

# BELLTEL RETIREE

The Official Newsletter for Union and Management Retirees and Employees of Bell Atlantic, GTE, Idearc/Supermedia, NYNEX, Verizon and its Subsidiaries. Paid for by contributions from Verizon and Idearc/Supermedia retirees.

Winter 2010-11

15 Years of Service to the Verizon Retiree Community

Volume 56

★ 1996 ★

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★ 2011 ★

## Retirement Deficit Hits \$6.6 Trillion Nationwide

Research conducted by the Pension Rights Center and Retirement USA has found that overall Americans have a \$6.6 Trillion deficit between what they need for retirement and what they have saved.

Despite careful planning with 401Ks, stocks, and savings accounts; most people just do not have the funds they need for retirement, researchers found. The Association of BellTel Retirees is a long time member of the Pension Rights Center and a supporter of the Retirement USA program.

The study done by the Center for Retirement Research at Boston College found that, half of Americans over the age of 65 receive less than \$18,337 a year from Social Security, pensions plans, and 401K's and one quarter receive less than \$11,000.

69% of American retirees count Social Security as half their income, while 26% depend on it for their full

income. Social Security payments average about \$14,000 a year overall, less than the yearly income of a minimum wage employee.

While a secondary income is often necessary for retirees, approximately 44% of private sector employees are involved in a retirement plan. In 2006, half of workers with private sector retirement plans had less than \$25,000 in their accounts. Those approaching retirement had only about \$40,000 saved.

Researchers also found that the less a worker makes while working, the less he or she tend to contribute into retirement plans. Only 28% of bottom paid employees in private companies participated in company plans. Almost three quarters of those workers reach retirement age without any employee funded pension or retirement plans.

Many of the retirement plans private sector companies provide are less reliable

than they are assumed. Only two of every 10 pension plans are guaranteed for life. While three in 10 retirees plan to use 401K benefits to supplement Social Security, 56% of those plans are invested in stocks. This has cost workers approximately a quarter of their savings in the 2008 market crash and has not yet rebounded fully.

When these statistics were taken into account with the cost of living after retirement, a total deficit of \$6.6 trillion was found nationwide.

Retirement USA created the first annual "Wake Up, Washington! Month," this past fall. The goal was to raise awareness about potential federal Social Security cuts and promote reform for private sector retirement systems. The Association and President Bill Jones participated at the kick off in Washington, D.C.

Visit the Wake Up Washington website and share your story:

<http://www.retirement-usa.org/node/add/story>

### Verizon Business News

#### Association Requests FiOS Retiree Discounts

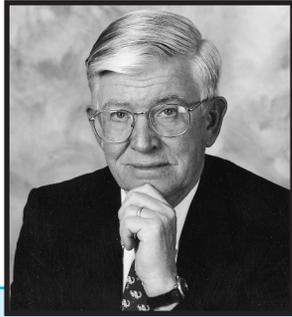
After communicating with the Association of BellTel Retirees, Verizon Communications agreed that Verizon retirees, who live in FiOS and High Speed Internet (HSI) territories, will be eligible for a discount to Verizon's services. The discount can be applied to existing and new retiree customers.

Verizon plans to offer the discounts in the first quarter of 2011. Verizon is

currently working out a plan to authenticate retirees and establish controls for the offer before releasing any discount codes.

The Association will keep you up to date with any further information on how to apply for the discount or you can log onto Verizon's website for any updates on Verizon FiOS and internet packages at [www.verizon.com/retirees](http://www.verizon.com/retirees).

*Association marks  
15 years of service to  
Verizon Retiree  
Community.  
See special feature  
in the centerfold  
(pages 6 & 7)*



## President's Message

by C. William Jones

Fifteen years ago four retirees of NYNEX met for lunch to discuss what was going on with the pension fund since, for the first time in recorded history, five years had passed without a pension cost of living increase. Our fear was that the pension trust was underfunded or that the company officers had made a change in how retirees were to be treated.

It did not take long to determine that the problem was a change in corporate policy, not a shortage of funds. We decided to invite others to join with us to petition the company. That petition was a letter to CEO, Ivan Seidenberg, with the names of 1,400 concerned retirees.

Imagine our surprise when no response was received. That failure was an alarm that signaled our group, at that point seven retirees, that we must stand up to our former employer and protest loudly that we were not going to sit on our hands and be passive sheep as we were shorn of the benefits that we earned over 30, 40 or more years of dedicated service.

We incorporated, obtained IRS not-for-profit status, started aggressive recruiting and fund raising and purchased sufficient stock in the company to be able to file proxy proposals. Attorneys were hired to look into the options that we had at our disposal.

Now almost 15 years later we are still here fighting as hard as we can to hang on to what we earned. Our 1,400 retiree member organization has grown to over 112,000, a lobbying organization has been established to see that Federal legislation keeps retired people in mind, proxy proposals have resulted in changes

in corporate governance and policy, a few pension improvements have been made, a lump sum payment was secured and a bill is before Congress that would protect retiree health-care benefits.

