Where Did The Time Go?
Managing Your Time to Communicate and Lead Effectively

Presented by
Tom DeLapp, President
Communication Resources for Schools
ACSA CEL Institute
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Expectations & Outcomes

• Understanding why there never seems to be enough hours in the day to do your job
• Recognizing and dealing with time wasters, time traps, and time bandits (the vampires that suck the life out of your day!)
• Techniques to maximize your time
• Auditing your time management effectiveness
• Setting realistic goals and work plans
Are you working hard to catch up?

Is your life just a continuous stream of deadlines where you’re always trying to beat the clock?

Of course it is! You’re in school administration!

DEAD • LINE

What you’re going to be if a project doesn’t get in on time

The excuse you’ll use for not doing it when you should have
Just trying to stay above water?

Are you caught up in the tidal wave of work and just hope you can stay on board long enough to hit the beach at some retirement home on Maui!

Do you hope you can just swim fast enough through the pool full of alligators to make it to the other side of your career?

Take the time to drown proof your career!

A little time management can help a lot!
Does this sound familiar?

• I just can’t make enough time in the day!
• If I only had a little more time for this!
• I didn’t think it’d take this much time!
• This happens too many times to me!
• It’s time to get organized (again)!
• How did they find time to do that!
• Time is running out!
• Nope, I’m finally out of time!
• God, I wish I could take some time off!!
• I guess it’s time to update my resume!

Don’t prioritize your schedule; schedule your priorities!
I don’t have enough time!

This seems to be the school leader’s answer to time management!
It’s a demanding environment

Public school consumer base is anxious, uncertain and impatient

PUBLIC SCHOOL PIÑATA
Beat us up until the goodies fall out!

THE EDUCATION ATM
They dial in their PIN, set their own credit limit, and expect the benefits to come out!

PUBLIC SCHOOL PUNCHING BAG
Repeatedly hit us and expect us to bounce right back!

They want us to spend time on their needs and priorities
Understanding people today

• Have self-professed expertise about education
• Diverse populations with diverse perspectives
• More aggressive consumer attitudes
• Harder to reach, but more ways to reach them
• Distrust large institutions and organizations
• Care little for the chain of command
• Look to others to solve their life/family problems
• Are media driven and have short attention spans
• Believe they are incredibly busy even if they aren’t

*Make time for me, but I can’t seem to find the time for you!*
Participant Poll Question

If I had 1 more hour in a day I would:

• Get caught up at work (reduce the backlog)
• Get caught up with chores at home
• Focus more on my office goals and work plans
• Eat lunch (or breakfast or dinner)
• Go home to spend time with family and friends
• Read or engage in a hobby or relaxing activity
• Exercise
• Sleep

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“Managing the Time to Communicate and Lead”
Buying yourself some time

• What would you do if you had an extra hour each day?
  – If you said “I’d get more work done” then shame on you!
  – The idea behind being more efficient and effective is to help make your life less stressful!
  – It’s also about creating opportunities for you as a professional and as a person!

• Effective time management can buy you an extra hour a day!
Working harder isn’t the answer

Is workload overload burning you out?

Using your time wisely is!
You can’t create more time!

• But you can compress the time it takes to accomplish tasks!
• By eliminating inefficiencies and “Do-Overs” you can create more useful time in your day
• Prevent time-on-task inflation!
  – Take care of little problems before they steal larger amounts of time later on
  – Stop being a crisis incubator!
  – Learn to accept “Good Enough”
  – If you don’t have time to do it right in the first place, when are you going to find the time to do it over later?

Make the highest and best use of every hour
Covering Your Assets!

You bring three things to the leadership table:

- **Talent**
  - Abilities, knowledge, experience, expertise

- **Temperament**
  - Personality, leadership, communication style

- **Time**
  - There are only so many hours in the day!
  - This one can defeat the other two every time!
Time is an appreciating asset

- If time is money then give me some more of both!
- Spend your time, don’t just use it.
- Invest time so you can reap dividends later.
- Value your time at a high level and then make sure you don’t waste it!
- Understand that time is a cost factor in everything you do.
- Think about how much each task is really worth.
Walk Your Talk

Don’t kid yourself

• “It’s not what you am inside … it’s what you do that defines you!” (from the movie Batman Begins)

• You are what you do, not what you say you do

• How you spend your time says a lot about you as a professional

• Getting control over your time takes planning, preparation and persistence

• If you always do what you’ve always done, you’ll always get what you always got

• Change the time equation in your personal and professional life!

