

**CWA's 70th Convention** convened in Las Vegas, Nevada June 23, 2008 with over 2400 delegates and guests seated. The first day of convention began with the Invocation, Presentation of the Colors and the National Anthem's of the United States, Canada and Puerto Rico.

President Cohen's ability to personalize our triumphs, as well as the struggles ahead of us in the labor movement continues to unify, mobilize and increases our desire to fight every day. He has the ability to make us remember how far we have come and remember those that fought before us.

Declaring, "This is Our Time" President Cohen called on the delegates to imagine life a year from now- a nation led by Barack Obama, the Employee Free Choice Act signed into law and affordable, universal health care within reach.

President Cohen called on the delegates to return to their locals and inspire CWA members, retirees and families to work harder and dream bigger than ever. This being our time rests on "three things--our unity, our strategies and our focus."

CWA and the AFL-CIO recently endorsed Senator Barack Obama for President and the Senator spoke to delegates in a satellite hookup from Albuquerque, NM. He thanked delegates for passing the resolution to endorse him and he pledged his full support for the Employee Free Choice act. This live teleconference with Obama, also served as a farewell celebration for retiring Secretary-Treasurer Barbara Easterling, who joined CWA 57 years ago as a telephone operator at Ohio Bell.

In her final convention speech, Easterling urged delegates not to underestimate their power to change the world. "Brothers and sisters, our voice has never been more important than it is today", she said. "During the past seven years, the Bush administration took dead aim at all of us in this room. Well guess what? We're still standing, stronger than ever. And together we can once again make history by electing Barack Obama president and changing America."

Earlier Monday, in an emotional speech that left delegates and national officers brushing away tears, retiring District 2 Vice President Pete Catucci paid an especially personal tribute to President Cohen and the union at large. Catucci, who was diagnosed in 2006 with ALS, also known as Lou Gehrig's disease stood and spoke despite his difficulties with speech and movement. He described his condition as a "gift" that has taught him to focus on what he called the "sweet and healing" power of love.

During the 3-day convention there were guest speakers and elections were held and the winners were: President Larry Cohen was re-elected, Jeff Rechenbach won Secretary-Treasurer and Annie Hill won the Executive Vice President position. All were unopposed.

In our District election, with Vice President Catucci retiring, Ron Collins won by acclamation.

Committee reports were given and the following resolutions were adopted:

### **Honoring Barbara J. Easterling's Inspiring Career**

**RESOLVED:** As Barbara J. Easterling enters retirement, on behalf of the members, retirees and officers of CWA, this 70th Convention expresses our deepest gratitude to her for a lifetime of devotion to our union, to working families across our country and to the causes of women's rights and human rights around the world. We wish her good health and many rich and rewarding years as she enters a well deserved retirement.

**RESOLVED:** We further bestow upon Barbara J. Easterling the title of Secretary-Treasurer Emeritus, and we call upon the Executive Board to make use of Barbara's talents and counsel in future years.

### **Barack Obama for President**

**RESOLVED:** All CWA locals will be receiving campaign materials and are strongly urged to reach out to their members through meetings, worksite leaflets, e-mail, websites, and newsletters. CWA helped lead the labor movement's biggest-ever political mobilizations in 2004 and the midterm elections of 2006. We call on our locals and our entire membership to exceed those efforts in 2008.

**RESOLVED:** CWA will work as never before to get our members to the polls on November 4, 2008, to cast their votes to transform our country's political landscape and restore the rights, dignity and financial security of America's workers and working families.

### **Million Member Mobilization for Employee Free Choice Act**

**RESOLVED:** That CWA is committed to building a political movement that this year will help elect a Democratic President, at least 60 worker-friendly US Senators and more members of the House of Representatives, who will put the interests of working families first.

**RESOLVED:** That every CWA local will collect signatures from at least 15 percent of its members, along with as many photographs as possible, as part of the Million Member Mobilization to restore workers' rights and the middle class.

**RESOLVED:** That every CWA local will continue to educate its members on the need for the Employee Free Choice Act and to mobilize widespread grassroots support for passage of this critical legislation in early 2009.

## **Stop Trade Agreements with Countries That Systematically Violate Labor Rights**

**RESOLVED:** CWA opposes trade agreements with countries that systematically deny workers' freedom of association, the right to organize, and the right to collective bargaining. It calls on the next Administration to renegotiate agreements with countries that deny workers these rights.

**RESOLVED:** CWA calls on Congress to vote down the Colombia Free Trade Agreement, and it calls on the next Administration to inform Colombia that it will negotiate a trade agreement when violence against trade union activists is eliminated and workers are allowed to freely join unions.

**RESOLVED:** CWA calls on the governments of Colombia and Costa Rica to refrain from intimidating trade unions and their leaders.

