The first three of seventy or so overtime violation grievances have been resolved by the Dispute Resolution Team (DRT).

NALC Branch 2128 was successful in proving that the Toms River management staff did violate the overtime provisions of Article 8 of the National Agreement.

The DRT awarded 27 hours of overtime to the Overtime Desired List (ODL) carriers for distribution to the grievants.

Though it is always rewarding to have a grievance resolved in your favor, I wish that we were able to have resolved these overtime issues in house and that management would have followed the National Agreement as it is written. Absent that resolve, this is the next best thing.

As I have told our membership and the officers of our Branch that serve our members, I believe that we will be successful in the grievance procedure; but, don’t expect that what we are requesting as a remedy will be awarded on the first few grievances. As we process more grievances, the remedies will increase and our aggrieved will be compensated accordingly.

You should know that I prepared, and that I will continue to prepare, and process, our seventy plus grievances as if we were going to take each case to arbitration.

For those that did not wish to work overtime and were required to do so, I did my best to convince management not to work you overtime when they did, and asked that the DRT award you additional overtime and compensatory administrative leave – [time off paid by management] – at a time of your choosing.

For now, no award was given to the non-ODL carriers. However, I do believe that there will be a point in time that the DRT will award what I requested.

For the ODL carriers, I also believe that there will be a point in time that the DRT will award ODL carriers more than just hour for hour of overtime, and that the remedy awarded will maximize ODL carriers to 12-hours and the overtime rate that is paid to the ODL carriers will increase, perhaps by several-fold.

Whenever you advance a grievance out of the office, the fate of the grievance lies in the hands of others – whether it is an arbitrator or the DRT team. Sometimes you like what you get; sometimes you don’t.
I’m one of those people who don’t really care for new years. I never celebrate New Year’s Eve and I never make any resolutions. I don’t care about the bowls—Rose, Cotton, Sugar, Fiesta—or whatever they’re calling them now. Parades? Unless it’s a ticker taped one for the Yankees, I’ll never watch them. I hate to reflect on the year gone by and I almost never think about the future. Guess you could say I’m a ‘live in the present’ kinda guy.

But this year we begin a new decade, 2010, so I’ll make an exception and jump into the prognosticating waters – along with all the other prophets and pundits – and offer my take on the year ahead. I’ll start off with some easy ones and then move into dicey territory where not even a weatherman knows which way the wind blows. Move over Madame Marie, here we go.

First off, for all you Jets fans. Don’t get too excited. Your team will not win the Super Bowl. Even if they get there, which is a possibility, they have no shot. As I write this, they only have to beat the Colts (which I suppose could happen given their history—remember Namath in ’69?) but the Saints will march all over them in the finals.

My second prediction says that the groundhog will see his shadow and there will be 6 more weeks of winter after February 2nd. This is a given. Even global warming and climate change don’t seem to affect Punxsutawney Phil.

Next, I see that gas prices will approach $5 a gallon by Labor Day. I’m going out on a limb a bit with this one and I don’t have any inside information—just a hunch-- but the oil companies, investors and speculators can’t go much longer without price gouging and profit taking at the expense of the rest of us. Sell your gas guzzler now before you’re priced out of it!

Here’s another sports pick for you. You’ll be seeing Lady GaGa appearing at the Mets games this summer rooting on her new boyfriend, David Wright. The Met third basemen, taking his cue from A-Rod and Kate Hudson, hopes that GaGa will be the lucky charm that takes the team to the World Series and ends their decade of disaster in the diamond dust of Citi Field. Kiss GaGa goodbye now David, it ain’t gonna work.

On the political front I see Sarah Palin getting a job over at Fox News. I’m being told that that already happened. Whoops, sorry about that one. Well then I’ll say that she’s in for an even bigger role over at Fix—that’s it—she’ll have her own show over on the network. And she’ll write a book and make lots of money doing that too. Wait, you say she did that as well? Ok, then let me just say that I betcha she goes out and actually reads a book this year. It could happen.

Closer to home, and where we work, I have some ideas about the future of the USPS and the NALC as well.

