



New Regime

by Shannon Opfer

Once upon a time, we worked for a kinder, gentler company. The relationship between the union and the company was a working relationship, not an adversarial one. No, this isn't a fairy tale, it just seems that way. Recently supervisors are being moved all over the place and being told to "crack down" on their people. Believe me, they are. Supervisors are afraid for their jobs in some cases, and are taking it out on their techs. People are being written up left and right, for things that have never been a problem before.

BE CAREFUL! Make sure you are where you are supposed to be, when you are supposed to be there. We recently had a third level supervisor in the area doing a ride along with a first level. I know that they stopped at every Verizon vehicle, not just the ones in the 1st level's crew. The 3rd level went over a list of safety equipment that technicians are supposed to have, and made sure that techs were wearing their safety equipment and that it was all in date.

If your safety equipment is out of date, it is just as much your responsibility as it is your supervisors'. This equipment has the potential to make sure that you go home safely,

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AT&T Core Contract

from the National

As AT&T continues contract negotiations with CWA, it is attempting to drastically shift the burden of health care costs to workers – despite the fact that in the first quarter of 2009, AT&T posted profits of more than \$3 billion.

Today, more members of Congress have joined the effort, including U.S. Reps Joe Baca, Linda Sanchez and Pete Stark of California and Lloyd Doggett of Texas, and Senator Sherrod Brown of Ohio, who have written AT&T CEO Randall Stephenson and demanded that negotiations be conducted fairly. We are asking that supporters contact their members of congress and step up the pressure on AT&T to step up and do the right thing.

EFCA, EFCA, EFCA

by Shannon Opfer

It seems that a huge amount of room in the last few new letters has been dedicated to the Employee Free Choice Act. There is a good reason for that.

This piece of legislation is incredibly important to the well being in the middle class of America. As the economy crashes around us, we sit, somewhat secure in the knowledge that we at least have some protection through out union. Shouldn't every American have that right?

Right now, polls show that the majority of Americans favor the changes that EFCA will bring. So why, if the majority of the voters favor it is it something that has the danger of

by Shannon Opfer

Verizon is now in the process of selling fourteen states to a company called Frontier. Wednesday, May 13, 2009, Verizon sent out a news release to employees stating what they were planning to do. Prior to the e-mail, the union had no inkling this was in the works.

The benefit for Verizon is clear, they get to eliminate \$3.3 BILLION in debt. They are able to do this because of a loophole called the Reverse Morris Trust Act. This act allows a company to spin off a division and "sell" it to a target company. This merge company must be owned by at least 50% of the original company's shareholders, but it is run by the target company. In this particular deal, Verizon shareholders will own approximately 68% of Frontier. With this sale, Verizon is able to divest their access lines in a tax free manner as they continue to focus on higher growth wireless business. In simple terms, Verizon gets to dump the divisions that aren't making money, rural land lines, and saves themselves the taxes on them. Frontier stands to gain an area that is larger than everything they have now, put together.

This is not the first time Verizon has done this. Last year, Verizon sold lines in New England to a company called Fairpoint. According to studies since then Fairpoint is on the verge of bankruptcy and customers are

not making it out of congress.

Corporations are terrified of EFCA. This seems ridiculous because all EFCA is calling for is the fair representation of employees. Why would anyone be against something that would benefit everyone? Studies have shown that when the number of union members rises, working conditions throughout the country rise. The country is in a deep recession. Wouldn't it make sense to do something to help the little guys?

I know you've heard it before and it seems like beating a dead horse. If you haven't yet contacted your elected officials, please do so. Every voice can count, if its loud enough. Don't let the corporations' money buy your silence. Stand up and do what's right.

Verizon Sale To Frontier

out of luck. The same thing has happened in Hawaii.

Part of the problem with this process is that the new company acquires 3.3 billion in debt, Verizon will get that amount in debt relief. How can a new company deal with having that much debt and still look to provide their customers, *our old customers*, with reliable service, much less look into broadband opportunities for the future?

CWA and IBEW stand to lose 7100 members represented in these areas. Frontier will be continuing the contract until it expires, but it will likely be a year until the sale is finalized and then there will only be one more year on the contract. After that, they don't have to negotiate with us.

Here's the big picture if you haven't figured it out already. Verizon management still makes less than their counterparts in companies like Comcast. They seem to think this is because we are union. How long do you think it will take for the company to start selling off chunks of our work? We have seen this coming for a long time. Since the development of Fiber to the Premises, many of us have seen the writing on the wall. The company would love to split off the profitable parts like wireless, FiOS, global IP networks.

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President's Point of View.....

