



# ***WAKE UP!***

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

New President Dan Wheeler (below) at the  
January Branch Meeting



Paul Desmond, Tony Bossi, David Barbuzzi and Dan Wheeler (above)

Stevie Pickett (right) gives an impassioned speech at the December Branch Meeting (right)



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## President's Message

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### *“We Understand but We Don't Care!”*

Most letter carriers are familiar with the clear plastic bags that start with the words “We care” in big letters. These are the bags mail gets put into when its damaged or shredded to the point where there is only enough left of the mail piece to bag it up. “We care’... but in the end, your letter was still shredded, and the contents are gone. The title of this month's *President's Message* is similar to the “We care” message and it's the message that many carriers have been getting from the Postal Service lately. Unfortunately, for letter carriers, the message has not started with “we care” but instead ended with it. In last month's *President's Message*, I wrote about the staffing shortages many of our offices are facing and some of the reasons why they exist. I wrote “the contract is the contract...they still need to follow the contract.” The problem is management often struggles to do things properly, including following the contract. With the current staffing issues it makes following the contract and proper scheduling of letter carriers all the more important. I understand that doing things properly won't fix the bigger issues or make everyone happy. The problem is that when management takes the approach of having to get the mail delivered at all costs it is a losing formula, especially for us letter carriers.

I understand we are in the delivery business. That's what we do; we deliver the mail. However, there are limits to what we can do physically and mentally. The fact of the matter is letter carriers are being pushed to the breaking point more and more lately. Letter carriers need days off, they need days where they can plan to punch out at a reasonable time, they need to know they are not going to be forced to go work in another installation on almost no prior notice. The message the Postal Service is sorry but that is just the way it is, does not cut it. Last month we had a PTF who was sent to work in another office on the employee's very first day on their own after finishing training with their on-the-job instructor. How is that a recipe for success when it comes to keeping new employees? We know for a fact we are struggling to hire and keep new employees. Shouldn't there be some kind of emphasis on keeping the ones who do get that far?

Until the Postal Service starts to think more about their employees mental and physical health and well-

being and backs off the “get it done at all costs” method, it will only get worse. Letter carriers who are close to retirement but planned on staying a little longer will just go now. Letter carriers who are new to the job will look down the tunnel without seeing the light and will just quit. Letter carriers will end up getting injured. The change in attitude must come from every level. Many managers convey they feel bad but must do what they have to do. I do believe many do feel bad but well wishes and sympathy don't cut it when the actions don't match up with the words. We will continue to file all appropriate grievances and continue to spread the message that in the end, although we are a delivery business, we are a people business too! No people = no delivery = no business. Please continue to let your steward or the branch office know when violations are happening in your office. I know they are aware of the staffing challenges at the national level. Although any changes they make may not come as fast as we would like, hopefully we will see some steps taken to alleviate these hiring and retention challenges going forward.

I also wrote about the scary trend of letter carriers getting robbed for their arrow keys in last month's *President's Message*. In an unfortunate case of foreshadowing on my part, one of our own Branch 25 carriers was involved in such an incident shortly after. Luckily for that carrier, the incident left him unharmed physically. The robbery happened in the middle of the day and was recorded on a customer's home camera. The robber lingered around a corner and when the carrier went to his vehicle he came around and took the carrier's key at gunpoint. Even though I wrote it last month the following bears repeating: If you find yourself in a similar situation, give up your keys, vehicle, mail, or whatever else they are looking for. All of that stuff is replaceable; you are not! Hopefully, these incidents are causing the Postal Service to accelerate their response to this problem. I know the NALC is working with the Service at the national level to come up with some possible solutions.

In Solidarity,

Dan Wheeler

## Executive Vice-President's Report

We are getting closer to Springtime, and I have spoken to a hand-full of carriers that are planning on requesting their "Bluebook", or the retirement application, soon. I have been told on more than one occasion that there is a wait to get a counselling session with HR to go over the application process. If you are requesting a Bluebook online, you can at the same time request a counselling session. Up to 6 months ahead of time is suggested if possible. If you plan to retire in a short period of time, the NALC retirement Department is an excellent source of information if HRSSC can't set you up with a consultation.

