



# ***WAKE UP!***

President/ Editor  
Dave Barbuzzi

Publisher  
Dan Wheeler

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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 Food Drive 2017**



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## President's Message

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The future of the Postal Service, the future of our Union, is today's CCA'S. Hopefully, everyone reading this article realizes that and contributes to the success of the CCA'S in your offices.

CCA'S aren't only the future though, they are increasingly becoming the present. That is why I for one am looking forward to vote to ratify the tentative agreement reached between the NALC and the Postal Service.

There are many improvements for CCA'S, but there are two that really stick out to me. First and foremost is the provision that the postal service will pick up a much larger portion of CCA'S health care premiums if they are self plus one or self plus family. Presently, the postal service contributes the same amount to a CCA'S premiums (\$125/bi-weekly) regardless of whether the CCA is self only, or self plus one or family.

With the ratification of the proposed agreement, the postal service will pick up 65% of the premium in the first year of employment and 75% in successive years. Now, I can't seem to locate the breakdown of the postal service cost for the non-career plans, but I do know that presently the employee (CCA) share is \$40, \$205, and \$370 per pay period for self, self plus 1, and self plus family. An increase in the amount the postal service pays means that in effect CCA'S with families will realize a substantial increase in their take home pay as a result of their decreased contributions to health benefit premiums. Hopefully, this measure will go a long way towards retaining CCA'S that have families.

The second new benefit that struck me is that management will have to negotiate annual leave provisions in the LMOU's that will cover CCA'S. Although some of Branch 25's local agreements contain provisions for CCA leave, most LMOU's here and elsewhere do not. Right now, CCA'S have to beg to use their leave and frequently they are not allowed to use it. Even if there is a day or a week where no one is off on leave, management still denies their request for leave saying that they can't lose the flexibility in the operation.

This should be the last summer that happens!! If the contract is ratified, there will be a local implementation period during which these leave provisions will be addressed.

Every letter carrier, CCA or veteran should understand the impact that these new benefits should produce. If CCA retention is improved, all letter carriers should realize benefits. Just this week alone I received several text messages and calls from letter carriers who were being mandated to work their Holiday or n/s day

for the Memorial Day holiday schedule. Senior carriers with more than 29 years service being required to work their holiday in an office that should have well over 20 CCA'S on staff. How many times have you read about letter carriers not on the overtime desired list earning \$75, \$85, and even \$95,000 dollars? That's blood money! If we can address CCA retention by making the job and benefits more appealing, that should result in far less instances like the ones detailed above. If you want my opinion, vote to ratify the agreement.

As I said, there are many provisions of the tentative agreement to get excited about, but you can find those on the [nalc.org](http://nalc.org) website, have a look. Elsewhere in this issue of the Wake-UP!, you will find commentary on politics and legislation. Please read Executive Vice President Paul Desmond's article carefully as well as Treasurer Jim Nutter's article. To say that we're under attack is an understatement. We do NOT have a friend in the White House right now. As a matter of fact, no working family has a friend in the White House right now. As a matter of fact, the only ones that have a friend in the White House right now are the uber rich!

I'm not writing this to say I told you so, or to upset those of you that may have voted for him. I'm saying this because we have to forget about November and focus on today, next month, 2018, and 2020.

We have several e-activists in the branch. That's great, but we could always use more. Go to the [nalc.org](http://nalc.org) website and sign up. Also, if you haven't installed the NALC mobile app yet, you definitely want to install that on your smartphone, whether you have an android or ios. The app will send you notifications when something of importance happens. In recent weeks those of us that have the app were notified that a tentative agreement was reached. Never before has information, once available, been disseminated to rank and file letter carriers so quickly.

I look forward to seeing you at the June branch meeting. Hopefully, the meeting will be well attended and there will be more CCA'S than usual in attendance asking questions so that they can:

Stay informed!!

