

Vote Nov 6th!



# HOTLINE

COMMUNICATIONS WORKERS OF AMERICA LOCAL 2201

VOLUME 28, ISSUE NO. 6

October 2007

# WHY VOTE?

A long time ago most of us learned that if you want something in life you have to stand up and fight for it. We fight for what is important to us. The thing is that what is important to each one of us is different. That difference means that we cannot rely on something to be done that might drastically effect us. It also makes sense that what one individual or group fights for has the potential to be the direct opposite of what is in our best interest. This in itself, is not a bad thing. It is in fact the basis of the democratic process. The requirement, however, is that we take the time to be involved.

This requirement is never more evident than on the political landscape.



What should come down to the best choice of the people is often influenced and manipulated by a system supported by lobbying and money. There is not much more in the world that can get a politician's interest like a big check. Money has become the lifeblood of this game.

There is, however, a wrench in this system. This "wrench" is what makes this country the best that it can be. Of course, we are speaking about a vote. Although money and lobbying certainly have huge influence, it still comes down to one person, one vote.

Your casting a vote and following up with your legislator is what provides hope for your and our interests that what we say is important. You as an individual and our thoughts as a Union should be a part of this country and this state. Issues like fair wages, healthcare, pensions and immigration should be brought to the forefront and policy should not be made in some boardroom where a very few people see a benefit.

We all want our economy and our country to do well but we must look at the bigger picture. Does it make more sense for the focus to be on how well the stock market is doing or the individual citizen. If you can't

be certain that your kids are safe but money is spent to give huge tax breaks to the wealthiest ten percent in the hope that it will "trickle down", is that in the best interest of America? It is better for corporations, who no longer have ties to individual countries, to send work to any part of the globe. Verizon is in the process of doing that now. Does that help you? Does it surprise you that many politicians agree with Verizon that it is good idea? Who is setting the priorities?

Without being involved and at the very least voting there is not much that you

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## WHAT HAPPENED TO SAFETY?

We all like to think that our employers have our best interest at heart except when it affects productivity. See Page 5 for one story . . .

## PRESIDENT'S LETTER



Brothers and Sisters,

This may come as a surprise to some of you but our employers don't feel the need to respect us anymore. They feel that we are of little importance. Basically, we as a united group of employees don't matter to them.

This has been made painfully aware to a group of Verizon FiOS Technicians who expressed their concerns collectively and sent it to their management team. Approximately 95% of that work-group joined together to advise management of problems that they faced in doing their jobs. The response that they received was minimal and designed to ignore the problems.

Recently we have seen management avoid and seemingly outright put employees in danger in the Fredericksburg area. This was after senior employees had warned management of a dangerous plant condition that had the potential of employees coming into contact with power lines. The Potomac region has had significant

accidents in the last few years and safety should always be the most important aspect, unless it gets in the way of productivity and then it seems employees don't matter.

If we have learned anything it is that respect must be demanded. We can no longer expect our employers to do the right thing. We must force them. Forcing them does not mean being rebellious or hurting the companies that we work for but showing the current management of our companies that we will accept nothing else.

For a long time now I have been encouraging everyone to get involved and help make a difference. It is the number of people who show up to events, meetings and wear red that make management take notice. A few people in one area trying to enact change will become targets and easily put down unless they are joined by all the other employees.

We are on the right side here. We are fighting for things like jobs, benefits and safety. It is amazing that we have to fight for these things and that our companies do not freely recognize their importance but every day we must continue. As we move ever closer to the end of our contracts we must

work together.

On Tuesday, November 6th, we can all join together and make a change that can affect all of us. On that day we have the opportunity to elect members of the General Assembly that will listen and support us. We all remember the fight that we had in the spring over HB1755. We must ensure that legislation that is bad for us and the community is not so difficult to fight and that our politicians are committed to do the right thing. In this issue we have listed the candidates in our area that are "Endorsed" as candidates who have agreed with supporting working families. I urge all of you to go out and vote. Vote for someone who will vote for you and when you go take a few people with you.

I also encourage all of you to stay alert and strong in the workplace. We must be safe even if our companies do not recognize the need. Together we can accomplish great things and force our employers to give the respect we deserve.

In Solidarity,

Chris Lane

## VERIZON REQUESTS EARLY BARGAINING

Verizon has requested to enter into early bargaining on the General Agreement that ends August 3, 2008. The Union has, of course, agreed to meet.

This marks the first time in decades that the company has requested and agreed to meet early.

In the last newsletter we sent out bargaining surveys in order to find out the needs and desires of the membership. This was done in the belief that bargaining would begin normally and there would be

plenty of time for the membership to respond.

