



WAKE UP!

President/ Editor
Daniel P. Wheeler

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, Newburyport, North Chelmsford, North Reading , Peabody, Reading, Rockport, Salem , South Hamilton, Sudbury , Tewksbury , Topsfield, Wakefield , Wayland , Wilmington , Winchester



Congratulations to two recent retirees out of the Peabody Office. Jack Murtaugh (left) is pictured with his wife, a retired Peabody clerk. Jack retired after 37 years. Gary Keough (right) retired after 36 years. Good luck, Jack and Gary!

President's Message

This month's President's Report about something fairly common but something that many letter carriers don't fully understand. That subject is a Pre-Disciplinary Interview (PDI). Many of the letter carriers we represent in PDIs have never had one and are unaware of what it means until the first-time management tells them they are being brought in for one. Some of these carriers are new, and some may have years on the job but have never been brought in for a PDI. The PDI is management's first step if they are considering issuing discipline. A PDI is the employee's "day in court". It is the employee's opportunity to offer an explanation of whatever event or issue that management is inquiring about. PDIs can vary wildly throughout the different offices and different managers. Some can be very informal, and some seem very official, with management reading from scripted questions.

Before we go too far talking about PDIs, I will say there is something called an Official Discussion. Such discussions are covered under Article 16 of the National Agreement. The JCAM (Joint Contract Administration Manual) has the following to say regarding discussions:

Although included in Article 16, a "discussion" is non-disciplinary and thus is not grievable. Discussions are conducted in private between a supervisor and an employee. Both the supervisor and the employee may keep a record of the discussion for personal use; however, these are not to be considered official Postal Service records. They may not be included in the employee's personnel folder, nor may they be passed to another supervisor. Discussions cannot be cited as elements of an employee's past record in any future disciplinary action. Discussions may be used (when they are relevant and timely) only to establish that an employee has been made aware of some particular obligation or responsibility.

Official Discussions are just that: discussions between the employee and management. They cannot be cited in the future, and no official record is kept. Management is not required to provide a steward for such discussions. However, management must make it clear that the discussion will not lead to discipline. If they do not clearly state this, a steward's presence should be requested.

This brings us to what is referred to as the carrier's Weingarten Rights. In 1975, the United States Supreme Court, in the case of NLRB v. J. Weingarten, upheld a National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) decision that employees have a right to union representation at investigatory interviews. These rights have become known as the Weingarten Rights. These rights are the foundation of the grievance process. Anytime an employee is questioned by management, and that questioning may lead to discipline, the employee has the right to representation from a steward. Whenever management tells an employee they wish to talk with them about something, the first question should be, "Is it possible this interview may lead to discipline?" If management answers yes, the employee should request a steward be present during the interview. Management is required to provide a steward if one has been requested. However, it is the employee's responsibility to make that request. There are offices with no stewards in the building. This does not release management from their responsibility to provide one. If there is no local shop steward, management must contact the branch office to have someone come sit in.

Management must also make the employee and steward aware of what the PDI will be about before it starts. If either the employee or steward requests, adequate time must be given to talk privately before the interview. Another major part of the Weingarten Rights is that the steward can actively participate in the PDI. The steward is not allowed to disrupt the PDI or to instruct the employee not to answer questions. For the most part, this is not an issue in any of the branch's offices currently. However, it has happened before where management thinks the steward is only there as a passive observer to the meeting. This is not the case and is a violation of the National Agreement. Not all PDIs lead to discipline being issued. Some do and some don't. Every letter carrier should know their rights. Knowing or not knowing could make a world of difference, even if it's something you have never needed to know up until now. The USPS Weingarten Card is printed on page 6 of this issue of *The Wake Up!* It may be something worth saving to refer to if needed. Remember, you only have rights if you know what they are!

In Solidarity,
Dan Wheeler

Executive Vice-President's Report

By the time you get this issue of the Wake Up! it will be February and Groundhog Day will have come and gone, leaving us essentially six weeks left of Winter. The days are getting a little longer, but we are still working in the dark in most stations, so please be careful. If the snow melts during the day, it sometimes ices up when the temperature drops after dark. We had to cancel the January branch meeting because of power lines down at the K of C in Wilmington, so we are looking into arranging a makeup meeting later in the year. We will post this in the Wake Up! when the details are complete.

