



WAKE UP!

President/ Editor
Dave Barbuzzi

Publisher
Chris Bruno

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Acton , Amesbury , Andover , Bedford , Beverly, Billerica , Burlington , Chelmsford , Concord , Danvers, Dracut , Gloucester, Haverhill, Holliston, Ipswich, Lawrence, Lowell, Lynnfield, Manchester, Marblehead, Maynard, Merrimac, Methuen, Newburyport, North Andover, North Chelmsford, North Reading , Peabody, Reading, Rockport, Salem , South Hamilton, Sudbury , Tewksbury , Topsfield, Wakefield , Wayland , Wilmington , Winchester



National Executive Vice President Brian Renfroe addresses members at the May branch meeting. Pictured in no particular order are John McColley (Lawrence), Bob Dion (Lawrence), Dave Hillner (Lawrence), James Tuttle, David Picconi (Regional Workers' Compensation Specialist), Steve Pickett, Jim Salvati, Jeremy Provost, Doreen Farris, Pat Worth, and NBA Rick DiCecca.

President's Message

“Welcome Back”

I received an email from the Manager of Human Resources today and the subject line was “Welcome Back”. I thought to myself “I haven’t gone anywhere” but let me open the email and see what’s up. Perhaps there was to be an announcement that the MA-RI District would be communicating with Union representatives.

Well, I was wrong. The email outlined a new program to “Welcome Back” employees the day they return from being out sick. Included with the email was a copy of a service talk that you probably have already received by now. The first step in the “welcoming” procedure is to “Pull the employee’s badge and keep it with the 3971 in a secure location.” I have to ask, how welcome will you feel if you have to seek out your supervisor in order to get your badge to clock in?

The rest of the service talk explains that your attendance will be reviewed with you, a copy of the “USPS Attendance Regulations” will be given to you, you may be provided with FMLA and/or EAP information, attendance expectations will be reinforced, and, if all that isn’t welcoming enough, the “Welcome Back” visit and review will be documented on the back of the employee’s 3972. Who could possibly consider this welcoming? Why not come up with a more accurate name for the program like “Since You Called In Sick We’re Gonna Try to Intimidate You So You Don’t Do It Again Soon”?

I have a very simple solution. This program is designed to control “Unscheduled Absences”. Just make sure your absences are “scheduled”. How do you do that? Again simple; you “schedule” medical appointments on a work day and use your sick leave to go to these appointments. Of course, schedule them in advance and when possible make them for the beginning or the end of the day. You are allowed to use sick leave for the reasonable amount of time necessary to attend a medical appointment.

While I’m on the topic of sick calls, it has come to my attention that some offices have attempted to tell letter carriers that they can’t use the postal service’s Interactive Voice Response System. That is simply not true. If you get a confirmation number, that means that your office participates in the program. An individual office can not opt out of the program unless they get permission from the area. The postal service’s own literature contains the following:

***“The Postal Service is reminding employees how to report their absences when they take unscheduled leave. You must call the Interactive Voice Response system at 877-477-3273 to report any unscheduled leave as soon as possible. To request unscheduled leave, select option 4 when prompted.*”**

Now that that’s out of the way, I want to take this opportunity to welcome all the letter carriers from the former Branch 212 into our fold. The “Lawrence” branch served Lawrence, Methuen, and North Andover and now Branch 25 serves these communities. I look forward to meeting and serving the new members and I hope to see as many as possible in the coming months at Branch meetings.

Speaking of Branch meetings, I wanted to thank national Executive Vice President Brian Renfroe for having recently attended our May meeting. Also in attendance in May was LPO Marc Ashmon and Regional Workers’ Compensation Specialist Dave Picconi. We had a regular who’s who for the meeting. I also want to thank all the members that attended and were so attentive to all the important information that was provided. I had warned everyone in the May edition of the “Wake-Up!” that the meeting would run long, and it did. It should be business as usual moving forward.

