



WAKE UP!

President/ Editor
Dave Barbuzzi

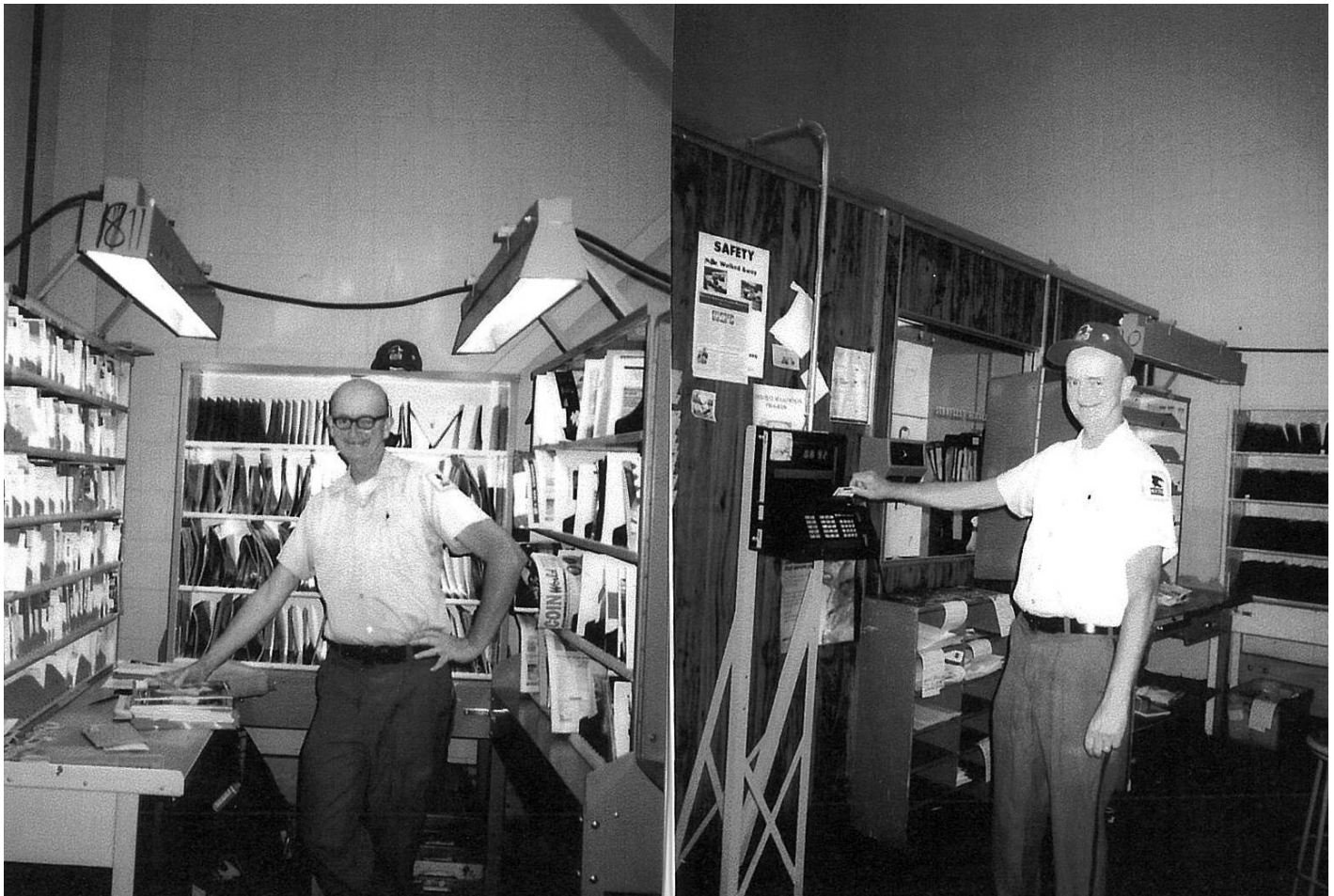
Publisher
Dan Wheeler

Volume 41 Issue 7

August/September 2017

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In Memoriam George Payzant



President's Message

I receive quite a bit of mail each day. Earlier this month I received two letters in particular that exemplify the ups and downs of the job, the ups and downs of life.

Neither letter was from a member. One was from the friend of a retired member, and one was from the children of a different retired member.

