



THE EAGLE

LOCAL 1103

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September 2011

73rd CWA National Convention



“CWA 1103 Delegation at Convention”

The Communications Workers of America held its 73rd annual convention from July 11th through July 13th and was attended by more than 2000 delegates from CWA Locals throughout the United States, Canada and Puerto Rico.

The theme of this year’s convention was “WE ARE ONE.” The “WE ARE ONE” theme signifies the CWA’s ongoing commitment to a national agenda, which brings together the entire labor movement and our allies to fight for economic and social justice.

This convention also marked the end of an era, as The CWA, one of the last big national Unions to hold annual conventions will now convert to bi-annual conventions. Our next convention in 2013 will be held in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

The local 1103 Delegation was lead by Vice President Kevin Sheil. Local 1103 Executive Board Members who attended as Delegates and Alternate Delegates are Business Agents Mark Crumm, Anthony Pugliese, Joe Mayhew, John Gentile and Kevin Scrobola.

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CWA Represented Workers Under Attack!

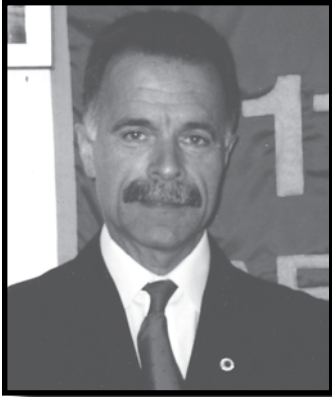
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In My View . . .



As we, the Communications Workers of America and the IBEW entered our second week on STRIKE Verizon is attempting to bully us and the general public. I have had the pleasure of visiting you on the many energetic picket lines and our resolve is unshake-

able and very strong. There's still much work left to be done. We have always been in the business of providing services to our Members since 1961 and, none more important than a fair and just Contract.

Our rallies, on April 4th, June 23rd were important, and the candle light vigil at Ivan's house was amazing but yet a smaller part of what it will take to bring home a desirable collective bargaining agreement. Your continued participation in these very public displays is so important because of the clear signal it sends to America's Middle Class, and yes, our strike has us drawing a line in the sand for the Middle Class.

Through our history we have struck many times, but only when it was absolutely necessary. In all cases, we could never have gotten the great contracts we did, without a strike.

Of course strikes come with a cost, like the loss of your weekly wage, and your benefits but then you would be entitled to the CWA Members Relief Fund, which is \$200 a week and available to you after the 15th day on strike, and \$300 a week after the 29th day on strike. In addition, in New York State, you would qualify for unemployment insurance after being on strike for 7 weeks. However, on the Companies end there is a high loss of FIOS customers. These would be new subscribers, as well as existing out of service customers that aren't hesitating moving to our competition.


What you should be doing now is talking to your family, friends and neighbors so they could become involved in our struggle because the court of public opinion weighs heavily in a fight between us and Greedy Verizon. As far as the Union, we have been networking with our elected officials, the media, and have developed a strategy among the bargaining committees in order to do the business of negotiating and accomplish-

ing our goals. We have been very successful in utilizing U-Tube, and Facebook. In addition you should goggle Verizon east mobilization to see strike activity from Virginia to Maine.

I have been involved in every phase of this process since 1969 and have had positive outcomes with and without a strike, but the one constant is, you will never progress forward unless you're willing to throw a punch as well as get punched.

In Solidarity,

**Joey Barca Jr.,
President**



THE EAGLE

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VERIZON STRIKE--- NO CONTRACT

This time is different. This time the community is overwhelmingly supporting the CWA workers on strike against Verizon because their story is easy to understand. Telling people the truth is easy and that is why this fight has resonated with the public. The real story is that Verizon is calling a play out of the Wisconsin playbook and attempting to strip workers of their collective bargaining rights. The real story is that Verizon is seeking to lower some of their employees' standard of living, instead of seeking to raise all of their employees' standard of living. The real story is that Verizon is extremely profitable and can afford to raise their employees' standard of living. However, Verizon has decided that, in the name of profits, it is better to use the bad economy as an excuse to lower the bar for all Americans. But the community gets it, because middle class Americans don't want their neighbors to have a low standard of living. So the real story is about choice. Verizon is choosing to drive a wedge into the middle class by pitting one group of workers incomes and benefits against another group of workers incomes and benefits. Verizon is choosing to establish a new, lower standard of living for workers living in New York, Connecticut, and New England. Unfortunately, for the middle class, Verizon's choice to treat its workers in such a way will have a lasting, negative impact on our communities unless the striking workers win.

