

## AVAYA Members Protected Through Bankruptcy Proceedings - Contract Extended Until September 21, 2019 -

Last year, CWA scored a big victory for Avaya workers and retirees. By intervening in bankruptcy proceedings, CWA was successful at preserving the collective bargaining agreement with the company as it emerged from bankruptcy. Retiree benefits and pensions also remained intact. CWA's quick intervention was key to protecting workers and retirees. Not only are CWA members among the few employees largely unaffected by the bankruptcy, but CWA was also able to ensure that employees who were owed severance pay months before the bankruptcy received their severance payments as well.

With the Avaya contract set to expire on June 18, 2018, delegates at the Telecommunications and Technologies Conference in January 2018 elected Ritchie Meringolo from CWA Local 1101 and Sandra Strain from CWA Local 6016 to bargain a new agreement with AVAYA. Prior to those negotiations getting underway, CWA is pleased to announce that a tentative agreement has been reached to extend the current contract until September 21, 2019.

Highlights of the tentative contract extension are as follows:

- All provisions of the current collective bargaining agreement remain in full force and effect.
- Effective July 18, 2018, wage schedules shall be increased by 2.8% on the maximum rates and 2.8% on the minimum rates in effect on October 17, 2017.
- For retirees who retired as of October 15, 2015, the Company will provide the following medical coverage funding:
  - For calendar year 2019, the HRA's for non-Medicare eligible represented retirees will be funded as follows:
    - \$6400 ( \$2200 Company contribution and \$4200 VEBA contribution) per year for retiree-only coverage; and
    - \$12,500 ( \$4000 Company contribution and \$8500 VEBA contribution) per year for spouse/domestic partner coverage.
  - For calendar year 2019, the HRA's for Medicare eligible represented retirees will be funded as follows:
    - \$2400 ( \$2200 Company contribution and \$200 VEBA contribution) per year for retiree-only coverage; and
    - \$4200 ( \$4000 Company contribution and \$200 VEBA contribution) per year for spouse/domestic partner coverage.

CWA Local 2108 will be mailing out contract extension ratification ballots to all our represented members of the AVAYA bargaining unit and results will be tabulated on February 23, 2018.

## VZ Financial Windfall Trickles Down With Stock Grants to Employees

Late last month, Verizon advised CWA that due to the additional savings from tax reform that will add \$3.5 billion to \$4 billion dollars of additional revenues to its operating cash flow this year, (this is on top of the 16.8 billion one-time increase under the new tax scheme), they were going to provide all employees (that includes first and second level management), 50 shares of restricted stock.



Under the conditions of this stock grant, all employees who are actively at work on February 1, 2018 are eligible for the program. Employees who are on a Company approved leave of absence on February 1, 2018, such as a short-term disability leave, will be eligible for the grant if they return to work prior to January 31, 2020. Eligible full-time employees will receive 50 restricted stock units (RSUs) and eligible part-time employees will receive 25 RSUs. A restricted stock unit is a hypothetical share of Verizon common stock. The award you are

receiving will vest over a 2-year period, with 50% of the number of units vesting on 1/31/2019 and the remaining 50% of the units vesting on 1/31/2020. If you satisfy the vesting requirement for the award, you will receive a cash payment equal to the value of the vested RSUs on the applicable vesting dates. The RSU's grant date is February 1, 2018.

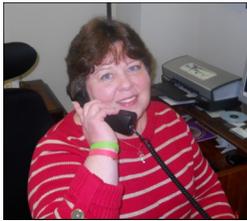
The value of your RSU award has the opportunity to grow in two ways. First if Verizon stock price increases, the value of each RSU also increases. Second, quarterly Dividend Equivalent Units (DEUs) can increase the number of RSU's you will receive at payout.

The actual value of your payout depends upon the closing price of Verizon's common stock on each of the vesting dates, 1/31/19 and 1/31/20, subject to any tax withholding obligations and legally required deductions. Vested RSUs will be paid in cash through local payroll as soon as administratively practicable following the applicable vesting date.

If you should happen to leave the payroll prior to the vesting date, the reason you separate from Verizon determines how your RSUs are

*Continued on page 2*

I attended a meeting our Our Revolution Howard County last week and wanted to share what I learned about **Improved Medicare For All** with you all.



