

CULT OF VICTIMIZATION

By Donald Faeth

Prejudice exists both on and off the job in today's society, as it has throughout the course of history. It would be ignorant of anyone to state otherwise. Some people are treated differently simply because of the color of their skin, ethnicity, nature of their gender/sexual preference, or due to a person's status in life. Sometimes...people are treated differently simply due to the way they behave. Some feel that they would be better served if that factor were ignored. This is becoming a big problem in our service. There appears to be a growing 'cult of victimization' where the EEO office has to navigate through piles of paperwork to differentiate between legitimate complainants from those who are utilizing that department as their crutch or as a weapon to satisfy a personal agenda.

The other day, at BITS, an employee conveyed to me that she wouldn't be up for charges if she were a 'white guy.' Maybe she has a point, heck, I'm a white guy and I have never received formal charges against me. Maybe people looked out for me, possibly it was pure luck. On the other hand, is it possible I just did my job (scratching head). Whenever something goes wrong in my life, I look inward first before I search for an excuse. Were my actions inappropriate? If so, I should try to correct what I did wrong, apologize to those affected, and learn from the error so it doesn't happen again (this article might be one of those situations). If my actions rose to the level of being disciplined, I would acknowledge my blame and try to work out the best deal. Mitigating factors, of course, would be brought to the surface to acquire a less severe penalty. However, to excuse oneself from blame just because you fall into a protected category under EEO laws, only reflects poorly on yourself and potentially can hurt another who was just doing their job.

If I had a penny for every time someone has said, "why am I here (BITS) when other people do the same thing and never got in trouble," I wouldn't be driving a little purple car with 184,000 miles on it. My response is always the same, did you or did you not, commit the infraction? If you came in late the same time your partner came in but you were told to fill out an AFL and your co-worker wasn't, guess what, be happy for your co-worker. What people fail to realize is that maybe you have established a pattern where the other person hasn't. Maybe they called ahead of time with a legitimate excuse, but you didn't. Maybe it was just an oversight of the supervisor and today it just sucked to be you. Then again, maybe you are right and the supervisor just doesn't like you. At the end of the day, it doesn't change your culpability by pulling someone else into your predicament. My kids do this all the time when they get caught, 'well, he started, they were doing it too, why isn't she getting into trouble?' Bottom line, it is time for some of us to just grow up.

I realize that this is a topic that most people wouldn't touch with a ten-foot pen. Ignoring a problem, however, only allows it to grow larger. The EEO office serves a very important function in the Fire Department and should be utilized without fear of ret-

tribution whenever someone is wrongfully discriminated against. They can be contacted on the 4th floor of 9 Metro Tech at (718) 999-1446. However, the lion chases the slowest antelope, the least athletic child gets picked last when choosing teams. It is called culling the herd or identifying the weakest link, it is not wrongful discrimination. This distinction should be brought to the surface of your consciousness whenever negative attention is brought to you. Was this brought onto me wrongfully or did I bring this onto myself? We all grow by meeting challenges in life and overcoming them. Making excuses for your own inappropriate actions only serves to move you in the opposite direction of achieving this.

As always, stay safe and united out there!

In Solidarity

Donald Faeth
Vice President



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THE TRUTH IS

By **Renaë O'Carroll**, *Executive Board Member*

I am so very proud of my co-workers for using the type of patience and restraint that is demanded yet expected of them during their tour. Watching my peers, under some of the most extreme situations, how can one not be proud of them?

Just listen to that critical notification being called over the air by one of your peers. Notice the control that your peer will have most of the time while they are driving {racing} to get that "gun shot wound," "cardiac arrest," "newborn," "pedestrian struck" or any other patient whose life is in the balance, to the hospital, this after working frantically to stabilize someone in extremis while keeping his/her emotions under control. Stand next to any emergency room bay in the city and watch how in control your peers are. Working as a team, moving as one, ensuring that this critical patient gets into the emergency room with a chance of

survival, all the while rendering the best possible care that can be given to this patient by the best trained EMS personnel in the country. I know EMS has its bad apples, but EMS is no different than any other agency out there, just read the papers. But I am sure you will agree with me that there is significantly more good apples than bad ones. I said all this to say that after looking at your peers in this light maybe, just maybe those of you that don't normally do it can acknowledge each other. A simple "hello," a handshake or even a "how are you" might make a big difference to your fellow co-worker who may have just had an extremely stressfull call. In a job like this one with very few rewards or accolades, just a few positive words from your peers could make all the difference in the world. That is why I would like to take this opportunity to say the Field Workers, to Dispatchers, and the A.R.D.'s "a job well done" and I salute you and that is the truth.