You can’t prove you can hit major league pitching if you never step into the batter’s box!
Evolution of Time Management

- “To Do” lists, checklists, notes
  - Helps you inventory your expectations and tasks
- Calendars, day planners, appointment books, PDAs
  - Helps you not forget your hours and days
- Project management (matrices and tracking systems)
  - Helps you count your time-on-task in reaching goals
- Using time to achieve priority results
  - Understanding that it’s not about doing things right if you’re not doing the right things
The Multi-Tasking Myth

• How many simultaneous tasks can you juggle successfully?

• The question is: “Am I giving 100% of the minimum attention required to do this task without jeopardizing the other tasks on my plate?

• Are you in fact giving less than 100% to each task when you take on more than one task?

• Is the little stuff infringing on the big stuff and distracting you?

• You cannot balance more than one thing per sensory input (sight, sound, feel, taste, etc.)
My Biggest Time Waster

Is it:

• A repetitive task that’s inefficient?
• An intrusive individual or type of person?
• Lack of complete information to do the job right?
• Waiting for someone else to do their job?
• Your own poor personal time use/practices?
• Your cell phone or email

Can you put a time cost on it?
Can you put a face on it?
Where are you losing time?

- Take 3 minutes to identify some of your personal time management problem areas. Are they:

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Participant Poll Question

My **Biggest Time Waster is:**

- A repetitive task or process that’s inefficient
- Co-workers or parents who interrupt me
- Responding to phone calls or emails
- Personal interruptions from social media or family issues
- Distractions in the office or workplace environment
- Lack of information to do the job right the first time
- Waiting for someone else to do their job
- My own inefficient or ineffective use of time
- Trying to multi-task too many demands or projects
- The way my boss delegates assignments
Twenty Top Time Wasters

• Attempting to do too much
• Inadequate planning
• Managing by crisis
• Inability to say “No”
• Lack of self discipline
• No self-service capacity
• Ineffective delegation
• Personal disorganization
• Poor listening habits
• Inadequate accountability
• Telephone interruptions
• Time bandits and drop-ins
• Meetings
• Paper work
• Partial completion of tasks
• Social Media
• Socializing
• Incomplete information
• Poor communication
• Travel
#1 Attempting too much

- **How big is your personal portfolio of tasks and assignments?**
  - Know what you have on your plate
- **Audit your time for two weeks to measure gaps and weaknesses**
  - Be very specific (day dreaming counts!)
  - Every ten minutes keeps you on track
- **Do you actually have a job description?**
  - If not, create a written description
  - Is it matched to your performance goals and employee evaluation instruments?
- **Assign a realistic time factor to each task or duty**
#2 Not planning your time

- Don’t practice ready, fire, aim!
- Have a work plan in place that reflects real time estimates too
- Work your calendar, try a reverse calendar
- Assign realistic time frames to tasks. Build in a buffer and don’t give it away!
- Plan for the unexpected and targets of opportunity
- Tie your work to a strategic plan. Put time on task to advance your district/school vision, goals and priorities
#3 Managing by crisis

- I do my best work under pressure!
- Just because they think it’s a crisis doesn’t make it one
- Encourage arsonists to put out their own fires
- Don’t over commit time because you need to factor in unforeseen events and changed circumstances
- Stamp out small flames before they become raging infernos!
- Fire prevention is much easier
- Not everything worth doing is worth doing today

The Chinese symbol for crisis is a blend of the symbols Wei for danger, and Ji for crucial point

Your response in a high profile incident or situation can be your finest hour
#4 Inability to say “No”

- By nature we are problem solvers so people bring problems to us
- If you don’t define yourself well, others will not see their request as an intrusion
- We aim to please and need to constantly validate our positions in face of budget cuts
- Piling up assignments like cord wood only leads to disappointing people
- Saying “No” is seen as the pathway to termination or irrelevance

I can’t seem to find this key on my keyboard or telephone!
• Some people have taken the ability to say “No” to a very high level
• They avoid assignments and shift responsibility
Participant Poll Question

How much of your time each day is spent on unanticipated tasks or interruptions?

