



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 delegates to the NALC's 73rd Biennial National Convention in Boston .

President's Message

The NALC held its 73rd biennial National Convention last month in Boston. Branch 25 had twenty-one delegates who attended the convention. A few delegates have written about the convention in this month's Wake Up! I won't go into too much detail about the convention's proceedings here. I was pleased to see a good mix of delegates from the branch this year. Some delegates, like Rich Donlon, have been attending for almost forty years, and a few were attending their first National Convention. I hope everyone will read the articles in this issue that some delegates have written about the convention.

The biggest issue that members were asking about heading into the convention was the status of our collective bargaining agreement. As almost everyone knows, our last contract expired in May 2023. The only information we got at the convention regarding the contract was that they are "very close" to having an agreement and are confident in having a good case at arbitration if it gets there. I wish I had more of an inside scoop to give, but that's all the information I have now. It was great to see Branch 25 President Emeritus Dave Barbuzzi kick off the convention proceedings by leading the Pledge of Allegiance on Monday morning to start the convention! Look for a picture of that on page 4 of this issue of the Wake Up!

As I mentioned in my President's Message in the July/August issue, the TIAREAP process that we had been under for route adjustments since 2022 expired on June 1 and was not renewed. We have had a few 271g special inspections that were requested by carriers completed since then. I have not heard of any management plans to conduct full office inspections in any of our offices in the fall. I have heard they are planning inspections in some offices in neighboring branches, so we will have to wait and see what they decide to do.

I will explain that to carriers who are unaware of what a special inspection is. Handbooks M-39 and M-41 clearly state that each carrier's route should be adjusted to as close to eight hours as possible. When a carrier's route is out of adjustment, the carrier has the right to request a special route inspection according to section 271 of Handbook M-39. Section 271 lists a few conditions that would allow for a special inspection. The one that we usually use to support these requests is

271. g. This states that when a route shows thirty minutes or more of overtime and/or auxiliary assistance over a six-week period for three or more days each week, the route qualifies for such an inspection. Even though routes are adjusted to the carrier, this metric still applies to the route if the regular carrier is not the one showing the time for the entire six-week period.

Once a special inspection has been requested, management will review the data and approve or disapprove the request. Usually, once a carrier asks for a special inspection, they know it qualifies. However, it is not unusual for management to deny a proper request. I would ask that any carrier requesting a special inspection notify the branch of their request so we can follow up on the status if needed. Once the request has been approved, the M-39 dictates that management must complete the inspection within four weeks of the request and that whatever adjustment needs to be made must be implemented within fifty-two calendar days of completion.

The fact that these inspections must be completed within four weeks means that the mail volumes usually benefit the carrier at this time of year. The fact that the inspections are being done "the old school" way again and outside of the TIAREAP process is also good because it allows us to fully pursue any potential issue through the grievance process, which was somewhat limited during TIAREAP. Whenever one of our offices goes through an inspection, we always try to get out to do route inspection training. That applies to special inspections, too. Anyone with any questions about special inspections should contact their steward or the branch office for more information. I hope to see you at the September branch meeting!

In Solidarity,

Dan Wheeler

Executive Vice-President's Message

As we have been reporting for months, the new Postal Service Health Benefits Program will take effect on January 1, 2025, and every active and retired postal employee will be required to enroll in this program that will be administered by the Office of Personnel Management (OPM). We have been told that more information is coming through the mail by October, but the USPS is holding virtual seminars on this program for all looking for more information. These seminars will be Zoom meetings. The seminars will be held on Tuesdays and Thursdays through early December. The Tuesday seminars are for current employees, while the Thursday seminars are for employees and annuitants. The Tuesday seminars will take place from noon to 1pm on September 10, 24, October 8, 22, November 5, 19 and December 3. The Thursday seminars will take place from noon to 1pm, and from 4 to 5pm on September 5, 19, October 3, 17, 31, November 14 and December 5. There is more information on this on the Liteblue MyHR website as well as the Zoom codes. I received all the above information via a USPS newsletter, so some changes are possible, but the Liteblue MyHR website should have any updated information or changes. As we have said before, the NALC HBP is part of the new program, but you still must enroll.

Seeing that the TIAREP ended in May, we only have the traditional 6-day route inspection process to evaluate and adjust routes. If anyone was planning on requesting a special inspection it will be done this way if the route qualifies per the M-39. Basically, if the route shows 30 minutes of OT or assistance on 3 out of 5 days for any 6 consecutive week period, the route qualifies. No one is required to request an inspection, but if the regular carrier on a route requests it and the route does qualify, it should be done within 4 weeks of the request. We currently do not have any stations that are scheduled to be inspected, but that could change at any time. If you have any questions about requesting special inspections, please call the union office.

