



WAKE UP!

President/ Editor
Dave Barbuzzi

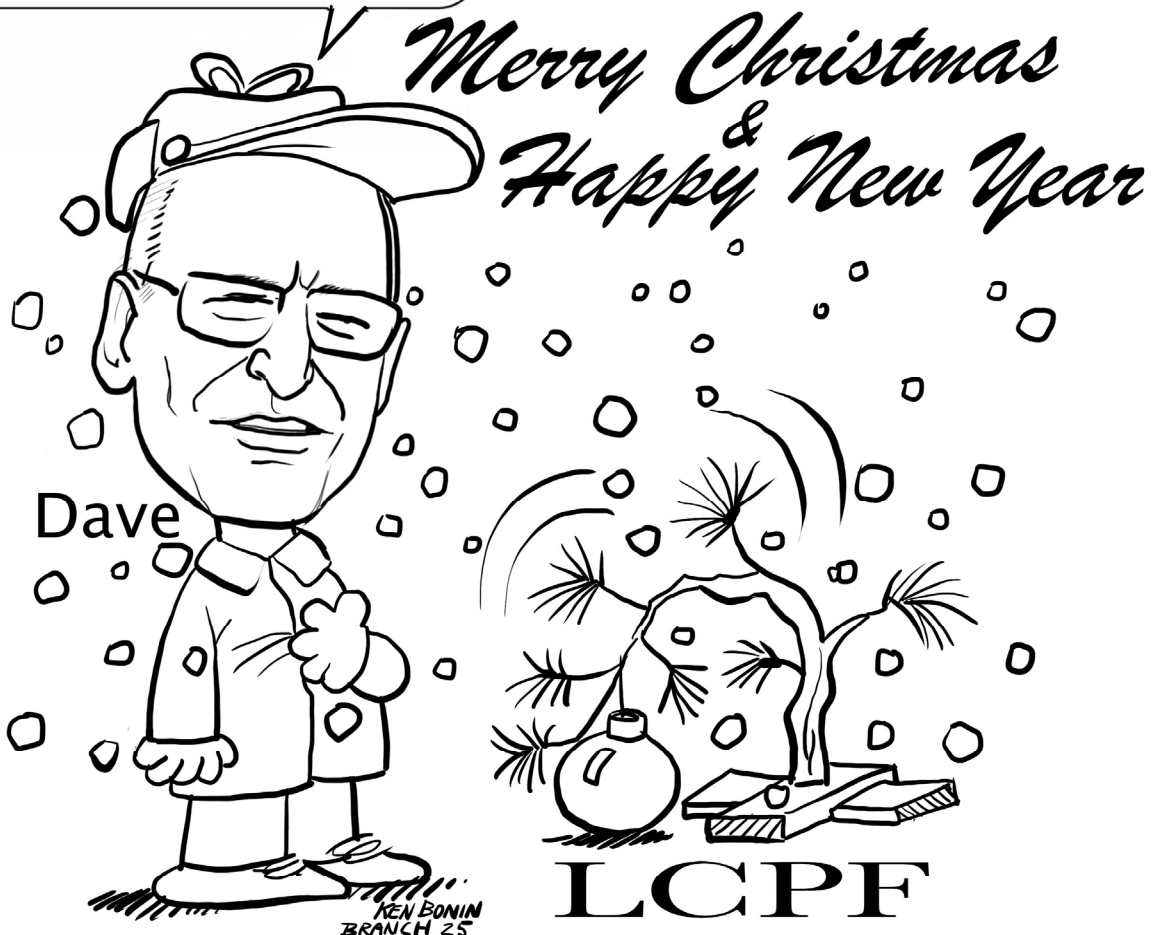
Publisher

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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

Please Help and make it a...



President's Message

Before I get into my article this month, I would ask all who read this edition of the Wake-Up! to turn to page 6 and read "A Soldier's Silent Night". We owe a great debt to our Veterans, one that we can never repay. If you think you're up for it, type in the link and listen to the spoken word version of the poem. It is very powerful. Thank you to all the Veterans, I hope you are warm and comfortable with your families this holiday season.

