

EAST COAST -vs- WEST COAST (Not Biggie and Tupac, but a Tale of Two MCOs)

By Marilyn Irwin, Vice President

In the Potomac Region, Central Office Technicians and Maintenance Administrators handle both the provisioning and maintenance of DSL lines, and have done so since its inception. As far back as 1998, CWA and Verizon reached a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) regarding DSL work, which guarantees that all parts of xDSL work, between and including the Central Office and the NID (Network Interface Device) will be exclusively performed by CWA-represented employees. These COTs and MAs enjoy the benefits of union membership, and are covered by our "core" contract. Local 2108 represents members in both the Provisioning Control Center (PCC) and the Maintenance Control Organization-East (MCO-E) offices, located at the Chesapeake Complex. The PCC provisions for the entire Verizon footprint, while the MCO-E handles about half of it.

Verizon has a Maintenance Control Organization-West (MCO-W) office in Long Beach, California. The employees there perform exactly the same work as those in the MCO-E, except they handle the maintenance of DSL lines in different states. However, Verizon considers the employees in the MCO-W to be "management". The director for both MCOs is Paul Shay, whose office is located at the Chesapeake Complex. At one point, during an exceptionally busy period, the MCO-W handled overflow MCO-E work.

There was an organizing campaign at the MCO-W in 2005. The workers voted, and decided not to be represented by the CWA, so they remained "management". Verizon honored the Neutrality Agreement that had been negotiated with CWA and, for the most part, remained neutral throughout that campaign.

Why, you might ask, are the workers in the MCO-W (who do the same work as our COTs and MAs) considered "management"? Why is Verizon so adamant to keep it that way?

Fast forward to March, 2007. The "management" employees at the MCO-W are not happy campers because their "Verizon Family" had just taken away their pensions. Poof! Gone! The employees started to talk among themselves, and realized when you have a contract and are represented by a union the terms and conditions of your employment cannot just change overnight, because "Uncle" Ivan said so. MCO-W employees contacted the CWA and asked for another election. They wanted another opportunity to vote to be represented by the CWA. They wanted a contract that spelled out the terms and conditions of their employment, which could not be changed at the company's whim. They did not want at-will employment. They wanted to have a say in the work place they had worked so hard to make successful. Another election was held in April of this year.

So, Verizon honored the Neutrality Agreement again during the second election, right? Wrong! Assuming they realized how angry the employees were (just like the supervisors on the East Coast), and that they would likely vote "yes" for the union now, this time Verizon conducted a textbook anti-union campaign. They told the workers it was Verizon's intention that, if they voted "yes" for the union, they would not be included in the California "core" contract, but would have to negotiate a new and separate agreement.

They tried to scare the workers by using boogiemans words like "strike", "lockout", "walkout" and "dues". They looked the other way while those opposed to union representation spread the "vote no" word, while policing the "vote yes" group to ensure that they did no campaigning on company time. The Senior Vice President visited and Verizon even bought pizza for the entire office on the eve of the election ... something they had not done since the eve of the 2005 vote! CWA lost the election by a mere seven votes.

CWA is now arbitrating Verizon's violation of the Neutrality Agreement. I flew to California to attend three days of the hearings in August. I testified that the work performed in the MCO-W is the same as the work done in the MCO-E and that the workers in the East have been union-represented and part of the "core" contract from day one. I explained that Local 2108 filed a grievance and we are awaiting arbitration because the MCO-W performed MCO-E work at one point. I was questioned about the number of times I have been on strike during my thirty-four years as a C&P/Bell Atlantic/Verizon employee and CWA member (four), the number of times I have been locked out (zero), and I explained that I have worked without a contract during negotiations. While none of those things are my idea of a good time, they were necessary, and we have a better contract because we were willing to stand up and fight.

"A Tale of Two MCOs" continued on Page 7



From The President's Desk

If the workers took a notion they could stop all speeding trains; Every ship upon the ocean they can tie with mighty chains.

Joe Hill

At the Local 2108 Stewards meeting in September we welcomed guest speaker and Local 2108 member Leslie Jackson. Leslie works for the CWA International Union as its director of Civil Rights and Fair Practices. She discussed the importance of an active Equity committee and how Locals might take advantage of the diversity of its membership.

The consensus seemed to be many of these members have no real understanding of the importance of the union. Without that understanding, without any real sense of what makes this thing (the union) work, these members don't think the union does anything for them.

As the discussion progressed, a theme began to evolve: How can we more effectively communicate with the younger members of our Union?

Almost everyone in the room agreed education is the most important key to any change in attitude and understanding.

Who is going to provide this education? When will it begin? How long will it take? These are tough questions. There are no simple answers. Or are there?

