



WAKE UP!

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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



Thank A Vet



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

President's Message

“Tid Bits”

No, the title of this article doesn't represent the little cheese cracker that Nabisco stopped making in the early 2000's (I never liked those growing up). This month, my article will serve to throw out “tid bits” of information that hopefully many of you will find useful.

First, it is that time of year again. It's time to apply for the Massachusetts AFL-CIO Scholarships. There is a link below to the website where you can find the online registration process, as well as study materials and an interactive exam studying tool. The branch presents two (2) \$1,000.00 scholarships to children of branch members that are graduating high school and continuing their education. Because the branch participates in this program, our members' children also qualify for many other scholarships offered by the Massachusetts AFL-CIO. Be sure to take advantage of this program!

<https://www.massafcio.org/scholarships>

The next thing I would like to touch on is something that is misunderstood by even the most veteran carriers and managers. The Holiday Schedule. Specifically, when and if carriers are excused from working on the holiday schedule. It is best to understand the proper meaning of the contractual language, especially with four holidays coming up in the next 60 days.

Many people believe that you can “bookend” your holiday with annual leave and be excused from working. This misconception comes from the language in Article 8 (overtime) which reads: ***“Normally, employees, including employees on the Overtime Desired List, who have scheduled annual leave, including incidental annual leave, immediately preceding and/or following non-scheduled days will not be required to work overtime on the non-scheduled days...”*** The language goes on to state that it is not the parties intent to create a means to circumvent the scheduling provisions of Article 8.

Holidays fall under Article 11 and Article 11 creates an entirely different requirement. The relevant language is ***“As many full-time and part-time regular schedule employees as can be spared will be excused from duty on a holiday or day designated as their holiday...”*** The above absolute language in Article 11 trumps the “normally” language found in Article 8. The Holiday Schedule is not a “normal” schedule.

It is best for everyone to understand this early in their career. Letter carriers have mistakenly believed that they have earned an exemption by using annual leave and have spent money on travel or events or whatever, only to find themselves on the holiday schedule required to work. They are then faced with the decision whether to

forego their plans, potentially losing money spent on reservations and travel, or take the time off and gamble on what management's response to their absence will be. Neither choice is a good one.

Have you been injured on the job...yet? It has been my experience over my career that most letter carriers, at some point in their career, suffer an on-the-job injury. Would you know what to do if you are injured on the job? There are forms that need to be filled out. Which form depends on what type of injury.

A CA-1 is for a traumatic injury. A traumatic injury is one that occurs during the course of one work day. A CA-2 is for an occupational disease or injury. This is an injury that develops over more than one work day. I won't get into a CA-2A as they are uncommon and a discussion on a CA-2A is better had with specific fact circumstances available.

Anyway, if and when injured, you should make note of the time. Not only is the time required for the CA form, but if management doubts your story and the OIG investigates, they will make a federal case out of your reporting of the time if it is not accurate. Think ring doorbell cameras with time stamps showing that you tripped down the stairs 6 minutes later than you said you did. It's best to report everything accurately. If you forget to note the time, then say words to the effect of “I believe it was approximately xx:xx as I had just finished delivering this address.”

Report the injury to your supervisor, in writing! Keep a copy of the notification as you will need it if you don't fill out a CA form immediately. Once you report your injury, if you are going to seek medical, get a CA-16 from your supervisor. You also need to get your supervisor's work email address, you will need it when you file your claim on ecomp. The CA-16 is authorization for payment for your medical provider. You present it to your provider as opposed to presenting your health insurance card.

When you go for medical treatment, a MEDICAL DOCTOR must sign (or countersign) the CA-20, which is the Attending Physician's Report. Notice it is not the “Attending Nurse Practitioner's Report” or the “Attending Physician's Assistant Report”. It is the PHYSICIAN'S report and as such must be signed by a physician. Hopefully, your doctor takes the time to answer the questions as asked on the form. It is far easier to get a claim approved on first submission than it is to have to appeal a denied claim.

