



The Sentinel

Official quarterly
newsletter of the
Communications
Workers of America
Local 2100

Communications Workers of America
Local 2100
Box F, Chase, MD 21027
November 2008—March 2009

410-335-2100

800-445-0242

410-335-0414 (fax)

410-335-2796 (info)

mail@cwa2100.org

www.cwa2100.org

Officers

President

Steve Holland

Ex. Vice President

Mark Balsamo

Sec./Treasurer

Tom Ward

District 1 VP

Milt Lanier

District 2 VP

Gary Kelso

District 3 VP

Kevin Miller

District 4 VP

Mike Dean

District 5 VP

Jason Chesney

NOVEMBER MEETING DATES

Baltimore

November 18, 2008 (Tuesday)

Knights of Columbus Hall

Frederick Rd.—Catonsville

Belair

November 17, 2008 (Monday)

Vitali's—Edgewood

1709 Edgewood Rd.

Westminster/Frederick

November 19, 2008 (Wednesday)

FW Post #467

519 Poole Rd.

All meetings begin at 7:30 PM

Local Area Wide Election Results

Nominations for Local 2100 Officers were held at the September round of General Membership meetings. Each candidate was carefully considered and the following members were nominated :

President-Steve Holland
(unopposed)

Ex. Vice President-Mark
Balsamo (unopposed)

Sec./Treas.-Kevin Miller
(unopposed)

Dist. 1 VP- Mike Somers
(unopposed)

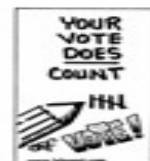
Dist. 2 VP- Gary Kelso
(unopposed)

Dist. 3 VP- Nick Riddle

Dist. 4 VP- Bryan Wholey
(unopposed)

Dist. 5 VP- No nominees

During this election process a unanimous Ballot was cast for each unopposed nominee by Secretary/ Treasurer, Tom Ward. The term for each nominee is 3 years, which will begin in January 1st of 2009.





What's going on??

As the end of the year 2008 approaches I would like to update you about some issues that are happening in our local.

First let me thank you for allowing me to be your local President for another term. I will do my very best to enforce our contract and see that members are treated fairly. This can only happen if you help me.

Next, I would encourage every member to update their beneficiaries, if needed. Every year we have members who have problems because their beneficiaries and other information are not accurate. Do not wait until it's too late.



On another note, The Local safety Committee (The green Shirted Thugs) will be conducting safety visits to our work locations. If you have safety concerns please advise the local.

We have now established a Local Contract Labor Committee. The committee will be chaired by Greg Bon. The responsibility of this committee will be to identify contract violations and to provide info to bring work back into the bargaining unit.

On the training front, The Local has scheduled Basic Steward's training class beginning in late October. I would like to thank all who volunteered.

I would like to thank Chris Biggart for volunteering to assist Tom Ward in putting together our local Newsletter.

I hope to see you at one of the membership meetings in November. For those that I don't see I would like to wish all of you a happy and prosperous holiday season.

Steve

Summary of Tentative Agreement Between CWA and Qwest, Plus Voting Information!

CWA Reaches New Tentative Agreement at Qwest

CWA reached a new tentative contract settlement with Qwest Communications that includes numerous improvements in workplace respect and other issues that members believe are critical at Qwest, along with improvements in wages and other gains.

CWA bargainers won agreement by Qwest management to resolve long standing job quota issues and performance expectation concerns, an acknowledgment by management that workers deserve respect for their contributions to the company.

The new proposed settlement is a four-year agreement that boosts wages by 3 percent each year, providing a compounded 12.55 percent increase over the contract term, a change from the previously negotiated three-year agreement.

"We recognize that to deliver the certainty of a four-year agreement to our membership in troubled economic times is a win for our members and Qwest," said CWA District 7 Vice President Louise Caddell.

The new agreement also includes the previously negotiated 3 percent increase in pension bands and a new health care option, maintaining affordable, quality health care for workers and families. There will be no health care increases in the contract's fourth year.

"This settlement is an improvement over the earlier tentative agreement, in that it further addresses workers' key workplace issues, including respect. In the face of our current economic crisis and Qwest's financial circumstances, we believe this allows us to move forward in building our members' futures and Qwest's success," Caddell said.

