



WAKE UP!

President/ Editor
Dave Barbuzzi

***Don't forget to apply for the
Branch 25 Scholarships!!!***

Publisher

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L-R: Rich Donlon, Glenn Anderson, Cheryl Kuchar, Lary Salo, Rockport's newest retiree Dana Salo, Dave Barbuzzi, Bruce Johnson, Bob Cronin and Dan Wheeler seated in the background.

President's Message

"10% Ain't Gonna Cut It Anymore"

How many reading this, no strike that, how many people in the country could honestly think that Betsy DeVos is doing what's best for the students and teachers in this country in her position as Secretary of Education? How many reading this wonder what that has to do with Branch 25?

It has everything to do with the future of every letter carrier. After years of a non-existent Postal Board of Governors, President Trump (the guy that selected DeVos as Secretary of Education) has now appointed 5 members. There is a 3-2 Republican majority on the board, but more important there is a 3-2 ideological majority on the board that supports the same ideology as the President. In order to understand the implications this new board of governors has for us, I'd like to point out a few lowlights of DeVos' tenure so far.

She has supported a 13.5% decrease in funding for the Department of Education. The cuts would have eliminated many after school programs, eliminated career and technical education, and programs to hire and train teachers. She violated federal law by revoking the Borrower Defense Rule. This rule held predatory for profit colleges (read Trump University) accountable for fraud and allowed students who were defrauded to seek justice in court. Without the rule, fake schools could force students to try to resolve complaints outside of court. Remember, last year court proceedings resulted in a \$25 million dollar settlement in a class action against Trump University. DeVos would prohibit such a proceeding.

Perhaps what's worst is last March the DeVos lead education department attempted to strip its employees of collective bargaining rights. *"Department officials unilaterally impose a 'collective bargaining agreement' on 3,900 union staffers represented by American Federation of Government Employees Council 252, and say they will no longer bargain with them."*

Think about that for a minute. The Postmaster General (the one that Trump has often times said that he wanted to replace) has just announced her retirement. There is presently a five member Board of Governors with an ideological majority that advocates the abolishment of collective bargaining, the privatization of all things government, and a general anti-union mentality. This five member board will appoint the next Postmaster General. How do you think that will go?

Right now, the Postmaster General and senior postal management seem to be "managing the decline" of the postal service. Put a privatizing, anti-union Postmaster General at the reigns and we're going to be in for a wild ride. Hopefully we all survive the ride.

So what's this 10% reference in the title? I'm glad you asked. Presently, about 10% of our members nationwide contribute to the Letter Carrier Political Fund. I'm disappointed to report that Branch 25 falls slightly below that average. We have to do better, and I'll tell you why.

We absolutely need postal reform to fix the pre-funding debacle. Our current liability is \$120 billion (with a "B") of which we've already given \$50 billion. Since we stopped making payments, the missed payment total has grown to \$42.5 billion. OPM could call for the immediate payment of this money tomorrow. How would the postal service make the payment? Layoffs? Cease delivery service? It could happen. It's not likely, but it could happen.

The other danger we face is a real federal budget. The government has been operating under continuing resolutions for funding for quite some time. There hasn't been a budget passed since 2008. The NALC has been able to defeat attempts to eliminate 6-day delivery that have been part of continuing resolutions. The positive thing is that the continuing resolutions call for 6-day delivery and for the rural delivery of mail at not less than the 1983 level.

Trump's proposed budget is NOT so kind. In a nutshell it calls for the elimination of collective bargaining, the elimination of the FERS supplement, elimination of retiree COLA, increase the rate paid for healthcare by 7%, and an increase in what we pay towards our retirement. These increases in what we pay towards retirement and health care are significant. The elimination of COLA for retirees is significant. Imagine living 20 years or more after retirement and not having an increase to your pension? How do you think that will work out? The FERS supplement alone for someone with 30 years' service is upwards of \$1000/month. How many people can deal with a \$12,000/year decrease in pay?