Unless you need emergent care, it is a good idea to talk to someone at the Union office so that we can guide you through the completion of the CA form and also to give you tips on how to speak with your doctor so that he or she properly completes his or her forms. Often times, carriers don't provide good (continued on page 5)

Executive Vice-President's Report

It has been good to be able to have in person monthly branch meetings, and I hope more members are able to attend each month. I know everyone is working a lot of hours and has other obligations, but if each member tried to attend a few meetings each year that would be great. We have some food at 7:15pm, usually pizza, start the meeting at 8pm and give out as much information as possible in an hour or so, and take any questions you may have. We try to adjourn the meeting by 9:00pm, but we will stay as long as members have questions. It is always good to see new faces, so remember we meet on the first Tuesday of the month at the Wilmington K of C.

Just a reminder to all that we are constantly being observed both intentionally and unintentionally. The contract states that carriers should expect to be observed in the office and on the street. In any business, management has the right to observe their employees to make sure they are working safely and following proper procedures. On the other hand, we are observed on a daily basis by security cameras in businesses and private residences. Some of our stations have cameras in the parking lots or inside the buildings, although I have no idea if they are actually working. For the most part, no one pays attention to these recordings unless they have a reason to. Unfortunately, there have been incidences recently, that carriers have been seen in videos in violation of postal policies and/or safety rules. Some in the branch and some not, but they sometimes get sent to local managers or make it to the social media networks. This is just another reason to keep in mind that no matter where you are, you are being observed, either directly or indirectly. I'm sure there are plenty of recordings out there of carriers performing their jobs admirably, but those generally aren't the ones that make it to the public. Be safe.

Keep in mind that we will soon be in Open Season for health benefits. The open season dates this year are November 8-December 13. Naturally, I would suggest you look at the NALC Plan to see if it is a good fit for you and your family. Everyone has their own individual needs for health care. There is an Open Season page on the NALC Health Plan website and it includes a brochure for 2022, and a slide show for anyone to check out along with the rates. This is the only time to sign up for health benefits or change your plan unless you have a life changing event during the rest of the year, so take advantage if necessary. Remember also, you need to carry health benefits from the FEHB program for the last 5 years of your career to maintain your benefits in retirement. Any changes to Thrift Savings Plan contributions or allocations can be done year-round.

It is great to see the Patriots, Bruins and Celtics all open their seasons to full stadiums and the Red Sox in the playoffs again with huge crowds. I know opening the outdoor stadiums has been easier than opening the indoor venues, as far as Covid is concerned, but overall I

think it is a good sign that we are finally able to enjoy some of these activities. This has also allowed a large number of people to get back to working at these venues and remain employed. The closer we get to the end of this virus the better.

We have a lot of retirements happening before the New Year, so make sure your retirement sessions are scheduled well in advance so there are no delays. Be careful with the trick or treaters out there. Halloween being on a Sunday this year should make it easier on those carriers working late.

Keep your head up!

Paul Desmond

Calendar of Events

November 2	Regular Monthly Meeting K of C Wilmington 8:00PM Food served at 7:00Pm
November 3	Cliché Day
November 4	Men Make Dinner Day
November 7	Daylight Savings Day
November 9	Chaos Never Dies Day
November 10	USMC Day
November 11	Veterans Day
November 13	World Kindness Day
November 14	World Diabetes Day
November 25	Thanksgiving Day

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

The fall season is upon us making this a glorious time of the year in New England. With it comes football, magnificent foliage colors and majestically clear blue skies. That's the good news. Unfortunately, the season, introducing us to the enjoyment of the holidays can have a bit of a downside - the temptation to overindulge. The combination of holiday treats and a potential dip in willpower can lead to unhealthy habits. There are positive things we can do to deal with these threats however.

- Recognize that, notwithstanding the physical demands of being a letter carrier, we tend to become more sedentary during the fall/winter seasons.
- While at a party, ask yourself - do you really want one more drink or a couple more of those delicious cookies?
- Consider: Am I becoming too much of a "couch potato"?
- Should I think about minor changes in my daily routine? - Maybe an adjustment to my exercise program?

