

State of the UNION Issue!



H O T L I N E

COMMUNICATIONS WORKERS OF AMERICA LOCAL 2201

VOLUME 28, ISSUE NO. 1

JANUARY 2007

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WAR?

War? You are probably wondering why this is on the front page. The real question is has Verizon and corporate America declared war on the American worker and more specifically Union workers? Unfortunately, as you will see, the answer is YES. But all is not lost.

Unions and subsequently the middle class was created by workers joining together and saying that enough was enough. The same thing needs to happen again.

The majority of our members are employed by Verizon or one of it's subsidiaries, including Idearc. It should be no surprise to all of you that Verizon has gone on an offensive in the last few years to rid itself of union, state and employee responsibilities. The following is a list of some of the actions that Verizon has taken:

- Eliminated the pensions of all management employees and significantly cut their benefits, turning a good career into a mediocre job.

- Signed a non-compete agreement allowing Verizon Wireless to unionize but then has fought CWA every step of the way, including terminating VzW employees who spoke about unions.

THE Stewards ARMY

- Merged with MCI to create Verizon Business, committed to allow MCI employees to join Unions, broke those promises and shipped much of Core work over to Verizon Business and overseas. (Just ask the Business Offices where there call volume have gone to)
- Verizon spun off CWA-represented Verizon Information Services into Idearc, a profitable segment that sells ads for the yellow pages. Verizon has kept

other non-union represented subsidiaries such as VSSI. (they service business phone systems)

- Attempted to sell-off rural portions of their network and recently spun off and merged the wireline business in Maine, Connecticut and Vermont. Although Verizon will maintain majority ownership they will leave management responsibility to Fairpoint Communications.

- For those who think that we are safe in Virginia, Verizon is pushing for relief from State Corporation Commission control on selling off portions of the company in this state. A Bill to do this has already passed the House of Delegates and may have passed the Virginia Senate by the time you read this. (In order to fight legislatively, CWA needs all of you to sign up for COPE. Ask a

(Continued on page 2)

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steward about contributing)

- Verizon has split up and segmented it's company in an attempt to wall in the Union. Verizon used to be approx. 60% union represented at the end of the last contract and now is approx% 40%.

All of these actions should scare all Verizon employees, including the local management. Their wages and security hinge on our success even though most of them do not realize it.

This attack on Union workers is not just limited to Verizon workers. Recently Lucent, with little warning, raised the premiums on it's retirees healthcare by as much as 100%. For some, their medical premiums are now more than what they receive in pension payments.

So should we throw in the towel and all apply for fry cook positions at McDonalds? Not as long as we want to maintain our standard of living and respect. Every major battle that Labor has won has been won by all of us joining together, from the initial right to form unions to the recent GoodYear strike in which many labor unions joined the Steelworkers to fight a major corporation.

Contrast that with the air traffic controllers being terminated in the 1980's. Where was the solidarity then? Why didn't labor rise up and support them? The reason is complacency.

The labor movement has lost most of it's membership and much of its power by sitting back and taking our pay, benefits and rights for granted. Most of our members don't realize that everything we have was fought for. Vacation, holidays, medical benefits and pay all were battles fought by the members before us. If you are a consultant and you get 30 minutes closed time, did you know that we have

that because of a strike in 2000? Verizon certainly does not want you to have that time, even though Verizon customers could not be cared for without it. For those of you with medical problems, twelve weeks a year to recover was unheard of until the labor movement rallied and was able to get the Family Medical Leave Act passed in the 90's. Ask one of your co-workers who have been here for 20 years about time off for migraines before that Act was passed. Now that benefit is threatened due to widespread abuse and corporate America being able to point to extreme cases of fraud in an effort get FMLA repealed.

