

BELLTEL RETIREE

The Official Newsletter for Retirees of NYNEX, Bell Atlantic, Verizon and Its Subsidiaries

Summer 2003

Volume 26



Executive Director's Message

by C. William Jones

Retirees Win Proxy!

The most stunning victories in the history of retiree activism occurred in March and April of this year through the efforts of your Association.

First, Verizon agreed, as a result of our proxy proposal, to change its policy regarding the calculation of incentive compensation for executives starting in 2003.

We agreed to withdraw our proposal, which called for the company to cease using earnings on the pension fund to pad executive incentive compensation, and Verizon agreed to include a paragraph in the Proxy Statement outlining their change in policy - essentially conceding defeat.

This action by the company was most probably precipitated by the huge vote last year (42.7 percent in favor) and the strong likelihood that the proposal would gain a clear majority this year.

But that victory was not all we had to celebrate.

Bob Rehm, Joe Ristuccia and I traveled to Fort Wayne, Ind., for the April 23rd Verizon Annual Shareholders Meeting. Joe Ristuccia made a powerful presentation promoting our proposal on Board

Composition, known as "Independent Directors" and Bob Rehm energized the crowd with a spirited presentation of the Executive Severance Agreements proposal, commonly called "Golden Parachutes."

He characterized the severance agreements as "scandalous" and the salaries as "outrageous." I followed up with a presentation supporting both of those proposals, declaring victory on the Incentive Compensation proposal and challenging the Board to make this policy change permanent.

Ivan Seidenberg then gave the company rebuttal declaring the "scandalous" payments necessary to attract and keep top-flight executives. However, following his rebuttal he announced that the shareholders had voted 59 percent in favor of the Association's proposal - a preliminary estimate puts the tally at over one billion share votes in favor of the Association proposal.

This announcement was greeted by a rousing applause from the more than 400 assembled shareholders, including a large contingent of CWA and IBEW members.

This was a historic win - the first time a NYNEX, Bell Atlantic, Verizon or Bell system shareholder proposal was won over the objections of the company! Again consider that this was the first time in the 125-year history of the company that a shareholder

proposal won. This is a significant achievement, and it was accomplished by you and your fellow retirees.

What does this mean to retirees? Your Association has worked tirelessly for more than seven years to bring important issues like pension increases and healthcare coverage to the attention of the officers of Verizon. In turn the company has given us nothing but lip service, with the possible exception of the increase of pension minimums and the lump sum payment in the year 2000.

These victories have forced important corporate governance improvements, which we hope will lead to a heightened respect by Verizon for the Association's ability to promote change. We will continue to press, in this manner and others, for our important issues until we are successful in gaining economic justice for all Verizon retirees.

Verizon retirees have cause for celebration of two historic victories and proof that grass-roots activism can make a difference. It took a lot of work on the part of our board and others but none of this would have been possible without your financial contributions, and we thank you.

Jack Brennan New Association Board Chairman

Jack Brennan has been elected as the new chairman of the Board of Directors for the Association of BellTel Retirees. He has served as a volunteer director with the Association for the past five years and is active with his local Pioneer organization.

Brennan officially took over the chairman role at the Association's Annual Membership Meeting in Virginia on April

11. Outgoing Chairman James Casey, a Virginia retiree from the old C&P Company, introduced Brennan to some 200 members in attendance.

Brennan, who hails from the original New Jersey Bell territory, started with the company as a draftsman at age 17 in 1953. After turning 18, he spent the next nine

(Continued on page 8)

Read the Newsletter Online

To access the BellTel Retiree newsletter or to "Write to Congress" on the Association web site (www.belltelretirees.org), click on "BellTel Retiree Newsletter" icon at the top of the page. When a box pops up asking for a "User Name" and "Password," enter "belltel" for both. Also, click the box that says "Save this password in your password list." This will enable you to bypass entering a user name and password each time you want to access the newsletter.

VIEW FROM WASHINGTON & National Retiree Legislative Network

By A.J. Norby

The NRLN has just completed the reintroduction process of HR 1322, the Emergency Retiree Health Benefits Protection Act, into the new Congressional session. As you know, this is the legislation retirees of the Association of BellTel Retirees and the NRLN wrote and was introduced to Congress through Rep. John Tierney (D-Mass.).

When Congress adjourned last year, we had nearly 100 Congressional Representative co-sponsors. When the new Congress convened, we had to start all over again with a new introduction and signing of co-sponsors. That's what we're involved with now - the re-signing and gaining of additional co-sponsors. We need your help to get Congress to set aside their partisan preferences and do what's right for their retiree constituencies. They need to pass HR1322 and start giving retired Americans some peace of mind.

We should not have to worry about loss of benefits that we worked for and were promised. I urge all of you to take up your pens and write to your Representatives and Senators about this bill. Tell them we want them to co-sponsor HR1322 and, if they will not, you want to know why.

On the Senate side, we continue to look for someone to replace the late Sen. Paul Wellstone as a chief sponsor of a companion bill. We don't care what party he or she repre-

sents - we need someone who will champion our cause.

Today somewhere between 7-10 million retirees are impacted by benefit reductions in some form. This is outrageous, and it's time that the politicians do something about it.

Your Washington-based NRLN has taken on the additional issue of "Cash Balance Conversions," which means that an employer can unilaterally change its defined pension plan, for future retirees, to one that penalizes the older worker.

These conversions remove the back-loading of traditional pension plans, with the net result of removing thousands and thousands of dollars of pension benefits that older workers have already earned or are about to earn. This is a particularly onerous scheme, because the closer the employee is to retirement, the more he is financially penalized under this plan.

I was recently in Washington, D.C., testifying against the proposed conversion to these plans before a Treasury Department (IRS) panel, where I publicly called these plans a "scam." It's really much worse than that. It's a very large rip-off to a segment of the work force that has very little leverage with its employers.

Other news about your NRLN is that we continue to see a steady rise in our membership. Among the newcomers are Lucent, AT&T, SBC, PacTel retirees and a number of new GM Clubs. We work hard on your behalf

and urge your continual support. Our tasks will not be of short duration. It took 11 years to pass the ERISA law. This work, too, will take time. Please be patient.

