

CWA Rallies in West Virginia to Stop the Sale of Access Lines

In a concerted effort to protect jobs and the growth of broadband and high speed internet, CWA members and activists from over a dozen other labor unions rallied in Charleston, WV to stop the sale of local access lines in that state. Frontier, which has operated in the state for many years, but not nearly at the level of Verizon, is the potential buyer.

West Virginia Governor Joe Manchin addressed the hundreds in attendance on the eve of Public Service Commission hearings and noted that he and his administration had spent a lot of time speaking with both parties and he hasn't yet reached a comfort level on the proposed landline deal. The governor also expressed concern about the jobs of current Verizon workers and their ability to work going forward. "I want to make sure (Frontier) and the system we have is strong enough to create and give the opportunity for the jobs we need and the service we need to get to the next level", noted Governor Manchin.

A major point of contention is the track record of the potential buyers after the sale is completed. The most recent example is the spin off of Maine, New Hampshire and Vermont to Fairpoint Communications. Fairpoint has since filed for bankruptcy protection and as a result, service issues have become critical, including major disruptions in the 911 systems. PSC staff attorneys and the state Consumer Advocate along with dozens of civic organizations have been against the deal for months, concerned about the debt Frontier will incur and the ability to make needed advancements in the state.

The PSC hearings were completed on January 15th, and briefs are due by late February and reply briefs are due in early March. Once all 14 states involved with the proposed deal have completed their regulatory process, the FCC will hold hearings on the proposed sale. CWA anticipates a decision in mid to late April.

CWA District 2 Vice President, Ron Collins, noted that the "Stop The Sale" campaign has been one of the best campaigns he has personally been involved with. "We will continue to push forward to stop this sale. As you know, everything is at risk for the 1600 CWA



West Virginia Governor Joe Manchin advises local activists that he is still not comfortable with the terms of the Verizon/Frontier deal.



CWA President, Larry Cohen, emphasized he didn't want CWA members and consumers in West Virginia to suffer the same fate as folks in New Hampshire, Vermont and Maine when Verizon sold access lines to Fairpoint. Fairpoint has since filed for bankruptcy.

February is Black History Month and Labor's history is closely aligned with that of black history in the United States.



As far back as 1850 came the establishment of The American League of Colored Laborers in New York City. Nineteen years later came the first national black labor organization, the Colored National Labor Union. A. Philip Randolph, one of the earliest leaders in the civil rights movement of the 1950's and 1960's started out as the president and a founding member of the International Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters. In 1957, he was elected as the AFL-CIO's first black vice president.

We celebrate the life and birthday of Dr. Martin Luther King in January of each year. Not only was Dr. King a great man and civil rights leader, he was also a great labor leader. It is often forgotten what brought Dr. King to be in the city of Memphis that fateful day in April 1968. He was there to support the striking sanitation workers who were attempting to negotiate with the city. The day before he died Dr. King delivered one of his most famous speeches, better known as the "I've been to the Mountaintop" speech, in support of the striking sanitation workers at Mason Temple in Memphis, TN.

As AFL-CIO Organizing Director Stewart Acuff said, "I would submit to you that Dr. King was a trade unionist. He believed in our movement and struggled for our movement. He knew and he preached that civil rights were inadequate without economic rights. Dr. King knew that our economic system allows a few to have too much power and wealth and workers to have too little, so he believed that we have a responsibility to struggle to push down wealth and power from those who have too much to those who have too little. That is why he was a trade unionist." His last great campaign was the Poor People's Campaign to organize America's poor to fight for economic justice and dignity. **continued on page 3**

2010 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 from the 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 the current year.
9. Resignation from the union will forfeit scholarship awards.

NAME: _____ SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER _____

RELATIONSHIP TO MEMBER _____ SCHOOL ATTENDING _____

ADDRESS _____ HOME NUMBER _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP CODE _____ WORK NUMBER _____

With all their faults, trade unions have done more for humanity than any other organization of men that ever existed. They have done more for decency, for honesty, for education, for the betterment of the race, for the developing of character in men, than any other association of men.

Clarence Darrow

As you are reading these words we now have over 400 of our fellow union members in DC, Maryland and Virginia who no longer work here at Verizon. Not because Verizon does not have the work. There is plenty of work to go around. And it's not because these people were incapable of performing the work. No, it's because they have been laid off. And that is mostly because Verizon no longer really cares about its customers and doesn't really understand the business they are in.

