survey is on the way. Follow the instructions closely so that your survey will be counted.

What is the survey all about? It gives you a chance to put the bargaining issues in your order of importance. It also gives you a chance to add issues that are not on the survey.

I don't know all the issues, but I certainly know some issues for the Retail Sales Consultants. To name a few that I think are major, we need to bargain the compensation plan, quota relief for all time away from the job, better scheduling language, better overtime language, and better language for union time.

With all the different issues we get from the stores, I expect to receive a survey from all of you. This is used totally by the Union. It is not seen by the company. Of course, the company will know the issues once bargaining starts.

There will be a representative on the bargaining team from District 2. As soon as we know who it will be we will get the name out there to you.

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## AT&T Mobility Health Care Plan Reaches Arbitration

from the National

Negotiations for a new health care agreement for 40,000 CWA members at AT&T Mobility entered arbitration this week after an agreement could not be reached with the company following two months of negotiations and mediation.

The company is insisting on shifting a significant share of the plan's costs to employees. This week, CWA told an independent arbitrator that AT&T is a financially healthy company and that its insistence on shifting additional costs to employees was unreasonable and unwarranted. Over the course of the three-day arbitration, CWA called several expert witnesses in support of its position.

The arbitrator is expected to submit a decision by end of November. CWA's agreement with AT&T Mobility provides for binding arbitration to resolve disputes in the health care plan. Four separate contracts cover

CWA members at AT&T Mobility but all share the same benefit plans.

The CWA AT&T Mobility bargaining committee was present throughout the arbitration. They are Betty Witte, chair, District 3; Paul Klaebel, District 3; Rafael Castro, District 3-Puerto Rico; Holly Sorey, District 4; Jim Murray, District 6; Joe Sison, District 9, and John Alphonse, CWA staff representative, District 1.

"The company's position is unacceptable and is exactly the wrong direction to proceed as we try to find a national solution to health care," said Executive Vice President Annie Hill, who heads CWA's Telecom Office.

"We want to find a solution that gets health care off the bargaining table, and also lessens health care costs to employers but, not at the expense of workers. That isn't the way to solve problems," she said.

*(Editors Note:)*We'd like to thank Local 2107 member Nicole Sauer for testifying at the arbitration.

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## American Health Care

a letter from Bill Salganik TNG-CWA Local 32035, Ret I thought I knew plenty about the American health care system and its problems, but working with the CWA Health Care Campaign has quickly caused me to see things in a new way.

I was a journalist for 39 years; for the last 12 of those, I covered health for the business section of the *Baltimore Sun*. I wrote about Medicare private prescription drug and HMO plans that were confusing and overwhelming (and sometimes deceptive) for seniors. I wrote about a non-profit Blue Cross plan that wanted to convert to for-profit operation – in the process, triggering up to \$39 million in bonus payments for its CEO. I wrote about obstetricians who stopped delivering babies when their malpractice premiums jumped to more than \$100,000 a year. I wrote about people who were sick and poor, but their small disability checks made them ineligible for Medicaid insurance; one man with \$900 a month in disability payments told me, "I'm too rich to be poor."

Some of these problems were solved, or at least mitigated. Maryland has raised the income cutoff for Medicaid. Insurance regula-

tors blocked the Blue Cross for-profit scheme and cut the CEO's bonus payments. The state set up a fund to help doctors pay for liability coverage, and malpractice premiums have actually declined.

But by focusing on one problem and one story at a time, you get a false impression. You get a sense that the health system can be fixed (maybe even that it is being fixed) by defining and solving problems, one by one.

After taking an early-retirement buyout from the *Sun*, I began to do some writing and research for CWA's Health Care Campaign. And looking at the health system as a system, rather than looking at one problem or issue at a time, I was overwhelmed by evidence of a seriously broken system.

I was asked to identify news stories and research reports that would be relevant for the campaign's Web site. Here are some of the headlines from my first week or so: Study finds 25 million underinsured, in addition to 47 million uninsured; Despite spending twice as much as other developed countries, U.S. has worse health outcomes; California fines insurers for canceling coverage for sick peo-

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

*Denise Burns*

This is about the do's and don'ts.

We have many issues with management in both the companies we represent. Many of them stem from the lack of training that management gets before and while they are in the position of dealing with reporting people.

