



# WAKE UP!

President/ Editor  
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Publisher  
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LETTER CARRIERS'  
**FOOD DRIVE**  
SAT, MAY 13, 2017

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## President's Message

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### *“Do You Know, Do You Care”*

In 1982, Phil Collins released a song with the above title. It immediately came to mind recently when I was scanning various social media criticisms of the Union, most notably for the lack of a new National Agreement. The rest of the song has no bearing on this article, but the title does.

The National Union isn't the only entity that comes under fire. People are often unhappy with their shop stewards, their branch officers, and of course their branch president as well.

It is extremely frustrating to be an employee of the postal service today. The newer employees are unhappy with their pay and their endless number of consecutive work days without any time off. The more veteran employees are unhappy that they have attained a position of seniority in their career and it doesn't seem to count for anything. They can't make plans on their days off. They frequently aren't treated with dignity and respect. Simple things that would make their jobs easier are often not provided.

Some of these employees choose to go onto what I have started to call “antisocial media” to complain. I say antisocial media because almost any group that you go to online, a fight breaks out. It's truly sad.

Some of these employees choose to be the ones that I mentioned earlier, the ones that chirp on the floor about the ineffective shop steward, or the corrupt branch president. It is far easier to bad mouth a shop steward than it is to stand up for one's own rights with management.

What I haven't seen any of these people do is educate themselves. I haven't seen them attend branch meetings or talk about how they attended branch meetings to try to effect change. I haven't seen them become active by volunteering, or by helping out the steward. Perhaps most importantly, I haven't seen them writing statements in support of their brothers and sisters. Writing statements is probably the easiest thing that someone can do, and often times the most valuable. But no, they don't write statements, they write complaints or criticisms about their Union and its leaders.

Right now, I can't think of any problem in the postal service that is more immediate than the poor staffing in many locations. When you think about it, most of the ills that we suffer through each day are a direct result of staffing.

The overtime provisions of Article 8 are frequently violated. Even if they aren't violated due to the fact

circumstances, people are still required to work more than they have signed up to work.

In some instances, we are our own worst enemies. For instance, I recently pursued overtime grievances in two of our associate offices. While investigating, I discovered that there were many carriers that failed to work their 8 hour guarantee on a n/s day. There's not too many things that you can do to tick off a carrier more than telling him or her that they have to work 8 hours on their n/s day. Plenty of carriers will curse the Union six ways to Sunday when they're told they can't “take a dive” on their day off.

Then, there's the individuals that demand that the Union fix the staffing in their office as they are racking their FSS and DPS. Look, just enforce the parts of the contract that will benefit me seems to be the attitude du jour. Some even go to the extent of working off the clock to make their time on the clock easier.

Working less than your guarantee, shortening lunches or breaks, casing FSS or DPS mail are not how to improve staffing in your office. They are only ways to prolong and exacerbate the problem.

The only way to attack staffing is to do your job as a professional letter carrier the same each and every day. Period.

The resources are available to everyone that cares to take advantage of them. Our national union's website has a “resources” page under the “Workplace Issues” tab. One of the items in the resources page is a “White Paper” prepared by our Contract Administration Unit (CAU) on overtime, staffing, and simultaneous scheduling. It is a very informative read and I urge all letter carriers to read it, not just shop stewards or branch officers.

There are also archives of many of the “Contract Talk” sections from the Postal Record. Again, a great way to become more educated to your rights in the workplace.

My point is, even though one of the most important things one can do is to attend a branch meeting, we realize that life can get in the way. Just as the national union provides a great deal of information on its website, so too does Branch 25 provide a great deal of information on ours.

So, you can spend a little time to get answers and educate yourself, or you can chirp and badmouth and complain. The choice is up to you. Back to the song title; now you know, do you care? I do.

Stay informed!

Dave Barbuzzi

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## Executive Vice President's Report

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One unfortunate aspect of the letter carrier craft is that we sometimes get hurt while on the job. If you get hurt at a specific time and place it is referred to as a "traumatic injury", and you will fill out Form CA-1 if you are seeking medical help. If you supply the proper medical documentation you are entitled to "continuation of pay" from the Postal Service for 45 days from the date of the injury. If you are out beyond the 45 days and your claim is approved you will be paid by the Department of Labor until you return to work.

