

CWA VOICE



The Communications Workers of America, Local 2202

Virginia Beach, VA

March/April 2003

Local 2202 Mourns the Loss of Past President Alfred E Cunningham

It is with much sadness, but with high regard that we announce the passing of our own brother and dynamic leader, Mr. Alfred E. Cunningham on Thursday, February 27th.

Al, as he was fondly known to many, served CWA Local 2202 from 1976 to 1984 as President. He was employed by the former C&P Telephone Company for many years until he retired as a technician.

A true humanitarian and philanthropist, Al will forever be remembered for his ever-so-giving character. Stephanie Pazur, CWA Local 2202 Secretary, recalls a moment during a past strike where Al so willingly took money from his own pocket just to help a fellow brother and sister out in order that they might care for much needed living essentials while out of work. Interestingly enough, several members indicated that while serving as our

Local President, Al Cunningham was responsible for the purchase of the condominium that houses Local 2202 today. It will be a difficult task to find a person that can match the unselfish giving, the gentle spirit, and the giant of a man that Alfred E. Cunningham was to those who knew him.



Alfred E. Cunningham and "Bootsie"
Past CWA Local 2202 President
1976-1984

Al, a native of Brooklyn, NY, not only had a love for his fellow man but also toward animals. His faithful dog, "Bootsie", would attest to the great love that this man had for a pet if he were able.

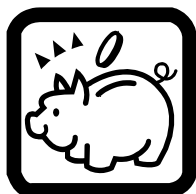
Al Cunningham will be surely missed by all who knew him. Survivors include his long-time friend, Alice W. Forrest. Survivors also include two daughters, Nancy Scott of Loveland, CO; and Ellie Holloway and her husband, Jimmy, of Gastonia, NC. Also surviving, a son, Robert Cunningham and his wife, Cindy of Virginia Beach. He leaves a sister, Patricia Randel, of Port Washington, NY and five grandchildren.

A memorial service was conducted on Monday, March 3rd in Al Cunningham's honor in Virginia Beach with our own incumbent President Scinaldi eulogizing. Those in attendance included District 2 VP Pete Catucci, Charles "Boots" Buttiglieri of Baltimore MD, Jack Dotson, District 2 Staff Rep, Carol Summerlyn, District 2 Staff Rep, and several members of Local 2202 Executive Board, members, and friends.

Memorial donations may be made in Former President Alfred E. Cunningham's honor by directing them to:

the Alzheimer's Association or the Virginia Beach SPCA

Remember: Verizon Employees qualify for employee matching through the Verizon Foundation



Attention College-Bound Members and their Families

➤ **2003 Local Scholarship Application included in this issue
Details inside**

("Balance" continued from previous page) Flexible and reduced work schedules are one option. Another would be additional excused time off for "family balance days." Allowing excused days to be taken in 1 or 2-hour increments could also help. California has legislation that requires employers to allow 48 hours a year to be used for any school-related activity. These are only a few of the solutions that allow for a win-win situation for both employers and employees.

On Organizing VIS Win Tentative Agreement

Following an epic organizing struggle and a 10-month bargaining mobilization effort, 1,700 Verizon Information Services (VIS) directory workers in the former Bell Atlantic/Nynex region have a tentative first contract to be ratified.

At press time, arrangements are being made for face-to-face meetings with negotiators to explain terms of the agreement, which covers twenty-one VIS offices in New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia, and West Virginia.

The sales representatives, graphic artists and support personnel won union recognition a year ago after a prolonged legal battle with the company over terms of the CWA-Verizon card check organizing agreement negotiated in 2000.

The tentative agreement provides across-the-board base wage increases of 4 percent immediately and 3.5 percent each subsequent year, together with a substantially improved commission plan for sales reps.

For artists and clerical staff, the tentative agreement sets up a five year wage progression schedule. For some employees with salaries higher than the top progression rates, a "market range" salary category is created, with the top of the market range increasing by 1.5 percent a year. Market range employees will receive the annual percentage increase in their base pay, however those with salaries higher than the market range will be paid the annual increase as a lump sum.

The agreement provides that management cannot shift benefit costs for the medical and dental plan---as it has done in the past---and guarantees no decreases in contributions to the cash balance pension and 401(k) savings match. It also locks in such benefits as the severance program, adoption assistance, tuition assistance, short-term disability, leaves of absence, basic life and accidental death and dismemberment insurance.

Other highlights include a grievance and arbitration procedure and creation of a Common Interest Forum to foster a dialogue over workplace disputes and concerns such as safety and health, work and family needs, and training and education opportunities.

Throughout their organizing and bargaining struggle---talks began last May---the VIS workers conducted widespread worksite activities including marching in to work together, informational picketing, organized phone calling to top VIS and Verizon officials, and wearing stickers and red shirts.

Frustrated by slow bargaining progress in the twenty separate sets of talks, the workers voted strike authorization and received the Executive Board's approval last October. The pace picked up shortly afterward when VIS agreed to bargain at the senior management level with leaders from CWA Districts 1, 2, and 13 to establish a model agreement.

Once ratified, the model agreement will apply to all twenty-one units (workers in Charleston, West VA recently became the 21st office to organize). Duration of the local agreements will vary from 32 to 44 months. And we welcome VIS to CWA Local 2202!

