

"Penny wise and a pound foolish"

SAVING PENNIES MAY BE COSTING VERIZON MILLIONS

The phrase "Penny wise and a pound foolish" comes to mind when describing some of Verizon's cost cutting measures.

Over the past few years, Verizon has had to deal with the genuine reality of competition. Among Verizon's money saving efforts is the scaling back on building maintenance. The problems are reaching epidemic proportions. It is so bad, we at Local 2108 are hearing from Verizon line management asking if we can help. In saving these pennies, Verizon may be creating a negative impact on worker productivity and in turn eroding profitability.

Absenteeism rates are at an all time high according to Verizon Labor Relations. Verizon is attempting to change the Regional Attendance Plan to impose additional disciplinary measures for our members who are absent due to illness (see <http://www.cwalocal2108.org/> for the latest news on negotiations). The last contract established a Joint Union/Company committee to explore ways to lower the absence rate. While making some progress, the answer may be as simple as a more regimented building cleaning and maintenance plan.



Unsanitary washrooms, poor ventilation, rodent infestations, paper mite's, dust and other indoor contaminates, all contribute to indoor air pollution. Indoor air pollution may contribute to the health problems office workers experience. Physical symptoms such as headaches, sinus discomfort, upper respiratory congestion, and eye irritation are the result of contaminated air. In some cases, indoor air pollution may cause serious infections like Legionnaires 'disease, a type of pneumonia.

In addition, worker health symptoms such as colds, headaches, drowsiness, irritation, and irregular breathing may be the result of temperature extremes, improper humidity levels, and too little or too much air circulation. Avoiding drafts and maintaining workplace temperatures between 68° - 75° and humidity levels between 30% - 60% can avoid these problems.

Compounding many of these problems is the high stress-levels many members deal with everyday. In part due to various aspects of office automation and workplace monitoring, the most stressful elements of office work are increasing. Health symptoms associated with job stress include psychological and physical strains such as frustration, anxiety, irritability, anger, depression, stomach or gastro-intestinal disturbances, and psychological tension. Poor indoor air quality promotes these symptoms. Some studies estimate the cost to industry to be in the tens of billions of dollars per year.

Verizon should consider the common sense rules every kindergartner learns. Keeping things clean kills germs and helps to prevent sickness. Instead of spending the "pounds" of money for meetings trying to figure out why employees are sick, Verizon should spend the "pennies" it would take to help keep them healthy!



From The President's Desk

"No job is so important and no service is so urgent, that we cannot take time to perform our work safely"

Bell System Safety Creed

This is the original Bell System Safety Creed. You couldn't walk through an old Bell System workplace without seeing these words framed and hanging on the wall. Some adaptation of this creed still exists within both Avaya and Verizon Communications.

While those words sound good, and these corporations use them as their "official" safety message, they are meaningless without action.

Recently, Verizon instructed the Directors over the outside forces to contact the local union leadership in their areas, to reach out and "partner" in bringing greater safety awareness among the employees.

It's true we often disagree with the company on many issues; the one area we have always been willing to collaborate with them is safety. While I know many of the supervisors, managers and directors we work for don't want any of their employees to be hurt on or off the job, the primary motivation for Verizon is the expense associated with on/off duty accidents. So while we are pleased to be getting these calls, it also raised the questions, "Where have you been?" and "Why now?"

One of the directors I heard from has had responsibilities over the Maryland area for 2-3 years that I know of, and until May of this year, no local union official had ever even heard from him. In fact, when I answered my phone with him on the other end, I almost fell out of my chair!



When he asked us to participate with him in a joint safety meeting with our members, I responded enthusiastically, yes! When I learned of the directive to the outside directors it all made sense. I hope the communication and collaborating will not end with this one contact. I know from our standpoint it won't.

Now to the "Why now?" question. Year to date for 2006 their have been six fatalities across the Verizon footprint. This doesn't include the many near miss/serious personal injuries that have taken place this year. One of those is close to home right here in Northern Virginia where a union member of CWA Local 2222 has suffered serious injuries from an electrocution. Why is this occurring now?

As one who has spent a career working for Verizon in all of its permutations since 1980, I can tell you that today, safety sits at the back of the bus!. Productivity is driving this corporation, and the management we work for have taken that message to heart. Gone are the days of regular safety meetings. Likewise, many of our line supervisors and managers didn't come through the ranks. Having never worked in the field, they are ignorant to the importance of making safety a part of the daily conversation.

One example of this is the supervisor who, when his technician called him to report a pedestal energized with electricity, told him to put on his rubber gloves and finish the job!

Another is the management in the Baltimore area who told the Local Union safety officer that it was too expensive for them to send C.O.T.'s for the baseline eye exam they are required by Verizon's own policy to have before working with fiber optic lasers.

