

## Morty Bahr Speaks to Local 2108

*“Let me begin with just a few brief remarks ... “*

*By Les Evans, CWA Local 2108 Steward*

**S**o began **Morton Bahr**, President of the CWA International Union, at Local 2108's April membership meeting in Landover. Anyone who has had the pleasure of hearing President Bahr speak knows he is many things, however, "brief" isn't usually one of them. When you've been around and working as a Union Activist for as many years as Morty has you have a lot of information to impart. There were times when you could have heard a pin drop in that room. No one left early and no one was disappointed.

In April of 1954, Morty began his career with the CWA by organizing his local Western Union shop into the union. He was then elected President of his local. He was appointed to the CWA staff as an organizer and in 1969 was elected Vice President of CWA District 1, which includes New Jersey, New York and New England.

Morty served in that position until 1985 when he was elected the President of the CWA. At the end of the 66th Annual CWA convention in 2004, he announced his intention to retire from that position in August of this year, after serving as our third President for twenty years.

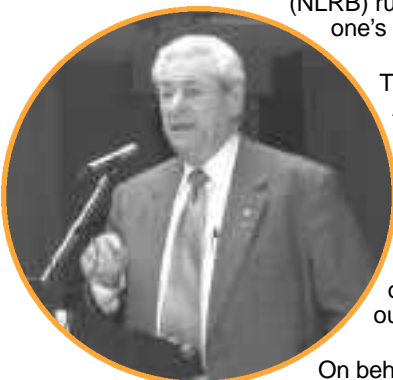


While Morty spoke about some of the highlights of his career, most of his speech focused on what we need to do in the future to keep our Union a viable and active force for the working people of this country.

He spoke extensively about the problems facing us as workers and unionists. He is passionate about our ability to help not only ourselves, but also other working people, both those who are organized and those who would like to be. Morty also spoke of the need for Unions to be involved politically because that's where anything we achieve at the bargaining table can be lost with the stroke of the legislatures pen. He explained the great difficulties workers trying to organize face today and how the laws passed as a part of President Roosevelt's New Deal, which were intended to protect workers have been so perverted that in many instances they have the opposite effect.

Morty explained how, with the rising cost of healthcare today, and the ever increasing ratio between active employees and retirees in many industries, that we will find it even more difficult to hold the line with our employers on cost-shifting to employees. This is true in every industry across our land. He spoke at length about concerning the problems of outsourcing call center work overseas, where employers have greater ability to take advantage of and exploit the workers.

He explained how in today's political environment the Department of Labor (D.O.L.) no longer protects Unions and workers. In fact, he gave examples of how the D.O.L. is actually attacking Unions and trying to weaken workers rights on many issues such as overtime pay, the forty-hour workweek etc. Employers no longer really worry about Union organizing campaigns because they know that even if they lose, they don't really lose. They know that all they have to do is file an appeal and the result of the vote will be set-aside until the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) rules on the appeal. What happens next? The NLRB never issues a ruling. The appeal just sits in someone's "In Basket" and never sees the light of day. Morty spoke of one appeal which is almost four years old.



True to form however, it wasn't all gloom and doom. Morty spoke positively of the next generation of Union Activists (you and me), and what we need to do to carry on the fight. Those in attendance found Morty's speech both informative and inspiring. we were all left with the feeling that, yes, it is time for us to pick up the banner and move forward.

Local 2108 would like to thank District 2 Vice President **Pete Catucci**, District 2 Administrative Assistant **Ron Collins** and Staff Representatives **Gail Evans**, **Monica Hogan** and **Jimmy Tarlau** for attending our membership meeting. Other honored guests in attendance included Executive Board Members from other Maryland locals, as well as past District 2 Assistant to the Vice President **Ed Lewinski**, (father of our own Vice President **Jenny Sylvester**).

On behalf of all our members, Local 2108 would especially like to thank President Bahr for taking time out of his schedule to be with us. We wish him only the best in his retirement and thank him for all the years he has dedicated to and leading the greatest union, the Communications Workers of America.

**See more pictures from President Bahr's visit on Page 6**



## From The President's Desk

# THE CHANGING OF THE GUARD

**A**t the April Local 2108 membership meeting, we witnessed our history in the making. CWA President Morton Bahr was our guest speaker. Morty was making what is to be his last speech at our local as President of our union. He will be retiring this August during the CWA Annual Convention.