At the National Convention in Boston, there was one of the new delivery vehicles on display in the convention center. It looked like quite an improvement over the LLVs we have been driving, with good site lines safety features. It may be quite a while before we get delivery of these vehicles, so please make sure any defective vehicles are written up on the vehicle repair tag. This form should be displayed in a spot any carrier can clearly find if necessary. You do not want to be driving a vehicle if the lights don't work or if the directional is broken, or the windshield wipers are not working correctly. Every carrier should be doing a vehicle check in the morning to assure that their vehicle is safe.

While we do not have an agreed upon National Agreement at this point, the NALC feels as if an agreement is attainable, without going through arbitration. This was relayed to the delegates at the Convention in Boston. As of now, we were told there is very little that the parties disagree on, but what those issues are remain to be seen. I have had many questions on when the contract will either be settled or arbitrated, but that is not something we can answer at this point. If there is an agreement, then the membership will get a chance to ratify the contract. All aspects of the agreement will be sent out to the membership. Hopefully, this will be soon. Until then, I hope to see many of you at the Branch meeting on September 10th at the K of C in Wilmington.

Keep your head up!

Paul Desmond

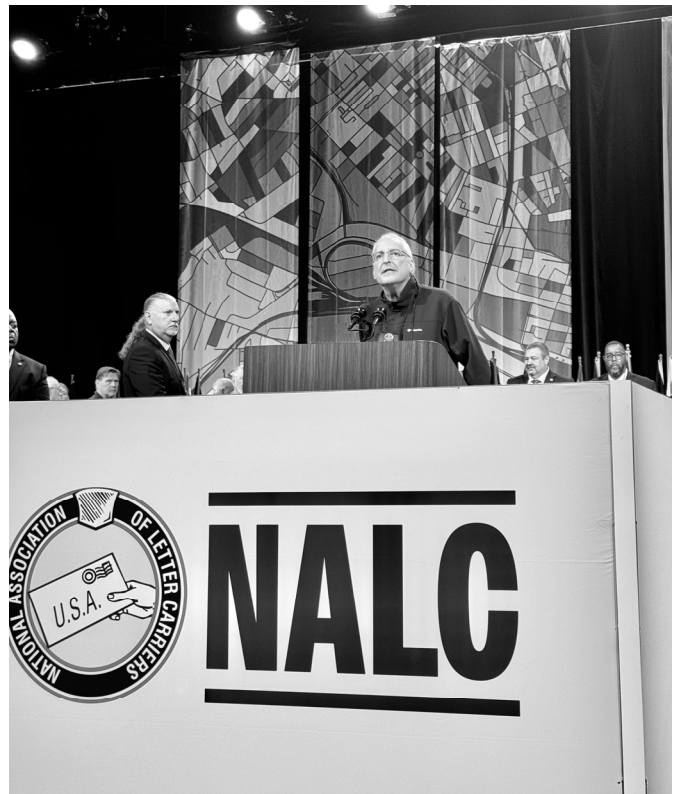
Calendar of Events

September 2	Labor Day
September 10	Regular Branch Meeting K of C Wilmington 8:00PM Food served at 7:15 PM
September 11	Patriot Day (9/11)
September 20	National POW/MIA Recognition Day
September 22	First day of Fall

Daniel P. Wheeler	President
Paul G. Desmond	Executive V.P.
Gilbert Paredes	Vice President
Joe Stearns	Secretary
James Metilinos	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
Andrew Dencklau	Assistant Treasurer
Andy Coan	Assistant Secretary
Jeremy Provost	Assistant Safety Officer
James Tuttle	Assistant Wake Up Publisher
Wesley Tugman	Assistant Health Ben. Rep.

Branch 25’s own President Emeritus Dave Barbuzzi led the delegates in the Pledge of Allegiance to open the NALC’s 73rd Biennial National Convention to start the proceedings on Monday morning

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



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



From the Secretary's Desk

CONGRATS to President Emeritus Dave Barbuzzi on being the third person to hit the podium and lead everyone in the Pledge of Allegiance to open the convention on Monday morning. I know how honored and proud Dave was, but the delegates and guests of Branch 25 were just as proud. This was an amazing thing to witness and to have Dave represent our branch with an incredible job well done. Pictures and a video of this achievement will make it to the branch website. I will let you know in the wake up as soon as that happens.

The 2024 convention definitely was one of a kind. You can read everything that happened on the convention floor at the NALC website. Just go to the website and click on Union Administration, then scroll down to National Conventions and rap sessions and click on that. The 5 days of Convention Chronicles are there that you can read. They cover a breakdown of what happened on those days. This page also has links to photos and videos so you can also see what went on. You can also see the power point presentation slides for all the workshops by going to your members only portal. Once you log in to it, click on the "2024 National Convention" block, then go to 2024 convention workshop and all the workshops will be listed. Just scroll down to what you want to view, and you can read the information that was presented. There was more information given but these slides will give you all the basics you need.

