



# ***WAKE UP!***

President/ Editor  
Dave Barbuzzi

Publisher  
Dan Wheeler

**Volume 41 Issue 10**

**December 2017**

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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

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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

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### *"The Season of Giving"*

Three people associated with Branch 25 will be receiving \$1,000 from the Branch! Do I have your attention? I hope so. At the December branch meeting, the attendance prize will be drawn until someone wins and the attendance prize is \$1,000.00. If that isn't a good enough reason to come to the meeting, then the Italian food catered by the Burlington Cold Cut Center should persuade you to attend.

Also, December is the month for high school seniors to apply for the NALC Branch 25 Scholarships (2x\$1000.00). The application is available for download at the Branch 25 website. The web address is printed in the Calendar of Events on the next page. The criteria is that the senior is continuing their education and is the son/daughter or grandson/granddaughter of an active or retired Branch 25 member. I strongly encourage all to apply for the scholarships and take the exam that is administered at the student's high school guidance office on Wednesday, February 7, 2018. By applying and taking the exam, the student becomes eligible for scholarships offered through the Massachusetts AFL-CIO, and some of those scholarships are pretty hefty!

Speaking of hefty, the workload at this time of year is definitely hefty. Some people are enjoying the added heft in their paychecks, but some people are overwhelmed by the day in and day out forced overtime in offices that aren't properly staffed or where the routes aren't properly adjusted. I have often used the term "blood money" in the past, and this year is no different.

Hopefully, what I'm about to say won't fall on deaf ears. Management is **REQUIRED** to maintain letter carrier routes as near to 8 hours as possible, and the work within in office is supposed to be distributed as evenly as possible amongst the routes in the office. If we don't force the issue, management surely will not.

I won't defend local management, but that being said they are pretty much powerless in this process. I don't know too many Postmasters that wouldn't take a properly adjusted office if given the opportunity. In most instances that means more routes, in some it means a realignment of existing routes, and in very rare instances it means fewer routes.

No, it isn't your Postmaster that is causing your woes, it is the Operations Programs Support (OPS) department. In the last several years, with the exception of one or two people not holding the top chair, the department has gone from bad to worse. We at the branch have come to expect their dishonesty, and they have not disappointed in the recent past.

One of the fundamental rights that a letter carrier has is to request a special mail count and inspection on his or her route. These are routinely denied by OPS. OPS will send a denial letter stating that the carrier didn't qualify for whatever reason, usually related to failure to meet the required overtime over the course of six consecutive weeks, and sometimes citing deficiencies the carrier allegedly has.

When called on the denial regarding overtime, OPS has responded "Oh, we misread the information, sorry" That's a load of BS. They tried to slip one by as they say. They assumed that the carrier wouldn't ask the Union to look into it. Well, the carrier did contact the Union and the Union got it resolved. The route is being adjusted very shortly.

Oh, and the perceived deficiencies, I was copied on a letter from OPS that had a Letter of Suspension attached to it. The only problem was, the letter had been resolved and the discipline had been expunged. The depths that OPS will drudge in an effort to abuse the letter carriers knows no limits.

I would ask that you do your best to survive the upcoming Holiday Season. Take all your breaks, take your lunch, follow all the safety rules, and do what you need to do to remain safe while providing great customer service. You are no good to yourself, your family, or the Postal Service if you cut any of these corners and end up injured or worse yet unemployed.

All things considered, 2017 has been a pretty good year. The branch has assigned just under 250 grievance numbers. Many of those grievances have been resolved without the need to appeal them to the B level. Some have gone to B and a few to arbitration. It has been a successful year.

It has also been a great year for CCA's. I am happy to report that the LMOU's for each office in the branch were opened and each now contains a provision for CCA's to take annual leave in both choice and non-choice vacation period. In the past, CCA leave has been entirely up to management's discretion in many offices throughout the entire country.

But, now is not the time to rest on our laurels. 2018 is just around the corner and with it I'm sure the challenges will be many. Try to enjoy the season, your friends and family! Merry Christmas and Happy New Year and celebrate well whatever you choose to celebrate!!

Stay informed!

