



WAKE UP!

President/ Editor

Publisher
Dan Wheeler

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Acton , Amesbury , Andover , Bedford , Beverly, Billerica , Burlington , Chelmsford , Concord , Danvers, Dracut , Gloucester, Haverhill, Holliston, Ipswich, Lowell, Lynnfield, Manchester, Marblehead, Maynard, Merrimac, Newburyport, North Chelmsford, North Reading , Peabody , Reading, Rockport, Salem , South Hamilton, Sudbury , Tewksbury , Topsfield, Wakefield , Wayland , Wilmington , Winchester

From the M39, Management of Delivery Services

231.5 The route examiner must inform the carrier that he/she intends to make a fair and reasonable evaluation of the workload on the route and that in order to do so ***the carrier must perform duties and travel the route in precisely the same manner as he/she does throughout the year.*** The examiner should impress the carrier with the fact that management is just as anxious and desirous of obtaining an accurate count of mail and inspection of the route as the carrier is, so that a fair and equitable evaluation of the workload on the route may be made.

232 Conduct of Route Examiner

232.1 The route examiner ***must:***

- a. Not set the pace for the carrier, but should maintain a position to observe all delivery points and conditions.
- b. ***Not suggest or forbid*** any rest or comfort stops but should make proper notations of them.
- c. ***Not discuss with the carrier*** on the day of inspection the mail volume or the evaluation of the route. These matters ***must be discussed*** with the carrier ***at a later date when all data has been reviewed and analyzed.***

From the M41, City Delivery Carriers Duties and Responsibilities

915 Inspection Day

In order that a fair and reasonable evaluation may be made by management, carriers must perform their duties and travel their routes in ***precisely the same manner*** on inspection day as they do throughout the year.

From Your Branch President

President's Message

“110 to 80 in 23”

As I write this article, 2016 is just about in the books. For the year, 110 pieces of discipline were issued to 80 letter carriers in 23 stations in Branch 25. I'm certainly not going to mention any names, but I'm going to list the offices and the number of pieces of discipline. Everything isn't always as it appears. Here goes nothing:

Acton 1, Andover 11, Bedford 2, Beverly 11, Billerica 11, Burlington 6, Chelmsford 2, Danvers 7, Dracut 4, Gloucester 1, Haverhill 3, Lowell 6, Lynnfield 2, Marblehead 6, Newburyport 1, Peabody 19, Reading 6, Salem 1, Sudbury 1, Tewksbury 2, Wayland 1, Wilmington 1, Winchester 5.

The above list is based on the local stewards contacting the Union office and requesting a grievance number in order to initiate a grievance. If (and I cringe at the thought), discipline is issued and resolved without our knowledge, it won't appear on this list.

It is worth noting that the following offices reported NO DISCIPLINE to the Branch: Amesbury, Concord, Holliston, Ipswich, Manchester, Merrimac, North Chelmsford, North Reading, Rockport, South Hamilton, Topsfield, and Wakefield.

The list also demonstrates that you can make numbers appear however you want them to appear, but they don't tell the whole story. For instance, I would be doing a disservice if I didn't explore a little deeper into the numbers in Peabody. Of those 19 pieces of discipline, not one grievance had to leave the office. That indicates that the local stewards and managers seem to “have things under control” and can work together to resolve issues.

It is no secret that I don't like grievances. If I had my way, issues would be nipped in the bud with phone calls to either local management, the POOMs, or labor. However, notwithstanding that mentality, we had to file some 200 contract grievances this year as well. I won't go into a breakdown of each office and each type of grievance, but I will just say this: we prevailed in more than we lost, significantly.

I would like to see all those numbers decrease in 2017. I will admit, though, given the ambitious inspection schedule that management has announced in the branch, we could start the year off with a flurry of grievance activity. That is entirely up to operations

support and the local offices. If the rules are followed, and carriers are not given any instructions other than to “do the route the way you do it each and every day”, grievances should be minimal. One can only hope.

On the contract front, in my opinion a hurdle has been cleared towards a contract for us. The postal service and the mail handlers union have reached a tentative agreement that will soon be sent to their members for ratification. The pay package is retroactive to November of 2016, and mirrors the pay package of the rurals and the clerks. That is, there are raises of 1.2, 1.3, and 1.3 percent in the three years of the contract. The raises for the mail handler assistants (mha's) are the same as those for the pse's and they are 2.2, 2.3, and 2.3 percent in the three years of the contract. PSE's and MHA's each will now receive six paid holidays, as opposed to none up to this point. Clothing allowances are up, and the employee's health care contribution is also up, negating part of the pay increases.

I put this information out there and invite you to research further terms so that you can be prepared for what our national president may send us for ratification. As you should be aware, our national officers are still negotiating with the postal service over the terms of a new national agreement. As the December issue of the Postal Record indicated, the discussions are continuing because “the path to a new agreement remains open.” I would imagine that the path will either open wider or abruptly close sometime in February when the results of the mail handlers' ratification vote are available.