This year's convention was attended by 5446 Delegates, from 50 states and 619 branches. There was a pass the bag collection done for 6 families of carriers who were struck with tragedy the past 2 years. This collection raised \$24,590 and motion had National match it to \$49,180. The veterans group raised \$1,191 for homeless veterans in the Boston area. A motion was made and approved that national would donate and bring this amount to \$10,000. An MDA raffle brought in \$48,179 and branch 825 from Oak Brook, IL had a 50/50 raffle for MDA that made \$9,695. These were also motioned to be matched by national to bring the MDA total to \$115,748. Thank you to all the delegates for these donations.

I personally attended workshops that had more to do with my job as Secretary and a branch officer, so I won't bore you with those. However, I did attend the workshop for the new NGDV vehicle, which was also in attendance with all the vendors and NALC groups. I was able to take

pictures of the outside and the inside of the vehicle. Some should make it to this wakeup, if not, again they will get to the branch website. I also was able to get inside the front and back of this vehicle. Like anything some will love it, and some will hate it. It is by far not the prettiest vehicle on the street, but honestly who gives a s***. This new NGDV is so much more user friendly, comfortable, functional, practical and most of all **SAFER**. For once the USPS actually took the input of carriers from both the NALC and the NARLC, and it shows in the features that have been included.

Twenty letter carriers from all over the country, including one from Fall River, MA, were involved in this process from start to finish. These carrier's suggestions led to over a dozen changes to the final design. Some features I know everyone will like are things like AC, backup camera, curbside cargo door, collision warnings, cup holders, coat hooks, intermittent wipers, keyless entry with fob, push button start, auto front and rear braking (meaning no more pulling the e-brake) as well as many other features.

There are 2 power trains being purchased. First is the BEV which is an electric motor and powertrain, and then an ICE which is a gas powered 2.0 liter turbocharged with 4 cylinders. Our carrier input was taken to heart by both the USPS and Oshkosh, which led to many changes to the final design. They were items like driver's seat controls, cargo area shelves, lighting for the steps and a porch light, coat hooks and the seat belt. The gas powered NGDV's will be FWD and AWD. The electric vehicles will be FWD. Most of the electric vehicles are going to the new S&D centers that are being built to accommodate electric vehicles.

All in all, I am pleased with what they have come up with. Are they perfect maybe not, but they are far and above, leaps and bounds, or any other analogy you want to use better than anything we have now. You can stand up in the back, have easier access from the front to back, no more door lock that sticks out that we smash our hands on, more leg room driving, an adjustable seat, etc. Of course, now the challenge is when we will see them. Both types of vehicles are supposed to be hitting the road this year, so fingers crossed.

(continued on page 7)

Vice President's Report

Strengthening Our Future: My Reflections on My First Union Convention

My First Convention Experience

Attending my first union convention was an unforgettable experience that left a lasting impact on me as a union member and a new leader. One of the highlights of the convention was the Meet and Greet on Sunday, where I had the incredible opportunity to meet and converse with President Brian Renfroe, along with our Branch Secretary Joe Stearns and Treasurer James Metilinos. We had the opportunity to talk with President Renfroe for a couple minutes and take a picture with him.

I also had the privilege of connecting with union leaders from all over the country. I had the chance to catch up with brothers and sisters that I have met previously at Formal A training, Region Rap Session, and National Rap Session. It was amazing to hear about the different challenges and successes that other branches have experienced. We shared stories, exchanged ideas, and discussed strategies for improving our branches and better serve our members. I realized that, while our circumstances may vary from region to region, we all share a common goal: to protect the rights of our brothers and sisters and ensure that they are treated with the respect and dignity they deserve.

Workshops: Learning and Growing

One of the most valuable aspects of the convention was the workshops I attended. I participated in a workshop focused on effective branch communications. As a new leader, I understand how crucial it is to keep our members informed and engaged. This class provided practical tips on how to improve our communication strategies, from using clear and concise language in our Wake Up newsletter to utilizing social media to reach a broader audience. I learned that communication is not just about sharing information; it is about building trust and fostering a sense of community within our branch.

Another workshop I attended was about the effective use of social media. In today's digital age, social media has become an essential tool for unions to connect with their members and advocate for their rights. The workshop covered topics such as creating engaging content, managing social media accounts, and using the right tone depending on what we were trying to communicate. I was particularly interested in how social

media can be used to mobilize members and rally support for important causes. By the end of the workshop, I felt more confident in my ability to leverage social media to strengthen our branch and engage our members.

I also had the opportunity to attend the workshop focused on strategic planning for new branch leaders. This workshop was especially relevant to me as I am still learning the ropes of my new role. The session focused on setting goals, developing action plans, and measuring progress. We discussed the importance of being proactive and thinking ahead to anticipate challenges and opportunities. The workshop also emphasized the need for collaboration and teamwork in achieving our goals. I left with a clearer vision of what I want to accomplish as a branch leader and a better understanding of how to get there.