One letter was informing me, and the branch, of the passing of George Payzant. When I read that letter, my stomach dropped, my mouth went dry, and my eyes watered a little bit. You see, George served as Secretary of the Branch when I became Assistant Secretary. I got to see first hand George's meticulous attention to detail, along with his dedication and pride for Branch 25.

I wasn't the only one that recognized these things. Then National Business Agent John Marco selected George to represent New England letter carriers for an inter-active exhibit at the Postal Museum which is located at the Smithsonian in Washington, DC. If you go to the exhibit today and press the button, up will pop George on the screen to give you a few tidbits about New England.

George was a proud Navy vet, and he made it a point to make his way to the mic and every convention that he attended. Often times he would speak on behalf of veterans. Every now and then, I would get a small handwritten note from George commenting on an article or a current event. Those are the kinds of things that keep your spirits up at times when all the bs that you deal with may start to get to you. George will be dearly missed by any that had the pleasure/honor to work with him at his station or to work beside him as Union officials.

The other letter was from one of Maurice Garand's children. The letter was seeking my assistance in obtaining Maurice's gold card for 50 years membership in the NALC. We had a conversation and as a result, I asked her if she could provide me with some background about her father's time delivering mail. If you read the Postal Record last month, you would have seen a summary in the "branch items" section. Elsewhere in this "Wake-Up!" you can also read a little bit.

I plan to go to present Maurice with his gold card in person. It will be a much more welcome trip to do that than it is to deliver plaques to funeral homes when a letter carrier passes.

I'm sharing these things with you to show that our union touches more than just you, the member. It touches your family and your friends. Clearly, the two men that I write about this month maintained an allegiance to the NALC. If they didn't, the folks that wrote those letters wouldn't have known to do so.

I realize that the post office is very different today than when Maurice was carrying mail and when George was serving the Union. It is much more difficult in today's micro-managed postal service to get to learn anything about your co-worker. Also, today's postal workforce and even more diverse than it has ever been.

The demands that have caused this drifting away from camaraderie were never more evident to me than at the last branch meeting when Kathy Hall announced that she could no longer head up the scholarship committee. Kathy worked tirelessly for many years to put together events for MDA and for our Branch 25 scholarship. However, fewer and fewer people attended events and fewer and fewer people volunteered.

So, I would like to ask you, the membership, what you can do to help turn that around. Does anyone have a hobby that could be turned into an event and shared with the membership? Are there any retirees that could organize a Bowlathon or a golf tournament? As it stands, the only event that we can count on is the pancake breakfast. That is not a big money maker, it is a big get together with family and friends and even the community and be served by branch officers and other volunteers. I'm not complaining, I love it, but that is just one thing. I have to believe that there could be so much that we could do to raise money for MDA or our scholarship fund.

I'm not going to write about the new contract. I was confident that it would receive the members' approval and I am thrilled that it did. As I've talked and written about before, I am extremely pleased for the CCA'S that have families as they will receive a very substantial increase to the amount that the postal service pays towards their health insurance.

The last thing that I would like to put out there is that along with the ratification of the contract, there will be a local implementation period in October. That doesn't give people a lot of time to put meetings together. I, along with Paul Desmond, have been reviewing the locals in the branch. Should there be something in your local that you think could/should be changed, get in touch with us sooner rather than later. I would be more than happy to meet with any office that would like to explore their local agreement, all you have to do is call.

Stay informed!

Dave Barbuzzi

Executive Vice President's Report

The vote to ratify our next National Agreement was confirmed with a ratification date of August 7, as most expected it would be, and the next step is to implement any changes. The NALC will keep us updated as to how any changes will be adopted and when they will occur. The NALC also has said they will keep us informed as to when the retroactive pay will be processed. These payments will be for both career and non-career letter carriers that were in a pay status on the effective dates of the retroactive pay increases. There will be a contract raise in November of this year, that combined with the retroactive pay increases will be a welcomed sight this fall. Recently retired carriers will also receive payments and have their annuities adjusted. Check on the NALC website and the bulletins sent out to the stations. Also, I'm sure the NALC app will be a source of information for this. The contract's term will run from May 21, 2016 through September 20, 2019. All Union members should have received a tentative agreement in the mail.