The U.S. spends more on health care per person, and as a percentage of gross domestic product, than any other advanced nation in the world, including Australia, Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, Japan, New Zealand and the U.K. Our per capita spending on retail prescription drugs is twice the OECD average (which compares those costs in 29 developed nations).

Unfortunately all that money has not made Americans healthier than the rest of the world. We have a high-priced health care system that leaves millions overlooked; we spend more, but we end up with less. Our infant mortality rates are more than double those of Italy and Sweden, and maternal deaths per 100,000 births is ten times higher than that rate in Australia. The life expectancy of Americans is nearly four years less than that of those living in Italy. Income plays a major role in our life expectancy, also. For those who turned 50 in 2010, the wealthiest have a remaining life expectancy over thirteen years higher than those with the lowest income. It is reported that 28% of American adults are "under-insured" today, meaning their out of pocket medical expenses are more than 10% of their income, or their deductibles are more than 5% of their income. I was shocked to learn that from 1999 to 2016 workers' earnings increased by 60% but health insurance premiums rose 213%, and workers' contribution to premiums increased by a whopping 242%.

If we are spending so much more for health care in the U.S., why aren't our outcomes better than those in other developed countries? Our current multi-payer health system is expensive, complicated and wasteful. One third of our health insurance dollars go to administration and insurance company profits! While the number of physicians has grown by almost 200% since 1970, the number of health care managers has grown by over 3000% in the same period of time. Our current system rations healthcare by ability to pay, and medical illness is still the number one cause of bankruptcy.

Other industrialized nations are making the morally principled and financially responsible decision to provide universal health care to all of their people - and by keeping people healthier they are saving money. We are somehow able to afford tax cuts for billionaires in America, so we certainly should be able to afford Improved Medicare for All. **The premise of this plan is that healthcare is a human right.** A Medicare for All Act of 2017 (S. 1804) was introduced in the Senate by Senator Bernie Sanders, and H.R. 676, called Expanded and Improved Medicare for All Act has been introduced in the House by Representative John Conyers. H.R. 676 would provide for universal coverage by a single, public plan, comprehensive benefits including long term care and no copayments for covered services.

PNHP (Physicians for a National Health Program) compared this Single Payer Plan to the "Public Option". They believe that the Single Payer Plan is the solution to our health care woes because it 1) provides guaranteed coverage for all U.S. residents 2) Eliminates co-pays and deductibles 3) Covers all necessary care 4) Ensures choice of doctor and 5) Controls costs without compromising access to care, while the Public Option provides none of these.

This all sounds great, but how would Improved Medicare for All be funded? I was surprised to learn that taxes already fund two thirds of health care spending (i.e. Medicare and Medicaid, the VA and Government Workers Benefits, tax subsidies, etc.). Medicare for All would eliminate health insurance industry profits, marketing costs and administrative waste, and allow for the negotiation of drug prices and medical fees, saving nearly \$500 billion annually. This is enough to cover all of the uninsured and to eliminate deductibles, coinsurance and co-pays for everyone. There are many options available on how to finance a Medicare for All system that will create savings for 95% of Americans, while

increasing income taxes on the top 5% of income earners. It is also expected that this new plan would be an economic stimulus for small businesses which would no longer be responsible to pay for private employee health insurance, and would lead to a net increase of 2.6 million jobs.

We can't be short-sided because we currently enjoy the great medical coverage CWA has negotiated for active and retired members and their families. When you consider how much health care costs have skyrocketed since the turn of the century, it's obvious that we can't continue on the same path and that we must fix the health care crisis in America. I believe that an Improved Medicare for All approach is what we need, and I urge you to contact your Senators and Member of Congress to ask them to support S. 1804 and H.R. 676.

