

Have a Safe and Happy New Year

from the Officers and Executive Board of
BRANCH 34 NALC BOSTON

National Association of Letter Carriers

Joseph P. Considine Branch 34 AFL-CIO
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Branch 34's CLAN

National Association of Letter Carriers

122 Years of Proud Union Participation and Accomplishments ★ 1890 - 2012

President's Corner

LABOR WINS!!!

We did it! Thanks to the NALC, AFL-CIO and Letter Carriers from across the country we experienced great success in the November 6th Elections. Here in Massachusetts, we experienced a "Clean Sweep." Every NALC candidate was elected, including our replacement for the co-author of Senate Bill S-1789. **Elizabeth Warren** will be our voice and she'll make sure it's heard in the U.S. Senate right beside Senator **John Kerry** (D-MA). She *will* work across the aisle, *but for working families* with no hidden agenda.

Thanks to NALC President **Fredrick Rolando** for his insight and action over these past months leading up to the election. His releasing of letter carriers from the workroom floor to get involved with the state AFL-CIO's "get out the vote" program proved invaluable. They worked tirelessly alongside our NALC legislative department to get the job done. There are too many in-



Robert A. Lind
President

dividuals to list from across this state, but from Branch 34 there are two standouts, Brookline's **Joe DeMambro** and Jamaica Plain's **Bob Damatin** both did a terrific job getting NALC candidates elected.

Thanks to every Branch 34 member that voted in this heated election. Thanks to everyone that put aside their

party and political preferences and voted for their job instead. We woke up Wednesday morning in a better situation because of you. Our battle is once again before us but we now have more representatives that will champion our cause. God Bless as we move forward, thank you for a job well done and contribute your fair share to COLCPE.



Hard Work Leads to Big Victory!

(Above) Branch 34 Officers along with NALC National President Fredrick Rolando pose for a photo prior to the NALC Day of Action/Steward Appreciation Day where much information was disseminated and allowed our candidates to prevail in the recent election. (Left) NALC President Rolando and Branch 34 President Bob Lind oversee the proceedings. See more photos on pages 6 & 7.

Happy Holidays!

Here we are once again; the holiday season. As the song goes, "The Most Favorite Time of the Year". We recently celebrated Veteran's Day, Thanksgiving and now the Christmas Season. This is a time to reflect and appreciate what we have: Health, Family and Employment.

For many of us it raises memories of lost love ones and past holiday seasons.

Keeping that in mind it reminds us to enjoy special moments together. Open our hearts to those less fortunate and be more giving which is the very premise of Christmas Season.

Going forward into the New Year we need to carry over throughout the entire year that holiday sentiment. Try to be less judgmental and exhibit more patience with the shortcomings and disappointments of those who surround you. Sacrifice for the betterment of others and strive to help someone who has fallen and needs a helping hand. Individually strive to be a better person than you were the previous year and always treat people the way you want to be treated. Lastly, concentrate on people's good qualities rather than character flaws. I believe if you live by that creed and attempt to incorporate it into your everyday life you'll be a richer (not in the monetary sense) person for it.

Merry Christmas, Happy Hanukkah, Happy Kwanzaa, or whatever special day you observe and may you and your entire extended family experience peace and joy during this special time of the year. May you also be blessed with good health and prosperity throughout 2013!

—Bob Lind,
Branch 34 President

Branch 34 Upcoming Membership Meetings

Tuesdays at 7:00 pm

December 11, 2012
at the Boston Lodge of Elks #10
Spring Street, West Roxbury

January 8, 2013
at the Malden Moose Hall
582 Broadway (Rte. 99), Malden

February 12, 2013
at the Sons of Italy Hall
120 Quarry Street,
Quincy

Check
Out These
Dates & Locations

Tel. / 781-281-1133
Fax / 781-281-1127
www.nalcbranch34.com

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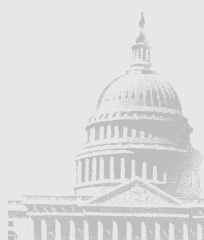
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NALC Day of Action/Steward Appreciation Day Photos

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Massachusetts Congressional Delegation

U.S. SENATE

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Russell Senate Office Bldg., Rm. 218
Washington, D.C. 20510
202-224-2742 Fax: 202-224-8525
kerry.senate.gov

The Honorable Scott Brown
Russell Senate Office Bldg., Rm. 317
Washington, D.C. 20510
202-224-4543 Fax: 202-224-2417
scottbrown.senate.gov

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

First Congressional District

The Honorable John W. Olver
Longworth House Office Bldg., Rm. 1111
Washington, D.C. 20515
202-225-5335 Fax: 202-226-1224
www.house.gov/olver

Second Congressional District

The Honorable Richard E. Neal
Rayburn House Office Bldg., Rm. 2266
Washington, D.C. 20515
202-225-5601 Fax: 202-225-8112
www.house.gov/neal

Third Congressional District

The Honorable James P. McGovern
Cannon House Office Bldg., Rm. 438
Washington, D.C. 20515
202-225-6101 Fax: 202-225-5759
www.house.gov/mcgovern

Fourth Congressional District

The Honorable Barney Frank
Rayburn House Office Bldg., Rm. 2252
Washington, D.C. 20515
202-225-5931 Fax: 202-225-0182
www.house.gov/frank

Fifth Congressional District

The Honorable Niki Tsongas
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Washington, D.C. 20515
202-225-3411 Fax: 202-226-0771
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Sixth Congressional District

