



**It's A Long Hard Road... Again
Forced Overtime Back**

by Ray Pomeroy

Verizon is once again violating the contract. They know it and you know it. They are forcing our members to work overtime in excess of 8 hours per week. Some people are told 10 hours a day 7 days a week others 6 days a week etc. We hear that they aren't taking all reasonable excuses, which they should be, and forcing back to back 6th days.

This has happened before and we already have grievances in the process at the executive level. Whether this time is added as a separate grievance or not remains to be seen.

The union isn't "letting this happen". Ron Collins at District 2 is in touch with the executives and they are aware of our position.

If you don't know our position it goes something like this. A long term service difficulty does not exist. The company has neglected the plant for a very long time and the fact that they have not allowed our members to maintain it properly has led up to a very high trouble load. This is not good reason to force our members to work excessive amounts of overtime. If they are truly concerned about the trouble load why are they forcing people in and having them work FiOS ORDERS?

For 10 days or so the company would not allow our members to work overtime, claiming budget reasons, while the trouble load continued to build from an already abnormally high level. It lends a little credence to my theory that if the load gets to a certain level they can dip into the "disaster" budget thereby leaving their normal budgets alone for a short while.

This issue is going to be arbitrated and if we win the company will probably continue to violate the decision until we take them to court over it. Just like they did with the 18% vacation issue that it took 3 years to rectify.

In the meantime, if you are fatigued you probably shouldn't be driving. Those of you that had the DOT training on recognizing signs of fatigue know this already. If you are fatigued and believe it would be unsafe to operate a motor vehicle, bucket or some tool that can otherwise injure you advise your supervisor.

**No Job is so Important, and No Service is so Urgent That We
Cannot Take The Time to Perform Our Work Safely.**

by Ray Pomeroy

These words are known to many of our members, they express an idea, maybe even an ideal, something to aspire to. They used to be a mantra of the Bell System.

The words remain unmolested in Bell South which is part owner of Cingular Wireless (along with AT&T, formerly SBC). I do not know, at the moment, if AT&T still subscribes to the notion or if Cingular inherited it from either of the Baby Bells that own it. I don't know if Bell South still adheres to the principle or if they merely post the words. I do know that Verizon has modified the wording, needlessly in my opinion. It was perfect in the original form.

Some people, not just management (and certainly not all management), only pay the idea lip service. A few managers come to us asking for help keeping you safe. The company at one time even declared that safety was "first among equals". There are no equals. Safety, from our standpoint is first period, head and shoulders above whatever is second at the moment. Not getting something done as quickly as it was promised can't put you in the hospital or kill you. Not doing things safely can.

One of our Cingular members recently lost a finger and we can trace it directly to not having the proper equipment to do the job. He is recovering but there was no way to reattach the missing digit. The member who lost his finger is a dedicated employee, as most of our members are, and was only trying to complete a job with the equipment available to him. He probably did not imagine that he could be so seriously injured performing such a simple task. This man lost a finger because he stood on a chair when no ladder was available. It wasn't his fault the ladder was missing from the site and it may not be entirely the company's fault either, we have no way of knowing if the ladder was ever reported missing.

In Verizon there have been several workers killed on the job by electrical hazards in the past couple of years along with some "near misses" that we know of. I don't know if these accidents were caused by complacency

on the workers' part or just the fact that safety is not getting the attention from the company that it should. I suspect that you'd find a little bit of both. When companies don't give safety it's due, eventually most workers will become complacent to a degree.

I know from experience and observation that Verizon isn't giving safety it's due. They used to have real safety rodeos, which I found very effective in reinforcing what I knew about safety. You went from station to station inspecting your equipment and demonstrating it's use, and if you did it wrong someone demonstrated the correct method. You climbed a pole and got a refresher on manholes, went through an electrical hazards station. You had your truck inspected and took a turn demonstrating your zone control driving knowledge in a real car on a real road.

Now you sit in front of a computer answering questions, guessing until you get 100% on the test while you try not to fall asleep. They do this for your annual safety overview and your driving. I found this method very ineffective and the feedback I get is I'm not the only one who thinks so.

The Local is attempting to take a more proactive stance on safety. Gary Waters, a Steward and OPT in Annapolis has been appointed to run the Locals safety committee. We will be looking for safety minded members to help out and join the committee.

I'm ashamed to admit that I don't know how Cingular approaches safety. We've been so busy trying to keep peoples jobs there that we haven't given safety it's due. We need input from the members at Cingular on what they think of safety. Not just technicians either. Our members in sales have their own unique safety issues. A couple of the stores have been robbed at gunpoint and that is a safety issue as well.

