



The Community Minded Union

Locally Speaking
The People Minded Local

Representing: Verizon-NJ Commercial & Marketing, Occupational Center of Union County, North Haledon Police Dispatchers, Data-Tele, Elizabethtown Gas, Cingular Wireless and American Labor Museum Botto House.

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COMMUNICATIONS WORKERS OF AMERICA

LOCAL 1023, CRANFORD, NJ

JANUARY 2008

DEAD IN THE WATER

VERIZON'S HEALTH CARE PROPOSAL DROWNS IN ITS OWN ARROGRANCE

At 1pm on Tuesday, December 11th, CWA District One Vice-President Chris Shelton notified Verizon Labor Relations that CWA was formally breaking off early negotiations. Shelton said, "there was just no possibility of going further based on the onerous medical proposal Verizon put on the table." Mr. Shelton went on to point out that, "The CWA Bargaining Teams have an interest in negotiating a fair and equitable contract and we are always available to listen to reasonable proposals, but we can never agree to the retrogressive demands Verizon put on the table."

Unofficial reports indicate that Verizon's proposal would have forced union members to pay for health benefits which they currently enjoy free of charge, with premiums varying from those for a single insured estimated to average around \$20 per week, and with family plans averaging about \$31 dollars per week. Weekly premium deductions would only be the beginning. Higher co-pays, additional co-pays for referrals, higher costs for HMO coverage versus Managed Care Network charges, higher deductibles, caps on retiree payouts, and exclusion of new hires

from receiving retiree health benefits altogether, are just some of the additional conditions included in Verizon's demands. Penalties were being added for failing to precertify hospital visits. The MEP-PPO was being eliminated and costs passed on to HMO participants. Additional costs were being added to prescriptions whether the prescriptions were being filled by mail order, in network, or out of network.

According to company negotiators, none of the conditions were subject to bargaining. Whenever CWA or IBEW negotiators asked the company for data relative to the proposals, none was provided outside the initial informational packets distributed at the first session of bargaining back on November 20th. Clearly, this was a case of take it or leave it.

That the Verizon management team could have gone into negotiations believing that the unions would be agreeable to such unrealistic demands is unlikely. Why, then, did they do it? That question has yet to be answered. Perhaps the answer will come in the next round of bargaining, tentatively scheduled for Spring, 2008. If so, we'll be ready with one of our own.

IN SOLIDARITY



As most of you know by now, Verizon initiated early bargaining with CWA and IBEW in mid-November. It was no surprise when we learned that the company's sole demand at these negotiations was going to be about health care benefits. It was also no surprise that these demands were retrogressive and completely unacceptable, and that the negotiations were doomed to failure. On Tuesday, December 11th, 2007, the CWA and IBEW negotiators left the table.

It was the company's intention to chip away at our hard won medical benefits structure. The company wanted our members to pay at least part of the cost of our health care with a weekly deduction from their paychecks. In addition, we would have incurred higher deductibles for doctor's visits. Retirees would have had their annual benefits capped. Use of HMO's by our members would have been discouraged through higher costs, and worst of all, new employees hired after the expiration of the current contract would have had no health care benefits after retirement from Verizon. Such an arrangement would create a two-tier system of employees with different benefits working side by side for the same company. We could never accept a division of benefits based on seniority. Such an idea violates everything we stand for.

We wanted to counter the company's sole demand with many demands of our own, but the company won't be hearing them until we reconvene in the spring of 2008.

Because the company is so single-minded about its demand that members must subsidize their health care costs, many union officials were generally pessimistic about the outcome of the negotiations from the beginning. In fact, when company representatives were asked routine questions about the company's proposal, the company reps were unable to answer any of them. This was a "take it or leave it" proposition. And, frankly, we weren't taking.

Nothing is ever gained from giving benefits or

wages back to an employer, as many unions have found out to their regret. Verizon makes tens of billions of dollars a year. It recently paid out over three billion dollars in dividends to its shareholders. It can easily continue to pay for your health care, and it should because you are the reason it's making all those billions in the first place. Without you it can't make a dime.

