

# BELLTEL RETIREE

The Official Newsletter for Retirees and Employees of Bell Atlantic, GTE, NYNEX, Verizon and Its Subsidiaries  
Paid for by contributions from Verizon retirees

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Volume 44

## Verizon Board Adopts BellTel Proxy

It's just been a few months since the advisory vote on executive pay proxy put forth by Association of BellTel Retirees president Bill Jones achieved more than 50 percent of the shareowner vote at the May 3rd Verizon annual meeting.

Nearly six months later, on November 1st, the Verizon Board of Directors announced that it will adopt the policy providing the Shareowners an advisory vote on executive pay packages. The policy will go into effect starting with the 2009 annual meeting.

Sandra O. Moose, Verizon's presiding director said, "The Board believes that these actions further strengthen Verizon's corporate governance practices. We believe that it is important to engage in an ongoing dialogue with shareholders and others."

The company also intends to make clearer the details of the types of compensation executives receive as severance packages. Another policy will require the independent compensation consultant to only work for the Human Resources Committee and in no other capacity at Verizon. This was

another question previously raised by the Association in past proxy campaigns.

The proposer of the victorious proxy had his own take on the matter. "We retirees and employees have had to tighten our belts, but it seems to me that the top of the house needs to lead by example," said Mr. Jones.

Supporters of the BellTel effort, including the AFL-CIO applauded the company's decision. "This is a strong victory for investors," stated Richard Trumka, the secretary-treasurer for the national union. "Shareholders delivered a vote of no confidence in CEO Ivan Seidenberg's pay, and the company took notice."

According to *FinancialWeek*, the shareholders of seven different companies voted in favor of say-on-pay proxies this year, but of those, Verizon is the first to actually adopt the measure. Insurance company Aflac had already enacted an advisory vote on pay policy in February 2007.

Prior to Verizon's November announcement, institutional investors urged the company to adopt the proxy

measure. In a letter they stated, "As institutional investors, we are concerned by the disconnect between executive pay and corporate performance at Verizon and other public companies."

The Association and its leaders have proposed numerous proxies in the last decade, with numerous resulting in board policies clamping down on excesses in corporate pensions, benefits, compensation and event halting the practice of using shadow profits to boost executive compensation.

Even with the announcement from Verizon, AFL-CIO senior legal and policy advisor Heather Slavkin is taking a wait-and-see stance on whether or not the company will really put executive pay packages up for a vote. "As we all know, the devil is in the details," said Slavkin. "We are eager to see how it actually looks when the management proposal is submitted to shareholders."

The Association will be meeting with Verizon officers to obtain all of the details of these policy changes to ensure that they will implement the plans in a manner that complies with the spirit of our proposals.

### UNITED AUTO WORKERS CONTRACT NEGOTIATIONS:

#### **Will UAW Agreement Model Future of Retiree Benefits?**

In September, General Motors (GM) and the United Auto Workers (UAW) reached an agreement in contract negotiations after a two-day union strike, with union members ratifying the contract. Similar negotiations with Chrysler resulted in initial union opposition, but were also approved. At press time, negotiations with Ford resulted in a tentative four year agreement.

However, what GM, Chrysler and the UAW union leaders are calling a successful outcome others are calling a bad break for workers, retirees and their families.

More important, some experts are predicting that the deal will set a precedent, causing other big companies in other industries to follow suit and rid themselves of obligations to their retirees. The deal also puts the national health care system debate back to the forefront of elected officials' agendas.

Details of the contract state that the burden of union retiree medical benefits will now fall into the hands of the union, in what GM reps claim will save the company from paying the near \$51 billion obligation it has to those retirees

*(Continued on page 8)*

### **SAVE THE DATE:**

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## President's Message

by C. William Jones

**M**any members write to us and ask, "Why don't you do anything about a cost of living adjustment to our pensions?" Let me give you the short answer first. **We have had the issue of inflation protection for pensions on the top of our list of issues for our entire existence – over eleven years.**

The more complete answer is difficult to explain but I will do my best.

Prior to the formation of the Association, this was the history of pension increases. For the period from between 1970 until and 1990, pension increases were given to retirees, on average, every 2 ½ years in the amount of about one half of inflation in for that period. After that, for all former NYNEX retirees, the last across-the-board increase was given in 1991. For Bell Atlantic management retirees the last increase was in 1993 and for Bell Atlantic craft people the last increase was in 1996.

The very first conversation that was held in October 1995 between a few retirees twelve years ago, that led to the formation of this Association, centered on this very subject. At that time, NYNEX retirees had not received a pension increase in four years. That was significant since it was the longest period without an increase in the preceding 25 or more years. That issue was the reason that a group of us banded together and contributed funds to hire an attorney to incorporate: to send our first newsletter and a request for contributions. It was later that we added other issues to our mission, including the protection of our healthcare benefits.