Denise Burns

WAR! It boils down to one word. Whether you work at at&t Mobility or Verizon it doesn't matter. They want to reduce head count anyway they can! I am sickened that Verizon has actually turned into at&t Mobility as far as how their management acts and the way they treat their employees. But it doesn't surprise me.

Name of the game now is to pick someone out, watch them closely and terminate them. It seems that there is no room for mistakes. If you haven't been touched by this streak of determined persecution, count yourself lucky. You don't have to be a bad employee. You can be a great employee at at&t Mobility, a top seller, and have seniority and it means nothing to them.

Everyone needs to start filing grievances on their write ups; counseling notices, written notices, final written notices, or ECM's, anything that you are talked to about that will be placed in your file or you think may be placed in your file. Please don't wait until the last warning to notify us and remember you only have 30 days to get a grievance heard. If you have a question about something you need to ask your supervisor and if you can't reach your supervisor, call their boss. Don't get into a situation of asking someone you work with or some other supervisor because they because they may have been told wrong or do not know how it is being done in your work group. Your supervisor is the one that is going to write you up, most likely at the direction of their boss. The pressure is on the supervisors and they will sacrifice you if they have too.

If the company changes or makes new policies, we need a copy of them. They should not be changing any working

conditions, wages or benefits without bargaining with the union. Call us immediately if something is changed.

The Union (CWA) does not bargain discipline. I have been told that the point system used for at&t Mobility was said to be from us. NOT TRUE!

If you are called into a meeting with any management, RSM, ARSM, 1st, 2nd or 3rd levels, security, or above, ask what the meeting is about. If there is going to be two managers and just you, ask for a union rep. Even if it is just you and one manager, ask if the meeting could lead to discipline. You MUST ALWAYS ask for representation, they don't have to ask you if you want it. If they say no and at any point you believe the meeting is heading to something that would be discipline stop the meeting and ask for representation. Don't continue without it. They should tell you before you go into the meeting what the nature of the meeting is about.

Don't work unsafely. If you are told to do something that could be unsafe, lead to an accident or injury tell your supervisor it is unsafe and ask him to get it corrected before you proceed. If they don't call a steward or the hall. Don't put yourself in harms way because all they want is numbers.

STOP thinking these companies care about you. They don't. Its business! Protect your self and don't through your co-workers under the bus. Be united, not divided!

"Not often has the power of one man over another been used more callously than in the American labor market after the rise of the large corporation." John Kenneth Galbraith

Health Care Rally

from the District

There will be a Health Care Rally in D.C., on Thursday 6/25. We want it known that among other things, health care benefits cannot be taxed, and employers should be responsible for covering their workers.

District 2 has been asked to bring members to this rally. We will pay for buses, lunch, and refreshments. We won't be paying for lost time. If you like to join us you will need to take a vacation day, or make sure it is your ADO. Please call the hall and let us know as soon as possible if you would like to attend.

Membership Cards

by Jeff Rechenbach

The current CWA Membership Cards have passed their expiration date. Existing cards should be considered current until they are replaced. We've been working for several months to obtain the new stock of cards. We have encountered some problems which has caused a delay. Please be assured that we hope to have the new cards shortly.

New contracts should be coming out soon. It is the companies responsibility to print them and get them out to us, so we are waiting on them. Be patient, they will get here.

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What does this mean for us? It can only be a matter of time before Verizon starts plotting to do the same thing here, if they haven't already. If they could manage to get rid of our copper lines, they would get rid of the Public Service Commission complaining about long outages, non profitable wire lines, and a majority of our long term union employees.

Most of the employees that have been here for a while are still on the copper side, Verizon is no doubt hoping that if they can rid of them, the newer employees in FiOS won't worry about a contract in two years, and the CWA and IBEW will go away. The company would love to see us go away. Since we beat back their efforts to deregulate in the Maryland legislature and with the PSC, they would love to not have a union to answer to.

Be afraid! This should be a wake up call not only to us, but to our customers. Verizon is trying to dump the copper lines on someone else. The two other places that they have done this have not fared well. Why would it will go better this time? And worse, if it does go better, what's to stop them from doing the same thing here. We know they would love to get rid of the Eastern and Western Shore. In reality they have already eliminated most of the employees over there, bringing more of them over here. The work load over there hasn't diminished. They don't have the people to cover it, and they don't care. The same thing is happening in Southern Maryland. They have brought FiOS to Waldorf, but there are huge tracks that they have no intentions of going into. And if they were to sell off the copper lines, they wouldn't have to. All they would be required to do is provide service for the customers that they are choosing.

There is a possibility that the FCC will not allow this sale. We hope that this will be the case. If they are really looking out for the best interest of the customers, there is no way that this sort of sale makes any sense.