The Honorable John F. Tierney
Rayburn House Office Bldg., Rm. 2238
Washington, D.C. 20515
202-225-8020 Fax: 202-225-5915
www.house.gov/tierney

Seventh Congressional District

The Honorable Edward J. Markey
Rayburn House Office Bldg., Rm. 2108
Washington, D.C. 20515
202-225-2836 Fax: 202-226-0092
www.house.gov/markey
Represented Communities: Middlesex County – Arlington, Belmont, Everett, Framingham, Lexington, Lincoln, Malden, Medford, Melrose, Natick, Stoneham, Waltham, Watertown, Wayland-Pct. 2, Weston, Winchester, Woburn; Suffolk County – Revere, Winthrop

Eighth Congressional District

The Honorable Michael Capuano
Longworth House Office Bldg., Rm. 1414
Washington, D.C. 20515
202-225-5111 Fax: 202-225-9322
www.house.gov/capuano
Represented Communities: Middlesex County – Cambridge, Somerville; Suffolk County – Boston-Wds. 1, 2; Wd. 3, Pcts. 1, 2, 6-10; Wd. 7, Pct. 10; Wds. 8-12; Wd. 13, Pcts. 1, 2, 4, 5, 6; Wd. 14; Wd. 15, Pcts. 1-5, 7-9; Wd. 16, Pcts. 1, 3; Wd. 17, Pcts. 1-3, 5-12; Wd. 18, Pcts. 1-8, 13-15, 21; Wd. 19, Pcts. 1, 3-6, 8, 9; Wds. 21, 22; Chelsea

Ninth Congressional District

The Honorable Stephen F. Lynch
Rayburn House Office Bldg., Rm. 2348
Washington, D.C. 20515
202-225-8273 Fax: 202-225-3984
www.house.gov/lynch
Represented Communities: Bristol County – Easton; Norfolk County – Avon, Braintree, Canton, Dedham, Holbrook, Medford, Milton, Needham, Norwood, Randolph, Stoughton, Walpole; Westwood; Plymouth County – Bridgewater, Brockton, East Bridgewater, Hanson-Pcts. 1, 3, West Bridgewater, Whitman; Suffolk County – Boston-Wd. 3, Pcts. 5, 6; Wd. 5, Pcts. 3-5, 11; Wd. 6; Wd. 7, Pcts. 1-9; Wd. 13, Pcts. 3, 7-10; Wd. 15, Pcts. 6; Wd. 16, Pcts. 2, 4-12; Wd. 17, Pcts. 4, 13-14; Wd. 18, Pcts. 9-12, 16-20, 22-23; Wd. 19, Pcts. 2, 7, 10-13; Wd. 20

Tenth Congressional District

The Honorable William Keating
Cannon House Office Bldg., Rm. 305
Washington, D.C. 20515
202-225-3111 Fax: 202-225-5658
www.house.gov/keating
Represented Communities: Barnstable County – Barnstable, Bourne, Brewster, Chatham, Dennis, Eastham, Falmouth, Harwich, Mashpee, Orleans, Provincetown, Sandwich, Truro, Wellfleet, Yarmouth; Dukes County – Aquinnah, Chilmark, Edgartown, Gosnold, Oak Bluffs, Tisbury, West Tisbury; Nantucket County – Nantucket; Norfolk County – Cohasset, Quincy, Weymouth; Plymouth County – Abington, Carver, Duxbury, Hanover, Hanson-Pct. 2; Hingham, Hull, Kingston, Marshfield, Norwell, Pembroke, Plymouth, Plympton, Rockland, Scituate

Thanks For Voting to Save Your Jobs!

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the carriers that voted and the carriers that took their own time to go door-to-door soliciting votes for the candidates that support our jobs. The choice this past election was stark to say the least.

Our opponents were on record that they would eliminate, if elected, the National Labor Relations Board, Prohibit project labor agreements, support right to work laws nationally and explore a greater role for privatizing the Postal Service.

Thanks again for voting your pocketbook.

Higher Level Assignments

The duty assignment of a full-time carrier detailed to a supervisory position, including a supervisory training program in excess of four months, shall be declared vacant and shall be posted for bid in accordance with Article 41.1.A.2.

Upon return to the craft the carrier will become an unassigned regular. A letter carrier temporarily detailed to a supervisory position will not be returned to the craft solely to circumvent the provisions of Section 1.A.2 of the contract.

Form 1723, Notice of Assignment shall be used in detailing letter carriers to temporary supervisor positions (204B). The Employer will provide the Union at the local level with a copy of Forms 1723 showing the beginning and ending of all such details.

Locker Searches

The Employer agrees that except in matters where there is reasonable cause to suspect criminal activity, postal management or inspectors shall not inspect lockers unless the employee or the Union representative has been given the opportunity to be present. For a general inspection, in which a number of lockers are to be inspected, where employees have had prior notification of at least a week, the above is not applicable. This is according to 41.3J.

I would like to also wish you and your loved ones a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!



J.T. McMahon
Executive Vice President

A Gift for Fred

Branch 34, as a token of their appreciation for his leadership, presented a commemorative crystal trophy to NALC National President Fredric V. Rolando at the Branch 34 Steward Appreciation Day held at Florian Hall on Sunday, November 4th. After this event, Fred, along with other Branch leaders from around the state participated in a NALC Labor Walk in Braintree prior to the November 6th election.



