



In the beginning, there was Alexander Graham Bell, and the “original” AT&T. As one of the conditions of AT&T’s monopoly, the government required them to make phone service universally available, even when providing the service to sparsely populated rural areas, like Bugtussle, wasn’t profitable for the company.

Now the telecommunications industry is at a critical juncture. The emergence of a new telecommunications system - one based on high speed interactive networks designed for voice, data, and video communications - opens up tremendous opportunities for improving the quality of our economic, civic, and personal lives. Unfortunately, we are falling behind because the United States, the country that invented the Internet, is the only industrialized Nation without a national policy or legal requirement to promote high-speed broadband. In fact, the U.S. has fallen to 16th in the world in terms of high speed Internet access. Instead, we have relied on a hodge-podge of fragmented government programs and uneven private sector responses to changing markets.



The United States has failed to bring the benefits of this telecommunications revolution to most of our population. While more households in the highly populated areas are adopting broadband, our relative position in the world is worsening. This is not surprising since we spend less as a nation on telecommunications investment while spending more as consumers for slower speeds. To make matters even worse, a substantial digital divide separates access to high speed Internet based on income and geography.

If we are to avoid a digital divide of haves and have-nots, of who can take advantage of the potential of high-speed Internet access, the time to act is NOW. In the 21st century, we need to have a national high-speed broadband policy. Imagine if every U.S. home has true high-speed Internet access. The first thing most of us think about is entertainment -- movies, live streaming web casts and interactive games. But the potential for universal broadband goes far beyond that. A true high-speed network would connect Americans to each other and to community services in ways we cannot yet imagine.

Yet while policy makers are dithering about what to do, companies like Verizon are pushing their own agenda. Having already won a statewide video franchise in Virginia, Verizon (as we go to press) is pushing for legislation, which if enacted, would take away the State’s ability to regulate whether the sale of any phone company assets would serve the public interest, protect consumers from rate hikes and poor service or ideally guarantee universal high-speed Internet service to everyone. The worst-case scenario has Verizon selling off access lines, like the 1.6 million customers in New England, to companies without the resources to build out the network required for true high-speed access. Nothing personal, it’s all about the bottom line.

CONTINUED, See SPEED MATTERS, Page 3

THE OPERATIONS ORGANIZATION HAS A NEED TO REDUCE FORCE AND INTENDS TO OFFER EISP. VOLUNTEERS WILL BE ACCEPTED AS NECESSARY TO MEET BUSINESS NEEDS. ...

The date is August 2, 2003. The contract between the new Verizon Communications and the CWA expires at midnight. Verizon has been gearing up for a work stoppage. In fact, for the prior six weeks they have vigorously prepared for it.

The deadline arrives, it's midnight and the CWA continues to bargain. Verizon would like the CWA to walk away from the bargaining table. Yet that doesn't happen.

A week goes by and yet the CWA doesn't strike. All of Verizon's best-made plans for forcing its CWA represented workers onto the picket lines have failed. The workers stand strong in the face of management.

Another week goes by and now Verizon management is approaching a critical juncture in their plans.

For more than a week, they have paid the retired management scabs they brought back in preparation for the strike to sit idly by and wait to find out whether a strike will occur.

They guaranteed the scabs ten days pay to be available whether or not a strike occurred. The ten-day deadline is approaching and in order to keep them available they will have to guarantee them two more weeks of pay.

With the deadline approaching management pushes harder on their main bargaining issue, the elimination of the Job Security Letter of Understanding.

Then CWA President, Morty Bahr, tells Verizon directly, "We will not give up this hard won job security letter. You



will find it easier to move the CWA Headquarters building to the other side of Interstate 395 then to get us to give up this protection". We are fortunate today that we held out for that protection.

During the course of the past year, Verizon has offered EISP packages to over 850 employees in the Potomac Region alone. Many of these offers have occurred in departments where no one is retirement eligible. In the majority of those circumstances, no one has accepted the EISP Package. Imagine what would have happened to those employees if we didn't have the Job Security Letter.

Clearly, just as they have done with management during this past year, those employees surely would have been laid off.

Recently, Larry Babbio - Chief Operating Officer for Verizon retired. The new C.O.O., Denny Strigle, has already started to make his mark in the management ranks. The message to them is very simple; you either make your objectives (no matter how unrealistic), or we'll find someone who will.

What does this mean for us, the CWA represented employees? We've all heard the saying "POOP ROLLS DOWNHILL", things will get worse before they get better.

What can we do about it? We can protect our families by protecting our jobs and ourselves.

