



WAKE UP!

President/ Editor
Dave Barbuzzi

Publisher

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Thank A Vet



Not just on November 11, but every day...

President's Message

"Is It Over Yet"

By the time you read this Article, the election for President of the United States should be just a day or two away. I am writing on Friday, October 23. At present, there have been more than 51,000,000 votes cast. Some of these votes are already being counted. Eight states begin counting votes either one week, or two weeks prior to election day. The other forty-four states, including all of the New England states, don't start counting their ballots until election day. Massachusetts has received over 1 million votes so far.

What does this mean? Well, consider that the 51 million votes already cast by mail/drop-off represents more than 34% of ALL VOTES CAST IN THE 2016 ELECTIONS. The fact that so many people have voted a full eleven days before the election serves to demonstrate just how divided the country is right now. Regardless of which candidate they support, citizens are voting in record numbers and if the trend continues this year's election will shatter previous voting records.

When all is said and done, I hope the country, the neighborhoods, can heal. The country is on edge, with each "side" reaching a fever pitch in support of their candidate. I am deeply concerned over how this country will react after the election regardless of the outcome. I hope I'm wrong, but I envision the kind of mayhem that we witness after sporting championship deciding games. I hope that no matter the outcome, that no one is hurt.

I have been following the Covid-19 trends and news stories with much interest. Just today it has been announced that the CDC has revised its position on what constitutes "close contact". Prior to this revision, close contact was defined as being six feet or less from someone for a period of at least 15 minutes. The new definition is being six feet or less from someone for a period of at least 15 minutes within a 24-hour period. This new definition greatly increases the number of people that would be impacted by someone that is carrying the disease and it greatly expands the group of people that contact tracing would encompass.

I have received many calls regarding other delivery companies using USPS barcodes on packages that they deliver. Some have even gone so far as to put these packages INTO THE MAILBOX!! I don't know when or how this issue will be resolved. There are a couple things that you can do, however. First, make sure your Postmaster (supervisor first, but if he/she doesn't do anything, put it on the postmaster) is aware of what is happening and if there is someplace that repeatedly receives these parcels make note of it. Second, educate your customers. Make sure that your customer is aware that the parcel that is left at the end of the driveway, or out in the rain, or whatever else, was NOT delivered by you. Explain to your customer that they can verify this

by entering the barcode number into the tracking program on usps.com. It is important that customers are made aware that we provide the best service, that we will attempt delivery at the door and attempt to place their parcel into their hands.

This is extremely important, especially right now. Through no fault of letter carriers, public confidence dipped a little bit over the summer. The postal service played the part of a political football, kicked around by Postmaster General DeJoy. Shippers even posted "warnings" on their website that the postal service was experiencing delays and perhaps customers should consider alternatives to the postal service. Our detractors took to social media, peppering local city and town gossip sites with complaints about the postal service. We are entering Christmas season. We NEED the public to be confident that they can trust us to get their packages delivered to their door, on time, without damage. I know that letter carriers are up to that challenge.

I would also like to talk about meetings. I recently contacted the Knights of Columbus, before the uptick in Covid cases, and found out that they are not allowed to have more than 25 people at a function. Clearly, we still can't have an in-person meeting under these circumstances. Last month, we had a Branch Zoom meeting. The meeting lasted a little over an hour, and that included nominations for delegates to the 2021 Mass State Letter Carriers' Convention. The meeting went relatively smoothly.

This month, we will again meet by Zoom. As a matter of fact, we will be meeting by Zoom for the foreseeable future. The information to login to the meeting can be found on the back page of the Wake-Up! To make it even easier to log in, there will be a link posted to the Branch 25 website (nalcbranch25.com). All you have to do is open the branch website on your computer, tablet, or smartphone and press the link. That's it, you're in! We aim to keep the meetings to an hour and we try to provide as much information and answer as many questions as we can. I hope to see you onscreen at the next meeting.