Among the suggestions we have given Verizon for how to raise awareness of the importance of safety with our members is this one. We challenged them to make safety a part of every discussion they have with our members. Whether a group discussion or with an individual employee, no matter what other topic they have to discuss, say something about safety as well.

But let's not rely on management to do the right thing. We know for them, the emphasis on safety is only the flavor of the month. We need to rely on our brother and sister union members. We need to rely on each other.

Communications Workers of America

2108 news

published monthly by
CWA Local 2108

Printing done in-house

Les Evans.....President and Editor
Amory Proctor.....Executive Vice President
Johnny M. Brown.....Secretary-Treasurer
Marilyn R. Irwin.....Vice President
Jenny K. Sylvester.....Vice President
Paul 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.cwalocal2108.org

CONTINUED, see **PRESIDENT**, Page 3

If you are a new employee, you need to make sure you ask questions. If, like me, you are one of our more seasoned members, you need to make sure you are talking to the new people about working safely.

If you're not sure of something, ask. If you ask your supervisor and aren't satisfied with the answer, ask your union steward. If you can't find them, call the local office.



RMC 2108 Retiree's Corner

By Calvin Foster, Vice President RMC 2108

Unfortunately, our President, Dennis Strout was unable to attend our September 13th meeting. I presided over the meeting in his place.

At the meeting we showed a video by **Families USA**, hosted by Walter Cronkite, on the "Problems with the Medicare Drug Program and How to Fix Them". It was quite interesting and informative.

The Alliance for Retired Americans 2006 National Convention was held September 5th through the 8th in Washington, DC. There were 556 delegates present representing over 2 million members.

The President of the MD RMC Mike Vivirito and I were among a group that visited Maryland Senators Sarbanes and Mikulski's offices. Unfortunately, Senator Sarbanes was not able to attend, though his staff did a fine job.

Both Maryland Senators are co-sponsoring bills that will attempt to improve Medicare Part-D and Social Security. The ARA held a rally on the Capitol steps for Retirement Security. Senate Minority Leader Harry Reid, and House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi attended with many other legislators to sign a pledge to have Retirement Security become a reality.

Senator Mikulski was interested in the outcome of the Lucent-Alcatel merger. RMC MD President Vivirito will bring information from the Delaware stockholders meeting that he and other CWA RMC members attended.

There will be a clean up party September 30th on Garden City Drive in front of the Local Office.

We are collecting names and sizes from people that are interested in denim long sleeve RMC logo shirts. Please call the Local office if you are interested.

Productivity is nice, but as I told one of my customers many years ago, no customers dial tone is worth my life.

Remember, your family wants you home at the end of the day!

Les



CWA Local 2108 Retired Member's Club Meetings

The 2108 Retired Members Club meets on the second Wednesday of every month at the Local office in Landover, Maryland. All meetings start at 11:00 A.M.



NATIONAL BREAST CANCER AWARENESS MONTH

Did You Know...

In the United States, more than 200,000 new cases of invasive breast cancer are diagnosed each year. Breast cancer incidents in women have increased from 1 in 20 in 1960 to 1 in 7 today. Since October is National Breast Cancer Awareness Month, The CWA Women's Committee is encouraging all CWA members to educate the women in their lives on the importance of monthly self breast exams, the significance of clinical breast exams performed by your doctor and yearly mammograms for women over 40 years old.

The largest risk factor is age. Most breast cancers occur in women over the age of 50, and women over the age of 60 are at the highest risk. Other risk factors include heredity, early puberty, late child bearing, obesity, heavy alcohol consumption and smoking.

Significant progress in mammography technology continues to help physicians diagnose breast cancer in its earlier stages. When coupled with new treatment options, early diagnosis through mammogram screening can significantly improve a woman's chances of survival.

Unfortunately, studies have indicated that a significant number of women over 40 years of age fail to get a mammogram, and of those who do, many never follow up with a second mammogram.

Women cite a number of reasons for their non-participation, including a lack of finances and a lack of time. It is important that women know there are resources available to help address these issues.

For example, throughout the year, low-cost or free mammography screening is available to many women who are over 40 and underinsured or uninsured. Additionally, many



For information on low or no-cost mammography screening, contact the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) at **(888) 842-6355** or visit their Web site at www.cdc.gov.

To find a breast-imaging facility, contact the National Cancer Institute at **(800) 4-CANCER**. For more information, visit www.nbcam.org.

mammography centers offer extended hours and some even provide child care for moms having mammograms.

In an effort to encourage women to have an annual mammography screening, National Breast Cancer Awareness Month (NBCAM) sponsors recommend making every day National Mammography Day.