Finally I would like to thank the members of the Association of BellTel Retirees who sent in contributions to our fund drive last year. Your Association is the largest group of supporters of our cause, here in our nation's Capitol, and your members, individually, respond generously. We appreciate your support and encourage you to continue to help when we call upon you. Remember to visit us online at: www.nlrn.org or call us toll free at 866-360-7197.



UNITED, TO PROTECT OUR FUTURE

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Government Taking Aim at Pension Plans

By Joseph Ristuccia

There are two proposals that are in the works that would seriously threaten future pension plans.

First, a Bush administration proposal would end the 1999 moratorium on the conversion of conventional defined pension plans to Cash Balance Plans. The moratorium was put in place because of a public outcry by workers at companies, including IBM and Verizon, whose future pensions were seriously cut through these conversions. The details underlying the proposal to lift the moratorium, thus permitting companies to commence conversions, do not contain sufficient protections for older workers.

Cash Balance Pension Plans are good for younger workers who tend to be more mobile. The problem arises when defined benefit plans - which favor those who remain longer with the company - are converted. Analysis has found that longer-tenured workers can lose as much as 50 percent of the value of their pension when it is converted.

During the moratorium, the IRS developed regulations which, when followed, would permit cash balance plans to comply with age discrimination requirements. But there are still problems including the lack of protections for older workers called "wear away" (the loss of earnings on the traditional plan assets after conversion), and failure to establish a "reasonable interest rate," which is key in establishing the opening cash balance with too much latitude given to companies in establishing this rate.

A second proposal, in the form of bill HR1776, will be a bonanza for corporations. While there are some good provisions in the bill - including upping the amount able to be put in 401(k) plans from \$2,000 to \$15,000 that will encourage more savings - there are many more anti-retiree and anti-worker provisions.

One of these is a section that would allow companies to contribute billions less to pension plans, which will make these plans far less

(Continued on page 5)

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Luster Returned to 140 West Street

In the Winter 2001-02 issue of the BellTel Retiree we told you about the severe damage inflicted on 140 West Street in the Sept. 11 attacks. The building had been the one-time headquarters of New York Telephone, and continues to serve an integral role in guaranteeing uninterrupted communication to and from the New York Stock Exchange, Wall Street and lower Manhattan - the financial capital of the world.

It also is adjacent to the World Trade Center site - now referred to as Ground Zero. But 140 West Street was able to endure the damage incurred from the relentless crumbling of its neighbors - the North and South Towers and WTC building 7.

The Art Deco-designed skyscraper was constructed decades before anyone ever envisioned the World Trade Center and still

Free Subscriptions Being Offered

Interested in keeping up to date with late breaking news of interest to both retirees and employees? The Association's website, www.belltelretirees.org, provides a periodic e-mail bulletin for all members.

These bulletins are the fastest and most direct way to quickly notify you when we need you to do something, deliver reports on the latest news, information, and important happenings related to retirees from their former employer, Verizon, or from the nation's Capitol.

Signing up is a simple and confidential process and, unlike other pesky services, ours does not share your e-mail address with others. That means no advertisements or "spam" e-mails permitted.

E-mail messages are sent directly by the Association's Executive Director about once a month, or when there is vital or breaking news.

To enroll, go to the BellTel website and scroll down the left hand side of the home page until you find "Keep Me Posted" with a picture of a man reading a newspaper. Click on the picture and enter your e-mail address. Then just click the submit button and the subscription process is complete - fast, simple and free. Shortly after signing up you will receive confirmation via e-mail.

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stands and serves proudly. It was fitted majestically with a grand and magnificent lobby of highly polished bronze and brass, and various hues of grained marble and granite antiques.

The building was polished and perfectly cared for, serving as a fitting symbol for the pride and excellence company employees brought daily to their workplace.

Damage from the collapse of the Towers, once standing quarter of a mile tall, put into question the future of the building. Steel beams from the collapsing Trade Center buildings punctured the outer façade of 140 West Street, causing significant damage to its entranceway, sub-levels, outer walls, windows and highly sensitive communications equipment.

Its basement levels suffered serious flooding and, as result of massive water damage, important historical records, memorabilia, antique equipment, and the miles of cable in the massive cable vault were ruined.

A few weeks after the attacks BellTel Board Member Robert Rehm, a former division manager-buildings management at NYNEX, noted that when he saw photos of the building in its splendor versus images of the damaged - but still standing - building amid the rubble and destruction at Ground Zero, it was hard to not become overcome with nostalgia and pride.



EARLY NYC SKYSCRAPER: A 1923 photo depicting the Barclay Vesey building located at 140 West Street was the original home of the New York Telephone Company. It was the closest neighbor to the Twin Towers. The building sustained heavy damage in the September 11th tragedy.

"For many retirees, me included, the image of 140 West Street brings back memories of meetings attended and the good old days spent working at the company," he said. "We are proud they have been able to restore this building to its magnificence and splendor."

According to the company, replacing equipment and cables alone, Verizon will spend a whopping \$1.4 billion. In addition, an estimated \$210 million will go into the restoration of the skyscraper.

The reconstruction involves 1,800 windows, 520,000 façade bricks, 22,500 cinder blocks, and 93 tons of steel. Also, meticulous detail is being put into the ornamental 72-foot entrance facing Washington Street. Pelican wings cast in bronze, and intricate Art Deco chiseled into

limestone will again adorn the walls.

Bob Rehm said that not only were he, and Joe Giampiccolo the now retired and former "MR. 140 West Street," extremely proud of George Famulare, the present Manager-Real Estate Operation at 140, but the entire Verizon family was.

"George displayed heroic actions in his managing the evacuation of the building on 9/11, in using his technical talents that limited collateral damage during and after the horrendous terrorist attacks, and, in applying his fine management and technical expertise during the recovery and restoration efforts to reconstruct this unique building," Rehm said.

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The Ties That Bind

More than 200 people braved one of this past winter's snowstorms to see old friends and former co-workers from the C&P Company in Baltimore, Md. The group meets in February for lunch and in September for a crab feast.

