

BACKROADS JOURNAL

Winter 2008

MaRLCA



NEW DISTRICT PROPOSED

Over the years, as our Rural Craft membership has increased, new union districts have been added. I believe that we should create a new district again.

District 1, in the extreme western part of our state has a membership of 246 carriers.

District 2, in the southeast has a membership of 580.

District 3, in the northeast has 343 members.

District 4, Worcester County has 294 members.

These numbers have become extremely uneven. Even though District 2 has twice as many members as District 1; they both receive the same representation at the state level, one District President and one Committeeman.

I propose we create a 5th district. If what is now District 2 becomes two districts instead of one; membership would be more fairly represented at the State Level. I also believe that another District meeting would be another opportunity for membership education and participation.

Come to union meetings! Discuss, debate and vote!

Ramona Daniel



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Craig "Barney" Lewis

Hello fellow rural carriers. Where do I begin? There has been so much going on and happening. Right now we need to pay attention to the upcoming mail count. We have a contract, we survived record snow fall in December and did an outstanding job delivering all the Christmas mail and parcels. We received a nice bump in our pay with the 2002 mail count grievance settlement payout, LLV's are coming, we are waiting for the lump sum cola replacement and the retro check, we have a standard on carrier pick up and the Postal Service has a new formula on management staffing - many offices may lose managers.

On the contract. In my last report I was hoping we could attain the same percentages of salary increases that the NALC received. First many people thought we should ratify the tentative agreement. I am happy we did not ratify. We should not be afraid of arbitration because of one bad WELLS decision. We should not always settle for less and leave money on the table. You deserve better. You work to hard for this company. We saw what money the NALC received. I find it ironic that some carriers can't see the significance of us receiving a higher percentage in salary that was offered in the tentative agreement and the needed increase in EMA. We do not need to fall farther behind the NALC. The 1.5 % compared to the NALC 1.9% - the parties deemed equal. City letter carrier's salaries are based on 40 hours and most rural routes whether they are H, J, or K's are 44 or 45 hours. So their rational was - this is equal. City letters carrier's retirement is based on 40 hours. Rural Carriers retirement is based on their evaluations which is a big benefit to us. So we are now waiting for the retro check and the lump sum payment of \$686.

The 2002 Mail Count Grievance Settlement saw 100% of rural carriers on the roles at the time, receive a monetary settlement. Seven Hundred and Eighty dollars was nice to see in our first pay check of 2008. Let's hope the Postal Service has learned their lesson from their bench marks and squeezing of rural carriers and trying to manipulate mail counts. Six years later and a 60 million dollar payout may have their attention. But I doubt this will deter them from scrutinizing rural carriers during the 2008 mail count.

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During December and the Christmas mailing season, we had record setting snowfall and managed to deliver a great deal of mail and parcels. I would like to thank the rural carriers in the state for doing an outstanding job under tough weather conditions and the constant watch of the managers and gatekeepers who told us NO OT and NO Aux Assistance but deliver in the toughest of conditions with record setting parcels. They found out this couldn't be accomplished. We did use both Aux assistance and OT. They tell everyone none and hope to only use only a little. The Postal Service keeps putting that carrot higher and they try to make it tough on us. They want to micro manage rurals during Christmas while the other crafts have OT up the ying yang. I told the managers at a meeting "you want to squeeze us during a 22 day period but before and after you don't care or give a damn how many hours I work or if I am delivering in the dark at those times." They told me not to take it personal and that they did care about me. Do you believe them?

Meanwhile in order to save cost, the window operations were shut down on Christmas Eve and New Years Eve at noon in a cost saving measure. This is the first time I have seen this in my 28 year career. But remember they have computer data now on everything and saw that the window hours open during this time generated little revenue to offset expenses of wages so we took away service to the public and shut down the operation. In most offices they saved 30 work hours. This was not done to be nice to the clerks. I do want to let you know that with the Sunday make up weather day for transporting mail across the country, Monday on Christmas Eve and New Years Eve I worked until 4:30 and 5:30- the latest times in my career and the most mail I have seen on those days. So if your managers didn't thank you for doing a wonderful job let me. You are truly professionals and prove it everyday: to deliver in these conditions (in LLVs, no less!) is nothing less than remarkable!

Speaking of LLV's, we do have some coming in the Mass District and SENE District.

If you have any questions on putting the LLV on your route, how it should be done and how you should be compensated just ask. I do have a checklist from past LLV deployments.



