



Working Retirees

by Denise Burns

Everyone is talking about the Working Retirees and how the "UNION" is giving them a raw deal. Once again the Union is getting the negative comments and Verizon doesn't take a hit. Wake up folks!

Assistant to the Vice President District 2, Ron Collins sent an official cancellation notification to James Davis, Jr., Director Verizon Labor Relations, giving Verizon 60 days to knock down the agreement. All working retirees should be off the payroll effective July 5, 2006.

The Union would not be canceling the agreement if Verizon was adhering to the language in the agreement. There were some Directors that did adhere to the agreement. It is unfortunate that in other areas there were numerous violations. This goes across the District 2 area, DC, MD, and VA. WV is not involved.

The following is directly from the agreement. "The Companies will not utilize Working Retirees as a replacement for or in lieu of filling regular positions. In other words, if an LOB has a need for a regular position, the LOB should pursue normal staffing procedures, such as RAMP, to fill the vacancy. The use of Working Retirees to fill a regular position will not be appropriate. If the Union believes that one or more Working Retirees are being utilized as a replacement for or in lieu of filling a regular position, the Union will refer the situation directly to Labor Relations for resolution."

"The Companies may at their discretion em-

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AFL-CIO Night at Camden Yards Friday, June 23 at 7:05 PM Baltimore Orioles Vs. Washington Nationals Tickets Only \$5.00!

Call the local office to reserve your tickets. Deadline for tickets and payment is June 9

Fireworks after the game.

After The Fact

by Ray Pomeroy

It happens all the time. Someone gets in trouble and starts bringing things up "after the fact". "My manager was never there so I...", "my co-worker uses that language all the time", "I was afraid to say something before but my boss asked me out and I told him no, he's treated me differently since then and now he's giving me a bad evaluation".

All of these may in fact be true but when you don't shine the light on them until you are in trouble it diminishes the impact and may just look like "sour grapes".

You can't wait until you are being disciplined to bring up improper behavior by others.

With the exception of crews or stores that are "satellite" locations, in other words have no supervisor full time at the location, if your boss is never there or is always unreachable you need to speak to someone about it. If you work with someone that habitually uses obscene language or worse, racial epithets you should speak to them about it. You should advise them that the behavior is a violation of the company code of conduct and if you are offended by the language let them

know. If the behavior continues get the union involved. Your boss shouldn't be asking you out at all, but people being people it happens from time to time. If they ask you out and then start treating you differently because you rebuffed them then it's a problem that needs dealt with immediately. If you get preferential treatment because you went out with them then it's a problem for other people and needs to be dealt with as well.

These are just a few examples that we have experienced here in Local 2107 and are not the only issues that people are not dealing with properly and in a timely manner.

If you are not comfortable dealing with a particular issue or just don't know how to go about it get in touch with a union rep and we'll help. We're not going to do it all for you but if you wait until you are in trouble to bring it up then our chances of helping are greatly diminished.

We're not hanging out at the bar here, we're trying to do a job, all of us. We cannot ignore certain behaviors like we are just dealing with the harmless drunk guy in the corner.

Customer Service Conference

I attended the CWA National Customer Service Conference, hosted by CWA Local 6222, in Houston, Texas April 20th through the 22nd.

The conference was very informative and I had an opportunity to talk with representatives from locals all over the country who are experiencing problems much like our own.

One of the opening speakers was Larry Cohen, President CWA. Larry spoke about the Ready For the Future initiative that you have been hearing about all year (Find the link at cwa-union.org) and that will be high on the agenda at convention in July.

President Cohen spoke about some companies finding that outsourcing is costing them customers. US Airways is bringing back 400 customer service jobs. He also spoke about Congressman Ted Strickland (D-Ohio) introducing The Call Center Right to Know Act.

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Following the Rules

by Ray Pomeroy

Do you know your 6 point sales plan? Jacki Baldwin tells us that the company is having problems with their employees following the plan and we don't want to have to start defending our members because they aren't.

The basic steps are:

- Greet
Build Value
Offer Solutions
Ask For The Sale
Educate
Thank & Depart

Most of these pieces have subcategories to be followed as well. If this doesn't look familiar get a copy from your manager. If it looks familiar and you aren't following it you should be.

All of our Cingular sales members know that they are secret shopped. If this is something the company is paying close attention to then you should be too.

