



Unity Prevails

by Shannon Opfer

As you have hopefully heard, Verizon had brought contractors into West Virginia to splice, a clear violation of our contract. These contractors have been removed as of Saturday, September 19. CWA/IBEW members are being loaned in from other areas in order to meet the work load. In addition CWA is working on a "Working Retiree Agreement" to bring in additional technicians beginning October 1, 2009 and ending March 31, 2010.

This is great news. The union came together to enforce our contract and stopped this violation in its tracks. This was huge because it wasn't hard to see the writing on the wall. If the company had been allowed to use contractors in West Virginia, how long would it be before they brought them here?

So there it is. We stand together and stop injustice. Why can't we do that everyday, in every aspect of our jobs? Why are we still allowing the company to divide and conquer? We should not be fighting amongst ourselves, we should be standing together against the company.

The company has made many mistakes. They claim they've hired too many people but in reality there aren't enough people to do the work. They are just not using us in the proper places. That's their problem, not ours.

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Babbio Sued

by bloomberg.com

Larry Babbio, former President of Verizon Communications, is being sued by New Jersey.

Stevens Institute of Technology, a New Jersey university, was sued by the state attorney general for allegedly mismanaging school finances, improperly handling investments and overpaying its president. . Babbio is accused of misuse of endowment assets, failure to monitor and breach of duty for awarding excessive compensation. Both Babbio and the president of Stevens Institute, are accused of breach of trust.

Gee, I wonder if any of that sort of stuff went on while he was here?

from CWA/UAW Alliance

CWA has many concerns about U.S. Senator Max Baucus' healthcare bill and how it would affect our members. In fact, CWA, UAW and much of the labor movement as well as a broad coalition of progressive organizations, are strongly urging the Finance Committee to make significant improvements to the bill.

CWA is calling on senators to:

Eliminate the excise tax on health care plans that would unfairly penalize plans with more older workers and retirees and force these plans to scale back benefits and increase premiums and co-pays for their employees.

Strengthen the employer responsibility provisions to ensure there is a level playing field that requires all companies to contribute to the cost of health care for their employees.

Include provisions that will encourage employers to provide health insurance coverage for early retirees who do not yet qualify for Medicare.

Thousands of CWA members called key House and Senate members and urged them

Baucus Bill Bad

to pass health care reform that meets our requirements. CWA is pleased with H.R. 3200, the House version of health care reform-- and hopes that House Democrats hold fast to the bill that has been approved by three different committees. That bill would not tax health care plans; has a strong mandate on employers to contribute to the cost of health care for their workers; and includes a catastrophic reinsurance program to encourage employers to continue coverage for early retirees.

The legislation that is pending in the House, and another bill that has passed the Senate HELP committee, would do a lot for CWA members. It would allow us to keep our negotiated health plans. It would protect retirees. It would clamp down on insurance industry abuses. And it would make it so that our friends and family members can get affordable coverage.

Call your representatives and tell them WE DON'T WANT OUR HEALTHCARE TAXED. Call your members of Congress today. Dial 1-888-580-0792. At the prompt enter your zip code. That will connect you to your U.S. Senator or Representative.

Open Enrollment

from the District

Benefit Renewal for active employees of Verizon will take place between October 15 and October 28. Open enrollment for all of Mobility will run from October 5 - October 16. Verizon members will also be able to make changes after this date until the close of business December 31st, but must call the Benefits Center after the initial Benefits Renewal closes. Please be aware that the company will be terminating participation in the following HMO's.

- Blue Care HMO (NEPA)
Keystone HP East (PA/NJ/DE)
Blue Cross HMO (DC/MD)
Horizon BCBS of NJ
Anthem Healthkeepers VA
Carelink Health Plans WV
Cigna Healthcare VA
HealthNet NJ
Amerihealth HMO NJ
Empire BCBS of NY
HIP health Plan of NY

Geisinger Health Plan PA
HealthNet NY/CT
Aetna HMO All areas

These plans currently have combined 10,497 active employees and 4,302 non Medicare retirees in the fBA South.

The Company will be implementing a new Anthem (Blue Cross/Blue Shield) EPO (Exclusive Provider Organization) with nationwide access to replace these HMO's. Although plan details are slim, the EPO will have a \$15.00 copay and \$50.00 ER limits as has been negotiated. The plan will also have the \$150.00 hospital co-insurance as the company previously implemented across all their HMO offerings and no referrals will be required . The EPO will also have the MEDCO prescription carve out, which means participants will continue with the negotiated prescription plan.

The Company proposed moving all the cur-

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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
Editor: Shannon Opfer
editor@cwa-2107.org
General Mailbox
2107@cwa-2107.org



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Affiliated with the AFL-CIO
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
Editor-Shannon Opfer
Assistant Editor-Matt Dement

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President's Point of View.....

