



WAKE UP!

President/ Editor
Daniel P. Wheeler

Publisher

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Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays to all Branch 25 Letter Carriers, past and present, who have felt more like Santa than a letter carrier at this time of year!

President's Message

I will start this month's President's Message with a special thank you to retired Lowell carrier Ken Bonin! Ken drew the cartoon highlighting the crimes against letter carriers on the back cover of this month's *Wake Up!* Ken has provided many cartoons for Branch 25 over the years, and we appreciate his talents. The issue of violent crimes against our Brothers and Sisters is the most critical issue we face as 2023 turns toward 2024. Help in addressing this issue may be on the way by the way of legislation. We hope a bill will be introduced soon to manage the cost of replacing the current Arrow Key system and funding more postal inspectors. These postal inspectors would be dedicated to crimes against letter carriers. Look for more information on this critical legislation shortly, including information on a possible NALC Day-of-Action to draw attention to this matter.

Branch 25 sent ten delegates to the NALC 2023 National Rap Session. The Rap Session was held November 17-19 in New Orleans, Louisiana. According to the NALC Constitution, the NALC holds a Rap Session in non-National Convention years. The weekend consisted of many informational workshops and updates from NALC National President Brian Renfroe. President Renfroe spoke about the issue of violent crimes against letter carriers, which, as I said at the beginning of this message, is our number one priority issue at the moment. There have been over two thousand incidents of violent crime against letter carriers since the year 2020. Only 14% of these crimes resulted in both arrests and prosecutions. The upcoming legislation I previously mentioned was discussed, as were the different options being tested to replace the old Arrow Key system.

President Renfroe spoke about the collective bargaining process and where we are at regarding our next agreement. Currently, the NALC is preparing to take our case to arbitration. The door is still open to coming to a negotiated agreement, however. The NALC will continue to work towards the best possible outcome, whether through negotiation or taking our case to arbitration. We get a lot of questions about the contract, so I will give a summary of how it will work going forward. The first possibility is that the NALC can come to a negotiated agreement without going to arbitration. In that case, the new agreement will be sent out to all members to be voted on as a proposed agreement. If the membership votes in favor of the proposed agreement, then the agreement is ratified and takes effect.

If there is no negotiated agreement, then it heads to arbitration. The USPS and NALC will present their cases, and the arbitrator will decide on the agreement. Many members are already asking about back pay. There will be information on possible back-pay once the terms of our new agreement are finalized.

As of November 22, it is 186 days since the 2019-2023 National Agreement expired. The NALC's Ed Morgan put together the following information on how long the previous agreements took to reach an arbitration decision or ratification by membership vote:

2019-23 535 days
2016-19 444 days
2011-16 417 days
2006-11 322 days
2001-05 217 days
1998-01 303 days

That's an average of 373 days over the previous six agreements. That's not to say how long this one will take, but it puts some perspective on the process.

At the November branch meeting a motion was approved by the membership to fund the following delegates to the 2024 NALC National Convention in Boston:

Tony Bossi
Andy Coan
Bob Cronin
Rich Donlon
Ken Dusombre
Bruce Johnson
James Metilinos
Doug Murray
Jim Nutter
Gilbert Paredes
Steve Pickett
Tony Porciello
Jeremy Provost
Jim Salvati
Joe Stearns
James Tuttle

Myself and Executive Vice-President Paul Desmond are automatic delegates per our branch by-laws. The December branch meeting will feature Chinese food instead of the usual pizza! I hope to see you there! I wish all members of Branch 25 a Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays!

In Solidarity,

Dan Wheeler

Executive Vice-President's Report

We have been getting a lot of calls about holiday schedules, as usual this time of year, and most relate to the pecking order by which management must use to make the schedule. As much as most stations have similar pecking orders, there are differences in LMOUs amongst our installations. These can be found on the branch 25 website under carrier resources. The LMOUs for every one of our stations are there in their entirety. The annual leave quotas and local bidding procedures are probably the most referenced, but please feel free to look the LMOUs over, because we will be going through a local negotiating period after the next national agreement is either negotiated or arbitrated. If anyone has suggestions of how to improve the provisions in the LMOU for their station, or any provisions that seem outdated that need tweaking, please let us know.

