



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, AT&R_T Nobility and American Labor Museum Botto House.

VOLUME 39, NUMBER 1

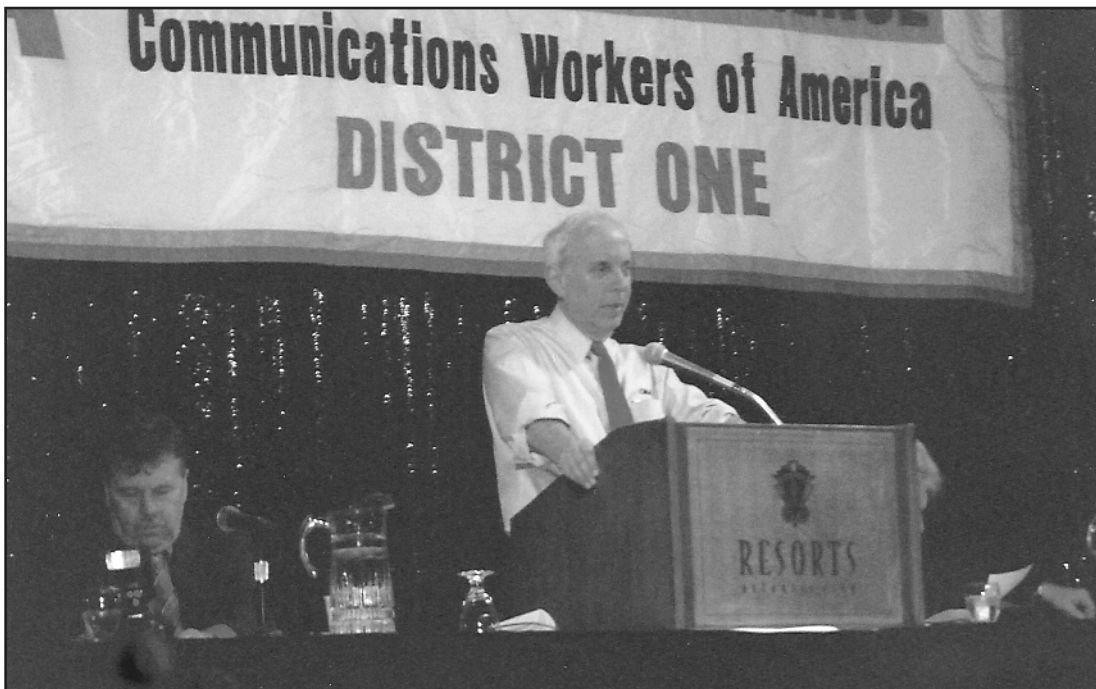
COMMUNICATIONS WORKERS OF AMERICA

LOCAL 1023, CRANFORD, NJ

JUNE 2010

LARRY COHEN:

TOUGH TIMES AHEAD FOR UNIONS



CWA President Larry Cohen addresses the delegates at the CWA District One conference in Atlantic City, NJ March 4, 2010, saying 'If we are to survive in the current economic climate, we need a lot more federal support than we are currently getting.'

Bargaining Continues at the Occupational Center of Union County

With their Contract expiring on March 4, 2010, the CWA Bargaining Team for the Occupational Center of Union County (OCUC) began bargaining on February 2, 2010.

The Bargaining Team comprised of the President and Vice President of CWA Local 1023, also includes Stewards Nick Dankanyin, Wanda Robinson and Lynn Boyko.

Following a series of assaults on benefits and wages, OCUC management came to the table demanding more give backs.

All bargaining demands presented by the Union were summarily rejected by management.

However, negotiations are far from over. CWA always lasts "one (1) day longer than the company."

Our members at OCUC are dedicated to providing vocational rehabilitation, supported employment, mental health, long term extended employment, and school to work transition services to approximately 350 individuals with disabilities, ages 16 and up, so that they can become productive members of their communities.

