



THE EMPIRE EXPRESS

New York State Branch League of Postmasters

Editor – Andrea Cammer

Fall, 2009

2009 OSCAR POGUE AWARD



Josephine M. Zunno

*“It is amazing what you can accomplish
if you do not care who gets the credit.”*

From the President's Desk



by Bob Cron—President

In spite of us losing convention leave, the turnout for the National Convention in Buffalo was great. I was pleasantly surprised at the number of Postmasters that attended. It shows how dedicated we are and is an acknowledgement of how important it is for us to meet.

The convention had some very good workshops and excellent speakers. Deputy Postmaster General Pat Donahoe told us that with changes the Postal Service could be back in the black by 2012. He also said he doesn't want us to be driving around "little bits of mail", referring to the small handfuls of missent letters we get. Yes, he said that. He stated that doing so is a waste of time and money and doesn't do anything to fix the real problem, which is, why are we getting that mail in the first place? Of course we knew that already.

Mr. Donahoe also spoke of reducing paperwork by eliminating redundant logs and reports. How many of you just started doing AM/PM absolutes, District Daily EXFC Checklist, Backdoor Mgt, and DOV logs, courtesy of the Northeast Area? Let's hope that this is what the DPMG is referring to as re-

dundant reports.

National President Charlie Mapa told us that we are Postmaster glue. Whenever we are shorthanded on the clerk side- just add Postmaster glue. When a carrier is out and no one is available to deliver the mail-just add Postmaster glue. It is Postmasters that are holding the Postal Service together.

Charlie is so right! As the Postal Service downsizes, more work is being pushed on to us Postmasters.

Besides having to take on additional paperwork and cover craft shortages, we have also been given additional tasks as positions are eliminated in Human Resources, Finance, and Operations Programs Support.

No doubt the Postal Service is counting on us to do all this work for free, during our lunch or by staying late.

If not for Postmasters picking up the slack, the Postal Service would be much worse off than it is. I don't know about you, but I feel the Postal Service does not appreciate everything we do and has a lack of respect for Postmasters.

Did you know that some Postmasters are not even allowed to schedule their own clerks? They are given a base schedule by the District, supposedly derived from the number of window transactions and amount of mail volume the office has. If the Postmaster needs their clerk outside of the base schedule they must ask permission! Also, if the Postmaster dare question the schedule, the District sends someone to the office to watch how the office operates in the morning to see if more hours are needed. This of course happens on a day when mail volume is light. Shortly after the visit the clerk

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Dues & Assessment Schedule

Level	Monthly
A	6.03
B	7.80
C	9.56
D	11.33
E	13.09
11	18.27
13	19.80
15	21.69
16	23.35
18	25.23
20	27.59
21	28.81
22	30.78
24	33.80
26	36.99
27	46.40
AA/Retirees	6.00
PMR, OIC, LBM	6.50
Assoc. Member	6.50

State Website:

www.nypostmasters.org

hours are further reduced. It's a sad day when you can't express a legitimate concern without some kind of repercussion.

This is the kind of mentality we have to deal with today.

While League Postmasters were going to bat for the Postal Service to help get HR 22 passed, the Postal Service figured out how to change the NPA rules midyear so that none of us will receive a decent raise. How many of you feel motivated now? They also took away our convention leave, and currently I understand they are going over form 150's to reduce office levels.

For these reasons and many others, I would urge you to join the League of Postmasters if you are not already a member. If you are a member I would ask that you speak to Postmasters in your area about joining. The League



NYS Vice President John Loehr, Jr. On special protection detail for President Charley Mapa at the National convention in Buffalo, NY

offers a superb Adverse Action Program and also has its own in-house Post Office Continuance Coordinator and Legislative Counsel as well as a network of Postmasters that will help to make your day to day job easier. We help you to build relationships from the ground up that will help should a problem arise.

There are a couple of other things I want to mention before I close.