We have a lot of talk from some management teams about "undertime" and the necessity to complete your assignment with a piece of another route in 8 hours. Usually, management will point either to a projection or some day in the past when you may have accomplished this in 8 hours. To be clear there are no standards agreed to on the street. Simply because you may have done your route and a 30 minute piece on any given day in 8 hours, does not mean you are bound by those numbers. Every day is different because of many reasons. Weather and the makeup of the mail have an effect on your time. Maybe there are an abundance of scans or accountable items to attempt, or many parcels that you can not fit in your satchel. For any reason you feel that you can not complete the assignment in 8 hours, please fill out Form 3996 with an estimate of how much time you feel you need over 8 hours. Of course, in some stations, management will automatically deny your request, but in this case you will have fulfilled your obligation to report the need for OT or assistance. If you have not filled out Form 3996 and find that you need more than 8 hours to finish, you can text management of your situation with the scanners. Keep in mind for the Christmas period, there is no reason needed in section J of the 3996, when you make an estimate. The rest of the year a reason is necessary.

Hopefully, by now most carriers don't have more than the 520 hours of annual leave they can carry over through next year, left on the books. If so, please request enough leave to get you in compliance with this. Management is required to make sure you don't give

back any annual leave. If you don't get the balance to 520, you will lose whatever amount of leave you have over that. If you really don't want to take time off, you can donate the leave to someone who has requested donations through the donated leave program. There should be notices posted in all offices for all who have requested leave donations and how to donate.

This month's Postal Record has a good article in the Life Insurance section about short-term disability insurance. The Postal Service does not provide us with disability insurance, probably due to the fact that we can save unlimited sick leave, but the NALC does offer policies. We have had many carriers inquire about the availability of disability insurance. The bi-weekly rates and the benefit amounts are listed in the article also for all those interested. The Mutual Benefits offered by the NALC extend beyond Life Insurance and disability policies. They also offer IRAs and Roth IRAs with fixed interest rates set every year.

I hope everyone had a great Thanksgiving and has a great Christmas and New Year season. I know it will be busy but enjoy. I hope to see you at the next branch meeting on December 12th at the Knights of Columbus in Wilmington, food will be served at 7:15pm. Keep your head up!

Paul Desmond

Calendar of Events

December 11	Open season Ends
December 12	Regular Branch Meeting K of C Wilmington 8:00PM Chinese Food served at 7:15 PM
December 23	Festivus
December 25	Christmas Day
December 29	Penalty OT Exclusion Period Ends
January 1	New Years Day

Vice President's Report

“The Windshield is Bigger than the Rearview Mirror for a Reason”

Peak season is upon us, and city carriers throughout the country will be scrambling to juggle the holidays with their social lives, sleep, shopping, and brutal work schedule. Let's hope the weather is nice to us this winter and be sure to stay on top of your mental and physical well-being. As a reminder, by the time you receive this Article, there may only be days left in open season, which is through December 11, 2023. Ensure that you have the right health, dental, or vision insurance coverage for you and your family.

As we approach the end of 2023, as I did at the end of 2022, I will ask you to start the new year off right and attend as many branch meetings as possible next year. Quite frankly, attend as many meetings over your lifetime as you can, but right now, it is crucial to be as educated about city carrier duties and informed about the contract as possible. The job is downright dangerous. Armed robbery on the street, short staffing, harassment and intimidation in the workplace, and a decrepit vehicle fleet are just a few of the issues we face on a daily basis. I understand life is busy, but we typically only have ten meetings a year, and beyond the education you will gather at a meeting, you will realize something greater: **you aren't alone in this.**

Now admittedly, I'm not really into social media. However, sometimes carriers send me posts or articles about other frustrated carriers from throughout the country. When I read these posts and articles I wonder, are these carriers attending their local meetings? Are they asking these questions or voicing these concerns at their meetings? Why wouldn't they? What is the NALC doing about management falsifying carrier safety records? What are the NALC and USPS doing about the armed robberies of carriers?

What is the status of our national bargaining? What can I do about my supervisor who has been telling me to take my personal vehicle out to deliver for the last three months? What can I do about the supervisor who has me dismounting a Promaster Van to deliver to curbside boxes? What is the Letter Carrier Political Fund? Why should I participate in Customer Connect? I can't speak for every branch throughout the country, but at a Branch 25 meeting, these topics would have been covered, or

these questions would be answered.

Another issue we face are toxic workplace environments. These create extreme stress and require carriers to remain vigilant at all times. The way to start and combat some of these issues is to get informed and educated about our rights. If you want to know what our union is doing about these issues, please, come and see. Food is served around 7:15, there is a bar, the meetings typically last around an hour and a half, and you will learn something. You might just be the catalyst to get another member in your office to go.

