



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



Left to right: Giacomo Guarino, Nancy Chrisos, Bob Nelson, Tony Rauseo, Lynnfield's newest retiree Steve Starkey, Dave Barbuzzi, Gary Belschner, Mike Kavanagh, and Dan Brown. Steve Starkey wrapped up a 46 year career and joined with fellow Lynnfield carriers to receive his retirement plaque and gratuity. We wish Steve many happy healthy years of retirement!!

President's Message

There is no denying that these are scary times. The pandemic that we are experiencing is tragic, and will surely have long-lasting consequences. What we can't allow is for hysteria to take over and cloud our judgement and suspend our sensibility.

If you haven't done so already, I would ask that you please go the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) website, cdc.gov, and take advantage of all the information that is available to you. The website is thorough and easy to navigate and understand. I hope that, as with many things, the more you learn about and understand COVID 19, the better prepared and less fearful you will be.

It would be an understatement to say that the pandemic caught us by surprise. As such, supplies are short and difficult to replenish. Branch Presidents have been tasked by our National President to communicate with our National Business Agent as frequently as possible to let them know what supplies are available and what supplies are lacking. This information is being shared at the headquarters level in an effort to get supplies where they are needed. The supplies are hand sanitizer, disinfectant wipes, gloves, and masks.

Unfortunately, at press time, there are more stations that are lacking some of these supplies than stations that have all of them. Items are backordered. All one has to do is watch the news to see that hospitals can't even get masks and gloves in many cases. Health care professionals are being forced to ration personal protective equipment (ppe). Governors are showing frustration at their inability to get much needed supplies from the federal government.

I would urge anyone that has the means to produce their own hand sanitizer or spray disinfectant to do so. We can wait for the postal service to supply them, or we can be pro-active and do it ourselves.

Along those lines, I have to commend the employees and managers that have been proactive. There are distilleries within the area that have been contacted that are now producing hand sanitizer and supplying it to the postal service. Thousands of personal size bottles have been produced and provided to employees.

You have to use them for them to be effective. Again I refer you to the CDC website. Hand-washing and sanitizing before touching one's face is paramount to staying healthy. Washing and sanitizing your hands is almost pointless, however, if you don't wipe down your steering wheel, gear selector, e-brake, door handle, and window crank.

There are those that are not taking the virus seriously at all, and there are those that are paralyzed with fear. Again, I can't stress enough how education from reliable sources is so important right now.

To that end, I visited the Billerica installation this morning. I wanted to be available to the members as there had been a positive-tested employee in another station that the employees in the Billerica installation were aware of. I wanted to make sure that the messaging provided by the postal service was accurate and I also wanted to be sure that our members understand that if they are in the at-risk group and they are fearful for their health, that they can self-quarantine on sick leave without consequence. If you're sick, by all means stay home.

If you are sent home by management, or by a public health professional, you will be paid administrative leave. Public health professionals become involved if your medical provider makes them involved. If your medical provider believes that you are exhibiting signs of the virus, they make the call to the appropriate public health care agency who then advise them what to do. That is how tests are administered.

If you are exposed to someone that has either tested positive or is a presumptive positive, let management know. It's also not a bad idea to let the Union know as well. I am told that the protocol is that the Occupational Health Nurse Administrators (OHNA), liason with the CDC and receive instructions on what to do. I am told that it is not just the OHNA making a decision, but a Public Health Professional making the decisions.

If this information hasn't been shared with you at your station, I am sorry for that. I hope moving forward that there is transparency between management and the employees. If you believe that your manager is keeping something from you, please make me aware. I will do everything I can to ensure that you receive the information you deserve.

Our NBA, Rick DiCecca, asked our District Manager (on a telecon) if the service could put out a mailing on proper customer behavior during this time. Kids are out of school and many of them think it's just another school vacation. One of their favorite things is to go and visit the mailman and take the mail. We have to politely let the parents know that now is not the time for that. We have to balance customer service with safety. Safety being the ultimate factor in any decision.

This situation changes day to day. We will do everything we can to answer any questions that may arise. Please don't assume that we are aware of what is happening in every station. Let us know.

Stay safe, and

Stay informed!

Dave Barbuzzi

Executive Vice-President's Report

At this point the country and the Postal Service are both operating in a way that is very much “not normal”. Most of the businesses are shut down and people that can are working from home, and all schools in the state are shut down until the beginning of May. It seems like things are changing on a daily basis and by the time the Wakeup reaches the members, we could be in a tremendously different situation. For now, we are still working and are considered essential workers. Hopefully, the Congress will pass some legislation that will help everyone, and at the same time give relief to the Postal Service. I don't have a lot of faith that we will get much relief for the Postal Service in any stimulus bill for the country but we should, considering that we are required to work and there is a lot of money being spent, in order for us to stay open, without the normal revenue. Most importantly, if you do not feel well, stay home and keep your distance from as many people as possible.