There is an article in this month's Postal Record about supervisors editing time punches of letter carriers. In most instances, the editing of time punches is necessary, in order to correct moves from one function to another, or to show work done on a different route that wasn't entered properly. These edits are necessary and actually ensure that routes can be evaluated properly in the future. Sometimes a carrier forgets to punch out and that last punch needs to be entered manually. Then there has been the rare occasion where the supervisor has intentionally changed the ending time punch to reflect an earlier last punch, for no other reason than to eliminate OT or penalty time that they do not want to report to their superiors. Obviously, this is a blatant violation of an employee's rights. Fortunately, this is a rare occurrence, but it has happened. We have always suggested to the members that they keep good records of their time punches so that they can confirm it with their paychecks. Check your pay stubs every two weeks, if you think something is wrong it is easy to get copies of your time punches.

There has been a lot of reports that management has been instructed to leave routes vacant and use carriers to pivot for what is supposed to be "undertime". There may be times that you have undertime and other times you may not. Every day is different. Unfortunately, management's calculations for so called undertime, is not always the same as a carrier's workload estimation. In this case you should follow the instruction and deliver the piece of another route if given one, but if you determine that you will be working overtime you should be informing management of this and fill out form 3996.

If your supervisor gives you an hour piece of another route and you feel you would require a half hour OT, you still need to inform management of the need of OT. By doing this, you cover your reporting obligations, and if management does not maximize the OT desired list, there is a paper trail. Just because management has been instructed not to use OT carriers on their NS day, does not change their obligations to maximize the OT list, prior to working carriers not on the OT list. Contact your steward or call the Union office if necessary.

More and more carriers have been retiring since the beginning of the summer and I expect many more will go before the winter. It is not unusual for employees to wait until a contract is settled before retiring. Generally, they wait until any retroactive payments are made. I hate to see them go, but this should ensure more CCAs are converted to regular status. Enjoy the rest of the summer.

Keep your head up!

Paul Desmond

Calendar of Events

September 1	National Letter Writing Day
September 4	Labor Day
September 5	8PM Branch Meeting @ Knights of Columbus 27 School St. Ext. Wilmington Food served @ 7:15
September 7	Patriots Opening Night
September 10	Suicide Prevention Day
September 11	Patriot Day
September 18	Air Force Birthday
September 20	Rosh Hashanah begins
September 22	Fall begins
September 26	National Pancake Day
September 30	Yom Kippur

Every Ten Minutes

According to a caption on a recent "People Magazine" cover, it declared someone dies from opioids every ten minutes. On a Sunday edition of "This Week", Governor Chris Christie from New Jersey, who serves on the task force to address opioid abuse, made the statement, that we suffer a 9-11 event every three weeks due to opioid addiction. These two statements should strike all of us. It gives us a real perspective of the magnitude of which our society is suffering.

Let's put my math degree to a simplistic example. Every 10 minutes means 6 people every hour. 6 people every hour yields 144 every day. That means 1,008 individuals are no longer with us in a week's time. Over a three-week period 3,024 of our fellow countrymen depart from this earth. Governor Christie cites a three-week period. According to Wikipedia, 2,996 people perished in the September 11th attack on this country. Does that comparison shock any of us as to the crisis this affliction is wreaking on us?

By the time you case 180 letters, someone has passed away from opioids. Another will pass in the time you case 80 flats. Take your 10-minute break and we are grieving an additional tragedy. We united, with our fellow Americans declaring war on the terrorists, who perpetrated the 9-11 attacks. We stand hopeful, the opioid task force can plan as urgent a plan of action in battling this scourge.

Like many who may read this article, I have experienced a relative who lost this battle. Very close friends of mine have had to lay their child to rest as a result of this plight. Residents, I deliver to on my route, have grieved the loss of a family member, left to question what more could have been done.

A parent, who is a lifelong friend of mine, spoke bluntly and directly at the eulogy for her son. She bravely addressed the young men and women, who were his friends, to take issue with the grim reaper who was harvesting their circle of peers. She spoke frankly to mothers and fathers of the reality, this was killing our children. She grieved for her son, yet hoped it could serve as a wakeup call to the heartache in our midst that required attention.