**On behalf of all CWA Local 2108 members, I thank Mr. Bahr and our own District 2 Vice-President Pete Catucci for accepting the invitation to speak to our membership.**

If you were in attendance, it would be my guess that you were fascinated by his presentation. Mr. Bahr spoke of his 51 years working for CWA. What impressed me was his personal insight of what it has taken over years of bargaining to achieve what was thought impossible just a decade ago. CWA has persevered and grown during a time where union membership has steadily declined. For most of us, we think of CWA as the communications union. Representing telephone company workers has been the mainstay of our union throughout our 60+ years of history. The fact is, 51% of CWA members work outside of the telephone industry. In today's world we also represent airline reservation workers, flight attendants, public workers, police, prison guards, television cameramen, Newspaper Guild members, college employees, manufacturing production line employees, and many others. Our union no longer specializes in the information age issues.



*President Campbell with CWA President Morty Bahr at the April Membership meeting.*

Mr. Bahr spoke of the importance of constantly upgrading our education. He should know, having come all the way up the ladder from an 18 year old radio officer serving during World War II on the Liberty Ship **SS Thorstein Veblen**, to serving as an elected Union officer for the past 51 years. Mr. Bahr also spoke of the importance of being prepared. He has made many appointments to positions in CWA, in preparation of replacing the most senior people in the process of retiring.

Here in 2108, your Executive Board has tried to accomplish the same goal. We have approved training for hundreds of new shop stewards over the past 5 years. As your chief stewards have moved on, or retired, we have chosen the most capable of shop stewards to move up to the roll of chief. This is a fine plan and it works well as long as we have willing, qualified, and dedicated members who volunteer to get involved. I do encourage those members who have thought about stepping up to do so. Just as importantly, I strongly encourage those who have already done so by becoming a union steward to get more involved. You should plan to attend the membership meetings and the stewards meetings. This advice also applies to our chief stewards. It is not enough for you to show up when you are on the union payroll; you must lead by example and attend the same meetings you ask your members and stewards to attend. These are the meetings where all new information is passed on and feedback from our members is received.

As our union grows and expands beyond Verizon and telephones, we have to be able to fight battles on a local level which used to be the mainstay of our National Union. It is up to you and me as members of the Communications Workers of America to stand prepared to

**DO WHATEVER IT TAKES!**

*Bob*

Communications Workers of America

**2108 news**

published monthly by  
**CWA Local 2108**

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**Recording Announcements**

(301) 459-8381: Avaya and Lucent  
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Local Office: (301) 459-2108 Toll Free: (800) 427-2108  
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# RMC 2108: The Retired Members Club

By Dennis Strout, President RMC 2108

Atlantic City

**O**ur April meeting was all about politics. **Calvin Foster** and **Kathy Harrison** gave detailed reports on the CWA Legislative Conference, which was held in March. Guest speakers, how to lobby and meet with Senators and members of Congress were reported out to the membership. I want to thank both of them for their outstanding work on behalf of our club.

On April 13, **Calvin Foster**, **Kathy Harrison** and **Steve Williams** and myself attended the Local 2108 membership meeting. The guest speaker was **Morton Bahr**, President of CWA.

President Bahr is an excellent speaker and his speech covered a wide range of subjects including social security, Medicare, prescription drugs, the trade deficit and many others. He also spoke on health care. Specifically about how the union has negotiated with Verizon on this issue. With the cost of health care rising it will be extremely rough to keep the company from shifting some of this cost to us.

On the decline in the labor movement, President Bahr spoke on how unions now represent only about 8% of the work force in this country.

Defined pension plans, he said, like we have at Verizon are being phased out. There are now only 35,000 companies with this type of pension compared to 115,000 in 1980. Additionally, bargaining pension increases with Verizon is next to impossible.

These are just some of the subjects he covered. I don't have enough space to mention them all. It was an excellent speech.

Money for the Atlantic City trip (May 18th) needs to be in by May 7, 2005. Make checks payable to RMC2108 and send them to the Local. If you are paying for more than one person, please include names of those you are paying for. This will be a fun trip so plan on joining us.



*Members listen to Executive Board reports at the April RMC 2108 Membership meeting.*

## May Meeting

Our May meeting promises to be very informative. **Sergeant Gethers** of the Prince George's County Police Crime Awareness Unit will be our guest speaker. He will speak on identity theft, auto theft and other crimes and how to avoid them. It should be interesting so plan to attend. That's May 11th! See you there.

