



## New year's resolutions

**P**articipate in “Gimme 5 for COLCPE”—Next month’s *Postal Record* will list those who are already contributing to the NALC’s political action committee. The list will include those who have signed up and contributed extraordinary amounts; however, there are still some carriers who have yet to sign up at all. A union works best when all members pull their weight. In November, we received another 1.9 percent wage increase—an active city letter carrier won’t even feel a \$5 per paycheck contribution.

**Identify new deliveries**—For the first time in many years, city letter carriers are being assigned a lion’s share of new deliveries, and we need them. The drop in mail volume has led to some contraction of our craft. One way to save our craft is to capture as much of the 1.2 million annual new deliveries as possible. One hurdle, though, is that when some local postmasters become aware of new deliveries within their ZIP code(s), they improperly assign the work to the rural carriers. This is where each carrier and shop steward can assist by identifying all new deliveries to the NALC (see page 23 of the December *Postal Record*).

**Submit Customer Connect leads**—Letter carriers have helped generate almost \$1 billion in new revenue for USPS simply by having a conversation with a customer on their route followed by answering a couple of questions and submitting them to the office Customer Connect representative. From there, a sales representative reaches out to the customer and works to help satisfy the customer’s mailing needs while securing new revenue and volume for USPS.

**Stop using a private vehicle to get to your route**—There are two choices when using a Privately Owned Vehicle (POV) to assist with delivery—dumb and dumber. Dumb is to use your POV and be reimbursed at the drive out agreement rate, which is \$3.30 to drive more than five miles, plus \$0.20 each additional mile, \$0.60 per relay. Dumber is the carrier who uses a POV to get to and from a route and is not in a drive out agreement with USPS. Why are we (1) putting the additional wear and tear on a private vehicle, (2) paying higher liability insurance, and (3) shortening our street time and leaving the route vulnerable to an addition or abolishment, barely being compensated for fuel consumption?

**Drive a union-made car**—There is nothing more disappointing than seeing a “union activist” pull away in a foreign, non-union-made vehicle. NALC President Emeritus

Vince Sombrotto pointedly remarked that for some, “Solidarity ends where sacrifice begins.” For a listing of union made cars, see the inside back cover of this issue or visit the United Auto Workers website.

**Avoid shopping at Wal-Mart**—Wal-Mart has issued “A Manager’s Toolbox to Remaining Union Free.” This toolbox provides managers with lists of warning signs that workers might be organizing and provides a hotline to call so company specialists can head off any attempt by employees to organize. The wages we earn are union dollars and shouldn’t be spent at an anti-union establishment.

**Patronize union hotels and boycott non-union hotels**—This must apply not only to our personal spending, but to any union function. An easy way to determine whether a hotel is unionized is to check [hotelworkersrising.org/HotelGuide/boycottlist.php](http://hotelworkersrising.org/HotelGuide/boycottlist.php).

**Talk up your union experience**—Americans from “The Greatest Generation,” those who lived through World War II and fought in the war and/or sacrificed at home making contributions to our war effort, understood the value of working together and how selfless acts could benefit a greater good. It was an easy choice for those in the workforce to determine that a union job would provide security for the worker and family, which would exceed short-term rewards, bonuses or promises of wealth.

The current generation of workers does not have those experiences and have been misled by (1) the corporate world, which replaced benefits such as a pension with 401(k)s and a health plan with the emergency room; (2) the banking industry, which gave credit cards to people who never sought them, as well as a credit rating system that rewards those in debt in lieu of those who pay off their debts quickly; and (3) mortgage lenders, who were trusted to perform a thorough credit check and honestly project the borrower’s ability to afford and repay a mortgage.

Now, the job market is dog-eat-dog and the employers hold all the cards. As the Employee Free Choice Act is debated, many young workers may not know the proud history of the American labor movement. Certainly the employers and bankers aren’t going to educate them, but we can. Speak to your young friends and relatives about your involvement with your union and how you have seen things change for the better. Hearing your life experiences will help preserve those accomplishments and assist younger workers in understanding how all workers benefit when organized labor exists. ☒