Association of BellTel Retirees Executive Director C. William Jones joined the February gathering and gave a 20-minute talk about what has been going on since his last visit with the group a few years ago, including the proxy proposals, legislative efforts and health of the pension fund amidst the recent publicity about heavy losses.

Many of the C&P retirees in attendance voiced their concerns about reductions in healthcare coverage, the lack of pension increases, and media reports about major losses in Fortune 100 pension funds resulting in "under funding."

The Association is very grateful to Maryland area retirees for the invitation, as this marks the second time Mr. Jones has addressed the group. In its 21-year history of meeting, the Old Line State retirees have invited outside speakers to just three meetings. The other was a C&P executive who talked about the effects of divestiture on the

Baby Bells back in the mid-1980s.

Earlier in the winter, Board Members Robert Rehm and John Parente traveled to Peekskill, N.Y., to meet with a luncheon group of some 100 retirees to discuss some of their major concerns. Since its inception, this gathering group, coordinated by retiree Dick Penta, has grown from just six or seven retirees to some 150 members.

We congratulate both of these groups for the major effort that goes into organizing regular retiree gatherings in your local communities. The effort you and others put forth is important for the entire retiree community.

Should you have local gatherings in your community and would like a guest speaker to talk about the efforts being coordinated nationally, what is happening with Verizon and legislative efforts in Washington, D.C., for the protection of Verizon



With Bill Jones, are Ed Franey (Left) and Orville Wright. Ed, who heads the luncheon group, spent 41 years with the C&P Company in Maryland. His career included Plant, Commercial and he retired from the Maryland Headquarters in Business Services. Orville had a varied 43+ year career with the C&P Company in Maryland. He started in Chestertown as a lineman, moved through Installation and Repair, Commercial and served a three-year stint in the Marine Corps from 1942 - 1945. He held a number of positions, which had responsibility for everything from stringing wire, collecting coins, responding to billing questions and repair work. He spent the last 25 years of his career as a lobbyist in Annapolis and Washington, DC.

retirees, we would be happy to arrange for a speaker from the Association to come to your meeting. Give us a call at (631) 367-3067, or via e-mail at association@belltelretirees.org

Association Ambassador Pin Returns

The Association of BellTel Retirees "Retiree Ambassador" pins are back by popular demand!

The lapel pin, emblazoned with the Association's logo in the colors blue, black and gold, was introduced at the 2002 Association Annual meeting in Florida and were an immediate hit.

More than 300 members at the meeting accepted the pins, raised their right hands and took an oath to proudly and regularly wear the pin, serve as a Retiree Ambassador and spread the word about the Association's mission to those who might ask about the

pin's significance.

The pins proved so popular, that by the end of the summer - just six months after their introduction - the pin supply was depleted. More than 3,000 have been distributed to retirees throughout the country.

"Over the last year I began wearing this pin to gatherings and people always asked about it. Those who were not Verizon retirees know a former telephone company employee," said Association Executive Director Bill Jones. "It's a great



way to find new members and it's certainly gratifying that so many people are interested to find out about the Association and its crusade for retirees and are rooting us on in our efforts."

"I have also found, as have other retirees, that these little pins are a great ice breaker when you run into other former

employees or their spouse. It truly helps create an instant bond from one retiree to another."

The Association has seen that as the Ambassador pins began circulating among members, retirees were wearing them in their own communities and spreading the word as they met other former employees of the Verizon companies.

To receive your Ambassador Pin, we simply ask for your address and the \$2.50 postage and handling cost. Please specify if you need only one pin or an additional one for a spouse. (As many as three pins can be sent for the same \$2.50 charge).

Send correspondence to: Association Ambassador Pins, P.O. Box 33 Cold Spring Harbor, New York, N.Y. 11724

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*Note: Herb Manna is a Bell Atlantic Retiree.
Discounts are offered to fellow retirees.*

Protecting Yourself From Identity Theft

Identity theft again tops the list of consumer complaints, according to a recent report from the Federal Trade Commission (FTC). Since punishment for this type of fraud and recovery of stolen funds is so rare, consumer prevention may be the only viable course of action for financial protection.

Identity theft is one of those things that if it hasn't happened to you, you're not very concerned about it. However, it is said to be one of the easiest crimes to get away with, and is devastating to its victims.

In 2001, there were approximately 500,000 identity theft victims; that's people who actually filed a police report. And, aside from consumer costs, it costs banks and credit card companies about \$5 billion because they are stuck with a good share of the tab.

But consumers don't get away scot-free. The average victims will spend \$1,374 and 175 hours cleaning up their credit report, which is a great deal of time and money out of their own pockets. Also, they may have their long-earned credit records destroyed in only a matter of weeks or months.

So while identity-theft victims don't make the mess, they are stuck with cleaning it up or they will suffer.

"Yes, they're a victim. Yes, it's a terrible crime. But there is no one who can do it other than the consumer," says Maxine Sweet, a Vice President at Experian, one of the world's leading credit bureaus.

One Maryland identity theft victim recalled how she spent much of the year 2000 contacting creditors. She had to navigate through dozens of different fraud notification procedures after an impostor had opened more than 60 credit accounts in just three months.

"It was a nightmare and nobody was helping," the victim said.

A credit agency will not remove inaccurate information from a credit report unless a creditor says so. They rely 100 percent on information from creditors and don't have the role or authority in judging the data it stores on hundreds of millions of consumers.

Experts say it is so simple to assume someone's identity today. If you go to the grocery store and write a check for \$30, the check has your full name and address, maybe even your phone number. It also has the name and address of your bank and the account number. Maybe the check-out clerk asks for your driver's license number, which, in 19 states, is your Social Security number.

If they write your Social Security number on the face of the check and your date of birth, then even more of your personal information is on display.

According to Frank W. Abagnale, a respected authority on the subjects of forgery, embezzlement and secure documents, this check can be seen by hundreds of people, including people at the grocery store, check-clearing house and payee bank. And if you don't get your checks in your statement, it goes to another company to shred them.

"It is so much information on just that little piece of paper, and that's just one way (to get you)," he said.