We have never taken our eye off of

the pension increase issue. Every time we meet with Chairman Seidenberg, we discuss the need for a pension increase. At every Verizon Annual Shareholder Meeting, we raise the pension and healthcare issues and let the Verizon Board of Directors, Verizon officers and the shareholders know that retirees have seen the buying power of our pensions shrink by about 40%. At every meeting with the Human Resources officers we also discuss the need for a pension increase.

What has happened since 1996? There were two things that happened in recent history that were a result of Association activities:

1) Prior to 1999, there was no minimum pension for Bell Atlantic retirees and there was a \$400.00 per month minimum for NYNEX retirees. Effective in 1999, the minimum full pension for all service pensioners was increased to \$500.00 per month, in 2000 to \$600.00 per month and in 2001 to \$700.00 per month for eligible participants with 30 or more years of service. For those with less service, the amounts were prorated. **Approximately 21,000 retirees benefited from these increases.**

2) In the year 2000, a Special Lump Sum Payment was made to all service pensioners who retired prior to February 1, 1995. This payment varied from \$2,500.00 to \$20,000.00 depending upon the amount of the retiree's pension and the number of years the person was retired. **Over 100,000 retirees received a lump sum payment.**

Since then, in spite of all of our continued attempts, there have been no further increases in pensions. Part of the reason is that the stock market took a dive in 2000. Coupled with that, a very large group of active employees took an "early out" incentive. The combination of those two events caused the excess funds from the pension fund excess funds to drop from \$26 billion down to just \$787 million. The fund never went into the red but it took a sizable hit. Since then, the fund assets and the excess funds have recovered, but very slowly.

The Chairman states, when we meet with him each year or so, that they review this issue annually and determine if it is required and is prudent,

given financial considerations of the business. During these reviews, The company takes into consideration in these reviews the added cost of retiree healthcare premiums as they consider that an added benefit to retirees. While the answer to the pension increase question has been "no" for the past seven years, we are remain hopeful that we can obtain some sort of inflation protection for retirees.

This is an overview of the history of this important issue and the actions and accomplishments so far. **I hope you understand that we will always keep this issue in the forefront of our discussions with Verizon officers.**



Association of BellTel Retirees Inc.

UNITED, TO PROTECT OUR FUTURE

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P.O. Box 33, Cold Spring Harbor,

New York 11724 · (631) 367-3067

website: www.belltelretirees.org

E-mail: association@belltelretirees.org

Hotline: (800) 261-9222

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### **President and Executive Director:**

C. William Jones (410) 770-9485

### **Office Manager**

Christina M. Kruger (631) 367-3067

### **Board of Directors:**

John M. Brennan, Chairman (201) 666-8174

Michael S. Kucklinca

Executive Vice President (516) 741-2424

Eileen T. Lawrence, Treasurer (718) 229-6078

Robert A. Rehm, Chief Financial Officer

(516) 827-0801

Richard Knapp, Secretary (914) 779-6292

James E. Casey, Jr., Vice President

Information Systems (540) 439-9568

Pamela M. Harrison, Vice President

Union Relations (845) 225-6497

John A. Parente, Vice President

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Government Relations (631) 765-1111

Mike McFadden, Vice President

Union Relations (856) 767-1131

Patricia Trent Wells, Director

(212) 535-6859

Sandra D. Thorn, Director & Legal Counsel

(631) 324-2027

Louis Miano, Director Emeritus

(781) 444-8080

Advertising Representative:

Jim Falborn (212) 260-1731

## Association Stands United With Verizon Workers

It has been reported that Verizon is interested in moving up its discussions regarding the new contract with workers. The present contract expires on August 8, 2008. The Association has a long history of standing united with all workers, union and management alike.

Our membership, as of the latest count, is made up of 44% former union people and 56% former management. We have said from our beginning in 1996 that we represent all retirees regardless of their affiliation. Once we retire, we are all in the same boat.

Association President and Executive Director, C. William Jones, said, "Everyone hopes that the negotiations can be conducted in such a manner that a strike is not necessary. There are no winners in a strike."

"However, continued Mr. Jones, should a strike take place, the Association asks members to honor picket lines. Further, the Association requests that members decline should the company ask retirees to come to work to replace striking workers."

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## A Thank You from Your Treasurer

Dear Friends,

In our last newsletter, we spoke to you about our need for funds, and especially the need for increased participation on the part of members who had never contributed. Our hope was to raise \$165,000 to meet this year's budget needs.

