



WAKE UP!

President/ Editor
Dave Barbuzzi

Publisher
Chris Bruno

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Acton , Amesbury , Andover , Bedford , Beverly , Billerica , Burlington , Chelmsford , Concord , Danvers, Dracut , Gloucester, Haverhill, Holliston, Ipswich, Lawrence, Lowell, Lynnfield, Manchester, Marblehead, Maynard, Merrimac, Methuen, Newburyport, North Andover, North Chelmsford, North Reading , Peabody, Reading, Rockport, Salem , South Hamilton, Sudbury , Tewksbury , Topsfield, Wakefield , Wayland , Wilmington , Winchester



Smilin' Rich Ahearn receives his retirement gratuity surrounded by James Tuttle, Cam Hillner, Dave Barbuzzi and Jack Lyman.

President's Message

"Time is Running Out"

I have written about it several times in the past, but it bears repeating, IF YOU HAVE HAD COVID 19 FILE A CA-1! The earliest cases were in early 2020, soon it will be 2023 so as the title says, time is running out to file a claim. We have no idea what any potential long-term effects of Covid might be, so it is imperative that you file a claim so that you are covered in the future.

You can not always plan for everything. We changed the branch by-laws to have meetings on the second Tuesday of the month. We did so for things like holiday schedules that are frequently around the first Tuesday of the month and we also took election day into account. We didn't want meetings to interfere with people voting. Well, this year, election day is on the second Tuesday of the month. That is because election day is on the first Tuesday ***after the first Monday in November.*** What's that expression about the best laid plans?

There is some very good information on the following pages and there is also some sobering information. Particularly distressing is the information contained in Dan Wheeler's article regarding robberies of letter carriers. If you're ever in a situation where it's your safety or the mail, make the right choice, take care of yourself.

Tony Bossi's article references the 12/60 workhour limits. A 12/60 violation used to be extremely uncommon. However, having gone through time records of multiple offices investigating potential overtime equitability grievances, I discovered that these violations are fairly common now. If you work over 12 (11.5 if you're not on the overtime desired list) hours in a day, or 60 hours in a week, file a grievance! It is an automatic win, and that can't be said about any other grievance.

So, here we are at about 3/4 of the way down the column, seems like a good spot for the next piece of information. This is my penultimate "President's Message" in the Wake-Up! Effective December 19 I will be beginning the next phase of my Union career working out of the NBA's office as a Regional Workers Compensation Assistant. My responsibilities will include Region 14 and Region 11, so I will still serve the members of Branch 25, just in a different capacity. If you are injured on the job, be certain to reach out for help.

A couple of you have noticed that I have been writing and speaking frequently about the newer officers. I have the utmost confidence and pride in every member of the executive council. I look forward to watching the direction that they lead the branch in. If you haven't been involved to this point, get involved now. One of the biggest challenges of a President or officer is reaching the members. Reach out to him to help out.

This month we will receive a 1.3% wage increase, and there will be a new step added to the pay chart. The new step, step p, will be \$444 higher than the current step o. After these two increases all that will be left is a potential COLA for January of 2023.

It will soon be time for high school seniors to sign up to take the MA AFL-CIO Scholarship Exam. Unfortunately, at press time the link is not active. That being said, the deadline to register is December 16, 2022. The exam will be administered through the student's local guidance department between February 6 and February 10, 2023. The Branch awards two \$1,000 scholarships. Last year, NO ONE APPLIED!!. Not only does registering entitle you to be in the running for the Branch 25 Scholarship, but many AFL-CIO affiliated Unions award scholarships through the program that are open to anyone. It is well worth registering and taking the exam.

The last thing I would like to cover is the FEHBP open season. This year, open season runs from November 14 through December 12, 2022. This is the time when you can either sign up for or make changes to your health benefits. When a CCA is converted to a career employee, they have 60 days to sign up for health insurance. Some CCA's miss this window. Now is the time to sign up to ensure you are covered for the rest of your career. Those that are nearing retirement must also be certain that they are in the program for the five consecutive years before they retire so they can carry insurance into retirement.

