



# ***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



***Branch 25 Vice President Dan Wheeler taking precautions and wearing personal protective equipment as he delivers mail in Holliston.***

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## President's Message

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### ***“If You're Sick, STAY HOME!”***

Each day at approximately 4:30PM I get an email that causes a bit of apprehension. The email is from the Manager of Human Resources for the Greater Boston District, and it lists the district's cumulative stats for Covid 19 ending that day. If there are any new positive tests, they are listed at the top. Of course, names are not listed, nor are crafts, simply locations with totals for each location. Each day after reading this email I either cringe, or let out a long slow breath, relieved that one of you has not become a positive test.

If you work in an office where someone has tested positive, you know that a management official from your office addresses you the next morning, along with a higher level manager ranging from the POOM to the District Manager, along with me. As I stated last month, I come to your office to address you, to try to reassure you, and to answer any questions that you may have.

I would like to think that you take something from these meetings. If only one more carrier wears a mask as a result of my visit, I will have accomplished something.

The biggest message that I try to convey is to respect the virus and to respect your co-workers, your family and your customers. Let's start with respecting the virus. We respect the virus by learning whatever we can about it. The best place for information strictly regarding the virus is [cdc.gov](http://cdc.gov), the cdc website. The best place for information about how the virus impacts your job, what your rights are and what is happening, is the NALC website, [nalc.org](http://nalc.org).

The other way to respect the virus is to put the knowledge you gain from whatever trusted sources to work. Maintain social distancing, utilize personal protective equipment, constantly wash your hands, clean as many surfaces that you come into contact with as possible, and if you're sick, STAY HOME!

How do you respect your co-workers, your customers, and your families? Much of the answer is the same as respecting the virus. Now is not the time for anyone to feel that “I'm young and healthy so even if I get it, I'll recover and be fine.” You may recover, you may be fine, but how many people might you come in contact with and infect? They may not recover and they may not be fine.

If you don't think you need to wear a mask for yourself, then wear it for your co-worker who may have a high-risk family member at home. We don't know who has a respiratory ailment, who may be having an at-risk pregnancy, who may be the only “essential” employee in a household who returns home from work each day to several family members that are afraid. Think about that before you decide that you don't need to wear a mask. At every station I visit I inform you that

management can't force you to wear a mask, but I wish they could.

Things have developed rapidly in the last month. The CDC has revised its position on masks, now stating that masks are strongly recommended. The USPS and NALC at the national level have agreed to a number of Memorandums of Understanding. Our webmaster, Mike Shields, has been updating the website each time a new memo or important release comes out. As a matter of fact, there has been a new pdf added to the site that you should definitely read. It is titled “USPS Close COVID-19 Contact Investigations Overview”. It is a 4-page document that provides an in-depth explanation of what happens after an employee reports a positive case. Please take the time to read it.

Fred Rolando, our national president, has been issuing statements that are published on the NALC website and there are now podcasts with updates on “podbean”. Podbean ([podbean.com](http://podbean.com)) is a free service that can be downloaded to your apple or android device. There is a series of podcasts entitled “You Are the Current Resident”. These podcasts run approximately 20 -25 minutes. You can stay up to speed on important issues on your commute to or from work or while you are delivering a mounted route if you have one.

There is no more important issue facing the postal service right now than how are we going to survive as an institution. As if the pandemic doesn't pose enough of a threat to our health, it poses at least as great a risk to our livelihood. Mail volume has dropped precipitously and it is not expected to return. Along with volume, revenue has also plummeted. To date, there is no relief for the postal service in any stimulus plans. Treasury Secretary Mnuchin made clear that President Trump would not sign the stimulus bill if it included funds for the postal service.

The reality is that the postal service was all but ignored in the stimulus bill. The service received the ability to borrow \$10 billion dollars. Provisions for the postal service to receive forgiveness of existing debt and \$25 billion dollars to continue operating were removed from the package in order to ensure that the President would sign the bill.

