



CWA President Emeritus Morty Bahr

Transition to the Future

By LaTasha Carpenter, CWA Local 2108 Delegate and Chief Steward



New CWA President Larry Cohen

On the first day of the 67th CWA Convention, more than 2,500 delegates and guests from all across the country said farewell to President **Morty Bahr** after serving his union for more than 20 years. On the last day, the delegates electing a new president, former Executive Vice President **Larry Cohen**.

Delegates at the convention also elected a new Executive Vice President, Jeff Rechenbach, and re-elected Barbara Easterling as CWA Secretary-Treasurer.

In his farewell address to the convention delegates, **Morty Bahr** spoke of big business, Congress, and the White House current attacks on Social Security, Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA), overtime and the NLRB. Morty also addressed the current labor split between the AFL-CIO and five disaffiliated unions.



Local 2108 officers and delegates with new CWA President Larry Cohen (left) and (top row, from left) CWA Executive Vice President Jeff Rechenbach, CWA District 2 Vice President Pete Catucci and CWA Secretary-Treasurer Barbara Easterling.

Social Security: Social Security is not in serious financial trouble. Nothing is more important to a worker than retirement security. And, Social Security is an important part of that security. Much misleading information has been put out about the solvency of the trust fund. But, the only threat to Social Security is Bush's attempt to privatize it by establishing private accounts, much like the 401(k)-type plans that exist today.

It is more than a coincidence that at the same time Bush put forth his plan, Gov. Schwarzenegger announced he would change the California public employee pension plan from a defined benefit plan to a 401(k) plan.

Just as the American people have seen through the Bush plan, organized labor in California has been able to force the Governor to back off at least until next year. CWA members need to recognize that both of these proposals are an attack on defined benefit plans. When the President of the U.S. and the Governor of the California both attack defined benefit plans, it gives courage to private employers to do the same.

In 1988 there were 112,000 defined benefit plans. Today, that number has declined to under 30,000 covering only about 20 percent of America's workers. If Bush were to succeed in his privatization effort, it would be a certainty that in the next round of bargaining we would be defending our defined benefit pension plans.

President Bush has made Social Security privatization the centerpiece of his second term, while totally ignoring the 45 million Americans who have no health care insurance, the increasing pressure on retirees to pay for more of their health care and the year-after-year double-digit rise in cost. **Health care is in crisis - Social Security is not.**

Family Medical Leave Act: We know how important the FMLA is to our members and we know how much employers despise the Act. Reports are that the DOL is looking to change the rules in two areas. First, employers want a leave for a serious illness to be a minimum of ten days. Half of all FMLA use involves serious illnesses lasting fewer than ten days. Management also wants a four-hour minimum for other intermittent leaves. Currently, workers can take as little as an hour.

Obviously, any rule that eliminates the ability of a worker to take short leaves, even increments of several hours to care for a family member or requires a worker to take 10 days when only two or three are necessary would impose an enormous burden on families at a time of distress.



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From The President's Desk

TOOLS OF UNIONISM

In the 1880's there was an English landowner who rented homes to many of the townspeople. At some point, he raised the rents to an unbearable level for all his renters. They went to him one at a time to try to negotiate their rent, but all were unsuccessful. The renters banded together as one and sent a representative to speak for all of them. Once again they were rejected.

The renters called a meeting of all the affected townspeople to discuss what options they had. It was suggested that the whole town isolate the landowner and not do business with him until he relented.

His income stopped and he had to give in to the demands of the people he depended on for his livelihood. This was the beginning of people using their collective power to succeed where failure was inevitable. The landowner's name was Thomas Boycott.

Boycotts, mobilization, picketing and strikes are tools the Labor Movement has in the union arsenal.

These tools are very effective when used correctly.

Many of you have stood up to our employers time and time again and each time the company has seen the benefit of negotiating settlements which we could accept.

These tools are not only used to bargain contracts, they can be used to change people's lives.

Right now, all across the country, employees of Wal-Mart are constantly threatened with discipline for speaking about joining a union. Many attempts have been made to unionize Wal-Mart workers and many times we have failed. When we have won, the owners simply closed down the store, or shipped the work to a contractor.