The President's Corner

When I was running for this office, I talked about "change" and how it is ever constant.

Verizon is on warp speed and every week it's something new.

I sit on the Commercial Marketing committee that consists of three (3) Local Presidents, two (2) CWA Staff Representatives and Verizon management. Back in January, after many discussions and much consideration, the Union decided to enter an agreement to bring the Campaign Calls into the CSSCs.

The trade off is the copper billing calls. Everyone on the Union side of this committee was emphatic – while the Union wanted to have our members receiving what was perceived to be the more lucrative calls in our CSSCs, we did not want the company to think that this was *carte blanche* for a new "queue".

We made it perfectly clear that we **were not agreeing** to allow the company to feed these calls to those the company felt were "sales performers". The Union was led to believe that the calls would be the "luck of the draw" and everyone would be on an even playing field.

Now we discover why the new AVAYA IP- ACD was installed. While the company cries "poor mouth," rants and raves about the loss of land lines and talks about laying off more than 2000 Union members in the Northeast, they install a new phone system into their business offices. I am assuming that all our members are aware that "IP" stands for internet protocol and hence no need for land lines. Can anyone come up with the number of land lines the company disconnected from their **very own offices** to install this new system? Don't forget to include Hamilton and the two (2) CFS offices. It's amazing that the company didn't have a contest with one of their *trash and trinket* prizes to be awarded to the person who guessed correctly.

This "new technology" called **skills based routing** (SBR) is not a queue so says the company. I beg to differ. An ACD (automatic call distributor) is an ACD whether one can actually see the piece of equipment that is distributing the calls or if it's virtual. If you are feeding a specific type of call to one person rather than another, it's a queue!

The other reason for the new internet based system is that now management can observe from anywhere! So if your supervisor is not in the office, do not be lulled into a false sense of security. If he/she isn't listening from the living room sofa while watching the boob tube, Ivan Seidenberg or whoever else in that ivory tower in Basking Ridge could be.

When a campaign call comes into a position, there is a grey box in the lower corner of CoFEE which marks the call. It's barely big enough to read without a



magnifying glass. Make sure you check for this indicator when you receive a call. Be aware that many management employees jump on these calls at the same time!

How the surplus is going to impact the company's SBR scheme is anyone's guess!

Speaking of the synthetic surplus....after several meetings between the Union and Verizon management, the Union was finally able to get a commitment regarding layoffs from Verizon. The company agreed that they would not lay-off any Consultants until after May 1, 2011. While this protects our Members with seniority dates after August, 2003, many of our more experienced Members are looking to take advantage of the incentives the company is offering to the Enhanced Income Security Plan (EISP).

While we wish these folks well in their new endeavors, our Union is under attack.

At every opportunity, Verizon is using technology to find ways to replace its most precious resource: **their employees**. The Union has made numerous attempts to sit down with the company to discuss their plans as provided for in our Collective Bargaining Agreement. The company's response is that these changes are not "major" and will not affect a large number of employees. Who does the company think they are kidding?



CWA BARGAINS BETTER TERMS FOR LATEST BUYOUT

Late in 2009 Verizon announced that more workers would be severed from the payrolls, in addition to those who have already retired, taken buyouts, been surplused or let go for other reasons. Verizon has made billions in profits and it couldn't have happened without the sweat equity put in by our members. The final total nationwide to be dropped from the payroll is expected to be approximately 12,000. Another enhanced buyout offer has been made to the members and it is significantly better than the previous enhanced offers, but only after lengthy negotiations with CWA.

This offer includes a raise of the one time bonus from \$10,000 to \$50,000, a raise in the number of years of service that will garner a bonus, increases in pension bands, and guarantees of no layoffs of specific job titles until at least 2011 regardless of NCS. In addition, the offer will be made to non-surplused employees as well.