You should know, however, that UPS and FedEx each qualify for grants and loans as part of the stimulus package. There is \$4 billion in grants and \$4 billion in loans for cargo carriers in the stimulus bill. Those two companies are facing some of the same issues as we are, reduced volume, yet they are deemed worthy of government assistance and we are not. The effects, the great reduction in volume, hasn't just affected UPS and FedEx and passed over the postal service. Reduced volume is ravaging the postal service.

The President, instead, has said that he believes that the postal service would be fine (*continued back cover*)

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## Executive Vice-President's Report

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Just a quick reminder that it is virtually impossible to completely social distance in the Postal environment, so please wear a mask that is provided or your own covering when in the buildings. Still try to stay as far away from others when possible. On the street it is a good idea to wear it if you will be close to any customers or the general public. Not only are you trying to protect yourself from someone that may unknowingly spread the Covid-19 virus or any other illness, you will help prevent yourself from spreading anything. I know some carriers do not feel it is necessary to wear a mask at this time, but most of this virus is spread by people that don't feel sick and don't know they have been infected. It is not a big inconvenience to wear a mask for the short period we are in the office for and it may prevent you from bringing home an illness to your family. The public health officials in Massachusetts are saying the virus is surging as I write this, hopefully the worst will be behind us soon.

This is usually the best time of the year for me after work, with either bringing my son to baseball, watching the Red Sox begin their season, or watching the Bruins and Celtics playoffs. Unfortunately, all of these are on hold and they don't seem to be ready to get underway any time soon. When it all does get back going, I suspect it will not look like it did prior to the shutdowns. There is talk of finishing the seasons without fans and even going to neutral locations in order to isolate the teams involved. There is also the idea that the hockey and basketball seasons may just end. As far as the youth leagues are concerned, who ever thought kids couldn't even play baseball in the Spring because of a pandemic virus. The schools have just been shut down until the Fall. How this all turns out remains to be seen. The social distancing is not going to disappear any time soon. Same goes for the Postal Service. In January when the virus outbreak in China was out of control, who thought it would lead to a national shutdown of schools and businesses. We have been fortunate to maintain our employment, although it may not seem like the best of times. The Postal Service is spending most of its money on salaries and cleaning supplies without much revenue coming in. The Federal government isn't helping out with money as of yet and we are required to keep working. There is hope that the next stimulus package will have funds for the Postal Service, seeing that they have given billions to Fedex and UPS. There was originally money for the Postal Service, but Trump wouldn't sign off on the legislation if we were receiving money. He is completely misinformed on why the Postal Service is running out of money and just wants to blame Amazon, who actually give us quite a bit of revenue, but it will be up to Congress to make a stand. It would help if everyone contacted their representatives in

Congress and asked for them to support the Postal Service.

I have watched way too many press briefings that are supposed to give us information about the corona virus, but turn into campaign speeches, so I have been watching sports reruns that happened decades ago. I have also been watching things like the International Handball Association and the 2006 Hamburger eating championship, both I didn't know existed. This is all well and good, but I am ready to get back to some kind of normalcy again, hopefully soon.

Keep your head up!

Paul Desmond

***PLEASE NOTE, THERE WILL BE NO MAY BRANCH MEETING DUE TO SOCIAL DISTANCING POLICY. ALSO, THE MINI GOLF TOURNAMENT IS POSTPONED.***

### Calendar of Events

May 1	May Day
May 5	Cinco de Mayo
May 6	National Nurses' Day
May 10	Mothers' Day
May 15	Police Officers' Memorial Day
May 16	Armed Forces Day
May 25	Memorial Day
May 31	World No Tobacco Day

David J. Barbuzzi	President
Paul G. Desmond	Executive V.P.
Dan Wheeler	Vice President
Andy Coan	Secretary
James P. Nutter	Treasurer
Kenneth Dusombre	Health Benefits Rep.
Jim Salvati	Safety Officer
Jack Lyman	Sergeant At Arms
Ron Noviello	Chmn. Board of Trustees
Dan Raske	Trustee
Bruce Johnson	Trustee
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Bob Cronin	MBA-NSBA Rep
Steve Pickett	Assistant Safety Officer
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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## **Safety**