President Campbell meets AFL-CIO President John Sweeney at the recent CWA Convention in Chicago.

In our own area of employment, we see the same pattern happening at Verizon Wireless. CWA has tried to get a foothold in the wireless side of our business for many years.

I am sorry to say the only results so far are that many of the brave activists who tried to mobilize their co-workers to join the union were fired. In my mind this is totally unacceptable.

I do not and will not use Verizon Wireless for my cell phone use.

The wireless service I do use has signed a neutrality clause that was bargained by CWA. If and when the majority of their employees sign union cards, the company automatically recognizes CWA as their exclusive bargaining agent, and then obligates themselves to sit down and negotiate with the union.

The company I am talking about is Cingular Wireless, owned by SBC. They recognize the need for labor peace, and have agreed to remain neutral and to not run an anti-union campaign when their employees are trying to make such an important decision.

This approach has benefited not only the employees, but has made SBC more profitable as well.

As Verizon workers, we have done the hard work for many, many years to make our employer successful. As a result, Verizon has built a completely new company, free from unions and contracts which would bind them to treat their employees with respect and to share the success and profits the workers have earned.

Think twice before you buy.

We as union members need to think of these unacceptable business practices when we buy services and products in our communities. It is up to us to band together as one in order to stop the flow of profits to companies who disrespect their employees. In my mind I cannot justify saving a few dollars at the cost of someone being mistreated, or worse, fired.

There are 13 million union members in this country and we have a voice which will be heard if we are willing to **"DO WHATEVER IT TAKES!"**

Bob

Communications Workers of America

2108 news

published monthly by
CWA Local 2108

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RMC 2108: The Retired Members Club

By Calvin Foster, Vice President RMC 2108

While President **Dennis Strout** was on vacation, Vice President **Calvin Foster** presided over the September meeting, assisted by Treasurer **Janice Crowe** and Secretary **Diane Reynolds**.

Although no new business was raised at the meeting, several reports were discussed, and a shop-till-you-drop bus trip to the Rehoboth, DE outlet shops was planned for mid-November.

The Club received a thank you letter from the Hospice of Howard County acknowledging the \$50 gift from RMC 2108 in the name of **Kathy Harrison's** father, Benjamin Franklin Harrison.

The Social Committee report by **Janice Crowe** thanked **Bonnie** and **Roger Roden** for their wonderful lunches provided at RMC meetings over the past few years. They will be surely missed since they have decided to move out of the area soon.

Janice also is planning the shop-till-you-drop bus trip to the Rehoboth outlet stores tentatively set for Friday, November 11th. The trip will cost only \$32 per person, and it should be a great time for everyone. Times will be announced at the next meeting. See Janice at the meeting for more information, or to make reservations.



RMC was well represented at the 67th Annual CWA Convention in late August by Vice President Calvin Foster (left), Roger wood (center) and President Dennis Strout (right).

Calvin Foster reported on the results of the CWA RMC meeting at the 67th CWA Annual Convention held in Chicago in August. Newly elected CWA President **Larry Cohen** spoke to the group and indicated the "RMC will become even more important in the future of organizing within CWA."



Secretary Diane Reynolds reports on finances

The RMC 2108 will also be changing our name soon. The Retired Members Club will officially be called the Retired Members Chapter to reflect the importance and relevance of retired members in the union.

The Alliance for Retired Americans Conference was held in Washington, DC recently, and **Kathy Harrison** reported on the importance of political awareness and political activity of retirees, especially during uncertain times in national politics.

Our next meeting will be on Wednesday, October 12th at 11:00am in the basement of 4301 Garden City Drive in Landover, MD. We hope to see many of you there.



RMC Members listen to reports by the RMC Executive Board at the September meeting.

Officer Elections Notice for CWA 2108

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.

Hear Ye..Hear Ye....CWA Wins Vacation Case...Again

District Court rules in favor of CWA



The 1998 Common Issues Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) established percentages (17% in 1999 and 18% in subsequent years) for the number of employees in each vacation administrative group permitted to schedule vacation in a given week. Verizon believed the percentages applied ONLY during the initial vacation selection period, and that requests that came after the initial selection period should be granted as force and load permitted. CWA believed that the language allowed 17/18% of the force in each vacation administrative group to be on vacation at any time regardless of when the request was made to management.

