



Future of The Union

by Ray Pomeroy

My youngest daughter is away at college now, studying journalism. Her mother and I will be able to pay her way through four years of college because we both have good union jobs.

I hope she 'gets' that. She knows something about unions and I think she understands how the two of us having good union jobs have affected her life so far. She grew up in a great house in a nice neighborhood, attended school in one of the best systems in the country, had decent cars to ride in, never had to forgo something because of an emergency room visit that we had to find a way to pay for (she's had quite a few). She's been able to participate in a lot of things that we may not have been able to afford if we hadn't worked at union jobs.

What I fear is that she will only remember the nights I couldn't be home or the times I was out of town on union business. Maybe she'll remember the frustrations I brought home over how unfairly management was treating a member or how much there was to do because so few people actually get involved with the day to day activities of the union.

(See future page 3)

**Cavalier Bargaining line
866 900-2107**

Verizon Pharmacy Problems

Some of you received notification from Verizon that they were dropping certain pharmacies from Verizon's prescription network.

The Union has been working with Labor Relations and they have committed to having all the pharmacies, with the exception of Wal-Mart, back in the network by November 1st.

Shortly thereafter, impacted employees will receive a letter advising them of the process to obtain reimbursement for out-of-pocket prescription drug costs up to the in-network benefit that they incurred between September 1, 2005 and October 31, 2005. If you paid out-of-pocket for any prescriptions because of this problem and don't receive a letter call the local office.

Unrealistic Quotas Lead to Discipline, Have You Been SAM'd

by Denise Burns

The quotas that Cingular holds our members to are unrealistic. The market we're in is close to saturation and handset sales are projected to rise only 8% to 10% this year vs. 25% in 2004. Company stores, both blue and orange, are too close together in many cases and are surrounded by "Authorized Agents". Our members are spending time performing customer service functions for people that buy phones at a lower rate from agents and the internet. When our members are doing service functions for other sales channels or even functions that used to be done by a support person in the store they are not on the sales floor making their quota.

In July, 207 of 387 reps, 53.5%, were SAM eligible. There is definitely a problem with how the quotas are determined.

We are trying to work on this issue and to continue putting information together we need your help. We have asked Cingular for the locations of their Authorized Agents but have been told they can't give us that infor-

mation. We need YOU, the sales people, to give us this information. We need the address of every Authorized Agent in Maryland. It will be easy for some of you to get us the information because you can look out the front window of your store and see the agent across the street.

If we are to get anywhere with these quotas, we will have to have a strong case and we are depending on you to help build one.

Please email cingular@cwa-2107.org with the addresses of Authorized Agents or any information you think is relevant.

We need Cingular Stewards. We have seen some interest from our new "blue team" members, who are now of course "orange" and we are hoping to see more of you stepping up to fight for justice in the workplace.

If you are interested you can call the office or email us at cingular@cwa-2107.org. Stewards applications are available on the local website cwa-2107.org

Changes to HCRA and DCRA Agreement a help to members who may have overestimated from District 2

Per IRS Notice 2005-42 employers may modify the rules on the use of remaining balances at the end of the year for Health Care and Dependent Care, Reimbursement Accounts. This change allows for increased flexibility to use remaining balances before forfeiting them, and may encourage greater employee participation as a result.

CWA and Verizon have agreed to amend the Verizon Health Care and Dependent Care Accounts for Mid Atlantic Associates. The amendments allow employees to use their current year flexible spending account to pay or provide reimbursement for qualified expenses incurred between January 1 and March 15 of the following year. Any money not used by March 15 will be forfeited. The deadline for submitting claims for both the health care and dependent care spending accounts is May 31.

This change is effective for contributions that were made in 2005 and for future years.

New Stewards

Welcome to our new stewards-Joyce Garner at Riva Road on the 3rd floor, Sandra Burch at Riva Road on the 2nd floor and Gary Waters at Forest Drive in Annapolis. We want to thank them for volunteering to be active in the local and the Union.

VZ Check Your Beneficiaries

We have reports that there have been problems with beneficiaries on Life Insurance policies of both active and retired members. Check your beneficiaries at www.resources.hewitt.com/verizon or 877 275-8947 and for your supplemental insurance go to <http://www.personal-plans.com/verizon/> or from the Hewitt site go to "other sites" and click marsh@work.solutions or 800-336-9427

A reminder to make sure members are aware they need to call Verizons pension dept. to designate a beneficiary for their pension proceeds because it will not automatically revert to the family or estate if the member has not designated a beneficiary. Members need to go to the following web site: www.resources.hewitt.com/verizon or call 877 275-8947

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President's Point of View.....

Denise Burns

Schedules, forced overtime, vacation days to sick days, absence with doctors' notes. You name it and Verizon is pushing it down our throats. Do they ask us to work with them on issues or do they just stick it to us?

We have grievances on issues and management makes agreements that they don't intend to live up to. I find, in some cases, that they are ignorant because they themselves have no leadership or they are just disrespectful and conniving. What happened to management that knew the business and knew that if you treated your employees with respect that you would get more out of them. Supervisors these days are so afraid for their own jobs that they can't effectively handle day to day business. They are not skilled in dealing with people and have no concept of what it takes.