This article is not meant to diminish the joys of the holiday season, but rather to offer suggestions for healthy living. Who knows - maybe following them would result in the needle on the scale reading the same next spring as it does today.

Keep on truckin'

Rich Donlon

Trustees' Report

In accordance with Article 6 Section 9 of the NALC Constitution for the Government of Subordinate and Federal Branches, on Tuesday, October 19, 2021, trustees Daniel J Raske, John K McNulty and Mark Gangi and observed by Joseph Stearns, audited the financial books and found them in order.

Beginning balance as of December 31, 2020	\$434,277.81
Ending balance as of June 30, 2020	\$454,830.46

Board of Trustees

Daniel J Raske

John K McNulty

Mark J Gangi

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

Hello Branch 25 brothers and sisters! I am Jeremy Provost and I have been with the Postal Service since 2014. I have spent my career at the Billerica DMU with Jim Salvati. I am really looking forward to working with Jim as the Assistant Safety Officer.

Heads up! Daylight savings time ends on Sunday November 7th. While this means we get to sleep in for an extra hour it also means that the sun sets an hour earlier. We'll be left working in the dark. Of the many challenges that the early sunset creates, I'd like to focus on driving at night.

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration motorists are three times more likely to be involved in a fatal accident at night than during the day. A factor that contributes to this is the reduced visibility at night. It's harder to see and be seen. Without the sun on our side all we can see out the windshield is a small patch of yellow light right in front of the LLV. It is important to watch your speed at night. Ideally you should be able to stop within the range of your headlights.

Another challenge of driving at night is the glare from oncoming traffic. To avoid being blinded by the light, try focusing on the white line on your side of the road or the edge of the pavement itself. A clean windshield will also reduce the glare. Make sure your LLV has a full tank of washer fluid and top it off if it gets low.

A lot of carriers use the dome light to see the mail at night. It works great but when I look out the windshield all I see are my knees. Take the time to stop before turning on the dome light and shut it off before moving again. I like wearing a headlamp when delivering at night. I can see the mail while I'm in the truck, and I can see where I'm walking when I dismount.

Doing a daily vehicle check every morning will make a big difference at night. Make sure all the lights work so you can see and be seen. Even if you're back in the office before sunset you will likely be driving home in the dark. Maybe for the first time since early spring. Check your personal vehicle to make sure it is in good working order for night time driving, and adjust your driving habits for when the sun goes down.

Stay Safe,

Jeremy Provost

Hello to all the members of Branch 25, I would like to say thank you for sending in pictures of people's last punches for retirement. Keep sending them in so we can get them recognized for their amazing careers!

Now on to another issue, as some people know I was a CCA for a year, then regular for 5 before I left and came back. I have been back as a carrier for almost 2 years, again as a CCA. With this comes a wealth of knowledge I have been able to pass onto the new CCA's and freshly converted CCA's. Now a newly converted regular and CCA's go to an orientation in Boston, and we all know how that goes. So here's where you come in.

With all these recent retirements the new regulars aren't given enough information about what has changed for them and their new rights. With that being said there are a lot of new hires that aren't aware of their rights concerning work hours in a day or time off for example as well. I know most are just scared to ask questions to tenured regulars so I am hoping anyone who reads this can reach out to an employee in their office and see if they have questions that can be answered. We are all in this together and with prime time coming up I think it would be helpful for these employees to gain the knowledge going forward.

Keep Reading

Chris Bruno

President's Message (continued)

descriptions or explanations of what happened. If you speak to us first, you will have a better idea of how to properly express yourself.

Finally, after you have completed your CA form and submitted it online, you can follow its progress on the ecomp portal. You can access anything that has been submitted in your case and check for accuracy. Again, if you see any discrepancies it's always best to talk to us at the Union office about them so that we can advise you as to what your next steps should be.

Lastly this month, and certainly not least, I want to wish my friend, Mary Tournas, a long, happy, healthy retirement. Mary is a letter carrier that cares and has never been afraid to call out anyone, including me. I wish you the best Mary, enjoy the hell out of your family, especially that granddaughter of yours!

Stay informed!

