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UNIFORMED EMT'S AND PARAMEDICS OF THE FDNY
LOCAL 2507, DC37, AFSCME AFL-CIO
718-371-0310

UEP Bulletin

WHAT'S NEXT?

By Patrick J. Bahnken



With the recent ratification of the new contract, the Union office has been inundated with calls asking the same question; when do I get my money? As stated throughout the many station visits, the time it takes from ratification to cut the pay order and actually get the money to the members is generally four to six weeks.

The initial check should include the base percentage increases with retroactivity. Calculations for retro shift differential, over time etc. will take slightly longer. If after all monies are paid out, you feel that you are still owed money, have your supervisor file a payroll inquiry. If you still have concerns, contact the Local.

Next on the horizon is our pending legislation in Albany. This year, we continue to push our death benefit equalization bills. Additionally, we are pursuing a twenty-year no age retirement bill.

All bills are currently before the City Council where we must receive a home rule message before any of these bills can go to the floor for a vote in either house. The Union is in contact with the City Council Speakers office as well as individual Council members to solicit their support in this endeavor.

If we succeed in getting home rule mes-

sages for our bills, we will then go back to Albany to push these bills to the floor of each house for a vote. Following that, it will be up to the Governor to sign these bills into law.

Lastly, I want to strongly encourage all members to get fitted for their new turnout gear. It has taken a long time to acquire these garments that comply with OSHA and NFPA guidelines. These garments are provided for your protection and will be of no help at all if you never get them. Never turn down any equipment that will improve your chances of not getting hurt or contracting a terrible disease.

In Solidarity

Patrick J. Bahnken
President

N.Y.C. VOCATIONAL TRAINING CENTER-EMS PROGRAM

The Fire Department's EMS Academy and the NYC Department of Education have an exciting program located at Fort Totten, Queens.

Students, 17½-21 years of age, in need of credits toward their diploma or GED may benefit from this program as a licensed teacher/EMT provides the academic component at the academy, with FDNY-EMS instructors providing the Emergency Medical Technician course.

Upon successful completion of the program and passing the NYS exam, students are eligible to apply for employment within the FDNY EMS Command.

For information call: Ms. Shelley Krebs at (718) 281-8356.

**Remember: There's no summer school.
Registration is in September.**

HAVE A NICE DAY

By Donald Faeth

As the saying goes, it all rolls down hill. Operations personnel contact the Division Chief and give instruction that no units are to be run down on a hot summer day. Then they add, since all volume is anticipated to be high, each battalion is expected to run an additional unit or two. The respective battalion commanders are then instructed to 'do whatever it takes' to make this happen. In turn, they order the lieutenants to mandate unwilling participants and sanction automatic charges for those unwilling to comply. Unfortunately, the EMT's and Paramedics are at the bottom of this hill. You could probably use the money, but you might have already made other plans after your tour or you have obligations that you are unable or unwilling to get out of. What do you do?

The union has taken the stance that employees who are capable of staying, should stay, if you are not too tired to do so and arrangements can be made for other obligations. We also strongly encourage all members to participate in the KVO policy. (We currently have an improper practice against the City for its flagrant abuse of dropping this agreement whenever they have staffing difficulties.) That being said, when faced with the threats and innuendoes associated with being mandated, the most important advice I can give you is to remain calm. A simple, I wish I could help you out here but I can't today...and maybe even an offer to stay later in the week, is all you should say. If your supervisors are raising their voice, cursing, and/or threatening you with charges, don't take it personal, just take a verse from the current Bon Jovi song and just say 'have a nice day.' You will lose a verbal engagement in this setting no matter what, if you respond in kind, just by virtue of your rank. A conduct unbecoming or insubordination charge has much greater weight than refusal to stay for overtime, which we will probably win. I sometimes have to laugh to myself when members call the office and say their supervisor won't let them leave. Have you been chained to the ambulance? If someone is literally holding you against your will, call the police, they would be very interested in making an arrest.

Anyone who tells you to just 'bang out' on days that you can't risk being mandated, is giving you very bad advice. This action harms your coworkers, not the people you have issue with. We all understand that the system is not staffed appropriately and there is no cushion of personnel to fill gaps in scheduling. We also understand that some of our brethren utilize sick leave as a personal vacation day, essentially leaving you the obligation to fill the newly created vacancy. Moronic policies of denying 1 day A/L requests sometimes encourages this activity, but it doesn't justify the action. Your responsibility should not be the burden of someone else unless you agreed ahead of time through a mutual.