Contract Language, Open to Interpretation "Management Usually Against Employee"

By **Anthony Miranda**, *Executive Board Member*

Another contract behind us. I hope by now you have seen some money in your checks. Contract language is open to interpretation? I have found it interesting how management will interpret the meaning of a part in the contract and usually it will be against the employee. There will be the major changes in how time gets calculated. Management wants people to work for straight time rather than at overtime pay. It is up to everyone to keep track of the time worked. Ask for copies of your TPR's. Any problems get in touch with your Delegate or Executive Board Member. The union is working with management to work through this problem. We need documentation to show what is happening with people's pay. Then there is the other problem, I call it "The Spoiled Child Syndrome." Where management deliberately does something opposite of what the language

of the contract stated. We have made many advances on negotiated issues. Because of this, management will go against time being issued, but we will bring them back to reality. We will be meeting with City Council Members as well as Elected Officials up in Albany. With your help we will prevail.

We will see other changes in Technology and Protective Personal Equipment. Times are changing in this world we are living in. We must protect our men and women at EMS. We all must go with the changes and comply with the new policies. It will be all about culpability factor in what happens to you. Let us know what problems arise out in the field. Again, be your brother or sister's keeper. Let's be strong in our fight for a good working future for all.



OVERTIME

(Continued from page 1)

Although the department has finally allocated some money to EMS recruitment, this positive development will have little effect on the EMS staffing crisis if we do not stop the continued mass exodus. EMS is a profession, not a prospective fire fighter screening program you idiots!

While the Union will continue to encourage its' members to come to work, we do this in support of those members who have

worked their tour and deserve to go home to their families. It appears that those in power will not fix the broken machine until such time as the broken machine actually and miraculously begins to work. This mentality is akin to "the beatings will continue until morale improves".

The time for a rectal cranialectomy at headquarters has come. I urge them not to wait much longer.

In Solidarity

Patrick J. Bahnken
President

EMS AT MADISON SQUARE GARDEN WITH THE NEW YORK LIBERTY—WNBA



EMS AT MADISON SQUARE GARDEN WITH THE NEW YORK LIBERTY—WNBA



U.E.P. SUMMER OUTING

By Oren Barzilay

My brothers and sisters, it has been a long drawn year for all of us, between Contract Talks, Health and Safety issues, mandations, having to hear and deal with your partner's mood swings, issues, and so on.

The Officers and Executive Board Members of Local 2507 would like to sponsor a union outing for its members in recognition for their hard work and dedication that they give each and everyday to the citizens and visitors of NYC.

The outing will take place in Queens, at Cunningham Park on Sunday, Aug. 27, 2006.

There will be food, drinks, music, sports and other events that

will be added with the members input, but most importantly it will bring all of us together, which is long overdue.

All those that will be attending are asked to email the Event Coordinator Oren Barzilay at NYCEMSEVENTS@AOL.COM with their Name, Station Number and Contact number. I am also looking for people that would volunteer to help with this event, such as manning the grill, looking for DJ's and suggestions for activities.

Please reply only if you would attend so we could have an estimated number of people. Thank you.



MEET THE PEOPLE

Photos by Oren Barzilay



Dispatchers

Top left to right, Keith Sawyer, Patric Johnson, Moish Stareshefsky, Jimmy Furlong, Randy Zuckerman, Sophie Mangru; bottom row, left to right, James Tidball, Miguel Nina, Anthony Dimattei, Joseph Vandemark and Betty Patterson.

Assignment Receiving Dispatchers

Top left to right, Marx Lawrence, Christopher Martino, Robert Denson, Mohammad Iqbal, Raul Perez, Renee Parris; middle row, left to right, Shaheed Ayesha, Laura Sieubuhr, Adriano Guedes, Arturo Banchs; bottom row, left to right, Tanika Ortiz and Handra Billingslea.



UNION CONNECTION

By Lester Muata Greene, Labor Liaison

What is Labor Day beyond the barbecue, picnic and parade, it is a holiday honoring working people.

It is observed as a legal holiday on the first Monday in September throughout the United States, Puerto Rico, and Canada. In Australia, Labor Day is called Eight Hour Day, it commemorates the successful struggle for a shorter working day. In Europe, and most of the world, Labor Day is observed on May 1st and is called MayDay. May is Labor History Month.

There were two workers in September 1882, a machinist Matthew Maguire from Patterson, New Jersey and Peter J. McGuire a carpenter from New York City who played an important part in staging the First Labor Day parade.

President Grover Cleveland signed a bill in 1894 making Labor Day a National Holiday.

In New York City, on September 5, 1882, 20,000 marched in the Labor Day parade.

This was part of Labors heyday when working people had power and used it.

This is part of what unions have to aim for in the 21st century, when we are at a low point, there must be a Labor Renewal, to once again realize working peoples potential.



“Only a fool would try to deprive working men and working women of their right to join the union of their choice.”

—Dwight D. Eisenhower

ENOUGH!

By John Schaefer, Pension/Grievance Coordinator

The dream of every member goes something like this: you pay your dues by doing “the right thing” and you will be guaranteed a fair & safe work environment, promote to the line of your choice, retire with a relative degree of health and enjoy the fruits of your labor. In other terms you will become part of the middle class while realizing the American dream.