It is now more important than ever that all of you who fall under the Verizon contract fill those out and turn them in as soon as possible. All of you should be involved in determining the course of our next contract.

It is also important for us to show solidarity and strength at this important time. We must wear red on Thursday and show the company that we are strong and committed to getting the best contract that we can. Verizon takes notice and counts the number of

people who are involved and that can directly impact what they will budge on at the table.

Please encourage all of your co-workers to be involved and help you and themselves by doing what is right.

This initial bargaining should begin soon and information will be distributed when gained.

**WHY VOTE? . . . CONTINUED.**

*(Continued from page 1)*

might be able to say. You have your opportunity to speak on election day and if you choose not to vote than you have silently agreed to all of these things that happen.

This election day your Local is urging everyone to exercise your rights and vote. But don't vote alone, take a friend or twelve. We have a great opportunity to put people into office who will listen to us the citizen and Union member.

In this issue, you will find a list of candidates who have been "Endorsed" as supporting you, the working American. This endorsement process is designed to insure that a candidate has the right morals and ideals to make good decisions to help "all" of the citizens and not just a few of the most influential.

It is important to understand that every candidate that runs has the opportunity to fill out a survey and submit to an interview before an "Endorsement" is given. Some do not even bother to listen or respond. Others respond, but their answers are not in line with

what you would expect out of a candidate that supports middle-class America. Only the ones that either have a proven track-record or step up and say that they will support us receive an "Endorsement".

Each one of us is unique and thus we all have different ideas on what we place our importance on. Some of us are pro-life while others pro-choice. Some of us support gun control yet many believe in the "right to bear arms". All of these choices are valid in their own ways but life must be built on a base. That base includes the basics of income, jobs, security, good health and shelter for us and our family. The issues that affect us as Union members speak to these basics first. The great thing about America is that you can vote for whomever you want. The responsibility with that freedom is that you have to actually go out and do it. If you don't then someone else will choose for you. On this election day please take the time to exercise our responsibilities as Americans and vote.



**EAST VICE-PRESIDENT JIM MORRIS FINDS SOME INSPIRATION ON A VACATION CRUISE.**

**Executive Officers**

**President**



**Chris Lane**

**Executive Vice President**



**Richard Hatch**

**Secretary/Treasurer**



**Robbie Johnson**

**Vice Presidents**

**Outside Plant South**

**Scott Sanford**

**Inside Plant Operations**

**Kim Johnson**

**Fredericksburg**

**Mike Shepard**

**Outside Plant North**

**Roy Shumaker**

**East**

**Jim Morris**

**Financial Admin Services**

**Bre Armbrust**

**Commercial Directory Services**

**David Vincent**

## Endorsed candidates in 2201's area

### VIRGINIA HOUSE OF DELEGATES

<u>District</u>		<u>District</u>	
19th	Lewis B. Medlin Jr.	66th	No Endorsement
22nd	No Endorsement	68th	No Endorsement
23rd	Shannon R. Valentine	69th	Franklin P. Hall
24th	No Endorsement	70th	Dwight C. Jones
27th	No Endorsement	71st	Jennifer L. McClellan
55th	No Endorsement	72nd	Tom F. Herbert
56th	Will F. Shaw	73rd	No Endorsement
59th	Connie Brennan	74th	Joseph D. Morrissey
60th	No Endorsement	88th	Carlos Del Toro
61st	No Endorsement	97th	No Endorsement
62nd	No Endorsement	99th	Robert J. Wittman *
63rd	Rosalyn Dance		
65th	No Endorsement		

\* Robert Wittman was not officially endorsed by AFL-CIO but has supported our Local.

These are the races that fall within our jurisdiction and the surrounding areas. To find out what district that you are located in please visit [WWW.CWA2201.ORG](http://WWW.CWA2201.ORG). There, you will find a link for you to check your address.

In the districts where there was "No Endorsement" there were no candidates who met the criteria to support working families.

### VIRGINIA SENATE

<u>District</u>		<u>District</u>	
4th	No Endorsement	15th	Robert L. Wilkerson
9th	A. Donald McEachin	16th	Henry L. Marsh
10th	No Endorsement	17th	R. Edward Houck
11th	No Endorsement	23rd	No Endorsement
12th	No Endorsement	28th	Albert C. Pollard Jr.

## WHAT HAPPENED TO SAFETY?

All of you know that our jobs can be dangerous. From being forced into work during inclement weather to coming into contact with perilous outside conditions. Because of this, safety should be paramount. The companies we work for talk about safety. They show us videos and have us sign documents that we were covered on safety but it seems when push comes to shove that safety is not as important as productivity or homes passed.