Denise Burns

Verizon Members Pay Close Attention! Have you heard the latest from Verizon President Ivan Seidenberg? Here is the headline from the New York Times, "Verizon Boss Hangs Up on Landline Phone Business". Catchy isn't it?

Speaking to a Goldman Sachs Investor conference, Seidenberg declared Verizon is no longer concerned with telephones that are connected with wires. According to him, his "thinking has matured" and predicting when voice landlines will stop shrinking "is like the dog chasing the bus". He also stated that video will be the core product in the fixed-line business and bundling sales will be moving to wireless and video from landline and video. Converting landline to FiOS gives Verizon an opportunity to cut costs. "We don't look any different than Google. We can begin to look at eliminating garages, call centers and central offices", he stated. His strategy is to reorganize the company within a year or two and then the financial impact should be evident.

Put this together with the announcement put out from CFO John Killian. He said that after the 8000 recent layoffs in the landline side of the business, at least 8000 more need to go and it needs to happen at an accelerated rate. Both of these statements made by Verizon's offensively paid CEO and CFO came out within two days of each other.

What does that mean for you and I? I think it is time for the little guys (you and me) to start worrying about where we will be in a year. How do we deal with this? We can sit back and say what is the Union going to do. We can curl up in a fetal position and stick our head in the sand. Or we can finally get angry and stand up with each other against the people that want to put us out of work.

Now, more than ever before, our jobs are on the line. Where are you going to go to get a job that makes the money we make and has the benefits that we have? We need to band together.

We have several major hurdles coming up that we must cross. We must stop the sale of West Virginia, stop the layoffs, secure jobs for our futures, and fight for healthcare and the Employee Free Choice Act, as never before.

Now is clearly not the time to fight amongst the different departments, lines of business or with any of your union brothers and sis-

ters. Now is the time to understand that a Cable Splicer is not FTTP, FiOS or copper. The title is Cable Splicer. We can fight all the smaller issues as we must but our end goal has to be a much bigger one. If we do not have jobs then all of the other issues will not matter.

I wanted to be able to share with you the results of the 72 layoffs that were announced along with the latest round of EISP's but I do not have the official information at this time. I have been told that no one was laid off. If they didn't take the EISP, they put in for an available job opening. I have been given a list of the people accepted for the EISP. In District 2 we had a total of 151, 1 in DC, 4 in WV, 50 in MD and 96 in VA.

I hope you all have been paying attention to the state of our economy. It is a sad state of affairs. I had the opportunity recently to watch the documentary that was done on the closing of one of the GM plants in Ohio. Our members from IUE-CWA Local 798, 1,000 of them, were let go when their plant in Moraine was closed. It had a ripple effect on that community for approximately 10,000 people. My vehicle was made in that plant and has a sticker proudly displayed on the driver side door. When jobs are lost, it doesn't just affect one person or family. It can crush entire communities.

It is a sad day when you see all of the businesses that are closing, car dealers closed with no cars on the lots, retail stores going under, restaurants trying to give the biggest discounts to get people to use their establishment. More and more people are losing whatever job they have, or giving back pay and benefits in order to keep a job at all.

I do not want to be one of those people, nor do I want you to be. I ask you to please get involved find out what you can do to help in this uphill battle. We need you. I cannot do it alone just as the officers cannot do it. You are the Union and the Union needs to stand strong! Let's do everything we can to make sure that we are not the latest group to stand in the unemployment line!

"Alone we're nothing, together we're everything-it's the whole philosophy of Labor."
Leon Davis 1932

"Today, we say that when you pick a fight with any of us, you pick a fight with all of us! And that when you push us, we will push back." Richard Trumka, 1995

(Unity from page 1)

Regardless of when you were hired, or what "project" you were hired for, you are a technician just like everyone else. Why are we still having petty squabbles about us and them? There is only one them and that is the company. While we sit around and worry about who's getting overtime and who's not, or what schedule is being given to a different group, the company is trying to reduce head count. They're making new rules and regulations, impossible numbers, and in general, creating a hostile work environment.

It is an amazing bit of sleight of hand. Keep us guessing and watching for what they'll do next instead of concentrating on the big picture.

We need to stand together and say we're not doing this. We're not going to allow you to pit us against our union brothers and sisters. Lets remember, an injury to one is an injury to all. Stop fighting each other and start working together. One person can change the world, but think how much easier it will be with all of us.