We are coming off a weekend where temperatures topped 95 degrees and it’s only May!! Every year I strongly recommend that ALL carriers download the OSHA-NIOSH Heat Safety Tool. You can get it for either Apple or Android devices and it could save your life. The app gives real-time heat indexes that prove invaluable in planning your day and responding to current conditions. It also provides guidelines for water intake, necessary time to get in the shade or an air-conditioned building, and when extra breaks should be taken. Please take heat seriously. The Postal Service has lost too many letter carriers to heat-related deaths. With that being said, if you are ever made to feel that you shouldn’t be taking extra breaks to get out of the heat, please contact the Union Office IMMEDIATELY! Also, if you ever feel the effects of heat stress, heat exhaustion, or heat stroke, CALL 911. There will be time to call your supervisor AFTER you call 911.

Vice President Dan Wheeler talks a little about the new route inspection process in his article. I suggest you read it. I also suggest you stop casing DPS, FSS, and circulars and by all means stop working off the clock if you are. Your reward for doing these things will be a longer route! Believe it or not, there are actually locations where letter carriers get upset with their steward or the Union in general because we attempt to safeguard their rights. It is more important to them to make deals for today than it is to create a better work place for tomorrow. Hopefully they smarten up before it is too late.

Finally, I’d like to take this opportunity to thank Rich Donlon for his years of dedicated service to the NALC. Rich has resigned his position as Assistant Health Benefits Representative. Stay well and stay informed!

Dave Barbuzzi

Executive Vice-President's Report

The next Branch meeting on June 7, will be the first since our recent merger with NALC Branch 212 of Lawrence. Please come out to welcome our new members and I hope many of our new members come out to attend the meeting also. The by-law changes that we approved as a branch at the May meeting have been sent to National Headquarters and are awaiting approval from the Committee of Laws. Hopefully, these are approved soon. Thanks to everyone for sitting through the readings of the current by-laws and the proposed changes. It can be tedious but is necessary when we see something in the by-laws that may need to be addressed. The training sessions through the NALC conventions and Branch Officer trainings, have provided us with insight to make sure our by-laws are compliant with the NALC Constitution. When the proposed by-law changes are approved, the by-laws will be updated on the Branch website.

We are coming into a tough time with the highest number of carriers on leave, but if you are a CCA with at least 60 days of service you are entitled to bid on hold downs on temporary vacancies. Please take advantage of this, it will not exclude you from doing pieces of other assignments but does give you the right to a schedule for 1, 2, or 3 weeks at a time, depending on the length of the vacancy. There is no set way to communicate the vacancies in the National Agreement. Most stations it is a verbal bid, and the posted prime-time annual calendar serves as notice of the available vacancies. If there are any questions on the process of bidding a hold down in your station, please seek out your local steward or call the Union office.

There is a good article that I came across recently from the Director of Retired Members, Dan Toth, that he wrote for the November 2021 Postal Record. It refers to the Office of Personnel Management's "Services Online" for retirees. After a retirement application is received and a CSA number is assigned, OPM sends out a temporary password to access Services Online. The temporary password is good for 30 days, so retirees are encouraged to go online and create a new password. Once you are on the site, there are many features you can access. Retirees can retrieve monthly annuity statements, verify FEGLI coverage and view 1099-R tax forms. You can also adjust allotments. There are other functions also. We have had calls this year by retired members looking for similar information that I believe can be retrieved on this site. It is only available to retirees. This article can be found on the branch website, www.nalcbranch25.

I want to thank everyone that collected food during the recent food drive. Some stations had better days than others, but let's face it, any food collected will be appreciated by the food pantries and those who use their services. This is one of the charitable functions we participate in and is actually done while we are working.

The pantries and the general public truly appreciate it. This year there were only a few stations that had bags donated by pantries and their totals were great. Because of the 2 years of no food drive, I think the bags became an afterthought. This is something we will work on communicating to the pantries in the future.

