

BACKROADS JOURNAL

Spring 2009

MaRLCA

STEWARD'S CORNER
FOR THE LAST TIME

JUDY DUGGAN
STATE STEWARD



Mail count..... is over, all but the crying. This has been the most devastating mail count ever. I think it well may prove to be worse than the 2002 count. The USPS reports that mail volumes were down by more than 16% during the month of January and it is expected to decline even more in the coming months. The drop in volume finally caught up with rural carriers during the 2009 mail count; letters were low, boxholder mail is disappearing and in some offices flats were almost non existent. Although results are not in yet, I have had reports of routes losing anywhere from 4-7 hours. I expect the number of "H" routes to almost double. Not too many of you submitted count disagreement forms (less than 70). Given the lack of volume and the persistence of management to squeeze every ounce of blood possible from you I find this very discouraging. I can't make up my mind if there are no disagreements because you actually do agree with the manner in which the count was conducted, or if you feel so beat up you don't have the strength to write one up. For any carrier that did bother to file a count disagreement, you will be notified by management of the results after my meetings with the CSAs are concluded. I hope this will be not later than the first week of April. Remember new count evaluations being April 25. I do know that there are some managers out there that do care and do their very best to give their carriers a fair shake. If you are on of the lucky carriers that have a decent manager, be sure to say thank you. They are a rare commodity these days. One does have to wonder if the time has come to get rid of the mail count and maybe even the evaluated pay system. The Union and the USPS had been charged with investigating alternative methods of counting mail. Their efforts failed. Perhaps it is time to pick up where they left off. Today there are reports for everything. There has to be a better system than this degrading manipulative mail count process we are dragged through year after year. Has the time come for the clock to ring for rural carriers?

DPS%..... Do you know what the DPS % is for your route? All you have to do to figure the DPS % rate is to find the total letter size mail from your latest 4241(mail count form) by adding column B (sec/seg) and column L (DPS) to column A(raw letter mail). Then divide Column L by the total letter size mail (L (A +B+L). This equals your DPS %. Remember, the USPS must provide you with at least the same % if DPS that you received during the mail count. If they do not-you can and should request a formal review. (continued on page 2)

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RDWL..... If you are lucky enough to still have a relief day remember that the time to sign the form again is fast approaching. Every carrier has an opportunity to sign the RDWL two weeks prior to the first full pay period in May. The first full pay period in May begins on May 9. The RDWL sign up sheet should be in your office no later than the last week of April 2009. It no longer matters if you actually have a relief day, you can still sign.

Holiday Reminder- There has definitely been a change in USPS policy concerning rural carriers working their holiday. In most instances when there is a Monday holiday the carrier whose relief day is on Monday (remember the relief day stays on Monday, it is the holiday that changes) will be required to work their holiday. You will be paid one extra day at straight time for working your holiday. There is no overtime paid for working your holiday. Obviously it is less expensive for the USPS to have a carrier work on their holiday than to pay a carrier 150% for working their relief day. If the choice is between working a carrier on their holiday and paying a carrier @ 50% + a day off they may still require a carrier to work their holiday. When you work your holiday there are NO ADDITIONAL days owed. Try this one and you will end up with a negative X day balance. This is the last article I will write as your state steward. Over the years I have tried to make these ramblings somewhat interesting and at the very least educational. I always believed that one of my greatest responsibilities was to teach you all that I could. I don't know that I have been successful but believe me, I did try.

(continued on page 3)

. I have encouraged you to take a stand when necessary and told you to back down when you were off base. My loyalty to you has never wavered. And although I believe it really is time to go, I feel like I am abandoning you when there is still so much to be done. This is a tough job. It wears you down. It can make you sad, afraid and totally paranoid. And then there are those rare moments when you just know you made a difference to that one carrier that had nowhere else to turn and it all seemed worthwhile. There have been times when I would wake in the middle of the night thinking about what I needed to do to help a carrier or just how I would get everything done that needed doing. So why did I do it if for so long? I can tell you this... It was never for the money (there was none)... It was never for the power or glory (they did not exist). I guess when it comes right down to it... I did it because it needed to be done and because there was one person, long ago that told me I could. Greg, I hope I didn't let you down!

