

Wal-Mart...Up Yours!

Maryland First State to Make Corporations Pay Their Fair Share

In a significant win for working families, the Maryland Legislature late on January 12 overrode Republican Gov. **Robert Ehrlich's** veto of a bill that would require large corporations to provide affordable health care for their Maryland employees.

In passing the Fair Share Health Care bill, Maryland became the first state to require its largest employers to spend 8 percent of their payroll on health care for their workers. Of the four employers in the state with more than 10,000 workers, only Wal-Mart does not meet the 8 percent threshold for employee health care. In May 2005, Ehrlich—with a top Wal-Mart executive by his side—vetoed the bill.

"What the Maryland victory shows is that the tide is turning because working people are not just fed up—they are ready to get active to set our country in a different direction, one state at a time," says AFL-CIO President **John J. Sweeney**. "The time is ripe for change."

Maryland is among 33 states where working families, their unions and community allies are joining with the AFL-CIO in launching Fair Share Health Care campaigns to ensure the largest corporations stop shifting health care insurance costs onto workers, taxpayers and other businesses.

Fair Share Health Care legislation will reduce the bill taxpayers pay to cover profitable corporations' employee expenses, ease the financial strain states face in growing Medicaid costs and help level the playing field between companies that provide good jobs and benefits and those that don't.

Among corporations forcing communities to provide public health care, Wal-Mart pays its hundreds of thousands of employees such low wages they can't afford company health benefits. Although Wal-Mart made \$10 billion last year in profits, 46 percent of the children of Wal-Mart's 1.33 million U.S. workers are either uninsured or on Medicaid, according to Wal-Mart's own information. In addition, fewer than half of Wal-Mart's workers have health care coverage on the job, according to an October 2003 AFL-CIO report.

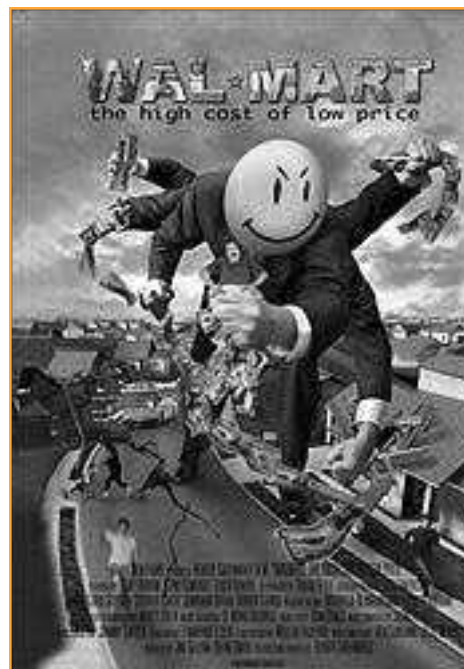
Many Wal-Mart workers and their families turn to emergency rooms and other public health services as their only health care option. In 12 of the 13 states where data has been released and analyzed, Wal-Mart workers rely on public health programs more than workers from any other company in those states.



WAL-MART
Always LOW Benefits... Always.

Michigan, Wisconsin and Washington are among states considering similar legislation.

Two polls released January 10 show the majority of Marylanders believe Ehrlich, a staunch supporter of President **George W. Bush**, is wrong and that Wal-Mart should be required to spend more on health benefits for its 17,000 employees in Maryland. According to a Zogby International poll, some 66 percent of adults say legislators should overrule Ehrlich's veto, as did 55 percent of those contacted in a Gonzales-Arscott Research poll.



From The President's Desk

It's All About UNION

February is Black History Month. Addressing the AFL-CIO convention in 1961, **Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.** observed:

"Negroes are almost entirely a working people. There are pitifully few Negro millionaires and few Negro employers. Our needs are identical with labor's needs - decent wages, fair working conditions, livable housing, old age security, health and welfare measures, conditions in which families can grow, have education for their children and respect in the community."

August 28th, 1963 is a historic date in our nations history. This is the day of the "March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom." Although best remembered for Dr. Martin Luther King's "I Have A Dream" speech, it's been lost in history that this march was the realization of a lifelong dream belonging to one of the marches principle organizers, **A. Phillip Randolph**.

