



# The Sentinel

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Official quarterly  
newsletter of the  
Communications  
Workers of America  
Local 2100

**Communications Workers of America  
Local 2100  
Box F, Chase, MD 21027**

410-335-2100

## 2011 MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS DATES

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800-445-0242

410-335-0414 (fax)

mail@cwa2100

www.cwa2100.org

### Belair

Monday, February 14, 2011

Doors Open 5:00 PM

Knights of Columbus 4714

23 Newport Drive, Forest Hill, MD

### Baltimore

Tuesday, February 15, 2011

Door Open 5:00 PM

Knights of Columbus Hall

Frederick Rd.—Catonsville

### Westminster/Frederick

Wednesday, February 16, 2011

Doors Open 6:30 PM

VFW Post #467

### Officers

#### President

**Mark Balsamo**

#### Ex. Vice President

**Kevin Miller**

#### Sec./Treasurer

**Charles Dobry**

#### District 1 VP

**Mike Somers**

#### District 2 VP

**Gary Kelso**

#### District 3 VP

**Nick Riddle**

#### District 4 VP

**Bryan Wholey**

#### District 5 VP

**Kevin Davis**

## Local 2100 Scholarship Award

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Our Community Services Committee established a Scholarship program and will award \$1,000 per year to the individual that applies and is selected. Each year a new candidate is selected along with a

possible renewal for the previous winner to receive the \$1,000.

There are applications and requirements for our members to apply on our web site under the Scholarship link.

Congratulations to our first scholarship winner from the Local. John Bennett's daughter Jessica was our 1st winner. John is a CST in the Fountain Green garage. Good luck Jessica and keep up the good work.

## August 6<sup>th</sup> Is Coming Will You Be Prepared??

by Mark Balsamo



That's right August 6<sup>th</sup> is coming and as of the writing of this article you have a little over 200 days to get prepared. I would like to think that everyone knows what August 6<sup>th</sup> is

but for those of you that have drawn a mental blank it is the end of the collective bargaining agreement for both Verizon Core and VCSI members.

As we enter into a new year we will also soon be entering into negotiations with Verizon over the future for ourselves and our families. Did you make a new year's resolution?? Have you thought about what you would like to see in our next contract?? Have you put any money aside in case of a work stoppage?? The time to begin is now, it's not too late.

No one can predict what the company is thinking but I'm sure we can expect little cooperation from them. The company has already started poor mouthing about how broke they are and how the economy has stifled their FIOS sales. I'm sure as the time gets closer we will hear more and more excuses as to why they can't continue to provide the members with the wages and benefits that we currently enjoy. One could also assume that they will want back everything that we have ever negotiated. The question that remains to be answered is how far is our membership willing to go to protect what we have rightfully earned and deserved over the years. Sacrifice comes in many different shapes and forms. Some members may think that if we just keep what we have they would be happy. Other members may expect for the union to bargain for substantial increases across the board. And other

members may recognize the importance of improving some of our contract language along with modest increases.

I believe a key focus for this round of negotiations should be the future as it relates to jobs and technology. Remember, it wasn't that long ago when touchtone dialing came into existence. How about when fiber was primarily used for inner office routing of calls, not to mention the Fiber To The Curb project and how FTTP and FIOS changed that. For me the scariest piece of all of this is the next generation of technology which is called the 4G network. Image how many jobs are at risk if this company could accomplish a big part of their work on a wireless network.

In the near future we will be sending out bargaining surveys for you the membership to tell us what issues are important to you. All of the returned surveys will be forwarded to the district office and they will be categorized and prioritized to help develop our strategy. Please take the time to fill out the survey and return it to the union hall. The point to all of this is that it takes planning, coordination and a unified effort. Please don't wait, time is ticking and before you know it August 6<sup>th</sup> will be here.

### Will you be prepared???

We strongly recommend the following as you begin to prepare for Contract Expiration in August 2011.

- *Save MONEY \$\$\$*
- *Delay Major Purchases*
- *90 Day supply of maintenance medications*
- *Schedule school physicals early*
- *Stay informed ... read newsletter, check website and attend membership meetings!*

## Retirees Corner

by Tom Thomson

Dear Retirees,

Another year has gone by and I hope everyone has a great 2011.