Let's talk about the absence policy and the Regional Attendance Plan. We bargained a joint committee to deal with this attendance problem because it costs Verizon an extreme amount of money each year. The committee had trials in several areas. Some absence improved a lot, some a little. What was most interesting is when company management and the union worked together and had respect for each other there was improvement. One thing the committee could not do was change the policy. If you have been around

long enough, you know that we used to get six (6) days a year before it affected your evaluation. When they changed to the RAAP is when people took advantage of the time off every three months. Verizon created their problem. Instead of dealing with the abusers one on one, they created a monster absence policy.

I will try to talk to the different departments and managers to see if we can improve our absence issues. We can use some of the methods that were effective in the trial and also come up with other things that will work for the different work groups. We need everyone to come to work whenever possible. Don't play the game because eventually you may get caught.

If you have problems in your work groups please contact a steward and bring it to their attention. We need to police our work place and make sure Verizon is approached when they violate our contract and our rights.

"In corporate America, a business answers to it shareholders and no one else. Workers' interest do not factor into the equation. The directors of a company have a responsibility that obliges them to place the owner interests first; if it means to going to part-time help, layoffs, cutting benefits and pay, that is what will happen." Steve Delaney

Still No Shorts for NSP Group

by Ray Pomeroy

We've been working on getting our National Services Group permission to wear shorts for a good part of the year with no success. The issue has gone to Steve Cannell, Vice President NSP, and for now the answer is no.

The issue came to a head this year for a couple of reasons. Some members who were under the NSG banner, contracting to NSP and wearing shorts, were transferred into NSP where they can't. Other members who can't wear shorts realized that members who could, were getting air conditioned trucks. We know that all the new trucks will have a/c and you just have to wait until your truck is up for replacement to get one, these people just want to be more comfortable or have a way to cool off.

Mr. Cannell says that he has approached fleet operations about filtering some of the air conditioned trucks into his organization but it's a sure bet that there will be no wholesale

replacement of vehicles because somebody has to pay for them.

Mr. Cannell, by his own admission, is basing his decision on factors that he is familiar with. In New York, and no doubt other places, the techs are often in offices with CEO's and top executives where everyone is wearing a suit or at minimum is dressed 'business casual'. I've explained to him that in our area our members are more likely to be out at a cell site or in a basement phone room installing or repairing a wholesale service.

We also discussed having his management team ride with us. Not just to see how hot it is in the truck and on the site but to get a feel for some of the other issues that we are battling on a day to day basis. Mr. Cannell plans to bring it up in his next meeting and says that he's not saying no forever, but we're going to have to see how it goes.

Sprint Workers Walk Out

from CWA

Nearly 1,000 Sprint local telephone workers began their walkout just after midnight on Oct. 10 over Sprint's insistence on health care cost-shifting, cutting disability benefits in half, eliminating overtime for Sunday work, gutting seniority protections, reducing paid leave time, reducing or even eliminating 401(k) contributions, and other issues. A major job security concession demand also is on the table in Tennessee.

"This is the most profitable segment of the entire company, yet Sprint is demanding concessions that attack our paychecks, our families' health security, our job conditions and our very future with the company", said Telecommunications Vice President Jimmy Gurganus. Sprint collected revenues of over \$6 billion last year from its 7.5 million customers, who live in mainly rural areas, he noted.

Media attention resulting from the strike, along with CWA newspaper and radio advertising, is focusing attention on the fact that Sprint has been using the local companies as cash cows to fund its wireless and data networks for years (Does this sound familiar to Verizon members?). Sprint siphoned off \$8.7 billion from local operations between 1998 and 2003, and meanwhile, the quality of local phone service has deteriorated and many service areas still lack DSL.

Now that Sprint has merged with Nextel, it is planning to spin off local phone service entirely next year. "They are abandoning rural America, and we're telling the public and the regulators that we're fighting for quality phone service as well as fairness for our members," said Gurganus.

Retirees Corner

RMC meetings are held on the second Monday of every month. Unless otherwise noted all meetings are held at the Local 2107 office at 2441 Holly Ave, Annapolis and begin at 10AM. We are planning our annual Christmas lunch in December, the date will be in the next newsletter. An RSVP is required, please call the local office. At the luncheon we will be electing new officers for the 2006 year. We will also be collecting dues for the 2006 year.

(future from page 1)

I can only hope that some of those negative memories will inspire her to get involved with the union, if she is lucky enough to be in one, so that she can carry her share of the load.

She's never had a problem stepping up and getting involved. She was active in school clubs to the point of starting one and did volunteer work for the county Health Department doing cigarette buys to see what stores would sell to minors. She already had her public service requirements met, she just wanted to do it because she believed in it.

Maybe she'll be a member of TNG-CWA one day. If she gets that chance I hope she gets the opportunities that my co-workers and I have had over the years and I think she'll step up for the union when she is needed.

If she does I'll back her all the way and hopefully I can help her strike a better balance than I have between home and union.

