



# ***WAKE UP!***

President/ Editor  
Dave Barbuzzi

Publisher

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



l-r: Linda Johnson, Marblehead's newest retiree Lorri Rocker, Dave Barbuzzi, Joe Stearns, Ralph Viger, and Kevin Sullivan.

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## President's Message

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When you receive this edition of the Wake-Up!, you will still have time to request a special route inspection this fall if you so choose. The requirements for a special route inspection are as follows: 30 minutes of overtime or auxiliary assistance 3 or more times a week over 6 consecutive weeks. The overtime or assistance is for the route, not just the regular carrier.

If you meet these requirements, you may submit a request for a special mail count and inspection. Management has 28 days to COMPLETE the inspection. Although you don't have to make the request on any special form, the Branch 25 website ([nalcbranch25.com](http://nalcbranch25.com)) has a form designed for this purpose. You can access the request form by going to [nalcbranch25.com](http://nalcbranch25.com) and then navigating to "Branch 25" and then "Carrier Resources". The form is titled "SRI Request Form".

If you do decide to request an inspection, submit the form to management and keep a copy for yourself. Note the date that you submit the form as that is when the 28 day clock starts ticking. Also, if you decide to request an inspection, please make us aware at the branch office. We will be happy to provide one-on-one training to prepare you for your inspection.

I got a call from an injured member today. He was very distraught as he has been out of work for a while and he is running out of leave. Naturally, he is concerned about his finances. He had contacted his local manager and asked for advanced sick leave. The local manager said that he could not provide advanced sick leave.

The ELM provides for advanced sick leave of up to 240 hours. An employee must submit a request in writing and attach medical documentation to said request. The requirement is that the employee is expected to be able to return to work and be able to repay the leave. Far too many people either don't realize that advance sick leave is available, or don't contact the Union to file a grievance if they are denied advance sick leave. Please, if you request advance sick leave and are denied, contact the Union office so that we can file a grievance. We have been very successful over the years.

I was also speaking with a retired carrier the other day. This gentleman is someone I consider a friend and is one of the most astute individuals I know when it comes to investing and financial management. At any rate, he called me to ask that I get the word out to our retirees that the way they

handle withdrawals from 401k's can have serious consequences not only on their taxes, but on their medicare expenses.

Apparently, if you withdraw enough from your 401k during any given year and that withdrawal pushes you into another tax bracket, the increased income also puts you into another bracket for medicare premiums. If you do land in another bracket and your premiums are increased, they will remain increased for two years.

I have written to our National Director of Retirees Dan Toth and asked if he might put some kind of article in the Postal Record about this danger. In the meantime, it is in your best interest to diversify your savings for your future. A combination of Roth IRA's and traditional 401k's allows you to manipulate your post-retirement income and perhaps keep you in a favorable tax bracket. I am not a financial expert, and I did not have the foresight to diversify my retirement savings earlier in my career so I'll have to hope for the best. However, in my position as President I feel it is my obligation to try to advise you to do your due diligence when planning for the future.

It's never too early to start planning for retirement. The NALC Mutual Benefit Association has plans designed specifically for CCA's so they can begin saving before they qualify for the TSP and pension contributions. Take advantage of them.

The branch is entering a busy time. Ron Noviello, Dan Wheeler, and Paul Desmond are attending OWCP training provided by the NBA office. Dan Wheeler and I are going to attend the Committee of President's meeting in October where we will be updated on legislation, contract negotiations, and other issues. As usual:

Stay informed!

Dave Barbuzzi

# Executive Vice-President's Report

I am not sure why some of our letter carriers have been ignoring some of their required duties such as vehicle checks in the morning, but I am guessing it is because either they are being rushed by their managers or they just haven't been trained properly. I realize when a carrier is hired as a CCA, they are trying to be as efficient as possible in order to be retained as an employee. We all went through it. My guess these days, is that most managers are under so much pressure from above, that they do not stress how important conducting a vehicle check is in the morning.

I drive through many of the communities we serve as a branch while conducting Union business as well as personal business. I see many Postal vehicles driving with only one headlight and brake lights not functioning. Who knows what else isn't working on these old, out of date vehicles, but this is what we have until the new vehicles are built and distributed. It is not only part of your job to inspect the vehicle, it is for your own safety that the vehicle be working properly.