I am currently working on the State website. I am redesigning most of the pages, adding links to current information, photos, etc. If there is anything you would like to see added to the site let me know. Once I have it up and running with the changes I will keep it as current as I can. As I receive updated information from National it will appear on our site. Feel free to email me a photo of your office for the site too. Again, comments/suggestions welcome. This is your website.

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2009 Benjamin Award Winners – Congratulations! Bob Cron!!!

Those of you that are keeping score have realized by now that in the last issue I was not the President. The President newly elected in May was Al Schweigert and he chose to take the early out in July. I moved up to President and Andrea Cammer is now the Executive VP . To finish out my unexpired VP term, I have appointed Steve Risewick. Steve is the Postmaster in Churchville 14428.

Last, but certainly not least, I want to congratulate Josephine Zunno on receiving the Oscar Pogue Award. The award is the Leagues greatest lifetime achievement award, named for our founder, Oscar Pogue. It is not given every year, only when warranted. Congratulations Josie!

Hello everyone, my name is John Loehr and I am the Postmaster of East Hampton, NY. I recently returned from my first (but definitely not my last) National Convention in Buffalo, NY. If you have never attended a National Convention then you missed out on a terrific time. New Yorker know how to put on bash!!

Although I was unfamiliar with the schedules and exactly what was expected of me as one of your Vice Presidents, I never felt out of place. There are so many people from our own branch as well as other states that went out of their way to make me feel comfortable with everything that was happening. If there was a question that I needed to have answered I felt like I could ask anyone that was part of the League. I heard repeatedly the term "League Family" and now I see why.

There were great seminars that were well attended and getting to know people from across the country was really cool . It is interesting to hear how other districts and states do things. It is amazing to me that what is top priority for one part of the country hasn't really been addressed in others. We do work for the same company ,right???

I hope that throughout the years of attending conventions like this one, not only will I receive invaluable information, but also build friendships that have already proven to be amazing resources. ☒

Proposed Code Change NYS Branch League of Postmasters

Delete code change approved at 2009 Convention

Present

Article 2 Section 3A –

Proposed

Article 2 Section 3A – Convention Site Selection procedures:

The Executive board should discuss possible state locations for selection. Locations where the convention have never been held or have not been held for some time shall be given priority. The Executive board should come up with three (3) possible locations (cities) by August 30th. The site selection committee, which shall consist of the Executive Vice President and two appointed members, shall gather information pertinent to those three (3) cities and present information to the Executive Board within 60 days. The Executive Board shall, by vote, narrow the selection choices to two and presents them to the membership at State convention, to be voted upon to determine where the following state convention will be held. The selected site shall be printed in the next and all ensuing newsletters. ☒



Tighten Your Belts it's going to get rough!

by Andrea Cammer VP

It's that time of the year again—BUDGET TIME!!! It doesn't look good folks. I am all for tighten ones belt in tough times but taking a look at the budget proposals for the year and we all are looking to be about a size 2 (frankly I can't remember when I was that size). Clerk hours - SLASHED. Expenses—SLASHED. We are going to need a very large bottle of "Postmaster Glue" to survive this year. What is "Postmaster Glue" you ask - Well if you attended National Convention in Buffalo this past August you would know that our National President, Charley Mapa considers all of us the "glue" that keeps this organization together.

It is times like these that the LEAGUE is here to help you. The League offers excellent training session at all League functions. Whether it is a 3 digit meeting (coming soon to your area), League Forum (Jan30- Feb 2), State Convention (May 2010) or National Convention (July18-22 in San Diego , Ca) the training that you receive is extremely valuable to our jobs now more than ever.

Don't have time to attend one of these functions, then you can always go to either the National website—www.postmasters.org Or the NEW State website—www.nypostmasters.org or read The latest edition of the Empire Express.