Maybe I can get her to write an article for the newsletter so she can tell you what it meant to her growing up union. I think she's probably a better writer than I and maybe she can get some credit for a "clip" too!

Who Are You Mad At?

by Denise Burns

We have received many complaints about Verizon forcing overtime. Some people even blame the Union. We as officers, have a hard time understanding how you can come to the conclusion that we are the ones to blame.

Verizon has ignored the contract language on Overtime Administration. Tell management that you are not happy with them. Don't let them see you vent against the Union because Verizon has done something to you.

The concept of Unions is: An organization of workers that promotes and protects the interests of its members in issues such as wages and working conditions, especially through negotiations with employers.

Notice it says organization-that means everyone not just officers and stewards but members as well. We need the members to show solidarity and to be solid. We need each and every one of you to participate in mobilization and job actions when necessary.

Management is smart. They know whether we are sticking together. Just look at how many "red" shirts you see on Thursday...the company sees the same thing. They pay attention to the infighting. They encourage backstabbing, tattling and any other thing to divide us. Do YOU fall for it or are you a stronger, smarter person than to let the company divide us so that they can get their way no matter how wrong it is.

Everyday Verizon is showing less and less respect for its workers and the UNION. If we stand together and do what it takes we will prevail. Step up to the plate, let management know they won't defeat us as workers or as a Union.

Labor-Friendly Republicans Join Democrats in Prevailing Wage Fight

from CWA

More than three dozen House Republicans are joining Democrats in a fight to reverse President George W. Bush's decision to slash wages for workers on Gulf Coast recovery and reconstruction projects.

While contractors stand to pocket tens of millions of dollars in profit, Bush's suspension of the 74-year-old Davis-Bacon Act ensures that little will trickle down to the region's devastated workers. The law requires federal contractors to pay prevailing wages in a project area. Now contractors won't have to pay more than the minimum wage, \$5.15 an hour.

Bush happily complied when a group of anti-worker Republican House members urged him to revoke the rule shortly after Hurricane Katrina struck. But now 37 House Republicans, led by Steven LaTourette of Ohio and Frank LoBiondo of New Jersey, have written Bush asking him to reinstate the prevailing wage law.

Meanwhile, 25 senators led by Senator Ted Kennedy (D-Mass.) have introduced the Fair Wages for Hurricane Katrina Recovery Workers Act to overturn the suspension. Representative George Miller (D-Calif.) has

introduced a similar bill in the House. "We can spend billions of dollars to rebuild roads, bridges and levees and hope that they are properly constructed by skilled laborers so they withstand the next hurricane, or we can skimp and try to save a few bucks an hour on wages," LaTourette said.

CWA Chief Lobbyist Lou Gerber noted the irony of the Republican White House and GOP leaders opposing Davis-Bacon: Representative Robert Bacon of New York and Senator James Davis of Pennsylvania, who introduced the bill in 1931, were both Republicans.

Sympathies to:

Damon Gaither death of his grandmother
 Karen Holland on the death of her mother
 Eric Turner on the death of his uncle

Verizon

Call MetLife for the Preferred Dental Program (PDP) to receive a list of dentists in your zip code area on 800 988-8331 or access MetLife at www.metlife.com/dental.

Call Davis Vision for participating providers on 800 999-5431 or www.davisvision.com. For Laser Vision Correction visit the web or call 877 999-7006.

We now have a Single Point Of Contact for benefits excluding the 401k. (To view beneficiary info for basic life and pension you must use the toll free number.) Using the internet you can log on to : <http://resources.hewitt.com/verizon>, use the eweb at: <http://eweb.verizon.com>, select "get hr benefit info" or call toll free 877 275-8947.

For your 401k go to www.401k.com or call 1-888-457-9333.

Cingular Wireless

NetBenefits	877-421-5225
Prescription Service Caremark	800-388-2085
VSP Vision Care	800-524-0910
Dental DHMO Cigna	888-010-5225
Tuition Assistance	866-242-6587
Disability MetLife (STD or LTD)	888-430-2630
EAP	800-287-9009
Pensions and 401K	877-421-5225
FMLA	877 421-5225
Payroll	800 345-6211

Dates to Remember

Membership meetings

11-07	Northern Area	630pm
11-08	Southern Area	630pm
	NO meetings in December	

Other Meetings

11-07	MD State council meeting	1030am
11-14	Retiree Meeting	10am
11-29	Executive Board meeting	

Other

11-02	Blood Dr Riva Rd	
11-15	Newsletter deadline	
12-02	Christmas Craft and Poinsettia Sale	
12-13	Newsletter deadline	

Disaster Relief

Donations to CWA's Disaster Relief Fund so far have helped more than 650 CWA families devastated by Hurricane Katrina, and relief coordinators are expecting to process more applications from members along the Gulf Coast affected by Katrina and Hurricane Rita.

Community Services

We will be asking for craft donations for our December Craft and Poinsettia sale. The sale is at Riva Road on December 2. Please contact Robin Coiro 443 436-5340 or Donna Blanchard 410 224-0166 for more information or to donate.

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