



Give Yourself Some Credit

by Shannon Opfer

Now that the economy is struggling, it's a good time to pay attention to your own financial security. As residents of Maryland, we are entitled to a free credit report from the "Big Three" credit reporting agencies once a year. The Christmas spending season is upon us, and it might be a good time to take a look at your credit report. For your free credit report, go to www.annualcreditreport.com,

Unfortunately, identity theft is all too common in our society and keeping current on your credit scores is a good way to avoid it. The interest rates of any loans you might take depend on your credit score. Finding out something is wrong after the fact won't do you any good.

Right now, Union Plus is offering free FICO scores online for a limited number of union members. If you are interested, visit www.freeficoscore.com/membersonly. This is a benefit for union members only and it will be checked, so please don't send it to non-members.

If you have had some trouble, and are experiencing problems, there are resources available to you as a union member. Please call (877)833-1745 or visit www.moneymanagement.org/FinancialFreedom if you need credit counseling or debt management services. There are many other helpful suggestions and benefits available at www.unionplus.org, www.acfc.com, or VZ life. Don't put it off until its too late.

Verizon Benefit Renewal

by Shannon Opfer

The last date for Verizon benefit renew is November 25. Please go over your policy and make sure that you are using the one that makes the most sense for you and your family.

The MCN plan, starting January 1, 2009, states that there shall not be a requirement for referrals to specialist providers. The network utilized by the Benefit Administrator shall be the Aetna Choice POS II network. We have many members in the Aetna HMO who generally would be better served by the

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AT&T Meetings in Dallas Will Set Stage for Winter Bargaining

from the National

Gearing up for nationwide bargaining in 2009, local leaders representing members at AT&T will meet in Dallas with CWA officers and staff next week for several days of intense preparation.

About 300 participants will attend the bargaining council meetings, being held for both the 125,000-member Core group at AT&T and the 20,000 members at AT&T Mobility "Orange."

The theme of the council meetings and the subsequent mobilization campaign and bargaining is, "One Union, One Fight, One Future."

On Tuesday, the first full day of the meetings, AT&T members across the country are being asked to wear red shirts to work as a sign of solidarity and support for their bargaining team.

The agenda includes a discussion of the future at AT&T as the company moves further into wireless and other new generation technology. Participants will also take a hard look at economics and what other CWA units have accomplished in bargaining at Verizon

and Qwest, as well as in other industries. Both Core and Mobility meetings will include discussions about mobilizing members for local and national activities that support the critical talks.

AT&T Mobility bargaining will begin first, on Jan. 21, 2009, in Richmond, Va. The current Mobility "Orange" contract expires February 7.

The Core talks will take place at six tables around the country beginning Feb. 24 to negotiate contracts for AT&T Legacy (formerly Legacy-T), AT&T East (formerly SNET), AT&T West (formerly PacBell), AT&T Midwest (formerly Ameritech) AT&T South (formerly Southwestern Bell) and AT&T Southeast (formerly BellSouth). Five of the current contracts expire April 4, 2009. The AT&T Southeast contract expires next August, but bargaining will be held in unison with the other companies.

Phil Pascoe, CWA Local 2107 Wireless Vice President, will be attending the bargaining council meetings, representing the local.

Sharon Harrison will serve as the District 2 representative on the AT&T Mobility Bargaining Committee.

The Employee Free Choice Act and Comcast

by Ray Pomeroy

Now that the election is over the most important thing, politically, for the labor movement to work on is getting the Employee Free Choice Act (EFCA) passed.

Recently there has been quite a bit of press about the "danger" of this bit of legislation. Some naysayers are claiming unions are trying to take away the fundamental right of Americans to have a secret ballot and we are "strong arming" employees into doing what they might not want to do. It is amazing to hear such a thing when we've seen so many big businesses strong arm their employees to keep them from joining a union.

Our experience in Local 2107 demonstrates this. We are currently involved in an organizing drive at Comcast, with an election scheduled for November 25th that would not have been necessary had the EFCA been in effect.

The majority of the people in the unit want a union and would have been spared hours of "captive audience meetings", imported anti-union executives and lawyers and company posturing in general.

Comcast is almost as well known for its anti-union tactics as Verizon Wireless. During the current drive we understand employees have been subjected to meetings of 3 or 4 hours long with, at times, HR, Philadelphia Lawyers and other high level managers in attendance.

They've had ride-alongs with people other than local management. Management has posted portions of our by-laws and portions of an old letter written by a union representative in another area, both without context, on the wall, all to discourage a "union yes" vote.