Recently, in the Fredericksburg area, there was an incident that highlights this. One of our line crews was asked to work on an FTTP job along a telephone-pole run. This crew found an unsafe condition with rotted poles, trees growing up around lines and power coming into contact with our plant. This crew did the right thing and advised their supervisor. This supervisor, Rob Ramirez, who has since gone back to being an associate, advised them that based upon his insufficient knowledge that they could work around the issues. The pictures that are on this page are of that area. It should be evident to anyone that you cannot work around these issues.



**TREE GROWING AROUND LINES**

When that would not work, the company then tried to send another crew out to that location. Apparently this crew would not “complain”. This failed for them as well. The company tried to send a group from Northern Virginia down to do the work but they were advised of the situation and another supervisor with some sense was able to stop that.

Alarming, it did not stop there. The Fredericksburg line crew was then “suddenly” needed in the Richmond area for an extended period of time. As this is written, they have been back-filled by a crew from Northern Virginia to work in the Fredericksburg area. Is this just a coincidence? You be the judge.

This incident still has not been properly investigated even though it allegedly appears to be a direct attempt to put technicians in harms way for an “important” fiber job.

Another piece of this puzzle is that Verizon has called in most of the garage, in Fredericksburg, to investigate “wrongdoing” when the technicians engaged in checking their vehicles on a certain day. Even though these actions are required on a daily, weekly, monthly and yearly basis. So, like the title says, what happened to safety?

Safety is something that we often overlook. Most of the time, an unsafe action that is taken we will get away with. But it is that one time when the price paid is too high. In the past few years in the Potomac region there have been numerous injuries and deaths related to electrical power. Electrical contact was the concern in the Fredericksburg pole-run. Verizon and its employees have seen first hand what happens when safety is no longer important.

Just this Friday, October 26th, 2007, a Verizon technician was killed in



**SUPPORT ARM ON POLE WITH A POWER LINE THAT IS SPLIT AND FALLING APART.**

Plymouth, MA, when it appears he contacted a power line while working in a bucket truck. What else will it take?

Verizon has a joint union-management safety committee and often gives lip service to making sure that this is a safe environment. For many of us, it is a part of our appraisal. We can and have been disciplined for failing to do the littlest of things. Verizon has a policy that says you can be punished for getting into a vehicle accident, even if it was not your fault, if you could have somehow magically seen the danger. Where is their punishment?

This event in Fredericksburg has been a failure on the part of the Walter Jones management team. On numerous occasions they were advised of the situation. Luckily, due to the diligence of union members, no one was hurt.

It is up to us as coworkers and union members to look out for each other. Make sure that you force the company to live up to their responsibilities concerning safety and never think that it won't happen to me. If you are asked to do something unsafe, let your stewards and the local know. You and your family are the most important things that can be protected and profits and productivity will never supersede that.

## STEWARD'S ARMY BEGINS TO MOBILIZE



On October 12th, Our local held a dinner/meeting for the newly formed and trained Steward's Army. 2201 has 260 members and retirees who have stepped up and volunteered to lead the charge in securing our rights and benefits. The Steward's Army is a return to "feet on the street" which made our Union great and and is mandatory against our fight with our employers. We were lucky to have Ron Collins, Assistant to Vice-Preseident Pete Catucci; Jim Leaman, president of the Virginia AFL-CIO and C.B. Sinclair, Union Liaison with the United Way, speak to those attending. Thanks to everyone who made it a great event.



## Santa is coming back to Local 2201

Santa Claus

North Pole

USA, USA

Greetings;

I would like to take the time to thank CWA, Local 2201 for their hard work in the community to help their fellow person. We would like to show our appreciation to the future young union members from the ages of 1-11 by having brunch with me, Santa on December 8, 2007 from 11: a.m.—2:00 p.m.; St John's Hall, 811 W. Nine Mile Road, Highland Springs, VA.

I'll have two of my elves with me. Mrs. Claus is requesting that a parent/guardian accompany their child or children to the breakfast.

If you would kindly fill out this form so Mrs. Claus can prepare for our guests.

This form must be returned to CWA, Local 2201 by 5pm on November 28, 2006.

I \_\_\_\_\_ will attend with my child/children

#\_\_\_\_\_, ages\_\_\_\_\_, Phone#\_\_\_\_\_.

We will \_\_\_\_\_ not be attending.



Please do not call to reserve seats. This form must be returned by mail, faxed (804-266-8572) or delivered in person to the Local at 5809 Lakeside Ave to reserve seats.