No one individual has the answers. No single resource can correct and cure this addiction. It is being recognized as a disease and a behavior disorder. If you question if someone you know or if you yourself believe you could be falling prey to opioid's grasp seek the education to become aware of the signs. Ask those close to you if they have noticed a change in behavior or appearance.

Do not be afraid to take the next step in seeking advice and guidance from a professional in how to make an address.

During my time as a steward, I found the Postal Service to be a willing partner in assisting individuals, and their family members in seeking assistance for many issues. Health, family, addictions, financial, depression, etc. Confidentiality has been maintained to my knowledge. Neither USPS nor I have all the answers. There are successes and failures. One fact is true. The Employee Assistance program (EAP) is available to every employee and their family member. Does EAP guarantee correcting an issue? No. It does help to identify the concern and direct the person to where assistance is offered.

If you have the need, or have a suspicion someone you know could be in need and do not know where to begin, call EAP. They may be able to aid in your decision as to if an address is suggested, where and how to begin, or alleviate some of the fears you may have. Additionally, your health benefit plan may have programs to be considered.

WWW.EAP4YOU.COM

1-800-EAP-4YOU

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Wishing you and your family a healthy life.

Jim Nutter

Treasurer Branch 25

Signs and Symptoms of Opioid Abuse

Opiate addiction is becoming more rampant every day. Drug overdose is now the leading cause of accidental death in the United States, edging out car accidents in 2014. Opioid pain relievers are responsible for more overdose deaths than cocaine and heroin combined. If you or your loved one has been prescribed an opioid to relieve pain, it's important to know the difference between using and abusing the drug.



1 in 10
Pain patients reported misusing
their opioid Rx medicines *

Know what to look for

Opiate addiction can be hard to recognize — the following list of symptoms could indicate a potential issue.

Behavioral Symptoms

- Opioids are used for longer or at a greater amount than intended
- Unsuccessful attempts to decrease the amount taken
- Large amount of time spent obtaining, using, or recovering from the drug

- Abandonment of important activities (including failure to meet obligations and decreasing time spent in recreational activities)
- Early refills for prescriptions opioids
- Spending money on unidentifiable purchases or being secretive about ways money is being spent
- Decrease in personal hygiene and appearance
- Doctor shopping
- Stealing money from loved ones or stealing prescription pills out of household medicine cabinet
- Agitation and restlessness, particularly in the morning
- An unusual shift from tranquil relations with others to volatile interpersonal relationships

In people with no history of drug addiction who take opiates for chronic pain, studies have not found clear-cut predictors of who is more or less likely to eventually abuse their painkillers. For this reason, narcotics abuse is one of the most common forms of drug abuse in the U.S. (It doesn't matter who you are, this can happen to you even if it's not intentional.)

Source: WebMD Understanding Narcotics Abuse.

Physical Symptoms

- Tendency to nod off or appear to be extremely drowsy
- Eye pupil constriction, red and/or glassy eyes
- Changes in sleeping habits
- Frequent sniffly or runny nose
- Increased constipation
- Complaints of nausea and/or vomiting

It Can Happen to Anyone — Opioid medications are intended to relieve pain; however, as the brain becomes used to feeling better, it often takes more and more of the drug to produce the same levels of pain relief and well-being, leading to dependence and, later, addiction.

If you or a loved one is at risk of opioid addiction, it's important to seek help as soon as possible.

Mood/Psychological symptoms

- Sudden mood changes
- Demonstrating unusual or atypical moods

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This document is for your information only. It is not meant to give medical advice. It should not be used to replace a visit with a provider. The USPS EAP does not endorse other resources that may be mentioned here. * Report: Prescribers, Patients and Pain, Partnership for Drug-Free Kids, April 29, 2015

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Be present and listen well

- ✓ It benefits everyone when you can focus on your family when with them. If your mind drifts toward your cellphone, your to-do list or work, redirect yourself to the present.
- ✓ Strive to slow down and be mindful at dinnertime. Regularly ask each family member to describe the best part of their day.
- ✓ Listen to family members without judging. To keep communication fresh and open, try to listen as if you're hearing each person for the first time.

Improving your family dynamics

Your significant relationships won't flourish and grow if you're operating on autopilot. Your active involvement is vital—being fully present, listening well, helping solve problems, and regularly assessing whether you're responding well to others' needs—in both good times and bad.

