



WAKE UP!

President/ Editor
Daniel P. Wheeler

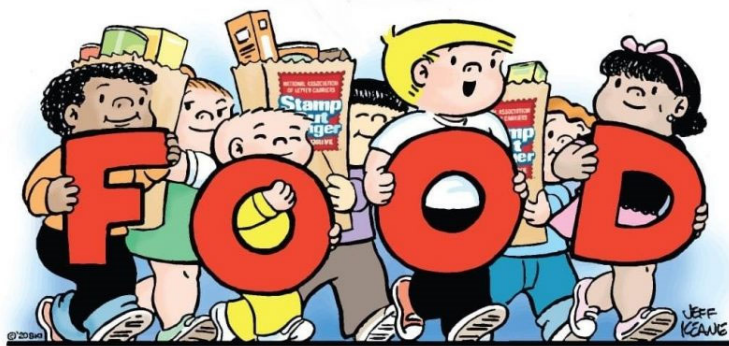
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The 31st Annual Letter Carriers'



**LETTER CARRIERS'
FOOD DRIVE**

SECOND SATURDAY IN MAY

PUT YOUR NON-PERISHABLE DONATION IN A BAG BY YOUR MAILBOX.
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May 13

President's Message

“Clipboards Everywhere You Look”

I have seen a lot of clipboards lately. No, I'm not about to get into some weird dreams I have been having. I'm not hallucinating either; these clipboards are attached to actual people. These people are not letter carriers, however. Letter carriers don't have much need for clipboards. We have a few up here at the branch office, although we don't really use them. A clipboard itself is not something to be concerned about. However, a clipboard in the wrong hands is something for us to worry about. The people using these clipboards are Postal management, usually from the district or HQ level, but sometimes local management as well. These clipboard-wielding managers are likely to pop up just about anywhere at any time. They seem to have been congregating in a couple of places lately. One office where they have been seen recently has been on management's radar because carriers from a few other offices were reassigned to work there.

Like many offices in our branch and around the country, staffing is an issue in this office. The Service is struggling to schedule enough carriers to deliver the mail, but there does not seem to be the same struggle to find Postal management to watch over the carriers and take notes on their clipboards. The problem is the Postal Service, as the old saying goes, can't see the forest for the trees. I understand management has a right to manage, and there may even be some positive things they can learn from these notes. Carriers are working long days and late hours due to staffing issues. Before the clipboards came out, carriers had not even been given full and proper instructions on operating procedures in the new work location.

There have been different reasons for the clipboards showing up in other offices. Sometimes, it has been because the office is undergoing or about to undergo the TIAREAP process. In another case, it was because management was "looking for inefficiencies" in an office where there are not enough carriers to deliver the mail consistently, as our customers deserve. The Postal Service should have brought me in to assess the situation because I already see the inefficiencies. The inefficiency is the lack of bodies on the routes. They should probably start there. To use another old saying, this is like "rearranging deck chairs on the Titanic". What good does it do to look for savings of seconds or minutes when we all know the big problem in front of us? Perhaps these people could have been better allocated to finding more employees for these offices.

Management has the right to manage. They have the right to bring in managers from the district or HQ level. However, like local management, they need to follow the rules of the National Agreement and common courtesy when dealing with our members. We have had some issues in offices where we have needed to reach out to

make this happen. If your office is seeing increased management presence, please be aware they may have the right to be there doing whatever it is they are doing. They do not have the right to go about it however they please. If you receive instruction that doesn't seem right from one of these people or by proxy from local management, please contact your shop steward or the branch office.

I also wanted to mention a few things about retirement this month. As of February 2023, the Office of Personal Management (OPM) has a backlog of about 23,000 retirement cases to be processed. Their goal is to have 13,000, so they are roughly 55% over their goal of cases waiting to be processed. If you are looking to retire, you should plan on a 6-month leeway to get everything set up through USPS Human Resources Shared Services (HRSSC). Employees looking to retire first apply for retirement through HRSSC, and then the retirement is approved by OPM. Due to the backlog of cases, they may offer group counseling sessions to review retirement benefits. We are entitled to individual counseling, and you cannot be made to be part of a group session. Some people don't mind the group setting, so the choice is up to you. There have also been many complaints of OPM phone system issues. Callers report being on hold for over an hour, and many members report their calls being dropped at some point. There is an OPM email address that some members have said can help get a response. If you want to contact OPM via email instead of the phone, the email address is retired@opm.gov. You should put your CSA number, name, and issue in the email's subject line.

