



# WAKE UP!

President/ Editor  
Dave Barbuzzi

Publisher  
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Branch 25 Recognizes and Celebrates Our Heroes



Veteran's Day November 11, 2018

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## President's Message

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I would like to start my article this month by thanking the membership for their confidence and support in electing me by acclimation to another term as President of Branch 25. It is truly a humbling experience to stand by and watch as the gavel is brought down a third time and no other nominations are put forth. I will do my best to validate your confidence in the coming three years.

In late September, Executive Vice President Paul Desmond and I attended the Committee of Presidents' meeting in Cincinnati. I have always found that the most valuable part of these meetings is when our National President speaks and has a Q&A session after he speaks. This past meeting did not disappoint as not only did our National President Fred Rolando attend, but Executive Vice President Brian Renfro and Director of City Delivery Chris Jackson also attended and addressed those in attendance.

After bringing us up to speed on various national level settlements, Fred spoke to us about the challenges facing letter carriers and the postal service. He made it clear to us that we have to get across to our members what we are dealing with legislatively and politically. As your President, it is my job to get that across to you. I hope that as members of this Union, you feel that it is your job to get it across to your coworkers, your family and your friends.

We are faced with risks from three sources: Postal Reform, Federal Budget, and the White House. Postal reform is all about the pre-funding that we have been facing since 2006. The USPS was faced with a mandate to prefund \$100 billion up front for retiree health care costs. No other government agency or private industry is required to do so, nor do they prefund to nearly the level required of USPS. That is prefunding 75 years in advance for ALL postal employees, regardless of their age or service. The account has \$50 billion in it, \$50 billion MORE THAN ANYONE ELSE!

We need to address the pre-funding because although there is such a large amount in the account, our detractors (UPS, FedEx, and unfriendly politicians) simply choose to dwell on and publicize the fact that we no longer make the almost \$6 billion/year payment to the account. They don't talk about the reasons behind it or the fact that we are unique in being required to do it. They are just using the fact to say that since we no longer pay into the account, we aren't viable and should be dismantled.

We could address the pre-funding issue through medicare integration. Requiring all retirees to sign up for medicare would result in the immediate full-funding of future retiree health care. The NALC would only support this if we can get guarantees that there would be no penalties for those presently that did not join right away, that those retirees that would receive no benefit are not required to join and that those retirees who could

demonstrate a legitimate hardship would not be required to join.

The next way to address the pre-funding would be to repeal the Act that established the requirement to pre-fund. This is not a realistic approach as the \$50 billion is invested in government securities. Congress is not going to vote to remove \$50 from their coffers.

The third solution has to do with a study conducted by the Segal Group. The entire report can be found online. Essentially though, the Segal Group found that the Office of Management and Budget has calculated the Postal Service's share of the CSRS and FERS retirement programs incorrectly to the tune of about \$85 billion (with a "B"). If that error was corrected, we'd be overfunded.

Finally, if the postal service was only required to pre-fund for those that are actually eligible to retire (those that are vested), the amount necessary to prefund would be roughly 50% of what it is now. In other words, we would be fully funded.

The threats to the postal service in the Federal Budget come in the form of increases to payments towards our retirement to the tune of 6.54 %, a proposal to eliminate CSRS COLA by 1/2 % per year, and a proposal to eliminate FERS COLA immediately. There are proposals to increase the high 3 retirement basis to a high 5, and proposals that would decrease the government's responsibility towards health care from 72% down to 65%. These proposals would result in greatly reduced take-home pay for letter carriers both active and retired. Think about that when you vote.

Finally, there are strong rumors that the White House will attempt to privatize the postal service. They want to make us part of the federal government and destroy collective bargaining. Congress would determine our wages and we would only be able to bargain over working conditions. The last time Congress determined wages was prior to the strike of 1970 when employees of the USPS qualified for food stamps. Again, think about that when you vote!

This is only a "Reader's Digest" version. Please, take the time to educate yourself further on what your vote means to your job. Take the time to participate whether it be by donating time to the campaign of one of our friends or by donating money to support one of our friends. Roughly 10% of the members of the NALC contributed \$6.2 million in the last election cycle. We need the other 90% to get involved as well if we want to survive the storms that will forever come our way.

Stay informed!