- Always be respectful. No one in the family should be subject to abusive verbal or physical treatment. Even when major disagreements develop, strive to keep communication respectful; this is an extremely important lesson for impressionable youngsters.
- When appropriate, make mutual decisions as a family. Although parents clearly need to make many independent decisions to preserve the family's well-being, it can boost children's engagement when the family talks through issues and reaches agreement.
- Accept individuals' differences and allow them to choose their own path in life—even if it's not what you would have expected for that person.
- Value quality family time. Healthy families spend time together in activities that each family member enjoys, and they do this often. They play, work, eat, and share some outside activities together. This boosts family member self-esteem and encourages closeness and mutual understanding.



Sitting down to dinner as a family brings many long-term benefits to children—simply because the family is regularly communicating. Avoiding the distraction of cellphones also boosts family closeness.

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What to do about worrying

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Signs of excessive anxiety

- Behavioral signs of anxiety may include chronic feelings of fearfulness and dread, an inability to stop worrying even with significant effort, trouble concentrating, and feeling “on-edge.”
- Physical symptoms can include fatigue, muscle tension, sleep problems, trembling, shortness of breath, headaches, stomachaches, nausea and chest pains.
- Panic attacks are episodes of intense fear with uncomfortable physical symptoms. Phobias are overwhelming fears of specific objects or situations. Generalized anxiety entails exaggerated worry and tension, often with no obvious cause.

When you worry too much

Today’s world is fast-paced, complex and often unsettling. Many situations—and certainly the daily news—can cause feelings of worry. While most anxious reactions are normal and can help you avoid actual dangers, excessive worry can harm your health.

Anxious, uncomfortable feelings usually subside when a worrisome situation changes or when you learn to cope by gaining a better perspective. Sometimes, though, overwhelming feelings of worry do not lessen. Instead, they get more intense and become difficult to control.

If you wonder whether you’re worrying too much, consider the following questions:

- Does it feel like you worry almost all the time?
- Do your worries interfere with your work, family and social life?
- Has excessive worry caused you to avoid situations, lose confidence or feel depressed and guilty?

If overwhelming feelings of worry are left unchecked, they can cause you not only to feel like you’ve lost control over your life, but can lead to serious health problems. If you’re feeling the impact of excess worry, remember that your program offers a range of coping strategies and treatments.



If worrying becomes a daily habit and interferes in your life, contact your family physician or a mental health professional who can assess your situation and help you develop ways to cope.

Log on to www.EAP4YOU.com today!

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

Safety

We all know the importance of hydration and water is the best way to get it done. But sometimes drinking water all day gets a little boring. Why not try eating more fruits and vegetables to stay hydrated too. Most fruits and vegetables have a high percentage of water. Put some lettuce or cucumber on a sandwich, they are 95% water. Celery is 93% water. Baby carrots are a good snack and actually contain more water than large carrots! For fruit, watermelon and strawberries have the highest water content. Grapefruit and cantaloupe are 90% water. Grapes are less at 81% but are easy to eat at break time or lunch.



Enjoy hydrating!

Jim Salvati

As I stated when I accepted the job as the Veterans' Coordinator for Branch 25, my son will be leaving for Marine Officer Candidate School. This will happen in May when he graduates. He will become the second most dangerous man in the world, a boot Lieutenant with a compass.

I will welcome him to the brotherhood, as my friends who have helped us follow this path (Thanks Randy)! I only have word passed down to give you Cullen.

The Eagle born to those who pledge their lives and sacred honor, was smiled upon by God and freed from chains and iron collar. We are held aloft on unity, and by History, revered. For preserving peace through strength our wings now reach across two hundred years.... but for each of those, and one year more, God has smiled upon The Corps... from the Barbary Coast to the Eastern Sand, by sword, by gun, or by bare hand. So, it's been, and shall be weighed: Though many are born...few are "made". Faithful Always, they shall remain...dogs to let loose when war is waged.

