

Notice of CWA Local 2108 Officer Elections

Election of officers for Local 2108 will be held in October of this year.

Nominations will be conducted at the **October 12, 2005** membership meeting for the positions of President, Executive Vice President, Secretary-Treasurer and the two (2) Vice Presidents. If the October membership meeting is cancelled, nominations will be held at the November membership meeting.

Any member in good standing of Local 2108 may run for office if they wish.

Candidates must be present in order to be nominated. If a candidate cannot be present due to extenuating circumstances, a letter of acceptance, written and signed by the candidate, must be presented to Frank Walker, Chair of the Election Committee prior to nominations .

Ballots will be mailed on **Friday, October 28, 2005** and will be picked up and counted on **Friday, November 18, 2005**, beginning at 9:30 a.m.

Nominees may observe the process of assembling and mailing of ballots and the counting of ballots, or may appoint an observer to represent them, provided that individual is a member in good standing of the Local and has a letter from the candidate appointing them as observer. This may not be done on union-paid time.

Any candidate wishing to use the Local's facilities for the purpose of mailing out campaign literature should contact **Frank Walker** at the Local on **301.459.2108**. As membership list labels will no longer be printed, any candidate who wishes to mail campaign literature should forward their envelopes or flyers to the Local. Within four business days, names and addresses will be imprinted on the material. This may not be done on union-paid time. Expenses for campaign literature and postage will be borne by the candidate.

Any member needing a duplicate ballot should contact the Local on or before **November 9, 2005** to request it.

The election will be handled in accordance with Local 2108 Bylaws, The CWA Constitution and federal regulations. Any questions regarding the election should be directed to the Election Committee Chairperson, **Frank Walker**, at the Local.



From The President's Desk

ELECT FOR SUCCESS

This year marks my 35th year as a CWA member. Over the 35 years, I have tried my best to provide for my wife and children. Along the way there were many roadblocks and challenges to overcome in order to be successful. All in all, I can truly say I have been more than fortunate in my efforts.

I joined the union on my first day of employment with C&P Telephone Company in October of 1970. My union representative explained to me about paying a portion of my wages to provide health care to my family, a portion for union dues and saving another portion for an emergency such as a strike. While I was listening, I was thinking how in the world can I afford to pay all these fees on my \$89.50 a week wages?

Thirty-five years later I wonder what would have happened if I had not followed his advice.

I have gone through many good times and some bad times along the way, but the good times have out-numbered the bad times many times over. My two children have grown to be successful adults, working in union jobs and earning a good living for themselves and their families. At the end of the day I can truly say I have achieved most of the goals I set for myself along the way.

During all these years I have also worked for the success of our union. I have been an active union member most of my career, and have served as a shop steward, chief steward, Vice President and President. I am so grateful for all the opportunities I have had along the way.

As we approach Officer Elections here in Local 2108, I have thought long and hard about what is best for our union and its members going into 2006. Our current agreement with Verizon will not expire until August 2008. Over the next three years, the company and the union will go through many growing pains as we install the new technologies that will take us into the future.



President Campbell and Vice President Jenny Sylvester meet with Howard Dean, Democratic National Committee Chair, at the recent Win Back Maryland rally in Bethesda.

The AFL-CIO has changed as well. It is extremely clear that the union movement as a whole must change the way we do business if we are to survive. The declining number of union members across the nation clearly shows the need for changes. The changes must start at the top and work its way down to the shop floor in every union workplace.

New ideas and new activists will be needed to replace those which are not working well for us.

Six years ago, there was a need to change the leadership in Local 2108. When I ran for the office of President, my commitment was to bring together four other officers who were ready and willing to turn this Local around and get us well on the way towards being the power needed to win battles against our employers. I also committed to rebuild our steward body by enlisting new members, providing as much training as possible, and to provide the experience they will need to be prepared to step up as an Officer.

