



# ***WAKE UP!***

President/ Editor  
Daniel P. Wheeler

Publisher  
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**Volume 47 Issue 6**

**June 2023**

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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 , Newburyport , North Chelmsford , North Reading , Peabody , Reading , Rockport , Salem , South Hamilton ,  
Sudbury , Tewksbury , Topsfield , Wakefield , Wayland , Wilmington , Winchester

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Retired Gloucester Letter Carrier, and Branch 25 Trustee, Bruce Johnson helps to unload food at The Open Door Food Pantry in Gloucester during the Letter Carrier's Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive on May 13.

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## President's Message

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### *“Everyday Is Different”*

It is unclear when the 365-day calendar was first used, probably around five thousand years ago by the ancient Egyptians. The fact of the matter is that we settled on 365 days per year at some point. It should go without saying no two days in the year are exactly alike. There is only one June 1, and there aren't two October 4's. December 25 does not repeat itself. If it is so apparent **that every day is different**, why does Postal management continue to push that every day should be like another? I am referring to management's use of data from a one-day PS 3999 to try and make a letter carrier's time for any given day comparable to a time they demonstrated on the day the 3999 was performed.

Let us take it from the beginning. M-39 (Management of Delivery Services); Section 141.2 gives management the right to conduct a one-day count of mail on a letter carrier's route. The carrier must be given a prior days' notice of this count, and the results are recorded on PS Form 1838-C and should be shared with the carrier. Management also has the right to perform street supervision on a letter carrier. Handbook M-39, Section 134 says carriers can expect daily supervision on the street, the same as in the office. When management goes out with a letter carrier for one day, it's often referred to as “walking the route” or “doing a 99” due to the fact the results are recorded on PS Form 3999 (Inspection of Letter Carrier Route). Unlike the day's prior notice when counting mail, there is no advance notice required to be given when management performs a 3999. These requirements are counterintuitive to many letter carriers. Having someone follow you around all day is more intrusive to your day than someone counting your mail in the office, but that's how it is.

I am explaining this process because of management's recent push to perform 3999s on letter carriers and what they do with the data they collect. We are currently under the mutually agreed upon process of TIAREAP (Technology Integrated Alternate Route Evaluation and Adjustment Process). The only way that any route can be adjusted during the duration of this agreement is through the TIAREAP process. While management has the right to perform a 3999 on a carrier, what they can do with this data is limited. The first thing they are trying to do in many instances is to set up a performance standard they will try to hold you to every other day. As I said at the beginning of this article, **every day is different**. If they walk your route today and it takes you a certain amount of time, it does not mean that's what time it will take you tomorrow or the next day. They may use 3999 data from a Tuesday with light mail and then try to say you should be able to complete your route on any other given day in the same amount of time.

Another one they like to use is saying, “We walked you on a Thursday, and you did it in eight, so why can't you do it this Thursday in eight?” It is worth noting Postal management has a knack for walking routes on exceptionally light days.

Unlike office time, where there is a standard of 18 and 8 for casing mail, there is no standard on the street. There is no standard for how fast you should walk. If you do the job safely and to the best of your ability, you make standards on the street! Management does not like to believe that **every day is different**, and every route is different. That means more work for them. It is much easier to determine that every day should be the same and every route the same. When management tells you the time you showed on a previous day's evaluation means you should be doing the same thing today, politely remind them no two days are exactly alike. As they often are at this time of year, local management is under instruction to leave a certain percentage of routes open due to projected downtime. Downtime, undertime, or pivot time is what they refer to as time a carrier is available to do additional work because your route won't take the full eight hours. You may or not have downtime on any given day because...**every day is different!** You don't have downtime just because management says you do, because you had it the day of your 3999, or because you had it last Wednesday.

If you have not realized by now, my key takeaway is **every day is different!** Management has the right to perform street supervision and collect data from their observations, but they do not have the right to use the data to harass letter carriers to conform to their idea of appropriate street times. Each carrier is responsible for determining that. You may have downtime, you may need exactly eight hours, or you may need additional time. The carrier's responsibility is to notify management and let them decide what to do with that information.