On the legislative front—HR 22 PASSED!!!! Although it is only for 1 year it is better than nothing. This passed because of the hard work that both Postmaster associations put into get-



ting the word out to our Congressman and Senators as to the state of the USPS. The passing of HR 22 is just a temporary fix, each of us will more than likely be called on again to push for an extension to HR 22 to last a bit longer than 1 year, so keep abreast of the situation and keep in contact with your representatives .Each and every one of us needs to constantly contact our representatives about issues that need attention from them. This is also true for our state representatives. Get politically active as much as you can. Our jobs depend on it and our livelihood depends on it as taxpaying citizens.

Make your voice heard!!!

Do you know someone who is not a member of the League??

Talk to them and ask them to join us. Newly appointed Postmasters from a non Postmaster position get their 1st year FREE!! Postmasters who were members but dropped out and now would like to come back to the League get their first 3 months FREE!!

This is not the time in our careers to be without representation and The LEAGUE of Postmasters has the best representation a postmaster could ask for. This is included in your membership monthly fee there is no extra charge and you will get representation from John P Difalco and Associates no matter what the situation. Our jobs are in good hands with John P. DiFalco—he is just like Allstate.

Have a wonderful Holiday Season and a Happy and Joyous New Year. Hope to see you all at Forum and State Convention. ✉

Mark your Calendar!



2010 NY State Convention **May 14, 15, & 16** Comfort Inn & Suites, Goshen, NY

Get the latest information from League Officials and NE Area Personnal.

Get re-energized about your career!!

RELAX and HAVE FUN

Is there a topic you wish to know more about??? Contact Bob Cron — President or Andrea Cammer — Convention Chair and we will make sure it is on the agenda. *Look for more details in the next issue of the Empire Express.*

Live Well And Look Forward

by John P. DiFalco

Over the last quarter century, in observing Leaguers confronted with adverse actions, I have witnessed every human drama possible. I have seen Postmasters experience the thrill of victory and the agony of defeat. There have been suicides, criminal incarcerations, innocent victims, insanity, death, and spiritual rebirth. Because of the LEAGUE and its Legal Service Benefit and Adverse Action Program, jobs have been recovered, alcoholics and drug abusers have been treated and are in recovery and, in most cases, justice has been served. LEAGUE Adverse Action Counselors and attorneys have met alleged sexual harassers, thieves, embezzlers, incompetents and yes, many innocent defendants.

When Postmasters who, for the first time in their lives, are confronted with an adverse action, it is indeed a traumatic experience often equivalent to the sum of the great tragedies one experiences in life. The individual is also buffeted by anger, remorse, frustration, and depression. The innocent Postmaster, who is being wrongly disciplined is the most susceptible to the emotional turmoil and depression that comes with an adverse action.

We often find ourselves telling them there is no such thing as a true victory in an adverse action appeal. Seldom does the Postmaster charged with an adverse action receive adequate compensation for all the suffering that individual and his or her family endures as a result of the crisis imposed on them by the Postal Service. When attorneys achieve a victory in an appeal, the Postmaster is returned to the status quo, their former position with back pay, but they know that there never really is a winner in an adverse action anymore than there is a real winner in any fight. There is guilt, recrimination, humiliation, and fear that can never be adequately compensated. There is an element of revenge that the innocent Postmaster most naturally considers when confronted with an unjust adverse action.

In dealing with all these normal human emotions, it is the practice of the LEAGUE's lawyers and Adverse Action Counselors to advise their clients that they must view the confrontation with their employer as a situation that they will probably never come out of a winner, no matter how successful their appeal is, as much of the damage that has been done to them is irreparable. However, just like the payment of taxes, which, like death is inevitable, Postmasters are counseled to view the adverse action appeal process as an effort to mitigate damage

to them, their family, and their Postal career. The Adverse Action Counselors and lawyers always try to do what is best for the individual Postmaster – if that means outright victory and full reinstatement, settlement, resignation, or some other remedy.

