LOCAL 2107 NEWS

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Surplus

by Shannon Opfer

A date has finally been attached to the surplus that the company put out in February. Now we know the timeline for the Article 35.

An EISP will be mailed out beginning on 4/16. The volunteer period to take that EISP will be 4/20 though 5/19. If you take the EISP your last day will be 5/29. Available jobs will be offered to the surplussed employees starting 5/10 through 5/17. If you qualify for one of those jobs, you will be assigned by 5/20. You will report for those jobs 6/1. If you don't qualify for a job and don't take the EISP, you will be off the payroll 7/10.

This Article 35 has only been declared for CSTs and OPTs. The EISP will be offered to every job title, but the Article 35 only affects the CSTs and OPTs.

We have gone through this before, so we know now how the company will treat this. If you stay they say that you are self terminating. They will only provide insurance until the end of the month in which your employment is terminated. They haven't been denying unemployment, although it is denied the first time automatically. If you were hired after 8/3/2003, take a very close look at all your options. If there is anything we can do to help, please call the hall.

AT&T, Verizon's Lobbying

from Washingtonpost.com/Cecillia Kang

AT&T and Verizon Communications opened a firehose of spending for lobbying in the first quarter to push their positions on net neutrality, the national broadband plan and a range of consumer-related issues including early termination fees and exclusive handset deals.

AT&T spent $5.93 million to lobby lawmakers and federal regulators in the first quarter, an increase of 76 percent from the same period last year. Verizon Communications spent $4.72 million in the first quarter, up 26 percent from the previous year. Figures for Verizon Wireless had not been submitted by the time this post was published.

Comcast spent $3.07 million to make its case

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Put Up or Shut Up

by Shannon Opfer

The "Union" is upset because the "members" aren't participating in the programs we are asking them to do. The "members" are upset that the "union" isn't doing anything. ENOUGH!! The time has come to put up or shut up. We are fighting for our lives here, folks. We have asked that everyone do a complete vehicle inspection before leaving your garage. Are you doing it? In Annapolis, I am generally the only one. Is this the arrow that is going to bring the company down? No of course not. I realize that. But it is ten minutes out of their day you can use for your benefit.

So if you don't like what the union is putting out, what have you got? Any ideas that would stop the company in their tracks? Step up! If you know what we need to do, let us know. Email us or call the hall. I hear an awful lot of suggestions every day, but no one wants to be the one to say, hey I'll do it. Well if you won't do it, why should I? Why should any of us? Lets just lay down and let the company do what they want to us.

I don't understand why we are fighting amongst ourselves. Instead, we need to remember who is causing the problem. The union didn't declare the surplus. The union didn't lay anyone off. The union didn't abandon anyone. The company did all these things. They are the ones making money hand over fist and we are the ones that are paying for it. They put out that email outlining the offer they were considering on Good Friday for a reason. Yes the extra money would have been nice. What they didn't tell you is that the offer only applied to 85% of the work force. So before you call the hall screaming that we've stolen money right out from under you, think about how you would feel if you were that 15% that didn't get the offer. We don't know who the offer was going to be given to. The union felt that the offer was not in the best interest of our members. If you were looking at it from the point of view they were, you hopefully would have made the same decision.

What difference can we make anyway? I don't know. Ask the members of 2100 who stood together because they were upset about not being able to pick lines on the schedule. After about two weeks, suddenly the com-

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Safety and Our Part In It

by Shannon Opfer

The company will preach safety all day long, but do they mean it? Do you take it seriously? You should. If you get hurt and the company feels it was something that could have been avoided do they thank you for putting productivity above your safety? No, they suspend you if not fire you for it.

Right now, the company is trying to implement a new safety policy that will allow them to fire you if you are seen doing something that could be life threatening. Pretty broad subject, right? What exactly does that entail? Who knows? It could be going up in a bucket without a hardhat or driving while talking on your cell phone. Speaking of which, have you heard that supervisors will be driving around in their personal vehicles specifically to find people talking while driving? They are going to write down your tag number and report back to your supervisor. Be aware. If you don't have a hands free, don't answer. Even if you do, I wouldn't suggest it. If someone calls while you are driving, find the safest place to pull over and call them back.

I realize we have numbers we have to meet, but I would rather be alive with low numbers than dead with the best numbers around. Do you take responsibility for your own safety? If there is something you aren't sure about, ask your supervisor. If they don't want to help, find a steward or call the hall. I guarantee if a call were placed to a second level because of a simple safety question, the issue would be cleared up quickly. Don't leave the garage without equipment. If a battery doesn't work, better to know first thing rather than using a piece of safety equipment that won't work. Do you have the proper number of cones on your vehicle? Does your 188A work?

Your life depends on these pieces of equipment. Take responsibility, its your life.