The ratification vote is underway, to be concluded by Oct. 31. The vote is being conducted by the American Arbitration Association.



IN BRIEF: In today's tough economy, younger workers are earning about 10 percent less than their counterparts did in 1979, adjusted for inflation. That means it's more important than ever that they understand how much better they could do if they are part of a union. A new study from the Center for Economic and Policy Research strongly makes that point. It finds that young, unionized workers, ages 18 to 29, earn, on average, 12.4 percent more than their non-union peers – about \$1.75 per hour more. They are also more likely to have health and retirement benefits. "Unions make a big difference for younger workers," said study author John Schmitt. "There is no economic theory that says young people have to be poorly paid or go without benefits." The study, "Unions and Upward Mobility for Young Workers," is available online at www.cepr.net

Local Safety Committee

It is agreed that all committee members should be attending the monthly garage inspection and do a follow-up inspection in a reasonable time. Safety committee members should and will be doing inspections at locations that have not been set-up as an inspection site (i.e. CO's, CEV 's, Remote reporting locations, etc.) Any violations that the committee member finds will be reported to the committee, and if necessary a WOW ticket or advise the building coordinator or local manager of the issues.

Other safety topics include the expanded duties of VCSI, more safety training should be conducted on the proper handling of SAI boxes to include climbing aerial boxes.

Contract Locators (Miss Utility) are not replacing grounds and bonds in pedestals for buried cables after they completed a locate on a cable which has to be corrected.

Contractors doing line work (LAI, Henkle and McCoy, N'TI, etc) are not completing all line work and making outside plant an unsafe and dangerous conditions. Recent examples are loose nuts on thru bolts, using "U" nails for strand, using improper material (strand connectors), leaving cable or interdict out of the ground at unsupervised locations, etc.

Contractors are now using forklifts in garages– loading and unloading reels, equipment and supplies. Contractors are not being escorted in buildings to get supplies. They also do not follow Verizon safety practices in the field, so be careful.

Monthly Safety Inspection Sites:

- — Ellicott City
- — Wolfe St
- — Hunt Valley
- — Harmans
- — Northeast, Havre de Grace?
- — Frederick
- — Druid Park Dr.
- —Vero Rd.

CWA-Backed Broadband Data Improvement Act

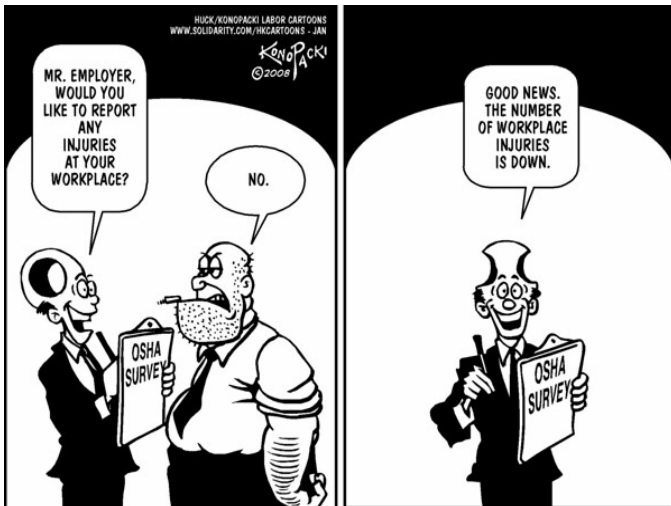
Passes-The Broadband Data Improvement Act (S. 1492), a key initiative of CWA's Speed Matters campaign, passed the Senate unanimously on Friday and the House passed it's version of the bill on Monday. Slight differences in the bills were ironed out in a joint committee yesterday and the measure has been sent to the president's desk.

The legislation requires the FCC to conduct annual studies on broadband deployment, adds a question to the federal Census on dial-up and broadband use, and provides grants to encourage private and public partnerships to identify barriers to broadband adoption in the states.

Senate sponsor Daniel Inouye (D-Hawaii) said, "we cannot manage what we can't measure. This bill will give us the baseline statistics we need in order to eventually achieve the successful deployment of broadband access and services to all Americans."

CWA President Larry Cohen earlier urged the Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee to support the bill, stating: "High-speed broadband is the critical infrastructure for the 21st century. It is the platform on which we will grow jobs and our economy in the coming years."