First of all, never assume that your supervisor knows what is going on, what should go on or even how to manage. I think that is the biggest mistake most of us make. Management is the same no matter what company we work for. They should manage.

Management should make sure that employees know their job whether by training or coaching. For at&t that means making and delivering an action plan to help with sales, etc. For Verizon perhaps more feedback to employees on how they are doing to give them a chance to succeed instead of fail. In both companies, there is no middle ground any more. Discipline is all they know how to do.

With the exception of a few management people that I have worked with most don't know how to communicate. Some don't care, some just want to be left alone, some lie, some take no responsibility, some abuse the contract regularly, some have no idea how to deal with the union or don't even know how a grievance is supposed to be done and some, I believe, have never even opened the contract.

Why am I bringing this up-it's not a management bashing-it is a wake up call to our members. Make sure you know the contract. You don't have to memorize it but you should be familiar with it and things in it that affect you directly. Make sure you are

aware of what your responsibilities are. If you don't want to get into trouble find out what the rules are, what's right and what's wrong-adhere to them.

Lately, there is too much discipline being handed out, some valid and some not. The companies are forever firing or disciplining over the Code of Conduct.

Here are a few examples of what is right: Come to work on time, do your job, if you need help or don't know something ask, communicate what needs to be communicated and nothing else, keep your personal lives personal and out of the work location, do not use or misuse any company equipment for personal use, be where you should be when you should be (sometimes exceptions can be made but it requires communication with your supervisor), never sign anything other than your paycheck or maybe for a key, if you are asked to meet with a supervisor ask if it could lead to discipline and what the subject is, (I found lately that there is some management that doesn't know what could lead to discipline, or so they claim), don't be afraid to ask questions of management or try to fix things without involving the union (gripes not grievances), keep a diary so that you will be able to defend yourself if or when you need to, be accountable for yourself and your actions, respect your coworkers, keep a business atmosphere in the workplace, watch what you say so that someone else doesn't get offended or feel threatened, etc., be accountable for yourself and your actions, use all safety equipment provided when necessary, do safety checks on vehicles, but most of all use common sense.

*(President on page 3)*

*(Salagnik from page 1)*  
 ple; Study shows money spent on prevention can generate big savings.

In summary: high costs, poor coverage, lagging quality, underfunded preventive care, and insurers who fatten their bottom lines by canceling the policies of sick people.

I hope you will take a look at what I've found.

www.healthcarevoices.org

This isn't a house that can be maintained by some fresh paint this year and roof patches next year. This is a house in need of serious renovation.

The system is broken, and the time to fix it is now. Now when we have a chance to elect people committed to reform. Now when there's enough political momentum to get something done. But what we need isn't a series of small fixes; we need true reform to create a system that covers everyone, holds costs in check, improves quality, allows the government to act as a referee to keep insurers and drug companies focused on care, not profits, and ensures that all employers pay their fair share so that CWA's employers who provide good health care to their workers are not put at a competitive disadvantage. In Solidarity,  
 Bill Salagnik

(President from page 2)

Here is what is wrong:  
 Coming in late, not using FMLA to prevent a chargeable absence, excessive cell phone use, credit card numbers over the phone and signing the customer receipt, out of your area, falsifying records or time, theft of any kind (remember supervisors don't have authority to give away company property), don't trust others to protect you when it hits the fan, don't tattle tale-address the issue if you need our help call us, not following managements direction (unless unsafe or against the Code), never use someone else's login, sign-on or password, abusing the contract, making special deals for yourself, creating a hostile work environment, not securing company equipment, do not use email or IM or company phone for personal use, don't worry about what your coworker did or didn't do or got away with, don't be discourteous to a customer (internal or external, some people don't have common sense), don't do personal business during working hours, and many others.

With the corporations of today, at&t Mobility and Verizon being two of them, don't underestimate the cutthroat attitude. Employees are no longer their concern, so please be concerned for yourself. If you have questions about things and aren't sure who to turn to ask a steward or an officer.

*"Work itself isn't humiliating if it gives you financial independence. There is dignity in that. The indignity comes when management perceives you as so many worker bees, not as contributing individuals."* Brian Kremer, auto worker, artist

Notes

There will be a number of by-laws changes to vote on at the September 30th meeting. Most of them are housekeeping changes such as changing "Cingular" to "wireless".