I hope everyone saved their copy of the January 2024 Postal Record because there is an article with a lot of basic information regarding the Postal Service Health Benefits Program which will be part of the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program beginning in 2025. There have been a lot of questions about the changes coming that may be answered within this article. Every carrier will need to enroll in a plan, many very identical to those that currently exist, such as the NALC HBP. The article also talks about the integration with Medicare. After the 2024 Open Season, once employees retire at age 65 or older, they will be required to sign up for Medicare. This is explained in the article. There will be more information coming this year, but this is a good article for those who have inquired about this process.

We are getting a lot of reports about employees having problems accessing Liteblue. Carriers are reporting it takes long periods to receive their updated passwords through the mail. If you haven't accessed Liteblue in a long period of time, you will probably need an updated password. If you are planning on retiring, please start the process as early as possible. Just having your "blue book" will give you an idea of what you need for information to complete the application. When you receive the blue book, immediately make an appointment for a consultation with HR and when you finally have the consultation, you should have the simple parts of it filled out.

We don't get a lot of calls about the NALC Mutual Benefits Association (MBA), but we have gotten calls asking about disability policies. The MBA now offers Individual Disability Income policies to active letter carriers who are unable to work because of illness or injury. The policies can be for different levels of income that can be used if needed and the cost of the policy depends on that level and your age. There is a waiting

period after you buy the policy before you can start to collect. The information is on the NALC website under the Mutual Benefits Association and brochures can be ordered through the NALC. The premiums are through payroll deduction. Of course, if you are injured on the job, you should be filing a claim through the Department of Labor and your medical expenses and salary should be covered if the claim is approved. We are allowed to accumulate an unlimited amount of sick leave, which makes up for the lack of disability offered by the Postal Service.

Just to remind everyone, most stations will be picking their AL choices for Primetime soon, so start making plans. You can check the LMOU for your station, they are all on www.nalcbranch25.com. Any questions call the union office. See you at the next branch meeting on February 13th.

Keep your head up!

Paul Desmond

Calendar of Events

February 4	Thank a Mailman Day
February 9	National Pizza Day
February 10	Chinese New Year (Year of the Dragon)
February 11	Super Bowl 58, Las Vegas
February 13	Regular Branch Meeting K of C Wilmington 8:00PM Food served at 7:15 PM
February 14	Valentine's Day
February 19	President's Day
February 24	Red Sox Spring Training Opening Day

Branch 25 Directory of Officers

Daniel P. Wheeler	President
Paul G. Desmond	Executive V.P.
Anthony Bossi	Vice President
Joe Stearns	Secretary
James Metilinos	Treasurer
Kenneth Dusombre	Health Benefits Rep.
Jim Salvati	Safety Officer
Doug Murray	Sergeant At Arms
Dan Raske	Chairman of Trustees
Bruce Johnson	Trustee
Tony Porciello	Trustee
Bob Cronin	Trustee
Gilbert Paredes	Trustee
Andrew Dencklau	Assistant Treasurer
Andy Coan	Assistant Secretary
Jeremy Provost	Assistant Safety Officer
James Tuttle	Assistant Wake Up Publisher
Wesley Tugman	Assistant Health Ben. Rep.

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

From the Secretary's Desk

At the end of January, we lost retired letter carrier Paul Wentzal. He was in hospice for the last couple of weeks of his life. His brother had called me at Paul's request, knowing I would get the word out of what was going on and how to get in touch or visit him. Fellow carrier Rob Smales and I went to see him that very night. I use this a lot but “if you know you know” that Rob and I were his frenemies in the best of ways. When we got to the door and peeked in, he had that great look of glad you're here and oh God why me. But most of all I want to thank all the Marblehead letter carriers both active and retired that sent notes to cheer him up or brought him an ice coffee to put a smile on his face. The family was so grateful for the outpouring of support. This is another side of the brother and sisterhood of the job. That no matter what is going on we all need to always support each other. Paul, I will never forget you my munchkin little friend, yours truly JB.