Finally, I want to again make clear that I am more than happy to host a Zoom meeting with any office that would like to do so. Further, if any of the stewards would like the Branch to provide any training, on whatever topic, we can do so on Zoom as well. We have to turn the negative into a positive and stay in touch.

Stay informed!

Dave Barbuzzi

Executive Vice-President's Report

Vote. I don't need to say much else. It is important in every election whether it be local or national, but you should take it seriously. There will be a high turnout this year, but that should be the rule not the exception for all elections. You can vote by either going to an early voting poll in your community or by mail if you have requested a vote by mail ballot. Obviously, you can go to your polling place on November 3, but Covid has made this less popular. I requested a vote by mail ballot and dropped it off at the designated box in my community at least 2 weeks ago. Any way you choose to do it is fine but please make sure you vote. Time will be tight by the time you read this so voting at the actual polling place may be your only option. We will be having a branch Zoom meeting on election night seeing it is the first Tuesday of the month, so vote early if possible. The Zoom meeting for last months branch meeting went well, not perfect but a good chance to catch some information without leaving your house.

Since the last Wakeup was published, we have been notified that all route inspections have been cancelled. The North Reading station was the only office scheduled to be inspected and there is no indication of when inspections will resume. The times generated from these current months could be used for analysis in any future adjustment, so please make sure you make the proper punches. We want the office and street credit to go where it belongs.

Open season for federal employee health benefits (FEHB) runs from November 9th through December 14th. This is the only time during the year you are allowed to change your plan or to sign up for a plan if you do not have one, unless you have a life changing event such as getting married or having a child. Every member will be sent a package with information about the NALC Health Plan for their review. This is a good plan that is owned and operated by the NALC, with good benefits and competitive rates. Everybody needs a plan that is beneficial to their own needs, but I urge you to compare the NALC plan with any other plan you are considering. You can sign up for whatever plan you choose either online at the Liteblue page or by phone at Postalease (877-477-3273). In both cases you will need your employee ID number and your USPS PIN. It's probably a good time to check where you are with your TSP contributions and allocations also. There are new Life Funds in the TSP that have a 5 year span to target a more specific date that you will begin to withdraw your funds. As always you should check with a financial advisor if needed for advice on these funds but there is an explanation on the TSP website.

Unfortunately, we have carriers get injured on the job more than anyone would like, but it is a reality. It used to be that you requested a Form CA-1 from your supervisor if you were to seek medical assistance, filled

out your section and the supervisor filled out management's section and it was sent to the Health Resource Management office who would in turn send it to the Dept of Labor (DOL). Now the most efficient way to report an injury to the DOL is to go to WWW.ECOMP.DOL.GOV and set up an account and fill out a CA-1 online. Of course, the first step is to inform your supervisor of any injury as soon as possible. It goes instantly into the system and you get a case number much faster than before. This is important when you are trying to seek treatment and your health care provider is looking for a case number in order to have treatment approved by the DOL. If you don't have a computer at home or you are technically challenged, your supervisor is supposed to be trained to help you on the computer at work. If you need help with this or any workers compensation call the Union office. The sooner you call us the better.

Keep your head up!

Paul Desmond

Calendar of Events

November 1	All Saint's Day, Daylight Savings Time Ends
November 3	BRANCH 25 MONTHLY ZOOM MEETING
November 3	ELECTION DAY!!
November 9	Open Season Begins
November 10	USMC Day
November 11	Veterans' Day
November 13	Sadie Hawkins Day
November 19	Great American Smokeout
November 26	Thanksgiving
November 27	Black Friday
November 29	Advent Begins

Branch 25 Directory of Officers

David J. Barbuzzi	President
Paul G. Desmond	Executive V.P.
Dan Wheeler	Vice President
Andy Coan	Secretary
James P. Nutter	Treasurer
Kenneth Dusombre	Health Benefits Rep.
Jim Salvati	Safety Officer
Jack Lyman	Sergeant At Arms
Ron Noviello	Chmn. Board of Trustees
Dan Raske	Trustee
Bruce Johnson	Trustee
John McNulty	Trustee
Anthony Bossi	Assistant Secretary
Peter Godino	Assistant Treasurer
Bob Cronin	MBA-NSBA Rep
Steve Pickett	Assistant Safety Officer
Richard Donlon	Asst Health Benefits Rep
Ron Noviello	Workers' Comp Rep.

