



AT&T Grievances

by Shannon Opfer

AT&T Mobility is the only union wireless company. That does not mean they are union friendly. Whether it is a malicious effort on their part, or just plain ignorance, management seems to have no idea how the grievance process works.

The grievance procedure for AT&T Mobility is laid out in Article 7 of the contract. It explains that a first level supervisor has seven days from the receipt of the grievance to respond to the union. After they set up a meeting, the company has 10 days to give the union an answer. If they do not respond within 14 days, the union can escalate the grievance to 2nd step. This pattern is continued up to 3rd step. If nothing has been settled, the grievance can be turned in for arbitration.

Here in 2107, 1/3 of grievances are never heard at 1st or 2nd step. Management doesn't respond in time, or at all. Many grievances are just pushed to 3rd step because no one else will hear it. This is not what is intended in the spirit of the contract.

We know how frustrating this can be. If you have a problem with AT&T, it can seem easier to just suck it up rather than fight the stacked deck. We need you to fight it. Stick with it and file these grievances because we need to show them we are standing strong on this. Its not always easy to stand up for your rights but it's the right thing to do.

DirectSat Bargaining Continues

by Denise Burns

There's not much to report as yet. The company did look like they were attacked/shocked when we put some of the financial items on the table. Our next meeting will be 4/1/10.

Communication is the key to a successful bargaining. Keep the stewards advised on any issues. We can address a lot of them at the table. We need to know everyone gets covered on any policies, etc. If you or your group is being left out we need to know.

Safety is a big issue. If you don't have the proper equipment, ask for it. Don't cut corners. Check your truck to make sure it is

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Total Job Performance

by Shannon Opfer

In the 14th century, Dante wrote his Divine Trilogly. According to him, above the gates of hell there was a sign that said, "Abandon every hope, ye who enter." Apparently Verizon has decided to make this their business model for 2010.

Welcome to the New Verizon. If it hasn't been implemented in your area yet, allow me to introduce to you The Total Job Performance Plan. Always before disciplinary actions were independent of each other. Your productivity was one issue, Skycreek another, and Sunrise yet another. Not any more. Verizon has decreed that everything plays into your performance as a technician. So lets say your productivity is down this month. You get an ECM. Next month you bring it up, but your Skycreek numbers have fallen. Now you get suspended for a day. Next month you aren't wearing your safety glasses. Three day suspension. Everything will play into this, and you can see where this is ultimately leads. Being fired. This is what Verizon wants. If they can get more of us off the payroll keep their jobs longer, and they can bring in technicians who will do our

work for less money and no benefits. No, that could never happen, right? Why not? We can't stop fighting amongst ourselves long enough to do anything against the company.

So here comes the Catch 22. The Union wants to know what we are willing to do to fight for our jobs. We want to know what the Union wants us to do. If all we do is fight with each other, we aren't fighting the company and they sit back and laugh.

So for now, here's what the union is asking of us. Every day, do a vehicle check. We should be doing this everyday anyway, because if something is wrong, and you get pulled over, you get the fines. Go over your DOT books and make sure that everything is working properly. If your garage does not have mirrors that allow you to see your lights, get together with another person and check both of your trucks. Make sure the fire extinguishers are up to date. Check your first aid kits. Some of the things in them can expire.

When you get to the customer premises, concentrate on giving the customer a quality
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New Surplus Declared

by Shannon Opfer

On March 5, 2010, Verizon declared its intention to declare another surplus. At the time this was written no effective date has been given so there is no real information yet. We know the number they want removed from payroll in the Potomac area is over 2000 people. This is a huge number.

We aren't being allowed to do the work we know is out there. Engineers are now being pulled off of FTTP to work on cell tower jobs. Its not that there aren't any more neighborhoods to cover, its that they are being told not to.

Before anyone is laid off, per the contract the company has to offer an EISP. I know the rumors have been flying, but here is what we know. The company has not offered a triple EISP. The company and the Union have been meeting and the company offered a slight bonus in addition to the EISP. This

would not be offered to anyone hired after 2003. The union turned this offer down. So if you hear that the Union is turning down offers, yes that is true. They have turned down offers that are insulting to our members. If Verizon has decided they have too many employees, they can offer all of them the same incentive to leave the payroll. We are a union and need to remember what affects one affects us all.

Currently, we have information that these are the jobs they are targeting in our local. 6 CSTs, 2 Master Automotive Equipment Techs, 11 OPTs, 17 Serv. Techs, and 2 Storekeepers. Please remember that this information can change at any time.

If you were hired after 2003, please do not think the Union has abandoned you. We are still fighting the layoffs from earlier this year. We have not given up. We will continue to put any and all new credible information on our website.

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President's Point of View.....