At all levels of front line management, you will find they don't understand how they are supposed to get the job done without the workers necessary to do it. Yet, it seems upper management doesn't care about that part. For them, we're just numbers on a liability sheet. We are an expense of doing business they seem to think they can do without. The reality is, this cannot continue. Eventually, it's all going to come crashing down.

It's similar to building a ten story building and then removing the first two floors one brick at a time and thinking the top floors will survive. They won't!

Verizon is steadily moving in a direction that is unsustainable. They want a completely expendable work force. They don't want anyone thinking about having a long term career. In fact, the only reason they didn't lay off even more is the majority of their workforce is still protected by the Job Security Letter in the contract. That's not to say they won't try for more in the future.

The following is a quote from the January 26th edition of the New York Times, "Verizon reported a fourth-quarter loss of \$653 million on Tuesday, mostly because of costs related to layoffs, despite a 10 percent increase in revenue. The company also said it planned to cut an additional 13,000 jobs this year."

Now, in context, Verizon reportedly employs 223,000 people and the article said Verizon planned "cuts", not all of which would necessarily be layoffs. Clearly, this company is headed in the wrong direction.

Some of those being laid off, and others who were not have asked the question, "Why isn't the Union doing more to stop these layoffs?"

Unfortunately, we are limited in our rights to prevent management from running the business into the ground. Just ask anyone who worked for the "old" AT&T. Twenty-Six years ago that was a company with over 200,000 workers. Today, it no longer exists. It went through several more divestitures after the Bell System break-up of 1984 and ultimately was bought up and is part of SBC Communications.

The limited rights we possess in telling the company how to run its business are won and lost at the bargaining table.

In the case of layoffs in Potomac, we won the right to a no layoff clause 10 years ago in bargaining. In 2003 we didn't gain that right for anyone entering the payroll after August 2, 2003. In 2008 Bargaining, we won partial job protections for certain job titles where Verizon is operating using VCSI employees performing "expanded copper duties". Those protections included a no layoff clause. What they didn't include was a no forced transfer or downgrade clause. In this case, Verizon is taking the position they didn't "layoff" anyone in those protected titles because they had jobs available. They were all jobs that required either a downgrade or a forced transfer to West Virginia, but they were jobs.



The CWA takes the position that the Company has violated the contract on several fronts and is taking the fight into the grievance and arbitration procedure.

First, we believe that before the company declares an Article 35 surplus, they must cease using VCSI to perform the expanded copper duties. The company believes that until they actually layoff someone in one of those protected job titles, they can continue to have VCSI perform the expanded duties.

We also believe that when the Company declares a surplus under Article 35, and they clearly do not have enough jobs for the number of people they have declared surplus, by any reasonable definition, that is a layoff. The Company believes that no matter how many people are declared surplus, so long as they have at least one job available that no one accepted, then no one was laid off.

In all likelihood it will take an arbitrators ruling to determine whose interpretation is the correct one.

In the meantime, we have probably not seen the last of these Article 35 announcements. As I have said in the past, I don't believe Verizon is very much interested in staying in the landline business, copper or fiber. I also know the best protection any of us have against a corporation of this size is each other and the Union.

The Union isn't the one declaring people surplus and laying them off. The Union and its members ratified the contract 18 months ago with the language we are bound by today. No one anticipated Verizon Upper Management would go nuclear on their own company and start getting rid of the very people who make it work. If we had, we may have been willing to strike over stronger job security protections. Hindsight is always 20/20. Anyone can be a great quarterback on Monday morning.

The best advice I can give anyone working for Verizon today is expect anything and prepare for it.

For some people, that may include making sure your financial house is in order because you may want to retire sooner than you anticipated.

For others that might be that you go back to school and take advantage of having Verizon pay for your education. The Tuition Assistance Plan is one of the most under-utilized, best kept non-secret benefits we have available. My advice is use it. It can better prepare for us what is shaping up to be a very uncertain future at Verizon Communications.

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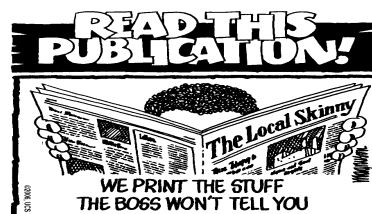
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Recording Announcements

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





WE PRINT THE STUFF THE BOGS WON'T TELL YOU

Pursuant to our Local 2108 bylaws, Delegate nominations were conducted at the January 13th Membership Meeting. The three nominees were **Carl Brogden, Larry Gibson and LaTasha Carpenter**.

