

A Few minutes with the Boss

By: Joseph Andalina

Not a Happy Thanksgiving for all—but we still have our blessings

This past month has seen a slew of layoffs in an array of municipalities involving various unions. In one, Prospect Heights, (a MAP chapter) layoffs resulted from MAP's win of an arbitration which prevented forced 30-day furloughs for the police and sergeants in that town.

In the 14 months it took to win this case, the city spent lots of money to continue their dictatorial campaign to furlough police without bargaining.

The arbitrator ruled in favor of MAP and the furloughs stopped. The city played the “take the furloughs, withdraw your grievances, ULPs, and give concessions” game. If we didn't play along, they would layoff six cops.

Well, discussions became more acrimonious and instead of trying to negotiate, the city dumped six cops. Happy Thanksgiving to their officers from the administration of Prospect Heights. Of course, they blamed the union. They all do.

Some follow up explanations made it to the press—some didn't, but as usual, the city's false claim took center stage with some people.

I wrote the following letter as a rebuttal, which subsequently appeared only online in the *Daily Herald*. While the press has been fair, the problem always has been that only soundbites or edited versions result from interviews or letters. In this case, they printed my letter but most of the time, the complete story simply does not make it to the public.

Maybe it doesn't make much difference as people really seem to have “drunk the Kool-aid” offered by the government and feel that the cops, firemen, public sector workers, and unions are all the problem.

My letter appears below at the end of this piece, which appeared online on November 18, 2010.

But remember, as bad as this case is and others, it still is a time to be thankful. Your health and your life is a wonderful thing. And if it's one thing I have learned is that life goes on and it's busy (well, that's two things.).

While we here at MAP will continue to fight for our members and those recently laid off, and as life goes on, I hope that all of you will have/had a peaceful and restful Thanksgiving.

Remember, that no matter what happens, we still have our families. That's what Thanksgiving is for; to dine with those we care for and rejoice that we have survived the hardships that life can sometimes bring.

Happy Turkey Day!

The City is not truthful.

Six cops were laid off in Prospect Heights and the impression was given that the union was responsible. A citizen writes to *Fence Post* expressing dismay that the union prevented the officers from accepting furloughs.

The truth? Our union has a contract with Prospect Heights. It doesn't contain furloughs. Last year, the city furloughed police employees, without discussions with the officers or union. The officers asked their union (MAP) to fight these infringements. It was improper in that the city made no effort to bargain. MAP did what the officers asked, which is what a union is supposed to do. We did not go forward until the officers filed the grievance, which was sent to the labor board. An independent arbitrator ruled in favor of the union. Every step of the way, MAP told the officers layoffs could happen. They said keep fighting. MAP wins the grievance, the city whines, and decides to layoff cops in retaliation. At this point, some officers may have said they would accept furloughs because the city put a gun to their head by threatening jobs. The officers are still telling us to keep fighting.

The fact is MAP offered to continue furloughs while preserving our win, holding off on issues of back pay issues and other grievances until mid-November or longer, while we met with the city to try to resolve this matter. That's the truth. But the city said no—you give up everything you won, pending grievances, and possibly other concessions, or the layoffs continue.

It's simply disingenuous by Prospect Heights officials. Citizens are not getting the true story. The city is playing this game in order to blame the union and the cops for something the city caused. Some of these officials are worse than liars.

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