Barney's Bench Talk

By Craig "Barney" Lewis - State President

It has been a long hard winter - my worst in 29 years. Add to that the tough economy, a bad mail count and now the consolidation of districts. The postal service is in dire straits but their methods or solutions are baffling to most employees.

Mail Count 2009! Dignity and respect-huh! It was the 2002 mail count all over again where the postal service tried to hold our carriers to bench marks on loading time, markups and column R time. I hope you have filed your mail count disagreement forms and are prepared to file class action grievances when credit is denied to our carriers. It appears they had a fair count in SENE and that their district is still intact. Imagine that - with no IRS like audits of the mail count.

The postal service is acting like a sinking ship. Throwing everything overboard that is not tied down in order to stay afloat. Safety and service time during this mail count went out the window when all we ever hear about is safety, safety, safety. Safety until it costs money; then it is gone!

But when it came down to putting all those talks into your evaluation it went out the window. Edit Book time was the same. Keep your edit book and your case labels up to date, but now we don't want to pay you to do that work either.

The mere fact is that the lack of mail volume during this time period was going to shave evaluations alone. Throwing salt into the wound, the postal service treated rural carriers poorly and also tried to deny everything they could get away with. It is time for us to grieve every contractual right that we are denied. This is the only thing that gets their attention.

We have no say when they gamble with our livelihoods and postal funds by purchasing flat sorting machines to put flats in DPS order and they buy airplane like hanger buildings to house those machines. The PMG should be fired over this decision alone!

Asst State Steward Gary D'Onofrio and I visited 2 plants during the mail count and both had automation equipment not running because there wasn't enough volume to put through them. The staffing in the ME plant used to be 200 employees. They run that plant with 150 employees now using no overtime. So where is the need to spend billions of dollars on DPS flat equipment with no mail to run in them? We have heard that Boston will be running a lot of the mail now.

My route has lost 12 hours now since the 2002 Wells Arbitration Mail Count including 4 hours on this past count. This route was a 48K prior to that. It is now a 41J or a 46 H. The route has not changed - 500 deliveries 25 miles. The standard changes, lack of volume and the time of year they now count us have led to many rural routes downfall. Most routes are now J and H routes. This means the postal service is a big winner Every route is entitled to a leave replacement but with no days to work how many RCA's will stay with not much work. It now takes over 3 months to hire subs - another great postal plan to make this a web based process. The postal service also wins in the Code 5 overtime.

(continued on page 4)

Rural carriers that are working 11 or 12 days have very few opportunities for overtime.

The Postal Service also gained after we walked away from the QWL/EI Process.

The fact that when we dumped the QWL/EI process this saved 80 postal districts \$150,000.00 each.

I am happy to say I had a hand in not ratifying the contract for 2007 this was the only period we did not lose hours on our evaluation. We did not count in 2007 because we did not ratify the proposed contract. It was a good move on our part that saved rural carriers money for a 2 year period, much to the dismay of the postal service and our National Officers. Thank God most of those officers are gone now. We need National Officers that will protect your jobs and your pay. I do think we have a good group in there now.

As you read this you have probably heard that right after the mail count there was major changes in postal districts. The New England area was hit hardest. The state of Massachusetts will now be divided into 3 districts. The SENE district will remain the same. The 015 to 019 will go into the Boston Metro District and 010 to 014 will be part of the CT Valley District. This may be tweaked a little. Of the 116 district personnel 105 are eligible for early retirement.

Those same managers who were shaving us during the count have now been shaved themselves. For being good managers and taking it to the rural carriers we can now displace you. They eat their own.

Managers now have to apply for their own jobs or eventually be RIFFED. They have gone after every craft and now finally we will do away with all of the unneeded and un-necessary managers.

Yes, another Voluntary Early Retirement will be offered to all eligible employees in April. There are 150,000 postal employees that are eligible for the VERA. It is a tough time to most people to choose that with TSP and 401K's taking big losses. Some may be fortunate to take advantage. Health issues will also play a big part in this decision. It did in my case.

