



# ***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

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*Retiring officially  
August 28, 2020*

*Last day on the  
job August 15, 2020*

*Love you all  
Wish you well*

*Your friend  
Rob Kennedy*



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## President's Message

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### *“Count to 10”*

This hasn't been a good week. Every now and then, calls from an office may spike. This usually happens when management issues a new standard operating procedure (SOP), or perhaps near the end of a quarter if overtime hours are out of whack. This week, the office was flooded with call from one of our stations with carriers letting me know that they were sick and tired of carriers working off the clock, of management delivering packages, and of management doing carrier pickups. As I write this article, my blood is boiling. But, to add insult to injury, I was also informed today that 4 or 5 carriers in an office with less than 10 carriers total are coming to work early, not punching in, and casing their mail. These offices have both been addressed in the past. I did not bother reaching out to the Postmasters, and I didn't advise the stewards to file grievances. Instead, I dropped a dime on the managers for allowing this to happen. I am confident that as I write this article, the situation has been taken care of.

What I'm not confident of is why? Why work for free? Why put people out of work because you are eliminating jobs by doing your job for free? What benefit do you receive? Do you think that the supervisors respect you for working off the clock? They don't. They're laughing at you. Seriously, though, why do it? If you want to donate your time, there are food pantries, animal shelters, and countless other organizations that would love and appreciate your help. The postal service doesn't need you to work off the clock and any supervisor or postmaster that allows you to work off the clock is (I've got to be careful here because I want to say a scumbag) not looking out for your best interest. Please stop. If you are a carrier in an office and you see your co-workers working off the clock, please let me know. I will report their supervisor or postmaster or both and we will make it stop.

If you would have told me in March that we wouldn't meet in person as a branch until at least after October I would have asked what you were smoking. But here it is, the eve of October, and we are still not allowed to gather in person. I have tried to provide as much information as possible in the Wake-Up! and on our branch website [nalcbranch25.com](http://nalcbranch25.com). However, according to our by-laws, October is when nominations for delegate to the Mass State Letter Carriers Convention must be made. We have to meet. But, we're not going to meet in person. We're going to meet with me here at the branch office and you in your living room or kitchen, or perhaps in your backyard if the weather is right.

We will be meeting via Zoom meeting. By the time you receive this Wake-Up!, active carriers should have seen the meeting information hanging on their Union boards at work. Both active and retired carriers can turn

to the back page of this issue for information on logging into the meeting. It is really quite easy. On a smart phone, tablet, or computer, you can enter the url (that's the stuff in blue) into the address bar on your device. That will take you to the meeting. It is even easier if you go to the Branch 25 website at [nalcbranch25.com](http://nalcbranch25.com). There will be a link to the meeting posted on the website. All you have to do is click on the link and it will take you to the meeting. It is a little more complicated if your computer doesn't have a camera, microphone, or speakers. A camera isn't necessary unless you want everyone to see how stylin' you are. If you don't have a microphone or speakers, however, you will have to dial in to the meeting. The phone number that most people should use is in red on the back cover. It is the New York number. You dial, listen to the prompts, and just like that you're in.

I don't expect things to be perfect for the meeting. The Executive Council has been meeting this way all through the pandemic, and it has worked out very well. There are a couple of things to be mindful of in order for the meeting to be successful. First, mute your microphone. On a telephone, this is done by pressing \*6. If you want to ask a question when we get to the general session after the officers' reports, there is a chat section on the screen. If you don't want to speak, you can identify yourself in the chat and ask your question. Myself and other branch officers will monitor the chat so that we can recognize you. There is also a "hand" icon to raise your hand. Again, if you do this, you will be recognized as quickly as we can during the general session and then I will unmute your microphone so that you can speak. On a computer or tablet, it is much easier. You just touch the microphone icon to mute or unmute yourself.

I hope everyone is reading everything they can to make an educated decision with their vote. I sincerely hope you vote your job, but I really hope you vote. For years, from Mike Rea, to Barry Doherty, to this month's article by Dan Wheeler, we have been told that the current election is the most important election ever. Guess what? It is. Be informed, and make an informed decision, and cast your ballot.

I truly look forward to seeing everyone on October 6, albeit virtually. I will extend the offer again. If your office would like to have their own zoom meeting, I would be happy to attend. Just give me some dates and times and we'll make it happen.

Stay informed!