Denise Burns

There are so many different things going on at one time, each one of them as important as the other.

One thing that hasn't been mentioned in all the discouraging news is our need to organize the unorganized. 800,000 union members vanished in 2009. To maintain any strength we must organize the public sector but more importantly the private sector. Recent numbers show the only significant increases have been in the public sectors.

You may think why should I care about organizing when my job is on the line. It is simple, the more union power means more bargaining power, more strength to fight corporate greed, more power to elect politicians to fight for family values and equal playing fields amongst the different industries.

We are receiving more leads for organizing. The companies are hiring more union busters to keep unions out. Why are corporations so opposed to unions? Easy, it gives the workers a right to have a say in the workplace. CEO's and upper management want total control.

Let's use the recent declared layoffs at Verizon as an example of why unions are needed. For over 50 years contracts have been bargained to get to the language we have today. Suppose we didn't have layoff language in our contract. This language is what is allowing people to leave the payroll with benefits and money. It allows people an incentive to leave before any layoffs occur. I agree the language could be better. But it is what it is right now. Without it you would be told goodbye, get out, so long.

Article 35 (Verizon Contract) language has been used before but not to this degree. This

language while not as strong as it could be protected us for a long time. Until this corporation, Verizon, decided to go out of the landline business, how many people did you see leave the payroll from a layoff?

Verizon bargained a contract with us in 2008, supposedly in good faith. Did they know what they were planning for the years ahead? My personal opinion is they did. It still doesn't mean unions aren't useful or necessary. Many workers out there know what it is like to work without a contract. Even CEO's, VP's and top management bargain contracts for themselves. They don't work without one.

My message is clear-this country thrives when there are more unionized workers. It is our time to get back some control. There are people out there that want a union. Most of them are afraid to speak up. All of us know someone out there that would benefit from a union. If you do know someone or even if that someone knows someone call the local and pass on the contact information. No one has to know who contacted us or how.

In the long run organizing will lead this country back to a middle class, supporting the workers of America, fighting corporate greed and giving our future generations a better place to live. Who do you know and how can we help?

"With all their faults, trade unions have done more for humanity than any other organization that ever existed. They have done more for decency, for honesty, for education, for the betterment of the race, for the developing of character in man, than any other association of men". Clarence Darrow

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safe. Report all issues to the proper person. Speeding is a big issue for the company and they will fire you for it. Currently, their GPS tells them how fast you're going but not the speed limit of the road you're on. They're working on an upgrade. If you are speeding-slow down. You need to perform the entire job safely.

Talk to your brothers and sisters in other locations to see if they are interested in a union. If they are, get their information to the local office (410 268-2107).

Hang together, stay alert and keep us updated on workplace changes.

ACFC Corner (Verizon Only)

Due to the downsizing that we are facing, the ACFC will be coming out with some additional resources to help people who may be affected. Whether you may be looking for a new job or just a work location change, we'll have something for you. It will be accessible from our homepage at www.ACFCARES.com under "Facing Downsizing"? We are hoping to get this up very soon! The committee is still trying to resolve our Backup Care issue & have given the vendor until 4/15/10 to be able to provide us with what is needed to proceed. We will keep you posted!

Hey, did you hear...

by Shannon Opfer

Ok, ladies and gentlemen, here it is. Don't believe everything you hear. In fact, don't believe most of what you hear. Rumors are flying fast and furious, but they are just that, rumors. Why do we insist on passing them on? Why are we playing into their hands and taking our focus off the main issues? These rumors cloud the issues and have us scrambling to put out the fires.

When we know something concrete, we will put the information out. Check our web site, we update it as soon as we can. Please don't call screaming at us that we're not doing something or should have done something when in reality your information is incorrect.

Talk to your stewards. Right now we believe most of these rumors are instigated by the company. They tell their supervisors something, the supervisors tell us, and next thing you know the union is getting accusations that we've turned deals down when there never was a deal.

This isn't elementary school. Let's stop playing telephone. By the time these rumors get back to us, they've been so distorted its impossible to know what the truth is. Instead of perpetuating it, call the hall and get the real story.

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job. Yes, your productivity may suffer. Remember that if everyone is doing something, it is considered a concerted effort. Just because the company doesn't care about the customer doesn't mean that you have to agree. We're the face the customers see and we need to let them know that we're fighting for them. Trust me, you can be the most productive tech out there and the company will not give a crap. Are you willing to stand together and say enough? If you were hired before 2003, there is probably a feeling of "whew", but I promise you this is not the end of this. You may escape a layoff, but that doesn't mean you're ok. You'll most likely be moved somewhere you don't want to be doing something you don't want to do. Construction may not be a Monday through Friday job much longer. During the storms, the company moved around ADOs. What's to stop them from doing that whenever they see fit?