In Solidarity,

Dan Wheeler

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## Executive Vice-President's Report

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As I write this, some of our stations are finally fully staffed and some are even over staffed. This will probably be temporary, due to retirements, but a good sign that hiring is back. This is a direct result, I believe, of the ability to hire PTFs as opposed to CCAs. Although there are still many offices that need to be better staffed, this should be an indication that the hiring of PTFs is the way to retain employees. I am told that the Woburn building has many new hires in the pipeline which it desperately needs. Lawrence also. Time will tell for them and the other stations. The stations that are still very understaffed are not yet authorized to hire PTFs. The current contract negotiations would be a good time for the USPS to ditch their efforts to hire non-career carriers. I don't think it would be tough to negotiate with the NALC. If we get this done in negotiations, then the job as a letter carrier will be a lot better. When carriers that don't want to work OT, don't have to, then I believe they will stay with the Postal Service. If the Postal Service plans on opening more of the Sorting and Distribution Centers, and they currently are, then the only way to make them work is with full staffing. That is painfully obvious in Woburn.

The Food Drive as usual was a big success once again. Every year the volume of food that we pick up is different, but any volume of food delivered to the pantries in our communities is good. Thanks goes out to everyone that helped out with the distribution of cards and arranged for food pantry transportation. Not every community has a pantry, but we made sure that the food was distributed to nearby pantries. They were all very grateful.

We are about to come into the heat season and all carriers need to be aware of staying hydrated, year round, but especially in the heat and humidity. If you are feeling weak or dizzy, please stop and seek shade and/or AC. Drink fluids before you even hit the street and keep plenty of fluids with you. It is your health and more important to return to your home healthy than to make time on your route. Hopefully, there will be safety talks in your stations to reflect the importance of staying hydrated and taking necessary breaks. If there are new employees hired in your station, please remind them to carry plenty of fluids with them.

This is the time of the year when temporary vacancies are generally abundant and made available for Unassigned Regulars, PTFs and CCAs. Obviously, these are available all year, but with prime vacation time the number of vacancies increases. The method for requesting hold downs is different for each station, but generally the vacation schedule is in a conspicuous place for all to see. If anyone has an issue with how to request a temporary bid, please call the union office or see your steward. These assignments are your right to bid on and should be taken advantage of all summer until the end of

the choice period. Don't let someone tell you the hold downs are not available because of volumes.

Because of the March branch meeting that was cancelled as a result of snow, we will be having an additional meeting on the 27<sup>th</sup> of June. This should satisfy our requirement to have at least 10 branch meetings this year. I know it is only 2 weeks after the branch meeting on June 13<sup>th</sup>, but it would be great if we could get a good crowd out to both meetings. The meetings only last about an hour and food will be served. Usually, we make a motion to suspend meetings in July and August, so these will be the last 2 meetings before September. Congratulations to all the retirees from the last couple of months. There are a lot of carriers leaving at the end of each month now with more planning on going this summer. There was a large number of carriers hired in the late 80s and early 90s who have decided to leave after long careers. Enjoy the summer.

Keep your head up and see you at the branch meeting!

Paul Desmond

### Calendar of Events

June 1	Say Something Nice Day
June 2	National Doughnut Day
June 8	Best Friends Day
June 13	<b>Regular Monthly Meeting K of C Wilmington 8:00PM Food served at 7:15PM</b>
June 16	Wish Fulfillment Day
June 19	Juneteenth
June 21	National Selfie Day
June 23	Take You Dog To Work Day
June 27	<b>Makeup Branch Meeting K of C Wilmington 8:00PM Food served at 7:15PM</b>

## *"A Simple Hello"*

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
Doug Murray	Sergeant At Arms
Dan Raske	Chairman of Trustees
Bruce Johnson	Trustee
John McNulty	Trustee
Bob Cronin	Trustee
Gilbert Paredes	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.***



Congratulations to Richie Donlon (left) and Ken Dusombre (Right) for being re-elected to the Executive Board of the Massachusetts State Letter Carriers' Association. The election took place at the Association's convention in May.

First I would like to start off by thanking everyone who sent in Food Drive photos. It would appear that the Food Drive came back with a roar. Thank you also to all the carriers who busted their humps to get the food back and help out on the docks to get it where it needed to go. I cannot even think of the amount of families that we, as a family, were able to help. I am hoping that this will also kick the members into gear about sending in photos for The Wake Up because it is awesome to see the support being shown.

Support is my next topic. There has been a massive influx of PTF hiring going on and from, what I have seen, a good amount seem to be lost after training. Not due to a lack of quality training, please don't think that is what I am saying. Random routes everyday, no trucks, questions on benefits or just general tips on the route they are covering. Management has been assigning them routes in the offices and some are being sent to other offices to work as well on an "emergency basis". This job gets easier as you go but starting out can be rough.