How do we do this? The first thing you need to do is get involved. Don't sit back and hope the person sitting next to you is informed about what's going on all around you. Stand up, take the bull by the horns and take responsibility for becoming educated.

The CWA is leading the charge for building a Stewards Army of Union Activists. This is not the traditional union steward who presents members in grievances, etc. This is an army of people who want to be informed and take action to protect themselves from what corporations like Verizon will surely do to us if we don't take action.

Don't wait; training sessions are beginning in March with the goal of having 280 Local 2108 activists trained by June of this year. Talk with your Chief Steward or contact the local office for more information and to sign up today.

Les

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
Dave Madara.....Contributing Editor

Recording Announcements

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

CWA

Local Office: (301) 459-2108 Toll Free: (800) 427-2108
Local FAX: (301) 459-1859 Web Site: www.cwalocal2108.org

RMC 2108 Retirees Corner

By Dennis Strout, President RMC 2108

The RMC 2108 Retirees meeting for February was unfortunately cancelled due to inclement weather.

Please join us at our March meeting at the Local Office on Wednesday, March 14 at 11:00am and catch up on all the information we have for you. See you at the meeting.



Verizon & VCS CPS Awards...

Coming to your wallet soon (in the March 8-9 paycheck)... the 2007 edition of the Verizon Corporate Profit Sharing Award bargained for by CWA.

The gross amount as computed by our contract will be \$784 minus taxes, deductions and union dues. The award will be prorated for employees who participated for more than 3 months but less than 12 months in the plan year.

For our VCS members, the Technician Incentive Pay Plan has been announced, and WMET District

employees will receive \$850 for the plan period of July 1, 2006 through December 31, 2006. Members must have been on the payroll before July 1st and still active as of December 31st to be eligible for the payout.

The payout will be a line item on their February 23, 2007 regular pay check.

The union has fought long and hard to earn this money for its members through hard negotiations with Verizon.

Once again.....IT PAYS TO BELONG TO CWA!

SPEED MATTERS, CONTINUED from Page 1

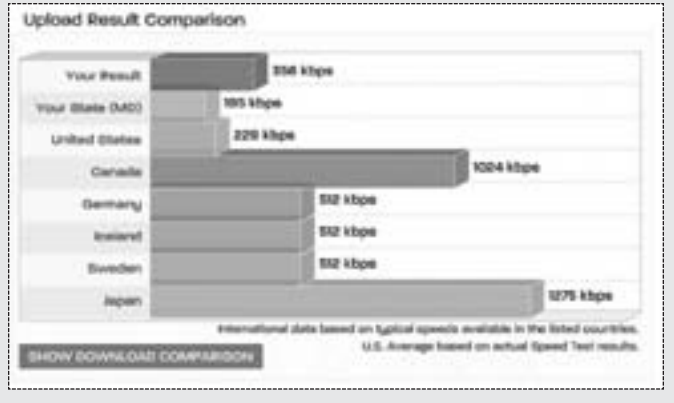
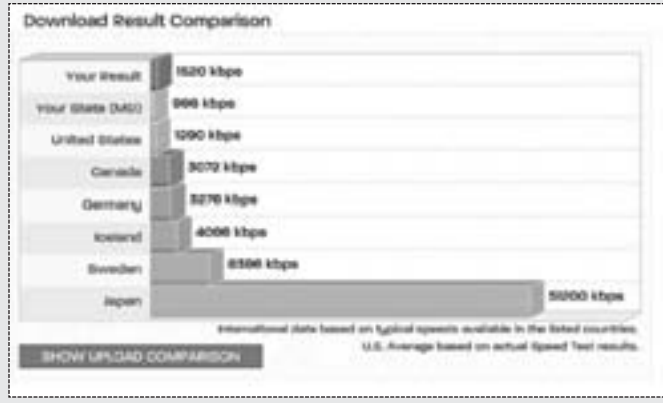
Make no mistake about it, when it comes to Verizon, it's all about the bottom line. Lip service aside, Verizon doesn't care if everyone has access to a high-speed Internet connection. Verizon only cares about deploying their FTTP/FIOS network to the neighborhoods they consider worthy, based on the bottom line.

