



WAKE UP!

President/ Editor
Daniel P. Wheeler

Publisher

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



Branch 25's Executive Council for 2025-27. Back row left to right: NBA Rick DiCecca, Bob Cronin, Gilbert Paredes, Jeremy Boucher, JT Tuttle, Wes Tugman, Jeremy Provost, Andrew Dencklau, Doug Murray, NALC President Brian Renfroe. Front row left to right Dan Wheeler, Bruce Johnson, James Metilinos, Sandi Mannas, Paul Desmond, Dan Raske, Joe Stearns.

President's Message

Happy New Year to the members of Branch 25! We made it through 2024, and we are on to 2025. I will start this month by saying that I hope most active carriers have taken the time to fill out and mail in their ballots for the Tentative Agreement. The original due date to return ballots was January 13. However, they just announced that the date to get ballots returned has been extended by two weeks until January 27. So, if you have not mailed your ballot yet, there is still time. I encourage everyone to make their voice heard and cast their vote.

As we enter the new year, a couple of things are happening throughout the branch that are worth noting. The first is the new safety blitz the Postal Service implemented last month. James Metilinos has written about this in more detail on pages 4-5 of this month's Wake Up! So, I won't go into a lot of details here, but active carriers should be aware of this. After reading over the training material issued by management to their people, it is clear to me that this program is designed as more of a "gotcha" method to try to catch carriers doing something wrong rather than promoting safety.

Please take the time to read James' article and be aware that management will focus on catching carriers with safety violations in the immediate future. It could be local management, people from the district, or other management making these observations, as has been the case so far. Please be safe and aware out there!

Another thing that I have noticed in our offices is the questioning in PDIs becoming increasingly pre-determined and aggressive. For a while now, most, if not all, local management has been instructed that PDI questions are to come from the district level. The questions are designed more to get us to admit guilt and answer a different version of the same question multiple times rather than to actually get answers as to what happened so local management can then make their own conclusion. It seems like more and more the conclusion has been arrived at by labor, and they are looking for the PDI to confirm that for them.

Remember that a PDI is management's obligation to complete a fair and thorough investigation, not just a formality, to get concurrence on a conclusion of guilt they have already pre-determined!

Last year, 525 total grievances were filed, an increase of almost 4% from the 508 total filed in the previous year. The breakdown by installation is listed below. Thanks to all the stewards in the branch who keep the grievance process moving promptly and properly!

In Solidarity,

Dan Wheeler

| | |
|-------------|-----|
| LAWRENCE | 185 |
| BEVERLY | 104 |
| LOWELL | 39 |
| BILLERICA | 26 |
| SALEM | 23 |
| DRACUT | 19 |
| PEABODY | 19 |
| HAVERHILL | 15 |
| GLOUCESTER | 15 |
| WAKEFIELD | 14 |
| SUDBURY | 9 |
| BURLINGTON | 8 |
| LYNNFIELD | 7 |
| WINCHESTER | 7 |
| ACTON | 6 |
| AMESBURY | 4 |
| MARBLEHEAD | 4 |
| CHELMSFORD | 3 |
| HOLLISTON | 3 |
| READING | 3 |
| WILMINGTON | 3 |
| NEWBURYPORT | 2 |
| WAYLAND | 2 |
| ANDOVER | 1 |
| CONCORD | 1 |
| MANCHESTER | 1 |
| NO. READING | 1 |
| TEWKSBURY | 1 |

Executive Vice-President's Message

First, I want to wish everyone a happy, healthy New Year. I hope the holidays went well. We received a lot of calls to the union office about switching to the NALC Health Plan during Open Season in December. The NALC Plans premiums went up slightly, but it seems like the large increase in premiums to the other plans made a difference. The NALC plan has always gotten high praise and I'm sure the cost was instrumental in members comparing it to other plans. The more members in the plan the better. The NALC Plan has been good for a long time, but each member has specific needs to what health plan is good for them.