On the following pages of the Wake-Up!, you will read proposed changes to the Branch's by-laws. The language highlighted in red is the existing language and the proposed language. This is the language that is to be discussed and voted on at the December branch meeting. As always, I encourage you to participate in the decisions made that affect your Union. I hope to see you at the December meeting.

It has been a rough couple weeks for the NALC, nationally and locally. Nationally, we suffered a couple defeats. First, a U.S. District Judge ruled that he lacked jurisdiction to issue an injunction to prevent the Postal Service from proceeding with the case consolidation initiative until the national level grievance is heard and decided. The NALC had sought an injunction to stop the Postal Service from expanding the test. With the court's decision, we are now left with the national level grievance as our means to try terminate the consolidated casing initiative. That case is scheduled to be heard in December.

Next, National Arbitrator Das ruled against the NALC regarding the pay consolidation case. The NALC argued that when we received our pay upgrade to grade 2, that meant that other crafts could no longer be excessed into the city carrier craft since they were not the same grade as us. Arbitrator Das rejected that logic. Fortunately, this decision does not have a great impact in the scheme of things. From 2014-2018, 11,589 level 6 clerks were excessed. Only 98 of them came into the carrier craft.

Locally, we suffered a loss at arbitration on a removal. It was a very difficult loss. The steward in the case did an outstanding job, he was thorough and he left no stone unturned in his efforts to mount a defense for the grievant. The grievant, to his credit, was forthright from the beginning. He told the truth every step of the way, including at the arbitration hearing.

I only wish that I could say the same for management. The stewards that I have trained in the branch have all received the same advice from me during their training. I have told each of them that they will always have my support on decisions they make as long as they can look in the mirror without turning away and they can sleep with a clean conscience each night.

I'm convinced that management receives no such training. In this case, management withheld information from the Union. They did absolutely no independent investigation. I sincerely believe that because of their lack of experience in the letter carrier craft, they didn't even understand the arguments put forth by the Union. But perhaps the most difficult part of this case is that whether they realized it or not, they perjured themselves under oath at an arbitration hearing.

It is important that we take something out of this, that we learn something. I've known for many years that arbitration is a great risk. I have said countless times that regardless of the facts of the case, or who presents a case, you can predict the outcome by simply flipping a coin. Arbitrators are fickle. You and I will never know what they are thinking and what single occurrence may cause them to decide a case the way they do.

What I learned from this case is that although we can't compel management to write a statement, or to sign our notes of interview, we have to be able to prevent them from giving false testimony. The only way that I can think of to do that is to have a witness present when we ask for a statement. If a letter carrier refuses to sign a letter of discipline, management writes "refused to sign" where the carrier's signature would have gone.

Unfortunately, it is not enough for us to write "refused to sign" or "refused to be interviewed". Moving forward, if a steward requests a statement of management and management does not provide a statement, the steward should get in touch with the branch office immediately. Either myself, or Paul, or someone that I designate will attend the interview that the steward conducts with management. The interview will be thorough, and we will notify management that if they want to have their representative present they are welcome to do so. We have nothing to hide. We will take thorough notes of all questions asked and answers received and we will read those notes to the managers. We will ask the manager(s) if they object to the accuracy of the notes of interview. We will offer the manager the opportunity to sign them as accurate. If they refuse to sign, the steward and the Union witness will mark the notes as "refused to sign".

I realize that the above paragraphs are detailed and pertain more to our stewards than our general membership, but I am beyond incensed at the behavior of everyone from the Supervisor, to the Postmaster, to the management B Team member to the Labor Relations Specialist. Each one of them broke the rules in some way while we...we carried ourselves with truth and honor. We will always carry ourselves with truth and honor and hopefully in most instances that will be enough.

(continued on page 8)

Executive Vice President's Report

Just a reminder to all that it is currently open season for health benefits until December 9th. Changes to your TSP can be made at any time throughout the year. It is a good idea to take a good look at the NALC plan if you don't currently subscribe to it. It compares very well against the other available plans. Most plans have certain benefits that are similar, but there may be something in the Plan that would be particularly attractive to you or your family. It can't hurt to look. Always keep in mind your obligation to have a FEHBP plan for the last 5 years of your employment in order to carry over a health plan when you qualify for retirement. There have been employees that have had to delay retirement by years in order to keep their health coverage.

