



# ***WAKE UP!***

President/ Editor  
Dave Barbuzzi

Publisher  
Dan Wheeler

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Tony Perconte, Legislative and Political Organizer for the NALC speaks to members about the Letter Carrier Political Fund at the February branch meeting.



## President's Message

At the February branch meeting, the members approved to fund a very generous number of carriers (36) to attend the 2018 Region 14 Rap Session on Sunday, March 11. Region 14 NBA John Casciano will be presenting the rap session and our National President, Fred Rolando will be attending. Rest assured, Fred will be giving enough information about national level issues to make your head explode.

I would strongly recommend that if you want a better understanding of the issues, both political and workroom related, that we are facing today and will be facing in the future, that you attend. Jerry Ugone will be covering Article 12, Patty Josef will be covering clock ring deletions, and our very own Rick DiCecca will be covering how NOT to lose a grievance. If you would like to attend, please either contact myself or Paul Desmond at the branch office, or email us via the Branch website. The web address is on the back of the Wake-Up! and there is a button on the website to ask questions. Use that button to contact the branch if you can't call, it's that easy.

As I am writing this Article, I just received confirmation that Article 12 has been lifted. That is great news for CCA's and regular carriers alike! In case you're not keeping track, the tangible benefits for a CCA being converted to regular are an immediate pay raise, sick leave, fronted annual leave, and access to the Thrift Savings Plan. The quality of life benefits are the elimination of Sunday work in most cases, and a more stable work schedule that does not have the carrier going to different offices for hours. Once regular, the carriers also get a roughly \$1700 pay raise every 46 weeks until they reach the top of the pay scale. The lifting of Article 12 is by far the best news that I've received in quite some time!

The current regulars will also benefit. There are a handful of our offices that have vacancies, some of them multiple vacancies, that have not been filled due to Article 12. These vacancies will now be filled as quickly as expeditiously possible, and not a moment too soon as primetime is just around the corner. The filling of vacancies will have the obvious benefit of bolstering staffing and hopefully reducing forced overtime to an extent.

I have been to several offices recently, and it's overwhelming to see all the new faces. I have even seen a couple new faces at branch meetings. Unfortunately, I don't know all of you, but I would like to. I realize that it is difficult for many to attend the branch meeting, and

it is certainly not easy for me to really have a conversation with the members on the workroom floor. Office times are so short, by the time I have spoken to 2-3 carriers, everyone would be out the door on the street. If there is an office that would like to have a local meeting, please don't hesitate to contact the branch office to arrange for one. Meetings can be held for training purposes, to answer questions in general or specific to your office. The point is, you are part of a Union and I personally would like you to know what you are part of. I would also like to know what you are experiencing in your office.

I know that many times in the past, Executive Vice President Paul Desmond has spoken at branch meetings and written in the Wake-Up! that letter carriers should keep track of their clock rings. Every letter carrier should have a pocket calendar and they should write down what time they punch in and out each day so that they can check their pay every two weeks. But, that isn't the only thing that a letter carrier should check or write down.

The branch processes many grievances. Often times, grievances involve financial resolves. Unfortunately, more often than not, these remedies are not processed in a timely manner. If you have a grievance and you are notified of the outcome, request a copy of the decision and then watch your paystub. If you don't receive compensation within a couple pay periods, please, let us know. I can assure you that we do not call the supervisors or postmasters that we meet with every week or so to ask if they have processed an adjustment. However, if you let us know that you haven't received one, then we certainly will follow up. Sometimes, another grievance needs to be filed, sometimes it doesn't, but we will be persistent on your behalf until you receive what is coming to you.

Finally, I'm happy to say that the branch will be having this year's pancake breakfast on April 15 at the Knights of Columbus in Tewksbury. It's a little bit later than usual, but hopefully the weather will be better and people will come out. **WE NEED VOLUNTEERS!** The proceeds from the breakfast fund the branch scholarships. If you are able to help out, whether it be the day of or soliciting contributions, please contact me at the branch office.

Stay informed!