NALCREST Apartment Bids - Two-Week Intervals – SIGN UP NOW!!

Listed below are the weeks available for NALCREST, in Lake Wales, Florida. The rental fee for the one bedroom apartment is \$195.00 per week, plus a \$55.00 cleaning fee for a total of \$445.00 for two weeks.

Anyone interested in renting the apartment, should submit their requests to the Branch 34 office, 400 West Cummings Park, Suite 3950, Woburn, MA 01801, in care of Kevin Flaherty. (This is for Branch 34 members/families only).

The weeks start on Monday and runs through Sunday. A random lottery will determine the selection if more than one request is submitted for the same weeks.

You can submit multiple weeks.

The apartment is available for two-week intervals only.

- December 31, 2012 – January 13, 2013
- January 14 – January 27, 2013
- January 28 – February 10, 2013
- February 11 – February 24, 2013
- February 25 – March 10, 2013
- March 11 – March 24, 2013
- March 25 – April 7, 2013
- April 8 – April 21, 2013
- April 22 – May 5, 2013
- May 6 – May 19, 2013
- May 20 – June 2, 2013
- June 3 – June 16, 2013

- June 17 – June 30, 2013
- July 1 – July 14, 2013
- July 15 – July 28, 2013
- July 29 – August 11, 2013
- August 12 – August 25, 2013
- August 26 – September 8, 2013
- September 9 – September 22, 2013
- September 23 – October 6, 2013
- October 7 – October 20, 2013
- October 21 – November 3, 2013
- November 4 – November 17, 2013
- November 18 – December 1, 2013
- December 2 – December 15, 2013
- December 16 – December 29, 2013
- December 30, 2013 – January 12, 2014

The Branch 34 2013 Calendar is available for download online at

www.nalcbranch34.com

Now It's Time For Them To Pay Us Back!

Well the election is over and I for one am quite pleased. The NALC worked very hard to get our candidates elected and now it's time for them to pay us back. The lame duck session of Congress has returned and there is talk of Postal Reform being slammed through in this session. As we all know the current version of Postal Reform is unacceptable to letter carriers. We need a better bill brought forward in the 2013 session of Congress that was elected. There is talk of eliminating six-day delivery as part of this compromise. We can't allow this to happen. We should all contact our Congressman and Senators to insure our interests are protected.

Speaking of the election; can you imagine that the presidential race cost the candidates over 5.8 billion dollars. The Mass. Senate race cost them over 70 million dollars. Just wondering if there is better use for this money. I can think of many. How

about a version of "Election Reform"?

On another topic, I was recently reading an article in the NALC Activist which is a newsletter published by the NALC. The topic that caught my eye was on Separation-Disability. This action is an administrative action the Postal Service can perform only after following the requirements outlined in the ELM and if the disability is work related the EL-505.

Section 365.342(a) of the ELM allows the Postal to separate an employee once they are absent continuously without pay for one year. In recent months the Postal Service has begun to aggressively seek the administration separation of letter carriers. This includes letter carriers that are injured on the job or have serious illness. Once separated the employee faces higher health insurance and reduced future retirement benefits. Employees that are separated are forced to seek premature disability retirement.

Once a letter carrier is separated, the union can no longer file grievances on his or her behalf after the date of separation. There are several things to keep in mind if you are or will be in an LWOP status for any length of time. First and foremost keep in mind the Postal Service can in fact separate you if you are in LWOP status for a year or longer. The Postal Service usually sends a Notice of Separation stating the effective date of the separation to the employee that is being separated. The employee is usually offered retirement counseling prior to separation as well. If either of these things happens the employee should notify their shop steward or contact the branch immediately.

The important thing to remember in the case of separation-disability is the urgency to investigate and file a grievance. Any delay in this matter may result in the employee being separated and no grievance being filed.

On a much brighter note the holidays are here. Thanksgiving has come and gone. Although we all have struggles in our life we can be thankful we have a decent job with decent benefits. Without our jobs everything could be much worse.

I would like to take this time to wish all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. I hope I do not offend anyone by these wishes and I wish all a very happy holiday season no matter how he or she celebrates. Let's have a happy, safe, and healthy New Year.



Kevin Flaherty
Secretary-Treasurer

Hot Topics

2012 COLCPE

It's your money and you should know. We have been urging carriers for years to contribute to COLCPE. As you know many still resist contributing even the requested \$5.00 per pay period (Gimme 5) for whatever reason. But you need to understand the importance of contributing and what is done with the money.

The NALC has emphasized the money collected goes to protecting our jobs and benefits. Some have told me that by giving to COLCPE they feel as if they are becoming part of a system of bribery and influence peddling in Washington.

COLCPE isn't like that. COLCPE is an investment in protecting your future. Whatever political involvement you take - COLCPE, E-activist, phone banks, labor walks, talking to your friends and neighbors, etc. - it means something. Don't you think that those who oppose us use the same tactics? We can't let them be successful because if they win, we lose. What do we lose? Simply put, the American Dream, a job with good pay and benefits that allows us to provide for ourselves and our families.

Winning our legislative campaign is going to take two things - money and boots on the ground. We have the ability to provide both. We should provide both.

During the just concluded election season the NALC contributed over \$49,000 to Massachusetts Congressional candidates, all of whom won. This includes \$10,000 to the campaign of **Elizabeth Warren**.