• Less than one hour per day
• About one hour a day
• 2-3 hours a day
• Half my day is out of my control
• Most of my work day is spent reacting
• None, I work to a set plan every day

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“Managing the Time to Communicate and Lead”
Develop a little Teflon

• Avoid impulsive commitments. Don’t answer “Yes” until you’ve thought it through and checked your schedule
• Engage the requester in sorting out the priorities
• Maybe you’re not the best man/woman for the job
• Give them just enough help so they can finish it themselves
• Get credit if you redirect your time
• Swap time with the requester
#5 Lack of Self-Discipline

- We put off disagreeable chores and things we don’t like to do
  - **Procrastination**
    Delaying the inevitable
    “This too will pass” syndrome
  - **Displacement activities**
    I need to clean my office first
    I’ll just make a few call backs
  - **Butterfly Effect**
    We put interruptions in our way
    Getting easily distracted

*When your “To Do” list immobilizes you it’s time to tear it up and do one thing!*
# 6 No self-service capacity

- Don’t be “personality dependent” in how your district answers questions and who can answer them
- Create information kiosks and parent information centers at schools and district offices
- Use your web page as your wire service and your answering service. Set it up from a users point of view, not as your table of organization. Make it FAQ-based!
- Ask staff what key questions they routinely get and create written information tools to address those issues
#7 Ineffective delegation

- Just because you can do something doesn’t mean you should do something. Put your hand down!
- Underlings can delegate up
  - They can be chore shifters
  - Do enough to “trap” you into finishing their work
- Are you clear when making assignments?
  - About scope, expectations, quality level, reporting systems, deadlines and progress
Taking the time to decide

- Time management has a ripple effect throughout the organization
- One person can affect everyone’s time, priorities and performance
Faulty Delegation Wastes Time

- Challenge your boss to be thorough when delegating something to you
  - Either tell me exactly how you want it or clearly tell me I have discretion to do it my way
# 8 Personal Disorganization

Tracking down stuff loses time!

- Keep your desk clear of “everything” so you only work on one thing at a time
- Do you have slow or outdated computers, printers, phones, and other technology? Filing systems, in-out boxes aren’t trash cans
- Use your technology tools as a “database network” by creating understanding folders and document titles
- Date and time stamp your work. Take clear messages (like names with phone numbers)
- How you take notes and where you put them matters
- Use quick responses instead of “follow-up memos”
Built-In Efficiencies

Know what you’re doing!

- Do you know what you don’t know? Fess up if you don’t!
- How can I learn more about this task that will buy me permanent time savings down the road?
- Am I having to re-learn something each time? Can I automate this activity?
- Have you learned your lessons and applied solved mistakes into permanent cures?
- Go to school on “school.” Build up your knowledge base or at least know where you can find out quickly
#9 We aren’t listening well

- We lose time sometimes because we don’t take the time to listen well

_Do you ---_

- Keep opinions to yourself until you’ve heard the other person?
- Listen for ideas as well as facts?
- Resist jumping to conclusions?
- Stay interested? Focus on the speaker from the beginning?
- Judge what is said, rather than how it’s said?
- Ask questions for clarification?
- Refuse to admit we got distracted or didn’t hear/understand?
People can stop listening

- When misinformation embeds, people stop listening
- Set the “mental furniture” for stakeholders about key messages and issues to avoid stereotypes and biases by communicating early and often
Obstacles to good listening

• **Hearing**
  – Eliminate environmental noise and distractions.

• **Attending**
  – Eliminate mental noise. Focus immediately. A conversation’s first three seconds set the tone and importance. Most people think you started listening when they started talking!