New National Postal Service Office Formula for management staffing They have changed the criteria for staffing in all offices and many places may lose supervisors.

the value given to offices having rural carriers is less than those for full time city carriers and clerks. Some managers jokingly say we aren't worth that much value to their operations. The true story on that is we need less supervision. If you get us the mail we will do our jobs without their interference. Our biggest problem is getting the mail to us. Then we can do our jobs within our evaluations. It seems lately when we have a lot of mail it gets to us early and we can't get out of the office. When the mail is light it gets to us later and we have to wait and get out later instead of us making up our evaluations on the light days. If we complain the standard answer is to change our starting times. Just venting here. Clerks don't slow down on light days do they? When they get done they get sent home.

Mail Count 2008

I have already discussed in this column that the Postal Service has data on everything. They are not the gang that couldn't shoot straight any more. They closed windows to save money. They know what time period the mail is the light and that's when they want to count us. We have a holiday every month but in this 2 week mail count there is no holiday. We get a day off but still have all the work spread out the next day and through the week to make up for it, but they don't want to pay us for it. So my point is please make sure you go to a mail count training!

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If not please read everything you can on your mail count. It is your pay check and yes, you need to fight hard for YOUR money. Challenge things you don't think are right. File mail count disagreement forms and let your stewards know immediately of a problem. Take piece counts of anything in question. We cannot get you compensation unless we have actual numbers on pieces. After the count is too late to notify us of a problem that happened in the first day or week of a mail count.

Yes, there is a carrier pick up standard for this count and some PO 603 changes - please learn them.

If you have labor issue please call your State Steward or one of the assistants. They are your nationally certified representatives.

Everyone – thanks for your support and please be safe and have a great 2008.

STEWARDS' CORNER

JUDY DUGGAN
STATE STEWARD

Right now I am up to my eyeballs in telephone calls, grievance prep and reports. SOOOO... This is going to be very short and not so sweet.

CHRISTMAS PERIOD... Thank goodness it's over. The USPS Holiday Greeting read something like this...NO overtime, NO assistance, and get every piece of mail delivered every day. Sound about right? Many of you called me at some point during the three week period. In most cases your questions were about the same. Can they send me home, when can they send me home, do I have to take the assistance, and can they pay the RCA overtime instead of me? The answer to all of the questions remains the same- YES. They could and they did. The Christmas period has become a shell game for the USPS. They don't want to see overtime hours for the regular carriers and in trying to accomplish this aux hours that they refuse to use during the year more than triple in these three weeks. The percent to standard goes through the roof and they pay OT for over 40 hours to any leave replacement that can work. . More hours, more money, cheaper rate of overtime...it is a grand company, isn't it? Of course some carriers did earn some overtime, and God bless each and every one of you!

They didn't figure on all the snow and in some offices, the complete lack of replacement carriers.

Mail volumes did not decrease as early as usual and I don't think the catalogs ever stopped. In MA district the overtime hours were up over those used last year by about 1,700 hours. Aux assistance hours were up by about 600. Total hours of overtime used in the MA district were 5,203.81. Believe me this is No Big WHOOP... Bottom line... In case no one else tells you... YOU DID A GREAT JOB MOVING ALL THAT MAIL. For every package you delivered and every accident you didn't have. THANK YOU.

AND NOW... MAIL COUNT... Option election Forms. By now you all know that you did not have to worry about signing any form. All routes in MA and SENE were opted into the two week mail count. This directive came from the Northeast Area and unless some manager is stupid enough to try to get away with something all routes in the entire area will be counted. Someone somewhere has projected that volumes will continue to decline and they will make their never-ending effort to capture more savings from your back. Please make an effort to attend a mail count training session. Bring your NRLCA Mail Count Issue of the national magazine to the training. I will not be passing out any additional manuals. I do have some mail count gauges that will be available for purchase.

RDWL ... Beginning with this new contract you will now have two opportunities to sign the Relief Day Work List: One in the middle of April and one two weeks prior to the new guarantee year.

The second change in article 8.5 pertains to who can sign the list. Now all carriers regardless of classification can sign. That means an "H" route carrier can sign the RDWL. Of course they will not work because they have no relief day however if their route changes to a J or K they will be sued in the rotation and will not have to wait for the guarantee year to sign up.

A MORE POSITIVE NOTE.... Finally the 2002 mail count award is completely settled. Much to the chagrin of the USPS every rural carrier on the rolls at the time of the 2002 mail count, including leave replacement carriers, will receive a monetary award no later than the end of January. At last "The Check is In the Mail!"