Most recently a suit was filed on behalf of retirees of the yellow pages

organizations who were transferred against their will to an undernourished spin off called Idearc, which has since gone into bankruptcy and emerged as SuperMedia and is hanging on by its fingernails as this newsletter is being printed. The good news is that on October 18 only one of the claims in our Idearc retirees lawsuit was dismissed by Federal Senior Judge Fish. While this is a small victory, it is important because it allows the case to move forward. In other words, Goliath has received a bloody nose from the retiree association. You can track the case on our web site along with other important information about our other activities on your behalf.

## OUR MISSION:

**The Association of BellTel Retirees Inc. is dedicated to promote the protection and enhancement of the pensions and benefits for all retirees and beneficiaries of the companies and subsidiaries that make up the Verizon and Idearc/Supermedia Corporations.**

**The Association will convince the company to properly care for its thousands of dedicated former union and management 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 fund.**

Summing up the past fifteen years we can point to accomplishments in corporate governance, progress in Congress, a minor win in the courts, some achievements resulting from meetings with Verizon officers, aid and assistance to many thousands of retirees who needed help and some amount of comfort to all 230,000 retirees of Verizon that there is a group working seven days per week to represent them and fight their battles to secure the pensions and benefits that they earned during their careers.

In 2011 the Association will celebrate its fifteenth year of battling for economic protection of Verizon retirees and surviving spouses. We assure you, we are not done. With your continued financial and moral support we will be here as long as necessary.



Association of BellTel Retirees Inc.

UNITED, TO PROTECT OUR FUTURE

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## Yellow Pages Retiree Lawsuit Green Lighted by Federal Court

This is an update about the *Murphy, et al. v. Verizon, Idearc/SuperMedia, et al.*, case pending in the Dallas Federal Court.

The civil action (a/k/a “lawsuit”) was started by your Association of BellTel Retirees because about 2,000 Verizon retirees were involuntarily transferred from Verizon sponsored pension plans into Idearc sponsored pension plans. Idearc was a company that inevitably went bankrupt after Idearc’s bankruptcy proceedings ended, the corporation changed its name to SuperMedia. Even today, things don’t look very good for SuperMedia. Just a few weeks ago former CEO Scott Klein abruptly resigned.

A primary objective of the *Murphy* case is to get all transferred retirees restored into Verizon sponsored pension plans and seek other equitable relief (court complaint can be found at: <http://www.belltelretirees.org/images/stories/docket06-amendedcomplaint.pdf>)

In September, the bankruptcy court appointed trustee filed a lawsuit against Verizon, attacking the Verizon ‘spin-off’ of the directory pages division into Idearc. The bankruptcy trustee argues that the entire transaction was fraudulent from the get go and that top officers knew that Idearc was certain to fail. Both the bankruptcy trustee’s case and the Association of BellTel Retirees “*Murphy*” case are being handled by the same judge, Dallas Federal Senior Judge A. Joe Fish.



In the *Murphy* case, retirees sued both Verizon and Idearc/SuperMedia. Naturally, the big corporations hired numerous big law firms to serve as their respective defense attorneys. Thus far, the defense teams of lawyers have argued everything possible to get the *Murphy* case dismissed. Despite these obstacles the retirees’ *Murphy* case is alive and kicking.

At the end of October, Curtis Kennedy the attorney for the retirees received an order from Senior Federal Judge A. Joe Fish (which can be viewed at: [https://ecf.txnd.uscourts.gov/cgi-bin/show\\_public\\_doc?2009cv2262-33](https://ecf.txnd.uscourts.gov/cgi-bin/show_public_doc?2009cv2262-33)), dismissing *only* one claim retirees tried to pursue against Verizon.

The claim that has been dismissed is an ERISA based theory that the Texas based federal courts have only allowed to be applied by a worker who claims he or she was terminated from his or her job in order for the company to avoid paying him or her various pension, medical or disability benefits. The Judge ruled that the claim had to be started within two years after the alleged wrongdoing.

The retiree lawsuit alleging retirees were involuntarily transferred to Idearc/Supermedia brought by members of the Association of BellTel Retirees was not begun until November 2009, more

than two years after Verizon’s November 2006 transfer of retirees into Idearc sponsored pension plans

All other claims asserted against Verizon are still pending.

More importantly, Senior Judge Fish ruled that the retirees claim could proceed against SuperMedia pension plan fiduciaries for failure to give retirees a full and fair consideration of their claims before filing the lawsuit. SuperMedia gave all retirees a proverbial “poke-in-the-eye” and ignored efforts to resolve the retirees’ dispute before the *Murphy* case was filed.

There are many other claims pending in the *Murphy* case which is on track and going forward.

The *Murphy* case is unique. It is the first case where retirees have challenged a decision by a corporation to send them off into a newly formed corporation without the retirees’ consent. For sure, this is not going to be an easy legal challenge. The *Murphy* case is one of first impression to be grappled by a Federal Judge.

Please remain supportive of your Association of BellTel Retirees – as an active member and financial contributor – as it continues this sojourn for the benefit of Verizon retirees and all other retirees who never want to find themselves in the same predicament as the retirees who were involuntarily transferred out of Verizon sponsored pension plans.