The leadership of CWA District One, Two, Thirteen and the IBEW of New England negotiated all of this. In what many thought was a delayed April Fools joke, members received a misleading email from Verizon on April 2nd after negotiations broke down. The email was worded in such a way as to make you think that the company wanted to give the members these things but the Union didn't want you to have them. NOTHING COULD BE FURTHER FROM THE TRUTH! The fact is that the company did not want to offer this enhanced buyout to all members so it would have the option to layoff newer members instead. Verizon was resistant to

any suggestions that would've reduced the total headcount to be dropped from the payroll. The Union held to its guns and eventually the company caved in and agreed to many of the specifics that it had previously refused to consider.

To volunteer, Associates must complete and sign the Volunteer Form included in the package and fax it to the number indicated no later than 11:59 p.m. EDT on June 16, 2010. The Your Benefits Resources web site will be updated to provide on-line pension estimates that include the provisions of the Offer beginning Friday, May 7th, and as of that date the Verizon Benefits Center will have the information needed to answer questions about the pension enhancements and separation benefits.

How to request an online pension estimate:

Beginning Friday, May 7th you can go to the Your Benefits Resources web site ("<http://www.verizon.com/benefits>) and select the "Pension" tab, then "Estimate Your Benefit."

Scroll down the page to the section titled "Projection Assumptions" and for "Last Day of Employment" click on "Other Date" and enter "07-03-2010."

For "Date You Begin Receiving Benefits" click on "Other Date" and enter "07-04-2010" or the 1st day of any month August – December. 2010.

Scroll to the bottom of the page and click on "Redisplay Projection."

It is important to know that anyone taking this package is not entitled to collect unemployment.



On Thursday, April 8th, CWA members picketed the Livingston building to protest the onsite training of newly hired non-union workers while union workers are being surplused.

EDITORIAL

In January 2010 Verizon announced its intention to reduce the payroll by over 12,000 employees by years end. This will be accomplished thru attrition, another enhanced offer and layoffs. (See related article on the buyout.) Verizon claims it needs to reduce the headcount because of dwindling profits and a changing telecom environment. The fact is that Verizon had a fourth quarter, 2009 loss of \$643M because it took a \$3 BILLION dollar charge resulting from the headcount reduction that year. As the industry changes it creates new opportunities and Verizon claimed that would create jobs. Now it is using the same reason to argue that it must cut jobs.

It's clear that Verizon isn't really concerned with the needs of the workers or its customers. Ivan Seidenberg recently stated that, "Verizon is deeply invested in America's future." The FCC just announced a broadband initiative to help bring high speed internet to rural areas, so how is Verizon working towards that goal by selling off New England to Fairpoint and many midwestern rural states to Frontier? Were they hoping to get a share of the \$130B that the federal government will spend on this project? Or did they not think themselves capable?

Verizon has opposed net neutrality rules proposed by the FCC because it wants the right to charge the end users for internet access and the web site owners for the right to deliver it faster. Net neutrality is essential to keeping the internet open to all and on a level playing field. Can you imagine paying someone for next day delivery for the item you won on Ebay only to find it took a week because the shipper didn't also pay extra? That's the world Verizon envisions: a world where they get to charge twice for the same work.

Slate magazine recently took Ivan Seidenberg to task for making statements that were intentionally misleading. In an interview with the Wall Street Journal, Ivan Seidenberg was asked what country has the best broadband and he stated, "The facts are that, in the U.S., there is greater household penetration of access to the Internet than any country in Europe." This is a true, but misleading statement. He is talking about access when the real measure is adoption. In foreign countries, a greater number of users use broadband because you get higher speeds for less money. As Slate pointed out, a 1M connection in the US typically costs \$35 unless it's bundled as part of a phone or TV package. In many other countries you can get a 200M connection for \$60 and 50M for less then we pay for 1M service.