Semper Fi,

A very proud Marine Dad and veteran,

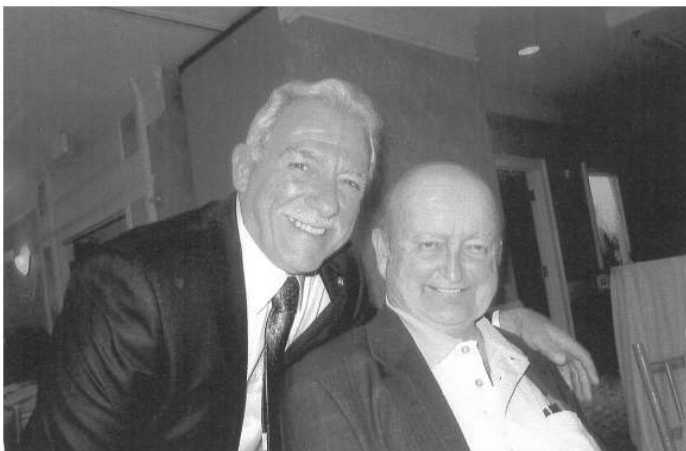
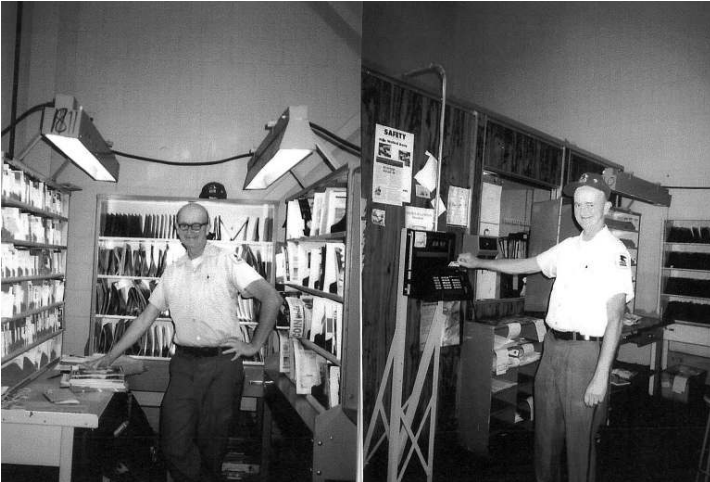
Andie Coulter

P.S. The most dangerous man is a 204B with a computer!



In Memoriam

George Payzant, long time letter carrier in Lynnfield passed away on June 12 after a brief illness at age 77 in Turners Falls. He was a popular letter carrier in Lynnfield for many years and former Branch 25 secretary. In his retirement, he spent time in Florida and moved to Machias, Maine. He lived his final years in Turners Falls. George was a fixture in his postal route and known for his good nature and reliability. He was an officer and active in the postal carriers' union and wrote essays published in the Postal Record. A proud Navy veteran, he spent years reuniting with his former shipmates throughout the country. George was former president of the Lynnfield branch and instrumental in the merger with Branch 25. He had the distinction of being chosen to record a clip that was used in an interactive display at the National Postal Museum in Washington D.C. He leaves his present wife, Kheng Payzant and many friends, nephews & nieces.



New Agreement

The Tentative Agreement is now an actual agreement. Letter carriers voted overwhelmingly to ratify the proposed agreement. The term will be retroactive to May 21, 2016 and will end on September 20, 2019. It's basically a three-year contract that for all intents and purposes is a two-year contract. Every member was mailed a summary of the agreement and I hope that everyone took some time to read it over. If you don't know your rights you don't have any rights!

We will get a 1.2% wage increase, paid retroactively from November 26, 2016 followed by a 1.3% increase on November 25, 2017. In November 2018, all Grade 1 letter carriers will be upgraded to Grade 2 which is an average increase of 2.1%. Aside from the wage increases that everyone looks for in the new contract there are other changes of note. Effective in May 2018 eligible former TE's will be advanced in Table 2 of the letter carrier pay scale based on their length of service as a TE after September 29, 2007. This is a good thing for all the former TE's who hung in to become CCA's, while taking a big pay cut to do so, after the Das Award.

CCA's will now also receive holiday leave pay for 6 holidays per year: New Year's Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, and Christmas Day. Previously CCA's received no holiday pay. There is also a MOU that requires local offices to include provisions in their Local Memos of Understanding to address CCA's being granted annual leave.

In my opinion, we got a pretty good deal in this contract. It's not perfect. Nothing ever is. I know there are other things that some members would like to see addressed. I am confident that our NALC leadership team will continue to work on those issues. This agreement was a long time coming but I'm sure that we got a better deal than if we had gone to arbitration. Some of the new provisions of the new agreement are a little confusing. If you have any questions please ask your steward or give the branch office a call.

