





MAKE UP!

President/ Editor Publisher
Daniel P. Wheeler

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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





NALC Branch President Dan Wheeler and former Lawrence Branch 212 President, Dave Hillner had the honor of presenting retired Lawrence Letter Carrier Peter Torissi his 65-year NALC membership pin. For more on Peter, see page 5 of this issue.

President's Message

As the summer winds down and we start to head into fall, letter carriers are still dealing with some lingering issues that have been prevalent throughout the branch this summer. Management continues to push their madeup metrics on us in many offices. One of those is carriers are still being told they should only be using twenty-two minutes to load their vehicles in the morning. I have talked about this before, but it bears repeating since we still hear management pushing this in some offices. Did management think up this twenty-two-minute metric themselves? They did not. They took this from the Technology Integrated Alternate Route Evaluation and Adjustment Process (TIAREAP) route adjustment process and worked it into a carrier's everyday routine. This is not what twenty-two minutes refers to. The twenty-two-minute loading time is just a parameter to be looked at when adjustment teams are reviewing data within the TIAREAP process. It's not a real-world number carriers can be held to. As is the case with delivery, it takes what it takes to load your vehicle. There are different factors for each office and each route within each office. It may take less than twenty-two minutes of loading time, or it may take more than double that time to load your vehicle.

The other number we are seeing is sixty minutes. Management has decided that sixty minutes is a nice tidy time for carriers to be in the office in the morning and that no one should take any longer. This metric doesn't come from TIAREAP but seems to be something someone came up with somewhere. Like the twenty-two minutes of loading time, sixty minutes of office time is just an arbitrary time. It may take a carrier less than sixty minutes in the office or longer than that due to many different factors. There are certainly standards and numbers that do apply to our jobs as letter carriers. If management tells carriers they only have a certain amount of time to do something, they may be making that number up. Please let your steward or the branch office know if this is an issue in your office.

We get a lot of questions about the next National Agreement. As of the writing of this article, I don't have any exact information to pass along. Our current agreement, which expired in May, remains in effect. From what I have heard, it seems like an agreement may be coming soon. If the National parties do agree, that agreement will be sent out to each member as the new Proposed National Agreement. Each member will have the opportunity to review it and then cast their vote either for or against. I encourage each member to take the time to do so if that time comes. If no agreement is reached, the process will proceed to arbitration. The NALC and USPS will then make their cases to the arbitrator, who will then make a binding decision. Hopefully, this front will have good news in the coming weeks.

The Technology Integrated Alternate Route Evaluation and Adjustment Process (TIAREAP) continues to move along slowly. The first two offices in the branch, Dracut and Wayland, have been completed. The seven offices in the Woburn Sorting and Delivery Center, Burlington, Lynnfield, North Reading, Reading, Wakefield, Wilmington, and Winchester, are in various stages of the process. Currently, the following offices are on the list to be part of the process: Amesbury, Gloucester, Ipswich, Lawrence, Marblehead, Peabody, Sudbury, Tewksbury. There are still no scheduled dates for any of these offices. At the current pace of the process, there's no telling how long it will take to get to all the offices on the list. The TIAREAP

In Solidarity,

Dan Wheeler

Executive Vice-President's Report

We are nearing the end of prime-time vacations in most of our stations, so hopefully, the staffing will improve in those shorthanded stations. I know a lot of hold-downs have been available during prime-time, and this doesn't end because the summer is nearing an end. assignment is available for an anticipated 5 consecutive days, then it is available as a temporary hold down. All PTFs and CCAs should be checking for available holddowns after the vacation calendars have been removed. Unassigned regulars are also eligible for hold-downs. Carriers still take vacations or are out with injuries and those assignments are available. A carrier working as a 204B for 5 scheduled days would also create a holddown assignment. The best way to protect you from being sent out of your station as a PTF is to request a hold-down when available. In most stations, management will let you know what is available, but if not, see your steward.