Newsweek, in a February 15th, 2010 article concluded that layoffs and downsizing are bad ideas because they rarely results in a higher stock price, an increase in productivity, or an increase in profits. Another

downside of layoffs is it often drives the best workers out the door. While buying out members with high seniority does save on payroll, it also deprives the company of the wisdom that comes with all those years of seniority. Layoffs also decrease morale and that impacts the health of the workers as well as their productivity. There is no upside to letting members go, but Verizon is going to do what Verizon wants to do, reality be damned.

The facts are simple. Verizon moved its headquarters to NJ claiming it would create jobs in NJ. It accepted tax breaks while doing so. Now Verizon is surplussing union members. Verizon pushed NJ politicians to allow it easier ability to roll out FIOS with the promise it would create jobs. Now Verizon has scaled back almost all FIOS rollouts and plans to layoff the employees it hired to roll out FIOS. At the same time that Verizon is trying to shed union employees, it still contracts out work to vendors, while failing to maintain its aging copper network and failing to answers calls on time in its service centers. Verizon is a very very profitable company, and it is clear that profits are more important then "America's future" or providing quality service or taking care of the employees that helped make this company what it is today.

Passage of EFCA Stalled

Efforts to pass the Employee Free Choice Act have stalled and it is unlikely to come up for a vote any time soon. The EFCA would make it easier for workers to form a union and make it harder for companies to engage in anti-union activity. Several months ago, the bill had momentum and was being pushed hard by Senator Harry Reid. At that time the Democrats held a filibuster proof majority of 60 votes in the Senate. White House Chief of Staff Rahm Emanuel made it clear that President Obama felt that health care reform was a higher priority. There was a belief among top Democrats and within the White House that they could only fight so many battles at once.

The Democrats now have a 59 vote majority in the Senate and it appears as if immigration reform is the latest front burner issue for the President and Congress. It appears that the EFCA will not come up for a vote for quite a while. With over 200 cases pending before the NLRB, organized labor is looking for favorable rulings on these cases to help labor move forward in the fight for fairness in the work place.

Greedy Verizon Tries To Bankrupt A Fourth Small Company

A recent court ruling prohibiting the use of the Reverse Morris Trust as a tax dodge does not appear to have derailed Verizon's attempts to sell rural land lines to Frontier. A Reverse Morris Trust is a way for a large company to unload unprofitable assets (i.e. rural states where it doesn't want to invest in FTTP) to a small company and obtain a huge tax write off in the process. Typically the smaller company inherits a sizable amount of debt. The process requires the large company to have a controlling stake in the smaller company, so even though Verizon will have divested itself of these states, it has an interest in them just the same.

This process has been legal since 1997 and it has been criticized by many as little more than a shell game and a tax dodge because it allows large corporations to greatly reduce their tax obligation. Verizon was able to get rid of 1.7B in debt and save 600M in taxes in the sale of its New England properties to Fairpoint. Fairpoint recently declared bankruptcy and most analysts believe it will be difficult for Fairpoint to make any major improvements in the quality of the service it provides. As predicted by many analysts, this has turned out to be a sweet deal for Verizon, while all the other interested parties took a beating.

This is not the first time that this has happened. Hawaii Telecom Communications, which took control of Verizon's Hawaiian lines in 2005, filed for bankruptcy in 2008. Verizon spun off it's phone book division in 2006 forming a new company called Idearc Media. They are also filed for bankruptcy recently and changed their name to Supermedia. Many analysts and consumer advocates have stated that the sale of rural states to Frontier is ill-advised and will likely end up the same way that the Fairpoint and Hawaii telecom sales did.

In March Administrative law judge Lisa M. Tapia in Illinois agreed with the unions and industry analysts when she stated that "the proposed reorganization will diminish Frontier's ability to provide adequate, reliable, efficient, safe and least-cost public utility service," mostly because it would leave Frontier with too much debt. Larry Cohen, President of CWA stated that, "with Frontier \$3.3 billion in debt, upgrading the networks to bring higher-speed broadband service to rural areas will not be a high priority," With Reverse Morris Trust deals, "you're getting companies that are taking on enormous debt," he said. Despite the fact that this sale is not as favorable as it was earlier, and the fact that many politicians, legislators, analysts and others have agreed that this is a bad deal for taxpayers, customers and workers, it appears as if the sale will go thru as planned some time this summer.