We need bi-partisan support to get reform and to maintain our benefits. We get bi-partisan support with votes and money. The money comes from the Letter Carrier Political Fund. The money in the fund, hopefully comes from YOU! Please, invest in your future today.

Stay informed,

Dave Barbuzzi

By making a contribution to the Letter Carrier Political Fund, you are doing so voluntarily with the understanding that your contribution is not a condition of membership in the National Association of Letter Carriers or of employment by the Postal Service, nor is it part of union dues. You have a right to refuse to contribute without any reprisal. The Letter Carrier Political Fund will use the money it receives to contribute to candidates for federal office and undertake other political spending as permitted by law. Your selection shall remain in full force and effect until cancelled. Contributions to the Letter Carrier Political Fund are not deductible for federal income tax purposes. Federal law prohibits the Letter Carrier Political Fund from soliciting contributions from individuals who are not NALC members, executive and administrative staff or their families. Any contribution received from such an individual will be refunded to that contributor.

Executive Vice-President's Report

I know it is sometimes hard to concentrate on what might be considered "little" things at work, but it has become increasingly necessary as the Postal Service is attempting to re-write our job descriptions. Some carriers may think casing FSS mail when you can get away with it is a time saver. It probably is but should never be done unless instructed to by your supervisor. Skipping breaks on a day when you might want to finish early can save you time. Attempting delivery of parcels to customers at the door takes time, but is required.

I'm sure there are other things you can do to eliminate a small part of your day, but the bottom line is it will surely not benefit you in the long run. Management is currently attempting to eliminate positions with the ongoing case consolidation initiative, and the routes are not being evaluated prior to implementation. Simply put, management is unilaterally adjusting routes to their liking and most likely using some form of average, derived from the workhour reports. I'm not saying these figures are accurate or are not manipulated, but they certainly are not based on a full count and inspection as defined in the M-39, the proper way to adjust routes. The Union is fighting this through the grievance procedure and even through the courts, but until there is a resolve and beyond, you would benefit by not skipping any of your duties or negotiated benefits, such as breaks or lunch.

During the month of November will be the beginning of open season for federal employee's health benefits. Open season will run from 11-11-2019 to 12-9-2019. There have been some changes to the plan highlighted in this month's Postal Record, but the article suggests that you refer to the complete brochure on the health plan's web site, at nalchbp.org. The rates have been set and are published there also. Don't wait until the last minute if you desire to make changes to your health benefits. If you need to compare multiple health plans you can do this on the OPM's healthcare website.

Speaking of Open Season, this is a good time to take a look at all of your benefits, especially TSP and any available products from the Mutual Benefits Association. These can be adjusted and added to at any time of the year. The end of the year seems like a time to gauge where you are as far as the Retirement needs go, and the MBA has some good products available that are easy to set up.

I just received my letter carrier resource book in the mail from the NALC, and I expect all active carriers, both career and CCA will soon receive one. I wouldn't expect anyone to sit down and read this from beginning to end, but there is a lot of good information that should be taken in by all of our active carriers. Not that retirees wouldn't enjoy the reading, but they have earned the right to read something for pleasure. Just a quick look at the table of contents and there are 5 sections broken

down in the guide. They include one about the job, and then covers rights and benefits, on the job, additional rights and benefits for career carriers, and finally the appendix that includes Q and As and some memos. It is very well written and all CCAs and newly converted carriers should pay special attention to the rights and benefits section. There are a lot of things discussed that most carriers have not seen in writing, but may have heard through the grapevine or at a Union meeting. Everyone will take something out of this that they probably weren't aware of. I wish this was available when I was hired.

So far it looks as if the National Agreement will probably be decided by an arbitrator but that is not unusual and was expected. Maybe we will get surprised, but with the upcoming retirement of the Postmaster General I don't expect anything to be negotiated.

Keep your head up!