The deadline to register to vote in the general election in MD is Oct 14th.

The deadline for absentee ballots in MD is Oct 28th.

Food for Thought

Ivan Seidenberg made more an hour in 2007 than a Verizon Engineering Assistant makes in 7 and a half weeks.

His hourly rate? \$9846.50

Where the Candidates Stand

Barack Obama

**Economy**

Proposes a middle-class tax credit of \$500 per worker or \$1,000 per working family to help stimulate the economy, would roll back Bush tax cuts for people earning more than \$250,000.

Proposes \$10 billion in relief to states to help them retain programs hard-hit by the economic downturn.

Proposes a \$10 billion fund to help families avoid home foreclosure.

**Workers' Rights**

Voted for the Employee Free Choice Act; has promised to fight for it and sign into law as president.

Will push for a ban on permanent striker replacement.

**Health Care**

Would not tax workers for their employer-paid health care benefits.

Supports reform leading to affordable, universal health care.

Health care goals call for guaranteed eligibility; no rejection for age, illness or prior conditions.

**Retirement Security**

Opposed Bush plan to partially privatize Social Security.

Proposes shoring up the system with Social Security payroll tax increase for people earning more than \$250,000 a year.

Would eliminate payment of income taxes by seniors making less than \$50,000.

**Jobs/Trade**

In trade agreements, would require labor and environmental standards from trading partners.

Calling for major investment in clean energy and green manufacturing, as well investment in rebuilding infrastructure to spur job growth.

Supports CWA's plan for universal, affordable broadband access (Speed Matters) to create jobs and boost the economy.

John McCain

**Economy**

Would continue Bush tax cuts, including those for the richest 1 percent.

Would cut corporate income tax rate by 10 percent, returning \$4 billion a year to oil companies.

Proposes that some home mortgage holders in danger of foreclosure, who can prove credit-worthiness, can apply for a new FHA-guaranteed home loan.

**Workers' Rights**

Opposes the Employee Free Choice.

Voted to allow permanent striker replacement and for national "right-to-work" law, which failed to pass.

**Health Care**

Would have workers pay income tax on their employer-paid health benefits.

Tax credit of up to \$5,000 per family to purchase private health insurance.

Insurance companies could continue to reject people for coverage for any reason.

**Retirement Security**

Voted for Bush plan for partial privatization of Social Security, continues to advocate privatization.

Has voted for, and continues to favor, raising Social Security eligibility age to 68.

Would consider cutting Social Security cost of living increases.

**Jobs/Trade**

Supports unrestricted free trade, including pending Colombia trade deal; does not call for worker or environmental standards.

Believes lowering corporate income tax rate from 35 percent to 25 percent will promote investment and job creation.

Supports more training programs for displaced workers by overhauling unemployment insurance system.

John McCain, like all the presidential candidates was asked to answer a CWA questionnaire this summer but declined despite repeated attempts to answer the questions. You can see Obama's answers at:

<http://www.cwavotes.org/>

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WEB-03/05

**Retirees Corner**

The next regular meeting is October 13th.  
 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.

**Verizon**

Medical, Prescriptions, Dental & Vision issues relating to payment of bills, providers, directories, medical necessity of services, forms, plan questions, retirees:

**John Petrini 800 627-0200 Fax: 610 566-3123**

FMLA, SADP, CORE issues:

Retirees:

**Sue Anderson 888 324-4969 Fax: 973 691-0865**

Sickness and Disability Absence, Family Medical Leave Absence, and Metlife related issues:

**Paula Terveer**

**Telephone – (888) 571-7218 Fax – (757) 667-6090**

**E-Mail – paula.a.terveer@verizon.com**

**at&t**

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

**Dates to Remember**

**Membership meetings**

09-30	Combined Membership	06:30 pm
11-03	Combined Membership	06:30 pm

**Other Meetings**

09-24	Executive Board meeting	
10-01	CSC meeting	04:00 pm
10-13	Retiree meeting	10:00 am
10-15	ACFC meeting	
10-28	Executive Board AFL-CIO	
10-29	Executive Board	01:00 pm

**Other**

10-14	Last day to register to vote in MD
10-21	Deadline newsletter

**Bargained for Holidays**

11-11	Veterans Day
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