It used to be said that carrying mail isn’t rocket science but that’s no longer true as management has turned the daily tasks of a letter carrier into ‘Postal-101.’ DOIS is_per-fected to the point where management has the ability

(Continued on page 6)
As of January 1, 2010, the management staff of Toms River will be recording and tracking the distribution, the equalization, and the equitability of overtime opportunities and hours worked for Overtime Desired List (ODL) carriers as per Article 8 of the National Agreement.

For many years we have recorded all overtime worked by ODL carriers regardless of whether the overtime was worked by the ODL carrier on their assignment or not. In essence, all overtime – to the unit - was chargeable overtime for carriers on the ODL (Any & All).

For the last three quarters, the ODL was not equalized under the terms and conditions of the agreement that we locally have.

The carriers on the ODL who were not within the agreed upon “area of tolerance” were afforded make-up opportunities in the following quarter.

As co-author and co-sponsor of a National Resolution that was adopted at the National Convention in New Orleans a number of years ago, also known as Resolution 46, I have a personal interest and concern over this matter.

Basically, Resolution 46 was a proposal by our Branch to record how we track and equalize overtime nation-wide, every minute worked regardless of whether the overtime was worked on or off their assignment, just as we do in Toms River.

First, I believe that the way we “equalized” overtime in Toms River was and still is the fairest way to distribute overtime and have all ODL carriers share in that distribution within a specified area of tolerance.

All ODL carriers share in the amount of overtime – money in their pocket – whereas no one ODL carrier could make a significant amount more than another.

Secondly, we narrowed the range that one carrier could be different from another by establishing a specified number of hours an ODL carrier had to be within for a specific number range of hours.

Thirdly, we eliminated most, if not all, of the possibilities of how a fellow ODL carrier may manipulate the system so as to receive more hours than any other ODL carrier.

With that being said, management equalized the ODL under the agreed upon terms for quite some time – close to nine years or so.

It has been in this past year that management believes that our agreement can be changed to include make-up opportunities at the end of a quarter and has only offered that as a remedy.

The contract provides for one make-up opportunity in the following quarter where management makes an effort to equalize the ODL and falls short due to a number of reasons that are reasonable and worth consideration and exception to paying a monetary remedy.

Make-opportunities are a one shot deal; not a continuous remedy. I am not in favor of make-up opportunities and cannot agree to such settlements.

I have discussed last quarters’ overtime distribution and equalization with our management staff and some of our Branch officers.

If we were to send last quarter’s quarterly overtime equalization grievance out of our office, the Dispute Resolution Team would have denied and will deny our grievance and direct us to follow the quarterly ODL equalization and equitability distribution as it is written in the National Agreement.

By Joseph R. Palmerson
President, Branch 2128

By not following the ODL as it is written, the NALC has no recourse to remedy when a violation occurs.

I am saddened that we have gotten to the point where situations such as this lead management to no longer honor what we sign. This was good agreement, a good agreement for all; it was fair and everyone benefited from it.

Be it as it is, we will follow the contract as it is written, and when a violation occurs, we at least have recourse to the grievance procedure and recourse to a monetary remedy.

Unfortunately, we had to bite the bullet for the two quarters in 2009 when management refused to honor past agreements and refused to payout the OT cash that our grievants were entitled to. This is not acceptable.

I have discussed this matter with Frank Papasso, Jim Keefe, and John Mezzetti. Needless to say, I am not pleased with what occurred.

I leave John Mezzetti and Jim Keefe to settle last quarter’s dispute and I will support their decision. Hopefully, the settlement will be fair and reasonable.

I will post a copy of the overtime provisions in the contract for you to review.

I suggest that if you are on the ODL, or are considering sign the ODL, that you review it and ask questions if you are unsure of anything. Ask a steward or my-

(Continued on page 5)
GETTING RID OF A NEGATIVE STENCH

You know that guy who doesn’t say much, but when he does the whole room gets quiet to hear what he has to say. His words are usually well thought out and hold truth and validity; therefore he is respected in what his opinions are. Why don’t people like that work for the Post Office? Comments and opinions come out of carrier’s mouths and hang in the air. A negative stench attaches itself to each and every one of us that spreads throughout the office, causing hatred, tension and dissention. So I ask you, the carrier, this, why do you continually insist on turning on each other. You know the type, no loyalty, judgmental, backstabbing, use someone up and discard them when you are done. Cynical, yes, but right on the money.