From the day of his arrival in Harlem in 1911, Mr. Randolph had been in the thick of the struggle for freedom for Black Americans. He began to come into his own when a group of Pullman porters came to him for help. The porters wanted the right to bargain for better wages and improvements in working conditions. They wanted a chance to run their own affairs. After a number of secret meetings, the organization of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters was formed in August 1925. It was a long and tough fight to get the powerful Pullman Company to sit down and bargain with the workers. It took 12 long years.

A. Philip Randolph's chosen home was the labor movement, which he believed to be real home of all working men and women. While he supported the needs of Blacks as Blacks, Mr. Randolph also maintained that those who are poor, or earn little money whether they are Black or White have basic interests in common, and that they should join together.

Communications Workers of America

2108 news

published monthly by
CWA Local 2108

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President Les Evans

An important colleague of Randolph was **Bayard Rustin**. At the end of 1962 Randolph began to talk to organizer Bayard Rustin about staging a big Washington demonstration. They conceived of two days of rallying and lobbying "to embody in one gesture civil rights as well as national economic demands." Dr. King had also been thinking about some new and larger form of demonstration. The synergy of these giants of the civil rights and labor movements culminated in the historic "March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom".

The values embraced by Dr. King and Mssr.'s Randolph and Rustin remain as important today as they were in 1963. As Mr. Randolph put it:

"The history of the labor movement in America proves that the employing classes recognize no race lines, They will exploit a White man as readily as a Black man . . . they will exploit any race or class in order to make profits."

We have only to read today's newspapers or watch the six o'clock news to see that Corporate America still does all it can to strip the American worker of the basic dignity and human rights of organizing, a living wage and affordable health care. Whether it's Verizon stripping it's employees of the promise of a decent retirement and health care coverage, or the retail giant Wal Mart passing its responsibility to its employees on to the rest of society to pay for health care.

As Dr. King put it in his speech on that fateful August day over 42 years ago, "We have also come to this hallowed spot to remind America of the fierce urgency of Now". Now is the time to step up and volunteer your time. Now is the time for all of us to re-double our efforts in making sure that all working people have the right to the basic dignity of safe working conditions, a decent standard of living, healthcare and economic security in retirement.

Now is the time to get involved in your Union.

In Solidarity,

Les



RMC 2108 Retirees Corner

As all of you know by now the Maryland Legislature has voted to override the Governors veto of the Fair Share Health Care Bill. This was known as the Wal Mart bill because the way it was written it would only affect Wal Mart. The bill states that companies employing ten thousand or more people must spend at least 8% of their payroll on health care or pay a penalty to the states Medicaid fund. Wal Mart and the business controlled republicans fought this bill to the bitter end and still now are considering law suits to stop it. The fight is not over yet but Wall Mart is on the losing side in this one.

Two other states have introduced legislation the same as Maryland, West Virginia and Kentucky. Thirty two other states are considering like legislation also. If I was Wal Mart I would take a step back and think about maybe changing my policies concerning health care for my employees.

The Maryland Legislature also overrode the Governors veto of the minimum wage bill. The minimum wage in Maryland is now \$6.15 an hour.

ATT RETIREES

AT&T discontinued check deductions prior to bargaining because they didn't know what the outcome of bargaining would be. Regrettably, AT&T failed to restart the pension check deduction for life insurance premiums when bargaining was completed.

Supposedly, AT&T has sent a letter to all affected retirees explaining what happened and telling them that they will need to write a check for the January premium. CWA has not yet seen the letter but when we do it will be posted on the Communications and Technologies web site: www.cwa-comtech.org

All subsequent life insurance premiums are supposed to continue via pension check deduction.

AT&T retiree medical and drug plans have been changed due to bargaining. I have a summary that I will make copies of and have available at meetings if anyone wants one.

Upcoming social events of the chapter, Fri. Feb. 24 at 8pm Murder Mystery at Laurel Mill Playhouse Wed. May 17 Atlantic City bus trip. Contact Janice Crowe for details.