## Court Mandates Raytheon and Visteon Pay Retiree Health Benefits

In September, the Ninth District Court of Appeals ruled that early retirees of Raytheon Missile Systems and its predecessor Hughes Missile Systems, who accepted buyouts and promised healthcare protections, will continue to have their health insurance premiums paid by the company. This ruling affects about 600 retirees.

Raytheon promised employees that if they agreed to retire early, Raytheon would cover all of their health insurance premiums in full until they reached age 65. However, Raytheon began making former employees pay for health insurance in 2004 claiming

that a collective bargaining agreement terminated this deal.

However, the court’s decision ruled that the company ‘reserved the right to modify or terminate “benefits,” not to change contributions. The Court also said Raytheon was wrong to require their former employees to begin making payments to their health insurance in 2004.

This victorious lawsuit was filed by retirees who were able to continue paying their healthcare premiums. A separate case by a second group of retirees’ unable to afford to make the payments is still pending.

### Visteon Corp. Retirees

Another victory was won and by Visteon Corporation retirees. Judge Christopher Sontchi in the Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit, ordered Visteon, an automotive supplier, to restore healthcare and life insurance benefits to some 6,500 retired workers who lost, their benefits during the corporations restructuring.

Originally, Judge Sontchi ruled that those benefits be terminated in December 2009. Along with reversing his decision, he ordered that those benefits be covered retroactively as well.

(Continued on page 10)

## CHANGES AT THE TOP OF VERIZON

Verizon will be playing a game of musical chairs with its executives in 2011. With Verizon Communication's Chairman and CEO Ivan Seidenberg's possible retirement next year and John Killian's announced departure from his role of Finance Chief, questions have been raised over their future successors.

During September, Lowell McAdam was announced to be the new president and chief operating officer of Verizon Communications. The COO role has been empty since Dennis Strigl retired last year.

The recent promotion places McAdam as likely next in line to succeed Seidenberg, who is expected to retire after he turns 65 in December 2011. He has been in charge of the communications company dating back to the NYNEX days.

McAdam has been serving as CEO of Wireless for the last four years. During



L-R Ivan Seidenberg, John Killian, Lowell McAdam

his time with the cellular phone company, revenue went up by 24 billion and saw 32 million more subscribers.

As COO, McAdam will oversee the wireless and phone line businesses, technology, and service operations. Daniel Mead, the former executive vice president and COO of Verizon Wireless, will be replacing McAdam as CEO of Verizon Wireless. Mead, in turn will be replaced as Wireless COO by John Stratton, who has been Verizon Wireless's chief marketing officer.

John Killian was also being considered to replace Seidenberg. However, he

recently announced his plans to retire, at the age of 55, by the end 2010. He has been with the company for 31 years. He wished to step down before being seriously looked at as a potential CEO of the company.

Mr. Killian's decision to retire was fueled by his long commute from New England to the corporate headquarters and the time it took away from his family. He plans to spend more time with loved ones and potentially work as a consultant. He reinforced that he has no plans to take a position at a competing company.

Mr. Killian began his career at New England Telephone in 1979 as a certified public accountant. After the formation of Verizon in 2000, he led Verizon Business. After Doreen Toben's retirement in 2009, he was named CFO.

Francis Shammo has been named Verizon's next Finance Chief. He was formally president of Verizon Telecom and Business.

## CEO PAY vs. EMPLOYEE PAY

On July 21, 2010, President Barack Obama signed the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act (Dodd Frank Act). Among the provisions, the act forces companies to disclose the ratio of the median annual pay of their employees compared to the median annual salary of executives. Many companies dread complying with this act, as the public would be exposed to seeing the

large gaps between an employee's salary and that of the CEO.

For example, last year S&P 500 chief executive's median salary was \$1,025,000 and the average private sector employee's salary is \$40,174 according to the Equilar analysis, 25.5 –to – 1 times greater than the ratio of their employees. Equilar benchmarks and tracks executive compensation, board compensation, equity grants and award policies and

compensation practices.

Companies claim that the rules to calculate the ratio have not been clearly defined by the Securities and Exchange Commission.

Larry Burton, chief executive of the business roundtable, which represents chief executives of the biggest US companies, said "The big concern we have is that a lot of work and clarification needs to be done on this." Companies and business groups want to work with the SEC to draft up regulations that are clear and understandable. Businesses hope that the SEC will develop a "consistent and digestible" measure.

Critics of the provision believe that this will create an administrative burden and will create a PR nightmare for companies that have a huge salary gap ratio.

According to Forbes, Ivan Seidenberg had the 44th highest CEO compensation as of April 2009; his total compensation was \$26.4 million. Total compensation was calculated by including: "salary and bonuses; other compensation, such as vested restricted stock grants, long term incentive pay payouts and perks; and stock gains, the value realized by exercising stock options."

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## Vice President Joe Biden Discusses Healthcare with BellTel Members

Members of The Association of BellTel Retirees and its sister organization ProtectSeniors.Org were invited to participate in a discussion with Vice President Joe Biden and top White House officials regarding the crisis of healthcare for retirees and other seniors. The stated purpose of the September 23<sup>rd</sup> call was to discuss the Affordable Care Act for senior citizens. Other leading Capitol Hill policymakers in the discussion included Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius and John Blum Director of Medicare.

