



WAKE UP!

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More than 200 letter carriers (some with spouses) showed up for the retirement seminar jointly hosted by Branches 25, 12, and 334. Glen Chandler of Branch 18 was assigned by NBA John Casciano to present the information and he did an outstanding job!!

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

“It’s the Kind of Tired a Good Night’s Sleep Doesn’t Take Care Of”

BUT

“Delivery Is Just Math”

You may want to make sure you aren’t reading this article over a cup of coffee. I wouldn’t want you to burn yourself when the hot coffee flies from your mouth when you choke on some of the words that follow.

The postal service, at least in this area, has just rolled out a new “tool” called the Supervisory Performance Engagement Tool (PET). The “tool” *assists supervisors to communicate with their carriers regarding expectations* and it also *helps the supervisor to assess requests for OT*. READ: Will provide the supervisor with another ill-advised basis to discipline letter carriers and will provide the supervisor with bogus grounds to DENY a carrier’s request for auxillary assistance or ot.

I was fortunate (unfortunate) enough to view a copy of the training materials that are being used in the roll out of the program. It’s full of gems. Unlike past “tools” like “DOIS” and “DUVRS”, this tool contains requirements for management to violate the national agreement. You read that right. Continue reading and you’ll see how.

My favorite quote is “Delivery is Just Math”. That’s actually not just a quote, but a heading for a section of the training. I was speaking to a letter carrier the other day. Throughout his career, this letter carrier has NEVER shied away from overtime. He’d do a piece of a route, a collection, work his day off, if it was ot, he was on it. Overtime is different now, though. The way the service has fouled things up, and treated people so horribly that staffing in most places is severely lacking, overtime is not a choice anymore. It’s an expectation whether you’re on the list or not. It’s an expectation whether you’re feeling well or not. It’s an expectation whether you’ve got personal matters to take care of or not. It’s relentless and it goes unappreciated. Management doesn’t have to thank you, after all, they PAY you! That’s their attitude. But don’t forget, delivery is just math.

But all this overtime, combined with the lack of appreciation shown by management has become exhausting. Carriers are tired, and it’s the kind of tired that a good night’s sleep doesn’t take care of. So what do they do? If they’re fortunate enough to be in a position to do so, they pack it in and retire. They may

not want to retire, they may want to go a few more years to pay some bills or to enhance their annuity, but they retire nonetheless.

The ones that aren’t appreciated and retire are actually more fortunate than the ones that are not only not appreciated, but have to continue working and are subjected to ignorant managers that make their lives hell because they don’t know how to manage. They don’t even show respect to the employee as a person, let alone a valued asset to the company.

I hate to tell you, but after reviewing the training material for this program, I’m pretty sure it’s going to get worse. This program requires a supervisor to enter an “Agreed to leave time” as well as an “Agreed to return time”. THERE IS NO HANDBOOK OR MANUAL THAT REQUIRES A LETTER CARRIER TO AGREE TO A SPECIFIC TIME THAT THEY WILL LEAVE AND RETURN. You are required to give your best ESTIMATE, and you are required to notify management if you will not be able to complete your duties in eight hours. We have enough arguments on the work room floor already without a requirement to give a specific “agreed upon” leave or return time. If you are forced to give a leave and return time, be certain to tell management that you are doing so “under duress” and only to satisfy the requirement that you obey an instruction, then notify your steward and the branch office and a grievance will be promptly filed. If management insists on a time, you can “agree” to do your best to leave at a particular time but there are things other than “math” that affect your day. I don’t need to tell you what they are, you’re human, you already know.

The training material also provides a dangerous premise for supervisors. Over the years, we’ve all heard how the office standards of 18 and 8 are the minimum standards. Many managers are quick to ridicule a carrier who maintains standards telling them that standards are minimum and we should do better. Many carriers absolutely do case faster than minimum standards. But, it is a violation of the contract for management to attempt to change office standards, and by training front line supervisors to expect MORE than standard they are doing just that.

The program also references a tool that provides PDI and LOW (letter of warning) templates customized to topics of engagement. Templates imply boiler plate language and applying boiler plate language in discipline to a group of individuals is wrong. Again, we will be monitoring the roll out of the program and we will be ready to provide assistance and resources to our carriers when needed. (*continued on page 6*)

Executive Vice President's Report

Congratulations to the many carriers that have retired recently, and the ones that are getting ready to retire from the Postal Service in the near future. We have talked a lot about how a high percentage of the work force is nearing age and years of service to be eligible for retirement. Keep in mind that our retirement benefits are completely controlled by Congress. There is an election coming up in November to elect a President and all seats in the House of Representatives. I'm not endorsing any candidates, but some candidates are friendlier than others when it comes to Federal Employees. Some would eliminate our pensions and retirement healthcare in a heartbeat. The last thing I want is Congress to eliminate any part of my retirement benefits or any other benefits we receive. The most important thing is to vote, regardless of who you support.