I choose to remain optimistic. I can't imagine that the parties would have continued to discuss the terms of the national agreement for this long after its expiration if there were not a legitimate chance to resolve many issues, both wages and other provisions being discussed. Let's hope the New Year brings a new contract with favorable wages and benefits.

Finally, I don't know about anyone else but I for one truly enjoyed Christmas falling on a Sunday this year! Couple that fact with the fact that there was no Amazon delivery and the legal holiday was observed on Monday and letter carriers almost enjoyed a “normal” weekend that has now become foreign to the postal service. Each and every one of you should give yourselves a well-deserved pat on the back for ensuring the postal service thrived during this arduous holiday season. You did a phenomenal job!!

I would like to wish all the members, their families, and anyone else reading this a very HAPPY & HEALTHY NEW YEAR!!

Executive Vice President's Report

I know it was a very busy Christmas season for everyone but hopefully there was time to enjoy the holidays with family and friends. There is a lot of things in the works for us as a business this coming year. First of all, our National Agreement will either be negotiated and sent out for ratification by the members of the Union, or arbitrated for a decision. Hopefully, an agreement is reached sooner than later. National President Rolando has said we will keep negotiating as long as there is a sense that we will be able to reach a fair agreement. We also have a new incoming President that would love to change the retirement system for federal employees, and I don't believe he wants to make it more what we would consider desirable. He has said this along with Paul Ryan and other Congressional leaders that want to reduce our benefits and make what we already have more costly. This will have a direct effect on all of us now and in the future. I am sure this will be the subject of great debate in Washington and there will be updates from the NALC as this proceeds. Stay updated. The NALC will update all members that are signed up as E-activist. This can be done on the NALC website. (nalc.org)

The branch is currently scheduling route inspection training for offices that are scheduled for inspections beginning in January. If you are in an office that is scheduled to be inspected, I suggest you attend this training. A high percentage of carriers have not been through a full 6-day inspection for many years, some not at all, but you should be aware of what to expect and your rights and responsibilities during an inspection. During an inspection you will do the route as you do every other day of the year, but there is daily paperwork most carriers are not familiar with until they have been through an inspection.

The penalty overtime exclusion period should be over by the time you get this notice. As I have said in the past, the provisions of Article 8 don't change during the penalty exclusion period but I expect management to try to limit your hours to avoid penalty OT afterward. If you are not on the OT list and you are required to work OT check with your steward to make sure it is legitimate. There are times when management can require you to work OT if you are not on the OT list, but certain provisions must be met.

Seeing that the New Year is here it is probably a good time to check your Electronic Official Personnel Folder (E-OPF) to make sure all is in order. This can be done on the Liteblue website. Most carriers only look at this when they are getting ready to retire, which is a good idea, but it should be reviewed more often. The

OPF contains information from your entire career and information that was submitted when you first were hired, such as beneficiaries you elected for your TSP and Life insurance policies. These items remain the same

unless you change it. Sometimes situations change and you may want to change your beneficiaries. These are things that you should be reviewing in your E-OPF on a yearly basis and especially if you are planning to retire in the near future.

This is also a good time to look into the policies issued by the Mutual Benefits Association of the NALC. They have good life insurance policies and IRA's as well as Roth IRA's that earn guaranteed income. It is never too early to start saving what you can for retirement. You can view the brochures for the products the MBA offers on the NALC website and view the current interest rates associated with the products also.

By the time you read this hopefully the Patriots will be looking forward to home field advantage for the playoffs. Less than 3 months until spring.

Keep your head up!

Paul Desmond

Calendar of Events

January 1	New Year's Day
January 3	8pm Branch Meeting @ Knights of Columbus 27 School St. Ext. Wilmington Chinese Food served @ 7:15
January 16	Martin Luther King Jr. Day
January 24	Compliment Day
January 28	Chinese New Years

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Dan Wheeler	Wake-Up Publisher
Richard Donlon	Asst Health Benefits Rep
Ron Noviello	Workers' Comp Rep.

Branch 25 would like to welcome the following new members into the fold:

- Dickon Barry.....Acton
- Miguel DeLara.....North Chelmsford
- Courtney DeAlmeida.....Newburyport
- Jay Johnson.....Beverly

Your "Wake-Up!" is produced in-house at the Branch 25 Union office each and every month.



**This Christmas
Gronk on the shelf**

Land That I Love

The United States of America has had 56 presidential elections in its history. Some of these elections have been extremely close like the 2000 election, while others have been blowouts such as the 1936 and 1972 elections. While the results may have not been what some Americans wanted, the transition of power has been remarkably peaceful until now.