On the other side of their "you don't need a union" campaign they had the trucks power

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President's Point of View.....

Denise Burns

What's been going on this year within the district and the local?

We've had three recent arbitration wins. A great win by CWA Local 2336 was the decision on a termination at at&t Mobility. The company cried fraud but the arbitrator said they didn't prove it, therefore, at&t Mobility did not have just cause to terminate the grievant and the grievance is sustained. The company was directed to reinstate the grievant to his previous position with full seniority, benefits and back pay, less interim earnings. This person was terminated in 3/06.

A win for the Correctional Officers Local 2911 with this decision: reinstate the grievant with full seniority and benefits; a twelve day suspension is warranted given the grievant's admitted poor judgment, but is time already served; the grievant will be made whole for any and all medical costs and expenses incurred during her improper discharge as a result of a lack of health insurance; the grievant shall receive full back pay less the twelve day suspension and any interim earnings. The person was terminated in 9/06.

VCSI MMSTs Local 2222 received this award: The company violated the Agreement when it failed to consider certain tasks performed by MMSTs in installing and maintaining FiOS video service as SMMST work within the meaning of Article 21, Section 12 (b) of the Agreement, and to compensate the MMSTs at the higher SMMST for the whole

day when they performed out of title work for one hour or more that day, as required by Article 4, Section 10; MMSTs who were not paid properly for work performed on or after 11/8/05 should be made appropriately whole. Some technicians will receive several thousand dollars.

The local continues to fight the unjust terminations at at&t Mobility. Their attitude is fire first, sometimes with no real cause but they stick to their guns. Hopefully, in the year ahead we will prevail in some of our own local arbitrations. We've made settlements to minor grievances at at&t Mobility. We've resolved some tardy issues without grievances.

Settlements with Verizon are difficult, but we have gotten some time back on suspensions. Some Verizon management will work with us to resolve issues in advance of grievances.

A great win for the district was the withdraw of an Article 35 situation that affected technicians in the non-protected areas.

Most of our issues seem to be company or district wide, not just local issues.

"As sure as a man will raise his hand by some instinct, to shield himself against a blow, so surely will workmen, instinctively, periodically, gather into unions. The Union is the arm that Labor instinctively throws up to screen its head." Daniel DeLeon 1949

ACFC Resources

by Dutchin Webster

The ACFC is a joint CWA and Verizon committee bargained-for especially to meet the family and daily-life needs of the CWA membership in the mid-Atlantic region. The committee will again receive funding based on the most recent contract between CWA and Verizon. Our "mission" is to come up with programs to help YOU, the CWA represented employee, with work/life issues.

- Our current free on-line promotions are:
- Living Green Toolkit
 - Cooperative Parenting & Divorce book
 - Clark Smart Parents, Clark Smart Kids book
 - The Single Parent Resource book
 - ADD & ADHD Answer Book

Check all this out and more at www.ACFCcares.com

Holidays

CWA 2107 would like to wish everyone happy and healthy holidays. While you are celebrating with your families, it is a good time to think of those that will not be able to do so.

"It's important to remember the thousands of men and women who serve our nation and those who are recovering in military/ veterans hospitals," said Army Col. Norvell V. Coats, commander, Walter Reed Health Care System. "The Holiday Mail for Heroes program is a wonderful outreach effort and a great way to acknowledge the sacrifices of our men and women in uniform."

Holiday cards should be mailed to:

Holiday Mail for Heroes
P.O. Box 5456
Capitol Heights, MD. 20791-5456

All cards must be postmarked by Dec. 10.

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You Don't Have to Finish

by Ray Pomeroy

If the center won't move a job you aren't going to get to and your boss can't do anything with it because there isn't anyone to give it to, what do you do?

If you can't or don't want to work late and you haven't been forced to work overtime in the manner prescribed by the contract, leave it on your log and have it taken care of in the morning.

The company won't let your boss do their job anymore and you are the victim. They may not like you leaving work on your log but it isn't your problem. If everybody handles it in the same way eventually the company will fix the problem.

(Benefits from page 1)

MCN.

The option we always refer to as the "Cadillac" plan is the Managed Care Network (MCN), which saw some changes in the new contract and comes highly recommended by John Petrini, who is our Union appointed expert on Medical, Prescriptions, Dental & Vision, along with additional information related to our new contract.