Paul Desmond

Calendar of Events

October 29	Executive Council Meeting
November 5	Regular Monthly Meeting Wilmington K of C 27 School Street Extension Food Served 7:00 PM Meeting Begins 8:00 PM
November 10	CPR Class (details in Safety Art.)
November 10	Marine Corps Birthday (for Randy)
November 11	Veterans' Day
November 17	World Peace Day
November 21	Great American Smokeout
November 23	National Adoption Day
November 28	Thanksgiving
November 29	Black Friday

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

Veterans' Corner

Happy Birthday to all my marine brothers and sisters.
Happy Veterans' Day to all who took the oath!

For some of you newer Veterans, please look into your military buy back. This will help you get credit towards your retirement. You will have to have certain documents so you need to check with Human Resources.

I got a lot of compliments at the Union meeting last year for putting the oath in the Wake-Up! so once again:

"I do solemnly swear 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."

I would like to encourage any member who is a Veteran to join the NALC Veterans' Group if you haven't done so already. You can go online to nalc.org and navigate to the Veterans' Group section to sign up, or you can call the Branch office and tell them your branch of the service and any veterans' groups you belong to.

Semper Fi

Andie Coulter

"3996 Please"

One of the biggest issues I see often as a Steward is completing and submitting a PS Form 3996. When a 3996 is filled out properly it will explain why you need help or overtime on your route for that day. A properly filled out 3996 is a key piece of evidence in a successful Article 8 grievance. It is also an extremely important piece of documentation that could protect carriers from discipline!

When filling out a 3996 make sure you fill out the form completely. In Box J where you write "Reason for Use of Auxillary" be specific. Don't write "route over volume" or "heavy parcels" or "route overburdened". Be more specific like "5 trays of DPS with a profile of 2 trays" or "marriage mail", or "multiple sets of circulars" etc. When submitting a 3996 management might tell you that your route doesn't need overtime or auxillary assistance, based on management's numbers. If management denies your 3996 stay professional and keep your cool (this is where some carriers get themselves in trouble because they are upset or angry). Tell your manager that you will do your best. In a polite way ask "What do you want me to do if I can't finish delivering the mail in time?" You got your instruction so go back to your case and finish your office work. Head to the street as you do every day and do your best.

If you find yourself running behind, don't skip your lunch, breaks or do your job in an unsafe manner to make up time on your route. If you do this it will be expected of you in the future. Instead if you find yourself running behind and you won't be able to finish delivering the mail and get back to the office in the approved time you need to ask management what they want you to do. Before I go further, remember this: Management gets paid to make decisions and carriers get paid to deliver the mail. In my office if Letter Carriers find themselves in this situation they would call the office or message management through the scanner for instruction. When talking to management inform management of how long you think it will take to finish your route and where you are. You need to get instruction from management, so ask if they want you to finish delivering the route or bring the mail back to the office. If management refuses to answer you, document that you notified them that you couldn't return on time and complete delivery of your route. If you are not on the overtime desired list, ask for Union time and meet with your steward and ask him or her to file a grievance on your behalf.

Be safe!

Doug Murray, Beverly

Vice President's Report

Branch President Dave Barbuzzi and I recently attended the NALC's Committee of Presidents Meeting in Las Vegas Nevada. I don't have any tales of great winnings at the casino to tell but I would like to pass on some of the latest contract updates that we received there from National President Fred Rolando and Executive Vice President Brian Renfroe. We are currently in the middle of a 60-day mediation process for our next contract negotiations. This is a required second part of the process, following failing to agree on a negotiated contract and before going to arbitration with it. It's not likely that any agreement will be reached during this period, but the NALC is keeping an open dialogue with the Postal Service while preparing to go to arbitration. Postmaster General Megan Brennan recently announced that she will be stepping down as of the end of January 2020. The NALC is unsure how this will affect the current discussions. Fred reported there has been some productive conversations with the Service during the 60-day period which was not expected.