In Solidarity,

Dan Wheeler

By making a contribution to the National Association of Letter Carriers' 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 your employment by the U.S. Postal Service, nor is it part of union dues. You may 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 canceled. 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.

Executive Vice-President's Report

Last month I wrote about the upcoming consolidation of 2 of our stations into the Sorting and Delivery Center (or Super Center according to the USPS), formerly known as the Woburn Detached Mail Unit, and I said there would be more to report at a later date. The building has housed 6 delivery units for many years, each unit moving in from their respective Post Offices. Of course, there may have been issues with time in the past due to more travel time, but nobody tried to reinvent the wheel. This move wasn't really anything new, except for the fact that Postal Headquarters had to have way too much input. This time the Post Office decided to bring in dozens of management employees from USPS Headquarters and other regions to "help" with the conversion to a "Super Center". They did not help much. As a matter of fact, they probably caused more confusion. Keep in mind all they did was move about 30 routes into the building, and they were not ready for it on day 1, even though they had months to prepare. It took a few days for all the new employees to figure out the process, seeing everything was different than in North Reading and Wakefield. No one knew on day 1 where to find keys or scanners and no one was there to help. Apparently, the HQ people didn't like the results of the office times of day 1, because they decided it would be a good idea to do office counts on day 2 of the move. Brilliant idea considering the carriers couldn't even punch in on day 1. I guess they thought the carriers didn't need any time to get familiar with an entirely different operation. Anyway, the counts they did don't mean a thing, and were stopped very soon after they began, and we are now in the time frame (days 31-75) that the data will be used to evaluate the routes. No thanks to HQ management, the carriers will adjust to the new process and hopefully get route adjustments in a timely manner. Once again, the carriers were far more professional than the managers from USPS Headquarters. Next time these people are used to put a "Super Center" together, maybe they will let the people that actually know what they are doing manage the move. Only time will tell if this move will result in the cost savings the Postal Service projects.

We have had more installations added to the memo that allows stations to hire PTFs instead of CCAs. This should have been done years ago. It has already shown that the stations authorized to hire PTFs are hiring at a much greater pace than the ones hiring CCAs. This should be a surprise to nobody. It is a significant pay raise that comes with instant career status, sick leave, TSP match and more. Hopefully, a result of contract negotiations will be all new hires as PTFs. In these installations, all CCAs, if any exist must be converted to career status. In order to succeed, the Postal Service needs a stable workforce, not one with employees looking for another job soon after being hired. Unfortunately, we had to cancel the last Branch meeting with the forecast for bad weather.

We did not want carriers driving to Wilmington during the height of a snow storm, that was calling for high winds. We should not run into that problem until next winter, so the next meeting is scheduled for April 11th. It is almost Opening Day at Fenway, usually a good sign of good weather to come. The Bruins and Celtics are both doing well heading toward the playoffs.

For those hoping to retire in the near future, I am told there is a backlog at OPM in processing retirement applications, so get you applications in as soon as you can. Otherwise, keep your head up and hopefully I'll see you at the April meeting.

Paul Desmond

Calendar of Events


April 1	April Fools Day
April 11	Regular Monthly Meeting K of C Wilmington 8:00PM Food served at 7:00Pm
April 15	Take a Wild Guess Day
April 16	Emancipation Day
April 17	National Stress Awareness Day
April 22	National Baseball Day
April 25	National Library Day
April 27	Babe Ruth Day
April 28	Safety and Health at Work Day

Branch 25 Directory of Officers

Assistant Treasurers Report

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.
Jim Salvati	Safety Officer
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Bruce Johnson	Trustee
John McNulty	Trustee
Bob Cronin	Trustee
James Metilinos	Assistant Treasurer
Andy Coan	Assistant Secretary
Chris Bruno	Wake-Up Publisher
Jeremy Provost	Assistant Safety Officer

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



**You continue to serve your country—
THANK YOU!**

NALC Veterans Group

Complete this form and mail to:
NALC Veterans Group, c/o NALC,
100 Indiana Ave., N.W., Washington, DC 20001-2144

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY, STATE, ZIP: _____

NALC BRANCH NUMBER: _____ BRANCH OF SERVICE: _____

I BELONG TO THE FOLLOWING VETERAN GROUP(S):

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OTHER: _____

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

I briefly want to shed some light on the incredible importance of the Letter Carrier Political Fund and the work they do lobbying Congress for better wages, benefits, and conditions for us all. Please, if you're reading the Wake Up! each month and you see an opportunity to attend a branch meeting during one of Marc Ashmon's addresses, attend. I'm sure we're all aware of the events that took place in East Palestine, Ohio. On February 3, Norfolk Southern train carrying carcinogenic chemicals derailed and caused irreparable damage to the environment, ecosystem, and lives of people who live there. Over 43,000 animals have died due to the events, and while no reports regarding the death of any residents or first responders have been made, many of the residents will surely face cancer in the not-so-distant future from this spill. The question people should be asking is: How did we get here?