Dante must have foreseen the business climate of 2010. Verizon is one of the circles of hell at this point and we are on the verge of throwing our hands up. We can't do this! If we're going down, lets go down swinging.

Stopping the Verizon Sales

by Shannon Opfer

The proposed sale of Verizon land lines to Frontier is still on the fence. Lawmakers in the states affected are starting to stand up and take notice. U.S. Representative Paul Hodes, a New Hampshire Democrat plans to propose a bill in congress opposing the Reverse Morris Trust Act which is the legislation that would allow Verizon to eliminate paying taxes on its sold interests while piling debt on the purchasing company.

In Illinois, a state hearing officer has concluded that the sale would "hurt service quality". The issue now goes to the Illinois Commerce Commission who will make a decision sometime in April.

In West Virginia, a petition with 5000 names on it was delivered to the Public Service Commission. "This deal is bad for West Virginia and we understand it is probably good for Wall Street" said Lincoln County Delegate Jeff Eldridge.

We support the ongoing efforts opposing this sale. As employees we still care about the customer whether the company does or not. This sale would end the same way all the other sales have. In disastrous service, and bankruptcy for the buying company.

Here in Maryland, CWA has placed a bill before the state legislation. Senate Bill 677 and House Bill 937 is now in committee. This bill is asking that the Public Service Commission be given the same control they have over the other utilities. This would give the PSC more stringent guidelines that Verizon would have to meet in order to sell.

While Verizon insists they have no plans to sell Maryland, they are fighting this bill with

everything they have. Although Verizon supposedly has "no money" and we are facing more layoffs in the field, Verizon can afford 10 full time lobbyists just for Maryland. Not that they need them when they have the support of Delegate Dereck Davis.

According to Ron Collins, Delegate Davis "mischaracterized the legislation as a *labor dispute* and disrespected me, organized labor, consumers & Maryland citizens. Delegate Davis is being misled by his corporate friends at Verizon -- last year, he carried Verizon's water, and somehow that wasn't a *labor dispute*. Even if he doesn't agree with the bill, he owes Marylanders the opportunity for an up or down vote, and shouldn't allow his personal feelings about labor unions or friendships with Verizon executives to get in the way of credible legislation. "

CWA cannot compete with Verizon as far as money goes. So we have to use our heads. Call your congressman or senator. If you are not sure who your representative is you can find it on mlis.state.md.us. Type in your address and you can find all your reps. We have sample letters you can write to them. Ask your steward. You can always call your representatives and let them know we need their support.

Quick note: We just found out that the delegate who sponsored the bill in the house has subsequently pulled it. We are unsure if this was Davis exerting his will on the committee or what, but we will try to find out. The bill is still before the senate, but without house approval is unlikely to go anywhere. In the mean time, we will have to regroup and decide what our next move will be. Check the website for future updates.

Joe Beirne Scholarship

from the National

This is a reminder that applications are now being accepted through March 31 for the CWA Joe Beirne Foundation's annual scholarship offerings for the 2010-2011 school year.

The Foundation's Board of Directors has approved the awarding of fifteen (15) partial college scholarships of up to \$3,000 each, and the winners also will receive second-year scholarships for the same amount, contingent upon satisfactory academic achievement.

Eligible for the scholarships are CWA members, their spouses, children and grandchildren, including the dependents of retired, laid-off, or deceased members. Applicants

must be high school graduates or high school students who will graduate during the year in which they apply. Undergraduate and graduate students returning to school may also apply.

Applications will be available solely online for completion and submission to the Foundation's website: <http://www.cwa-union.org/pages/beirne>.

The winners will be chosen by lottery drawing. Further information about the program can be found at the website.

This valuable scholarship program is made possible by the funding of CWA. For more information and assistance, please call 202.434.1403.

Retirees Corner

The next regular meeting is April 12, 2010.
RMC meetings are held on the second Monday of every month. Unless otherwise noted all meetings are held at the Local 2107 office at 1825 George Ave, Suite 4, Annapolis and begin at 10AM.
The new hall is just past Evolutions Gym on the right hand side.

DirectSat Techs

If you are receiving this newsletter, that's because we have your address. If we don't have someone's address they need to either call the hall or email us their information so we can put them in our database. Get the word out for them to get in touch!

Labor Night Baseball Game

This year's game will be on June 25. It will be the Orioles vs. Nationals. Tickets are \$6.00 this year, and will be limited. First come, first serve.

Dates to Remember

Membership meetings

none scheduled at this time

Other Meetings

03/30/10	Executive Board	tba
04/01/10	DirectSat Bargaining	
04/06-04/08/10	District 2 Conference	
04/12/10	End of Session in Annapolis	

Other

04/20/10 Newsletter deadline

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