

CWA Supports Stem Cell Research

The CWA 69th Annual Convention unanimously passed resolution 9A-07-4, entitled Stem Cell Research. This particular research hits home for the many thousands of victims of a myriad of diseases, conditions, and disabilities including ALS, Parkinson's and Alzheimer's diseases, juvenile diabetes, spinal cord injury, stroke, burns, and heart disease.

The CWA family is not immune to this need. Our own CWA District 2 Vice President, **Pete Catucci** has recently been diagnosed with Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS), more commonly known as Lou Gehrig's disease. Lou Gehrig first brought national and international attention to the disease in 1939 when he abruptly retired from baseball after being diagnosed with ALS. Most commonly, the disease strikes people between the ages of 40 and 70, and as many as 30,000 Americans have the disease at any given time.

ALS is a neurodegenerative disease that usually attacks the nerves and causes degeneration throughout the brain and spinal cord. A common first symptom is a painless weakness in a hand, foot, arm or leg, which occurs in more than half of all cases. Other early symptoms include speech, swallowing or walking difficulty.

In an emotional speech during the debate concerning this resolution, Vice President Catucci went to the microphone and urged the delegates to pass this resolution. He spoke of his own struggles with the disease and the benefits to be realized from Stem Cell Research in combating ALS. He told the body that when his doctor told him the diagnosis was Lou Gehrig's disease, the first question he asked was, "If it's Lou Gehrig's disease then why do I have it?"

Pete spoke about how research on stem cells is advancing knowledge about how an entire organism develops from a single cell and how healthy cells replace damaged cells. He told us this promising area of science is also leading scientists to investigate the possibility of cell-based therapies to treat this disease.

Pete also explained that some of the most serious medical conditions, such as cancer and birth defects, are due to problems that occur somewhere in this cell transformation process, and that a better understanding of normal cell development will allow us to understand and perhaps correct these medical conditions.

In a showing of solidarity, the delegates from District 2 gathered behind our vice president on the platform and joined him in urging the convention to pass the resolution.

A number of delegates spoke in favor of the resolution, including some who have been through the tragedy of having a loved one die from this terrible disease. Many of these same people offered whatever support they could to Vice President Catucci.

Vice President Catucci ended his remarks to the delegates saying he intended to fight for as long as he could for a change in policy by the federal government to support research in this most promising field.

In a related note, Vice President Catucci announced his intention to serve the remainder of his term of office until the convention in June 2008. At that point, he will not stand for re-election. Pete endorsed the current CWA District 2 Administrative Assistant to the Vice-President, **Ron Collins**, to succeed him in office.



CWA District 2 Vice President addresses the 69th Annual CWA Convention last month in Toronto about Stem Cell Research.

From The President's Desk

The essence of trade unionism is social uplift. The labor movement has been the haven for the dispossessed, the despised, the neglected, the downtrodden, and the poor.

A. Philip Randolph

We frequently hear about special interest groups during the election season, often referred to in a negative manner. Organized Labor is one of those groups.

The major difference between Organized Labor and a special interest group like the Chamber of Commerce or the National Association of Manufacturers is that Organized Labor looks after the interests of **ALL** working people, not just those organized into a union.

Throughout its history, labor unions have fought for changes in our society with the goal of social justice for all men and women.

Throughout the nineteenth and into the twentieth century, American children worked in large numbers in mines, glass factories, textiles, agriculture, canneries, home industries, and as newsboys, messengers, bootblacks, and peddlers. Organized Labor fought for and won the changes in labor law that put these young children in schools rather than on the factory floor.

In his address to the 1957 convention of the AFL-CIO, the great labor leader A. Philip Randolph said, "Civil rights represents democracy and democracy represents civil rights. Therefore, the labor movement, representing great masses of workers, has the moral responsibility for its commitment to the principle of civil rights". While labors involvement in the civil rights movement began slowly, eventually labor leaders understood discrimination against any one of us is an injustice to all of us.

The 2007 CWA Convention delegates continued the forward-looking tradition of Mr. Randolph.

The first and most sweeping change is to the make-up of the CWA National Executive Board. In adopting the Proposal on

Executive Diversity Board, the CWA has literally put our money where our mouth is in calling for more opportunity for women and minorities. We are setting the example by giving rank-and-file minority members the opportunity to rise to the decision-making ranks within the CWA.



We passed resolutions concerning Restoring Pension Promises to the working people of the United States, federal government funding for Stem Cell Research, protecting a free press in our country and calling for an end to the genocide which is taking place in the Darfur region of Sudan. You can find a copy of these Resolutions at www.cwalocal2108.org.