Wisconsin

Wisconsin Circuit Judge **Juan Colas** recently ruled that major portions of the controversial collective bargaining law championed by Governor **Scott Walker** are unconstitutional. The state has already come out and asked for a stay while it appeals the judge's decision. This issue is a long way from being resolved and will in all probability reach the Supreme Court.

2016 Presidential Race

Yes I know, we just finished this race and I'm already talking about 2016. But every election has both short and long term consequences. For the long term, let's first talk about the Democrats - **Barack Obama** can't run again, **Joe Biden** is too old, so will **Hillary Clinton** take another shot? Have also heard the name of **Rahm Emanuel** (Mayor of Chicago and former Obama Chief of Staff) mentioned as a possible candidate.

For the Republicans, most pundits are saying that if the Republicans are ever going to be relevant again they need to broaden their appeal. To me that means disavowing the likes of cartoonish New

Jersey Governor **Chris Christie** and going in the direction of Governor **Bobby Jindal** of Louisiana or Senator **Marco Rubio** of Florida.

In the short term, Obama's election may mean another race for the United State Senate in 2013. The buzz is that Senator **John Kerry** is under serious consideration to become either Secretary of State or Secretary of Defense, If selected and confirmed it means there will be a special election in 2013 for the balance of his term with the election for a full term being run in 2014. You know that **Scott Brown** will run for the Republicans. The name I have heard as a possible Democratic challenger is Congressman **Michael Capuano**.

Believe it or not it could get more interesting. Governor **Deval Patrick** has the power to appoint an interim Senator until the special election is held. Whoever that interim appointment is could decide to run for the job and would have an advantage as the incumbent. Suppose that interim pick is the Governor himself, Deval Patrick? Governor Patrick is a longtime friend of Barack Obama. Even though Patrick has been saying he will complete his term and not accept a position in the Cabinet (he has also been mentioned for the Supreme Court) he may just be keeping his options open.

\$3,400

\$3,400 is the amount the average American will see their payroll and income taxes increase by if the lame duck session of Congress can't prevent The Fiscal Cliff. The New Year could see a combination of payroll and income tax increases along

with mandated cuts in programs and services throughout the government that would cripple our economy. While addressing the Fiscal Cliff Congress may well consider Postal Service reform as well.

Do you have faith in Congress to do the right thing and act with a sense of urgency to act in a way to protect our paychecks, our jobs and the economy as a whole? Do they care to act in a responsible manner or are they just on cruise control in going through the motion to when the term expires. Will they do nothing or something incredibly stupid?

Speaking of incredibly stupid, let's talk about retiring Senator **Joe Lieberman**, Chair of the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee, who has actually proposed to immediately suspend letter mail delivery on Saturdays but retain six-day parcel delivery as a compromise to save the Postal Service. **ARE YOU FREAKIN' KIDDING ME?**

Let's eliminate 25,000 letter carrier jobs. That has to be good for the economy and growing the Postal Service. **BYE JOE, DON'T LET THE DOOR HIT YOU IN THE ASS ON THE WAY OUT!**

★★★★★

In closing, I want to end this article on an upbeat note by wishing all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!



Michael Kidd
Legislative Liaison

Safety Meetings Are Important!

It has come to my attention that there are many stations that are not having Safety meetings. Also I hear that there are not many Safety talks being given out. Some stations none at all.

At the beginning of the year I will, with the help of **Bob Damatin**, be sending out a questionnaire to all of the stewards in the Branch. It will compose of how often the safety team is meeting, how long for, who is on the committee, and are you getting

safety talks or not This is not only a Boston problem but a regional and national one as well.

★★★★★
Also I would like to wish everybody a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. Be safe out there.



Michael Gorham
Health Benefit Officer

Protect Your Future!

GIVE TO COLCPE!

Branch 34's CLAN

Founded May 1971

AWARDS

International Labor Communications Association
GENERAL EXCELLENCE - LOCAL UNION PUBLICATIONS - CIRCULATIONS of 2,500 to 9,999
First Place, 2003

National Association of Letter Carriers
GENERAL EXCELLENCE - LARGE BRANCH PUBLICATIONS - MORE THAN 1,500 MEMBERS
First Place, 2012
First Place, 2010
First Place, 2008
First Place, 2002
First Place, 1996
First Place, 1994
Second Place, 2006
Second Place, 1992
Third Place, 2004
Honorable Mention, 1982
Judges' Commendation, 1988

BEST STORY
First Place, 1996
Third Place, 1990
2 Honorable Mentions, 1992
Honorable Mention, 1990

BEST CARTOON OR PHOTO
First Place, 2006

PROMOTING UNIONISM
Third Place, 1992
Judges' Commendation, 1988

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Pre-Disciplinary Interviews

Over my nearly ten years as an NALC steward, I have had countless opportunities to sit in on Pre-Disciplinary Interviews or PDI for letter carriers. It used to be little more than a discussion between a supervisor, letter carrier, and steward to review an alleged incident and a chance to persuade management not to go forward with any adverse actions, which the union was fairly successful at. Now, it's a prescribed manifest provided by management, describing how guilty the letter carrier is; a pre-cursor to discipline if you will. This is simply another example of management taking a perfectly useful provision of the contract and molding it into a weapon against the rank and file. Although, all letter carrier should be aware of this process (PDI) and their rights regarding it, I write this article geared toward the local shop stewards. Having dealt with the grievance procedure at each of the four steps, I have witnessed increased scrutiny of PDI's at both the step B and arbitration levels. Here are some basic practices all stewards should be aware of regarding PDI's.