I know other articles in this issue of the Wakeup are talking about the new route adjustment process, so I won't talk at length about it. Please keep in mind that the data currently being collected can be used to evaluate your route. This is what every carrier should want, a route evaluated by their own times when they are on their own. No one breathing down their necks for 3 days asking why they ring a doorbell to deliver a parcel. Perform your street duties on the street and not in the office, where the time disappears because office time during an evaluation is based on recorded cased volume. This process is in effect through 2023. The weather is heating up so stay hydrated and seek shade if necessary.

Keep your head up!

Paul Desmond

Calendar of Events

June 6	D-Day WWII
June 7	Regular Monthly Meeting 8:00PM, K of C, Wilmington Food served at 7:00PM
June 14	Flag Day
June 18	Go Fishing Day
June 19	National Kissing Day
June 20	Father's Day
June 23	National Let It Go Day
June 25	Take Your Dog To Work Day
June 28	Paul Bunyan Day
June 30	Meteor Day

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Jeremy Provost	Assistant Safety Officer

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

A Note From Training

I just wanted to take a minute to acknowledge the RAP session that happened in Rhode Island at the beginning of May. I was lucky enough to have a chance to go thanks to the branch. The skills and knowledge that I was able to learn were so much more than valuable. As a newer steward with a thirst for knowledge and training it was great to get some face time with some of the people I look up to in the branch. It's not very often you get a chance to talk face to face with these amazing people. So for information, the one on one's, and the exercises the trainers provided, I would like to say I am forever thankful for the time they spent to make sure everyone that attended got what they needed out of the weekend.

I would also like to take a chance to say it was a pleasure to meet the other attendees and say thank you for the stories and other helpful information they had based on situations they had dealt with. I can't express how it felt like a big family.

So for anyone that reads this that thought they may have wanted to attend a union function, DO IT. It is not something that you will regret.

Keep Reading,

Chris Bruno

"Closer to the Heart"

I have to give a shout out to Rich Donlon for the inspiration for part of this month's safety article. Rich asked if Branch 25 was going to start back up with offering CPR courses. It might be a good time to think about it depending, of course, on what Covid is doing. It will be a good opportunity for people who haven't taken the course and also for people who have because you should get re-certified every two years.

I reached out to Winchester Hospital but unfortunately they are not scheduling group CPR courses at this time but may be in the near future. I will ask around and see if there are other options available and will inform everyone when we can start booking classes. At this point, I think it makes sense to shoot for the fall.

Now that the weather is warming up, one thing to keep in mind is water safety. Pool covers will start to come off soon and can be a danger to anyone especially small children. A pool should always be fenced in. If it is an above ground pool the ladder should never be left unattended in a position where a child could climb into the pool.


If swimming in open water, be sure it is designated for public use, make sure there is a lifeguard present, and never swim alone. When entering the water, always enter feet first. If you get into a boat, wear a life jacket that is in good shape, properly fits and is U.S. Coast Guard approved.

Stay Safe,

Jim Salvati

Lyrics Trivia

And what you say about his company
Is what you say about society
Catch the mist, catch the myth
Catch the mystery, catch the drift

 **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



Assistant Treasurer's Report

Would you believe me if I told you that at one point in time a letter carrier was eligible to receive welfare benefits due to the poor wages we once received? What if I said over 18,000 military personnel were detailed to sort and carry mail and were not capable of doing so? This is by no means a slight to our honorable veterans who serve our country - it's a compliment to our brothers and sisters who work tirelessly to deliver the nation's mail.

March 17, 1970, Vincent Sombrotto, Branch 36, motioned to strike, citing poor wages, dangerous working conditions, and meager benefits. The following day, the largest wildcat strike in United States history began and lasted for eight days. The outcome? Dissolving the United States Post Office Department and creating the United States Postal Service and granting collective bargaining to the four major postal unions.

Why am I saying this? The NALC is one of, if not the, strongest unions in the country. We are solely responsible for working with Postmaster General Dejoy to repeal the pre-funding mandate with an astonishing 79 votes at the senate. For any of you who are unaware: bills commonly die at the senate.