The story I was told was that a trainer in Boston reached out to a local steward about a PTF coming in. The trainer asked for the steward to go introduce themselves because the PTF was nervous about going to the office but wanted to succeed at the career. The steward did just that. The steward walked over introduced themselves and the PTF was incredibly thankful for them taking the time to go out of their way to do that and offer help whenever needed.

So this is a message to the local stewards. A simple hello can help make or break some employees. Going into prime time can be tough enough for new employees so lets set them up for success by supporting them. I am sure a lot of you do this already but lets go the extra mile to get that interaction and positive reinforcement.

Keep Reading,

Chris Bruno

**✂**

**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

**✂**

*‘Blinded by the Light’*

Has anyone noticed that some headlights are a lot brighter than others these days? I thought the glare from some vehicles were bothering me because I was getting old. It turns out it’s a real thing. A lot of newer vehicles come with bright headlights. According to journalist Jack Crosbie, “every single SUV is equipped with military grade halogen retina destroyers!”

If you drive a car, a truck or SUV behind you can seem really bright. Part of it is, of course, because they are higher up than you but the other factor they also have LED lights. Although some light measurements will read the same Lumens, the LED ‘blue’ type of headlight is perceived as brighter than the halogen ‘yellow’ lamp. And does anyone even remember when state inspections included headlight adjusting?

Better road illumination and less glare from oncoming traffic are both key for safer night driving, automotive safety experts say. Technology that can do both at once — known as adaptive driving beams — has been in use in Europe since 2012, according to automakers, and today is available in cars sold in every major automotive market worldwide. Except the U.S.!

“The United States is decades behind the rest of the developed world with respect to updating standards to keep up with technologies, particularly in the headlight area,” said Greg Brannon, AAA’s director of automotive engineering and industry relations. “The standards have not been substantively updated since the ‘70s.

A 2022 regulation allowed the technology in the U.S. for the first time, but more than a year later, no vehicles with it are available for sale. So we may be dealing with more headlight glare for a while.

Stay Safe,

Jim Salvati

Trivia: Who wrote *Blinded by the Light* and what band made it popular in 1976?

Blinded By The Light was written by Bruce Springsteen and made popular by Manfred Mann's Earth Band.

*“Two Meeting Month”*

Yes you read that correctly. This month we have 2 meetings. 1<sup>ST</sup> our regular monthly meeting on June 13<sup>th</sup> the second Tuesday of the month. Then on June 27<sup>th</sup> the fourth and last Tuesday in June we will have our second meeting. This second meeting is to make up for our cancelled March meeting. The times for both meetings will be the same. Food served at 7:15pm with the meeting starting at 8pm. I know I have pushed hard on this, but I cannot stress enough the importance to have the 2 meetings. I know we are getting into the heart of prime time and vacations, but we really need an effort to complete these meetings. So come on down for a couple meals and as always the cash bar will be open. Thank you in advance for those of you that can attend these meetings. The council truly appreciates it.

I wanted to comment on the Region 14 RAP session put on by Rick DiCecca and his team. This was by far the best one I have attended. The classes were extremely informative and provided a great deal of information. Our own Dave Barbuzzi put on an excellent presentation of OWCP. If you are a steward this is an excellent resource to learn from. Don’t pass up on a chance to attend one in the future.

**LCPF** -- You will be hearing a lot about this in the coming months. For those that may not know what that means it is Letter Carrier Political Fund. This is what the NALC uses to help us get bills passed in congress that can help us or help stop the ones we don’t want. This was instrumental in the passing of the Postal reform act which got rid of the prefunding of retiree benefits that had a strangle hold on the USPS. Our National President Brian Renfroe has made this one of his top goals to increase this fund as best we can. A strong effort will be put forward to do this. Much more to come on this matter.

I had the honor to present William J. Healey with his 60-year Letter from Brian Renfroe and his 50-, 55-, and 60-year pins. Yes he was owed a couple. I have the privilege of knowing him by his postal nickname “Spider”. An inside joke to Marblehead he is the original Spider. We had a great conversation as he told me about his daughter who worked for the State department some years ago and was in charge of 10,000 people (a very proud DAD). He proudly showed me pictures of his daughter with former President George W. Bush. His start date with the NALC is January 10<sup>th</sup>, 1963, and he has been retired over 25 years. When he started he said stamps were about 4 cents each. WOW. He told me that back in his day it was fun to work at the post office and enjoyed the job. He knows it is a different world now. I never worked with him but remember when he and fellow retiree Nicky Freeman used to help out on the food drive. They would go out and collect food from the carriers on their routes to help out. Thank you for all your years of service to the NALC.