What Can We Do

You may not want to hear this but paying your dues and going out on strike, if needed, is not enough. We must do more and we must do it together. The following are some things that you can do to ensure our future:

- **Come to meetings** . Our membership meetings are every other month with the potential of being monthly if needed. This is the place to find out information and share problems that we can address.
- **Join a committee**. The local offers many committees that could use your help and do not require much commitment.
- **Become a steward**. Even if you do not want to represent members in grievances, this year CWA is forming a STEWARDS ARMY that uses activists to mobilize the membership and has room for roles outside of the traditional steward role. (see the explanation in this paper)
- **Get involved in politics**. The rights of employees are defined through poli-

tics. Corporation spend billions of dollars a year lobbying for the "flexibility" to do to you as they see fit. If you do not get involved then you give up your right as a citizen to have your voice heard. CWA has a political education fund (COPE) to fight for working family issues that affect us as members. For as little as one dollar a week you can make a difference. Please see a steward or call the Local to get involved.

- **Be a good Union member**. This includes doing what is expected of you at work. Coming to work on time and showing up when we can. When we fail to do the job that our co-workers expect of us then we put more of a burden on them and not our managers. We all want better working conditions, more flexibility at work and increased benefits. It is impossible to fight for those things if the company can point to widespread problems in certain groups. An example of this would be asking for more appointment time when a large portion of the office is out sick. We all face difficult times but we can better face them by being able to count on one another to watch our backs, offer support and spend all of our energy on fighting for what's important instead of ourselves.

We all want a good career and the ability to retire with a good life. We must believe that it can happen but nothing good in life is free. It takes work. It takes hard work. We all have to be committed to the same goal but we can do it. United together we can turn the tide and take back America for it's citizens and show Verizon and all of our employers that we built these companies, not China, and you cannot throw us out for a quick buck.

PRESIDENT'S LETTER



This is a story about teamwork. I received this while attending training and thought that it would a good to show how we must stick together and support each other if we hope to maintain the benefits and rights that we have.

The Goose Story

*Next fall, when you see Geese heading South for the Winter, flying along in V formation, you might consider what science has discovered as to why they fly that way:
As each bird flaps its wings, it creates an uplift for the bird immediately fol-*

*lowing.
By flying in V formation the whole flock adds at least 71% greater flying range than if each bird flew on its own.*

When a goose falls out of formation, it suddenly feels the drag and resistance of trying to go it alone and quickly gets back into formation to take advantage of the lifting power of the bird in front.

When the Head Goose gets tired, it rotates back in the wing and another goose flies point.

Geese honk from behind to encourage those up front to keep up their speed.

Finally, and this is important, when a goose gets sick, or is wounded by gunshots and falls out of formation, two other geese fall out with that goose and follow it down to lend help and protection. They stay with the fallen goose until it is able to

fly, or until it dies. Only then do they launch out on their own, or with another formation to catch up with their group.

Too many times we lose sight of what a Union is about. We become complacent to think that paying our dues and voting is enough. Just like the Goose Story, we cannot survive as a Union by flying alone. Allied under a common goal and fighting together we can accomplish anything we need to, but not alone. When you see a co-worker in need or are asked to help by a steward please think of this story and realize that without your help it will not happen.

In Solidarity,
Chris Lane, President

Goose story by Dr. Harry Clarke Noyes

THE STEWARD'S ARMY

One of the key initiatives in CWA's Ready for the Future program is the creation of a volunteer "Stewards Army" of rank-and-file activists to mobilize for positive change, both within our industries and in American society.

The initial goal is to recruit 25,000 activists into the Stewards Army by July 2007, and then build our ranks to 50,000 by 2009. CWA is developing a special education and training program for members who sign up.

Those who join won't all be shop stewards in the traditional sense of handling grievances and enforcing contracts at the job site – a critically important job that is done by thousands of CWA stewards in countless locations.

The Stewards Army is really about "stewardship" in a broader sense: stewardship to strengthen workers' bargaining and organizing rights and advocate for our other major goals – jobs, health care, and retirement security.

The goal is to join CWA's 50,000 with another 500,000 or more activists from other major unions to create a powerful force to change the priorities of the country and refocus on an agenda for working families.

The Stewards Army will include both active union members and retirees. Its action program will sometimes be directed at a CWA employer or workplace, and other times will be more broadly focused on a CWA industry goal or even a national issue such as health care. Actions can range from sending an e-mail message to participating in rallies, meeting with elected officials and mobilizing thousands for mass action.

We need to reorient America's priorities – and to do that we need to ignite a movement. Join us!