We have said it many times and will continue to say it, if you get hurt on the job you should probably call the Union office to get help with the paperwork. The initial paperwork which is usually a CA-1, is a basic document stating briefly what happened and is where you request Continuation of Pay or request sick leave. The first 3 days of an on the job injury are generally covered by sick leave unless you are out for 14 days. After that there is documentation from doctors provided in order for the claim to be approved. The Department of Labor has specific criteria that they use in order to approve claims of on the job injuries. This is where there can be confusion on the part of the employee. The paperwork can be overwhelming but must be completed. Unfortunately, most managers can't be of much help with this paperwork. They simply haven't been trained for it and it is not part of their position. If hurt on the job you should call the Union office for advice on how to complete this paperwork. We get a lot of calls from carriers after their claims are disapproved and we may have been able to help them prior to that. If a claim is disapproved there is an appeal process we can help with also.

The leaves are beginning to fall and the mail and parcel volume should be picking up as we get closer to the holidays. I know that some managers are going to be expecting you to work an 8 hour day every day regardless of volumes or any other conditions. But don't be intimidated into skipping breaks or lunch in order to accomplish this. If you get hurt, management is not going to care that you were tired because you didn't take a break all day. They are not going to stick up for you because you were trying to finish your route without working OT. They are still going to blame you for the injury. Work safe and fill out a 3996 if necessary.

It has been great to see faces that I haven't seen for quite a while at the last couple of Branch meetings. We don't expect every member to attend every branch meeting, I know this is impossible for most members for many reasons, but it would be good to see more members try to make a few meetings every year. We have some food at 7:15pm and the meeting starts at 8pm. The meeting usually lasts about an hour to conduct business so it is not a great deal of time. Hope to see you there on the first Tuesday of the month.

Keep your head up,

Paul Desmond

Calendar of Events

- | | |
|-------------|--|
| October 25 | Executive Council Meeting |
| November 1 | 8pm Branch Meeting @
Knights of Columbus
27 School St. Ext.
Wilmington. Food served
@ 7:15 |
| November 6 | Daylight Savings Time Ends
(We gain an hour!) |
| November 8 | Election Day |
| November 10 | Marine Corps Birthday |
| November 11 | Veterans' Day |
| November 17 | Great American Smokeout |
| November 24 | Thanksgiving |
| November 27 | Advent Begins |

Branch 25 Directory of Officers

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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.

Reprinted below is the text of the Step IV settlement referenced in this month's President's Message

Mr. Fredric V. Rolando
President
National Association of Letter Carriers, AFL-CIO
100 Indiana Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20001-2144

M-01769

Re: Q06N-4Q-C-11022051
Class Action
Washington DC 20260

Dear Mr. Rolando:

Recently, our representatives met in prearbitration discussion of the above-referenced grievance.

The issue in this grievance is whether the office efficiency tool used to project office and street time in the Greater Indiana District violates the National Agreement.

After reviewing this matter, we mutually agree to settle the grievance as follows:

The subject office efficiency tool is a management tool for estimating a carrier's daily workload. The office efficiency tool used in the Greater Indiana District or any similar time projection system/tool(s) will not be used as the sole determinant for establishing office or street time projections. Accordingly, the resulting projections will not constitute the sole basis for corrective action. This agreement does not change the principle that, pursuant to Section 242.332 of Handbook M-39, "No carrier shall be

disciplined for failure to meet standards, except in cases of unsatisfactory effort which must be based on documented, unacceptable conduct that led to the carrier's failure to meet office standards." Furthermore, as stated in the agreement for case Hi N-1 N-D 31781, "there is no set pace at which a carrier must walk and no street standard for walking."

Projections are not the sole determinant of a carrier's leaving or return time, or daily workload. The use of any management created system or tool that calculates a workload projection does not change the letter carrier's reporting requirements outlined in section 131.4 of Handbook M-41, the supervisor's scheduling responsibilities outlined in section 122 of Handbook M-39, or the letter carrier's and supervisor's responsibilities contained in Section 28 of Handbook M-41.

This settlement is made without prejudice to the parties' rights under the National Agreement.

Please sign and return the enclosed copy of this decision as acknowledgement of our agreement to resolve this case, removing it from the national arbitration docket.

Time limits were extended by mutual consent.

Sincerely,

Alan S. Moore

Fredric V. Rolando

A Choice to Be Made

As of this writing, there is no new contract. Why is this contract taking so long to be agreed upon? Of course, I don't know what I'm asking for, do you? I was never sent any questionnaire asking me what I would like in wage increases or benefits. The contract expired May 20, 2016, do you realize the Red Sox record at that time was 25-17! We all remember how much management appreciated our efforts after Christmas last year, but those words are long forgotten. I would bet there are two excuses by management for no contract, pre-fund healthcare and new trucks.