CWA filed grievances objecting to Verizon's position and took a consolidated grievance to arbitration. On May 1, 200, the arbitrator sustained CWA's grievance, and ruled that the Company MUST allow vacation requests at any time as long as the requests do not result in more than 18% of the force on vacation. Verizon disagreed with the arbitrator's decision, but applied it to the extent it did not contradict other agreements between the Company and CWA. Verizon held that it was NOT obligated to allow unrestricted vacation requests up to the 18% limit if the requests were made within 24 hours of the start of the tour, and these 24 hour requests were covered ONLY under the Short Notice Excused Work Day (SNEWD) provision of the contract.

Because Verizon and CWA were in disagreement about the application of the arbitrator's decision, Verizon and CWA filed cross Motions for Summary Judgment with the US District Court in the District of Columbia. The Company sought to compel the union to file another grievance

if it objected to using SNEWDs as the appropriate mechanism to receive time off work within 24 hours of the start of a tour. CWA sought to compel Verizon to allow unrestricted requests for vacation up to the 18% limit even if the requests were made within 24 hours of the start of the tour.

On August 20, 2005, the US District Court ruled in favor of CWA.

Verizon initially decided to appeal the decision by the US District Court, but has since decided not to do so. Effective Monday, September 26, 2005, request for vacation should be granted at any time as long as the requests do not result in more than 18% of the force in a vacation administrative work group on vacation.

Once again, it **PAYS TO BELONG TO CWA**.

CWA Local 2108 Members

Personals

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

John Brice, father-in-law of **Marie Brice** who died on August 24, 2005.

Margaret J.A. Morgan, mother of **Margaret Morgan** who died on August 30, 2005.

Denise Queen, mother of **Lakeshia Queen** who died on September 6, 2005.

Congratulations To:

Simone Brown on the birth of her grandson, **Christian Alexander Savoy** on August 18, 2005.

Sheila and **Laurence Cary** on the birth of their son, **Laurence Cary, Jr.** on August 30, 2005.

Shannon Opfer and **Rob Scott** who were married on September 5, 2005.

Recently Retired:

Michael Nalesnik **Larry Christian**

Stanley Pitcher **Michael Blake**

Ronald Hilliard

New Members

Charles White

Eric Bjorklund

Lakeshia Queen

Demitrius Thomas

Ed Anderson

Karen Jarvis

Barbara Oliver

Steven Fletcher

Simone Brown

Anthony Queen

Ian Williams

Dilcia Nixon

Transferred

Charles White

Michael McGuire

Derrick Huntley

Sean Curry

Lakeshia Queen

Bobbie E. Davis

Karen Lewis

Madia Hall

Anthony Queen

Terrance Mooney

Frederick Hall, Jr.

Emerson Goldring

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.



Labor Cares - Labor Shares Through The United Way

Support the Union Choice for charitable giving

[The Community Services Agency of the Metropolitan Washington Council, AFL-CIO](#)

Local Labor's Charity providing: Information and Assistance for working families, Educational Programs for Unions and their members, Future Force youth workforce development program, Career Path worker training and upgrade project, Holiday Basket Project for families in need.

1925 K Street, NW. Suite 410, Washington DC 20006 Phone: 202.857.0480

email: kmkirch@dclabor.org

DESIGNATION NUMBER 033868

Backup Care Options: New Benefit for CWA Members

Backup Care Options is a unique backup care program to support CWA/Verizon Mid-Atlantic Region Members when they experience a temporary breakdown in their normal care arrangements and need to get to work.

Through this benefit, you have access to experienced Backup Care Specialists 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. These Specialists find and schedule care on your behalf so you can get to work with confidence, knowing your loved ones are in skilled hands. Anyone who counts on you as their "primary" caregiver – infants through the elderly – qualifies for this program. Adult family members who need care do not have to be living with you.



