

Like a Bad Check, “Code of Conduct” Training is Back Again

Every year probably due to lack of moral integrity among Verizon’s corporate elite, the mandate for “Code of Conduct” training is forced down everyone else’s throat. They must feel, that we are in some way as corrupt as they are. While for the most part the training is recycled from the prior year, CWA recommends every member take the training very seriously. You will be held accountable for understanding every section of the Code of Conduct. Be sure you do!!

Verizon has become instrumental in using this manifesto to justify discipline and claiming ignorance to its content is a hard declaration to battle in the grievance process. Many members have the misconception that a failure to sign an acknowledgement indicating you have read and understood the policies will get them out of a jam when they are pulled into an investigatory meeting. This is not the case. As long as you are given the opportunity to read the materials and ask questions to fully understand what was presented, your lack of a signature doesn’t hold water.

One of the interesting changes in this year’s policy states that **“This Code does not give you rights of any kind, and may be changed by the company at any time without notice to you.”** This statement alone begs the question, if I’m not aware of something that may be a violation of the Code of Conduct, how can I be in violation? Perhaps

that is the one question every member should be asking their supervisor.

CWA Local 2108 strongly recommends every member take the time to **PRINT** out a full copy and take the company provided time to thoroughly read every page. This is not a 15 minute read either. To truly understand what is being presented it could take hour and hours to digest. Any questions that arise should be addressed with your immediate supervisor in writing immediately. Failure on managements part to provide you with satisfactory responses should be brought to the attention of your shop steward so the appropriate grievances can be filed.

So sit back, prop your feet up on your desk, grab a cup of coffee and spend some non-productive company paid time getting to know what is expected of you. Don’t click “yes” on any box to indicate that you have been given a paper copy of the Code of Conduct or that you have been given time to read it in its entirety and ask questions unless that is the truth. The job you save could be your own!!



“Breakfast With Santa”



With over 100 members and their children/ grandchildren in attendance, this years “Breakfast With Santa” was once again a smashing success. Special thanks go out to the following for all their efforts: , Don Kurz and his wife Karen, Nate Tyree Scot and Usula McElroy, LaShaya Gray, Robin Dill, Matt Irwin, Jenny Sylvester, Amory Proctor, Marilyn Irwin, and “special” guest Dick Bissell from the Association of Retired Americans, who may have been in disguise !!



As we turn our calendars to 2016, as always, I find myself reflecting on this past year, and contemplating the new one. As CWA enters our eighth month of attempting to bargain a just and reasonable contract with the Poster Child for Corporate Greed (aka Verizon), we are sadly no closer to our goal than we were on Day 1. Recognizing that strikes are difficult on our members and our customers, our Union has diligently fought to avoid taking that action. Unfortunately, each day that passes gets us one day closer to the likelihood of a strike being called. It is imperative that we are all ready when that day arrives.

Strike duty forms were distributed to all of our members in July, prior to the expiration of our contract August 2nd. If any of your information has changed since then, please see your steward or chief steward right away to update it. We will be collecting/updating cell phone numbers from all of our members after the first of the year, in order to call or text as many of our members as possible in the event that a strike is called. It is especially important that we have accurate contact numbers for those who work late evening, overnight and early morning shifts. We will continue to update our Facebook page (CWA Local 2108) and our website (www.cwalocal2108.org) with bargaining reports and the latest information to keep you informed.

It both disappoints and angers me that we have reached this point. Verizon is perfectly content to turn their backs on the very employees and retirees who have made this company what it is today. Since Divestiture in 1984, when telephone customers first had a choice of who would provide their local and long distance service and telephone equipment, C&P Telephone, then Bell Atlantic, now Verizon was the choice of the masses. Not because of CEOs Ray Smith, Ivan Seidenberg or Lowell McAdam. Verizon became the successful Fortune 15 corporation it is today because of you and me. Our customers recognized and appreciated the highly trained, knowledgeable, customer service-driven workforce we provided to them. Whether they needed to dial "0" or "411" for an operator, or call repair service for a technician visit or the business office to add or change their service, our customers knew they were reaching the cream of the crop.

