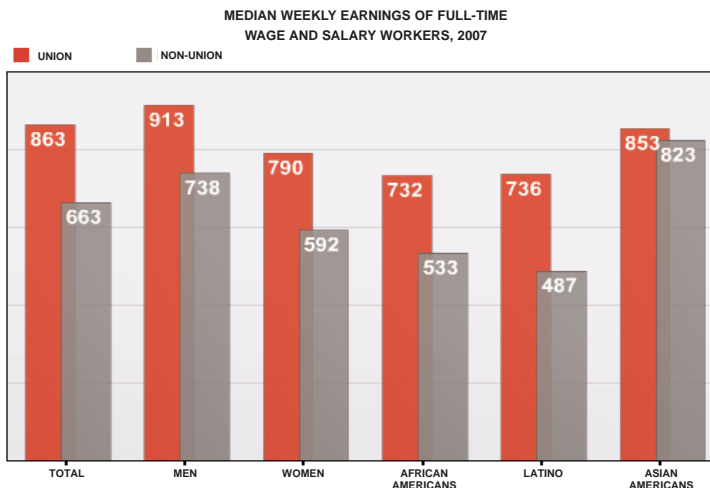


Why We Need the Employee Free Choice Act Now!

What does the Employee Free Choice Act do?

It does three things to level the playing field for employees and employers:

- * Strengthens penalties for companies that illegally coerce or intimidate employees in an effort to prevent them from forming a union;
- * Brings in a neutral third party to settle a contract when a company and a newly certified union cannot agree on a contract after three months;
- * Establishes majority sign-up, meaning that if a majority of the employees sign union authorization cards, validated by the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB), a company must recognize the union.



Source: U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Union Members in 2007," January 2008
Prepared by the AFL-CIO

What's wrong with the current law?

The National Labor Relations Act states: "Employees shall have to the right to self organization to form, join, or assist labor organizations...." It was designed to protect employee choice on whether to form unions, but it has been turned upside down.

The current system is not like any democratic election held anywhere else in our society. Employers have turned the NLRB election process into management-controlled election process—the employer has all the power, controls the information workers can receive and routinely poisons the process by intimidating, harassing, coercing and even firing people who try to organize unions. On top of that, the law's penalties are so insignificant that many companies treat them as just another cost of doing business. By the time employees vote in an NLRB election, if they can get to that point, a free and fair choice isn't an option. Even in the voting location, workers do not have a free choice after being browbeaten by supervisors.

The "September Massacre"

In a massive assault on workers, the Bush-appointed majority of the National Labor Relations Board issued a sweeping set of 61 decisions in September 2007 – the *September Massacre* – denying basic worker rights and protections with blatantly biased decision-making. Through these and prior decisions, the Bush Board has violated its statutory duty to protect workers and has instead subordinated the public interest to corporate interests.

The National Labor Relations Act (NLRA) declares that it is "the policy of the United States" to encourage "the practice and procedure of collective bargaining" and to protect "the exercise by workers of full freedom of association, self-organization, and designation of representatives of their own choosing." The Act promotes the economic well-being of workers by counter-balancing the power of large corporate employers with worker organizations.

The Bush Board's September decisions strip workers of their rights. They establish new rules that deny workers the right to organize through freely signed authorization cards but allow employers to withdraw recognition based on identical or even less reliable signed writings.

They make it harder to obtain effective remedies against illegal employer conduct and cheaper for employers to violate the law; easier for employers to discriminate against employees or job applicants who are also union organizers; easier for employers to deny jobs to employees who exercise their right to strike; easier for employers to file lawsuits in retaliation against protected union activity; and easier for employers to target union supporters for layoffs. More than half of the cases demonstrate delays of four to as much as eighteen years, many without final remedies even now.

This government-sanctioned assault has put the American Dream at risk for American workers. Today, fewer and fewer workers are able to exercise their right to have a union. The result is unprecedented income and wealth inequality, stagnant wages and more Americans without health insurance or retirement benefits. And for the first time, Americans don't believe the next generation will be better off.

From The President's Desk

Where trade unions are most firmly organized, there are the rights of the people most respected.

Samuel Gompers

It is often said the most important part of the word "Union", is the first letter. The fact of the matter is, without the "U" the word becomes meaningless.

The same is true for our Union. I sit here today writing this newsletter editorial the same as I do every month. I am thinking about everything we have happening right now with the different companies we represent. Let me tell you, there is a lot going on.

In the Verizon core company, we are within five months of the expiration of our current contract. Verizon has approached the Union with the idea of attempting to reach an early settlement. The Union told Verizon we just could not get there on reaching an early agreement until they agree to fix what is broken in our current agreement.