Whether it means scheduling an appointment on a 40th birthday, or reminding a friend to make an appointment, every step counts.

Don't wait, do it for the ones you love and for those who love you.

CWA Local 2108 Members

Personals

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

Annie P. Berry, mother-in-law of **Jim Royster** who died on August 21, 2006.

Anna G. Chillemi, mother of **Pat Chillemi** who died on August 25, 2006.

Lovell Richardson, Jr., father of **Lovell Richardson, III** who died on August 29, 2006.

Welcome New Members

Barbara Oliver

Jermaine Teagle

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, 11225 Fern St, Wheaton, MD 20902.

All meetings start at 6 pm.

Customer Service Professionals Week

The Communication Workers of America has designated October 1-7, 2006 as "Customer Service Professionals" week. In today's information-based service economy, where success depends on being "customer focused," the job performed by our growing number of the customer service professionals has become critical for success.

Nationally, more than 3.3 million women and men work as customer service and sales representatives in virtually every industry. Almost one-quarter of CWA Local 2108's membership is made up of Communication Representatives, Service Representatives and Consultants.

In today's environment, job stress, monitoring, and pressure for sales are critical issues the CWA continues to work towards improving with our employers. This also means work policies that enable us to fully interact with the customers to resolve their problems. We recognize that without a strong union presence, employers will choose the "low road" of strict management control over employees, meaning tightly scripted interactions with customers and unobtainable sales goals.

On the other hand, our employers can compete based on what is called a "high performance" strategy: investing in a highly trained, experienced work force, and providing employees with the working conditions that allow them to win customer loyalty and increase market share through high-quality, responsive, and timely service.

Customer Service Professionals Week also focuses on the differences between unionized, non-unionized and workers in foreign call centers. CWA has conducted numerous interviews, and while most aspects of the job have common denominators, workers without a union voice or strong labor laws are subjected to additional pressures, unrealistic expectations, lower wages and benefits and an uncertain career path than those covered under a collective bargaining agreement. By shining a light on workplace inequities, CWA is striving to grow quality jobs everywhere.



Referendum Vote at November Membership Meeting

Pursuant to Article XIII, Section 3 of the CWA Constitution, CWA Local 2108 will hold a referendum vote at our next regular membership meeting on November 8, 2006. The meeting will be held at The American Legion Post 268, in Wheaton, Maryland.

An officer of CWA Local 2107 has transferred into a work location in Local 2108's jurisdiction. He has requested that we "waive jurisdiction" over him, which would allow him to remain a member of CWA Local 2107 and continue his term in office. The CWA Constitution requires that both our Local (as the "waiving" local) and CWA Local 2107 (as the "expanding" local) vote on the matter. Members in good standing in attendance at the November membership meeting will be able to vote on this matter.

Any questions about this referendum vote should be referred to Frank Walker, Election Committee Chair, by calling the Local office on 301-459-2108

Web Site Aids in Refuting Anti-Union Claims

If the lies being spread by anti-union smear merchants make you so angry that you're tongue-tied, check out a new website that will help you refute the outrageous claims.

The Anti-Union Network, launched by American Rights at Work, profiles the various union-hating groups and challenges their distortions. Featured prominently is the egregiously misnamed "Center for Union Facts," with a diagram of the corporate money trail funding the project.

Learn more about the range of organizations comprising the anti-union network. We'll continue to post profiles of players and groups in the future. Stay tuned for more.

Center for Union Facts—notorious industry lobbyist and PR flak Richard Berman is now attacking unions through his latest front group, in the same way he's fought against drunk driving laws, health regulations, consumer protections, and minimum wage increases for years.

National Right to Work Foundation and Committee—is the country's oldest organization dedicated solely to destroying unions.

U.S. Chamber of Commerce—the nation's most powerful business lobbying organization, has been campaigning against unions, fair labor practices, and legal protections for America's workers for nearly a century.

Public Service Research Foundation and Council—these small, established groups supply their more prominent anti-union colleagues with research, polling, and propaganda to fight against the right of teachers and other public employees to have unions.

For-Profit Unionbusters—these professional consultants or lawyers profit off their ability to manipulate labor law, advising employers on how to thwart union organizing drives or how to get rid of workers' unions.

The site also includes a news feed and an e-mail sign up for breaking news about unions and union-busters. Check it out at www.antiunionnetwork.org.



AT&T Agrees to Return Contracted Tech Support Work, Verizon Contracts Out

In contrast to what Verizon has been doing in the DSL arena, CWA reached a new agreement with AT&T to return Internet/DSL support work to the CWA bargaining unit, potentially creating 2,000 new union jobs. This work is currently contracted out both within the United States and overseas.

