

# WAKE UP!

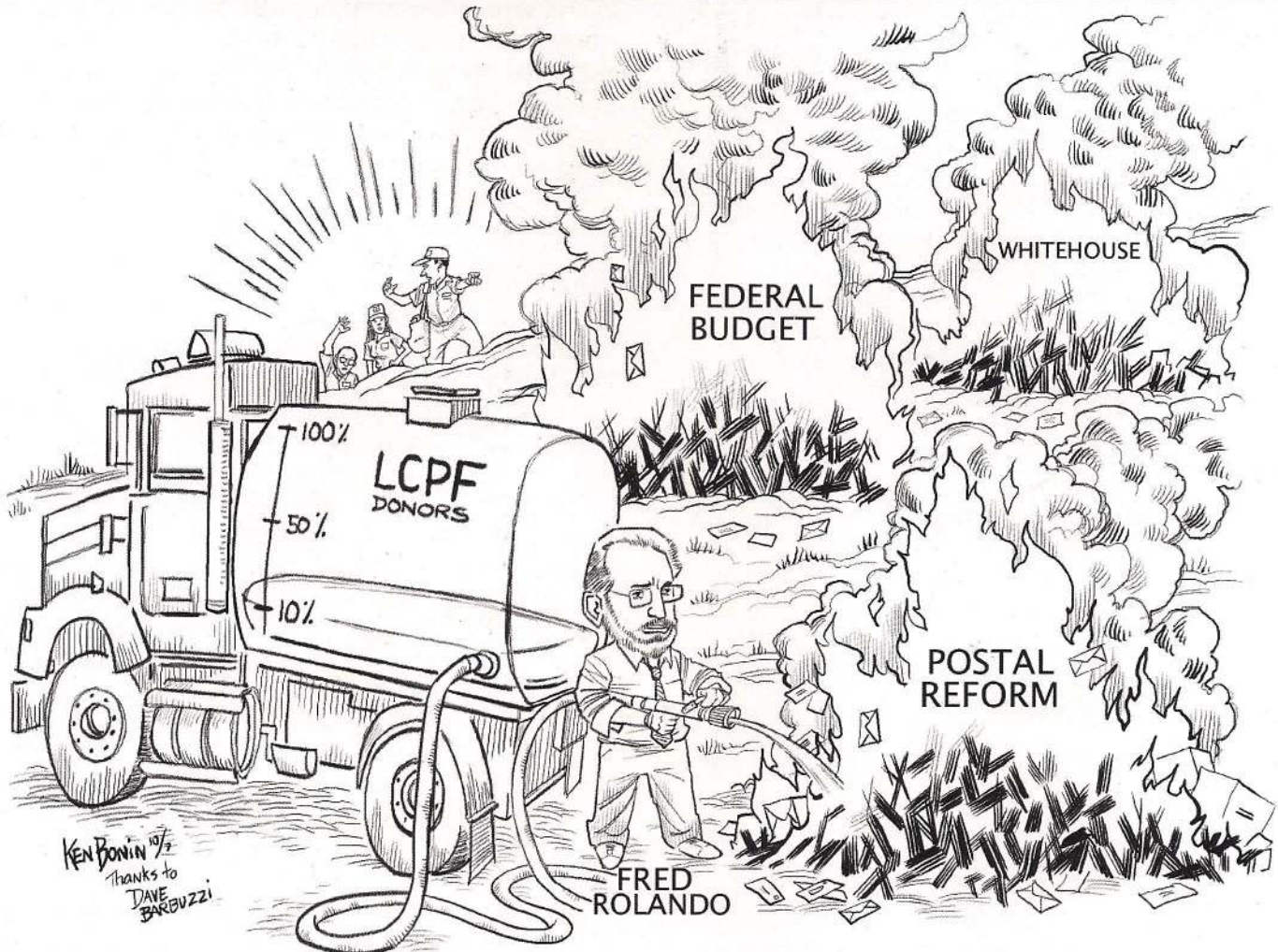
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Dave Barbuzzi

Publisher  
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Volume 42 Issue 10

December 2018

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*"Putting out political fires would be easier if the Letter Carrier Political Fund were at full strength..."*

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## President's Message

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### *“So this is Christmas and what have you done Another year over, a new one just begun”*

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year and if you celebrate something different, may that be happy and healthy for you as well.