If a windshield wiper is not working on a sunny morning, it is quite possible in New England that it could rain or snow in the afternoon. Carriers routinely work after dark and if a headlight is out it could be a problem. Please take the time to inspect your vehicle in the morning with another carrier. If something is in need of repair, fill out a repair tag and give it to your supervisor along with the vehicle keys. Any questions on this call the Union office.

Our National Agreement will be expired by the time the Wake Up! is delivered and you should have received the last COLA for the life of the contract by now. The NALC has been negotiating with the Postal Service since June and we will keep negotiating as long as they feel there is a chance to agree on an acceptable contract that the letter carriers could ratify. These negotiations have never been resolved overnight, and if no agreement is reached, I'm sure we will be well prepared to go forward in arbitration.

Once an agreement is reached or an arbitrator has issued an award, there will be a time frame designated for local negotiations. Most local agreements are pretty solid, but some stations could use a tweak or two. We will be looking at the locals well before the negotiations begin, but any suggestions would be welcome when we get to that period. Remember, it takes two parties to negotiate so nothing is guaranteed.

I personally could not make the Spinners game in August, but I heard it was a great time with a great turnout. It's never easy to get carriers and their families together in the summer, but this event was a great success. The Branch is working on setting up a mini-golf tournament next Spring, probably on a Sunday in May. I'm bringing this up now so when you see it in the Wake Up! it will ring a bell and you can add it to your calendar. It is still in the planning stages but more info will follow.

As of now there is only one station scheduled to be inspected this Fall but that could change in a day. Any station being inspected will be offered a meeting to discuss the procedures. So far, North Chelmsford is the station scheduled in October. As many of you know the NALC has filed a national level grievance that is scheduled to be heard in December to challenge the casing consolidation initiative that began in Virginia. If we prevail on this grievance I fully expect a full scale inspection schedule, be prepared.

Keep your head up!

Paul Desmond

## Calendar of Events

September 24	Executive Council Meeting
October 1	Regular Monthly Meeting Wilmington K of C 27 School Street Extension Food Served 7:00 PM Meeting Begins 8:00 PM
October 4	World Smile Day
October 5	World Teachers' Day
October 8	Yom Kippur
October 14	Columbus Day
October 27	Navy Day
October 31	Halloween

## Branch 25 Directory of Officers

David J. Barbuzzi	President
Paul G. Desmond	Executive V.P.
Dan Wheeler	Vice President
Andy Coan	Secretary
James P. Nutter	Treasurer
Kenneth Dusombre	Health Benefits Rep.
Jim Salvati	Safety Officer
Jack Lyman	Sergeant At Arms
Ron Noviello	Chmn. Board of Trustees
Dan Raske	Trustee
Bruce Johnson	Trustee
Anthony Bossi	Assistant Secretary
John McNulty	Assistant Treasurer
Bob Cronin	MBA-NSBA Rep
Peter Godino	Assistant Safety Officer
Richard Donlon	Asst Health Benefits Rep
Ron Noviello	Workers' Comp Rep.

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

## 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

## Veterans' Corner

We are Veterans. Yes we make fun of each other. Marines eat crayons, Navy is Uber, Air Force is chair force and the Army...well I will leave that one alone because a broken crayon still colors.

The best way to put it is you mess with one of us and you get the pack, no matter how famous you are. When Elvis (The King himself) was asked by a reporter why he wasn't sitting down when the photos were taken, he replied "Despite my service, I'm still an entertainer. These guys are the real heroes for the service they give to America. Long after I go home, there'll be more heroes like these men and women making sure the men and woman live free one nation, under God."

Before getting off the bus, Elvis made sure each serviceman had \$100 out of his own pocket and thanked them for their service, even though he gave the same service as them.

At this time, September 9, 2019, only .05 percent of this country have served. Be proud and carry your honor. You earned it! And thank you all it is an elite bunch of men and women to do what you have done.

Semper Fi  
Andie Coulter

*"If they stand behind you defend them;  
If they stand beside you respect them;  
If they stand against you defeat them!!"*



# Letter Carrier Pay Schedule

## City Carrier Wage Schedule: Effective Aug. 31, 2019

The following salary and rate schedule is for all NALC-represented employees.