VIS Contract Bargaining to Resume

On Friday afternoon, January 6th, District One Vice President Chris Shelton announced that formal bargaining for a new contract between CWA and Verizon Information Services will resume on Monday afternoon in New York City.

"The solidarity of our members and the strength of our unfair labor practice strike and mobilization activities have persuaded management that it's time to get back to the bargaining table," Shelton said. "We hope that serious bargaining will now produce an agreement that meets the needs of our members to protect their wages and working conditions."

Shelton cautioned, however, that hard bargaining must still take place in order to reach a contract settlement. "We must be prepared to continue our fight if we cannot achieve a fair contract at bargaining. Our members at VIS have stood strong for ten weeks and I know that all of us will continue to do whatever is necessary to achieve what our members need in our next contract."

The initial movement towards resumption of bargaining began with high-level contacts between Shelton, CWA National Union President Larry Cohen and top Verizon officials, including CEO Ivan Seidenberg and Human Resources Director Mark Reed. These contacts were followed by informal exchanges of ideas over the last two weeks between District One Assistant to the Vice President Dennis Trainor and top representatives of Verizon Information Services.



Based on these discussions, CWA believes that there is a solid basis to return to formal bargaining. The VIS and CWA bargaining teams are scheduled to begin meeting Monday afternoon.

Please check the District One website for updates on bargaining next week, and we will send out another Unity@Verizon alert if there are major developments.

Most of all, stay strong on the picket line and in your mobilization campaign! Our unity and determination have brought us to this point, and will carry us to the finish line.

If talks do break down, watch for information about plans to escalate our unfair labor practice strike and mobilization activities. And just to get ready, start putting aside your Yellow Pages books and ask your family and friends to do the same.

2006 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: _____

CWA Joe Beirne Foundation Scholarship Program

Thirty partial college scholarships of \$3,000 each are being offered for the 2006-2007 school year. Winners, selected in a lottery drawing, also will receive second-year scholarships of the same amount contingent upon satisfactory academic accomplishment

Eligible for the awards are CWA members and their spouses, children and grandchildren, including those of retired or deceased members. Applications and information are available online only at: <http://cwa-union.org/members/beirne/>

Deadline for applications is March 31, 2006.

BLOOD DRIVES FOR 2006

CALVERTON

FEB 22&23

APR 26&27

JUN 28&29

SEPT 27&28

DEC 13

Be sure to attend the Blood Drives to give the gift of life!

CHESAPEAKE

FEB 7&8

MAY 9&10

AUG 1&2

NOV 7&8

2006 Membership Meeting Schedule

Membership meetings are held on the 2nd Wednesday of every month alternating between the Local Office in Landover, MD and the American Legion Post 268 in Wheaton, MD.

Below is the schedule for the remainder of the year, please cut out and share with your fellow members!

Wed, March 8 at American Legion Post 268

Wed, April 12 at Local Office

Wed, May 10 at American Legion Post 268

Wed, June 7 at Local Office

Wed, July 12 at American Legion Post 268

Wed, August 9 at Local Office

Wed, September 13 at American Legion Post 268

Wed, October 11 at Local Office

Wed, November 15 at American Legion Post 268

Wed, December 13 at Local Office

CWA Local 2108 Members

Personals

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

Annie Mae Rush, mother of **Clinton Rush** who died on **October 31, 2005**.

Lambert P. Durkin, father of **Richard Durkin** who died on **November 11, 2005**.

Archie Watson, Sr., father of **Archie Watson, Jr.** who died on **December 7, 2005**.

Richard Darnall, a retired member and husband of retired member **Kathy Darnall** who died on **December 14, 2005**.

Roland Moore, a retired member and husband of retired member **Doris Moore** who died on **December 13, 2005**.

Jean Elizabeth Ford, mother of **Janet Ford** who died on **December 17, 2005**.

Annie Boykin, mother-in-law of **Marsha Boykin** who died on **December 20, 2005**.

Jimmy Elmore, an active member who died on **December 22, 2005**.

Charles Floyd, father of **Angela Spellers** who died on **December 23, 2005**.

Margaret Theresa Harley, mother of **Sharon Harley** who died on **January 3, 2006**.