We need to stay together as a union. We need to fight for carriers rights. We need strong leadership that is not afraid to file grievances.

The city carriers have a new MOU that states new territory goes to them. This is not entirely true and you need to be aware of this so we can fight to keep all new deliveries in rural areas rural. This will not be an easy task. You will have to keep a close watch on those new streets and houses.

I seem to be always talking about change. It amazes me how many changes our craft has been through and since 2002 - most of it for the bad. So just like the country needs to turn around this recession we need to turn around what is happening to the Postal Service and what is happening to our craft. There are a number of people running for delegate - please look the list over and make sure you are casting your votes for the people that are going to vote for your best interest, not just looking for a trip.

Please show up at our State Meeting and let your voices be heard. The National Officer is Robert Horne a newly elected NRO. Robert has been the State Steward of Georgia for a long time. The State Meeting is in New Bedford at the Days Inn Whaler and Convention Center. The Saturday night get together will be hosted at Cyd's Creative Kitchen owned and operated by Cyd Ryle. Cyd was a longtime rural carrier.

I would like to wish you the best of luck in your offices while delivering mail and trying to keep these new evaluations. Please do not try to speed up this will only lead to delivery and safety problems for you. It will be a tough year but we will get through it if we all stick together.

FYI- Massachusetts License Renewals

Everyone knows thier postmaster is "supposed" to periodically check your license to make sure it's valid. The registry no longer mails you a renewal notice, so it's up to YOU to renew before it expires! They are good for 5 years, and are issued according to your birth date, so take a look a few weeks before that big day and see if it's time to renew! You may even be able to do it online. Check out the registry web site for more information.

<http://www.mass.gov/rmv/index.htm>

MaRLCA
Statement Of Activities

Income	7/1/08-3/24/08	7/1/07-3/24/08
4100000 · Interest / Dividends	3,180.15	3,722.41
4200000 · Membership Dues	142,391.02	144,553.55
4400000 · Reimbursements	939.33	797.28
4500000 · Sales	774.00	531.50
4600000 · Steward Training Dues	7,315.00	7,238.00
Total Income	154,599.50	156,842.74
<hr/>		
Expense		
5000000 · Accounting Fees	2,546.00	2,342.00
5010000 · Bank Charges	5.00	0.00
5100000 · Awards Recognition Bereavement	410.00	225.00
5350000 · Elections	144.00	80.00
5400000 · Equipment Purchases - Admin	659.98	0.00
5410000 · Equipment Purchases - Steward	660.21	1,272.45
5610000 · Lodging - Steward	0.00	102.02
5700000 · National Convention	29,262.16	23,872.61
5800000 · Office Expense - Admin	1,322.47	1,125.76
5810000 · Office Expense - Steward	516.21	1,068.62
5900000 · Payroll Taxes	4,493.03	5,080.78
6000000 · Per Capita Dues	7,352.00	7,560.00
6100000 · Postage - Admin	2,202.68	2,344.87
6110000 · Postage - Steward	1,213.10	986.42
6200000 · Printing - Admin	416.36	1,360.50
6210000 · Printing - Steward	146.39	530.84
6300000 · Eastern States Conference	160.00	60.00
6420000 · National Seminars	4,524.59	249.00
6510000 · Repairs / Maintenance - Steward	146.25	159.00
6600000 · Salaries & Wages - Admin	7,032.45	9,631.31
6610000 · Salaries & Wages - Steward	35,685.16	36,817.44
6620000 · Salaries-Annual	0.00	0.00
6700000 · State Meetings	7,118.68	7,230.28
6701000 · Backroads Journal	3,556.89	3,396.47
6800000 · Steward Training	17,675.81	19,439.50
6900000 · Telephone - Admin	1,092.02	1,108.10
6910000 · Telephone - Steward	3,341.26	2,442.75
7000000 · Travel - Admin	5,228.67	4,023.15
7100000 · Travel - Steward	5,960.40	4,416.25
7200000 · Web Site	184.00	184.00
7300000 · Storage Rental	699.00	422.96
8000000 · State Income Tax	378.00	345.00
Total Expense	144,132.77	137,877.08
<hr/>		
Net Income	10,466.73	18,965.66