What is the purpose of a PDI? This is an interview to discover the fact circumstances surrounding a particular incident or problem, commonly referred to a fact finding interview. A PDI is also known as the carrier's day in court, which is their opportunity to give management all the information or reasoning surrounding a particular incident. Steward should take this opportunity to remind **all carriers** that they should immediately request union representation if approached by a supervisor or manager seeking to conduct a PDI. Steward should speak to the conducting management official as to the nature of the inquiry or the incident, and press them for any details or inferences management has already made about the situation. Attempt to get a copy of the PDI questions at this point, if the supervisor is green; this may just work. Next, the steward should meet with the letter carrier prior to the PDI for about 10 to 15 minutes on average (this may vary based on nature of the alleged incident). Discuss the nature of the alleged incident, use the what, where, when, why, and how questions; its easy to remember. But perhaps more importantly, advise the carrier to think of how he/she is going to answer management's questions and how those answers may or may not affect the potential issuance of subsequent discipline (give the carrier sample questions if you're

an experienced steward). Please be mindful to avoid admitting your guilt, to often I read PDI notes in preparation of a Formal step A grievance meetings or arbitration hearings and the grievant/letter carrier has already admitted to the charge and is trying to rely on mitigating circumstance to win the grievance. To be crystal clear- Mitigating circumstances are still an admission of guilt in most instances. If invoking mitigating circumstances as your defense, be prepared to support such circumstances with irrefutable documentation. Side note: If ever writing a statement for a grievance as a grievant or steward and you start a sentence with the following phase: The grievant acted as charged, but..... (Please reconsider or try to settle the grievance).

During the PDI the steward has ever right to be an active participant, however be mindful that it is still being conducted by management and we are not there to help the dark side in any way. Your first step once in the office prior to the start of the meeting is to once again ask for a copy of the questions management will be asking, you may or may not get a copy, if not inform the supervisor/ manager that you will be planning to writing down each and every question and the grievant will not be answering said question until the question is written; this may prove to be extremely time consuming, most of the time they will hand over the questions at this point. Lately, I have seen multiple pages of management's PDI questions; they're being far more thorough than in years past. I surmise that this is directly attributed to management's Step B representative interfering in every step of the grievance procedure. As a steward you should try to control the tempo of this interview, be mindful that either you or the carrier can call for a side bar (time out) and meet in private to discuss a question or answer at any point. Both the carrier and steward also have the right to ask relevant questions of management regarding the issue or ask for clarification of managements questions. Our objective is to avoid the issuance of discipline, but if not; to stare clear of the carrier being incriminated. We, as a union, do not endorse the carrier lying during these interviews or ever for that matter; however they may not always recall some vital details (incriminating) or they not always understand certain questions regarding details related to innocence or guilt; if you know what I mean. Carrier should be advised to answer all questions to the best

of their abilities and should be encouraged to participate in the PDI meetings. Recently, I read an Arbitration decision where the carrier responded to all of management's PDI questions with a generic response of: "I do my job in accordance with the national agreement and the rule and regulation of the Postal Service" or something to that effect; the arbitrator lambasted the carrier in the decision attacking his or her credibility and cooperation.

Stewards should always take notes as to how all the PDI questions were answered by the grievant and do the same if any questions were asked of and answered by management during the meeting. All this information may prove to be helpful in the grievance process, this is the first opportunity the grievant has to go on record regarding the incident, it may be viewed as less self serving as a statement written after discipline has be issued.

Following the PDI, the steward should request a copy of management's notes from the meeting; this should include the responses to all the questions that were asked of the carrier, steward, and management. Try to secure the aforementioned notes immediately so management won't have a chance to alter or mold to responses given by the carrier.

This may prove to be helpful in any future grievance against discipline, the

steward should write a statement identifying any and all discrepancies resulting from the steward's notes being cross referenced with management's notes. As a practice, stewards should get in the habit of documenting and all disputed details against management at every level of the grievance procedure. If proper attention is paid during the PDI, the letter carrier may be able to gain the upper hand in defending any discipline issued. This can be viewed as the first (one of the most crucial) building blocks in constructing a successful grievance.

On behalf my family and I, we would like to take this opportunity and wish everyone in our union and their families a great holiday season and good fortune and health in the New Year. This has been another hectic year on all fronts. Special thanks, to all the stewards and branch officers of branch 34, without your help I couldn't do my job. I hope we can all take a few minutes to appreciate what we have in our personal lives as well as in our work lives. So take some time off and recharge your batteries, for many great battles will wage in the New Year.



Brian Manning
Area Steward

Things That Drove Me "CRAZY" in 2012

Our educational system which has failed to teach drivers the meaning of the word YIELD.

★★★★★

Drivers who know what the meaning of the world YIELD is but choose to ignore it anyway.

★★★★★

The non-handicapped who park in handicapped spots.

★★★★★

Dopes who take up two parking spots so you can't fit.

★★★★★

People who gaze for eternity trying to decide what lottery ticket to buy hoping to win a big payday oblivious to the long lines of people behind them.

★★★★★

The people who have a trash bucket in their line of sight but still throw trash on the ground.

★★★★★

The drivers who turn on red into traffic when the sign clearly reads NO TURN ON RED.

★★★★★

Those stupid expressway lighted signs that tell you how far and how long it will take you to get to point X. I'd rather that money was spent fixing potholes.