There exists a common misperception that sick time is our time. Heck, it says right here on my pay-stub that I have accumulated X amount of time, right? Wrong, we only have compensatory rights to the value of half of our accumulated time after ten

years of service at retirement. This benefit was won in negotiations in the citywide contract. This is why the system is capable of applying a WOP to day taken until documentation is provided. This practice is usually not utilized

unless an employee has established a pattern or calls in on a holiday. However, some people have become creative in how they supply this documentation when it is requested or because they want fewer points counted towards them for the day. This situation has become so problematic, that the department is now forwarding altered or false medical documentation to the Department of Investigation (DOI) for possible criminal charges. This has happened, and members have been arrested! You can be charged with a misdemeanor, and under certain circumstances, even to the level of a felony. Remember, the City and the department have the right to verify the validity of medical documentation submitted. Be careful out there.

In Solidarity

Donald Faeth
Vice President



You and Me, We're In This Together!

By Anthony Miranda, *Executive Board Member*

I have been on this job for 21 years. I have always tried to be a part of our going forward as a service. I see a lot of new people on this job. I say to you, see what you can do at your station to make things better. Stop waiting for the other person to do something. I am proud to be back on the Executive Board. I want everyone to know that we on the board are working very hard to improve the quality of life on this job. We have a lot of work to do yet! We need everyone's help, if you can lend a hand please contact your Delegate or call the office.

There are many people at the station level that always have something negative to say about our job or the Local. These are the same people that don't go to meetings or vote for a contract. Don't fall prey to their ignorance and seek the answers to your questions from the right people who are the Delegates or the Borough Coordinators. If your Delegate is not doing his or her job at the station call the office.

Our strength is in our network and the way we can get information to our membership. I look forward to working with everyone out there to make a difference. God Bless You all and be kind to each other.

UNION CONNECTION

By Lester Musta Greene, Labor Liaison

In the April 2006 issue of Union Connection, I started with what I would refer to as “Union 101,” explaining what unions want and their purposes. In this issue I will expand your understanding—how unions are good for our families, how they protect our safety, health, and rights, and how to meet challenges that are coming up.

Unions have done more for the American people and for families than any institution in our nation. They protect seniority and reduce favoritism by putting value on the years you’ve worked for the company (FDNY). They also play a important role in every piece of social legislation that benefits the family. Unions and the labor movement fight for your needs, by working with the government on the city, state, federal levels to pass legislation that will enhance the well-being of workers and their families, by conducting campaigns for laws to improve job training, health insurance, education, and child care, and to create more affordable housing.

Unions protect your safety and health. Did you know that in 2001, excluding deaths from the 9/11 terrorist attacks, an average of 16 fatalities caused by workplace hazards occurred every day? The National Safety Council reported that 3.9 million American workers suffered disabling work injuries, which cost workers billions of dollars in lost wages and medical expenses.

A network of union representatives plays an important role in our communities, by working with the United Way, American Red Cross, and other social service agencies that provide needy individuals with food, healthcare, jobs, housing and financial aid, as well as counseling on alcoholism, drug abuse, and family problems.



Our unions give us legal protection for wages, benefits, and safeguards against unfair and abusive treatment through provisions in our contract that provide for a grievance process that takes up complaints against management.

WOW! You do need a union!

But there are challenges facing workers in the 21st century. As the global economy keeps developing, we are going to have a tougher time defending our jobs and living standards. Multinational corporations continue to slash their workforce, and they tell us that unless we reduce our wages and benefits, we’ll be priced out of the global job market.

When you hear this, the choice you should make is to work with the union and other working people who are in the same fix in this country and around the world. We can combine our strength to defend your rights to a job and a decent livelihood. You should take this step not only for yourself, but for your children and those who come after them.

To all my union brothers and sisters, have a safe summer and “Remember: In Union There Is Strength!”

References:

- Why unions “are good for you and your family” by Harry Kelber
- Why unions are in politics The Labor Educator
- The making of ideal union member—The Labor Educator
- The making of ideal union leader from The Labor Educator

AFFORDABLE HOME MORTGAGE PROGRAM

Dear Member,

Local 2507 understands that all working families across the country want the opportunity to make the American Dream of Homeownership a reality. The challenges of buying a home, from the first time homebuyer to the seasoned veteran, can be overwhelming. The home buying process may be multi-leveled, require careful planning and a high level of commitment but it is a dream that can be realized.

If you are considering buying a home or refinancing your current home there are many benefits available to you through Countrywide Home Loans:

- Free Homeownership Education
- Free Debt and Budget Counseling
- Free Pre-approval and Affordability Analysis
- House America Home Buyer Preparatory Education
- On-Site access to certified Home Loan Consultants
- Access to Countrywide’s wide selection of competitively

priced home loans including zero down payment and low down payment programs to make qualifying faster and easier

- \$500 savings at the closing of your home mortgage

For most families the key to owning a home is understanding the process. Countrywide’s union program is designed to guide you through the road to homeownership. Through this program we will ensure that the members of Local 2507 who want to own a home will learn the appropriate steps needed to achieve the American Dream of Homeownership.