Many of us spoke about our experiences when we started working for the company. Some of us work for Verizon Communications, others Verizon Connected Solutions, while others still for Idearc Media. Even though we all work for different employers, a common theme emerged among the stories.

Each of us had one person we pointed to as the person who

welcomed us into the Union, explained to us the rules and helped us along the way.

Last month I wrote about the people who had the biggest influence on me. It's now our turn to be an influence to the new generation of workers coming along behind us.



I know that Amory as well as Johnny, Marilyn, Jenny and I, speak with members everyday about the union.

Yet, we are only five people. It is impossible for us to speak with every member. We communicate in every way we can and make ourselves as accessible as possible. Whether it is tail-gate meetings, visits to worksites or membership meetings, we do all we can.

If you have read this column at all over the past 21 months, you have read about what would happen to us without the union. You need only look at the management in Verizon, Verizon Connected Solutions or Idearc Media to know what our fate would be without the Union.

I personally believe we have more members than we think who understand the importance of having a union. I talk to many people each day who tell me how important it is to them.

It's time everyone takes responsibility for talking union everyday. This is not always an easy task. Often, we are uncomfortable challenging our co-worker who says he doesn't understand what the union does for him. It's easier for us to ignore this rather than challenge it. Yet, challenge it we must.

So, here is the challenge for you. Yes, I'm talking directly to you. Talk to the one person you know doesn't really understand the importance of the union. Challenge it every time you hear someone say the union doesn't do anything for them. It's in remaining silent that we allow this lie to gain speed.

We are only ten months from negotiating what I believe to be the contract that will set the standard at Verizon for many years to come. Verizon is hell bent on getting rid of the union.

It is going to take every one of us to join this fight. The only power a union has is in the strength of its members.

The 73,000 workers at General Motors just demonstrated this very effectively. They went on strike over issues of retiree health care and job security. Their level of commitment and solidarity sent the message to GM that they were willing to do whatever was necessary to obtain a fair contract.

It took less than two days for GM management to hear that message and reach a settlement.

That's the power of many acting together as one. That's the power of UNION!

Les

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RMC 2108 Retirees Corner

By Calvin Foster, Vice President RMC 2108

At the September 12th meeting I gave a brief description of the Alliance for Retired Americas Legislative Conference that Dennis and I attended in Washington, D.C.

There were over 600 delegates at the conference. We had workshops on organizing and how to drive the issues of retirees to the forefront of the general public.

Many speakers, including current Presidential candidates, attended and spoke about issues concerning retirees and health care. Dennis and I also participated in Capitol Hill lobbying visits in the morning, and met with the CWA Executive Board and CWA RMC delegates later in the day.

The most immediate issue that retirees have in legislation is House Bill H.R. 3162. This bill concerns Medicare Advantage overpayments of 12 to 19 percent more than the cost of traditional Medicare, which is a threat to the Medicare Trust

Fund.

We should all be concerned. This is one of the many negative pressures retirees and future retirees have to overcome. This bill is now in conference in the US Senate. Your Senators would like to hear from you. Give them a call or see someone on the Executive Board, as we can give you some help.

Social Activity for October

There is a short trip to the MD Eastern Shore at Dixons Auctions, located in Crumton. This will be on October 17, 2007 (Wednesday). Anyone interested in attending should call Janice Crowe.

Enjoy this weather while it is here, and I hope to see you next month.



RMC 2108

Customer Service Professional Week:

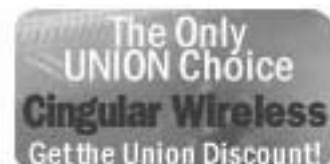
We're Getting The Job Done Right

Every day, CWA Customer Service Professionals bring our communications skills, problem-solving abilities and dedication to the job – and that makes all the difference for customers and the bottom line of our employers.

We don't work in an easy environment. In fact, everyday, we manage sales and performance pressures, monitoring and stress to provide the high road quality service that customers expect.

During Customer Service Week, **October 1-5**, CWA celebrates customer service members who are so vital to the success of our employers.

Our employers know this too, and that's why CWA has been successful in negotiating the return of more than 2,000 Tier 1 DSL support positions from outsourced and off-shore venues and in gaining hundreds of new airline reservations jobs, with more slated to return from overseas.



Local 2108 Picnic Pics

On Saturday, September 15th, the Local held their annual Family Picnic at Mayo Beach under delightful skies and temps in the mid 80s. The picnic was attended by nearly 500 members and their families. There was great food, cool games and fun, fun, fun. Here are a few of the pictures captured at the event. Hope to see you next year!