The Postal Service has decided to end all inspections and one day counts through the end of April. Probably a good idea with the possibility of low volumes after the closures of all schools and almost all businesses for what could end up being an extended period of time. The inspections most likely wouldn't be representative of an average week, and therefore a waste of time. We don't know if or when the inspections will be rescheduled for but will notify all involved if this happens. We still have inspections scheduled for May, but that is subject to change. I'm sure we will have carriers being told they have “undertime” if the volumes drop off. If you do that's fine, but if you receive a piece of another route on the street or in the office, and feel you will require OT to finish, then fill out a 3996. You are still required to inform management of the need for OT.

I am sure you will read this in another section of the Wakeup, but just a reminder that there will not be a branch meeting in April. Obviously, a branch meeting would be a gathering of larger than 10 people and that would be in violation of the guidelines set up for social distancing to battle the corona virus. It is hardly worth it to try and salvage a monthly meeting as opposed to taking a risk of anyone falling ill or spreading the virus. I'm sure there would not be a hall we could gather at anyway but hopefully we will be able to meet in May. As of now there is no more information for the national agreement discussions, which seem to be heading to arbitration or the case consolidation arbitration award.

We have been very busy at the office with OWCP cases, mainly appeals and requests for more information. We have said it for years that it is a lot easier for us to help members with their compensation cases from the beginning, rather than after the case has been denied and it is time to appeal. Cases get denied sometimes because

something as simple as a signature from a physician is missing or a carrier did not understand what was being requested by the Department of Labor in order to approve the case. Other times the DOL is looking for a lot of information and we can help clarify what it is they need. When the DOL is looking for information, there is a time limit so the sooner we know you need help the better. A phone call to the Union office could save you a lot of time and may help you to get your claim approved easier. OWCP claims can be difficult to get approved even if everything is done properly.

Hopefully we will meet in May, see you then.

Keep your head up and hands clean!

Paul Desmond

Calendar of Events

April 1	April Fools' Day
April 5	Palm Sunday
April 7	Meeting Canceled
April 7	World Health Day
April 12	Easter Sunday
April 20	Patriots' Day
April 22	Earth Day
April 24	Arbor Day

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Paul G. Desmond	Executive V.P.
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Your "Wake-Up!" is produced in-house at the Branch 25 Union office each and every month.

MDA MINI-GOLF TOURNEY!!

***Branch 25's First Mini Golf
Family Fun Tournament!!
(To benefit MDA)***

Sunday, May 17th at 1:00PM

**Nunan's Garden Center
269 Central Street
Georgetown, MA**

\$20 per person

**Includes: Round of Golf along with a
Hamburger or Hot Dog or
Chicken Fingers**

***Extra food and beverages will be available for
purchase as well as raffles!!***

***Look for more information coming to your
office soon!!***

***Massachusetts
Department of Veterans' Services***

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Department of Veterans' Services (DVS) is to be the chief advocate for the nearly 323k veterans of the Commonwealth and their families. DVS establishes policy, proposes legislation, ensures that adequate funding for veterans' programs is included in the Governor's budget and represents the interests of veterans in matters coming before the General Court. In addition, DVS represents all state agencies and individual veterans before the Federal Department of Veterans' Affairs in securing federal compensation and other benefits that might be available.

VETERANS' BILL OF RIGHTS

Veterans have a right to:

- File a written application for veterans' benefits at anytime. You can insist upon this right even if told that you are ineligible [108 CMR 4:01(1)]
- Get help from your local city or town Veterans' Service Officer (VSO) or town clerk in completing your application [M.G.L., ch. 115, s. 3].
- Receive a full explanation of the services and veterans' benefits available under M.G.L, Chapter 115, as well as other available benefits.
- Be treated with dignity and respect and to receive accurate, courteous, and timely service.
- Appeal and request a hearing if you disagree with any action taken in your case [108 CMR 8:08 (1)].
- Expect confidentiality: personal information will not be collected or used except for the purpose of determining your eligibility for benefits [M.G.L., ch. 40, s. 51].
- Receive fair and equal treatment without regard to veterans status [M.G.L., ch. 40, s. 51] race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, sex or handicap [M.G.L., ch. 40, s.51]
- Preference in public employment [M.G.L., ch. 31, s. 25 and ch. 41, s. 112]

For additional information on your rights speak to your local VSO by calling City/Town Hall or the Department of Veterans' Services at 617-210-5480.

Semper Fi!

Andie Coulter



Coronavirus

Prepare without Panic

If you speak with three different people, you'll receive a range of different response to the Coronavirus Disease – some are ordering face masks and stocking up on supplies, others are thinking they will not be going overseas this summer and others have not heard of the virus. Information on the virus is updating all the time and what we do know is, there is no need to panic. The following are practical steps to prepare for the effects of the Coronavirus (COVID-19).

