



Corporate Profit Sharing

This March, Verizon employees will be receiving their corporate profit sharing check again. While this is a great thing, don't forget that it is bargained for. The company didn't just decide to give us this bonus because we've worked so hard, or because they felt like being nice. Our union fought for this. Checks should be received March 6.

at&t Mobility

**WEAR YOUR
CWA
RED BUTTONS**

Support your bargaining team
Keep up on the issues
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call the hotlines for updates
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Employee Free Choice Act, Again

by Shannon Opfer

The economy is crumbling around us. Unemployment is climbing. Is this really the time to worry about something like the Employee Free Choice Act?

Absolutely. Its more important than ever. Right now, bankers are still getting their bonuses and benefits with the bailout, and yet there is so little out there to protect the working class. EFCA is a step in that direction.

If there are those of you out there who still don't know what EFCA is, it is a bill before Congress that will make it easier to unionize employees that want to be unionized. It DOES NOT remove the ability to have a secret ballot. It just allows employees who want to unionize an easier way to do so.

EFCA would create meaningful penalties for employers who violate agreements. It creates smoother paths to a first contract includ-

ing binding arbitration if necessary.

According to CWA News, big business has put \$200 million into negative campaigns to defeat EFCA. Not only that, three days after Bank of America Corp. received a \$25 billion handout, they hosted a teleconference for big corporate executives. The subject of the call wasn't how to help the economy. It was to persuade corporations to send "large contributions" to groups fighting Employee Free Choice.

Bank of America and AIG, are trying to use funds given to them from the taxpayers to deny those same taxpayers their fundamental rights.

Afraid that EFCA will pass, businesses are creating new groups designed to battle it. A new employer umbrella group, "Save Our Secret Ballot," is putting pressure on individ-

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Working Without a Contract

by Shannon Opfer

At the time this was written, at&t mobility is working without a contract. There are many questions as to what that means.

You will continue to work. You will still receive a paycheck, the company cannot change your wages or working conditions. All benefits, including healthcare, will remain in effect. The grievance procedure will continue, although arbitration probably will not.

You also have the legal right to participate in "concerted activity." You can mobilize on the job, wear buttons and stickers, leaflet and do informational picketing.

Why has the bargaining committee made this decision? By not striking, we are showing the public that we care about service and quality even if the company doesn't. We will continue to do everything we can to ensure our customers receive good service.

Also, the company is prepared for a strike. Why give them what they want? They have been trying to convince our members to cross a picket line if we strike. By not striking now, we are showing that we are willing to go the extra mile in order to get what we

need. If the decision is made to strike we have over 150,000 CWA members at at&t who will support you.

As of right now, it is not business as usual. Mobilization is more important than ever. Our strength in bargaining comes from a strong and visible mobilization. Make sure the company knows that we stand together behind our bargaining team. Wear your red CWA button. Display signs on your cubicles, lockers, and bulletin boards. Do workplace actions, informational picketing, and rallying. Your power is what will move AT&T management at the table.

At this point the company is hoping you'll resign. It is worth it to stay and fight. Unions are only as strong as our membership. If we stand together we stand to gain what we need in order to have a decent work environment.

Please remember to call the hall and report any retaliation and or discipline that comes from mobilization efforts. If you don't let us know what going on, we have no way of knowing and correcting the problem.

You can check the website or call the hotline for updates.

Off The Clock Work

by Shannon Opfer

Wal-Mart, possibly the largest anti-union company, has agreed to pay \$640 million to settle lawsuits across the country claiming that it forced employees to work off the clock. It has been described as the largest settlement ever for lawsuits over wage violations. It is believed that Wal-Mart is afraid of what they might face with Obama in office, so they chose to make this settlement. This will probably aid Wal-Mart in battling any drive toward unionization. Employees won't push for a contract if they feel they are getting some benefits

How is it that Wal-Mart employees are suing over being forced to work without being paid, and yet there are union members who are volunteering to do so? Every time we give the company a free minute, we are pushing the union further back. Unions have fought to get forty hour work weeks and overtime. If you are working, but not being paid, there is something wrong. The fault does not always lie with the company. We all know what our start and stop times are.

It looks pretty bad if Wal-Mart employees are willing to sue over something we are giving away for free.

