

# The Contactor

## The Union for the Information Age

Published monthly by

**CWA Local 6310  
AFL-CIO, CLC**



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## CWA Campaigns Forestall AT&T Shutdowns

Courtesy of CWA International

CWAers in Pennsylvania, working with allies throughout the labor movement, put together a successful political/community action campaign to forestall the closing of two AT&T call centers employing 260 workers.

Subsequently, AT&T announced today that it would keep the Fairhaven, Mass., center open an additional 60 days, and CWA is continuing to fight for a similar extension at the Mesa, Ariz., center, said Ralph Maly, CWA vice president for Communications and Technologies.

CWA Local 13500 President Sandy Kmetyk said "hard work by so many people" won an agreement by AT&T to keep 45 jobs at the New Castle, Pa., location, where IBEW members provide help for hearing- and speech-impaired customers, and won a reprieve for another 225 members of her local at the Pittsburgh call center.

AT&T originally announced in February that it would close the Pittsburgh operations on April 21. "We got the actual transcripts of the public utility commission hearing where AT&T said that Pennsylvania would not lose jobs as a result of the merger with SBC. Then, we started to mobilize," Kmetyk said.

After CWA elevated the issue, the PUC announced that it would investigate whether the layoffs would hurt quality service. CWA members and officers began contacting elected officials from Governor Ed Rendell to Pittsburgh Mayor Bob O'Connor and many others in their fight to keep hometown jobs.

Rendell, who also had received assurances from AT&T that there would be no loss of jobs in the state, urged the company to reconsider its decision, Kmetyk said. AT&T agreed to keep the center open, at least for the near fu-

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ture. Rendell has also pledged additional job retraining funds for the "jobs of the future," she added.

Kmetyk stressed that the victory was a team effort and credited IUE-CWAer Jack Shea, who heads the Allegheny County Labor Council, District 13 Vice President Jim Short and Marge Krueger, Short's administrative assistant, for their help.

Meanwhile, in Arizona and Massachusetts, CWAers also are mounting public campaigns to keep their AT&T call center jobs in the face of announced closings. Working with CWA Vice Presidents Annie Hill, District 7, and Chris Shelton, District 1, members are working to build support for their hometown jobs.

In Mesa, Ariz., members of CWA Local 7050 are contacting state elected officials and regulators to build support for keeping the 57 call center jobs. Working with other CWA locals

and the state AFL-CIO, the local has brought CWA's concerns about the closing to Gov. Janet Napolitano and the state corporation commission - which regulates state utilities, said local president David Blackburn.

In Fairhaven, Mass., Local 1051 President Linda Teoli said CWA members had pressed elected officials, urging them to support the local's effort to keep the call center open. U.S. Senators Edward M. Kennedy and John Kerry, along with five members of the Massachusetts delegation, contacted AT&T chief executive officer Ed Whitacre, urging AT&T to keep the center open. ]

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would not lose jobs as a result  
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## LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

-BY TONY ELLEBRACHT

April 28<sup>th</sup> is Workers Memorial Day.

Each year on Workers Memorial Day, working people throughout the world mourn for the people who were hurt or killed on the job and renew our struggle for safe workplaces. Picture yourself hanging by a rope, dangling off a 100-story building cleaning windows without the appropriate safety harness or any protective gear. Imagine working aloft without the protective gear that we have available to outside Technicians, or performing the same repetitive motion and wondering if the strain on your body will make today your last day on the job. This is what millions of America's workers face. In today's environment of work speedups, worker layoffs, and relaxed safety regulations, millions of workers each year are put under impossible, dangerous conditions and are injured or killed on the job.

The nation's attention was riveted at the beginning of the year when the coal miners lost their lives. Since the beginning of the year 23 coal miners have perished on the job. The spotlight will fade, and we won't see the millions of other workers who will be injured or killed on the job this year. OSHA penalties are clearly not enough to change the behavior of many employers. Our jobs and work sites are becoming more and more dangerous with the thought process that we have to do more work, with little or no improvements in the conditions we most often work under. For the first time since 1994, there was an increase in the national fatality rate, and fatal falls reached their highest number since the Federal Bureau of Labor Statistics started keeping track of them.