Onto more current items of interest, The NALC convention is coming to Boston this August. The delegates have been elected and those funded are set. However just because you are not an elected delegate, you can still attend the convention. There is a guest seating area for those who are not delegates. This is a great way to see what happens on the convention floor and how the voting on different items are handled. There are also many booths for various functions and suppliers of our union. As the convention approaches, I will supply more info on this. It is the perfect opportunity with it here in Boston.

The cold weather and snow are here so please be diligent and careful out there. We all know that a little dusting of snow might be no big deal, but it is the ice under it that you can't see that will cause the problem. Watch where you walk and wear the ice grippers when needed. I have run into a few of these this year, especially when everyone thinks it will just melt away. That's when it refreezes the most.

As I always end this if you have moved, please update your address with the branch. You can call, write, or email me at JESBR25@gmail.com. See you at the branch meeting February 13th.

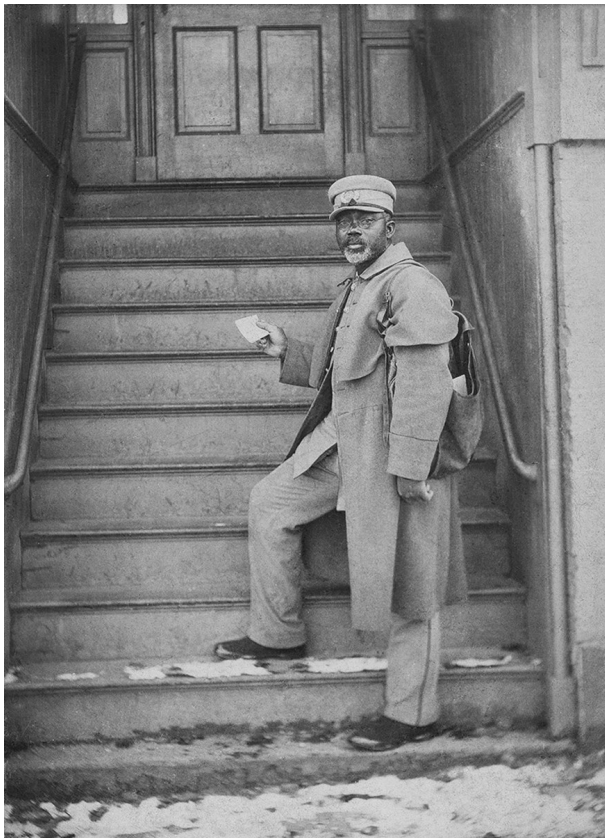
Snapple Fact # 237 The number of times a cricket chirps in 15 seconds, plus 37, will give you the current air temperature.

Joe Stearns

Black History Month

February is Black History Month. Black workers have carried mail for the USPS since the beginning of city delivery service. The first known black letter carrier is thought to be James B. Christian from Richmond, Virginia, who started carrying mail in 1869. Shortly after that, William Carney, a founding vice-president of NALC Branch 18 in New Bedford, Massachusetts, started as a letter carrier. Carney was born into slavery around 1840 in Norfolk, Virginia. How he made his way to Massachusetts is unknown, but it may have been through the Underground Railroad.

Carney joined the 54th Mass. Volunteer Infantry at the start of the Civil War. During the Battle of Fort Wagner in 1863, he showed extreme gallantry in saving the regimental colors. He was awarded the medal in 1900. Twenty African American soldiers received the Medal of Honor before Carney. However, because his action in the Battle of Fort Wagner took place before all the others, he is considered the first to win the award. Upon returning to New Bedford, he took a job maintaining the city's streetlights. After a brief time in California, he returned to Massachusetts and took a job as one of the first letter carriers in the city. He continued to make his appointed rounds for another thirty years. Carney died in New Bedford in 1908 at the age of 68.



New Members

We would like to welcome the following new members to Branch 25. Please help us in welcoming them and help them out in your stations.

