

WAKE UP!

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Left to right: Beverly Shop Steward Doug Murray, Beverly carrier Juliana Sidelnikov, Artem Sidelnikov, and President Dave Barbuzzi (Photo bomb: Jim Nutter)

President's Message

"Challenge Accepted"

On the cover of this month's "Wake-Up!" you'll see Doug Murray, Juliana and Artem Sidelnikov. Artem is a sailor with the United States Coast Guard who was recently assigned to California. This assignment put the family in a tough spot as Juliana was (key word here) a letter carrier in Beverly. Juliana applied for transfer and was denied. Doug filed a grievance and then I handled the grievance after it wasn't resolved at the local level. Long story short, Juliana is a letter carrier in sunny California now.

While waiting for everything to be sorted out, Artem's commanding officer was apprised of the situation. At the June branch meeting, Artem asked if he could address the members, and when he did he read a letter from his commanding officer and presented Doug and me with challenge coins from the boat he's assigned to on behalf of his Lieutenant. I have to tell you, it ranks up there with one of the most memorable moments of my entire Union career, and definitely has a spot in my "life memories". I look at the letter, and the challenge coin, and I am filled with pride and I "accept the challenge" to continue fighting the fight.

Your shop steward accepts the challenge every day as well. He or she steps on the workroom floor under less than ideal conditions and fights to protect and enforce your rights. There are a few offices where we need people to "fight the fight". I can assure you, if you step up as a steward, you will receive the support that you need from the branch officers. Give it some thought, sometimes there's a very satisfying feeling that comes from helping others.

I'm not sure how many members are aware, but our very own Dan Wheeler and Tony Bossi both "fight the fight" for carriers beyond the scope of Branch 25. Dan, on multiple occasions, has represented Region 14 letter carriers during the various cooperative route adjustment processes, including the current process. Tony is often called on to perform work on behalf of our National Union. Both Dan and Tony also occasionally work at our National Business Agent, Rick DiCecca's office. Of course, you all know that Rick is a member of Branch 25 as well.

To round things out, James Metilinos is an instructor at the carrier academy, getting first crack at new CCA's while they're at their most impressionable state. And last but not least, Bill Anderson is the Union representative on the B Team. You wanna talk about thankless jobs? Try being the guy that has to decide grievances and dealing with upset branch leaders 50% of the time. That's a whole different fight!!

This weekend, I will be traveling to Maryland to undergo extensive training from NALC for workers' compensation (OWCP). Branch 25 has always had our

fingers on the pulse of OWCP. For years Ron Noviello set the standard for local OWCP Reps, assisting countless members in getting their claims approved. The NALC is under no contractual obligation to provide this service, but we do anyway to all members. As the catch phrase says, "membership has its privileges". Ultimately, the training I receive will provide a direct benefit to the members of the branch.

I know that I welcomed the members of the former Branch 212 to Branch 25 last month, but as of the mailing of the last Wake-Up! we did not have all of the mailing list. As a result, the retirees of Branch 212 did not receive a Wake-Up! So...WELCOME RETIREES OF THE FORMER BRANCH 212 to Branch 25! I look forward to meeting you and hearing from you. Hopefully, you may be able to make it to a branch meeting in the near future. I hope that by the time this issue of the Wake-Up! arrives in your homes, you will have received the check that was mailed on June 8. If you are a retiree of former Branch 212 and you have not yet received the check, please contact the Union office as soon as possible. If you have received the check, please be sure to cash it as soon as possible so that we can balance the books.

I'd like to offer all members a few reminders in the next few paragraphs. First and foremost, if you're a CCA, bid a hold-down before prime time is over (the contractual term is "opt" a vacant assignment). At any rate, once you have 60 days in you can exercise your RIGHT to opt on a vacant assignment. That means, if you're the #1 CCA, take a look at the vacation calendar and plan the rest of your summer. Look at the "best" routes, and do them when the regular goes on vacation. If you have any questions, contact the union office.