Hosted as a conference call, Vice President Biden announced that next

year, retirees who are a part of Medicare Part D will get a 50 percent discount on name brand prescription drugs. He added, "President Obama and I will fight to ensure there are no Medicare cuts and to increase services." Mr. Biden continued to speak for about 30 minutes and then he turned the call over for 5 minutes of questions and answers.

One of our Association members, James Hannah, a retiree of Verizon living in North Carolina raised concerns about the relatively small



*Vice President Joe Biden*

\$2,000 penalty for employers who cancel active employee coverage but zero penalty for canceling earned benefits of retirees. Secretary Sebelius addressed Mr. Hannah and said she understood his concerns and that "We want to stop the erosion of retiree plans." However,

she offered no further information as to how to stop erosion of retiree healthcare plans.

**Hear the call in its entirety online at:**

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/photos-and-video/video/2010/09/23/senior-citizens-and-affordable-care-act-audio-only>

## 2011 Annual Retiree Member Meeting April 20 in Atlantic City, New Jersey

The Association of BellTel Retirees has selected Atlantic City, New Jersey as the host for its 2011 annual member meeting. The gathering of hundreds of retirees will take place at the Tropicana Casino and Resort on Wednesday, April 20, 2011.

The Tropicana has agreed to offer Association members a special room rate of just \$69 per night for single or double occupancy for the meeting. Say you are attending the Association of BellTel Retirees meeting to get the discount. It is recommended that anyone needing overnight accommodations should book their reservations early.

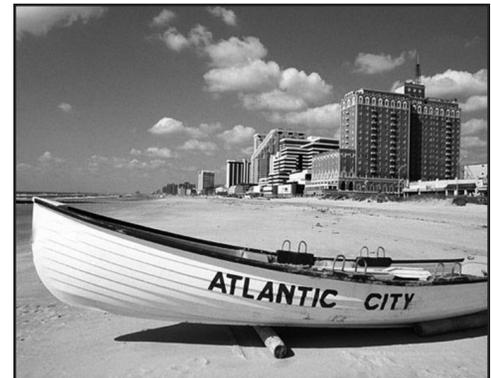
This year a special key note address will be given by Thomas J. Mackell, Jr. who recently served as chairman of the Federal Reserve Board for the District of Richmond, Virginia which encompasses the District of Columbia, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina and West Virginia. Mr. Mackell, who predicted and warned of the current financial market stumble at the Association's 2008 member meeting in Sturbridge, MA, is author of the book, "When the Good Pensions Go Away: Why Americans

Needs a New Deal for Pension and Health Care Reform."

Last year's meeting held in Tarrytown, New York, was a huge success with over 300 Association members attending.

Reservations are required to attend the meeting on April 20th in Atlantic City. To reserve your spot, please complete the reservation form on page 9.

*(Continued on page 9)*



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# 2011 Marks 15 Years Advocating for BellTel Retirees



**Earliest Experiences: 1995-1999**  
**W**hat happens when a former employer makes cuts that significantly and negatively impact retirees who spent decades serving that employer? And what to do was the quandary four NYNEX retirees contemplated over lunch back in October 1995.

Trained by the Bell System to be decisive and take action, the group knew sitting on the sidelines like lambs was just not a possibility.

For the five previous years there had been zero pension cost of living adjustments (COLA), something they and tens of thousands of other NYNEX retirees factored as an essential part of retirement budgeting based upon the company's history of granting regular COLA's dating back to at least 1970.

So recognizing the issue, the four – Bill Jones, Bob Rehm, Ed Ward and Don Eltharp – expanded their dialogue to other retirees who were raising the very same questions with their own circle of former colleagues. Within weeks the advocacy network expanded to include Mike Kucklinca, Joe Ristuccia and John Parente.

By December 1995 the seven were traveling throughout New York State to speak at retiree gatherings and Pioneer meetings to address the issues and hear what fellow retirees thought needed to be done.

First a letter was drafted to the Chair-

man & CEO of NYNEX Ivan Seidenberg signed by the seven, plus about 1,400 others, but the unthinkable occurred. The CEO failed to respond to the communication from the Company's own loyal retirees.

This error in judgment only fed the retiree movement. In order to grow beyond the 1,400 hundred signatories, the seven founders each donated \$350 to hire a lawyer and incorporate the Association of NYNEX Retirees. Then they were off and running for an important cause.

"I was sick and tired of looking at a paycheck on January 1<sup>st</sup> and not seeing a cost of living increase in it," said Mike Kucklinca. "The fact that the company did not keep their promise was what motivated me (to take action)."

Fellow co-founder Joe Ristuccia reflected, "We spent our lives working to earn our pension and health benefits and it is up to us to protect what we earned. It is a good thing that the Association was created. Thanks to our efforts, retirees have representatives working on their behalf that are able to put employers on notice. We are ready to step up to the plate when our earned benefits are threatened."