Open Bargaining Resolutions: Embracing Change and Moving Forward

One of the open bargaining and contract campaign resolutions that passed calls on the NALC to organize rallies involving every branch before the formal start of contract negotiations. These rallies will help highlight our demands, making sure everyone knows what we are fighting for. It also calls for the NALC to post monthly updates on important issues like wages, hours, and working conditions. This way, members will be kept informed about what is happening. The resolution also states that members will receive frequent updates on where we are in the negotiation process, keeping everyone in the loop as we move forward.

These resolutions are critical for shaping the future of our union and ensuring that our members' voices are represented in the bargaining process. The passage of these resolutions is a testament to the power of collective action and the importance of standing together as a union. Moving forward, it is essential that we embrace change and remain adaptable in the face of new challenges. As President Renfroe mentioned throughout the convention: GROW. RISE. TOGETHER.

(continued on page 7)

Endorsing Vice President Kamala Harris and Governor Tim Walz: A Strategic Decision and Why It Matters

One of the highlights of the convention was the endorsement of Vice President Kamala Harris and Governor Tim Walz for the upcoming presidential election. This endorsement is significant for OUR UNION because it signals our commitment to supporting leaders who prioritize the rights and well-being of working people. Vice President Harris and Governor Walz have both demonstrated their dedication to labor rights and have advocated for policies that benefit working families. Their leadership aligns with the values of our union, and their endorsement is a strategic move to ensure that our voices are heard at the highest levels of government.

This endorsement also underscores the importance of political involvement for our union. In today's political climate, it is more important than ever for unions to engage in the electoral process and support candidates who will fight for our rights. The backing of Vice President Harris and Governor Walz is not just about supporting a particular candidate; it is about advocating for policies that will improve the lives of our members and ensure the future success of our union. This underlines the importance of the Letter Carrier Political Fund (LCPF), which helps us contribute to those candidates that have our best interests at hand. Political involvement allows us to influence decisions that directly impact our members' lives, from wages and benefits to working conditions and job security.

In conclusion, as I reflect on my first convention experience, I am filled with a sense of pride and purpose. I have learned so much from the leaders I met, the workshops I attended, and the resolutions that were passed. I am more committed than ever to serving our members and working to strengthen our union. This convention has reinforced the importance of solidarity, communication, and strategic planning in achieving our goals. It has also reminded me of the power of collective action and the need to embrace change as we move forward. I am excited to take what I have learned back to our branch and continue working to protect the rights of letter carriers not only in my branch, but all over the country.

Enjoy the rest of the summer,

Gilbert Paredes

This was my third convention and I still learn so much each time. Every convention has been different in its own way as well. There were so many great speakers that got the delegates fired up. More business was done on the floor than you can imagine, so much so the convention ended about 4 hours later Friday than it was supposed to. I am already looking forward to Los Angeles in 2026. I also want to thank the membership for voting to allow us to go to the convention for this learning experience.

This is very important to all that this pertains to. I am going to directly quote from the "Understanding the Postal Service Health Benefits (PSHB) Program" everyone should have received in the mail. If you are an annuitant entitled to Medicare Part A (typically at age 65) before January 1, 2024, and not enrolled in Medicare Part B, you and your covered, Medicare eligible family members may be able to participate in the one-time PSHB SEP for Medicare Part B from April 1, 2024, to September 30, 2024. Eligibility letters for the one-time PSHB SEP were mailed to annuitants and eligible family members in March 2024. All required information must be returned in the envelope provided and postmarked by September 30, 2024. If you are eligible and have not done it yet, please get it done so you don't miss out on this money saving opportunity. This is the last chance we can tell you about it here in the wake-up.

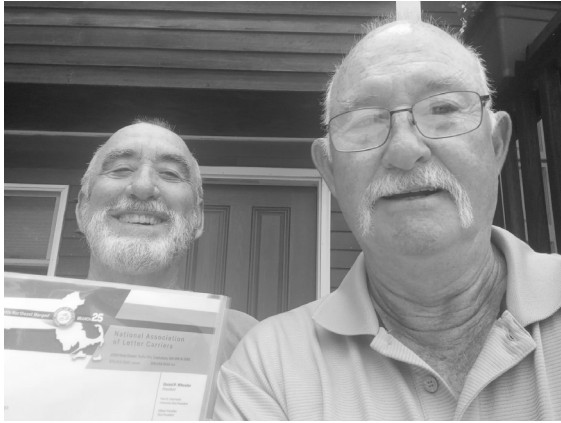
I know I have hit you with a lot here, but this could have been a lot longer. I hope everyone enjoyed their summers. This year seems to be flying by. My daughter has already moved back to college to start her senior year, and I can't believe how fast it has gone by. For those sending off kids for their first year of college, don't cry too much, believe me they will be back. If you get this before Labor Day then have a good couple days off if you can, and if you get it after I hope you have recovered well from it then.

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 September 10th.

Snapple Fact # 906 – Rubber bands last longer when refrigerated. (Fitting for us letter carriers.)