I am so proud of what we have achieved. There are over 170 union stewards in our Local, and all four officers I have served with over the past 6 years are the best of the best.

I am confident the Officers and steward body of Local 2108 are prepared and willing to take our union into the future.

I will be stepping down as President of Local 2108 at the end of this year. I do not plan to run in the next election, and plan to return to Verizon as an engineering assistant.

I do plan to apply for a shop steward position and will attend membership meetings.

We still have a lot of work to do.

I say we, because it does take all of us working together to succeed in this fight for our futures. I look forward to rejoining you in the workplace and look forward in joining you in doing

“DO WHATEVER IT TAKES!”

Bob

Communications Workers of America

2108 news

published monthly by
CWA Local 2108

Robert W. Campbell.....President and Editor
Amory Proctor.....Executive Vice President
Johnny M. Brown.....Secretary-Treasurer
Marilyn R. Irwin.....Vice President
Jenny K. Sylvester.....Vice President
Paul L. Goldbeck.....Managing Editor

Recording Announcements

(301) 459-8381: Avaya and Lucent
 (301) 459-8422: Verizon
 (301) 459-9541: VCSI



Local Office: (301) 459-2108

Toll Free: (800) 427-2108

Local FAX: (301) 459-1859

Web Site: www.cwlocal2108.org

RMC 2108: The Retired Members Club

By Dennis Strout, President RMC 2108

One of the hardest things I have to do each month is write an article for the newsletter. I am not a writer, never have been and never will be. Most months it's not so bad. We have a meeting and sometimes a guest speaker so I can write about those. There are also usually pictures to fill up space. August is the month we have no meeting.

No meeting, no guest speaker, no pictures. I'm on my own. Fortunately, there is a subject near and dear to all of us that I can write about.

SOCIAL SECURITY

When Congress reconvenes in September it will take up the Social Security debate with the intent on passing some kind of legislation to save the system. President Bush has said that any legislation must include PRIVATE ACCOUNTS. The majority of Americans don't want private accounts as part of social security but the President doesn't seem to care what the public wants.

Congress is going to try to give him what he wants. We retirees are a large block of voters. WE VOTE. We need to make sure that the Congress understands that. We also need to make sure that they understand that just because we are retired doesn't mean we forget easily. We will support and vote for those that support us.

Write, call or e-mail your representatives and let them know how you feel about this important issue.

Talk to your children and make sure that they understand that it is their futures as well as yours that is at stake. Get them involved. Attend rallies and lend your voice to stop destroying a program that has worked for 70 years.

We need to join together to save Social Security. Don't let George Bush have his way.



RMC2108 has fun too. Pictured above are some of the folks that went to Atlantic City with us for the day. The Club plans many trips during the year for our members.



Meetings provide a time for us to give you information you need in your daily lives. Are you a member?



The Club, in cooperation with Local 2108, cleans up Garden City Drive a couple of times a year.

Verizon Pharmacy Participant Changes

Wal-Mart and Walgreen pharmacies no longer honoring Medco

Effective September 1, 2005, Wal-Mart and Walgreen pharmacies have decided not to participate in the Medco network of pharmacies (*Ed Note: But why would we be going to Wal-Mart anyway?*).

A letter was sent out to all Medco participants who have used either Wal-Mart or Walgreen pharmacies in 2005, and advises them of the change and their local network alternatives.

According to Medco's access data, 99.7% of our members have a network pharmacy within one mile of their home. These letters were mailed out in the first week of August.

Blood Drive at the Chesapeake Complex

The Chesapeake Complex blood drive collected 79 pints of blood on the August 2nd and 3rd drive, just a few pints shy of the 85 pints collected on May 3rd & 4th drive.



Please remember to support the area businesses that made food donations.

Raulins Bakery, Beltsville Md 301 937-9595, donated donuts each day.

Pizza Boli, Old Columbia Pike 301 384-8900, provided pizza daily.

Our many thanks to all those who contributed to our blood drive, and we look forward to seeing you again soon.