MaRLCA
Statement of Finance

	Mar 24, 09	Mar 24, 08
ASSETS		
Current Assets		
Checking/Savings		
1000000 · Banknorth	25,548.75	29,537.26
1100000 · APCU Savings Account	51,193.57	58,067.36
1200000 · APCU CD's	107,061.91	101,856.75
Total Checking/Savings	183,804.23	189,461.37
Total Current Assets	183,804.23	189,461.37
TOTAL ASSETS	183,804.23	189,461.37
 LIABILITIES & EQUITY		
Liabilities		
Current Liabilities		
Other Current Liabilities		
2100000 · Payroll Liabilities	1,259.22	425.93
Total Other Current Liabilities	1,259.22	425.93
Total Current Liabilities	1,259.22	425.93
Total Liabilities	1,259.22	425.93
Equity		
3900 · Net Assets	172,078.28	170,069.78
Net Income	10,466.73	18,965.66
Total Equity	182,545.01	189,035.44
TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY	183,804.23	189,461.37

Campaign Articles

Editor's Note: Those nominated were allowed, but not required, to submit articles. They are listed in no particular order.



Steve McCarthy for Secretary/Treasurer

I have enjoyed serving as your Secretary/Treasurer for the past 4 years and thank you for your support. I believe I have worked hard to fulfill my duties and have attempted to address your membership issues in a timely manner. I have also worked to increase our membership and have twice been recognized by our National office for my efforts. I also serve as Chairman of the Secretaries Training, Development, and Compliance Committee, which has helped me to better perform my duties. I would truly appreciate your vote in my bid for re-election.

To my fellow Rural Carriers,

My name is Dawn Makrinikolas and I would like you to consider me for National Convention Delegate. I have been local Steward since 2007 and was recently on the QWL safety team doing office visits. One year ago I became the Chairman of the Constitution and By-laws committee after serving as a member for 3 years. I have been an active member of the union since I became an RCA. I firmly believe in our union and what we collectively can do for our future. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Hello Fellow Rural Carriers

It has been my pleasure to serve you as a state officer for the past 19 years. I would first like to thank you for your support during those years. I believe in doing the best I can in educating rural carriers about your rights and getting information to you as soon as it hits the wire. I hope I have been of assistance to you in this area. I am running for the office of State President for one final year. I would appreciate your vote.

Thank you
Craig "Barney" Lewis
MaRLCA State President

My name is Bill Piwowarski, and I am running for delegate to the national convention. I have been a delegate the last four years, and would like to go and represent you again this year. I have done what I can as district president, board member, local steward, academy instructor, safety team member, but I need you vote for me at election time so that I may once more represent you at the national level.

Thank You
Bill Piwowarski

Dear Fellow Union Members,

I am running for delegate to the National Convention this year.

I have been an elected delegate in the past from 2000-2006

I understand the workings and vote in what I consider the best interest of the membership.

I humbly ask that you again consider electing me as one of your delegates this year.

Sincerely,
Nancy Upham

Ramona Daniel for Delegate

Hi, Ramona Daniel here, and I'm asking for your vote for delegate to the National Convention. I'm the Vice- President of our State Association, a local steward, former Assistant State Steward, the PAC chair, and have six times been a Delegate to National Convention.

I authored and submitted the constitution and bylaws change that allows you to see how delegates vote at convention.

I hope I've proven my dedication to our Union in the past and hope you'll give me the opportunity to serve in the future.

Thank you for your consideration!
Ramona Daniel



Hello everyone my name is Victoria Laczynski and I am running for District One committeeman and delegate to the National Convention As you know we have just completed a very disappointing count with many of us losing several hours on our routes and you may also have heard about the closing of the North Reading district office. God only knows what will happen next! Now more than ever you need someone to speak on your behalf and stand up for your rights at the National Convention. With that in mind I ask for your vote. Thank you ,
Victoria Laczynski