### Career city letter carrier increases

Date	Type of Increase	Amount
July 2016	COLA	\$21
Nov. 26, 2016	General wage increase	1.2%
Jan. 2017	COLA	\$333
July 2017	COLA	\$270
Nov. 25, 2017	General wage increase	1.3%
Jan. 2018	COLA	\$520
July 2018	COLA	\$645
Nov. 24, 2018	Upgrade/Pay Schedule Consolidation*	2.1%
Jan. 2019	COLA	\$0
July 2019	COLA	\$624

### City carrier assistant increases

Date	Type of Increase	Amount
Nov. 26, 2016	General wage increase	2.2%
Nov. 25, 2017	General wage increase	2.3%
Nov. 24, 2018	Upgrade/Pay Schedule Consolidation**	3.1%

\*\* All Grade 1 and Grade 2 CCAs received an average increase of 3.1%.

\* All career Grade 1 and Grade 2 letter carriers received an average increase of 2.1%.

**NOTE: This pay schedule reflects consolidation of Grade 1 into Grade 2 on Nov. 24, 2018. The remaining grade is called City Carrier.**

**NOTE: Carrier Technicians receive additional compensation equivalent to 2.1% of the employee's applicable hourly rate for all paid hours.**

NOTE: The full COLAs will be added to the salaries of all steps in Table 1 and Step O of Table 2, with proportionate application of the COLA to Steps A-N of Table 2.

**Table 1: City Carrier Schedule**

RSC Q (NALC)

This schedule applies to all carriers with a career appointment date prior to Jan. 12, 2013.

	Basic Annual Salaries															MOST PREV. STEP
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	
City Carrier (Grade 2)	52,844	57,079	57,177	60,208	60,648	61,090	61,525	61,961	62,405	62,832	63,276	63,718	64,152	64,600	65,037	444
Carrier Technician**	53,954	58,278	58,378	61,472	61,922	62,373	62,817	63,262	63,716	64,151	64,605	65,056	65,499	65,957	66,403	454
Part-Time Flexible Employees - Hourly Basic Rates																
City Carrier (Grade 2)	26.42	28.54	28.59	30.10	30.32	30.55	30.76	30.98	31.20	31.42	31.64	31.86	32.08	32.30	32.52	
Carrier Technician**	26.98	29.14	29.19	30.74	30.96	31.19	31.41	31.63	31.86	32.08	32.30	32.53	32.75	32.98	33.20	
Full-Time/Part-Time Regular Employees - Hourly Basic Rates																
City Carrier (Grade 2)	25.41	27.44	27.49	28.95	29.16	29.37	29.58	29.79	30.00	30.21	30.42	30.63	30.84	31.06	31.27	
Carrier Technician**	25.94	28.02	28.07	29.55	29.77	29.99	30.20	30.41	30.63	30.84	31.06	31.28	31.49	31.71	31.92	
Step Increase Waiting Periods (In Weeks)																
Steps (From-To)	A-B	B-C	C-D	D-E	E-F	F-G	G-H	H-I	I-J	J-K	K-L	L-M	M-N	N-O	YRS.	
	96	96	44	44	44	44	44	44	44	34	34	26	26	24	12.4	

\*\* Carrier Technicians receive an additional 2.1%

**Table 2: City Carrier Schedule**

RSC Q7 (NALC)

This schedule applies to all carriers with a career appointment date on or after Jan. 12, 2013.

	Basic Annual Salaries															MOST PREV. STEP
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	
City Carrier (Grade 2)	39,999	41,785	43,575	45,363	47,152	48,940	50,730	52,518	54,307	56,095	57,884	59,672	61,461	63,248	65,037	1,789
Carrier Technician**	40,839	42,662	44,490	46,316	48,142	49,968	51,795	53,621	55,447	57,273	59,100	60,925	62,752	64,576	66,403	1,826
Part-Time Flexible Employees - Hourly Basic Rates																
City Carrier (Grade 2)	20.00	20.89	21.79	22.68	23.58	24.47	25.37	26.26	27.15	28.05	28.94	29.84	30.73	31.62	32.52	
Carrier Technician**	20.42	21.33	22.25	23.16	24.07	24.98	25.90	26.81	27.72	28.64	29.55	30.46	31.38	32.29	33.20	
Full-Time/Part-Time Regular Employees - Hourly Basic Rates																
City Carrier (Grade 2)	19.23	20.09	20.95	21.81	22.67	23.53	24.39	25.25	26.11	26.97	27.83	28.69	29.55	30.41	31.27	
Carrier Technician**	19.63	20.51	21.39	22.27	23.15	24.02	24.90	25.78	26.66	27.54	28.41	29.29	30.17	31.05	31.92	
Percent Step O																
	61.50%	64.25%	67.00%	69.75%	72.50%	75.25%	78.00%	80.75%	83.50%	86.25%	89.00%	91.75%	94.50%	97.25%	100.00%	
Step Increase Waiting Periods (In Weeks)																
Steps (From-To)	A-B	B-C	C-D	D-E	E-F	F-G	G-H	H-I	I-J	J-K	K-L	L-M	M-N	N-O	YRS.	
	46	46	46	46	46	46	46	46	46	46	46	46	46	46	12.4	