While the official numbers which determine our delegate strength are expected to be received from the CWA Secretary-Treasurer's office sometime in May, we anticipate being entitled to three delegates, based on the number of members in our Local during the past nine months.

Because we expect to be entitled to the same number of delegates as were nominated, the Election Committee made the decision to not conduct the elections at this time, as had been previously announced.

If we are entitled to three delegates when our official delegate strength is determined by CWA, the three nominees will be elected by acclamation. If we are only entitled to two delegates, ballots will be mailed and an election will take place at that time.

Any questions about this process can be directed to Local 2108's Election Committee Chairperson, Dedria Tyree or Vice President Marilyn Irwin at the Local Office on (301) 595-2108.

CWA Needs Your Help For Haitian Relief Efforts

The relief effort in Haiti is less than a few weeks old, and aid workers are racing against time to prevent further loss of life. **CWA is partnering with Save the Children to help provide critical supplies to quake survivors** - particularly children, who are most vulnerable.

Help make sure Save the Children has the resources it needs to continue these efforts. Any amount you can afford will help save lives. Journalist Tony Winton, president of the News Media Guild, TNG-CWA Local 31222, has been on the ground in Haiti documenting the disaster and the relief effort.

The devastation and suffering in Haiti is beyond words and images. From a people that had next to nothing, the earthquake took everything, with very long odds against the real threats of disease and starvation. A sustained relief effort, lasting years or decades, is needed to avoid these and to give the Haitian people a chance to build a sustainable way of life.

Save the Children has worked continuously in Haiti since 1978, and after last week's earthquake it began an immediate large-scale relief and recovery effort. They are well suited to undertake the kind of sustained relief effort Tony says is needed, but they need our help in order to do that.



Your contribution will help Save the Children deliver food, water, shelter materials, medicines, hygiene kits, and other essentials during the first critical weeks of the post-disaster period.

Then, as conditions allow and children's survival needs are being met, Save the Children will also use your generous gift to initiate and sustain long-term recovery programs that address the health, education, protection and well being of children in Haiti.

Please join your CWA brothers and sisters in supporting these lifesaving efforts. Visit this website to make your contribution:

https://secure.savethechildren.org/01/wpg_e_haiti_earthquake_10

continued from page 1 ... In 1961, Dr. King explained his belief that the civil rights and union movements were linked. Speaking before the AFL-CIO Convention that year, he said: "The two most dynamic and cohesive liberal forces in the country are the labor movement and the Negro freedom movement ... Together we can bring about the day when there will be no separate identification of Negroes and labor." Four years later, he told the Illinois AFL-CIO convention: "Negroes in the United States read the history of labor and find it mirrors their own experience".

In 1967, one year before he died, Dr. King wrote that unions are just as important as business in ensuring economic success for people of color. "Our young people need to think of union careers as earnestly as they do business careers and professions."

Personals :

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

Racheal Johnson, mother of retired member **Sandrya McQuater** who died on December 21, 2009.

John M. Fitzgerald, a retired member who died on January 3, 2010.

Doris Ervin, sister of **Sandrya McQuater** who died on January 6, 2010.

Sharon E. Clark, an active member who died on January 8, 2010.

Horace Tibbs, stepfather of **Sandrya McQuater** who died on January 10, 2010.

Cheryl "Trish" Johnson, an active member and sister of **Myron Johnson** who died on January 13, 2010.

Gertrude Campbell, mother of **Jacqueline Dean**, who died January 18, 2010.

Carolyn Melton, mother of **Glenn Melton** who died on January 12, 2010.

Hank Ruth Fourcade, grandson of retired member **Robert Fourcade** who died on January 7, 2010.

John Fitzgerald, retired member who died January 3, 2010.

Congratulations to:

Barbara and Bill Balster on the birth of their granddaughter, **Ella Grace Allen** on December 26, 2009.

Welcome New Members

New

Ed Anderson

Latrice Scales
Tareq Risheq

Karen Lewis

Kumar Carter
Timetna Banks

Jenone White

Janar Wilson
Jack Logan

Transferred

Karen Lewis

Kia-Tanya Williams
Joyce Galatolo
Letitia Thompson
Sonya Powell
LaSean Ray
Donna Milliken
Kimberly Gomillion
Tanya Claiborne

Ed Anderson

Tina Waid-Ferreira
DiNika Reed
Jeremy Bowers

David Broach

Edward Mohan

Carl Brogden

Tanya Rivera
Rashaad Thomas
John Techie-Mensau, Jr.