He says ID theft started years ago with, "If I can get enough information, I can apply for a Visa. I'll use the card for two weeks and throw it away."

Now, however, it's, "If I can get enough information I can get a cell phone, I can get a car, a mortgage, I can go to work for a company under contract labor and have somebody else pay the taxes."

Abagnale should know, because, besides being a consultant to hundreds of financial institutions, corporations, foreign govern-

ments and the FBI, he was also in the identity theft business himself, but on the other side of the law.

His book, "Catch Me If You Can," details his criminal escapades, and was recently made into a movie by Steven Spielberg, starring Leonardo DiCaprio as Abagnale.

He notes that criminals realize it's the simplest scam in the world - no one has to see your face or know who you are. Only amateurs hack into computers, pros hack into people. It is a lot easier to approach someone and get the information, than break into a database.

So consumers need to be smarter. The biggest thing is to guard your Social Security number and monitor your credit report. Monitoring your credit is the only way you can prevent yourself from being a victim.

A monitoring service, such as Privacy Guard, will notify you whenever someone applies for credit in your name or checks your credit history.

People should also shred account documents before tossing them in the garbage. It's also best to mail bills and other financial information at a post office mailbox and not the mailbox in front of your home.

The FTC recently standardized fraud declaration reports that victims file with banks and creditors. Instead of filling out a separate fraud packet for each creditor, victims fill out a single fraud declaration and send copies to each creditor. The FTC can be contacted at 877-438-4338.

To reach the three major credit bureaus call, Equifax 800-525-6285 or www.equifax.com; Experian 888-397-3742 or www.experian.com; and Trans Union 800-680-7289 or www.transunion.com.

We live in a time when if you make it easy to steal from you, chances are someone will.

Pension Plans

(Continued from page 2)

healthy, thereby jeopardizing their ability to pay the pensions you were promised.

Other harmful provisions include allowing employers to pay out smaller pension lump sums beginning in 2006, contribute less money to union pension plans, make it easier to establish better pension plans for "specially" favored employees (the ones at the top) and exempt stock options from payroll taxes.

It also contains provisions for financial institutions and insurance companies that will steer a lot more business to them. One provision will even undermine 401(k) plans - under the heading of providing better health coverage - by allowing employees to access these plans to

cover medical expenses.

How can you help to make sure that pension plans - as we know them - don't go the way of the dinosaur? Just follow these two steps:

1. Write to the U.S. Treasury ask them to delay the lifting of the Cash Balance Plan moratorium until the proposed regulations are altered. Changes are necessary to assure that older workers are protected against any loss of their pension value when converted or are given the choice between their traditional plan or the Cash Balance Plan. Make 5 copies of your letter. Send the original to:

Internal Revenue Service
POB 7604 CC: ITA: RU (REG-209500-86)
Room 526
Ben Franklin Station
Washington, DC 20044

Using your copies, send one to your

Congressperson, one each to your two Senators and one to your local newspaper as a letter to the editor.

2. Write to your Congressperson and both Senators to urge them to oppose HR1776 or, at least, take action to eliminate the anti-retiree provision, located in section 705 of the bill.

Sample letters can be found on our web site: www.belltelretirees.org. Go to the member Area (User Name: belltel & Password: belltel) to see the sample letters. Enter your zip code in the "Write to Congress" box to find the names and addresses of your Representatives.

For those not on the internet, if you need sample letters, call our office on 800-261-9222 and make sure you leave you name and address.

This is extremely important. We need your

Association Meeting Goes to D.C. Area

Some 200 retirees made an April 11th trip to the Hyatt Hotel near Dulles Airport in Herndon, Va., for the 7th Annual Membership Meeting of the Association of BellTel Retirees.

Despite the overcast, rainy day outside, the retirees were bubbling and enthusiastic inside the hotel, eager to voice their concerns and hear about the progress the Association has made in the past year.

Hampton Hoge, who joined Verizon when it was still known as C&P and retired in 1991, said he was most concerned about retiree benefits, which the company is "reducing every year."

We gave our entire working lives to the company," he said. "Now they want to take away what we thought was ours."

Bob Rohrer, who lives in Frederick, Md., and worked for the C&P for 41 years, said he has been keeping his eye on the recent scandals that have been going on for the past year-and-a-half.

"I fear some of the things that are going on in corporate America," he said, noting that benefit packages are decreasing every year. "The Association is an outstanding example of what can be done when people pull together."

His friend, Victor Crist, a 43-year veteran of the company, agreed, "You can only achieve things by working together."

Beverly Ford, who lives in Baltimore and retired from C&P in 1988, recently has volunteered to be a state representative for the Association because she feels the Association's mission and message must get out to all retirees.

"It's important because I don't think that we're treated fairly or equitably," she said. "The health coverage isn't as good as it was a few years ago, and it keeps getting worse."

All attendees were given one of the Association's Ambassador lapel pins, a gold pin which contains the logo of the Association. Association Executive Director C. William Jones asked all in attendance to raise their right hand and pledge to wear the pin with pride and serve as ambassadors for the Association by taking the time to explain to all those who ask about the pin what the Association is about, why we are fighting for the protection of retiree pensions and benefits, and how to join.

Jim Casey, the Association's outgoing chairman of the board, welcomed the group and held a moment of silence for the troops fighting the war in Iraq. He then led the group in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.



From left, Hank Zahn of Virginia, Pat George of Syracuse, NY, and Mr. & Mrs. Don Banister of Virginia met up at the Association's annual meeting. At the meeting, Don Banister, who is an active Verizon employee, offered to become a State Representative for the Association.

He also announced the winners of the two "early bird" raffle drawings. John Halweg won the first drawing and received a color TV/VCR and Kenneth Lacey won the second drawing and received a TV.

Jack Sellen, the Association's secretary, introduced the gathering to Jack Brennan, the Association's new chairman of the board (see story on cover), as well as the rest of the board members.

Treasurer Eileen Lawrence reviewed the Association financials. Copies were available to all members.