Fast-forward to scripts, unreasonable sales quotas, unattainable Average Handling Time and Jobs Per Day requirements, and technicians being scored for "Repeats" only because a customer called back within seven days, with no investigation to determine if it was because the tech did something wrong, or if it was due to a totally unrelated matter. Today our members struggle to provide great service in spite of Verizon, not because of Verizon.

As I have talked with members about the sad state of bargaining, most question "Why?" With Verizon profits now exceeding \$1 billion per month, **why** can't we maintain good, affordable health care? **Why** can't we keep job security protection and a defined benefit pension plan with a cash-out option which doesn't rob us of 25% of our earned pension moneys? **Why** can't we have reasonable overtime rules so that we can have time to rest, spend time with our families and live our lives? **Why** can't we have an Accident Disability Plan to protect us if we are hurt on the job? **Why** can't Verizon continue building out FiOS, a service customers love and want, therefore creating and maintaining good, Middle Class jobs?

Why? **It's because of Corporate Greed and Control.** Nothing more, nothing less. We've talked about corporate greed a lot lately. Today let's talk about what I mean by control. In a nutshell, Verizon wants to be able to do whatever they want to you, whenever they want, with no oversight or repercussions. They don't want a pesky union filing grievances or arbitrating your termination. Without a union, you would be "at-will" employees, and could be fired at anytime, for any reason, or for **no** reason (as long as they didn't violate the law by blatantly firing you due to the color of your skin or your sexual orientation, for example). Employees who kiss-up to the boss and do less work than you could be paid more than you, and your choice would be to take it or look for work elsewhere. You wouldn't have anyone to advocate on your behalf when your work conditions were unfair or unsafe. No one would be there to answer your questions about FMLA usage or to help you file a complaint if your rights were violated.

In case you think I am exaggerating about how important that "Control" word is at Verizon, read about the firing of Bianca Cunningham, a Verizon Wireless worker in New York who helped to organize 65 VZW workers in six stores in Brooklyn in 2014. Verizon was unsuccessful, but did everything in their power to prevent those 65 VZW workers from joining 40,000 Verizon Communications workers and 80 Verizon Wireless technicians who already have CWA representation. In September, Bianca, now chief bargainer of the group's first contract, was fired by VZW for doing her job as a steward. The company's actions were so blatantly wrong that in November the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) authorized a federal complaint against Verizon for violating federal labor laws when it fired Bianca in an attempt to silence Brooklyn Verizon Wireless workers. One woman, leading 65 workers along the path to union representation, was viewed as such a threat that VZW decided she had to be fired. I see no other explanation than the fear of losing their all-powerful, complete control. I hope those who see no need for a union at Verizon heed this story. It could be your future.

In Solidarity,

Marilyn

CWA Files Executive Level Grievance Over The "Lead To Succeed Program"

As far back as most anyone can remember, the ol' phone company has had some sort of "referral program" in place. "Networkers", the "Champions Program" and "Sell One More" were all versions of "voluntary participation" initiatives established to offer our customers additional products and services while the techs were on premise. These "voluntary" programs were successful because they were just that, "voluntary".

But lately, the Local has been receiving calls from Technicians who say they are being strong-armed and threatened with discipline by their supervisors for failure to enroll in the "Lead To Succeed" program. After checking around the District, the same arm twisting tactics were being deployed around the entire region.

CWA District 2/13 has since filed an Executive Level Grievance against Verizon for violating the Letter of Understanding regarding Sales and Referral Incentives Programs. It is CWA's position that participation in the Lead To Succeed program is completely voluntary. The Sales Referral Incentive Programs Letter of Understanding on page 244 of our contract clearly states, "Except for attending informational meetings, the decision of whether or not to participate in sales and referral programs shall be wholly voluntary." The contract language could not be written any clearer. The Union is seeking that Verizon immediately cease and desist from requiring mandatory enrollment of the program and any technician who was forced to enroll under the threat of disciplinary action, be "unenrolled".