We are at a point in our jobs where unity is extremely important. Without it, you can bid farewell to all you know when you punch that clock every day. For those of you who do run at the mouth, do you really know what you are talking about? When you bash your union reps are you aware of what they try to do FOR YOU? Do you know how many hours, at night away from their families are spent on the computer looking up past grievances to make sure your rights aren’t being violated? How about the hours that are spent, volunteering just to show NALC support just in case NALC needs them, to help YOU out. The phone conversations, emails, correspondents, meetings are all being held for YOU so when it comes time to represent you, your representatives know what they are talking about and are well educated. So then there are the carriers who will run at the mouth again saying, “That is what I pay union dues for.” I have actually witnessed non union members complain about why the union did not help them. Hypocrisy at its finest. Think about what you are saying. Try to make an educated well thought out rebuttal instead of a spoiled child holding their breath in the corner because you didn’t get your way.

Look at the bigger picture instead of what is right in front of you. We can all have diarrhea of the mouth, but no one is going to listen to you, if you sound like a whining baby. This is how nothing gets solved and your voice doesn’t get heard, leaving you frustrated and blaming the union.

So before you make comments like, “why do my union dues pay for him to go there,” or “I don’t want her to be a shop steward,” or “the union never backs me up or helps me.” Think about the content of your words. What you say, may spread to others, leaving them to question the union’s intentions. A bad stench. Management knows that the carriers turn on each other and they use it to their advantage. Remember, what your union has given you and then maybe we can come together again in unity. Educate yourself before speaking. What has the union done you ask? Do you like getting 10 minute breaks, wash up times, the right to voice your opinion, the choice to work overtime or not? The list of what the union has won for you is endless and apparently overlooked by some. Maybe you have not gotten exactly what it is you seek from the union, but the fact that you have a right to seek anything at all should be proof enough that YOUR union is working for you.

Branch 2128 Executive Board members spread some holiday good cheer around at the December meeting. Seated (L-R) are Angelo Portuese, Ed Sedillo, Lou Grokowski, and Perry Hodges. (Ed. Note: the bottles were strictly props)

By Tracy Rosell
Lakehurst Shop Steward

Local NARFE Chapter Meets Installs Officers

The National Active and Retired Federal Employee Association (NARFE) has installed their slate of officers for Local Chapter 1619. Branch 2128 member and retired Lakehurst letter carrier, Bill Scarola, takes over this year as the chapter’s President.

Meetings are held monthly at the Manchester Civic Center located in the basement of the Manchester Township Municipal Building. The next meeting is scheduled for Monday, February 8 at 1:00 pm.

NARFE works to protect the future for active and retired federal employees. They have been safeguarding and improving the earned rights and benefits of those employees since 1921. NARFE represents some five million federal workers, retirees, spouses and their survivors.

If you’d like information on joining or want to attend a meeting, please contact Bill Scarola at 732-350-1761.
Politics: Lesser of Two Evils Now a Reality

This past election cycle I had the opportunity to work for the NALC on Jon Corzine’s behalf in his unsuccessful campaign for re-election as Governor of NJ.

First let me say, that even though we lost, it was an experience that I will remember as perhaps one of the best in my career as an NALC representative. The work we did out of the IBEW Union Hall was both challenging and rewarding despite the negative outcome for us.

I worked with Jeremy Goldberg, NALC NE Regional Field Coordinator, and many members of other AFL-CIO affiliated unions. At any given time we had a room full of union electricians, teachers, carpenters, bricklayers, pipefitters, laborers—all with one goal in mind—the re-election of a union friendly governor.

It wasn’t an easy job. Corzine never was a blue collar kinda guy and he was a tough sell from the outset. Our only real argument that had a chance to convince those opposed to him (and there were lots of union households who hated him) was that he was the lesser of the evils out there—and as we saw by the election results, that type of argument never sells very well.