Joe Stearns

55 Year NALC Pins



Branch 25 Awards

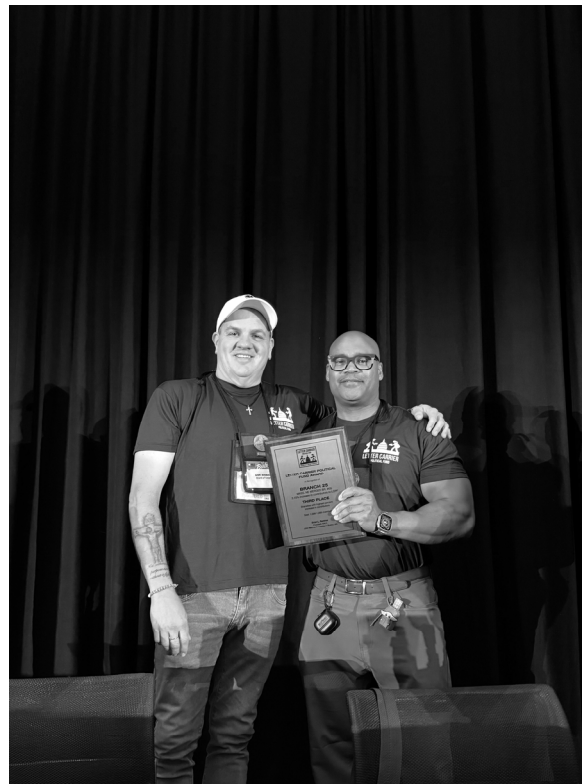


Branch 25 President Dan Wheeler receiving the Second-Place Award for Best Branch Website from NALC President Brian Renfroe.



Pictured from top to bottom are the following Gloucester retirees who recently received their 55-year membership recognition pins. Pat Conlon pictured with Branch 25 Trustee Bruce Johnson, Bob Ryan pictured with his son Tom, and Roger McPherson. 55 years is a long time! Congratulations to all!

Branch 25 won three awards at the convention this year. The branch won the Second-Place Award for Best Website. Special thanks to retired Newburyport Carrier Mike Shields who maintains the site for the branch. The branch also won a First-Place and Second-Place Award for increases in contributions to the Letter Carrier Political Fund (LCPF). Thanks to all who contributed or increased their contribution this year!



LPO Mark Ashmon presents one of the Branch 25 LCPF awards to President Dan Wheeler.

The NALC 73rd Biennial Convention in Boston began by President Emeritus of Branch 25, Dave Barbuzzi, leading 5371 delegates in the Pledge of Allegiance. Soon after NALC President Brian Renfroe made his opening remarks. Then Executive Council members made statements for the removal of President Renfroe from office for dereliction of duty and other charges. President Renfroe addressed these charges on Wednesday. The delegates then had to vote to support him or remove him. There was so much discussion on the matter that it went into Thursday. The delegates voted to support their President against all charges and allow him to remain as lead negotiator for the new contract. He stated that an agreement was close, but certain issues still had to be resolved.

Due to the delay in the normal proceedings the delegates convened at 7:30 am on Friday and adjourned at 4:15 pm to finish regular business matters. As it was, we never welcomed the children with Muscular Dystrophy so they could address the convention about their summer camp adventures. We did pass the hat and had raffles for MDA raising \$24,590.00 which was matched by National for grand total of \$48,179.00. Members also raised \$1,191.00 for local homeless veterans. A motion on the floor for National to donate and bring the amount to \$10,000.00 was passed. Then the delegates also passed the hat for 6 fallen letter carriers in the line of duty to be divided up and donated to their families. Again, this was matched by National.

The "Protect Our Letter Carriers Act" was discussed by the original sponsors of the bill, Rep. Greg Landsman (D-OH) and Rep. Brian Fitzpatrick (R-PA). It is getting a lot of support from both sides of the aisle. Something has to be done to ensure the safety of all letter carriers and send a strong message that these crimes will not be tolerated. The Vice President, Kamala Harris, unanimously received an endorsement from the NALC to be the Democratic candidate for the Presidency of the United States. A shout-out to Branch 25 Secretary Joe Stearns for organizing a great dinner at Maggiano's. Also, thanks to Tony Bossi, Regional Grievance Assistant for Region 14, the Branch 25 delegation had front row seats at the NALC 73rd Biennial Convention. This was my 10th convention since 2000.

Bruce Johnson

Branch 25 Trustee

In August I attended my fifteenth or sixteenth National Convention...as age increases, memory decreases. The story never changes. Once again, the wisdom, dedication and camaraderie of the delegates from all across the nation came to the fore. Every issue, resolution and amendment, and yes, even amendments to amendments were brought forth, debated, discussed and acted upon, sometimes with measurable degrees of rancor. Letter carriers are letter carriers after all. No one, not one, not one delegate was denied permission to address those assembled.