Dave Barbuzzi



## Executive Vice President's Report

I never thought I'd say that I miss the PTF workforce but I certainly do. As a PTF, we were treated as the current CCAs are, with a few exceptions. The PTFs were career employees after 90 days on the job. PTFs got full benefits including health, Thrift Savings, sick leave, COLAs and contractual pay increases. As far as Sundays go, most offices had a 2 hour collection that the PTFs rotated covering, so you were not expected to be available every Sunday, although that may be different today with the Amazon contract. Unfortunately, we had an arbitrator rule against the Union in establishing a new class of carrier, the CCA. The Postal Service fought to have the CCAs paid less and have a less attractive benefit package than the PTFs. I don't think the Postal Service has benefitted from this. Back during the PTF days, the Postal Service was allowed to hire casuals, a supplemental workforce, mostly for the summer and the Christmas rush, for 90 day periods. They were paid less, but knew it was a temporary job and most came back for a few summers. This was later changed to the Transitional Employee that turned into CCAs. The CCA job is far better than the casual, and has better benefits and a clearer path to career than the Transitional. As a career employee, you knew there was going to be a certain number of casuals showing up around the middle of May, usually when the colleges got out. Not any more, what you have as a workforce is it. It makes for a tough summer for everyone, carriers and managers. We fought for a mostly career workforce, but looking back, the staffing is worse than ever. I don't know if it is a result of the change in workforce or not, but I miss having a summer workforce every year.

Speaking of summer, most stations should be choosing AL for choice vacations at this point or may be done. If any CCAs were not allowed to make a choice, please let your steward know or call the Union office. There are legit reasons that management can disallow a choice for a CCA but not many. The number one reason would be lack of annual leave balance at the time the leave would be used. Most Local Agreements have designated April 1 as the last day to complete the AL calendar and post it where it can be seen. This is a good way for CCAs to see what is available for hold downs for the summer. Make sure the calendars are posted, and if you are denied a hold down for any reason let your steward know.

We get a lot of calls from carriers and stewards that deal with attendance issues of all kinds. Management can be quick to conduct pre-disciplinary interviews or issue discipline over absences, especially unscheduled absences. A lot of carriers don't realize that their absences could possibly be covered by the Family

Medical Leave Act (FMLA). There are many instances and conditions that could be covered by the FMLA, but essentially if you are out for 3 days, or have to make 2 trips to a medical provider, or 1 trip and a prescription is necessary then it is possible your condition could be covered. Three days with a chronic condition that incapacitates you for work is the most common. I won't get into the entire process of the FMLA, but essentially you need to give your supervisor enough information to determine that your illness or condition could be covered by the FMLA. No diagnosis, but a general nature of why you are out. Request your leave to be FMLA on a 3971 and it should generate paperwork from HRSSC in Greensboro. This should be filled out by your doctor and sent back to Greensboro within 15 days. This should not be taken lightly, and every employee should take advantage of the law. The law protects you from action being taken against you as a result of your absence. Any questions call the Union office.

Keep your head up!

Paul Desmond

### Calendar of Events

March 6	8PM Branch Meeting @ Knights of Columbus 27 School St. Ext. Wilmington Food served @ 7:15
March 8	International Women's Day
March 11	Daylight Savings Time 2018 Region 14 RAP Session, Providence RI
March 14	National Potato Chip Day
March 17	St. Patrick's Day
March 20	First Day of Spring
March 25	Palm Sunday
March 30	Passover Good Friday



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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.*

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### **COLA Update**

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The fourth regular COLA under the 2016-2019 National Agreement is \$520 annually following the release of the January 2018 Consumer Price Index.

On February 14, the Bureau of Labor Statistics announced that the CPI for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers (CPI-W, 1967=100) stood at 720.604 in January, 22.024 points above the base index of 698.580 in July 2014. After adding the 0.465 cents carried forward from the third adjustment period, the accumulated COLA through February stood at 25 cents per hour or \$520 annually.

The fifth COLA will be based on the increase in the CPI-W between the base index month and July 2018, less any previously calculated COLAs, and will be payable the second full pay period following the release of the July 2018 index. The four COLAs that have been calculated under the 2016-2019 National Agreement, totaling 55 cents per hour, are as follows: 1st COLA, 1 cent per hour (\$21 annually), 2nd COLA, 16 cents per hour (\$333 annually), 3rd COLA, 13 cents per hour (\$270 annually), and the 4th COLA, 25 cents per hour (\$520 annually).

Courtesy of NALC.org

Imagine if you hurt yourself while doing your job. Doing something you do every day as part of your job. One little thing is off. You miscalculated by an inch and one thing hit another thing and you hurt your back. You tell your supervisor, you go to the doctor and you try to recover. You feel a little better and try to return to work. There is still pain, but you try.