Does anyone know who the biggest contributor is to the sphere of influence the NALC has today? It's not Rolando. It's not your Barbuzzi (Sorry Dave). It's not even your local steward. It's you, the member. Your dues fund this union. Your voice and actions allow us to grieve and collectively bargain every day. We are capable of serving our members because of all of you. Please, speak up if you have questions or concerns in your office with potential issues. Your stewards and officers work for you. We take pride in being able to help you. We want to assist you in any way we can.

The one thing I would like to point out to all of you going forward is simple. While many of us have great relationships with management, remember they are not your friends. I've been blessed with many supervisors who provide union representation prior to PDIs. However, remember that YOU are responsible for asking for union representation if you believe any interview could lead to discipline. Any time you are brought behind closed doors, the first thing out of your mouth should be "If this could lead to potential discipline, I would like a steward present." Management MUST cease the interview and provide you with a union official.

This is your Weingarten Right. Joint Contract Administration Manual (JCAM) Pages 17-6 and 17-7 provide you with the context. Please please please read this and be aware we cannot exercise this right for you. I can promise you, in my limited two year experience, while management may provide it voluntarily, postal

inspectors, local law enforcement, and even federal agents will not provide it voluntarily. They will absolutely take advantage of you. Say nothing. Ask for your union. It is legally required to be provided to you as long as you're in that postal building on postal time.

Remember, the union works for you. Your contributions to this incredible union allow us to serve you. We want to help you. The branch is a phone call away. Many stewards will give their personal contact information to you. Utilize it. Stay united, brothers and sisters.

James Metilinos







Vice President's Report

Last month I wrote about the MDD scanners being used in a future route adjustment process. As of May 10, the future is now! The NALC and the Postal Service have agreed to several memorandums of understanding (MOUs) which have created an alternate route evaluation and adjustment process that will take us through the rest of 2022 and all of 2023. In sticking with the use of acronyms similar to previous joint adjustment processes this one, as well, is a RAP; TIAREAP to be specific. TIAREAP stands for Technology Integrated Alternate Route Evaluation and Adjustment Process. This new process will be like the previous CDRAP in that there will be teams made up of both Union and management members who will jointly evaluate the data, instead of the standard route inspection process. Normally for the week of inspection a management team of route examiners would descend on your office and each carrier would have one of these examiners follow them on their route for the entire day. Most likely this would happen three times during the week. This new process eliminates the need for carriers to be followed by a route examiner. The MDD scanner will now be filling that role.

This new method will use seven weeks of data from weeks the carrier has already delivered his or her route. These seven weeks will be randomly selected. The eighth week is being referred to as the Live Week. This is the week where data from the MDD scanner will be used. This data will be reviewed jointly by one of the teams made up of a Union and management member. Just like previous route adjustments, no data from the months of June, July, August, or December will be used. Office times will be chosen from the carrier's actual office time from the data collection period or the estimated standard time, whichever is lower. Like previous mutual adjustment processes, there are safeguards written into the MOUs to allow for instances such as good scanner data not being available or data the regular carrier not being available.

Being that this is a joint process, management will not be able to just unilaterally make any adjustments. There are provisions written into the MOU that require carrier feedback on data and proposed adjustments as well as carrier consultations which must occur before any adjustments are finalized. For those carriers who have gone through full-blown route inspections before and know how stressful it can be, hopefully, this should be a far less stressful experience.

Not every office will be part of the new process. The Union and management will begin jointly selecting offices to be part of the TIAREAP in July and LIVE Weeks will begin in September. This is a far different process than we have done before, but the NALC at the National level seems excited about this being a positive thing for letter carriers. For anyone interested in reading all the details in the MOUs, the numbers are as follows: M-01982, M-01983, and M-01984.