Our union needs more carriers getting involved, holding moronic managers who stare at a screen and don't give a damn about a person's life accountable; those ones out there who think we are just a number on a route, and we need more carriers contractually educated enough to look out for each other in the office. Whether you've attended a meeting previously or not, you'll see the frequent flyers are happy to see a new face and thrilled to see someone sacrificing their time to hopefully make their future better. On a lighter note, Happy holidays and happy new year!

In solidarity,
Tony Bossi

Branch 25 Scholarships

Branch 25 gives out two separate scholarships annually in the amount of \$1000 each. These scholarships are administered by the Massachusetts AFL-CIO. Any graduating children of Branch 25 members are eligible to apply for one of these scholarships. Applicants must register online at www.massaflcio.org/scholarships no later than 5 PM on December 22, 2023. Exams will be online and available starting Monday, February 5, 2024. All students will take the test at their high school. The school will determine the testing dates and times. All study materials are available at www.learnlaborhistory.com.

The NALC also gives out five \$4000 scholarships nationally. The deadline to apply for those is December 31 and more information on those can be found at www.nalc.org/member-benefits/benefits-for-members/scholarships



Stay Grounded This Season

By Using Affirmations

Affirmations can be a powerful tool to help you stay grounded and maintain a positive mindset. Grounding affirmations are statements that you repeat to yourself to reinforce a sense of stability, calm, and presence. They can be especially useful during times of stress, uncertainty, or when you need to reconnect with yourself.

Here's how you can use affirmations to stay grounded:

Choose the Right Affirmations: Select affirmations that resonate with you and address your specific needs. Grounding affirmations should focus on feelings of stability, presence, and calm. For example:

- "I am grounded and secure."
- "I am connected to the present moment."
- "I am in control of my thoughts and emotions."

Repeat Regularly: Incorporate these affirmations into your daily routine. You can say them aloud or silently to yourself. Repeating them regularly helps reinforce their positive impact.

Mindful Breathing: Combine your affirmations with deep, mindful breathing. Inhale as you say the affirmation and exhale as you release any tension or negativity. This practice can help you center yourself.

Visualize: As you repeat your affirmations, visualize yourself feeling grounded and stable. Imagine a strong connection to the Earth. This visualization can make the affirmations more effective.

Use Them in Stressful Situations: When you encounter a stressful or anxiety-inducing situation, repeat your grounding affirmations. This practice can help you maintain your composure and stay centered.

Create a Routine: Establish a daily routine that includes affirmations.

Keep a journal: Write down your affirmations and reflect on how they make you feel. You can also note any changes in your mindset and emotional state over time.

Adapt as Needed: Over time, your needs and circumstances may change. Be willing to adapt your affirmations to reflect your current situation and feelings. Affirmations should always feel relevant and authentic.

Stay Patient and Persistent: It may take time for the affirmations to have a noticeable impact on your mindset. Be patient and persistent, and trust that they will contribute to your sense of groundedness over time.

Affirmations are a simple but effective tool for promoting a grounded mindset. Reach out to your EAP for additional support in navigating the holiday season with a greater sense of stability and calm.

Branch 25 Directory of Officers

Daniel P. Wheeler	President
Paul G. Desmond	Executive V.P.
Anthony Bossi	Vice President
Joe Stearns	Secretary
James P. Nutter	Treasurer
Kenneth Dusombre	Health Benefits Rep.
Jim Salvati	Safety Officer
Doug Murray	Sergeant At Arms
Dan Raske	Chairman of Trustees
Bruce Johnson	Trustee
Tony Porciello	Trustee
Bob Cronin	Trustee
Gilbert Paredes	Trustee
James Metilinos	Assistant Treasurer
Andy Coan	Assistant Secretary
Jeremy Provost	Assistant Safety Officer
James Tuttle	Assistant Wake Up Publisher
Wesley Tugman	Assistant Health Ben. Rep.

