

*By: Matt Klingman, CWA Local 2108 Vice President*

## New office.... Same issues

First of all, thank you to all who voted for me in the Local election. I truly appreciate the opportunity to represent you as an officer in Local 2108. Now I have the duty to represent members in Montgomery County, a whole bunch of new faces but the same issues I have been dealing with in Prince Georges for years.

For FIOS techs it seems more and more job duties have been added to the job without adjustment to the hours per dispatch. Copper techs continue to deal with a failed plant that leads to increased time per job, and repeats that are out of their control. The company stresses customer satisfaction and doing the job right the first time from one side of its mouth, then with the other side attacks us for taking the time to do all the things they require us to do.

So what are we to do? Disregard policy and processes to speed production? Stock trucks before work in order to leave the garage quicker? Work off the clock so we don't get put on some sort of plan? Disregard safety practices because it takes too much time?

Of course not! We need to adhere to the rules, report our time accurately and by all means work safely. I know many of us were in front of those wireless stores in the unending rains telling our customers not to let those contractors into their homes during the strike. We explained that they needed to wait for the Union workers to return to work if they wanted the job done right. When we got back how long did it take for us to correct all those botched jobs? Quality work takes training, experience and time.

Understand that the way we work has a direct impact on company policies and possibly your employment. If we choose not to follow the rules to chase that production number we are ultimately validating that production number as obtainable. And trust me, even though they know better, managers will pretend that the productivity objective was reached with the existing rules being followed. If we are found not in compliance with the work rules, regardless of why we chose not to follow them, discipline usually follows. The company doesn't care if you did it for customer satisfaction, to meet an objective or even just to complete the work. It's a violation. It's discipline. It's a new number to chase next year.

Watch your Sisters' and Brothers' backs. Ask a question when something your supervisor says doesn't sound right. Document roadblocks in case you are questioned later. Familiarize yourself with the Code of Conduct and the Potomac Work Rules, and follow them. Get involved and stay involved.

## CWA To Join Women's March on Washington on January 21, 2017

On January 21, more than 300 CWA'ers will be a part of a huge demonstration and march in Washington, D.C. for the Women's March on Washington. We will stand together in solidarity with our partners and children for the protection of our rights, our safety, our health, and our families -- recognizing that our vibrant and diverse communities are the strength of our country.

The rhetoric of the past election cycle has insulted, demonized, and threatened many of us--immigrants of all statuses, Muslims and those of diverse religious faiths, people who identify as LGBTQIA, Native people, Black and Brown people, people with disabilities, survivors of sexual assault. Our communities are hurting and scared.

We are confronted with the question of how to move forward in the face of national and international concern and fear. In the spirit of democracy and honoring the champions of human rights, dignity, and justice who have come before us, we join in diversity to show our presence in numbers too great to ignore. The Women's March on Washington will send a bold message to our new administration, Congress, Senate, State and Local governments on their first day in office, and to the world that women's rights are human rights. We stand together, recognizing that defending the most marginalized among us is defending all of us.

**The Women's March on Washington** is expected to draw over 200,000 women for a peaceful protest of the incoming administration. We will meet at the intersection of Independence Ave and Third St SW, near the U.S. Capitol, at 10:00am on January 21, 2017(the day after the Inauguration). CWA is working on securing buses and will be sending out updates as they become available. Please follow the link below if you are interested in participating in the March. For most of us in CWA Local 2108, the rally is just a short Metro ride away. Please plan to attend to ensure our voices are heard.

<http://www.cwa-union.org/join-womens-march-on-washington>



*Executive Vice President Amory Proctor swears in newly elected Vice President Matt Klingman at the December 2016 membership meeting.*



I would have been disappointed had the Ravens beat the Steelers on Christmas Day. The Steelers are my team, and they have been since before I became a cordboard operator at C&P Telephone Company in Wheeling, WV, which is just an hour from Pittsburgh. I wouldn't have been a **poor sport** about a loss, but I would have been disappointed.

While I'm not a poor sport about a football game, many Trump supporters have decided that I'm (and a multitude just like me are) "poor sports" because our presidential candidate didn't win. These Trump fans think we should "get over it".