Happy Thanksgiving!

Stay well and stay informed!

Dave

Executive Vice-President's Report

We are coming up to the next Open Season for Health Benefits in November and I am not trying to sell any particular plan, although the NALC is a good plan, whatever plan works for you and your family is best. What I do want to stress is the need to sign up for a plan if you do not have health insurance. We have received calls at the Union office from carriers that have either forgot to sign up, or couldn't figure it out online. If you can't figure it out or do not own a computer, there are forms you can fill out through the Postal Service. Also, the Postal Service has the means to help you with their computers and we can try to arrange that, as long as you have your password for Liteblue. The first thing is to make sure you have a current password available, if not you should be requesting one now. Please do not wait until the end of Open Season to do this, you may miss out. This year, Open Season runs from November 14th through December 12th for 2023 benefits. The brochure for the 2023 NALC Plan can be found on the NALC website that connects to the Health Plan site.

Since our last branch meeting there has been a memorandum of understanding signed by the NALC and the Postal Service that authorizes the hiring of PTFs in some of our stations. I hope this somehow makes it easier to not only hire, but to retain employees that want to stay and work for many years. I understand that being a letter carrier isn't for everyone, but it is a good job with good pay and benefits. The retention problem seems to be more related to the amount of hours required to work, than the actual work. It will be a lot better when the Postal Service can retain their employees to the level it was when there was a need to administer a test because there were so many applicants. When I was hired it took over a year from the time I took a test, until the day I had an interview. It was then a couple of months before I was actually hired. Part of the allure of working for any Federal job was always full benefits from day one. Hiring PTFs in all installations may bring us back to that. PTFs also have an immediate career seniority date.

If you had Covid-19 within the last year or so and filed a CA-1 with a request for Continuation of Pay, you should have used your own leave for the first 3 days, and the rest of the time out should have been COP. These are the rules of the Department of Labor. If you were out 14 days or more, all leave reverts to COP. There was a huge backlog in the system last winter because of the number of claims submitted and, as a result, some cases were approved for COP, but the local managers were not instructed to make an adjustment to restore the leave. In these instances, the carrier's leave was charged for the entire absence. This was not intentional by the Postal Service. When carrier's have reported this to the branch, we have been able to have the leave converted to COP very quickly in most cases. If you have had Covid, filed a claim that was approved and not had leave restored that should have been, please let us know at the Branch

office. Any dealings with the DOL are not easy, and can be time consuming, so don't hesitate to call the Union office when you are claiming an on the job injury.

We are getting close to daylight savings time and it will be getting darker earlier every day. This is no reason to cut corners in order to finish early. In the past, management has brought carriers in early to deliver parcels, but that depends on the volume and remains to be seen. Take your lunch and breaks when necessary and not at the end of the day to avoid darkness. Remember, the monthly branch meetings are now on the 2nd Tuesday of the month. Next meeting is November 8th. Vote and then come to the meeting.

Keep your head up and Happy Thanksgiving!

Paul Desmond

Calendar of Events

November 1	All Saints' Day
November 6	Daylight Savings Time Ends
November 8	Election Day
November 8	Branch Meeting K of C Wilmington 8:00PM Food served 7:15PM
November 10	USMC Day
November 11	Veterans Day
November 13	Sadie Hawkins Day
November 17	World Peace Day
November 24	Thanksgiving
November 25	Black Fiday

Branch 25 Directory of Officers

David J. Barbuzzi	President
Paul G. Desmond	Executive V.P.
Dan Wheeler	Vice President
Anthony Bossi	Secretary
James P. Nutter	Treasurer
Kenneth Dusombre	Health Benefits Rep.
Jim Salvati	Safety Officer
Jack Lyman	Sergeant At Arms
Bob Cronin	MBA-NSBA Rep
Chris Bruno	Wake-Up Publisher
Dan Raske	Chairman, Board of Trustees
Bruce Johnson	Trustee
John McNulty	Trustee
Gilbert Paredes	Trustee
Joe Stearns	Trustee
Andy Coan	Assistant Secretary
James Metilinos	Assistant Treasurer
Jeremy Provost	Assistant Safety Officer