## RONALD BYRD 1953-2005

CWA Local 2108 is saddened to announce the passing of one of our Chief Stewards, **Ron Byrd**. Ron, who was only 52, died in his sleep of a heart attack in the early hours of April 15th. Ron had suffered repeated heart attacks in the past, and had been off work on Short Term Disability for almost a year. He was preparing to retire on a Disability Pension April 20th, and move to Alabama mid-May, to live closer to his family.

Ron is survived by his eighteen year old daughter, **Tiffany**, his grandson, **Gavaughan**, his ex-wife, Local 2108 Steward **Sharon Byrd**, and his stepson, **Howard Hancock**.

At the time of his passing, Ron had twenty-five years of service, all as a Central Office Technician. He began his career in North Carolina, transferring to Hunt Valley, Maryland in 1980. Ron served as a CWA Steward for over twenty-two years. After transferring to the Chesapeake Complex in 1999, Ron was appointed Chief Steward June 5, 2000. He was also a member of our Local's Legislative Committee.

In addition to his family, Ron will be missed by his fellow CWA activists, and the many members who he helped over the years.



## 2005 CWA LOCAL 2108 SCHOLARSHIP GRANT

CWA Local 2108 is proud to offer scholarships to our members and their families. Please read the rules below, and call the Local if you have additional questions.

1. Three \$2,000 scholarships are available.
2. Available to members in good standing since last negotiated contract, their spouse and dependent children or dependent children of deceased members.
3. \$1,000 will be mailed directly to the institution per semester.
4. Student must take at least 9 credits per semester.
5. Must have a letter of acceptance to college or accredited learning institution with application.
6. Drawing at July membership meeting as a raffle.
7. Community Service Committee will screen applications.
8. Applications must be postmarked by June 30, of current year.
9. Resignation from the union will forfeit scholarship awards.

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ SOCIAL SECURITY # \_\_\_\_\_

RELATIONSHIP TO MEMBER: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_ HOME TELEPHONE #: \_\_\_\_\_

CITY: \_\_\_\_\_ STATE: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

MEMBER'S NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ WORK TELEPHONE #: \_\_\_\_\_

NAME OF SCHOOL: \_\_\_\_\_

### More Pictures from Bahr's Visit to Local 2108



# CWA Local 2108 Members

## Personals

*We wish to extend sincere sympathy to the family and friends of:*

**Curtis O'Deen Leach**, mother of retired member **Mary Willbrand** who died on May 17, 2004.

**Pearl McGregor**, sister of **Nellie Ouzts** who died on December 31, 2004.

**William Gaines**, brother of **Kathy McClain** who died on March 5, 2005.

**Eleanor Webb**, a retired member who died on March 9, 2005.

**Henrietta Countess**, grandmother of **Jane Jackson** who died on March 11, 2005.

**Lawrence H. E. Beane, Sr.**, father of **Lawrence Beane, Jr.** who died on March 13, 2005.

**Don Spencer**, father of **Alan Spencer** who died on March 20, 2005.

**Laverne C. Ruppert**, mother-in-law of retired member **John Hamolia** who died on March 25, 2005.

**Marvin Mazyck**, father of **Scotty Mazyck** who died on March 27, 2005.

**David Enlow**, brother of **Mark Enlow** who died on March 29, 2005.

**Alexander Gaines**, father of **Kathy McClain** who died on March 30, 2005.

**Darnell Shuler**, brother of **Monique Leonard** who died on April 5, 2005.

**Samuel Papich**, father of **Gary Papich** who died on April 6, 2005.

**Alice W. Hayes**, grandmother of **Ed Anderson** who died on April 12, 2005.

**Ronald K. Byrd**, an active member who died on April 15, 2005 (*see story page 3*).

**Richard R. Hurt**, uncle of **Bill Hurt** who died on April 15, 2005.

### Congratulations to:

**Bitisiet Amare** on the birth of her daughter, **Leah** on April 11, 2005.

## New Members

### Gregory Farrell

Margarita Lopez

### Jenny Henry

Tamla Dunbar  
Kimberly Grooms  
Kedrick Musgrove  
Roxiann Price  
Aziza Williams  
Abdurrahman Henderson

### Jay Smith

Sean Carr  
Steve Randolph  
Gonzalo Ramirez  
Eric Sebold  
Dave Ossorio  
Dillon Jayasuriya  
Ken Henkel  
William J. Whelan

### Derek Green

Omar Nixon

### Jenny Sylvester

Raymond Robidoux

### Charles White

Grafton Brown, Jr.  
Ryan Payne  
Cornelius Lyons  
LaShawn Crouch

### Ruben Flores

Glen Croston  
Eugene Callahan  
Bruce Hines  
Carlos Diggs  
Ricardo Beale  
Joseph Coon  
Eddie Duren  
Jack Fleeman  
Tsegaye Kuma  
Adrian Price  
Kameron Simmons

### Carl Brogden

Melvin Caldwell  
Preach Powell

### Carmen Butler

Lane Smothers, Jr.  
Melvin Harper  
Bryan Howell  
Charles Dorsey, Jr.