Although the plans aren't finalized, we are planning to hold our spring luncheon somewhere on the east side this May. At the Christmas Social, we asked if the people present would be willing to drive to the east side, and most everyone indicated that they would. We have heard from many members that they would be more likely to attend events closer to home. So hopefully, attendance at the spring luncheon will justify the move and we will have a good crowd. The crab feast and the Christmas Social will continue to be held at the Knights of Columbus Hall in Catonsville. Further information regarding the spring luncheon will be sent to you the beginning of April.

This year is a contract year and we will be needing the help of our retirees during the bargaining process -- we all know what that means -- walking informational pickets, etc.

Tom Thomson

President of CWA 2100 Retirees' Club



## Save Money The Union Way

by Chuck Dobry

In the current economy all of us and our families are looking for ways to cut back and save money. How can we do this yet still support other union families like ours? Well, first of all we can shop at stores like **Costco**, which is represented by the Teamsters. You can buy anything from Diapers to tires for your vehicles. Besides that, the pharmacy is much cheaper on generics than your local big box Pharmacies that you see on every corner. Snopes.com did an investigation that verified this fact. While you're there fill your tank too. Gas at Costco is typically 10 cents cheaper per gallon than local gas stations.

Another major expense for families is Insurance. Once again being a union member can save you a lot of money. **Union Insurance Group 1-888-200-4545** can give you a no obligation quote. I recently switched all of my insurance (Home & Auto) from Allstate to UIG and saved well over \$1,000. I have recommended it to several friends and they saved too. As a Union Member you are entitled to several other programs that can save you big money. Ranging from Legal Services to Home mortgages. For more information visit [WWW.unionplus.org](http://WWW.unionplus.org). Let's start the New Year off by putting money in our pockets instead of someone else.

## Beneficiaries and You...

Recently, open enrollment was conducted throughout Verizon in regards to the health care providers. A couple of plans had been discontinued. If you missed changing your insurance carrier you can opt once a year outside the open enrollment to do so. Everyone needs to make sure their information is correct. If you took advan-

tage of changing carriers you should receive new cards and information from the new provider.

Also, please take the time to check on any policies, accounts and personal information to make sure that you have the correct beneficiaries listed on those documents. Even if you didn't have any changes in the past year it wouldn't

hurt to confirm the information to keep it up to date and keep a copy for your records.

Take a minute and make sure the correct information is on the documentation. Don't put your loved ones into the situation to try and figure out what should have been corrected by you.

## Welcome New Members from the American Red Cross

December 14, 2010 was the day that the Bio-Medical Equipment Technicians at the American Red Cross in Baltimore, Maryland finally won a voice in their workplace. The election was won by a vote of 5 for the union, 2 opposed and 1 challenged. Those of you that have always had the advantage of union representation may not appreciate the exuberance and excitement of this small group of Red Cross employees or the courage that it took for them to stand up to an aggressive management team determined to keep the union out.

Five years ago, this unit tried to form a unit with the Teamsters. The company promised and gave them 6%-10% raises, promised to im-

prove working conditions if they would vote against the union. They researched unions and decided that CWA was the union they wanted to join, a union that stood up for its members and stood together

The first meeting was November 1<sup>st</sup>, 2010 and the election was held on December 14, 2010. Although only a little more than 6 weeks from start to finish, the company waged a brutal attack on the employees. CWA has a brochure titled, "A Checklist: What Your Employer Might Do." Of the 20 anti-union tactics listed, the company used 18 and used many of them repeatedly. They did hold captive audience meetings several times a week, threatening the employees with loss of salary, loss of benefits, strikes,

not being able to talk directly with management. They promised to improve working conditions, buy them chairs, and even went so far as to fire one of the supervisors. This small group never wavered in their support of each other and their desire to join CWA, ignoring both the company's threats and their promises. They stayed focused on their goal to join CWA and win a true voice in their workplace. On December 14, of the original 5 supporters, all 5 voted yes. Not one of them had been swayed by the company.

Bargaining for their first contract will begin in a few weeks. . We welcome this small, but courageous group into our local. ..by Pam Wilt

## Weather or Not



It is that time of year again when the weather can be very unpredictable. Make sure that you have an ice scraper, de-icer, small shovel, extra gloves, blankets and other items in your vehicles to be prepared for whatever mother nature can throw

at you. Always be careful when approaching an area that may have been 'salted'. The melt can actually turn to ice in another area or could be covered by a light snow dusting. Make sure your vehicle heater and defroster are working properly and don't forget to check your wiper

blades and have de-icer in your washer fluid. Some small ideas and advanced planning could save you a lot of time and money - if you plan ahead, take your time and stay calm. Have a great 2011.