Let me make myself perfectly clear. I'm not upset about Donald Trump becoming our next president because I didn't vote for him and I'm a sore loser. I am deeply, profoundly concerned and scared about not only what will happen during Trump's presidency, but the ramifications which will be felt for decades beyond that, because of the Supreme Court and other judicial appointments he will make during his (hopefully) one term in office.

The Donald hasn't even taken office yet, and look at the types of people he has chosen as Cabinet nominees:

- **Steve Bannon**, chosen as Trump's **White House Chief of Staff**, once said that feminists are a "bunch of dykes" and birth control makes women "unattractive and crazy". He has been praised by White Nationalist Groups and the KKK, including their former leader, David Duke, who called the choice "excellent".
- **Jeff Sessions**, who voted for a constitutional ban on marriage equality, has passed numerous anti-women laws and was denied a federal judgeship in 1986 because he was too racist (not just racist, but **too** racist), is Trump's choice for **Attorney General**, the highest legal position in the land.
- **Michael Flynn**, who launched a vile attack against transgender people at the Republican National Convention in July, has been selected as **National Security Advisor**. He has hazy business ties to Middle Eastern countries and has appeared to lobby for the Turkish government. He took a paid speaking engagement last year with Russia Today, a TV network funded by the Kremlin, and attended the network's lavish anniversary party in Moscow, where he sat at Putin's elbow.
- **Scott Pruitt**, a climate change denier who is dedicated to dismantling the few environmental protections we've got, has been selected to lead the **Environmental Protection Agency**.
- **Steven Mnuchin**, Trump's pick for **Treasury Secretary**, wrote the book on the housing bubble burst when he foreclosed on over 36,000 homes. He has sworn to keep anyone from reining in the Big Banks. He and Bannon both made millions while working at Goldman Sachs, a company Trump criticized heavily while campaigning.
- **Rex Tillerson**, Exxon CEO, will be Trump's **Secretary of State**. He crafted a \$500 billion joint venture with Russia in 2011 to drill for oil on the Arctic Shelf and the Black Sea, and to develop shale oil deposits in Siberia. Shortly after Tillerson signed that deal, Putin pinned an Order of Friendship medal on Tillerson's suit.
- **Betsy DeVos** has been tapped to be Trump's **Secretary of Education**. Neither she nor any of her four children ever attended public schools, and she is an advocate for education vouchers. Advocates of public education worry that she will speed up the privatization of public schools, a move many fear could destroy the American Education system, one of our country's most impor-



tant civic institutions. Teachers' unions have stated that redirecting public money to private schools via vouchers or other schemes is tantamount to defunding the public school system.

- **Andrew Puzder** is Trump's choice to head the **Department of Labor**. For more than 100 years, the DOL has been responsible "for promoting the welfare of wage earners, job seekers and retirees". The department looks out for ordinary working people when it comes to keeping jobs safe and making sure workers aren't shortchanged or cheated when it comes to their wages. Puzder opposes many of the policies and programs he would be responsible for administering. He opposes their overtime rules and rejects increasing the federal minimum wage of \$7.25 per hour, which hasn't been raised since 2009. Puzder prefers machines to human workers, as machines are "always polite, they always upsell, never take a vacation, never show up late and there is never a slip-and-fall or age, sex or race discrimination case". Workers in his fast-food restaurants, like so many others who work in retail or the food industry, are paid so little that many qualify for food stamps, public housing assistance and Medicaid. This makes taxpayers foot the bill for these workers, while Puzder, who made \$4.4 million in 2012, laughs all the way to the bank. How many of you think Puzder would intercede and help us secure a fair contract with Verizon in 2019, like Tom Perez did in May?

Most of these appointments equate to the fox being given the keys to the hen house. Trump convinced voters that he understood their frustration with a "rigged economic system" that he said favored Wall Street elites and Washington DC insiders over average workers. He vowed to "drain the swamp", yet his cabinet appointees represent an historic level of wealth. With many positions still unfilled, the current appointees have a combined net worth of more than \$14 billion, compared to \$250 million in George W Bush's first cabinet.



In campaign speeches Trump promised to not make cuts to Social Security, but just before leaving for the holidays, Rep. Sam Johnson (R-TX), Chairman of the House Subcommittee on Social Security introduced a bill that would raise the retirement age to 69 and slash Social Security benefits for the majority of seniors. Many Republicans want to take the benefits we've earned through a lifetime of hard work to pay for tax breaks for the wealthiest Americans and corporations. I haven't heard Trump speak out against this bill yet. It is imperative that we all do! Please make phone calls and send letters and emails when you are asked so we can protect Social Security and our seniors.

