



the unity



October 2007

www.washtech.org

Vol. 2, Issue 9

Grievances Filed Over WA Family Care Act

**By Marcus Courtney
WashTech President**

In the past several months, the union has filed five grievances where employees received discipline for taking time off work when they needed to care for a sick family member. In at least four of these cases the discipline resulted in termination because the absences pushed the employees over eight points. The Washington Family Care Act allows employees "with available sick leave or other paid time off to care for sick family members in addition to children under age 18," and in doing so the employee should not receive any discipline for exercising this right, according to the Washington State Department of Labor and Industries.

The union's position is that employees have access to both sick time and other paid time off under the contract. According to the Labor and Industry rules, the employee gets the choice, not the employer, on what available time they want to use. In one grievance, the company has argued the employee is not

Become an Advocate for Your Peers

If you are interested in becoming a member of the Community Action Team (CAT) or a Shop Steward and become an advocate for your fellow employees here at AT&T, WashTech Local 37063, please do not hesitate to contact any Shop Steward. To become a CAT takes only one hour out of your day, as the details of the position will be laid out for you. After three months as a CAT, you are then eligible to undergo the rigors of being an actual Shop Steward.

Planning Council Position Still Available

The Planning Council is the governing board of the local. It meets every month on the second Tuesday from 6:30-8:30 PM at the union hall. Currently, we are in search of someone to fulfill the position of Education Chair.

If you are interested in learning more about this position or how else to get actively involved with the local, please contact Marcus Courtney at 206.726.8580 or courtney@washtech.org.

entitled to use the contract's sick time because the Family Care Act rules sick leave and not time.

The majority of the grievances are in the third step of the process under the contract, and one is rapidly moving toward arbitration. In addition to the grievances, many employees have also filed complaints with Labor and Industries claiming the company has violated the Family Care Act Rules.

\$8 in '08 COPE Drive Launched

It is once again time for the fall COPE (Committee on Political Education) drive. The 2008 election campaign will be one of the most historic this country has ever seen. The fact that we may elect the first woman or African American to the presidency illustrates that history is in the making. As union members, we need to make sure that we elect candidates that will support our rights and our contract! COPE makes that happen. In 2008 and beyond, the union is asking that members sign up for \$8 a week for '08.

Our local has strong COPE support. We currently have more than 160 members that are actively signed up! At the District 7 Conference our local won an award for the most COPE cards signed. We need to keep this tradition going for the fall drive. If you are not signed up for COPE sign up! If you are giving less than \$8 a week we ask that you consider increasing your contribution to meet the goal. Your contributions make a difference. The Washington Family Care Act, the Family Medical Leave Act, Fair Labor Standards Act (Overtime Law) are laws which our members use every day on the job were passed because we elected politicians that would listen to US and not just the powerful corporate lobbyists who opposed these bills every step of the way. Members of our local testified before the U.S. House Ways and Means Committee because we are recognized by Congress as the national voice for technology workers. Congress wouldn't be listening to us if we were not out organizing and raising money to help support electing candidates that support us.

When you see a Steward or CAT, ask how you can join the \$8 in '08 Team!

Your Labor Contract: What's In It For You?

By Les French
Vice-President
Cingular/AT&T Bargaining Unit

Your Employment Contract was signed and accepted in 2005 and went into effect on Feb. 6, 2005 and continues until Feb. 7, 2009. This is a negotiated instrument, agreed to by Cingular and the Communication Workers of America (CWA) and administered by both. Your Contract is a written document spelling out the terms and conditions of your employment here at the Call Center and has specific and detailed information regarding many aspects of your work and benefits while working at Cingular. The Contract has 27 Articles covering various aspects of work and benefits and 14 Letters of Agreement which are additional stipulations added and agreed to by both parties. Together, these items spell out a lot of the agreed upon terms and conditions of your work environment. This series of articles will focus on various parts of the Contract and look at the language of the Articles.

The first article to look at in depth is Article 7, Grievance procedure. The purpose of this article is to set guidelines for the processing of grievances that the Union may wish to file on your behalf. The article has nine sections and in Section 1, the right of the Company and the Union to have an informal discussion regarding the grievance is established. This is an important step and is a precursor to a more formal process established in the other sections. This informal process frequently solves the issue in a most expeditious manner and without any further discussion. The language of the Contract requires the Company and the Union to solve differences at the lowest level of discussion.

Section 2 of the Article defines what is a grievable action and the Contract language in this section requires the Company and the Union to solve differences at the lowest level of discussion possible. This article also establishes the content of the grievance, the provisions of the contract violated and the requirement that it be written and delivered to the company within 30 calendar days of the action being grieved.

Section 3 of the Article establishes the (3) successive steps in the grievance procedure and the timeline for each. These are:

1. Step 1. This is a meeting with the first level manager (Supervisor) to allow the Union to query the facts of the case and to present its position. This must be requested within 30 days of the action.

2. Step 2. This is a meeting with the Human Resources department if no resolution is accepted by both parties at step 1. This step may be utilized to discuss in-

terpretation of company policy and contract language and must be requested within 15 days after company rejection of the Union demands.

3. Step 3. This is a meeting with the Department of Labor in Atlanta and can be conducted by a District representative, Chief Steward, Unit Vice President or other designated person. This is the final step prior to Arbitration or Mediation by both parties. The Labor representative must render a Company decision within 15 days after the meeting has taken place. This meeting may be conducted by telephone and at a mutually agreed time.

The remainder of the sections in this article pertains to housekeeping requirements and other minor details regarding the flow of information between the Company and Union. In addition, Section 9 defines those employees having more than 30 days of employment as eligible to file a formal grievance with regard to any disciplinary action. In summary, Article 7 of your contract describes your right to challenge a management decision to discipline you and the procedure to follow when doing that. Questions about this right and the procedure may be directed to any of our Stewards or the Union staff.

Next Month: Mediation and Arbitration

Your Union Representation

See these folks on your front lines at AT&T as the first step to getting any questions answered in regards to your Union or if you need representation.

Want to do more for your peers and see your name on this list as well? Do not hesitate to contact any of the individuals below and join their ranks.

Shop Stewards are designated in bold, while CATs (Community Action Team) members are non-bolded.

Check out the Union Bulletin Boards in all break rooms for flyers with everyone's picture and WashTech e-mail address if you need to contact one of them.

Bothell 1

Jim Burdick (NBS)
Tony Patterson (ETS)
Donna DePuy (NBS)
Kale Nostrand (NBS)
Gary McGahey (ETS)

Bothell 2

Rich Atherton (BEUC)
Tiffany Cole (BEUC)
Les French (BEUC)
Sharon Kent (BEUC)
Kevin King (ETS)

Bothell 5

Curt Eidem (ANS)
Scott Ellestad (ANS)
Mindi Hart (ANS)
David Hildebrand (ANS)
Mitch McMurry (NBS)
Bill Montgomery (ANS)
Ben Schlechty (ANS)
Jolene Thomas (NBS)
Nancy Wright (ANS)
David Waterbury (NBS)