E-mail Addresses

President: Denise Burns
 dburns@cwa-2107.org
EVP: Mike Parker
 mparker@cwa-2107.org
Sec-Treas: Dutchin Webster
 dwebster@cwa-2107.org
Northern VP: Eddie Miller
 emiller@cwa-2107.org
Southern VP: James Padgett
 jpadgett@cwa-2107.org
Wireless VP: Phil Pascoe
 ppascoe@cwa-2107.org
Asst Sec-Treas: Sandi Burch
 sburch@cwa-2107.org
Editor: Shannon Opfer
 editor@cwa-2107.org
General Mailbox
 2107@cwa-2107.org



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**Communications Workers
 Of America**
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Officers:

President-Denise Burns
Secretary/Treasurer-Dutchin Webster
Executive Vice President-Mike Parker
Vice President South-James Padgett
Vice President North-Eddie Miller
Wireless VP-Phil Pascoe
Asst Secretary-Treas-Sandi Burch
Editor-Shannon Opfer
Assistant Editor-Matt Dement

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President's Point of View.....

Denise Burns

Let's talk Verizon for a few minutes. I just spent two days in hearings at the Public Service Commission (PSC). The hearings were brought about by the tentative settlement reached by the staff of the PSC, the Office of the Peoples Council (OPC), and Verizon.

Listening to the testimony was one of the most eye opening experiences I have ever had. I can understand how the OPC and PSC may think this is a good settlement for consumers. If you believe everything Verizon testified to, they are doing all they can to protect the consumer and help the company grow as well.

As an employee, what I heard was half truths and out and out lies. First, the settlement will get most customers that were out of service and waiting for appointments between \$2.77 and \$10.88. I guess it seems like a fair settlement to those involved but it certainly doesn't say much for the customer that sat home or lost time from work waiting for us.

There was a letter sent from Maryland President Bill Roberts to the PSC when this all started saying the company would move technicians over to "copper" from "FiOS" and there would be 1000 hours daily overtime to catch up on service commitments. The company did move over some technicians and allow overtime, the majority in FiOS, and push out the dates the customers could expect us to be there. That way we weren't missing appointments in some cases and we didn't use the overtime because the date was so far out the techs

were working on futures.

The most interesting fact to me was about service in the future all Verizon management would say was that they would "try" to do better. We know what that means, status quo. They didn't tell the OPC or the PSC about their continual downsizing of the force. In fact, as we were in the hearings more EISP's were being offered.

It was also brought to the PSC's attention that the data they are getting from Verizon, which is what the settlement is based on, is not quite accurate. There were questions about measurements on out of service troubles that couldn't be answered by the company. In fact, at the close of the hearings on Friday, the company was still required to submit more testimony or a sworn statement on how the calculations are done. It is based on what is two days, or four days and how it is counted by the company. It seems if a customer accepts a new commitment even at the company's request it is not reported as a missed commitment because the customer is willingly accepting a new appointment. And what choice do they have?

The settlement as it stands is only in Verizon's best interest. It will give them deregulation. They will raise costs, determined by the market, without oversight. The biggest problem I see that led to the agreement is that the PSC staff and the OPC did not talk to anyone in Verizon that really does the work or knows how things really are. They didn't do enough research. They took Verizons' word as gospel. Why

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ACFC Cares

The ACFC has resources available to Verizon union members. ACFC is a joint committee of associates and management designed to give employees tools they might need in day to day life.

Some of the tools available right now are:
 Caregivers Toolkit.
 I have a friend who...(a book about teens)
 Addicted Kids DVD
 Living Green Toolkit
 The College Solution book
 Cooperative Parenting on Divorce

For further information go to www.ACFCcares.com, or call 877-ACFC-HELPS.

Fundraisers

Throughout March and April, the Community Service Committee will be collecting items for a yard sale. You can bring gently used items to the union hall, or look for a box in your work location. Please only give items that might be worth reselling.

Also, beginning March 2, 2009, we will be selling Joe Corbis. If you think you would be interested in selling some, please contact the hall and get the information. If not, please support us by buying.

The CSC meets once a month and could always use some ideas and help. If interested please call the hall, or check the dates for meetings on the back of the newsletter.

(EFCA from page 1)

ual states to adopt constitutional amendments requiring the election route. They have begun to target Arizona, Arkansas, Missouri, Nevada, Utah and the District of Columbia. AFL-CIO official Fred Azcarte calls the group “a shadow corporate front group.” It leans heavily on businessmen and known pro-business, anti-labor politicians.

While we are trying to unionize workers, big business continues to thwart us at every turn. They hold “closed door” meetings threatening employees if they join unions, or even discuss the possibility. They fire people known to be active in unionization. They tell lies about unions and what employees can expect from them.

These underhanded tactics are exactly why we need EFCA. Unions are fighting them, but it is difficult. One of our biggest efforts is to get the word out to our members.

Talk to your representative. We need to make sure that EFCA doesn't get put aside with everything that is coming before Congress. Show your support so we can get this bill passed. All we're talking about is the ability for workers to bargain a fair contract. If EFCA is something that CEOs feel so strongly against, I'm pretty sure that it's going to be something worth looking into.