Medical Benefits Update

You should have received your Update to Your Medical Benefits SPD Booklet within the past couple of months. The Local would like to make you aware of one of the changes that could be important to you.

UPDATED INFORMATION ON CERTIFICATES OF CREDITABLE COVERAGE

When any person's coverage under the plan ends for any reason, including the end of COBRA continuation coverage, the company will send that person a Certificate of Creditable Coverage, free of charge, as required by the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA).

This certificate may help the person receive coverage under another plan.

Specifically, this certificate may help reduce or eliminate exclusionary periods of coverage for pre-existing conditions under the plan. Without evidence of creditable coverage, you may be subject to a pre-existing condition exclusion for 12 months (18 months for late enrollees) after your enrollment date in your coverage.

You will also be provided with a certificate, free of charge, when you become entitled to elect COBRA continuation coverage, when your COBRA continuation coverage ceases, if you request it before losing coverage, or if you request it up to 24 months after losing coverage.

To request a certificate, access *Your Benefit Resources Website* or call the Verizon Benefits Center.

CWA Local 2108 Members

Personals

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

Garnette E. Walker-Ford, mother of **Rosemary Blackshear** who died on January 28, 2005.

Joseph Donald Murph, brother of **Jacque Bush** who died on June 28, 2005.

Lydia Peterbark, grandmother of **Asiya Abdella** who died on July 22, 2005.

Nathaniel Price, Sr., grandfather of **Yvette Holmes** who died on July 22, 2005.

Darell Dozier, a retired member who died on July 30, 2005.

Harold McBain, a retired member who died on August 6, 2005.

Arthur L. Brooks, brother of **Wallace Brooks** who died on August 10, 2005.

Ruth Alsop, mother of **Glen Alsop** and mother-in-law of **Martha Alsop** who died on August 12, 2005.

Warren Travis Holmes, brother of **Troy Holmes** who died on August 13, 2005.

Geneva Pitchford, mother of **Lillian Kersey** who died on August 18, 2005.

Michael Depangrazio, an active member who died on August 16, 2005.

Christopher Byrd, an active member who died on August 21, 2005.

Congratulations To:

Bronda Clark and **Marc Wilson** who were married on June 8, 2005.

Shelley Archer and **Trenton Barron** who were married on June 25, 2005

Traci Crawford on the birth of her grandson, **Makhi Williams** on August 18, 2005.

New Members

Don Kurz
Marc Singleton
Winston Jolly, Jr.
Arthur Ray Wilder

Ruben Flores
Nathaniel Patterson

Lakeshia Queen
Joseph Steelman
Kelly Nick

Ed Anderson
Lango Flanagan

Sandi Fisher
Fayette Myers

Anthony Queen
Mia Joyner

Eric Daughtry
Michael Nalesnik

Transferred

Don Kurz
Jesse Lee Walker

Joe Cooke
Wesley Crawford

Ed Anderson
Towanda Thomas

Barbara Oliver
Dabra Watters

General Membership Meetings

The Local 2108 General Membership Meetings take place on the second Wednesday of every month, alternating between the Local Office in Landover, and American Legion Post #268 in Wheaton. All meetings start at 6 pm.

Retired Members Club Meetings

The 2108 Retired Members Club Meetings take place on the second Wednesday of every month, at the Local Office in Landover.

All meetings start at 11 am.

Union Plus

Education Services

Unlock a World of Education Opportunities.



The ever-soaring cost of college tuition and vocational/technical training can make the goal of earning a diploma and getting a better job seem out of reach. That is why the Union Plus Education Services program provides working families with a wide-range of educational assistance.

Scholarships

Two scholarship programs are available through the Union Plus Education Foundation.

Union Plus Scholarship - Awards ranging from \$500 to \$4,000 are granted to recipients. Applications are available each year beginning Sept. 1. Union members, spouses and dependent children are encouraged to apply. Members can visit www.unionplus.org/scholarships for an application, or they can send their name, address and phone number, along with the name of their international union on a post-card to: Union Plus Education Foundation, c/o Union Privilege, P.O. Box 34800, Washington, DC 20043-4800.