# WINTER EXTRAVAGANZA



DECEMBER 8<sup>TH</sup>, 2007

8PM-MIDNIGHT

PRESENTED BY  
CWA LOCAL 2201  
SOCIAL COMMITTEE

B.Y.O.B.

HOR D' OEUVRES

MUSIC

ST. JOHN'S HALL  
811 W. NINE MILE ROAD  
HIGHLAND SPRINGS VA.

TICKETS: \$7.00 per person

RESERVE TABLES (6) \$40.00

DRESS: SEMI-FORMAL

FOR TICKETS: CWA LOCAL 2201 9-5 M-F 266-2201

SEE: SOCIAL COMMITTEE PERSON  
MUST BE 21 OR OLDER

## Local 2201 helping out in the community with Habitat for Humanity



**IMPORTANT NUMBERS**

**Verizon**

**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 Network-**

877-999-7006

**Healthcare Coordinators-**

FMLA, Disability

Bill Sonnik (888) 571-7218

Benefits (Active)

John Petrini (800) 627-0200

Benefits (Retiree)

Sue Anderson (888) 324-4969

**Cingular/AT&T**

**Benefits Center**

(877) 421-5225

**Disability/FMLA**

Gates Macdonald

(866) 4-LEAVES

**LOCAL 2201 HONORED FOR NEWSLETTER  
CARTOON**



**IPO VP KIM JOHNSON ACCEPTING AN AWARD FOR A CARTOON THAT HER AND HER DAUGHTER LACEN KINKEL DREW FOR OUR HOTLINE.**

**THE CARTOON WON THIRD PLACE FOR THE "BEST ORIGINAL CARTOON" FROM THE NATIONAL CWA NEWSLETTER CONTEST.**

**SUBMISSIONS FOR  
HOTLINE**

Remember to send in your submissions for the HOTLINE to Suzanne @ the Local. She can be reached at 804 266-2201 or editor@cwa2201.org. Any fax submissions should be sent to 804 266-8572. 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.

**Support Your Union brothers  
and sisters.**

**Make the switch to  
Cingular/AT&T Mobility  
for your wireless phone.**

**10% Discount offered to Union members.**

**NEW MEMBERS**

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

James Bishop	CDS
Monica Blount	IPO
Daryl Childs	OPN
Craig Coles	Idearc
Edward Criste	FRED
Justin Cuneo	OPN
Marty Dixon	OPN
Shansia Douse	OS/RS
Antwann Littlejohn	Idearc
Randall Pitcock	OPN
Margaret Temple-Banks	CDS
Bryan Winslow	OPN

**In Memoriam**



CWA Local 2201 lost a member, Henry “Hank” Westerman, 37, on September 27, 2007. Survivors include his daughter Courtney, age 9. Hank was Central Office Technician at 10 N. Nansemond St. in Richmond. He is missed by many.

**UPCOMING EVENTS**

- November 1, 2007 Equity Committee Meeting, 5:30 p.m., Local Office.
- November 6, 2007 Idearc Job Steward Meeting, 5:30 p.m., Local Office.
- November 8, 2007 Women’s Committee Meeting, 5:30 p.m., Local Office.
- November 8, 2007 Community Services Committee, 6:00 p.m., Local Office
- November 13, 2007 Inside Plant Operations (IPO) Job Steward Meeting, 5:30 p.m., Local Office.
- November 13, 2007 Commercial and Directory Services (CDS) Job Steward Meeting, 5:30 p.m., Local Office.
- November 15, 2007 Organizing Committee Meeting, 5:30 p.m., Local Office.
- November 16, 2007 Financial and Administrative Support (FAS) Job Steward Meeting, 5:00 p.m., Local Office.
- November 19, 2007 East Job Steward Meeting, 6:00 p.m., Ferebee’s in Tappahanock.
- November 20, 2007 Outside Plant South (OPS) Job Steward Meeting, 7:00 p.m., Shoney’s Oxbridge Square Shopping Center.
- November 27, 2007 Health & Safety Committee, 5:30 p.m., Local Office.
- November 27, 2007 Outside Plant North (OPN) Job Steward Meeting, 6:00 p.m., Local Office.
- November 28, 2007 Education Committee Meeting, 5:30 p.m., Local Office.
- November 29, 2007 Fredericksburg (FRED) Job Steward Meeting, 6:30 p.m., Pizza Hut.

**GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS**

**Next Membership Meeting:**

Thursday December 20th, 6pm at the Local Office

**Retiree’s Membership**

**Meeting:**

Wednesday Nov 14th, 12pm @ the Local Office

**RICHMOND CENTRAL LABOR COUNCIL**

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

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

Non-Profit Org.  
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**Time Valued**

