



TelCo Retirees Association, Inc  
*United for a Secure Future*



*Dear Members,*

*The TelCo Board has been very involved with AT&T and its planned benefit reductions, and fortunately we have won the battle for the grandfathered retirees. Board member Ted Mazzella played a huge part in that win, and we are acknowledging that here. Ted's early recognition of the legal potential of AT&T's intentions and his swift action was instrumental in making our win possible. Thank you, Ted! Inside, read Jane Banfield's VP report and letter sent to AT&T by TelCo in conjunction with the other AT&T retiree organizations. Also, see what action YOU can take.*

*Carole Hansen, Director  
760-510-0105  
chansen41@gmail.com*

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## Welcome New Members

Mark Bearden, John Bello, Lisa Donnan  
Robert Dumpert Jr, Mike Evans,  
George Fogg, Charlotte Gillett,  
Steven Hodges, Robert Knight,  
Paul Riechman, Rodney Seiler,  
Garrett Smith, NanC Ward, Stan Wong

## Help Is On The Way

TelCo Retirees Association is pleased to announce that **John Tucciarone** has agreed to be our **Healthcare Advocate**. We realize there are so many different packages, problems, and questions that it is necessary to have someone who will be able to research and consolidate information. John is just that person. He was active in ACER (AT&T Concerned Employees and Retirees) and now in TelCo. He is a problem solver and gets his answers. It may not always be the answers we want or need but clarification is half the battle. John can be reached at 908-745-1651 and [tucciarone1@verizon.net](mailto:tucciarone1@verizon.net).

*Note: This number is for healthcare questions only; for questions on other issues please use our general inquiry number 831-484-1514.*

## How to Join TelCo Retirees

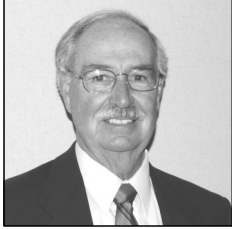
All retired, former, and active (pre-retirement) employees of Pacific Bell, SBC, AT&T and any other former Bell System company are eligible to join TelCo Retirees Association. Suggested membership fee is \$34 per year.

Membership applications can be downloaded from the TelCo website

**[www.telcoretirees.org](http://www.telcoretirees.org)**

*or by writing to:*

**TelCo Retirees Association, Inc.  
PO Box 669  
Spring Valley, CA 91976**



## President's Message

*By Monte Baggs, President and CEO*

I'm sure you all remember, as a kid, standing by the side of the pond wondering what it was going to be like when you made the jump...how deep is it...how cold is it...any obstacles in there? Well, that is what we (members of the Board) felt like earlier this month as we prepared for our first ever Zoom Annual Meeting. We had done our preparation for the meeting but had never actually invited the membership to participate. Would anyone actually take the necessary steps to learn how to join a Zoom meeting? How many would show up...2,5,20,?? In our last face-to-face Annual Meeting I think the number of members that showed up was around ten. There is a maximum number of 100 allowed in Zoom meetings for our account. We have around 500 members of TelCo. Could we exceed our limit? So, as you can see, there were lots of unanswered questions. We took the jump anyway and said we'll just have some fun with whatever happens.

I'm very glad to report to you that the meeting went pretty much as we had hoped it would. We had about 30 members join the meeting and they all seemed to know how to negotiate the system. Who says you can't teach an old dog new tricks? We had just one little glitch...we went over our allowed time limit of 40 minutes and had to briefly interrupt business and upgrade our account to a Pro account. Minor detail.

We completed reinstalling the members of the Board and the Officers of the Board. They remain the same as last years members and Officers. Members, you owe a tremendous debt of gratitude to these volunteer Directors, who are doing a fabulous job of serving your interests. I'll point to the most recent accomplishment of protecting our Grandfathered retirees from the life insurance take back AT&T announced. We protested that action and AT&T backed away from it. There's lots of other activities going on, including NRLN activities, that are also in your interest... they have earned your gratitude. I thank them and hope you will too.

The "take away" from this experience is this...it appears we may have found a new process for our Annual Meetings. Zoom has proven to be a great way to allow our membership to get involved with our Board. It requires no travel, no looking for difficult to find Hotels, and extraordinarily little expense when compared to face-to-face meetings. I believe the members who joined us on the Zoom meeting enjoyed the experience as well.

We welcome your feedback!

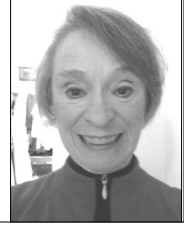
### Question or Comment?

For telephone inquiries on non-healthcare issues, please call

831-484-1514

# Vice President's Report

*By Jane Banfield, Vice President*



## Life Insurance & Death Benefit Changes

AT&T announced a reduction in benefits for 1/1/2022:

1. Former managers' Life Insurance moving to a flat \$15,000 + Retirement Death Benefit capped at \$25,000
2. Former managers' Life Insurance moving to a flat \$15,000 (no Retirement Death Benefit)
3. Former bargained employees' Life Insurance capped at \$25,000 + Retirement Death Benefit capped at \$25,000
4. Former bargained employees' Life Insurance capped at \$25,000 (no Retirement Death Benefit)

The AT&T retiree associations, TelCo Retirees Association, SNET and AASBCR sent a letter to AT&T Executive Management requesting reconsideration and questioning the legality of including Grandfathered retirees. TelCo Retire Assn. member Ted Mazzella sent documentation to AT&T supporting our position. **End Result: GRANDFATHERED RETIREES WILL NOT BE INCLUDED IN THIS BENEFIT REDUCTION. Their current Life Insurance and Death Benefits will remain unchanged.**