Bill Jones filled in the attendees on the organization's beginnings, starting with just two members - he and Ed Ward back in 1995 - when they and other retirees simply wanted to inquire from the company, as to why there had been no COLA since 1991 - even though retirees had been promised in their working years to expect a COLA every two to three years. Their communication, then to NYNEX Chairman Ivan Siedenbergh with a petition from 1,400 retirees asking for a COLA went unanswered. That unanswered letter served as a wake-up call to a sleeping giant - the company's own retirees - and helped them understand the need to join together for economic justice and for the protection of their pensions and benefits.

Vice President-Government Relations Joe Ristuccia explained the latest efforts in the Legislative arena and detailed the various programs being undertaken by the National Retiree Legislative Network.

Since their humble beginnings, he said, the group has now swelled to more than 95,000 members which makes it the largest grassroots retiree activist group in the nation.

Jones then opened the floor to the attendees, fielding a host of questions ranging from how Verizon's pension fund is doing in light of recent hits to the economy and stock

market, to the problems of deductions in healthcare plans, to the effect the Association's Calculation of Incentive Compensation proxy win will have on Verizon's policies.

Gary Lyons of Virginia applauded the Association's effort in holding a meeting in the southern Verizon territory and encouraged the Association to hold more meetings in the south.

This was the second consecutive year the meeting was held south of the Mason-Dixon line, which attracted 135 retirees from just the Virginia, Maryland and West Virginia area.

Jones said that while the board hasn't directly addressed next year's annual meeting yet, it has thought about holding it in possibly Richmond, Va., Atlanta, Ga., or the west coast of Florida to provide retirees in those areas a face-to-face contact with the Association leadership.

Jones also addressed a question that many retirees have recently brought to his attention concerning mail they have received from Verizon. The company has sent many retirees a letter asking them to come back to work if its workers go on strike.

Jones said that while he and the Association's other board members hope a strike can be averted, if there was one, the Association would discourage its members from filling in.

"The Association of BellTel Retirees Inc. is asking its over 95,000 members to refuse to work as replacements for striking workers. Our membership has suffered serious erosion of pension buying power and dwindling healthcare benefits over the past ten or more years at the hands of the company. We can not come to their aid when they will not come to ours."

Association Members Respond to Proxy Victory

In the immediate days following the proxy results, close to 400 congratulatory e-mails flowed in. Here are some examples of messages we received from members:

- What a great triumph! Way to go. - **Karen Ferguson, executive director of the Pension Rights Center.**
- You folks have every right to be proud of a job well done. Congratulations. - **Jack Pally**
- It had to take a lot of work on your part to make this happen. Thank you again and again for a job well done! - **Tom Merritt**
- Congratulations! This is truly an excep-

tion in the rubber stamp charade governance. - **John Madson**

- Congratulations to us all, but especially, those of you who have been carrying the battle standard. - **Edward Lynch**
- This is the best news I've heard in a long time. The little people have finally found their collective voice. - **Josiane Birbiglia**
- I remember the AT&T Board Chairman, prior to divestiture, make the same statement you just did - since the beginning "we have never had a proxy vote overturned." In fact, I was at his house when he said this, since he was my stepfather. Super job. - **Ted Perry**

• I am proud to be a part of the Association of BellTel Retirees. Thanks again for a great victory! - **Paul and Alice Hassett**

- A stunning Victory! - **Noel Deve**
- Kudos to Bob Rehm, Bill Jones, Joe & Ann Ristuccia, and all the members of the BellTel Retirees Association who made this happen. - **Len Williams**

• Again you, your board and staff are to be commended for the manner in which you spearheaded this critical proposition with tenacity, courage and deep feelings for all shareholders (and us retirees)! - **Graham Glover**

Proxy Victory Grabs National Headlines

The Association of BellTel Retirees' proxy victory over Verizon received much media attention after it garnered nearly two thirds of the shareholder vote.

Following the victory, newspapers and wire services across the nation acknowledged its historic importance - it was the first time in a century the company had been defeated.

Reports from the Associated Press, Reuters, Dow Jones, Forbes, TheStreet.com, New York Post, Miami Herald, Boston Globe, Kansas City Star, Wichita Eagle and many others were stunned by the accomplishments of Verizon shareholders and retirees.

"The retirees' group...is celebrating the slaying of its first giant," wrote the New York Post.

"While the resolution was initiated by former employees" it was the funds and institutional investors siding with the retiree proxy, "creating a post-Enron alliance of workers' interests with those of shareholders," said the Boston Globe.

One Ohio newspaper went so far to write an editorial commending the victory noting, "Stockholders of Verizon...were playing hardball. They ordered their employees - the Board of Directors - to check with them first before

giving top executives big perks. Is anyone surprised?"

When the victory was announced to the 400 in attendance wild applause shot through the crowd. That applause and the response of the Association Director Bob Rehm was reported from coast to coast.

"Mr. Siedenbergl that shows that little people can make a difference. The company owners - your employers - are telling you something," he said.

By all news accounts, it was a watershed moment for shareholder activists.

Baby Bells Go to Supreme Court

In March, the U.S. Supreme Court agreed to consider dismissing several lawsuits against the Baby Bells, including Verizon Communications, based on charges alleging that the companies have been utilizing anti-competitive business practices.

The dispute is over Baby Bells' leased telephone lines that run from their central office directly to consumers' homes and offices. Rivals are arguing that the Bells are deliberately providing poor service on these leased lines. The competing companies claim in the suit they will develop bad reputations among customers causing their businesses to suffer.

Curtis Trinko, a New York consumer, attorney and local AT&T telephone customer, has brought these claims against Verizon Communications in an unusual case where a consumer is using federal laws to make a case against what he charges is mediocre phone service.

In its case arguments, Verizon states that people who were indirectly injured cannot use the laws, because then anyone in the nation with a phone could take legal action.

Other companies, including the United

Parcel Service and Visa, urge the Supreme Court to invalidate the appeals court's original decision allowing Trinko's suit. They argue that the lower court's decision could affect all companies by discouraging them from competing aggressively because then they would have to share their equipment with some of their less successful competitors.

If the Supreme Court decides the case can go forward, it could open the floodgates to lawsuits and potentially millions of dollars in consumer claims against Verizon and other Baby Bells for failing to provide proper assistance to their competitors.