UNION WINS IMPROVEMENTS TO HEALTH CARE PLAN

From the moment it was announced that President Obama's health care reform would be financed in part by including a tax on so called "cadillac health care plans," union members and their leaders were united in opposition. President Obama stated that taxing expensive health care plans was necessary to help fund the reforms. The unions agreed that passage of health care reform was essential to improving the quality and availability of health care to all Americans. Penalizing workers who had fought to get good coverage and burdening middle class families was not the way to pay for it. After much negotiation among Democrats leaders, organized labor, the White House and other key players, these excise taxes were deferred until 2018. This will allow labor unions time to negotiate at contract time how these changes will impact members.

Among the improvements made to the health care plan -

- Raises the threshold at which family plans are taxed from \$23K to \$24K, and \$8,500 to \$8,900 for single workers.

- Raises the threshold for workers in high risk professions.

- Raises thresholds for workers in high-cost states.

- Raises thresholds for plans that have a higher than average number of older workers or female workers (these plans typically cost more).

- Allows any collective bargaining unit into the health insurance exchange.

- Exempts dental and vision plans from the calculations.

- Allows for increases in thresholds if inflation grows faster than expected.

Welcome New Members

Patricia Aguilar – OCUC, **Rami Ayyash** – AT&T Mobility, **Raphael Aziz** – AT&T Mobility, **Steven Chiocchi** – AT&T Mobility, **Cristal Connell** – AT&T Mobility, **Inelda Deleon** – OCUC, **Diane Ferreira** – AT&T Mobility, **Cristina Herrera** – AT&T Mobility, **Alicia Lomas** – AT&T Mobility, **Elyse Markowitz** – OCUC, **William Obodo** – AT&T Mobility, **Kelly Perrow** – AT&T Mobility, **Deliz Rodriguez** – AT&T Mobility, **Joel Roman** – AT&T Mobility, **George Waters** – AT&T Mobility

Congratulations Retirees

Teresa Branch – Newark VPS, **Camille Davis-Perry** – Newark VPS, **Manuel Diaz** – OCUC, **Sharyn Forman** – Newark VPS, **Lynne Krompholz** – Newark VPS, **Steven Slomback** – Fair Lawn CFS, **Susan Terrents** – Cranford Bankruptcy

CRANKY CONSULTANT: STOP BLAMING THE UNIONS!!!!

The definition of scapegoat is "An individual or group unfairly blamed for problems not of their own making." If you are a union member you probably knew that already. Many states are facing severe budget shortfalls and large corporations are looking to reduce expenses wherever possible during the economic downturn. Republicans and the anti-union crowd have loudly criticized unions as the cause of their troubles, depicting us as lazy, highly paid, "greedy do nothings."

Susan Shurman, a professor at Rutgers University's School of Management and Labor, said that politicians are "searching for villains and scapegoats." Politicians appeal to non union workers by saying that union workers aren't willing to partake in the "shared sacrifice." The problem is that that this isn't about sacrifice and it isn't about actual resolution of issues. What this is about is UNION BUSTING. Compare what Republicans said about the Auto industry bailout and the Wall Street bailout. Many prominent Republicans insisted that a bailout of GM should only occur if the labor unions agreed to major concessions to help GM become more profitable. Explaining his "no" vote, Alabama Sen. Richard Shelby said the bill simply wouldn't have worked.

"It will not make the Big Three competitive," Shelby said. "It will not make them efficient. It will not make them compete in the marketplace."

When President Obama appointed a Pay Czar to control executive compensation at firms receiving TARP funds, these same Republicans cried foul, saying it would interfere with the company's right to manage itself. Union members making good money? Bad. Corporate executives making fantastic money? No problem.