We are getting closer to having the North Reading and Wakefield carriers moving to the Woburn installations. We are told the expected date is 2-25-23. We expect changes to be made to the work room floor but do not know any details as of yet. We are also told that there will be some cosmetic changes to the building, painting to be specific, but nothing has begun as of now. One issue of concern has been the parking of both Postal and private vehicles. There doesn't appear to be room for the additional Postal vehicles the way the parking lot is currently configured, but we are told there will be some construction to the lot to add parking spots. As far as the private vehicles go, there is a good size lot for employees that may be sufficient, but time will tell. The parcel machine has been adjusted to the additional units coming in and we are told that it will run all units at once and be done earlier than it currently is. Since this is the first S & DC (Sort and Delivery Center) that we are affiliated with, only time will tell how successful it will be. The routes moving in will have their travel times adjusted (estimated) and the routes will be entered into the TIAREAP process after 30 days, according to a memo signed at the national level. The TIAREAP is the new agreed to route evaluation and adjustment process, and will adjust the routes according to the data collected after the move. Like I have said, this is the first time we will be going through this process and time will tell the results, and the results will be based on the carrier's data along with their input through consultations.

President Dan Wheeler has recently appointed stewards in a few of our stations. I'm glad these carriers have stepped up to take on this responsibility. It is not an easy position and is not for everybody, but I like to know we have contacts in more of our stations. The carriers on the

workroom floor are the backbone of the USPS. We still have a few vacant steward positions in the Branch so if anyone is interested in the vacant position in their office, contact the Branch to discuss the possibility of being appointed. There will be steward elections every three years with the next election cycle in the Fall of 2024.

It seems like we have been going through a lot of PDIs and letters of discipline related to attendance recently. There is a big difference between unscheduled leave and scheduled leave. Anything scheduled in advance should not be considered for discipline in my opinion. If you make an appointment for a couple months in advance, you should request the leave immediately in order to schedule the leave well in advance. Also, if there is a chance that it should be considered covered under the FMLA, you should request that when filling out form 3996. This protects you from any disciplinary action under the law.

We are getting close to the Super Bowl and unfortunately the Pats will not be involved this year, but the Bruins and Celtics are doing well. I hope to see many of you at the next branch meeting.

Keep your head up!

Paul Desmond

### Calendar of Events

February 1	Black History Month
February 3	Work Naked Day (not suggested)
February 4	THANK A MAILMAN DAY
February 14	Valentines Day
<b>February 14</b>	<b>Regular Monthly Meeting</b> <b>K of C Wilmington 8:00PM</b> <b>Food served at 7:15PM</b>
February 17	Random Act of Kindness Day
February 22	Be Humble Day
February 26	Tell a Fairy Tale Day

Daniel P. Wheeler	President
Paul G. Desmond	Executive V.P.
Anthony Bossi	Vice President
Joe Stearns	Secretary
James P. Nutter	Treasurer
Kenneth Dusombre	Health Benefits Rep.
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James Metilinos	Assistant Treasurer
Jeremy Provost	Assistant Safety Officer

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

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## Secretary Report

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I title this article as such because some of the items in this article should have been done a long time ago. But like they say it is never too late.

First, I would like to congratulate Dave Barbuzzi on his promotion to RWCA. National made an excellent choice with this one. I know Dave will be a great representative to all who need him. Also, thank you for all the years of time and service you have put into Branch 25 and for the faith in me as a trustee. We are where we are because of all your efforts.

Congrats to Dan Wheeler as the new president of the branch. Dave once again made a solid choice here. I have gotten to know Dan over the last few years and the Branch is in good hands. He will be a great leader for years to come. I want to personally thank him for asking me to take over as secretary. I am honored that he has faith in me to do this job and I will do everything I can not to let him down.

As for our new vice president Tony Bossi, this is a well-deserved step up as well. His knowledge is undeniable and will fight for all the members. Tony, as well as Dan have become friends of mine along this journey. I can say for both of them we have not only gained excellent officers, we have gained straight up good people as well.

Now onto some of the better late than never thanks. In Marblehead, over the last couple years since the dreaded Covid visited us, some carriers have retired and should have been recognized for their time and service by me. As the steward I dropped the ball on this. So, for those I

am thanking now please forgive me and understand that your service is much appreciated.

Paul Wentzell, where do I start, first Smales says, "Hi there buddy". Paul retired in 2020 and put in 32 years with a smile on his-no wait a growl-no not that, oh well! Those who know and love him understand.

I hope you are enjoying your time now, but know, "I miss you Chunk"

Brad "Bones" Carey a second-generation carrier left 4/29/21 and did 35 years with the Post Office in the town he lived and grew up in. He always had a great attitude and delivered his route like a professional. I cannot say I miss you because I see you walking or riding your motorcycle all the time. Good to see you enjoy your retirement!

Good old "Blacky" Bobby Black that is, stepped away on 3/30/22 and left with 36 years. I must thank him a lot for always being a listening board for me to vent to. I could always count on him to be there when I needed him. He knew the ropes and had experienced it all. Hopefully, I will see you sometime.