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President's Point of View.....

Denise Burns

Day after day we represent the guilty and the non-guilty. We listen to problems that aren't union concerns. We try to help everyone that needs it. We file grievances to either lesson the impact or eliminate or resolve the issue.

Our best advice is to come to work, do your job, monitor the contract, question what needs questioning and support the union. We don't recommend playing the system with absences, minding other peoples' business, turning on co-workers, being a tattletale, coasting, or talking instead of working.

Many of our problems are avoidable. Despite the lack of training, the amount of work required, unknowledgeable management, unfair policies, and lack of tools, you can focus on your job and get it done. It may not be to your satisfaction but it will be to the companies' satisfaction. So many people get stressed out, which in turn causes flare ups and problems in the workplace. While I understand wanting to do the best you can, you have to understand that the companies' just want it done. Perhaps some of the stress should be on them not you. We work for the company and we, for the most part, do as we are told. At the end of the day you should feel satisfied with what you have accomplished. If you didn't get to accomplish much because of roadblocks, that is on the company. If you lack the training to do your job and aren't getting assistance, that is on

the company. If at the end of the day there is still work to be done but because of the size of the workforce it doesn't get done, that is on the company. But if you aren't doing your job, that's on you.

I have worked for Verizon for 31½ years. I believe I am a good employee and have always wanted to do well in my job. It is getting harder and harder to keep a positive attitude with so many negatives to deal with but I am not going to let the "company" problems make me ill or cause me to not be a good employee.

There are many reasons why members get disciplined. If you can avoid it you should. Once you are being disciplined you need to give us all the facts. We need the truth in order to help you. When we investigate we will find out what has gone on. Don't be unreasonable and think that the union will get you off if you are guilty and the company can prove it. Don't think that the process will happen overnight. Again, our advice is to prevent discipline by just doing your job!

Work itself isn't humiliating if it gives you financial independence. There is dignity in that. The indignity comes when management perceives you as so many worker bees, not as contributing individuals.

Brian Kramer, auto worker, artist

At Cingular

by Denise Burns

In the last couple of months we have made progress on getting Cingular folks signed up. We are also close to getting an accurate database for them. If you haven't been contacted or you know of someone in your location that hasn't please call the office and let us know.

While we are signing you up, we are asking for volunteers to be a steward. We have three people waiting to be trained and we could use more. If you are interested or just want to know what a steward is call us. The more stewards we have the better representation you will have. It makes sense to have someone that works for Cingular and talks Cingular language to help you. We do have one new steward trained, William Joseph. He is a technician and his contact information is 202 255-1345 or email wjoseph@cwa-2107.org.

We are also signing up people to be mobiliz-

ers. They distribute information sent to them or place it on the bulletin board at the work location. Call us if you can help with that.

We are getting more and more members filing grievances. We want everyone to know that we are taking grievances on any discipline issues, write ups or verbals. If you are unsure of what you should do, you should call to ask. We have Statement of Occurrence on our website that you can download, fill out and fax to us. Give us the details of the situation and what you expect to get as a remedy. There is a 30 day time limit to grieve an issue. Don't wait; get in touch with us as soon as you have a problem.

We still have not received our shipment of contracts. New sign ups are getting them now and we will send them out to the others when they arrive. To view the contract, visit our website at www.cwa-2107.org.

(Conference from page 1)

According to the Congressman's website "the bill will require all call center representatives to identify their physical location at the beginning of each call to or from the center. It will also require corporations providing call center services to obtain annual certification from the Federal Trade Commission to verify that their employees are truthfully informing American consumers of their location."

I attended FMLA and sales quota workshops at the conference as well as a Cingular breakout session.

The Cingular breakout session was enlightening to say the least. I was under the impression that our issues with SAM (now SPR), getting our people signed up, getting new contracts, too many authorized agents and a host of other issues were local. They're not, all these issues are happening on a National scale. While we don't yet have a concrete plan to deal with any individual issue we did determine that part of our problem was not communicating across the Districts so that we know how widespread a problem is or how other Locals are handling an issue. To that end we have set up a method for Cingular locals to keep each other abreast of things and so far it is working pretty well.

We also talked about mobilizing on a National scale, for instance a lot of Cingular locals out west have Black Friday's. Our

Cingular members have to wear "team colors", black being one of them, and out there they all wear black on Friday to show their solidarity. We should be trying this and other mobilization activities across the country to show the company that we are all united and working from the same playbook.