The changes and challenges that we are facing today are greater than ever, FSS, reorganization, substandard routes. Folks we need to be diligent. We need to file more contractual grievances, no matter how small they may seem. I am running for the position of State Steward and would very much appreciate your support. I have been a local, area and am currently an Assistant State Steward. I know how demanding that the State Steward's job is and I am ready for the challenge to get through these tough times together if you would allow me the opportunity. -Art Courcy

Hello friends and fellow carriers I am running for Vice President and Delegate to the National Convention. I am currently an assistant state steward and have also served on your state board for the past five years. In addition, I have also served as your delegate at the last three national conventions. I think that my experience and knowledge of the issues facing rural carriers and my willingness to take a stand will be beneficial to our state now and into the future. I would appreciate your support and your vote. Thank you for your consideration,
Gary D'Onofrio



JUDY DUGGAN
DELEGATE

When you vote for delegate please vote for JUDY DUGGAN. I have the experience, and knowledge needed to make your voice heard above all the others. I have been protecting and fighting for rural carrier rights and improvements for many years. I have never given up the fight and I will not give it up now. At this year's convention proposals will be brought forward that could change the face of the rural carrier craft forever. My commitment to serving this craft has grown stronger through the years. Your voice is my voice. Please vote JUDY DUGGAN

I have 11 years of service with the Postal Service, and I have performed duties as a local Steward for the last three.

It was evident during my brief term on the QWL Safety Team that many of us face the same challenges. While I have no aspirations for a Union position, I'm interested in speaking out on behalf of all of us on the front lines. We, as a group, must work to achieve fair representation from Management at Count.

I'm just a working man who wants to see what really happens to us at these delegations.

Andrew Brisbane

Hello everyone, my name is William Tokarz and I would like your vote to elect me as a delegate to represent you at this years National Convention. I have been a RCA for 21 years and a member of the MARLCA about 20 years. I did have the opportunity to represent you at the 2007 National Convention and would like the honor of representing MARLCA again in 2009. I would appreciate your vote.
Thank you, William Tokarz



POLITICAL ACTION

Postmaster General Potter is pushing for 5-day delivery and office closings.

PUSH BACK by supporting your Political Action Committee.

A reduction in service would require action by Congress, so make sure they hear your voice, not just Potter's.

The National Rural Letter Carriers Action Committee works to keep Congress informed on the issues that effect you, your job and your benefits.

So please continue to monitor legislative issues on the Union's national website and donate as generously as you can to PAC. Answer the letter you recently received from the National Office or you can now have a donation taken automatically from your paycheck. These donations will allow the National PAC to better plan its actions by having a dependable base fund of donations.

I would like to thank those members who do make this donation and are supporting PAC on a daily basis: Art Courcy, Ramona Daniel, Gary D'Onofrio, Steve McCarthy, Gill Perez and Rebecca Rose-Darling.

As always, donations may be made at anytime with a check made out to NRLCA PAC (not to me or Mass., please) and send to:
Ramona Daniel (PAC Chair)
PO Box 924
West Barnstable MA 02668

Million Mile Award Recipient

The National Safety Council's Million Mile award is given to individuals who have driven 30 years or a Million Miles without a preventable motor vehicle accident.

Eileen Ficks, a rural carrier from the Halifax MA Post Office, was presented with a Million Mile Customized plaque from Halifax Postmaster Tom Petruzzelli and Nancy Upham from the Rural Safety Team.

Being a Million Mile member is quite an honor and Eileen attributes her safe driving record to having a positive attitude towards safety in every aspect of the job.

Eileen has been a member of the Rural Safety Team for many years and has contributed to increasing safety awareness in rural offices and in looking into carrier safety issues.

I wish that I was the bearer of good tidings, but there aren't many of those going around these days. We have all suffered through another mail count, except a few offices, and I'm not really sure if they are better off than those who really know what their route evaluation is currently. Sorry everyone, but things are what they are, at least we still have jobs.

Spring district meetings have come and gone, I hope you made the effort to attend yours. I have made it to all but district 5. The next thought is that you need to be attending the Spring State Meeting and show a little more support for this union. It being a union and all, it can only be as strong as the people it represents, and that is all of you. My last to you is that it is time to vote for Officers and National delegates, take the time and cast your ballot. We need a better showing than 400 members voting out of a possible 1450; make your voice heard!