Just a quick reminder if you are moving or have moved make sure we have your new address. As always you can call the office, mail us the change, or email me at [jesbr25@gmail.com](mailto:jesbr25@gmail.com)

Snaple Fact #94: Lizards communicate by doing push-ups.

Joe Stearns

# Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive 2023



# Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive 2023



Beverly, Concord, Salem, & Gloucester Letter Carriers pitching in during the Letter Carriers' Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive.



# Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive 2023



Letter Carriers doing their part for the 2023 Letter Carriers' Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive in Salem, Marblehead, Tewksbury and Holliston.





### Dog Hazard



Branch 25 Secretary Joe Stearns recently had the opportunity to visit retired Marblehead Letter Carrier William J. Healey and present him with his 60-year NALC membership pin and recognition letter. Joe Stearns writes more about Brother Healey in his article on page 5 of this issue.



USPS has implemented a hazard warning tool on our scanners, and once we report a hazard such as a dog at an address the scanner will alert us of the hazard on the customer's property.

Remember, the number one tool we have is to stay vigilant while performing our duties.

Basic rules to follow:

1. **Observe the area.** Take a quick glance at all the places a dog may be — under parked cars, under hedges, on the porch, etc.
2. **Size up the situation.** Determine if the dog is asleep, barking, growling, nonchalant, large, small, etc.
3. **Avoid signs of fear.** A dog is more apt to bite you if it knows you are afraid.
4. **Don't startle a dog.** If the dog is asleep, make some kind of non-startling noise, such as soft whistling. Do this before you are close to the dog, while you still have time and space for an "out."
5. **Never assume a dog won't bite.** You may encounter a certain dog for days or weeks without incident — and then one day, it might decide to bite you.
6. **Keep your eyes on the dog.** A dog is very likely to bite you when you aren't looking. Always be on the alert for a sneak attack!
7. **Make friends.** Talk in a friendly manner. Call the dog's name if you know it, but never attempt to pet or feed a dog.
8. **Stand your ground.** If a dog comes toward you, turn and face it. If you have a satchel, hold it in front of you and back slowly away while making sure you don't stumble and fall. **NEVER TURN AND RUN.**
9. **If a dog attacks you, use the repellent to protect yourself.**

Courtesy of Tony Bossi's Leadership Academy

Project Pamphlet

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## Vice President's Report

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### *“Through the Fire and Flames, We Carry On”*

Our current National Agreement is set to expire at midnight on May 20, 2023. By the time you read this article we will have an update on how negotiations for a new contract are progressing. If a tentative agreement is not reached, a legally mandated 60-day mediation period will begin. The parties use the mediation period to select a neutral arbitrator and continue negotiations. For the 2019 National Agreement NALC and USPS had entered interest arbitration, and from mid October 2020 to late November 2020, the parties went from presenting testimony before the arbitration panel to reaching a tentative agreement. It benefits both parties to come to a tentative agreement, as the interest arbitration decision is final and binding. When a tentative agreement is reached, the members will vote to ratify the new agreement.

As you read this you might be saying to yourself, “Didn’t Tony just write about this recently?” You’re damn right I did. Back in March, I wrote a similar article for the Wake Up! Why am I revisiting the subject just months later? The more educated we are about the contract process and our rights the better off we will all be. When we have a new contract there will be a local implementation period for our LMOUs which are governed by Article 30. You can read the LMOU for each office in the branch on our website. I recommend doing some research to compare some ideas from other offices. Look at your annual leave rules, holiday pecking order, and language for opting/hold down rules. This is an investment in your future and many times has the potential to be a quality of life change for you and the other carriers at your local office. The further in advance you prepare the easier it will be to potentially modify or add to your LMOU. Remember if the LMOU is opened management is required to bargain in good faith over each of the items within it.

Summer is on the way, and new PTFs and CCAs will be facing the unique experience of carrying mail in heatwaves or the true luxury of the interior of our LLV fleet during the summer months. Visit the national website for some tips and tools on how to stay safe in the heat. When you return from extended leave or even a week off during the summer prepare yourself for going back out into the heat.