Micki Wade

Leslie Lockhart
Walter Brewer, Jr.

Marlena Duckett

Teddie Mims

Scot McElroy

Wayne Angleberger, II

Don Kurz

Charles Berg

Sabrina Staley

Tony Morales
Jonathan Murphy
Carol Cooper
Mary Langone
Janice Salters
Steven Colbert
Denise Cooper
Brenda Baskerville
Jane Beach
Samuel Stamper III
Ynelle Smith
Deborah Maile
Connie Kitchen
Stephen Johnson
Polly Hopkins
Demetria Flemings
Jeanette Fenwick

Richard Johnson

Kimberly Gomillion
Candra Hughes
Raymond Daniels
Lambard Jackson

Larry Gibson

Deborah Chapman
Stanley English

Sharon Byrd

Jacquelyn Cahill
Leah Carter
Elaine Davis

Bob Orr

John Gentry

Tonie Price

Richard Woodson
Amy Strzegowski
Aquanette Spellman
Yolanda Wilson
Tanya Savoy-Mitchell
Amy Rominski
Harriet Mobley

Deborah McCracken

Audrey Meekins
Victoria Paige
Brenda Kline
Sharon Holman
Cheryl Gushee
Sergio Gomez
Stacey Fulford
Mary Dorzey
Newell Davis
Janet Christmas
Robert Brown
Brian Bogdanski
Kris Ratchford
Dena Andreasik
Molette Alston
Jefferey Alkire
Karen Kingsborough
Jeong Kim
Kimberly Hagerman
Gabrielle Petty
Debbie Maenner
Michele Ross

Retirees

Patrick Barnes
Sonia Cousins
Wright Dixon
Armando Fernandez
Patricia Kearney
Danny Laux
Edna Marlowe
Patrick McCarthy, Jr.
Jack Pham
Aaron Phillip
Vernon Smith
Jane Wahr
Charles White, Jr.
Hilario Campos
Daniel Saunders



RMC 2108
Retirees Corner



Calvin Foster
President RMC 2108

RMC 2108

The year has started with many important issues that the nation must try to understand and act on. Many of these, like Health Care Reform, are of direct concern to all, or should be in my opinion. We will see many twists and turns by our elected government to bring us as a nation to a satisfactory solution we all can agree upon.

As retirees, we have to be aware of any changes that may have long term effect on our lives. We all should be ready to pass any of our concerns and suggestions to our legislators. They work for us. The cost of Health Care Reform should not be paid for only by those of us that have bargained for and received healthcare throughout our years of employment. Let your Congressional Representative, Senator and/or The President hear your concerns on this.


Congress and Senate - (202) 225-3121 - White House (202) 456-1414

If you are looking for more things to do try joining the CWA RMC 2108 for a special matinee performance of "Hairspray" on Wednesday, April 21,2010 at TOBY'S Dinner Theater in Columbia, MD. The cost is \$40.00 per person. Call Janice Crowe at 410 533 5370 for more information.

Our next meeting is February 10, 2010 at 11:00am, come join us .



FEBRUARY 2010

- 3 Chief Stewards Meeting - 9:00am
Local Office, Beltsville, MD
- 10 Retired Members Chapter Meeting, 11:00am
Local Office, Beltsville, MD
- 10 Membership Meeting - 6:00pm
Local Office, Beltsville, MD
- 14 Valentine's Day

- 15 Presidents Day Holiday
Union Negotiated Holiday

MARCH 2010

- 3 Chief Stewards Meeting - 9:00am
Local Office, Beltsville, MD
- 7-9 Communications and Technologies Conference
Las Vegas, NV
- 10 Retired Members Chapter Meeting, 11:00am
Local Office, Beltsville, MD
- 11 Membership Meeting - 6:00pm
Local Office, Beltsville, MD **(Note Date Change)**
- 14 Daylight Saving Time Begins
Set Clocks Ahead 1 Hour
- 17 St Patrick's Day


SAVE THE DATES:
February 10, 2010 - Membership Meeting, Local Office, Beltsville, Md.- 6:00pm
February 10, 2010 - RMC 2108 Meeting, Local Office, Beltsville, MD - 11:00am

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