

By Matt Klingman - Vice President

## Local 2108 Conducts "Reversing Runaway Inequality" Training

Local 2106 Executive Vice President Justin Tapia and I conducted Reversing Runaway Inequality Training for fifty CWA members at the Local 2108 offices August 7th and 8th. The training was based on Les Leopold's book by the same name.

Charts were analyzed and history was reviewed as we discussed how they relate to the problems faced by working people in America today. Spirited discussions took place as we discussed:

- The cause of runaway inequality in our country
- How the U.S. compares to other developed countries
- The impact economic inequality has on taxes, debt, education, racism, foreign trade and war
- The steps we can take to build a fair society



Of particular interest was the "Powell Memo" from 1971. It was drafted by Lewis Powell, a corporate lawyer who wrote a strategy for corporations to gain more riches and more power. The Memo called for corporations to create Think Tanks, control content on TV, radio and the press, and keep school textbooks under constant surveillance. He cited the need for corporations to band together and support like-minded candidates to gain political power. It's obvious in 2018 that corporations certainly followed Lewis Powell's suggestions for the past forty-plus years!

The Better Business Climate had a huge impact also. It cut taxes on the super wealthy and large corporations, decreased government regulations (especially on Wall Street), reduced government social spending and weakened unions. Thanks to decreased regulations on Wall Street, corporate raiders have changed the way CEOs run their businesses. In the "Good Old Days", businesses would reinvest in themselves in an attempt to become larger, richer and more profitable and powerful. Under the BBC, CEOs strip assets from their corporations and spend the money to buy back shares. This makes shareholders richer and stronger, with no regard for the company's long term health. Think about what you hear every day at Verizon--- "What's the stock price?" "We must cut costs." We see the selling-

off of assets and the lack of reinvestment in existing assets. How much of the billions of dollars Verizon, AT&T and other corporations got to keep in their coffers thanks to the big tax break this past year was invested in creating new jobs, modernizing the infrastructure and growing the companies? Not much, I guarantee you! I'm certain a lot of company stock was purchased and the 1% got even richer.

Our CWA Brothers and Sisters at AT&T are facing the same Corporate Greed mindset as us. Check out [WWW.CWA-UNION.ORG](http://WWW.CWA-UNION.ORG) to see how working families continue to fight outside of the Big Checkmark. I could probably write another page or two however my hand is cramping and my crayon is getting short.

On a different note, I'd like to talk to you about my strike fund. Hopefully everyone reading this has one. I put 25 bucks a week into an account I cannot easily access (mainly so I don't convert it into a bunch of scotch ). Now with the contract extended to 2023 I have a few choices. Do I:

- Stop sending money because 5 years is a long time away so I will worry about it later
- Withdraw it and go on a shopping spree
- Continue to add the same amount I always have because I don't even miss that \$100 a month

As much as I would like to do both of the first two options I am going with door number 3. Seven weeks without a paycheck was painful and having to decide if I am going to pay child support, rent , electric or eat is not a place I want to ever be again. That's a lesson the strike taught me. It also taught me that the company is heartless when it comes to applying pressure to try and get us to break and come back to work out of fear ( mind you we are the same folks that the company wants us to make money and give our customers service with a smile), and because of that tactic the strike also showed me that this Union is full of scappers that told the company " F\*%# You, we aren't coming back until you negotiate a good contract!" I cannot control how the company is going to act towards me in the future but I can control how much that paycheck has control over me.

P.S. I still can't walk past a brick of ramen without wanting to kick it down the aisle of the grocery store!



Less than a century ago, the majority of CWA Local 2108 members would not have had the right to vote in the mid-term elections this November. The 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, which granted American women the right to vote, wasn't ratified until ninety-eight years ago. And while the 15th Amendment, prohibiting states from denying a male citizen the right to vote based on "race, color or previous condition of servitude" was ratified in 1870, it wasn't until the Voting Rights Act of 1965 was signed by President Johnson that various discriminatory practices at the state and local levels (created to prevent African Americans from exercising their right to vote) were ended.



Prior to the Voting Rights Act of 1965, many African Americans, particularly those in the South, were sent home and denied the right to vote by being told they got the date, time or polling place location wrong. Some were told they were not eligible to vote unless they could recite the entire Constitution! Many of our younger members probably are thinking this was "ancient history", but it really wasn't that long ago. If it wasn't during your lifetime, it was during your parents' lifetime that Americans were beaten and bloodied as they marched and protested for the ability to vote.

You've read for years about the billions of dollars the Koch Brothers and others like them pour into elections to get candidates elected who will do what is best for the 1%. While the working class will never be able to match the money the billionaires spend, the great equalizer in this country is the fact that **we each get one vote**. Americans have the privilege, and I would argue the responsibility to educate themselves about the issues and the candidates and to actually show up and vote.