The case, Verizon Communications v. Trinko, will go to the Supreme Court for oral arguments in the fall.

MEANINGFUL TIPS FROM A FELLOW RETIREE

- **Replace costly Bell Atlantic Supplemental Life Policy**
Save up to 50% on 10 Yr. Term Policy with NO premium increases
Call for Free Quote.
- **Replace low return assets with a top performing "Tax-Free" bond fund yielding 6½%.**
- **Rebalance your 401K or IRA investments - eliminate concentration on a few stocks-reduce risk, increase income and plan for future growth.**
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In Tribute to Pay Phones

Recently, a fellow retiree sent us information on "The Payphone Project" - a website cleverly dedicated to reporting on pay phones across the globe.

The Payphone Project began as a light-hearted link on a personal web page. The creator acknowledges one of David Letterman's comedy routines as his inspiration.

He describes how Letterman would call a nearby payphone and either carry on a humorous conversation or actually invite the stranger up to the television studio as a guest. The Payphone Project is a replica of this routine - the idea of a "whimsical joke to promote random contacts among complete strangers."

Over the past eight years, though, this small link has managed to evolve into its own "payphone fan" website, a massive database that is both regularly visited and frequently utilized. Gradually, a catalog of 500,000 payphone numbers has been collected and carefully organized.

Because the site discloses the location of most of the phones it lists, the public can turn to this database when tracing personal phone calls - often things like prank calls or runaway children or use it just for curiosity or nostalgia's sake.

In addition to providing this enormous collection of numbers, the website also offers a rather eclectic assortment of photos, stories

and updates on telephones around the world. Web site users, tourists and locals from around the globe have contributed photos and information of the unexpected, unusual and some rather typical findings related to these age-old devices.

Scan the web site and you can see and find out about:

- Uganda's solar powered payphone installed in the middle of a body of water.
- The opportunity, if you felt like taking it, to call the Eiffel Tower's observation desk payphone at +33(0) 1 47537568. Or how about calling the payphone tucked away in the Vatican, one in Ho Chi Minh City, the US consulate in Siagon or on the Hollywood Walk of Fame?
- France's first ever-underwater phone booth. The system works through a buoy and allows for only underwater communication.
- Proposals to eliminate pay phones in some communities and others to turn payphone booths into charging stations for cell phones.



- Or what about New York City's only three remaining outdoor walk-in telephone booths - each of which is situated along West End Ave. Clearly Clark Kent would be at his wits end in the Big Apple.

The fact is, in many places the phone booth is going the way of the dinosaur for a wide variety of reasons, no doubt the widespread usage of cell phones is the primary reason. While the curtain may be slowly closing on the future of the pay phone as we know it, this web site is truly a tribute to the contributions it has made and continues to contribute to societies around the world.

So for pleasure, good old times or just for curiosity's sake, take some time to view this website at www.payphone-project.com

ASSOCIATION OF BELLTEL RETIREES INC. 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.

Jack Brennan

(Continued from page 1)

years in outside craft and says he dealt with every function in that department from splicing to installation to repair to central office.

In 1963, he moved up in the company into first- and then second-level management positions, with responsibilities that included serving as the Presidential Coordinator in charge of communications when U.S. Presidents visited New Jersey. He recalled how honored he was to represent the company in this role during visits by Lyndon B. Johnson and several trips by Richard M. Nixon.

In 1981, Brennan moved to human resources where he worked on management job evaluation, salary administration and labor relations. He eventually retired from Bell Atlantic in December 1991.

Along with the Association's Director

and Secretary Jack Sellen, he served as director of the two different retiree annual meetings held in Atlantic City, New Jersey. Brennan also chairs the Association's Strategic Planning Committee, making vital recommendations to expedite the current growth and expansion of the Association of BellTel Retirees.

"Jack has made numerous important contributions to our Association over the past five years," said Bill Jones. "Most notably was his leadership in bringing Bell Atlantic retirees into the Association following the merger of NYNEX and Bell Atlantic."

Brennan said, "I am honored to work with this board whose primary goal is always the care and protection of the retirees and surviving spouses. We have accomplished much, but have so much more to do for all of our retiree members."

Brennan and his wife of 46 years, Anna Mae, live in Hillsdale, New Jersey.

RETIREE SPOTLIGHT: Advocate Hails from a Four Generation Telephone Company Family

When Pamela M. Harrison, a 1998 retiree of Bell Atlantic and president of CWA Local 1103 Life Member Council, traveled to Verizon's 2002 annual meeting in Minnesota, she had no idea how her life would change.

She had heard of the Association of BellTel Retirees but, being a union retiree, she didn't join, thinking it was a group for former management. But at Verizon's meeting, when she heard Proxy proposals from C. William Jones, Robert Rehm and Joseph Ristuccia, she was blown away.

"When I saw how organized their proposals were, I was so impressed, I couldn't wait to join," she said. She also was impressed with the way they were able to bend the ear of Verizon's Ivan Seidenberg at the meeting.

"Ivan Seidenberg responded well to these people who, at one time, were his peers," she said.

She joined the Association - which by then she had come to realize was for all former telephone company employees, not just management. Shortly after submitting her membership application, she received a call from Robert Rehm, asking her if she wanted to join the Association's Board of Directors.

"I just knew I wanted to be part of an organization that was so dynamic," she said, and was appointed one of the board's directors for union relations. She can provide the Association's board with insights from former union members' perspective.

"I was retired and I knew I would have to face the same issues down the road," she said. "What they're doing would lead to better working conditions for all Verizon employees and not just executives."

Ms. Harrison began her career at Bell Atlantic the day after her high school graduation in 1965. She was a customer representative in charge of billing and orders. She then moved into the phone company's public office as a teller taking care of account payments in the Bronx.

When she moved upstate to Poughkeepsie, N.Y., she became an operator, and then on to a switching equipment technician.

After taking a two-year associates degree which expanded her skills in dealing with the company's new technologies, she became a Telecommunications Technical Associate,



Pamela M. Harrison

whose job it was to be a specialist in all phases of telecommunications.