Now the morning you come back, you are brought in the office and given a Pre- Disciplinary Interview. Why? Because Management believes you were performing an unsafe act when you hurt yourself. When you were doing something you do every day, the same way. Then you're asked, "Don't you remember the proper lifting demonstration we had 5 months ago?"

Can you imagine such a crazy thing?

TRY to stay safe, I guess.

Jim Salvati

Safety Officer

Lyrics Trivia

I say we can act if we want to if we don't nobody will  
And you can act real rude and totally removed  
And I can act like an imbecile

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### **MBA News**

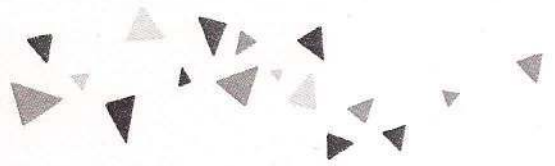
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Reminder: April 16, 2018 is the last day to make a contribution to a Traditional IRA or Roth IRA for the 2017 Tax Year. The United States Letter Carriers Mutual Benefit Association (MBA) has announced that the Interest Rates paid on MBA Policies will remain the same for 2018. The MBA is currently paying 3.25% interest on the Retirement Savings Plans (except for those policies which guarantee a higher minimum rate).



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## Dealing with difficult people

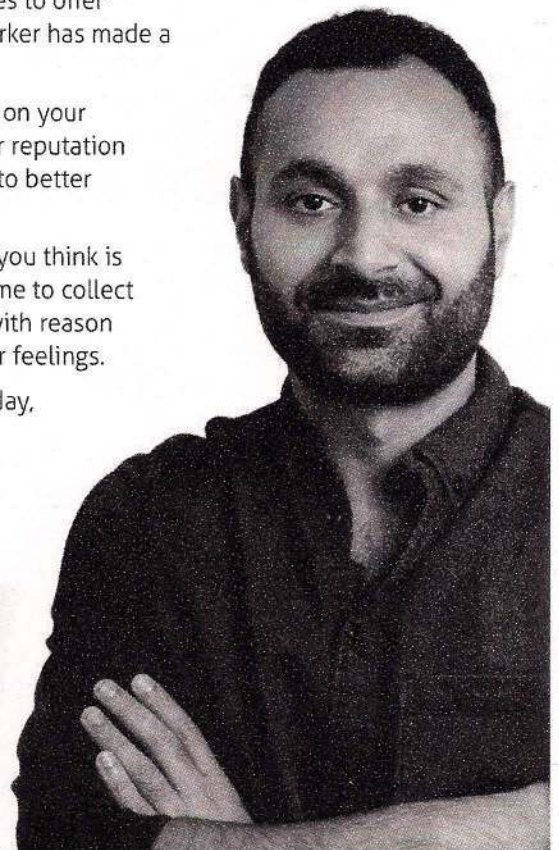
- When you're clashing with someone, their words can feel like a personal attack. However, remember their behavior usually isn't about you—it reflects their own struggles and/or unmet needs.
- Although you can't change a difficult person, you *can* change how you react to them. Hear their concerns and extend some forgiveness.
- You can repair a relationship by letting go of negative thoughts you've stored up about the other person. Strive to recognize their strengths, talents and skills.

## Getting along with others

Have some of your workplace relationships become a drag? With some effort and persistence, you can create more understanding, acceptance and trust between you and your co-workers.

You probably spend more time with your work colleagues than you do with your immediate family. As you know, however, even the healthiest of families have interpersonal conflicts. In order to get along better at work:

- Be respectful of differences. Give your co-workers space to be who they are no matter how they differ from you ethnically, culturally, temperamentally and even politically.
- Enhance your trustworthiness by avoiding office gossip. Instead, look for chances to offer generous praise when a co-worker has made a contribution.
- Be reliable and follow through on your commitments. This boosts your reputation and can be catching—leading to better teamwork.
- If a co-worker says something you think is hurtful or in poor taste, take time to collect your thoughts. Then respond with reason rather than heated emotions or feelings.
- If a co-worker is having a bad day, offer a simple act of kindness. Your colleague will likely return the favor when you're having a bad day.



When a work project succeeds, share the credit with your co-workers. Even if a success was mostly your idea, remember that few work accomplishments are entirely solo efforts.

Log on to [www.EAP4YOU.com](http://www.EAP4YOU.com) today!