Your response was heartwarming and overwhelming! As we go to press with this newsletter, the results of our September appeal have exceeded our goal by more than \$10,000. Thank you ever so much for coming through for us.

Over 1500 members contributed who had never supported us in the past. They are very anxious to remain part of our Association. In correspondence accompanying their donations, they explained that they misunderstood who we are: a totally independent volunteer organization, whose single source of funds is member donations – and that our goal is to protect the pensions and benefits of Verizon retirees. Many erroneously thought we were associated with the Telecom Pioneers, or even Verizon.

Still others advised us that they did not want to receive the newsletter. While this is disappointing, it is a cost savings for us. We will keep in touch with them only once each year.

On behalf of Bill Jones and my fellow board members, I send a very special thank you to those who had contributed earlier this year and responded with a **second generous contribution**. You brightened our spirits at a bleak moment, and you confirmed what we have always known: our members are as dedicated as we are to our cause, and want us to continue to be the voice that Verizon hears.

To those of you who took the time to write to us, thank you for your thoughts, prayers and suggestions. We welcome them.

One more very important item: we send our thanks to Chris and Jackie at our Cold Spring Harbor office, who personally answered too many calls to count. The calls were non-stop for the first 10 days. And no matter how overwhelmed they were, they always responded as the "voice with a smile."

Finally, we wish all our members a happy and healthy holiday season. We look forward to speaking with you in 2008, and sharing our accomplishments and goals.

Thank you again; you are the best!

*Eileen Lawrence,  
Treasurer*

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## SEC Requests More Disclosure on Executive Compensation

In the wake of the Association of BellTel Retirees' victory in the proxy vote requesting "say on executive pay," the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) has demanded more information from roughly 300 companies that details their executives' salaries and bonuses.

SEC Chairman Christopher Cox has upped his campaign to get full disclosure on executive pay, making it one of his top priorities. Cox's main complaint is the vagueness with which the disclosures were written, often including a lot of hard-to-comprehend legal-speak.

The SEC letters were faxed to the CEOs of companies including Pfizer Inc., Prudential Financial Inc., Coca-Cola Co., General Electric Co., and American Express Co. According to one insider, receipt of the letters caused a stir among the CEOs, who aren't used to getting direct communications from the SEC.

"The letters are intended to help

issuers better explain why they've paid executives what they've paid them," said SEC spokesman John Nester.

With Pfizer, the SEC wants a better description of what it is that the board's independent pay consultant does. Specifically, how the compensation board used tally sheets of data to determine executive pay. The tally sheets are supposed to paint a clearer picture and breakdown of executive pay packages.

Last year, the then CEO of Pfizer had, in his compensation package, the option to collect a lump sum of \$83 million if he retired by the end of 2005.

Corporations that received the letters complained that the information requested by the SEC, specifically details of performance targets that are used to determine compensations and bonuses, are details that need to remain confidential and out of the hands of their competitors. These were among the details required by

the winning Association of BellTel Retirees' proxy.

The SEC response was a request that these companies then provide a real reason why the details need to remain confidential. Furthermore, the SEC wants companies to provide a list of their competitors and any information used to create target performance goals that are tied into executives' pay and bonuses, also suggestions from past Association proxies.

Companies were given until mid-September to respond to the SEC's request for full disclosure, and another batch of letters were expected to reach more corporations in the near future.

### Attention All Snowbirds

For those of you who temporarily relocate to warmer climates for the winter months, won't you please take the time to drop us a note or email with your main and "snowbird" address, so that we can update our records and forward all important retiree communications to you.

This helps your Association substantially by allowing the most direct and immediate correspondence with our members. It also eliminates substantial cost of return postage and clerical assistance needed to correct the errors in our database.

We would be more than happy to redirect your mail to your snowbird address in the colder months, and then revert to your main address for the remainder of the year.

Please send your information via email at: [association@belltelretirees.org](mailto:association@belltelretirees.org) or mail to us at: P.O. Box 33, Cold Spring Harbor, New York 11724.



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## Legal Eagle Fighting for Retirees: Company's First Anti-Trust Expert Joins Board

Sandra DiIorio Thorn began her academic career as a student of Italian literature before obtaining her law degree from Rutgers School of Law in Newark, New Jersey. Prior to that, she graduated *cum laude* from Wells College, where she received her Phi Beta Kappa key, and earned her Master's degree from Columbia University.

However, Ms. Thorn decided that being a college professor, her initial career goal, was not for her. "I wanted something more concrete that directly affected people. And I found the law."

While at Rutgers, Ms. Thorn served as the administrative editor of the Rutgers Law Review, a post reserved for top law students.