## **Promoting CWA's Print Sector Label**

**RESOLVED:** The Communications Workers of America supports the use of the CWA Label and will encourage locals, sectors, districts and the national union to utilize this label to identify capable and competent printers that can fulfill their printing requirements.

## **Greening the Economy: A Climate Change and Jobs Strategy That Works For All**

**RESOLVED:** CWA will take an active role in advancing domestic legislation that addresses climate change and at the same time protects the interests of our members in good jobs at home while creating new job opportunities for displaced workers.

**RESOLVED:** CWA will work with a broad coalition of environmental and social justice groups to incorporate workers' interests into the green jobs agenda. CWA will support organizations such as the Blue Green Alliance and the Silicon Valley Toxics Coalition that are bringing together like-minded parties to achieve environmental sustainability that is worker friendly.

**RESOLVED:** Because global warming crosses borders and must be addressed on an international level, CWA will work with international labor organizations to promote good jobs and workers' rights in a worldwide climate change regime; governments in developing nations to ensure that a United Nations agreement explicitly recognizes labor's vital contributions; and to ensure that every nation do its part to reduce emissions so an imbalance that encourages job exports is not created.

**RESOLVED:** CWA will educate and mobilize our members to support local, state, and federal initiatives that use the skills of our workforce to create good, union-represented green jobs.

**RESOLVED:** As part of its Speed Matters campaign, CWA will promote the environmental advantages of a national policy for universal, affordable high-speed broadband networks as one among many of such a policy's job-creating social and economical benefits.

## **Working for Peace and Labor Rights in Iraq**

**RESOLVED:** CWA continues to support our troops and believes that the best support is to bring them home and give them all medical treatment, care and benefits they need and deserve.

**RESOLVED:** CWA encourages all Locals to unite with labor unions here and internationally in the growing movement against the war and to deepen their active solidarity with the Iraqi trade unionists.

**RESOLVED:** CWA joins with the AFL-CIO and other labor organizations to call on the Iraqi government to take immediate steps to bring Iraq into compliance with International Labor Organization core labor standards.

## **Organize Cable and Satellite Industries Now**

**RESOLVED:** This 70<sup>th</sup> Convention recognizes cable and satellite companies as key organizing targets.

**RESOLVED:** CWA, and its locals and districts, should continue to experiment with using new technologies in creative ways, and with innovative approaches such as the Religious Leaders for Justice at Comcast and the Cable Switch campaigns in Milwaukee, Wis., and Grand Rapids, Michigan.

**RESOLVED:** CWA, and its locals and districts, should be ready to accelerate cable and satellite organizing even more when the Employee Free Choice Act is signed into law.

## **CWA Taking the Lead in National Health Care Reform**

**RESOLVED:** CWA will continue to build for health care reform on the principles of: (1) Cover everyone; (2) Control costs; (3) Strong government role; (4) Improve health quality; and (5) Broad-based tax financing.

**RESOLVED:** CWA endorses, advocates and will educate about legislative proposals that are consistent with these principles including the National Health Insurance Act, the Medicare for All Act and the Americare Health Care Act.

**RESOLVED:** This 70<sup>th</sup> Convention encourages all CWA members to participate in CWA's health care campaign, join the CWA Stewards Army, and help build a political movement that will achieve, at last, health care for all.

## ***REPORT OF THE NATIONAL WOMEN'S COMMITTEE (SUMMARY)***

This year's report highlights issues of importance to women in the areas of financially empowering women, health care, domestic violence, legislation, 2008 elections,

research, sick leave, leadership, education and mobilization.

Although financial situations can be scary it is imperative to set up a will. A twenty-one page guide entitled "Planning for the Future: A Guide to Wills and Trusts" can be downloaded from <http://www.giftlegacy.com>

Domestic Violence is still on the rise. Every nine seconds, someone is a victim of domestic violence. Abuse happens in every culture, every country and within every age group.

Ask yourself:

- Have you ever been afraid of your partner?
- Does your partner try to control where you go, what you do, and who you talk to?
- Does your partner accuse you of having affairs?
- Does your partner control your finances?
- Do you worry about your partner's moods to the point you walk on egg shells for fear of making him/her angry?

If you said yes, you could be suffering abuse. Do not feel you must face domestic violence alone.

There are many domestic violence bills currently pending in Congress. Kanawha County has a local domestic violence shelter.

Breast Cancer Research Stamp was the first in our nation's history dedicated to raising funds for a special cause.

The stamp currently costs 55 cents and is a valid first-class stamp. The additional 13 cents charged is directed to research programs at the National Institute for Health and the Department of Defense Breast Cancer Research Program.

You can find more information on The Breast Cancer Site on the home page of our website.

Additional Committee reports included the Appeals Committee, the Retired Members Council, the National Committee on Equity and the Finance Committee. Additional Convention information can be found at the CWA National Website.

Ending remarks were given by President Cohen before adjourning the 70<sup>th</sup> CWA Convention.