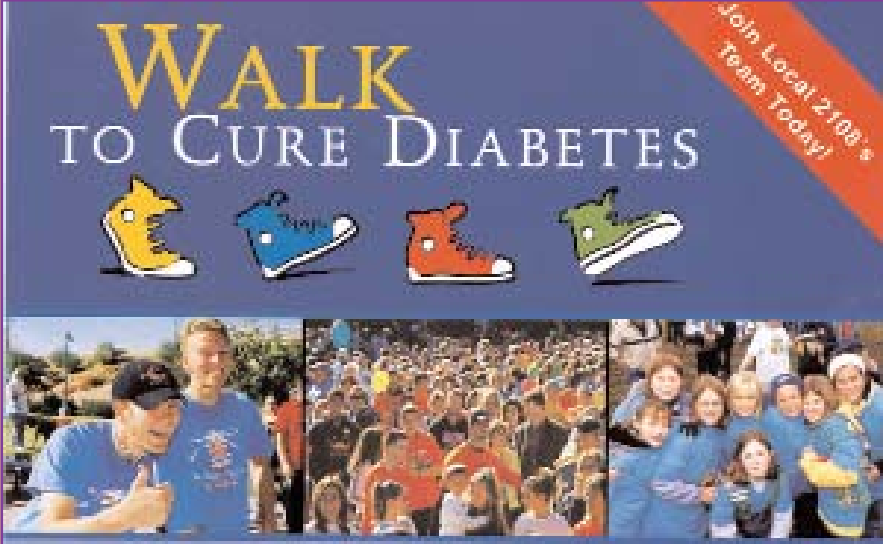
Too bad if you live in some less densely populated, rural neighborhood which doesn't meet the financial criteria for deployment. It's discrimination based on geography and income. If you don't live in a desirable area, or in Verizon's eyes don't have what they perceive as the correct income level, no high speed Internet for you.

As we mentioned before, the time to act is NOW. A national high speed Internet policy won't happen unless we fight for it. Action is required on everyone's part, Consumer, Legislative and Business. Here's what **YOU** can do:

- Go to www.speedmatters.org for additional information and resources on this critical issue.
- Use the resources at the Speed Matters web site to tell friends and family members about this issue and ask them to join the movement for Universal High Speed Internet.
- Use the links available at the Speed Matters website to call on Congress to get serious about a national high speed Internet policy.
- Raise awareness by letting everyone know about the Speed Matters website.

A national high speed Internet policy won't happen unless we fight for it.





WALK
TO CURE DIABETES

Join Local 2108's Team Today!

Join Local 2108's Team

WALK TO CURE DIABETES

May 6, 2006


Washington, DC

On The Mall

(We'll leave from the Local Office at 9:00am)

Lace up your sneakers and get ready to Walk To Cure Diabetes.

Last year, CWA Local 2108 raised thousands of dollars for the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation in their fight to cure diabetes.



C'mon out and join the fun and help make a difference in the lives of people living with diabetes. It's up to us to make it happen, one step at a time. Whether joining us for the walk or to find out how to contribute to this important cause contact Vice President Jenny Sylvester at the Local office on (301) 459-2108.

Verizon Implements New RAP

Claims bargain to impasse, CWA files charges

In March, 2006, Verizon rolled out changes to the Regional Attendance Plan which expedited the process for placement on the plan for what they deem as a chargeable absence or tardy.

CWA initiated bargaining with Verizon in May, 2006, over the proposed changes in the plan due to the fact that the changes affected terms and conditions of employment and is a mandatory subject of bargaining. This meant that Verizon would have to delay implementation until bargaining was complete.

Over the past 10 months the CWA bargaining committee and the company met numerous times to try and hammer out an agreement, with both sides still far apart on a proposed settlement. On February 12, 2007, CWA submitted another counter-proposal to the company which was flat out rejected and then the company declared that bargaining was at impasse. Verizon then advised the union that it was their intention to implement the new plan on March 1, 2007.

CWA immediately filed board charges with the Department of Labor and presented them to Verizon that same day.

Some of the new revisions to the plan include:

An employee will be placed on Step 1 of the plan if the employee has:

- *Two chargeable incidents of absence in 6 months; or
- * One chargeable incidents of absence 3 days or greater; or
- * Four chargeable incidents of significant tardiness (or equivalent minor tardiness) in 6 months; or
- * Any combination of 1 chargeable incident if absence and 2 or more chargeable incidents of significant tardiness (or equivalent minor tardiness) in 6 months.

In addition, an employee will move directly from Step 1 to Step 3 if he/she has a chargeable incident of absence within 6 months that exceeds three days.

The definition of "significant tardiness" has been changed from 6 minutes or more to 5 minutes or more.

Verizon is implementing this plan over CWA's objections and until the NLRB rules one way or another, CWA members will be subjected to the new plan.