We have been telling carriers as long as I can remember to make all the proper time punches and do your job by the manuals in order to not skew any numbers used for adjusting routes. Don't case the automated mail unless instructed to do so. Don't skip or combine breaks. Another reason is your every move is seen through your scans and moves in the vehicle. There may be reasons for being off your route or line of travel, delivering Express Mail or pieces of other routes or deviating with authorization, but just keep in mind someone is always watching.

We get a lot of calls about FMLA and not always about how to request leave and have it approved. Some carriers don't quite understand that FMLA is a law that protects you from the Postal Service from taking action against you for using leave. I have had carriers tell me they thought it was a negative thing, but they didn't understand. We have had carriers ignore the paperwork without realizing that it is to their benefit. Basically, it protects you from discipline in order to take care of yourself or a family member. We would hope that most managers wouldn't take action against their employees that are sick or caring for a family member, but there are those that may. If you receive paperwork in the mail from Greensboro, to be filled out by your doctor it should be taken seriously and acted upon immediately. Any questions on this please call the Union office. The law is there to help you.

Now that we have turned the clocks back an hour it most certainly will be dark while many carriers finish their assignments right through the winter, especially through the holidays. Working in the dark is not inherently unsafe to the point that your life is at risk, but you need to be extra cautious. If there are stairs and delivery points not lit up then you should not attempt delivery. It is not worth risking an injury when you can not see where you're walking. Of course, if management instructs you to return to the office when it is dark you do it, but we rarely see that. If you do curtail any deliveries notify your supervisor and fill out a 1571.

In my article for last month's Wakeup, I mentioned that you would automatically receive a Letter Carriers Resource Guide in the mail from the NALC. I was mistaken. You must request a copy through the NALC website. There is a "members only" section where you very easily set up an account, that has information about you. There is an icon in this section to click on that will automatically send a copy of the Resource Guide to the address on record. Every active member should do this.

If you are planning to retire any time in the near future, give yourself time to schedule a counseling session with Human Resources in Greensboro. There are a lot of employees eligible to retire and they are all requesting individual retirement sessions. If you give Shared Services a retirement date 5-6 months ahead of time you should be able to schedule a session in time to retire. You can always change the retirement date after you get the Blue Book, the book you send back to Greensboro with your information. Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays.

Keep your head up!

Paul Desmond

Calendar of Events

November 26	Executive Council Meeting
November 28	Thanksgiving
December 3	Regular Monthly Meeting Wilmington K of C 27 School Street Extension Food Served 7:00 PM Meeting Begins 8:00 PM
December 7	Pearl Harbor Day
December 20	Last Day to Apply for MA AFL-CIO Scholarship
December 22	Chanukah, Winter Solstice
December 23	Festivus
December 25	Christmas
December 26	Boxing Day
December 31	New Year's Eve

Existing Language

President

The position of President shall be a full-time position. The President will be Chief Steward and shall be the responsible executive and administrative head of the Branch, Editor-in-Chief of the Wakeup, and shall be a member ex-officio of all committees. He/she shall examine all contracts to which Branch 25 is a party. No obligation shall be incurred, nor a contract made, unless countersigned by the President. He/ she shall have the authority to appoint members to fill unexpired vacant terms of office for Branch officers. He/she shall have the authority to appoint all committees and name their Chairperson. He/she shall automatically be a delegate to all National and State Conventions or to any meeting called by the National Association of Letter Carriers, Committee of President's (C.O.P.) meetings, or affiliates. **For the faithful performance of his/her duties he/she shall receive City Carrier Grade 1, Step O, plus \$15,000.**

Branch 25 will incur the obligation of employee and employer CSRS contributions, up to 5% matching contributions for FERS employees, the U.S. Postal Service's share of the Federal Employees Government Life Insurance, and the U.S. Postal Service's share of the Health Benefit Premiums not to exceed the premium charged by the NALC Health Benefit Plan.