• **Interpreting**
  – Look for cues to motives and meaning

• **Evaluating**
  – You can listen as you speak.
  – Audit your side of a conversation; do you listen or talk more?
Poor Listening Skills

• **Feigned Listening**
  – Excessive head nodding, Uh-Huhs

• **Sporadic Listening**
  – Drifting in and out, usually because you're impatient

• **Argumentative Listening**
  – Letting emotions drive your response

• **Distracted Listening**
  – We don't admit we’re distracted so we sometimes answer a question that wasn’t asked
#10 Inadequate Accountability

- Failure to set clear lines of authority and responsibility makes it hard to enforce accountability
- Know who’s doing what on each task
  - Make specific assignments part of your project tracking system
- Have in mind the destination before you start the voyage on a project
  - Put in place performance standards
- If I learn to slide in under the tag I might be more apt to steal bases when I shouldn’t!
#11 Telephone Interruptions

- **We treat phones like alarm clocks**
  - We get uncomfortable when they ring

- **Why do we let the caller take cuts?**
  - Let them know you if can’t handle their request on demand
  - Treat face-to-face as more important

- **Set aside a “telephone free” time**
  - Bundle your call-backs and screen your calls so you decide when to respond
  - But don’t screen all calls automatically
Participant Poll Question

How much of your time each day is spent talking on the telephone (on average)?

- Less than one hour per day
- About one hour a day
- 2-3 hours a day
- Half my day is spent on the phone
- I spend ¾ of my work day on the phone
- I hate the phone so I let other people answer it
Tips for Telephone Talking

Take charge of the phone call

• Be pleasant, but get down to business
• Make sure you know who you’re talking to
• Alert them to how long the call will last
• Use prompts like, “My final point is …” or there are 4 things we need to talk about”
• Note the time you start a phone call and track the time you’re spending
• Don’t keep going over the same ground; be methodical by recapping and seeking closure with the caller on each point
• Summarize to ensure understanding on both ends of the conversation

An incoming call shouldn’t be a blank check for someone else to spend your time!
#12 Time Bandits and Drop-Ins

- Complainers
- Buck Passers
- Dawdlers
- Leaners
- Minute Men
- Inattentives
Complainers

• No open complaint items at meetings
• Don’t agree to accept their “delegation” of responsibility. Involve them in solutions
• Avoid the accuse - defend - reaccuse sequence. Move from problem identification to problem solving as quickly as possible
• Make them write it down, give them a task so they are active in the solution. Put the ball in their hands
• Triangulate them (Have you told …, Can I tell … or I’ll be happy to arrange …)
Buck Passers

• Frequently show their limitations so you’ll volunteer to step in. It’s just easier if I do it myself (well OK then!)

• Appeal to you to solve the problem for them instead of presenting options to you

• You paper train them to do minimal work because you’ll complete it as you “edit”

• They make their procrastination your problem by jamming your schedule

• They are infectious because they model negative behavior for others

• A culture of buck passing ends up coming full circle eventually

Passing Problems Like Hot Potatoes!
When we’re under staffed and overworked, organizations tend to shift their excess priorities to others.
Dawdlers

- They set the tempo and work pulse for the workplace
- People will decide on their own how long something should take unless you set the stopwatch
- Define “good enough” for them
- Be clear on expectations for performance, turn-around time
- Use frequent check-ins to monitor and motivate

These people force you to manage them because they need to be overly-directed . . . and that steals time!
Leaners

• Over-stay their welcome by leaning on your door jamb and not leaving
  – Waiting parents who needs to kill time (yours)

• They can be drive-by listeners who want to be side tracked and are seeking displacement

• See your open door as a rest stop on the work highway

• They attract other leaners to join them in team leaning exercises

• Be clear with leaners that you only have a short time. Get up and move them out after a few minutes

• Try standing up when they knock on the door
The Minute Man

• “Got a minute?” usually means you’ll spend 10 minutes
• Sometimes people want you to help them when they should be helping themselves
• Your response: I have a minute. Then at 30 seconds stand up and start shepherding them to the door
• If they snag you in the hall, make sure you monitor your time commitment. If it looks like it will take longer than a few minutes, set a meeting.
• Interject with quick questions to clarify what they want and whether it’s worth your time at this moment
• These people like to “take cuts.” Don’t let them!
Inattentives

• “If it’s really important she’ll tell me about” attitude toward memos and publications
• They don’t see how knowing what you think is important affects them
• They don’t take the time to be informed and usually don’t inform others well
• Let e-mail pile up and then race to erase them often discarding necessary stuff
• Be clear and direct in what you write
• Have consequences for “failure to read”
• Ask for specific responses with deadlines to test their attention levels

This is a major culprit in causing “Do-Overs”
#13 Meetings

- Anticipate outcomes so you can set expectations
- Members must know their roles and responsibilities
- Have a definite purpose and make it clear to all attendees when they are invited
- Is the meeting to inform, engage or decide?
- Can an e-mail or memo suffice?