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

V.P. REPORT

There are just 22 days until the election as I write this month's VP Report. If the next couple of weeks between my writing and your reading are like the rest of this year, there will be a lot that has happened in between. The USPS has delivered 417 million pieces of election mail so far this year, including ballot applications, voter information and 64 million ballots. In comparison, the USPS delivered 200 million pieces of election mail in 2016. There are people who do not support Vote by Mail and will claim fraud, even without proof, but hopefully everything goes as smoothly as possible. The USPS has not yet released the final financial numbers for the fourth quarter of 2020, but the hope is the report will show that things are further looking up from the low point of earlier this year.

The COVID-19 Pandemic has taken its toll on the entire country. There have been almost 8 million cases of Coronavirus in the United States, including over 200,000 deaths. The unemployment rate in September was 7.9%, with over 12 million people unemployed. That number has gone down for the last few months but is still almost double of pre-pandemic levels. Letter carriers have been lucky to keep working but have also been thrust on to the front lines during the pandemic and have not been exempt from the consequences of COVID-19. At least 22 active letter carriers have died from the virus. Many letter carriers have been affected in other ways. Struggles with remote learning for children, spouses losing jobs and the illness or death of family members are some of the issues that letter carriers have dealt with. For me

personally, I had to deal with my father being diagnosed with COVID-19 while he was in a nursing home and we could not visit. Luckily, he recovered but for many families their loved ones did not.

We will see where the election results take us. The issues of postal reform and emergency funding/ stimulus money for the USPS, which I have mentioned in earlier articles, will again be hot topics after the election. The direction those issues take will depend a lot on who wins the presidential and congressional elections this year. Time will tell the tale, as it always does.

One thing is for sure going forward; Amazon will continue their push for dominance in the online retail market. Amazon accounted for 45% of all ecommerce sales in 2019. Almost half of all online purchases made were made from Amazon! That number will only increase as they look to grow their market share. Amazon had 280 billion dollars in revenue in 2019. That means they made \$283,000 per minute last year! Amazon is continuing to push to move towards more 1-Day and Same-Day delivery as well as moving away from using UPS and the Postal Service as "last mile" delivery partners. According to Marc Wulfraat, president of logistics firm MWPWL International, Amazon delivered 67% of its own parcels this year and looks to increase that number going forward. They are aggressively adding small warehouses all over the country, often duplicating UPS's network of logistic locations. In Massachusetts they are opening a new distribution center in North Andover and a new office tower in the Seaport District of Boston which will add over 3000 jobs between them. The USPS must be able to make the changes and take the operational initiatives it needs to be able to remain competitive and here's to hoping the election brings better opportunities for that in 2021

In Solidarity,
Dan Wheeler

 **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



In last month's issue of the Wake-Up! I offered some thoughts on the presurgery/preprocedure consultation that routinely takes place when applicable. I wrote that I would offer additional related thoughts in this month's issue, and so, in the words of talk show host Chris Cuomo, "Let's Get After It."