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

Secretary’s Report

“The Penalty Overtime Exclusion Period 11.5 /12 /60”

One of my favorite sayings is “the only time I like more than penalty time is quitting time.” If you’re a newer member, penalty overtime rate is paid out to Carriers at 200% your base hourly straight-time rate. But peak season is approaching, and with it the December penalty overtime exclusion period. As referenced in Article 8 of the National Agreement, the December period during which penalty overtime regulations are not applicable, consists of four consecutive service weeks. This year the December period begins December 3rd, 2022 and ends December 30th, 2022. The National Parties agreed the month of December is understood to mean four consecutive service weeks, rather than the entire month. This was agreed upon in M-01508 which can be found in the Materials Reference System at nalc.org.

Another exception during the December period concerns work-hour limitations. Normally, Carriers on the Overtime Desired List (ODL) and Work Assignment List (WAL) may be required to work up to 12 hours in a service day (12.5 hours including mealtime **for the ODL and WAL**) and 60 hours per week per Article 8. These work limits do not apply to full time employees on the ODL or WAL during the penalty overtime exclusion period. Management may assign ODL Carriers to work

more than the 12/60-hour limitations during the penalty overtime exclusion period. ELM Section 432.32 provides the following rule that applies to all employees:

Except as designated in labor agreements for bargaining unit employees or in emergency situations as determined by the PMG (or designee), employees may not be required to work more than 12 hours in 1 service day. In addition, the total hours of daily service, including scheduled work hours, overtime, and mealtime, may not be extended over a period longer than 12 consecutive hours. Postmasters, Postal Inspectors, and exempt employees are excluded from these provisions.

Because this language limits total daily service hours, including work and mealtime, to 12 hours, all letter carriers **not on the ODL or Work Assignment List (including PTFs and CCAs)** are effectively limited to 11½ hours per service day. This is true whether or not a meal break is taken. **This rule also applies during the penalty overtime exclusion period.** Exceptions such as these also effect other provisions of Article 8, such as the Letter Carrier Paragraph:

However, the memo states that management does not have to use ODL carriers to provide auxiliary assistance if such an assignment would mean that the ODL carriers would be working penalty overtime. In that limited situation—if no auxiliary assistance is available without going into penalty overtime—management can require full-time regular carriers not on the ODL to work overtime on their own routes on a regularly scheduled day. Remember that this limited exception applies only when a full-time non-ODL letter carrier is required to work overtime on his/ her own assignment on a regularly scheduled day.

Attend Branch meetings to learn more about these provisions and exceptions, and if you believe your rights are being violated, request time with your steward or contact the Branch Office.

In Solidarity,

Tony Bossi

“Back Story”

A couple of weeks ago I saw a carrier in my office handling a large box that was still strapped to a pallet. The carrier was pulling it, and then tried to use the straps to lift the package and pallet up onto his back like a backpack. There were clerks nearby and I suggested that the carrier ask one of them to get a pallet jack and help. The carrier refused and continued to struggle with the oversize box and pallet all the way to the two-ton. I let the carrier know that he'd be in the *Wake Up!* this month.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics there are more than one million workers who experience back injuries every year. 75% percent of those back injuries occur while performing lifting tasks. For proper lifting, OSHA Safety Training lists five steps. Plan ahead, stretch, lift, carry, and set down.

Before you lift, check the area you are working in. Make sure it's clear and suitable for walking. For example, if you're lifting a heavy package into a hamper then make sure the path from the package to the hamper is clear. Also make sure that your body is ready to lift. Stretching your legs and back will help reduce the risk for injury.

When you lift, stand as close to the load as possible. The further your feet are from the load, the more force is exerted on your back. Bend at the knees and keep your body upright, then (get ready, I'm about to say it) lift with your legs! Look straight ahead, keep your back straight, and keep your shoulders back.

