



# ***WAKE UP!***

President/ Editor  
Daniel P. Wheeler

Publisher  
James Tuttle

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## President's Message

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The front cover of this month's Wake Up! Says "Hell No!" Hell no to what you may ask? Hell No to dismantling the United States Postal Service as we currently know it! The talk of privatizing the Postal Service is nothing new. They have been talking about it during my entire 30-year career, in fact. However, currently potential changes seem more possible than ever. There has been a lot of speculation about what may actually happen or not happen in the last couple of weeks. There is a gap in time between when I am writing this and when you will be reading it. Things may or may not change between now and then, but I will explain the situation as it stands at the moment.

There have been many recent developments. On February 18, Postmaster General Louis DeJoy announced that he would be stepping down from his position. He didn't give an exact timeline for his departure. He said he would stay on until his successor was found but didn't indicate when that would be. Next, on February 20, the Washington Post posted a story saying that President Trump had plans to fire the members of the Board of Governors, eliminate the Postal Regulatory Commission, and possibly fire other upper postal management. This would be in advance of planning to end the USPS operating as it has since 1971 and putting it under the control of the Treasury Department.

This would end the USPS operating independently and make it an official part of the federal government, as before the 1970 strike. This news caused much concern and speculation; if this happened, it could have devastating effects on letter carriers. NALC National President Brian Renfro held a meeting for branch presidents on Friday, February 21, to fill everyone in on what was happening. Brian stated, "Make no mistake, they are going to try to do this...don't believe any reports that say otherwise."

The NALC fully anticipates the administration to try and cancel our collective bargaining agreement. The National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) does not currently have a quorum because of recent firings, so it would be of no help if that happened. NALC leadership felt it would be beneficial to have an agreement in place if any of this happens and not to be still working under our expired one. To that end, the executive council voted to proceed to expedited arbitration to get an agreement as

soon as possible.

So what does that mean? Under expedited arbitration, the NALC and USPS will present only the financial part of the contract to the arbitrator. All of the work rules parts will be stipulated whether they are agreed on or not. President Renfro said he hoped to start hearings on this as soon as the last week of February. I'm unsure how long it will take to begin the expedited arbitration and get a decision. Still, it will be much sooner than we would have proceeded with regular arbitration as originally planned. The thought is that if current senior postal leadership is fired, no one may be left to bargain with, or the people who replace them will have no interest in bargaining.

Just because the administration attempts to do something doesn't mean it has the legal right to or that it would be successful even if it did. However, through the first month, it is clear that potential legal challenges will not deter them from attempting these moves. It's no secret how vital the Postal Service is to millions of Americans daily. The Postal Service employs 640,000 people, including 73,000 veterans. Any attempt to dismantle the Postal Service is an attack not only on all the hard-working employees but also on the American public. As I said at the start of this article, we don't know exactly what will or won't happen. The question is, what can we do to prevent it from happening?

The USPS is always listed as the most trusted government entity by the American people. We need their support now more than ever. The NALC held a "Save the USPS Rally" In Washington DC on February 25 and had a Day of Action the next day to send the message loud and clear to the White House to scrap any potential plans they may have to dismantle or disrupt the Postal Service. We can help by letting our elected representatives know how we feel about this and encouraging the non-postal public to do the same.

More information on local day(s) of action or rallies will be forthcoming. For now, we need to be ready for anything and everything! The near future will be interesting for sure! Stay tuned for more to come. Come to the next branch meeting for the latest information.

In Solidarity,  
Dan Wheeler

## Executive Vice-President's Message

It looks like the weather is starting to improve a little now that March is here, within a couple weeks we should have a significant increase in daylight. Hopefully, the ice will be gone also. The clocks will be set ahead. Until then be careful on the ice and avoid any unsafe deliveries. If you work after dark, you should be able to get a head lamp from your manager if you want one.

