



WAKE UP!

President/ Editor
Dave Barbuzzi

Publisher

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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



Brother Dominic Landry of the Peabody station recently successfully bid Route 9 in South Peabody. The very same route his grandfather, retired Branch 25 member Frank Landry, held down for over 20 years. You're doing your grandfather proud, Dom!

President's Message

"I Really Don't Care"

Do I have your attention? I'm sure there are those that will have just read that four word title and moved on. I'm glad that I could fuel their energy.

*I really don't care if you work 8 hours. That is the complete quote. I don't care if you come in and work 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, or 10 hours on your day off. I DO care that you get paid your guarantee!

The eight-hour guarantee is nothing new. The language has been in the contract since before I started my career in 1987. The heartburn has been around just as long. I can still recall being a steward in the early 90's and filing grievances to ensure that carriers were paid 8 hours when they went home early on an n/s day. The phone call would come in the morning, the carrier wouldn't want to work the entire day, and the supervisor would say something like "just get your route done and you can go home." The grievance would follow, and then the 8-hour guarantee. It's nothing new.

This year, with the advent of Sunday work being commonplace due to the staffing issues and more so now with peak season upon us, the guarantee battle has again reared its ugly head. I understand that you don't want to work 8 hours on Sunday if there are only 5 hours work. I also understand that you may be working both of your days off and you don't want to work 8 hours on either of them if you can get out in less than 8. I don't blame you. Contrary to what management may tell you, I (OR THE UNION) AM NOT MAKING YOU STAY 8 HOURS WHEN YOU'RE DONE IN 5! That's right, if it were my call, you could go home. I just want to make sure you are PAID for 8 hours which is your guarantee.

Recently, in one of our offices where we have filed grievances and received pay and cease and desist orders, the local managers think they are being cute. When carriers ask in the morning if they can waive their 8 hour guarantee and leave early, the supervisors have said "You are guaranteed 8 hours, but, if you don't feel well, I can't make you stay. After all, in the days of Covid we have to be careful." Carriers then complete their work for the day and sign PS Form 3971's to leave early. I don't know if the carriers realize it or not, but you can't be paid sick leave at the overtime rate of pay. So, in effect, all the 3971's do is let management off the hook for the balance of your 8-hour guarantee. There are many offices where the managers have integrity and they simply pay the guarantee. The carriers leave when they're done, and they get paid 8 hours. That is what the contract, and the union, calls for. Please, be aware, management is not doing you a favor letting you go early UNLESS they are going to pay you. I can think of no worse form of disrespect than management stealing wages from carriers who are busting their butts to keep the mail moving under present-day conditions!

Very soon, those of you that are still active carriers will have the opportunity to participate in a ratification vote for our tentative National Agreement. Ratification materials will be sent out on January 10-11 and will be due back by February 16, 2021. Details of the tentative agreement have appeared in the Postal Bulletin. My portion of the January Branch 25 Zoom Meeting will be primarily dedicated to discussing the tentative agreement and I will answer any questions that I am able to answer between now and then and in the new business portion of the branch meeting. Please make an effort to attend via Zoom.

I attended a Virtual National Rap Session on Sunday, December 20, 2020. Some of the key provisions that were discussed were as follows:

- Duration 9/21/19 through 5/20/23
- Pay increases of 1.1, 1.1, 1.3, and 1.3 percent retroactive for the first two upon ratification
- Regulars with at least 46 weeks at Step O will become Step P 11/2022
- 6/21 Step CC eliminated, CCA new entry rate will be Step BB which is 50 cents higher than the present Step CC
- CCA'S receive an additional 1%/year on top of prior mentioned pay increases in lieu of COLA
- Retirees will get adjustment for any hours worked after pay increase dates. Annuities will be recalculated if necessary
- CCA'S with 24 months relative standing in the same installation will be converted to career
- CCA'S can decline conversion, but won't be offered another opportunity
- Health Benefits: postal contribution remains at 73% through 2021, becomes 72% in 2022 and 2023. The 1% amounts to less than \$4/pp for individuals and less than \$8/pp for family plans
- Effective 2022, USPS will pay 75% of the total premium for CCA's in the postal non-career plan. This is regardless of how long a CCA has been employed and applies to both individual and family
- Holiday Pay: If you work the actual holiday that you receive holiday pay for, your holiday pay can be converted to a/l. This applies to CCA's that work on holidays that they would be paid for