"Keeping people connected," is how she describes her multitude of jobs at the company.

You could say that Ms. Harrison's attraction to the phone company ran in her blood. She became the third generation in her family to work for the phone company. In fact, her grandparents met in "Ma Bell" around the turn of the century.

Her mother, Monica Harrison, worked for the company from 1934-1981 and her father, Edward, after retiring from the police force in 1960, took up a second career in New York Telephone, retiring in 1982. Currently, the family has two fourth-generation members employed by Verizon. One is a lineman in New York, while the other is in installation and maintenance in New Jersey.

Ms. Harrison also has the phone company to thank for her current marriage to Joe Eicher. Some 15 years ago, they were working together and Joe had an extra ticket to an Eric Clapton concert. He asked her if she would like to go with him and she agreed. On the drive to the concert, sparks flew, and by the time they arrived at the concert, they decided they wanted to get married.

After vacationing in Cape Cod for one week and then one month in California, she returned to New York on a Sunday, and got married the following Sunday.

"It's the absolutely best, most wonderful, extraordinary thing that's ever happened to me," she said.

As for the phone company, however, Ms. Harrison said that its current state has trou-

bled her. She has seen a drastic change since her parents' time in Ma Bell.

She said that Verizon has forgotten what it truly is: a utility.

"Verizon has forgotten what utility means," she said. "No. 1, it means being useful. The second definition is something that gives the greatest happiness to the greatest number."

"They're not making the shareholders happy, not making the employees happy, not making the retirees happy, and, most of all, not making the customers happy," she said. "The residential customer is at the bottom of the heap."

She said, Verizon has moved from putting money and promoting its residential service - which built it into a billion dollar company - to looking for the cellular market.

"While cellular service has its uses, it can't - at this time - replace a hard-wire network," she said. "The technology just isn't there yet."

"While Ivan Seidenberg wants to woo the corporate customer, he is forgetting residential and small business customers," she said. "It was built on five and ten cents and is now up to billions of dollars 125 years later. But those people who put in the nickels and dimes are being forgotten. They are being left in the lurch and aren't getting the service that is their birthright."

She said that the Verizon executives aren't just hurting the customers.

"The problem that the operating officers refuse to see is that they're compensating themselves so much that they're hurting the company and the people who earned these benefits," she said.

On the heels of the Association's recent Proxy victory and Verizon agreeing to another of its proposals in February, she said it's time to keep the pressure on.

"When you took less (while you worked), it was so the company could put some of your wages away for when you retired," she said. "Now that it's time to get your money back, they're refusing to give it to you." They're holding it to enrich themselves."

She said she hopes that other union retirees won't separate themselves from retired management.

"All retirees are in the same boat, whether they're craft or management," she said.

Help Inform Retirees in Your Local Area

Have you ever found yourself reading the section of your hometown or community newspaper listing local happenings, events and information about non-profit groups that can be of service to you?

Well, most if not all newspaper and some local radio and television outlets have a Community Service Bulletin Board that allows organizations and individuals to list events and information without cost.

Several of our members have successfully used this forum around the country to put out the word in print about your non-profit Association of BellTel Retirees and its mission to aid all retirees and surviving spouses of the companies that today make up Verizon.

Do you have the time to sit down for a few minutes to write a letter to your local news outlets to inform other telephone retirees that the non-profit Association is here

to assist them?

A simple hand-written or typed note - like the suggested sample below — from you to the community affairs or community bulletin board editor does really produce results. Best of all you can help inform other retirees taking up only a few minutes of your time.

Dear Editor,

I am writing on behalf of the Association of Bell Tel Retirees of which I am a member. We are a non-profit volunteer organization of former telephone company employees and surviving spouses of the companies that make up what is today Verizon Communications to protect the pension and benefit rights of retirees in this community and throughout the U.S.

Would you please consider running a short item in your community bulletin board or community service notices to advise other

local retirees in our community that there is such an organization is here for them to turn to.

Should you be able to include a message the Association can be reached at 800-261-9222; online at www.belltelretirees.org or via U.S. Mail: P.O. Box 33, Cold Spring Harbor, New York 11724. Membership is open to retirees and spouses of former Verizon employees.

Thank you, in advance, for all your time and consideration on this request. I look forward to seeing this message included soon!

Sincerely,
(your name)

Be sure to include your name, address and phone number. Though this information will surely be kept private, it is important so the editor can contact you and confirm the information if necessary.

Member Mailbag



Dear Association:

I am a retiree of 1985. I had 39+ years of service with NY TEL & NYNEX. When I read your newsletter I couldn't help but think how times have changed for all workers in the communications business.

When we (the vets of WW2) were hired by the phone companies in the late 40's, it

was almost a lifetime commitment. For our dedication and loyalty to the company we were allowed to reach the maximum level of capabilities for job advancement. It wasn't a question of keeping your job - that was a given. Ma Bell was a family and we took care of the company and in turn the company took care of us (in good times and hard times).

I can remember when I first came on the job how the old timers would praise the company for keeping them on during the Great Depression - many times the pay was only for three days work but nobody was let

go. In fact, it was more than just a job - it was a status symbol in just about every city and town in this country. If you worked for the phone company you earned the gratitude and respect of your fellow citizens for providing the best and most reliable communications in the world at a reasonable price.

What changed all this? Just what the young mother ("Mom Saves Jobs" Spring 2003 BellTel Newsletter) and yourself are bringing to the attention of the FCC. The Justice Department of our great nation went ahead and destroyed a progressive and efficient system that provided excellent service at a reasonable price and at the same time provided good jobs for tens of thousands telephone workers. In their obvious haste to destroy this terrible "monster" - the Bell System - they severed it into so many pieces with so many restrictions as to what they could or could not do that they could not function competitively in the communications business.

And who really got hurt when they did this? The telephone worker (lost jobs) and the telephone user in higher costs and poor service.

I have tried to talk about this problem with our representatives at both State and Federal levels to try and correct this injustice. What Heidi Neal and yourself are doing is to be commended and our entire Association should give you both all the support and assistance you need and deserve.