Early Voting in Maryland makes voting extremely convenient, and if you haven't done so before, I strongly recommend you take advantage of it. You can vote at any Early Voting Center in the county in which you reside (Prince George's and Montgomery Counties each have 11 centers) from Thursday, October 25 through Thursday, November 1, from 10a-8p each day. You can avoid the long lines we used to experience on Election Day after a hard day at work. We have posted all Maryland Early Voting locations on our website ([cwalocal2108.org](http://cwalocal2108.org)) if you are unsure where you can Early Vote. Of course the option of voting on Election Day, Tuesday, November 6 from 7a-8p is still available to all.

CWA endorsed **Ben Jealous and Susie Turnbull for Governor and Lt. Governor** months before the Primaries. We feel that Ben's platform is more in line with what is important to Maryland workers than that of Governor Hogan. One need look no further than their Labor Day statements to understand why. Ben Jealous wrote the following about Labor Day: "As a former union member of the Communications Workers of America, and the grandson of an American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) family, I know the power that unions have to transform lives and families. In fact, the day we walked out of poverty was the day our family became a two union household." Ben went on to explain that both of his grandparents were AFSCME members, and he credited their union pensions with putting him through college. He stated that in this time when the president, Supreme Court and Congress are attacking unions, states must stand up for us. When I searched for any statement by Larry Hogan about Labor Day, I found NONE. Like many of you, I shook Ben Jealous' hand at our rally during the 2016 strike against Verizon. Larry Hogan never showed up on a picket line, nor did he offer any support for our strikers.

As COMMUNICATIONS WORKERS, many of us have earned our livings talking with people. We are perfect candidates to help Ben Jealous get elected as the next Governor of Maryland. **Volunteers** are need to

**Canvass** (knock on doors to provide Jealous literature), **Phonebank** (call voters and ask for their support) and perform **Data Entry**. Go to **BenJealous.com**, choose the county you can volunteer in, and click on the tasks you are willing to do. You will be contacted to advise where and when you can help.

While corporations and special interests (including the Koch Brothers) are spending millions of dollars to keep Larry Hogan in power and maintain control of the governor's office, Ben needs the financial help of working people like you and me to run a strong campaign and ensure he becomes our next governor. I hope you will join me in making a **donation** of \$5 or more to the Jealous campaign, which can be done on his website, also. You don't need to be a millionaire to donate; since the filing deadline, Ben's average contribution has been \$42. **All of us joining together to donate a little of our time and/or money, and taking the time to vote for Ben Jealous will ensure that the working people of Maryland have a true ally in the Governor's office. VOLUNTEER! DONATE! VOTE!**

In Solidarity,

*Marilyn*

Now Available To All CWA Local 2108 Members

## Survivor Support Financial Counseling Service

Last month, Verizon sought CWA's agreement to allow the Company to offer Survivor Support Financial Counseling Service to our members. Prior to the new agreement, Survivor Support Financial Counseling Service had only been available to the Company's management employees.

### What is Survivor Support Counseling Service?

Ayco's Survivor Support financial counseling service is a benefit that provides specific, personalized answers to help you navigate the complex financial issues following the loss of a loved one.

They can provide guidance with a myriad of overwhelming issues such as:

- Is there enough money to maintain my current standard of living?
- Do I need to do anything with the will?
- What are the tax implications of my decisions?
- How much Social Security am I eligible for, and how long will it be paid?
- What other factors should I consider in making decisions regarding employee benefits?

If you decide to participate in the Survivor Support service, you will receive a one-on-one counseling session to review and help you resolve issues. They will provide you a personalized financial plan following your counseling session summarizing the topics discussed and prioritizing issues requiring attention. For 12 months after the counseling session you will have direct access to your financial team to help address issues as they arise.

It's difficult to focus on financial issues at a time when you're feeling emotionally overwhelmed, but we urge you to take advantage of the financial counseling assistance being offered.

Survivor Support can be reached by calling **1-800-235-3417**.

Per the 2016 Memorandum of Understanding between CWA and Verizon, on September 15, 2018 all eligible associates in the Mid-Atlantic region will see an increase of 1% across all pension bands.

In addition, if any eligible associate leaves the service of the company under a Special Enhanced Income Security Plan (Special EISP), they will automatically qualify for the next scheduled pension band increase as part of the Special EISP offer.

## Thinking About Retirement?

You may want to check out one of these important workshops presented by **Nettworth Financial** Group to see if the reality of retirement is on your horizon and get treated to a free meal!!