Some talks are taking place but the clock is ticking. Ordinarily, contract negotiations begin around the end of June of a bargaining year with the goal of reaching agreement before the contract expires. We are already in April, so if we are to reach an early agreement, it had better come quickly.

The VCSI contract expires at the same time as the Verizon core agreement. In a meeting for the VCSI techs a couple of weeks ago we heard the message loud and clear, what they want the most is movement into the core contract. They fell they are doing the same work and should therefore receive the same compensation.

In Idearc, management is attempting to roll out a new twist on their compensation plan. They have come up with work rules restricting the sales person's ability to meet their sales quota and make a living. It is the equivalent of requiring them to build

ten boxes a day but only giving them parts for five of them. Then, when they do not meet the quota of ten per day, management disciplines them and threatens them with termination.



In Avaya, after the sale last year to Silver Lake and TPG Capital, we are beginning to see downsizing around the country as the unionized portion of their workforce continues to shrink. They seem to be in the business of getting out of the business of telecommunications. Since the sale, we have seen management over bid contracts to the point where it appears they deliberately did not want to hold onto the work.

With all of these changes taking place in every segment of our industry, what I hear most often is, "What is the Union going to do about it?"

Each time I hear that I have to ask the questioner, "I don't know, what are YOU willing to do about it?"

You see, the Union really is YOU.

Yes, it's true that I'm your Local President. That makes me a Union Representative. While I know I have grown larger as I get older, I also know I am not large enough to be the entire union.

The whole concept of a labor union centers around the workers, plural, people like you and me standing up together against a company that has infinitely more money and resources than any one of us possess individually.

What we have that the company does not is each other. Yet, it only really works if we all get involved.

The UNION, ladies and gentlemen, is you. You are the ones who make this whole thing work.

We cannot afford to stand back and wait for someone else fight our battles.

The time to stand and fight is now.

However, no one can do it alone. These companies are too big, too rich and too powerful to fight as individuals. We must stand together, collectively demanding fair treatment and respect in the workplace.

What can you do? We have a Membership Meeting every second Wednesday of the month at 6:00pm right here in the Local.

It is a small sacrifice of your time to come out and talk about what's going on in your workplace and talk about what we can do together to fight for the fairness and dignity we deserve as the men and women who make these companies' work.

Either we stand together or that old saying will most certainly come true.

United We Bargain - Divide We Beg.

I look forward to seeing you at our next Membership Meeting.

Les

Communications Workers of America

2108 news

published monthly by
CWA Local 2108

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Recording Announcements

(301) 595-1824: Verizon
(301) 595-1826: VCSI
(301) 595-1834: Avaya
(301) 595-3072: Idearc



Local Office: (301) 595-2108 Local FAX: (301) 595-2412
Web Site: www.cwalocal2108.org

RMC 2108 Retirees Corner

By Dennis Strout, President RMC 2108

One of my duties as president of the RMC is organizing. Trying to get the retirees of the local to join our chapter is the hardest job there is. Every new retiree receives an invitation to join when they receive their gold card from the Union; few take advantage of the opportunity.



RMC 2108

I talk to retirees on a daily basis and the ones that haven't joined give the same reason. (It's too far to travel.) I'm not sure if that is a good reason or just an excuse for some of these folks. We have members that travel from the Eastern Shore, Southern Maryland and Delaware to attend our meetings on a regular basis. We even have members travel from Pennsylvania to attend a couple of meetings a year. If it's not too far for them why is it too far to travel from Rockville or Gaithersburg Maryland.

I may be wrong but I think it's more of an excuse than a reason. We need to start getting together this year more than any other. Our health care and other retiree benefits are under attack by Verizon. They most certainly will be after cut backs this year in contract negotiations. We all need to keep informed of what's going on and the easiest way is to attend the retirees meetings. I'm asking all retirees to think about it. The chapter is growing on a yearly basis. We now have over two hundred and forty members. Wouldn't you like to be one of them?

Dues are only \$15 a year. That's not bad for all we offer. In addition to seeing old friends and co-workers we also try to have interesting guest speakers and social activities throughout the year. Come to one meeting and see if you like it. If not, you haven't lost anything.

Since this year is an election year, people are deciding who to vote for to be the next President of our country. In that light this next paragraph comes from the Friday Alert published by the Alliance for Retired Americans.

John McCain Restates Support for Social Security Privatization

In an interview appearing in the March 3 edition of the Wall Street Journal, John McCain restated his support for the privatization of Social Security, saying "As part of Social Security reform, I believe that private savings accounts are a part of it—along the lines that President Bush proposed." The proposal McCain favors is the same Bush privatization plan rejected by the American people in 2005 for jeopardizing the economic security of current and future retirees and ravaging guaranteed benefits for seniors and the disabled.