Well, now that a couple of months have passed, and another election went the wrong way for us—the Massachusetts Senate race, which was won by another anti-union candidate—maybe it’s a good time to reflect on the direction we’re heading in since we voted on the change we could believe in, just a little over a year ago.

Is the country moving the right way and did we do the right thing when we elected Barack Obama and other supposedly “union friendly” candidates in the last national election?

Now let me say that you probably know me as a progressive Democrat when it comes to politics—in the words of FOX’s Bill O’Reilly, a leftie liberal pinhead. But I’ve come to realize that in the past year or so my real political position has evolved. I’m close to moving ‘Democrat’ out of that first description because it’s becoming harder and harder to defend what Democrats have done to sustain the economic mess that this country still finds itself in.

Whew. There, I’ve said it. Now let me try and explain in 100 words or less.

In a nutshell (and with some exceptions to the rule), it seems to me that the difference between Democrats and Republicans is this. Republicans tell you that they’re going to screw you

(Continued on page 8)
New Year Predictions Just Too Easy, from page 2

(Continued from page 2)

to do MIARAP route adjustments on a daily basis. Routes are abolished one day and reappear a few days later based on mail counts and computer data. Carriers are asked to scan every piece of mail they deliver and every mailbox they deliver to is bar-coded for MSP scanning. Managers assure the union that it should take no extra time.

With that, here’s an easy one. Lakehurst carrier Pat Moreno is disciplined for missing one of those aforementioned scans.

I also see the early buyout retirement that many letter carriers are looking for, and expect to happen, never does come. Instead, we are given an offer we can’t refuse. Retire now and we (USPS) will fund your health care, don’t retire and you’re on your own finding and paying for your own plan.

The big news in Toms River’s future is that Joe Palmerson will win the big WOO grievance after a year’s pay) but the postal letter carrier $54,619 (one year of preparation and 30,000 pages of evidence and testimony. The arbitrator awards each Toms River carrier $54,619 (one year’s pay) but the postal service refuses to payout. Palmerson files another grievance on that, and wins it, but management ignores the verdict. He files another grievance on the grievance and it’s now 2011 so you’ll have to check back for next year’s column to follow the continuing saga of this prediction.

Here’s another one that probably everyone sees coming. It’s the middle of May 2010 now and we’re in the midst of an early heat wave as the temperature soars to 98 degrees. Needless to say, the air conditioning system in the post office isn’t working (except for in the postmaster’s office) and carriers swelter as they sort their mail. Some of these predictions are just too easy!

Continuing into the future, DPS flats arrive in our area in the summer of 2010. Carriers struggle with the fourth bundle of mail initially but figure out a way to make the system work. Three bundles on the side tray and one on the dashboard. What’s unsafe about that? I don’t know but I do know that Pat Moreno is disciplined again for collating DPS flats with his residual mail. These predictions are a piece of cake!

In September 2010, the Lakehurst softball team wins the NJ State Letter Carrier Tournament. Toms River and Lakehurst battle it out in the championship game and it all comes down to the final play when Joe Rendzia limps home with the winning run. On Monday, after the tournament, 17 carriers call out sick in TR and Lakehurst—all of them having participated in the tournament. You guessed it, Pat Moreno is given a letter of warning for setting a pattern with his sick leave (he called out sick the previous year, the day after the tournament).

Finally in early December 2010, carriers receive what they deem to be an unexpected Christmas present as Lakehurst supervisor Vito Gelosi leaves the postal service for a job in the private sector. When President Obama closed the prison at Guantanamo Bay earlier in the year, who’d a thunk that many of the alleged terrorists would be transferred to a prison here in New Jersey. And who knew that they would need a warden with rabbit ears, no compassion, and a sense of duty and determination to watch over the prisoners like a hawk. Well I guess we all knew he was qualified so we can’t argue their choice of him. But who will we ever get to replace him?

In the days following the promotion, the Lakehurst numbers go into the toilet as 204b’s scramble to fill the void. A decision is made to promote someone within the office to take Vito’s place. Who gets the job? Can anyone fill those shoes? Am I getting carried away with these crazy predictions?