As I round third base heading for home (running the bases is fun, especially at Fenway Park) I want to express my hope that every carrier who wishes to do so has the opportunity to attend a National Convention. Get involved. Whatever your niche may be, bring it to the NALC. On the station level, support your steward(s). On the state level bring knowledge and information to our National Business Agent, Rick Dicecca and his staff, and to our MSLCA— Massachusetts State Letter Carriers Association, President Scott Doughty and his staff and, when appropriate to our National President Brian Renfroe and his staff on the national level.

If you think you have nothing to offer think again. The lifeblood of any great union is this: SOLIDARITY. Show it and act on it for and with those mentioned above.

Keep on truckin'

Rich Donlon

What *is* happiness?

Happiness is something that most people strive for, but many can have a difficult time defining it.



Most of us want to be happy and try to work toward achieving happiness. While the concept seems easy to approach, the deep-rooted nature of what it really means to be happy can be somewhat abstract. Getting into the science of happiness helps answer that question. Arthur Brooks is a Harvard professor who studies happiness. His book, *The Art and Science of Happiness: Build the Life You Want*, takes a deeper look at his research and the puzzle pieces that come together to create a neuroscientific definition of happiness.

When asked to define happiness, most people describe a feeling. However, happiness is much more than that. It's not a destination but rather a direction—a sign that several pieces of a formula have come together successfully. The research Brooks conducts has solidified an actual formula for happiness.

Happiness = Enjoyment + Purpose + Satisfaction

Enjoyment

Enjoyment can be defined as pleasure combined with our humanity. Pleasure is something that happens to us and engages a part of our brain called the limbic system. When we combine pleasure with our experiences with others, it moves to a different part of our brain and becomes enjoyment. For example, eating Thanksgiving dinner brings us pleasure by filling our stomach, but the enjoyment comes from consuming it with others and the connections we have with those we care about.

Purpose

We often look for meaning in our lives, but it can be hard to grasp. The paradox of purpose is that it frequently requires suffering. When asked how we find meaning or resiliency, inevitably we talk about challenges or loss. Ultimately, happiness requires unhappiness to build meaning. It's through overcoming challenges that we derive a sense of purpose. Navigating through difficult circumstances can lead to a sense of significance and direction. Embracing the paradox of purpose reminds us that life's struggles are not obstacles to happiness, but rather integral parts of the journey toward a more meaningful existence.

Satisfaction

According to Brooks' research, satisfaction tends to be the most difficult of the elements to achieve. We want to feel it and work to gain satisfaction, but cannot keep it. We set expectations for what we think will help us attain satisfaction: doing a good job, graduating, retiring, etc. Once we achieve those goals, we will finally be satisfied, right? Unfortunately, we know that the feeling of satisfaction wears off over time. Accomplishments feel good in the moment, but once the feeling is gone, we strive for more. That is why this component is the most difficult. The benchmark seems to constantly change with each accomplishment. Each achievement sets a new benchmark. While this inherent drive to progress is a fundamental aspect of human nature, it can also contribute to feelings of dissatisfaction. Managing those desires or wants can help change that relationship with satisfaction.

For additional support on your journey to find enjoyment, purpose, and satisfaction reach out to the EAP.



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

An “un” Conventional Week in Boston

A convention for the NALC was hard for me to imagine before last month. I anticipated a floor of high-level branch members, few representatives from each branch, and a formal type meeting to conduct a union business. Luckily, I was wrong on all counts. Not only has this convention, skyrocketed my passion and work ethic for our union, but inspired me to push into other avenues I never thought I would have interest in.

The exhibit floor itself was flooded with people almost every moment of the day. Some of the booths included health insurance, political fund, disaster relief, the new mail truck being rolled out, and plenty of photo opportunities where we could commingle with our brothers and sisters from around the country. Seeing delegates from Alaska and Puerto Rico really made me feel like a part of something much bigger than I ever imagined. Despite people being incredibly varied from all walks of life, it felt so easy to suddenly start a discussion or call them, my brother/sister in the union. Next to my actual family, it was invigorating to feel welcomed and a part of this one.

Inside the rest of the convention center, a plethora of classes were offered every morning and afternoon. They covered a broad range of topics that the newest union member or the most experienced could gain knowledge from. While it was impossible for me to take everything, as much as I would have liked to, I dove into grievance handling and communication. The classes were quite engaging. I even asked a few questions myself, despite being nervous to be on a microphone in front of a few hundred people. In the end, the knowledge I gained from them has given me the confidence I need to be a more active steward and the drive to push into my position as the assistant editor.