When it is all over, the Postmaster must make a psychological and emotional adjustment to their new status, be it successful appellant, satisfied settlement recipient, or former Postmaster. In all such cases, we tell the damaged Postmaster that life is indeed a road not a goal and it will have its bumps, turns, accidents, high points, and low points. In the contest of an adverse action, as in any other trauma one experiences along this road of life, the best remedy for personal well being is to live well and look forward. We advise our clients, no matter how successful their appeal has been, to forget the past, for it cannot be changed, to put aside thought of revenge and recrimination because those emotions can never be fully satisfied, and to simply move forward with their career, their lives and their emotional outlook. The strategy of living well and looking forward is presently being followed with great success by many former Postmasters. Indeed, some recipients of adverse actions look back upon their confrontation with the Postal Service as a turning point in their lives, as a fork in the road which causes them to take a better path to happiness, career, reality, and overall well being for themselves, as well as their families. The adverse actions in some cases have, rather than split families, caused them to circle the wagon and become a more cohesive group with love, caring, and togetherness which lasts even after the adverse action appeal has become history.

Again, we say to all Postmasters, if you are confronted with an adverse action, you will be represented without any questions concerning your guilt, innocence, status, or personal motivation for your actions. The LEAGUE is non-judgmental and competent in representing its members. You will constantly be advised to avoid situations which may result in adverse actions or adverse consequences to you, your career and, most of all, to your family. But you will always be told that, no matter what the outcome of your particular case, should you be confronted with discipline, that you are to live well, for indeed that is the best revenge, and to always look forward, for that is without question the best approach to recovering from an adverse action and to traveling life's road. ✉

Need Advice—Need Help—Contact:
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Cathy Winnie—NE AREA
845—331-2741

Change is Necessary and Confusing

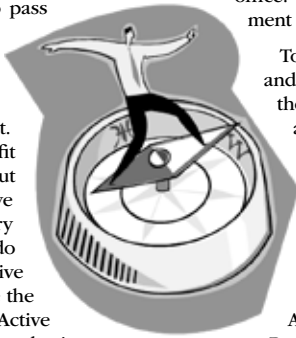
by Bob "Bull Dawg" Bittner

During the National Convention there was much disagreement on proposed changes to the Articles of Incorporation and the Code of Governing Rules. Change is often hard to understand as suspicion comes into play and clouds the intent. No wonder it is often difficult for our Congress to pass legislation. The First change in the Articles of Incorporation centered on our three "Distinctive Classes" of membership.— Active, Associate and League Benefit. There presently is no League Benefit member among the League.— but the board felt we should not remove this option. Associate members vary in title and pay fewer dues and do not share in all the rights of Active Members. The word Active may be the word that causes the angst as an Active Member is defined as a Postmaster who is in charge of an office (Postmaster or Officer in Charge).

I believe that the intent of that definition is to limit Active to Postmasters who are in charge of a post office who are either a Postmaster or Postmaster Officer in Charge. Non Postmaster Officer in Charge is not defined but does fall into the Associate Class of membership. Presently it is being interpreted to mean that an OIC is an Active Member regardless of if that OIC is a Postmaster or not.

The presented change to the Article of Incorporation was to clearly define the classes of our membership. In addition our rules for amending the Articles of Incorporation does not require a 2/3 vote as per Art 6 Section 2(a) of the Articles of Incorporation.

I for one do not believe that an Associate Member OIC holds the class of Active member and I would venture to say our original Articles of Incorporation and Code of Governing Rules had no such intent. We have gone astray. Change is needed to clarify and clearly define the intent of the separation of three classes of membership. If the intent, as I believe it is, of the classes was to assure that Postmasters in Charge of a Post Office are Active members then why would we allow an Associate Member who pays fewer dues the rights and privileges of an Active member? Active members by Code are the only members who may serve on a Standing Committees, may hold positions on the National Board and should be the delegates at the convention. Now if the membership believes otherwise after a healthy debate I can live with the results.



There is a thought that Charley is in charge of his office however Charley is on a temporary leave of absence from the Postal Service and in his stead a replacement is in charge of the office. We call that replacement an Officer in Charge. Clearly by definition Charley is not in charge or rather entrusted with the responsibility a post office. He then fails to meet the requirement of our present written code.

