



# ***WAKE UP!***

President/ Editor  
Dave Barbuzzi

Publisher  
Chris Bruno

**Volume 45 Issue 10**

**October 2021**

---

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

---

Shop Steward



Alternate Shop Steward



## **Article VI Shop Stewards**

**Section 3.** During the month of October, of election years, an election of Shop Stewards shall be held in each station or unit. The President shall appoint an election committee of three (3) members, in good standing, in each station or unit. The committee shall organize and receive nominations during the second week of October, and no later than the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month they shall post the names of all the nominees (in alphabetical order) for a period of seven (7) days, after which the vote shall be taken by secret ballot. The election committee shall supervise the election, count all ballots and declare the nominee receiving a majority of votes cast, the elected Shop Steward and then notify the Branch Secretary at the Union office. The nominee receiving the second highest vote shall be the Alternate Shop Steward.

---

---

## President's Message

---

---

### *"Be The Good"*

I have written in the past about the fact that just about every day I put a "Life is Good" t-shirt on. Most of the t-shirts have some sort of positive message or comical phrase. My favorite message is "Be The Good". I won't rewrite the article, but with this month being the month for Steward elections in the branch I wanted to mention that I believe that the "Be The Good" phrase is interchangeable with "Be The Steward" in the postal service, particularly for the NALC.

We have really great stewards. Each, in their own way, does their best to "Be The Good" in their offices. It's not always easy, and they don't always get it right (nobody's perfect), but they do their best everyday for YOU, the member. Often times, they are caught in the crossfire of sarcasm and complaints from both management and the members, and unfortunately from the very vocal NON-MEMBERS. They don't give up and they don't leave the members hanging, they persevere and get the job done.

I am appealing to you this month to consider giving them a hand, or perhaps stepping up to be the steward in one of the half dozen offices where we don't have a steward. There will be steward elections this month throughout the branch. If you are so inclined, get involved.

The Shop Steward job is a difficult job to train for. We have all stewards up to the office for a few hours of general training when they become stewards, and then there's a ton of communication over the phone and sometimes in person. It would be impossible to train anyone for each possible scenario that they could face any given day, so we take the approach of call us when you have questions and we will teach you what you need to know. If you think you can "Be The Good", then put your name in the running and see what happens.

I wrote a little about overtime last month and I wanted to touch on it again, especially since we are heading into peak season. If you are not on the overtime desired list and you are assigned a piece of a route to do on "down time" and you know that you can't get it done on "down time", fill out a 3996. If you don't fill out a 3996 and we file a grievance on your behalf, it is almost certain that management will say that they didn't know that you would go into overtime. Take that excuse away.

There is also confusion as to how many hours carriers on the overtime desired list must work before carriers that aren't on the overtime desired list can be forced to work overtime. There are many answers to this one. First, if an odl carrier can complete the work on regular overtime, then that carrier should provide assistance to the non-odl carrier. The caveat is that management does not have to provide 15 minutes of assistance to a non-odl carrier if there is going to be 30

minutes of travel time involved. That goes against the "rule of reason".

If a non-odl carrier is going to be required to do overtime off his or her assignment, the contract states that all odl carriers should be maxed to 12 hours. Over the years this has been challenged and management has argued (successfully at times) a "window of operation". What that means is that if it is only "occasionally" that management has to go off the list, then they are only required to work the odl carriers to the last truck which is the end of the window of operation. We would argue, however, that if management is going off the list regularly, then they have to meet the 12 hour requirement of the contract. Unfortunately "occasionally" and "regularly" are subjective terms and more often than not, a grievance must decide the definition.

The best thing to do is to make your steward aware of the circumstances so that he or she can investigate and determine whether a grievance exists. Overtime violations are far too common in the postal service.