MaRLCA
Statement of Activities
July 1, 2007 through January 12, 2008

Jul 1, '07 - Jan 12, 08

Jul 1, '06 - Jan 12, 07

Income

4100000 · Interest / Dividends	3,722.41	3,090.91
4200000 · Membership Dues	98,866.63	139,223.77
4400000 · Reimbursements	797.28	1,973.39
4500000 · Sales	360.00	398.00
4600000 · Steward Training Dues	6,204.00	8,001.00
Total Income	109,950.32	152,687.07

Expense

5000000 · Accounting Fees	2,070.00	2,419.00
5100000 · Awards Recognition Bereavement	125.00	340.21
5410000 · Equipment Purchases - Steward	744.20	0.00
5700000 · National Convention	23,872	20,848.47
5800000 · Office Expense - Admin	717.33	810.80
5810000 · Office Expense - Steward	676.81	570.42
5900000 · Payroll Taxes	3,615.09	3,234.99
6000000 · Per Capita Dues	7,560.00	7,465.00
6100000 · Postage - Admin	1,536.60	290.89
6110000 · Postage - Steward	809.96	439.36
6200000 · Printing - Admin	1,338.9	563.98
6210000 · Printing - Steward	231.99	129.57
6300000 · Eastern States Conference	0.00	320.00
6420000 · National Seminars	0.00	3,371.24
6510000 · Repairs / Maintenance - Steward	159.00	152.55
6600000 · Salaries & Wages - Admin	8,414.21	10,846.08
6610000 · Salaries & Wages - Steward	24,413.06	19,699.82
6620000 · Salaries-Annual	0.00	0.00
6700000 · State Meetings	3,750.80	4,570.27
6701000 · Backroads Journal	1,874.62	3,040.38
6800000 · Steward Training	17,107.58	15,108.72
6900000 · Telephone - Admin	860.48	1,617.36
6910000 · Telephone - Steward	1,818.92	2,097.12
7000000 · Travel - Admin	2,654.40	2,174.94
7100000 · Travel - Steward	2,427.08	1,736.40
7200000 · Web Site	184.00	223.98
7300000 · Storage Rental	212.96	0.00
8000000 · State Income Tax	345.00	321.57
Total Expense	107,520.67	102,393.12
Net Income	2,429.65	50,293.95

MaRLCA

Statement of Finance

As of January 12, 2008

ASSETS	Jan 12, 08	Jan 12, 07
Current Assets		
Checkings/Savings		
1000000 · Banknorth	13,193.41	10,585.70
1100000 · APCU Savings Account	57,639.86	99,990.61
1200000 · APCU CD's	101,856.75	96,365.14
Total Checking/Savings	172,690.02	206,941.45
Total Current Assets	172,690.02	206,941.45
 TOTAL ASSETS	 172,690.02	 206,941.45
 LIABILITIES & EQUITY		
Liabilities		
Current Liabilities		
Other Current Liabilities		
2100000 · Payroll Liabilities	190.59	-123.30
Total Other Current Liabilities	190.59	-123.30
Total Current Liabilities	190.59	-123.30
Total Liabilities	190.59	-123.30
Equity		
3900 · Net Assets	170,069.78	156,770.80
Net Income	2,429.65	50,293.95
Total Equity	172,499.43	207,064.75
 TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY	 172,690.02	 206,941.45

Winter Safety by Bill Piwowarski, District 4 President

It's winter time again and well, driving conditions have been a mixed bag for awhile. We need to be as cautious now as we are all the rest of the year in our driving habits. It's a bit more difficult now with snow blocking our view of the streets and intersections to be safe. As carriers who are out there doing the job every day we can't take anything for granted. The ice we don't see, the car around the corner, or that the other guy will stop, or see us can't be taken for granted. I urge you all to use caution out there doing your jobs, don't become a statistic!

Important note for District 2 rural carriers: Assistant state steward Art Courcy has moved. His new address is: 248 Park Circle Attleboro MA 02703. For now his phone # remains the same. (508) 222-3093

RESOLVE TO DONATE TO PAC!

HELP YOUR POLITICAL ACTION COMMITTEE
PROTECT YOUR JOB AND BENEFITS!

YOU ARE A FEDERAL EMPLOYEE.
CONGRESS CAN AND WILL AFFECT YOUR
JOB AND BENEFITS. YOU ARE A VOTER AND
YOU CAN AND SHOULD AFFECT DECISIONS
MADE BY CONGRESS.