To meet or not to meet, that is the question
Meeting Standards

• Set protocols for conduct and process
• Time the agenda and stick to it
• Start on time, end on time
• Don’t “revisit” items for stragglers or indecisives
• Produce minutes immediately
• Be sure of consensus before moving on
• End on positives, restate conclusions
• No one leaves without an assignment
• Praise in public, criticize in private

Never have large meetings when small ones will do
#14 Paper Work Piles Up

- The “touch it only once” rule
- Write responses right on the memo and ship it back
- Don’t keep hard copies if digital copies will do
- Have a processing system that fits your style
- Trash all drafts
- Keep one source for the office so you can share it
#15 Partial Task Completion

- Dropping a project with hopes of picking it up later means more start-up time
- If you lose your train of thought on a project it could cause a train wreck
- Others who have to pick up the pieces often can’t find them
- Getting past it so it doesn’t nag you can be a liberating feeling
- The further away you get from it the less likely you’ll be to want to start it up again
#16 Social Media

- A Weapon of Mass Distraction
- Highly intrusive, impulse driven
- Injects on-demand personal interests into the workplace
- Is hypnotizing as a time sinkhole
- Takes digital cuts so you get off track and have to retrace your steps
- Doesn’t care about your priorities
- Is a convenient sublimation device
The Modern Day Side Arm

- Smart phones are the “weapon of choice” to contend with a hectic life
- Seniors are the fastest growing users of cell phones because Boomers equip their parents
- Phones are a common denominator in a mixed media world to reach all stakeholders
- Phones bridge the generational, digital, and language divides
- Smart phones enable instantaneous access and transmission
#17 Socializing

- Watch for the late arrivers who show up to work on time but don’t get started for 45 minutes!
- Some small talk is good, but train folks to keep it small
- Taking frequent breaks is good for stress, but bad for time management if you’re not careful
- Build in time for maintaining relationships as a time priority in your schedule. Do it consciously, not by accident!

Cultivating public relationships is the key to our business
#18 Incomplete Information

- Starting a project without knowing what you need to know means lost time and backtracking
- Is the information you have the most current?
- Are you sure the information is reliable?
- Do you understand the technical jargon?
- Is all the information at hand or are you going to have to wing it for a while?
- If you are the source for information for someone else on staff, make sure you dole it out completely
#19 Poor Communication

We lose time when we mis-communicate

- With our body language
- In face to face conversations
- In the way we write
- In cyber communications
Attitude is Everything!

If the letter A = 1%, and B = 2% and so on, then -

- KNOWLEDGE = 96%
- HARDWORK = 98%

But

ATTITUDE = 100%

A positive mental attitude is critical (PMA)
Don’t carry personal baggage with you to work
Face-to-Face Communication

- Your voice sets the tone or attitude of the transaction.
- Smile and establish eye contact.
- Be discreet. Keep their business, their business!
- Use understandable language - not school jargon.
- Have enough front office volunteers as translators.
- Use active listening skills to make sure you clearly understand their concern or request.
- Make your visitor feel important. Use their name as often as possible. At the end of the conversation, thank them by name for coming in and welcome their return.
E-Mail Communication

• Learn how to engage in “serial communication.” Don’t play cyber tag! Leave detailed messages with the time/date, what you need to talk about, and suggested best times to call back.

• Never use sarcasm. Never type in all caps, it’s the equivalent of yelling on the Internet.

• Watch for automatic replies because your answer may be broadcast to an entire list.

• You don’t own your school e-mail, the district does. Keep a record on file of e-mails because other people will.

• Use head notes so key messages are on the first screen before they have to scroll down.

• Proof read and spell check before sending.

• Be sure to put your full name and telephone number so people can contact you.
Buy time by making written communication sing!