Congressional supporters cited the unique Speed Matters national broadband speed report showing that the United States still lags most other advanced nations in high-speed Internet deployment, and that rural areas and many inner cities especially are poorly served.





An Economic Recovery Plan for American Families: Fighting for American Jobs, Restoring Rights for American Workers

The economic crisis and financial chaos that surround us are part of an even bigger story. The United States has been borrowing enormous amounts of money while shipping quality jobs overseas and not producing enough domestically. Predictably, that's resulted in a crushing decline in the standard of living for working families.

While even most conservatives now agree that government must act to end this economic crisis and support providing a handout to the biggest bankers on Wall Street, they continue to attack government involvement in health care reform and bargaining rights for workers.

In their view, the government rescue of Wall Street bankers and investment firms is just a necessary fix. Health care reform, on the other hand, is an unwanted intrusion by government.

We take a different view. We believe that the best way to restore the economy and restore the living standard of millions of American families is to focus on quality jobs and bargaining rights.

Create 21st Century Jobs and Infrastructure. To rebuild our economy, the U.S. needs wind farms across America and development of more alternative energy, high mileage cars produced in the U.S., and the build out of high speed Internet networks – the economic engine for the 21st century -- for rural and urban families and businesses. Necessary repairs to our highways and bridges and communities will require a massive infrastructure investment, with the materials and technology all produced by millions of new jobs. This is a real investment in our future, one that supports middle income and working Americans. These kinds of quality jobs and real economic development will address our country's financial crisis and should be ahead of any further financial bailouts or tax rebates to Wall Street. We've had enough bailouts for companies that outsource manufacturing and services, and get a tax break for doing so.

Pass the Employee Free Choice Act. We are through listening only to the organized voices of bankers, brokers and billionaires. Around the world, workers are increasingly bargaining their stake in the global economy. In the United States, however, bargaining coverage only exists for 12 percent of US workers; that's one-third the typical rate for the large economies in the global North or South. In the US, our health care crisis, retirement insecurity and pay cuts have only made the economy worse, not more competitive. Consumption has been fueled by borrowing and trade deficits have cut our jobs and transferred wealth to Asia and the Middle East. Promoting bargaining rights for US workers must be part of any recovery plan. This is the best economic stimulus, one that will restore the middle class and our standard of living.

Health Care for All, funded by a broad based tax. If all Americans had world class health care, millions of jobs would be created for health care workers and our nation's health care crisis could be addressed. If funded at least in part by taxes on imports, health care for all could help create millions of additional jobs. Almost every other global democracy funds health care with Value added Taxes on imports (and often other goods).

We need to move most health care funding away from being a "tax" on our jobs, share the burden among all US employers and have the right to bargain supplemental health care as 12 million union members still do.

We need to step up and step out to build a coalition for a 21st Century New Deal. We will join together with labor and youth, civil rights and progressives, faith based groups and environmentalists, everyone who wants to sign on to a new economic recovery plan for America, one that benefits American workers, not just Wall Street. Let's get started!

A Recovery Plan for All of Us

**Jobs, not just rebates
Jobs, not just bailouts**

Support for American Workers, not just Wall Street



Mortgages

Chase mortgages for union members

Union Plus Mortgage & Real Estate makes refinancing and home-buying easier and more affordable for working families. Through Chase Home Finance, one of the largest lenders in the U.S., union members can take advantage of convenient mortgages. Take a look at these mortgage benefits, then call **1-800-416-5786** or contact a Chase mortgages rep in your area to apply or ask questions.

- Easy application process for Chase mortgages right over the phone, in-person or only
- Unemployment/ disability and strike benefits to help you make mortgage payments when you're out of work
- Mortgage loans to purchase or refinance your home
- Mortgage programs for borrowers with "less than perfect" credit
- Down payments as low as 5% - and even lower for qualified buyers
- Parents and children of union members are also eligible for Union Plus mortgages
- Interest rates, calculators and other resources for home buyers are available here

Chase mortgages made simple

Financing a home can be a complicated business, so why not leave it to the mortgage experts? Our mortgage counselors will walk you through the entire process of buying, selling and refinancing homes. We also offer special mortgage programs for first-time buyers.