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President's Point of View……

Denise Burns

We are hearing how incompetent the Union is at bargaining, when we don't agree to the first offer the company throws at us. I have heard how much money has been taken from peoples' pockets and how they have paid union dues for years to get nothing for them.

WAKE UP-Bargaining –is negotiations between an employer and a labor union usually on wages, hours, and working conditions.

CWA looks out for *all* members not just a handful. CWA has bargained to get you the ISP and the EISP and any extra we can get. CWA bargains wages, benefits, vacations, excused days, bereavement pay, differentials, safety, sickness and disability pay, pensions, overtime, travel allowances, holiday pay, seniority, termination allowances, contract labor language and layoff language with pay, just to name a few.

What have most of you done to get these benefits? Walked a picket line a couple times, maybe a job action or two, or handed out some mobilization flyers. Ever think you were getting a lot for your money? No, not the people I've talked to. A cable splicer at top pay makes around $32.00 an hour, which brings you to about $66,600 a year. That would make your dues about $888 a year. Add a benefits package for a single person-$6,805.44, single plus 1-$13,194.72 and family $19,057.68. That doesn't include overtime, holiday pay, or differentials. So a splicer with a family working 40 hours a week makes around $85,660 a year in base and benefits. Take his Union dues out and he makes $84,770. That's great money for a high school graduate.

I think CWA has bargained damn well and today's members have had very little to do to reap those benefits. Most of the hard times in our union were fought by the retirees, but we tend to forget that. In today's environment its "all about me". Fortunately that is not how CWA operates.

When we ask you to do something as simple as wearing a red shirt on Thursday, some of you just laugh or ignore the request. When we ask you to do safety checks, something that will make YOU safe, you ignore us saying it won't do any good. Well, it is those and other activities that show we are united. That is how we have gotten this far. People in the past stuck together even on the smallest of things. Today, people tend to think someone else should do it for you. That is not how it works.

If ,by additional bargaining, there is an offer that exceeds what is in the contract, all of you that had something negative to say about the union should thank everyone you know in a union leadership role.

Once the current stewards, officers and staff people step aside who is going to be there to carry on? I hope it won't be someone that gives up after the first try. Could the next generation of leaders of the union have the "me" first attitude? If so, where will that take us and how long will it take to lose everything we have now? This is not a game, its life and livelihoods. We fight for all and we all should be in the fight!

"Our labor unions are not narrow, self-seeking groups. They have raised wages, shortened hours and provided supplemental benefits. Through collective bargaining and grievance procedures, they have brought justice and democracy to the shop floor."
President John F Kennedy, 1962

Proxy Votes

The Verizon Stockholder meeting will be held on May 6, in Little Rock, Arkansas. The union will be once again collecting the proxy votes to send in with Ron Collins, who will be attending.

This year we are suggesting voting *against* Section A-Item #3-Advisory vote related to Executive Compensation. We also suggest voting *for* Section B-Item #6-Performance Stock Unit Thresholds.

Your proxy **must be signed** and returned to the hall by April 30. If you have any questions or concerns, please call the hall.

Workers Memorial Day

by Shannon Opfer

Workers Memorial Day is Wednesday April 28. This is a day to remember those people who have given their lives in order to just do their job. We all know how dangerous our jobs can be. This is one day set aside to remember those of us who have not been so lucky. We may chafe against the regulations but without them, our jobs go from dangerous to deadly in the blink of an eye. Lets honor those who have gone before us and make sure from here on out, we don't have to add any more names to the roster.

Mother's Day Flowers

The Union Plus Flower Delivery Service provider, Teleflora, is committed to a 100% local florist delivered model with no drop shipments for flowers & gifts ordered online or by phone. Teleflora provides hand-delivered flower arrangements, baskets, and gifts through local florists rather than flowers delivered in a box by express mail. Labor union members receive a **20% discount** on all flowers when they browse arrangements and order online or call **1-888-667-7779**. All customer service calls are answered in the United States. 100% satisfaction guaranteed.

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pany is allowing them to pick their lines. Its great when it works. Too bad we can't seem to get the momentum to do that here.

I realize its coming into summer. People want to be with their families, fishing, swimming, whatever. We're committed to our children, our churches, our neighborhoods. We have had a long run of being able to do all those things. Unfortunately, if we can't get it together here, we'll all have plenty of time for all that when we're unemployed. Sound like I'm being an alarmist? I don't think so. The writing is on the wall, folks. Verizon wants out of the wireline business which means they don't need us. We know they don't care about the customers. So what's left? I'm not sure. But if we continue to sit back and wait for someone else to do it, the opportunity is going to pass us by and it will be too late.