1. Getting Ready
 - a.) No alcohol and (almost always) no eating after midnight.
 - b.) No cosmetics and no skin-care products the morning of the procedure.
 - c.) Pack smart. You may want to bring your laptop, a good book(s), earplugs (for guarding against that loudly snoring roommate) - things to make your stay more comfortable. It's a good idea to leave your valuables at home.
2. At The Hospital
 - a.) Review your health record at check-in.
 - b.) Meeting with anesthesiologist is a crucial part of the procedure. He or she will have a series of questions for you. You in turn will be able to ask questions, e.g., will the anesthesia be general or local and what are the protocols for the procedure, etc. Remember, the more information you share, the safer the outcome.
3. After Your Procedure
 - a.) Establish a rapport with your in-hospital caregivers so that they relate to you as a person rather than by your ailment.
 - b.) Don't be shy about determining the credentials of those treating you.
 - c.) Address any concerns that you have with your surgeon.
 - d.) Be sure you are adequately prepared to return home safely.

This presentation is by no means all-encompassing but I hope it provides helpful information if needed.

Finally, a special message from Jerry Lee Lewis to fellow Executive Board Member Jim Salvati - "Goodness gracious Great Balls O' Fire!"

Keep on truckin'

Rich Donlon

I began my postal career in April of 1987, and many things have changed since my first stint as a letter carrier in Waltham, MA. For instance, when I resigned in 1999, there was no DPS, FSS, nor GPS., scanners, and LLV's had just replaced the old white postal jeeps. Yes, so very many things have changed since I last left this carrier career, my initial employment as a civil servant. I can remember though, that as a shop steward, I would have to remind carriers NOT to deliver any mail after dark because it was determined to be a safety hazard...back then.

So, listen to this one. During my letter carrier re-orientation, held at the GMF upon my signing up again to become a newly-appointed CCA, one of the instructors advised our class to be very careful if you ever find yourself delivering mail at night. He then said to be sure you wear a headlamp to aid in seeing through the darkness. Well, I let out a big chuckle and told him that surely he was joking, because it was truly a safety hazard to deliver mail after it becomes dark out. Well, it used to be.

However, this letter carrier good start instructor informed me that, during my separation and hiatus from the postal service it was determined that darkness alone did not make mail delivery unsafe. He used the example of letter carriers in Alaska who, because of living in the time zone of the midnight sun, have to deliver mail in the dark many months out of the year.

The reality is, darkness in and of itself is not a safety hazard. That does not mean, however, that delivering mail in the dark is the same as delivering mail during the day in daylight. Carriers have to take extra precautions when delivering in the dark. You have to pay extra attention to where you are stepping. In the dark, it is difficult to recognize black ice, it is also more difficult to spot large cracks in the sidewalk. If you are using your headlamp to be able to see the sidewalk, then you most likely aren't illuminating your mail and you aren't able to read addresses. As a result, you may not be able to finger mail while walking, you may have to wait until you can divert your headlamp light from the ground to the mail.

It may also be unsafe to deliver mail to some houses. Perhaps there is no walkway light or porch light. Only you can decide your circumstances. Be sure to make decisions based on safety. If you decide not to deliver, make certain that you have detailed reasons for your decision.

Cheers!

Stevie Pickett
Assistant Safety Officer

VOTE

Exercise
Your Right

KNOW THE SIGNS



Suicidal signs may reveal themselves in conversation, through actions or even social media posts. If you recognize the following signs, reach out and speak up.

- Talking, discussing, fixating on death or suicide
- Giving away valuable or meaningful possessions
- Having reckless and dangerous behavior
- Increasing the use of alcohol and/or drugs
- Sleep issues, too much or too little
- Not taking basic care of self
- Having a history of suicide attempts
- Putting personal business in order
- Neglecting doctor's orders
- Increased anger & intensified mood swings
- Withdrawing, isolating and disconnecting from others

Your EAP is here for you & we can help. Contact us today.

800-EAP-4YOU (800-327-4968)

TTY: 877-492-7341 | EAP4YOU.com



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

WAKE UP

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at the next meeting
November 3
via
ZOOM Meeting

Topic: Monthly Branch Meeting
Time: Nov 3, 2020 08:00 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85461695484>

Meeting ID: **854 6169 5484**

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