Dave Barbuzzi

## Executive Vice-President's Report

As we move from Summer into the Fall season and choice vacation period begins to end in most of our stations, I hope the staffing situation improves and there is less OT for those not on the OTDL. Management has the obligation to assign OT and if the OTDL is not fully utilized prior to working non-OTDL carriers, please contact your steward or call the Union office. The payment of penalty time to OTDL carriers is not a reason to use non-OTDL carriers off their assignments. Some stations are still using regulars on Sundays which is a NS day just like any NS day during the week. Regular carriers on the OTDL should be utilized for Sundays also if available.

Congratulations to all the carriers that have retired recently but unfortunately the pandemic has shut down our in person branch meetings, and we haven't been able to recognize them in person. If anyone has definite plans to retire by a certain date, I suggest they contact Shared Services up to six months in advance. The Postal Service has an obligation to offer you a consultation to complete your retirement papers, but there are a lot of employees eligible and requesting their Blue books. The consultation is done over the phone and from what I hear is very helpful. Hopefully, all our newly converted regulars have taken advantage of the Federal Employees health benefits, but if you missed out, there will be open season for health benefits coming soon, usually beginning in November.

One thing that we have warned people about in the past but keeps rearing its ugly head is the people contacting our members, offering help with their Federal Retirement Benefits. They call themselves Federal Retirement Specialists. These people aren't associated with the Postal Service or any other Federal organization or the NALC. They are simply predators. They send out mass mailings hoping you will figure they are associated with the Federal Government as normal retirement procedure and you will reply. They are very friendly and helpful as far as filling out retirement paperwork, but they have one motive. They want your TSP account when you retire. They tell you they can invest it for you and offer it as an annuity. They also charge an absurd fee which comes out of your TSP when you hand it over to them. They will come to your house armed with papers for you to sign, but don't do it. These people are not looking out for your best interest. If you have had contact with them, cancel anything you have signed. You can leave your TSP account intact until you decide how you would like to invest it, or you can leave it invested in the TSP for a nominal fee. Most people could use some financial planning advice, but there are certified professionals that are in that business and they are obligated to have your interests as a priority. These previously mentioned predators have their own interest in mind and want your money.

We still have only one station scheduled for inspections this Fall, North Reading in October, but we don't know if it will actually happen and are preparing for it to go on. If we get notification of any other stations being scheduled, we will let them know. Also, it is possible the NALC and the Postal Service agree to a route evaluation process as has been done in the past, but that remains to be seen. If that happens it will be important that the carriers are making the correct punches in order to get proper credit for the routes. It is going to be difficult to evaluate routes from times used in the Spring due to the pandemic, but this is when carrier input is so important.

Being that we are currently in the Arbitration process for our National Agreement it would be a good idea for our members to start reviewing their local memorandums for items that may need to be tweaked or changed. After the National Agreement has been resolved, there will be a period designated for local agreement negotiations, usually a 30 day period. Most local agreements are pretty solid but there may be something that may be worth looking at. Keep in mind any changes to a local agreement have to be agreed upon by both parties, or challenged through arbitration. Nothing is automatic, but if carriers have any ideas they should write it down and get it to the branch for review.

Keep your head up!  
Paul Desmond

### Calendar of Events

October 2	World Smile Day
October 3	Virus Appreciation Day
October 4	Oktoberfest
October 5	World Teachers' Day
October 6	Monthly Branch Meeting Via Zoom Meeting at 8:00PM
October 8	Yom Kippur
October 9	Fire Prevention Day
October 12	Columbus Day
October 27	Navy Day
October 31	Halloween

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## Branch 25 Directory of Officers

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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
John McNulty	Trustee
Anthony Bossi	Assistant Secretary
Peter Godino	Assistant Treasurer
Bob Cronin	MBA-NSBA Rep
Steve Pickett	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.***

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## V.P. REPORT

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“This is the most important election in our lifetime!” This phrase is one you have probably heard from many political pundits in recent years. I am not sure when it was first used but as far back as the 1800s the sentiment was being stated. In 1864 when Abraham Lincoln was running against George B. McClellan the *New York Times* editorialized “We have had many important elections, but never one so important as that now approaching....The republic is approaching what is to be one of the most important elections in its history.” The phrase has taken off in the last 30 years or so. If you look up comments on most recent presidential elections you can find an endless list of quotes; the most important election in our lifetime, the most important election in history, the most important election in a generation..... Whether or not 2020 will or will not be the most important election of any of our lifetimes remains to be seen. I suppose only time can tell that tale.