As February is Black History Month, I will close with a quote from Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. **"Of all the forms of inequality, injustice in healthcare is the most shocking and inhuman."**

In Solidarity,

*Marilyn*



*The Executive Board of CWA Local 2108 after taking the Oath of Office which was administered by CWA District 2-13 Vice President Ed Mooney at officers training held January 22-26, 2018 in Silver Spring, Md.*

(continued...from page 1)

**Verizon Awards Employees Stock Grant**

treated. If you voluntarily resign (and are not retirement eligible) before the applicable vesting dates your award will be cancelled immediately and you will forfeit any unvested RSUs. If you are terminated for cause at any time before the award is paid, you will forfeit any unpaid RSUs (vested or unvested). Under other circumstances when you separate, you will not forfeit the unvested RSUs. For example, if you retire when you are retirement-eligible, are involuntarily terminated without cause, separate from service under a Company provided severance plan (or, if you are an associate, you leave pursuant to a surplus declaration), or you separate from service due to death or disability on or before January 31, 2020, your then unvested RSUs will vest and be payable on the regularly scheduled payment date. If you die, any payment you would have become eligible to receive will be made to your estate.

Any payment received under the award will not be taken into account as compensation in the determination of benefits under any pension, savings, life insurance, severance or other benefit plan maintained by Verizon and it will not be included in wages for computations of overtime. Furthermore, payouts from this award may not be rolled into an existing 401(k) plan.

The CWA Joe Beirne Foundation was established in October 1974 by the Communications Workers of America Executive Board to honor the name and memory of the founding President of CWA, who served for more than 30 years. In his capacity as the first CWA President, Joe Beirne took great pride in the roles he played in the fields of education and learning and other areas of social concern.

Fifteen partial college scholarships of \$4,000 each are being offered for the 2018-2019 school year. Winners, selected in a lottery drawing, also will receive second-year scholarships of the same amount contingent upon satisfactory academic accomplishment. Part-time students, less than 12 credits, will receive half of the scholarship monies.

Eligible for the awards are CWA members and their spouses, children and grandchildren, including those of retired or deceased members.

Applications are accepted during the months of November through April. **Final deadline for the 2018-2019 school year is April 30, 2018.**

**To apply online, go to:**

<http://www.cwa-union.org/pages/beirne>

## The Vincent & Patricia Maisano Labor Scholarship Program

This scholarship award is being presented as a tribute to the second CWA District 13 International Vice President and the former Secretary-Treasurer of CWA Local 13000. Both of these individuals retired in April of 2005. Vince and Pat both placed a high priority on education.

All CWA District 2-13 members, their spouses, children and grandchildren (including dependents of laid-off, retired or deceased CWA District 2-13 members) who are or were members in good standing at the time of separation from the Union 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 apply.

One (1) scholarship, to be paid at the rate of \$1,000.00, will be awarded to an eligible applicant from the District 2-13 Potomac Region.

Applications will be accepted during the months of December through March. Final deadline is **March 31<sup>st</sup>** of the year in which the scholarship will be awarded.

**To apply online, go to:**

<http://district2-13.cwa-union.org/pages/scholarship>

## Thinking About Retirement?

You may want to check out one of the listed workshops presented by **Networth Financial** Group for a retirement check-up and a free meal!!

### Retirement Income Planning

Saturday, **February 10<sup>th</sup>** @ 10 am – CWA Local 2108, 10786 Rhode Island Avenue, Beltsville, MD

Thursday, **February 15<sup>th</sup>** @ 6:30 pm – Ruth's Chris, 1777 Reisterstown Road, Pikesville, MD

Wednesday, **February 21<sup>st</sup>** @ 6:30 pm – Elks Lodge, 2210 Old Washington Road, Waldorf, MD

**Reservations are required** and to RSVP you may call us at (877)-534-2860, or register online at [Networth.net](http://Networth.net). Please specify if you plan to bring a guest with you and the name(s) of your guest(s). We look forward to seeing you there!

### Personals

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

**Dolores Hall**, mother of **Nantambu Hall** who died on December 3, 2017.

**Mack Ford, Jr.**, and **Eric Ford**, brothers of **Rosemary Blackshear** who died on December 27, 2017.

**Vicki Wright**, a retired member who died January 5, 2018.

**Robert L. Stevens**, a retired member who died on January 7, 2018.

**Joanne Budelman**, wife of retired member **Frank Budelman** who died on January 9, 2018.

**Judith Profit-McCowan**, a retired member who died on January 14, 2018.

**Sandy Hoffman**, former member who died on January 16, 2018.

**Thomas M. McDonald**, son of **Sheila Zembower**, who died on January 19, 2018.

### Congratulations to:

**Lamar Christian** on the birth of his daughter, **Lauryn Samara Christian** on January 13, 2018.

### Welcome to Local 2108

#### New Members

**Mike Foster**

Phillip August

Jorge Benardez Green, Jr.