I have had calls at the union office inquiring about how to transfer to other stations and how to know where any vacancies exist. There is no list available that shows where vacancies exist, although there was for a brief period when management and the Union agreed to a memo that allowed PTFs to transfer into vacancies across the country in order to make regular. This was a few years ago and was temporary, but it was helpful in allowing PTFs to make regular, who would have otherwise had to wait a long time for vacancies in their own stations. The best way now to transfer to an area that you deem desirable is to go on Liteblue and request a transfer through "e-reassign". According to the national agreement, you need 18 months of career service in order to transfer within the same geographical area. On Liteblue, you request a transfer to the craft you want, I assume city carrier, in any station you desire. There will not be available vacancies to view. The transfer requests are considered on a first come, first served basis when a vacancy exists, so if you are considering a transfer, don't delay. You should renew your request every 12 months in order to stay in line and request a transfer to multiple stations. The best part of requesting a transfer is, you can always deny the transfer if it is offered to you, and you decide you no longer want the transfer. The offer simply goes to the next person in

We are only a few months into contract negotiations, but I am hopeful that we reach a negotiated settlement soon.

Sometimes these negotiations can go on for a year or more, especially if an arbitration case is necessary. I fully expect that the Postal Service will see the advantage of hiring PTFs for retention of carriers, from the most recent 6 months or so. If this becomes a reality nationwide, I would expect less forced OT, probably less fatigue and definitely better morale. Not to mention better pay and benefits. Also, once the contract is resolved, there will be a designated period to negotiate local agreements. We have been looking at the LMOUs and identifying possible tweaks to them. Any suggestions from the members are welcome. All the LMOUs in the branch are on the branch website, nalcbranch25.com.

One result of the TIAREP process that has brought to my attention is that carriers are scanning SPRs using the load tool, while lining them up in trays in the office or racking them. The scanning part should be done on street time while loading the trucks. They are being told that district policy is not to move from office to street and then back again to the office. I don't agree with this because it eliminates the scanning time. You only get standard time in the office during an evaluation based on volume. Loading is a street function and scanning them on the load tool on office time results in that time disappearing. You will only get credit in the office for the volume of SPRs. Please scan using the load tool on street time, that way you will get the proper street credit.

Keep your head up!

Paul Desmond

Calendar of Events	
September 4	Labor Day
September 10	Patriots Season Opener vs. Philadelphia Eagles
September 10	Grandparents Day
September 12	Regular Branch Meeting K of C Wilmington 8:00PM Food served at 7:15PM
September 21	World Gratitude Day
September 23	First Day of Fall
September 24	Yom Kippur

Vice President's Report

"Stationary Events, Leeway Rules, and 99's Oh My!"

Most of us are no stranger to management's flavor of the month campaigns. Someone in management up near the top floor needs to remind their boss why they are needed, and they make up some bogus initiative that at best inconveniences letter carriers or at worst creates a toxic work environment. Local management gets their marching orders, and they enforce them to stay off their boss's radar. Sometimes these initiatives die out quickly, other times they require months of grievances if it is a contract violation, like the dreadful consolidated casing initiative. Sometimes it can be initiatives that come and go, with a management focus on an issue fading and then coming back.

When it comes to stationary events and questions from your supervisor about them, ask them if the questions could lead to discipline and utilize your Weingarten rights if needed. If you are brought in for a predisciplinary investigation (PDI) or investigative interview, defend yourself in the presence of your steward. This is your day in court privilege and the union is seeing more and more discipline being issued from misguided and downright moronic managers. These managers are arguing that because we currently have a mutual inspection process (which has created hundreds of routes) utilizing scanner data, they can use GPS data instead of conducting personal observations of carriers delivering their routes. The managers get an email about stationary time and must answer why there was stationary time and what they are doing about it to their boss. Absent a personal observation by the supervisor indicating otherwise, management should take the carrier's word on why there was a stationary event or if there even was one. If the manager doesn't listen to you and wants to conduct a PDI, carriers can make their life and their steward's life easier by being proactive and explaining the events during the questions part of the interview. If discipline still comes, file a timely grievance.