The Postal service recently agreed on terms with the Rural Carriers Union and a proposed agreement with the APWU was rejected by their committee. The Postal Service will try and use the agreements reached with other unions as their bottom line with us, but we will continue to show how our jobs are not only different but more difficult than others and will not accept that kind of bargaining. Management has not shown much willingness to move in the right direction on issues of importance to us such as uniforms, staffing problems, CCAs, the lack of a proper nation-wide safety program and dignity and respect issues.

One of the biggest issues is the phasing out of the non-career workforce. It's the NALC's wish to have a 100% career workforce. The CCA staffing issue has been a problem for us in most of the country. The CCA retention rate is only around 50% nationwide. Some districts are doing better and some worse but on average for every 2 CCAs that are hired 1 is walking right back out the door. There are contractual caps on the amount of CCAs that can be on the rolls and the Service continually goes over that number. There is a national level grievance currently scheduled for arbitration in December of this year. The NALC is looking for more one-time conversions and would like to see automatic conversions, after a certain amount of time, in the future. The NALC is also looking to enhance language on the culture on the workroom floor. Despite this being an issue that should be clear to everyone there has not been much eagerness of behalf of the Postal Service to facilitate these changes. I'm sure management would not want to come to work and deal with the toxic culture too many of our brothers and sisters deal with daily. It's unfortunate that in contrast with the lip service they've

given on this issue there has not been much done of any substance on their part.

One final item of interest was learning that employees are soon going to be able to see their time clock entries on the LiteBlue website. I'm not sure of exactly how it will work but this is what it will be according to the Postal Service:

The Postal Service will introduce an application this fall to make it easier for employees using personal computers or mobile devices to see their time clock entries. The Virtual Timecard app will provide employees with near-real-time, secure access to their Time and Attendance Collection System clock entries and accrued work hours. Additionally, employees — including those who use electronic badge readers — will be able to view clock rings and accumulated work hours by category for the current pay period. The Virtual Timecard will be available in November as an "Employee App – Quick Link" option on [LiteBlue](#), which can be accessed on desktop computers and mobile devices.

In Solidarity,
Dan Wheeler

MASS AFL-CIO SCHOLARSHIP Q&A

How do I sign up for the Labor History Exam?

Interested applicants can register for the exam by visiting www.massaficio.org/scholarships. The application process will open in October 2019 and the deadline to apply is Friday, December 13, 2019. Once the application has been submitted, **it is the student's responsibility to notify their guidance office that they plan to take the exam which will be held in February 2020.**

Who is eligible?

Every year the Mass AFL-CIO publishes a scholarship brochure describing the eligibility criteria for each award. Students with a Union affiliation are eligible for both the Massachusetts AFL-CIO awards and those awards listed under their specific local union/central labor council. Students from other states are only eligible for scholarships offered by their affiliated local union that meet the union's criteria.

How are the winners selected?

All Massachusetts AFL-CIO scholarships and local union/central labor council scholarships listed in Section 1 of the scholarship brochure are awarded solely on the basis of the multiple-choice exam and essay score. Awardees are selected by the Scholarship Committee, which reviews and scores the essay question, and combines this score with the multiple-choice exam. Students that comply with the guidelines and rate highest on the exam shall be judged the winner of local union/central labor council awards. Students sponsored by a local union are eligible to receive no more than 2 scholarships.

The next CPR training class is Sunday November 10th. The class will be held at 200 Unicorn Park in Woburn from 12 pm- approximately 4 pm. There is no Patriots game that day so hopefully we can get a full class. Please call the Branch office if you are interested.

With the fall season upon us let's remember some helpful tips in minimizing the contraction and severity of colds and flu. I won't include hydration ,we hear enough about that! We also hear a lot about Vitamin C but don't forget about Vitamin D. Deficiencies in Vitamin D can lead to a weakened immune system. Good sources are tuna fish, egg yolks and mushrooms.

Antioxidants can prevent some illnesses and lessen the severity of colds and flu. For beverages coffee and tea are both good sources. Try different types of both to get different benefits. Try a darker roast coffee such as Kenyan and try different teas such as green or white! Don't like coffee or tea?. Try grape or cranberry juice.