As for leave, the position would be granted the same amount of sick and annual leave per year as the person holding the position would earn at the Postal Service, with the requirement that he/she must take 15 days of vacation each year. If the duties of the President require him/her to work on a Saturday or Sunday, or after normal business hours, then he/she shall be granted compensatory time for said hours. No more than thirty-two (32) hours of compensatory time may be accrued at any given time. Unused annual and sick leave will be placed aside in a sick and annual bank. The person holding the position will forfeit leave in the same manner as it is earned. For every 80 hours of LWOP used, 8 hours of annual and 4 hours sick will be reduced from the total, or that equal to what the person in the position is currently earning. When he/she vacates the office, unused annual leave will be paid. Unused sick leave will be forfeited.

Proposed Language

President

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Branch 25 will incur the obligation of employee and employer CSRS contributions, up to 5% matching contributions for FERS employees, the U.S. Postal Service's share of the Federal Employees Government Life Insurance, and the U.S. Postal Service's share of the Health Benefit Premiums not to exceed the premium charged by the NALC Health Benefit Plan.

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Existing Language

Executive Vice-President

The Position of Executive Vice-President shall be a full-time position. The Executive Vice-President shall serve at the direction of the President. The Executive Vice-President shall serve in the absence of the President. He/she shall also participate in all forms of organizational activities as directed by the President, and shall automatically be a delegate to all National and State Conventions and Committee of President's (C.O.P.) meetings. He/she shall be involved in all aspects of Branch administration. The Executive Vice-President shall coordinate, schedule and provide training to the membership as required. The Executive Vice-President shall preside in the absence of the President, and in case of death, resignation, disqualification, refusal or neglect of the President to discharge the duties of his/her office, the Executive Vice-President shall then perform all the duties incumbent upon the President for the remainder of the term of office. **For the faithful performance of his/her duties he/she shall receive City Carrier Grade 1, Step O, plus \$10,000.**

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Veterans' Corner

For all who have served, we all spent a holiday away from family. But, we had our new brothers or sisters with us in a mess hall.

“A Soldier’s Silent Night”

Twas the night before Christmas, he lived all alone,
In a one bedroom house made of plaster and stone.
I had come down the chimney with presents to give
And to see just who in this house did live.

I looked all about a strange sight I did see,
No tinsel, no presents, not even a tree.
No stocking by the fire, just boots filled with sand,
On the wall hung pictures of far distant lands.

With medals and badges, awards of all kind
A sober thought came through my mind,
For this house was different, so dark and dreary,
I knew I had found the home of a soldier, once I could
see clearly.

I heard stories about them, I had to see more
So I walked down the hall and pushed open the door.
And there he lay sleeping silent alone,
Curled up on the floor in his one bedroom home.

His face so gentle, his room in such disorder,
Not how I pictured a United States soldier.
Was this the hero of whom I’d just read?
Curled up in his poncho, a floor for his bed?

His head was clean shaven, his weathered face tan,
I soon understood this was more than a man.
For I realized the families that I saw that night
Owed their lives to these men who were willing to fight.

Soon ‘round the world, the children would play,
And grownups would celebrate on a bright Christmas
day.
They all enjoyed freedom each month of the year,
Because of soldiers like this one lying here.

I couldn’t help wonder how many lay alone
On a cold Christmas Eve in a land far from home.
Just the very thought brought a tear to my eye,
I dropped to my knees and started to cry.

The soldier awakened and I heard a rough voice,
“Santa don’t cry, this life is my choice;
I fight for freedom, I don’t ask for more,
My life is my God, my country, my Corps.”

With that he rolled over and drifted off into sleep,
I couldn’t control it, I continued to weep.

I watched him for hours, so silent and still,
I noticed he shivered from the cold night’s chill.

So I took off my jacket, the one made of red,
And I covered this soldier from his toes to his head.
And I put on his T-shirt of gray and black,
With an eagle and an Army patch embroidered on back.