WHEN YOU NEED IT MOST

Use Backup Care Options when you need temporary care for your loved ones. Example situations include:

- School or child care center is closed for holidays, parent teacher conferences, etc.
- Your regular caregiver is ill or taking vacation time
- Your child or loved one is ill and requires care treatment at home
- Your spouse or loved one is recovering from medical treatment
- You are travelling on business and need care either at home or in your destination city

AFFORDABLE CARE

ACFC (Advisory Council on Family Care) covers the majority of costs for the backup care program. You are

bills for the co-pay within 1-2 months following care.

- \$15 co-pay per usage
- 1 usage = 1 day of center-based care
- 1 usage = up to 10 hours of home care (for up to 3 dependents)
- 100 hours of care available from September 1, 2005 - August 31, 2006

TRUSTED NETWORK OF PROVIDERS

Backup Care Options has a carefully selected and contracted National Provider Network, which consists of outstanding child care centers and highly qualified home care professionals available to deliver temporary care for your loved ones. To ensure quality care, all child care centers must meet or exceed state licensing regulations and guidelines including background checks, health and safety standards, and staff to child ratios. Contracted home care agencies in the network require that all caregivers are FBI background checked, CPR/First Aid certified, licensed, insured and have relevant experience in child or adult/elder care.

Child Care Centers

- Exceptional Facilities
- Close to home or work
- For healthy children

Home Care for Children & Adults

- Leading Agencies
- Qualified professionals
- 24-hour care available
- For healthy or mildly ill children or adults

REGISTER TODAY

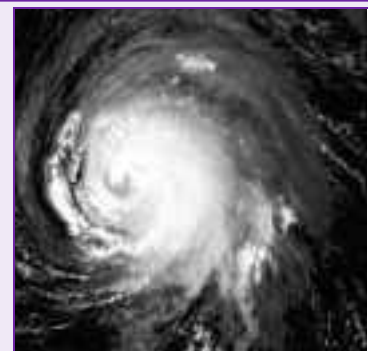
To register or find out more information on this benefit for CWA-Verizon members, call 800.557.0847 or go to www.workoptionsgroup.com.

Give To Hurricane Victims

Donate through CWA Disaster Relief Fund Today

Hurricanes Katrina and Rita caused significant damage to Gulf Coast states, and the calls for assistance are unending. Whether or not the government helps, doesn't matter. **YOU CAN HELP NOW!**

CWA Locals and retiree chapters from around the country have mobilized to provide support for members in the wake of the hurricanes. Delegates to the CWA convention in Chicago last week voted to direct up to \$4 million in funds to hurricane relief and members visiting the CWA website have donated thousands more to the **CWA Disaster Relief Fund**, which provides direct aid to CWA members and retirees. Through the **CWA Disaster Relief Fund**, you will have a tremendous impact on the lives of members and retirees who have been affected by the hurricanes. Your valuable financial support will be given directly to CWA members and retirees trying to rebuild their lives -- at a time when many have little to build on.



The **CWA Disaster Relief Fund** is chartered as a 501(c)(3) organization separate from CWA's operating funds. 100% of your donation will go directly to CWA members and retirees. Donations to the **CWA Disaster Relief Fund** are tax-deductible. To help out even more, Verizon will match your donation, dollar for dollar, if you contribute your donation through the Verizon Foundation site.

Visit verizon.com/foundation, and make your contribution to the **CWA Disaster Relief Fund**, and help unfortunate CWA members in the states affected by this terrible disaster.

CWA 67th Annual Convention

CONTINUED, from page 1

But, Big Business is not concerned one iota about the hardship such changes would impose on workers. The NAM, U.S. Chamber of Commerce and the Society for Human Resources Management, along with 75 other trade groups, have formed the National Coalition to Protect Family Leave, an oxymoron if there ever was one.

They say changing the family leave rule is at the top of industry's "to do" list now that it got Congress to withdraw the Clinton-era ergonomics rule on repetitive motion injuries and saw the Bush Administration tailor the nation's overtime pay rules more to its liking.

President Bush and his corporate allies seek to turn the clock back to the days when workers had to choose between family and job.

Overtime and Team Act: There is a current bill in Congress that will change overtime after 40 hours in a week to after 80 hours in two weeks. The boss could work you 55 hours in one week and 25 hours in the next with no overtime payments. Coupled with this is a bill that would permit the employer to give the workers comp time in lieu of overtime. The Bush Administration refers to both bills as being "Family Friendly."