As John Lennon says in the lyrics above, “What have you done?” Have you done anything this year to make your life better in the years to come? Have you thought about doing anything in the last twelve months that would have a positive effect on your future?

Maybe you quit smoking. Perhaps you started to wear a seatbelt in your personal vehicle. Did you decide that this past year was the year that you would get out and take frequent walks, or even ride a bike?

In the pages that follow, the Assistant Health Benefits Director talks about benefits in our Health Benefits Plan for smoking cessation while our Safety Officer urges us to learn CPR. Those are two things that could help to prolong your life and save someone else's.

Unfortunately, there are many things that can have a negative effect on your life. Your job can be one of them. The job of a letter carrier is both physically and mentally demanding. Never mind that heavy lifting that comes with the explosion of parcel volume that you are dealing with, delivering bag after bag of dog food and whatever else shows up in your hamper. But, you are also faced with the very real effects of the elements, whether it be dangerously high heat indexes or bone chilling cold rain and treacherous driving during the winter months with snow and ice storms.

With all of these things working against you, I would hope that you do everything in your power to stay healthy and ensure that you can continue to do your job until you are able to retire, **ON YOUR TERMS**. That is why it always blows my mind when I get calls from people who are upset because some of their co-workers are working off the clock.

Every now and then we get calls at the Union office about carriers working off the clock. If there is a local steward, we contact him or her and ask them to look into it. Generally, a grievance isn't required because management realizes it is **THEIR RESPONSIBILITY**, not the Union's, to ensure that no one works off the clock. Article 41.3.k states: “Supervisors shall not require, nor permit, employees to work off the clock.”

Your Union steward isn't a “rat” if he or she puts an end to working off the clock. Typically, the steward, or someone from the branch office, will simply say “Hey, there are people working off the clock, can you make sure you put an end to that please?” It is one of the first things I look for when I visit an office. Are the FSS trays missing from the casters? Do I see circulars in the carrier cases? If I show up at starting time do the carriers have to leave their cases to punch in and check

their vehicles? Hopefully you are reading this and thinking “who would do such a thing?”

Working off the clock fixes nothing. As a matter of fact, it makes matters worse, for everyone. If you work off the clock, you are not showing office time that you are using. If you work off the clock to case dps, fss, or circulars, you are most certainly reducing the amount of time that it would have taken to deliver that same mail had you not cased it off the clock. So, not only are you not getting paid in the morning, but you are getting paid **LESS** during the day.

It's not just about your pay, either. It's about the length of your route. If your office is inspected, and eventually it will be inspected, you will lose both office and street time as a result of working off the clock. You won't be able to do so during the week of inspection, so your street time will show an increase. You won't realize the proper street time because management will take the average time that it took you during the year, you know, the shortened time that you spent on the street because you cased mail in the office to reduce the number of bundles you take on the road.

It's unfortunate that those that are donating their wages to the post office by working for free are so vocal when complaining about the Union for trying to keep those wages in your wallets where they belong. It's also unfortunate that management may choose to pass the buck and blame the Union for not wanting you to work off the clock. Management should be just as upset as the Union is if and when people work off the clock.

Similarly, there are a number of carriers that have taken the pro-active step to preserve their careers by having their doctors evaluate them to determine what their limitations are. The problem is, sometimes these folks work beyond what their doctors have given them for restrictions. Again, it is up to **MANAGEMENT** to enforce your restrictions and again it is often the Union that forces management to do so.

In case you're not aware, no one can force you to exceed your medical restrictions whether they are in the form of workhour restrictions or weight or activity restrictions. More importantly, you can't choose to exceed your restrictions either. If you want to work in excess of your restrictions, go to the doctor and see about having them lifted or relaxed. If not, obey them, no matter what. Your steward will be vigilant in enforcing the contract to protect your health. Help him or her to do so.

Stay informed!  
Dave Barbuzzi

ps All letter carriers should make every effort to attend the January branch meeting on January 8. Our national president, Fred Rolando, will be in attendance and I'm sure he will provide timely information on a variety of subjects. I hope to see you there!!

## Executive Vice President's Report

By the time this edition of the Wakeup is delivered all regular letter carriers should be upgraded to level 2. The upgrade should appear on the paychecks dated 12-14-18. The T-6s will be compensated with a similar upgrade and the CCAs will also be receiving an increase to complete the upgrade. This is not only just a raise in hourly wages, it will automatically give an extra boost to the TSP contributions which are figured by base pay, and will increase all active carriers' retirement annuity.