However over the last decade the job has failed to uphold its end of the deal on that dream. The reality is this: over the last decade our work environment has become oppressive, the job has intruded upon and limited our lives essentially making us virtual slaves to the profession all the while robbing us of our health and personal welfare.

Some of the blame lies with the current anti-union sentiment of the Dept., some of the blame lies at the feet of the current politically appointed administration. It lies mostly at our collective doorstep. Members have come to believe that their union just buys them the right to have a grievance filed while biding time between contracts.

This job has withered into irrelevance because the upper echelon leadership, aided by the cadre of station bosses, expends its energies engaged in battle with the members. Neither can find any common language through which to discuss opposing views. Bosses see all critics as malcontents and a threat to power. Dissidents view all bosses as bureaucrats and react with militancy. These opposing sides do not appreciate the result of their actions, which is the inability to communicate with, and actually lead the members. This is what I call

fiefdom of leadership

Fiefdom of leadership occurs when the need to retain power is the primary goal of the leadership. That goal can only be supplanted in importance by the unrelenting pursuit of maintaining ones personal status (with an eye toward promotion) at the expense of the union members. The pursuit of this agenda by dictatorial process only reinforces the memberships perception that the leadership is, in fact, inept. This method of leadership maintains the status quo at the expense of any tangible progress. The subtle implication is that the members are too stupid to realize the situation. Fiefdom of leadership has the distinct aura of corruption to it, and the members are keenly aware of it.

The members are demanding that the leadership direct the focus of their energy away from their personalities and redirect it to the new world realities, The members are demanding that the leadership reverse the erosion of our standard of living. The members realize that the growth of the EMS system without justice for the providers is a false victory.

The Dept has had no visibility, or success, in confronting the challenges we are facing. The leadership must place greater emphasis on member participation in the process, especially at the grassroots level. The leadership must harness and direct these energies back into the community which it serves. This Dept has the unique advantage of ethnic diversity and economic commonality with the people it serves. It is criminal to allow that power to be squandered while the Dept. leaders engage in the folly of internal political shenanigans. All this while the members become more and more disenfranchised and alienated from the mainstream they have striven to become part of.

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UEP Bulletin

OVERTIME

By Patrick J. Bahnken

Back in the 1980's when response times were as high as twenty minutes, the New York City Board of Estimate (precursor to the City Council) held hearings to find out why response times were so high. The Executive Director of EMS under HHC responded to Board of Estimate President Andrew Stern's inquiry that the high heat index was to blame. This led an angry Stern to reply "it was hot last year, it's hot this year and it will be hot again next year! What have you done to prepare for it?"

What the city has done to prepare over the last twenty years has been little more than to shift the blame. Now instead of blaming the heat index, the Department blames the rank and file by claiming that high sick leave rates are making it hard to turn out enough ambulances. They hope you will ignore the fact that there exists a tremendous amount of known vacancies which already point to a significant lack of staff. They also forget that the very people they accuse of malingering are the same people that voluntarily sign up to staff these hundreds of known vacancies each and every month!

What is their solution each time the staffing problem comes around again? You guessed it; they blame you and then cancel the KVO program. Their solution to their problem is to place the blame on you and reward you for coming to work by forcing you to stay at work! In a simpler term, they appear to enjoy whipping the horse that is pulling the load.

Now the Department has taken the "abuse the worker" mentality to a new level. They have actually suspended the KVO program NOT in response to a staffing emergency but in ANTICIPATION of a staffing emergency.

What makes this so sickening is that the only things that appear to have been done over the past twenty years to address the staffing problem are shifting of blame and abusing the worker! In other words, same song, same dance.

The Union has been supportive of the department in the past when it came to running ambulances. We have held the position that in the end, we want our people on our ambulances out in the field rather than another entity. Simultaneously, we have



presented alternatives that would be less onerous on our members. Sadly, when the emergency ends, so too does the conversation on alternatives.

When the department became aware that the Union would not support the recent suspension of the KVO program they responded by telling us that our position would not help with the problem.

It is said that the definition of insanity is doing the same thing the same way and expecting a different outcome. We will no longer support this constant cycle of failing to plan on their part constituting an emergency on our part. If this department hopes to see us support them ever again, then some things have to change.

A good start would be to better explore alternative work schedules and one-day annual leave picks. The department thinks of you as little more than a drone and forgets that you have a life beyond work. After all, how could you possibly have a life if they never issued you one? They do not understand that you have a family, friends or other interests outside of this department. The Union has repeatedly informed the department that members have families and obligations like their children's dance recitals, little league games, weddings, birthday parties etc.

Rather than acknowledge the fact that people have lives and try to find a more workable solution, they just bury their heads in the sand and repeat the mantra "members have to come to work, members have to come to work, members have to come to work..." like some mindless zombie. True to the definition of insanity, we keep doing the same thing the same way all the while expecting a different outcome.

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