I had to save the "KING" for last. Ron Linnane retired 11/7/20 with 33 years plus military time with the Marines. I do not have enough time or room to put everything I would like to say about him here. Ron was steward in Marblehead for most of his illustrious career. He protected everyone with a fire and tenacity like no other. If I learned 10% of what he knew I will be just fine as a steward. He helped me a few times both as a carrier and as a steward. You would be hard pressed to find a better carrier, steward, and person than him. Thank you, Ron, on behalf of Marblehead, and mostly me, for all you did. Sorry, this took so long to get out.

Lastly in my own notes I would like to say as the secretary of branch 25 I will do my best to continue the lengthy line of officers who have served this branch so well over the years, as well as the ones I serve with now. If you have retired and not notified the branch, there is a gratuity voucher in the Wake Up. Fill it out and get it back to us as soon as possible. Also, if you have moved there are member address update vouchers as well, please let us know when you move so we can keep you informed. The address for the branch is listed in multiple places in the wakeup. I can also be reached by email at [JESBR25@gmail.com](mailto:JESBR25@gmail.com). Please feel free to contact me with what you may need.

Thank you in advance for your support during this learning experience. Hopefully, the bumps will not be too bad. Luckily, I have great support right by my side, (Andy and Tony, that means you.) I do not have any catchy sign off yet, maybe someday but for now:

Happy New Year and best wishes and health in the coming year,

Joe Stearns

## Safety Report

What BE FAST is not about is skipping your breaks. Always take your two 10 minute breaks. Not sure what to do for 10 minutes? Play Wordle. Too cold to sit in the truck? Hit a Dunk's and get a coffee or just sit and warm up. Call a friend. Don't touch the mail, don't organize parcels. Take the time that is your time. Then there is Lunch. Stop. Rest. Eat something. As Campbell's Chunky Soup says, "Lunchtime is your half time." It's time to refuel for the rest of the day. Maybe you can't always have hot soup but you can bring a sandwich and some fruit. You're getting paid for it and it reduces stress. And stress is one of the causes of strokes, which is what BE FAST is about.

Stress causes the heart to work harder and increases blood pressure. Stress also increases the fat and sugar in the blood. These things can lead to blood clots that can stop blood flow to the brain which may lead to a stroke. Every year about 800,000 people suffer a stroke in the United States. It is the No. 5 cause of death and leading cause of serious long-term disability in the US, according to the American Heart Association. However, a stroke is a preventable and treatable disease. Knowing the signs of stroke and getting fast treatment when symptoms occur can make the difference between life and death or serious disability.

So recognize;

Balance- Sudden loss of coordination.

Eyes- Sudden blurred or double vision.

Face- Drooping or numbness in the face.

Arms- Weakness or numbness in arms or legs.

Speech- Slurred speech.

Time- Call 911 immediately.

Trivia: What coach stars in the current Chunky Soup commercial?

**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

Trivia answer: LA Rams Coach Sean McVay

## Installation of National Officers



NBA Rick Dicecca gets a congratulatory hug from Fred Rolando on his way to the stage



Rick and the other National Officers Being sworn in

Outgoing National President Fred Rolando and new President Brian Renfroe share a moment on stage



# Stay Connected:

## TO IMPROVE OVERALL WELLNESS

Connection and connectedness – to others, to our communities, to our work, to our spirituality – matters a great deal to our overall wellness. Humans are social creatures; it is important for us to interact and feel that we belong. Connection is fostered and maintained in many ways, and several factors have an impact on our connectedness.

### Connection can be related to:

- Feeling seen and acknowledged by those around us
- Seeing and acknowledging others that we care about (even if we don't know them)
- Spending quality time with others
- Connecting to those who share interests (through music, support groups, etc.)

Studies have found that a lack of social connection may be a larger disadvantage to physical health than obesity, smoking and high blood pressure; that people with poor social connections may recover more slowly from disease or illness. Having healthy connections and relationships can: improve the immune system; positively impact sleep patterns; decrease cortisol and extend overall lifespan. Connecting and feeling connected are critical to feeling well.