Dave Barbuzzi

## Executive Vice President's Report

At this point we were expecting the National parties to come to an agreement on a new joint route evaluation and adjustment process, but it hasn't materialized yet. We are still expecting it to happen, but it probably will not happen before any scheduled inspections take place this Fall. This means all street times currently entered into managements systems will most likely be used to adjust routes in the near future, but probably not until after the New Year. If a new adjustment process does get implemented, we do not know if every station will be included or how the stations involved will be chosen. The last time this type of process took place both management and the Union submitted stations to be evaluated. I can't stress how important it is to make sure your time punches are correct, that means for your route and any assistance you provide either in the office or on the street. There will be more on this once any process is announced.

We see every month at the Branch meetings that many of our carriers are retiring, and many more are becoming eligible or are eligible to go when they chose. I bring this up because there will be conversions and that also brings up the vacancies for carriers that desire to transfer to another station. The more retirees the more opportunities exist for possible transfers. We have carriers transferring within the branch in order to get closer to where they live and carriers transferring out of state. Anyone that is thinking of a transfer does not have to wait for a vacancy in a particular office, you simply request the transfer to any office in the country on the Liteblue website. The transfer requests are considered on a first come, first serve basis as vacancies occur. You can apply to transfer to as many stations as you like, and if you decide to change your mind when a transfer is offered to you, you are not obligated to accept the transfer.

There has been a lot of questions recently on the rights and benefits of CCAs being converted to PTF status as a result of the agreement at the national level, converting thousands of CCAs to career status. Without getting into the content, I will say there is good article in this months Postal Record with questions and answers about PTF carriers. I believe almost any question any recently converted PTF would have would be in this article, but feel free to call the office with any other concerns. Although everyone wants to be a full-time regular, being converted to PTF has great benefits.

With all the insanity going on in Washington right now, we can't lose track of what is going on with the Postal Service. The President's report on the Postal Service has been completed by the appointed task force, but the results have not been made public. The opinion is that it will not be revealed until after the mid-term elections. Be ready to contact Congress if anything in the report suggests reducing or eliminating any of our benefits or

rights, or anything that harms the Postal Service.

Congratulations to all the recently elected branch officers at the October meeting. It was good to see all elected by acclamation and there are still vacancies to some positions on the executive council. We have steward nominations currently going on in all of our stations, if there is not a signup in your office please notify the branch immediately. Anyone interested in becoming a steward or possible branch officer, but is not sure of the responsibilities should call the Union office and speak to Dave Barbuzzi. It is great that we have some new carriers getting more involved in the branch and within their own stations as stewards. Don't forget the branch meetings are the first Tuesday of every month.

Keep your head up!

Paul Desmond

### Calendar of Events

October 30	Executive Council Meeting
October 31	Halloween
November 1	All Souls Day
November 6	8PM Branch Meeting @ Knights of Columbus 27 School St. Ext. Wilmington Food served @ 7:15
November 6	Election Day
November 10	USMC Day
November 11	Veteran's Day
November 13	World Kindness Day
November 22	Thanksgiving Day
November 23	Black Friday
November 24	All Grade 1 carriers upgraded to level 2

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## Branch 25 Directory of Officers

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David J. Barbuzzi	President
Paul G. Desmond	Executive V.P.
Bob Cronin	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
Dan Wheeler	Wake-Up Publisher
Richard Donlo	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.*

another branch just because we are close by. Who knows if any of this has anything to do with the carrier in Texas' original question? I don't know about you but I wouldn't want to bet on advice from a carrier in Texas I'd never met, however well-meaning or knowledgeable they may be.

Luckily for the members of Branch 25 we have a great knowledge base right here starting with your local stewards and right up to our branch officers and up to our regional officers if need be. So please, social media is a great place for a lot of things: funny mailbox pictures, retirement pics, talking about general aspects of the job among others. When it comes down to needing real advice that may affect your employment, pay or health I encourage you to reach out to our local experts and not a random albeit probably well-meaning carrier from who-knows-where.

In solidarity,

Dan Wheeler

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## Be Careful What You Ask For

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I would like to touch on something that President Barbuzzi mentioned at the September branch meeting; the use of social media by members. There has been a lot of talk about what is or isn't appropriate use but that's not what I want to discuss. I'm talking about the use of social media, and most specifically Facebook as a source of information. On any given day there are hundreds of questions posted to the various forums and groups that letter carriers can join or be part of. On the surface it seems like a great tool for letter carriers. There are a number of different groups out there: general groups, CCA groups, steward and officer groups... There are also a number of different types of people out there in those groups. For sure, there are many knowledgeable members willing to give advice. There are also many people who are either ignorant of the facts or don't care about the facts. There are carriers who think they are giving correct advice and may be for their location. I have seen posts go on for what seems like forever with someone saying "I know that's right because it happens here" Remember, we are all bound by the same National Agreement but there are also local agreements and district policies, Step B decisions and other things that come in to play.