Unfortunately, all other retirees are subject to the reductions. TelCo Retirees Assn's Board looked for other legal alternatives. We received assistance from NRLN (National Retirees Legislative Network) seeking other cases filed and their outcome. Lawsuits filed by Lucent and other retiree groups affiliated with NRLN were unsuccessful. These cases were individually filed for Death Benefit and Life Insurance benefits. Our Lucent/Avaya counterparts had their benefits eliminated or reduced many years ago. The cases were unsuccessful. The Courts have found that Life Insurance and Death Benefits, as well as health care, are not protected under ERISA and therefore, AT&T has the right to reduce or eliminate these benefits. The only exception is if you retired prior to AT&T inserting a ROR (Reservation of Rights) into the retirement plans. Because of the number of different companies, mergers, acquisitions, etc. there is no specific date but it is usually 1990 and earlier. This is the exception that applies to Grandfathered retirees.

Special thanks to our Board members, Ted Mazzella and Carole Hansen, who found and forwarded documentation from the 1980s. If you are a **GRANDFATHERED RETIREE** and have documentation from retirement prior to 1991, please contact us so we can maintain an ongoing library. Contact Ted Mazzella 845-359-5874, TKMAZZ@verizon.net.

**What else can we all do? Our only alternative is to make our feelings known by the AT&T Board of Directors. Please see the back page of this newsletter for directions on how to do it!**



Supporting AT&T, Ameritech,  
SBC and Bell System Retirees



Logos displayed courtesy of AT&T Archives and History Center®



December 31,2020

Ms. Angela Santone  
Senior Executive Vice President HR  
AT&T  
208 S. Akard Suite 3703  
Dallas, TX 75205

Dear Ms. Santone,

As AT&T retirees we are compelled to express our shock and dismay at AT&T's announcement regarding retirement life insurance benefits. It is truly amazing that at the height of the worst pandemic our country has ever experienced, with over 300,000 people who have already died, AT&T would inform retirees that they are cutting and or eliminating life insurance and death benefits for retirees. Does that say something about how retirees, your so called "ambassadors" are regarded by their former employer?

It is quite interesting that the explanation provided is not that this is a steep burden on AT&T during difficult financial times but rather that AT&T is making these changes to be closer to the "market". AT&T was once the "market" leader.

When most retirees were hired, in many cases their salaries were less than "the market" because they were offered "exceptional benefits" to compensate. At retirement retirees were assured by many corporate leaders of receiving these benefits, both verbally and written. Now the "new AT&T" has had a change of heart. Evidently this is not a case where your word is your bond.

It is also our understanding that "Grandfathered" retirees have legal protection under the Reservation of Rights clause. Have you thoroughly evaluated your obligations in this area? We feel strongly that "Grandfathered" retiree provisions regarding Life Insurance and the Death Benefits should be made whole.

It also appears that AT&T has *mindfully chosen* to differentiate between union and management retirees. We have to ask why? What makes one class of retirees more valuable than another?

Retirees of both union and management from our organizations, have a long history of pride, loyalty and respect for AT&T. They are shareholder as individuals as well as members of our retiree groups which also own AT&T stock. They have defended the company to friends and neighbors, written letters and called their Senators and Congressional representatives when asked to do so by AT&T. But respect and loyalty is a two-way street.

There has been an erosion of benefits over the last decade since AT&T has made "super deals" that have cost the shareholders, as well as retirees. Retirees really feel the pinch when benefits are cut or reduced. Why is this necessary? What is the true savings to AT&T?

It would seem that at this time, in our nation, when the need for assistance is so great that AT&T would again want to take a leadership role in helping and protecting some of the most vulnerable, including your own retirees. We encourage you to examine the disparities of this decision and reconsider the changes you have suggested before implementation.

Sincerely,

JoAnn Alix-Gagain, President  
SNET Retirees Assoc, Inc.  
318 Central Rd Middlebury, CT 06762

Monte Baggs, President,  
Telco Retirees Association, Inc.  
PO Box 669, Spring Valley, CA. 91976

Jane Banfield, VP  
Telco Retirees Association, Inc.  
PO Box 669, Spring Valley, CA. 91976

Carole Lovell, President  
AASBCR®  
P.O. Box 110355  
Cleveland, OH 44111-0355

CC: John Palmer Senior Vice President  
Julianna Galloway Vice President

**Make Your Voice Heard!**  
***It's quick, easy and very important!***

The only thing we can do about AT&T's actions is to make our feelings known by the AT&T Board of Directors. We are asking that everyone who is a shareholder, individually or via a mutual fund or ETF to please take the time and write to AT&T Shareholder services. **Please ask that your comments are referred to the next Board of Directors meeting.** Express your feelings, while suggesting we understand that AT&T needs to manage its expenses, but directing this cost cutting to a few hundred thousand senior retirees whose wage-earning days are over is petty. Also, to offer different amounts to management and bargained employees is insulting to managers who spent their lives supporting the AT&T brand.

*It's easy! Go to: **<https://investors.att.com>***

Select Stockholder Services across the top menu

Scroll down to the bottom to Contact Us, select Stockholder Services

Select Individual Stockholder Contacts.

You will see an email option a) [g47603@att.com](mailto:g47603@att.com)

And **if you are a stockholder**, select option b)

Fill in the required blocks and your comments.

*Note: Unfortunately, there appears to be no non-internet method of expressing your opinion directly to the appropriate organization.*