The Union has made an initial data request to determine all technicians, by job title and location, currently enrolled in the program and when they were enrolled.

Additionally, all technicians who signed up for the Lead to Succeed Program because their supervisor told them it was a job requirement should contact the Local on **301-595-2108**.

Children's Hospital 50/50 Raffle

Winner:

Vincent Vaughan—\$774.00

2016 Union Plus Scholarship Now Accepting Applications

Since 1992, the Union Plus Scholarship Program has awarded more than \$3.7 million to students of working families who want to begin or continue their post-secondary education. Over 2,500 families have benefited from our commitment to higher education. The Union Plus Scholarship Program is offered through the Union Plus Education Foundation.

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 Deadline:

A complete application must be received on or before 12:00 p.m. (Eastern Time) on **Friday, January 31, 2016**. Applications received after this deadline will not be considered. To apply for the scholarship, please go to:

<https://1unionplusscholars.communityforce.com/login.aspx>

Scholarship Award Amounts:

Amounts range from \$500 to \$4,000. These one-time cash awards are for study beginning in the Fall of 2016. Students may re-apply each year.

Award date:

The Scholarship Committee will determine recipients of scholarship awards by May 31 each year.

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 31st of the year in which the scholarship will be awarded.

The winners will be chosen by lottery drawing. To apply for the scholarship, please go to:

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

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.

Personals

Congratulations to:

Deena Rojas on the birth of her daughter, **Naila Razia Yousefi** on December 3, 2015.

Welcome to Local 2108

Transferred Members

<u>Latasha Carpenter</u>	Christopher Augins	Howard Lee
Scot Sappington	Dwight Allen	Richard Rekus
Marc Thompson	Todd Goetz	Timothy Ringgold
Eric Barnes	Derrick Gutrick	Aaron E. Robinson
Jeff Coleman	Mike Sankey	James Bullington
Renee' Harris	Vernard Murray	Derrick D. Jones
Charles Dickerson	William Aleshire	Tamala Dozier-Dunn
Bennett Bussey	Marvin Wright	James Guercio

The Beirne Foundation Scholarship Program

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 \$3,000 each are being offered for the 2016-2017 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 2016-2017 school year is April 29, 2016.**

To apply online, go to:

http://www.cwa-union.org/pages/beirne_scholarship_application

RMC 2108 Retirees Corner

After 6 months of stalled and retrogressive bargaining with Verizon, we enter into 2016 with no end in sight on negotiations and are forced to continue fighting for our benefits that we have earned after years of employment with one of the most profitable corporations in the USA. Verizon continues to line the pockets of the corporate executives and the shareholders, while trying to roll back the standard of living for the employees who built this company.

We retirees need to reaffirm our support to this fight and stand strong with the active CWA members in this battle. This is our fight too!!

The next RMC 2108 meeting is on January 13, 2016 at 11:00am. See you there!!



Calvin C Foster Jr
President- RMC 2108

Verizon Corporate Profit Sharing Award May Be Deferred Into Savings Plan

You have the opportunity to defer the entire amount of your CPS award (minus appropriate taxes and deductions and any overtime adjustment you may receive) into your Verizon Savings Plan account.

To defer payment of the CPS award, you must be actively contributing to the associate savings plan at the time the award is paid and meet all other eligibility criteria.

If you elect this option, the CPS award will be deferred into the associate savings plan on a before-tax basis, and the applicable company matching contribution of the CPS deferral will be made to your account.

Your paystub will show an increase in the year-to-date "Basic Savings - Before Tax" contributions to include the first 6% of your deferred CPS award, and the remaining portion will be added to the year-to-date "Supplemental Savings - Before Tax" contributions total.

If you choose to defer your award, you will not receive your payment in your paycheck; however, your pay stub will reflect the deferral processing.