Since the Fall, we have had a few special inspections conducted throughout the branch. The latest ones wrapped up in February. During this process management compares the week of inspection street times to the 1840B street time, which is a random analysis of 7 previous weeks along with the week after inspection. Management has the right to choose which time is most representative of the route, which is usually the lowest of the 2. We talk about this constantly, making sure you are getting credit for all your street time and not skipping any breaks or lunch. By the time you get inspected an 1840B time has been calculated, except for the week after inspection, and if you have skipped street duties, the 1840B time may be short of what it should be. It is up to you to make sure the 1840B time is truly representative of what you need for a street time.

We have gotten a few calls from retirees about their Form 1099R that is necessary to file tax returns. If you don't receive one in the mail, it can be printed off the Retirement Services Online website, or request one to be mailed to you. Any retiree with access to a computer can sign in and establish an account at [www.servicessonline.opm.gov](http://www.servicessonline.opm.gov). You will need your CSA number to establish an account, but it is worth the effort for the time it saves if you need the 1099R or need to change anything with your deductions or an allotment to your annuity. We all know how difficult it is to get anyone from OPM, or Shared Services on the phone, and this process is quite simple. If you do need the number to OPM retirement services, it is 888-767-6738.

As most of you know, we are heading to arbitration for our national agreement. From what I understand, it is expected to be a quicker process than usual, with the parties stipulating certain contractual issues. Whatever the outcome of the arbitrators' award is, we may be a short time frame from the expiration of the award. The tentative agreement that was rejected by the members would have expired in November of 2026 and it is possible that a current award could mirror that time frame. There is a lot going on right now with the

announcement of PM General DeJoy planning to step down and the current administration talking about changes to all agencies of the government. Hopefully, Congress will get involved if necessary. Keep an eye on the NALC website and app for information.

In most of our stations, the LMOU dictates that the prime-time vacation schedule starts to get filled out by the 1<sup>st</sup> of March. Some are earlier, but by April most are completed and should be posted with the office or unit. This is a good time for PTFs, CCAs and unassigned regulars to get an idea of what might be available for hold downs during prime time. Each office requests hold downs their own way, but if you have any questions, please ask the steward or contact the Union office. See you at the next meeting March 11<sup>th</sup>.

Keep your head up!

Paul Desmond

### Calendar of Events

|                 |   |
|-----------------|---|
| March 4         | Mardi Gras  |
| March 9         | Daylight Savings Time   |
| <b>March 11</b> | <b>Regular Branch Meeting<br/>K of C Wilmington 8:00PM<br/>Food served at 7:15 PM</b> |
| March 17        | St. Patrick's Day   |
| March 20        | First Day of Spring   |

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|-------------------|--------------------------|
| Daniel P. Wheeler | President                |
| Paul G. Desmond   | Executive V.P.           |
| Gilbert Paredes   | Vice President           |
| Joe Stearns       | Secretary                |
| James Metilinos   | Treasurer                |
| Wes Tugman        | Health Benefits Rep.     |
| 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        |

The other day when I got back from my route a carrier was complaining to me about the truck they used that day. They told me that the transmission was slipping badly. “I hope you wrote it up,” I said. “No, it’s someone else’s regular truck. I don’t want them to be without one in the morning,” they replied.

I’ve talked about the importance of doing vehicle inspections in the past, but just as important as inspecting your vehicle is writing it up when there is something wrong. Problems with your vehicle won’t get fixed unless you write it up. Even the small stuff. If the wipers don’t work on a sunny day, write it up! That’s the only way they’ll get fixed before it’s raining. If one headlight is out, get it fixed before you’re out after dark and the other one goes out. Write it up.

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

**PLEASE REACH US AT:**

**[nalcbranch25.com](http://nalcbranch25.com)**  
**(978) 658-5820**


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- Treasurer James Metilinos      **[jmetbr25@gmail.com](mailto:jmetbr25@gmail.com)**

Any defects with your vehicle need to be reported on a Vehicle Repair Tag, PS Form 4565. The form comes with three copies, and instructions on the back. Fill out all parts of the form above the line that says, “To Be Completed By Supervisor.” Then have your supervisor sign the form. Give copies 1 and 3 to your supervisor along with the vehicle keys. **KEEP COPY 2!** It belongs to you. If management likes to give out broken vehicles, this will help you.