Dave Barbuzzi



## Executive Vice President's Report

It is closing in on the end of the year, and like most prior years, the carriers are working a lot of hours in order to deliver the holiday mail and parcels. This is generally no surprise to anyone, whether or not you work for the Postal Service. We are used to it. I'm not saying everyone wants to work these hours, but when you take a job as a letter carrier, it is expected that this is the busiest time of year. When we are hired we are told this is part of the "Service". Management at the district level has decided this year that maybe it is better not to finish delivering all of the mail and parcels every day. I'm guessing it has been determined to be too costly. Generally, this means leaving carriers at home on their non-service days, and bringing carriers back to the office prior to finishing their routes. Maybe this is the way the Postal Service wants to operate in the future, or maybe just temporary, but if the Postal Service wants to compete, they better figure out a way to provide better service. If the Postal Service catered to its customers like they do to Amazon, we would be delivering every piece every day, just like the old days. My guess is we will be told to deliver everything when we hit the 4 week period of penalty time exclusion. This year that will be from 12-2-17 through 12-29-17.

Every now and then I get a call from someone asking if management can use a carrier to work as a 204B, and for how long and as a result sometimes, force non-OT desired list carriers to work off their assignments for OT. The answer unfortunately is yes, they can work forever as a 204B although their routes may go up for bid. But that doesn't mean the non-OTDL carrier doesn't have a grievance, depending on the circumstance. It baffles me why management would take a carrier that is requesting OT by signing the OT list, and work them as a manager, and at the same time work OTDL carriers penalty time and non-OTDL carriers OT. Not only does it create terrible morale, but it sometimes creates grievance activity. I've said it a hundred times, maybe more, if management would use all their carriers as carriers, instead of managing, the Postal Service would be better off. If the 204B is that valuable, promote them now and hire someone else. It is that simple.

There is a large number of carriers getting close to retirement age and years of service required for retirement. If you are planning to possibly retire within the next year it is a good idea to check your electronic OPF to make sure you have named the proper beneficiaries to your TSP and life insurance policy. You can check this at anytime, but you don't want any

surprises when you are filling out your final retirement papers. This can be checked through the liteblue website or you can request a paper copy sent to your house through postalease also.

I hope everybody has a great holiday season.

Be safe.

Paul Desmond

### Calendar of Events

December 1	Rosa Parks Day
December 5	8PM Branch Meeting @ Knights of Columbus 27 School St. Ext. Wilmington Food served @ 7:15
December 7	Pearl Harbor Day
December 10	Human Rights Day
December 11	Health Benefits Open Season Ends
December 12	Chanukah Begins
December 15	<b>DEADLINE TO REGISTER FOR BRANCH 25 SCHOLARSHIPS!! DOWNLOAD APP FROM WWW.NALCBRANCH25.COM</b>
December 21	Winter Solstice
December 23	Festivus
December 24	Christmas Eve
December 25	Christmas
December 31	New Year's Eve



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## Branch 25 Directory of Officers

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## Election Results

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

Elections for delegates to the 2018 National Convention to be held in Detroit were held at the Branch meeting on November 7, 2017. The results are as follows:

Jim Nutter	46
Dan Wheeler	46
Randy Keller	44
Andy Coan	41
Rick Dicecca	41
Bob Cronin	40
Rich Donlon	35
Ken Dusombre	31
Kevin Sullivan	30
Bruce Johnson	25
Jack Lyman	25
Joe Stearns	16
Doug Murray	15

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

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## Soldier Christmas Poem

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As we celebrate Christmas, and we open our gifts,  
We realize what priceless gifts a soldier gives to our country  
The gifts of patriotism, service, and deep dedication to our nation.

As we feast on a variety of fine Christmas delicacies,  
We acknowledge that a soldier personifies a variety of fine qualities:  
Courage, good character, honor, fortitude amidst hardship,  
Persistence in subduing evil, and bravery in the face of danger.

A soldier is a cut above the rest of us,  
Doing jobs we could not or would not do.  
While we are surrounded by Christmas comforts,  
We remember soldiers in places we would not want to be,  
Bringing the gift of adaptability to any situation,  
No matter how harsh or difficult.

As we "ooh" and "aah" over the Christmas lights and shiny  
ornaments  
We recognize that a soldier gives us the most cherished gift of all,  
The shining light of freedom.

At Christmas, let us wrap our hearts and minds  
Around our treasured soldiers.  
May they understand how very much their service means to us.  
Let us send the Christmas gifts of love, respect and admiration  
To our steadfast, loyal, magnificent warriors  
And their essential civilian support staff.

They themselves are the most precious Christmas gift of all,  
Our protectors - our soldiers.

Have a Happy and Safe Holiday! Merry Christmas and Happy  
Holidays!!