Want to get involved? Politicians are starting to gear up for the upcoming elections. See if you can find a labor friendly candidate and offer them your services. They can always use the help and its better to start looking now than in November when its too late to do anything. Come out to the Labor KickOff the Maryland State and D.C. AFL-CIO are putting together. It will be Saturday, May 1, 2010 and the National Labor College, 10000 New Hampshire Ave, Silver Spring, MD. It is from 12:00 to 2:00 p.m. There will be food for all and games for the kids. There will be Labor friendly politicians there. Come out and meet some of them and your union brothers and sisters.

Everything is connected. If we had strong political support we wouldn't have to fight so hard with the company. Every little thing helps. We all have our own talents and there are ways we can make all those different talents work for us. If you have any thoughts or suggestions, please call the hall.

Reinvigorating the NLRB

from the National

With four of five seats now filled at the National Labor Relations Board, chair Wilma Liebman said the NLRB would seek a more "dynamic" approach to interpreting the nation's labor laws to help "reinvigorate collective bargaining" in the workplace.

At a national conference on collective bargaining in higher education, Liebman faulted the "static" approach to the law that the NLRB took during the Bush administration, which "had the effect of removing more and more employees from the protections of the law, especially vulnerable contingent workers."

She specifically mentioned the Bush board's decision to eliminate bargaining rights for thousands of graduate assistants and others in higher education.

CWA took the lead in pressing the Obama administration to name Mark Pierce and Craig Becker as recess appointments to the NLRB, after it was clear that the Senate minority would continue to block their nominations. CWA activists convinced 141 members of Congress to sign a petition urging White House action.

The NLRB now has a clear majority of three Democrats who support the law's original intent to encourage collective bargaining and protect workers' organizing rights. The four-member board will also get to work on clearing the huge backlog of cases that the NLRB could not address with two members. Liebman said the board would look at "not just the words of the law" but the impact of board decisions on conditions affecting workers today.

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against new net neutrality rules, but also to promote its proposed merger with NBC Universal to lawmakers and regulators who are reviewing the deal. That figure was down from the fourth quarter of 2009, when it spent $3.48 milion, but up from $2.76 million a year earlier.

AT&T and Verizon's spending far outpaced that of other well-known tech companies, including Google which spent $1.38 million in the same quarter. Microsoft spent $1.72 million during the first quarter and Facebook spent $41,000.

It was a busy quarter for both AT&T and Verizon. AT&T, for example, lobbied on about 50 telecommunications-related issues.

Specifically, AT&T and Verizon pushed their positions with regulators and lawmakers on bills and proposed rules related to net neutrality – which both companies oppose. In the first quarter, the Federal Communications Commission released its national broadband plan, which contained more than five dozen policy proposals. The telecom giants opposed proposals such as line sharing for small businesses but pushed for more federal spectrum to be allocated for mobile broadband.

Analysts expect the telecom and cable giants will continue to ramp up lobbying efforts for the rest of the year as the FCC deals with questions over a reclassification of broadband services – another idea the companies oppose. They have also increased their efforts at the FCC on specific policies related to the national broadband plan.

What is a Union?

by Denise Burns

A union is a group of workers who organized together for representation and collective bargaining rights. It is not, as employers and some others suggest some "outside" organization that comes into your workplace to get between you and your employer. The truth is, you and your co-workers are the union.

Employers like to say that unions are old-fashioned and are no longer needed. If this is so, why do top executives at every major corporation negotiate their own legal contracts – like union members – that detail their compensation, retirement, and severance packages. Why should we be any different, or have fewer rights?

In explaining what a union does, we must include organizing. The more we organize in our industries the better off the industry workers become. We need to even the playing field so workers in telecommunications all have a fair wage and good place to work.

We've organized a group of DirectSat workers (Direct TV work) and we are bargaining a contract. We need to set our goals on trying to organize our local areas. Comcast is a big one, along with all the wireless companies. If you know anyone working there find out if they are interested in organizing. Call us with a contact name and number give out the local office number and have them call us. Either way we will get our organizer, Lynette Snell, in touch with them.

Retirees Corner

The next regular meeting is May 10, 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.

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.

Get Well to:

Rob Hayes

Local 2100 will be sponsering a Career Day,
Wednesday, May 5, 2010 from 3:00-7:00 p.m.
It will be held at 8035 Harford Rd, Suite C, Baltimore, MD

There is also a Business Expo and Job Fair on May 1, 2010 in the Parking Lot between the Food Lion and the Green Turtle in Edgewater, Md from 9:00-3:00 p.m. Rain date is May 8.

Dates to Remember

Membership meetings

05/12/10	Combined meeting	6:30 p.m.

Other Meetings

04/22/10	DirectSat Bargaining Committee	
04/27/10	Executive Board	
05/01/10	AFL-CIO Labor KickOff	12:00-2:00 p. m.
05/05/10	DirectSat Bargaining Committee	
05/24/10	DirectSat Bargaining Committee	
05/27/10	Executive Board	
06/11/10	President's Meeting	

Other

05/18/10	Newsletter deadline

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