District 4 President
Bill Piwowarski

MaRLCA Spring State Meeting
Days Inn & Whaler Banquet
Conference Center
500 Hathaway Rd
New Bedford, MA

Telephone for Reservations: -508 997-1231

Book Your Room Now!

Mention Massachusetts Rural Letter Carriers when making your hotel reservations!

Located at Route I-195, Exit 13B

Saturday Night, May 2, 6:00 - 10:00 pm Meet & Greet At:

Cyd's Creative Kitchen

2331 Acushnet Ave

New Bedford, MA

From the Day's Inn take Route 140 north

Take Exit 4 - King's Highway

Turn left at the lights at end of exit ramp

Turn left at 4th set of lights - Acushnet Avenue

Restaurant is 1/4 mile on left

Sunday Morning, May 3, 9:00 A.M. Business Meeting & Guest Speakers

National Officer Robert Horne

Lunch \$10.00

To Reserve Lunch, contact Don Ryle at 508 996-9033 or dryle@comcast.net

ATTEND YOUR STATE UNION MEETING

PAC Raffle

First Prize-iPod Nano

Second Prize- \$100 American Express Certificate Third Prize ~ \$50 CASH

NEW BEDFORD MASSACHUSETTS

THE CITY OF NEW BEDFORD ATTRACTIONS INCLUDE:

New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park

New Bedford Art Museum

Buttonwood Park and Buttonwood Park Zoo

Not everyone knows this but it is our State Steward Judy Duggans last term and over the years (I won't mention how many that would be showing my age) she has come to the rescue on more than one occasion in my office as I'm sure in several others as well. Always willing to answer any questions you might have had and going to battle if necessary when ever there was a greivance or a count disagreement. We will all miss her wisdom and guidance in the future! I say this from the bottom of my heart: Thank You Judy for everything and may you have a very long and relaxing retirement!

Vicky Laczynski



April designated "Employee Assistance Program Awareness Month"

EAP is a free, confidential program for postal employees and their families. Each year, one out of five employees will have some kind of situation that either disrupts their home life, or interferes with their job performance, and could benefit from the help of EAP.

There is no charge to employees or family members who receive counseling or other services provided by EAP. If additional help is needed, EAP will work with you to identify the best available treatment services according to your insurance plan.

EAP is completely confidential- your privacy is protected by federal and state confidentiality laws and regulations. Your personal information may not be released by anyone without your prior written permission, except as required by law. All EAP counselors are licensed mental health professionals and are either employees or independent contractors of Magellan Behavioral Health. They are NOT affiliated with the USPS!

You can call EAP 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The toll free number is 1-800-EAP-4YOU (1-800-327-4968) (TTY: 1-877-492-7341) You will always speak directly to a real person, NOT a recording! Counseling and information is also available in several different languages, and you can access the EAP web site for information about such topics as child care, elder care resources, self-assessments, and more. The web site address is: www.EAP4YOU

EAP is completely voluntary, and is NOT part of disciplinary procedures. Participation in the process is your choice, and your first appointment can even be "on-the-clock." You should coordinate any on-the-clock appointment in advance with your supervisor.

Most importantly, EAP is NOT just for problems in the work place! Everyone of us must face personal problems at some point in our lives. EAP can be there to listen and help you through your concerns, big or small. You don't have to face it alone! EAP can help you with work related stress, financial problems, personal relationship issues, anger management, depression, anxiety, family/parenting issues, alcohol/drug dependence, grief, bereavement; the list goes on.

1-800-EAP-4YOU

Keep the number handy: you might not need it today, but it's nice to know when you DO need it, someone will be there for you!

Calendar Of Events

Meeting notices are mailed in advance to each member with exact dates, times, & locations. Support your union by attending state & local meetings.

Results of mail count effective-April 25

Spring State Meeting- May 3 New Bedford MA

Memorial Day- May 25

Independence Day- July 4

National Convention @Grapevine TX- August 18-21

Labor Day-September 7

MaRLCA Web Site: www.marlca.org

BACKROADS JOURNAL
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FIRST CLASS MAIL