The rhetoric has gotten ugly at times, such as when Chris Christie compared teachers to drug mules, a comment that former Education Commissioner Saul Cooperman called "terrible." Not missing a chance to

take a dump on unions, Rush Limbaugh recently went after unions when a mining accident in WV claimed the lives of 29 miners. "Was there no union responsibility for improving mine safety? The union is generally holding these companies up demanding all kinds of safety. Why were these miners continuing to work in what apparently was an unsafe atmosphere?" Rush might have a point... **if there actually was a union representing the workers at that mine.** I guess we should thank Rush for inadvertently making our point for us, that unions help protect their members.

Chris Christie and the rest of the anti-union crowd want to engage in a race to the bottom, where union members give up their benefits because "nobody gets X benefit in the real world". What they fail to realize is that unions set the pace for wages and benefits everywhere. If a person can work for X company and get good union benefits, Y company has to offer something close otherwise why would someone want to work there? As X employee benefits improve, Y must also increase to keep pace. The arguments made by the anti-union crowd should not inspire anger at unionized workers, but a desire to join a union.

The reality is that the executives and politicians decide the fate of their companies and their states, not unions. It is the top leadership that sets policy. It is the workers who follow that policy. Win or lose, sink or swim the fact is the worker has little control over the destiny of the company or the state. NJ didn't get into a financial crisis overnight, it happened over decades of both Democratic and Republican rule. Verizon didn't find itself in a competitive environment overnight and the executives should have planned better for how to respond to the emerging threats. Chris Christie, Ivan Seidenberg and the rest of them should remember that when you point the finger of blame, there's four fingers pointing back at you.



Stewards Meeting, April 14, 2010

CWA LOCAL 1023 GRIEVANCE REPORT FOR 2009

AREA ONE – Joy Van Pelt, Chief Steward

Absences/Tardies –	3 won, 1 lost, 1 settled, 2 open
Class Action –	3 lost
Appraisal –	1 won, 1 settled
Observation –	1 won
Management Doing Production –	1 won, 1 withdrawn
Vacation, EWD –	1 withdrawn
Training –	1 lost
Bypass, U&T, Transfers –	2 open, 2 lost
Harassment/Mutual Respect –	7 won, 10 withdrawn, 1 settled, 2 open
Health & Safety –	1 open
Working Conditions –	1 settled
Suspension/Letter of Suspension –	1 settled, 2 lost, 2 won, 1 open, 1 withdrawn
Unfair/Unequal Treatment –	3 open, 2 withdrawn, 1 lost, 1 settled, 8 won
In-Charge –	1 won
Surplus –	2 open
Seniority/Loan/Force Transfer –	3 open, 3 lost

Total Grievances 72

AREA TWO – Jerry Adamo, Chief Steward

Absences/Tardies –	5 settled, 1 withdrawn, 1 open
Disability/Leave of Absence –	1 open, 1 withdrawn
Dismissal –	4 lost, 1 withdrawn, 2 open
Appraisal –	1 lost, 1 settled
Observation –	2 withdrawn, 1 settled, 13 open
Vacation, EWD –	1 open
Pay Treatment –	3 open
Training –	2 won
Bypass, U&T, Transfers –	1 open
Weather –	1 settled, 6 open
Harassment/Mutual Respect –	28 settled, 5 open, 6 won, 5 lost, 2 withdrawn
Working Conditions – Suspension/Letter of Suspension –	1 lost, 1 open 16 lost, 23 settled, 19 withdrawn, 1 won, 12 open
Unfair/Unequal Treatment –	1 open, 1 lost, 1 won, 1 withdrawn
Death in the Family –	1 open
Denial of Union Representation –	6 open