Without the program, half of all American seniors would live in poverty. Privatization would mean a 30-50% cut in benefits, with the average retiree losing \$134,000 in payments over 20 years of retirement. In a Bush/McCain world, seniors' risk would be Wall Street's reward. Think about who you're voting for and why.

I hope to see you at our next meeting. Remember, the second Wednesday of the month.

Verizon Proxies

Verizon's annual meeting will be held in Lincoln, NE, on May 1st. Proxies should be arriving in the mail or to your e-mail shortly. To have the union deliver your proxy to Verizon:

1. Vote your proxy by placing an "X" in the For, Against, or Abstain box for each proposal.
2. Sign and date the card where indicated.
3. Bring back the proxy card and the return envelope to the local or give it to your Steward by April 17th.

2008 Proxy Voting Recommendations

We recommend the following votes:

1) Election of Directors

Recommendation: Against all nominees

2) Ratification of Appointment of Accounting Firm

No recommendation

3) Eliminate Stock Options

Recommendation: For

4) Gender Identity Non-discrimination Policy

No recommendation

5) Separate Offices of Chairman and CEO

Recommendation: For

To have the union deliver your proxy to Verizon:

1. Vote your proxy by placing an "X" in the For, Against, or Abstain box for each proposal and by placing an "X" in the For or Withhold box for Board nominees.
2. Sign and date the card where indicated.
3. Bring the proxy card in a sealed envelope back to your local by **April 17th**.

Note: You **cannot** vote online if you want the union to deliver your proxy. You may print out the online proxy and then treat it like a regular paper proxy.

CWA & IBEW will be collecting and delivering voted proxies to the company.

CWA & IBEW are not asking for discretionary authority to vote proxies on behalf of their members. Please make sure you vote and sign your proxy.

2008 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: _____



Attention CWA Members:

APPLY NOW FOR JOE BEIRNE SCHOLARSHIPS

Apply now for partial college scholarships of \$3,000 each for the 2008-2009 school year, and another \$3,000 for 2009-2010. (2nd year award based on satisfactory academic record.)

Thirty new scholarships will be awarded by CWA's Joe Beirne Scholarship Program.

Eligible are CWA members, their spouses, children and grandchildren (including those of laid-off, retired or deceased members) planning for college studies.

Final deadline for applications is April 30, 2008.

Applications are easy to make online at the Foundation's website (including submission of a short original essay).

Winners will be chosen in a lottery drawing.

The program honors CWA's founding president, who served for more than 30 years. Joe Beirne took great pride in the roles he played in furthering educational opportunity and working for social justice.

For more information, and to fill out and submit the application form, visit:

<http://cwa-union.org/members/beirne/>

OUR MESSAGE IS LOUD AND CLEAR

Thousands of CWA and IBEW members picketed at more than 250 Verizon locations on March 6 and March 13, carrying signs demanding that Verizon honor our contract.

Verizon management has sought to reach a new agreement with IBEW and CWA by May 1, 2008. After preliminary talks were suspended without any progress in December, Verizon initiated another round in February. But union leaders have insisted that if Verizon hopes to reach an early agreement on a new contract, it must respect the existing one.

To back up that message at the bargaining table, the Stewards Army and other activists distributed leaflets with information about how Verizon is undermining our job security.

"Giving out the information helped us mobilize for the picketing," said Chris Flock, an inbound calls consultant for Verizon's Business Partnership Channel and member of CWA Local 2201 in Richmond, VA. Flock is a member of the Stewards Army.

"The picketing focused people's minds on getting ready for this August," said Stephen Moser, a Business Installation tech and Local 1109 chief steward at a garage in Manhattan. "It sent management a message that we haven't fallen asleep since our last agreement. That we still want the same things we have always wanted. Members felt empowered by it."



Ladies and Gentlemen, put your walking shoes on!



The Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation walk is scheduled for **May 4th** in Washington D.C. Local 2108's team, captained by Chief Steward LaTasha Carpenter, is looking for walkers.



to Cure Diabetes



We will provide more information later, in the meantime mark the date on your calendar.

Any questions call **Jenny Sylvester** at the Local Office: 301.595.2108.