Now that it is January, there is a possibility that route inspections will be conducted. We currently have a couple of special inspections scheduled, but not any full office inspections. If any inspections are conducted, the information used to compare the week of inspection is derived from carrier's time punches from the previous 7 months, not including December, June, July or August. This is referred to as the 1840B time. Please make sure you are making the proper punches and are not eliminating any street functions, such as breaks or lunch. Any moves in the office should also be made if you are working on another route. These moves will give proper credit to each route. The TIAREP program has expired, and until any other route evaluation program is agreed upon, route inspections will be conducted as stated in the M-39 with management accompanying carriers on the street for up to 3 days. If you are interested in requesting a special inspection or just want more information, call the union office.

It seems like in every station management is focusing on attendance amongst other issues. Generally, the focus is on unscheduled absences. If you know you will be out more than 1 day, tell your supervisor so every day after the first is scheduled leave. Please remember to request FMLA paperwork if you are out with a chronic condition, which most conditions that keep you out of work for 3 days qualify as. The 3 days do not need to be consecutive, but if you have a condition that requires intermittent leave throughout the year, it may qualify for FMLA coverage also. This is as easy as checking the FMLA box on Form 3971, which everyone should fill out when leave is necessary. Please keep a copy of this form for your records. FMLA coverage is not a separate category of leave but protects you from adverse job action. You can use AL, SL or LWOP to cover an

FMLA absence. Please take advantage of this.

It was good to see a large turnout at the December branch meeting for the installation of branch officers and to hear National President Renfroe speak. I hope everyone enjoyed the meal. By the time we have our next meeting January 14th, there will have been a day of observance for the death of former President Jimmy Carter. There is a memo in the JCAM that describes how employees are paid, whether the day is their regularly scheduled day or non-scheduled day. I'm sure there will be more questions to follow on this. Keep your head up and see you at the next meeting on January 14th.

Paul Desmond


Calendar of Events

| | |
|-------------------|---|
| January 14 | Regular Branch Meeting K of C Wilmington 8:00PM Food served at 7:15 PM |
| January 20 | Martin Luther King Day |
| January 27 | National Agreement ballots due back |
| January 29 | Chinese New Year |
| February 2 | Groundhog Day |

| | |
|-------------------|----------------------------|
| Daniel P. Wheeler | President |
| Paul G. Desmond | Executive V.P. |
| Gilbert Paredes | Vice President |
| Joe Stearns | Secretary |
| James Metilinos | Treasurer |
| Jeremy Provost | Safety Officer |
| Doug Murray | Sergeant At Arms |
| Dan Raske | Chairman of Trustees |
| Bruce Johnson | Trustee |
| Tony Porciello | Trustee |
| Bob Cronin | Trustee |
| Sandi Mannas | Trustee |
| Andrew Dencklau | Assistant Treasurer |
| Jeremy Boucher | Assistant Safety Officer |
| James Tuttle | 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.

The opinions expressed in the Wake Up! are those of the authors. They do not reflect the opinions or views of Branch 25 or the National Association of Letter Carriers.

 **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



“I heard from a carrier in my office that two carriers in city x were put on emergency placement yesterday.”

This text is becoming far too frequent. I see this text from a carrier or in a group chat almost daily. I’ve had plenty of members tell me it’s happened in Billerica, in Danvers, in Salem; all over the state at this point. It’s happening in my office as well. Local management, as well as headquarters, have been doing street observations several times throughout the week. ELM 812 dictates management’s responsibilities to observe carriers on the street and to provide the proper PS Form 4588, *Observation of Work Practices*, to the carrier upon completion. So why have street observations and emergency placements become so common in the past month?

Our regional office was informed from National back on December 13th of a new initiative pushed by USPS headquarters called “Safety Blitzes.” This project identifies an increase in motor vehicle accidents (MVA) of 15.64% over the past two years and an increase in personal accidents of 10.26%, respectively. USPS has identified Mondays and Fridays to be the biggest days for accidents in general and has called for safety blitzes to be done on these two days. This does not mean observations will not be done any other day of the week, as we have seen carriers in installations already being observed and approached on Christmas Eve.

There are three key indicators management will be looking to observe:

1. The vehicle is running, and the carrier is not in the vehicle.
2. Carrier not wearing a seatbelt.
3. Distracted driving (texting, phone call, headphones, eating, etc. while driving)

(continued on page 5)

Treasurer's Report Cont.