### Ed Anderson

Vanessa Slowe

### Larry Gibson

Bruce Williams

### Debbie Boyle

Jason Wilcox

## Transferred

### Jenny Henry

Jed Shenk  
Reginald Mills  
Rodney Rice  
Andrew Peace II  
Abera Mengistu-Abebe  
Timothy Houston  
Malik Carter  
Chance Bernard  
Constance Anderson  
Kevin Arrington, Jr.  
Stephen Mitchell  
Stephan Blanchet  
Joseph Wood  
Christopher Ross  
Steven French  
Kevin Rawls  
William Phillips, Jr.

### Vallorie Coley

Brandi Jennings

### Michael Moses

Nekia Rice

### Jennifer Martin

Otis Howard

## Recently Retired Members

Henry P. Armwood

**CWA LOCAL 2108  
ANNUAL FAMILY PICNIC  
SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE!**

**BE SURE TO COME TO:**

**MAYO BEACH PARK – EDGEWATER, MD**

**SATURDAY, JUNE 4TH, 2005 – NOON TO 5:00 PM**

**FOOD • SODAS • BEER • SPORTS • GAMES • MUSIC • SWIMMING**

**FOOD CATERED BY GLEN'S BBQ UNLIMITED**

**\$10.00 PER TICKET**

**CHILDREN UNDER 2 ADMITTED FREE**

**\*ALL TICKETS MUST BE PURCHASED IN ADVANCE\***

**\*NO TICKETS WILL BE SOLD AT THE GATE\***

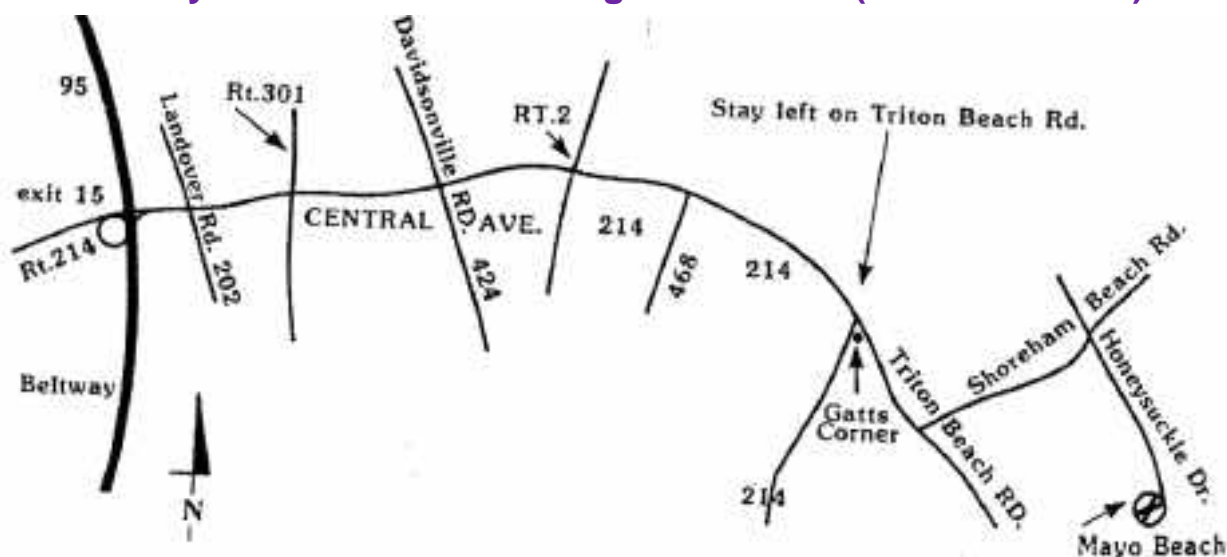
**\*LIMIT OF 6 TICKETS PER MEMBER – NO PETS ALLOWED\***

**\*\*LAST DAY TO PURCHASE TICKETS IS FRIDAY, MAY 27TH, 2005\*\***

**THIS YEAR MAYO BEACH HAS LIMITED ATTENDANCE AT THE PARK, SO TICKETS WILL ONLY BE AVAILABLE ON A FIRST COME, FIRST SERVED BASIS. PLEASE SEE YOUR CHIEF STEWARD OR CALL THE LOCAL OFFICE ON (301) 459-2108 FOR TICKETS.**

Amounts paid to this organization are not deductible as charitable contributions for federal income tax purposes.