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Safety in our workplace and while performing our postal duties is of the utmost importance to all USPS employees. Our Safety Team wants to be proactive in our safety advice to this workforce. Hopefully, we can help to avoid any accidents, injuries, slips, trips and falls before they occur by cautioning Branch 25 members in advance on seasonal hazards. So, we will discuss a few of the possible safety hazards we may encounter during these next few months of this spring season. We'll talk about the birds and the bees and the flowers and the trees... But, first, we would like to congratulate all of you letter carriers for surviving another hazardous winter season. We experienced plenty of severely cold, windy days along with the usual wintery snow, ice and slippery dangerous driving and walking conditions. Again, we commend your constant focus on the importance of correct safe driving practices and proper parking techniques. We care about your daily safety!!!!

Okay, here are some spring safety issues we want you to be aware of. During warm spring days we will be wearing short-sleeve shirts and shorts, leaving our arms and legs exposed to the sun's harmful rays. If you sunburn easily, apply sunscreen lotion several times a day to try to avoid skin cancer. Don't forget your ears!

Also, wear appropriate headgear to shield you from the sun. Good sunglasses will help to protect your vision on bright, sunny days. Please remember to stay hydrated all day long, and be mindful of the symptoms of heat stroke, like heavy sweating.


I recently saw on T.V. that local wild turkeys are very aggressive lately during their spring mating season, and they have been attacking some letter carriers. Don't be afraid to use your dog spray on these feathery carrier hazards.

Trees, shrubs and flowers are now in bloom and pesky pollen is all around us. So, if you suffer from pollen allergies, you might want to keep some allergy medication on hand. Along with opening flowers and blossoming shrubs come honey bees, wasps, bumble bees, yellow jackets and green hornets. Bee stings are definitely a spring hazard! If you are a recently hired CCA, you should probably know by now if you're allergic to bee stings and carry with you an adult epi-pen (anti-allergen, auto-injection). In medical terms, bee stings can cause - just like nut and food allergies - a victim to go into anaphalctic shock, which means your throat swells up so much that it becomes very difficult to breath, and is one scary situation. Please be cautious around busy-body-bees! (Maybe cut back on body spray for awhile so you don't smell like a flower and attract unwanted visitors).

Lastly, we advise you to be extremely cautious when approaching landscapers using huge leaf-blowers and creating quite a dust storm over the entire sidewalk, without regard for passers-by, like us. Also, be cognizant of the fact that they wear safety goggles while operating their weed-whackers. Thus, we seriously need to watch out for the stones and projectiles that get shot out of these hazardous weed-whackers.

It's a dangerous world out there. So, please be safe as you complete your daily delivery rounds. Kudos to you professional "street warriors" for the outstanding jobs you do every day "delivering" for our fellow American citizens living here in Branch 25 territory.

Stevie Pickett  
Assistant Safety Officer

 **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



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## Vice President's Report

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### *“7:01 Anyone?”*

Letter carriers should be aware of what is referred to as the “7:01 Rule”. On March 23, 2020 the Postal Service and NALC signed M-01913; Re: Temporary Use of the Employee and Labor Relations Manual (ELM) 432:53, City Letter Carriers (7:01 Rule). This memorandum of understanding was the fourth in a series of MOUs which came out in a short time period in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic. This MOU, like some of the others, has an expiration date but will be revisited at that time to see if it will be continued. M-01913 is to last 60 days from March 23, 2020. The following is for those who may be unclear of what this really means.

During the 60 day duration of this MOU any regular city letter carrier who works more than 7 hours but less than 8 on a regularly scheduled day will be excused from completion of their 8 hour tour but still credited with 8 hours of work time for pay purposes. Any hours not worked between the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> hour will be included in the carrier's pay. Letter carriers are required to notify their supervisor they are leaving early and may be assigned available work to complete their 8-hour day if there is any available. In short, if you work at least 7:01 and there is no other work to do you go home and get paid for 8.

The 7:01 Rule is something that brings out varying reactions from letter carriers. Some carriers may jump at the chance to get out early and get “free” money from the Postal Service. Some will say that they would never ever use it because it will show that you can do your route in less than 8 hours and when this is all over a nice fat addition of time will be waiting for you. I would normally lean towards the latter opinion. My guess in this instance, based on no inside information, would be that times from the COVID-19 pandemic will not be used for any future route adjustments but who knows for sure.