This year, the United Auto Workers, whose industry is experiencing hard times, was willing to work with car makers and made many concessions to Ford and GM in order to save jobs when they went to the bargaining table. Were these men and women shown any consideration for their cooperation? Absolutely not! Before the ink was dry on the new contracts UAW members were being laid off by the thousands.

The ultimate solution to this country's health care woes is a national program that covers everyone. Ours is the only industrialized country that doesn't have one. CWA is working hard to see that such a program is put into law. The right results in the national presidential and congressional elections next year will surely bring us closer to that goal.

Meantime, in a few months, we look forward to good faith bargaining with Verizon for a fair contract that benefits all members equally. And be assured there will be no give backs when we bargain it.

Rey Massa

**President
CWA Local 1023**

JOB POSTING SAYS DRIVER'S LICENCE REQUIRED? READ THIS BEFORE YOU APPLY!!!

Many of our members have been posting for jobs in RAMP that require a valid driver's license. Be aware that the company will require you to fill out a questionnaire about your driving history as part of your application. If you omit to mention any violations less than three years old, the company will disqualify you for the position. This includes driving without a seatbelt, and using a cell phone while driving and other violations that are not strictly defined as moving violations.

Our best recommendation is that you order a copy of your driving record from the Department of Motor Vehicles before completing the application. Be aware that whatever appears on your copy will also appear on the company's copy of your record.

It's also a good idea to familiarize yourself with what Verizon considers an acceptable driving history before applying.

CWA GRIEVANCE REPORT THROUGH END OF THIRD QUARTER 2007

In any given quarter, one Area may report closing out more or fewer grievances than other areas. This disparity is caused by the grievance process itself, since grievances are often pended for additional records, or to verify pertinent information, or are in the appeals process.

AREA ONE – S. Adamo, Chief

Absences and Tardies – Disciplinary	Settled
Absences and Tardies – Disciplinary	Settled
Absences and Tardies – Disciplinary	Won
Vacation, EWD, etc.	Settled
Vacation, EWD, etc.	Won
Training	Won
Training	Won
Harassment and Mutual Respect	Won
Harassment and Mutual Respect	Won
Working Conditions, i.e., Adherence	Won
Suspension/Letter of Suspension	Won
Unfair and Unequal Treatment	Settled
Unfair and Unequal Treatment	Won
Unfair and Unequal Treatment	Won

Total Grievances for Area One: 47

AREA TWO – W. Riley, Chief

Absences & Tardies – Disciplinary	Settled
Absences & Tardies – Disciplinary	Settled
Absences & Tardies – Disciplinary	Won
Absences & Tardies – Disciplinary	Lost
Absences & Tardies – Disciplinary	Lost
Absences & Tardies – Disciplinary	Settled
Dismissal	Settled
Dismissal	Settled
Dismissal	Settled
Dismissal	Lost
Appraisal	Settled
Harassment and Mutual Respect	Won
Harassment and Mutual Respect	Won
Harassment and Mutual Respect	Won
Harassment and Mutual Respect	Won
Harassment and Mutual Respect	Won
Harassment and Mutual Respect	Won
Harassment and Mutual Respect	Won
Harassment and Mutual Respect	Won
Harassment and Mutual Respect	Won
Harassment and Mutual Respect	Won
Harassment and Mutual Respect	Won
Working Conditions, i.e., Adherence	Won
Working Conditions, i.e., Adherence	Lost
Suspension/Letter of Suspension	Settled
Suspension/Letter of Suspension	Lost
Suspension/Letter of Suspension	Won
Suspension/Letter of Suspension	Won
Suspension/Letter of Suspension	Won
Suspension/Letter of Suspension	Lost
Unfair and Unequal Treatment	Won
Unfair and Unequal Treatment	Won
Unfair and Unequal Treatment	Lost
Unfair and Unequal Treatment	Won

AREA TWO REPORT CONTINUES

Denial of Union Representation	Won
Sales Treatment	Won
Work Completion of Term Employee	Settled