Some might ask, "Why would the CWA get involved in issues like these?"

You need only go back and read the quote at the beginning of this article. I could not say it any better than Mr. Randolph did.

In fact, the ability to help people is the main reason I am involved in the Union movement.

We walk through this world and we make choices. The choices we make define who we are better than anything we could ever say about ourselves. Our actions, not our words, tell the world who we are.

Among those choices is the choice of whether we are willing to be of service to others. I believe the choice we make when we choose to be a union steward, stewards' army member or officer in the union is to serve others.

It is a high calling and more often than not a thankless one. If you get involved because you are looking for glory or some sort of higher status then you will be sadly disappointed.

Most often, the only satisfaction you receive is the self-satisfaction of knowing you did your best to help someone. Every once in a while a member tells you "thank you", but more often it's the other phrase ending in "you".

Everyone loves a winner and the world defines a winner as someone with money, celebrity or some other higher social status. We do not describe winners as neglected, downtrodden or poor.

Yet, those are the very people who need the most attention and the ones for whom the labor movement must fight.

Therefore, the question we should ask is not why the CWA would be involved in issues like Darfur or the Iraqi War or Stem Cell Research.

The question we need to ask is, "**WHY WOULDN'T THE CWA BE INVOLVED IN THESE ISSUES?**"

IN SOLIDARITY,

Les

Communications Workers of America

2108 news

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- Johnny M. Brown.....Secretary-Treasurer**
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RMC 2108 Retiree's Corner

By Dennis Strout, President RMC 2108

Retiree Health Care seems to be the hot topic of the month so I am reprinting some info that you may be interested in. Read on.

Victory in Congress Will Help Protect Retiree Health Care

For retiree's and future retiree's, the CWA and the IBEW, in a coordinated campaign with Alcatel Lucent, won a key tax code change that will help preserve retiree health care at that company and others.

An amendment to the supplemental war funding bill, adopted by Congress and signed into law, permits companies like Alcatel Lucent to transfer more than one year's worth of retiree health costs from excess pension assets. Federal tax law had allowed employers to transfer only the equivalent of one year's costs for health benefits for retiree's and their dependents, if pension assets were over funded by more than 120%.

The change allowing additional retiree health care funding – if pension assets are sufficiently over funded – will enable CWA and Alcatel Lucent to build up a VEBA trust fund (Voluntary Employee Beneficiary Association) with CWA's goal to see that fund grow to cover future retiree health costs and limit the company from trying to shift more health care costs to retiree's.

Ralph Maly, CWA Vice President for Communications and Technologies, said, "CWA and IBEW locals, especially those with Alcatel Lucent members, spent a great deal of time and effort urging their members of Congress to make this change."

He thanked Senator Edward Kennedy (D-Mass) and Representative George Miller (D-Calif.) for their efforts throughout the two-year fight to get the change adopted.

This will help preserve retiree health care going forward, especially for the Alcatel Lucent retiree's.

CWA represents about 2,600 active workers at Alcatel Lucent and some 120,000 retiree's and dependents.

Correction Of ARA Press Release

On May 3, 2007 the Alliance for Retired Americans issued a press release which indicated that the Verizon Corporation had told the CWA that it wanted to eliminate all retiree health care in 2008. For the record, this statement is not correct. Verizon has not officially communicated this goal to CWA.

Nonetheless, it is critical that everyone understand that unlike pension benefits, health coverage for retiree's is not guaranteed or protected by the law. Instead, strong collective bargaining agreements backed by mobilized union members and retiree's are what protect health

coverage for retired workers at Verizon, AT&T, Goodyear and countless other major employers. In that light, we will continue to fight, in every round of negotiations with every employer, to maintain quality and affordable health benefits for all those we represent.

But CWA will also continue to fight in the political arena for reforms that guarantee everyone – whether they work or are retired - coverage by comprehensive health benefits. We believe that the solutions to our nation's health care problems cannot be won at the bargaining table and certainly not by shifting cost burdens onto our members. Only a comprehensive national solution can alleviate the burden of soaring health care costs and guarantee all of us that we will be able to get the care we need.

The fight for health care benefits is just one of the battles being waged by the CWA.

From an e-mail I received

You may already know about this. There is a motion in Congress to stop corporations like Verizon from robbing their retiree's of their health care benefits. You and I both know that it is a matter of time before they try to cut back or even eliminate them.

