

Another writing by Patrick on the direction our union is going. This is his reply to the below quote from someone on rootsweb...

"I further believe that we are duty bound to support our officers and enable them to lead and advance the common good of our Association."

Patrick's reply/opinion subj: _NOWHERE !!_

I agree and concur with your premise, but temper that with remarks. I strongly believe, that before one can be a true leader, they must first be a good follower. But, ask, is it realistic to think knowledgeable members are willing to follow officers, especially those at National, who have taken them --
--NOWHERE ?

The biggest "personnel" problem with this association (could be a real union) is lack of trained and experienced leadership at all levels. Yes, the "what's in for me" status quo types, (state officers, in a lot of instances, for a lot of reasons and agendas that I won't get into, and not necessarily always out of a sense of duty), those ignorant of things NRLCA, and those who blindly follow (pretty much the apathetic type that say Oh well... whatever) ARE doing "their duty". The majority of this association, IS already doing as you believe they should, they ARE "supporting" NRLCA officers, and where have we gotten ?
-- NOWHERE !

What is frustrating, and that's what you see as motivation for many posts on this list and others, is that officers for the most part are not listening to members. This is as true at state level, as it is at National. Many at state are in "lockstep" with National . The unfortunate thing is, many are taking their organizations in the same direction
-- NOWHERE !

It would be fine, if officers at all levels really listened, but the attitude is, and has been -- Sit down. Shut up. We know what's good for you. This is irrespective of the many, and often repeated attempts to affect meaningful change, or get assistance. Hence, things remain pretty much the same, with pretty much the same officers (many well-intentioned) doing pretty much the same things, and pretty much going in the same direction as far as affecting real change
-- NOWHERE !

I understand your concerns. But, were we to do our duty, we'd all be voting Yes on the contract extension proposal, since National recommend we say Yes. I use this as an example to point out, that members and state units are pretty much

impotent and not a factor in providing and prioritizing the direction members would like to see THEIR union go. Yes, letters may be written by a few concerned officers. But why no input from all states, as to what their members think ?

ANS: A nonexistent communications network. Were all state organizations to have been involved with National, would NRLCA members have been spared the debate and expense of considering the offer from USPS to extend our current contract ? Which is hopefully, going
-- NOWHERE !

Your post was really more about adjusting attitudes, than anything else. But seems to me, most state boards/officers are mostly only interested in the administrative tasking of running a state organization. That are learning to be the same type officers we've had at National for as long as I've been a Rural Carrier. This bodes for a continuation of the same type leadership we have, and have had ! Few in those leaderships positions have done much of anything to help to improve Rural Carriers working environments and paychecks. So, the frustration is knowing we've gone NOWHERE and, are heading
-- NOWHERE !

I've heard the same calls for the past 10 years -- get involved, go to meetings, run for office, be a delegate. Too many who really cared were (and continue to be) "shut out" and "shouted down" by those in the majority, with the status quo mentality. For those who do participate, and truly want to improve things for Rural Carriers and the NRLCA, I salute your efforts. But, am a realist, and believe that a lot of those who "participate" and call for others to do likewise, do it for mostly for personal considerations and their own agendas. So, it's business as usual, going
-- NOWHERE !

Other than the current majority "herd mentality" members I mentioned, who blindly do their duty and support our officers, is a minority who are tired of going NOWHERE ! They are shouting I'm tired of this BS and not going to take it anymore ! Those numbers will steadily increase. The status quo will continue to try and protect "their turf" and each other (only to a degree, because of their "me first attitude"). But they have been put on notice in recent years, that many of the apathetic members have been jolted into reality as result of failed leadership. They too are tired of putting up with the BS in their working environments, which is OFTEN OVERLOOKED or NOT ADDRESSED, OR NOT ADEQUATELY ADDRESSED, by our association ! They are reminded every two weeks, about doing

the same or more work for the same pay. Some even think, what have I really gained ? Their "awakening" is slow, but it's happening ! The status quo is afraid, very afraid that those members will also start shouting I'm tired of this BS and not going to take it anymore ! I'm tired of going
-- NOWHERE !

I see that as a reason why we don't do a better job of educating members on what union membership entails, why we don't effectively train officers to be effective managers and leaders, and why we don't have an NRLCA communications network. An educated, well-informed, connected "apathetic" member represents a threat to the status quo. I see no change in that direction, because the status quo doesn't want to see it. The status quo thrives on apathy ! Education, training, information, and giving members more say in THEIR organization would go a long way to help keep us from continuing to go
-- NOWHERE !