Another issue that has been popping up is attendance related discipline due to carriers being five or less minutes "late" for work. Many carriers may know this as the five-minute leeway rule. Contractually the provision states this leeway is allowed due to "timeclock congestion." With the removal of timeclocks and carriers using their scanner to begin tour, some managers are arguing the provision is no longer applicable. Management has no right to unilaterally abolish a contract provision, but interestingly the leeway rule may also affect carriers when they punch out. For example, if you were to punch out up to five minutes after your end

tour on a regularly scheduled day, you would still be paid for an eight-hour day. Management conveniently seems to be ignoring this fact. If this is happening in your office contact the branch office and your steward about it right away.

I also ask that you enforce your rights when a supervisor follows you on your route for the day, which is a "3999." Management should review, edit, and discuss the PS Form 3999 with the regular or replacement carrier within three business days of the walk whenever possible. The whenever possible is typically for reasons beyond control, not because the manager is "busy." A copy of the unedited 3999 will be provided to the regular or replacement carrier a day prior to discussing the results with management. Management is required to explain comments and edits they added on the 3999. 99s are frequently done to get a made-up baseline on your route that management will use to when it suits them to deny overtime on your route or assign you imaginary undertime. Enforce these contract provisions so they are required to meet their obligations or you're letting them off easy on something that they will likely use to make your job more aggravating.

In Solidarity,

Tony Bossi

PSHB Program Information

The Postal Service Health Benefits (PSHB) Program is a new, separate program within the Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB) Program, administered by the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) which will provide health insurance to eligible Postal Service employees, Postal Service annuitants, and their eligible family members starting in 2025. The PSHB Program coverage will replace Federal Employees Health Benefit (FEHB) Program coverage for these groups. The USPS has put out two fact sheets, one for active employees and one for retirees. These fact sheets are on pages 6 & 7 in this issue of the *Wake Up!*

65 Year NALC Membership Recognition



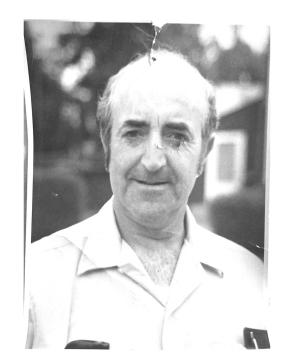
Brother Torissi with former Lawrence Branch 212 President Dave Hillner and Branch 25 President Dan Wheeler

Retired Lawrence Letter Carrier Peter Torrisi recently received his 65-year service pin and letter of recognition. He started delivering mail in 1955 and retired in 1992. He served in the United States Army during the Korean War and started at the Post Office shortly after. Peter turned 93 in August. Thanks for all of your years of dedication to the NALC Brother Torrisi!



Peter in his days as an active letter carrier







FACT SHEET

Postal Service Health Benefits (PSHB)

USPS EMPLOYEES

The Postal Service Reform Act of 2022 (PSRA) was signed into law in April 2022. Since then, the Office of Personnel Management (OPM), in conjunction with the Postal Service, has been working to implement a new Postal Service Health Benefits (PSHB) Program, as required under the new law. PSHB is a new, separate program within the Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB) Program and will be administered by OPM. Coverage under the PSHB Program will be effective January 1, 2025. Below is a list of facts regarding the PSHB Program for active employees:

- 1. You are required to select a health insurance plan in the PSHB Program during the 2024 open season period, from November 11, 2024 December 9, 2024.
- 2. PSHB plan options and premium information will be available in October 2024.
- 3. OPM will launch a new enrollment platform for health insurance. Information on how to make elections using the new system will be available prior to the 2024 open season.
- 4. If you are an **active employee age 64 or older as of January 1, 2025**, you ARE NOT required to enroll in Medicare Part B to continue your PSHB health insurance coverage once you retire. However, upon your retirement and entitlement to Medicare Part A (typically at age 65), you will have the option to enroll in Medicare Part B during a special enrollment period.
 - If you are the primary subscriber, your covered family members will not be required to enroll in Medicare Part B to stay on your PSHB plan; however, enrollment in Medicare Part B may reduce your overall costs for health care-related expenses and may provide better value for you and your family.
- 5. If you are an active employee under the age of 64 as of January 1, 2025, to continue your PSHB health insurance coverage in retirement, you WILL BE required to enroll in Medicare Part B after you retire and become entitled to Medicare Part A (typically at age 65).
 - If you are the primary PSHB enrollee, your covered family members will also be required to enroll in Medicare Part B when you retire, upon their entitlement to Medicare Part A, if they wish to remain covered by your PSHB insurance.
 - If you retire on or after January 1, 2025, and you are under 64, you WILL BE required to enroll in Medicare Part B when you become entitled to Medicare Part A (typically at age 65) to remain enrolled in a PSHB plan. The Social Security Administration (SSA) will mail you a notice when you are eligible to enroll in Medicare Part B during your initial enrollment period. Your initial enrollment period starts three months prior to your 65th birthday and ends three months after your 65th birthday. If you are the primary PSHB subscriber, your covered family members will also be required to enroll in Medicare Part B upon their entitlement to Medicare Part A, if they wish to remain covered by your PSHB insurance.
- 6. There are exceptions to the requirement to enroll in Medicare Part B as an annuitant. These exceptions will also apply to your covered family members. Annuitants may be responsible for providing proof of eligibility for the applicable exception(s) to the designated agency. These exceptions are:
 - You are residing outside of the United States and its territories. You are required to follow the policy and procedure set forth by the Postal Service to be eligible for this exception; or
 - You are enrolled in health care benefits provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs; or
 - You are eligible for health services provided by Indian Health Services.
- 7. As a general rule, spousal and family member PSHB coverage is based on the primary enrollee's eligibility. If the primary subscriber is required to enroll in Medicare Part B, dependent family members will also be required to enroll when they are eligible.



FACT SHEET

Postal Service Health Benefits (PSHB)

USPS ANNUITANTS

The Postal Service Reform Act of 2022 (PSRA) was signed into law in April 2022. Since then, the Office of Personnel Management (OPM), in conjunction with the Postal Service, has been working to implement a new Postal Service Health Benefits (PSHB) Program, as required under the new law. PSHB is a new, separate program within the Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB) Program and will be administered by OPM. Coverage under the PSHB Program will be effective January 1, 2025. Below is a list of facts regarding the PSHB Program for current annuitants:

- 1. You are required to select a health insurance plan in the PSHB Program during the 2024 open season period, from November 11, 2024 December 9, 2024.
- 2. PSHB plan options and premium information will be available in October 2024.
- 3. OPM will launch a new enrollment platform for health insurance. Information on how to make elections using the new system will be available prior to the 2024 open season.
- 4. If you are an **annuitant as of January 1, 2025, and not currently participating in Medicare Part B**, you ARE NOT required to enroll in Medicare Part B to continue your health insurance coverage in the new PSHB Program. Participation in Medicare Part B is voluntary; however, enrollment in Medicare Part B may reduce your overall costs for health care-related expenses and may provide greater value.
 - a) Your covered spouse and eligible family members will also not be required to enroll in Medicare Part B even if they are age 65 or older; however, enrollment in Medicare Part B may reduce overall costs for health care-related expenses and may provide greater value.
 - Note: If you are an annuitant as of January 1, 2025, and are already enrolled in Medicare Part B, you ARE required to remain enrolled in Medicare Part B to continue coverage under PSHB.
- 5. If you are an annuitant entitled to Medicare Part A (typically at age 65) prior to January 1, 2024, and have not enrolled in Medicare Part B, you and your covered, eligible family members may be able to participate in the special enrollment period (SEP) for Medicare Part B that starts on April 1, 2024. Those who enroll during the SEP will not need to pay the late enrollment penalty. Eligibility letters will be sent to annuitants and eligible family members in early 2024.
- 6. If you retire between October 31, 2024, and December 31, 2024, and are entitled to Medicare Part A (typically at age 65), you will have the option to enroll in Medicare Part B during a specific eight-month special enrollment period immediately following your retirement date. If you wish to enroll, you MUST contact the Social Security Administration (SSA) to initiate enrollment if you are over the age of 65.
- 7. As a general rule, spousal and family member PSHB coverage is based on the primary subscriber's eligibility. If the primary subscriber is not required to join Medicare Part B, neither will dependent family members. Likewise, if you qualify for the SEP, so will your covered family members.