CWA Local 2108 Members

Welcome New Members

Mike Carter

Christopher Mwombela
Anthony Wilson
Carl Adams
Stanley Livesay, Jr.
James E. Mitchell, Jr.
Sean Thomas

Barbara Oliver

Cynthia Harrell

Carl Brogden

Byron Oliver
Robert Porter

Carmen Butler

Jeffrey McKay

Scott Brannan

Reggie Goforth

Sy Gaines

Rupert Rickards
Tarryl McKenna
Joseph Wells

Kim Lee

David H. Williams
Charles Bush
Michael Gunther
Wayne Dudley
Adrienne Kennerly
Rhonda Burton

Les Evans

Pamela Jones

Transferred Members

Bob Orr

Donnell Dory

Hank Allred

Barbara Herring

Carl Brogden

Ronald Payne
William S. Hicks, Jr.
Demetrius Ratliff

Monica Jones

Randall Sills
Sean Brewer
Charles Gray
Earlston Ford, III

Kyle Austin

Joyce E. Robinson

Joe Cooke

William McGee

Personals

We wish to extend sincere sympathy to the family and friends of:

David Alfonso, father of **Cheryl Saunders** who died on August 19, 2007.

Frenchie Mae King, mother of **Sharon Byrd** who died on August 26, 2007.

Kenneth Lyle, an active member and husband of retired member **Laila Lyle** who died on September 5, 2007.

John H. DeGroot, father of **John C. DeGroot** who died on September 6, 2007.

Meagan Matthews, sister of **Carolyn Matthews** who died on September 17, 2007.

Jayden Fisher Harper, son of **Eric Harper** who died on September 19, 2007.

Congratulations to:

Mary Jo and Mike O'Keefe on the birth of their daughter, **Kennedy Mary O'Keefe** on July 31, 2007.

Lorraine Williams on the birth of her granddaughter, **Saree Amirah (Breezy) Majeed** on August 21, 2007.

More Local 2108 Picnic Pics



New Test For Sales and Service

The HR Assessment & Selection group has reviewed the current test requirements for sales & service job titles throughout Verizon. Based on this analysis, effective October 1, 2007, the CCE-R Sales & Service test requirement will be replaced by the RepEvaluator test. The titles include Communications Representative, Consultant, Consultant Bi-Lingual, Credit Specialist, Customer Sales Representative, Public Communications Sales Representative, Service Representative, Telemarketing Representative, Telephone Canvasser-Business and Telephone Canvasser-Residential.

The RepEvaluator is an on-line simulation of customer contact jobs that streamlines the testing process and continues to assess test takers on critical skills required for the relevant titles. Similar to the CCE-R, the RepEvaluator assesses the ability of candidates to meet the demands faced by employees in customer contact positions involving sales, service, and collections. The RepEvaluator will be administered via computer, and involves listening to pre-recorded customer inquiries, entering data accurately into appropriate fields, determining how to respond using on-line reference materials, and then selecting the best response to the customer inquiry

using a multiple-choice format. Prior to beginning the scored section of the RepEvaluator, the test taker is provided a tutorial on how to use the system, time to become familiar with the information included, and a practice scenario.

The retest interval will be 6 and 12 months and expiration for the RepEvaluator will be upon replacement. Grandfather rules exist.



Verizon – The New Robber Barons For The 21st Century

Verizon is trying to sell its network in Vermont, New Hampshire and Maine to FairPoint Communications. FairPoint is a tiny, undercapitalized outfit. Massive Verizon chose tiny FairPoint because it could avoid paying \$700 million in taxes on the \$2.7 billion deal by taking advantage of a tax loophole called the Reverse Morris Trust.



The “Reverse Morris Trust” is a tax-avoidance technique that, thanks to Wall Street’s financial wizards, is increasingly deployed by corporations seeking to sell off unwanted assets without paying taxes on their gains. It is a remnant of the once-booming “disguised sale” transaction structure that many thought Congress had largely eliminated in the Taxpayer Relief Act of 1997.

While Verizon walks away with taxpayer money, consumers and the economy will suffer because highly leveraged FairPoint will not be able to invest in a high speed internet infrastructure - which limits millions of customers to the information dirt road, rather than the

information superhighway.

This is just the start – Verizon has already announced its intention to sell off other regions. Congress shouldn’t subsidize Verizon’s attempt to sell off our jobs and our access to high speed internet.

Act Now to Save Your Job! Call Congress and Your Senators at 202.225.3121.

Tell them: No Taxpayer Money for Selling off Networks! Make the “Reverse Morris Trust” Tax Scheme Illegal to Protect Good Jobs in Telecoms !

PSC Rates Verizon Response DN – Does Not Meet Requirements

On September 7, 2007, Verizon Maryland Inc. submitted a massive amount of additional documents on its phone service to the Maryland Public Service Commission.

The telephone company previously had filed thousands of pages of data with the PSC, which is investigating customer complaints about Verizon's service. But commissioners deemed those initial filings incomplete and gave Verizon until September 7 to supplement its earlier information, or face thousands of dollars in fines.