For the first seven years of her law career Ms. Thorn worked as an attorney with Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher and Flom, one of the top firms in New York City. However, she decided to leave private practice and pursued a career with Verizon, right at the cusp of the break-up of the Bell System.

The most recent retiree member to volunteer her time to the Association of BellTel Retirees' board is no stranger to the issues concerning Verizon workers and retirees alike- Ms. Thorn worked for the Bell companies as legal council since 1983.

Before she retired, Ms. Thorn served as Vice President and General Council for the company in New York



*New Association Board Member  
Sandra D. Thorn*

and Connecticut, handling regulatory matters and litigation for Verizon New York

Some of her achievements as a Verizon employee include obtaining the first cable franchise for the company in New York, creating and implementing an incentive regulation plan and supervising both the New York and Connecticut Regulatory Legal Departments for Verizon.

"I really am enthusiastic to be an Association board member; I really admire the members of the board. I

think they are very hard working and I'm proud to be a part of the board."

Born in Providence, RI, Ms. Thorn has lived in New York for over 35 years. She currently resides in New York City with her husband.

"At the time [I began working for the Verizon companies], the regional operating companies did not have anti-trust lawyers because AT&T retained them, so I became the their first anti-trust counsel," said Ms. Thorn in an interview with *BellTel Retiree*.

Ms. Thorn joined the Association board in March 2007 to become the only lawyer in the group. "I knew some of the members on the Association board, but more importantly, I wanted to join because I believe that retiree health benefits are particularly important."

"I've seen people who did not have those health benefits," she continued, "and needed to rely on the kindness of others to get by. The people who have worked for the Verizon companies, many of them have worked for the company for over 40 years and they need to be protected going forward as much as we can help them."

Ms. Thorn expects that her experience as an attorney will benefit the

*(Continued on page 8)*

**Are you wondering what the date after your name on the address line on the correspondence you receive from the Association signifies?**

**It is the date of your last contribution, placed there for your (and our) convenience.**

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## Member Mailbag



In the Fall 2007 newsletter, the Association of BellTel Retirees Board Members sent an appeal to members who'd yet to make a contribution alerting them of their status as members, as well as the Association's need for donations.

The response was overwhelming; not only did over 1500 of the members who had never given a contribution send in donations, but *well over 1400 of the members who had already donated money this year gave a second contribution.* At press time, the donations were still coming in, and the Association would like to thank all contributors for your continued support of our efforts.

Below are a few excerpted examples of what your fellow Association members had to say in response to the fall appeal:

\*\*\*\*

Giving to the Association is like giving to yourself. Sorry I didn't realize I hadn't kept up with my dues.

*Adele V. Anderson,  
Port Washington, NY*

\*\*\*\*

Sorry I never took the time to read the literature you sent and thought it was associated with the Pioneers.

*M. J. W., Franklin, MA*

\*\*\*\*

## Members Respond to Fall Appeal

This sentence [*You have never, ever financially contributed to our efforts to protect your pension and healthcare benefits*] pained my conscience that I contemplated suicide. I decided to donate and live.

*S. F.,  
New York, NY*

\*\*\*\*

Keep up the GREAT WORK. Enclosed is a donation to help our members who have a reason they cannot afford to pay or make a contribution to the Association. We are counting on you to achieve our mission.

*John Watts,  
Ft. Orange, FL*

\*\*\*\*

I received your letter dated Fall 2007 with great interest and I read it carefully. You all did a great job over many years and I am happy to join. Please find my check enclosed herewith.

*Adelheid Dexter,  
Charlotte, NC*

\*\*\*\*

I thought I did send my contributions in... [the] early part of 2007.

I can only afford so much. As you know, we have not had a raise in pension since I retired in 1994.

I'm sorry about not sending you any money for January-September 2007. However keep up the good work that you do on my behalf.

*L. Margaret Hathaway,  
Waterford, NY*

\*\*\*\*

Your letter certainly got my attention in more ways than one- some good and some bad.

All of my last working years and all of my retirement years were consumed with the raising and taking care of the three small children that I became responsible for after being widowed at age thirty-seven.

In 1984 I was forced to retire on disability which added to the problems I already had...and a year and a half ago my disability became such that I could not live alone...

I'm enclosing a small donation which I realize cannot compensate for all the newsletters in the past, and I do not expect to be left on the mailing list as I don't know what my donations will be in the future.

...I wish you the best for the future of the Association of BellTel Retirees.

*K. W.,  
Richmond, VA*

*Editor's Note: The Association will keep KW on the mailing list as a "Complimentary Member."*

\*\*\*\*

Thank you for the wonderful job you and [the Association] are doing on the behalf of us old retired folks. Also thanks for the personal response to my last inquiry concerning COLA. It answered a lot of my questions. I only wish I got such effective and timely response from the [company] benefit office...sometimes it is difficult to get the smallest request accomplished.