So, what happens if any of the three indicators are met during a safety blitz? Management is instructed in the POD Management Training to approach the carrier, stop the engine and obtain the vehicle keys, and contact local management to come out to the location of the observation. Once local management arrives, the employee will be transported back to the installation, management will obtain the emergency placement forms, and the carrier will be placed in a non-pay, no work status, pending a pre-disciplinary interview. The supervisor who conducted the blitz will provide local management with the proper PS Forms, photos, and statements necessary to conduct the PDI.

The information I'm equipping you with comes directly from a POD Management Training PowerPoint that was emailed to postal management. I have a copy of this training manual as well, and any member who is looking to obtain it to assist their members, please reach out to myself or the branch and we can ensure you receive a copy of it.

Some of our offices have local contracts that require management to hold safety meetings and have safety teams to ensure the facility and delivery operations are safe for the members. I've been requested, as I'm sure many of you have, if you're part of a safety team like me, to correct and help improve any deficiencies observed on the streets by the carriers. I've had carriers tell me management is asking them to fill out PS Form 4588's if they observe carriers. Do not do this. Do not report any action back to your local management. This information will be used to discipline the membership. If you are looking out for your brothers and sisters, let them know their actions are unsafe and could get them hurt, or worse.

So, what should you do if you're being observed? Just carry out your duties as normal. Remember, if you're carrying a foot route or doing a park and loop, we must carry a satchel and dog spray. I understand many of us wear headphones. Please be aware, the district standard operating procedure does not permit headphones and even if you're wearing only one, you could face discipline. Hold your handrails. Shut off unsafe deliveries and communicate this to local management.

During your observations, management may not use covert techniques to observe you, which is stated in the M-39, section 134.22, *The manager is not to spy or use*

other covert techniques. Any employee infractions are to be handled in accordance with the section in the current National Agreement that deals with these problems. If management finds a deficiency, they must correct it on site and approach the employee.

If management does approach you, be cautious about the information you provide to them. Under Article 17 of the National Agreement, we are entitled to representation. Any information you provide to management during a safety blitz could be used in a pre-disciplinary interview. Your safest and smartest action is to immediately request a steward. While management will likely not provide one in that instance, you will not be required at that moment to answer any questions. This goes for local management as well once you're brought back to the installation. Please remember, a steward is not guaranteed unless you ask for one. This is called your Weingarten Rights.

The reason these safety blitzes are currently becoming a mainstream talking point is the conflict it creates with Article 16 of the National Agreement, *Discipline Procedure*. The very first sentence of Article 16 reads, "...a basic principle shall be that discipline should be corrective in nature, rather than punitive." Management has created a training project that directs local management to observe carriers and place them off duty. By immediately placing a carrier in an off duty, no pay status, this action is directly punitive and not corrective; a violation of Article 16. This is outlined in management's safety blitz program. Management is not attempting to hide their actions and encourages local management to place members out of work.

Please be vigilant and smart while you're making your appointed rounds. If you're a probationary employee, management may part ways with you for almost any reason whatsoever. Billerica just lost a PTF to a safety blitz who had no more than 30 days of time in. Remember: Ask for a steward and wait for one to be provided to you. Contact the hall!

Don't forget, VOTE ON THE TENTATIVE AGREEMENT!

James Metilinos

Steward Appreciation



Branch 25 recognized the stewards for their hard work at the December branch meeting. Thanks again, to those stewards who were able to attend.



(Clockwise from top left) Gilbert Paredes of Salem, Mike Cahill of Tewksbury, JT Tuttle from Dracut, & Mike Gudatis from Newburyport.



Greg McMeniman form North Chelmsford (left) & Fred Durfee of Bedford (right)

(Clockwise from top left) Brian Morrison of Bedford, Wes Tugman from Lowell, Jack Lyman of Dracut, & Doug Murray from Beverly.



Steward Appreciation



(Clockwise from top left) Sandi Mannas of Concord, Tom Ayers from Ipswich, Joe Stearns of Marblehead, & Justine Masters from Acton.