Stay tuned for the next edition of wild and crazy predictions

Believe me, stranger things have happened at the post office. Happy New Year everyone!

USPS & GPS: Another Form Of Annoyance

GPS in our vehicles will be here sooner than you might think. Some post offices in NJ are already using the technology and it shouldn’t be too long before we see it in our area.

The Office of the Inspector General (OIG) has convinced management to invest in the technology as a way to save hours and gas. Although their reasoning is suspect, the USPS has the right to utilize GPS units in their vehicles—in order to know, at a moment’s notice, where their vehicles are located. Management says that

(Continued on page 11)
Most of our offices are knee deep in the MIARAP process once again. You remember MIARAP? It was the postal service version of fair and balanced route adjustments. How the national union agreed to this scam I'll never know—but we’re stuck with it, so we’ll just have to make do with what we’ve got.

When something is called ‘fair and balanced,’ I don’t know about you but that’s seems to me to be a dead giveaway that it isn’t. But we’ve beat that dead horse before, and you know our branch’s beef with it. And if you’ve read the branch items in the Postal Record, you know that there are nationwide problems with this 1-month route analysis.

Carriers were advised that what they did during the month of November 2009, was going to be the data used for the route adjustments. If you read the postings or came to union meetings and you worked your route professionally—filling out 3996’s and 1571’s, took your lunch, breaks and comfort stops—then ‘maybe,’ we’ll have accurate data for these evaluations. If not, then we’re in for another round of abolishing routes and overburdening others.

Preliminary indications show that we had plenty of mail volume to work with during November. The low volume analysis of the previous adjustments hurt all of our offices because the volume that the adjustment was based on was not a true picture of the real volume. Our country’s struggling economy was hitting rock bottom about then and low volume reflected it. Now that the economy has rebounded, volume has returned and so should the routes we lost. Makes sense, right?

Well, if you were at the January union meeting, you heard Joe Palmerson say not to count on getting routes cut and new routes returned. He said that the postal service’s plan is to temporarily use a ‘router’ system to carry us over to when the FSS flats (DPS Flats) are operational.

When will FSS flats get to our branch? Your guess is as good as ours but right now it looks like it could come as soon as May.

In the meantime, be prepared for your route consultations that will take place during the MIARAP process. If you have questions, talk to your stewards and branch officers. They should be able to point you in the right direction.

In any case, you need to know that your union is not sitting idly by. We take this very seriously and will do all in our power to make sure that this fair and balanced system really lives up to its words.

MIARAP Coordinators Set To Evaluate Branch Routes

The month of November has come and gone. The data that you provided during that month will be analyzed and is scheduled to be used in the evaluation and adjustment process of your assignments.

What you did during this month is what you did. You have no one to thank … or blame … but yourself.

Hopefully you took my advice and worked professionally, safely, and efficiently. You will be the ones who will thank yourselves.

You can lead a horse to water; but, you can’t make him drink.

I advised each and every carrier to ask for a copy of your 3999 and review it. Again, I advise you to do so. It’s not to late.

As of today, I provide you with the latest update on the route adjustment process that is scheduled in our offices throughout the branch.

Please note that what I report now could change 180 degrees one hour from now. Read the bulletin board for the latest updates.

Toms River

- Appointed MIARAP coordinators: Phil Cornell, NALC President – Brick Ken Strom, Postmaster – Point Pleasant
- Is slated for the first group of FSS flats - DPS flats
- The implementation of FSS flats has been postponed. The implementation date is not known as of today.
- The MIARAP adjustments that are to be implemented in January from November’s data may not be implemented if the FSS flats are implemented in early 2010. We don’t know if MIARAP adjustments will be implemented first and then FSS adjustments or just if managements will wait and just implement the FSS adjustments.
- Management intends on using COR – Carrier Opti-

(Continued on page 8)
MIARAP, from page 7

(Continued from page 7)

mal Routing – to adjust and square off routes.

- Prepare yourselves for routes being eliminated; all routes going up for bid; and chaos. Once again, our work-life will be disrupted.