I received a Christmas card and newsletter from an old friend of the family during the holidays. The newsletter included pictures of her attending a "Make America Great Again" Trump rally with her teen-aged daughters. She wrote about her three-month-old niece, who was born with Down Syndrome. I can't imagine taking my daughter or granddaughter to a rally for a man who speaks so terribly to and about women, and obviously holds us in such low regard. And I have to won-

der if this family friend has thought about Trump's ridicule of that handicapped reporter since her niece's diagnosis.....

As always, I understand that not all of our members and retirees will agree with my point of view. I appreciate those of you who have taken the time to read this article, and I respect your right to disagree.....But please be clear, my feelings have nothing to do with being a poor sport.

I wish you and yours peace, health and happiness in the New Year.....

In Solidarity,

*Marilyn*

## Verizon Health Care Benefits Coordinators Can Help Answer Your Benefit Questions

Got a question about your Medical, Dental, Vision, Disability or enrollment ? CWA appointed Health Care Benefit Coordinators are just a phone call away! The Health Care Benefit Coordinators can handle issues from any active or retired Mid-Atlantic CWA (MD, NY, PA, DE, VA, DC, WV) represented member, regardless of their home state.

**Cindy Ebner**, Retiree HCBC for Medical, Dental and enrollment issues 866-248-4449

[Cynthia.X.Ebner@verizon.com](mailto:Cynthia.X.Ebner@verizon.com)

**Ines Millard**, Actives' Medical, Dental, Vision, Disability and Enrollment 888-571-7218

[Ines.I.Millard@verizon.com](mailto:Ines.I.Millard@verizon.com)

**Jodi Grant**, Actives' Medical, Dental, Vision, Disability and Enrollment 888-324-4969

[Jodi.I.Grant@core.verizon.com](mailto:Jodi.I.Grant@core.verizon.com)

## RMC 2108 Retirees Corner

If you are like me, trying to figure out what's going to happen over the course of the next year that will affect retirees has been the biggest source of my headaches so far. There are many issues to be addressed: Economic issues, Cyber-Security, International challenges and many more that are on the short list.

But perhaps the one that hits closest to home, are cuts to Medicare benefits. A few days ago, House Speaker Paul Ryan announced Republican leaders in Congress are prioritizing the dismantling of health care for millions of Americans, and that includes Medicare. It's not just Republicans in Congress who are behind this disastrous plan. Two of President-elect Trump's top nominees, Representative Tom Price for Secretary of Health and Human Services and Mick Mulvaney for Head of the White House Budget Office, have supported Paul Ryan's plan to destroy Medicare.

Ryan's plan, if implemented, would make seniors pay more but get less, plus it would raise the Medicare eligibility age. We can stop this from happening, but only if we put pressure on our representatives to do the right thing. RMC 2108 members and all retirees need to join the battle and contact their representative by call **1-866-828-4162** and demand they oppose any efforts to cut Medicare benefits for millions of Americans.

We will be discussing these issues at our next RMC meeting on January 11, 2017 at 11:00am. Please make plans to attend and welcome in the new year with friends and a nice luncheon.



RMC 2108

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

## Personals

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

**Maria Emilia Herrera de Lopez**, mother-in-law of **Margarita Lopez** who died on November 26, 2016.

## Welcome to Local 2108

### New Members

**Ken Singleton**  
Irving Rodriguez  
John C Puskar

**Mike Foster**  
Reginald Etienne

### Transferred Members

**Tony Meeks**  
Chris W. Reading

## Children's Hospital 50/50 Raffle Winner

**Brenda Goodwin**

**\$ 983.50**

## 2017 Union Plus Scholarship Program Accepting Applications

Since 1991, the Union Plus Scholarship Program has awarded more than \$4 million to students of working families who want to begin or continue their post-secondary education. Over 2,700 families have benefited from our commitment to higher education. The Union Plus Scholarship Program is offered through the Union Plus Education Foundation, supported in part by contributions from the provider of the Union Plus Credit Card. (You do not need to be a Union Plus Credit Card holder to apply for this scholarship.)