CWA Local 2108 Members

Welcome New Members

Les Evans

Tara Woodard
Christopher Handley
Ronald Petigny
Bennie Coleman
Colleen Beaumont
Michael Cox
Bernice Griffin
Cedric Reynolds
Tiffany Yancey
Milagros McCollin
Tiloria Arrington
Juvaye Carpenter
Robert Lucas
Stanford Lizama
Maria Anderson
Kim Lee
Kennith Waller
Delendo Keith

Carl Brogden

Demarion Owens
Raamon Carey
Frantz Louis

Loren Goldsberry

Robert D. McCullar

Joe Briscoe

Carl Schultz

Barbara Oliver

Carla Gittings

Ed Anderson

Shannon Wiggins

Jenny Sylvester

Rhonda Bell

Larry Gibson

Darrel Brooks

Sy Gaines

Bernadette Thomas
Lawrence Brooks

Donald Kurz

Gerald Robinson

Trish Lyle

Shanda Price
Tracy Stewart

Transferred Members

Les Evans

Damion Upshur

Paul Goldbeck

Keith Hannah

Carl Brogden

Benjamin Canterbury II
Thomas Dawson, Jr.
B. Greg Stevens

Sy Gaines

Tenise Pope

Don Kurz

Ronald M. Scott, Jr.
Kenneth Saunders, Jr.
Javonn Curtis
John Vasquez



Personals

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

Arthur Carroll, grandfather of **Dan Carroll** who died December, 2006

Margaret "Peggy" Mason, a retired member who died on December 20, 2006

William Buch, a retired member who died on January 10, 2007

Congratulations to:

Aimee Evans on the birth of her grandson, **Daniel Phillip Duckworth** on January 31, 2007

Retired Members

Mary Arnett

Joy Bell
Karen Bowers
Evelyn Adams
Claudia Thomas
Veronica Wright
Mary Watson
Carolyn Moore

Carolyn Cox

Susheela Vasanth
Helen Powell
Maxine Kent
Mona Harris
Marc Gottlieb
Donna Carroll



Carl Brogden



Larry Gibson



LaTasha Carpenter

Delegate Election Results

The CWA Local 2108 Election Committee met at the Local office on February 17th to count the ballots for Delegates-At-Large to represent our Local at District Meetings and the CWA Convention. The number of Delegates that our Local is entitled to is based on our average number of members. The official numbers have not yet been released, but it is anticipated that we will be entitled to take three additional Delegates to the Convention in July.

The result of the election is as follows: **Larry Gibson 381, Carl Brogden 357, LaTasha Carpenter 327, Trish Lyle 266.**

CWA Joe Beirne Scholarships

Eligibility

CWA members, their spouses, children and grandchildren (including dependents of laid-off, retired or deceased CWA members) may apply. Applicants must be high school graduates or at least high school students who will graduate during the year in which they apply. Undergraduate and graduate students returning to schooling may also apply. Prior winners may not reapply.

Scholarships

Thirty partial college scholarships of **\$3,000** each are being offered for the 2007-2008 school year. Winners, selected in a lottery drawing, also will receive second-year scholarships of the same amount contingent upon satisfactory academic accomplishment.

Dates

Applications are accepted during the months of November through March. Final deadline is **March 31, 2007**.

Selections

Winners are chosen by lottery drawing and only winners will be notified.

Applications

Applications should only be submitted through the online application form available at:
www.cwa-union.org/members/beirne/application.html.



Joseph Beirne

Better Health Care Together

CWA and AT&T have joined together with other corporations, labor and policy groups in a new coalition - Better Health Care Together - calling for a national program guaranteeing universal access to quality, affordable health care by no later than 2012.

The new coalition brings together an unusual group of businesses (many non-union), including Wal-Mart, along with the Service Employees International Union, which operates the Wal-Mart Watch campaign, highlighting worker abuses at the giant retailer.

"It's a group that usually doesn't agree on much, but we do agree about the urgent need for real reform that will fix our broken health care system," said CWA President Larry Cohen. At the news conference, Cohen quoted CWA members who are worried about the future of health care for themselves and their children. He also noted that, "Most labor disputes today - such as the recent 3-month strike at Goodyear - are caused by workers trying

to protect their families' health security."

Every time we bargain, we face intense pressure for more cost shifting and benefit reductions for active CWA members and retirees. In part, this comes from providing primary coverage for spouses, retirees and retiree spouses whose own employers are not paying their fair share. This, combined with the basic immorality of allowing 47 million Americans to remain without coverage, reflects a system in crisis.

This group alone will not bring about a legislative solution, and we are continuing to work aggressively with other unions, organizations, allies and congressional leaders. We expect these new corporate and labor voices will increase the pressure for elected officials to take action and will add to the growing number of major organizations demanding an answer to the health care crisis.