Download the OSHA Heat Index app. This is near and dear to me. I don't want any of our members suffering the ill-effects of heat exhaustion or heat stroke. You will get scanner messages telling you to take your "authorized" breaks in air conditioned buildings. I'm telling you if you need to take "ADDITIONAL" breaks due to the high heat and humidity, DO SO! Contact your office and let them know that you are doing so. The best way to contact your office is by scanner message, just realize that scanner messages are broadcast NATIONALLY, so don't text anything stupid. Again, if you get any pushback, contact the office.

We need your help letting us know if there are any residual vacancies in your office. A residual vacancy is the route that doesn't get bid after a bidding cycle. Someone retires, their route goes up for bid and someone bids it. This process continues until no one bids the posted route. That is a residual vacancy. We need to know about this in the office so we can get the next person promoted. (continued on page 4)

Executive Vice-President's Report

As we have sent the by-laws proposals approved by the Branch to NALC Headquarters for approval, there is one approved change that does not need approval by the committee of laws. That being the change in the day of our monthly meeting. The NALC Constitution allows us to do this on our own. As you will see in the Wakeup, the monthly Branch meetings will now be on the second Tuesday of the month starting in September. The meeting will still start at 8pm with food served at 7:15pm. Hopefully, this change will work out for the members. We had a lot of meetings on the days after holidays that fell on the first Mondays of the month, and attendance suffered. We hope this change allows more carriers to attend the monthly meetings. I hope to see you in September.

Now that July is upon us, please take the precaution of staying hydrated throughout the day and night. That means drinking fluids before you even get to work and during the day. Most athletes are taught that hydrating properly begins the day before games, we should be taking this advice since we work long days in the heat and humidity, not just a couple hours. As always, make sure you have plenty of fluids with you and take breaks when necessary, especially if you aren't feeling well. There has already been heat waves throughout the country and it is just a matter of time before one hits New England.

This can be a very busy time of the year, due to the high number of carriers on annual leave in most stations, but please take time to inform the CCAs and unassigned regulars on the process of opting on vacant assignments (hold downs) during the choice leave period. PTFs are also qualified. Most stations the process is notifying the supervisor verbally you are interested in temporarily vacant routes, and it is done by seniority for regulars and PTFs, or relative standing for CCAs. You aren't required to request a hold down but I suggest it unless you prefer to do different assignments and have different start times on a daily basis. Opting also helps you get familiar with routes as you will do it most days of the vacancy. Generally, you will not do the route on the routes NS day, the T-6 will if available but you are not guaranteed the day off. Opting on vacant assignments is not just for the summer but one of our benefits all year.

We still have carriers filling out CA-1s for Covid but not nearly the amount as early in the year. In some cases the forms have been filled out after the continuance of pay period. That is fine, because you can buy back the leave that you used while out with Covid if you like. The main reason to filing a claim for Covid is to already have a claim if there are any future issues related to the virus. If you have filled out Covid CA-1s and it is beyond the 45 day COP period, you should get a letter notifying you it is approved without COP, but that you can buy back the leave used via form CA-7. As always, if you have any questions in regard to Workers Comp issues please call the Branch office.

I hope everyone has some time this summer to enjoy with your families. The good weather in New England does not last long enough. Keep your head up!

Paul Desmond

Calendar of Events

July 1	National Postal Worker Day
July 4	Independence Day
July 7	Global Forgiveness Day
July 11	World Population Day
July 18	National Ice Cream Day
July 21	National Be Someone Day
July 24	Amelia Earhart Day
July 30	International Day of Friendship

Branch 25 Directory of Officers

David J. BarbuZZi	President
Paul G. Desmond	Executive V.P.
Dan Wheeler	Vice President
Anthony Bossi	Secretary
James P. Nutter	Treasurer
Kenneth Dusombre	Health Benefits Rep.
Jim Salvati	Safety Officer
Jack Lyman	Sergeant At Arms
Dan Raske	Chairman, Board of Trustees
Bruce Johnson	Trustee
John McNulty	Trustee
Mark Gangi	Trustee
Joe Stearns	Trustee
Chris Bruno	Wake-Up Publisher
Bob Cronin	MBA-NSBA Rep
James Metilinos	Assistant Treasurer
Andy Coan	Assistant Secretary
Jeremy Provost	Assistant Safety Officer

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

President's Report (cont.)