This will be the largest increase we have seen in a long time, and is well deserved. The current contract expires in September 2019. I'm sure our national officers are already preparing for the next round of negotiations that will begin long before the expiration of the agreement.

We have had a lot of CCAs converted to regular this fall and more will be soon. Generally, the first of the year is a popular time for carriers to retire. One provision that newly converted regulars find out is that annual leave can not be used the first 90 days of a career appointment. There is nothing to prevent you from having pre-approved days off, but the Postal Service can not pay you for annual leave, the payroll system won't allow it. This is something we challenged at the national level, without success, for carriers that don't require a probation period. I just thought I would let the CCAs know so it is not a surprise, many newly converted regulars find out after the fact when they don't get paid for pre-approved annual leave. Any questions on this don't hesitate to call the Union office.

As of today, the report that President Trump requested on the Postal Service still hasn't been made public. I'm sure he would do everything in his power to privatize the Service, mostly because he has no idea how it is run or what has caused any financial issues, but I don't believe the majority of Congress is with him on this.

The Democrats have taken the majority in the House of Reps and that should help fight off any privatization talks. That being said, anything can happen so be ready to contact your Reps and Senators if the need arises. Information is distributed through the NALC app that keeps members informed about these issues and many more. It is very easy to download the app and there is a "government affairs" section that has legislative information.

We get a lot of calls from carriers asking how much they would get as a FERS Supplement when they retire prior to age 62. Obviously, carriers want to retire as soon as possible if it is financially possible. My first response is that there is a formula that is published in the Postal Record along with the estimated annuity payments. You can also obtain your estimated annuity payments through the Liteblue website. You give the date you would like to retire and it computes your years

of service and salary and comes up with a pretty accurate estimate of your retirement annuity. My next response is to contact the NALC Retirement Department in Washington. They are truly the experts on retirement info.

It seems as though winter has come early this year as we have already received snow and the weather has been unusually cold for November. With all the rain and now snow we have got, the ground is slippery especially where the leaves are. Be careful, especially when it gets dark. Do not run or skip breaks, if you get hurt, upper management is not going to have your back. Years ago there was a mutually adhered to slogan, "work smarter, not harder", I don't know if this is something that is heard in the halls of the district offices anymore. Time is everything.

I know everyone works a lot of hours but hopefully carriers can take the time to attend a few branch meetings each year. This January the meeting is on January 8<sup>th</sup>, the second Tuesday of the month because New Years is the first Tuesday. This will be our installation of branch officers, being installed by National President Rolando. This is a meeting you want to be at if possible.

Keep your head up!

Paul Desmond

### Calendar of Events

December 1	Penalty Overtime exclusion begins
December 3	Advent begins
December 4	8PM Branch Meeting @ Knights of Columbus 27 School St. Ext. Wilmington Food served @ 7:15
December 7	Pearl Harbor Day
December 9	Christmas Card Day
December 10	Human Rights Day
December 21	Winter Solstice
December 24	Christmas Eve
December 25	Christmas Day
December 31	New Years Eve

## Branch 25 Directory of Officers

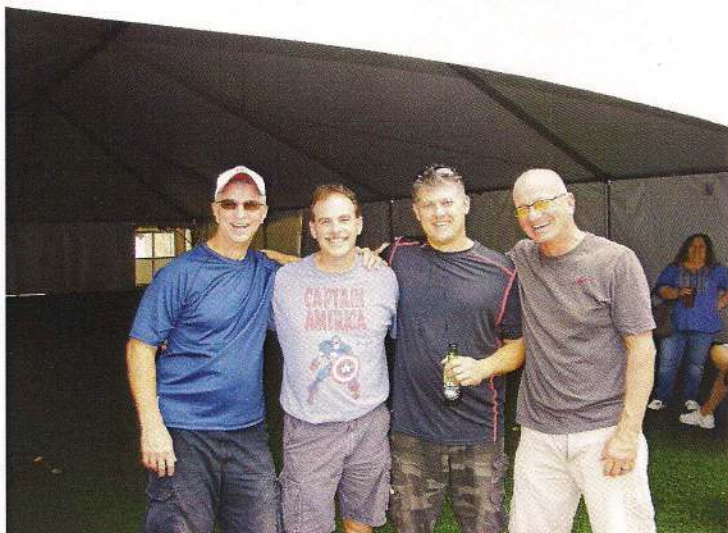
David J. Barbuzzi	President
Paul G. Desmond	Executive V.P.
Bob Cronin	Vice President
Andy Coan	Secretary
James P. Nutter	Treasurer
Kenneth Dusombre	Health Benefits Rep.
Jim Salvati	Safety Officer
Jack Lyman	Sergeant At Arms
Ron Noviello	Chmn. Board of Trustees
Dan Raske	Trustee
Bruce Johnson	Trustee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