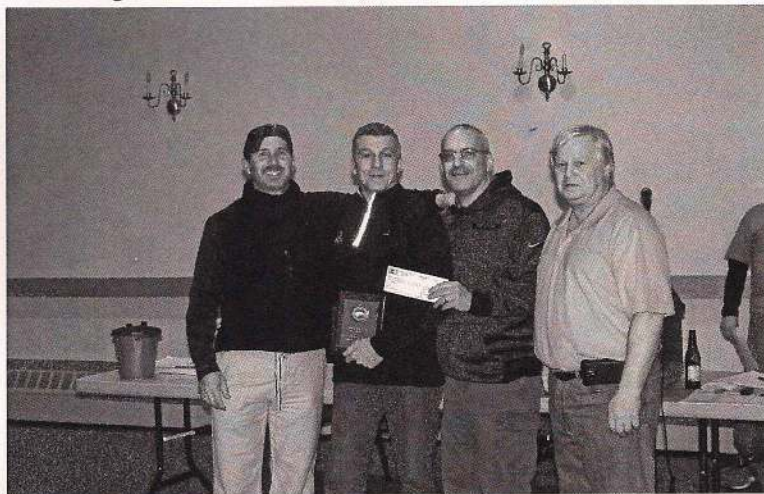
**Magellan**  
HEALTHCARE<sup>SM</sup>



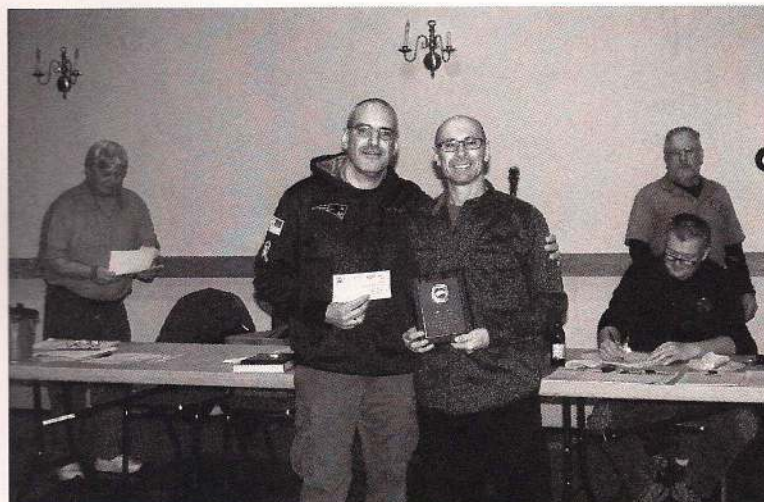
## Recent Retirees



Mario Iannetti receives his retirement plaque from Branch president, Dave Barbuzzi along with Mike Kavanagh



Lowell letter carrier Walter O'Neil recently retired after 31 years. Best of luck in retirement Walter!



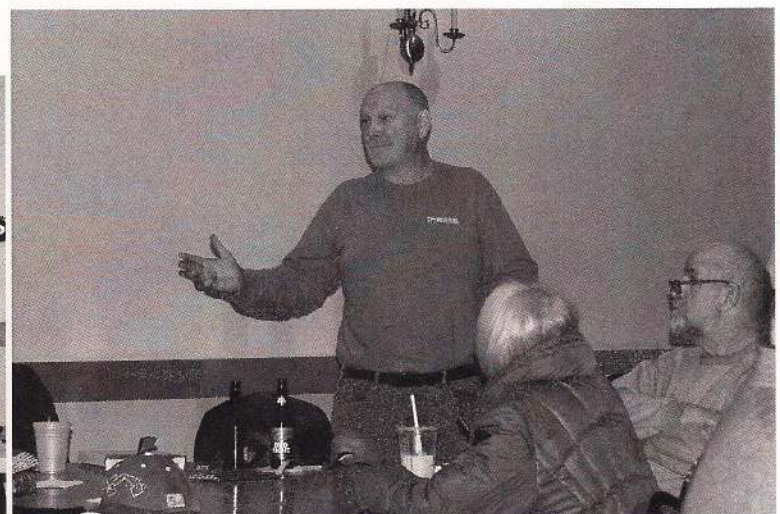
Former Branch Officer Dave Dente, with President Dave Barbuzzi. Dave recently retired from the Concord office after 34 years as a letter carrier.