CWA Local 2108 Members

Welcome New Members

Sabrina Staley
Sandra Williams

Karen Lewis
Shallun Evelyn
Nair R. Osorio Branco
Franklin Foreman
Tamera Duarte
Gisselle Gomez

Ed Anderson
Laura McClain
Tybar Middlekauff
Audrey Chandler
Shannah Fenelus
Monica Dancy
Stacey Wilkes

Transferred Members

Marlena Duckett
Todd Duck
Hector Badra

Vallorie Coley/
Sharon Byrd
Rashawn Robinson
Keisha Lawson

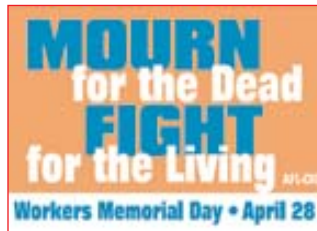
Carl Brogden
John Hallman

Retired Members

<u>Sharon Duckett</u>	<u>Yvonne Noell-Arthur</u>
<u>Dominic Cicala</u>	<u>Nathaniel Arnold</u>
<u>Estrellita Joyner</u>	<u>Constance Bransom</u>

Workers Memorial Day

Decades of struggle by workers and their unions have resulted in significant improvements in working conditions. But the toll of workplace injuries, illnesses and deaths remains enormous. Each year, thousands of workers are killed and millions more are injured or diseased because of their jobs. The unions of the AFL-CIO remember these workers on April 28, Workers Memorial Day.



The first Workers Memorial Day was observed in 1989. April 28 was chosen because it is the anniversary of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration and the day of a similar remembrance in Canada. Every year, people in hundreds of communities and at worksites recognize workers who have been killed or injured on the job. Trade unionists around the world now mark April 28 as an International Day of Mourning.

Personals

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

Kirkland Davis, father of **Pamela Brown** who died on February 14, 2008.

Ellen Galloway-Brantley, mother of **Grayson Brantley** who died on February 16, 2008.

Alvin Koontz, grandfather of **Farris Trotter** who died on February 23, 2008.

Joseph Paul Butler, father of **Catherine Butler** who died on February 27, 2008.

Julius Taylor, father of **Bill Taylor** who died on March 4, 2008.

Lance Bradley, a retired member who died on March 5, 2008.

Congratulations To:

Tarcela and Clarence Cosby on the birth of their daughter, **Tasha Coley Cosby** on February 1, 2008.

Tisheenia Searcy on the birth of her daughter, **Aysia Nalani** on February 6, 2008.

Karina and Charles Steckler on the birth of their daughter, **Charlene Hannah Steckler** on February 24, 2008.

Sandi Manns, on the birth of her son, **Peyton Alexander Manns** on February 25, 2008.

Jameelah Dinkins, on the birth of her son, **Caden Dinkins** on February 28, 2008

Verizon Benefits Center Changes

In early April the contact information for the Verizon Benefits Center will change. The new number will be **1-877-4Vz-Bens (1-877-489-2367)** and the web address will be **www.verizon.com/4verizonbens**. Calls to the Benefits Center will continue to be accepted through 1-877-275-8947 until early April. Employees and retirees will be notified of the new contact information in mid to late March.

Since February 1, 2008 the process for acquiring general HR (non-benefit) information changed. When employees call the HR Helpline (ask 1-877-Ask-VzHR) for general HR questions (non-benefit related), they are provided with the contact information to reach the appropriate resources. For instance, if they are calling regarding tuition reimbursement they will be given the CAEL number and the call will be transferred. Once call volumes decrease for non-benefit related topics, automatic transfers will cease, and the caller will be given the appropriate number to call.

Additionally, the eWeb has been updated to include new tools to make it easier for employees to find contact information and general HR policy information. Below are selected contact numbers and web links for different programs:

<u>Program</u>	<u>Web Access</u>	<u>Telephone Number</u>
<u>Benefits</u>		
Aetna Dental DHMO	http://www.aetna.com	1-800-843-3661
Dental	http://www.metlife.com/dental	1-800-556-3490
Vision (Associate Employees only)	http://www.davisvision.com	1-800-999-5431
MetLife Disability	http://www.metlife.com/mybenefits	1-800-638-4228
Verizon Benefits Center	http://resources.hewitt.com/verizon	1-877-4Vz-Bens
Savings Plan – Fidelity	http://www.netbenefits.com	1-888-457-9333
<u>Employee Assistance</u>		
Employee Assistance Program (EAP)	http://www.verizon.com/life	1-800-845-0632
Vz Life	http://www.verizon.com/life	1-800-845-0632
<u>Family Medical Leave</u>		
FMLA		1-877-4Vz-Bens "Say FMLA"
<u>Payroll</u>		
Payroll		1-866-489-7297
<u>Training & Education</u>		
Tuition Assistance - CAEL	http://www.tamsonline.org/vztap	1-866-994-3470

Verizon Electrical Awareness Training

Verizon recently completed the Electrical Awareness Training for outside technicians. This training was a direct result of CWA's action taken to resolve the cause of two member/technician electrocutions in May and October of 2006.