These are definitely circumstances we have never seen as letter carriers. I delivered mail during the September 11, 2001 anthrax scare and back in 2008 and 2009 when the economy crashed, and we did not yet have the parcel volume we do now, but this is definitely our most trying time in my opinion. All of this is only compounded by our lack of support from the current administration in the White House. My advice to letter carriers would be the advice that Branch 25 leadership has always given. Do your job professionally the way it should be done every day whether that means your route takes you 10 or 7 hours to deliver on any given day. There are so many different circumstances right now. Some offices may be well staffed, some may not be. Parcel volume seems to be higher, but some offices are not seeing FSS or FSM flats every day. Some carriers

with residential route may see no drop in deliveries while carriers with businesses may have many holds or non-deliveries now.

A fair day's work for a fair day's pay is a principal that the NALC and USPS should both believe in. If you are rushing through your route by taking shortcuts, skipping breaks, lunch, or deliveries because you can get out early and get paid please think about it. You may not see an addition to your route later, but you are still hurting yourself by not doing the job safely and professionally. On the flip side please do not put yourself in a position to get into trouble by killing time or hanging around to extend your time. In the words of our local football coach “It is what it is”. I hope everyone is doing their best to stay safe out there!

In solidarity,

Dan Wheeler

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### **Just For The Health Of It**

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Before I begin writing about the subject matter for this month, I'd like to thank President Barbuzzi for his excellent messaging in the April issue of the Wake-Up! His presentation was both informative and reassuring. Thank you, Dave.

Last month I touched on suggestions that could be helpful to you in choosing a new health care provider. Continuing along these lines I want to offer some tips that may prove beneficial to you when going to a doctor's appointment:

- 1) Remember, you're the customer. Don't allow yourself to be rushed or interrupted. Be sure your questions and concerns are answered.
- 2) If it's not a routine visit write down the reason(s) for your being there. That way you won't leave anything out.
- 3) If you're in any way unsure of something, ask for clarification and explanation, for example method of treatment, testing, surgical procedures, etc.

One final note. I'm confident that I can speak for all of us when I express my respect, admiration and thanks to all, including our brother and sister letter carriers who have and continue to put themselves on the front lines in the war against this insidious disease during these difficult times.

Keep on truckin'!

Rich Donlon

# Coronavirus

## Avoiding Fear, Rumors, False Information and Panic

**COVID-19 is a new respiratory virus that has been detected in over 100 countries. Information is rapidly evolving but not complete, which can lead to fear, rumors, inaccurate information and possibly, panic. Knowing how to avoid these pitfalls can help people manage this difficult situation more effectively.**

**Know the Facts** - Up to date and accurate information is critical to avoiding unnecessary fear, rumor and panic. Spreading information that is inaccurate or not evidenced based in fact can escalate fear. Get information from reliable sources: **Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), World Health Organization (WHO) and State and local Public Health Organizations.** If you are a leader, provide the most accurate information promptly and completely. Encourage others to avoid over exposure to media.

**Know the Disease** - The following are symptoms of COVID-19 - fever, cough and shortness of breath. The virus transmits - person to person, through respiratory droplets from the infected individual. It's also transmitted by coughing or sneezing and through touching surfaces or objects, then touching mouth, nose or eyes. Respect social distancing.

**Be Prepared with a Family Plan** - Find local organizations to contact for information, support and assistance. Learn your employer's plan for continuing operation during the pandemic. Have household supplies for at least two weeks to minimize going out. Plan for childcare if schools are closed. Plan how to arrange your home if you need to separate a sick family member. Figure out how you will care for a sick family member. Plan how you will care for pets if you become sick.

### Behavioral Health During a Pandemic/Public Health Emergency

Behavioral health is important during a pandemic. Uncertainty can increase fear and lead to stigma towards others. Managing emotions will assist people with building resilience.