We run the risk of Verizon deciding to reduce or eliminate our benefits any time they choose. To reduce that risk, write to your Senators and ask them to sponsor/support the Emergency Retiree Health Benefits Protection Act. The companion bill in the House of Representatives is H.R.1322. Please write to your Congressional Representative and ask them to support this bill also. If we can get these bills passed we will have a good shot at holding on to our benefits.

Future Meetings

Our August meeting has been cancelled by a vote of the membership. We do this every year to give everyone a chance to relax and enjoy their summer.

The September meeting will be run by vice president Calvin Foster as I will be out of town. I will see you in October.



RMC 2108



"I've finally found a job that's perfect for me - I'm retired"



CWA LOCAL 2108



ANNUAL FAMILY PICNIC

SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE!

BE SURE TO COME TO:

MAYO BEACH PARK - EDGEWATER, MD

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 15, 2007 - NOON TO 5 PM (RAIN OR SHINE)

FOOD * SODAS * BEER * SPORTS * GAMES * MUSIC * SWIMMING

FOOD CATERED BY GLEN'S BBQ UNLIMITED

\$10.00 PER TICKET

CHILDREN UNDER 2 ADMITTED FREE

ALL TICKETS MUST BE PURCHASED IN ADVANCE

NO TICKETS WILL BE SOLD AT THE GATE

LIMIT OF 6 TICKETS PER MEMBER - NO PETS ALLOWED

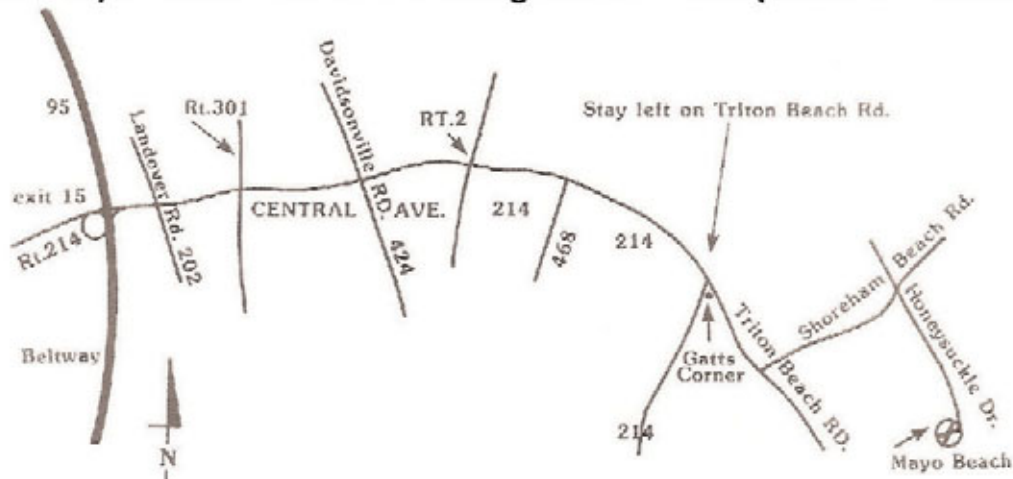
LAST DAY TO PURCHASE TICKETS IS FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 7, 2007

MAYO BEACH HAS LIMITED ATTENDANCE AT THE PARK, SO TICKETS WILL ONLY BE AVAILABLE

ON A FIRST COME, FIRST SERVED BASIS. PLEASE SEE YOUR CHIEF STEWARD OR CALL THE

LOCAL OFFICE AT (301) 459-2108 FOR TICKETS.

To Mayo Beach from I-95 Using Rt. 214 East (Central Avenue)



(This flyer produced by Local 2108 in the Local Office)

CWA Local 2108 Members

Welcome New Members

Carmen Butler

Charles Dorsey, Jr.

Karen Lewis

Wallace Truesdale

Transferred Members

Richard Johnson

Garfield Reid
Sherman Fauntleroy
Everett Allen
Anthony Robinson
Eddie Smith
Corey Goodman
Kathleen Love
Samarro Reynolds
Patrick Bannerman
Mansoor Lindsey
Rahim Kolade
Ronnie Jackson
Temesgen Negussie
Calvin Givens
Mark Rich

Ed Anderson

Shannon Morgan
Deborah Minor
Alissa Mitchell
Cyril Bennett
Beatrice Dabney
Charles Taylor
Ife Madyun
Alanda Byrd
Noreen Gossett
Sherri Newsome
Talesha Jones
Brenda Hunter
Tanzy Brown
Deshara Thomas

Carmen Butler

Vaughn Willis
Edward Jewell, III
Gustav Richard
Curtis Clark

Bob Orr

Charles Arthur Dickerson

Personals

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

James F. Mitchell, brother of **Lilia Toler** who died on June 25, 2007.