The fact is that our workforce has grown, but the government agencies that keep our workplaces safe, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), is fighting to stay alive. Since 2001, the OSHA budget has been cut by three percent, and hundreds of enforcement positions have been eliminated.

This understaffed and under funded agency, along with others that provide safety for workers, cannot do their work in a meaningful way in an environment that is hostile to their existence.

To add insult to injury there has been a bill introduced at the federal level that would diminish OSHA enforcement. The Occupational Safety Partnership Act allows employers to self-certify compliance through third-party audits and exempt companies from OSHA penalties. A companion bill, the Occupational Safety Fairness Act, includes measures to award attorneys' fees to all small employers who prevail in OSHA enforcement cases and other provisions that would make it difficult for OSHA to issue citations for job safety violations.

Rather than addressing the serious safety and health problems that face workers today, we are falling father and father behind. Since 2001, the Bush administration has blocked or withdrawn dozens of important safety rules



and killed dozens of workers protection measures under development at OSHA. The administration has favored voluntary compliance over issuing new protective standards. The best way to make sure workplaces are



Tony Ellebracht—President

safe is to make sure workers have the freedom to join together in a union. Recently I attended a meeting at ASI where the question was raised about the company's safety procedure, in the event of a tornado. The response was somewhat surprising. I am not sure they even have a plan, but more concerning is that they left me with the impression that they didn't even know when to have their employees implement the plan, if they have one. In the last few months, we have had a number of server weather alerts, and it was conveyed to me that during most or all of them, it was business as usual. We must make sure we all know what the safety guidelines are and when should they be enforced. I encourage you to ask your managers to provide you with a copy of the safety guidelines, and you should be prepared to carry them out. We should not have to wait until after a catastrophic event to go over those guidelines. If we do, it could be too late. The same should hold true for any center. You should know what the procedures are before the situation occurs. We must do this; we can't depend on the company to take the proper steps to prepare everyone. Together, workers can fight to make their issues a priority. Together, workers can fight to keep and create good jobs in this country. Together, workers can fight for safe jobs. ]

# KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

# 17,000 Former AT&T Wireless Workers at Cingular Join CWA

Courtesy of CWA International

A wave of organizing by Cingular workers in Iowa, Texas and Michigan has brought the total of former AT&T Wireless employees represented by CWA to nearly 17,000. More than 75 percent of the former AT&T workers have signed up for CWA representation within the past year. Overall, nearly 90 percent of Cingular's employees, or 38,500 workers have representation with CWA.

The latest gains include 78 network technicians in Iowa and Texas. In a drive fueled by concerns over rising healthcare costs and secure benefits, 66 cell and switch technicians across the state were visited by organizers and Cingular workers from CWA Locals 6001, 6110, 6132, 6137, 6143, 6150, 6200, 6206, 6222, 6225 and 6733.

In another multi-local campaign in Iowa, organizers from Locals 7102, 7103 and 7108 spoke one-on-one with 13 former AT&T Wireless techs, answered their questions and helped them join the union.

The American Arbitration Association also certified 87 former AT&T Wireless retail associates in Michigan. With that certification, all eligible customer service representatives throughout District 4 have gained CWA representation. Locals 4100, 4108 and 84768 assisted those workers in getting their CWA voice. ]

Carol Simpson ©2006, UCS



**Union grievance procedure**



**Non-union grievance procedure**

## At the Meeting April 10, 2006

By Debbie Williams, Secretary



☎ Motion made and seconded to send up to three to the CenturyTel Bargaining Caucus in St. Louis May 9th at the Radisson Hotel, registration \$45.00 per person. Motion Carried.

☎ Motion made and seconded to send Mark Johnson to the CWA Civil Rights and Equity Conference April 27-30 in Philadelphia. Motion Carried

☎ Motion made and seconded to rescind last month's motion to send Debbie Williams to the CWA Civil Rights and Equity Conference. Motion Carried.