*J. S. L.,  
Gambrills, MD*

\*\*\*\*

I know you count on contributions of retirees and you work hard to help all of us. I will try to send as much money as I can to help our cause.

I retired December 31, 1991, and never dreamed I would never get a cost of living increase each year.

*(Continued on page 10)*

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## Verizon Sale of New England Lines: What Will This Mean for Retirees?

In the Spring 2007 issue of the BellTel Retiree, it was reported that Verizon had agreed to spin off its New England access lines in three states to FairPoint Communications, of Charlotte, NC. The transaction combines Verizon's personnel and local exchange and related business assets from Maine, New Hampshire, and Vermont with FairPoint.

However, there has been an increase in both public concerns in the New England states affected, especially by members of the Association of BellTel Retirees.

While most Wall Street analysts

view the deal as good for both companies, union workers' and retirees have many significant concerns.

While customers have identified concerns about future service quality and costs, retirees in the region wonder how this might affect their pensions.

According to the details of the transaction which have been disclosed, about 3,000 Verizon employees will continue their employment with the local telephone operating companies located in those states, while receiving paychecks from the North Carolina-based FairPoint.

As FairPoint becomes the new employer of the 3,000 former Verizon workers, the North Carolina company will assume pension and other post employment benefit obligations for employees remaining with the company.

*Verizon retirees from the Maine, New Hampshire and Vermont region already retired at the time of the sale will continue to receive their benefits from Verizon.*

The \$2.7 billion sale/merger was expected to be completed by the end of 2007.

Under the terms of the agreement, FairPoint will distribute approximately \$1.015 billion in 53.8 million shares of its common stock in a tax-free transaction to the shareholders of Verizon. FairPoint will also assume \$1.7 billion of debt from Verizon.

Fairpoint says the merger will allow it to expand DSL and other broadband availability within the first twelve months after the completion of the agreement. FairPoint also plans to increase local operational presence and create new local service centers to serve the three New England states.

In late October, the CWA asked the Vermont's Department of Public Service reject the sale. In Maine, a list of 23 conditions was recommended by the state's Office of Public Advocate before the sale and merger could take place. The CWA also called for an investigation of the merger by the Federal Communications Commission.

### UPDATE:

#### AARP vs. EEOC

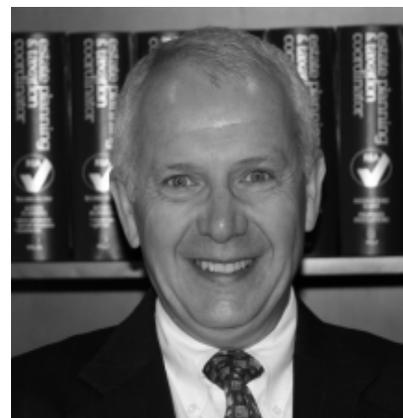
As reported in the Fall 2007 issue of the *BellTel Retiree*, the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) sued the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) in order to stop them from enacting an Age Discrimination in Employment Act (ADEA) exemption that would allow corporations to cut off retiree benefits for those eligible for Medicare.

As a result of a district court ruling stating that the EEOC can, in fact, issue the ADEA exemption, the AARP has now gone to the U.S. Supreme Court to review the Third Circuit Court of Appeals decision.

In the meantime, the EEOC was ordered not to issue the exemption until the appeal is heard. A ruling is expected sometime between October 2007 and June 2008.

### TALK TO A RETIRED VERIZON MANAGER ABOUT YOUR RETIREMENT SAVINGS AND INCOME STRATEGIES.

*Jim Biggins is a retired Verizon- Executive Director with  
a Master Degree from Bentley College  
in Personal Financial Planning.*



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## Will UAW Agreement Model Future of Retiree Benefits?

(Continued from page 1)

and their families. Instead, \$36 billion of that debt will be put in a VEBA trust that will now be managed by the union.

"I'm pleased to say that we have a VEBA in place that will secure the benefits of our retirees," said UAW President Ron Gettelfinger.

More specifically, the contract would not include any dental HMOs, only three of the medical HMOs previously offered and all of the PPOs, except Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan, from which the contract retirees were accustomed. In essence, under the new contract, choices would be limited and co-pays would increase from \$10 to roughly \$25.

Other details of the agreement include a pension increase for retirees, which is offset by the increase in medical care contributions, early retirement offers to veteran workers, and lower pay structures for new employees and the promise of annual bonuses or lump sum payments for current employees.