#### Congratulations to Recent Retiree:



Samuel H Jackson  
Michael Pierpont



**Are you "WEARING RED" on Thursdays?**

## RMC 2108 Retirees Corner

Please make plans to join the RMC 2108 for a special matinee performance of "NEWSIE'S" on Wednesday, March 21, 2018 at Toby's Dinner Theater in Columbia, MD. Tickets are \$50.00 per person. For additional information, call Janice Crowe on 410-533-5370.



This months RMC meeting is on February 14, 2018 at 11:00am. Hope to see you there!!

**Calvin C Foster Jr**  
**President- RMC 2108**

By: Matt Klingman, Vice President

# Safety Issues Highlighted on District 2/13 Conference Call

On the January 29, 2018 CWA District 2/13 safety conference call, there was discussion about the deteriorating facilities in the outside plant world (not just the cable), but also the associated equipment with the cable plant. All members working outside are reminded that the company has the responsibility to maintain structures such as wooden walkways, stairs and handrails that are used to safely access CEVs, SAls, and Hubs. This responsibility is covered under the OSHA Telecommunications Standard. If you find any of these that require repair please identify them to your supervisor and ask when you should expect it to be made safe. If you receive any pushback from the company or the repairs are not made, please notify the Local.

Another hot topic discussed revolves around the potential exposure to 5G, cellular and microwave radio frequencies. Exposure is a serious health concern for anyone working around these types of antenna arrays. Signs and other markings identifying potential hazard areas MAY be present, but we are aware that Verizon is not utilizing the signage at all locations. Reports from our members indicate that even on Verizon owned buildings there are no markings. NARDA personal RF monitors should be issued to anyone who works in proximity to this equipment. There is a CBT that explains how and when to use the monitor, Complete the CBT and clarify any questions on its operation before accepting the equipment and doing the job. During your pre-job survey if you see any antennas but have no personal RF meter, do not approach them. Advise management that you require the appropriate personal protective equipment in order to do the job safely. Some symptoms of RF/microwave exposure are Increased body temperature ( sometimes only a spot on the body depending on antenna type), dizziness and itchy skin.

Currently, there is legislative language being drafted to allow the Big Telcos (VZ and AT&T) to place 5G antennas wherever they want with municipalities having no say in this placement. Telcos are able to rent public spaces for peanuts. CWA District 2/13 is researching the health effects in order to protect workers and our communities.

# Local 2108 Calendar

## FEBRUARY 2018

- 7 Chief Stewards Meeting - 9:00am  
Local Office, Beltsville, MD
- 14 Valentines Day



- 14 RMC 2108 Meeting - 11:00am  
Local Office, Beltsville, MD
- 14 Membership Meeting - 6:00pm  
Local Office, Beltsville, MD
- 19 President's Day  
Local Office Closed

## MARCH 2018

- 11 Daylight Savings Time Begins  
Set Clocks Ahead 1 Hour
- 14 RMC 2108 Meeting - 11:00am  
Local Office, Beltsville, MD
- 14 Membership Meeting - 6:00pm  
Local Office, Beltsville, MD
- 17 St. Patrick's Day



- 26-30 CWA/USW Health & Safety Conference  
Pittsburgh, PA



In honor of Black History Month, we share the following labor quote from Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s speech in support of the striking sanitation workers in Memphis TN on April 3, 1968, the day before his assassination:

**"Be concerned about your brother. You may not be on strike, but either we go up together or we go down together. Let us develop a kind of dangerous unselfishness."**

### WEINGARTEN RIGHTS

*If this discussion could in any way lead to my being disciplined or terminated or have any effect on my personal working conditions, I respectfully request my union representative, officer or steward to be present at this meeting. Without union representation, I choose not to participate in this discussion.*

**MARK YOUR CALENDAR: Membership Meeting - Wednesday, February 14, 2018, 6:00pm RMC 2108 Meeting - Wednesday, February 14, 2018, 11:00am**



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LaTasha Carpenter - Vice President

Johnny Brown - Secretary-Treasurer

Amory Proctor - Executive Vice President

Marilyn Irwin - President

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