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April 12, 2016

Allentown Morning Call
Verizon workers in Lehigh Valley plan to strike Wednesday

Fierce Cable
Cable will add another 3.4M broadband subs in 2016, Evercore predicts

Engadget
Layer3 vows to fix cable, not replace it

Kansas City Star
Google Fiber targeting $15 broadband plan for poorer Kansas City area neighborhoods

cnet.com
AT&T tries to sweeten DirecTV bundles

Associated Press
Al Jazeera America signs off tonight

pennlive.com
Could Pa.'s longest-serving state lawmaker be shown the door?

Pittsburgh Tribune-Review
Political frictions

As his own father, Ralph Roberts, aged into his 80s and 90s, Comcast Corp. chief executive Brian Roberts said, he found that he and Flyers owner Ed Snider regularly grabbed lunch around town - the Capital Grille on Chestnut, Table 31 in the Comcast Center, and, more recently, the Union League on Broad. They'd talk sports, media, and life. Roberts, who heads the city's largest publicly traded company, said he trusted Snider as a mentor. "I came to realize his genius," Roberts said. "Sports was not a hobby for Ed. It was his life."

Roberts recounted his relationship with Snider, 83, on Monday between business meetings in New York and only hours after the Flyers owner died in California after a two-year battle with cancer. The younger Roberts and Snider had been drawn together in the mid-1990s when Comcast bought the Sixers basketball team and combined it with Snider's Flyers with the idea of launching a regional sports network on cable.

Even though Comcast owned a majority economic interest in the partnership called Comcast Spectacor, Snider - who had previously run the Prism sports-and-movies cable network - held title as managing partner with day-to-day control; his most recent title was chairman. Comcast today owns 76 percent of Comcast Spectacor and Snider owns 24 percent.

Ralph Roberts believed that "if you are going to go into a business, go with an expert," his son said. The Roberts duo ran cable companies, not sports-media businesses. That was Snider's domain. Snider, who mortgaged his home in the 1960s to acquire the Flyers as an expansion team in Philadelphia, made his fortune with it.

And if the Robertses and Snider didn't get along, the partnership papers contained an out. Either side could walk away after a year. Not only didn't they divorce as partners,

dissuade candidates for open seats in Pa. Legislature	but, Roberts said on Monday, "I never felt the need for Comcast to second-guess his decisions." Roberts considers Snider the pioneering force for Comcast's stable of highly profitable regional sports networks, including what is now Comcast SportsNet Philadelphia.

Over time, Snider also evolved into a friend. During their lunches, they talked about business such as Comcast's takeover of NBCUniversal, along with sailing, vacation destinations, and the vagaries of life. Ralph Roberts died last June at 95. Brian Roberts said that Snider realized "his mortality" with the advance of his cancer and had taken steps for a smooth transition for his "beloved Flyers" and stadium-manager Comcast Spectacor, based in South Philadelphia.

Snider worked closely with Dave Scott, a former Comcast cable executive who is the chief executive of Comcast Spectacor. Other Comcast executives have joined Comcast Spectacor. But the company, with 3,000 full-timers and 15,000 part-timers, remains largely the house that Snider built. Executive vice president Phil Weinberg, Wells Fargo Center president John Page, and Flyers chief operating officer Shawn Tilger have worked for the company at least 20 years. No one in the Snider family is involved with the management company, officials said Monday. "We planned for this," Roberts said, adding that for Snider, "building that [Flyers] franchise was everything." – ***Philadelphia Inquirer***

The chief executive officer of Charter Communications Inc met last week with the head of the U.S. Federal Communications Commission (FCC) on the cable company's proposed acquisition of Time Warner Cable Inc and Bright House Networks.

The meeting Wednesday came as the FCC continues its review of the proposed tie-ups after an informal 180-day FCC review period ended March 25. Charter CEO Tom Rutledge met with FCC chairman Tom Wheeler Wednesday to discuss "the public interest benefits of its proposed transaction with Time Warner Cable and Bright House Networks and the ways in which it will enhance competition," according to a filing with the FCC by Charter.

It is the second meeting between Wheeler and Rutledge in less than a month; the pair also met March 16, according to a separate Charter filing. The company discussed the expansion of its "broadband network to new customer locations and its commitments to settlement-free interconnection and broadband service without usage based pricing or data caps," the filing said.

In a brief interview Tuesday as he exited a Senate hearing, Wheeler declined to comment on the status of the Charter review. "Stay tuned," he said. Charter said in May that it would buy Time Warner Cable, the fourth-largest U.S. cable company, in a $56 billion cash-and-stock deal that would make it the No. 2 U.S. Internet and cable company after Comcast Corp. Shareholders of both companies and most U.S. states have approved the deal. Charter also announced in March it would buy Bright House Networks in a $10.4 billion deal.