In 2014, under the Obama Administration, the Department of Transportation finalized the requirements for any high-hazard, flammable material being transported by train to adopt electronic brakes and any older model to be retrofitted for them. This means had the legislation stuck, this train derailment in East Palestine probably wouldn't have happened, or at the very least be severely controlled.

However, during the Trump administration, companies like Norfolk Southern would go on to lobby to rollback this legislation and repeal it under the guise of the process being far too expensive to adhere to. They would also spend \$2M in the process in 2018 alone. This lobbying led to the recent derailments. This is why the Political Fund lobbies.

In 2022, in the midst of the coronavirus epidemic, Norfolk Southern would also announce they would be spending \$10B on stock buybacks, a move that would be done to return cash to the shareholders of the company. A company that during a world-wide crisis would be up 8% in profits, for a total of \$4.8B on the year.

But Trump was only partially responsible for this tragedy. As a matter of fact, President Joe Biden is just as guilty. In December, Joe Biden, self-proclaimed "labor friendly" president, signed legislation that would make it illegal for railroad workers to strike. They believed the financial infrastructure of the railroad system and the impact it would have on the nationwide economy was too big to allow a strike. Instead of considering the poor wages, no sick leave, and safety concerns of the workers, the administration would do exactly what Nixon did in 1970 and attempt to force underpaid and underappreciated workers to return to their posts.

So how does this tie into the Political Fund? The fund uses donated wages (a payroll allotment) from the membership to fund their lobbying at Congress to help create a better overall work environment for us all. As a matter of fact, they did so last year in repealing the prefunding mandate. Consider a single dollar a pay period. Every cent is important. This will ensure our voices are heard when we need it most. When our safety and wages are on the line, our organizers will be able to speak our peace.

James Metilinos

“Keep Yourself Safe”

A service talk at my office the other day consisted of watching two videos. The first video was about heat stress, the second was regarding the security of Arrow keys. Both subjects are important for letter carriers and their safety. We watched these videos on the workroom floor using the supervisor's computer monitor and computer speaker. I'm pretty sure no one heard the narration. Maybe half could see the video content.

The whole scenario is indicative of the hypocrisy of the Postal Service's stand on safety, i.e. it's very important and not important at all.

A couple years ago there was a snow storm that brought slippery conditions and low visibility. There were no messages on the scanner saying come back to the office. I called the Union office to update them on conditions and ask when did they think I should go back. I was given the advice to go back whenever I thought I should go back. And that is the answer.

That is the answer not only for snow, but for heat, problems with trucks, and your own security. You decide what is the safest thing for you to do. Think about your family when making decisions; not about the mail.

One thing I learned from the last snow storm was if you are going to return to the office early, scan all remaining packages as no access before you go back. Otherwise, you could be told to go back on the road to scan them!

Be extra vigilant on locking your LLV and being aware of your surroundings. A letter carrier in our branch was attacked in his LLV with a knife and needed four stitches in his hand.

Educate yourself on all letter carrier safety issues. Go to NALC.org and click on Safety and Health.

Stay Safe,

Jim Salvati

HAPPY EASTER!

Spring seems to be headed our way, and this is not an April Fools joke. Which means better weather as well as better daylight. I only say this because as I write this article, today's weather wasn't bad. When I got home from work a lot of people were out walking their dogs or out with the kids. Just be attentive on those later days that we will start seeing more kids and families out and about now in the early evenings.

But before that spring arrives we did have to cancel our March meeting due to the nor'easter. In order to fulfill our bylaw requirements of 10 meetings a year it will need to be made up. We are tentatively looking at June 27th for the makeup meeting. While 2 weeks apart isn't ideal, we don't want to get too far into prime time then we have too. Once we have the date set I will notify you here in the wakeup as well as at the branch meetings. Which brings me to my next item "BRANCH MEETINGS". I know it is hard sometimes to muster up the energy to go back out after a long day on the street. You are just too tired. I get it I really do. We have 10 meetings a year, I'm not asking to attend every meeting right now, but for those who never come maybe you say, ok I will try for 2 or 3 a year to start. If you have a little drive then bring a coworker you get along with to keep you company. I can promise you won't go hungry; we have food. You won't go thirsty, there is a cash bar. Linda is our friendly bartender who will take care of you. There is a \$50 door prize, 50/50 raffle and our big attendance drawing at the end of each meeting where you could win up to \$1000 bucks. Plus, you never know what type of information you will learn at a meeting. Who knows you might actually enjoy it and want to come again.