The Supervisor Safety Handbook, EL-802, Section 3-2 prohibits management from allowing drivers to use vehicles with defects or safety deficiencies. If you write up a vehicle and management is giving the keys to someone else before it is fixed they are putting people in danger. They’re also violating Articles 14 and 19 of the National Agreement. Talk to your steward and show them your copy of the Vehicle Repair Tag with the supervisor’s signature on it.

Worrying about having a truck in the morning is no reason to risk your safety, or the safety of other carriers. We get paid by the hour, so if management is paying you to sit around because they can’t provide you with a safe vehicle, so be it.

Proud to be a Tremendous Loser,  
Jeremy Provost

 **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



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## Vice President's Report

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### The Membership Has Spoken

In any democratic organization, the voice of the membership is the most powerful force. This was made clear when our members rejected the tentative agreement. Democracy is not always about easy decisions or unanimous votes, it is about the will of the people, and in this case, the membership spoke loud and clear.

This decision reflects the collective judgment of letter carriers across the country, who carefully reviewed the proposed contract and decided it did not meet our expectations or needs. Whether it was concerns over wages, benefits, or working conditions, the rejection of the agreement sends a strong message that members expect better. By the time you are reading this, we have all made aware that the contract is going into interest arbitration. The NALC announced Dennis Nolan as the chair of the three person arbitration panel and the hearing dates will be announced as soon as they are confirmed.

This moment highlights the importance of staying informed and involved in union matters. It is not enough to simply be a dues-paying member, we must all be active participants in shaping our future. That means reading contract proposals, attending union meetings, and making our voices heard when it matters most.

### Branch Officers Training

As we continue the fight for a stronger contract, it is just as important to ensure that our local branches are operating effectively and in the best interest of the members. In January, I had the opportunity to attend a Branch Officers Training along with our Treasurer, James Metilinos, and Assistant Treasurer, Andrew Dencklau. This training provided us with essential knowledge about branch operations, policies, and by-laws that every branch must have in place to protect itself and our members from liabilities.

One of the key takeaways from the training was understanding the financial responsibilities of a union branch. Proper financial management is critical, not just to keep the branch running, but to ensure that every dollar is accounted for and used to benefit the membership. Learning about budgeting, financial reporting, and audits reinforced the importance of transparency and accountability in leadership.

Beyond finances, we also discussed the legal and operational policies that every branch needs to have in

place. These policies serve as safeguards, ensuring that our branch operates within the guidelines of the NALC Constitution and federal labor laws. Having strong policies in place doesn't just protect the branch, it protects every member who relies on the union to advocate for their rights.

Being a branch officer is not just about holding a title; it is about responsibility and integrity. Members trust us as elected leaders to act in their best interests, to be honest, and to always put the membership first. That means making tough decisions, standing up for what is right, and ensuring that the branch is run ethically and efficiently.

As we move forward, both in contract negotiations and in strengthening our local branch, we must remember that our union is only as strong as the members who participate and the leaders who serve with integrity. Democracy has spoken, and now it's our job to make sure that voice continues to be heard at the bargaining table, in our branches, and in every decision we make.

Written at the Amsterdam Airport Schiphol, in a plane that has not taken off yet, because apparently, boarding early just means extra quality time with my seat. See you on the other side!

Gilbert Paredes

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## Treasurer's Report (cont. from page7)

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Then it would be likely my claim would be approved. While filing a CA-2 is relatively straight forward, compiling a case that can causally relate work to injury can prove challenging. These three days of training has given us the ability to assist you and your doctors with ensuring your claim will be approved.