The vehicle news is mixed right now for us. The Postal Service seemed to be pushing ahead with their plan to buy new vehicles, regardless of the objection of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Biden administration, but they have hit a few snags recently. At the end of April, sixteen states, the District of Columbia and two environmental activists joined together to file a lawsuit against the Postal Service alleging they used faulty assumptions and miscalculations to justify their new vehicle purchase program. On May 11, House Committee on Oversight and Reform filed a bill that would require the Postal Service to redo its environmental analysis of its vehicle purchase plan. This bill would have to pass in the full House and then would likely die in the Senate. It is too early to tell if either of these things will slow down or stop the vehicle purchase plan but for letter carriers desperately in need of new, safer vehicles, any delay is not a good thing.

I have talked and written a lot lately of positive non-Postal Union news and it keeps rolling in. Almost every day it seems, there is news of another Starbucks location voting to organize. The first Union election at Starbucks happened in August of 2021. By the end of 2021, there had been 14 elections. Since January 1, 2022, there have been 251 representation petitions filed with the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB)! In the 60 elections held so far, the Union has won 54 of them. That's 90%! With 193 elections to still be held its not unreasonable to project that Starbucks could have about 7000 represented workers soon. That's rather good, considering that a year ago they did not have any. Keep pushing Brothers and Sisters!

In Solidarity,
Dan Wheeler





Talking About Hard Things

The Importance of
Strong Communication
in Military Families

Military life, while honorable and respected, comes with challenges for the whole family. From training to deployment, families are separated repeatedly. It can be a struggle to stay connected. Military members may also face physical injuries and mental health issues including trauma and suicide risk. Children may experience feelings of abandonment due to constant moving or separation from the parent. Spouses may experience an increase in responsibilities. The whole family system is impacted. Working on communication when there are periods of separation or great challenges is vital. Families must work at building strong communication to stay united.

Tips for improving communication while having difficult conversations:

- Be aware of the common challenges military families might go through. Talk about them.
- Avoid repressing feelings. Recognize and express emotions. Don't bottle them up.
- Anticipate the potential for abandonment issues and talk to children about them often.
- Listen carefully to all family members. Work to understand what each person thinks and how they feel.
- Validate one another's' emotions and establish a plan to ease fears.
- Keep communication open with the entire family. Let others know what to expect as much as possible.
- Set specific times to discuss uncomfortable things. Be selective while choosing a place and time to share.
- Share the right amount of information based on the situation.
- Be aware of tendencies to avoid uncomfortable topics like physical intimacy, finances, and unresolved fights.
- Respond with body language like nodding and good eye contact, to demonstrate attention to your partner.
- Repeat back what you heard the other person say and seek clarification, if needed.
- Keep a sense of humor about difficult situations.
- Talk openly about what is on your mind and important to you.
- Don't respond with judgment about rights or wrongs.
- Don't respond about how the other person should feel or give advice.

It can be tough to talk about difficult things with your family. The USPS EAP can provide information and resources to help you and your loved ones learn to improve communication when facing challenging times. Reach out today to learn more or visit EAP4YOU.com.



CALL US TODAY: 800-327-4968
800-EAP-4YOU | TTY: 877-492-7341
WWW.EAP4YOU.COM

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Our website — EAP4YOU.com — offers a wealth of information, tools and resources available any time and professionals are ready to take your call at:

800-327-4968 (800-EAP-4YOU) or TTY: 877-492-7341.



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WWW.EAP4YOU.COM

WAKE UP

2500 Main Street
Suite # 201
Tewksbury, MA 01876
Phone: (978) 658-5820
Fax: (978) 658-0888
Web: www.nalcbranch25.com

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at the next meeting
June 7
K of C Wilmington
8:00 PM



Back Right LPO Marc Ashmon was busy at the May branch meeting. Thirteen members signed up for the Letter Carrier Political Fund as new contributors and six members increased their contributions. Seated with Marc are Branch 25 Vice President Dan Wheeler, Trustee Joe Stearns, and Dracut Steward Cam Hillner.