## Spring Awakenings:

In the Spring of 1997 the front page of our newsletter, then named "The Retiree Advocate" chronicled how the fledgling association had in fact met with Chairman Seidenberg, how the group had established a Washington D.C. presence, was communicating



*The Association Board at our 2nd annual member meeting in Boston. Shown L to R: John Venti, Jack Brennan, Lou Miano, Bill Jones, Phil Richer, Bob Rehm, Mike Kucklinca, John Parente and Joe Ristuccia.*

with the Chairman of the New York Public Service Commission, elected its first female board member (Eileen Lawrence our hard working Treasurer of many years)

and had retained the services of an attorney and public relations firm to help the Association chronicle its story. The board also established a \$12 suggested dues level and membership had surpassed 10,000 members in only 14 months.

In May 1997 the then NYNEX-only group held its

1<sup>st</sup> retiree annual membership meeting on Long Island attracting over 500 members from Massachusetts, Rhode Island, New Jersey, upstate New York, Long Island and New York City. Jack Reardon of Local 1118 even led an upstate New York delegation that left home at 4 am in order to arrive on time. It was clear that all those who gathered were prepared to stand up and defend the pensions and benefits they earned over a lifetime of service.

In an interview some years ago with the BellTel Newsletter, co-founder Ed Ward said, "I really believe that if we didn't have this Association, a better part of our medical plan and a better part of our prescription plan would be lost." Mr. Ward, a former United States Marine retired from the Association's board in 1998. At that first annual meeting, Ward explained retiree



*New England area BellTel members take to the streets of Boston and company headquarters to commemorate seven years without a pension COLA.*



*BellTel members demonstrate outside of Bell Atlantic headquarters in New York City in 1998 to increase recognition of their economic plight.*

*The Verizon Retiree Community*

★ 2011 ★



*Directors Phil Richer and Lou Miano survey the crowd of hundreds of retirees gathered for the Association's annual meeting at the University of Massachusetts.*

leaders already barnstormed over 100 retiree gatherings since founding the Association.

The summer of 1997 the Association first initiated its proxy efforts, to harness the 80-plus percent of Bell System retirees who were Bell company stockholders.

By later in 1997 the Association leadership expanded to include leaders from the New England region, led by Lou Miano, John Venti and Phil Richer – a former Massachusetts State Republican Party Chairman – preaching to New England retirees, while our expansion west and to the south would progress via the Bell Atlantic merger.

In February of 1998, our rapidly growing Association was tapped as a key player at a national retiree conference lending guidance on retiree legislation and meeting with U.S. Department of Labor and Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) officials. Heading opposition against a SEC proxy measure to make proposing corporate rule changes harder to win, the SEC agreed with us and decided to set aside its change. That year we offered our first two proxies: Shareowner approval of severance agreements for senior managers and requiring independent directors. Both measures have since been instituted at Verizon or its predecessor companies.

## A Voice That Won't Be Muted:

Toting posters reading “Promises at Retirement Broken” and “Ma Bell's Orphans” retirees protested outside of the company's Manhattan and Boston headquarters to mark an “Unhappy 7<sup>th</sup> Anniversary” of the last COLA on February 1 of 1991. Association President Bill Jones told the gathering, “As we stand here in protest, your company executives sit in a luxurious dining room eating patte and deciding our futures. They in essence, have changed the rules of the game in the fourth quarter – which clearly is unethical, unprofessional and unprincipled. Our retirees feel abandoned and betrayed.”

Our second annual member meeting was at the University of Massachusetts in Boston; The Association changed its bylaws to incorporate Bell Atlantic retirees. The first retiree leader to join the board from the Bell Atlantic territory was John “Jack” Brennan, a 38 year company veteran from New Jersey. Brennan would eventually assume the Chairmanship of your Association, a position he has brought great honor and vision to, plus thousands of volunteer hours.

By now members were becoming more and more cognizant that their healthcare costs were rising and their medical options were diminishing with new company provided Point of Service or HMO providers. This recognition only further bolstered our Association's already strong focus and early and active priority on Capitol Hill to write and secure legislation to protect earned retiree healthcare benefits.

By the Summer of 1998 our membership had soared to 35,000, we changed our name to the Association of BellTel Retirees Inc. and the retiree agenda clearly dominated the first post-merger Bell Atlantic shareowner meeting, where an amazing 419 million company shares were voted with our proxies. Mr. Jones and Mr. Rehm spoke before the board and shareowners with Mr. Rehm being interrupted 10 times by standing ovations. Company officers walked away that day in Wilmington, Delaware recognizing retirees were succeeding in shifting the landscape.

Kicking off 1999 on a sour note for

America's retirees was a curveball from the U.S. Supreme Court which ruled that under ERISA, American corporations do not have to share surpluses from their pension plans with retirees and workers, even if those workers had contributed to the plans (Hughes Aircraft Retirees Case).

Over 450 attended our 1999 annual member meeting in Atlantic City, and Association of BellTel Retirees officers also traveled to Atlanta to speak at both Bell Atlantic and the GTE annual meetings (pre-merger). At the Bell Atlantic meeting our retiree proxies and issues continued growing in stature, supported by over 570 million shares, illustrating The Association of BellTel Retirees growing clout.