While company and union reps have applauded their efforts in negotiating these new terms, the fallout for both is plain to see.

GM can no longer claim the medical benefits monies as an asset, which will cause stock prices to fall in the wake of the contract negotiations. This in turn puts a strain on the company to make further cutbacks, evident in the fact that news outlets reported the tentative status of 15 plants throughout the country; it is forecast that some of them will soon have to close.

GM reps continue to tout the deal as



a good move for the company, keeping them competitive in the automobile manufacturing sector, and in a statement said the agreement would be "the basis for maintaining and strengthening its core manufacturing base in the United States."

According to GM Chairman and Chief Executive Rick Wagoner, "This agreement helps us close the fundamental and competitive gaps that exist in our business."

Retirees and UAW union members have reportedly spoken out against the vote, not fully faithful that the new contracts are a good thing, mostly due to the fact that initial negotiations between the union and the companies were closed to UAW rank-and-file members.

"I'm just wondering what we are giving up," said Lyle Coleman, a veteran GM employee from the Detroit area. Still, he believes the VEBA could be a good thing. "It's a big burden off the company. If it's managed right, it will be okay."

During the ratification process of the

agreement between the union and GM, where the 74,000 UAW members vote on whether to adopt the new contract, one union local in Romulus, MI rejected the agreement. The same outcome occurred with the local in Messina, NY; the Messina plant is one of the 15 scheduled to be shut down.

Even with the few locals not voting for the agreement, two-thirds of the UAW members agreed and ratified the new GM contract. With Chrysler, the contract was ratified by a narrow margin. Shortly thereafter, the automobile maker slashed about 12,000 jobs.

The Ford contract ratification was still underway as of press time. The tentative agreement mirrored the ones negotiated with GM and Chrysler in that retiree benefits will no longer be the responsibility of the company, and lower wages will be offered to new hires, as well as buy-out options offered to current employees who retire early or give up their jobs.

## Sandra D. Thorn

(Continued from page 5)

Association board and members. "Because I'm a lawyer, I'm hoping that the Association can use my expertise. I'm hoping I can help advise the Association on when a lawyer is needed and when we can rely on ourselves."

A recent retiree of the company, Ms. Thorn hopes to help recruit more current employees join the ranks of the Association. "I also think being a recent retiree gives me more insight as to why the company makes its decisions, because the company is not the company it was when all of the other board members retired."

Today, Ms. Thorn focuses her time and legal expertise to the New York Law School as an adjunct professor, teaching Legal Reasoning and Writing to students since 2006 when she retired from her duties at Verizon. "Teaching law is different. I'm teaching people how to be a practicing lawyer which isn't taught in law school."

### MEANINGFUL TIPS FROM A FELLOW RETIREE

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## Concession Telephone Service

We receive many calls from retirees regarding their concession telephone service. The typical problem is that they have lost all or part of their concession service.

It is important for retirees and active employees to understand a few things about concession service. First, concession service is not applicable to all services. At the time a service is ordered you should ask if that service is covered by the plan. Second, there has been a long-standing policy that most package plans do not receive the concession service discount and no concession discounts apply to packages that combine local and long distance.

That is not to say that you should not subscribe to a package plan. However, you should do the math before you add products or change your telephone service. Your business office representative should be able to help you compare what a total package plan costs – remembering that discounts may not apply. You can then choose the most cost-effective way to order your service.

Your business office number can easily be found in the front pages of your Verizon telephone book as well as your monthly telephone bill. Wells Fargo TPA can also provide information regarding your eligibility for concession service. To reach Wells Fargo TPA call at 1-800-898-3886.

## The Pioneers and the Association of BellTel Retirees: Two Different Retiree Organizations

We were pleased by the response to our September appeal, but were very surprised to learn that a number of you still believe *our* letters and newsletters are from The Pioneers, rather than the Association of BellTel Retirees. Although we have often explained our organization, and published our mission statement in the newsletter, we will take this opportunity to once again sum up what we do for you, vs. what the Pioneers do.

### Association of BellTel Retirees Inc.

- Governed by an all-volunteer board – over 9000 hours of volunteer time each year
- Our only source of funds is from you – our members
- Dedicated to protecting the pensions and healthcare of Verizon retirees
- Strategies include:
  1. presenting shareowner proposals
  2. meeting with Verizon corporate leaders;
  3. supporting healthcare legislation to roll back your cost for healthcare: HR1322 - through ProtectSeniors.Org
  4. Quarterly newsletter to inform members of our goals, accomplishments, financial health, retiree news, and Pioneer events
  5. Litigation, if and when necessary
  6. Speaking at Pioneer and other group meetings, when invited