★★★★★

Drivers who double park on city streets, and leave the vehicle, because they can't find a legitimate spot.

★★★★★

People who park in front of fire hydrants.

★★★★★

Bicycle riders who don't know or don't follow the rules of the road and then get mad at you when you beep the horn.

★★★★★

Lax enforcement of parking laws such as double parking, parking in handicapped spots or at fire hydrants.

★★★★★

Since when did weeds become the new city landscaping? People, pull the weeds. Hey wouldn't that be a great job for kids in

the summer?

★★★★★

Taxi drivers, limo drivers, duck boat drivers and anyone who drives a Lexus or BMW, FYI, you don't own the road.

★★★★★

Dear Moms and Dads, please just say goodbye to the kids when you put them on the school bus. They want to get away from you as quickly as you want to get away from them. STOP PRETENDING. They are going to grow up hating you anyway, what's the point, and besides you are making me late waiting for the bus to move.

★★★★★

Management's stupidity and ineptitude – they still can't get the mail delivered even after 200+ years.

★★★★★

Our two party political system. We need a real third party in America to break the logjam in Congress. We can call this new political party the BEAVERS. Get it – log-jam – the Beavers.

★★★★★

Letter carriers who complain they don't get votes from their customers but don't vote for the letter carrier who delivers their own personal mail. Can you believe that?

★★★★★

Labor Reps who don't return phone calls or are "too busy to speak with you." And they are surprised when grievances result.

★★★★★

People who pick up after their dogs. Don't get me wrong, thank you for picking up the poo but don't leave the blue bag on the sidewalk. Take it with you or put it in a garbage can.

★★★★★

Anyway, after all is said and done, I wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!



Michael Kidd
Area Steward

ATTENTION RETIRED LETTER CARRIERS:
Anyone who meets the 50 year requirement to receive a GOLD CARD, please contact the Union Office at 781-281-1133 to provide and receive more information.

The Boston Letter Carriers Mutual Benefit Association
Founded May 18, 1889

522 Dorchester Avenue, South Boston, MA 02127
Telephone (617) 269-9111

Assets: \$5,000,000
Life Insurance: \$5,500 • Weekly Benefit: \$42*
Lifetime Sick Benefit: \$480 • Annual Dues: \$14
NO PHYSICAL EXAM

Applicants must be under forty years of age and less than three years a full-time Letter Carrier. Premiums have never been increased. Managed by Boston Letter Carriers. Supervised and audited by the Massachusetts Department of Insurance. See your Station Mutual Benefit Association representatives for further details, or call 617-269-9111.
* After first seven days with no leave to your credit.

President: Thomas Sheehan • Recording Secretary: Arthur Dinsmoor

Branch 34's Officers and Executive Board Wishes its Members a Happy Holiday Season!



Now Is Not the Time to Rest!

At the outset, let me wish you and your loved ones all the wonder and magic of Christmas and the happiest of any other holiday's you and yours may observe. As the last of the parcels, cards and long days ending well after dark subside, I hope you can take time to reflect on the past year and job well done despite increasingly difficult circumstances.

★★★★★

Unfortunately, for us, now is not the time for rest. And while the upcoming trials and tribulations we face appear daunting, this will not be another one of those requests that you contact your congressional representatives or contribute to COLCPE.

Instead, during this season of giving, I would ask that we take the time to remember those less fortunate than ourselves, including our Brothers and Sister Carriers from New York and New Jersey who continue to live through the destruction of Hurricane Sandy. The act of helping others can create an improved sense of well-being. Knowing that you sacrificed something such as time, finances or property in order to help others in need can give you a sense of purpose in life or work and inner satisfaction.

While there are numerous outlets accepting donations for the victims of Sandy, one such agency worthy of consideration is the *Postal Employees Relief Fund* (PERF). PERF is not an emergency relief agency such as the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the Red Cross and the Salvation Army, who are set up for immediate needs. Instead, PERF provides grants to help in the long-term restoration of homes, property and vehicles damaged by natural disasters or home fires.

PERF was initially created in 1990 to assist postal employees affected by Hurricane Hugo and the California earthquake and has remained a permanent process to date providing thousands of grants totaling tens of millions of dollars to active and retired postal employees impacted by hurricanes,

earthquakes, floods, tornadoes and fires.

While contributions to PERF are primarily received via payroll deduction through the annual Combined Federal Campaign (CFC#10268), members wishing to provide immediate assistance can make a credit card contribution to by logging on to postalrelief.com and clicking on to "Donate to PERF" or by simply sending a check or money order directly to:

**Postal Employees Relief Fund
P.O. Box 7630
Woodbridge, VA 22195-7630**

One need only watch the nightly news to get a glimpse of devastation these families are living through, with snow and sub-freezing temperatures fast approaching to realize the enormous need for assistance. Wiktionary defines the proverb *'there but for the grace of God go I'* as a recognition that others' misfortune could be ones' own, were it not for the blessing/ kindness/luck bestowed by fate or the Devine. In a nutshell, such circumstances could become our own at any time.

On a lighter note, I saw this parody of an old classic and couldn't help but think it might bring some enjoyment to our Brothers and Sisters with young children as well as the old ones, like me, who have already been there.

'Twas the Night Before Christmas... for Parents
(Santa's helpers tackle gifts with "some assembly required")

'Twas the night before Christmas when all through the house I searched for the tools to hand to my spouse. Instructions were studied and we were inspired, In hopes we could manage "Some Assembly Required."