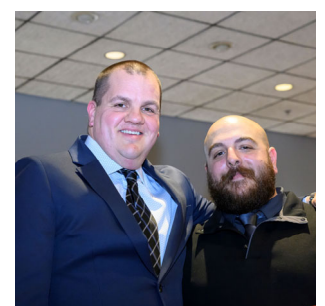


(Clockwise from top left) Shirley Easterbrook from Winchester, Cam Fullen of Wilmington, Andrew Dencklau of Haverhill, & Sal Mustica from Wayland.



Jeremy Provost of Billerica (left) & Bob Cronin from Lawrence (right)

Phil Marchand of Salem (left) & Lowell's James Metilinos (right)





The holiday season can bring an avalanche of packages and increased customer demands, making the work environment particularly intense. Here's a practical guide with strategies designed to help USPS employees manage stress and maintain balance during this busy time:

Take Stress-Busting Breaks: During long shifts, take short, intentional breaks to decompress. A 1-2 minute pause for deep breathing or a quick walk around the break room can help clear your mind and reduce stress. Don't underestimate the benefit of stepping away for short breaks to refresh and recharge.

Manage Tasks Effectively: Keep track of tasks and deadlines. Identify the most important tasks and schedule them effectively. A simple checklist can help prioritize your daily responsibilities and manage the high workload.

Collaborate: Work closely with colleagues and family members. Communicate openly about your workload to handle the days more effectively. Teamwork can make the holiday rush more manageable.

Stay Flexible and Adaptable: Expect and be prepared for changes in your routine and workload. Flexibility is key in adapting to shifts in volume or procedures. Keep a positive attitude and adjust your approach as needed. If you are able to maintain a positive mindset, you will more likely enjoy festive atmospheres.

Communicate Openly: Regularly update your team and family on the issues and challenges you're facing. Clear communication helps in resolving problems quickly and managing expectations.

Pause and Reflect: At the end of each day, take a moment to reflect on what went well and what could be improved. This can help identify effective strategies and areas for adjustment, making future work days smoother.

Hang in there! To learn more about managing stress during the holiday rush, reach out to the EAP. We are here to help you have a happier, healthier season!



CALL US TODAY: 800-327-4968
800-EAP-4YOU | TTY: 877-492-7341
WWW.EAP4YOU.COM

December Branch Meeting



North Chelmsford's Greg McMeniman retired after 36 years. Congratulations Greg!

Secretary's Report

I hope your Christmas, Hanukkah, Kwanzaa, and New Years celebrations were enjoyable and filled with love, family, and friends. As I write this on the last day of the year it is a lot to look back on in 2024 for our union. We had branch elections for our 2025-2027 council. Thank you again for the membership's support. I know we will do our best to make you all proud of your decision. We attended the 73rd National Convention right here in Boston. It did not disappoint and was a filled event. Our own Tony Bossi was appointed to RGA (Regional Grievance Assistant) for regions 14 and 15 back in the spring a well-deserved and earned promotion. Of course, there is the new TA (Tentative Agreement) that is being voted on as we speak. I know this might sound like a broken record, but if you have not voted yet then please fill out your ballot and send it in. Read what the national offices sent in the ballot package and make an informed decision that is best for you. To end the year at our December meeting we had our steward appreciation night as well as our installation of officers. The hard-working stewards of this branch were honored with some branch apparel and a gift. Then the officers were installed by our own National President Brian Renfroe who made the trip up here. Afterwards he spoke about the TA and took questions from the membership. As you can see it has been a busy year in the branch, not to mention all the grievance work done by the stewards as well as Dan, Paul, and Bob. As always it was another successful year in the branch.

I want to congratulate Mark and Carol Sullivan on their retirement from the Marblehead Office. They got married while at the Post office and now are leaving together. Carol had over 39 years of service and Mark had almost 37 years plus military service (Thank you) that will put him over 40. That's over 76 years combined. I am sorry I forgot to get a picture for this wakeup, but I will work on that. Enjoy your time off and of course for Mark..... GO PATS!!!!