- **Be Prepared** – If there was a natural disaster and you had to stay home for several days what would you need; water, non-perishables, medicine, paper products, hygienic items etc? We need to prepare for school and business closures or the need to stay home due to someone in our household having the COVID-19 Virus. This preparation will give a sense of control and being prepared for the possibility of a home stay.
- **Information Overload** – Inconsistent information is all over the internet, news outlets and airwaves. Turn to trusted sources to find the most current information on the Coronavirus such as the Center for Disease Control ([cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov)), the World Health Organization ([who.int](https://www.who.int)) and the National Institutes of Health ([nih.gov](https://www.nih.gov))
- **Prevention Procedures** - Wash your hands frequently, and cough into your elbow or tissue not your hands. If you are having the symptoms of the virus check in with your doctor and follow their advice. Being mindful of the different ways to prevent the spread of the virus is a great way to stay prepared.
- **Prevent Panic** – With all of the differing opinions, changing and updated information, it can be confusing and hard at times not to overreact. Take and use the precautions instructed from trusted resources, prepare for a stay at home if need be, put prevention procedures in place and try to remain calm.
- **Reduce the Stigma** – Anyone can get this virus; it does not discriminate. Please try to be kind to all people. Do not discriminate because you see someone who looks like they are from another country. At this time, we need to help and support each other through these trying times and remember a little kindness can go a long way to help prevent panic.

This is an emerging, rapidly evolving situation. For the latest information visit [CDC.gov](https://www.cdc.gov).

As always, your EAP is here for you and your family. Whether you are staying home or continuing your routine, there are a variety of ways to connect with your EAP including: by telephone 800-327-4968 (800-EAP-4YOU), TTY: 877-492-734, online at [EAP4YOU.com](https://www.EAP4YOU.com), through video, by live chat or text message. Reach out to us to learn more about the many options you have to receive support from your Employee Assistance Program.



CALL US TODAY: 800-327-4968
800-EAP-4YOU | TTY: 877-492-7341
[WWW.EAP4YOU.COM](https://www.EAP4YOU.COM)

A reality in our lives is that sometimes, and for whatever reason, we may wish to choose a new health care provider(s). Your doctor may retire, die, or perhaps he or she may be "losing it" a bit. He or she may relocate or leave your preferred provider network (or get kicked out!). Or, you simply may not feel comfortable with a certain provider. On a personal note I recently changed dermatologists and am much the better for it. In any event, the following suggestions may be helpful should you wish to make a change.

1. Determine whether or not the caregiver is a member of your Plan's Preferred Provider Network.
2. Arrange for a Courtesy (i.e., cost-free personal interview). Some Providers do them, some don't.
3. Determine the caregiver's institutional affiliations (e.g., hospitals, clinics, etc.).
4. Determine the caregiver's medical credentials.
5. Discuss his/her accessibility practices and procedures, both emergency and routine.
6. Discuss his/her professional practice - where, how long.
7. "Ask around" regarding patient satisfaction with caregiver's professional performance.
8. Determine through your State Board of Medicine if there is any record of malpractice.
9. Discuss payment procedures.

Keep on truckin'

Rich Donlon


This month I wanted to write about something not necessarily postal related, but something that applies to everyone. When you hear the term estate planning you may think it's something that only applies to the rich. The fact of the matter is everyone should have an estate plan, even if your estate is modest. I have recently had to deal with some of these issues with a couple of members of my own family. It can be a lot of work for family members to work through these issues once someone's health starts to deteriorate, either slowly or quickly. There are some things that we all can, and should, do to make these decisions easier on those who will be entrusted to handle these matters down the road.

This is some basic advice and not meant to replace the advice of actual legal or financial professionals. One thing that everyone should have is a will. A will can distribute your property, name an executor, name guardians for children, forgive debts and more. Having a will also means that you, rather than your state's laws, decide who gets your property when you die. Most people want to distribute their property differently than the state would distribute it. Two more things to consider is naming a health care proxy and power of attorney. A health care proxy allows you to appoint someone else to act as your agent for medical decisions. It will ensure that your medical treatment instructions are carried out, and it is especially important to have a health care proxy if you and your family may disagree about treatment. A power of attorney is a legal document that allows an individual to appoint another person or entity to act on their behalf to administer their affairs. Power of attorney documents can be all encompassing or limited to certain actions.

There are other things to think about as well, such as setting up trusts for property or other assets in order to avoid lengthy probate problems, pre planning funeral arrangements and expenses, and keeping beneficiary information up to date. The NALC retirement page has links to update beneficiary info for FEGLI, CSRS, FERS and TSP. These can be found at NALC.org/workplace-issues/retirement.

No one wants to spend a lot of time thinking about their own mortality. Unfortunately, life comes fast. Unforeseen events and health changes can come quickly. It's estimated that 70 percent of people over age 65 will require long term health care at some point. The more planning you do ahead of time will make things easier for those who will be making future decisions and help to make sure your wishes are followed. As is the case with everything in life, you can never be too prepared.

In solidarity,
Dan Wheeler

 **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



READY FOR SPRING+SUMMER



Lyrics Trivia: But I can see you, your brown skin shining in the sun, you got your hair combed back and your, sunglasses on baby...

WAKE UP

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*at the next meeting
?????*

Hopefully May 5, 2020