The election of 1860 which saw the election of Abraham Lincoln was important to the shaping of the country, leading to the Civil War and the abolition of slavery. The election of Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1932 was important because he reshaped the scope and reach of the government in ways that have not been much changed since. I am not sure if anyone was calling those elections the most important of our lifetimes or not, but history shows that they were.

To say that 2020 is the most important election for letter carriers is probably still cliché but also true. We are not immune to the political hyperbole. I have heard Union activists proclaim the importance of upcoming elections for years. It would be hard to argue the fact that this one is not. We have heard the calls to privatize, from some in government, at least since I started 25 years ago. The issues and circumstance of the Postal Service in the last few decades have been well documented but 2020 has been quite a year! The Coronavirus pandemic that hit earlier this year has brought new financial and operational issues that nobody saw coming at this time last year. At about this time last year I was observing the consolidated casing initiative in the Taunton and Fitchburg offices. I recall writing that this was potentially the biggest change for letter carriers I had seen in my career. Now that consolidated casing has come and gone and considering our current issues it seems almost silly that it seemed so important.

Some letter carriers are registered Democrats, some letter carriers are registered Republicans. Some letter carriers are registered as Independent. Some letter carriers voted for Hillary Clinton in 2016. Some letter carriers voted for Donald Trump in 2016. All these statements are true. I think it is fair to say the current administration has been more vocal in speaking out against the Postal Service than those that came before. The Vote by Mail issue I wrote about last month is obviously a preeminent issue this year. Both candidates have made their feelings on that issue clear through their public statements. The NALC, along with the American Postal Workers Union (APWU) and National Postal Mail Handlers Union (NPMHU), has endorsed Joe Biden for president this year. You can find more about each candidate’s positions on their campaign websites if you are unfamiliar with them.

Voting in any election, including presidential, is a personal choice. There are many issues that must be taken into consideration when choosing a candidate. There is no perfect candidate for sure. Everyone has their issues which are important to them: COVID-19, the economy, healthcare, crime, judicial appointments, foreign policy, immigration, climate change and many others. Everyone must make that choice for themselves. In his September President’s Message, Dave asked for people to “vote your job”. I will be voting my job this year and would also ask my fellow letter carriers and Union members to do the same. Just like choosing which issue are most important everyone must decide who the best candidate for our jobs is. As a reminder you have until October 24 to register to vote in Massachusetts. You can register online at [www.sec.state.ma.us/ovr](http://www.sec.state.ma.us/ovr) or at your local city or town hall.

Dan Wheeler

### *What Were They Thinking?*

Many of you are probably aware of the devastating wildfires spreading across California, Oregon and Washington State. Although some of these fires start naturally, such as from lightning, most of the fires are due to human interference. Climate change brings hot and dry conditions making fires much more likely to start. From there wind takes over to spread fire rapidly. A Federal policy of aggressively extinguishing all fires is now being reconsidered. The idea is to let fires burn at controlled low levels so there is less fuel for a fire in the future. The idea of raking up the debris of a few million acres of land has not been seen as a viable solution.

In other instances, the human interference is more obvious. One of the fires was started by a pyrotechnic device set off for a gender reveal party. Setting off an explosion was a bad idea to start with. When it is set off by firing a bullet into the device in 4 foot tall dry grass in an area already being ravaged by fire it takes 'bad idea' to a new level. That fire had burned over 10,000 acres at the time of this article.

Lastly, let's check out a couple more bad ideas with not such serious large scale destruction. The first example comes from France. An 80 year old man wanted simply to kill a fly in his house. He picked up his handheld bug zapper and hunted down the fly. He found the fly and gave it a zap. Unfortunately, unknown to the man, his kitchen had a gas leak at the time. The spark from the zapper set off an explosion that blew up his kitchen and a section of roof off his house. The man was not seriously injured. The fate of the fly is unknown.

The next example comes from a man in Brazil who thought he would help his wife with her garden. It seems that cockroaches were ruining the garden. The man located the area where the roaches were originating and he dug a hole. He then poured gasoline into the hole. He then threw a match in the hole. If you have seen the final scene of Caddyshack, you know what happened. If not you can find the video online. Be sure to check out one of the roaches scurrying away unscathed.