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

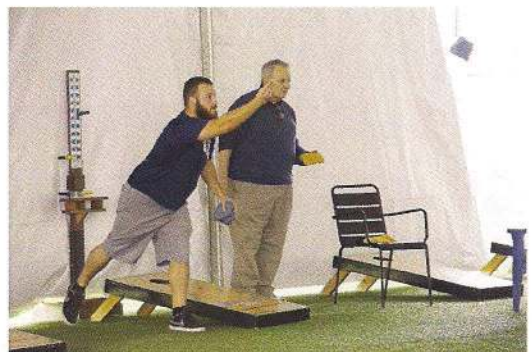
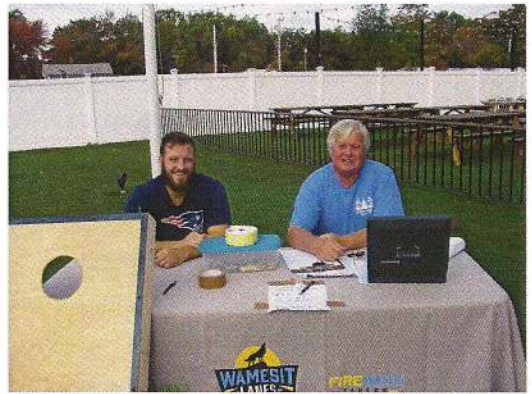
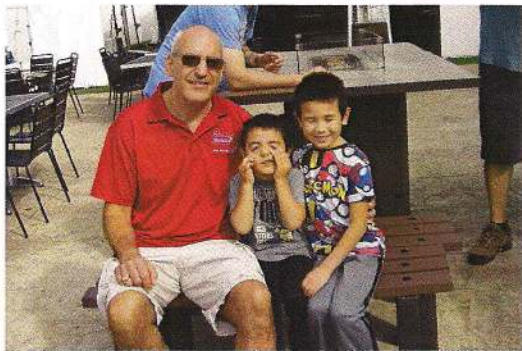
## Branch 25 Cornhole Tournament

On October 7 Branch 25 held it's first annual Toss Out Muscular Dystrophy Cornhole Tournament at Wamesit Lanes in Tewksbury. Thanks to everyone who came out to play or made a donation. A special thanks to National Business Agent-elect Rick DiCecca who made a pair of Red Sox cornhole boards which were raffled off.

America's letter carriers have helped lead the search for a cure for neuromuscular diseases for half a century. The NALC was the first national sponsor of the Muscular Dystrophy Association and letter carriers are among MDA's top fund-raisers, collecting more than \$20 million in the past 15 years alone to finance research and provide care and services for children and adults with muscular dystrophies.



(Left) The final four at Branch 25's Cornhole Tournament. Retired Lowell carriers Kenny Bonin and Paul Lopolito along with champions Eric Giurado and Mike Bassett of Andover.



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## Recent Retirees

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Andover had two recent retirees. Michael Bradish retired after 34 years and Wilbur Liu retired after 32 years.

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## Open Season Reminder

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Open season for enrolling in a health care plan through the Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB) program runs from November 12, 2018 through December 10, 2018.

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## Branch 25 Training

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Congratulations to Branch 25 Assistant Secretary Tony Bossi, pictured here with NALC Vice President Lew Drass, Tony recently completed the NALC's Formal A and Beyond training program. Congratulations Tony!



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## Burlington Happenings

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John Carrabino recently celebrated a birthday from behind bars



Carriers Rich Scalesse and Mark Brown



Burlington CCA Pam Ingalls

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## Corrections And Omissions

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In The November *Wake Up!* Retired Lowell carrier Eileen Nutter was identified incorrectly as Elaine Nutter. Bob Cronin was elected as Mutual Benefits Representative at the October meeting but left off of the list printed in the November issue.

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## 2018 Penalty Exclusion Period

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As referenced in Article 8, Sections 4 and 5 of the National Agreement between NALC and USPS, the December period during which penalty overtime regulations are not applicable consists of four consecutive service weeks.