In the final year of the Millennium your Association was leading the nation-



*President Bill Jones illustrates the rise of membership in the Association. By the close of 1999, over 65,000 members had joined in the fight to protect retiree pensions and benefits.*

al fight against companies like Bell Atlantic using “shadow profits” from the retiree pension fund to boost executive bonuses and compensation. We were simultaneously working on Capitol Hill to form alliances with other corporate retiree groups and examining options for litigation and Federal legislation. Reaching the 65,000 member mark we also opened our doors for active employees to join in the fight to protect their own future pensions and benefits.

*IN EACH BELLTEL NEWSLETTER  
ISSUE THROUGHTOUT 2011 WE WILL BE  
SPOTLIGHTING KEY ACHIEVEMENTS,  
NEWS, EVENTS AND PERSONALITIES  
WHO CONTRIBUTED SO RICHLY TO  
THE ASSOCIATION'S HISTORY.*

## Member Mailbag



Dear Association:

I've read the letter from "Name withheld" in the fall issue. Please permit me to respond.

Dear Mr. Name Withheld:

I applaud you for finally taking a few minutes to voice your dissatisfaction with your pension benefits. That's the first step. But, my question is, why did it take you 15 years to do so?

Have you, like many retirees, just been sitting on your butts waiting for others (like the BellTel Retirees) to do the work so you can reap the benefits?

Have you and your friends ever voiced your dissatisfaction to the top management of Verizon? Have you and your friends ever voiced your dissatisfaction to your legislators? I could go on but, perhaps I should ask just one question. What have you and your friends done, other than this letter to The BellTel Retirees?

Mr. Name Withheld, there is only one

thing in which we are all guaranteed to succeed, and that is to do nothing.

Here is a check to extend Mr. Name Withheld's membership so that he can stay informed and perhaps learn how to participate.

*With Best Wishes,  
B.S. Allamuchy, New Jersey*  
\*\*\*

Dear Association,

Great letter from Mr. No Name. Just great for a good laugh – we have met a few like that through the years. He could have saved 44 cents more by not writing. Thanks for all the great work you all do and good luck in tough times. I look forward to your letter all the time.

Thanks again,  
*TMC Bronx, NY*  
\*\*\*

Dear Association:

I am responding to the retiree and his friends who will not stand with us to contribute.

I am a retired senior living simply with a mortgage. Do you think I do not need a raise?

I am thankful for what I am receiving, because I cannot live without it.

So next time you and your friends feel

like complaining, please thank God for what you have.

P.S. you are the only link I have to keep me informed of the company.

*Member in Warwick, Rhode Island*  
\*\*\*

Dear Association:

I have enclosed my contribution. Now more than ever do we need your representation. These are scary times. More and more retirees are experiencing the loss of pensions and benefits. The corporations and municipalities have turned their back on the workers who carried the burden every day to make sure that they fulfilled their obligation to be very production and take pride in their jobs and their company.

I enjoyed the article you did on Bill Phraner. I had the pleasure to work with Bill as an installation tech in Patchogue, NY. He always had a great joke to tell to start the day off. He was an avid sailor and an excellent manager but he was "one of the guys."

Keep up the excellent work. We are depending on you.

Sincerely,

*George Fedorenchik  
Naples, FL*

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## ASSOCIATION REPORTS FINANCIAL STATUS

Dear Fellow Members,

Our request to you for support in our September 2010 appeal was well received, contributions continue to come in. Many members gave well above the average, and sent wonderful notes of encouragement and thanks. Each contribution and message is truly appreciated. We cannot publish all of them, but we can say, "Thank you so very much!" You are part of a remarkable group of people who united to stand up for themselves and others to save their financial security in retirement. We have

said it before, but it can't be said enough: It is so important to us to know that we have your support, and that you are steadfastly there for us.

Here are our results to date – what has been accomplished with your help as of October 31st:

### DONATIONS

2010 YEAR END GOAL \$700,000  
AS OF 8/31 \$533,496

### APPEAL RESULTS

SEPTEMBER \$100,361  
OCTOBER \$ 42,444  
Year to Date as of 10/31 \$676,300  
% of Goal attained 96.6%

*There is still time to make your 2010 contribution.*

Our work continues, and we are within a month of kicking off our 2011 campaign – the year of our Fifteenth Anniversary. It will be a very special year – and one we could not have reached without the support of a wonderful family of retirees who understand what it is like to work as a team.

Have a joyous and safe holiday season. And again, *THANK YOU!*

## 2011 Annual Retiree Member Meeting

*(Continued from page 5)*

Be sure to include the name(s) of those who will attend and return it to the Association of BellTel Retirees with your \$5 per person registration fee to:

J. McCann  
Association of BellTel Retirees Inc.  
P.O. Box 33, Cold Spring Harbor,  
New York 11724.

Please make all checks payable to the Association of BellTel Retirees. Tickets to the meeting will be mailed to you along with directions to the hotel once payment is received. Please note that reservations to attend the meeting on the 20<sup>th</sup> of April should not be confused with hotel room reservations that you may make, should you need overnight accommodations. They are separate and distinct.