Unfortunately, I must also touch on an unfortunate trend that surfaced in the last couple months. We have had carriers placed on "Emergency Placement" in two offices for inappropriate interaction with each other. The inappropriate interaction was in the form of shouting matches on the workroom floor. It seems that for whatever reason, whether it be the long hours or the stress we are all experiencing from the persistence of the pandemic and the way it has impacted our lives, people are getting on each other's nerves. Please, don't do anything that will cause you to end up on the outside looking in. Count to 10, keep your cool, take a walk, do what you have to do to NOT threaten someone, even if it's an empty threat.

Finally, I would like to appeal to everyone to make an effort to attend your branch meetings. I realize that the September meeting was difficult, as it was the day after a holiday and many folks worked very late. But, for the first time since I've been President, there were more pizzas than members. We do our best to have the meetings efficient and shoot to get the members out in an hour. Ultimately it is up to the membership as the meeting lasts till there are "no further questions". I look forward to seeing you on October 5!!

Stay informed!

Dave Barbuzzi

# Executive Vice-President's Report

As I write this, I was hoping to be able to report that the number of infections and deaths for Covid-19 have dramatically fallen, but that is not the case. It seems that the return of in person learning at the local schools and colleges has increased the number of infections in a lot of communities. Hopefully, many of these students have been fully vaccinated and the result will not be severe. The schools and even some private businesses seem to be going back to trying to mitigate these factors by bringing back mask mandates when inside, and in some cases requiring vaccine mandates. I was on the UMASS Amherst campus recently and was required to wear a mask inside any buildings. The TD Garden is implementing a vaccine mandate on September 30 to enter any event, so I guess we are still not close to getting back to normal. Be safe.

The Postal Service has a long-term plan that includes having their stations fully staffed within a short period of time. Fully staffed meaning full CCA allocation as well as regulars assigned to positions. This may be able to be achieved in some parts of the country, but from what I have seen locally, we are not even close around here. The ability to retain new hires in some stations has been tough, with the requirement of working almost every Sunday, along with the fact that this job is simply not for everyone. There are a lot of new hires that don't last more than a couple of days. The new contract certainly increased the financial package for new hires, but the fact that it could take up to 2 years to become a career employee with full benefits remains an obstacle.

I am still getting many reports of carriers performing street duties in the office. Casing automated mail or working in any capacity before you punch in can only hurt the way your route will be evaluated. Office time for a route evaluation is always either the actual time spent or standards, which is based on casing 18 letters and 8 flats a minute and pulling down your route at 70 pieces per minute, plus fixed office time which for most routes is 33 minutes. If you take longer than this in the office because of casing automated mail, there is no credit given for the extra time spent and most likely you could actually lose time on the street. On the other end if you work off the clock, that time will probably bring you under standards in the office and that is the time you will be credited. Both of these practices could result in you losing time in an evaluation. It doesn't take much for a route to become an auxiliary route in a scenario as this. Any questions about what are the proper methods on either office or street work, call the Union office.

While on the subject of route evaluations, there is an article in the latest Postal Record that talks about using technology in a route adjustment process. This is being discussed by the parties by way of a joint task force on City Delivery and Workplace Improvement. Transferring territory from a one day 3999 is how adjustments were typically done, but it is just a picture

from one day. The task force is discussing using multiple days of data in order to transfer territory during adjustments. There is a lot of data available and they are trying to use it instead of performing 6-day inspections. There is not a finalized process, as of now, for evaluations and adjustments of routes but it seems like progress is being made. The article, by Executive Vice President Brian Renfroe, also addresses other functions of the task force.

I hope to see more members at the next branch meeting, bring another member with you.

Keep your head up!