### Retirement Preparedness

**Thursday, August 30<sup>th</sup>** @ 6:30 pm – **Ruth's Chris**, 106 Crown Park Avenue, Gaithersburg, MD

**Tuesday, September 11<sup>th</sup>** @ 6:30 pm – **Yellowfin**, 2840 Solomons Island Road, Edgewater, MD

**Tuesday, September 18<sup>th</sup>** @ 6:30 pm - **Ruth's Chris**, 1777 Reisterstown Road, Pikesville, MD

Reservations are required and to RSVP you may call Nettworth at (800)-859-2212, or email them to register online at [Nettworth.net/marylanddcvirginia](http://Nettworth.net/marylanddcvirginia). Space is limited!



## RMC 2108 Retirees Corner

Some things are predictable, summer is coming to an end, the mid-term elections are on the horizon and the Republican party has started making noise about cutting Social Security and Medicare. In an effort to pay for the Trump Tax Scam and the deficit it has created, the GOP leadership is stating clearly that they are coming for our earned Social Security and Medicare benefits. So as usual, we have to pay attention to all this before we vote in order to protect our economic future.

At this month's RMC meeting, we will discuss these issues along with special guest Dave LaGrande, retired CWA Health & Safety Coordinator, who will be with us to discuss opportunities to help with the Ben Jealous campaign.

Our next luncheon meeting will be on September 12, 2018 at 11am. Come and enjoy!!

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



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

### Personals

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

**Randi Cramer**, fiancée of **Arthur Higgins** who passed away on June 25, 2018.

**Jordan McNair**, son of **Tonya Wilson** who passed away on June 13, 2018.

**Michele Casey**, a retired member who passed away on August 11, 2018.

### Welcome to Local 2108

#### New Members



**Rob Willis**  
Donald Aladmbro

**Tony Meeks**  
Gilfredo Pockels



## 2019 Union Plus Scholarship Program Accepting Applications Now

Since 1991, the Union Plus Scholarship Program has awarded more than \$4.3 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, 2019.

#### Evaluation criteria:

This is a competitive scholarship. Applicants are evaluated according to academic ability, social awareness, financial need and appreciation of labor. A GPA of 3.0 or higher is recommended.

The required essays can account for up to half your total score.

Scholarship applicants are judged by a committee of impartial post-secondary educators.

#### 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, 2019**. Applications received after this deadline will not be considered.

#### Scholarship Award Amounts:

Amounts range from \$500 to \$4,000. These one-time cash awards are for study beginning in the Fall of 2019. Students may re-apply each year.

#### 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/benefits/money/union-plus-scholarships>

# Verizon, VCSI Contract Extensions Ratified

CWA members at Verizon in the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic regions and at Verizon Connected Solutions voted overwhelmingly to ratify a four-year extension of their current contracts, which were set to expire in August 2019.

The extensions provide for additional wage increases and enhanced retirement benefits. The agreement, which extends the contracts through August 5, 2023, will deliver an 11.2% wage increase over the additional four years and covers more than 34,000 Verizon workers.

"This is a solid contract for Verizon workers that will improve wages and raise the living standards of our members across the region," said Ed Mooney, Vice President for CWA District 2-13.

Separate agreements were ratified covering 40 Verizon Wireless retail workers in Brooklyn and 7 workers in Hazleton, Pa., who voted earlier this summer to join CWA.

# Have You Scheduled Your Floating Holiday?

It seems that almost every year CWA Local 2108 hears from members who haven't scheduled their Floating Holiday prior to October 1st of the calendar year and then Verizon denies that employee the ability to schedule after that date, causing them to lose it altogether. It is the Union's position that if an employee has not scheduled it by October 1st, it is the company's responsibility to notify the employee to schedule it at that time.

With that being said, CWA Local 2108 strongly suggests that all of our members working under the Verizon agreement schedule their Floating Holiday prior to October 1, 2018. This way you cannot be denied the ability to schedule your holiday. Keep in mind that you can still be required to work on your Floating Holiday. In that case you will receive holiday pay treatment just as if you worked any other negotiated holiday.



# Local 2108 Calendar

## SEPTEMBER 2018

- 3 Labor Day  
Local Office Closed
- 
- 12 RMC 2108 Meeting - 11:00am  
Local Office, Beltsville, MD
- 12 Membership Meeting - 6:00pm  
Local Office, Beltsville, MD
- 14 Labor Night at Camden Yards - 7:05pm  
Orioles - vs - White Sox

## OCTOBER 2018

- 3 Chief Stewards Meeting - 9:00am  
Local Office, Beltsville, MD
- 10 RMC 2108 Meeting - 11:00am  
Local Office, Beltsville, MD
- 10 Membership Meeting - 6:00pm  
Local Office, Beltsville, MD
- 31 Halloween

**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, September 12, 2018, 6:00pm - RMC 2108 Meeting - Wednesday, September 12, 2018, 11:00am -

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