Andrew Coulter

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## Safety

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At work, we check our vehicles every morning to see if they are ready to go. Don't forget your personal vehicle! This time of year, can be challenging for Letter Carriers to get their personal vehicles inspected. I recently realized my car needed a new inspection sticker. Luckily, I guess, we had a lot of work done on the car, so I was reasonably sure it would pass. It's a good idea to check whatever you can before taking it for inspection such as tires and lights. [www.mass.gov](http://www.mass.gov) has some helpful tips for inspections and more. The site recommends going early in the month when stations are less busy. Also (if possible!) go midday Monday through Friday. They also have locations of inspection stations.

Happy Motoring,

Jim Salvati, Safety Officer

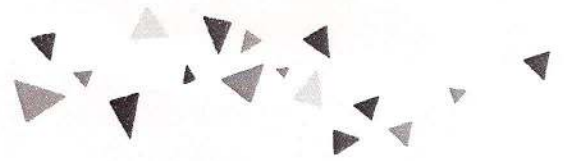
Trivia lyrics

*Nobody gonna take my car  
I'm gonna race it to the ground*

*Nobody gonna beat my car  
It's gonna break the speed of sound*



# Momentum



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## Compassion: helping others through challenges

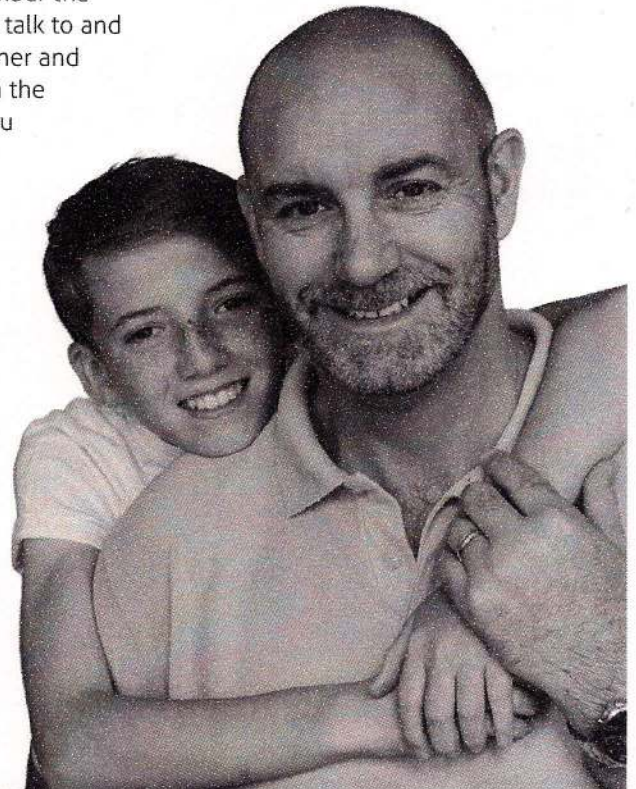
- When someone is hurting, listen closely to the words and emotions they express. Don't judge them. Let them finish speaking before commenting.
- Try to understand the other person's feelings—have empathy. Remind yourself of a time when you faced such challenges and needed someone to understand.
- Once you understand the other person's situation, encourage them to find another way to think about the problem so it doesn't seem as bad.

## Improve family communication

While every family is unique, all families benefit when parents pay close attention to communication in the home to maintain a loving and supportive environment.

As your family grows and changes, so does the way you talk to and do things with each other. Children face tougher issues as they get older, and your relationship with your partner also changes. It's important to remember the basics of good family communication. It'll help you keep up with the needs of your children and partner over time.

- **Be there.** Turn off electronics and give your loved ones your full attention often. Use this time to ask one another questions, learn about each other's day, help one another solve problems, and encourage each other.
- **Do unto others...** Remember the Golden Rule? When you talk to and do things with your partner and children, treat them with the same level of respect you want given to you.
- **Have dinner as a family often.** Sitting together without distractions and talking about daily life has been linked to many positive behaviors in children.



Studies have found when people help others look at problems in new ways, they improve their own mood and reduce symptoms of depression. In other words, helping others benefits the helper.

Log on to [www.EAP4YOU.com](http://www.EAP4YOU.com) today!

**Magellan**  
HEALTHCARE



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## Welcome New Members

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Crystal Burke	Gloucester
Sampor Burke	Newburyport
Francis Clarke	Newburyport
Shannon Gilmartin	Acton
Katherine Hartigan	Danvers
Mohammed Iddisu	Haverhill
Dominic Landry	Peabody
Joseph Napoli	Billerica
Denise Moore	Danvers
Allison Weaver	Amesbury

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## What I'm Thankful For

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By the time you read this you will have already had your Thanksgiving dinner, watched a full day of football, and told yourself that you will be going to the gym and this time you mean it. Thanksgiving is a time when we think about what we are thankful for. I would like to tell you about a few things I'm thankful for.