While I've only scratched a very brief and small surface of what is necessary to get a claim approved, I'm confident in myself and the branch's ability to serve the membership in ensuring every one of you gets the coverage you need when facing work-related injuries. Please, reach out to us if you believe you may need injury compensation. We can give you informed opinions on whether or not you are entitled to benefits and assist you in getting them if you're entitled. To quote President Emeritus Barbuzzi, "If it hurts, file a claim."

James Metilinos

Did you see the 2018 movie Green Book? Did you know it was based around a publication started by a letter carrier!? The movie is about a piano player and his driver/bodyguard who are on a concert tour of the south in 1962. The Green Book guides them to black friendly venues where the piano player would be welcome.

These Green Books were a series of publications for the purpose of helping black vacationers travel across America safely. The guidebook featured thousands of businesses or that welcomed blacks during the Jim Crow era. In addition to motels, tourist homes, and restaurants, the book also had listings for taverns, nightclubs, tailors, barbershops, beauty salons, drug stores, liquor stores, gas stations, and garages. Dubbed the “bible of Black travel.” By 1962 there were more than two million copies of it in circulation!

Victor Hugo Green, named after the noted French author, was born on November 9, 1892, in Manhattan, New York City. His family moved and he grew up in Hackensack, New Jersey. Starting in 1913 he worked in Bergen County, New Jersey as a letter carrier for the US Postal Service. He was subsequently drafted into the United States Army to serve in WWI. He requested exemption from the draft due to his “employment in the transmission of mail.” (Oh, well. It was worth a try.)

After his marriage to Alma Duke in 1917, the couple moved to Harlem, New York. Green continued to work as a carrier in New Jersey. In 1936, he published the first version which was called The Negro Motorist Green Book. Green, then age 44, drew on his own firsthand travel experience as well as recommendations from fellow postal workers.

The demand for the first Green Book was so great that by the publication of the second annual edition in 1937, Green had shifted his focus to a national audience. To do so, he used his involvement with the National Association of Letter Carriers to reach out to postal workers across the country to gather information.

Green died in 1960, four years before the passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act greatly reduced the need for the Green Book, which ceased publication in 1967. The movie Green Book won the academy award for best picture in 2019.

Jim Salvati

I was fortunate to receive an opportunity to obtain some advanced OWCP training from Region 14 RWA and our very own President Emeritus Dave Barbuzzi from February 18 through 20. I had been vocal with the branch to get some training in worker's compensation because letter carrier injuries are far too frequent. As a matter of fact, a startling statistic I learned was roughly 80% of all letter carriers will face an on the job injury. Go into your office and stand by four other carriers. Four of you are likely to sustain an injury while working at some point in your career. While the OWCP classes at RAP sessions and conventions are good jumping off points, they mainly cover filing a CA-1 (claim for traumatic injury) through the [www.ecomp.dol.gov](http://www.ecomp.dol.gov) portal, which if you haven't created an account, do so immediately. You'll be grateful should you sustain any injury while working.

There's no possible way I could summarize the three days in a simple article, but I want to touch on a handful of points that might encourage some folks to reach out and potentially file a necessary claim. Two things I would like to clarify to any and every member reading this right now:

1. People often believe in their probationary period USPS can terminate you without repercussion. While this oftentimes can be true, the Department of Labor last year obtained a federal court judgement in the amount of \$141,000 for a CCA who was terminated during their probationary period for an injury sustained on the job. Do not fear retaliation. If you're hurt, report it and file.

As a dues paying member, our branch will assist in filing your claims. Several officers of the branch are “entities”, individuals who may be elected by you to be on your claim. Doing so will allow us access to the claim where we can assist you in uploading documentation, bills, and more. This is strictly available to members and members only.

We're all aware of the snow and ice we've been facing this year and the increased precautions we should take at work. Imagine during your appointed rounds you slip on ice and fracture your ankle. This is a “traumatic injury”, which is defined by OWCP as an injury sustained over the course of a single work shift. Management has four hours from this injury to supply the employee with a CA-16, authorization for medical examination and treatment. Bring this with you to the doctor or hospital.

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## Treasurer's Report (cont. from page 6)

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But are you covered? There are five elements to ensure your claim is approved.