Read up on the available plans before you take advantage of the open enrollment period. Remember, healthcare for you and your family is something that you want to take the time to get right.

(Continued from page 1)

washed, which no-one had ever seen before, and they decreased the work load, (Decreasing the work load is one of the things that the workers are fighting for) and if the vote goes the company's way on the 25th it's a good bet the work load will go back up and those trucks will never be clean again.

In the past, in an attempt to keep the union out, Comcast has given the workers bonuses, promised promotions (that were never given) and even suggested that there were new flat panel TV's around if folks voted no.

These aren't new tactics and they certainly aren't confined to Comcast. If the union is so bad for the workers why is the company willing to go to these extremes to keep us out?

We saw much the same thing at Cavalier Telephone when we organized that unit and of course it continued in the form of foot dragging for almost 2 years while we tried to negotiate a first contract.

What would be different if the Employee Free Choice Act were in effect? First off instead of waiting around for an NLRB election, giving the company time to hold captive meetings and do all the other anti union things they do, we would just have to get a

majority of the workers to sign cards (card check recognition) showing that they want a union and the company would have to recognize the union. In addition if a company were to be caught brow beating it's employees the way they do now there would be penalties to contend with.

The second toughest thing about organizing is that when you do win an election, companies often drag out the negotiations on the all important first contract, sometimes for years.

Many times while negotiations are dragging on (such as during Cavalier bargaining) employees of the same company in nearby locations will be given raises, bonuses and better working conditions. After a while some frustrated employee files for decertification and we lose the unit. That's the whole purpose of the company dragging their feet. Under the Employee Free Choice Act this would no longer be a viable tactic. Under the EFCA if a contract wasn't hammered out in ninety days time it would go in front of an arbitrator.

For more information on the EFCA go to the politics page of our website at www.cwa-2107.org/Politics.htm and go to www.cwa-union.org/efca/ to pledge your support.

at&t Mobility, It's Time to Step Up

by Shannon Opfer

The 2007 CWA Convention passed a resolution to create the Strategic Industry Fund. This fund was created to promote the union way of life to both non-members and members, and to help combat the union busting that is going on in America.

The reasoning behind this is simple. The more unionization we have, the better off we will all be. Unions bring up wages, promote safety, and generally improve the lives of their members. Non-members also benefit from this. When our pay and benefits go up, it forces other companies to increase theirs as well in order to keep their employees.

I'm sure by now, we all realize just what unions do for us. For example, without the unions there would be no 40 hour work week, paid holidays, or child labor laws.

Big business in America does not want unions. For years, they have spent millions lobbying for anti-union legislation. They have hired lawyers who specialize in union busting tactics. In some cases, they have shut down workplaces instead of allowing the union to gain a foothold.

SIF was designed to battle these and other issues by directing funds to specific campaigns/projects that focus on an industry or company. We also focus on educating our members. These campaigns require our members' participation. Without employees who are willing to take these classes and fight for what is best for themselves and their fellow employees, the SIF is pointless. We cannot sit idly by any longer. Many of our members would rather sit back and let someone else do the work. The someone else who is doing the work is the union busters. They are getting their message out there. Without people stepping up to take these classes and get our message out, this battle we are facing will continue to grow more difficult.

We know how busy this time of year can be, but without the unions, how many of those things would you be able to do.

With bargaining coming up for at&t, it is more important than ever to get this message out. We are currently getting classes together. If you are interested, please call the hall or talk to a steward. We need people to get involved. If not now, then when? If not you, then who?

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.

Sympathies to:

Jon Bobel on the death of his father-in-law
Patrick O'Neill on the death of his father-in-law

Congratulations to:

Brandon Hood on the birth of his child

Get Well to:

Gary Goldsborough

Dates to Remember

Membership meetings

No meetings scheduled in December

01/05 Combined Membership 6:30 pm

Other Meetings

12/03 Community Service Committee 4:00 pm
12/08 Retiree Christmas Luncheon 12:00 pm
12/10 ACFC
12/12 MD Local Presidents 10:00 am
12/16 AFL-CIO Executive Board 10:00 am
12/18 Metro Baltimore Council 5:00 pm

Other

11/25 Comcast Election vote
12/02 at&t SIF training 8:30 am
12/03 at&t SIF training 8:30 am
12/04-12/06 Customer Service Conference
12/16 Newsletter deadline
01/07-01/09 Metro Baltimore Leadership Conference

Bargained for Holidays, Both Contracts

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11/28 Day after Thanksgiving
12/25 Christmas
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