**To Mayo Beach from I-95 using Rt. 214 East (Central Avenue)**



## CWA and Healthcare in the USA

Employers continue to cutback on benefits and place more of the costs of health care in higher deductibles and co-payments onto active workers and retirees. Equally disturbing, increasing health care premiums almost surpass the employer-sponsored pensions of many retirees. According to The Kaiser Family Foundation, the percentage of all workers receiving health coverage from their employer fell from 65% in 2001 to 61% in 2004. It estimates that there are five million fewer jobs providing health care insurance in 2004.

Drug costs continue to pass health plan coverage caps. Drug companies used to raise their prices every year, but kept price increases to the rate of inflation. The drug price increases of recent years outpace inflation. As the costs of prescription drugs continue to increase and new brand-named drugs are invented, more employers are requiring employees to pay higher co-pays for their drugs. For seniors with a limit on their drug benefit it is increasingly difficult to afford drugs. Working families are forced to pay the rest out of pocket.

While most states are encountering their largest deficits in more than 60 years, some large employers are shifting health care costs to the public! State and local taxes are picking up the tab for major employers who either don't provide health care coverage, or provide very limited coverage. Employees simply cannot afford to enroll in these plans. Others are not eligible because employers keep them on part-time status. For example, the State of Massachusetts spent \$52 million in public funds to cover health care for thousands of workers and their dependents at leading employers such as hospitals, universities, and the commonwealth. Four companies had more than 1000 workers who received public health benefits over one year: Wal-Mart (\$2.9 million), McDonalds, Dunkin' Donuts (\$3.1 million), and Stop & Shop (\$3 million)!

In the 109th Congress, CWA will promote legislation to ensure that more Americans receive the health care benefits they need. CWA will also support "Medicare fixes" to the new prescription drug law (Medicare Modernization Law), which established a new prescription drug benefit under Medicare. CWA will also fight efforts by the Bush Administration to drastically cut funding to the States for Medicaid by cutting administrative funds and converting Medicaid into a "block grant." President Bush's 2006 Federal Budget proposal will hinder the efforts of many CWA-represented public workers to perform their jobs efficiently. And finally, CWA will support legislation to improve patient safety and nurse staffing.

**NEXT Month: Medicaid and Medicare Prescription Benefits**

## AFL-CIO Night at Camden Yards

**Friday, June 17, 2005**

**Baltimore Orioles vs Colorado Rockies**



**Tickets are only \$5**

**We only have 100 tickets and they will be available on a first come, first serve basis.**

**Tickets are for Local 2108 union members and their family and friends**

**Contact the Local TODAY for yours!**

**301.459.2108**

**Tickets are for Upper Reserved seating.**

# Local 2108 Union Calendar

## May 2005

- 3 Chesapeake Complex Blood Drive
- 4 Chief Steward's Meeting 9:00am  
Local Office, Landover, MD
- 7 Walk To Cure Diabetes - The Mall in DC
- 8 Mothers Day!
- 11 Retired Member Club Meeting 11am  
at Local Office, Landover, MD
- 11 General Membership Meeting 6pm  
at American Legion Post 268, Wheaton, MD
- 11-15 CWA Customer Service Conference  
E. Rutherford, NJ
- 25 Stewards Meeting 6pm  
At Local Office, Landover, MD
- 30 Memorial Day - Local Office Closed  
Union Negotiated Holiday

## June 2005

- 1 Chief Steward's Meeting 9:00am  
Local Office, Landover, MD
- 1-3 CWA Health & Safety Conference  
Baltimore, MD
- 8 Retired Member Club Meeting 11am  
at Local Office, Landover, MD
- 8 General Membership Meeting 6pm  
at Local Office, Landover, MD
- 19 Fathers Day!
- 22 Stewards Meeting 6pm  
At Local Office, Landover, MD
- 24-26 CWA Civil Rights & Equity Conference  
Cleveland, OH

Visit Local 2108 On The Web: [www.cwainc2108.org](http://www.cwainc2108.org)

# It Pays To Belong To CWA

CWA President  
Morty Bahr  
Speaks at April  
Membership  
Meeting  
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