There will be more discussed at the Branch meeting. One other subject of note was that of new vehicles. It appears there will not be a new fleet in 2021. There may be some replacements made, but not service-wide. There is talk that the new administration may provide assistance in making government vehicles green. The service is waiting to find out what funds there will be.

Stay informed and HAPPY NEW YEAR!

Dave Barbuzzi

Executive Vice-President's Report

I hope everyone got through the Christmas season safely and enjoyed a little down time with their families. It has obviously been a year like no other, but there is hope on the horizon that a vaccine will be made available in the near future for every one of us. If this happens, this would be the first step to getting back to a somewhat normal work environment and possibly an increase in mail volumes, with an increase in business to jumpstart the economy. We are not there yet, so don't expect to stop wearing masks, or the dividers at the carrier cases to be removed for a while, but it looks like we are getting there. As I have said in previous articles, we may have had a rough year, but unlike many other people, we have not missed any paychecks during this pandemic. Unfortunately, not everyone can say that.

For the past couple of months, while on my way to work or on the way home, I have seen many LLVs driving with only one headlight on. Obviously, we turn them both on at the same time, so the only conclusion can be that the other light does not work. I'm not referring strictly to Branch 25 stations, but other branches as well. When we do our vehicle checks in the morning, we should not ignore it when something in the vehicle needs repair. Please get a vehicle tag and write up the needed repair and give it to your supervisor along with the vehicle keys. If you need help with this ask for your steward's help. Management should not be handing these vehicles out to anyone else without the vehicle being repaired. If this happens, please call the Union office. We have had vehicles given to carriers with broken lights and windshield wipers that don't work, after they have been written up by other carriers. Just because it isn't forecast to rain or snow does not mean the vehicle is safe without wipers, especially in the winter with snow everywhere splashing on the windshield. Also, it gets dark very early this time of year and missing a headlight can be unsafe. Check your tires to make sure they are not bald. These are things that have come to our attention recently. No one should be driving an unsafe vehicle.

We have had calls asking about when retroactive pay will be received for the tentative agreement for the national contract. First of all the contract needs to be sent out for ratification by vote of all eligible members. If the contract is ratified and I think it should be, then the time frame is usually referred to as, "as soon as administratively possible", for the retro payments to be made. By all accounts, it looks like the contract will be sent out for ratification in January. The next branch meeting will be held by Zoom, and there will be information on the tentative agreement shared that night. The Zoom information is in this month's Wakeup and there is also a link to it on the branch 25 website. I encourage all members to participate in these meetings, you are not required to do anything but watch and listen,

but if you have a question or comment there is a way to do that also. You can enjoy a beverage of your choice and kick back and attend a meeting without even leaving home.

Now that we have had our first major storm of the winter I hope everyone stayed on their feet. I know everyone is always in a hurry, but safety is more important than making up time. If there isn't a clear path to a delivery, please avoid it for that day. Be especially careful in the dark, and notify your supervisor of all non-deliveries because of safety issues. We have hit the point that we start to gain about a minute per day of daylight, and it will be noticeable in about a month.

Happy New Year and keep your head up!