Last, but certainly not least, I'd like to talk to you about some things you need to know about Workers' Compensation, OWCP. First, you may think that you'll never get injured, but the odds are that during the course of your career you will. Register on "ecom" now. It's free. If you ever are injured, you will need to file and upload forms through ecomp, so you may as well take the first step now and be prepared.

By the way, Covid-19 IS a workplace injury as long as you worked within the 21 days preceding your positive test. It is extremely important to file a CA-1 if you have had Covid as we don't know if there will be any long-term effects. All claims (provided you have a positive test administered by a medical professional) will be approved. PERIOD.

For any other injuries, there are different forms to fill out. In the most simplistic terms, if you have an injury that occurs during one work shift (traumatic injury), you need to fill out a CA-1. If you have an injury or illness that develops over time, you need to fill out a CA-2.

The medical documentation for your claim is typically the "weak link". Doctors aren't writers and some doctors can't be bothered with such trivial tasks as providing proper medical for you. Also, some doctors may refuse to help you because you may have a pre-existing condition like arthritis and they perceive filing a claim involving that to be fraudulent. What many people, and many doctors don't understand is that your

job doesn't have to cause your injury in order for your claim to be accepted. All it has to do is aggravate or accelerate your injury. For example, you have arthritis in your knees and you dismount the two steps of your Ily 130 times/day to deliver parcels, not to mention the 8-10 miles you walk (much of it on uneven terrain). Get the picture? Your job aggravates your condition! Contact the Union office for assistance and file that claim!

Frequently, our members will file claims and then receive a letter in the mail saying that there are things that haven't been established in order to accept your claim. The member is in a panic thinking that their claim was denied. It wasn't. The letter is called a "development letter" and it lists exactly what is needed from you and/or your doctor in order to get your claim approved. Believe it or not, the claims examiners at workers' comp are supposed to help you get your claim approved! So, get in touch with the office so that we can help you get what you need.

In the coming months, I'll try to pepper my articles with more information about workers' comp. In the meantime, if you have any questions whatsoever, about anything, either call the office or email me directly or though the branch website.

I hope everyone has a safe, enjoyable summer and I hope to see you in September at the branch meeting on September 13.

Stay well and stay informed!

Dave

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

Something interesting just happened in Branch 34: 190 CCAs are being converted to PTF. This conversion is the result of the mutual agreement between the NALC and USPS in MOU 01985. What's even more interesting is that Branch 34 will not hire any more CCAs. They will only hire PTFs. It's an "all career workforce". This means new hires are entitled to accrue sick leave, step increases, career benefits, and so much more; things that current CCAs do not currently get (sorry..). This is covered in M-01986.

Let me sidetrack for a second. It will be obvious why shortly. Choice vacation period is upon us. Offices are increasing the number of carriers who are off. This means more work for us all. If your office is compliant with article 8, it means overtime list carriers are working up to 12 hours a day and 60 hours in a week. Carriers off the list should not be mandated to work until this requirement is met. If your office is anything like mine, it means they most likely are understaffed. If any of you don't know, I also train the new hires in the good start academy in North Reading. Complete transparency: the amount of new hires through that door is quite bleak. One of the key points that was brought to our attention at the RAP session was hour maximums. Please, do not work over 12 hours a day. Do not work over 60 hours a week. Yes, you're entitled to more money. You may

even be entitled to an escalated remedy. I know the cash seems like a great opportunity. But you need to understand, as long as mail is delivered, even at the cost of penalty overtime, your office will continue to go understaffed.

If mail is not being delivered in your building, call the branch. Speak with a steward. Let them know. Fill out a 1571. Get a copy. The NBA office wants to know. Why do they want to know? Because it will allow them to continue to bargain with the postal service for the letter carrier. If you set clear boundaries and work your max hours, let the mail go undelivered. Management will staff your building (hopefully..) The postal service will be more apt to bargain with the NALC for better wages, benefits, and hey, maybe even a complete career workforce. I'm sure there's plenty of offices with CCAs who would love to be able to be making more than \$18.92 an hour, getting sick leave, access to the phenomenal NALC health benefit plan, and more. That could be a reality much sooner than you think if we all do our part.