Make sure you have a good grip on the load while you are carrying it. Carry the load close to your body. Take small steps and keep your hips and shoulders in line as you change directions. Set the load down in the reverse of lifting it. Bend at the knees, keep your head up, and keep the load close to your body.

There are also several things to avoid while lifting. You should avoid twisting your body while lifting. Don't lift a load that is too heavy for you. It is unsafe to lift a load above your shoulders or have a load block your vision while you are carrying it. Take your time when lifting a heavy load. Haste makes waste and rushing

while performing a lift could cause you a back injury. Avoid lifting while excessively fatigued. Fatigue is likely to cause poor technique which, again, can cause a back injury. All of this information for safe lifting is also available on osha-safety-training.net.

We all do a lot of lifting and carrying everyday. It's important to take the time and do it right every time.

Stay Safe,

Jeremy Provost

MEMBER ADDRESS UPDATE

MEMBER NAME: _____

NEW ADDRESS: _____

If this is a temporary change please fill-in the beginning and ending dates: FROM ____/____/____ TO ____/____/____

Please mail this form to:
NALC Branch 25
2500 Main St Suite 201
Tewksbury Ma, 01876-3185

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



SIGN ME UP!

How to contribute to the Letter Carrier Political Fund using PostalEASE — ONLINE Enrollment

Through PostalEASE, active letter carriers can contribute directly from their USPS paychecks to the Letter Carrier Political Fund (NALC's PAC) by designating the Political Fund as one of the three payroll "allotments."

Online Enrollment

1. Login to USPS's Postal Ease website at <https://ewss.usps.gov>
You may also get to the Postal Ease website through the USPS LiteBlue website See the instructions below
2. Click "I agree"
3. Enter your Employee ID number and Password and click "Submit"
If you have not yet set up a password click the link provided on the page or go to:
<https://ssp.usps.gov/ssp-web/welcome.xhtml>
If you forgot your password click the link provided on the page or go to:
<https://ssp.usps.gov/ssp-web/einVerification.xhtml>
4. Under Payroll click "Allotments / Payroll Net To Bank"
5. Click "Continue"
6. Click "Allotments"
7. Enter the 9-digit Financial Institution Routing Number: 0 6 4 0 0 0 1 7
8. Enter your 17-digit Account Number _____ 0 0 3 4 9 5 2 5 3 5
See instructions in step D at right
9. Enter Account type as "checking"
10. Enter amount of your Allotment: \$ _____
The maximum yearly amount is \$5,000
11. Click VALIDATE
12. Click SUBMIT
13. Print or write down your confirmation number for your records

To get to Postal Ease through Lite Blue:

- Got to www.liteblue.usps.gov
- Enter you employee ID and Password and click "Log On"
- Click "My HR"
- Click "Employee Apps"
- Click "PoastalEASE"
- Begin at step 1 above

BEFORE YOU START, YOU'LL NEED:

- A. Your 8-digit Employee ID Number (on your paystub)
- B. Your USPS password
- C. Your Postal Record Number (Located on the back cover of your Postal Record magazine, above your name. Or call 202.393.4695 to get your Postal Record Number). See the example below.



- D. To create your personal account number, insert the seven digits of your Postal Record Number to the spaces below:
_____ 0 0 3 4 9 5 2 5 3 5

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. Any guideline amounts are merely suggestions, and you may contribute more or less than the guidelines suggest and the union will not favor or disadvantage you by reason of the amount of your contribution or your decision not to contribute. 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. Federal law requires us to use our best efforts to collect and report the name, mailing address, name of employer and occupation of individuals whose contributions exceed \$200 in a calendar year.



SIGN ME UP!

How to contribute to the Letter Carrier Political Fund using your retirement **ANNUITY**

Using your **Annuity**, retired NALC members can contribute directly from their CSRS or FERS annuities to the Letter Carrier Political Fund (NALC's PAC) on a monthly basis. This is a convenient way to make regular donations to the political action fund similar to the payroll system available to active carriers.