Another type of injury is known as an "Occupational Illness or Disease" and in general terms, is something that developed over time and can't be pinpointed to any specific time and place. In this instance, you would fill out Form CA-2 and this also requires detailed medical documentation in order to be accepted by the Department of Labor. When filling out a CA-2 it is extremely important to get all the proper medical documents in a timely manner because you don't have the option of using Continuation of Pay, you must use your own leave in order to be paid.

If your claim is accepted the Department of Labor will pay you until you return to work, and you can buy back your leave that you used if you choose to. That is why we suggest you call the Union office if you believe you are going to fill out a Form CA-1 or CA-2. Many carriers call the office after they get letters from the Department of Labor informing them that their claim is denied or that they need to provide more information for their claim to be accepted. Obviously, if you have a traumatic injury and need to seek immediate medical help, your number one priority is not to call the union office, but call as soon as you can so we can hopefully guide you through this process. In both instances, time is of the essence in obtaining proper medical documentation in order to have your claim approved.

Once again, we are approaching Prime Time vacation schedules in most offices and there should be a lot of temporary vacancies that unassigned regulars and CCAs should be seeking as hold downs. Unless it is written in your local agreement about how to bid on these hold downs, it is up to the carrier to request any available assignment. Anyone that would be available to hold these assignments should be finding out what is available for Prime Time vacations. In most offices, there is a vacation schedule posted somewhere that is readily available for anyone to see. As long as a CCA has 60 days of service they are available to hold a temporary vacant route. Any CCA that doesn't know how to request hold downs in their office should seek out the steward or call the Union office for direction.

Having hold downs during Prime Time is one of the few benefits CCAs can enjoy, take advantage of this and call the Union office if you are told that hold downs will not be made available.

The NALC Food drive is coming up on May 13<sup>th</sup> and this is the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the drive. This year we seem to be getting a lot of support from local businesses and food pantries that are willing to invest in buying bags and signs in order to increase the amount of food collected. In the past, we have seen the offices that distribute bags and the ones with plenty of advertising do very well on the day of the food drive. This is one of the best things we do for the communities we serve and the pantries greatly appreciate it. At this point in the year the pantries stock's are dwindling and the food drive is what refills the shelves. Last year we collected 80 million pounds nationally, and over the past 24 years the total is approximately 1.5 billion pounds. Not bad.

Keep your head up!

Paul Desmond

### Calendar of Events

May 2	8PM Branch Meeting @ Knights of Columbus 27 School St. Ext. Wilmington Food served @ 7:15
May 5	Cinco De Mayo
May 6	National Nurses Day
May 13	NALC Food Drive
May 14	Mother's Day
May 19	National Bike To Work Day
May 20	Armed Forces Day
May 29	Memorial Day

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## Branch 25 Directory of Officers

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David J. Barbuzzi	President
Paul G. Desmond	Executive V.P.
Bob Cronin	Vice President
Andy Coan	Secretary
James P. Nutter	Treasurer
Kenneth Dusombre	Health Benefits Rep.
Jim Salvati	Assistant Safety Officer
Rick Dauphinais	Safety Officer
Jack Lyman	Sergeant At Arms
Ron Noviello	Chmn. Board of Trustees
Dan Raske	Trustee
Dave Ferris	Trustee
Bruce Johnson	Trustee
Anthony Bossi	Assistant Secretary
John McNulty	Assistant Treasurer
Dan Wheeler	Wake-Up Publisher
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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## COMMON SENSE

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"These are the times that try men's souls" These words were written 241 years ago by an intellectual giant by the name of Thomas Paine and contained in a pamphlet entitled COMMON SENSE. His motive was to inspire and unite American colonists during a difficult period (think American Revolution) to resist a despotic, it's all about me government. What's that got to do with the price of tomatoes? In my view the words are as relevant today as when they were first written. Today we are faced with an anti-labor, anti-public employee, and anti-middle class Federal Government. The question becomes, what can we do about it?

In my years of political activism dealing with letter carriers the two most common responses I get are:

- 1.They (the politicians) are going to do what they want anyway, and
- 2.How do I make my voice heard?

Regarding point one. Tell that to the two members of the House of Representatives from Utah who were booted off the stage at recent town hall meetings in their districts. Incidentally, one of the representatives chairs the House

Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, the committee with authority over the USPS. I'm not a fan of booing but I must admit, sometimes it does make a point. How about the Senator from the mid-west, who, when she arrived to speak at a town hall meeting was greeted by so many protesters she turned around and went home.