☎ Motion made and seconded to send Tony Ellebracht and Shawn Bland to District's 6 organizing retreat in Norman OK. Motion Carried.

☎ Motion made and seconded to purchase 8 tickets to the Maryland Heights Police Trivia Night March 21, 2006 at a cost of \$100.00. Proceeds to be donated to the Rankin Jordan Children's Hospital. Motion Carried.

☎ Motion made and seconded to send e-board to the CWA National Convention July 8-12, 2006 in Las Vegas NV. Motion Carried.

## Upcoming Events

May 5

May 8

May 6-12

May 14

May 20

May 29

May 31

Cinco de Mayo

**Membership Meeting**

National Nurses Week

Mother's Day

Armed Forces Day

Memorial Day

World No Tobacco Day



## Legal Advice

By Mike Goldberg, Attorney at Law

This article has been going out to many different Unions over the last 15 years or so. Unfortunately, the same people who are the most likely to read this article are the ones being laid off by the thousands. Whether you are CWA, UAW, Teamsters or any other Union that picks up this article, you all are going through massive restructuring efforts that really mean layoffs so the fat cats at the top can keep their huge salaries. You might wonder how this in any way relates to the topics I usually write about, but it really does. You see, there has been a drastic change in how the companies are treating people when they need medical attention from a work related condition. I am seeing more and more denials for help when someone sustains a work injury. I am hearing stories from the companies that they need to control costs and therefore are taking a hard look at the amount of money they spend to help those individuals who sustain injury. They are encouraged by Governor Blunt's actions to limit the benefits paid on behalf of people who are injured. Quite simply, they feel very powerful and are willing to deny, harass or harm people who are entitled to their benefits. I know that it is very frustrating to everyone when they cannot get their benefits. The delay of payments or medical care is almost the rule and not the exception anymore. The employers are causing stress on individuals so

they will simply quit or try to go off on their own and pay for their treatment. The employer knows there is no quick fix for these problems as there are large delays in the courts. What can be done in this situation? How does one fight back when it seems that nothing is going to go your way? All I can suggest is to not give up and explore all the legal avenues available to you. It is important to understand the realistic options you have and not simply what you think is right. There are some options that can be used. They are time-consuming and not always successful. However, if you do not try to fight back then you will never turn back the company's ongoing assault on your rights. The biggest problem I see is the denial of medical care or simply the fact that the employer will not give you an answer regarding care. There is a procedure available to force care but it is available only when you have a doctor recommend same. The burden is on the employee to prove he/she need care in order to have a chance to force the care. The recommendation can come from any doctor. I often suggest that you first try your primary doctor to see what options you have. The Judge is not going to force care unless there is evidence you need something. Many times people tell me they are hurting and want treatment. The problem is I am not a doctor and cannot provide a medical examination.



Mike C. Goldberg

You will need at minimum some medical support to file a hardship petition and try to force treatment. Remember, the employer in Missouri gets to select the doctor. The fact that you want to go does not really get you anywhere without medical support. So find a doctor who will at least provide some recommendations so that you can fight the employer. It will still take time but at least you can try to force the employer to do something.

I will discuss more options next month. If you have questions, please let me know.

Michael C. Goldberg  
314-621-8363 or 1800-489-2891

# JULY MEMBERSHIP MEETING CANCELLED

**Due to a scheduling conflict with the National Conference, it is necessary to cancel our July membership meeting.**

## Good & Welfare

### Retirements

Claude Evans  
Larry Jones  
Vickie Stephenson

### Deaths

Donald Allen-father  
Cindy Huseman-mother  
Jason Vellmer-grandfather

### Letters

I would like to thank CWA Local 6310 for the beautiful Bible along with the concern and respect the Union has shown my brother, Jack Held.

Carl Held ■

The Learning Tree director, staff, children and seniors would like to thank you for your generous donation of funds, for the Gertrude Munford Memorial Fund. The seniors that are enrolled here at the Learning Tree will greatly benefit from your generosity.