Secretary Report

"Back to Business"

Before I begin my article I want to congratulate Mike "Mad Dog" Mullaney on his retirement. Mike finished off over 29 as a letter carrier plus some military time. You could always count on him to come up with a nickname for you as you walked in the door for your career. Mike, I hope you enjoy your retirement of camping and golfing, congratulations again!!!!!!!

As per the title of this article we are starting the meetings back up on September 12th. We have a busy fall ahead of us with a lot to do. We have nominations as well as the election for delegates to the August 2024 convention right here in Boston. We also have some minor bylaw changes that will be voted on for approval this fall. We have a national RAP session coming up this fall. Not to mention the usual business at hand at each meeting including the wealth of information given at each monthly meeting.

I hear all the reasons as to why people can't attend a meeting, and I understand them. It's too far to travel, I got out of work too late, I was tired and so on. These are legit reasons I agree because I have felt the same way many a meeting night. All I ask for those that have never attended a meeting or just a couple over the years, is to try and plan on going to 2 or 3 meetings from now till June. That's only 2 or 3 nights of your time over a 10month period. At the very least you get a meal and some information you can take back to your office with you. I started attending meetings not long after I started when my Steward Ron invited me to come to one. I think it was my 2nd or 3rd meeting someone talked about the incorrect instruction to deliver express mail. I told Ron how our PM told me to scan a bunch of express mail as attempted just before noon at the office before taking them out. He told me to go to the mic and tell my story, I did, and then was told what to do to cover my *** (posterior). The point of this is that, had I not gone to this meeting I would have never known what I was told to do could have gotten me in trouble. I have been attending meetings ever since. I know not everyone can attend all 10 meetings and that's why I ask to start with just a couple. Maybe you enjoy it and decide to attend more or maybe you can only come to a few each year, either way we will increase the attendance of meetings this way. Remember a lot of Information about what

goes on in the PO comes from you the carriers. The more carriers we have means the more info we receive that can help the branch with any issues. Thank you in advance for those of you willing to try this out and if you come and it's your 1st meeting please stop by the podium and say hello. I would love to know that we have new people coming.

As always if you have moved or are moving please inform me of this. I do not get address changes done through postal ease. You still need to change it there, but I need it as well. The best way to get an address change to me is to email me at JESBR25@gmail.com. Also, if you know of anyone who has moved mention it to them as well. I missed an article for last month so I will give you 2 facts to make up for it this month.

Snapple Fact #1511 It is impossible to sneeze while you are sleeping.

Snapple Fact #958 The state of Alabama once financed the construction of a bridge by holding a rooster auction.

Joe Stearns

Local Negotiations

Our current National Agreement expired in May. We may be headed to an agreement or if not, an arbitrated contract. Article 30 of the National Agreement allows for certain issues to be negotiated locally. These items become the Local Agreement for each office. Once the new contract becomes official there will be a designated period of time where items in each Local Agreement can be negotiated. I encourage carriers to look at their Local Agreements to see if there are any issues that need to be addressed. If anyone has any questions or concerns regarding their Local Agreement, please contact the branch office. All of Branch 25's Local Agreements can be found on nalcbranch25.com



Looking After Youth Mental Health Helping Teens Boost Self-Esteem

Building self-esteem in teenagers is an important aspect of their personal and emotional development. The following are some **strategies and tips to help teenagers build self-esteem:**