Those seeking overnight hotel accommodations, can contact the Tropicana Hotel at the special number for BellTel members 1-800-247-8767 or go online at <http://www.tropicana.net/hotels-Atlantic-City/index.htm>

## GO GREEN

This newsletter is available to you on-line. If you wish to receive **ONLY** an on-line copy, please email us at [association@belltelretirees.org](mailto:association@belltelretirees.org) and put in the Subject line of the email –GO GREEN. Please give us your name, mailing address and email address so we can make the change.

## Early Bird RSVP for Association of BellTel Retirees Annual Meeting

Wednesday, April 20, 2011 at the Tropicana Casino & Resort,  
2831 Boardwalk, Atlantic City, NJ 08401-6338

**A Ticket Is Required To Attend**

I will attend the meeting in Atlantic City, New Jersey - # in party \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Enclosed is a Check for \$ \_\_\_\_\_ (**\$5.00 per person**)

Please list your guest's names and addresses: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

### **PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY**

(You can list invitees names on a separate piece of paper if more than 2 are attending)

**A ticket will be mailed to each member and guest for admission.**

Please return this registration form and fee **ASAP** to: **Association of BellTel Retirees Inc.**  
**c/o Jackie McCann / PO Box 33 Cold Spring Harbor, NY 11724**

## Health Benefits

*(Continued from page 3)*

Visteon retiree case is different from the Raytheon retiree case because their benefits are only protected while Visteon is in bankruptcy. Visteon is close to emerging from bankruptcy, and the Visteon retiree attorneys believe that once they do, retirees will have to continue to fight to keep their benefits. Critics feel that Visteon will try to use a Chapter 11 bankruptcy plan provision that overrides bankruptcy-court protections for retired workers, claiming the company cannot exit bankruptcy without dropping the benefits for retirees.

Visteon claims that the cost of providing these benefits is \$310 million.

### WHEN DONATING – PLEASE CONSIDER Going Online

Did you know that we made our online donating feature a lot easier to use? While it has always been a safe and efficient way to donate to our great organization, it has now been made easier.

If you have used our online feature before and thought it was cumbersome, please check it out. We have listened to requests from our members and customized our site to make it very user friendly. If you have never used our online donation feature, we encourage you to do so today. Donating online is a very safe, fast and easy way for you to donate, and a less expensive way for our organization to process your generous donations.

Go to [www.belltelretirees.org](http://www.belltelretirees.org) and click on the BLUE DONATE NOW.

**Donate Now**  
Secure donations through  
Network for Good

We are always very appreciative of your support and contributions. Donations are our only source of revenue. When combined with the volunteer hours of your board (over 12,000 annually), they make this a very significant and personal commitment to protecting all Verizon retirees' retirement security.

## RETIREE NEWS AND NOTES

On October 15, Chairman of the Association of BellTel Retirees, Jack Brennan spoke to about 90 union retirees from local #827 of the International Brotherhood of electrical workers, southern division in Williamstown, New Jersey.

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On September 30, Association of BellTel Retirees Board Secretary Pam Harrison attended George Alcott's retirement dinner at Quincy Lodge of Elks, in Massachusetts, where over 300 were in attendance. Ms. Harrison presented Mr. Alcott an award recognizing his years of service and his support of the Association of BellTel Retirees. Mr. Alcott served as President of the CWA 1301 for over 20 years and the vice president of Massachusetts AFL-CIO.

\*\*\*

On September 14, Chief Financial Officer of the Association of BellTel Retirees, Bob Rehm attended the Top of the Hill Gang retiree luncheon in Ridge, NY. There were 35 attendees at the luncheon. Though, Mr. Rehm did not speak as a guest, he did address retirees concerns about pension, healthcare, and death benefits.

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On September 2, Chuck Schalch, Director of BellTel Retirees attended the Germantown Council Pioneers meeting



Credit: Susan Conway

*Board Member Pam Harrison presents George R. Alcott III, retired president of CWA local 1301 with an award recognizing his service and support of the Association of BellTel Retirees.*

at the Cottage Green Restaurant in Northeast Philadelphia. Mr. Schalch spoke to about 40 attendees about their benefits packages, where some were very surprised that they and fellow retirees were at risk of losing their healthcare benefits. Chuck also spoke of the work that BellTel's sister organization, Protect-Seniors.Org does to protect earned healthcare benefits and encouraged them to join.

*If you would like to invite a member of the Association of BellTel Retirees Board of Directors to speak at your next event or gathering, please contact the office at 1-800-261-9222 or via email at [association@belltelretirees.org](mailto:association@belltelretirees.org).*

### 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.**

# Reliance: Who Do You Rely On?

*By David Simmonds, Director  
Planned Giving Committee*

Whether we realize it or not, we spend our entire lives relying on others. Think about it. We're born and we have our parents to love us, nurture us and make sure we stay healthy and active. We enter our school years and we rely on our teachers to give us the tools necessary to make life worthwhile. We rely on mentors, be they parents, teachers, civic leaders, or just friends. During our teenage years, it becomes a little foggy, but whether we realize it or not, we rely on all those around us to make the right decisions for us, even if we can't make them for ourselves.