Stay Safe!

Jim Salvati

Lyrics Trivia

*You shake my nerves and you rattle my brain  
Too much love drives a man insane  
You broke my will, but what a thrill...*


First the bad news. Your doctor tells you that you need corrective surgery and that it will require a hospital stay. Not a good way to start your day. Now for the good news. There are steps you can take to make the experience safer, more efficient, and less stressful. Among them:

1. The Presurgery/Preprocedure Consult. The Consult is sort of like a training session prior to route inspections. It will help to ease your anxiety, increase confidence and prepare you mentally. It should ensure that your primary care doctor is kept in the loop. It should include a review of your health record and medical history, medications and supplements, appropriate contact info and other critical facts, e.g. allergies, negative medical reactions, implants, etc.
2. Questions to ask at the Consult.
  - a. Can I have an early morning time slot? This will ensure a fresher operating staff and less time to be anxious or hungry.
  - b. What about medications and fasting?
  - c. Should I donate blood in case I need a transfusion?
  - d. What will my recovery be like? (Side effects, rehab, or equipment at home)
  - e. What is the hospital policy regarding patient advocates and companions?

Next Month: Getting Ready, At the Hospital, After Your Procedure.

In the interest of space allowance I wanted to suspend discussion of the above subject in deference to a looming threat, e.g., "Covid-19 fatigue". Yes, I'm tired of it and so are you but please don't let your guard down! We need only to look around the country for the relapses taking place. Continue the protocols - masking, social distancing, and when appropriate, testing.

Keep on truckin'  
Rich Donlon

 **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





**W VOTE**

Exercise  
*Your* Right

# Suicide Awareness in Today's World

The emotional and behavioral effects of the current global pandemic present additional risk factors that may impact those struggling with suicidal tendencies. It is important for those struggling with such issues, as well as for those who support them, to seek assistance opportunities. This may include telemedicine services for mental health, maintaining physical distancing while remaining socially connected and using telephone-based and digital outreach to individuals at risk for suicide.

## Signs someone may be struggling:

- Fixating on suicide
- Giving away valued possessions
- Behaving recklessly
- Increasing use of alcohol and/or drugs
- Experiencing changes in sleep
- Neglecting basic self-care
- Putting personal business in order
- Neglecting doctor's orders
- Exhibiting an increase in mood swings
- Withdrawing from others

If you recognize these signs, take action. To learn how to help someone get immediate care call the EAP.

## If you are personally struggling with thoughts of suicide:

- **Reach out.** If you are having a difficult time, speak up and tell someone. Seek help from someone you trust.
- **Start the conversation.** Find a way to ask for help, no matter how uncomfortable the conversation may seem.
- **Be honest and direct.** It is important for others to know the severity of the situation.
- **Accept support.** Give others the opportunity to help.
- **Avoid isolating yourself.** Be aware you may have a desire to disconnect from others.
- **Know your resources.** EAP, crisis lines, counselors and intervention programs are available to you.

If you or someone you know is struggling with thoughts of harming themselves, call your EAP today and speak with a counselor. We can guide you on how to take action while offering comfort and providing confidential\* support.

If you feel you are in immediate danger, call 911 or the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline - 800-273-8255 (TTY: 800-799-4889)

\*EAP counselors have master's degrees and are licensed professionals. Your privacy is protected by strict federal and state confidentiality laws and regulations and by professional ethical standards for counselors. Information you share with the EAP may not be released to anyone without your prior written consent, except as required by law (e.g. when a person's emotional condition is a threat to him or herself or others, or there is suspected child or elder abuse) or the issuance of a court order upon a showing of good cause.



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

## **WAKE UP**

2500 Main Street  
Suite # 201  
Tewksbury, MA 01876  
Phone: (978) 658-5820  
Fax: (978) 658-0888  
Web: www.nalcbranch25.com

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*at the next meeting*  
**October 6**  
*via*  
**ZOOM Meeting**

**NALC BRANCH 25 Regular Monthly Meeting**

**Time: Oct 6, 2020 08:00 PM Eastern Time**

**Join Zoom Meeting**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87186088862>

**Meeting ID: 871 8608 8862**

**One tap mobile**

**13126266799,,87186088862# US (Chicago)**

**19292056099,,87186088862# US (New York)**

***There is NO in-person meeting!!!!***