### TelecomPioneers

- Governed by volunteer board
- Supported financially by dues from employees and fundraising activities of the various Chapters and Councils
- Also, the Verizon Foundation and other telecommunications foundations give operational support Grants
- Dedicated to community volunteer projects, with special focus on education
- Volunteer workers are retirees or active employees from telecommunications companies organized in chapters across the US and Canada

**WE ADMIRE AND SUPPORT THE PIONEERS**

*but ..*

**WE DO NOT RECEIVE FUNDS FROM THE PIONEERS OR VERIZON**

**We depend upon your financial support**

**We specialize in assisting Verizon/Bell Atlantic Retirees!**



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# Parting Ways with NRLN

The Association of BellTel Retirees was one of the original founders of the National Retiree Legislative Network in 2003. We did that because we realized that after having financed the drafting of a bill, which is now called the Emergency Retiree Health Benefits Protection Act (HR 1322), we needed help to get it passed.

The concept of inviting retiree organizations from all parts of the country and from all industries to join together to lobby for a common cause was a great idea. Unfortunately, it did not turn out the way we had planned.

A number of problems developed. First, there were not many retiree organizations that were organized as activists. Rather, most were social in nature and frequently were supported financially by the company from which the folks

retired. Of those who were created to perform an activist role, only a very few were large enough to create any critical mass.

Our organization and one or two others expended untold hours coaching these small organizations on recruiting, fund raising and organizational structure but, much to our disappointment, they did not grow and prosper. As a result, a few of the larger organizations were left to finance the NRLN.

The final blow was when the NRLN moved HR 1322 the Emergency Retiree Health Benefits Protection Act, to the back burner and directed their efforts toward other legislative pursuits. Board members of the Association of BellTel Retirees tried to convince the NRLN leadership that the saving of our healthcare benefits should be a top priority. When our efforts failed we had to

withdraw and seek another solution.

That solution was to join ProtectSeniors.Org, a lobbying organization open to retirees of all companies in all industries. This organization was founded by an Association board member. Two other Association leaders serve on the board as well. ProtectSeniors.Org is dedicated to one cause at this time – passing (HR 1322). After all, what issue is more important than to provide the same protections that exist under ERISA for our pensions, to our healthcare benefits?

We hope that this has cleared up any confusion that you might have concerning the relationship between, the Association of BellTel Retirees, ProtectSeniors.Org and NRLN. Should you need more information, We urge you to call, email or write to us.

## Member Mailbag

*(Continued from page 6)*

Whatever happened to “you will never have to pay for health care?”

Please keep fighting for us or else the people working now won't get any pensions at all.

*Margaret Terry,  
New City, NY*

\*\*\*\*\*

Sorry I'm behind in my dues. I'm 92 years young and a bit forgetful.

I admire and support your efforts

to keep our pensions and all your good work. I like the newsletter, too. Don't forget me.

*Edith Martin,  
Cutler Bay, FL*

\*\*\*\*\*

Enclosed find a check ... towards our goal of \$165,000.

I retired almost 2 years ago at age 55 from Verizon with 35 years.

I would not have what I have today if it wasn't for Ma Bell and the Union. I now look forward to being a BellTel Retiree member for the rest

of my life. I feel it is a responsibility to protect what we earned for ourselves, and future retirees.

Management or Craft, it's not important now. The Association is our “Union” now, and I want your voice to stay loud and clear.

Thanks for all your hard work.

*Fred Schwarz,  
Port Ewen, NY*

\*\*\*\*\*

I already received my 2007 card. After reading your recent article I thought a little extra was in order. I really appreciate the work you do!

*Rosalie Starahs,  
Paoli, PA*

\*\*\*\*\*

After reading the previous issue of the *BellTel Retiree* and this latest one I decided to double my donation for this year. I'm sorry I can't make it more because the great work you're doing deserves it.

*J. C.,  
Hawthorne, NY*



**HELP US HELP YOU!**  
Financial support is needed to help pass our law:  
The Emergency Retiree Health Benefits Protection Act  
HR 1322

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ProtectSeniors.Org is a 501(c)(4) nonprofit organization. Contributions are not tax-deductible

# Verizon Business News

## Third Quarter Earnings Looking Good

Verizon reported an increase in earnings in the company's third quarter: net income was listed at \$4.2 billion, up 19 percent from last year's numbers. The company also reported its revenues as \$23.8 billion in revenues, up by 5.8 percent.

Earnings and income improvements were attributed to the 1.6 million new wireless customers, bringing the total to 63.7 million, and the 1.3 million new FiOS customers added since launching the service in 2005.