John Thiele

ASSOCIATION OF BELLTEL RETIREES INC.

Membership Payment Office
P.O. BOX 61, Glen Head, NY 11545-0061

Yes! I want to join the Association of BellTel Retirees Inc. I support you in your fight to protect the pension and benefit rights of both management and non-management retirees and active employees.

Enclosed is my tax-deductible contribution of:

Active Employee Member* \$25 minimum \$36.50‡ \$50 or Other \$ _____

Retiree Member \$20 \$25 \$36.50‡ \$50 or Other _____

Check Enclosed or Charge contribution to my Visa

MasterCard Credit Card Acct.# _____ Exp. Date _____

Signature _____

Name _____ Address _____

City/State/Zip Code: _____ Telephone _____

Management Non-Management E-mail: _____

I retired or expect to retire in (year) _____ from (Co.) _____

* All names are kept strictly confidential ‡ Only 10¢ a day.

The Association of BellTel Retirees is a 501 C3 IRS • Tax-Exempt Corporation representing all retirees and active employees of Bell Atlantic

AT&T and Lucent Retiree Organizations Created

Congratulations go out to retirees of AT&T and Lucent who have recently formed their own retiree advocacy associations.

For several years now, retirees from these and several other former Bell Companies have sought to create independent associations that could represent their specific needs.

Association of BellTel Retirees' and the National Retiree Legislative Network's boards have kept in touch with some organizers of these groups and are very proud to stand shoulder-to-shoulder with them in the fight for retiree economic justice.

The Lucent Retirees Organization has constructed an informational web site (www.lucentretirees.org) where its retirees can sign up and view its online newsletter. The organization is broken down into nine regional groups serving different geographic parts of the nation. If you do not have computer access you can also join by calling Ken Raschke at (336) 765-9765 or writing to him at 231 Pinetuck Lane, Winston-Salem, N.C. 27104.

At the recently created AT&T Retiree Association (ARA) web site (www.newdawnweb.com/attretirees), you

can find out about its efforts to advocate on behalf of members and retirees. You can e-mail the ARA at ara@newdawnweb.com For those without computer access, you can find out more by calling 908-685-2174, or write to them at 668 Thru Way Drive,

Bridgewater, NJ 08807.

If you or your friends are a retiree from AT&T or Lucent we encourage you to reach out, join and play a role in this grass-roots effort. The future you will be fighting for is your own.

SAVE YOURSELF A STAMP

The Association has embarked on a campaign to improve the efficiency of handling donations from our supporting members. We have engaged a MasterCard/Visa payment processing company that allows us to take credit card payments over the Internet on our website: www.belltelretirees.org

The process is very simple and totally secure in every way. If you are hesitant, almost all credit cards are insured against any possible misuse. Also, today's Internet payment processing is 1,000 times more secure than just a few years ago.

We make this appeal because a study of donation processing shows that it takes almost twice as much time to process by

check as it does for direct processing with a credit card payment from our web site.

The credit card payment option will further help the Association to keep down costs and utilize its donation to the fullest in its mission "to promote the protection and enhancement of members and/or their beneficiaries' pensions and benefits."

We understand a great many of you do not have Internet access. We will always accept checks for any amount you can afford and respond to correspondence sent to us by U.S. Mail.

If you do wish to make contributions online, go to www.belltelretirees.org, click on "Donate Now Through Network for Good" and follow the instructions.

New Book Tells of Life on the Inside...of Bell Labs

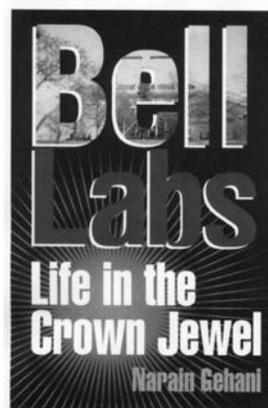
Bell Labs, the greatest research lab of the twentieth century, has been called America's national treasure and the crown jewel of AT&T and Lucent. To scientists all over the world, pursuing research at Bell Labs has long been a dream because of its brilliant scientists, numerous inventions, academic freedom, and plentiful resources. But now, forced by the marketplace, competition, and economic conditions, the world's most prestigious research

lab is in the midst of radical cultural change.

Bell Labs: Life in the Crown Jewel tells the story, from the inside, of the transition Bell Labs is undergoing as it adapts to new business conditions.

The 269-page hardcover book (\$29.95/Silicon Press) is written by Dr. Narain Gehani, an expert in Web technologies, software, and databases.

Narain Gehani worked at Bell Labs for twenty-three years from 1978 to 2001. He was there during the critical years when AT&T changed from a monopoly to a competitive company. He was there when AT&T split up again and handed Bell Labs to Lucent. He was there during the rise and fall of Lucent. He was a witness to the changes in Bell Labs as it went from the hands of a million-employee company (AT&T) to a company (Lucent) that now



has less than fifty thousand employees.

Narain Gehani, shares insights about Bell Labs, its culture and tells its glorious history. He describes the cultural differences between research and the business units, the different research models and the challenges facing Bell Labs in the twenty first century. Bell Labs: Life in the Crown Jewel is packed with anecdotes about a way of life possibly gone forever.

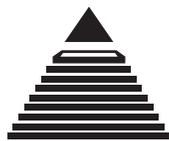
Gehani's chapters contain references that may have meaning to fellow retirees, such as: I Have A Job For Life! ; The Crown Jewel; Life At Murray Hill; Looking For Dung But Finding Gold ; Do We Work For The Same Company? ; Bell Labs Goes West ; and Most Fantastic Place!

To find out more or to order the book visit www.silicon-press.com or call 908-273-8919

“Do Not Call” Registry - PA

In our spring issue, we listed states and their “Do Not Call” registries to help our members ward off telemarketers.

For those of our members who live in Pennsylvania, there is also now a “Do Not Call” registry that wasn't included on the list: (888) 777-3406, or www.nocallsplease.com



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we're your financial guide, your financial counselor, and we're here to help you with life's major issues.

5 You can enjoy the prestige of having your money professionally and privately managed because Pinnacle is an established, well-respected investment advisor.

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