Charles Kilby, father of **Keith Kilby** who died on **January 12, 2006**.

Congratulations to:

Clinton Rush on the birth of his daughter, **Kameryn Mae Rush** on **November 2, 2005**.

Kathy Guillaume and **Lawrence Delemar** on the birth of their daughter, **Kari Noelle Delemar** on **December 9, 2005**.

New Members

Carl Brogden

Christopher Brown

Ed Anderson

Aaron Pittman
Shade Smith
Earl Smith, Jr.
Jon T. Williams
Mary Carbajal
Sayleen Simmons
Paula Young
William Legette, Jr.

Karen Lewis

Keith Lea
Olumunmi Akinyosoye
Icy Barton
Monique Aiken
Travia Clark

Chantelle Townsend

Yanique Ash
Leslie Middleton
Ilona Dorsey

Transferred

Anthony Queen

Sean Brewer

Charles White

Greg Headly

Chantelle Townsend

Joy Bell

Larry Gibson

David Dansker

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.

Remember:

It Pays To Belong To CWA

Delegate Nominations



Carl Brogden



Bob Campbell



LaTasha Carpenter



Larry Gibson



Trish Lyle

The above members of Local 2108 have thrown their hats into the ring to be elected by you for Delegate to the CWA Convention to be held in June 2006 in Las Vegas, Nevada. Only three of the nominees will be eligible. Please utilize your rights to vote for 3 of the nominees when your ballot arrives in your mailbox.

Your Verizon Health Insurance Beneficiaries

At the Local 2108 January Membership meeting a question was asked concerning beneficiary designation on your Verizon life insurance. The question dealt with the ability to designate a beneficiary and the changes that take place based on age and marital status. First, if you are married and you wish to designate someone other than your spouse for your pension plan benefit your spouse must sign a release allowing you to do so.

Second, for your life insurance options through Verizon you will be asked to name a beneficiary for Basic Life Insurance and Employee Supplemental Life Insurance.

You may also name one or more contingent (secondary) beneficiaries who will receive plan benefits if all primary beneficiaries die before you. You may change your beneficiary at any time.

If you die and your beneficiary has died before you, that person's estate or heirs have no rights to the benefit from your Plan. All or part of your benefit then may be paid to (in order of succession):

- **Your living spouse**
- **Your living children (distributed equally)**
- **One living parent or living parents (distributed equally)**
- **If none of these family members are living, benefits will be paid to your estate.**
- **Note: The same rule applies if you don't have beneficiaries on file when you die.**

Effective January 1, 2006 Verizon changed administrators from **Marsh@WorkSolutions** to Hewitt Associates as the administrator for their Employee Supplemental Life and Accidental Death and Dismemberment (AD&D).

With this change, now would be a good time to go to the Hewitt website at:

<http://resources.hewitt.com/verizon/>, and verify your coverage, including your beneficiaries.



BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Barbara Oliver, CWA Local 2108 Equity Committee Chair

February is Black History Month. This time has been set aside for all Americans, not just African-Americans, to remember and reflect on those persons whose shoulders we stand on. There will be many celebrations in different venues throughout the month.

Our young people need to know that Black History is an important part of American History. Our country has been shaped and influenced by many African Americans, in the fields of science, education, politics, entertainment, fine arts and sports. These influences have affected each and every one of us, without regard to our race.



I encourage each member of Local 2108 to set aside time during this month to participate in a celebration or informational seminar honoring Black History Month, and to take a young person with him or her. This is the perfect time to educate about the past, in order to provide opportunities for the future. After all, if you don't know where you have been, how will you ever know where you are going?

See page 7 of this issue for the entire **Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.** "I Have A Dream" speech, given on August 28, 1963 at the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, DC. It is as poignant now as it was then.

Toys For Tots

Our members once again set records in our Toys For Tots campaign which ended recently. Truckloads of toys were shipped to the needy children in our area, and the Local thanks all of you who participated.



Toys for Tots Campaign

Chief Stewards LaTasha Carpenter and Hank Allred (VADI in the Chesapeake Complex) even produced a contest to see who could gather more Toys for Tots, with LaTasha narrowly defeating Hank in the total toy collection of 352 items.