Paul Desmond

Calendar of Events

January 1	New Year's Day
January 3	Feast of the Epiphany
January 5	Branch 25 Zoom Meeting
January 18	Martin Luther King Jr. Birthday
January 20	Inauguration Day
January 29	Executive Council Meeting



Amazon Sunday parcel delivery in Gloucester, MA 12/20/2020

Branch 25 Directory of Officers

David J. Barbuzzi	President
Paul G. Desmond	Executive V.P.
Dan Wheeler	Vice President
Andy Coan	Secretary
James P. Nutter	Treasurer
Kenneth Dusombre	Health Benefits Rep.
Jim Salvati	Safety Officer
Jack Lyman	Sergeant At Arms
Ron Noviello	Chmn. Board of Trustees
Dan Raske	Trustee
Bruce Johnson	Trustee
John McNulty	Trustee
Anthony Bossi	Assistant Secretary
Peter Godino	Assistant Treasurer
Bob Cronin	MBA-NSBA Rep
Steve Pickett	Assistant Safety Officer
Richard Donlon	Asst Health Benefits Rep
Ron Noviello	Workers' Comp Rep.

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

Assistant Secretary Report

"An Unstoppable Force Meets an Immovable Object"

We've all been there before. It's a Tuesday morning, and today you have a set of house to house and heavy parcel volume. You're going to need to request a 3996. The supervisor is sitting on their computer, the 3996 form is a foot away from them, like a dog and its food bowl. You can already hear them saying "no one needs overtime on their own route on a Tuesday!" Maybe you should just take a chance you will finish on time and skip your lunch if you're cutting it close.... DON'T!

Every day we report to work we have the responsibility to inform management when we *believe* our routes are going to require auxiliary assistance. We do this through Form 3996, and the time we request is an *estimate*. Once you have submitted a 3996, management has the responsibility to approve, modify, or deny the request. Although we must provide a reason, please do not argue with your supervisor about the time requested. This whole thing can feel like an exercise in futility sometimes as management side steps giving you an instruction and questions how you could ever need overtime. Try to be patient and remain calm. Losing your temper will not help, and in my 15 years I haven't walked into the office and had a supervisor hand me a 96 while stating to take overtime. You can find a great

resource about how a morning interaction with management should go at the branch website under the Carrier Resource tab. Simply click on the NALC Carrier Guide.

As an example, you may estimate you need 1.5 hours of assistance due to inclement weather, road construction, heavy accountable volume, and it being trash day on your route. Your supervisor might say "you need an hour and a half because of road construction?" At this point its clear they want to argue today. Instead of feeling tempted to engage, I would state something like "there are multiple reasons I need the hour-and-a-half, as I wrote on the form." Your supervisor might start to talk about DOIS, or the PET Tool. None of these computer programs can substitute for a professional letter carrier's understanding of their own route. The supervisor may question you, but they should always remain professional.

If the supervisor becomes disrespectful or insulting, request union time with your steward, or notify the branch. If you witness a supervisor belittling a fellow carrier, request union time/notify the branch and do your best to write a witness statement. These types of interactions might be a daily occurrence, and many carriers are probably familiar with this old song and dance, but you should never feel anxious at work because you need overtime. Carriers should also never work off the clock or skip breaks/lunch to make up time. Today's favor becomes tomorrow's expectation.

Happy New Year!

Tony Bossi



A side street in Burlington a couple days after the storm. Even with this very slight incline, it took the carrier several minutes to cover this ground. This is the type of thing you have to be thinking about when you complete your 3996.

“Hampering Progress”

A couple of weeks ago, one of my coworkers asked me if I needed a topic for my next article. I said yes, please. In fact, if anyone ever has a good topic let me know directly or through the branch office, I’m always looking for input. Anyway, it turned out this carrier injured his foot due to a hamper with a bad wheel. Now we all like that train with the square wheel on its caboose when we watch the Rudolph special, but a square wheel on a hamper is not fun.

In my office we have nice new gray carts which are great for unloading your truck at the end of the day. However, the old orange hampers, or Pumpkins as they are called, are in tough shape. It’s so bad that If you find one that rolls smoothly , you want to hide it so you can have it everyday.

Of course, the proper action to take when you find a hamper with a bad wheel is to put a repair tag on it. However, I don’t think there exists in the office the spare parts or man power to fix them. My office is starting to build a hamper graveyard in one corner of the building.