- Taken from the CWA national website www.cwa-union.org

LOCAL 2201 MEMBERSHIP

of Members: 2121

of Non-Members: 442

Non-members erode our rights and weaken the ability to fight for you the member. They essentially get a free ride while all of us have to take up the slack for them. All of us know a non-member. Please talk to them and encourage them to join. It's time that they do their fair share. For those non-members that have not received a union presentation please contact a steward or call the Local at

EXECUTIVE VICE-PRESIDENT'S LETTER



This is a story that I wish was not true but unfortunately is...

Two months ago I was approached by a friend of my wife's about a run-in with two

CWA/Verizon technicians. She told me that around her neighborhood their were Verizon contractors working, digging up the ground to place new fiber cable. She was amazed that they never took a break and were "running around all over the place" to quickly finish the job. A week later two Verizon technicians came out and according to her "stood around". After a few days of her not seeing much progress, she approached the technicians and asked how they were doing and mentioned the "other guys" (contractors) were so active. One of the technicians told her "We don't have to work hard we're Union."

I tell this story not to point out two technicians that may have

said something stupid or to point out the difference in placing fiber and splicing, which can appear very different to the untrained eye. The problem is that now the perception of this person is that Union people are lazy. It is easy to make a bad impression but incredibly hard to turn someone around once that impression is made. When we look to the community for support, if this is the impression that many have then the company will win. Union people have always been the backbone of America and it's economy. We have built this country and only ask for a fair wage and respect in return.

The business community has attempted to portray us as greedy workers who only want more for ourselves and don't care about the consumer, shareholders or the community as a whole. Unfortunately they have been successful in convincing a large portion of America that this is the case. We have only to look at the

decline of Union membership as proof of this. We must hold ourselves to a higher standard. A standard that shows that we are the greatest workers in the world and that our work can compete with anyone. This takes a personal responsibility to always do the best job possible and to let our families, neighbors and the rest of our community know the value that we bring as Union workers to America. Please remember this story and be conscious of the image that we portray in our community. We need their help to fight outsourcing and the stripping away of our rights and benefits. We also need them to buy the products we produce and to make our companies successful. The security and future of the United States lies in the American worker and the best of those has always held a Union card.

In Solidarity,

Richard Hatch, Executive Vice-President

VERIZON WIRELESS GIVES BAD RECEPTION

On December 21, 2006 Local 2201's Organizing Committee distributed information to customers on site at Verizon Wireless stores in our area. The intent of this information was to educate Verizon Wireless (VZW) customers about Verizon's unwillingness to allow the wireless employees to organize. We visited eight stores including the Hull Street Road, Mechanicsville, Pocono Crossing and two Broad Street locations. At each store we were met with strong opposition from the management staff. Some managers informed us that we needed to leave the property because Verizon Wireless owns it, while others felt compelled to call law enforcement.

Our primary purpose for this organizing effort was to encourage Verizon

Wireless customers to become a voice in VZW employee's fight to become unionized. However, Verizon Wireless strongly opposes their



efforts. They have engaged in such tactics as harassment, threats and even termination of some employees who have been brave enough

to discuss organizing a union with their co-workers. We are all aware of the benefits of being a part of a union policed company, such as higher wages, better benefits and job security. Verizon Wireless, and the core company Verizon Communications, fear a much stronger union with the addition of Verizon Wireless and their strong opposition stems from that fear.

Submitted by -

Erica Williams, Verizon BSC Consultant

Lenny Hargrove, Verizon BPC Consultant

CWA

IS READY FOR SOME
FOOTBALL



“ SUPER BOWL” PARTY

DATE: FEBRUARY 4TH, 2007

TIME: 3:30P- GAME OVER

PLACE: CWA LOCAL 2201

5809 LAKESIDE AVE

RICHMOND VA.

WEAR NFL APPAREL TO ENTER THE CWA DOME COME EARLY
PLAY CARDS, CHESS, CHECKERS, BACKGAMMON, ETC.

SNACKS, FOOD, DRINKS, AND JUST PLAIN FUNNNNN!!!!