Enroll by Phone

Call the NALC Retirement Office at 202.662.2877 anytime or toll-free at 1.800.424.5186 Monday, Wednesday and Thursday from 10 a.m. to noon or 2 to 4 p.m. (ET). (Note: you will need your CSA retirement Claim number.)

Enroll Online

1. Go to www.servicesonline.opm.gov
2. Enter your CSA number, beginning with the letter A and ending with a zero. SAMPLE: A22222220
3. Enter your PIN (Personal Identification Number). If you don't know it, click Using Services Online for help with one.
4. Once you've entered your CSA number and PIN, click Log In.
5. On the next page, click ALLOTMENTS TO ORGANIZATIONS.
6. Click START
7. Select the Letter Carrier Political Fund (Formerly COLCPE)
8. Enter the amount of your monthly contribution. (*Maximum yearly amount is \$5,000*)
9. Click SAVE
10. On the next page click YES (if correct), then print the next page for your records.

Enroll by Mail

Complete this form and send to:

NALC Retirement Department, Attention: Letter Carrier Political Fund, 100 Indiana Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20001-2144

I, _____ (your name) wish to contribute to the Letter Carrier Political Fund. I authorize the Office of Personnel Management to withhold the amount below from my *monthly* annuity payments:
☐ \$25 ☐ \$20 ☐ \$15 ☐ \$10 ☐ \$5 ☐ Other: \$_____ (Maximum amount per year is \$5,000) and forward that amount to the Letter Carrier Political Fund (NALC's PAC). I make this authorization voluntarily and may revoke it at any time by notifying the Letter Carrier Political Fund in writing.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Full Name (please print): _____ Branch: _____

CSA or Social Security Number: _____ Phone: _____

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. Any guideline amounts are merely suggestions, and you may contribute more or less than the guidelines suggest and the union will not favor or disadvantage you by reason of the amount of your contribution or your decision not to contribute. 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. Federal law requires us to use our best efforts to collect and report the name, mailing address, name of employer and occupation of individuals whose contributions exceed \$200 in a calendar year.

Vice President's Report

Did you see what happened multiple times in St. Louis Missouri back in June? Does anyone know what happened in July in Bethesda, Wheaton, Beltsville, Columbia, or Takoma Park Maryland in July of this year? How about what happened in Covington Kentucky in August? How about what happened in Dayton Ohio or Evanston Illinois at least four times in September? If you guessed letter carriers were robbed at gunpoint for their arrow keys, then you are correct. This has been a disturbing trend in the last few years, and it's getting worse, not better. Letter carriers are being robbed, usually at gunpoint, for their arrow keys. For those who may not know, the arrow key opens the blue collection boxes and many of the larger banks of mailboxes at condos and apartment buildings. Once a thief has the arrow key, they have access to a large amount of mail for the surrounding area. Outgoing mail in a collection box or incoming mail at a delivery point is now available to steal.

This has been happening all over the country at an alarming rate. It has been reported the "going rate" or street value of an arrow key in Chicago is currently \$8000; easy money for someone with a gun. Letter carriers aren't hard to find out there on the street. Sometimes the robber takes just the arrow key. Other times vehicle keys, mail or personal items are stolen as well. Delivering mail is a hard job. We deal with a lot of safety issues out there. Weather issues, delivering in the dark, dogs and just the physical rigors of the job are things we understand we must deal with at some point. Most carriers don't think of the possibility of getting robbed at gunpoint for their arrow key. This doesn't just happen in big cities either. Unfortunately, it's happening everywhere. It does seem to have happened less in our area than in others. I'm not sure if there's a reason for this or if we have just been lucky so far. Whatever the reason for it please be aware out there. This is happening and could just as well happen here as anywhere.

The NALC is aware of this problem as is the Postal Service. It was announced at the recent Committee of Presidents meeting, the NALC along with Postmaster General DeJoy will be meeting with the Postal Inspection Service and the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) to come up with some possible solutions. Right now, the Postal Service asks letter carriers to be vigilant and to be aware of your surroundings. I'm hopeful with the NALC involved we may be able to come up with some other ideas to help keep letter carriers safe. It should go without saying, no letter carrier should ever try to fight with one of these thieves or refuse to give a key or anything else when being threatened. The key, your vehicle, or your money are not worth the potential resulting harm or loss of life.

