

70th Annual CWA Convention – EFCA, Health Care, Jobs, & Retirement

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He went on to say that “This is the most anti-labor administration in our memory. They don’t believe in unions. They don’t believe in organizing and they’ve packed the National Labor Relations Board with their buddies.” One of his first priorities is to change all this and with CWA’s and Labor’s support, he would do just that. Besides enacting the EFCA and providing health care for all, he also committed to protecting Social Security from benefit cuts or raising the retirement age and wants to give our seniors making less than \$50,000 a tax cut.

Members’ Relief Fund Convention Action

At our last General Membership Meeting, a motion was brought forward, seconded and voted for in the affirmative by those attending, that directed the Local 1103 delegates to the upcoming CWA convention to attempt to double the payouts from the Members’ Relief Fund in the event of a strike via convention action. Prior to the convention, I sent a letter to the chairman of the Defense Fund Oversight Committee (DFOC) regarding this motion to insure that everything would be in order when it came up. 1103 delegates Joe Mayhew and Ron Mangeri even addressed this with the DFOC in person prior to the convention convening. After listening to them though, the DFOC did not agree with our request.

We did not accept this, and to keep our promise to the Members that were present at the June General Membership Meeting, I went to the microphone on the convention floor

the next day to appeal to the delegates assembled to act on our request. After some discussion, the question I posed was turned over to the DFOC to answer for every convention delegate. The DFOC reported that they studied our motion and had denied it for the following reasons:

- (1) that the fund would be drained in one-half of the time,
- (2) that the fund would not be able to pay for medical bills and COBRA for any extended period of time if this motion passed; and
- (3) that the fund faces three major potential upcoming strikes (Verizon, AT&T and Quest). They pointed out that after considering our motion, although it would help in the short term, it would have a long and lasting negative impact in the long run. After more discussion on this issue, the delegates agreed with the DFOC’s decision and did not act on this.

**JOEY BARCA,
President**



1103’s delegates and alternates Fran Gottron, Joey Barca, Anthony Pugliese, Kevin Sheil, Joe Mayhew, Mark Crumm and John Gentile at the beginning of the first day’s session before breaking for one of many workshops

Later that day, CWA’s retiring Secretary/Treasurer Barbara Easterling, in her last speech after 57 years of service to CWA, reminded everyone that “our voice has never been more important than it is today. During the past seven years, the Bush administration took dead aim at everyone in this room, yet, we’re still standing and stronger than ever...and that we can once again make history by electing Barack Obama president and changing America.”

“This is our time and it rests on three things - our unity, our strategies and our focus”

Larry Cohen calling on delegates to motivate members and retirees to get Barack Obama elected.

This year was the election of CWA’s national officers. With Barbara Easterling stepping down, Executive Vice President Jeff Rechenbach stepped up and became CWA’s Secretary-Treasurer. District One Vice President Chris Shelton was re-elected over challenger Carla Katz, and four at-large board members were elected to adhere to last years’ convention action to create these diversity positions. One from the Northeast, the Southeast, Central and Western United States.

Although the national elections were prevalent, workshops and

bargaining filled the agenda. We are also proud to say that our own Local was quite prominent this year. After the installation of the national officers, our own 1103 Retired Members Club Vice President Jeanette Spoor opened the third day by singing “Solidarity Forever.” Our website must be quite popular nationwide because we received the “Member’s Choice” award for it by receiving the most overall votes during the different awards presentations. And Local 1103 stood out when President Joey Barca went to the floor microphone and presented our request to increase the Members’ Relief Fund payout to Members and victims on strike. (The related article by President Barca goes into depth about this.)

“We need to pass the Employee Free Choice Act so that workers like me can join a union without running through a meat grinder or employer intimidation. I know that soon I will be holding a CWA card in my wallet”

Roger Reece, a worker leading the fight for CWA recognition at Verizon Business in New York and New England.



The color guard convenes the convention with our National Anthem

After four rather busy days, everyone went their separate ways committed to not just help get Barack Obama elected, but to also get labor-friendly people elected and re-elected to the House and the Senate so Obama can get this and other pro-labor legislation to his desk and signed into law.