Food for thought.

James Metilinos

"Bad Habits"

Curb it, park it, brake it, take it. Wear your lap and shoulder belt when the vehicle is in motion. Close the door when driving through an intersection. Don't finger the mail while driving. These are just some of the rules we have to follow while operating postal vehicles. We all know these rules. Management might not care about safety, but they preach these rules in service talks and won't miss an opportunity to let you know when you're breaking them.

I don't understand why carriers don't follow these rules. Last week I saw one carrier driving without a seatbelt, and another one turning left through an intersection with the door open and mail in one hand. We get paid by the hour so there is no reason to take shortcuts. Especially ones that jeopardize our safety.

How can we avoid a PDI? Follow the rules. Prevent a roll away or run away? Follow the rules. Not get thrown from an LLV and killed in an accident? Follow the rules. Take the time to do the job the right way.

To the carriers who are out there doing their job the safe way everyday, thank you. To the ones with the bad habits, start to change them now. Be deliberate with your actions and over time you will be doing the right thing without even thinking about it. One of my supervisors has done street observations on me two to three times a week. It doesn't bother me. I make sure I do the right things all day everyday. He can come see me three times a day everyday for all I care.

As a parting thought I'd like to stress the importance of seat belts. According to the NHTSA, buckling up in the front seat of a passenger car can reduce the risk of fatal injury by 45% and reduce the risk of moderate to severe injury by 50%. In a light truck like an LLV the risk of fatal injury is reduced by 60% and risk of moderate to severe injury is reduced by 65% when you buckle up. Also airbags are not a replacement for seat belts. They are designed to work WITH seat belts to keep you safe in an accident.

Stay Safe,
Jeremy Provost

Vice President's Report

On June 1, 2022, the last Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS) letter carrier in Holliston retired. That got me to thinking about many of the carriers I worked with at the beginning of my career, who are now retired. Anyone who started On January 1, 1984, or later is part of the Federal Employee Retirement System (FERS), which means any CSRS carriers still working have at least 38 years of service. I'm not sure how many CSRS letter carriers there are out of the 200,000 plus in the country but the number is getting smaller each day. When I started many carriers had been around for a while. Slowly, over time, those carriers started to retire. I would guess most offices are similar to mine, having not many CSRS carriers left. The Postal Service has seen an influx of new CCAs coming in and making regular over the last few years, replacing the "old-timers". In one office I visited recently, carriers that were halfway up the seniority list had 5 or fewer years of service. In Holliston, I'm the last of the Mohicans, as the old saying goes. There are no more carriers left who were there when I started. Bobby "The Mayor" Blair, Fitzzy, Ray, Sully, Burgey, Dee, Mikey T., Bobby T., Bob Ford, and Jimmy L., among others, are all gone now. Every office has those same carriers of its own.

I wanted to take a few moments to acknowledge those carriers this month. The older group of these carriers started back in the 1960s, many of them being Vietnam-era Veterans. Moving into the 1970s and 1980s more were hired to replace many of the World War 2 Veterans who had put in their 30-40 years of service with the Postal Service, after returning home from military duty. These carriers started before scanners or GPS, before barcodes, before DPS or FSS, before FMLA, and long before Amazon or Amazon Sundays. These carriers used to spend 2-3 hours in the office casing mail before heading out to deliver their routes. Some days, routes would have 5-6 feet of LL Bean catalogs alone at their cases to be sorted. Now it would be pretty rare to have that total volume of flats to sort in one day. They started in the Postal Jeeps, instead of LLVs. They started before there was a Joint Statement on Violence and it wasn't uncommon for managers to physically threaten carriers as a way of settling disputes. There were even ashtrays at the cases and many carriers smoked while casing mail in the office, which seems crazy in 2022.

That's not to say that these carriers were better than the carriers who have started working in the last few years. Time marches on, work methods change, and the way we think of work changes as well. I suppose it has always been this way. When I talk with some of these retired carriers now they shake their heads at some of the things that are going on now and say they can't imagine working here now. I would bet that if you picked a random moment in time it would still be that way.