The children were quiet (not asleep) in their beds, While Dad and I faced the evening with dread: A kitchen, two bikes,

Barbie's town house to boot! And, thanks to Grandpa, a train with a toot!

We opened the boxes, my heart skipped a beat... Let no parts be missing or parts incomplete! Too late for last-minute returns or replacement; If we can't get it right, it goes in the basement!

When what to my worrying eyes should appear, But 50 sheets of directions, concise, but not clear, With each part numbered and every slot named, So if we failed, only we could be blamed.

More rapid than eagles the parts then fell out, All over the carpet they were scattered about. "Now bolt it! Now twist it! Attach it right there! Slide on the seats, and staple the stair! Hammer the shelves, and nail to the stand." "Honey," said hubby, "you just glued my hand."

And then in a twinkling, I knew for a fact. That all the toy dealers had indeed made a pact. To keep parents busy all Christmas Eve night. With "assembly required" till morning's first light.

Congratulations Retirees

On behalf of President Lind, the Board of Officers and all the Brothers and Sisters of Branch 34, we extend our wishes for a long, happy, healthy and well deserved retirement to the following recently retired members:

William Campbell..... North Weymouth
Daniel P. Clancy..... Somerville
Roger Gaudreau.....Roxbury
Frank Grover.....Back Bay Annex
Eduardo Martinez..... Jamaica Plain
Hayward MeyersRoxbury
Brian Mulrooney.....East Weymouth
Ronald C. Olson Stoneham
Kelley A. O'SheaSouth Boston
Laurence D. Tiner.....Medford
Roosevelt Wilder.....Roxbury

We spoke not a word, but kept bent at our work, Till our eyes, they went bleary; our fingers all hurt. The coffee went cold and the night, it wore thin. Before we attached the last rod and last pin.

Then laying the tools away in the chest, We fell into bed for a well-deserved rest. But I said to my husband just before I passed out, "This will be the best Christmas, without any doubt.

Tomorrow we'll cheer, let the holiday ring, And not have to run to the store for a thing!

We did it! We did it! The toys are all set! For the perfect, most perfect, Christmas, I bet!"

Then off to dreamland and sweet repose I gratefully went, Though I suppose there's something to say for those self-deluded... I'd forgotten that **BATTERIES** are never included!



Michael Yerkes
Financial Secretary

In Memoriam

Sherman Busby
Retired Member – Brookline
Thomas F. Connolly
Retired Member – Brookline
Robert J. Kenney
Retired Member – Fort Point
Peter P. Lucas
Retired Member – Scituate
Edward R. Parsley*
Retired Member – G.M.F.

* denotes 50-Year Life Member

Rest in Peace



Steward Appreciation Day / NALC Day of Action Photos



Let First Priority help you {Pri·or·i·tize}

verb: list or rate projects or goals in order of importance

To do list!

- ✓ Save money
- ✓ Change your scenery
- ✓ Spend more time doing what YOU want

New Location – New Reason to Celebrate!

First Priority has been serving members for over 85 years! We have provided excellent service to postal employees and their families since 1924 and are now open to those that live or work in Suffolk and Essex counties. Plus, we have a new reason to celebrate!

In addition to our Boston, Lowell and Waltham branches our newest branch at 100 Swift Street in East Boston offers a convenient location, drive-thru with ATM, expanded hours, and like all our branches, people ready to help you accomplish your financial to-do-list!

- **Save money**
We make saving easier with great rates and easy-to-use products!
- **Change your scenery**
First Priority offers online pre-approvals for mortgages, home equity loans, and lines of credit. We have a product to fit your home financing needs.
- **Spend more time doing what YOU want**
There are lots of convenient ways to bank with First Priority – phone, online, ATM, or in branch.



800.949.7628
www.firstprioritycu.com

Now Open at 100 Swift Street, East Boston, MA 02128

Drive-up ATM – Open 24 hours!

Lobby Hours:
Monday – Wednesday 8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.
Thursday – Friday 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.
Saturday 9:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

Drive-Up Hours:
Monday – Wednesday 7:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.
Thursday – Friday 7:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.
Saturday 9:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

BRANCH LOCATIONS

Main Office General Mail Facility | 25 Dorchester Avenue, Boston, MA 02205
Hours Monday – Friday 7:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. | Thursday 7:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.

East Boston Branch 100 Swift Street | East Boston, MA 02128 (Now Full-Service)
Hours Monday – Wednesday 8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. | Thursday – Friday 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. | Saturday 9:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

Lowell Branch 155 Father Morrisette Blvd. | Lowell, MA 01853
Hours Monday – Friday 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Waltham Branch Northwest Processing Facility | 200 Smith Street, Waltham, MA 02454
Hours Thursday 7:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.



Steward Appreciation Day / NALC Day of Action

Sunday, November 4th was a morning dedicated to thanking our Branch 34 Shop Stewards for the service they provide this union on a daily basis. What made this day even more special, besides those that took the time to attend, was our special guest speaker NALC President **Fredric V. Rolando**.