Various media outlets reported in March that Wheeler is likely to circulate a draft order approving the deal with conditions. Five Democratic senators including Democratic presidential candidate Bernie Sanders have raised concerns about the proposed tie-up. New Charter would be the third-largest pay-TV provider in the country, serving roughly 17.3 million customers, and the second-largest broadband provider, with 19.4 million subscribers in nearly 40 states. Time Warner Cable declined to comment.

Charter said Monday in a statement it is continuing to "have productive conversations with the FCC and we look forward to a timely resolution." It said New Charter would deliver faster minimum broadband speeds and a comprehensive low-income broadband program. – ***Reuters***

The Federal Communications Commission promised that managing the Internet like an 1890s railroad wouldn't result in a crush of new "net neutrality" regulations, but this claim keeps hitting the firewall of reality: Now the commission is proposing privacy rules that dump decades of successful policy and don't apply to the tech companies that profit off Web habits.

The FCC recently passed new rules for how Internet-service providers collect customer data. In all but a few cases, consumers would be required to consent, or "opt-in," for a broadband company to use or share preferences to, say, sell targeted ads. The agency said in a fact sheet: "When consumers sign up for Internet service, they shouldn't have to sign away their right to privacy."

That sounds great, though this isn't the FCC's job, or at least not until recently. For decades the Federal Trade Commission managed such consumer protection, but the FCC phished this authority last year when it reclassified Internet providers as "common carriers" as part of imposing net neutrality. Yet instead of applying the FTC's privacy approach—which focuses on punishing deceptive or unfair practices—the FCC would default to barring nearly all uses of viewer preferences.

This matters because consumers are usually willing to trade some data—not a Social Security number, but past purchases—for better and more tailored experiences, as Amazon and Google have shown. Customers who prefer to stay off the grid can almost always opt out of collection, but now that minority will dictate innovation for everyone else.

Speaking of Amazon and Google, the rule doesn't cover tech giants, as Google managed to win a last-minute exemption to net neutrality for so-called "edge providers," even though their business model includes snapping up information on everything you buy. These companies are apparently too big to regulate. As a Moody's report put it, allowing such companies to stay regulated by the less meddlesome FTC would offer "a distinct competitive advantage" in online advertising, not that Silicon Valley needs it.

The FCC says cable companies deserve special punishment because it's easier to switch websites than to rip out your connection. But the average Internet user moves among six devices and connects everywhere from cell service to coffee shop Wi-Fi, as **a February report from Georgia Tech** points out. A provider catches a fraction of these interactions, and that number is dwindling as some 70% of Internet traffic will be encrypted by the end of the year. It's harder to escape Google, which handles roughly 70% of Internet searches. Is Ask Jeeves still around?

Google, Netflix and others have blown up the way Americans watch television, which makes it more bizarre that the FCC is trying to block the cable industry from competing with the companies that reinvented it. But a legal challenge to the net-neutrality rules that spawned this episode is awaiting a ruling at the D.C. Circuit Court of Appeals. Perhaps the court will notice the arbitrary rules rolling out of the commission since it clinched control of the Internet. – ***Wall Street Journal***

Three Democrats vying in the U.S. Senate primary are set to face off in another broadcast debate this evening. The 7 p.m. event will be hosted by WGAL-TV and Franklin & Marshall College, and will be live-streamed on the central Pennsylvania station's website.

The candidates clashed repeatedly during their first broadcast forum last week. Katie McGinty, a former environmental adviser in state and federal administrations, faced critiques from retired Navy admiral Joe Sestak and Braddock Mayor John Fetterman over ties to the oil and gas industry, while she criticized Sestak for a statement that she said showed support for a plan that would raise the retirement age. Since then, both sides have sought to set the record straight in their view. Her campaign has rebutted

	remarks that she was a lobbyist for a pharmaceutical company, releasing lobbying disclosure forms indicating that she was briefly registered as a lobbyist for only a few days in 2000. McGinty's campaign spokeswoman also issued a statement from McGinty's employer at Washington firm Troutman Sanders, who said she did not lobby for the company and that the initial registration was a standard practice at the firm. Emily's List, a Washington group supporting McGinty and other female Democratic candidates, **launched a television ad** continuing to attack Sestak on Social Security. Sestak has refuted the claims about his Social Security views, arguing that the comment cited by McGinty referred to other aspects of that broad debt-reduction plan. His campaign points to other comments he's made on Social Security and his votes supporting the program as a Delaware County congressman. Tonight's debate comes days before another round of campaign finance reports are due. Those filings on April 14 will give the first glimpse of how much candidates have raised since January 1 - and how much they have to spend in the final days before the April 26 primary. Meanwhile, Republican U.S. Sen. Pat Toomey - who faces no primary opponent - has launched another two television ads. The 30-second spots focus on **his work on legislation to address heroin abuse** and **his efforts to aid refinery workers in southeastern Pennsylvania** when those facilities were poised to be shut down. – ***Allentown Morning Call*; PCN will air the debate live tonight at 7:00 pm**