The people I met were incredibly successful in pushing me to do more as a union member. I spoke with a brother from branch 46 who is a delegate at the Massachusetts state Association, something I had only heard of in passing during our executive council meetings. Along with hearing from other state associations on the floor, I’ve gained an interest in becoming a part of our own state association in the future if allowed. I spoke briefly with Mike Caref, NBA of region three, who’s branch has had a lot of tragedies and strength in the wake of them. His leadership in grievance

handling, toxic work environments, and the TIREEAP process really showed me how much someone can do to put themselves out there and help the members of our union. I spoke briefly with NALC members from podcasts and recent inner groups of the NALC in an attempt to relate and acknowledge what they’ve said or what they are asking for. It helped me realize that there is no real division among our members as we all want the same things: a strong contract, dependable leaders, and teeth in our DRP again. No matter who it was, each and every conversation and view helped my own grow and evolve, pushing me further and helping me navigate my goals as a branch 25 officer.

The convention floor itself was loud! While we have a moderately sized branch, this meeting puts ours to shame with how many ayes and nays I heard shouted at the top of people’s lungs. Handling business was extensive and took up more than half the time on the floor. However, the decisions made put into light how important making motions and discussing points really are, especially at a local level. Besides business, many motivational speakers, local and non-local, help show the strength and support the NALC has across the country and even the world.

Next to joining the postal service and becoming a council member, this convention really felt like a milestone in my career. Being a part of the supreme body, whose vote trumps all else in this union was an honor and a privilege I won’t forget. I sincerely thank the membership of branch 25 for allowing me to have this opportunity.

In Solidarity,

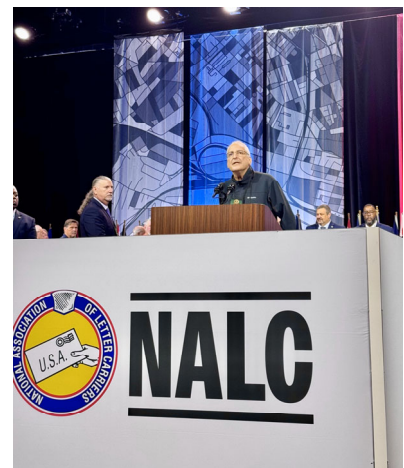
James “JT” Tuttle, Assistant Editor

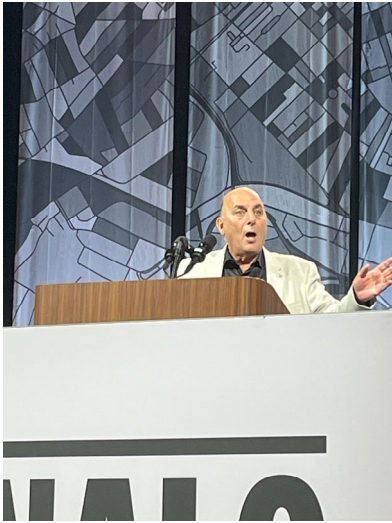


There was a Next Generation Delivery Vehicle (NGDV) on display for members to check out.



73rd Biennial NALC National Convention





NPMHU President Paul Hogrogian



NALC Secretary-Treasurer
Nicole Rhine



NALC Region 14 National Business Agent
Rick Dicecca



James Metilinos,
NALC President
Brian Renfroe,
Gil Paredes, and
Joe Stearns



IAFF President Ed Kelly



Branch 34 President Tom
Rooney



Back in (Union) Business

Welcome back, Branch 25. I know we've all had a busy summer with vacations, work, and more, but we're back to our regularly scheduled meetings and newsletters. Much has happened since the beginning of prime time, most notably, the 73rd Biennial Convention, which took place in Boston, Massachusetts. The delegation from our branch varied greatly, with many of us attending our first convention as well as many returning.

Monday kicked off with the pledge of allegiance, lead by our very own David Barbuzzi, followed by a lengthy address by President Brian Renfroe. Each microphone on the floor lit up with members from the "Concerned Letter Carriers" (CLC) group, making, and eventually passing, a motion to hear the article 10 appeals filed by Director of City Delivery Chris Jackson, no later than Wednesday. As is customary to our conventions, leaders in labor attend and address the delegation, and this year was no different. AFL-CIO President Liz Schuler spoke to the body to address the biggest event happening in 2024; presidential elections. Schuler spoke strongly regarding the reclamation of power to the working class and how electing a pro-labor president is essential in guiding all unions to better organization rates and better working conditions. Shortly after, Congressman Stephen Lynch (D) addressed the body to acknowledge the work letter carriers did throughout the pandemic and continuing today. As some of you may recall, I wrote an article this year covering the three hour hearing of the Delivering for America (DFA) plan and Postmaster General DeJoy. One of the key components of why the Postal Service is struggling financially is the way they are required by federal law to invest pension liabilities. Lynch assured the body he would be introducing legislation to diversify those investments to help generate revenue and cut postal losses.