Dave Barbuzzi

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## Executive Vice President's Report

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First of all, I would like to thank everyone that participated in the Food Drive in any way for their help. Whether it be organizing the food in your station or the food banks, distributing bags or simply picking up food along your route that day, it is a huge undertaking that results in a great service for the public we serve. We have been distributing the Food Drive cards from out of the Tewksbury Post Office for a number of years now, and I would like to thank the Postmaster Dave Branga and his staff for allowing us to use the space and equipment to get this done. The ability to use the Postal network to distribute the cards has been a tremendous help. This is all part of a joint effort that is greatly appreciated by the food banks and the customers that benefit from it. It is amazing how many customers donate food simply because they can just leave it for us to bring to the food banks for them. After 25 years the Food Drive is still going strong and we seem to have a bigger interest from organizations that want to contribute. This year we had organizations donate money for signs and banners to publicize the food drive in their communities.

The White House has very recently released President Trump's Fiscal Year budget proposal for 2018. It is a good thing it is just a proposal and can't be implemented immediately, without approval of Congress. The budget proposal calls for major cuts to federal and postal employee pension benefits. It calls for greater contribution to the retirement system by the employees also, basically a pay cut. It also calls for eliminating COLA's for current and future FERS retiree's annuities, and reducing CSRS retiree COLA's. Another major blow to FERS employees would be the elimination of the Social Security supplement that retirees enjoy until they reach age 62.

Another way Trump wants to reduce our pension benefits is to base all future annuities on a high-5 average instead of the current high-3 average salary. This would effectively reduce all future retiree annuities, both CSRS and FERS. It would not alter current annuities. These are just a few of the budget proposals, but as you can see our new President is seeking to hit federal employees in the wallet instead of his billionaire friends. He said he would attempt this, while on the campaign trail, and it is happening. The good thing is that most comments coming from both parties in Washington are basically saying the budget is dead on arrival and will be determined by Congress not the President. There are a lot of Senators and Reps that realize the budget would do more harm than good to their constituents.

As you probably are aware, we do have a tentative agreement for a National Agreement. I'm not going to get into any details, they are on the NALC website, but one of our biggest concerns was that the CCAs be treated more fairly than the last arbitrator's decision left them, and we did seem to make some gains. One example would be that CCAs would get 6 paid holidays. There also is an increase in salary for the CCAs with more step raises for those carriers that were TEs. I am hoping the increase in pay and benefits make it easier to maintain and increase our staffing. There should be bulletins in every office on the Union boards with a summary. You can also check the NALC website for details. If the contract is ratified it will be current through September of 2019.

Seeing that it is basically summer, I hope you all get a chance to take some time off and rest and keep an eye out for the vote to ratify our contract. I believe there will be an explanation of the process in the June Postal Record.

Keep your head up!

Paul Desmond

### Calendar of Events

June 6	8PM Branch Meeting @ Knights of Columbus Hall 27 School St. Ext. Wilmington Food served @ 7:15
June 13-15	NALC Rap Session, Harrah's Resort, Atlantic City, NJ
June 14	Flag Day
June 18	Fathers' Day
June 21	First Day of Summer
June 23	Bring Your Dog To Work Day
July 4	Independence Day
July 11	Major League Baseball All Star Game
July 23	National Hot Dog Day





Holliston Steward Dan Wheeler



Maynard's Shawn McBreen, John Leahy and Scott Baggs



Burlington's Justin Donovan



Glenn Schaffer of Lowell



Mary Tournas of Chelmsford





Rich Scalesse of Burlington



Peter Marchand of Tewksbury



Burlington volunteers



George Peteff Andover



Jim Lockhart of Holliston  
(L) and Jodi Nickolsi of  
Tewksbury(R)







Holliston's George Burgey and John Nickerson



Billerica steward Tony Bossi



Gary Sullivan of Holliston



Kyle McArthur, Chelmsford







Maynard CCA Jess Celi



Holliston's Tim Fitzgerald



Dracut carriers Jack Lyman and Marc Frenette



Rich Scalesse, Burlington



Craig Bradley, Billerica

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## Branch 25 Directory of Officers

## Branch 25 Election Notice

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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	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	Assistant 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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Although the sun feels great after a long, cold, winter it can also be dangerous. UV radiation from sunshine is the main factor responsible for skin cancer and skin cancer is the most common form of cancer. Melanoma is not the most common type of skin cancer but it is the most dangerous. On average, a person's risk for melanoma doubles if he or she has had more than five sunburns. If you grew up between the 50's to 70's you have probably had five sunburns. Many of us have experienced what cancer can do to victims and their families.