To meet the concerns of the board and President Charley in dealing with the requirement to be "in charge of a post office" which at present our President is not the board added language to allow the President need not be in charge of a post office during the term of office. The intent was to end a conflict with the code nothing more. The President would still have to be an Active member, a Postmaster, but a Postmaster who is not in charge of a Post Office during the term of office: the only Active member who would fit this change.

The Immediate Past President has value to serve on the board it should not matter the class of membership but rather the experience and relationships that have been formed while this individual was serving as our President. This position on the board is really honorary. It is needed to help assist the incoming President navigate the politics of the Postal Service and the Hill. We all need to take a deep breath and reconsider the intent of the change. Put the League first do we or don't we need this experience for at least a year? Remember it was not so long ago that the Immediate Past President served four years. The membership has seen fit to cut that to one year upon recommendation. One year regardless of the class of membership that that individual has is worth our consideration and support. Remember this is an individual who has served us well.

On the other hand there is considerable savings to be considered if we just eliminate the board position of Immediate Past President. The members will have to take stock and weigh the pros and cons and then make their vote heard.

The Articles of Incorporation is our "Constitution" and if there is change it must be created here first as the Code of Governing Rules must be consistent with the Articles of Incorporation and the laws of the District of Columbia for the administration and regulation of the affairs of the Corporation. The membership needs to understand this as the reason why

Continued on page 9

National Convention—What an Experience!!



by Frank Kouba—VP

I have just returned from my 1st national convention and I can say that if you weren't there you missed a great time. All attendee's were greeted by our new State President,

Bob Cron, who made every one fee right at home. The moment you put on that "pink" tag that signaled that you were a first timer the hugs started coming and they didn't stop until you walked out of the hotel to head home.

At the first timers orientation meeting, everyone was given an assignment to obtain signatures from each board member of all 50 states. What an interesting way to meet new people. I feel very lucky to have made so many new friends from very interesting places. The opening event of the convention was the Welcome

Party given by the NYS Branch. What a great time. The state board really showed

Every attendee what a great state we live in. State's Night was a blast and the trip on the Maid of the Mist was fun.

Of course the convention was not all fun and games—we did go to hear the latest from Postal Headquarters and the League officials. There were a lot of great training session that we were able to attend. Conventions aren't just about training and meetings, it was also about networking and meeting Postmasters from around the United States.

I encourage you to attend this year's National Convention in San Diego in July. You won't be disappointed. Of course to get you ready for that make time to attend the 2010 New York State Convention which will be held in Goshen in May. ☒



Looks like it's official now!

President Obama on Oct. 28 signed the Fiscal Year 2010 National Defense Authorization Act, H.R. 2647, which ends the National Security Personnel System and includes a range of major changes affecting federal retirement that have been long sought by federal employee unions. Among other things, the law gives those covered under the Federal Employees Retirement System the right to count unused sick leave toward their retirement calculation; updates work rules for reemployed annuitants by allowing them to return to service on a limited, part-time basis without being penalized by an offset of retirement annuity; and lets FERS employees who return to federal service redeposit their annuities and receive credit for years of service. The bill also phases out the non-foreign cost-of-living adjustment system for feds in Hawaii, Alaska and U.S. territories, replacing it over several years with locality pay, which can be counted for retirement purposes. The new law also returns employees under the National Security Personnel System to the General Schedule. The law requires the transition of all employees out of NSPS by Jan. 1, 2012. ☒

Change

continued from page 8

one impacts the other.

In conclusion we the membership need to be educated in the procedures during a League business session. You don't know what you don't know until you don't know, and then often it is too late. We all need to educate our self in regard to this process. We also all need to be aware of and to follow our own Convention Rules which are read and adopted at the start of each convention. We need to know when a quorum is necessary and how to proceed when not met. We need to know and follow the rules of debate and when to ask for a point of order. We need to be prepared. Change is necessary even the "Founding Fathers" of our Constitution knew that and set a process in place to allow for amendments and judicial review. Let us do no less. ☒

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