I have kept a lot of this to myself for some time now but feel like I need to get this out now. Over this last year there have been many controversies in the NALC. In an organization this big you will never be in agreement over everything, that is obvious. This is why we have conventions to vote on national items, why we vote on our national agreements, and why we vote on our branch and national officers. This is the democratic way

a union truly works. But this year I have seen this union being torn at the seams. Fighting at all levels of the NALC. Disagreement can be good because it brings discussion and works towards a common goal. But when it gets to the point we are at it will halt everything this union has worked for to get where we are today. This union is about working together to achieve the best we can for all. But this year I have seen people make this personal against others. People's individual feelings about someone have become prevalent over our common union goals. While not everyone has to get along we do need to work together. This is unfortunately not happening right now in my opinion. I don't know what the answer is, but I do know it will hurt this great union in the future. Again, if you don't like something or what someone is doing then you can vote against it, but do not force it upon others. Understand that everyone is capable of making their own decisions. When those decisions are made via voting then we must work together with what the majority has decided to still do what we do best. I have seen this in the past in other areas and watched things come crashing down. Remember one definition of union is: a number of persons, states, etc., joined or associated together for some common purpose. We need to keep this in mind in all we do. Thank you for listening.

Another end of year item is addresses. Since this is one of my priorities, I want to stress how important it is that we have them correct. During this time of voting on the TA I have had a couple people say they didn't get it. Some of them said that they get the wakeup, but do not get the postal record from national or visa versa. So, if this is the case with you, please notify me or the branch with any changes. The USPS does not notify the branch when you put in an address change. You need to let us know on your own. I also want to touch on the subject of mark-ups. I get wakeups back here with perfectly good addresses or incorrect mark-ups. Please be careful in how these are done. If you have questions on how to do this just ask your fellow coworkers.

(continued on page 11)

Secretary's Report Cont.

I also want to congratulate the Beverly carriers on another successful Christmas Parade. My family and I went down to see them off and take a group photo. They had a great breakfast table set up with a couple postal trucks and a carrier's decorated jeep. It was cold but they did have sunshine for the parade. They gave out candy and collected letters to Santa from the kids along the route. Look for the group photo here in this wakeup. Such a great tradition they are continuing in Beverly.

Lastly, I hope everyone's 2025 gets off to a good start and stays that way. Best wishes to all the council members who have run again and those joining us for the first time for a successful year. To all the stewards keep fighting the good fight, unfortunately the fight will never stop. To all the members of the NALC here is to a happy and healthy 2025 to all, stay safe and stay strong.

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. See you at the branch meeting January 14th.

Snapple Fact # 408 - Panda bears eat up to 16 hours a day.

Joe Stearns

Welcome New Members

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.

| | |
|---------------------|------------|
| Joseph Okonotoh | Bedford |
| Samuel Tabako | Beverly |
| Gamil Wael | Beverly |
| Linda Yu | Chelmsford |
| Thomas Mulrey | Haverhill |
| Encarnacion Batista | Lawrence |
| Michael Kischel | Peabody |

Welcome New Members

| | |
|--------------------------|------------|
| Yeshua Lugo | Lawrence |
| Andre Morris | Peabody |
| Bartholomew Mwebaza | Peabody |
| Lisa Spinale | Tewksbury |
| Justin Brooks | Billerica |
| Amber Cotto | Beverly |
| Ruth Gonzalez | Lawrence |
| David Mojica-Perez | Lawrence |
| Kurt Thomson | Concord |
| Ricardo Beaupin | Lawrence |
| Sarah Carney | Haverhill |
| Coneron Choppell | Billerica |
| Somnang Lon | Billerica |
| Ian Maclean | Billerica |
| Josef Nobile | Andover |
| Konstantino Papadopoulos | Peabody |
| Seth Porter | Wayland |
| Thomas Reed | Billerica |
| Alexsander Romero | Salem |
| Michael Vinard | Marblehead |
| John Zouharis | Wayland |
| Jaquez Cruz | Andover |
| Michael Hayes | Gloucester |
| Shanely Jimenez | Haverhill |
| Caleb Mosher | Marblehead |

WAKE UP

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First Class Mail
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TEWKSBURY, MA



at the next meeting
January 14
K of C Wilmington
8:00 PM



Maynard's Gary Cooper recently celebrated his last day delivering mail. Enjoy your retirement, Gary!