- Avoid embarrassment --- proof read don’t just spell check
- Be sure your name is typed under your signature. Let people know who they can call
- Eliminate jargon and educationese because they’ll call for clarification anyway
- Content is the key. Don’t get caught up in desktop publishing styles that lose your message.
- Paper train your customers to expect regular communication. Put a date on every communication.
- Check all addresses regularly so they’re accurate and avoid duplicates!
People read in layers

In **3 seconds** they scan headlines, masthead, photos and pull-out quotes

In **30 seconds** they skim the first paragraphs & sub-headings of every page to see if they’re interested

They’re only going to give you about **3 minutes** to read the whole thing so keep articles short and to the point
Bulletin Board Scan Test

Put your newsletter on the wall. Step away six feet.
Can still you read anything?
If you can’t, neither will your reader.
Do main messages still come through?

Principal’s Message

School test scores continue to rise
Average 25 point gain over 2001 in Math and English

Successful intervention program helps struggling students

“All the reading training we got last year has really paid off in the classroom”
- First grade teacher

Inside:
- Lunch Menu
- Parenting tips
- April Calendar
- PTA News
- School Board

Parent Isabel Hernandez reads with son Joey each morning in the First Steps school readiness program
Try the Dollar Bill Test

Place a dollar bill on your page. If you move it around, it should always be able to touch some graphic element: a photo, pull quote, headline, illustration, chart, etc.

If it does, then you have enough visual impact
Integrate all communications

- School or district annual reports
- Board agenda items
- Fact sheets, FAQs and brochures
- Web Pages
- Presentations & visual displays
- Public engagement strategies
- Media kits, news releases, opinion columns
- Broadcast e-mail, e-newsletters, voice mail messages, blogs, podcasts
- Key communicator letters, service club speeches, talking points

Write it once, then step on it for multiple uses
Practice Rumor Control

• Rumors are like water running down hill; you can’t stop them, but you can harness them!

• Channel information flow through the rumor mill so it doesn’t erode your support base

• Inoculate against the “negativity virus”

• Rumors win on Speed and Quantity, Give them Quality and they’ll work for you!

• Turn them into key communicators

• Nip them in the bud so you don’t waste time on damage control later on

Rumors can undercut your efforts
#20 Travel

- Are your archived computer files easily accessible by someone other than you?
- Can you work on the go?
  - Transportable, replicable, retrievable, cyber-friendly
- Do you schedule tasks to fit routes to and from meetings or work sites?
- Do you plan to use down time productively?
Managing My Time Better

- Take 3 minutes to write down some immediate action steps you’ll take this year to better manage your time.

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Participant Poll Question

What is the primary area where you will work to improve your time management?

• Handling telephone calls
• Emails and text messages
• Dealing with time bandits and drop ins
• Monitoring/auditing how I use my own time
• Setting realistic time commitments w/ co-workers & the boss
• Correcting my personal habits that waste time
• Changing a system or practice that’s inefficient
• Managing meetings w/ groups and individuals
• Other
Supervisors Caught in Middle

Empower middle management

- Employees rely on supervisors for credible, reliable information
- Administrators should be well informed so they can be “truth tellers” and semi-neutral opinion leaders for employees
- They also send cues and model accepted time management practices
- Supervisors and Principals should not cause time management problems for staff

School District

Principals

Managers

School Sites/Depts
Stay focused on priorities

- Watch out for displacement activities
- Don’t be ruled by the last person who talked to you!
  If you don’t like to soloist, get a bigger choir!
- Sure it might be more fun to do something else, but stay focused on priority tasks – first things first!
- Think strategically, act strategically and spend your time strategically!
Streamline the process

- Procedures should help not hurt
- Is there enough time built into the process?
- Can a conference call put everyone on the same page quicker?
- Collision of schedules means someone’s priority has to trump others
- Is there a real purpose for a schedule or deadline, or does it just fit one person’s concept or needs?

Is your bureaucracy a black hole that wastes time?
The ripple effect starts with you

Make time management a priority

- For yourself and others
- Free time for free time
- Don’t be a slave to your day planner; make it your tool
- Model expected behaviors about timeliness
- Be the time “compass” for staff
- Take time to take care of yourself!

AND BUYS YOU TIME!
For further information

Tom DeLapp, President
Communication Resources for Schools
2351 Sunset Blvd, Suite 170, #504
Rocklin, California 95765

(916) 315-1409

Cell & Text: (916) 765-1759
Email: tomdelapp@aol.com
Web Site: www.tomdelapp.com
Blog: www.tomdelapp.blogspot.com
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