And although it barely fit me, I began to swell with pride
And for a shining moment, I was United States Army
deep inside.
I didn’t want to leave him on that cold dark night,
The guardian of honor so willing to fight.

Then the soldier rolled over, whispered with a voice so
clean and pure,
“Carry on Santa, it’s Christmas Day, all is secure.”
One look at my watch, and I knew he was right,
Merry Christmas my friend, and to all a good night!

*Written by Lance Corporal James Schmidt
Below find a youtube link to hear this poem read by
Father Ted Berndt*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8D-OL-KQOt4>

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year Everyone!!
Have a great Holiday!

Semper Fi!

Andie Coulter



Treasurer's Report

"Make A List, Check It Twice"

It is that time of year, where one has to take time to assess what the needs for the upcoming 2020 year will require. I'll devote this article to ideas and situations, that one could explore.

What decisions have to be made regarding your health coverage? Open season is currently underway and expires on December 9th, 2019. This is the deadline to enroll, or change your selections of coverage. Federal Employee Health Benefits (FEHB), Federal Employee Vision and Dental Insurance (FEVDI), and Flexible spending Accounts (FSA) are all available for your consideration. Review what your current needs have been in 2019 and project what may be expected in 2020. Will you require family coverage, single plus one, or just single? Depending on your FEHB plan will enrolling in or changing your needs in FEVDI make sense.

The participation in FSA can be a great financial benefit. Understand the terms of this carefully so as not to expose yourself to an over investing for payments you will not use since you may forfeit funds not spent. Plan that your expenses, will exhaust what you set aside. Consider your NALC HBP which is union owned and managed and a not for profit plan. All savings go back to the members for reduced rates. Check it out to see if it is a wiser choice for you.

Are you, or will you be eligible for Medicare by turning 65 years old in 2020? The time frame to enroll in Medicare is important and not being timely could make your enrollment more expensive. Will it make a difference in your choice of health plan during this open season? Know how it works in conjunction with the available health benefit plans.

How are your choices of withholdings going to affect your tax status next year? Should you consider any changes for 2020? Did your marital status change? How many dependents will you have next year, is it a growing family or a shrinking one? Will you be responsible for an elderly parent, or maybe a disabled member? After filing your 2019 taxes do you expect a refund or will you be paying for a tax due? Should you adjust your withholdings or request an additional dollar amount be withheld in the future? You may want to assess your contributions to the Thrift Savings Plan (TSP). Are you investing a minimum of 5% to also receive the 5% match by the Postal Service? Does it give you the opportunity to increase your investment even more to further enhance your available funds in your later years? It may be a worthwhile consideration No matter what your current age, retirement eligibility creeps up on us faster than you realize.

How are your annual leave and sick leave balances? Are you prepared for vacation planning and expenses?

If a health issue arises for you and/or a family member, are your financial needs protected?

What of upcoming expenses and investments? Should you buy or sell a home? Foresee any needed repairs or upgrades? Is the car worth servicing or will you need to consider a new one? Lawnmowers, snow blowers, repave the driveway, add on to the home, in other words, do you have a plan?

Not all of us will face all these possibilities. Some of us won't even consider them. You may, or you may not. They are only ideas to make you think. Good luck with whichever you choose.

Happy Thanksgiving

Jim Nutter, Treasurer

Below are listed links that appear on the NALC.org website. Please take the time to explore them.

Services and opportunities for members only

New members — By joining the NALC, you have taken the first and most important step toward protecting your job and securing the future of letter carriers and the United States Postal Service. Start here to find information to help you learn more about your union and your rights and benefits as a city letter carrier.

NALC Group Accidental Death Benefit — NALC provides an Accident Death benefit of \$5,000 for all NALC members.

Union Plus benefits — NALC members can take advantage of a long list of money-saving Union Plus benefits, including home mortgages.

NALC Products — A convenient online catalog and order form for buying hats, shirts, watches and more from the NALC Insignia Collection.