To comply with the PSC's request, Verizon submitted an additional 20 boxes containing 10 sets of documents, each set consisting of about 8,000 pages of reports and analyses. They included spreadsheets, Word documents, PowerPoint presentations, PDF files and printouts. Two boxes were given to the Maryland Office of the People's Counsel, which represents the state's residential utility consumers and is a party in the case.

More than 300 objections were lodged against the company by late July, a 50 percent increase from the comparable period last year. The PSC said it has received another 150 complaints about Maryland's largest telephone provider since the hearing.

In response, Verizon outlined a series of improvements, including putting more technicians on the job, increasing worker overtime and retraining call-center employees to help customers who lose service and have medical conditions.

"We recognize the need and are taking steps to communicate better with our customers whose voice service is affected," a Verizon spokesperson said.



MOSH & Verizon come to Terms Over Citation

Verizon has reached a settlement with Maryland's Occupational Safety and Health Unit (MOSH) regarding a MOSH citation issued after the unfortunate fatality of an employee last October.

Verizon has agreed within six months starting **September 1, 2007**, to provide employees working in Maryland whose job responsibilities require them to work in proximity to electrical power lines with power awareness training. The training shall include the following topics:

- The importance of power awareness
- Power line contact with vehicles, including aerial lifts
- Identification and recognition of electrical hazards
- Health effects from exposure to and/or contact with power
- Resolving health hazards through education and training, properly designed equipment and tools and utilization of personal protective equipment

Verizon, at its discretion, may also include additional topics related to electrical safety or power awareness in its training. Upon completion of the training, Verizon agrees to provide MOSH with documentation regarding the content of the training and verification of attendance of employees.

(From Page 1) A Tale of Two MCO'S...

The MCO-W arbitration case will continue in October, and Local 2108 Chief Steward Kendra Whitaker-Hughes will attend to give testimony about the work done in the MCO-E and to convey the support of our local to our brothers and sisters in the West.

It is obvious that Verizon wants the MCO-W to remain as "management" so they don't have the same rights as you and me. They can be fired "at will", their benefits can be gutted at any time and they can receive unequal pay for equal work. The cherry on this Verizon sundae is they will have a well-trained workforce to transfer the MCO-E work to, should we go on strike in 2008.

You have all read CWA literature stating that we need to "Tear Down the Wall" at Verizon. Simply put, this company's agenda is to do away with the Union. The currently anti-union National Labor Relations Board recently cited Verizon for "interfering with, restraining and coercing employees in the exercise of the rights" guaranteed by federal labor law during organizing campaigns at Verizon Business in Pittsburgh, PA and Monsey, NY. VZB management bragged to their employees that Verizon Wireless had "laid off employees because of their union activity", and threatened them with the same fate. They even put their employees under surveillance to discover their union activities!

Verizon's actions at the MCO-W, Verizon Business and Verizon Wireless illustrate why now, more than ever, we need The Employee Free Choice Act signed into law to protect workers from fear, intimidation and retaliation once they decide they want to be represented by a union.

It also emphasizes the problems we would be facing without the Union, without all of us standing together and fighting for our rights as employees. When we demand a safe work place, fair wages, benefits, job security and a decent retirement, we are not asking too much. Nevertheless, as Verizon has demonstrated, the only way we will keep what we have is by standing together.

Local 2108 Union Calendar

October 2007

- 1-5 Customer Service Professional Week
- 3 Flushots - Chesapeake Complex, 8:30 -5:00
- 3 Chief Steward Meeting 9:00 am
Local Office
- 3 Finance Committee Meeting 4:00pm
Local Office
- 4 Flushots - Calverton, 10:00-1:30
- 10 Retired Member Club Meeting 11:00am
Local Office, Landover, MD
- 10 General Membership Meeting 6:00pm
Local Office, Landover, MD
- 21 ALS Walk 9:00am
Washington, DC

November 2007

- 1-2 District 2 Meeting
Washington, DC
- 6-7 Blood Drive
Chesapeake Complex
- 7 Chief Steward Meeting - **Cancelled**
- 11 Veterans Day
- 12 Local Office Closed - Veterans Day Holiday
- 14 Retired Member Club Meeting 11:00am
Local Office, Landover, MD
- 14 General Membership Meeting - **Cancelled**
- 14-17 Chief Stewards Training
Ocean City, Md.
- 15 ACFC Cares Healthfair - **Calverton**
- 22-23 Thanksgiving Holiday
Local Office Closed
- 27-29 Verizon National Bargaining Council Mtg.
Philadelphia, Pa.

**VERIZON & VCSI CONTRACTS
EXPIRE IN ONE YEAR...

ARE YOU READY?**

Visit Local 2108 On The Web: www.cwlocal2108.org

**See pages 4 & 5
CWA Picnic
Pics....**

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