## Veterans' Corner

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts began providing for its veterans right after the revolutionary war. The state legislature formalized the assistance provided to veterans by establishing MGL Chapter 115 and the Department of Veterans' Services. Chapter 115 enables every eligible Massachusetts veteran to receive certain financial, medical, educational and employment benefits earned by military service.

Veterans' Service Officers (VSO) in 351 municipalities across the state help veterans and families connect with benefits. Please check with your own town or city's VSO to see what you are eligible for.

Semper Fi  
Andie Coulter



Former Wake Up Publisher Mike Kavanagh speaks about the Letter Carrier Political Fund



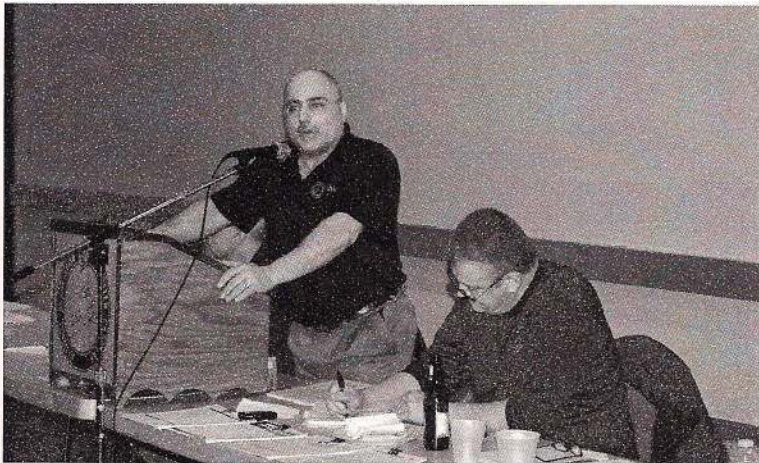
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## Letter Carrier Political Fund

Tony Perconte, Legislative and Political Organizer came out to our February branch meeting to speak to members about the Letter Carrier Political Fund (LCPF). The LCPF is a non-partisan political action committee (PAC).

The LCPF helps us to support those politicians who support our causes as letter carriers. Because no union dues are used the LCPF relies solely on member contributions. For more information please check out the article "Why Congress Matters" in the February *Postal Record* or go to NALC.org or check out the NALC app on your phone.



By making a contribution to the Letter Carrier Political Fund, you are doing so voluntarily with the understanding that your contribution is not a condition of membership in the National Association of Letter Carriers or of employment by the Postal Service, nor is it part of union dues. You have a right to refuse to contribute without any reprisal. The Letter Carrier Political Fund will use the money it receives to contribute to candidates for federal office and undertake other political spending as permitted by law. Your selection shall remain in full force and effect until cancelled. Contributions to the Letter Carrier Political Fund are not deductible for federal income tax purposes. Federal law prohibits the Letter Carrier Political Fund from soliciting contributions from individuals who are not NALC members, executive and administrative staff or their families. Any contribution received from such an individual will be refunded to that contributor. Federal law requires us to use our best efforts to collect and report the name, mailing address, occupation and name of employer of individuals whose contributions exceed \$200 per calendar year. Any guideline amount is merely a suggestion, and an individual is free to contribute more or less than the guideline suggests and the Union will not favor or disadvantage anyone by reason of the amount of their contribution or their decision not to contribute.

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## Check Out Our Website

Did you know that Branch 25 is online? You can find us online at [nalcbranch25.com](http://nalcbranch25.com). You can find the latest branch and national NALC news, branch calendar, a ton of useful links and branch contact information. You can even read the Wake Up online and get Jim Salvati's lyrics trivia answer for this month.

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## Welcome New Members

Johnathan M. Banford	Peabody
Vincent A. Calderon	Marblehead
D.C. Dy	Lowell
Carolyn K. Fountain	Manchester
Johnathan M. Gryzbinsky	Peabody
Mohamed A. Hikli	Andover
Cameron J. Hillner	Dracut
Thomas J. Kennedy	Salem
Thang Lau	Wakefield
Richard W. Logan	Wakefield
Lisa M. Martin	Gloucester
Cody W. Morgan	Andover
Pierre J. Noel	Tewksbury
Thomas D. Rash	Salem
Wesley A. Tugman	Lowell
Cynthia A. Yates	North Reading
Christopher D. Zimmerman	Wakefield



## **WAKE UP**

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