Brook Aguasvivas	Haverhill
Carol Barry	Peabody
Christina Godfrey	Beverly
Patrick Melican	Billerica
Scott Richardson	Manchester
Andrei Sliker	Dracut
Brett Bakos	Newburyport
Edwin Bracero	Beverly
Victor Castillo	Lawrence
Julie Clark	Lawrence
Jimenez Gomez	Lawrence
Jean Mathieu	Woburn
Pete Meyer	Ipswich
Jason Mispilkin	Newburyport
Sanjay Pradhan	Andover
Robert Sullivan	Haverhill
Christopher Thum	Newburyport

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

USPS Weingarten Card

USPS SUPERVISOR RESPONSIBILITIES UNDER WEINGARTEN WHEN INTERVIEWING AN EMPLOYEE WHERE DISCIPLINE MIGHT RESULT

Under the Weingarten rule, you **must** allow each employee the following rights in conducting an investigatory interview:

1. Each employee has a right to be represented by a union steward during an investigatory interview (but not during an Article 16 "discussion"). If, before or at any time during the interview, an employee requests a union steward or in any other way indicates that he or she wants representation, you **must** do one of three things: (1) you must provide a steward, **or** (2) you must end the interview, **or** (3) you must offer the employee the choice of continuing the interview without a steward, or of having no interview at all and therefore losing the benefit that the interview might have given to him or her. *When in doubt, it is better to provide a steward or contact Labor Relations immediately.*
2. The supervisor must tell the employee and steward the purpose and subject of the meeting before the meeting begins. (over →)

(Continued from other side)

Then, **if** either the steward or the employee requests, adequate time must be given to them to talk privately before (or during) the interview.

3. During the interview, you must permit the steward to participate. He or she may ask questions, clarify the employee's answers, comment about the questions, discuss favorable facts, suggest others who have information, and advise the employee. The steward is not allowed to disrupt the meeting or tell the employee not to answer a question. If that happens, postpone the remainder of the meeting and consult your manager or Labor Relations immediately.
4. You may begin the interview, if appropriate, by saying:
 - A. You are going to be asked a number of specific questions concerning (specify the issue causing the interview);
 - B. You are subject to disciplinary action if you refuse to answer or fail to respond truthfully to any questions;
 - C. Your steward may advise you and participate in the interview (assuming the employee has requested a steward).

PRACTICAL TIPS FOR

Living Intentionally

Living intentionally is about making choices that reflect your true self and what you want to achieve in life. By doing so, you can lead a more purposeful, fulfilling, and meaningful life that brings you greater happiness and satisfaction.

Tips for living more intentionally:

- **Reflect:** Take time to reflect on your values, goals, and priorities to gain clarity on your intentions.
- **Set Clear Goals:** Define specific, measurable, and time-bound goals that align with your values. Having clear goals gives you a roadmap to follow, making it easier to live with intention.
- **Be Mindful:** Practice mindfulness to help you stay present and make more conscious decisions.
- **Prioritize:** Arrange tasks by relevance to goals. This helps you allocate time and energy more effectively.
- **Simplify:** Reducing clutter, both physical and mental, can help you focus on what truly matters. Eliminate distractions and unnecessary commitments to create space for intentional living.
- **Create a Mission Statement:** Write a mission statement that encapsulates your values and intentions. This statement can serve as a guiding light for your decision-making.
- **Practice Gratitude:** Express gratitude for the positive aspects of your life to maintain a positive outlook.
- **Learn to Say No:** Being intentional means being selective about the commitments and obligations you take on. Don't be afraid to say no to things that don't align with your goals or values.
- **Review and Adjust:** Periodically review your progress and adjust your goals and intentions as needed.
- **Build a Support System:** Those who share your values can provide encouragement and accountability.
- **Take Responsibility:** Own the consequences of your decisions, whether positive or negative.
- **Embrace Flexibility:** It's essential to remain flexible and adapt to changing circumstances.
- **Enjoy the Journey:** Remember that living intentionally is not just about reaching goals but also about enjoying the journey. Find joy and satisfaction in the process of living in alignment with your values.

Living intentionally is an ongoing practice that requires self-awareness and commitment to lead a more purposeful, fulfilling, and meaningful life. The EAP is here to support you in living a more purposeful, fulfilling and satisfying life. Visit EAP4YOU.com to learn more.

WAKE UP

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at the next meeting
February 13
K of C Wilmington
8:00 PM

Make a New Year's
RESOLUTION to
ATTEND
UNION MEETINGS.



WE COUNT ON
OUR MEMBERS
to MAKE A
DIFFERENCE!