Lakehurst

- Appointed MIARAP coordinators: Phil Cornell, NALC President – Brick
  Ken Strom, Postmaster – Point Pleasant
- Routes are to be adjusted in January 2010 through the MIARAP process
- Management intends on using COR – Carrier Optimal Routing – to adjust and square off routes.

Beachwood

- Appointed MIARAP coordinators: Phil Cornell, NALC President – Brick
  Ken Strom, Postmaster – Point Pleasant
- Routes are to be adjusted in January 2010 through the MIARAP process
- Management intends on using COR – Carrier Optimal Routing – to adjust and square off routes.

Seaside Heights

- Appointed MIARAP coordinators: Phil Cornell, NALC President – Brick
  Ken Strom, Postmaster – Point Pleasant
- Routes are to be adjusted in January 2010 through the MIARAP process
- Management intends on using COR – Carrier Optimal Routing – to adjust and square off routes.

Lesser Evils, from page 5

(Continued from page 5)

and they do. Democrats tell us that they’re going to help us but they screw us. Which is the lesser of the two evils here?

I suspect that George Wallace may have been right when he stated that “there’s not a dimes worth of difference” between the two political parties when he ran for President as an Independent in 1968. And he may have been right, but we’re stuck with this 2-party system so I guess we need to make the best of it.

It’s too bad that there are those among us that can’t get beyond the Republican – Democrat labeling. The teabag rallies are the perfect example. There is a populist outrage in this country now that is justified by the economic events of the past couple years. Populism is not owned by either political party, although these tea-bag rallies are generally considered anti-Obama pro-right wing (Republican) lovefests.

But look a little closer at the phenomena and you can find an underlying thread that unites the crowds. People want their country back. It’s time that the left and the right of America find the common middle ground that they have and work together to achieve that result. But who’s got our country and how do we get it back?

A lot of the teabaggers think that government IS the problem. They are partially right. BAD government is a big part of the problem but it’s much deeper than that. MONEY is the problem. Specifically, big money is the problem and what fuels it. Big money from big corporations, from Fat Cat billionaires, from special interests with deep pockets of MONEY—going to support Congressmen, Senators and Presidents, who in turn, make the rules we get to play by.

Health insurance should have been an easy fix. I think we can agree that we pay too much for our coverage, get too little for what we pay in premiums and spend more time and money arguing with the insurance companies over what is and what is not covered. And as federal employees, we’ve got it pretty good. When you hear it said that most of the country would love to have the same health plan that Congress has—well folks, guess what? We have that plan.

But, getting back to health insurance in general, it didn’t get fixed because there’s too much money at stake in reform—billions of
MIARAP Made Easy When Playing By the Book

Most of you have just completed the MIARAP process for interim route adjustments and it’s something the NALC has pushed for a long time. This involves using the carrier’s own times as part of the adjustment, instead of the long drawn out 6-day count, which caused a lot of confusion and heated tempers. There are always problems with any count, and I liked the 6-day count myself, as I became expert at it after 36 yrs, but any count is fine with me. Why, do I say that? Because I do my route “by the book”.

Now, if you have done your route each day “by the book” then this process is a piece of cake. I document every MSP scan and volume each day and see how I compare daily, to the time it took me to get to the phone, and the time to get back to where I left my route, and would they please have a reimbursement form ready when I get back, so I can ask for a refund for the change I used for the phone, in order to notify them I am complying with their backtracking order.

Going by the book means backing into the parking spaces when delivering businesses or parking in any slotted parking spot. I always use the seat belt and parking brake. During the summer I have to roll up my windows. The heat climbs to over 115 degrees in the LLV and I have to take my “heat breaks” occasionally. Just doing what they told me to do during the safety talks on Heat Stress. I have those documented too, just in case they forget when they read them on the workroom floor. Seems they like to “forget” things like that. I always try to be sure to “remind” them of what they told us.

Sometimes minor things to management, are bigger things to carriers. How many of you constantly have upside down flats in the morning? I don’t remember reading where I had to learn to read upside down in my job qualifications? Do you? What’s worse are the carriers that case the mail into the case the way they pick them up, upside down and sideways! Carrying a pivot from one of these guys just costs more time on the street, since I flip them all around right side up, to be sure I don’t mis-deliver a piece of upside down mail, or worse, when they miscase the upside piece of mail because they are in such a hurry.

