

MAP and the New Year
By: Joseph Andalina

Some of you have been with MAP since we started back in 1984. Most of you have affiliated with MAP sometime between then and now. Whatever your status with MAP, I wish to convey our appreciation for your loyalty, support, and continued membership.

Many of you have come from different unions looking for an organization that will listen to you and fight for you. The police, corrections, and related law enforcement employee labor field, as a public sector entity, is different from the private sector unions. Citizens, your employers, and the media are constantly examining everything we do under a magnifying glass. Our every word and deed are scrutinized for mistakes, whether avoidable or not, justifiable or not. We are in a tough business.

The brass and the media are quick to jump on the “bash the cops or correctional officer” bandwagon. Once you get into a jam, you see how far south your relationship with your employer goes. It is easier to release you than save you. Don’t believe me? Call someday and I’ll fill you in about the amount of discipline we have handled this past year, as well as from 1985 in general.

There is always a concerted effort by most employers to separate the officer alleged to be involved in some misconduct from those of you not currently in a jam. It’s as if they can convince you that the officer is a screw-up, that his/her fellow brother/sister officers will put distance between them and the alleged offender. It is an ongoing problem in all areas of law enforcement. Coupled with that are government’s efforts to keep you as low paid as possible. Keep your standard of living low, reduce benefits and cry poor mouth. Why is that?

Is it for their own governmental pork barrels? Is it an effort to reduce taxes to gain political support for their next election? Is it a concerted effort to keep public employees public servants, which historically means low wages and give them more power over you? Who knows? Maybe all three, maybe a combination, maybe it’s another unknown rationale that the aliens running some of the municipalities and counties have hidden from us.

Sure, many of us make a decent buck. Usually after our secondary employment or a hell of a lot of hours working details or overtime that we are required to work. Is that okay? Can’t we make a decent living with just one job if we wanted to? Or about missing every kid’s birthday, most Christmases, and other important holidays. There is little sympathy for you from the bosses, but we continue to do this job because we care.

Contract negotiations have become more difficult, simply because we want to increase wages and benefits and get rid of wage reducing government tactics, such as merit and exorbitant steps in grade where you will never actually get to “step 237” and maximize your pay.

Grievances are another area that has seen an enormous increase over the years. M.A.P. preaches constantly to grieve your contractual problems. If your employer is the type to work things out with you, fine. However, if they are obstinate, fail to apply rules equally, or just hard-hearted, then you must strive to enforce the spirit, if not the letter, of your contract to make it viable for everyone.

The big three for police labor unions are not unlike those in the private sector; collective bargaining, legal defense and grievances. We hope that we have shown all of you as a chapter and individually that M.A.P. has kept all of its promises. We have listened, we are accessible, our attorneys negotiate your contract with grievances, and we have ensured that your rights as law enforcement officers (in all areas) have not been usurped. Your employers, the press, and the politicians have recognized that MAP is truly the union for law enforcement and that we will fight for you.

We hope that you know we have spent the necessary time, effort, and money to protect all of your interests. Most of the time we are successful. Sometimes the evidence is there against some individuals facing discipline, sometimes it is not there to sustain favorable arbitration awards. But in every instance, we hope that you know that win, lose or draw, the expenditures of time, effort and money was indeed present.

A good union, as M.A.P. is, will continue to provide this service to all of you in every one of our chapters in the coming year. The new year will see increased activity in all of these areas and many new ones, too, as we represent more correctional officers, telecommunicators, and other members in the law enforcement field.

New members and new chapters are joining M.A.P. on a regular basis. Chapters are leaving other unions because they know they will find with M.A.P. a union that does what it is supposed to do, and that is simply representing its members.

So in this New Year, you can expect more of the same extensive representation from your union, your board, our staff, and our attorneys. Yes, there may be misunderstandings—some glitches in the systems, too. However, just call on us when you need us, or during any phase of our local representation. We will continue to strive to provide the best professional labor/legal services to you at the lowest dues cost possible.

Remember that our only agenda is YOU.

Stay safe.