"It has taken a long time and cost a lot of money for Verizon to get to where they are today with their television and internet," said Jeff Kagan, an independent telecom analyst. "However, now that they are beginning to deliver on the FiOS promise, the customers seem to be welcoming the offering."

## Vonage and Verizon Settle Patent Suit

After a U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit upheld the decision that Vonage infringed upon Verizon's patents on Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) services, the two telecom companies have settled the dispute. The terms, which are dependent upon the outcome of the Court of Appeals decision on Vonage's petition for a rehearing for two of the three patents in question, are as follows:

If Vonage is granted a rehearing or the injunction is vacated, Vonage will pay Verizon \$80 million dollars.

If the courts uphold the original decisions, Vonage will have to pay Verizon \$117 million.

In the initial court decision, Vonage was also ordered to pay Verizon 5 percent in royalties on all future income from the use of its patented technology. "We're pleased to put



this dispute behind us and believe this settlement is in the best interests of Vonage and its customers," said Sharon O'Leary, Vonage's chief legal officer.

## Verizon Expands Service to Asia

On October 31, Verizon announced that it had received licenses to offer telecom services to large businesses in India.

The licenses, which allow Verizon to offer national and international long distance services, put the company in direct competition with AT&T. The latter won similar licenses in India in 2006.

Verizon Business already has a license to provide internet service in India.

### MISSION STATEMENT

The Association of BellTel Retirees Inc. is dedicated to promote the protection and enhancement of the pensions and benefits for retirees and beneficiaries of the companies and subsidiaries that make up the Verizon Corporation.

The Association will convince the company to properly care for its thousands of dedicated retired employees.

The Association will conduct activities designed to educate elected federal, state and local representatives and promote the passage of legislation which will protect and guarantee, rather than invade, our hard-earned pension and benefits funds.

## Game Plan



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# RETIREE NEWS & NOTES

Association Board Member Robert Rehm spoke on 9/20/07 at the Nesconsett Pioneer meeting in St. James, NY. About 60 attendees appeared to appreciate the Association's efforts on their behalf and enjoyed a one hour talk that included the delivery of the 2007 Proxy presentation given at VZ Annual Shareholders Meeting in Pittsburgh.

The Neconsett Pioneers are always looking for new members; to join them contact Jack Malone at (631)499-1144.

\*\*\*\*\*

On October 3<sup>rd</sup>, Association president Bill Jones spoke at the Caesar Rodney Life Member Club Fall Luncheon meeting in Georgetown, DE.

In attendance were about 70 very attentive members. Also on hand during Mr. Jones' talk was Laura Howard, a new Delaware resident and Association staff member.

Mr. Jones spoke about the recent, past and planned activities of the Association and updated those present on the legislative activities of ProtectSeniors.Org, a grassroots organization that focuses on the passage of H.R. 1322, the Emergency Retiree Health Benefits Protection Act.

While there were very few questions at the end of Mr. Jones' talk, he was approached by many of the attendees at the close of the meeting. Most were very complimentary of the Association's work, while others had problems with which they needed advice or help.

Mr. Jones found it to be a worthwhile trip.

\*\*\*\*\*

Association Board Member Mike McFadden organized what he considered the Association's best blood drive to date on October 30th. "Our goal was 50 pints and we exceeded that by 14 to send the red Cross 64 pints for distribution," said Mr. McFadden.

Since April 2005, the Association has collected 411 pints of blood.

When broken down into blood products this amount of blood has the potential to help over 1200 patients in hospitals. "We are very proud of what we do," says Mr. McFadden, "and it is easy once you have run a couple of drives."

Mr. McFadden adds that events like the blood drive offer retirees and active Verizon employees a chance to get together and see each other a few times a year.

Anyone interested in starting a blood drive in their area can call Mike at 856-767-1131. The Red Cross will give you all the help that you need; contact them at 1-800-261-9222. "It will only cost you some time to help bring the gift of life to someone," says Mr. McFadden. "It could even be one of your own."

\*\*\*\*\*

On November 1, 2007, Association Board Member Mike Kucklinka spoke to a group of retirees in West

Hempstead, NY at a Pioneer meeting for the Paumonok Chapter. Thirty-eight people were in attendance to hear Mr. Kucklinka speak for an hour on the history and future of the Association.

Comments from the attendees included awe at the number of non-contributing members as reported in the Fall 2007 *BellTel Retiree*. Retirees present also voiced appreciation for the number of volunteer hours put in by Association board members, and agreed with and applauded the Association's fight for promises not kept.

Mr. Kucklinka also took the time to ask those in attendance to update their contact information for future communications from the Association.

\*\*\*\*\*

*If you'd like a representative from the Association to speak at your event, please contact the office at 631-367-3067, or via email at association@belltelretirees.org*

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