Of course, to help prevent the flu, get a flu shot! There maybe the opportunity to get one in your station. If not, check your hometown community. Also CVS and Walgreens now offer a free flu shot.

If you do get the flu, it is best to stay home, rest, and avoid contact with others except to get medical care if needed, experts say. Avoid contact with others for at least 24 hours after the fever subsides to avoid spreading the flu. Avoid driving when you have the flu, which can reduce your reaction time almost six times as much as moderate alcohol intake!!

Stay Healthy,

Jim Salvati

Movie quote trivia:

I think it's a bad idea to march today Sergeant. You know it IS the cold and flu season.



“Just For The Health of It”

Sometimes we need to remind ourselves that to a large extent we are responsible for our own health and wellbeing. This opening statement is a lead-in to the subject of this article, namely, the Common Cold.

The National Health Information Center tells us that the average person gets 3 or 4 colds a year and the colds last from 3 to 7 days. However, there are positive steps we can take to potentially avoid falling into this category.

Among them:

1. Wash your hands often and keep them away from your nose, eyes, and mouth.
2. Try not to touch people or their things when they have a cold.
3. Get regular exercise and adequate rest.
4. Follow a healthy diet.
5. Talk to your doctor about products that claim to prevent colds.

The Common Cold is just that, common, but not inevitable. Put into practice the above recommendations and you'll be stacking the odds in your favor for avoiding one this winter.

Keep on truckin’

Rich Donlon

IS IT A COLD OR THE FLU ?

An infographic titled "IS IT A COLD OR THE FLU ?" with a wavy line separator. On the left, a person is shown lying in bed, looking unwell. To the right, two columns of symptoms are listed under the headings "COLD" and "FLU". Each symptom is accompanied by a small icon: a person with a sore throat, a sneezing person, lungs for cough, a headache, a person with a fever, and a person with muscle pain. The "FLU" column includes icons for a high fever (thermometer), chills (person with shivers), vomiting (person with a bowl), and loss of appetite (fork and knife).

COLD	FLU
SORE THROAT	MUSCLE PAIN
SNEEZING	HIGH FEVER
COUGH	CHILLS
HEADACHE	VOMITING
FATIGUE	LOSS OF APPETITE



Abuse to any one at any time is always wrong. If you or a loved one is suffering in an abusive situation, reach out to the USPS EAP.

Stop the Silence - Stop the Violence

Reach Out to Your EAP

Often victims of domestic violence struggle with insecurity and insufficient support, both financially and emotionally.

Victims have to call in sick, and in extreme cases, they miss so much work they lose their jobs. Not only is this bad for the victim and the workplace, but it also gives the abusers more control as the victim must rely on them even more.

Many times victims remain in abusive situations. Your EAP is here to help change that.

Financial Stats

- Victims of intimate partner violence lose 8 million days of paid work yearly.
- The cost of intimate partner violence exceeds \$8.3 billion per year.
- Between 21-60% of victims of intimate partner violence lose their jobs due to reasons stemming from the abuse.

Your EAP is here to help. Counselors are available always at 800-327-4968 (800-EAP-4YOU) or TTY: 877-492-7341. You may also find support in the following ways via:

EAP4YOU.com

View our resource library, watch educational webinars or enter a live chat session.

Talkspace

Reach out to a licensed therapist through audio, video and text messages.

myStrength

Find personalized resources to improve your mental health.

Video Counseling

Visit with EAP consultants and clinicians from any where with a video call.

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WAKE UP

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I WANT YOU...

*at the next meeting
November 5, 2019*

The Veteran's Creed

- 1. I am an American Veteran**
- 2. I proudly served my country**
- 3. I live the values I learned in the military**
- 4. I continue to serve my community, my country and my fellow veterans**
- 5. I maintain my physical and mental discipline**
- 6. I continue to lead and improve**
- 7. I make a difference**
- 8. I honor and remember my fallen comrades**