Four hour training sessions were conducted by Company supervisors to all outside CWA bargaining unit members as part of an agreement with the Maryland and Indiana Departments of Labor/Occupational Safety and Health Administrations. We want to know how you felt about the training.

A questionnaire is available from the Local Office regarding the all phases of the content of that training.

If you would like to participate in the survey, please contact the Local Office at: 301.595.2108 as soon as possible.

The more feedback we have about the Electrical Awareness Training, the more CWA will be able to help ensure that the Company is providing safe and healthful working conditions for all represented technicians, allowing them to return home from work in the same physical and mental condition in which they began their work.



VERIZON INC. & VERIZON CONNECTED SOLUTIONS, INC. (VCSI)

CWA MEMBERSHIP BARGAINING SURVEY

LOCAL 2108 - BELTSVILLE, MARYLAND

Please complete this form and return it by Thursday, May 1, 2008 by one of the following methods:

Fax: :301.595.2142 • U.S. Mail: 10782 Rhode Island Avenue • Beltsville, MD 20705 • Hand deliver to your Steward

This survey is intended to give the Negotiating Committee an idea of which items the membership would like to see improved or changed in this year's bargaining and the relative importance of each. Please put a number 10 in the block opposite the item you consider the most important. Put a number 9 in the block considered next most important and so on down to number 1. Put as many number 1's (tenth choice) as you wish....

- Shorter wage progression schedules, Job and employment security, Pension improvements, Earlier retirement without penalty, Rights to privacy, Other Benefits, Shorter work week - shorter hours, Improvements in hospital & medical plan, Elimination of subcontracting, Increased holidays, Improvements in sick pay & beginning the first day, Union Jobs in other subsidiaries, Increased overtime premium payments, Elimination of the monitoring of employees, Safe/Healthy work conditions, New rules for due process (discipline suspended until grievance process is completed), Improve the savings plan, Better Management, Ban of supervisors performing bargaining unit work, Contractual rights to training and retraining, Base wage increase, Improved ISP, Further restrictions of supervisors returning to bargaining unit, Profit sharing, Elimination of tests or training to pass tests, Elimination of all forced overtime, Health benefits, Co-determination of company policies which affect employee's jobs, Improved dental plan, Child care, Paid clothing allowance, Upgrades, Employment guarantees, COLA, Less job pressure/stress, Better absence control

OTHER GOAL:

Four horizontal lines for writing other goals.

NON-ECONOMIC BARGAINING SUGGESTIONS - THESE SHOULD PRIMARILY CENTER ON CONTRACT LANGUAGE CHANGES AND WORKING ISSUES:

Five horizontal lines for writing non-economic bargaining suggestions.

COMPANY: (CHECK ONE) [] VERIZON [] VCSI

MEMBER'S NAME AND WORK LOCATION (OPTIONAL): _____

CWA LOCAL 2108 - BELTSVILLE, MARYLAND

Local 2108 Union Calendar

April 2008

- 2 Chief Steward Meeting 9:00 am
Local Office
- 9 Retired Member Club Meeting 11:00am
Local Office, Beltsville, MD
- 9 General Membership Meeting 6:00pm
Local Office, Beltsville, MD
- 6 - 9 CWA Legislative Conference
Washington, DC
- 9 - 12 CWA Civil Rights and Equity Conference
Washington, DC
- 28 Workers Memorial Day

May 2008

- 4 Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation Walk
Washington, DC
- 7 Chief Steward Meeting - 9:00am
Local Office, Beltsville, MD
- 14 Retired Member Club Meeting 11:00am
Local Office, Beltsville, MD
- 14 General Membership Meeting 6:00pm
Local Office, Beltsville,
- 26 Memorial Day Holiday
Paid Holiday Thanks to your Union Contract

Things You Should Know!

For 2007 **Ivan Seidenberg's** total compensation was **\$26.55 million**, 25% more than the previous year. He also received **\$471,467** for his part-time jobs serving on 2 other corporate boards.

VZ's stock rose **17.3%** in 2007 (but has **lost** all of that gain in 2008).

Want Your Voice Heard?
Fill out and submit the Local Bargaining Survey on Page 7 of this issue!

**OUR VERIZON AND VCSI
CONTRACTS EXPIRE
ON AUGUST 2, 2008
WEAR RED ON THURSDAYS**

Visit Local 2108 On The Web: www.cwacalocal2108.org

September
Massacre...
See page 1

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