Current Addresses

The union has quite a bit of information that we send out throughout the year. If you move or relocate, it is very important to keep us up on your current address. If anything changes we need your current information so we can get the information out to you. You can call the hall with that information, or e-mail us at 2107@cwa-2107.org

Coffee Anyone?

from UCS News Service

An NLRB judge recently ruled that Starbucks had illegally fired three baristas and otherwise violated federal labor laws in seeking to beat back unionization efforts at several of its Manhattan Cafes.

In Michigan, an NLRB regional director approved a settlement between the company and a union over the firing of a union member who had been active in organizing at his Starbucks outlet.

Might be something to think about before you get that cup of coffee tomorrow morning.

(President page 2)

wouldn't they? Verizon is an upstanding business with caring and sharing people at the top!

From the company's standpoint, this is all about deregulation. They want to be another Comcast or Cavalier. They want to answer to no one! Wouldn't we all like that?

Deregulation has done little for consumers. When the banks removed regulations, look where it got us! The economy is in the tank! They CEO's and higher management are indicted or in jail and peoples' livelihoods are gone.

What will happen to this work force, to all of us, if Verizon Maryland gets what it wants without oversight? Things are bad enough

now. Can you imagine what the company would try and get away with if they could? We can't sit by and watch it get worse. We have to keep an eye on Verizon and make sure that they do not get deregulation passed. The only ones who would benefit would be the higher ups, not the customers and certainly not the employees.

“The problem with American competitiveness has nothing to do with the work ethic of American workers. The problem has to do with chief executives who earn 100 to 150 times as much as their workers, multinationals that export jobs somewhere else, and a government that encourages it.” Jeff Crosby

***note in 2006 the average earning for executives grew to 364 times as much as their workers

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Lilly Ledbetter Bill

from the UCS News Service

President Barack Obama has signed into law a labor-supported bill that gives women, blacks and Hispanics powerful new tools to challenge pay discrimination. It was the first significant piece of legislation signed by the new president.

The bill, the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act, was named after a longtime supervisor at a Goodyear tire plant in Alabama who for years was being paid less than her male counterparts. She sued her employer under the Fair Pay Act, but the Supreme Court rejected her suit on the grounds she should have filed her claim within 180 days of “the alleged unlawful employment practice”- the initial decision to pay her less than men.

Because she didn't learn of the discrimination until years after it began, the court said in a 5-4 decision that she had no case.

The bill relaxes the statute of limitations, making clear that each new paycheck is a violation of the law if it results “in whole or

in part” from a discriminatory pay decision made in the past.

Obama supported the bill as a senator from Illinois, and he danced with Ledbetter at one of the inaugural balls. By contrast, George W. Bush threatened to veto the bill, saying it would encourage a flood of lawsuits by workers asserting “stale claims.”

Senate and House votes on the Ledbetter bill generally followed party lines. In the House, three Republicans voted for it, and five Democrats voted against it. In the Senate, five Republicans voted for the bill and no Democrats opposed it,

Republicans said the bill was unfair to employers. They will be exposed to “decades-old discrimination claims that they have no ability to defend,” said Representative John Kline (R-Minn).

Obama approved the bill saying it would “send a clear message that making our economy work means making sure it works for everybody.”

Retirees Corner

The retirees will be holding a shrimp feast on March 9, 2009. It will be held at 11:00 am and will be in the basement of the union hall.

Sympathies to:

Carla Queen on the death of her father & brother
Mike Mattingly on the death of his mother

Union Plus Legal Service

1-888-993-8886 or www.unionplus.org/legal.

at&t

Payroll: 888-722-1787
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Dates to Remember

Membership meetings

03/04/09 Combined Membership 06:30 pm
04/06/09 North Membership 06:00 pm
04/08/09 South Membership 06:30 pm

Other Meetings

02/24/09 AFL-CIO
02/25/09 Executive Board 04:00 pm
02/26/09 ACFC meeting 10:00 am
03/13/09 Presidents meeting
03/19/09 ACFC meeting
03/19/09 Baltimore Metro Council
03/23/09 Union Night at Lawyers Mall 6:00 pm
03/25/09 at&t Steward meeting
03/26/09 Verizon Steward meeting
03/31/09 Executive Board 4:00 pm
04/01/09 CSC 4:00 pm

Other

02/23-2/24 New Officer Training
03/01/09 Collection for Yard Sale Begins
03/09/09 Retiree Shrimp Feast
03/17/09 Deadline newsletter
03/19-03/20 Advance Stewards Training

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