Then there is the **Team Act**. This will permit the employer to appoint employees to a committee and then negotiate wages and conditions of employment with their own appointed committee.

National Labor Relations Board: This year, we celebrated the 70th anniversary of the passage of the National Labor Relations Act, commonly known as the Wagner Act – Labor's Magna Carta.

The Act established the National Labor Relations Board to administer the part of the Act that dealt with workers' ability to form unions and bargain collectively.

The Bush-packed NLRB has, over the past four years, meticulously eroded the rights of workers. And, they make no apologies as they dismantle historic precedents.

On May 20 this year, NLRB Chairman Battista, in a speech, said the following: "Obviously, the Board majority would reflect, to some degree, the governing philosophy of the appointing president."

Last year alone, the Board majority reversed 45 prior decisions that had been favorable to workers. Since the NLRB has largely become a tool for employers, more unions have been following CWA's lead to avoid the Board where possible and to bargain to organize to win card check agreements.

Our success and the growth of this movement have caught the attention of the Administration. In a recent speech, Chairman Battista fired a shot across our bow he blasted unions for endorsing card check and neutrality agreements instead of "ballot box democracy" of secret ballot elections.

He made no mention about employer threats and intimidation, or that one worker every 23 minutes is discharged while trying to bring a union into their workplaces.

In CWA alone, during the past four years we have taken care of



President Bob Campbell readies his report as chairman of the CWA Finance Committee, responsible for a \$96 million budget.

92 organizers who were fired for union activity at a cost to our union of \$571,688. We will continue to support any worker who has the courage to fight to bring CWA into his workplace.

More From Convention

Delegates from CWA District 4 simultaneously express regrets of losing their District Vice President **Jeff Rechenbach** and embraced him as the new Executive Vice President of CWA. Many of the delegates present were surprised to learn Rechenbach's work with CWA began at the age of 19 when he was elected president of a 2,000 member local in Cleveland, Ohio.

Barbara Easterling expressed disappointment with the current split in labor. She agreed with guest speaker **John Sweeney**, President of the AFL-CIO, who said that unions of the AFL-CIO "are determined to focus our energy, not on those who are trying to tear our movement apart, but on the greedy corporations and the right-wing elected officials who are trying to tear us apart." She stressed that organizing and political action are equally important and reminded the convention floor "we have disagreed before, but have always been able to find our way. What we need is permanent global solidarity to win this fight. We do not grow by subtracting and dividing but by adding and multiplying."

Larry Cohen spoke about the first resolution adopted by the convention floor, "CWA— Ready for the Future. It calls for gathering the "collective wisdom" of all CWA members, leaders and staff through a series of meetings at every level that will "examine our union thoroughly and thoughtfully from top to bottom in order to best represent our members." Larry stressed, "Resolution one starts with each local, the core of our union. Division is easy; it can be created through any conflict. A common vision of our future, a willingness to take some risks, a commitment to change is more difficult. But CWA is up to the challenge, and with all of us working together, we can make it happen. All of us together, using our diversity and understanding it to make us stronger...young members and retired members, minorities, women and men, straight and gay, all sectors... diversity of leadership, as well as membership -- all working together. That is our strength and that will be the source of our success."

Local 2108 Union Calendar

October 2005

- 5 **Chief Stewards' 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**

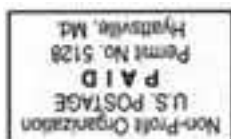
November 2005

- 9 **Retired Member Club Meeting 11:00am**
at Local Office, Landover, MD
- 9 **General Membership Meeting 6:00pm**
at American Legion Post 268, Wheaton, MD
- 9 **Last day to request duplicate ballot**
for Officer Election
- 10-12 **Chief Steward Training**
Ocean City, MD
- 11 **Veterans Day Holiday**
Union Negotiated Holiday
- 18 **Ballots counted for Officer Election**
- 23 **Stewards' Meeting**
CANCELLED
- 24-25 **Thanksgiving Day Holidays**
Union Negotiated Holidays

Visit Local 2108 On The Web: www.cwa/local2108.org

It Pays To Belong To CWA

Local 2108
Officer
Elections
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