To reduce the risk of skin cancer, have an annual checkup with your doctor. Examine your own skin every month looking for any changes in moles or any red patches. Using a sunblock of at least 15 SPF can reduce the risk of melanoma by 50%. Cover your skin as much as possible especially between 10am and 2 pm. Wear a hat with a wide brim all around. If you wear a baseball hat put sunscreen on your neck and ears. Wear sunglasses that have UV protection. Definitely avoid tanning beds.

For more information go to <http://www.skincancer.org>.

Stay Healthy!

Jim Salvati

Nominations for delegates for the National Convention for 2018 shall be held at the October 3, 2017 regular meeting for Branch 25, NALC, 8:00 PM at the Knights of Columbus-Wilmington, MA. Election for delegates will be held by secret ballot at the November 7, 2017 regular branch meeting, also at 8:00 PM at the Knights of Columbus- Wilmington, MA.

Expenses for elected delegates shall be voted on at the November meeting. All elected delegates must have attended 60% of the regular monthly meetings, held between delegate elections, to be a paid delegate to conventions.

Any member who has not been a member for the prior two (2) years will have their attendance prorated from their date of membership. In addition to the provisions of Article 5 of the Branch 25 by-laws, which designates the President and the Executive Vice-President as automatic delegates of these functions, Article 5 of the NALC Constitution shall prevail.

Andrew Coan, Secretary  
Massachusetts Northeast Merged Branch 25

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### TRUSTEES REPORT

**In accordance with Article 6 Section 9 of the NALC Constitution for the Government of Subordinate and Federal Branches, on Tuesday May 23, 2017 trustees Ronald J Noviello, David M Ferris, Daniel J Raske and Bruce Johnson, assisted by treasurer James P Nutter and assistant treasurer John K McNulty, audited the financial books and found them in order.**

Beginning balance as of  
June 30, 2016 \$298,680.23

Ending balance as of  
December 31, 2016 \$307,319.48

Board of Trustees

*Ronald J Noviello*

*David M Ferris*

*Daniel J Raske*

*Bruce M Johnson*





George Peteff of Andover



Gary Cooper of Maynard



Andover's Bob Collins



Sam Yin of Lowell

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## ACTIVIST Or ACTOR

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Are you an activist or actor? Whether at home, with friends, at work or at a union function, one can always hear discussions of workplace issues and predicting what may come of negotiations over them. The recent negotiated agreement between the US Postal Service and the NALC is the result of much studies, trials, research, and efforts by the parties. Our national conventions helped set the course of the union positions by voice and vote of the delegates attending. The union's national officers along with hired legal counsel, economist, and statisticians then engage the USPS to find where our common interest coincide and where disagreements can be overcome. The current agreement is to be sent out for ratification by the active members.

The success of the agreement could not have been accomplished without you, the letter carrier doing your part. Electing your national and branch officers and stewards is playing an activist role. Carrying out your duties in a professional manner every day is an activist role. Reviewing the current agreement, discussing it with your peers and then voting to ratify it or not is an activist role. If ratified carrying out the terms of the new agreement is an activist role. I urge all active letter carriers to timely, read, review and vote on the ratification. I personally believe it to be a pretty fair contract but it is not what I believe, but what you believe that matters.