(Enrollment from page 1)

rent HMO enrollees to the new Anthem EPO. This met strong resistance from the union participants of the ACHC. The union participants countered that the non Blues HMO enrollees should be defaulted into the MCN/MEP as appropriate. Those members would then be able to select whether or not the EPO met their needs. We also suggested that it would be appropriate to default Blue Cross (Keystone East, Horizon BCBS etc) HMO participants into the Anthem EPO as this is an administrative consolidation with no provider disruption to the participants. Those members could of course select MCN/MEP if they so choose during Benefit Renewal. This would remain consistent with how we have conducted these type of changes in the past and afford the least disruption.

The Company is reviewing our proposal and it is expected (at this writing) that they will accept.

The following HMO's will continue to be offered in 2010

Optimum Choice DC/MD/VA/DE/WV
Kaiser Permanente DC/MD/VA
Optima Health Plans VA
Health America of PA
Keystone HP West PA

Draft communications are being developed and will be reviewed with the ACHC. Initial mailing is scheduled for October 9th.

AT&T Just Doesn't Get It

by Denise Burns

Management for this company is absurd. I know there are good ones (very few) and bad ones. This company either trains them how to be polite and ignore what you have to say or to just ignore the Union altogether. I used to think I had a working relationship with some of the ARSM's and very few RSM's but I am convinced their management training takes all common sense away from these people, if they had it to begin with.

It doesn't help when you don't report what they're doing wrong. Everyone should be keeping a log on the things management allows to happen or makes happen. No one can possibly know all the rules of this company nor can you understand everything in the Code of Conduct yet they make you sign as if you do. Please put signed under protest if you sign at all. Question them. They change the rules and make up new ones quite often. Talk to others that work in other stores. See if the same things are happening there.

I know a sales environment is a tough place to work, but management can make it better or worse. They are not consistent in these stores. Some play by the book, some give leeway, some lie and I don't know what the rest of them do. I don't care if you are "best friends". If it comes down to it, they will put you on the line in order to protect themselves.

This may be harsh but it's necessary be-

cause I need your help. Some of you will tell on another union member but won't say anything about management. That's just wrong. Being a union member means sticking together and fighting for everyone's best interest. If you have issues with another member, work it out or call us, but don't be a rat. I have seen so many people fired because someone told on a co-worker. Sometimes what one person gets fired for is going on in another store and is just overlooked. That isn't right. Firing isn't the answer to all of the issues out there.

If you want things to change positively, get together. If there are issues to be addressed we'll work with you. Management will be the first people to tell you the code of conduct says you must tell if something is wrong. But they never say that includes you telling on them. They like it when the workforce is divided because they know they have complete control.

We need to start having group membership meetings to talk about issues going on and what is or isn't allowed. I need some of you to take the lead, get a group together and call so we can set up meetings. I know it is difficult to plan around everyone's schedule so if you can have a few people from a couple stores get together one time and then others at different times.

If you want your workplace to be a better place we need to start this now. Don't wait until more of you are fired.

An injury to one is an injury to all!

Frontier's Dim Horizon

by Shannon Opfer

Apparently, we are not the only one who feel the Frontier sale is a bad idea. According to tradingmarkets.com Consumer advocate groups such as the National Association of State Utility Consumer Advocates (<http://www.nasuca.org>) (NASUCA), and the New Jersey Division of Rate Council are filing their opposition to the merger.

According to David Springe, consumer counsel for the State of Kansas and president of NASUCA, "The merger proposed by Frontier and Verizon is not in the public interest. The failure of the companies to offer adequate consumer benefits or protections puts customers at risk of being served by a company without enough financial strength to make necessary improvements to local tele-

phone facilities and widen the deployment of broadband access."

According to the Charleston Gazette, "West Virginia Attorney General Darrell McGraw is also raising objections to Verizon's plans to sell to Frontier Communications.

McGraw has sent a letter to the state Public Service Commission, warning that the purchase could lead to substandard telephone services, job losses and higher prices for consumers. He urged commissioners to give the merger "heightened scrutiny".

It seems that the public is paying attention now that their service is going to be affected. If you have any friends or relatives in the affected areas tell them to call their public service commissions and let their voices be heard.

Retirees Corner

RMC meetings are held on the second Monday of every month at the local office

Congratulations to:

Brandon Flook on the birth of his daughter
Tucker Coppage on the birth of his daughter
Collin Caswell on his marriage

Sympathies to:

Michael Jordan on the death of his sister

Get Well to:

Rob Hayes recovering from surgery

Dates to Remember

Membership meetings

09/28/09 Combined Membership 6:30 pm

Other Meetings

09/28/09 CWA MD State Council 10:00 am
09/30/09 Executive Board tba
10/15/09 Metro Baltimore Council 5&7 pm
10/28/09 Executive Board tba

Other

10/20/09 Newsletter Deadline
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