## Ask Ducky.....

This section was initiated to help the Local educate our membership with current issues that arise from our workplace. Members can submit their questions to this Local on issues that may concern them. We might not be able to post all questions but we will select the ones that involve the majority of our membership.

- Ducky, What should I do if I am involved in a motor vehicle accident?-Willy from Westminster
- Willy hope this helps, The very first thing that you should do is to make sure everyone is ok at the scene. If there are injuries then you should call 911. The next call that you should make is to your immediate supervisor or the duty supervisor. If the manager arrives and you feel that this discussion could lead to discipline you should invoke your Weingarten Rights and request a steward either on-scene or when you arrive back at the garage. Once a steward is requested you are not required to answer any questions until a steward is present.
- Ducky, How long do I have to file a grievance?-Hank from Harmans
- Hank, As a member you have 30 days from the 1st day that you are harmed. If, for example, you are unfortunate enough to be involved in a motor vehicle accident on July 1st but the company suspends you on July 10, the grievance must be presented to management within 30 days from July 10th. Remember, the grievance has to be presented to management. So you must get the grievance to a steward before August 9th. The sooner it is in the process the faster it gets resolved. Note: If you get a 20 day suspension you will be away for 28 days (including weekends).
- Ducky, Can contractors place fiber or do pole transfers?-Paul from Pikesville
- A.— Contractors can direct bury fiber or inner duct but may not bury inner duct and then feed the fiber or load the inner duct with fiber prior to burying it. All transfer work should be performed by our Line Crews. The exception to this would be an emergency situation or work required by government entities.
- Ducky, When should I pick the vacation schedule? Frank from Fitch
- Frank, The vacation schedule should be picked by January of the following year. It is not uncommon to be picking this schedule in January for the 1st round for week-at-a-time selection. The 2nd round is used for selecting day-at-a-time vacation scheduling. The Vacation schedule will be picked by seniority of the work group that it impacts and is subject to the 18% rule which is rounded up. Note: Holidays that fall on Saturday can be observed any day of the week prior and ones that fall on Sunday are always observed on Monday. Floating Holiday must be scheduled by October 1st and at least 30 days prior to its use.
- Ducky, How far can the company transfer a member?-Sam from Shannon
- Sam, You can be moved 35 miles greater than you currently travel to work. For example, if you travel 20 miles to work the company can move you 55 miles from your home. So, if you take a map and circle 55 around your house this is where you can be moved inside the circle. It is not 35 miles from your garage. All these calculations are done by MapQuest by most traveled routes and not as-the-crow-flies.

Future Questions can be emailed to [mail@cwa2100.org](mailto:mail@cwa2100.org) c/o Ask Ducky.

**AUGUST 6, 2011 is approaching faster than you think!!**

You may think that it's too early to start thinking about August, but we can't wait. Below is a Defense Form that needs to be filled out by each member and returned to the Local. If you prefer, you can also go on-line and fill out the form and email directly to the Local. Please remember that if you complete this form and any of the information changes you will need to contact Ginny at the Local and give her the updated information.

**DEFENSE FUND CERTIFICATION FORM  
 FLAT PAYOUT FROM MEMBERS' RELIEF FUND  
 CWA Local 2100**

**Bargaining Unit: (Check One)**      Verizon      VCSI      AVAYA  
     AT&T      Other \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Home Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Home # \_\_\_\_\_ Work # \_\_\_\_\_

Personal Cell # \_\_\_\_\_ Cell # \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_

Work Location \_\_\_\_\_ 1<sup>st</sup> Level Supv. \_\_\_\_\_

**I certify that I am eligible to receive strike benefits under the rules of the Members' Relief Fund and will serve my strike duty to the satisfaction of the Local. I understand that if I am found ineligible under the rules or fail to serve my strike duty satisfactorily, I will return any payments I am not entitled to.**

Strike Duty Verified \_\_\_\_\_

Striker's Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Eligibility Verified \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Payment Record**

Week Ending	Duty Confirmed	Check Number	Amount	Notes

**IN OFFICE INFO.**

**STRIKE DUTY** \_\_\_\_\_

**STEWARDS' NAME** \_\_\_\_\_

**STRIKE CAPTAIN'S NAME** \_\_\_\_\_