Next year, we want to do even more for the worthwhile campaign to get the needy children of our area toys for Christmas. Hopefully we can once again set records and see even more happy faces at Christmas.

'I Have A Dream...'

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Speech from August 28, 1963, Lincoln Memorial, Washington, DC

I am happy to join with you today in what will go down in history as the greatest demonstration for freedom in the history of our nation. Five score years ago, a great American, in whose symbolic shadow we stand today, signed the Emancipation Proclamation. This momentous decree came as a great beacon of hope to millions of Negro slaves, who had been seared in the flames of withering injustice. It came as a joyous day-break to end the long night of their captivity.

But one hundred years later, the Negro is still not free. One hundred years later, the life of the Negro is still sadly crippled by the manacle of segregation and the chains of discrimination. One hundred years later, the Negro lives on a lonely island of poverty in the midst of a vast ocean of material prosperity. One hundred years later, the Negro is still languishing in the corners of American society and finds himself an exile in his own land

So we have come here today to dramatize a shameful condition. In a sense we have come to our Nation's Capital to cash a check. When the architects of our great republic wrote the magnificent words of the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence, they were signing a promissory note to which every American was to fall heir. This note was a promise that all men, yes, black men as well as white men, would be guaranteed to the inalienable rights of life liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

It is obvious today that America has defaulted on this promissory note insofar as her citizens of color are concerned. Instead of honoring this sacred obligation, America has given the Negro people a bad check, a check that has come back marked "insufficient funds." But we refuse to believe that the bank of justice is bankrupt. We refuse to believe that there are insufficient funds in the great vaults of opportunity of this nation. So we have come to cash this check, a check that will give us upon demand the riches of freedom and security of justice.

We have also come to this hallowed spot to remind America of the fierce urgency of Now. This is not time to engage in the luxury of cooling off or to take the tranquilizing drug of gradualism. Now is the time to make real the promise of democracy. Now is the time to rise from the dark and desolate valley of segregation to the sunlit path of racial justice. Now is the time to lift our nation from the quicksands of racial injustice to the solid rock of brotherhood. Now is the time to make justice a reality to all of God's children. It would be fatal for the nation to overlook the urgency of the moment and to underestimate the determination of it's colored citizens.

This sweltering summer of the Negro's legitimate discontent will not pass until there is an invigorating autumn of freedom and equality. Nineteen sixty-three is not an end but a beginning. Those who hope that the Negro needed to blow off steam and will now be content will have a rude awakening if the nation returns to business as usual. There will be neither rest nor tranquility in America until the Negro is granted his citizenship rights. The whirlwinds of revolt will continue to shake the foundations of our nation until the bright day of justice emerges.

But there is something that I must say to my people who stand on the warm threshold which leads into the palace of justice. In the process of gaining our rightful place we must not be guilty of wrongful deeds. Let us not seek to satisfy our thirst for freedom by drinking from the cup of bitterness and hatred. We must ever conduct our struggle on the high plane of dignity and discipline. We must not allow our creative protest to degenerate into physical violence. Again and again we must rise to the majestic heights of meeting physical force with soul force. The marvelous new militancy which has engulfed the Negro community must not lead us to a distrust of all white people, for many of our white brothers, as evidenced by their presence here today, have come to realize that their destiny is tied up with our destiny. They have come to realize that their freedom is inextricably bound to our freedom. We cannot walk alone. And as we walk, we must make the pledge that we shall always march ahead. We cannot turn back.

There are those who are asking the devotees of civil rights, "When will

you be satisfied?" We can never be satisfied as long as the Negro is the victim of the unspeakable horrors of police brutality. We can never be satisfied as long as our bodies, heavy with the fatigue of travel, cannot gain lodging in the motels of the highways and the hotels of the cities. We cannot be satisfied as long as the Negro's basic mobility is from a smaller ghetto to a larger one. We can never be satisfied as long as our children are stripped of their selfhood and robbed of their dignity by signs stating "for white only." We cannot be satisfied as long as a Negro in Mississippi cannot vote and a Negro in New York believes he has nothing for which to vote. No, no we are not satisfied and we will not be satisfied until justice rolls down like waters and righteousness like a mighty stream.