You would think that the winner of this election was Satan himself. Violent protests have broken out, amendments to abolish the Electoral have been proposed, and recounts in key swing states are under way. Folks, the Society of the Tin Foil Hats have heard the call, so let's take a Reynolds Wrap roll call of the leading delegates in this collection of idiots.

Leading the way is the outgoing senator from California Barbara Boxer. Babs is so upset at the fact Mr. Trump won the Electoral College but not the popular vote, she wants to amend the Constitution abolishing the College. She has co-sponsored legislation to abolish the Electoral College before, but has been unsuccessful. I have to laugh at her efforts because the Founding Fathers established the Electoral College so that less populous states could have a fairer playing field in determining who becomes president. This bill would unlikely pass as the Republicans hold both houses of Congress and even if it did pass, three-fourths of the states would have to ratify it within seven years after its passage in the Congress.

Imagine if James Madison were alive today, he probably would tell Babs that the College was created "to prevent factions from forming that would have a common interest that would violate the rights of citizens or harm the nation as a whole." The tale of the tape would reveal that Mr. Madison was the Father of the Constitution, the 4th president of the United States, and Secretary of State. I have to give Babs her due as she has been a stockbroker, reporter, member of the House of Representatives, and a U.S. Senator. She will never be mistaken for having the foresight Madison, Hamilton, and Washington had forming this country. Every time I hear her name I think of a popular Simon and Garfunkel song and a breed of dog! Did I mention that at one time she was an in law to the Pants Suit Princess AKA Hillary Clinton, oh what strange bedfellows politics creates.

Dave Hallinan
Peabody

Safety Talks

Over the years we have all heard the same talks; wet leaves, school's in, school's out, rollaways, etc... Two weeks ago we had our first snow fall of the season. The Channel 5 weather girl called it a wintery mix. We got the talk reminding us to drive slower and use stair railings.

Just so happens this day on my route is trash collection day and my LLV was following behind a trash truck. One of its workers was dangling off the business end of the truck. With one foot on the step and holding on with one hand the rest of his body was straight out like a cheap flag in a hurricane. I wonder if the refuse company gave a safety talk on this morning? If so, what was the context? Be careful, the greasy step might be slippery when wet and hold on with both hands. Compare that to my instruction to use both the lap and shoulder seat belts.

Imagine if you would, the knucklehead falls off the truck and I hit him. There would certainly be a PDI following the revocation of my driving privileges. A manager would be sitting there with a copy of my safety record. He'd say something like, "this doesn't look good for you due to being an accident repeater. There's a dog bite four years ago and a bee sting from last year." Of course this is hypothetical. None of these "accidents" actually happened, but easily could have. The message here is to be aware of your surroundings, even if they are yellow Labs or yellow jackets. Take the safety talks seriously.

Bob Cronin
Vice President



Sunshine State News

Lauderdale By The Sea

Happy Thanksgiving!



Arrived October 15th, a week late due to Hurricane Matthew. The weather has been absolutely beautiful-average temperature is between 78/80. There is water everywhere and being a Pisces I am loving it and Mark is just soaking up the sunshine. Due to unforeseeable circumstances we have decided to remain in the Lauderdale area (which we love) and will be renting the condo (see photo/left) with a great water view! We have been keeping busy by exploring the coast line and surrounding areas. There is so much to see and do here! We have even discovered the statue of the Bare Foot Mailman (see above) one of Mark's predecessors!!

Momentum

Coping with holiday stress



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How to cope with holiday blues

- ✓ Strive to get more sunlight during the day and/or use a phototherapy (light) box if you suffer from seasonal affective disorder (SAD).
- ✓ Seek more social contact during this time of year. Counseling, medications and support groups also make a positive difference.
- ✓ Isolation can be a problem for people suffering with depression. If you don't have plans with others, find public celebrations or volunteer opportunities where you can serve those less fortunate.

Beating stress this holiday season

Often we over-schedule and over-achieve during the holidays, leaving little opportunity to truly celebrate the peaceful pleasures of the season. Better to keep things simple in order to avoid stress and exhaustion.

At this time of year, people often find themselves trying to keep up with shopping, decorating, cooking, school events, work functions and other celebratory gatherings. With so much going on, it's easy to feel overwhelmed. Here are simple ideas for cutting holiday stress.

- **Don't seek perfection.** People often maintain an idealized image of how the holidays should be. However, everything about your holiday season doesn't have to be perfect or just like last year.
- **Be realistic about what you can do prior to and during the holidays.** Trim some tasks or social functions so that you have more time to enjoy the season and the people you value most.
- **Get help.** Share your challenges with those around you. Delegate some tasks to family, friends or coworkers, as appropriate.
- **Get rest.** Don't let your schedule get so off-kilter that you neglect to get an adequate amount of sleep.



Access *MoodCalmer*—a self-guided, confidential online program that helps you understand the symptoms of depression, challenge negative thoughts, feel better, and manage relapses. Sign in at www.EAP4YOU.com to learn more.

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