We have also asked Lamar Maddox, a Cingular Steward and technician to canvass our Cingular techs for a sub committee. The dangers and issues at Cingular are different and we need safety minded people familiar with the problems and the work to join up.

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President's Point of View.....

Denise Burns

We did very well in the primaries with the candidates that CWA and the AFL-CIO endorsed. Now we have to prepare for the General election on November 7.

Once again I am going to ask each and every one of you to get involved. Read up on the candidates that Union's are supporting. As I am writing this there are only 48 days until the election. While in the past we have heard each election is the most important for us to be involved in, I believe that it is the case in this one, especially for collective bargaining and contract negotiations. Both of which affect each one of us. Union's have made great strides for this country and it is time to get the country back on the right track.

Vote for candidates that support us, the working people. We should have the right to have good paying jobs in this country, to have benefits and pensions, to be able to bargain with greedy corporations and to have a say in our government.

I want to ask for those of you that have an hour or two to volunteer to do so. There will be phone banks and walking door-to-door to union members' homes prior to the election

so that we can get every union member out to vote.

Not only is it your privilege to vote but it is a responsibility. October 17th is the last day to register before the General election. To register in Maryland you can go to www.elections.state.md.us/citizens/registration/ to download an application or for other information go to www.elections.state.md.us.

Remember the candidates that will help us in the future need our help now. Talk to your neighbors, friends and relatives to let them know why it is so important to vote.

If you have time to volunteer prior to or on Election Day please contact the local office and we will get you the information.

Let us never forget that government is ourselves and not an alien power over us. The ultimate rulers of our democracy are not a President and senators and congressmen and government officials, but the voters of this country.

*Franklin D. Roosevelt,
July 8, 1938
in a speech in Marietta, Ohio*

Cingular Worker Briefs Congressional Candidates

from the National

More than 25 congressional candidates from around the nation learned what a difference card check and neutrality makes to workers trying to organize a union when Local 13000 member Peter Braunston addressed a candidate forum in Washington, D.C., organized by the AFL-CIO and the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee.

Braunston spoke of the ease with which he and colleagues near Philadelphia gained recognition by Cingular after signing cards last November — the same process as outlined in the Employee Free Choice Act.

"We are thrilled that we joined a union," Braunston said at the forum Sept. 13 at AFL-CIO headquarters. "We now have a voice in

our destiny and are able to realize better wages though organization."

A substitute teacher, Braunston said he went to work for Cingular part-time because he could not afford health insurance for himself, his wife and infant son. When he came under the union contract in February 2006, his health care expenses dropped from \$400 to \$40 per month.

Other workers at the forum, an emergency room nurse and a manufacturing worker, spoke of the firings and intimidation they endured in traditional organizing campaigns to join AFSCME and the Sheet Metal Workers.

Mesaba Flight Attendants Win Major Court Ruling

from the National

A federal judge in Minneapolis this week blocked Mesaba Airlines from slashing pay and benefits for its 450 flight attendants by nearly one-fifth when he overturned an earlier ruling by a bankruptcy judge that gave the airline permission to abrogate its labor

contracts.

"This is a monumental victory for Mesaba workers and employees everywhere," said Tim Evenson, president of AFA-CWA's Me-

(Mesaba on page 3)

Do You See What I See

A Safety Follow Up

by Ray Pomeroy

Hopefully you read the safety article on page one. It applies to Cingular and Verizon members.

I want to share some things I've seen and heard over the last 20 years as well as some things I'm still seeing. I want to cover a couple of recurring issues so you know how to handle them as well.

Some of what I heard:

Said to a supervisor about safety glasses: *I'm not wearing those things, they look stupid.*

This may be one of the stupidest things I've ever heard especially considering you only get one set of eyes. And he said this right to the boss! Think that's not in his file waiting for an eye injury?

On going in a manhole that wasn't ventilated: *I just have to take a quick reading, I can hold my breath that long.* Excuse me? The hole got ventilated, not even a moron with 15 years on me is getting by with that.

On going in a CEV when an alarm is sounding: *that thing is always going off, the blowers running, it'll be fine.* It was that time, he got in before I could stop him.

What I see and hear today is just as bad. I get calls from people who have a job in a CEV, the alarm is on and won't stop and they don't know what to do.

First off there is a decal in the lid that points you to the correct BSP which also tells you not to go in unless the GREEN light is on, it's not enough that the red light is off, it

might be defective. You treat it like a manhole. It must be ventilated (doesn't matter that the built in blower is running) and you need a second man, just like a manhole. If you can't get what you need to do it properly then you JEP the job. If you get slack about it from dispatch you call the boss and if he tells you any different you call the union, right then.