I am not unmindful that some of you have come here out of your trials and tribulations. Some of you have come fresh from narrow jail cells. Some of you have come from areas where your quest for freedom left you battered by storms of persecutions and staggered by the winds of police brutality. You have been the veterans of creative suffering. Continue to work with the faith that unearned suffering is redemptive. Go back to Mississippi, go back to Alabama, go back to South Carolina go back to Georgia, go back to Louisiana, go back to the slums and ghettos of our modern cities, knowing that somehow this situation can and will be changed. Let us not wallow in the valley of despair.

I say to you today, my friends, that even though we face the difficulties of today and tomorrow, I still have a dream. It is a dream deeply rooted in the American dream. I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed. We hold these truths to be self-evident that all men are created equal. I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave owners will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood. I have a dream that one day even the state of Mississippi, a state sweltering with the heat of oppression, will be transformed into an oasis of freedom and justice. I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character. I have a dream today. I have a dream that one day down in Alabama, with its vicious racists, with its governor having his lips dripping with the words of interposition and nullification; that one day right down in Alabama little black boys and black girls will be able to join hands with little white boys and white girls as sisters and brothers. I have a dream today. I have a dream that one day every valley shall be exalted, and every hill and every mountain shall be made low, the rough places will be made plains and the crooked places will be made straight and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed and all flesh shall see it together.

This is our hope. This is the faith that I will go back to the South with. With this faith we will be able to hew out of the mountain of despair a stone of hope. With this faith we will be able to transform the jangling discords of our nation into a beautiful symphony of brotherhood. With this faith we will be able to work together, to pray together, to struggle together, to go to jail together, to climb up for freedom together, knowing that we will be free one day. This will be the day when all of God's children will be able to sing with new meaning "My country 'tis of thee, sweet land of liberty, of thee I sing. Land where my fathers died, land of the Pilgrim's pride, from every mountainside, let freedom ring!" And if America is to be a great nation, this must become true.

So let freedom ring from the mighty mountains of New York. Let freedom ring from the heightening Alleghenies of Pennsylvania. Let freedom ring from the snow-capped Rockies of Colorado. Let freedom ring from the curvaceous slopes of California. But not only that, let freedom, ring from Stone Mountain of Georgia. Let freedom ring from every hill and molehill of Mississippi and every mountainside.

And when this happens, when we let freedom ring, when we let it ring from every tenement and every hamlet, from every state and every city, we will be able to speed up that day when all of God's children, black men and white men, Jews and Gentiles, Protestants and Catholics, will be able to join hands and sing in the words of the old spiritual, "Free at last, free at last. Thank God Almighty, we are free at last."

Local 2108 Union Calendar

March 2006

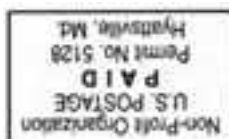
- 1** Chief Steward Meeting 9:00am
at Local Office, Landover, MD
- 6-8** CWA C&T Conference
St. Louis, MO
- 8** Retired Member Club Meeting 11:00am
at Local Office, Landover, MD
- 8** General Membership Meeting 6:00pm
at Local Office, Landover, MD
- 15** President's Meeting 9:00am
at CWA Local 2107, Annapolis, MD
- 17** Delegate Election Ballots Counted
- 20** Presidents Day Holiday
Union Negotiated Holiday
- 22** Stewards' Meeting 6:00pm
at Local Office, Landover, MD
- 29-31** CWA District 2 Conference
at Weirton, WVA

April 2006

- 5** Chief Steward Meeting 9:00am
at Local Office, Landover, MD
- 12** Retired Member Club Meeting 11:00am
at Local Office, Landover, MD
- 12** General Membership Meeting 6:00pm
at American Legion Post 268, Wheaton, MD
- 26** Stewards' Meeting 6:00pm
at Local Office, Landover, MD

Visit Local 2108 On The Web: www.cwalocal2108.org

February is
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ISSN: 0162-248X