Last year we raised \$4,287 to go towards
political campaigns and to lobby Congress on your
behalf. This year let's do even better.

Some of the issues PAC is working on:
CONTRACT DELIVERY SERVICE

The Post Office has begun contracting out
new deliveries in parts of the country.

As you have hopefully seen, our National
Officers joined the National Officers of the City
Carrier's Union in picketing against CDS. Both our
Union's have been working hard to support
legislation that would stop or limit the ability of the
Post Office to contract out what should be City or
Rural Carriers jobs.

These are our jobs! Let's work to keep them!

The Bill in the Senate is S1457; it is co-sponsored by
both of our Massachusetts Senators, Kennedy and
Kerry. Please thank them.

In the House is Resolution HR282. Please call or
write your Representative and ask him to support it.

NO MAIL LISTS:

While no specific national legislation has
been introduced on this it is becoming a hot topic.

The no call list legislation went through very quickly
and this could too. What would your next count be
like with little or no advertising mail?

RETIREE BENEFITS:

If you're not retired yet, you'll want to some
day. Working carriers pay for their health insurance
pre-tax, retirees after taxes. Allowing them to pay
before taxes would be a substantial savings and only
FAIR.

So, sign up for Direct Deposit to PAC. Now
you can have donations taken from your paycheck
and directly deposited to PAC. Check online, in your
National magazine or call me if you're interested!
(508) 420-8839. SPECIAL RAFFLE: WIN AN I-
POD!

Or write your check to: NRLCA PAC and send it to:
Ramona Daniel (PAC Chair). PO Box 924, West
Barnstable MA 02648

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WHERE IN THE WORLD IS DISTRICT 5?

Submitted by Don Ryle, President District 2

Most of you remember the count schools of old
when Dave Ross would always explain a point he
was trying to make in two different ways. As an
example, he might be discussing a mark-up such
as deceased and he would always explain that "on
the other side of the bridge" that means that the
person is dead! I'm sure there were many other
examples that escape me as I'm writing this
article, but my point to all of this is that the Cape
is a "different world."

The Cape has unique people, circumstances and
problems. Many offices on the cape do not have
DPS and probably never will. While offices on
this side of the Canal are growing into mega
offices with 20 - 30 routes, the Cape offices are
small with only 2 or 3 routes. These offices are
scattered all along the 75 plus miles of the Cape
making it difficult for those rural carriers to have
any regular communication with each other. It
limits visits by union officials to just those times
when there is a problem. It also makes for a long
drive to attend even a District Meeting. Can you
imagine having to take 2 days off to attend a
meeting? Any carriers from Martha's Vineyard
that wanted to attend a meeting would probably
have to do just that in order to figure into their
itinerary the ferry schedules necessary to get
across the "pond."

I would like to address these rural carriers from
Cape Cod. This is your time! You have a terrific
person leading your charge. Ramona Daniel has
been fighting tirelessly for you at each and every
board meeting, state meeting and district meeting
to see that you are adequately and fairly
represented. She is fighting to give you a voice,
to let the other members know of your unique
situations. It will take a commitment from all of
the Cape Rural Carriers to see this new District 5
take hold. It will take commitment from at least
three or more carriers who are willing to serve as
District President, District Committeeman and
District Secretary / Treasurer. If the Rural
Carriers of Cape Cod are truly interested in the
formation of a fifth district, please make sure you
attend the special meeting which is tentatively
scheduled to be held in Hyannis on Monday,
March 31, 2008. You will be notified by mail of
the exact time and place. This is your time to be
heard! This is your time to step up to the plate!

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Meeting notices are mailed in advance to each member with exact dates, times & locations.

Support your union by attending district & state meetings.

Jan 27 Mail Count School, Marlboro MA

Jan 30 Mail Count School, Taunton MA

Feb 18 Presidents Day observed

Feb 23 Mail Count begins

Mar 7 Mail Count ends

Mar 11 District 4 Meeting, Manor Restaurant, West Boyleston MA

Mar 13 District 1 Meeting, Hampton Inn, Chicopee MA

Mar 18 District 3 Meeting, VFW Post 662, Lowell MA

Mar 19 District 2 Meeting, Lorenzo's Restaurant, Middleboro MA

May 4 Spring State Meeting, Holiday Inn, Springfield MA

May 26 Memorial Day observed

SPECIAL District 2 Meeting TBA (Cape Cod)

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Published for the Massachusetts

Rural Letter Carrier Association

FIRST CLASS MAIL