Dave Barbuzzi

Vice President's Report

This month's report has nothing to do with the post office or the NALC, not directly anyway. About the time I was to be writing my submission for the next *Wake Up* my dad passed away. To be honest, I just was not feeling the usual content. To quote my friend and fellow executive council member Richie Donlon, "If you will indulge me for a moment..." I would like to share a few thoughts about my dad this month.

I always think it is kind of cool to see someone who has followed their father into the same line of work. That was not the case with me and my dad. He worked most of his career as an engineer for a textile machine manufacturer. His career path followed the path many people's followed in the second part of the twentieth century, holding on in an industry that was rapidly sending operations and jobs overseas to cheaper locations, until finally his job was gone too. He only worked in a union job briefly after high school but did have one union experience, he relayed to me. In the early 1960s he worked in the machine shop of a mill for a couple of years. At some point he was fired, for no cause, by a boss who did not like him. He filed a grievance and the union he was part of had a lawyer represent him at his hearing. He got his job back and the company had to repay the \$50 he had paid the union lawyer to represent him. He was always proud of his little victory against management. I like to think that story had, at least, some small part in my future union involvement.

I also like to think that my dad's work ethic helped to shape mine as well. My dad worked until he was 73 years old. He worked years after he could collect social security and after people started asking him why he did not just retire and enjoy not working. Everyone is different and I think, honestly, he just enjoyed getting up and going to work every day. I have no plans to work until I am 73 years old, but I always admired him for doing it. By the time he retired he was already showing signs of dementia, although it would still be a couple of years until he was diagnosed with the Alzheimer's Disease that would eventually take his life.

My dad was always proud of my job at the post office. For those younger carriers out there, it may sound funny now but to the older generations working for the post office was an impressive thing.

Getting into the post office was "a government job," meant good benefits, steady work and someplace you could work your whole career. Years ago, the office I worked at had bought all the employees jackets with the postal logo and office name on it. I never really wore it and at some point, I gave it to my dad. He wore that jacket all the time for a few years and according to my mother used it as a conversation piece. If someone asked about the Post Office (or maybe even if they did not) he would use it to tell them about what I was doing at work or with the Union. As time went on and his illness progressed my stories of what I was doing at work or with the Union became more one-sided until they became just talk to pass the time or fill the silence. Even though my dad never was a union activist nor a mailman he has influenced the person I have tried to be, both as a worker and a Union member.

In Solidarity,

Dan Wheeler



QPR

Question, Persuade, Refer

The QPR approach to suicide prevention has three steps.

Question

If you believe someone is considering suicide, ask them directly, “Are you thinking about suicide or wanting to kill yourself?” Do not ask in a roundabout way, for example, “Do you want to hurt yourself?” Self-harm can be non-lethal and it’s not the same as wanting to die. It takes courage to ask someone if they are considering suicide, but know that asking someone if they want to kill themselves does **NOT** drive them toward that action. That’s a myth and not accurate. Don’t be afraid to ask the question.

Persuade

Persuade the suicidal person to allow you to assist them in getting help right away. Say “Will you go with me to get help?” or “Will you let me assist you in getting help?” Another option can be to enlist their promise not to kill themselves until you’ve arranged help for them. If persuasion doesn’t work, call a crisis hotline: National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 800-273-TALK (8255), emergency services: 911 or the USPS EAP: 800-EAP-4YOU (800-327-4968), TTY: 877-492-7341 for immediate assistance.

Refer

Refer the person to an appropriate resource for assistance. Ideally, you would personally escort them to see a health care professional. Next best would be to assist in making arrangements for help and getting their agreement to follow through on this plan. Less preferable is to provide referral resources and have them seek one of the options on their own.

If you or someone you know has thoughts of suicide get help right away. Call your EAP. We are here for you. There are a variety of ways to connect with us including: by telephone, online, through a video call, by live chat or text message.

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
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WAKE UP

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at the next meeting
November 2
K of C Wilmington
8:00 PM



Lisa Secchiaroli punching in for her last day after an amazing 35 year career. Congratulations on you're retirement!