Another issue that bothers me about the hampers is the side webbing. When they’re in good shape the sides are nice because they come off and on easily for loading and unloading. They also help keep mail and parcels from falling out. But half the time they are either missing or replaced with rope or tape. Once I had one with sides made of yellow strapping from the Globe ads and when I told a clerk it needed to be fixed they said the strapping WAS the fix!

Are the hampers in better shape in your office? If not keep writing up repair tags and let’s hope the USPS gets us some new ones. And if it has a bad wheel use caution rolling it.

Stay safe,

Jim Salvati

Lyrics Trivia

“Rollin', rollin', rollin'”

Name Song/TV Show , the star of the show, the singer of the song, and the 1980 movie that featured the song.

As I sit here writing this article for the Wake Up! we find ourselves smack dab in the middle of what singer Andy Williams called “the most wonderful time of the year.” I hope this is proving true for you and your family despite having to endure the ravages of a deadly and pervasive virus and the rantings of a whacky and delusional sitting President of the United States. I know this is a harsh personal characterization, but how else do you describe someone who insists he won the 2020 election, considered COVID-19 a hoax and described the United States Postal Service as “a joke”?


As always, the New Year brings new and renewed challenges and opportunities, among them the chance to take (or retake) the health assessment offered by the High Option NALC Health Benefit Plan. What is the assessment? It’s an online tool that analyzes your response to health-related questions and gives you a personalized plan to achieve your health goals. You answer a series of questions and you get a numbered value of how you’re doing health-wise in your daily life, and steps to take to improve your health. Why take the assessment? Not only does it offer a chance for a healthier you, it provides for an economically healthier health benefit plan. A healthier you results in savings for the Plan, allowing it to keep increases in premium costs to a minimum and provide for additional benefits for all of us.

There are numbers you should know for your participation: Total Cholesterol, Blood Pressure, and Body Mass Index (BMI). How to determine BMI can be found online.

Next month: Specifics on the incentives offered for participating and the step-by-step procedure for doing so.

Keep on truckin’

Rich Donlon



BRANCH 25 RETIREE GRATUITY VOUCHER


Name: _____
(as it will appear on plaque)

P.O. Retiring from: _____

Phone number: _____

Retirement date: _____

Please note: Retiree must be a member in good standing at date of retirement. Retiree has 4 months from retirement date to remit this voucher to the branch office. Please mail to: NALC Branch 25
2500 Main St, Suite 201, Tewksbury Ma, 01876



Vice President's Report

Most of you have heard the term Postal Reform by this point. What is Postal Reform and where are we at this point and going forward? Postal Reform is a term used to cover a broad range of issues that must be changed from the way they are done currently to assure the continued success of the Postal Service. I will not get too far into the weeds on the how and why we got here to the point that Postal Reform is so desperately needed. I wrote about that back in the July 2020 issue of *The Wake Up* for anyone who wants to go back and check that out. Since the misguided legislation that put us into our current situation was created by Congress, we must also turn towards congress to pass appropriate Postal Reform legislation to correct it. Understandably, that does not give most of us great confidence that things will get done.

What are we in the NALC looking for in Postal Reform? The biggest issue we face by far is the need to address the pre-funding burden. The first part of that is to pre-fund only the vested liability for retiree health benefits as private sector companies do. This would reduce the retiree funding burden by at least \$35 billion. The next two parts are Medicare Part D integration and possible Medicare Parts A and B integration. Changing the way the Federal Employee Health Benefits Program (FEHBP) covers postal employees would also save billions of dollars. Properly investing in the Postal Service Retiree Health Benefits Fund (PSRHBF) is the fourth part of alleviating the pre-funding burden. These are certainly not the only components of Postal Reform. New products and innovations, changes to service and product pricing are among the other parts of a complete reform package. The NALC has put out more in-depth information on the website for those who want to look it up.