Paul Desmond

## Calendar of Events

October 5	Regular Monthly Meeting K of C Wilmington 8:00PM Food served at 7:00Pm
October 9	Fire Prevention Day
October 10	Columbus Day
October 13	ER Nurses Day
October 17	National Pasta Day
October 19	Evaluate Your Life Day
October 23	Make A Difference Day
October 24	United Nations Day
October 27	Navy Day
October 31	Halloween

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
James Metilinos	Trustee
Anthony Bossi	Assistant Secretary
Chris Bruno	Wake-Up Publisher
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.*

---

---

## True Value

---

---

I am not writing about the hardware store. I am talking about your Branch 25 Union meetings. I have been retired 3 plus years now and I recently attended the last Union meeting. I was disappointed at the lack of newer employees who did not attend. The only way to have a successful career and to enjoy your job is to know your rights and responsibilities. You can read your local and national contracts to gain knowledge but your executive council, with their years of dedicated service and wisdom, can give you insight.

You must understand that management has a way of interpreting the language in those contracts differently than you might. Ask any steward and they will tell you the same. If you want to learn the realities of your job description then head on over to the next Union Branch 25 meeting, where knowledge is shared, comradery is present and pizza is served. You don't get that at your local Tru-Value hardware store.

Keep the Faith,

David Dente  
Concord, MA

Living in today's extremely high-pressure environment (to include the very nature of a letter carrier's job) it often seems that the hurrier we go the behinder we get. Hoping not to come across as Doctor Doom I think it's appropriate to write about a potential approaching double whammy. By that I mean not only continuing to deal with COVID-19 but also the inevitable arrival of the flu season. I realize that so much has been written and publicized about COVID that we've developed a kind of fatigue regarding it. However, with the deviant it continues to be as much as, if not even more so, a reality as ever. Please continue to follow the protocols for your well-being and that of your family.

I want to focus the rest of this article on the upcoming Fall/Winter flu season.

1. When administered by an in-network provider or a participating pharmacy you pay nothing. (To locate a participating pharmacy go to [nalchbp.org](http://nalchbp.org) or call CVS Caremark at 800-933-6252.
2. Flu vaccines have shown to be *highly effective* in reducing illness, hospitalization and death.
3. The optimal time for the shot is in the month of October. This is not an absolute. September and thereafter have proven to be effective.
4. Flu vaccines will not protect against COVID-19 but it can save healthcare resources for care of those who have it.
5. If you are 65 or older the high-dose shot is the one for you.
6. Some flu and COVID-19 symptoms are similar. If you experience persistent coughing, sore throat, runny nose, etc., **GET TESTED.**

### **REMINDER**

We're heading toward that very important time of the year – Open Season. Time to start thinking about next year's plan choice. Make the plan comparisons. For me, after more than 40 years as a member it's a no-brainer—the NALC Health Benefit Plan!

Keep on truckin'

Rich Donlon

# Safety

At the September meeting I told a story of a carrier who was delivering a parcel to someone's front door as he had done in the past. On this day, however, the customer appeared at the side door which is up a flight of stairs. The carrier did the courteous thing and brought the package up the stairs. Unfortunately the stairs weren't in good shape even though they appeared to be. The carrier hurt their leg and missed a couple days of work. Since we all deal with stairs here a few facts to keep in mind;

- More than 1 million injuries are caused by stairway falls each year in the U.S.
- Stairway accidents are the second leading cause of injury, with motor vehicle accidents being the leading cause.
- Stairway accidents result in 12,000 fatalities each year.

Main causes of stair accidents;

- Poor lighting
- Objects left on the stairway
- Missing or damaged steps
- Items on the stairs.
- Missing or damaged handrails.
- Slippery steps.

Stay Safe and watch your step,

Jim Salvati

Song Lyrics Trivia

If there's a bustle in your hedgerow, don't be alarmed now  
It's just a spring clean for the May queen

Too easy or obvious? Name the album the song appeared on.

## 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

# 5 Things You Didn't Know About the Post Office

We sometimes forget that what we now call the United States Postal Service (USPS) has been around a long time (our postal system was established in 1775), and it has a history of being ahead of its time. Helping us remember is USPS historian Jenny Lynch. Here are some favorite trivia nuggets about this American institution.



Wesley Smith was an airmail pilot from 1919 to 1927.