2007 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: _____

Employee Free Choice Act

A bill allowing workers to form unions by signing membership cards, instead of voting in a formal N.L.R.B election, advanced in the U.S. House of Representatives on February 14, even as the Bush administration threatened to veto it. The Democratic-controlled House Education and Labor Committee voted along party lines, 26-19, to approve the bill, which would require employers to recognize unions after a majority of workers have signed pro-union cards or a petition.

Vice President Dick Cheney declared the administration's opposition to the measure, citing the need for secret ballots to prevent possible worker intimidation. "Our administration rejects any attempt to short-circuit the rights of workers," Cheney told the business-friendly National Association of Manufacturers. "We will defend their right to vote yes or no by secret ballot, and their right to fair bargaining." He said President George W. Bush "will veto the bill" if it is sent to him. Vice President Cheney pretending to defend the rights of working people is like the National Right to Work committee pretending to be pro-union.



To form a union under current law, a majority of workers must vote in favor of one in a government-supervised election. While the law permits card check sign-ups, an employer can reject it and force a ballot, which often takes months.

Backers of the Employee Free Choice Act argue the election process is inherently unfair because employers routinely deny union organizers access to the workplace, while bosses can require workers to attend anti-union meetings. They also cite studies showing that employers often fire workers illegally with little, if any, penalty in the months leading up to elections. The bill's opponents counter with charges of

worker intimidation in organizing campaigns, which they say the bill would make worse.

In a report summarized by Executive Director Kenneth Roth of Human Rights Watch about the U.S. worker's freedom to form unions and bargain collectively:

"Our findings are disturbing, to say the least. Loophole-ridden laws, paralyzing delays and feeble enforcement have led to a culture of impunity in many areas of U.S. labor law and practice. Legal obstacles tilt the playing field so steeply against workers' freedom of association that the United States is in violation of international human rights standards for workers."

For the first time the bill makes labor law violators subject to civil penalties and requires that unions and companies unable to reach agreement on a first contract submit to binding arbitration. "Let the employees decide if they want an election or if a majority want to sign-up with no veto by the boss," committee Chairman George Miller, a California Democrat, said as the panel began drafting the legislation.

We expect the bill to reach the House floor this month where approval is likely, since more than half of the chamber's 435 members, including a handful of minority Republicans, have co-sponsored it. We expect the introduction of a similar measure in the Democratic-controlled Senate soon, but its fate there is less certain.

A similar bill died in the last Congress.

AFL-CIO National BOYCOTTS

Entertainment/Recreation

BIG LEAGUE THEATRICALS ROAD COMPANY

Big League Theatricals national tour of 'Miss Saigon'
Actors Equity Assn./American Federation of Musicians

ECHOSTAR DISH NETWORK

Satellite Television Service
Communications Workers of America

Transportation & Travel

ADAM'S MARK HOTEL

Hotel in Buffalo New York
International Union of Operating Engineers

Others

RJ REYNOLDS TOBACCO CO.

Cigarettes: Best Value, Camel, Century, Doral, Eclipse, Magna, Monarch, More, Now, Salem, Sterling, Vantage, and Winston; plus all Moonlight Tobacco products
Bakery, Confectionery & Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers International Union



Local 2108 Union Calendar

March 2007

- 7 Chief Steward Meeting 9:00am
Local Office, Landover, MD
- 14 Retired Member Club Meeting 11:00am
Local Office, Landover, MD
- 14 General Membership Meeting 6:00pm
American Legion Post 268, Wheaton, MD
- 23-25 CWA Safety Conference
Holiday Inn on the Hill - Washington DC
- 23-25 CWA Womens Conference
Washington Court Hotel - Washington DC
- 25-28 CWA Legislative Conference
Hyatt Regency Hotel - Washington DC
- 28 Stewards Meeting 6:00pm
Local Office, Landover, MD

April 2007

- 4 Chief Steward Meeting 9:00am
Local Office, Landover, MD
- 11 Retired Member Club Meeting 11:00am
Local Office, Landover, MD
- 11 General Membership Meeting 6:00pm
Local Office, Landover, MD
- 25-26 Blood Drive
Calverton Business Office, Beltsville, MD

Give Blood!

<p><u>2007 Chesapeake Blood Drives</u></p> <p>May 8 & 9 August 7 & 8 November 6 & 7</p>	<p><u>2007 Calverton Blood Drives</u></p> <p>April 25 & 26 June 27 & 28 September 26 & 27 December 12</p>
--	--

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

**Speed
Matters....
See Page 1**

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