Union Plus National Labor College Scholarship - Earn your Bachelor of Arts degree while continuing your trade union work. Each year, the Union Plus National Labor College Scholarship awards a total of \$25,000 to eligible students attending the National Labor College in Silver Spring, MD. To learn more about the college degree program, visit www.georgemary.org. To request a scholarship application, call The National Labor College Office of Student Services at 301-431-5404.

Loans

College Loans

Available to students attending accredited colleges and universities, these loans pay for tuition, room-and-board, books, fees, computers and other expenses. To apply online or receive financial aid counseling, members can visit www.unionplus.org/education or call 1-877-881-1022.

Consolidation Loans

Juggling multiple loan payments can be overwhelming. With a federal consolidation loan, all your federal loans can be consolidated into one easy, lower payment — which means more cash in your pocket. Just one call to 1-800-338-5000, can put you on the road to an easier financial future.

Education Planning

To help members prepare for college entrance exams, determine where they should go to college, how to pay for college, and make sense out of the FAFSA financial aid application process, have them visit www.unionplus.org/education.

Who's eligible?

Any union family member in need of money to help pay for education.

Member Access

Visit www.unionplus.org/education or call 1-877-881-1022.

Program Advantages

- ★ Union Plus Education Foundation Scholarships
- ★ Education loans for education-related expenses at any accredited college, university, trade, technical or professional school
- ★ Consolidation Loans. For information call 1-800-338-5000
- ★ Financial aid counseling over the telephone, and online services that make planning for college easier and less stressful
- ★ Strike assistance benefit on student loans
- ★ Loans and counseling provided by a unionized shop, American Education Services
- ★ Upromise - everyday purchases help pay for education
- ★ Discounts on college textbooks



Education Services

Working For Working Families
www.unionplus.org/education

SE HABLA
 ESPAÑOL

1-877-881-1022

The Right to Refuse Unsafe Work

Thousands of workers die or are injured because of on-the-job accidents each year. Many more are exposed to unhealthy conditions that cause serious illnesses years later.

When does a worker have the right to refuse dangerous work?

On February 26, 1980, the United States Supreme Court issued a landmark ruling which more clearly defined a worker's right to refuse work where an employee(s) has (have) reasonable apprehension that death or serious injury or illness might occur as a result of performing the work. The unanimous decision came in a 1974 case against Whirlpool Corporation in which two workers refused to crawl out on a screen from which a co-worker had fallen to his death only nine days earlier. A Cincinnati, Ohio appeals court ruled in favor of the worker's rights in "Whirlpool" and the Supreme Court affirmed that decision. (At the time the Supreme Court took the Whirlpool case, there were two other appeals court rulings that had been decided the opposite way. These cases were issued by courts in New Orleans (1977) and Denver (1978).

The two workers in the "Whirlpool" case were told to go out on a screen 20 feet above the floor to retrieve small appliance parts which had fallen from a conveyor belt system above. The screen was in place to protect workers in the plant from falling parts. The retrieval assignment had resulted in other workers falling partially or completely through the screen. Claiming that the screen was unsafe, two employees refused to carry out the assignment. Whirlpool supervisors sent the workers home for the day and withheld about six hours pay.

In its decision, the court emphasized that the OSHA Act provides a worker with the right to choose not to perform an assigned task due to reasonable apprehension of death or serious injury coupled with a reasonable belief that no less drastic alternative is available. Further, the Court held that a worker who utilizes this OSHA Act protection may not be discriminated against for such action.

However, the Court also indicated that an employee who refused work based on the regulation runs the risk of discharge or reprimand in the event a court subsequently finds that she/he acted unreasonably or in bad faith.