Next, this is the time to prepare for the barrage of Christmas packages. Will management respond with dedicated trucks for packages? Speaking of trucks, I think we are beyond the life expectancy of these trucks, yet every day we are told to be safe, amazing! Last week I first needed a brake light replaced, I accomplished that feat, and then Murphy's Law kicked in. The power steering bracket broke, releasing the fan belt, lost power steering, and then overheated in the next 10 minutes; finally I had to call for help.

And last, it's election time, and what a choice. Both candidates leave lots to be desired. (*continued next page*)

A Couple of Charities for Your Consideration

According to the National Center for Charitable Statistics (NCCS), more than **1.5 million** nonprofit organizations are registered in the U.S. That's a lot of possible places for your money to go. Everybody has their hand out! Believe me, I know it. PTO Yankee Candles anyone? How about some Cub Scout popcorn?

Everyone has to decide where their charitable donations will go. People make those decisions based on a number of reasons. Some people have organizations that are close to their heart such as the American Cancer Society or the Alzheimer's Association. Others may not have a specific charity in mind and choose to give when and where the opportunity arises.

There are a couple of charities that are near and dear to the NALC. The first one is the Muscular Dystrophy Association, the official charity of the NALC. Most of us hear about the MDA all the time. We have our MDA Bowlathon. We sell shamrocks. We mention it a lot but how many of us really know what it is? Muscular dystrophy is a group of diseases that cause progressive weakness and loss of muscle mass. There are many different kinds of muscular dystrophy. Symptoms of the most common variety begin in childhood, primarily in boys. Other types don't surface until adulthood. Some people who have muscular dystrophy will eventually lose the ability to walk. Some may have trouble breathing or swallowing.

The NALC was the first national sponsor of the Muscular Dystrophy Association and letter carriers are among MDA's top fund-raisers, collecting more than \$20 million in the past 15 years.

The other one is the Postal Employees Relief Fund (PERF). For almost thirty years, PERF has been there to help carriers, clerks and other active and retired postal workers rebuild after hurricanes, typhoons, earthquakes, floods, tornadoes and wildfires. Initially created to assist postal employees affected by Hurricane Hugo and the San Francisco Bay-area earthquake, the fund has gone on to provide thousands of grants totaling millions of dollars since it began. PERF is run by the four postal unions and three management organizations, along with the Postal Service, solely for the benefit of postal employees.

Employees can give to both MDA and PERF through the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC). The CFC is a voluntary federal government program which allows government employees including letter carriers, to donate to charitable organizations of their choice by designating an amount to be deducted from their paychecks. Employees may give to more than one charity. The open season for the CFC runs until

December 15. The CFC number for the MDA, the union's official charity, is 10561. The CFC number for PERF is 10268. Check with your steward or manager for information on how to contribute.

In solidarity,
Dan Wheeler

THANK YOU

I would like to thank Ron Noviello for representing me at an oral hearing at the JFK Building in Boston. I filed an appeal for a work-related injury. I needed ankle surgery and the Department of Labor denied my claim. After my surgery, I was out of work for 18 weeks with no pay.

Ron accompanied me at my appeal in Boston. The appeals board sent me for a second opinion with an orthopedic surgeon which resulted in winning my appeal. Thanks to Ron for all his help and support.

*Tina Destefano
Marblehead Carrier*

A Choice to Be Made...continued

Many people will vote for one, because they don't trust the other. What does this say about our selection process? Do you think it's time for term limits for members of Congress? Do you think the media is attacking one candidate more than another? Do you think the media is the problem?

Good luck in making your choice, we certainly need help.

Management, like the name of this newsletter, Wake Up!

Dick McGurl, Bedford
Letter Carrier - 37 years

Dress For Less

Many carriers may recognize the title of the article as the name of a popular retail store in different parts of the country. My intention, instead, is to bring some attention to the contractual benefit of carriers to the uniform clothing allowances.

In our national agreement (2011-2016) which expired in May of this year (however it is automatically extended until a new agreement is reached) the uniform clothing allowance is governed by Article 26. Career letter carriers, as of this writing, are entitled to an annual allowance of \$420 upon their anniversary date of eligibility. These carriers are issued a debit card from CITI Bank which is used for the purchase of authorized uniform articles from approved vendors. The card, when still active, is automatically replenished on the subsequent yearly anniversary date.; CCA'S are not issued a debit card. Instead, they are given a voucher which is used when dealing with the vendors and reimbursed by the postal service directly.