Nalcrest — NALC's retirement community

Scholarships available to children of NALC members — William C. Doherty Scholarships, John T. Donelon Scholarship, Costas G. Lemonopoulos Scholarship, Union Plus Scholarships

Postal Employees' Relief Fund — To aid postal employees who are victims of natural disasters

Killed in the Line of Duty — Application form to have members who were killed in the line of duty memorialized on a plaque at NALC headquarters.

Printed below are the results of the election for National Convention Delegates that took place at the November monthly meeting on November 5, 2019. The top 12 vote-getters that qualify to be funded delegates, will be funded delegates. Any nominee that received at least one vote is eligible to be a non-funded delegate to the convention. Please advise the Branch as soon as possible whether you are able to attend the convention. The dates that you would have to be excused from work if you are an active carrier are August 16, 2020 through August 21, 2020.

John McNulty = 37
Jack Lyman = 34
Bob Cronin = 48
Dan Wheeler = 51
Jim Cavaliere = 19
Phyllis McKinnon = 14
Bruce Johnson = 28
Jeremy Boucher = 9
Tony Bossi = 40
Rich Donlon = 37
Ron Noviello = 33
Mike Kavanaugh = 34
Eillen Nutter = 27
Jim Salvati = 33
Joe Stearns = 17
Doug Murray = 12
Steve Pickett = 21
Ken Dusombre = 42
Jim Nutter = 44
Rick Dicecca = 3

The President and Executive Vice President are automatically delegates to the National and State Convention.

When you receive this issue of the Wake-Up!, you will most likely be gearing up for Thanksgiving, as will the post office. The penalty overtime exclusion period runs from November 30th through December 27th this year. Black Friday is November 29th. Now is the time to prepare yourself physically and mentally for the season. Be aware that you may not be the only person that could be "on edge". Avoid confrontation with customers and remember that more and more customers have video doorbells. I like to think that these doorbells can only help us. Hopefully, they are "catching" letter carriers at their best; curbing their wheels, turning off their vehicles, using their seatbelts, and PLACING parcels on the porch AFTER ringing the doorbell and waiting a reasonable amount of time to see if a customer is home to receive a package.

It is most certainly tempting to cut corners, but please don't. We are trying to provide the best service we can and trying to grow the business. Along those lines, I was happy to attend events in Ipswich and Andover in the last month. Each of these offices were recognized for their efforts for coming in first in the 2019 leads challenge for their level office. It is refreshing that there are offices that exist where the relationship is such that management and craft work together when it matters. Make no mistake, providing service and increasing business matters.

I'd like to finish up by encouraging people to become more involved with the union, YOUR union. In January 2011, my first month as President, I wrote in the Wake-Up!: *"The next leaders are out there. They may not know it yet. It's up to us to recognize it. It's up to us to lead by example, to provide encouragement, and to stand behind them. We have to realize that not only our words, but our actions have a profound effect on the next generation of letter carrier, the next generation of leader."*

"So, if I were asked what my main goal is as President of Branch 25, I would have to say that it is to recognize and develop the talent in the Branch so that we can continue to represent letter carriers at the high level that has been established and that Branch 25 letter carriers have come to expect, and deserve. I hope you'll help me, because it's not a one person job."

I stand by those words, and I welcome our members to help recognize and develop talent for the present and future of our branch. Why don't you make it a priority in 2020?

Stay informed!

Dave Barbuzzi

Branch 25 Directory of Officers

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

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

TRUSTEES' REPORT

In accordance with Article 6 Section 9 of the NALC Constitution for the Government of Subordinate and Federal Branches, on Tuesday October 22, 2019 trustees Ronald J Noviello, Bruce Johnson, Daniel J Raske, and John K McNulty audited the financial books and found them in order.

Beginning balance as of December 31, 2018 \$332,977.89

Ending balance as of June 30, 2019 \$365,329.66

Board of Trustees

Ronald J Noviello Daniel J Raske
Bruce Johnson John K McNulty

Just For the Health of It

Recently, Ken Dusombre and I attended our Plan's latest Health Benefits Seminar. Apart from the information we receive in our formal classroom sessions, one of the highlights for me is the add-on information we get from our guest speakers. The speakers hail from our healthcare partners (CVS Caremark, Optum Health and Cigna) and are highly acclaimed within their respective organizations. The subject matter this year included diabetes, depression, and living and working well. I want to offer brief discussions regarding each in this and subsequent Wake-Up! articles beginning with diabetes.