Call us at 1-800-416-5786 (8:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. E.T. Mon - Fri; 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. E.T. Sat) and make yourself at home. Or visit Home Finance center for today's rates, online calculators and an online application.

Union Plus personal service with Chase Mortgages- with a smile and a handshake

Prefer doing your Chase mortgage arrangements in person? You can set up face-to-face appointments by calling a Local Chase Branch Office and identifying your union.

Members Complete Basic Steward Training

The following members have completed Basic Steward training which was held at the Local office on October 28th and 29th. The Executive Board and Officers would like to welcome and congratulate the following members for their commitment to assist fellow members.

Errol Davis—VCSI—Ellicott City

Jeff Carroll—Westminster

Mike Constantine—Westminster

Dean Smith—Mt. Airy

Kyle Shanholtz—Frederick

Dan Carroll—Randallstown

T.J. Manzari—Shannon Dr.

Alfred Winchester—Vero Rd.

Jason Daly—Harmans

Steve Jones—Harmans

Rob Barry—Harmans

Greg Dugan—Shawan Rd.

Melvin Silwick—Shawan Rd.

Leslie Lockhart—Shawan Rd.



VCSI Arbitration Award

Verizon Connected Solutions Inc. and CWA District 2 Classification of Multi-Media Service Technicians

The Union filed a grievance on December 7, 2005 complaining that the Company was in violation of Article 21, Section 12(b), the Collective Bargaining Agreement by failing to pay Multi-Media Service Technicians (MMSTs) at the rate of pay for Senior Multi-Media Services Technicians (SMMSTs) for certain work performed in the installation and repair of FiOS video services. Specifically, the Union claimed that MMSTs were performing the work of SMMSTs on a regular basis since December of 2005. (The SMMST rate ranges from \$4.00-\$7.50 per hour more than the rate of MMSTs). According to the Union, Article 4, Section 10, of the contract required that where the work of the senior title is performed for one or more hours a day, the MMSTs should have been compensated at the higher craft pay for the entire work day. The Company took the position that the video work performed by MMSTs was not SMMST work, was insufficiently complex for the higher craft pay and that MMSTs did not receive sufficient training to perform the SMMST tasks. Based on these assertions, the Company denied the Union's grievance and the Union submitted a demand for arbitration on March 21, 2006.

The case was heard by Arbitrator Ira F. Jaffe, Esquire on October 1, 2007.

The Arbitrator sustained the grievance in its entirety and awarded the full remedy sought by the Union. The Arbitrator disagreed with the Company's position and found, instead, that MMSTs were indeed performing work contractually allocated to the SMMST position and ordered that those individuals be compensated accordingly.

Specifically, the Arbitrator determined:

The plain language of the Agreement . . . supports the Union's contention that some of the work performed by MMSTs in connection with FiOS installation assignments qualifies as SMMST work. The following tasks performed by MMSTs in connection with the FiOS installation work meet the definition of SMMST work contained in Article 21, Section 12(b): 1) loading of updated firmware on the router; 2) required set up and configuration of the router, whether changing security settings, resetting IP addresses (on either the router or the set-top boxes), determining if MAC filtering is on and, if so, turning it off; 3) setting and initializing up set-top boxes, to the extent that the set up and initialization involves the downloading and/or installation of new code modules, software, and/or firmware; 4) any detailed (as opposed to simple) set up, configuring, adjustment, testing and/or diagnosis of routers, set-up boxes, televisions, VCRs, audio systems, set-top devices video cameras, and any other peripheral equipment that was part of the customer's video system and which the technician is responsible for reinstalling or checking as part of the FiOS installation; routine configuration of televisions and components that customers of average knowledge and sophistication could perform may not qualify as SMMST work, but configuration done on television and components that need to be done by a Company technician who has received training on the particular item as part of the process of ensuring that FiOS connectivity is achieved, would appear to so qualify.

On any work day in which the technician performed these tasks (or any other tasks not testified to, but which properly are SMMST, as opposed to MMST, video work) for one hour or more, the provisions of Article 4, Section 10, mandate that the technician be paid out of title pay for all hours worked on that day. [pp. 25-26]

The Company was directed to make whole all affected MMSTs for the days on which they spent one hour or more performing higher craft SMMST work and the Arbitrator retained jurisdiction to oversee that the Company fulfilled its obligations under the Award.