Willie Lewis Hines, father of **Jeff Hines** who died on June 26, 2007.

Daniel Williams, brother of **Alvera Bullock** who died on June 20, 2007.

Patricia Wallace, sister of **Miriam Mazariego** who died on June 30, 2007.

Carl A. Rutledge, father of **Mark Rutledge** who died on July 4, 2007.

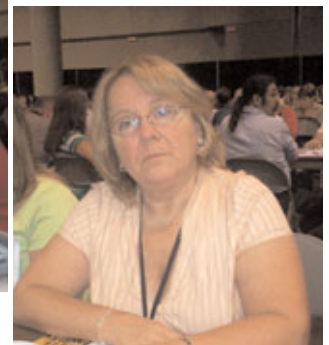
Sherwood Cabean, father of **Sheryl Cabean** who died on July 5, 2007.

Baby Addison Ruth Douglas, daughter of **Todd Douglas** who died on July 8, 2007.

Alease Hill, mother of **Gerald Hill** who died on July 20, 2007.



More Convention Pics



**69th CWA Convention
Toronto, Canada**

CWA Announces Four At-Large Diversity Seats on Board

The 69th Annual CWA Convention is history and the delegates to this year's convention made a little of the same. In an historic action to support efforts to reach out to a new generation of workers – who are in growing numbers women and minority workers – the 2007 CWA Convention voted to expand CWA's 19-member Executive Board, establishing four at-large diversity seats that give greater voice to local leaders. This action strengthens the foundation of a union already known for its progressive values and ensures that CWA leadership reflects the diversity, experiences and strengths of the full range of CWA's membership.

Convention delegates established four at-large diversity board member seats representing four geographic areas of the union, with the goal of having at least three be people of color and at least two women.

"This is not about being politically correct, it's about doing the right thing, and that is to elect local leaders to our Executive Board and to reflect the makeup of our union membership so that our unity is stronger among all our members," said CWA President Larry Cohen.

"Bringing the perspective and ideas of local leaders and activists to the top ranks of the union's leadership can only make us stronger and wiser and better equipped to take on the tough challenges facing our movement in the 21st century," Cohen said. "Our fight for economic justice in the workplace and social justice in our world is strengthened today by this action to make certain that workers of every description see themselves reflected in our leadership," he said.

The CWA Executive Board initially will appoint four members to the at-large diversity seats; those appointments will come from nominations made by the Committee on Equity, the National Women's



Committee and the CWA Minority Caucus. Then beginning with the CWA elections for national officers at next year's convention, these at-large board seats will be open to any CWA member wishing to run for those seats.

The at-large seats come from the four geographic regions, roughly equal in the number of members in each, as established by this year's convention. Local 2108 members are geographically in the Southeast region. While these are at-large seats, meaning the entire body of convention delegates will vote for all four seats, candidates may only run for the seat in the geographic region where their Local is located.

"The fight for equity and justice is what organized labor is all about, and CWA has always been on the forefront of positive change," said CWA Secretary-Treasurer Barbara J. Easterling. She went on to say, "This diversity plan ensures that all will have a strong voice in the workplace, in society and in our union".

Local 2108 Announce Scholarship Winners

CWA Local 2108 proudly announces the results of the Local Scholarships drawing held at the July Membership meeting. The winners will receive \$2,000 Scholarships, paid \$1,000 per semester.

The winners are:

- **Bridget Vernon**, stepdaughter of member **Mark Glotfelty** who will attend Frostburg State University.
- **Michael Reed**, son of member **Terry Reed**, who will attend Frederick Community College.
- **Rebecca Brown**, daughter of member **Johnny Brown** who will attend University of Maryland, University College.

CWA 69th Annual Convention Resolutions

Delegates to the 69th CWA Convention in Toronto in late July took historic action to increase diversity among CWA leadership (see *story page 6*); witnessed the signing of a strategic alliance with the United Steelworkers (USW) to help support CWA's 8,000 Canadian members; and pledged to support embryonic stem cell research to help treat devastating diseases such as ALS (Lou Gehrig's disease), spinal cord injuries, Parkinson's disease (see *story page 1*).

The delegates also passed resolutions to restore pension promises, build a political movement and protested the new postal rates for small and medium periodicals. Below is a synopsis of the resolutions:

RESTORING PENSION PROMISES

When the Employee Retirement Income Security Act (ERISA) passed in 1974, about one-half of the American workforce participated in defined benefit pension plans. Some 21 million workers still enjoy that kind of secure, company-funded pension program, but they now amount to less than 20 percent of the total workforce. Another 30 percent of workers have only a 401(k) plan to build a nest egg for retirement. Half of America's workers have no employer-sponsored retirement plan whatsoever.