Where are we right now with Postal Reform? Currently there are six resolutions in the House and/or the Senate. These resolutions cover the following issues: removal of the pre-funding mandate, maintaining door delivery, anti-privatization, maintaining 6-day delivery and maintaining service standards. These resolutions that have been introduced during the 116th Congress have received different levels of bi-partisan support. In October House Resolution (HR) 925 passed the House of Representatives. This was a \$2.2 trillion version of an original \$3 trillion relief package which included \$15 billion (down from \$25 billion in the first draft) to go to the Postal Service. The good news is there has been bi-partisan support for our issues. The bad news is, as you read this, all those resolutions are either dead or have mere days until they expire. When the 117th Congress convenes on January 3, 2021 all previous legislation expires. Similar legislation may be re-introduced as new, but the process starts all over again. During the 116th Congress there were 16,377 pieces of legislation

introduced. Only 836 or roughly 5% of those even made it as far as getting to a vote. Only 214 or roughly 1% were enacted into law. That is the lowest total in at least the last 50 years. It is no surprise that none of the resolutions involving the Postal Service made the cut.

Where does that leave us regarding Postal Reform going forward? We still do not know what the 117th Congress will look like at this point. Currently there are 50 Republicans, 46 Democrats and 2 Independents (who are usually on board with the Democrats). The final 2 seats will be decided by run-off elections in the State of Georgia on January 5. If the Democrats win both seats it will basically leave a tied Senate with the Vice President casting the deciding vote assuming votes go along party lines. The House of Representatives is controlled by the Democrats and President-elect Joe Biden is a Democrat. This would mean the Democrats control both chambers of Congress and the White House. If the Republicans win 1 or both Senate seats, they will maintain control of the Senate. Postal Reform has received bi-partisan support and is not a political party issue. The NALC has supported politicians from both major parties with the Letter Carrier Political Fund (LCPF). The reality is that Postal Reform is more likely to have an easier path from a Democrat controlled Congress than from a split one.

President-elect Joe Biden has publicly vowed to work with Congress to boost funding for the Postal Service and to eliminate the long standing and burdensome pre-funding mandate. Time will tell that tale as it always does. What politicians say or promise is not always indicative as to what will happen. It is hard to imagine that things will not be markedly better under the new administration though. One early indication that we will have more to say about Postal Reform in the new administration is the appointment of Jim Sauber to Joe Biden's USPS Transition Team. Jim is Chief of Staff to NALC President Fred Rolando and well informed on our issues. Hopefully, this is a sign of better things to come. If you are not currently a giver to the LCPF please consider becoming one. We need the support of our allies in Congress to make Postal Reform a reality.

In Solidarity,

Dan Wheeler



KNOW THE RIGHT WORDS

This is a serious conversation. It may take awhile, so initiate it when you have enough time to spend. Find a private place where you can speak with the person, without distraction.

After initiating a conversation, LISTEN.

Every conversation is different, so be prepared for what may occur. The person may not want to talk, and you can reassure them that you care and are ready to listen anytime they feel like talking. Or, the person may open up and share some very painful feelings. **Don't try to talk them out of how they are feeling.** It's okay to ask questions.

Make sure they are SAFE for now.

Talk about suicide resources such as counseling or a crisis hotline and offer to search for phone numbers. If the person has a plan to harm themselves, **it's important not to leave them alone.** Ask if you can call a family member, their counselor or emergency services while you remain with them. Continue to provide reassurance and support.

YOUR EAP IS HERE FOR YOU: 800-EAP-4YOU (800-327-4968) | TTY: 877-492-7341

WAKE UP

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First Class Mail
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at the next meeting
January 5
via
ZOOM Meeting

January NALC Branch 25 Zoom Meeting

Time: Jan 5, 2021 08:00 PM

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87027802421>

Meeting ID: 870 2780 2421

One tap mobile

+19292056099,,87027802421# US (New York)

Dial by your location

Find your local number: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87027802421>

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