**Kevin Sheil,
Vice President**



Dear President Cohen,

I want to thank you for having the courage and wisdom to call a strike against a greedy Verizon corporation.

It's about time that the middle class stand up for themselves, their families, and their communities. Like many CWA Local 1103 Members, you knew that Verizon was calling a play out of the Wisconsin playbook and was attempting to strip our collective bargaining rights away.

Our Members understand that it is wrong to pit private-sector against public-sector, and it's wrong to create false comparisons between one group's incomes and benefits with another group's incomes and benefits. CWA Members are not rich and most live pay check to pay check, but they are in this for the long-haul. The Members on our picket lines are not delusional and are prepared for the financial and mental hardships that a protracted strike will cause. They understand that this fight is not theirs alone and are willing to do their share.

Verizon has underestimated our will and commitment to our middle class way-of-life. They have also underestimated public and union support for our fight. I am happy to tell you stories of how SEIU Local 1199 EVP Mike Rifkin offered to send 20,000 of his Members to any Verizon Wireless store, and how UPS drivers are dropping off water to picket lines, and how teachers from the Mahopac Teachers Association and Yonkers Teachers Association have walked picket lines with us, and how mail carriers have joined us on the lines, too. This is the true and noble movement!

President Cohen, every successful movement has a successive generation of leaders and followers. It's our generation's turn and WE are ready!

In solidarity,
Kevin Sheil
Vice President, CWA Local 1103

***CWA 73rd National Convention ...
continued from front cover***

They participated in many discussions, debates and floor votes to fulfill their responsibilities, such as dealing with issues brought to the floor by the Finance and Defense Fund Oversight Committee, the Resolutions and Rules Committee, The Retired Members Council, the National Committee on Civil Rights and Equity, the Constitution Committee and the Appeals Committee. All of the convention delegates worked tirelessly to get two years of convention business completed before the bi-annual schedule begins.

One of the highlights of this year's convention was, Local 1103 Retired Members Council President, Jeanette Spoor, who sang the national



Columbia, which is designed to prevent effective collective bargaining rights and other workplace protections. Over the past 25 years, nearly 3,000 (That's right 3000) union activists and leaders have been murdered in Columbia.



anthem during the opening ceremony.

Local 1103 was again honored when Vice President Kevin Sheil was asked to be on the Resolutions and Rules Committee.

The Resolutions and Rules Committee reported out to the convention on such issues as the Strategic Industry Fund Distribution and the Strengthen Our Union resolution. The Strengthen Our Union resolution was passed by the delegates and will allocate resources from the S.I.F directly back to the Locals for organizing and other front line struggles that are necessary to build our Union. They also reported on, and recommended adoption of the, Oppose Colombia Free Trade Agreement resolution – Unanimously adopted by the convention delegates this resolution, in part, provides that The CWA oppose the Columbia Free Trade Agreement because it will sanction the economic and legal system of

In his opening address, President Larry Cohen acknowledged and thanked the 1,000 mobilizers as well as all the staff and officers who worked day and night to win the largest representation election in the United States this year – 25,000 United/Continental flight attendants. He applauded the tremendous efforts of all the CWA workplace leaders as the best in the labor movement. "But times are tough" he said, "Our economic system is broken. Our challenge

is to build a movement that restores the American Dream by making collective bargaining a part of the fabric of our nation." He went on to describe the rise



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and fall of collective bargaining in the United States. How, as bargaining coverage grew to 36% in the 1960's so did the real improvements in living standards.