Shirley Black & Staff ■

Thank you for the lovely Bible. It will be a nice remembrance of Roy. Also, thank you for the donation to the Lung Association, which was greatly appreciated. Roy loved being a Steward for the Union and was truly a "Union" man.

Dorothy Gudermuth ■



# 20th Annual Local 6310 Picnic



**SCHROEDER PARK - MANCHESTER, MO**

**Saturday, July 29, 2006**

Playground, sand volley ball, tennis courts, ball field, nature trails, roller blade track, horse shoes.

There's also a really nice water park. You may use the park's pool in swimming attire only.

More details to come in upcoming issues of  
The Contactor and on-line at <http://www.cwalocal6310.org>

**It's a fun time for everyone and the food is great.**

\*Special Note: No pets are allowed in the park.

## Snapshots from the Sweatshop

By Debbie Williams, Secretary Local 6310

Every month I receive from Local 1023 in Cranford, New Jersey a copy of their newsletter. Local 1023 is primarily a Verizon local and they frequently have articles that I find interesting and sometimes amusing. The following article is a perfect example. So thank you to Local 1023 and Nick Brakespeare for allowing me to reprint your work.

*"Someone sent me a copy of a memo that allegedly is being circulated among high ranking Verizon officials – at least according to my anonymous source. I don't claim to know whether this document has any credibility at all, but I think it's pretty funny and that's the reason I'm printing it in the column this month.*

To: Ivan Seidenberg, CEO  
 From: XXXXXXXXXXXXXXX  
 Subject: New Medical Initiative  
 Date: 2/4/06

*If I may say so myself, sir, coming up with the idea of canceling the management pensions was a stroke of genius on your part. Wall Street loved it. No one is better than you are at what you do!*

*I've been hard at work attempting to follow your directive of Friday, January 13<sup>th</sup>. At that time you assigned me to explore ways to reduce our employee medical costs, and I think I've come up with a great concept. I call it Verizon MediVend.*

*Basically, we partner with a major discount drug store to provide a vending machine capable of dispensing drugs in each one of our buildings. The machine is equipped with a series of symptom buttons, e.g., "headache", "depression," "flaring hemorrhoid," "chest pains," and so on. If an employee becomes ill during the workday he or she puts money in the machine, presses the appropriate button and the machine dispenses a drug fitting the symptoms associated with the condition. So, for the examples noted above, the machine would dispense "Bayer Aspirin," "Zoloft," "Preparation H," and "Nitroglycerin" in that order. Naturally, drugs as powerful as Zoloft would require a supervisory override.*

*We can use the voice of our wildly popular "Darby" (voice activated prompt both customers and members are forced to use) droid to soothe the patient during the Verizon MediVend experience with such phrases as "You look like you could use a big dose of something!" and "Here! Let me beam you up with some of this!" and at the finish, "Feel a lot better now, don't you?" The cute thing about the last part is that the Darby droid doesn't stop asking "Don't you? Don't you? Don't you?" until the worker answers her with a bright, resounding "YES!"*

*It is my belief, sir, that this new method of dispensing medications will provide for a much faster resolution of employee medical symptoms, reduce time off for doctor's appointments, and lower the cost of health care for both employees and the company.*

*Hope you like the Verizon MediVend idea. I worked very hard on it.*

*In closing sir, let me say that I really admire the sharpness of the crease in your pants.*

Sincerely,

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX" ]

# RETIREMENTS



Above: Scott Turner - VP AT&T South (left) Congratulates new retiree, Vickie Stephenson (right) at the Membership meeting.  
Below: Donna Walsh - VP AT&T Metro (left) sending Claude Evans (right) off to retirement. All retirees are presented with a visor, a check, and a personalized wristwatch by CWA Local 6310.