Verizon Fined \$5.7 Million

Verizon Communications must pay \$5.7 million to the federal government for marketing long-distance calling in some places in 2002 before receiving final regulatory approval.

Verizon admitted that on five occasions in nine states, it broadcast ads and sent customers direct mail solicitations offering long-distance service, even though the FCC had not given the go-ahead.

The 1996 Telecommunications Act lets regional phone giants sell long distance in their local territories, but only in markets that the FCC determines are open to competitors.

Verizon's chief marketing officer, Maura C. Breen, said that no customers received service prematurely, so Verizon did not make money from the situation.

(taken from The New York Times, March 5, 2003, AP

Change in Verizon RAMP Policy



Effective March 17th, Verizon implemented a *No Show Test Penalty*. Employees who are scheduled to take the UTB-R or a secondary test will incur a No Show Test Penalty if they fail to appear for the test because they are either "not ready to take the test, or "no longer interested in the job title requiring the test.

If a penalty is incurred, the employee must wait a specified period of time before applying for any job title requiring the UTB-R or secondary test for which they were scheduled. The penalty is six months for the first occurrence and twelve months for subsequent occurrences within eighteen months of a previous occurrence.

To avoid incurring a penalty, employees should Review the Job Brief and applicable test brochure before applying for an advertised job. After applying, employees must cancel their application *before* the job-advertising period ends if they are no longer interested in the job; and employees must notify their supervisor immediately if they are not interested in taking a scheduled test. The supervisor is responsible for contacting the Test Administration. To avoid a no show penalty, the test appointment must be cancelled by 4 p.m. on the day of the appointment.

Questions related to the RAMP process can be directed to the Verizon HR Helpline at (800) 925-3775.

THE PRESIDENT'S CORNER



Dear Union Brothers and Sisters,

I would like to start by thanking all of our members in Verizon and VCSI who returned their bargaining surveys. The information that you have furnished has helped us in preparing our bargaining agenda for this August.

The top five issues on the survey were: job and employment security, base wage increase, health benefits, pension improvements and employment guarantees. The surveys collected from the rest of Virginia and all of District 2 read the same way. The just demands of economic and employment security are at the top of everyone's list.

The bargaining committee has met and discussed the information returned on the surveys. We are now in the process of formulating our demands and writing the proposals for this round of bargaining. The battle has begun, and the timeframe between now and August will be difficult at best. Again, it is your unity that will render a settlement that is equitable to all of us. This is the time to put our differences and personal agendas aside and come together as one union. Without your support, the union would not be able to produce a contract that you deserve.

Please keep in mind that our Job Stewards and Executive Board have volunteered for this undertaking. No one gets any extra pay, and in the event of a strike, no one gets any pay for the job that we are all doing. I want to thank them in advance for the endeavor before them. I am hopeful that you will thank them each time the occasion arises. They deserve your gratitude.

Shortly our local will begin to come out with briefing papers that will be passed out through our mobilization structure. These papers will contain very valuable information that will help you understand the union's position in this round of bargaining. They will also give you the latest information that is available to us.

Remember that we're all in this together and together we will prevail.

In Unity,

Louie

Congratulations!

To Charlotte Lewis and Pamela Kiernan who won the \$5.00 door prizes at the March 10th Membership Meeting.

Curtis Barnett's name was drawn for the Pot-of-Gold worth \$22.02. He was not present to claim his prize.

The Pot-of-Gold continues to GROW!

**JOIN US AT THE NEXT
MEMBERSHIP MEETING ON
MONDAY, MAY 12, 2003
7:30 P.M.
IRONWORKERS HALL
5307 E. VIRGINIA BEACH BLVD
NORFOLK, VA**



**GREAT JOB
EILEEN D. YOUNG**

*Who located her full name
in ALL CAPS in our last
newsletter and won \$10.00.*

**Locate your name in
ALL CAPS in this one...
Call the Union Office
on (757) 456-2202**

**The National Association
of Letter Carriers (NALC)
2003 Food Drive
Saturday
May 10, 2003**

The Need For Balance Between Work and Family

BY PAULA TERVEER

Trying to balance your time between work and family can be a real juggling act. Many of us have children, spouses and parents that need and deserve more attention than we can find time to provide. (Not to mention trying to find time to pursue an education or a hobby.) How often has the need arisen to stay home with a child too sick to go to school, but not so sick to warrant a trip to the doctor? How many field trips and /or school programs have you missed? How often have your parents needed assistance, but you were not able to provide it? How often have you put off your own doctor's appointments because it was too hard to get the time off? The faster we go the more behind we seem to get.

Now that the company has downsized, many of us are being forced to work even longer hours than be-

fore. In many departments it is next to impossible to get time off without being penalized or forced to use up all of our vacation days. Vacation time should be used for rest and relaxation, not to fulfill obligations or appointments.

It is past time for employers to recognize that more needs to be done to accommodate their employees personal and family needs. Employers that help their employees balance work and family life through flexible scheduling and family benefits have shown improvements to their bottom line. Absenteeism, tardiness, stress, turnover, and unproductive work time has been shown to decrease.

These types of improvements can be attained through bargaining and also through legislation. (see "Balance" on next page)



*Please support our
brothers and sisters
in their annual
project to benefit the
local Foodbanks.*

*Place your non-
perishable food
items at your
mailbox for pickup
on May 10, 2003..*