Yes, it's all about ATTITUDE ! It's all about having a real concern for Rural Carriers, knowing what needs to be done, and doing it ! The status quo are masters of convincing us of their concern. However, actions speak louder than words, and their record speaks for itself -- we're still headed
-- NOWHERE !

What it's not about, is the "What's in it for me ?" , "Sure beats not delivering mail, yet gettin' paid by the union", and "The perks from National Board are to court favor from "influential" state officers and other "fair-haired members" attitudes ! And, have always wondered how many delegates would actually care to be delegates, if not supplemented by state or National. And as for National Officers, have always wondered, how many would run if they were given a base salary consisting of a living wage for the DC area, and legitimate/approved expenses, and a "bonus" equal to the percentage gained or LOST by the average Rural Carrier, as a direct result of their efforts. They too should know firsthand, the impacts of going
-- NOWHERE !

Yes, I understand full well the "give" and "take" of being a state officer, a steward, and/or delegate. And yes, do advocate reimbursement based on loss of wages/benefits and legitimate/approved expenses. What I suggest is if motivation has less to do with concern for Rural Carriers and welfare of the NRLCA, you might just be a "taker". In any organization, there are "givers" and "takers". Too much associated with the status quo is more about "taking" and less about "giving". If we had more "givers" and less "takers", we might not continue heading

-- NOWHERE !

Some have said the key to meaningful change lies with DELEGATES. I disagree, because it's painfully obvious that the majority of delegates are responsible for helping to maintain the status quo, as they have for the past 10 years that I'm aware of. The ONLY way I see any real significant change happening, is that it must come from the top. In the Rural Carrier ranks, the pool of qualified candidates for the top jobs, with the leadership/managerial experience and proven success in running a large organization, are probably scarce. Getting them to seek office may not prove easy either. But, should those type persons be elected, in order to effect real and meaningful change, would require they be empowered to take action and effect sweeping changes to organizational structure and the way NRLCA currently does business. We should have been "growing" future leaders, by training and educating members and officers. Instead, it's been a "mentoring" in the status quo, "going through the chairs" on the National Board, inordinate time spent in different chairs on the board, or in the same job for too long system ! That MUST change !! Or, we will most definitely, keep going -- NOWHERE !

To affect sorely needed change at the top, requires "waking up" apathetic members, get them to understand their inaction supports the status quo, and work to empower all members to act by passing OM/OV for election of National Officers. MEMBERS must tell DELEGATES that this is what they want ! And the DELEGATES MUST vote accordingly ! The implication I too often get from posts is that I don't think delegates in most cases know what members really want, so vote more on a personal bias. MEMBERS need to ensure DELEGATES understand their wishes. And, DELEGATES need to vote accordingly, irrespective of personal beliefs. Too often, I surmise the case is, that DELEGATES are of the opinion that THEY were elected to represent members, so THEY'LL do what THEY think is right, as opposed to really considering what it is that members really want, especially if they don't understand the vote or it's consequences. In a lot of cases, this represents an uninformed/contrary vote in respect to members welfare. Retirees, who for the most part are unaffected by the consequence of their votes, and not in daily contact with Rural Carriers and the workplace, should consider not running as delegates. To me, just because a person was elected DELEGATE, doesn't imply knowing more, being more intelligent, or more "in the know" than any other members, as some would like to imply. If that were the case, we wouldn't still be going -- NOWHERE !

Yes, delegates will be required to make judgments concerning their votes, but it's critical they have an understanding of how the majority of members they represent truly feels about the vote at hand, especially those having a direct impact on them. Along with delegate representation, must come accountability to the membership they represent. Have suggested they report to the members they represent on how they voted, and on the key issues that affected them. To improve any delegate system requires accountability, to keep from going
-- NOWHERE !

States, must also become involved in setting up and helping the National Board prioritize an agenda to streamline the organizational structure, better identify/outline duties/responsibilities of officers/stewards/members, establish a communications network, and establish/implement tailored training to members and officers, and turn NRLCA into an efficient and effective union (NRLCU). Then and only then, will NRLCA be in a position to improve the Rural Carrier workplace and paycheck. This will cause a lot of emotional hand-wringing from status quo members who'd rather have an association, as opposed to a real union. Passing OM/OV is central to change. Changing attitudes is critical to keeping NRLCA from going
-- NOWHERE !

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