



Pension (and other) Rumors

by Ray Pomeroy

Diversity Proposal Adopted at 69th Annual Convention

from the National

We've all heard them and they're just that, rumors. What rumors have we heard?

Pension rumor 1: We are going to lose the lump sum cash-out.

Status: Possible. The lump sum is, like everything else, subject to bargaining. It's up to all of us to retain this option by supporting our bargaining team in '08.

Pension rumor 2: Because of the new Pension Protection Act, if I don't retire in 2007 my lump sum payout will be less.

Status: According to the experts this is likely, however Ron Collins from CWA District 2 had Bob Patrician, CWA Research Economist, look over the Verizon SPD and he came up with the following:

Article 6, Section 12 of the pension plan document describes in detail the terms of the pension cash-out for those who separate from service after 9/30/2003.

6.12 (c) (2) (c) lists three separate sets of assumptions and states

"The lump sum payable to a Window-Eligible Employee who elects a Service Pension or a Deferred Vested Pension cash-out shall equal the greatest of the amounts determined using the assumptions in (i), (ii) and (iii) below."

The three assumptions relate to interest rate, mortality and the age of the recipient for purposes of the calculation.

It then goes on to describe those three sets of assumptions as follows:

(i) GATT

Interest Rate: GATT amount using the 30 year Treasury security rate published by the Federal Reserve for the 2nd calendar month preceding the first day of the calendar quarter when the pension commences.

Mortality table: as described by the Secretary of the Treasury according to the Internal Revenue Code section 417(e).

Age: in whole years and months on the 15th day of the middle month of the calendar quarter when the pension begins

(ii) PBGC

Interest Rate: 120% of the applicable PBGC rate for the month prior to the calendar

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CWA Convention Adopts Innovative Plan on Diversity, Adds Voices of Local Activists to Top Leadership

In an historic action to support efforts to reach out to a new generation of workers – who are in growing numbers women and minority workers – the 2007 CWA Convention voted to expand CWA's 19-member Executive Board, establishing four at-large diversity seats that give greater voice to local leaders.

This action strengthens the foundation of a union already known for its progressive values and ensures that CWA leadership reflects

Who's Doing the Disrespecting?

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

When BACCSI, now VCSI, was created by Verizon, it was to provide a lower cost subsidiary to allow Verizon to compete in the deregulated services side of the business. In addition, it also created an enormous amount of tension between the bargaining units.

Verizon "CORE" technicians didn't like VCSI technicians "stealing their work" and VCSI technicians didn't understand why they were being disrespected. They were just doing their jobs. After all, they are CWA Brothers and Sisters too!

It took some time and effort, but CWA members at VCSI and Verizon united for the betterment of all. They understand each other's role and respect one another. They also understand Verizon insisted on this arrangement and the division it caused among the workers was just an added bonus for the Company.

Our unity is about to be tested again.

The big push toward FIOS deployment, policy changes and constant confusion has become the norm. Enter again VCSI announcing their intent to start hanging ONT's and installing triple plays. CWA is adamant that the Verizon Broadband Agreement captures the work from the Central Office to the ONT as exclusively "CORE" work. Additionally, the VCSI contract spells out VCSI's role.

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the diversity, experiences and strengths of the full range of CWA's membership.

Convention delegates established four at-large diversity board member seats representing four geographic areas of the union, with the goal of having at least three be people of color and at least two women.

"This is not about being politically correct, it's about doing the right thing, and that is to elect local leaders to our Executive Board and to reflect the makeup of our union membership so that our unity is stronger among

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Bargaining Committee Members Elected at District Meeting

The following were elected as bargaining representatives on the Verizon bargaining committee in District 2:

Jim Pappas, President Local 2336 - Representing Metro (DC, NORVA & MD SUB).

Steve Holland, President Local 2100 - Representing Maryland.

Chris Lane, President Local 2201 - Representing Virginia.

Linda Miller, President Local 2001 - Representing West Virginia.

The following members were elected as alternates on the bargaining committee:

Les Evans, President Local 2108 - Representing Metro (DC, NORVA & MD SUB)

Denise Burns, President Local 2107 - Representing Maryland.

Paula Terveer, EVP Local 2202 - Representing Virginia.

Jimmy Mazzi, President Local 2011 - Representing West Virginia.

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President's Point of View.....

Denise Burns

How much is enough?

I have talked about both Verizon and at&t getting rid of people in prior articles but I have to bring up the subject again.