As always if you have moved we probably don't have your new address. When you move there are slips in the Wake up, you can fill them out and mail it to us, or you can email me at jesbr25@gmail.com. I couldn't come up with some catchy sign off so I figured I would just give you more information to absorb each month.

Snapple Fact #819: Children grow faster during springtime.

Joe Stearns

Vice President's Report

"The More You Know"

During the month of March, I attended my second week at the Leadership Academy. The Academy is excellent, they really push you out of your comfort zone. During the first two weeks, national officers have come throughout each week to discuss their positions and what they do at NALC HQ. A couple of classes stood out to me during week two, such as the class on the NALC Health Benefit Plan, presented by our Director of Health Benefits Stephanie Stewart, and the class on our Letter Carrier Political Fund, or LCPF, presented by President Renfro.

I know we are months away from open season, but I would strongly recommend anyone who is not part of our plan to sign up when possible. It is a non-profit plan, with the goal being to provide quality healthcare and comprehensive benefits. I know healthcare is not the most stimulating subject, but don't let name recognition blind you from the quality and benefits provided by the NALC Plan. During the class we learned about and discussed some of the new options the High Option Plan offers. One of the topics was on Telehealth, which started back in 2020. Telehealth is a way to have a virtual visit with a physician or nurse practitioner for minor acute conditions 24/7. You can have a prescription written if appropriate, all for a \$10 copayment per visit. The Nutrition Counseling Program and Women's Health Services Program are newer programs provided via Telehealth with NO copayment and offer services seven days a week.

Another new service through Telehealth is Hello Heart. If you have a blood pressure reading of 130/80 mmHg or higher you can request an FDA-cleared monitor that you can use from home. The program provides guidance on how to improve your lifestyle through coaching via smartphone or tablet. You can use the monitor to keep tabs on your blood pressure and even send the data privately to your doctor. There are also weight loss programs and diabetes management tools. Many of the other carriers at class have utilized Hinge Health, which is a Virtual Musculoskeletal Program to help overcome back and joint pain. This is offered at no cost to you and dependents over the age of 18, provides a personal care team, and a free tablet with sensors you can wear that guide you through the exercises.

One more fact about the NALC HBP; The Plan allows members to seek medically necessary treatment for a work-related injury before it's approved by the OWCP. Once the claim is approved, the Plan will seek reimbursement for its expenses directly from OWCP, which leaves one less thing for an injured worker to worry about. If your interested in learning more about your benefits I would contact our Branch Health Benefits Representative Ken Dusombre or call the customer service line at 888-636-6252.

Don't wait and stop putting it off, your health should be at top of your priority list.

Concerning the LCPF, I wanted to briefly discuss one of the important bills likely heading through congress that was reintroduced nearly a year ago. H.R. 4268, or the "Federal Retirement Fairness Act," would provide CCAs and TEs a path to purchase retirement credit for time spent in these non-career positions. I hope that we all have a renewed sense of enthusiasm since our victory with the Postal Reform Act, and now would be a good time to keep the momentum going. The Shipping Equity act and Social Security Fairness Act are also bills to keep a close eye on, but the questions regarding political action I most frequently hear about on the workroom floor concern non-career retirement credit. If the bill were to pass it would allow affected employees greater retirement security. Signing up for LCPF is simple, and with the recent COLAs donating five or ten dollars a paycheck to potentially have a bill like H.R 4268 pass could be one of the best investments in your future that you could possibly make. If you're interested in signing up, contact the branch office. Now is the time to have your voice heard!

In Solidarity,

Tony Bossi



Throwback cartoon from Branch 25's Ken Bonin



The Value in Setting Boundaries

Setting healthy boundaries gives us the ability to express our thoughts and feelings in a way that clearly communicates our needs. It is a crucial part of our daily routine. Boundaries offer protection and promote confidence. Developing boundaries can foster inner peace by allowing some control over our comfort. Although it's not a skill that comes naturally, it's important to learn how to set boundaries because without them, we are far more vulnerable.

Establishing boundaries is good for not only ourselves, but the people around us as well. When we are clear about our boundaries, others understand our limits and are better able to adapt their behavior. Strongly communicating boundaries helps prevent manipulation in personal relationships as well as being taken advantage of in the workplace.