☑ The United States Post Office Department, which preceded the USPS, helped develop commercial aviation: "When airmail started, there was no aviation industry," Lynch says, "so the post office created one—building airfields and using its own pilots, planes and mechanics."

☑ Women served as mail carriers and postmasters in the United States for decades



before they won the right to vote, and African Americans were appointed beginning in the 1860s.



☑ Owney, the well-traveled terrier, was the unofficial mascot of the U.S. Railway Mail Service in the late 1800s.



• The post office started a forward-thinking "Farm-to-Table" initiative in 1914, allowing farmers to mail fresh goods to customers via parcel post.

☑ This drum of drinking water was found in a Nevada post office basement in 2012, a relic of the mid-1960s, when 1,500 post offices were designated as nuclear fallout shelters.



1 OCTOBER 25, 2020

FROM TOP: ISTOCK; COURTESY USPS; UNIVERSAL HISTORY ARCHIVE/GETTY IMAGES (2); SMITHSONIAN MUSEUM; UNIVERSAL HISTORY ARCHIVE/GETTY IMAGES; COURTESY USPS



---

---

## Vice President's Report

---

---

There seems to be a push within the Boston District lately regarding letter carrier's office times. I know there has been in my office and speaking to a couple of carriers at the branch meeting, it seems to be going around. This is nothing new. I think upper management has one of those Wheel of Fortune style wheels with their favorite topics on it. Occasionally, they give it a spin and see where it lands. This time it landed on office time. I like to tell people that office time is theirs, as in the Postal Service's, time and street time is our time, as in the carrier's time. That is an oversimplification of things but it's a good basic principle to keep in mind. What I mean by that is there are standards for pretty much every task a carrier performs in the office. The times will change based on volumes and other considerations, but the formula is always there; X number of letters, flats, accountable mail pieces = a certain number of minutes. There is no such formula for street time. It takes what it takes, as the saying goes.

It goes without saying that a carrier should take all the time they need to perform their AM and PM office tasks. However, if you have the option of performing a task on office or street time, chose street time. Typical office duties are clocking in, inspecting your vehicle, casing and pulling down your mail, setting up your scanner and handling accountable items/keys and mark-ups. The complete list of office tasks can be found in the M-39. There are other duties that get done on office time that either should be done on street time or may take away from your street time: casing DPS, casing FSS, sorting through and lining up parcels and lining up flyers. I will admit that I can be guilty of doing some of these things myself sometimes. There are times when management may even instruct you to case FSS because you are waiting on mail or parcels to be finished sorting.

You may be asking yourself, what does it matter whether I do something on office time or street time? If it takes me eight hours total to do my route, then aren't we just shuffling around times between different places to end up with the same total time? In theory, yes. In practice, no. It may not be a problem as you go along day-to-day on your route until one day you get the notice that you are being inspected. During the week of a route inspection, you will not be allowed to do these things that are street duties. FSS and DPS will go straight to the street. You will not be able to sort through your parcel hamper (only to count your parcels) and make it neat and tidy like you may like. So, you say "No big deal, I will be doing everything by the book on the week of inspection so that will be a fair evaluation." Here is where something called 1840B time comes in.

As part of an official route inspection management will compile something referred to as your 1840B street time. This is the street time from your route compiled over an eight-week period; a randomly drawn previous seven weeks and the week after inspection. The M-39 allows management to choose from the two collections of data for street times they now have after an inspection:

1840B street time or week-of-inspection street time. This is where the "office time is their time and street time is your time" line comes in. Let's say, during the period which is now your 1840B time you took an hour and fifteen minutes in the office because you performed some functions that were not office time. You then took six hours and forty-five minutes on the street for a total of eight hours.

On the week of inspection, you do everything by the book. You will probably have a shorter office time because you are doing less in the office. Your street time may be longer during inspection but management now chooses your 1840B street time for evaluating your route because you did that over a seven- or eight-week period as opposed to the one week of inspection.