The employee turnover for the sales reps at at&t wireless is tremendous. With the company's slow destruction of the compensation plan more people are leaving to go to other companies. They fire people with little or no investigation into what they supposedly did, depending of course on who is doing the investigation. The Code of Conduct is their vague but powerful weapon. They terminate employees for things that would rate a write up or suspension on the wire-line side of the business, there is no suspension policy on the wireless side of the house.

I see a lot of disparities between ARSM areas. We need our members to call us when policies are put into effect. The company may be using policies at one store but not another. Disparate treatment cannot be tolerated.

At Verizon we see them offering EISP's (incentives to leave) when they are already understaffed. You don't have to wonder where the work is going. The large business, special services and government work is being given to Verizon Business, formerly MCI, which is a non-union subsidiary. The company is turning over FiOS work to their lower paid subsidiary VCSI (Verizon Con-

Ask A Lawyer

Americans are sometimes so sure and so proud of their rights and freedoms that they take them for granted -- assuming, for instance, that free speech protections apply everywhere, including at work. Wrong.

Truth is, the First Amendment often doesn't apply on the job and exercising what you think are your rights could get you fired. That's why Working America, the AFL-CIO's community affiliate, has started an online Q&A called Ask a Lawyer. Simply write in with a question and check back for a response.

Questions so far include concerns about work hours and breaks and whether an employer can control a worker's after-hours activities, such as dating a coworker or blogging.

Check it out at www.workingamerica.org/askalawyer/.

nected Solutions) and in other departments such as building maintenance and Outside Plant Construction they are contracting out the work. They know that they have to wait six months after an EISP before they can contract out any work in the title and area where the offer is made and that's what they do.

VCSI, which is a unionized subsidiary, contracts out much of what the "core" company sends them and is therefore just backdoor contracting. We see it all the time and are filing grievances when we do. If you know it is happening call a steward or officer and give them the information, where, what, when, who and possibly why.

In the Support and Resource Center (SRC), they continue to offer "A" time (also known as 'P' time or 'cold' time, all terms for unpaid excused time) and our members are still taking it. Taking "A" time hurts everyone. It just convinces the company that they have more than enough people. Missing commitments no longer seems to bother them.

The latest Technological Change Summary report we received from Verizon shows them implementing a lot of changes that automate the SRC's work, meaning they will need less people to do the work that is left. The company says the cuts will be handled through attrition, but someone somewhere will be out of a job.

I have been with Verizon and its predecessors for thirty some years. This is the first time I know of, that a noticeable number of people are leaving with very little service. They are leaving because they aren't sure where the company is going or because of Verizon's treatment of its employees and customers.

Get in the right mind set for working at at&t or Verizon. Don't let these companies give you the impression that they are doing anything for your benefit. The bottom line today is the bottom line, it's all about money and the companies will do almost anything to make a buck. They'll do it at our expense and the customers.

"Is it not required that a corporate balance sheet give at least as much attention to the number and quality of jobs it has provided during the year as it does profits?" Thomas Donahue

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all our members," said CWA President Larry Cohen.

"Bringing the perspective and ideas of local leaders and activists to the top ranks of the union's leadership can only make us stronger and wiser and better equipped to take on the tough challenges facing our movement in the 21st century," Cohen said.

"Our fight for economic justice in the workplace and social justice in our world is strengthened today by this action to make certain that workers of every description see themselves reflected in our leadership," he said.

"The fight for equity and justice is what organized labor is all about, and CWA has always been on the forefront of positive change," said CWA Secretary-Treasurer Barbara J. Easterling. "This diversity plan ensures that all will have a strong voice in the workplace, in society and in our union," she said. "It's the right thing to do, the smart thing to do, the only thing to do," she said.

This action was a key component of CWA's Ready for the Future program, adopted last year to strengthen CWA's grassroots activist base and develop strategic initiatives to take on critical issues in industries and public policy.

CWA Secretary-Treasurer Easterling headed a committee of local and national elected officers that over the past year explored ways to increase Executive Board diversity. The committee mailed surveys to solicit and incorporate suggestions from locals, held regional meetings and met with local unions to exchange ideas on building diversity and determine how best to move forward. The committee proposal was posted on the union's website, with members posting comments, discussing the proposal and offering recommendations.

The CWA Executive Board initially will appoint four members to the at-large diversity seats; those appointments will come from nominations made by the Committee on Equity, the National Women's Committee and the CWA Minority Caucus. Nominations will be made by Sept. 1, 2007. At-large diversity board members will have a full voice and vote on all Executive Board deliberations.

Check out the Union Sportsmens Alliance at:

www.unionsporstmen.com



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quarter when the pension begins.