For some time, our members in the DSL Centers at the Chesapeake Complex have noticed an erosion of tech support work leaving the bargaining unit and ending up in California. Many suspect Verizon is also utilizing contract services in Canada and India to perform services currently maintained by our bargaining unit.

But, beginning next year, more than 800 new jobs at AT&T will come under CWA representation, with more to be returned to the U.S. from foreign call centers starting sometime later in the year.

"Reversing the flow of work from contractors back to our bargaining units is a terrific achievement," said CWA Executive Vice President Jeff Rechenbach. "We're also pleased that the wages and benefits we've negotiated, in addition to being superior to those in the industry, will provide a base for CWA to build career opportunities for even more workers," he said.

CWA and AT&T negotiated the wage rate, benefits and job duties for the new position of Tier 1 customer assistant as part of the 2005 National Internet Contract. That contract expires July 21, 2007

The agreement does not change any of the work performed by CWA-represented customer service representatives under the core contract. Job duties under the new customer assistant title include first tier customer care services — related to customer registration, e-mail creation, DSL line signal testing, modem/filter assistance and e-mail, browser and modem troubleshooting.

To date, Verizon has 8 call centers in India with plans to open additional centers in the near future.

Children's Hospital 50/50 Raffle Tickets on Sale Now

OUR ANNUAL CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL 50/50 RAFFLE TICKETS ARE NOW AVAILABLE FROM YOUR CHIEF STEWARD OR THE LOCAL OFFICE.

WHEN YOU PURCHASE YOUR TICKETS YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS ENSURE THAT SPECIALIZED CARE IS POSSIBLE FOR THOUSANDS OF CHILDREN IN THE METRO AREA WHO OTHERWISE MAY NOT RECEIVE IT. IT ALSO REINFORCES THAT AS A MEMBER OF CWA LOCAL 2108 YOU ARE DEMONSTRATING YOUR LONG STANDING COMMITMENT TO THE COMMUNITIES WHERE YOU LIVE AND WORK.

DONATIONS ARE \$1.00 PER TICKET AND YOU DO NOT NEED TO BE PRESENT TO WIN. LAST YEAR'S WINNER COLLECTED \$1735.50.

SO WHEN YOU ARE APPROACHED BY YOUR STEWARD TO HELP SUPPORT THIS WORTHY CAUSE, REMEMBER EVERY TICKET SOLD IS A WINNER BECAUSE OF THE HELP IT PROVIDES.

THIS YEAR'S DRAWING WILL BE HELD AT THE MEMBERSHIP MEETING ON DECEMBER 8, 2006 IN LANDOVER, MARYLAND.

DON'T MISS YOUR OPPORTUNITY

For most people, if someone was to forbid them to do something they really wanted to do (and it wasn't illegal) they would immediately fight for their rights. Today, millions of people world-wide live where the most basic human right is violated everyday. Many of our fellow citizens right here in America spent many years deprived of this same right. Americans have fought wars abroad and died right here at home for this right. *The right to vote.*

Too many of us take this right for granted. Yet, if someone tried to take it away, we'd be up in arms. That's why the Executive Board of Local 2108 urges all of our members to exercise their right to vote in the upcoming elections.

IMPORTANT DATES TO REMEMBER:

Oct. 17: Deadline for registering to vote
(Contact Jenny Sylvester at the Local office if you have not yet registered)

Nov. 7: General election;
polls open from 7 a.m. until 8 p.m.

For the list of Labor endorsed candidates go to:
<http://www.cwalocal2108.org/>

Local 2108 Union Calendar

October 2006

- 4 Chief Steward Meeting 9:00am
Local Office, Landover, MD
- 11 Retired Member Club Meeting
Local Office, Landover, MD
- 11 General Membership Meeting 6:00pm
at Local Office, Landover, MD
- 29 Daylight Savings Time Ends
- 31 Halloween



November 2006

- 1 Chief Steward Meeting - (Cancelled)
- 7 Election Day - Don't forget to VOTE !!
- 7-8 Blood Drive
Chesapeake Complex
- 8 Retired Member Club Meeting
Local Office, Landover, MD
- 8 General Membership Meeting 6:00pm
at American Legion Post 268 Wheaton, MD
- 11 Veteran's Day
- 23-24 Happy Thanksgiving! Union Office Closed
Union Negotiated Holiday



Visit Local 2108 On The Web: www.cwlocal2108.org

Do Your Job
Safely!
See Page 2

Non-Profit Organization
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Permit No. 5128
Hyattsville, Md.

COMMUNICATIONS WORKERS OF AMERICA
LOCAL 2108
4301 Garden City Drive, Suite 102
Landover, MD 20785-2210
ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED
ISSN: 0162-248X