Another thing, one that can kill you, is not using your 188A to test for electrical hazards. It's easy to get complacent when you've never found anything energized but that's when it will get you. I've found hot SAC boxes, strands and pedestals. One pedestal was so hot it caught fire. YOU must take some responsibility, you have to use your personal protective equipment.

I have seen our people using their cell phone while driving. Do you know the Verizon policy? You don't use the phone while driving unless you are using a hands free appliance. If it's possible you are supposed to pull over somewhere safe to use the phone. Some local area have stricter policies. A lot of other people have told me that they have seen this also and if we can all see it so can management.

No one at Verizon or Cingular is going to shed a single tear if you are killed, they'll leave that to the loved ones you left behind.

Seen in a bathroom stall at Verizon:
Today is the Gift You Get for Working Safely Yesterday.

Customer Service Week - Focus on Saving FMLA

from the National

During CWA Customer Service Professionals Week this year, October 3-7, locals will be mobilizing in the workplace to fight attempts by the corporate lobby and the Bush Labor Department to curtail protections of the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA).

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the National Association of Manufacturers and other business groups are calling for changes in the law to limit FMLA leave to conditions that last 10 days or more. Current law defines a "serious health condition" as one that requires more than three consecutive days of treatment and recovery.

Corporate America also is pushing for changes that could force workers to take leave for no less than a half-day at a time, which would force many workers to take unnecessary leave without pay.

In customer service offices, CWA will be circulating petitions telling the administration and Congress to keep vital FMLA protections in place. The petitions will be pulled together into a massive e-mail action message to government officials.

Since the FMLA was passed 12 years ago, it has benefited more than 50 million workers who have coped with serious illnesses or had to care for family members during a medical crisis, protecting them from job loss.

(Mesaba from page 2)

saba master executive council. He said the union hopes management now "will come back to the table for productive discussions — this time with a proposal that is fair."

He noted that, "Over 100 days ago, we presented the company with a cost savings proposal that met their targeted concessions. We have heard nothing from them since. It is time for management to drop litigation and negotiate fairly."

Mesaba sought to use the bankruptcy process to impose wage-benefit cuts of 19.4 percent, which would have meant that some flight attendants would take home less than \$10,000 a year after paying health insurance costs.

A resolution Supporting AFA-CWA members at Mesaba Airlines who are fighting their bankrupt employer's attempt to nullify their contract, was passed at Convention.

ACFC reminder

ACFC reminder—Please don't forget to go to ACFCcares.com to order your FREE "Raising Healthy Eaters" books and/or the Family Fitness Folder. Also please make sure your address is correct in Verizon's system because we will be mailing out a "Preparedness Binder" to everyone at the home address that is on file.

Please note, alcohol at Local meetings was banned by a motion of the membership years ago. We have become lax in enforcing the rule and wish to advise the membership that they will need to curtail the consumption of alcohol until after the meetings. Please do not show up at the meetings already inebriated, it is a distraction that makes it difficult for you to get your point across and for others to take you seriously.

**Verizon Open Enrollment is
October 18th through the 31st.
Don't Miss it!**

Retirees Corner

The next meeting is October 9. Hope to see you there.

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.



Sympathies to:

Clark Buchanon on the death of his mother.
 Flora "Ann" Green on the death of her mother.

Congratulations to:

Ann Crawford on the birth of her grandson
 Carrie McGurk on the birth of her daughter
 Shannon O'Connor on the birth of her son

Retirees

Optical Discounts for CWA Local 2107 Retiree Club members
 Thanks to the efforts of Mike Vivirito, District 2 Retired Council President, the retirees can go to United Optical and receive the following discounts;

Exam (including glaucoma test)	\$30
Covered Frame	\$30
Non-covered Frame	20% discount
Single Vision Lenses	\$25
Bifocal Lenses	\$39
Trifocal Lenses	\$54
Contacts-Daily Wear	\$75
Contacts-Extended Wear	\$130
All Options	20% discount

United has contracted to provide optical services to CWA Retirees. The patient is responsible for all fees. The retirees will be issued identification cards. Patients should bring this card with them at the time of service but it is not mandatory. The computer code is: CWAR

Dates to Remember

Membership meetings

10-02	Northern Area	6:30 pm
10-03	Southern Area	6:30 pm
No Membership meetings in November		

Other Meetings

10-09	Retirees	10:00 am
10-16	Washington Metro Council	6:30 pm
11-01	Executive Board	TBA

Other

09-26	Williamsburg Advocate Conference
09-28	Mobilization Activity
10-05	Customer Service Week
10-17	Newsletter deadline
11-07	General Election Day
11-13	Safety Conference Call

Discount to Union members

Six Flags America—We now have Buy one, Get one free passes available at the Hall for any day through 10/29/06.

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