Since the program was introduced to our union about 18 months ago, nearly 50 members of our union have either purchased a home, refinanced their existing home or have been pre-approved for a mortgage with the help of this program.

For more information regarding the program, please contact your local Countrywide Home Loans Representative Brian Gallagher at 212-763-5529.

It is our hope that you will take advantage of this great opportunity.

CHAMPIONS AT HEART

By Oren Barzilay

I am proud to announce that four of our members representing FDNY EMS at the International Journal of Emergency Medical Service Games (JEMS) which was held in Baltimore Maryland on March 24, 2006, took first place.

Team members were, Paramedic Joseph Hudak from Bot, Paramedic James "Bubba" Faller from Bot, EMT Joseph Fortis from Bot and alternate Paramedic Donald Hudson from Bot.

I, with other members of this department along with Chief Peruggia and their Commanding Officer, Capt. Holiday attended this event to show support.

I must tell you, you had to be there to see the amount of respect, honor and cheering these guys received from their com-

petitors and their competitor families as well. The crowd just loved them.

Not only did they do an amazing patient care but at the same time they had the crowd and judges rolling from laughter, it was a tough scenario and they outscored all competitors.

What makes this story great is not the fact that they won first place and took home a \$1000 cash prize, but the fact that they choose to donate this money to the family of our fallen sister Debbie Reeve whom died on March 15 of this year.

A real class act.

From all of us, great job guys.



EMS MEMORIAL—ROANOKE, VIRGINIA



BIG BROTHER, BIG SISTER

By Renae O'Carrol, *Executive Board Member*

How many times have you said to someone other than your co-workers, "I hate working with these new guys?" I know that I have been guilty of it and I am sure some of you have said the same thing too. These comments eventually get back to that new EMT or Paramedic who just came out of the Academy and is sitting in the tech's seat right next to you probably feeling nervous, afraid and uncertain. You've seen that person, with that lost look in their eyes trying to feel their way out on the job just as you and I did in our first weeks. They, again like you and I were, are, probably wondering how and if they will ever fit in or be accepted into this place with so many different moods and personalities.

Today we have young adults for who this might be their first real job, responsibility or exposure to the real world. I had one whose conversation was only about video games. I said to myself this has got to stop. Not his fault that other than what knowledge he received from the academy the rest of his young life was consumed with today's technology of video games and computers. To deal with the situation, since I was going to be spending hours on end with this person, I decided to enter into his world of video games and whatever and in the same time exposed him to a little bit of my world. I shared my likes and dislikes. It wasn't bad. I actually learned some interesting stuff.

I said all this to say that it isn't their fault that they are placed on my unit. You and I could either deal with it properly or make other arrangements. I kept saying to myself that this is temporary which for

the most time it is. After all we are not promised a unit just a tour. I know it's also hard to have to drive all the time when they are not EVOC'd trained. One of the ways I dealt with it was thinking to myself, Hmmm, do I really want that person who probably has more experience at playing Grand Theft Auto (San Andrea's Edition), indy 500, crash cars or even hours on end surfing the web, as in my case and doesn't know the area and is already nervous driving me around? Think about it. It isn't their fault that they didn't come out EVOC trained like us with time on the job? No it isn't. Remember somebody had to guide most of us when we first started. Lets put ourselves in their shoes and do the same for them and maybe one day they will remember also and continue to be a sort of be a big brother or big sister mentoring like we did for them, remember that non-EVOC trained, nervous rookie partner might be the only one able to call a 10-13 if something happens. Do onto others etc.

EMS BIKE RIDE



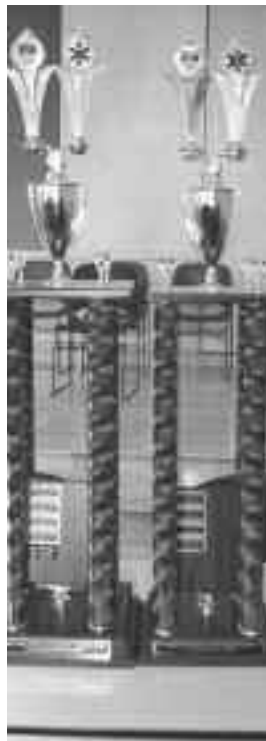
EMS MEMORIAL—ALBANY, NEW YORK



EMS NIGHT AT SHEA STADIUM



FDNY-EMS COMPETITION 2006



FDNY-EMS MEDAL DAY



MEET THE PEOPLE

—Photo by Oren Barzilay

Left to right: Tomisha Taylor, Batt. #55; Steven Correa, Batt. #55; Frank Vela, #55; Neil Torres, #55; Shawn McCalla, #26; Gil Dejesvs, #17; Mario Thompson, #17; Eddie Signer, #14; Carlos Rivera, #14.

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