If you choose to defer your CPS award, you must make your election between **January 4, 2016 and February 4, 2016**. To make your election on the NetBenefits web site, go to <http://netbenefits.com/Verizon>, then enter your Username and password. Under the Quick Links drop down box for your plan, choose Contribution Amount. Scroll down to Profit Sharing and choose the Profit Sharing Election link.

You may also call the Verizon Savings Plan Service Center at 888-457-9333 from 8:30 a.m. through Midnight Eastern time, Monday - Friday (except when the New York Stock Exchange is closed). Please note that the deferral period ends at **5:00 p.m. ET on February 4, 2016**.

Register For a NettWorth Workshop To Learn More About Retirement Planning

Retirement Benefits Seminar

Jan. 16 - 12pm CWA Local 2108, 10782 Rhode Island Ave, Beltsville
 Jan. 19 - 7pm All Set Restaurant & Bar, 8630 Fenton St, Silver Spring
 Jan. 21 - 7pm Buca di Beppo, 11110 Mall Cir, Waldorf
 Jan. 23 - 12pm CWA Local 2108, 10782 Rhode Island Ave, Beltsville

Retirement Preparedness Score

Feb. 6 - 12pm CWA Local 2108, 10782 Rhode Island Ave, Beltsville
 Feb. 11 - 7pm Brio Tuscan Grille, 20 Paseo Dr, North Bethesda
 Feb. 13 - 12pm CWA Local 2108, 10782 Rhode Island Ave, Beltsville

Social Security Seminar

March 5 - 12pm CWA Local 2108, 10782 Rhode Island Ave, Beltsville
 March 10 - 7pm Buca di Beppo, 122 Kentlands Blvd, Gaithersburg
 March 12 - 12pm CWA Local 2108, 10782 Rhode Island Ave, Beltsville

Retirement Exploration Seminar

April 26 - 7pm Brio Tuscan Grille, 20 Paseo Dr, North Bethesda
 April 28 - 7pm Buca di Beppo, 11110 Mall Cir, Waldorf
 April 30 - 12pm CWA Local 2108, 10782 Rhode Island Ave, Beltsville

Hosted By: NettWorth Financial Group
 Scott Ferguson, Financial Advisor*

REGISTER ONLINE:
www.nettworth.net/marylanddcvirginia
 Or Toll Free: (877) 534-2860

Seats are limited. You must register to attend.

Complimentary Dinner For CWA Local 2108 Members and Spouses!!

Local 2108 Calendar

JANUARY 2016

- 1 **New Year's Day**
Local Office Closed
- 
- 13 **RMC 2108 Meeting - 11:00am**
Local Office, Beltsville, MD
- 13 **Membership Meeting - 6:00pm**
Local Office, Beltsville, MD
- 18 **Martin Luther King Jr Day**
- 31-2/2 **Telecommunications & Technologies Conf.**
Orlando, FL

FEBRUARY 2016

- 3 **Chief Stewards Meeting - 9:30am**
Local Office, Beltsville, MD
- 10 **RMC 2108 Meeting - 11:00am**
Local Office, Beltsville, MD
- 10 **Membership Meeting - 6:00pm**
Local Office, Beltsville, MD
- 14 **Valentines Day**
- 
- 15 **President's Day**
Local Office Closed

MARK YOUR CALENDAR: Membership Meeting - Wednesday, January 13, 2016, 6:00pm
 RMC 2108 Meeting - Wednesday, January 13, 2016, 11:00am



10782 Rhode Island Avenue, Beltsville, MD 20705

Web Address: www.cwalocal2108.org

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

Jenny Sylvester - Vice President

LaTasha Carpenter - Vice President

Johnny Brown - Secretary-Treasurer

Amory Proctor - Executive Vice President

Marilyn Irwin - President

Printing Done In-House

Published Monthly

2108News

Communications Workers of America Local 2108

ISSN: 0162-248X

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Beltsville, MD 20705-2513

10782 Rhode Island Avenue

LOCAL 2108

COMMUNICATIONS WORKERS OF AMERICA

Non-Profit Organization
 U.S. POSTAGE
 PAID
 Permit No. 5128
 Hyattsville, Md.