On Tuesday, Vice President at Large Roxanne Brown of the United Steelworkers Union addressed the convention, encouraging our sisters to speak up and be heard. She spoke confidently of her triumphs in her position at the Steelworkers Union and advocated that women have just as much say in the union as their brothers. Brown also endorsed Vice President Kamala Harris for President, which Renfroe would soon

introduce as a resolution to the body for voting. The membership overwhelmingly voted in favor of the endorsement, and today, the NALC proudly endorses Harris and Walz for 2024's president. Boston's own Ed Kelly, president of the International Association of Fire Fighters, also addressed the body, committing himself to work to enact the Protect Our Letter Carrier's act, which would designate a prosecutor in each state for these senseless attacks on letter carriers. Kelly has many ties with the Postal Service and NALC, with several members of his immediate family being letter carriers or postal employees, giving further confidence to the membership of his long term goals to benefit the membership.

Wednesday initially was led with National Agreement resolutions; proposed changes or additions to our working contract that our national officers can use to bargain with the Postal Service to better working conditions and wages for letter carriers. Towards the tail end of the day started the appeals process, which took up the entirety of Thursday as well. I won't detail too heavily what was discussed, but President Brian Renfroe was served charges regarding incidents that include driving under the influence of alcohol, improper conduct, and abandonment of duty. The executive council requested an investigation held by former Region 5 National Business Agent Mike Wier and ultimately, found Renfroe guilty of driving under the influence, issuing him a suspension of NALC driving privileges for a year and mandating a recorded statement on drunk driving. While this was a first of its kind for the NALC, what I found to be the most important aspect of this process was democracy. Responsibility and action was returned to the supreme body; the delegation. We were left with the obligation of voting on the charges and what we thought was appropriate. This first time event in NALC history helped shape and define our future if further similar circumstances were to take place. I've heard many stances from many carriers in many buildings and I'd advise all of you reading who want to see change: **get involved**. Go to your meetings. Vote at your meetings. Become delegates to the convention. We always say, "be the change you want to see," and this is no different.

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Back in (Union) Business Cont.

On our last day Friday, we finished the National Agreement and General Resolution amendments and additions. While I think it's beneficial to the membership, unfortunately, the executive council and delegation voted against the open bargaining resolution that over 30 branches and state associations cumulatively introduced. However, a resolution did pass to introduce all the bargaining information and tentative agreement to be posted, upon ratification, to the Members Only portal on the NALC.org website. Additionally, if you were not a delegate but are interested in the workshops and training that was held in Boston, you can head over to said Members Only portal and all of the workshops will be published there for reading. There were multiple strong classes for new stewards or employees looking to learn their contract; following a grievance in four steps, the contract administration unit, mail counts and inspections, OWCP and much more. We encourage our members to read up on this material as it is all very beneficial.

Two quick things to finish out this (sorry!) longer article. First, our contract and where it stands. Renfroe was adamant a tentative agreement would be sent out to the membership very soon. No arbitration dates have been scheduled, and while that is certainly a concern for many people, I believe this bodes well as the NALC and USPS are quite close to an agreement. We were told a flat dollar amount increase would be given, not a percentage, as well as a single pay table and a shorter length to max pay. There seems to be one article that hasn't been agreed to and it concerns CCA's, although we weren't provided the details regarding this article and why it's contentious. Lastly, there was a monstrous amount of health benefit information that was provided to the membership. I've been in contact with our assistant health benefits rep and we will publish an article in our upcoming newsletters, likely in October or November. As it currently stands, the amount of fee for service (PPO) plans that exist have been slashed substantially. We were told Blue Cross Blue Shield and craft-bargaining insurance (NALC) will still be available under the new PSHB plans, so most of us will be covered. If you carry benefits through the Postal

Service, you must make an election to a new plan under PSHB or OPM will place you in a plan equivalency,

provided one exists. If no equivalency exists, they will place you in the cheapest plan available that is not HDHP (high deductible). Be on the lookout for additional information coming soon. Please, don't hesitate to reach out to myself or the branch for information. I've paid close attention as this will affect all our members in some capacity and we would like to keep coverage for you all as best we can.

The Spire sleeps, and so shall I.

James Metilinos

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:

Ivan Betances- Haverhill	Elicser Bonilla- Lowell
Anthony Ciampa- Billerica	Jeremiah Pharis- Salem
Aramis Doucett- Lawrence	Tung Ng- Lawrence
Gaurau Jain- Wayland	Mollysa Yim- Lowell
Laurence Razenj- Concord	Saul Rosario- Concord
Ivan Montanez- Lawrence	Robert Rathe- Billerica
Michael Lambert- Peabody	
Aaron Sprague- Billerica	
Peter Von Tetzchner- Gloucester	
Fausto Mojiefusco- Haverhill	
Rodriquez Gonzalez- Lawrence	
Alexandria Heusser -Haverhill	
Nathan Joyall- Newburyport	
Thomas Lanteigne- Billerica	
Shyheim Cullen- Billerica	

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at the next meeting
September 10
K of C Wilmington
8:00 PM



Branch 25 Trustees Tony Porciello and Bob Cronin at the recent NALC National Convention in Boston.