Last month, I had written one of our offices in Branch 25 would have completed their Live Week for the new alternate route adjustment process and one would be getting ready to start theirs. Due to some technical issues both of our offices management placed into this process, Sudbury and Dracut, have been pushed off for now. They will be re-scheduled once the technical issues are resolved. The month of October is the second pre-determined selection period of this process. At the end of the month, we will know which zones have been selected for the second round. I would imagine we will start to see bigger zones selected now that we have been doing this for a few months and getting a feel for it.

There are a couple of take-aways from what I've seen in the beginning of this process I'd like to talk about. The first one is how important it is for letter carriers to carry their scanners with them at all times on the street, except for when you're on lunch or taking personal needs time. I will admit I'm guilty of leaving my scanner behind when I don't need it to scan something. The fact is the way this new program works it's going to be better for the carrier to get a proper evaluation and adjustment if the Teams can have the clearest possible data to look at in the DSR Program. Multiple consultations occur during this process. These consultations are required by the MOU and are designed to help evaluation teams get information and carrier input about their routes. There are no right or wrong answers. There are no good or bad numbers either. These consultations are also not anything to do with performance, discipline or local management. I have seen carriers worried about needing a steward or asking if the numbers we are going over are OK, good, or bad. It's our hope carriers feel comfortable during these consultations and answer questions as best they can. There are no good or bad answers or numbers and nothing that comes up will be part of the discipline process.

In Solidarity,
Dan Wheeler

Opioid Addiction

Workplace Warning Signs



Opioids are a class of drugs that include heroin, fentanyl and prescribed pain medications. The effect of using and misusing opioids is not limited to personal or home environments and can have a big impact on the workplace. Substance use disorders represent a pressing issue for American employers and workers and workplaces are a critical point of contact for people struggling with or recovering from a substance use disorder. Understanding workplace warning signs can help minimize the potential cost of substance use at work while creating an environment that proactively prevents substance misuse, reduces stigma and encourages treatment and sustained recovery.

Workplace Warning Signs:

- An inexplicable reduction of work efficiency
- Excessive use of sick days
- Sudden decisions to use vacation time
- Increase in accidents and errors
- Frequent tardiness
- Mental slowdown
- Vomiting, nausea
- Sweating, runny nose
- Aches and pains
- Fatigue
- Weight loss
- Facial changes

What You Can Do:

- Follow USPS Policies
- Never ignore a problem
- Monitor performance and behavior
- Talk to the employee privately - focus on observable changes and performance issues
- Give the employee an opportunity to respond
- Alert the employee to EAP services
- Inform them about possible discipline for any performance or policy related violations
- Document everything, including on-the-job accidents

Opioid addiction can lead to serious issues at home and in the workplace. If you or someone you know is struggling with substance abuse—opioid or other—your EAP can help. We are here to support you as you navigate treatment resources. Reach out at 800-327-4968 (800-EAP-4YOU), TTY: 877-492-7341 or visit EAP4YOU.com for more info.

Assistant Treasurer's Report

First and foremost, I'd like to say both candidates for office of National President have held an AMA (Ask Me Anything) on Reddit, which can be found at the following hyperlink:

<https://www.reddit.com/r/USPS/>

Both David Nobel and Brian Renfro have had their identities confirmed and chose to answer many questions regarding the current state of the Postal Service as well as items we many carriers wish to see reformed in the upcoming round of contract negotiations (elimination of the table 2 pay scale, static COLA increases at all steps, an all career workforce, etc). There are many interesting things to see before you cast your vote and send in your ballot. Please take a few minutes and invest some knowledge in the people who will be representing you.

That said, I'd like to discuss social media a little more in depth to many of the members who may be on platforms like Facebook, Reddit, Twitter, etc. Social media is a very good tool to receive answers to some of your contract questions. However, it's a very real possibility that the answer you receive may not be correct.