I’ve never understood the PTF’s nowadays. They fly around the station casing two, sometimes three routes, and carrying a different one. They run to be back in before the 5 pm window, even running in to swipe their badge before emptying their vehicle. The book says you unload your vehicle first then put your dispatch away, THEN swipe in, however, most PTF’s just look at me when I tell them what the M-41 says. Sadly, most don’t even know what the M-41 is anymore.

I even told one PTF it’s in the Carrier Order Book. He didn’t know what that was either. I asked him if he didn’t know the Carrier Order Book, what did he do with the accountable mail for a particular business. He said he gave it to the receptionist (this was during a portion of my detail as a Union officer, ). I told him there was a letter from the President of the company specifically stating that NO accountable mail is to be delivered to the receptionist, and that no one is allowed to sign for accountable mail except for two people in the company. It’s in the “special order” sheet in the Carrier Order Book. He said he didn’t know anything about it. Isn’t the Carrier Academy training great?

(Continued on page 10)
By the Book, from page 9

I notice the new carriers don’t listen to the Old Timers anymore. That’s a sad thing. I instruct them on what’s right and what’s wrong with their work habits, but they ignore me. They only come to me when they are being disciplined and need help. Imagine...they are being disciplined by the Supervisor they were running for...and they even usually state that while they are being issued their Letter of Discipline. They don’t know yet that they only are establishing their “standard of performance” on any particular route, and when they can’t run the route one day, they’ll get written up for expansion of street time.

They chide me and say “you do everything by the book” and think it takes way too long “that way”; however, knock on wood, I haven’t had discipline in over 33 yrs. I had a 5 day suspension as a PTF once and had it thrown out. I’ll continue doing things by the book, because that’s what they pay me to do and it takes longer that way. Sure, some take shortcuts, but then they have longer routes, too!

Doing things by the book takes time, and it must be done until it becomes habit. Locking your LLV door takes less than 2 seconds. Think about that for a moment...when you close the LLV door and run into an office, but don’t lock your vehicle, it would only take an additional second or two to avoid that sinking feeling when your return to your vehicle and see a supervisor there with your door open. I always think of that when I close my LLV door, is it worth a Letter of Warning while saving 2 seconds. I think not.

Of course, I’m an Old Timer now and these new PTFs just aren’t the same these days! That’s just what I heard when I first started, in 1973, while I was still a senior in high school. At one time I was the youngest carrier in Orlando, and at the bottom of the seniority list...now I am #6 on the list and have my Official Old Timers Card!

By the Book is not a dirty word, it’s how they pay you, to do things by the rules and regulations set forth. Look, it takes longer, so why wouldn’t you do it “by the book”?

But first, you have to READ the book to be able to do it by the book. How many have you read the Carrier’s Bible, the M-41 Carrier Duties and Responsibilities? It’s in the back of your Route Book... (hint: it’s under your case ledge!) Till the next time...I have to take my Geritol.

Denny Belden
Aka VetCarrier

Lesser Evils, from page 8

(Continued from page 8)

...dollars transacted by the insurance companies, CEO’s, shareholders and yes, politicians. Most of your elected representatives have been bought and paid for by the insurance industry. Was it a coincidence the other day, when Scott Brown was elected as the new Senator from Massachusetts, that the health insurance and pharmaceutical stocks shot way up on the NY Stock Exchange? Brown made it perfectly clear that he was against ‘Obamacare’ and health insurance reform. The industry and Wall Street’s reaction to his victory was swift. Follow the money folks.

Most of the civilized world covers their citizens with basic healthcare. But then most of the civilized world looks at basic health coverage as an inalienable right of their countrymen—not a means to a big profit end, or a way to line the pockets of the politically privileged.

I’m not optimistic that things will change at all. The recent Supreme Court decision that makes it legal now for corporations to funnel as much cash as they want to into political campaigns will make COLCPE look like pocket change when it comes to the pay to play rules that move the wheels of government. With this decision, MONEY becomes even more important in politics.