Mortality table: Non-Insured Unisex Pension 1984 (UP84)

Age: in whole years and months on the 15th day of the middle month of the calendar quarter when the pension begins

(iii) GATT

Interest Rate: Applicable interest rate according to IRS Code 417(e).

Mortality table: as described by the Secretary of the Treasury according to the Internal Revenue Code section 417(e).

Age: in whole years and months on the 15th day of the middle month of the calendar quarter when the pension begins

So with the passage of the Pension Protection Act of 2006 the change which people are worried about comes into play as the third set of assumptions above "(iii) GATT". However, even with that change in the law, the governing language in the plan is the "shall equal the greatest of the amounts determined using the assumptions in (i), (ii) and (iii)" language.

The new law is anticipated by the plan document but merely adds an additional calculation to determination of which of the three is the greatest amount.

Note: the question of how long the lan-

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Again "CORE" techs will think their work is being stolen and VCSI techs will feel disrespected. The reality is "CORE" work is not being stolen; it is being given away by Verizon. VCSI technicians, and all technicians, are being disrespected, by Verizon!

Today, CWA and VCSI technicians are still fighting to obtain Senior Multi-Media tech pay for the video work that they are already performing. VCSI stubbornly refuses to grant this pay. CWA strongly believes that this is a contractual violation that is going to be in front of an arbitrator very soon.

No matter where CWA members work or what work their contract allows them to perform. They always stick together for the good of all. We will persevere in our struggles.

Verizon will continue to divide us, CWA will do the opposite. CWA members will unite to make our lives better, so we may all live the American dream.

This letter from Ron Collins was meant as a framework for us to build on, we think we couldn't possibly improve on it.

guage continues to apply is clear in 6.12 (a) which describes the window being available through August 2, 2008.

The bottom line on pensions? Get a good financial planner to help you with your retirement decisions.

Extension rumor: Verizon wants a contract extension.

Status: To date Verizon has not approached the union about an extension.

Strike rumor: I can be fired for participating in a strike.

Status: No, you can't be fired for engaging in a lawful strike. The NLRA, under Section 7, recognizes strikes as a protected concerted activity of employees. Whether you are involved in an Economic or ULP (Unfair Labor Practice) Strike, you are still considered an employee.

This doesn't mean a strike, the ultimate tool we have, is always the best means of settling a contract dispute. Anyone that was with Bell Atlantic in 1995 remembers working some 8 months without a contract. Sometimes the company is a little too ready and a little too eager to see us on the street.

By the way next year is a Contract Year NOT a Strike Year and our members should be referring to it as such.

Worker to Worker Organizing

by Denise Burns

Do you know someone that works in a non-union shop that would like to have a Union? Some facts that they should know; Union workers earn more, they have better benefits, they have a contract with protection against unfair treatment, guaranteed pay rates, a grievance process and Union Workers have a legally protected voice in the workplace.

The more people that are organized in this country the better our power will be. Please take a few minutes to talk to a friend, neighbor or relative and see if they are interested.

If someone is, get their name and contact information and call the local office or Lynette Snell on 301 572-6770.

Retirees Corner

The next regular meeting is August 13.

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.

Get Well to:

Jimmy Leakan recovering from knee surgery
 Mitzi Turner
 Mike Turner

Congratulations to:

Mark McDonough on the birth of his daughter
 Christina Vance on the birth of her daughter

We ask that you all keep Al Schuitema, former Northern Area Vice President in your thoughts and prayers. Al is battling a number of serious health issues and has been for quite some time. We understand that he is back in the hospital but have no other information at this time.

Verizon

Medical, Prescriptions, Dental & Vision issues relating to payment of bills, providers, directories, medical necessity of services, forms, plan questions, retirees:

John Petrini 800 627-0200 Fax: 610 566-3123

FMLA, SADP, CORE issues:

Bill Sonnik 888 571-7218 Fax: 304 264-4189

Retirees:

Sue Anderson 888 324-4969 Fax: 973 691-0865

Dates to Remember

Membership meetings

08-06	Northern Area	6:00 pm
08-07	Southern Area	6:30 pm
09-11	Combined Meeting	

Other Meetings

08-13	Retiree meeting	10:00 am
08-15	ACFC meeting	
08-16	Metro Baltimore Council Meetings	5 & 7 pm
08-29	Executive Board Meeting	
09-10	Retiree Meeting	10:00 am
09-14	Presidents Meeting	

Other

07-29 thru 8-03	Leadership Training
07-30 thru 7-31	Verizon steward training
08-21	Newsletter deadline

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