- Encourage self-acceptance: Help teenagers understand and accept themselves as unique individuals. Teach them to embrace their strengths, talents, and guirks. Remind them that nobody is perfect.
- Provide unconditional love and support: Offer unwavering support. Let teens know that you love and appreciate them for who they are, regardless of achievements or failures. Show interest, listen actively, and offer guidance when needed.
- Set realistic expectations: Help teenagers set realistic goals and expectations for themselves. Encourage them to strive for personal improvement rather than perfection. Celebrate their progress and efforts, no matter how small.
- **Promote a healthy lifestyle:** Encourage regular exercise, a balanced diet, and sufficient sleep. Physical well-being can positively impact mental and emotional health, contributing to increased self-esteem.
- Encourage positive self-talk: Teach teens to replace negative self-talk with positive, empowering thoughts. Help them recognize accomplishments and strengths. Remind them that mistakes and setbacks are part of the learning process.
- Nurture passions and interests: Support teens in pursuing activities and hobbies they enjoy. Engaging in activities they are passionate about can boost their confidence, provide a sense of achievement, and help them develop new skills.
- Foster social connections: Encourage teenagers to develop and maintain healthy relationships with peers. Support them in participating in social activities where they can meet like-minded individuals and build positive connections.
- Teach problem-solving and decision-making skills: Equip teens with the tools to assess situations, weigh options, and make informed choices. Success in navigating challenges can enhance their self-esteem.
- Seek professional help if needed: If a teenager is struggling with self-esteem issues that significantly affect their daily life, it may be helpful to consult a mental health professional. Therapists can provide guidance and support tailored to an individual's specific needs.

Building self-esteem is a gradual process; one that requires patience and consistent effort. It's important to be a positive role model, provide a nurturing environment, and offer encouragement along the way. For further assistance reach out to the EAP or visit EAP4YOU.com for more resources and information.



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

Branch 25 Directory of Officers

Recent Retirees

Daniel P. Wheeler Paul G. Desmond Anthony Bossi Joe Stearns James P. Nutter Kenneth Dusombre

Jim Salvati Doug Murray Dan Raske Bruce Johnson

John McNulty **Bob Cronin** Gilbert Paredes James Metilinos

Andy Coan Jeremy Provost James Tuttle Wesley Tugman President Executive V.P. Vice President Secretary Treasurer

Health Benefits Rep.

Safety Officer Sergeant At Arms Chairman of Trustees

Trustee Trustee Trustee Trustee

Assistant Treasurer Assistant Secretary Assistant Safety Officer Assistant Wake Up Publisher

Assistant Health Ben. Rep.



Bob Scott was recognized at the June branch meeting. Bob retired from the Wayland Office with 22 years of service.

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





North Reading's Jim Wantman retired after 26 years of service. Congratulations Jim!

The NALC's 73rd National Convention will be coming to Boston next year. It will be the fourth time the convention has been held in Boston. The first ever convention was held in Boston in 1890. It was held there again in 1968 and 2008. Over the next year we will be sharing some interesting material from the 1968 convention packet over the next year leading up to the 2024 convention. Pictured left, is a flyer announcing the Grand Opening Parade for the convention. It was a 22 division parade starting on Boston Common. Any old-timers out there remember a time when conventions had parades?

Safety

"Pump the Brakes"

A carrier recently used an LLV that had just come back from the VMF. When he first used the brakes, they felt a little low. With each use, they became even lower. He quickly turned around and headed back to the DMU. After a couple of scary moments when the brakes barely stopped the truck, he made it back safely.

It turned out the brake fluid was nearly empty, and the cover of the brake fluid reservoir was missing. The VMF was informed of the incident. It turns out there was at least one other similar incident. Apparently, the problem stemmed from a new parts supply vendor. The problem was quickly identified and has been corrected.

This story is a good reminder to make sure we check the brakes a couple of times before leaving the parking lot. It's also a good time to check the emergency brake. We should also continue to check all lights, mirrors, wipers, and the rest.

With the fall coming, It's also a good time to check tire treads and those great heaters that keep us so warm!

Stay Safe, Jim Salvati

What if there is a safety hazard at the workplace?

If you need to report a hazard, unsafe condition or practice utilize PS Form 1767. Be sure to request union time with your steward or contact the branch office if necessary.



Article 14.2 provides a special priority for the handling of safety and health issues, providing for cooperative correction of unsafe conditions and enforcement of safety rules, and requiring special handling of individual safety issues as they arise. Article 14.2.(c) provides that safety and health grievances may be filed directly at Formal Step A of the grievance procedure.

Branch 25 Office: (978) 658-5820
Branch Website: nalcbranch25.com
Branch 25 President: Dan Wheeler
Branch 25 Executive VP: Paul Desmond
Safety Officer: Jim Salvati
Assistant Safety Officer: Jeremy Provost

WAKE UP

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at the next meeting
September 12
K of C Wilmington
8:00 PM