As noted, the employer docked the two workers about six hours pay in the Whirlpool case. The Supreme Court ruled that the OSHA Act does not require an employer to pay a worker who refuses to perform an assigned task in the face of imminent danger. Rather, the Act simply provides that in such cases the employer may not discriminate against the involved worker(s). Thus, the Court has left this issue to be decided by labor and management through collective bargaining. Members of unions that do not negotiate the necessary protective language in their contracts should not expect to be paid for the refusal to work period. This will be true even where an employer is found guilty of violating the OSHA Act.

In light of the Supreme Court's decision, what should CWA members who are faced with an imminent danger situation do?

The Supreme Court has said that a worker may refuse unsafe work where she/he has refused the job in good faith. Good faith may be interpreted as an honest belief that the job was unsafe and unusually and objectively dangerous.

Good faith can be demonstrated by the manner by which you refuse unsafe work:

- Explain the hazard to the supervisor and your steward,
- Offer to do other, safe work until the hazard is corrected,
- Give management a chance to respond before doing anything else,
- If the condition isn't corrected, call OSHA and request an "imminent danger" inspection,
- Do not walk off the job. If management won't fix the hazard, force them to take the next step. Make sure you have expressed your reasons for refusing the job and your willingness to do other work, clearly and in the presence of your steward and/or other workers.

If you're fired or disciplined:

- File a grievance immediately,
- File an unfair labor practice charge with the NLRB immediately but within 180 days, and
- File a Section 11(c) discrimination complaint with OSHA immediately but within 30 days.

The bottom line is to stay cool. Don't let management provoke you into rash action that could hurt your case later.

Proving that your job was "abnormally and objectively dangerous" is a matter of documentation:

- Was the job one you'd never done before? Or, had the conditions of the job changed recently?
- Did you protest the job before?
- Did other workers protest the job before? Did others refuse to do the job?
- Was the company in violation of OSHA, state, or local safety and health regulations?
- Many chemicals and conditions are clearly dangerous but aren't covered by any standards. Have workers been injured or made sick doing your job? Just what chemicals were you working with?

If any CWA member refuses unsafe work, she/he should notify your job steward or local officer. In turn, this information should be made available to the CWA Representative and the CWA Occupational Safety and Health Department.

What Can You Do?

All CWA members should make sure that their employer is maintaining a safe and healthful workplace. The key to making the workplace safe for all CWA members is strong, active local safety and health committees. The committee can identify dangerous conditions at the workplace and discuss them with management. If the employer refuses to cooperate, the committee can request an OSHA inspection. The committee should always coordinate its activities through the local officers, the CWA Representatives, and negotiated safety and health committees.

In addition, CWA members may obtain information and assistance by contacting the:

CWA Occupational Safety and Health Department
501 Third Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20001-2797
Webpage: www.cwasafetyandhealth.org
Phone: (202) 434-1160.

Local 2108 Union Calendar

September 2005

- 5 **Labor Day**
Union Negotiated Holiday
- 7 **Chief Steward's Meeting 9:00am**
Local Office, Landover, MD
- 14 **Retired Member Club Meeting 11:00am**
at Local Office, Landover, MD
- 14 **General Membership Meeting 6:00pm**
at American Legion Post 268, Wheaton, MD
- 28 **Stewards Meeting 6:00pm**
Local Office, Landover, MD
at American Legion Post 268, Wheaton, MD

October 2005

- 5 **Chief Steward's Meeting 9:00am**
Local Office, Landover, MD
- 12 **Retired Member Club Meeting 11:00am**
at Local Office, Landover, MD
- 12 **General Membership Meeting 6:00pm**
OFFICER NOMINATIONS
at Local Office, Landover, MD
- 26 **Stewards Meeting 6:00pm**
Local Office, Landover, MD
- 28 **Officer Election Ballots Mailed**

Visit Local 2108 On The Web: www.cwacal2108.org

It Pays To Belong To CWA

**Local 2108
Officer
Elections
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