# CONGATULATIONS!!

## PORT SECURITY: WAL-MART'S BOTTOM LINE OPPOSITION TO SAFETY

Courtesy of Wal-Mart Watch.com

*Union Faults Wal-Mart on Port Safety (Reuters via Los Angeles Times)*

The nation's largest labor federation accused Wal-Mart Stores Inc. on Wednesday of using its lobbying muscle to oppose port safety measures because they would reduce profit. Through a lobbying group, the Retail Industry Leaders Assn. (RILA), Wal-Mart opposed several port security measures including proposals to make shipping containers more secure, beef up inspections and provide more prompt cargo information, according to the AFL-CIO. "Wal-Mart, America's largest importer is using its clout to block new port security measures," the labor federation said in a report. ]

# Local 6310 Scholarship Info

Local 6310 will offer college scholarships to six persons this year (active members, spouses and dependent children are eligible). The amount to be offered is \$1,000.

Eligibility requirements are:

1. All active dues-paying members, their spouses and their dependent children (graduating high school seniors or currently enrolled full-time with a minimum of 12 credit hours in a trade or technical school or college) are eligible.
2. Limit of one entry per student.
3. Limit of one scholarship per family.
4. Previous winners not eligible.
5. Money will be held in trust at the school or college of the winner's choice. A total of six scholarships will be offered. Each scholarship will be valued at \$1,000.



## Local 6310 College Scholarships

### Official Entry Blank

- I am an active dues-paying member of CWA Local 6310.
- I am a spouse or dependent child of a Local 6310 active dues-paying member (graduating high school senior or currently enrolled full-time with a minimum of 12 credit hours in a trade or technical school or college, in the fall or winter semester.)
- I have not previously received a scholarship from Local 6310.

### APPLICANT INFORMATION

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

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

High School \_\_\_\_\_

College \_\_\_\_\_

### MEMBER'S INFORMATION

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

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

I am an active dues-paying member in good standing of the CWA Local 6310 and the above applicant is either myself or my child, either currently enrolled full-time with a minimum of 12 credit hours in a trade or technical school or college or graduating from high school in June 2006.



# Retirees' Corner

**FOR NEWS AND  
UPDATES VISIT  
US ON THE  
WEB AT**

[www.cwalocal6310.org](http://www.cwalocal6310.org)



Greater St. Louis Retirees' Chapter Meeting  
**Monday, May 8, 2006**  
Graptic Communications Hall  
105 Progress Parkway, Maryland Heights, MO

**Meeting Begins at: 11:30 AM**  
**Lunch Served at: 12:15 PM**  
**Cost is: \$10/person**  
**(you may bring a guest)**

**Reservations are a must!** Call Bud at 314 837-7344,  
Ralph at 314 428-2490, or Leroy at 314 822-2218 by  
**Noon, Thursday May 4, 2006.**

President Brinkmann opened the April meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag. He asked members to stand for a moment of silence for departed members. Sympathy is extended to the family of Bertha Powers on her passing. Also, to Earl "dogge" Doggendorf on the passing of his wife.

Laura Granich, "Jobs with Justice" and her committee had petitions on raising minimum wage in Missouri from the present \$5.15/hr to \$6.50/hr. She asked those in attendance to please sign the petitions. 100,000 signatures will be needed.

Rita Voorheis, CWA Northern Area Director, spoke on

the restructuring of the Union from top to bottom.

Bob Huss, President of Local 6350 advised there was no information of Lucent buy-out. There will be a meeting at the Carpenters' Hall, April 26 at 6:30 PM on the high cost of drugs.

Bill Koencnik, Legislative Chairman, reported on the Legislative Conference in Jefferson City on April 3-5, 2006. SB—816 did not come out of committee and was dead for the rest of the session. So far, the session has not been friendly to Labor.

It is possible that voters in the November election may be required to have IDs in order to vote.

Treasurer Eagan gave the following financial report:

Balance 3/13/06	\$5,617.93
Expenses for March	(\$3,761.75)
Receipts for March	\$1,318.00
<b>Balance 4/10/06</b>	<b>\$3,174.18</b>

Secretary Grumke gave the minutes from the March meeting. A motion was made to accept the minutes as read, S&C.

Bud's joke on Peacock went over big.

There were 100 members and guests present.

Meal: Ham, Au gratin potatoes, green beans, roll, salad, ice and cake from Bud's Birthday cake and drinks. ]

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