Better health care, better pensions, higher wages and expanding organizing rights. He stated "But everything changed as bargaining rights declined. You can see it's been declining now for 40 years in the U.S. and our recent history teaches us that it is not really possible to steadily improve our standard of living when bargaining power is collapsing." This trend must be and will be reversed. Therefore the CWA National Executive Board adopted a strategy called "Five Steps for Union Survival and Union Building." This strategy would direct resources and structure to support our goals in line with current income. Implement industry and employer-based strategies that rely on local leadership and Strategic Industry Funds. In 2011 our organizing priorities include T-Mobile, now selected as the global campaign for labor. Continue our political



and legislative priorities at all levels of government that focus on our 4 key issues; Secure sustainable jobs, health care for all, retirement security and bargaining and organizing rights. Continue to build alliances on economic issues at local, state and national levels.



The CWA and the labor movement's One Nation Coalition have recognized that we are building the foundation for a renewal of the labor movement. We are rebuilding the labor movement from the ground up.

On a final note, we would like to congratulate CWA Secretary-Treasurer Jeff Rechenbach on his retirement and thank him for his years of dedication and service to The CWA. Our Union is better today because of him.

*Fran Gottron,
CWA Local 1103 Organizer*

CWA REPRESENTED WORKERS UNDER ATTACK

Bethel Bargaining Continues

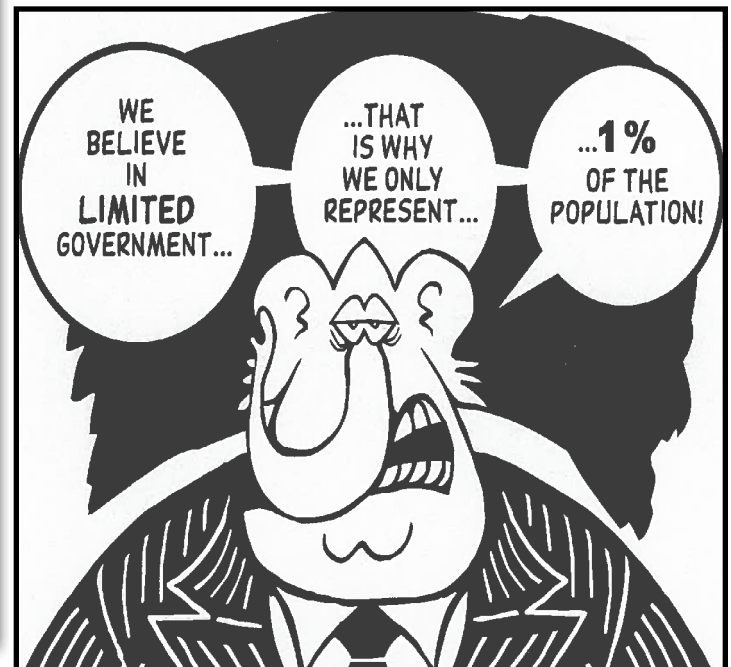
The Contract between CWA Local 1103 and the Bethel, CT, Board of Education, expired on June 30, 2011. Although both sides committed to work to reach an agreement before the contract expired, we have yet to achieve that goal. Bargaining started on May 20, 2011, with exchanging of ground rules. With all good intentions, we committed to picking dates to bring this contract to a tentative agreement on or before expiration. Both sides were unable to meet that commitment due to the availability of our attorneys, during the months of June and July. We have only met twice since that meeting in May. We met on June 20th with the partial exchanging of proposals, and we met again on July 20th with the final exchange of proposals. During the July 20th meeting things began to get a little contentious, in that, the Boards attorney accused us of stalling when we asked for clarification about their Health Savings Account (HAS) proposal. After a long side bar discussion and caucus on both sides, the Board of Education agreed to additional dates to come to an agreement in lieu of forcing us to "Binding Arbitration." The additional dates are: August 29, September 7, September 19, September 28 and 29, with a Mediation date set for October 6. Our Bargaining Team is confident we will be able to reach an agreement before the October 6, date. I would like to extend my appreciation to everyone on our Bargaining Team for their insight, tenacity and dedication, in an effort to reach an agreement in these most difficult economic times.