We need YOU to get involved, you are the eyes in the workplace.

We can fight them like this.



Or we can fight them like this!



(retirees from page 1)

ploy Working Retirees which they consider qualified for a maximum of one hundred twenty (120) days in a calendar year to meet service needs related to workload peaks, service emergencies, employee absences for vacation, illness or disability, leaves of absence, etc., special projects or other temporary work requirements."

An addendum to this agreement allowed for the use of working retirees in FTTP or backfilling for FTTP to be used for 220 days. This too was abused.

Some of the abuses we are aware of in this local are; hiring non-retirees as working retirees, working them 220 days when they didn't fall under the 220 day agreement, and keeping them on year after year.

Two hundred and twenty days is equal to 44 weeks. That is 8 weeks shy of a 52 week full time position. Allowing for vacations, etc., it is a full time position.

The working retiree agreement was designed to lessen the impact of contractors. "The use of Working Retirees will generally have the effect of reducing the need for additional contractors. Arguably, every Working Retiree placed on the payroll should reduce work opportunities for contractors."

If Verizon had used the agreement as intended you would not be reading this article. In addition to the abuse to this agreement Verizon has made it clear, via a presentation Larry Babbio gave for Merrill Lynch, that they are going to reduce the Union side of the house by 2007. They are not letting us into Verizon Business (formerly MCI) but are taking some of our work. They agreed to a neutrality agreement in Verizon Wireless and willfully violated it for years while they held anti-union meetings and terminated the people that wanted a Union presence there, they continually ignore our contract and they are quite bold about our elimination.

In fact, the company has forgotten the workers that allowed them to get to this place and time. We are now disposable. This is not acceptable to the UNION and it shouldn't be to you.

Are you registered to vote?

Do you participate in the political process? If you do, we thank you. If you don't, now is the time to start.

The elections for Governor of Maryland and Comptroller along with many others are this fall. This is a critical election for working people and unions. We need to take back not only our state, but our country.

We will be distributing information about the candidates' issues and where they stand on

them. As always, the Union is only interested in candidates that support working families' issues. The party affiliation does not matter.

We will be coming around to register people to vote but in the mean time if you want to register or make changes in Maryland go to "<http://www.elections.state.md.us/faq.html>".

If you are interested in politics and legislation, we are looking for members to be on our committee. Contact the local office if you are interested.

Retirees Corner

The next meeting is June 12 at 10AM. We welcome all new members and hope to see more of you at the meetings.

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.

Cavalier Bargaining line 866 900-2107

We are still waiting for the Company to bargain with us. They have given us a date of May 30. We will let you know if they follow through.

Got Yours?

New Membership cards have been issued for 2006-2009. Some were mailed and some were given to stewards to hand out. Unfortunately, some of them were lost in the mail. If you have not received your card please tell an officer, a steward or call the local office.

Get Well to:

Carlene Hannon, recovering from surgery
Lynn Jenkins, recovering from surgery

Scholarship Fund Raiser

SAD BUT TRUE

We want to thank the handful of people that supported our effort to put on a bowl-a-thon to raise money for the Roberta B. Mervine Scholarship Fund. Special thanks to those that made a donation even though we had to cancel the event.

This scholarship fund was started in 1993 after our beloved friend and member passed away from cancer in October 1992. Roberta was 37 years old and a dedicated member of the local. We have been able to maintain the scholarship fund until now. This is one of the easiest scholarships to win. Winners are selected by a lottery-type drawing in the month of June.

The lack of participation to raise funds for this scholarship fund means that after this year, we will no longer be able to give out scholarships. Before we do that, if there is anyone out there willing to help with fund raisers or have ideas on fund raisers please call us.

The deadline for the Roberta B. Mervine Scholarship is May 31.

Dates to Remember

Membership meetings

No Meetings in June

Other Meetings

05-23	Executive Board	02:00 pm
06-12	Retirees	10:00 am
06-15	BMET Council	
06-16	Presidents	10:30 am
06-20	Stewards	06:30 pm
06-29	Executive Board	TBA

Other

06-20	Newsletter Deadline
06-27 thru 06-28	Steward Training
07-07	Retiree Crab Feast
07-10 thru 07-11	CWA Convention
07-18	Newsletter Deadline

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