As we progress into our adult years we come to rely on a different set of people. We don't replace the old ones, we just add to the list of those we rely on. We now have spouses, employers, and other mentors. We rely heavily on our employers to provide us with what we need to survive. They provide a livable wage, healthcare, other benefits, and a safe working environment. It's no surprise that as we enter retirement, we continue to rely on those who provided us with a means to "live the good life."

So it comes as quite a shock when the things we worked so hard to earn, start to

become less than what we expected. At this point we start to rely on someone we never thought of as we were growing up: an organization whose sole purpose is to fight for our rights as retirees.

The Association of BellTel Retirees is there to provide us with the information we need and to listen when life becomes a little more than we can handle. When we have questions about our pensions, our benefits, whom do we turn to? The Association of BellTel Retirees has been there and we can rely on them to help, no matter what it takes. There's that word again, rely. I have seen clearly that you can rely on the Association to be there when you need them.

How do they do it? Your contributions are the only income the Association has to accomplish what it does. What you contribute all goes to support you, the retiree. But sometimes it just doesn't seem enough. If you've been a member for a while, you know what it means to have the Association to rely on. Many of you contribute more than once a year for which all retirees are very grateful. But there is another way you can help.

The Planned Giving Program is now there for you to think about and help advocate for you and your fellow retirees and surviving spouses in future years. The Association's support in the future

may be needed perhaps more than you've needed it in the past. By setting up a contribution through your estate planner, you can insure that the legacy of the BellTel Retirees will continue on. You can leave something to help surviving spouses and fellow retirees enjoy the same protections and support you've come to expect.

It has been my experience that Bell System people (Bell Heads) stick together more than any other group. Lifelong friendships are formed. Many families have passed the torch to their children as they became employees of "the System." That is why the Planned Giving Program is so vitally important: to insure retirees now and in the future and surviving spouses get what they have worked so hard for and earned. It is the Associations turn to rely on you.

We would encourage you to consider making an entry in your estate plan to think of the Association when the time comes. It can be in many forms. It can be cash, stocks, bonds, insurance policies, or property. You have relied on your Association for years, now it's time to rely on you. Please help if you can. If you have any questions at all please call the Association office at 1-800-261-9222, and someone will get back to you quickly.

Thank you for your generosity.

**ASSOCIATION OF BELLTEL RETIREES INC.  
P.O. Box 61, Glen Head, NY 11545-0061**

Yes, I want to support the Association of BellTel Retirees Inc. in our fight to protect the pension and benefits of all retirees and active employees. Enclosed is my tax-deductible contribution of:

**\$100.    \$75.    \$50.    \$36.50.\*    \$25.    Other \$\_\_\_\_\_.**    **Check Enclosed.**    (\*Equals Only 10 cents a day)

*Or you can use your credit card. Just fill out the information listed below.*

Visa    MasterCard    Credit Card Acct.# \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_    Three digit code on back \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_    Expiration Date \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_    City/State/Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_    Telephone # \_\_\_\_\_

**I am interested in learning more about Planned Giving. Please contact me.**

The Association of BellTel Retirees is a 501 © (3) IRS Tax-Exempt Corporation representing retirees and active employees of Verizon, all of its subsidiaries and all of the companies that were combined to form Verizon and Idearc.



# NJ Telecom Pioneers 20th Sports Jamboree

The New Jersey Telecom Pioneers recently hosted its 20<sup>th</sup> Sports Jamboree, an event aimed at bringing happiness to wheelchair bound and visually impaired children, teens, and young adults. The Association of BellTel Retirees and ProtectSeniors.Org members partnered with the Pioneers to play an active role in the Jamboree. Duties included running the events, keeping athletes safe, preparing food, and cheering on the participants.

About 500 participants, family members, and volunteers gathered on August 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> at the Pine Hill Scout Reservation in New Jersey for the event. The athletes ranged in ages, from 8-23, and levels of disability.

Sporting events included 40 yard races, basketball, softball, a pilot race, bicycling, hockey, and a slalom (zig zag obstacle course) races. Winners were presented with awards at a dinner following the events.

"It was a great opportunity for The Association of BellTel Retirees and ProtectSeniors.Org to be involved. It is



*Children participating at the Pioneers Sports Jamboree event.*

tremendously exciting for the kids and to see the smiles on their faces puts tears in your eyes, especially when you see them run for the first time," said Jack Brennan, Chairman of the Association of BellTel Retirees.

Athletes come from New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Delaware, recruited through word of mouth or by their schools.

The total cost for the weekends is always free to the participants and their families, due to extensive fundraising and generous donations.



"We are just a bunch of people who get together for the common goal of watching kids smile," said Chairperson Bob Hawk, Telco retiree. For him, the event is about showing love and bringing happiness to the participants and their families.

The event originated in 1991 after three years of planning and preparation from the Pioneers. They were inspired after visiting a Sports Jamboree in West Virginia and decided to start the one New Jersey. 20 years later the Jamboree has more than doubled its number of participants.

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