Total Grievances for Area Two: 112

AREA THREE – Ann Gilliard, Chief

Absences & Tardies – Disciplinary	Won
Appraisal	Lost
Dismissal	Won
Dismissal	Lost
Appraisal	Lost
Observation	Settled
Harassment and Mutual Respect	Settled
Harassment and Mutual Respect	Won
Harassment and Mutual Respect	Won
Harassment and Mutual Respect	Won
Harassment and Mutual Respect	Won
Harassment and Mutual Respect	Won
Harassment and Mutual Respect	Won
Harassment and Mutual Respect	Won
Harassment and Mutual Respect	Won
Harassment and Mutual Respect	Won
Harassment and Mutual Respect	Won
Suspension/Letter of Suspension	Won
Suspension/Letter of Suspension	Settled
Suspension/Letter of Suspension	Won
Suspension/Letter of Suspension	Lost
Suspension/Letter of Suspension	Lost

Total Grievances for Area Three: 182

AREA FOUR – Charlene Johnson, Chief

Absences & Tardies – Disciplinary	Lost
Absences & Tardies – Disciplinary	Lost
Absences & Tardies – Disciplinary	Lost
Absences & Tardies – Disciplinary	Won
Absences & Tardies – Disciplinary	Settled
Dismissal	Settled
Dismissal	Settled
Dismissal	Settled
Training	Won
Training	Won
Harassment and Mutual Respect	Won
Harassment and Mutual Respect	Won
Harassment and Mutual Respect	Won
Harassment and Mutual Respect	Won
Harassment and Mutual Respect	Won
Harassment and Mutual Respect	Won
Harassment and Mutual Respect	Won
Harassment and Mutual Respect	Won
Harassment and Mutual Respect	Won
Harassment and Mutual Respect	Won
Harassment and Mutual Respect	Settled
Harassment and Mutual Respect	Settled
Suspension/Letter of Suspension	Settled
Suspension/Letter of Suspension	Settled
Suspension/Letter of Suspension	Lost
Unfair and Unequal Treatment	Won
Unfair and Unequal Treatment	Won
Equalization of Overtime	Won
Equalization of Overtime	Won
Denial of Union Representation	Won

Total Grievances for Area Four: 89

(continued on Page 4)

GRIEVANCE REPORT *(continued from Page 3)*

AREA FIVE – George Santiago, Chief

Absences & Tardies – Disciplinary	Lost
Absences & Tardies – Disciplinary	Settled
Absences & Tardies – Disciplinary	Won
Dismissal	Lost
Management Doing Production	Won
Weather Conditions – Inclement	Won
Harassment and Mutual Respect	Won
Harassment and Mutual Respect	Won
Harassment and Mutual Respect	Settled
Harassment and Mutual Respect	Won
Harassment and Mutual Respect	Won
Harassment and Mutual Respect	Won
Working Conditions	Won
Suspension/Letter of Suspension	Lost
Unfair and Unequal Treatment	Settled
Equalization of Overtime	Won

Total Grievances for Area Five: 83

Total Grievances for All Areas Through 9/30/07: 517

CWA PROUDLY SUPPORTS

AIR AMERICA RADIO

WWRL 1600 AM ON YOUR RADIO DIAL

Attention Members!

**Check out the Local's
Website at:**

www.cwalocal1023.net

MOVING?

*Please remember to give your
new address and phone number
to the Local Office when you move.*

You can call: (908) 709-1023

You can Fax: (908) 276-8921

You can e-mail: cwa1023@verizon.net

You can send by mail:

CWA Local 1023

118 South Avenue East

Cranford, NJ 07016

**QUOTE
OF
THE
MONTH**

“The answer to our problems is not to put more burdens on the workers, the real answer is national health insurance.”

— *Walter J. Butler*



The voice of local 1023 endeavors to provide factual, informative and relevant comment on matters of interest to the Membership. Reprint permission is granted to All Union Publications, with credit to the author. All inquiries concerning this publication should be referred to the Editor.

- EDITOR **Ward Riley**
- PRESIDENT **Rey Massa**
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Union Office (908) 709-1023 Fax (908) 276-8921
Announcement – (908) 276-7771 • Office Hours: Monday - Friday, 9-5

LOCALLY SPEAKING
COMMUNICATIONS WORKERS
OF AMERICA – LOCAL 1023
118 SOUTH AVENUE, EAST
CRANFORD, N.J. 07016

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