This year, the December Penalty Overtime Exclusion period begins Pay Period 25-18, Week 2 (Dec. 1) and ends Pay Period 01-19, Week 1 (Dec. 28).

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## Just For The Health Of It

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This is the third in a series of articles referencing add-on benefits for members of the NALC High option Health Benefit Plan. The subject is the Quit for Life Program through Optum.

We've all heard the many and varied reasons for quitting smoking: You owe it to your kids. The financial and physical cost to your health is humongous. The inside of your car stinks! Remember the one from our parents? "It will stunt your growth!" Despite all the pontificating, someone who wants to quit smoking has to grasp this reality— you do it for you. It may seem self-serving but that's a fact, Jack.

There are many approaches to the challenge. (I was fortunate, "cold turkey" worked for me.) But, as the saying goes, whatever rows your boat.

The cost-free Quit for Life Program offers a lot of tools to help you get it done. Among them:

1. A Quit Coach to work with you.
2. Free nicotine replacement therapy products (gum or patches) if it's part of your quitting plan.
3. If applicable, over-the-counter medication will be paid at 100% when purchased at a NALC Care Select retail pharmacy or mail order program.

Interested? For more information call Optum at 1-866-784-8454. You can do it—just for the health of it.

Note: Open Season runs from November 12th to December 10th. Take a good look at our plan— owned by letter carriers and run by letter carriers. I've been a member for 37 years and I am grateful for that!

Keep on truckin'  
Richie Donlon

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## Safety

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"Today is a good day to die"; it's a quote from an old sci-fi movie called *Flatliners*. The plot involved a group of medical students who took turns dying and reviving each other. In real life, I don't think anyone wants to experiment like that. However, it does not take science fiction to revive someone from cardiac arrest. It takes Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation (CPR).

CPR, especially if performed in the first few minutes of cardiac arrest, can double or triple a person's chance of survival.

Cardiac arrest is not a heart attack.

The symptoms of a heart attack can last for days before the event. Cardiac arrest occurs when the heart malfunctions and stops beating unexpectedly. Seconds later the person is unresponsive.

Each year, more than 350,000 out-of-hospital cardiac arrests occur in the United States.

What if one of your fellow carriers had a cardiac arrest on the workroom floor? Wouldn't you want to help save their life? Think about taking CPR training. The USPS

does have some training being conducted and should be coming to our area. Keep an eye out for that. In my station, we are planning to schedule a group training session. You can also get more information or schedule a class through heart.org. Let's do this!  
Stay Safe,

Jim Salvati and Peter Godino

Lyrics Trivia

New York, New York, is everything they say  
And no place that I'd rather be  
Where else can you do a half a million things  
All at a quarter to three

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## VETERAN'S CORNER

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First of all Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays to all!  
They say the gates of Heaven are guarded by Marines. The streets are paved by the Navy's Seabees, the air is patrolled by the Air Force and the Heaven is policed by the Army.

Yesterday the devil charged the gates of Heaven. As he approached he saw God, his Son, Saint Peter and a man the devil has never seen stopped him in his tracks. Bewildered, the devil stared at the man not knowing what to make of him. So he just shrugged his shoulders and said with a laugh "Who is this mortal to think he is to stand against all the might of hell?" With this the devil raised his hand and 1,000 demons charged the gates. The man coolly raised his weapon. He began firing and with every shot a demon fell. After an hour of this the devil stood alone. Furious, the devil shifted to his natural beastly form. With all his might he charged the gate himself. The man smiled and pulled out his k-bar and waited to take on the devil.

After the devil fought against the man he stood back and examined his wounds. He looked up at the man and saw his wounds and he looked 1/2 dead. So the devil once again charged the man. The man smiled and grabbed his k-bar again. The devil stopped in his tracks and curiously looked at the man. "What are you?!" "Who would not be afraid of me and stand against all of hell's might?"

To this Saint Peter raised an eyebrow, Jesus smiled and looked at his Father. All the while the man stood at attention. God laughed and said "If you really need to know I will tell you. I took some fire and turned it into fighter spirit. I took some stone to give him nerves. I finished by giving him willingness to sacrifice himself for the greater good of others. He will not quit until his job is done. He is my greatest creation, he is called a Veteran.

Always Semper Fi!

Andie Coulter

## **WAKE UP**

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*at the next meeting  
December 4, 2018*

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