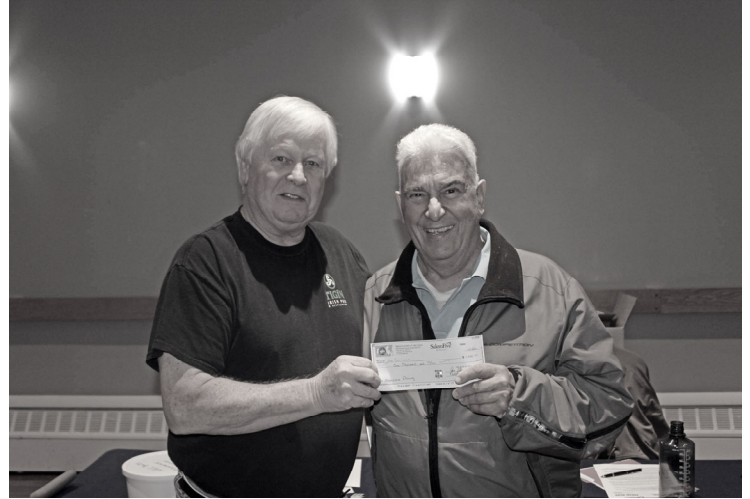
Your “Wake-Up!” is produced in-house at the Branch 25 Union office each and every month.

Recent Retirees



Congratulations to Haverhill’s Janice Earnshaw on her recent retirement! Good luck in all your future post-Postal endeavors Janice!

Branch Meeting Attendance Prize



At the October branch meeting, a motion was approved to change how the monthly attendance prize will be given starting in January 2024. As part of the motion, for the December meeting, the second attendance prize, as currently established, will be drawn until there is a winner. However, it will be drawn from those members in attendance only. This would be a great time to attend a monthly meeting, especially if this is your first time. We hope to see you on December 12! Retired Wakefield carrier Joe Scimone (above) was the lucky winner of November’s \$1000 dollar attendance prize. Congratulations Joe and good luck to all those in attendance in December!

From the Secretary’s Desk

It is hard to believe that when you read this, Thanksgiving will be gone, and December will be upon us. I hope everyone enjoyed Thanksgiving with a great meal, parade watching, Football games, and most importantly... Family Time. I know I did. Now, onto the Christmas rush.

The NALC RAP session was a great success, with most of us being first-time attendees to one. A lot of information was given out, as well as updates to ongoing items at the classes. The RAP itself also included a good amount of information, including about the contract. Our President, Brian Renfro, informed us of where we stand.

At this point, we are preparing for arbitration; however, we are also still negotiating as we go along. One of the obvious sticking points is the financial package, along with some other items. The NALC will continue to bargain in good faith right to the last second. I had a chance to speak with our EVP Paul Barner prior to the RAP session, and he said the same things about the financial package and creating a new pay table that Brian told us about. While there was a lot of hard work put in by the Branch 25 delegation, there was a little fun time as well. All I will say is there was some singing and bull riding involved. Looking forward to the 2024 Convention in Boston.

At the end of October, Marblehead lost another retiree, Richard "Irv" Irvin, who passed away. Rich always had a nickname or funny story to tell. One last time for Rich... "Who runs this place??? Dracula". He will be missed.

December's meeting is Tuesday the 12th. Come on down and enjoy some Chinese food and the last attendance drawing before we start the new process in January. Who couldn't use some fried rice and MSG?

Before I end, I want to wish everyone a safe and Happy Holiday Season as well as a Happy New Year. Don't forget to be good so Santa will stop at your house. Try to enjoy this time as much as you can, and remember, with all that goes on at the USPS, it is the time of year when family and friends mean the most to us. Never take it for granted, and treasure every moment.

As I always end this, if you have moved, please update your address with the branch. You can call, write, or email me at JESBR25@gmail.com. Merry Christmas, Happy New Year and see you at the meeting.



Appropriate Snapple Fact # 1307 Canada's postal code for Santa Claus at the North Pole is HOH OHO

Joe Stearns

WELCOME



We would like to welcome the following new members to Branch 25. Please help us in welcoming them and help them out in your stations.

Taylor Hughes	Haverhill
Charles Jeffries	Haverhill
Daniel Letendre	Sudbury
Ian Lopez	Billerica
Dawin Luna Medina	Lawrence
Ethan Ortiz	Billerica
Mohamed Osman	Marblehead
Sonny Rivera	Lawrence
Felix Santiago	Lawrence
Tet Shrestha	Salem
Nicholas Stonov	Concord
Ashok Tamang	Billerica
Flores Taueras	Lawrence

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

WAKE UP

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at the next meeting
December 12
K of C Wilmington
8:00 PM



CASTING A SHADOW ON SAFTY