Allow me to address the second point. There are many ways to contact the members of Congress but in the interest of brevity let me focus on the easiest and fastest, namely, the telephone. Here's how you do it:

- 1.Pick up the phone and dial 866-220-0044
- 2.Follow the prompts which are clear and simple
- 3.Give your Zip Code
- 4.Identify yourself (constituent, letter carrier, concerned citizen)
- 5.Tell why you're calling. Use the three C's-be clear, concise, and complete

Want to help in other ways? Easy. Are you an E-Activist? If not become one by going to NALC.org so that you can learn what's going on. It's not rocket science folks- it's COMMON SENSE. Anything worth having (a job, family, well-being, health care) is worth working for. Are you in?

Keep on truckin'

Richie Donlon

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## Veteran's Representative

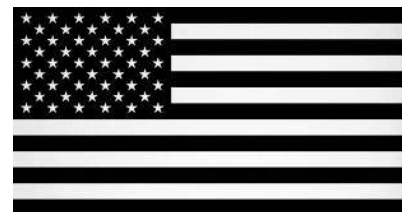
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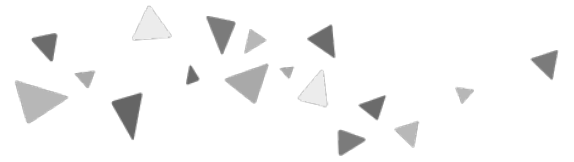
I came across a fitting quote the other day whose author is unknown. I would like to share it with you.

"What is a veteran? A veteran, whether active duty, discharged, retired or reservist is someone who at one point or other in their life wrote a blank check made payable to "The United States of America," for an amount up to and including their life."

Andy Coulter



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## Adopting smart money habits

Do you consider yourself financially fit? If not, maybe it's time to take a closer look at your finances to see if you can be smarter with money.

Here are some elements of a fiscal fitness plan:

- **Set financial goals.** What are your immediate, short-term and longer-term goals? Would you like to get out of debt? Purchase a new car or a home? Save for a child's education? Once you've prioritized your goals, you can decide whether to make changes in how you're managing money.
- **Establish a budget.** A working budget can help organize your finances and help you find ways to save money.
- **Track your spending.** Use a budgeting app to track exactly where your money is going each month.
- **Trim your debt.** If a large part (such as one-third) of your monthly spending goes to paying down debt, it should be a priority to reduce that debt. Living within your budget can help you cut debt balances faster.
- **Start saving.** Try establishing achievable, short-term goals such as saving \$50 per month, then increase that amount over time.



Financial issues can be stressful—to think about, talk about, and overcome. Unresolved money concerns can adversely impact your relationships in addition to your physical and mental health.

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

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**LETTER CARRIERS' FOOD DRIVE**  
**SAT., MAY 13, 2017**

**PUT YOUR NON-PERISHABLE DONATION IN A BAG BY YOUR MAILBOX.  
 WE'LL DELIVER IT TO A LOCAL FOOD BANK.**

NATIONAL PARTNERS



## Park Point Safety

Over the last twenty years over a dozen letter carriers have been struck, with four of them being killed, while working out of the back of their vehicle. On April 11, 2017, another letter carrier was struck in North Babylon New York. The carrier, who lost one of his legs, was standing outside of his vehicle when the accident happened. According to a news report the street in North Babylon is called Prairie Drive, but residents say it really could be called Prairie Highway, the cars clearly whizzing beyond the 30-mph speed limit.

This unfortunate incident is yet another reminder about one of the biggest safety issues that we face as letter carriers. It is one that many of us don't think about; park points. There are no park point locations that are one hundred percent safe but we can still do our part to find the safest location. If you have park points where you are

working out of your vehicle please give some thought to where you are parking. Are they exposed to heavy traffic? Are they in a location where traffic cannot see you well? Is there a safer choice available?

If you have any concerns about park points on your route please bring them up to your supervisor. Management should take any safety concerns, especially ones that may put employees lives at risk, very seriously. If you feel like your concerns are not being heard call the union office.

Stay safe out there,  
Dan Wheeler

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## **WAKE UP**

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