CWA currently faces demands at the bargaining table from companies that want to eliminate the opportunity for workers to earn pension benefits in the future. For example, 650 members in New England employed by Idearc Media – the telephone directory business spun-off by Verizon last November – have been working without a contract since June 23. The two CWA locals, bargaining jointly with the IBEW from upstate New York, have been confronted with demands to roll back decades of negotiated benefits and contract provisions, by a company which reported nearly \$800 million in profits last year. Idearc management has proposed to freeze the pension plan effective January 1, 2008.

SenAtor. Tom Harkin (D-Iowa) recently introduced legislation – Restoring Pension Promises to All Workers Act – to address the flaws in the Pension Protection Act of 2006. If enacted, the bill will prevent pension abuses by employers. Harkin's bill would require any company with a supplemental pension plan for executives to provide similar benefits for all their workers.

RESOLVED: That the Communications Workers of America supports the Restoring Pension Promises to All Workers Act introduced by Senator Tom Harkin in order to prevent employers from escaping responsibilities to fund secure pension benefits.

BUILDING A POLITICAL MOVEMENT

The movement to rebuild our nation and restore respect for working Americans is growing exponentially. In November 2006, the American people established a new mandate for our government, and CWA- supported and pro-worker candidates took over the House of Representatives and Senate. CWA members, along with their brothers and sisters in unions across the country, came together for a common purpose. We had a new agenda — a people's agenda, a worker's agenda — that carried the day. Our determination to obtain healthcare, jobs and retirement security gave voice to millions of average Americans who over the past six years under the Bush administration had seen their concerns ignored by a government that catered to the rich, promoted corporate greed and looted a balanced budget to finance a war that our brave men and women in uniform continue to endure.

RESOLVED: That CWA-COPE contributions increase from \$3 million to \$5 million annually by 2009, as called for by the 68th CWA Convention in CWA's "Ready for the Future" resolution. Our new initiative, "\$8 in '08," which asks members to contribute at least \$8 a month to COPE, can help us reach our goals.

RESOLVED: That CWA provide updated resources and training materials on CWA-COPE.

RESOLVED: That CWA actively train and assist members to run as delegates to the 2008 Democratic and Republican National Conventions.

RESOLVED: That all levels of our union actively engage and participate in the AFL-CIO Working Families Vote 2008 campaign and that all CWA elected officers contribute to CWA-COPE.

RESOLVED: That we challenge ourselves to build a political movement led by activist members of CWA's Stewards Army who will ensure that our key issues — jobs, health care, retirement security, collective bargaining and organizing rights — will be addressed.

FAIR POSTAL RATES FOR SMALL AND MEDIUM PERIODICALS

A recent decision by the U.S. Postal Board of Governors will foist a backbreaking increase in periodical postal rates on small and medium sized publications throughout America. The rate increase was devised by Time Warner, one of the largest publishers in America, as a way of shifting its own postal burden onto the backs of smaller publications. This unfair policy will not only force smaller publications to bear a larger share of the July 15th postal rate increase, it will force them to invest heavily in new technology, a cost they can ill afford because of their limited size and resources.

RESOLVED: That the Communications Workers of America stand against the postal rate increase designed to help large publications. Ultimately it could force thousands of medium to small publications, including labor newspapers and magazines, into extinction.

RESOLVED: That every CWA local urge their members of Congress to rollback the periodical postal rate increases that took effect July 15th.

Local 2108 Union Calendar

August 2007

- 2 Chief Steward Meeting 9:00 am
Local Office
- 7-8 Blood Drive
Chesapeake Complex
- 8 Retired Member Club Meeting
CANCELLED
- 8 General Membership Meeting 6:00pm
Local Office, Landover, MD

September 2007

- 3 HOLIDAY - Labor Day
Local Office Closed. Union Negotiated Holiday
- 5 Chief Steward Meeting 9:00 am
Local Office
- 7 **LAST CHANCE TO BUY PICNIC TICKETS**
- 12 Retired Member Club Meeting 11:00am
Local Office, Landover, MD
- 12 General Membership Meeting 6:00pm
American Legion Post 268, Wheaton, MD
- 15 Local 2108 Family Picnic
Mayo Beach Park, Edgewater MD
- 26-27 Blood Drive
Calverton Blvd

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