\*\* Carrier Technicians receive an additional 2.1%

**Table 3: City Carrier Assistant Schedule**

Hourly Rates

RSC Q4 (NALC)

This schedule applies to CCA Hires with no previous TE service.

This schedule applies to CCA Hires with previous TE service after Sept. 29, 2007, who were on the rolls as of Jan. 10, 2013.

	CC	BB	AA
City Carrier (Grade 2)	17.29	17.79	18.29
Carrier Technician (add 2.1%)	17.65	18.16	18.67
Steps (From-To) in weeks	CC-BB 12	BB-AA 40	

	CC	BB	AA
City Carrier (Grade 2)	18.72	19.22	19.72
Carrier Technician (add 2.1%)	19.11	19.62	20.13
Steps (From-To) in weeks	CC-BB 12	BB-AA 40	

*“A Little Help From My Friends”*

No, that's not this month's lyric trivia (too easy anyway). This month will be different. Thanks to suggestions from a couple of Branch 25 members, we have this month's topic and a TV quote trivia.

It was brought to my attention that a horse was infected with EEE in one of our offices; Holliston. Unfortunately, the horse died from the infection. So let's take a closer look at this disease and how it is affecting our area.

Eastern Equine Encephalitis, or EEE, is a mosquito-borne infection, which can cause brain swelling, fever, and coma. The virus that causes EEE is spread through the bite of an infected mosquito. Mosquitos become infected when they bite infected birds! Outbreaks of EEE usually occur in Massachusetts every 10-20 years. These outbreaks will typically last two to three years. This year in Massachusetts, as of September 16, there have been eight human cases of the rare and potentially deadly virus.

Although most offices in Branch 25 are at low risk, Holliston and Sudbury are at critical risk, Andover is at high risk and at moderate risk are Billerica, Tewksbury, Concord, Acton, Dracut, and Amesbury. To find out the latest information, go to [Mass.gov](http://Mass.gov). Here you can find a map of Massachusetts and the severity of the risk in different cities and towns. Also you can find out if and when your town is spraying. Look for Control Projects and Districts and you'll find contact information for your area.

Meanwhile, if you are outside between dusk and dawn, be sure to wear long pants and shirts. Use a repellent with an EPA-registered ingredient, such as DEET, according to the instructions on the product label. Public Health Commissioner Monica Bharel says, "Even though it is September, it is still mosquito season."

Make your home and yard safe by installing or repairing screens. Keep mosquitoes outside by having tightly-fitting screens on all of your windows and doors. Drain standing water. Mosquitoes lay their eggs in standing water. Mosquitoes can begin to multiply in any puddle or standing water that lasts for more than four days!

Stay Safe and Healthy,

Jim Salvati

TV quote Trivia:

"Leave your blood at the Red Cross or your community blood bank not on the highway" Name the show and the actor who said it!

If you are covered by CSRS, practically any previous employment you've had with the federal government that was not covered under CSRS, including employment that was covered by Social Security withholdings, may be creditable for retirement purposes. To avoid a reduction in the amount of your annuity or, depending on the dates of the service, to receive credit for the service at all, you must make a deposit. Under CSRS, the significant date is Oct. 1, 1982. If you had non-career federal service prior to Oct. 1, 1982, for which retirement contributions were not made, that prior service is creditable for retirement eligibility and computation of your annuity benefit, whether or not you pay a deposit. However, if you do not pay the deposit in full, the annuity benefit (and any survivor benefit) will be reduced by 10 percent of the deposit amount due at retirement. If you had non-career service on or after Oct. 1, 1982, that prior service is creditable for retirement eligibility, whether or not you pay a deposit. However, if you do not pay the deposit in full, this period of service will not be used in the computation of your annuity benefit.