October 06, a carrier in the NALC Stewards Help Page recently inquired about being mandated to work an NS day on Saturday (10/08). The carrier has annual leave on Thursday (10/06). Normally, this would disallow management from mandating the carrier to work. Article 8 is clear that annual leave directly preceding or following any NS day will not allow that carrier to be available for mandated overtime unless the carrier indicates it to management. There are countless images and citations to prove this by many carriers. However, each of these carriers and citations are demonstrably false.

10/08 is a holiday schedule, Columbus Day. Carrier scheduling for 10/08 will no longer be governed under article 8, but article 11, and management, as long as they follow the correct pecking order under the article (or local contract), may be required to schedule that carrier who has annual on Thursday. It is imperative to know

your contract. Many people will speak confidently on social media platforms behind a computer screen with completely incorrect information. Many people will take that information to their supervisors. And I'm sure in many installations, management will get it wrong. This can lead to more potential grievances.

If you have questions regarding your holiday schedule or anything that you may think is potentially a contractual issue, or even if you're looking for clarity on any topic, call the hall. Seek out your steward. We usually have an answer pretty quickly. If we don't, we have the ability to contact longer tenured members who will directly. We will help you.

The mission of Branch 25 isn't to file grievances. We are here to create a fair and contractually compliant atmosphere in the offices we work in. We cannot do that without the help of our members.

Thanks for all that you do.

James Metilinos

Opioid Addiction

How to Support a Loved One

Watching someone you care about struggle with opioid addiction can be overwhelming and difficult to witness. You may feel sad, frustrated and confused by their choices and behaviors. Not only is it an emotionally challenging situation, but it can have a negative impact on other parts of your physical, financial and social well-being.

In any circumstance, it is critical to remember to take care of yourself while trying to support someone else. When you do not purposefully reserve the time, care and attention for yourself, you can easily be left hanging in the balance. Instead of viewing self-care as secondary or selfish, see it as an essential part of the process. **Here are a few tips on how you can support a loved one struggling with opioid addiction while also honoring and respecting your own needs:**

1. Ask your loved one who is struggling, “How can I support you?” Honor their response and understand it is okay if they do not have an answer. Each person is the best expert on themselves. Your loved one may not be making choices you believe are best, but the decision they are making is their right.
2. If your loved one has asked you to do something specific, or to provide them with something (money, housing, etc.) evaluate if you have the capacity to support them in that way. Saying “no” will not make you responsible for their circumstances. In fact, having clear healthy boundaries with your loved one may lead them to professional help quicker.
3. If you choose to help a loved one who is struggling, be sure to be clear of any caveats. If you feel compelled to control what they do with the resources you provide—how they spend money, who they are in contact with, where they are going—communicate that ahead of time. If you give them resources on conditional terms, without informing them of the conditions, this will not lead to your loved one feeling supported and it may further damage the relationship. Fight the urge to “fix” your loved one by instead evaluating what boundaries you need to set with them to continue loving them.
4. If your loved one comes to you and asks for assistance getting professional help, do not feel as though you need to navigate this process alone. The EAP is a professional support available to you 24 hours per day, 7 days per week. Make the call with your loved one so you both can get the support you need.
5. Be sure to take care of yourself every step of the way, as loving someone with opioid addiction can often feel depleting. Having your own therapy support to identify and implement healthy boundaries, will help you be accountable for your own needs. This can make a difference on your ability to continue the long journey towards recovery with your loved one.

Opioid addiction can lead to serious issues at home and in the workplace. If you or someone you know is struggling with substance abuse—opioid or other—your EAP can help. We are here to support you as you navigate treatment resources. Reach out at 800-327-4968 (800-EAP-4YOU), TTY: 877-492-7341 or visit EAP4YOU.com for more info.

WAKE UP

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



Mattie Berryman is all smiles flanked by Bruce Johnson and Dave Barbuzzi while receiving her retirement gratuity.