### Here are some ways that you can become more connected:

- **Take care of yourself** – managing stress levels can improve your ability to connect
- **Start with existing relationships** – those around you may not know you are feeling disconnected and may not realize you need support, so don't hesitate to reach out
- **Volunteer** - engaging in acts of service and kindness is a great place to demonstrate compassion and a good way to create a sense of connection
- **Join a group** – whether online or in person, spending time with others can feel rewarding and fulfilling
- **Ask for help** – reach out to the EAP for support

**The EAP is here for you. Our team of professionals is available to support you in building and maintaining connections. For more information visit [EAP4YOU.com](http://EAP4YOU.com) or give us a call at 800-327-4968 (800-EAP-4YOU) | TTY: 877-492-7341.**

## Assistant Secretary Report

You've all seen the photos of the future mail truck, the Next Generation Delivery Vehicle (NGDV). Well, I got to sit in and look over a demo model that was on display at the national convention in Chicago as well as attend a workshop on the NGDV. The workshop was led by assistant to the President for City Delivery Doug Lape who explained the NGDV evaluation committee and introduced the twenty NALC members who served on the committee. Yes, for the first time that I'm aware of in my 35 years with the USPS the organization actually sought input from those who will be using equipment before laying out billions of dollars buying the thing they will be stuck with for decades.

I found the committee member's commentary about the evaluation process interesting. It was stressed repeatedly that the demo truck isn't necessarily the final form that will show up at your office in the future and that it is yet to be determined what type of routes and offices will receive them. My first impression as I'm 6'2" tall is that I could stand up in the thing with no problem. So, Hooray for us tall employees. Yet, since every plus has a minus in this world of compromises, I can foresee a lot of damage to these trucks from tree branches, etc. So that will take some adjustment to driving awareness in the future.

Overall, the truck felt too wide to me. We were told its only 9+ inches wider than an LLV. Along with the height I can foresee this truck being kind of sketchy on mounted and dismounted routes. This is New England and lots of us deliver on roads where ox carts were traveling on not that long ago. I'm not wild about that feature.

The other feature that was noticed by me and other northern climate delegates was that the demo NGDV looked to be sitting too low to the ground. So, I also foresee these trucks being hung-up on mounds of solid frozen snow and ice. We were informed that several members on the evaluation committee brought that up to the engineers from Oshkosh and it again was stressed that the truck on display was a prototype. We'll see if the end product looks different.

A couple of interior features surprised me. Firstly, you'll have to buckle up the seatbelt before you can turn on the motor. That's a GOOD thing! The other feature is the new style of shift selector (or as Eva Gabor on *Green Acres* called it the "PERNINDEL"... Park Reverse Neutral Drive Low). It's a dial gizmo you'll rotate to get in to drive, etc. Turning a dial selector, even on a prototype, felt odd to me. But then I'm getting older. (Hence the Green Acres reference)

Then there's the gas vs. electric power debate. That's been discussed up and down Congress and in the media this year so I won't dig into that except to relay that your office may get one or the other and there's numerous details involved in that decision. Either way as the long the thing moves down the road as advertised then I guess it doesn't really matter.

A few of the committee members, who are active rank and file Letter Carriers, spoke at the workshop and had a few observations I found interesting. A sister from New Mexico said she was a bit surprised that some rural carriers from the NRLC were concerned about any truck feature they felt would slow them down on the job, such as actually having to use the seatbelt! I guess getting paid by mail volume as opposed to being paid by the hour can affect one's perspective.

Another sister from southern California was surprised to hear the concerns of carriers from our northern snowy climes. She called it an "eye opener" hearing the numerous concerns of those dealing with our treacherous winter months. I found it reassuring that she said the northern carriers were a very vocal group with their snow and ice concerns.

Along with the LLV, in my career I've had to drive old AM General Jeeps and Vans, Chrysler K-Car station wagons, Ford Pinto, Ford FFV, Ford Hi-Cube conversion van, 2-ton and 2 1/2 -ton box trucks, Dodge Pro Masters and most recently the Mercedes Metris. So, when a committee member from New York explained that he took a realistic approach to serving on the NGDV advisory committee. His quote is "I've been around long enough to know that this truck isn't going to be perfect for everybody on every type of route. But I figured this is the first time anybody has asked me for my input as a carrier, so I figured so let's see if we can correct as much as possible from the start. We offered our recommendations and now it's up to them." Now is the waiting part to see what we end up with.

*"Let's be careful out there!"* (You're going to have to figure out that TV show reference for yourself)

Andy Coan

Assistant Secretary

<b><i>MEMBER ADDRESS UPDATE</i></b>	
MEMBER NAME:	_____
NEW ADDRESS:	_____ _____
If this is a temporary change please fill-in the beginning and ending dates: FROM ___/___/___ TO ___/___/___	
Please mail this form to: NALC Branch 25 2500 Main St Suite 201 Tewksbury Ma, 01876-3185	

# **WAKE UP**

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*at the next meeting*  
**February 14th**  
**K of C Wilmington**  
**8:00 PM**