The first thing I'm thankful for is our new negotiated contract. I am of the belief that a negotiated contract is always better than an arbitrated one. No contract will ever be perfect for everyone. Someone always finds fault in some part of it. Over all, we made some good gains in the latest contract, especially for CCAs. The CCAs who stuck it out after taking a big pay cut after the Das Award will see some of that pay coming back. They will also be enjoying some paid holidays off including Thanksgiving and Christmas. CCAs will also be guaranteed better opportunities to use annual leave due to the mandate that they must be negotiated into local agreements.

The second thing I'm thankful for is our representation at the regional level. National Business Agent, John Casciano and our two RAAs, Jerry Ugone and Branch 25's own Rick Dicecca do a great job. Some people may hear those names but don't really understand what they do. The NBA and RAAs cover 15 different areas of the country. In our case Region 14 is all New England. They are responsible for many things including Step B Teams, arbitrations, staffing issues, the Customer Connect Program, making sure we are properly trained to deal

with all the issues we have and much more. They work tirelessly to make sure that we have the resources to succeed as a union.

Perhaps one of the reasons that some people are not familiar with the regional operation is because of the next thing I'm thankful for; the leadership of Branch 25. Our full-time officers do a great job in keeping our branch running smoothly. They are always there to answer your call at the office and give advice. They are willing to get out to the offices to monitor inspections, give inspection training after hours, handle grievances, to make sure we have trained stewards in our stations and handle the branch complaint department.

I'm thankful for the part-time branch officers and local stewards as well. These are the people who work for the members often on their own time or after having fought with management to get union time. The stewards especially do a great job. They are usually the first in line to deal with management and their fellow carriers and they do it for the whopping salary of 0 dollars. They do it because, like all of us involved in the union, they are passionate about representing their fellow carriers.

Lastly, the thing that I'm most thankful for is the member who is or was what you would consider an average letter carrier. This carrier may or may not have ever been a steward or on the office safety committee. This carrier may or may not have been to a National or State Convention. This carrier may or may not have ever written up a grievance or met with management. This carrier may or may not have ever memorized the Article 8 rules or even knows what Article numbers corresponded to what part of the National Agreement. This carrier just does or did his job the right way every day, thinking about customer service and doing the job to the best of their ability. We lost a couple of these carriers in my office this year to retirement. I hope for the best for these carriers but in a selfish way I will miss them too.

Helen Keller said "The world is moved along, not only by the mighty shoves of its heroes, but also by the aggregate of tiny pushes of each honest worker." Without what many would consider the average letter carrier there would be no union, no Postal Service; and for them I am thankful.

In Solidarity,  
Dan Wheeler



## Health Benefits

Recently, Health Benefits Representative Ken Dusombre and I attended the 2017 NALC Health Benefit Plan Seminar to familiarize ourselves with information regarding the Plan for 2018. It is our intention, as in the past, to present relevant information at our monthly meetings, but in the meantime, I'd like to offer a few highlights which may serve to guide you in your choice of a plan for 2018:

1. As is often the case, the first question asked in "What are the rates for our Plan for 2018? Answer - approximately 4% across the board. This is an extremely favorable rate when one considers some projected rate increases across the country for the coming year, some as high as 26%. Our rates are found on the back page of our brochure.

2. Reminder: Our plan is non-profit, administered by letter carriers for letter carriers. Premium revenues are centered on increasing benefits and controlling costs.

3. Reminder 2 Open season begins on November 13th and ends on December 11th. Don't delay if you choose to join our Plan. The system gets busier as enrollment time gets shorter.

4. Reminder to CCAs: if you are promoted and are a member of the USPS Plan, begin the process of enrollment immediately, your membership expires on the last day of the month of your promotion.

5. Be sure to use the correct code for enrolling (found on the back page of the brochure.)

6. Active letter carriers are in Category I as found on the back page of the brochure.

7. Once again, if you wish to remain in your current plan no action is required.

We are now the third largest plan in the entire Federal Employee Health Benefit Plan System!

Find out why by taking a good look at our brochure. Finally, if you have concerns contact Ken or me through the Branch 25 office at 978-658-5820.

Keep on truckin'!

Rich Donlon


Assistant Health Benefits Representative

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## **WAKE UP**

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*at the next meeting  
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