Pre-diabetes and diabetic conditions are pervasive in our society, affecting an estimated thirty million Americans. Astoundingly, many are totally unaware that either of these conditions applies to them. Smoking, a sedentary lifestyle, poor diet and excessive alcohol consumption are significant contributors to these conditions. Blindness, loss of limb(s) even death can sometimes result. Fortunately, diabetes is a controllable disease. Caremark offers a program titled Transform Diabetes Care.

For more information call 1-800-227-3728. To illustrate the magnitude of this problem, I want to point out that it is the single most expensive portion of the Plan's Prescription Drug Program.

A few brief reminders:

1. Open Season runs from November 11 to December 9th.
2. To compare plans go to opm.gov/healthcare-insurance
3. If you plan to change plans, don't wait until the last minute - you could be shut out. If you plan to change to our plan (great idea!) and need help, contact Ken or me.

Keep on truckin'
Rich Donlon

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

Suggestions for a Healthy, Happy Holiday Season

The holidays are a time for joy and celebration. We have a chance to spend time with loved ones, make new memories, relive favorite traditions, and enjoy the sounds and smells that fill the season. But the expectation of holiday joy can actually leave some people feeling lonely, depressed, frantic, overwhelmed and exhausted. Below are a few strategies to help you reduce your stress this holiday season.

Set realistic expectations

Often, we have high expectations of the holidays, which may or may not be fulfilled. Take time before the holidays to identify some positive, realistic expectations. But also keep in mind that busy schedules, financial pressures, social demands with friends and family can create stress no matter how positive the holidays are. Knowing that this stress will exist and preparing for it is the best way to ensure a healthy and happy holiday.

Balance and structure your free time

Don't spend too much time alone or too much time socializing. Find a balance between isolation and excessive partying. Structure your weekends around activities that include visits with friends or family, attending church or synagogue services, taking care of chores or volunteering your time toward a worthy holiday cause. If you can't be with loved ones during the holidays, write or call them. Take responsibility for how your holiday time is spent. Choose to be with people you know and with whom you will feel a sense of belonging.

Don't forget a little self-care

Maintain a regular exercise program. Whether it's getting outside for a brisk walk, jogging, swimming laps or using a stationary bicycle, exercise will help maintain fitness and has been demonstrated to be effective in helping lift depression. If in doubt about a program, consult your physician.

Be a good money and time manager

Pace yourself. Know how much money you have to spend for the holidays, know how much you have to accomplish and budget your money and time accordingly. Make a to-do list: presents to buy, cards to write, preparations to make...then try to accomplish something on that list every day. Talk to family or friends about setting dollar limits on gifts. Give gifts of “time” or “service,” or consider making craft or food gifts.

Watch out for over-indulgence

It's easy to get caught up in the celebrating and find yourself over-indulging in all kinds of ways. The top three include:

1. **Too many late nights** – Fatigue makes depression worse; rest does the opposite
2. **Too much rich food** – Buttery, sugary, calorie-laden holiday fare can make a person sluggish and tired, not to mention add on the pounds
3. **Too much alcohol** – Remember, alcohol is a depressant. While alcohol may initially create a feeling of relaxation and warmth, it also depresses the central nervous system. If you have a drinking problem or eating disorder, attend Alcoholics Anonymous or Overeaters Anonymous meetings regularly. The support of a group can get you through.

The bottom line

We can expect too much from the holidays. Our memories, expectations, the commercialism of the season and the resulting feelings can set us up to feel let down. Remember, it's not the holiday season itself that is stressful, it's how we handle it and feel about it that can lead to stress. Focus on accepting our feelings as okay and giving ourselves permission to experience the holidays as they occur. How we feel about the holidays and how we handle our feelings can help reduce stress.

Your EAP is here for you.

We're available to talk 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

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*at the next meeting
December 3, 2019*