Recently I was tagged in a post by someone I know in another part of the country. The original post was from a carrier in Texas asking about bidding. Someone from our region jumped in with how it goes in his branch and the next thing you know I've been tagged by someone 1000 miles away to comment on something that happens in

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## Veteran's Report

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Happy Veterans Day! Oops Marine Corp birthday first. Semper Fi to all my Brothers and Sisters. OK, Happy Veteran's Day. You earned it! You have done something that less than 5% of the American people have done. You wanted to serve, you volunteered to serve, you knew what could happen. You gave the United States a check with a price, up to and including your life. No greater price could be asked.

Real heroes don't wear capes. They wear the most precious medal around. It is not shiny but glows with pride and honor! It's a dog tag. Some wear it around their neck or in the straps of their boot, some received theirs in AFROTC (Pittsburgh), San Antonio Texas (USAF) or in Fort Jackson (Army). Some earned those in 1964 at Parris Island (Randy Keller) some got theirs at the YMCA (Navy). Remember I am a Marine. :-)

Most veterans know when you look them in their eyes. They have the honor, pride and sacrifice. We have all said these words:

*"I do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; and that I will obey the orders of the President of the United States and the orders of the officers appointed over me, according to regulations and the Uniform Code of Military Justice. So help me God."*

This is the oath we all said. Happy Veterans Day! Happy Birthday Marine Corps!

Semper Fi,

Andie Coulter

*"You only have your thoughts and dreams ahead of you. You are someone. You mean something."*

Batman

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## Just For The Health Of It

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This is the second in a series of articles about additional benefits available to members of our High Option Health Benefit Plan. Reminder: These benefits are in addition to and not part of our Plan.

Sooner or later, odds are that some readers of this article will be charged with providing care for another – that person being elderly, disabled, or otherwise afflicted. Some of our brothers and sisters already find themselves in this situation. Fortunately meaningful support is available for these folks. United Healthcare, through Optum Health offers a program entitled Solutions for Caregivers at no additional cost to members. Highlights include but are not limited to:

- The services of a professional care manager.
- On site assessment of a registered nurse.
- A personal care plan to recommend resources.
- Coordination of benefits.

The aforementioned registered nurse is the Care Advocate with geriatric, disability and community health experience to help guide the caregiver.

Got questions like:

- What services are needed?
- What's covered under my health plan?
- Can I get help to pay for services?
- What community resources are available?

These questions and others that you may have can be answered by calling Solutions for Caregivers at 1-877-468-1016, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. A final note. The services are available for members or spouses caring not only for relative but also caring for a friend or neighbor.

Keep on truckin'

Richie Donlon

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## Branch Election Results

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The following members were elected by acclamation at the October branch meeting:

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
Peter Godino	Asst. Safety Officer
Jack Lyman	Sergeant At Arms
Dan Raske	Trustee
Bruce Johnson	Trustee
Ron Noviello	Trustee
Anthony Bossi	Assistant Secretary
John McNulty	Assistant Treasurer
Richard Donlon	Asst Health Benefits Rep

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## The Noble and the Brave

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When America had an urgent need,  
These brave ones raised a hand;  
No hesitation held them back;  
They were proud to take a stand.

They left their friends and family;  
They gave up normal life;  
To serve their country and their God,  
They plowed into the strife.

They fought for freedom and for peace  
On strange and foreign shores;  
Some lost new friends; some lost their lives  
In long and brutal wars.

Other veterans answered a call  
To support the ones who fought;  
Their country had requirements for  
The essential skills they brought.

We salute every one of them,  
The noble and the brave,  
The ones still with us here today,  
And those who rest in a grave.

So here's to our country's heroes;  
They're a cut above the rest;  
Let's give the honor that is due  
To our country's very best.

*Joanna Fuchs*

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## Safety

Looking for something new to do at work? Why not try being an on-the-job Instructor (OJI)? The training consists of just one day and you make yourself a little extra money when you start training new CCAs. I have been training new hires for about a year now. We have one other OJI in our office and we could certainly use more.

If you're interested call the Union office and let your Postmaster know. If you are a qualifying candidate, you will be informed when the next training session is happening. The training is held in Boston, so you get a day away from the daily grind. When I went the instructor was great and the class size was only about 10 people, so it was casual and open to plenty of questions.

Of course, the OJI position may not fit everyone. I've found you must be real patient as the CCA is learning. I try to let them do the job themselves as much as possible and it's not all that comfortable in the jump seat. It can also be a bit scary with a new LLV driver at the wheel.