The CWA and IBEW have created a movement to bring high speed internet and FiOS to everyone, not just the urban areas. It is called "Speed Matters". It is an initiative that will force companies to bring high speed internet protocols all over the country, not just to the profitable urban areas. This may not be the most cost effective plan for the company, but it is the only one that makes sense for the country. High speed internet has become a necessity in our society. Bringing high-speed internet everywhere would ensure future jobs for us, and a better future for everyone.

When Will Enough Be Enough??

by Mark Balsamo, local 2100 printed with permission

When will enough be enough seems to be the question coming out of everyone's mouths these days. When will the company stop its blatant terrorist activities in some Director groups against our membership? When will they honor our negotiated seniority rights? When will they stop disciplining our members on this bogus bullshit productivity plan? (Didn't they learn anything from their last plan?) When will they stop forcing our VCSI members for daily overtime regardless of their personal obligations? When will they sit down with us in an honest attempt to resolve issues for our membership? When will the company get off our backs and get on our side? When will they realize that we are not the enemy??

Wow !! That just about sums up my feeling as to the state of the company today. I can hardly wait to see what surprises they have in store for us in the future. One would think we are near the end of a contract and we are asking for Management to eliminate all of their undeserved bonuses. After all it is the only thing they have left (for now) that hasn't already been stripped from them. I'm not sure how some of these Management people wash their face in the morning and can look themselves in the mirror. It must be a miserable feeling knowing that they are just a puppet, that they are required to do whatever they are told if they want to keep their jobs. I bet those same people tell their kids to stand up for yourself, never compromise your integrity and to always treat people as you would want to be treated.

In my 30 years around this company I have never seen so many people so miserable. I

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and if you're not using it, not only can you get fired, you could lose your life. If something is out of date, tell your supervisor. If they don't want to help, find a steward. We know the company's priority is numbers. Your priority should be your personal safety.

However, watch your numbers. People have been written up for low productivity. Make sure that you are doing skycreak and grounding procedures. If you're unclear on what they are, get an explanation from your supervisor. If they are going to hold us to these new standards, make sure you know what they are. "I didn't know" is not an excuse any more. Use common sense. If you don't have a ladder rack, don't put a ladder on your

am embarrassed to admit to anyone that I work for Verizon. Never is it a good news story. There are even reports that the great golden egg of Verizon called FIOS is seeing signs of trouble. None of this is necessary. We understand that the company is in a changing business. Hell, we deal with these changes everyday. I still believe that everyone wants the company to succeed, we understand what is at stake. It is the daily disrespect and bureaucratic bullshit that is killing this company right before our eyes and they don't care!!! Make no mistake about it, this company wants us gone. They will stop at nothing to get what they want, just look at the stunt they tried to pull in the Maryland Legislature this past session. And who stopped them? "The union", that's who. So if they want to kill us "I'll be Damned if we will dig the grave for them". If it's a war they want maybe we should just give them just what they are asking for.

So what will it take?? How many more people have to be threatened with unwarranted discipline before our membership explodes? How many more unnecessary ECM'S do we have to get? How many members are willing to stand up in the workplace and say "No More." How many are willing to take a stand no matter what it takes ?? How far are we willing to go and insist that we be treated with respect?

And when will we finally wake up and understand the Union Creed "that the injury of one is the concern of all". Ask yourselves..... *When Will Enough Be Enough???*

In Unity,

Mark

truck. If management has a problem with that, tell them to get you a ladder rack.

Document everything! In days past, the company would provide us with journals to keep track of our jobs. Ask your supervisor if they can still get you one, if not spend the \$.99, and buy a notebook. People are being questioned about things that happened months ago. If you have it written down it gives you something to refer back to.

I know it might seem like I'm being paranoid, but I'm not. Cover your ass before its too late.

We have to look out for each other. The company doesn't care about us. Get involved with the union and show that you care about yourself and your fellow employees.

Retirees Corner

The next regular meeting will be June 8, 2009.
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 10 am.

Congratulations to:

James Humphreys on the birth of his son

Sympathies to:

Jeanie Jordan on the death of her grandmother
Jason Mullikin on the death of his grandmother
Phil Pascoe on the death of his mother
Mark Hamrick on the death of his grandmother
Ricky Hamrick on the death of his great-grandmother
Rick Boecher on the death of his grandmother
Robert McMunn on the death of his father

Dates to Remember

Membership meetings

06/03/09 Combined Membership 6:30 p.m.

Other Meetings

06/03/09 Executive Board 1:00 p.m.

06/12/09 President's Meeting 10:00 a.m.

06/18/09 ACFC

06/18/09 Metro Baltimore Council 5&7 p.m.

Other

06/16/09 Deadline for Newsletter

06/21-06/23/09 Convention

06/25-06/26/09 Legislative Conference

06/25/09 Health Care Rally

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