In solidarity,

Dan Wheeler

Vice President's Report

Welcome New Members

I've spent some time this summer providing coverage at the Branch 25 office. Dave and Paul were on leave at the same time. Compensation officer, Ron Noviello was also on vacation. Thanks to Dave for having confidence in me to cover these absences. The phone rang early and often. It's been a few years since answering a union telephone and I had to catch myself when early on almost answering as Branch 33. In addition to the many varied calls from the membership, there are also calls from National, the Business Agent's office and Labor Relations. There was some walk-in traffic with workman's comp questions. Calls were also fielded from clerks.

A real head scratcher was a call from a carrier facing multiple disciplines but continues to be a non-member. There were calls from more than one station regarding denied annual leave requests. It appears the flavor of the month is capturing under time. Carriers are told they have under time ranging from 15 minutes to in some cases up to an hour. They occasionally guess right and there is some amount of under time. It is usually based on very low amounts of caseable mail. Quite often they fail to consider needed time to collate mail due to extra bundles and/or necessary time to deliver circulars and heavy parcels.

When under time does exist, throw mail on a vacant route, or deliver a relay or parcels on the way out to your assignment. When they guess wrong and you don't have under time or not as much as the extra work given to you, a 3996 should be filled out. If they still insist, ask to see the steward. If none are available ask for union time to call Branch 25 office for assistance.

Which came first? The chicken or the egg? There are occasions when under time is a result of a carrier doing things improperly. Did the carrier always do things wrong, thus creating under time or is the corner cutting new in an effort to achieve management's expectations? Every day I witness carriers dealing with COA's, or hold mail prior to punching in. Others grab empty tubs and their vehicle keys while not yet on the clock. Other carriers accepting that they have under time are delivering upwards of 40 parcels daily while never ringing a doorbell. It doesn't matter which came first. It's never too late to do the job properly. To those carriers that I spoke during my time working at the union office, please say hello at a monthly meeting so I'll have a face to go with our phone conversations.

Bob Cronin

Antonio Harlow-Rivas	Newburyport
Robert Ward	Beverly
Junior Abrru	Lowell
Matthew Malloux	Billerica
Rachael McGovern	Billerica
Eric Brown	Gloucester
Michael Copley	Lowell
Gary Cota	Billerica
Melissa Provost	Andover
Rory Madden	Newburyport
Carlos Champitazi	Billerica
George Donahue Jr.	Gloucester
Joseph Finnigan	Andover
Gerald Fitzgerald	Newburyport
Christopher Flannery	Salem
Corey Osgood	Peabody
Kaitlyn Tabbi	Gloucester
Tim Wisdom	Billerica
Vathan Grimsley	Billerica
James Kokoska	Salem
Paul Rideout	Gloucester
Eric Sisson	Danvers
Vladimir Sowerder	Wakefield
Lisa Cane	Billerica
Renato Castro	Sudbury



Congratulations on 50 Years of NALC Membership

Congratulations to 50 years of NALC membership to Amesbury's Musical Mailman, Maurice Garand! Maurice was born in 1929 and grew up in Newburyport. After serving his country in the Army in the early 1950's he settled in his wife's hometown of Amesbury. Maurice worked part time as a postal worker and could spend time with his children when they were young, which was unique for men at that time. Once the opportunity for a full-time job at the Post Office became available Maurice quickly became known as Amesbury's musical mailman. He was known for his whistling to the small transistor radio he always kept in his pocket.

According to retired Amesbury letter carrier Kate Drury Maurice was famous for knowing everyone in town and their relatives and could often be found going over someone's family tree with his fellow carriers. Kate reports that she was happy to take over Maurice's route from him when he retired in 1990 but it was hard to fill the shoes of a carrier who was so beloved by his customers.

Maurice never really stopped delivering. After leaving the Postal Service he started to deliver Meals on Wheels in Salisbury and later was able to deliver in his old stomping grounds in Amesbury. He still delivers about 25 meals a day. If you hear whistling while in Amesbury take a minute to say congratulations to one of the good ones, Maurice Garand.



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*at the next meeting
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