Total Grievances 182

AREA THREE – Dana Hazzard, Chief Steward

Absences/Tardies –	35 open, 11 lost, 5 withdrawn
Disability/Leave of Absence –	1 lost
Discrimination –	1 won
Dismissal –	14 lost, 10 open, 8 settled, 1 withdrawn
Appraisal –	1 lost, 2 settled, 2 open
Observation –	2 withdrawn, 1 won
Tour Selection –	1 withdrawn
Pay Treatment –	1 settled
Training –	2 won, 1 open
Weather –	3 open
Harassment/Mutual Respect –	31 open, 10 settled, 18 won, 6 withdrawn, 3 lost
Working Conditions –	1 open
Code of Conduct –	1 settled, 1 withdrawn
Suspension/Letter of Suspension –	17 lost, 3 withdrawn, 4 settled, 49 open, 14 won
Unfair/Unequal Treatment –	3 withdrawn, 3 open, 2 won
Seniority/Loan/Force Transfer –	3 open, 1 settled
Denial of Union Representation –	1 open
Layoff –	6 open

Total Grievances 306

AREA FOUR – Charlene Johnson, Chief Steward

Absences/Tardies –	12 lost, 2 won, 2 settled, 1 open, 2 withdrawn
Appraisal –	1 won
Tour Selection –	1 open
Pay Treatment –	1 open
Training –	3 open, 1 won, 1 settled
Weather –	4 open
Harassment/Mutual Respect –	3 open, 7 settled, 2 withdrawn, 8 won, 1 lost
Working Conditions –	2 open, 1 withdrawn, 1 won, 1 settled
Suspension/Letter of Suspension –	15 open, 4 lost, 6 withdrawn, 5 settled, 1 won
In Charge –	1 won
Equalization of OT –	2 open
Mandatory OT –	1 won, 1 open
Code of Conduct –	1 open
Unfair/Unequal Treatment –	1 won, 2 settled, 1 lost, 6 open
In-Charge –	1 won
Equalization of OT –	2 open
Layoff –	1 open

Total Grievances 95

Continued on Page 8

2009 GRIEVANCES

Continued from Page 7

AREA FIVE – Dinorah Santiago, Chief Steward

Absences/Tardies –	2 lost, 3 won, 8 open, 1 settled
Demotions –	1 lost, 1 withdrawn
Dismissal –	3 lost, 1 withdrawn, 2 open
Appraisal –	2 open
Observation –	1 withdrawn
Management Doing	
Production –	2 open, 1 withdrawn
Vacation, EWD –	2 open
Tour Selection –	1 settled
Pay Treatment –	1 won, 2 open
Weather –	4 settled
Harassment/Mutual	
Respect –	31 open, 4 won, 5 lost, 3 settled
Health & Safety –	1 open
Working Conditions –	4 open
Code of Conduct –	2 won
Suspension/Letter of	
Suspension –	8 lost, 2 withdrawn, 3 settled, 25 open
Unfair/Unequal Treatment –	19 open
In-Charge –	1 open
Seniority/Loan/Force	
Transfer –	1 withdrawn, 1 open
Denial of Union	
Representation –	4 open, 1 lost, 1 withdrawn

Total Grievances 156

Total Grievances Local 1023 in 2009: 814

Attention Members!

Check out the Local's
Website at:

www.cwalocal1023.net

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

"No company ever shrank to greatness." Dwight Gertz, management consultant, reacting to corporate studies showing how Wall Street does not react well to downsizing.

Check out
Local 1023 on
Facebook
to stay on top of
current events!!!!



BACKUP CARE PROGRAM TO BE DISCONTINUED

The ACFC has announced that it will no longer offer the Backup Care program. If anyone needs help on locating Nannies, Summer Camps, Volunteer programs for the Summer, etc., they can call VZ-Life at 800-845-0632 for that type of resource and referral.

The Community Minded Union
Locally Speaking
The People Minded Local

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-IN-CHIEF William Angus
PRESIDENT Kathleen Forté
VICE-PRESIDENT Ward Riley
SECRETARY Sharon Adamo
TREASURER Glenn Fernandez

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