Lack of acclimatization has been a major factor with heat-related illness and death. If you feel ill, reach out! You know yourself better than anyone, so if you think you’re in danger, call 911, get a customer’s attention, and try to find some shade until the paramedics arrive. We know heat is a part of the job, but we aren’t machines. Don’t let management treat you like one either. We’ve all gone out to the route preparing for an eight-hour day only to get the call or scanner message that we are needed to perform overtime. If you don’t have the items to stay hydrated or you need to take an

extra break from the heat, and even if you’ve already taken your lunch and breaks, you have the right, for your safety, to do so. Any push back on something like this from management should be met with a response of “can this lead to discipline?” If they say yes, explain to them you’ll answer any questions they have once you have a steward present. Let’s start watching out for each other both in and out of the office. Being a letter carrier is a difficult job, and it seems to only be getting more dangerous.

Recently there has been a lot of Letter of Demand or “LOD” issues going around. Try and keep an eye on your virtual timecard throughout the week to catch any mistakes management may make inputting your leave. It is both our responsibility to submit leave slips or 3971s and management’s responsibility to input your leave correctly. Mistakes happen, and when one type of leave is used in place of the other it can frequently be fixed quickly by local management. But when you are paid for leave you did not want to use; things can get tricky fast. If you are compensated for leave that you didn’t want to use, and the pay period closes, you would effectively have to buy it back, or pay USPS for the value of the amount of leave you were put in for, which usually leads to some frustration. This may be a grievable matter, and you should request union time with your steward when it happens, or especially if it is happening frequently due to management error.

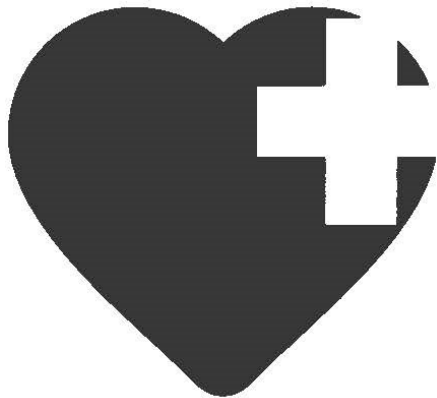
In Solidarity,

Tony Bossi



## Safety and Health

Few issues should be as important to a letter carrier as their safety, but all too often we cast it aside due to the pressures of the job. This brochure was created to bring awareness to some of the more common safety issues carriers face on a daily basis. As always, if the following provisions or your rights are violated, request union time with your steward or contact your branch office. Whether you are a new hire or a veteran carrier, take a few moments to read through this brochure and pass along any knowledge you gain to our fellow brother and sister carriers!



New England is a great place to live, but we have the challenge of facing both extreme heat and bitter cold. After being hired and upon completion of 90 workdays or 120 calendar days, you will receive a uniform allowance per Article 26 of the National Agreement. When a CCA becomes eligible for a uniform allowance, funds must be approved through an eBuy submission by local management. After approval, a Letter of Authorization form must be completed by local management and provided to the employee within 14 days of the eligibility date. Depending on the time of year ask a few of the senior carriers what they would recommend you buy. Be aware that upon conversion to career employee your uniform allowance anniversary date will not

## Beat the Heat

Extreme heat causes more deaths than any other weather-related hazard; each year more than 65,000 people seek medical treatment for extreme heat exposure. The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) and Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) have collaborated to update OSHA's original Heat Safety Tool app for smartphones. Letter carriers who are exposed to hot and humid conditions can use the app to check the heat index and learn about the relevant protective measures. The app displays the heat index in the user's location and shows the current risk level.

Apple App Store



Android App Store



### Risk Factors for Heat Illness

- High temperature and humidity, direct sun exposure, no breeze or wind
  - Low liquid intake
  - Heavy physical labor
  - Waterproof clothing
- No recent exposure to hot workplaces

### Symptoms of Heat Exhaustion

- Headache, dizziness, or fainting
  - Weakness and wet skin
  - Irritability or confusion
  - Thirst, nausea, or vomiting

### Symptoms of Heat Stroke

- May be confused, unable to think clearly, pass out, collapse, or have seizures (fits)

(Pictured at left) Branch 25 Vice-President and recently appointed Regional Office Assistant (ROA) for Region 14, Tony Bossi recently completed NALC Leadership Academy. Tony is pictured here receiving his diploma from National Assistant secretary-treasurer Mack Julion. Congratulations Tony!

# **WAKE UP**

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*at the next meeting*  
**June 13**  
**K of C Wilmington**  
**8:00 PM**



Congratulations to (Left to Right) Kevin Nugent, Denise Moore, and Steve McCarthy of Danvers who received service awards recently. Kevin got his 25-year award and Denise and Steve got 35-year awards.