It's important to understand that different cultures have different views on boundaries. What one person thinks is okay may not be right for someone else. That is why effectively communicating our boundaries is so important. Setting boundaries involves respecting and valuing ourselves and others. One way to avoid conflict when opinions differ is to always treat others with consideration and fairness.

Tips for Setting Healthy Boundaries:

- Be honest and respectful
- Take time to collect yourself before and after a difficult conversation
- Ask others what they're feeling rather than making assumptions
- Follow through on what you say
- Don't compromise on things that are not acceptable to you
- Take responsibility for your actions
- Keep in mind everyone has a right to be treated with respect and fairness
- Understand that there are many ways to say "no"

It's helpful to expect that boundaries may be crossed at some point, especially in the workplace where we spend most of our day. This allows us to be prepared and address concerns when they occur. Learning to communicate boundaries creates a work environment that allows everyone to feel safe, happy and valued.

To learn effective communication skills and get help with setting and maintaining boundaries, contact your EAP at 800-327-4968 (800-EAP-4YOU), TTY: 877-492-7341 or visit us online at EAP4YOU.com.



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WAKE UP

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at the next meeting
April 11th
K of C Wilmington
8:00 PM


 2023

BOSTON RED SOX SCHEDULE

MARCH/APRIL

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
				BAL 2:30		BAL 4:30
BAL 1:35	PIT 7:30	PIT 7:30	PIT 1:35	DET 1:30		DET 4:30
DET 1:30	TB 6:40	TB 6:40	TB 6:40	TB 1:30	LAA 7:10	LAA 4:30
LAA 1:35	LAA 11:10	MIN 7:30	MIN 7:30	MIN 1:35	MIL 8:30	MIL 7:30
MIL 2:30	BAL 6:35	BAL 6:35	BAL 1:55		CLE 7:30	CLE 4:30
CLE 1:35						

MAY

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
		TOR 7:10	TOR 7:30	TOR 7:10	TOR 6:30	PHI 7:05
PHI 1:35		ATL 7:20	ATL 7:20		STL 7:10	STL 4:10
STL 7:08	SEA 7:30	SEA 7:30	SEA 7:30		SD 9:40	SD 10:30
SD 4:30	LAA 9:38	LAA 9:38	LAA 9:38		AZ 9:40	AZ 7:15
AZ 4:30		CIN 7:10	CIN 7:10			

JUNE

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
				CIN 7:10	TB 7:30	TB 1:10 TB 6:10
TB 1:35		CLE 7:30	CLE 7:30	CLE 7:30	NYN 7:05	NYN 7:35
NYN 1:35	COL 7:30	COL 7:30	COL 7:30		NYN 7:30	NYN 7:05
NYN 7:08	MIN 7:40	MIN 7:40	MIN 7:40	MIN 1:30	CWS 8:30	CWS 4:30
CWS 2:30		MIA 7:30	MIA 7:30	MIA 6:10	TOR 7:07	

JULY

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
						TOR 1:07
TOR 1:37		TEX 1:35	TEX 7:30	TEX 7:30	OAK 7:30	OAK 4:30
OAK 1:35	★ ALL-STAR BREAK ★			CHC 8:05	CHC 2:30	
CHC 2:30	OAK 9:40	OAK 9:40	OAK 9:40		NYM 7:30	NYM 4:30
NYM 1:30		ATL 7:30	ATL 7:30		SF 10:15	SF 7:15
SF 4:05	SEA 9:40					

AUGUST

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
		SEA 9:40	SEA 4:30		TOR 7:30	TOR 4:30
TOR 1:35	KC 7:30	KC 7:30	KC 7:30	KC 7:30	DET 7:30	DET 4:30
DET 1:35		WSH 7:05	WSH 7:05	WSH 4:05	NYN 7:05	NYN 1:05
NYN 12:05	HOU 8:30	HOU 8:30	HOU 8:30	HOU 4:05	LAD 7:30	LAD 4:30
LAD 1:30	HOU 7:30	HOU 7:30	HOU 4:10			

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
						KC 8:30 KC 7:30
KC 2:30	TB 4:10	TB 6:40	TB 6:40		BAL 7:30	BAL 4:30
BAL 1:35	NYN 7:30	NYN 8:05	NYN 7:30	NYN 7:30	NYN 7:07	TOR 3:07
TOR 1:35	TEX 8:05	TEX 8:05	TEX 2:05		CWS 7:30	CWS 4:30
CWS 1:35		TB 7:30	TB 6:10	BAL 6:35	BAL 7:05	BAL 7:05
BAL 2:05						

*ALL GAME TIMES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE

■ HOME AWAY