R.S.V.P (804) 266-2201 BY 5:00PM FEBRUARY 1ST, 2007

EXECUTIVE OFFICER SITE VISITS

We are asked occasionally to set a scheduled time to visit various work locations, in order to answer questions, hear concerns or ideas about the Union. To honor this request, the elected officers of the Local will be visiting locations throughout the year to hear from you. All of our major locations will be visited. The following locations are already scheduled:

February 6th	-	Park Central	11:00 am –2:00 pm
February 21st	-	Brittons Hill	7:00 am–9:00 am
March 14th	-	Hungary Springs (3013 Foyer)	11:00 am–2:00 pm

Important Telephone Numbers**Verizon Benefits Center-**

877.275-8947

CWA Retiree Health Care Benefit-

888-324-4969

Aetna US Healthcare-

800-247-5482

Medco Health Prescription-

877-877-1878

MetLife Dental Plans-

800-988-8331

Aetna DMO-

800-843-3661

Davis Vision LASIK Network-

877-999-7006

MetLife Insurance-

800-638-4228

Marsh@Work Solutions-

800-336-9427

Mutual of Omaha Long-term-

800-877-1052

ADP COBRA (Does Billing)-

800-891-0535

Fidelity Investments-

888-457-9333

United Healthcare (pre 12/31/89)-

800-334-4515

Principal Financial Group**John Bennett-**

804-323-7847

COMMUNITY SERVICES CORNER

I would like to thank everyone for their help in 2006 and look forward to having an even better 2007. I would like to take a moment to reflect on the achievements the committee had during 2006:

Collected Recipes for my committee's first cookbook.

September we held a food drive for Central Virginia's Food Bank and donated a total of 1,284 pounds of food.

We also participated in the American Heart Association's Heart Walk. We had four walkers and collected approximately \$400.00.

November we partnered with the Women's Committee and had a Bake/Yard Sale and raised 319.25 for Albert V. Norrell Elementary School.

December we as a local partnered with United Way, IBEW Local 50, and the Bakery, Confectionary, Tobacco, Grain Millers International Union Local 358 and delivered Christmas trees donated by Target, food donated by the Central Virginia Food Bank, and toys donated by the Salvation Army.

As you can see we have been busy not just as a committee but as a local as well. So with that in mind I would like to touch on some of the upcoming events for 2007:

January: Food Drive Going on now for the Central Virginia Food Bank.

Cookbooks on sale now for \$10.00 and the

proceeds will be donated to the Pediatric Aids Foundation and CWA Bone Marrow Foundation.

I am hoping to have a date soon for a Bowl-A-Thon for the Children's Hospital.

Here is some **beneficial information** that **can help those members** who have children that are **seniors in high school**.....Their is a scholarship program that CWA members and their spouses, children, and grandchildren, including those of retired or deceased members are **eligible for. Thirty** partial college **scholarships of \$3,000 each** and they are being offered for the 2007-2008 year. **Applications are only accepted during the months of November through March.** For more information go to: CWA Joe Beirne Foundation Scholarship Program website at: www.lwg-union.org/members/beirne/application.html.

Again I would like to thank everyone for their help and support especially the other committee chairs and board members. Working together in 2007 will help build the momentum for 2008. I would also like to invite those that may be interested in being a part of this committee to its next meeting which will be held on February 15th at 6:00 PM at the local.

In Solidarity,

Missy Duff

Community Services Chair

NEW MEMBERS

CWA Local 2201 would like to welcome the following people who have joined our union.

Timothy Ballenger
Pamela Boone-Skeeter
Mark Cain
David Deuber
John Rector

15 DAY NOMINATIONS NOTICE LETTER

Dear Fellow Member:

The 69th C.W.A. Annual Convention will be held in Toronto, Canada July 16-17, 2007.

As set forth in Article 9, "Local Delegates to International Convention and Policy Making Meetings", Sections 1 and 2 of your Local Bylaws, I am calling an Executive Board Meeting on Thursday, March 1, 2007 at 6:00 p.m., at the Local Office, 5809 Lakeside Avenue for the purpose of making nominations. This constitutes your fifteen (15) day notice.