Face the facts folks—working for the post office makes us mighty small players in the big money game. I suppose you could argue that there is strength in numbers but when your numbers are fractured in every which way and united behind no common cause, a small number of people is worth nothing in comparison to truckloads of moola.

So what do we do now? Something’s gotta give, right?

At least that’s what I’m holding out for. Sometimes things get so bad that change is the only good alternative out there. That’s what gave Obama and his coattails the big victory in November 2008. We were in a helluva mess. They (the Democrats) offered us a promise of change in the status quo. As of today, they haven’t even come close to delivering. We’re tired of excuses, we’re tired of blame. We need to see something that we can wrap our arms around—the change that we believed we were promised. I’m sick and I’m tired of holding my nose in the voting booth and pulling that lever on the lesser of the evils.

And I know you are too. I found that out in November. Ain’t that right, ex-Governor Corzine?

Unsafe conditions, from page 8

(Continued from page 8)

to light as far back as September 2009, yet management has still not addressed or corrected them.

Palmerson noted that the problem can be traced to the lack of custodial help in the office. Beginning with the death of one custodian in July
Changes Coming: Discipline Too?

The said change was coming. Well, THEY were right.

You can ask anyone that works at the Post Office, and they will concur that our job is no longer what it once was. There are many ideas on why this has come to fruition. One may say, because of the Union’s relentless style of enforcing the contract, management is punishing everyone by going after any infraction they can find. Others say, that since we are now in a new district, the new regime instructed management to hold carriers accountable for every error or minute and to capture whatever they can. It has also been said that supervisors are under such pressure from their higher ups, due to the dire financial straits that the USPS finds itself in, that they are placing unwarranted strain on carriers.

You can pick whatever reason suits you but you cannot hide from the fact that lax rules and regulations of the past no longer apply. Carriers are longer playing favorites and everyone is fair game. Be careful, know your job, correct bad habits when you need to, work safely and you will have nothing to worry about.

By Tracy Rosell
Lakehurst Shop Steward

basic, yet on any given day, carriers are observed not following these simple rules. (And these are the easy ones) We need to know our job because if you haven’t been called into the office and had the pleasure of sitting in the “brown chair” don’t worry, you’ll get your turn. Management is no longer playing favorites and everyone is fair game. Be careful, know your job, correct bad habits when you need to, work safely and you will have nothing to worry about.

Installing GPS Units for LLV’s, continued from page 6

(Continued from page 6) they’ll be able to determine and develop more efficient driving patterns and monitor driving habits with the objective of reducing fuel consumption.

According to an article appearing in NALC Br. 38’s The Sentinel, the type of data that the USPS will collect through GPS is vehicle speed, vehicle idling, park times and route deviations. The information collected will be transmitted to postal managers via email and end of the day reports.

The program will require that carriers are notified if and when they are assigned a vehicle equipped with a GPS system. In addition, carriers will receive a service talk about the new technology before it is implemented in their office.

GPS could be utilized positively for carriers unfamiliar with routes and/or delivering in unfamiliar territory. Will management use it that way? History tells us that that’s very unlikely. Management has not yet indicated that GPS will be used for taking disciplinary action but we suspect it might be the case, given their inherent distrust of city letter carriers.

But if you’re like 99% of all letter carriers and you do your job the way it’s supposed to be done, you have nothing to worry about. Chalk it up as another minor annoyance and your bosses distrust of you.

Thanks to NALC Branch 38
“The Sentinel”
December 2009
New Branch Officers Installed at January Meeting

Branch 2128 Officers for 2010 were installed at the regular January union meeting. All officers ran unopposed for election and remain in their term for the next 2 years. You can see the list of officers and board members on page 2 of this issue. One notable change from last term is that Tim Schneider replaces John Nagy as Branch 2128 Treasurer. John served our branch well, in an important and work intensive position, which was duly noted at the January meeting. Good luck John and welcome aboard to Tim!

Front line Branch 2128 officers (L-R) Dave Balog, Amy Masker, Tim Schneider and Joe Palmerson. Missing is VP Al Manzo.