Speaking to some vendors and others at the recent national convention, brought my attention to a few issues that I would like to share. In more than a few instances, carriers are not aware that their debit card has expired. Not being aware of the card expiring, these carriers were not expecting a new replacement card being issued to them. When receiving the new card in the mail, they would discard it since they did not order it.

Secondly, some carriers would not activate the new card properly. The vendors have informed me that carriers should check their card's expiration date. If their card has expired, they should expect to receive a new one. When obtaining the new card, they should activate it properly and wait until they receive the confirmation that the card has been properly activated, otherwise it cannot be used.

Finally on this issue, letter carriers have failed to exhaust the yearly allowance before the yearly anniversary date for the replenishment of the \$420 allowance. If the carrier did not use the total \$420 before the next anniversary date the remaining balance is forfeited and able to be retained by the card issuer, in this case CITI Bank. Although I have not confirmed it, I have been told that roughly \$20 million was forfeited last year and retained by the card issuer. That is a lot of uniform articles. That is a lot of agreed to benefit, that is not only forfeited by the carriers, but also of no benefit to the postal service, since the card issuer gets to retain the unused allotment.

I advise carriers to check their card's expiration date, review their available balances and ensure that they exhaust their allotment at least two months before their

eligible anniversary date (which may or may not coincide with their entered on duty date). You can always purchase gloves, socks, ties, etc...to fully utilize your allowance.

Some useful references:

- National Agreement Article 26
- Postal Record issue August 2013 Contract Talk
- For detailed info on Uniform Allowance Program see <https://liteblue.usps.gov>
- To check balances call CITI BANK 1.800.287.5003

Dress for less!

Jim Nutter, Treasurer

Continued from page 2

It's a sad state of affairs that a new program comes complete with a recipe to discipline letter carriers. It seems to me that if management came up with a reasonable program, they wouldn't have to worry about how to succeed with discipline BEFORE they even rolled the program out.

I could continue writing about this program and fill up all eight pages of the Wake-Up!, but instead I'll finish up on this topic by referring you to a national level settlement from 2011 that certainly still applies today. The pertinent part of the settlement reads: "*The use of any management created system or tool that calculates a workload projection does not change the letter carrier's reporting requirements outlined in section 131.4 of Handbook M-41, the supervisor's scheduling responsibilities outlined in section 122 of Handbook M-39, or the letter carrier's and supervisor's responsibilities contained in Section 28 of Handbook M-41.*" I strongly urge all letter carriers to go to the nalc.org website, and under the tab "Workplace Issues" select "Resources", then select "Materials Reference System". Once there, enter the number 1769 to read the complete text of this resolution. I will also ensure that the resolution is published on the branch 25 website.

You should also read the referenced sections of the M41 while you're at it. Hell, you should read and familiarize yourself with the entire M41. The postal service, to borrow the phrase of so many employees that call the Union office, is "out of control". The only way to regain control is to have an educated workforce. Educate yourselves!

Stay informed!

Dave Barbuzzi

Momentum

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Fall is a good time for change. This month, we are taking a look at how you can weather some of the major changes that occur in life. We'll examine how to adjust to big life changes such as marriage, retirement and divorce.

Getting used to major changes can be very challenging, and sometimes overwhelming. The EAP offers confidential no-cost counseling and resources, including convenient telephonic counseling. You can call 800-327-4968 (TTY: 877-492-7341)

Don't forget to visit the www.EAP4YOU.com website. This portal offers helpful information, self-help tools and resources you can access 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Be Resilient and Adapt to Life Changes

Change can come to you at any time in life. Whether positive or negative, the biggest changes impact you greatly—changes in marital status, losing a family member, job loss or promotion or retirement. Smaller changes can be stressful too. It's important to learn to bounce back from life's ups and downs. Here are some tips for doing that.

Give yourself time to adjust. There are no rules on how quickly you should adapt to new situations. Don't rush yourself.

View the change as a positive. Whether the change is good or bad, ask yourself how you might become stronger as a result of coping with this change.

Take care of yourself during a time of change.

Change often brings on stress and can include trouble sleeping, depression, and more. Remember that regular exercise, a balanced diet and adequate sleep can help you cope better. It also helps to learn relaxation techniques.

When possible, put off planned changes so there aren't too many at once. If you are getting married while also coping with an ailing parent it may be best to hold off on looking for a new job until you've had time to adjust to the other changes.

Don't try to weather the change alone. Talking with trusted friends and family about what you're going through will help. Don't keep feelings of depression and stress bottled up.

Use humor to cut the stress. When a new and unfamiliar situation comes your way, try to see the humor in it. A few good laughs go a long way toward easing stress.



Log on to www.EAP4YOU.com today!

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*at the next meeting
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