I must mention an additional activist role that we should also embrace, the world of "Politics". The NALC has always maintained a position of proffering support of the issues that affect and enhance the interest of letter carriers. The many social issues of each one of us, are left to our own devices by the union. The NALC tries to inform the membership and congress how any article of legislation affects the USPS and the life of the letter carriers.

Recent bills on 6-day delivery, door to door delivery, rate increases, the right to bargain collectively, health benefits, and pensions are considered and drafted every year. I hope you can see that the political activity can have a much greater impact on the letter carrier than our negotiated agreement could ever have. Congress can wipe out the USPS with the stroke of a pen.

This is never so evident as it is with the current proposals of the budget by the President and Congress. A particular notice is made to what changes are being recommended to federal pension. CSRS COLA slashed by ½ a percent. Eliminated COLA for FERS annuity calculated on your high 5 instead of the high 3 years. Increase the amount you are required to contribute and decrease matching funds. Eliminate the bridge or supplemental provision

preventing you from able to retire at age 56 which would require you to work until minimal eligibility of social security age. Yes, with a stroke of the pen legislative action can greatly affect your life.

Are you an activist? Or, just an actor? Go to the NALC website (NALC.org) and sign up to be an activist. Stay informed of legislation as it passes through the process. Contact your US representative and senators asking for their support on our position of a bill pertinent to your interests. Be an activist; not merely an actor.

Now, I am informing the membership that our reporting requirements, have been complied with. The IRS from 990, and the Department of Labor LM2, have been completed and timely filed with both branches. They are public documents and can be seen online at IRS.GOV and DOL.GOV. In addition, upon request they will be made available at the union office by appointment.

Happy Father's Day,

Jim Nutter, Treasurer

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## Welcome New Members

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Ian Blanchard	Lowell
Ryan P Doyle	Beverly
Shawn M Murphy	Danvers
David A Nocivelli	Beverly
Jeffery F Roesel	Newburyport
David Salas	Concord
Bradley L. Scatterday	Rockport
M.M. Tobin	Billerica
Channy Williams	Lowell

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As a veteran in the armed forces, we all served with honor, courage, and strength. We should all show our pride in what we have accomplished. Not many in the American population have done this. As a matter of fact, only 2.9% of the American population have served. A job well done by all who served!

Stay Strong!!

Andie Coulter  
Veterans' Coordinator



## CCAs , Opting and Hold Downs

Summer is almost here and with summer comes prime time vacations. Prime time vacations mean an increased number of open assignments available for opting. Article 41 provides the rules for opting on temporarily vacancies. Any assignment which is anticipated to be vacant for a period of five or more days is eligible for a "hold down". Unassigned regulars, PTFs and CCAs may opt on these temporary vacancies. T-6 positions are not eligible for opting because they are a level two job. CCAs have a sixty-calendar day waiting period from the time they start before they can put a hold down on an assignment.

The opting carrier assumes the duties and schedule of the regular carrier and does so until the regular carrier returns to the assignment. The five-day break in service, after A CCA's 360-day appointment, does not break the hold down. If the five-day break creates a five-day vacancy however, that vacancy creates another hold down opportunity. The carrier who put the original hold down on the assignment would return to that assignment after their five-day break in service.

Hold downs last the duration of the vacancy and you may not jump off a hold down to opt on to another vacancy. Keep that in mind when putting in for a hold down. Also, a carrier may not be removed from their

hold down unless it is to give a full time regular carrier sufficient work. Carriers may not be denied hold downs because the hold down would create overtime either. For example, if you worked Monday through Thursday already you cannot be denied a hold down starting on Friday because it would cause overtime for that day.

There is no contractual provision for the notification or posting of these hold down opportunities but it is possible that your office may have something written into their LMOU. Check with your steward to see if there is anything in yours about opting. Some offices post them for everyone to see. Some are notified by word of mouth and some are not mentioned at all. If you are not being made aware of hold down opportunities in your station please talk to your steward about it.

In solidarity,

Dan Wheeler

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 **Federal Disability Program**

## **WAKE UP**

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*at the next meeting  
June 6, 2017*

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