If you decide to try on-the-job Instructing, be forewarned that you may put in a lot of hours training only to have the CCA decide the job is not for them. But if they do stay it can be rewarding. I think it's important to give them a good chance and show them how the job is done according to Union/ Management guidelines.

Stay safe,

Jim Salvati

Lyrics Trivia

And I have a lesson  
That I must impart to you  
It's an old expression  
But I must insist it's true

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## Welcome New Members

Kristie A Cutillo	Marblehead
James B Dobson	Marblehead
Christopher M Harris	Newburyport
Rachel Lowe	Andover
Zachary K McHugh	Wakefield
Philip D Morello	Newburyport
Brian A Richmond	Newburyport
A M Roberts	Marblehead
Joseph P Savasta	South Hamilton
Lyndsay A Sholds	Marblehead
Juliana Sidelnikov	Beverly
Oren Goldstein	Sudbury
Tiffany Perez	Peabody
Andrew R St. Pierre	Peabody
Keenan P Haines	Billerica
Bryan A Lapointe	Billerica
Joseph J Batesteri	Peabody
Zachary J Clougher	Dracut
Ryan N Pezzulo	Gloucester
John P Farrell	Gloucester
Arman Khurian	Beverly
Justin MCKiel	North Chelmsford
Nancy Roads	Marblehead
Melvin Almonte	Salem

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## Welcome New Members

Vicki A Erazo	Dracut
Brandon C Forbes	Billerica
Sandro P Martins	Billerica
Peter R Natola	Marblehead
Michelle L Price	Newburyport
Miguel E Vasquez	Danvers
MM Abdullah	Wayland

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## Check out Our Website

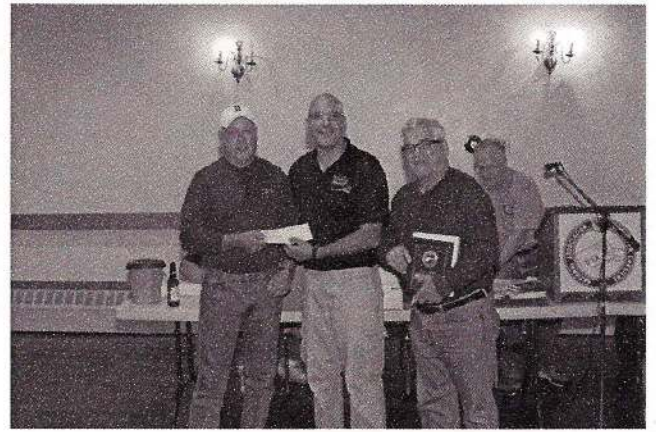
Did you know that Branch 25 is online? You can find us online at [nalcbranch25.com](http://nalcbranch25.com). You can find the latest branch and national NALC news, branch calendar, a ton of useful links and branch contact information. You can even read the Wake Up online and get Jim Salvati's lyrics trivia answer for this month.

## Recent Retirees

## Recent Retirees



James Gemma of Lynnfield recently retired after a 29 year career



Tony Santos of Salem receives his retirement gratuity after 33 years of Postal Service along with military service as well.



Robert Cogswell retired out of the Winchester office after 30 years.



John Miner from Salem is recognized for his almost 35 years of service



Elaine Nutter from Dracut and wife of Branch 25 Treasurer Jim Nutter retired after 31 years

## **WAKE UP**

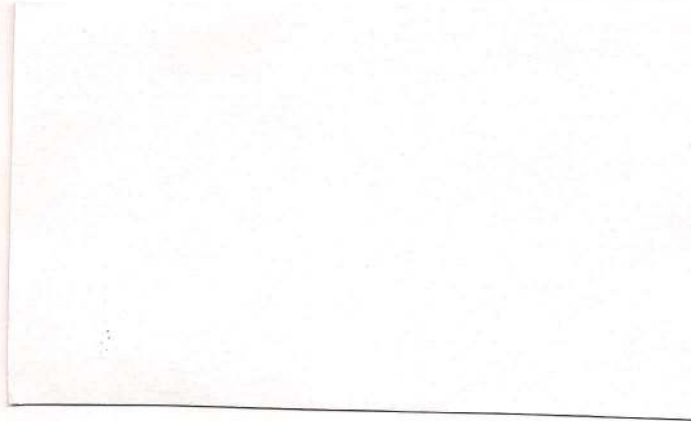
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**I WANT YOU...**

*at the next meeting  
November 6, 2018*



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  3. Have chronically sore knees; or
  4. Have had knee surgery for **ANY** reason; then

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