Under Article 9, Section 1 of your Local Bylaws, there are two (2) provisions for being nominated as candidates to serve as a Delegate to a Union Convention.

1. By the Executive Board serving as a Nominating Committee.
2. The Petition Method, Article 14, Section 4, "General Provisions".

The petition must be signed by 15 members of the Union in good standing.

Section 4 of this Article, Paragraph D provides the proper wording which is as follows: "The undersigned members in good standing of Local 2201, petition the Nominating Committee to place the name of _____ on the ballot for delegate to the C.W.A. Convention.

If you plan to run as a delegate, through action taken by the Executive Board, you are to complete a special form which may be obtained at the Local Office. This form contains information on the past and present activities directly associated with Local 2201 about the delegate which will be made available to all members. This will allow the membership to become more familiar with the candidates. If you need a form, please contact the Local Office. This form needs to be completed and returned no later than the beginning of the Executive Board Meeting, on March 1, 2007.

Fraternally,

Chris Lane - President

WOMEN'S COMMITTEE ALERT

January is Cervical Cancer Awareness month. Due to this the women's committee would like to make you aware of an important vaccine that is now available. The FDA recently approved the first vaccine against human papillomavirus (HPV). HPV has been shown to cause Cervical Cancer. Merck & Co developed the vaccine, named Gardasik. It is a series of 3 shots, two months after the first shot is given you will then receive the second shot. The final shot is received five months after the second. Most Insurance companies are covering this but you would want to check with your provider to verify as the shots have run around \$130.00. If they do cover it a helpful universal insurance billing code for this vaccine is 90649. Please note that your insurance provider may use a different process. Please contact your doctor for additional information and any possible medical questions/diagnosis. This vaccine is relatively new and not all medical offices may carry it. Any member of the Women's Committee can provide informational resources.

SUBMISSIONS FOR HOTLINE

Remember to send in your submissions for the HOTLINE to Suzanne @ the Local. The number is 804 266-2201. This would include any articles, ideas for articles, condolences, congratulations, corrections and any questions or complaints that you might have. The HOTLINE goes out to the entire membership and is the best way to get your message out.

UPCOMING EVENTS

- February 1, 2007 Equity Committee Meeting, 5:30 p.m., Local Office.
- February 1, 2007 Inside Plant Operations (IPO), Steward Meeting, 5:30 p.m., Local Office.
- February 6, 2007 VIS Job Steward Meeting, 5:30 p.m., Local Office.
- February 12, 2007 EAST –Job Steward Meeting, 6:00 p.m., Ferebee’s Restaurant, Tappahannock.
- February 13, 2007 Commercial and Directory Services (CDS) Job Steward Meeting, 5:30 p.m., Local Office.
- February 15, 2007 Women’s Committee Meeting, 5:30 p.m., Local Office.
- February 15, 2007 Community Services Committee Meeting, 6:00 p.m. Local Office.
- February 20, 2007 Financial and Administrative Support (FAS) Job Steward Meeting, 5:00 p.m., Local Office.
- February 20, 2007 Outside Plant South (OPS) Job Steward Meeting 7:00 p.m., Shoney’s at Oxbridge Square.
- February 22, 2007 Organizing Committee Meeting, 5:30 p.m., Local Office.
- February 22, 2007 Fredericksburg (FRED) Job Steward Meeting, 6:30 p.m., Pizza Hut, Route 1 and College.
- February 26, 2007 Operator Services/Repair Services (OS/RS) Job Steward Meeting, 6:15 p.m., Local Office.
- February 27, 2007 Health & Safety Committee, 5:30 p.m. Local Office.
- February 27, 2007 Outside Plant North (OPN) Job Steward Meeting, 7:00 p.m., Local Office.

GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS

Next Membership Meeting:

Thursday February 8th, 6pm at the Local Office

Retiree’s Membership

Meeting:

Wednesday February 14th, 12pm @ the Local Office

RICHMOND CENTRAL LABOR COUNCIL

Thursday, February 8th
231 East Belt Blvd
Richmond, VA

Communications Workers of America
Local 2201
5809 Lakeside Avenue
Richmond, Virginia 23228

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit No. 749

Time Valued