The lower office time, inspection-week actual time or inspection-week average standard time will be used, as laid out in the M-39. Let's say, now your office time is down to fifty minutes, and they use your 1840B street time of six hours and forty-five minutes; your total route time is now seven hours and thirty-five minutes, and you may be in for an addition. It becomes a more difficult argument for the Union to say that one week of data is more representative than seven or eight weeks. Keep in mind how these things may affect your route. Your office may go along for years without being inspected. On the flip side they could announce an inspection tomorrow and chances are your times that will be used for 1840B street time are long-gone and in the rear-view mirror. Be aware that how you do the job today may affect your route later.

In non-postal labor news, a bill has been passed by the California Senate aimed at combating Amazon's algorithm driven rules. Amazon is well-known for monitoring their warehouse employees very closely. Employees have complained of not being given enough time to take bathroom or other necessary breaks. Amazon workers have told of working in fear of being fired for having too much of what Amazon calls "off-task time". Workers have also complained they are being held to metrics which the company does not even make them aware of. This bill would require California warehouse workers to be made aware of the performance metrics the companies are using to measure their work. Labor activists are championing this bill as a first of its kind victory for workers in the country. Yesenia Barrera, a former Amazon worker who now organizes with the Warehouse Worker Resource Center says the bill will create a standard that will lessen injuries. As of this writing, the bill faces one more procedural vote before heading to Governor Gavin Newsom's desk for signature.

In Solidarity,  
Dan Wheeler



## Benefits of Being Compassionate in the Workplace

Employees who show kindness and compassion are often rewarded with team members' loyalty. Compassionate team members tend to have increased levels of engagement, and more people willing to work with them. Often when given more responsibility and power in an organization, individuals can become distracted, stressed and may miss observable changes in their team. This may cause them to be less likely to tune in to others' concerns. No matter their title or responsibilities, it is important for everyone to pay attention to employees' concerns and address them appropriately.

Compassionate teams create work environments where there is harmony and cohesiveness among the employees. This in turn creates an environment where employees want to go the extra mile and work together to get the job done. The time invested in leading with compassion and kindness creates a high functioning, effective and successful work team.

If leaders want employees to help them succeed, they must show them they genuinely care for them. It's easier to build loyalty if leadership is compassionate and kind. Managers who can demonstrate awareness and show empathy for their team members will help encourage commitment from them. Building commitment is necessary for success. People will often stay in a bad job with a good manager and leave a good job because of a difficult manager. It's an unfortunate truth that a lot of employees quit their jobs because of their bosses. When employees have a compassionate supervisor or manager, they are more likely to stay. If leaders believe in them, employees will more than likely believe in and follow their leader.

### Tips for Leading with Kindness and Compassion

- Embrace an open-door policy
- Don't interrupt others
- Use encouraging words
- Recognize and acknowledge positive behavior
- Show gratitude
- Let others know you care
- Assist others when they are going through hardships
- When you feel angry, take a deep breath
- Be considerate of your fellow team member's feelings
- When you are wrong, apologize
- Bring food to share!!

**For further guidance on leading with kindness, reach out to the EAP. We offer valuable resources for reaching professional goals, including honing your skills to fully become a compassionate leader and teammate. To find more information visit [EAP4YOU.com](http://EAP4YOU.com) or give us a call at 800-327-4968 (800-EAP-4YOU), TTY: 877-492-7341.**



**CALL US TODAY: 800-327-4968**  
800-EAP-4YOU | TTY: 877-492-7341  
[WWW.EAP4YOU.COM](http://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

First Class Mail  
U.S. POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
Permit No. 409  
TEWKSBURY, MA



*at the next meeting*  
**October 5**  
**K of C Wilmington**  
**8:00 PM**

**NALC BRANCH 25 STEWARD NOMINATION FORM**

*(Self-nomination is allowed, must be a member in good standing and must not have served in or applied for a supervisory position in the last 24 months)*

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---