1. Are you an employee at the time of injury? This is fairly straightforward - yes.
2. Did you sustain the injury in the performance of duty? This does NOT mean "on the clock". Did you show up to work at 7:45am, 15 minutes before your shift and fracture your ankle on the way in? This is likely "in the performance of duty." Likewise, if you fracture your ankle helping a customer move furniture into their home on the clock, you're not "in the performance of duty."
3. Is there a causal relationship? This element will play largely when filing a CA-2, an injury that is sustained over more than a single shift. Essentially, is there a clear link between an injury and how your job specifically aggravates or accelerates a pre-existing condition or injury? This will require medical documentation from your doctor.
4. Is there a diagnosis? A doctor, NOT a physician's assistant, must diagnose the injury or illness specifically. Something like "pain" is not a diagnosis, but a symptom of a larger underlying injury. If your doctor is diagnosing pain, expect your claim to be denied. Consider "Pain of the ankle from walking all day" versus "Consistent walking on uneven surfaces, stepping in and out of the mail truck which contains two steps up into the vehicle, and climbing twenty flights of stairs daily has aggravated and accelerated osteoarthritis of the ankle by deteriorating the cartilage and causing bone to rub together". The latter will almost certainly result in approval of a claim, which could result in a scheduled award down the line if you suffer some level of permanent mobility impairment.

Is the claim filed in a timely manner? When you're injured on the job, you must report the injury as soon as possible, but within 30 days. This does not mean wait until day 29. Once you've reported the injury, you have up to three years to file a claim for a CA-1, unless you're seeking continuation of pay, which once again is filed within 30 days. When filing a CA-2, you have three years from last exposure to file. If osteoarthritis of the ankle is something you have been battling for years, the correlation of the injury to work, assuming a doctor's diagnosis has been provided, can be filed three years from your most recent shift, as that would be your last exposure..

These are the barebones to ensure a CA-1 is approved. CA-2's are far more complex as they often deal with degradation over time due to a preexisting condition. Imagine for a moment you're suffering from carpal tunnel syndrome, a condition many Americans, even myself, face today from their nature of employment or hobbies. The carpal tunnel is a narrow passageway the median nerve passes through in the wrist. Carpal tunnel syndrome is when that passageway becomes inflamed or blocked, applying pressure on the median nerve, resulting in a tingling feeling in your thumb, fore and middle finger, pain, and a decrease in mobility and use of the hand and wrist. This is often exacerbated by repetitive use and poor wrist positioning.

How many of you use repetitive wrist motions? Every one of us, right? We all case and sort mail into the carrier case each morning. We all drive LLV's or promasters which entail opening truck doors on a track that are quite heavy. We all finger mail while we walk or when we pull over to a mailbox. These are just a few motions we do daily that can accelerate and aggravate a preexisting condition like carpal tunnel syndrome. I've been dealing with it for the better part of three years now myself.

Fortunately, federal apportionment, which is the degree of which work has contributed to my injury, is not static. What does that mean? It means if ANY amount of work, even a fraction of a percent, contributes to my preexisting condition, I'm eligible to file a claim with OWCP. Go back again to having carpal tunnel syndrome. If I filed a claim and my doctor provided an injury narrative that stated something along the lines of:

"It is my professional opinion with a reasonable degree of medical certainty that the continued repetitive motion of twisting the wrist to sort letter and catalogue-sized mail into the mail sortation case by the employee over ten years has contributed to and accelerated carpal tunnel syndrome of the right wrist. These repetitive motions add additional stress in the wrist, causing the carpal tunnel to become inflamed, resulting in loss of range of motion and weakness of the hand, making grasping and grabbing, holding and hand motions difficult and potentially impossible."

Continued on page 5

# **WAKE UP**

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*at the next meeting*  
**March 11**  
**K of C Wilmington**  
**8:00 PM**



Lawrence's Chuck Pinard retired after a 40-year career. Good luck in retirement Chuck!