Letter carriers retiring in the 1920s probably told the newcomers they were glad they were getting out and couldn't imagine starting their careers now. I was hired in a transition period for the Postal Service after many of these "old school" carriers came in together but before the creation and hiring of CCAs. When I get to retirement I'll be left to tell the stories of these "old school" carriers I worked with when I started like a kind of postal Rip Van Winkle I guess. Thanks to all those carriers who are now, hopefully, enjoying their hard-earned retirements. The Post Office will go on but it won't be the same without them.

Last month, I touched on Technology Integrated Alternate Route Evaluation and Adjustment Process 2022-2023 (TIAREAP). I have been named as the District Lead Team member for the NALC and will be heading up the process for the Massachusetts/Rhode Island District along with my management counterpart. As I write this in mid-June the process is just starting so more information will be coming out as things get moving. If I can communicate one thing to members at this point it would be to pay attention to what you are doing every day on the street and understand how it may affect your route. President Dave Barbuzzi has said as long as I can remember that if you do what you are supposed to do and be where you are supposed to be then you won't have to worry. We now have a process where the data from what you do every day will be used to adjust your route. No program or process is perfect and there will always be adjustments and considerations to be made but if letter carriers are doing things to hurt themselves it will be more harmful than it ever has been during this new process. Look for more information about the TIAREAP in future issues of the *WAKE UP!* and at future branch meetings.

In Solidarity,
Dan Wheeler

LGBTQI+ MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS

Building an Inclusive Culture

— for LGBTQI+ Employees —

Feeling excluded can be a common experience for many in the LGBTQI+ community. It is important to understand the toll that discrimination and rejection may take on a person. They can lead to mental health and addiction issues, for which the rates are higher among the LGBTQI+ population. Feeling harassed and isolated from a group setting, including a workplace, can have devastating impacts including increases in depression and anxiety symptoms, reduced sleep, decreased job satisfaction and suicidal thoughts. Feeling excluded can also have a negative impact on productivity and morale in a workplace.

The following steps may help in establishing and nurturing an inclusive culture for everyone:

Be mindful and self-aware of biases. Ask yourself the following questions:

- What sort of biases are you bringing to work about specific groups/communities of people?
- What language do you use that might cause others to feel excluded?
- How does your demeanor and behavior signify that you welcome all types of people?
- Do you find yourself having closer relationships with certain people and not with others?

The answers can provide valuable information in identifying issues that may need to be address within yourself.

Value diversity. If you value what others can uniquely contribute to the workplace, they will feel included.

Be aware and accepting of differences. If people do or say things in a manner differently than that in which you are familiar, make an effort to understand (and if possible, appreciate) where they are coming from.

Communicate openly. Open communication will likely make acceptance easier because you may find that differences aren't as difficult to accept once you have a better understanding.

Practice good manners. Being polite and showing courtesy will encourage other to do so as well.

Work together. If everyone feels they are a contributing member of a team, they are sure to feel included.

Practice listening skills. If people feel heard, they will feel included.

Creating a culture of inclusion takes understanding. Understanding requires empathy. With time and open minds, more inclusive work environments and relationships can be built. Reach out to your EAP if you are interested in creating a more inclusive culture in your workplace. We can help.

WAKE UP

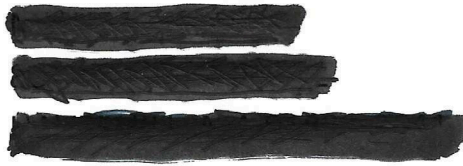
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Web: www.nalcbranch25.com

First Class Mail
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TEWKSBURY, MA



I WANT YOU...

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



Left Side (Yellow):

- Faint or dizzy
- Excessive sweating
- Cool, pale, clammy skin
- Nausea or vomiting
- Rapid, weak pulse
- Muscle cramps

Right Side (Red):

- Throbbing headache
- No sweating
- Body temperature above 103°
- Red, hot, dry skin
- Nausea or vomiting
- Rapid, strong pulse
- May lose consciousness

Bottom Left: • Get to a cooler, air conditioned place

Bottom Right: **CALL 9-1-1**