### Eligibility

Current and retired members of participating unions, their spouses and their dependent children (as defined by IRS regulations). At least one year of continuous union membership by the applicant, applicant's spouse or parent (if applicant is a dependent). The one year membership minimum must be satisfied by May 31, 2017.

### Application Timeline:

Applications are available starting in mid-June, and a complete application must be received on or before 12:00 p.m. (Eastern Time) on **January 31, 2017**. Applications received after this deadline will not be considered.

### Award date:

The Scholarship Committee will determine recipients of scholarship awards by May 31 each year. During the first week of June award recipients will be individually notified by mail, and all applicants will be sent an email with notification that the [award list has been posted online](#). Please note that due to the volume of applications we cannot provide any information on the status of an application before award announcements are made.

To apply, go to: <https://www.unionplus.org/college-education-financing/union-plus-scholarship>

## Winter Safety Tips

In case you hadn't noticed, winter has arrived. Old man winter brings with him some of the more deadly hazards any of us have to face just getting to and from work – **ICE!**. With that in mind, here are some tips from the University of Wisconsin Occupational Health Website.

### Choose Appropriate Clothing

During bad weather, avoid boots or shoes with smooth soles and heels, such as plastic and leather soles. Instead, wear shoes or boots that provide traction on snow and ice; boots made of non-slip rubber or neoprene with grooved soles are best. Wear a heavy, bulky coat that will cushion you if you should fall. Keep warm, but make sure you can hear what's going on around you.

### Walk Carefully Over Ice

In cold temperatures, approach with caution and assume that all wet, dark areas on pavements are slippery and icy. Dew or water vapor can freeze on cold surfaces, forming an extra-thin, nearly invisible layer of ice that can look like a wet spot on the pavement. Walk in designated walkways as much as possible. Taking shortcuts over snow piles and other frozen areas can be hazardous. If you must walk in the street, walk against the flow of traffic, as close to the curb as you can. Point your feet out slightly like a penguin! Spreading your feet out slightly while walking on ice increases your center of gravity. Bend slightly and walk flat-footed with your center of gravity directly over the feet as much as possible. Keep your hands out of your pockets. Hands in your pockets while walking decreases your center of gravity and balance. You can help break your fall with your hands free if you do start to slip. Watch where you are stepping and GO S-L-O-W-L-Y !! This will help your reaction time to changes in traction. Use special care when entering and exiting vehicles; use the vehicle for support. Take short steps or shuffle for stability.

### Indoor Safety

Walking over slippery floors can be just as dangerous as walking over ice! Keep these tips in mind if you are entering a building: Remove as much snow and water from your boots as you can. Water from melting ice on the floor can lead to slippery conditions.

### If You Should Fall

Try to avoid landing on your knees, wrists, or spine. Try to fall on a fleshy part of your body, such as your side. Wearing thick clothing can help prevent injury to the bony parts of your body. Try to relax your muscles if you fall. You'll injure yourself less if you are relaxed.

## Local 2108 Calendar

### JANUARY 2017

- 2 New Years Holiday  
Local Office Closed



- 11 RMC 2108 Meeting - 11:00am  
Local Office, Beltsville, MD  
11 Membership Meeting - 6:00pm  
Local Office, Beltsville, MD  
16 Martin Luther King Day  
20 Inauguration Day  
Local Office Closed  
21-24 Telecommunication & Technologies Conf.  
San Juan, PR

### FEBRUARY 2017

- 1 Chief Stewards Meeting - 9:30am  
Local Office, Beltsville, MD  
8 RMC 2108 Meeting - 11:00am  
Local Office, Beltsville, MD  
8 Membership Meeting - 6:00pm  
Local Office, Beltsville, MD  
14 Valentines Day



- 20 President's Day  
Local Office Closed

## MARK YOUR CALENDAR:

RMC 2108 Meeting - Wednesday, January 11, 2017, 6:00pm  
Membership Meeting - Wednesday, January 11, 2017, 11:00am



10782 Rhode Island Avenue, Beltsville, MD 20705

Web Address: [www.cwala2108.org](http://www.cwala2108.org)

Local Office: (301) 595-2108 :: Local Fax: (301) 595-2412

Marilyn Irwin - President

Johnny Brown - Secretary-Treasurer

Latasha Carpenter - Vice President

Matt Klingman - Vice President

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