If you are covered by FERS, federal service prior to 1989 that was not covered under FERS may be creditable for retirement purposes, but only if you pay the amount of deposit plus accrued interest to the Office of Personnel Management (OPM). Under FERS, the significant date is Jan. 1, 1989. With certain minor exceptions, a FERS employee cannot make a deposit for service performed after Jan. 1, 1989. Since the transitional employee (TE) category was first created by arbitral award in 1992, it is not possible to make FERS deposit for prior TE service. The amount of the deposit payment for most employees is 1.3 percent of the basic pay for the service, plus interest. Generally, the interest rate is 3 percent annually for years prior to 1985, and thereafter a variable rate determined by the Department of Treasury. Use Standard Form 3108 to apply to make deposit for noncareer service by employees covered under FERS. It can be obtained from the Postal Service Shared Services. It can also be obtained online at: [opm.gov/forms/pdf\\_fill/SF3108.pdf](http://opm.gov/forms/pdf_fill/SF3108.pdf). Part A of SF 3108 is completed by the applicant. Current employees submit the application to the Postal Service for completion of Part B. Separated employees send the application directly to OPM at Office of Personnel Management, Retirement Operations Center, P.O. Box 45, Boyers, PA 16017-0045. Additional OPM guidance is available online at [opm.gov/retirement-services/fers-information/creditable-service](http://opm.gov/retirement-services/fers-information/creditable-service).

The above was excerpted from the Director of Retirees Ron Watson's article in the July 2015 Postal Record. The entire article is available at [nalc.org](http://nalc.org).

# Sleep Hygiene

Sleep hygiene is a variety of different practices and habits that are necessary to have good nighttime sleep quality and full daytime alertness. Obtaining healthy sleep is important for both physical and mental health. It can also improve productivity and overall quality of life. Everyone, from children to older adults, can benefit from practicing good sleep habits.

One of the most important sleep hygiene practices is to spend an appropriate amount of time asleep in bed, not too little or too excessive. Sleep needs vary across ages and are especially impacted by lifestyle and health. Good sleep hygiene practices include:

## 10 tips to help you sleep better

1. **Don't go to bed unless you are sleepy** – If you lay awake for more than 10 minutes, sit in a chair and relax there or listen to soft music in the dark. Avoid TV or internet.
2. **Create a quiet, comfortable and cool bedroom** – Block lights on electronics, add white noise like a fan to mask noise if you live on a busy street, set the thermostat to 60 – 67 degrees.
3. **Use relaxation rituals before bed** – This can include a warm bath, light snack or a few minutes of reading. Begin reducing exposure to light a few hours before bedtime.
4. **Strive to get a full night's sleep on a regular basis and keep to the same bedtime** – Try to stick to within 20 minutes of going to bed and waking up daily.
5. **Avoid taking naps if you can** – If you need to nap, try to keep it short (less than one hour) and do your best not to nap after 3 p.m.
6. **Avoid watching TV, reading, writing, eating, talking on the phone or playing cards in bed** – The bedroom is for sleep, intimacy and recovering from illness.
7. **Watch what you drink and when** – Reduce caffeine intake and cut it off by 2 pm. Avoid beer or any other alcohol within six hours of your bedtime.
8. **Avoid cigarettes/nicotine before bedtime and use sleep aids with caution.**
9. **Don't go to bed hungry** – If you need to, have a small light snack before bed.
10. **Exercise early** – Experts say to exercise before 2 pm and nothing strenuous before bed.

Resource - National Sleep Foundation: <https://www.sleepfoundation.org/articles/sleep-hygiene>

## Your EAP is here for you.

We're available to talk 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

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# WAKE UP

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**I WANT YOU...**

*at the next meeting*

*October 1, 2019*



l-r: Rosemary Quinn-Deangelo, Andie Coulter, Tewksbury's newest retiree Everett "Charlie" Jones, Dave Barbuzzi and Mark Pitts.