#### Common Reactions

- Fear and worry
- Increase or decrease in eating
- Poor sleep and concentration
- Worsening of chronic medical issues
- Increase use of alcohol and/or drugs

#### Ways to Support Yourself

- Avoid excessive exposure to media
- Take care of your body
- Make time to relax and unwind
- Connect with others
- Practice positivity and remain hopeful

#### Ways to Support Others

- Recognize those at risk of stigma
- Know the facts about the virus
- Share facts, not rumors
- Support those at risk of stigma
- Model appropriate coping skills

**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: 877-492-7341, 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)

**NALC Br 25**  
**Monthly Treasurer's Report**  
**James P Nutter, Treasurer**

<b>Total Beginning Balance as of January 31, 2020</b>	<b>357,770.84</b>
Check Book balance as of January 31, 2020	101,135.06
<b>Following Report is for the Month of February/March 2020</b>	
<b>Money taken in during February/March 2020</b>	<b>59,128.32</b>
National Dues	58,714.12
Retiree Dues	164.20
MDA Fundraising	250.00
<b>Money spent during February/March 2020</b>	<b>37,902.87</b>
Breakdown	
Time on union business	Net 18,655.32
Mileage	1,113.80
Reimbursed Expenses	143.23
Per Diem	
Payroll Taxes and W/H Transmittal	8,981.56
FICA Tax	1,823.92
Med Tax	426.56
Fed w/h	3,093.00
FICA W/H	1,823.92
Med W/H	426.56
State W/H	1,387.60
DUA	
FUTA	
MA PFML	
Paid To Affiliates	861.62
Mass AFL-CIO	472.50
NSLC	360.00
NALC	29.12
Operating Expenses	8,147.34
Condo Fees	360.00
Copier Lease	1,591.38
Door Prize	100.00
Hall Rent	230.00
MDA 50/50 Raffl	124.00
Meetings & Func	833.30
Membership Sup	320.00
Office Supplies	266.84
Postage	1,676.54
Insurance	470.00
Retiree Gratuitee	800.00
Telephone	642.65
Utilities	382.63
Website	150.00
Donations	200.00
<b>Ending Check Book Balance as of March 31, 2020</b>	<b>122,360.51</b>
<b>Total Ending Balance as of March 31, 2020</b>	<b>379,181.70</b>
	For Month 21,410.86

## **WAKE UP**

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*at the next meeting*

## **May Meeting Cancelled**

if we raised our prices...A LOT! Those were his words. However, many analysts believe that raising our prices at all would drive business AWAY from the postal service to other private shippers, and would hasten the expansion of independent delivery services set up by companies such as Amazon.

The President has also said that we are in the state we are in financially because we have not raised our prices A LOT and have made bad deals with Amazon. He has been provided the facts, but he chooses to ignore them.

For those of you that have only been around for a short while, you may not know that in 2006, Congress passed the Postal Accountability and Enhancement Act. At the time, with a good economy, it appeared that the only truly negative part of the act was the 3 day waiting period for workers' compensation benefits. There was/is a requirement that the postal service pay over \$5 billion dollars/year from 2006 to 2016 to prefund retirees' health benefits 75 years into the future. At the time, in that economy, it was thought that even though this mandate was unique to the postal service, the service would be able to make the payments and continue on. Then, 2008 happened to the economy and things started going off the rails. The overwhelming majority of losses

suffered by the postal service since that time are the result of the prefunding mandate...period.

Now more than ever, we have to understand the facts and be able to relay those facts to anyone that will listen, especially our elected representatives. It is not enough for us to contact them, we need our friends and families to contact them as well. We need relief from the devastation the postal service is suffering due to this pandemic.

That brings me to my final point. The ONLY thing that we are communicating to our elected officials is the need for relief. There is a lot of chatter about hazard pay. Hazard pay is not our message to Congress. Relief from the losses suffered as a result of the unprecedented drop in mail volume is our message to Congress. This drop in volume is unsustainable and immediate help is necessary. Hazard pay, although a hot topic today, is not our biggest priority. Keeping the postal service functioning so that we can get ANY pay is our priority. Help in any way you can.

Stay informed!

Dave Barbuzzi