***Business Agent,
John Gentile***

TALKS IN FAIRFIELD COME TO A HALT

As the attacks on unions continue across the country the CWA Local 1103 Executive Board continues to fight back. In Fairfield, Connecticut our Police Dispatchers have been without a contract for over a year. When the town came to the table to bargain they looked to modify their pension and medical plans drastically. The town has undergone some changes in their political structure with the First Selectman accepting a promotion to work for the Governor in Hartford, and other personnel being shifted. These changes have stalled negotiations and with an upcoming election it remains to be seen if there will be any progress in the near future. The Town board in Fairfield also known as the R.T.M. is made up of majority republican members. Other Unions that have negotiated with the town have had a difficult time getting their contracts approved. Your bargaining committee is committed to getting a contract that is fair for all members involved and will continue to push the town to do what's right.

***Business Agent,
Kevin Scrobola***



The Retiree's Corner..

Fellow Retirees,

Well it's come to this. We are on strike against Verizon.

First and foremost I want to send a great big shout out to all the retirees that have come out to support their active brothers and sisters on the picket lines. When I visit a line and ask the picket captains if they've had any retirees come out the response is always yes. I have been handing out red shirts to those retirees I get to meet on the lines that say on the back "Remember the Past, Fight for the Future".

Many active members I have met on the lines are thankful for the support of the retirees and are grateful for their contributions to the benefits they have now. They understand that the fight is theirs now and that we retirees depend on them to maintain what we all have.

There is no better example of solidarity than that!

In addition to being on picket lines, I along with Joe Mayhew, 1103's LPAT coordinator, have been attending rallies that have been organized by the Metro New York Health Care for All Campaign, which is comprised of many and diverse organizations, to get the message out to congressional representatives to keep Medicare, Medicaid and Social Security intact.

To those retirees who think that they have no dog in this fight, think again.

Make no mistake; we are in real danger of losing all the benefits we have gained over the years. Despite making huge profits during the present economic crisis Verizon has seen fit to follow the lead of state governments and corporations who are looking to break unions and cut benefits.

In addition, there are those in Congress who, under the guise of cutting government spending and not raising taxes, are pressing for Medicare, Medicaid and Social Security changes.

We cannot afford to stand idly by and let others fight for us. We need to get out and stand together with our active CWA members to protect what is rightfully ours. The rally held on July 30 down at Verizon headquarters in NYC was one such example of what we need to do. We need to do more. When we ask you to write letters or make phone calls or stand on picket lines or attend rallies you need to do so. I do not want to think about what will become of our retired members if we lose the benefits we have come to rely on.

On a lighter note we are planning a picnic to be held in honor of the late Tommy Wonsor who was the first President of our retiree chapter. The date, time and place will be announced. The cost will be \$5 per person. Food and refreshments will be provided. Proceeds from the ticket sales will be used to make a donation in Tommy's name to The Marine Society, the world's oldest public maritime charity.

PLEASE MAKE NOTE:

Elections for the 1103 RMC officers will be held in November. You must be a Council AND Chapter member to be eligible to vote. If you are unsure of your status please contact us and we will let you know your current status.

*For those of you with internet access please visit our website at: cwalocal1103rmc.org
There you will find important links to websites that will be of interest to retirees and their families.*

The Labor Movement; the folks who brought you retirement!

And as always, rest in peace, Gerry Horgan.

*Jeanette Spoor – President
CWA Local 1103 RMC*

Have a Drug,
Alcohol or
Gambling Problem ?

Call
Headquarters
939-8203 or 8204

Ask to be put in
contact with
Tom O'Halloran



All Information
is Confidential



COMMUNICATIONS WORKERS OF AMERICA - LOCAL 1103

(AFFILIATED WITH A.F.L.-C.I.O.-C.L.C.)

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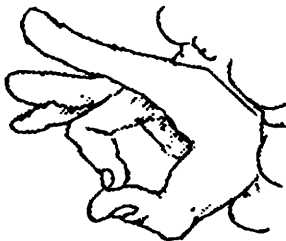


PERIODICAL

If It's Thursday...

THEN YOU MUST BE WEARING RED

IF NOT...



IT'S TIME FOR
A WAKE UP CALL!



Bargaining a Contract is Never Over.
It is Always an Ongoing Process Between Agreements.
Show Your Solidarity Every THURSDAY!