This event began with Branch 34 President **Bob Lind** welcoming and thanking our stewards for the job they perform on a daily basis. He reiterated that although they seldom hear it, the branch office and the membership of Branch 34 *do* appreciate their hard work. President Lind spoke of the stressful times we live in and the struggle letter carriers face today. He further stated that as a union we have always struggled with adversity throughout the decades. He went on to state that it's during these troubled times that we respond best. When a struggle appears on the horizon we close ranks and stand shoulder to shoulder ready to take on any foe. Branch 34 and the NALC shop steward is no stranger to adversity and it makes our union stronger. If there were no struggles there'd be no need for a union but when trouble is in the air we respond as one.

He thanked the stewards for the job they do on a daily basis and reminded them that our mission and agenda couldn't be advanced without them. After recognizing those in attendance he encouraged them to relax and enjoy the brunch.

Our first guest speaker was our own Region 14 and Branch member NBA **John Casciano** who echoed his thanks



for the service they provide. He spoke of the many hats worn by the NALC Shop Steward and the need for their important role on the workroom floor. He spoke from his own experience that there was many a time, before he even clocked on, he was met by members looking for assistance. He reiterated that the shop steward doesn't do it for the money but does do it to enforce, protect and promote the NALC agenda and we rely upon them to get the job done.

President Rolando also applauded their efforts and thanked our stewards for serving this union during these extremely difficult times. He thanked Branch 34 for extending the invitation to him so he could attend this worthy event. He reminisced about his experience as a shop steward and applauded the efforts of every shop steward in attendance. After he recognized our stewards he went on to



discuss several topics including legislation, the presidential election and the U.S. MA Senate race along with the many MA U.S. Congressional races. He further spoke on contract/arbitration issues and his vision for the future of the NALC and the postal service. His main focus was getting out the vote for our NALC candidates and convincing middle class working families to vote for those that will protect their future (NALC Candidates).

The event ran from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Florian Hall in Dorchester and once finished we hightailed it to Braintree's Utility Workers Union Hall (Local 369) to prepare for our NALC Labor Walk. This walk was delegated to one of our own, Jamaica Plain's Shop Steward **Bob Damatin**.

Bob, Joe DeMambro and **Maureen Marinelli**, all Branch 34 members, were released by the NALC to work jointly with the MA AFL-CIO's political campaign. They along with many outside the branch letter carriers working tirelessly to get the vote out for NALC candidates in Massachusetts.

The walk encompassed certain south shore towns including outside the Boston Installation's geographic area. We not only had Massachusetts Carriers from across the state working to get the vote out but also support from outside such as Pawtucket, RI. Our National President



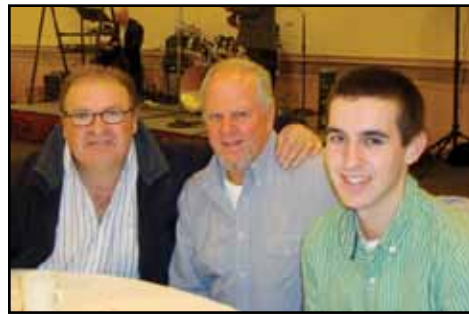
was accompanied by two national officers, **Randy Keller**, Branch 25 and our own Branch 34 **John Casciano**.

President Rolando reinforced the importance of our mission to win over those labor affiliated voters before heading out the door in pursuit of votes for NALC candidates. NALC volunteers returned to Local 369 shortly after nightfall and were greeted and thanked by our NALC National President **Fredric Rolando** who has made it his business to get involved in this grassroots effort across the USA.

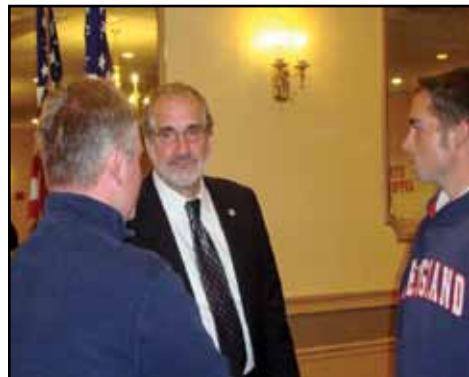
Our involvement was vital in this labor walk and election process. Getting our candidates elected is the first step in the survival of the postal service. We can now move forward and lobby our legislators to help make us financially sound moving into the future. This is a never ending struggle but we are definitely on the right course.

In the weeks ahead our legislators will be lobbied to introduce feasible, responsible and achievable legislative changes that will enhance our financial stability for decades to come.

As we move into a new year, all NALC Members need to make a financial commitment in protecting our jobs into the future. That commitment is COLCPE and like any deduction it goes unnoticed in your paycheck. Nothing is truer than the words, "a little goes a long way in securing your future". A bi-weekly donation of a mere five



dollars to our political action fund may be small investment, but your return is huge. It not only helps to keep you employed today, but also helps protect your benefits long into retirement. Word to the wise: don't be pennywise pound foolish! Invest in your future today: **Give to COLCPE**.



Branch 34 Says Farewell to its Newest Retirees!

North Weymouth's Pat O'Toole



North Weymouth's Bob O'Toole celebrates his last day.



North Weymouth's Bob O'Toole (second from left) receives congratulations from Area Steward Brian Manning, Shop Steward Mark Elliott and Branch 34 President Bob Lind.



Bob O'Toole receives retirement gifts from Branch 34 President Bob Lind.



North Weymouth's Best pose for pictures with Bob O'Toole and Million Mile Club Member Rich Nickerson (far left).

Somerville's Dan Clancy



Somerville's cornerstone Dan Clancy poses with Branch 34 President Bob Lind and "Fast" Eddie Davis.



Somerville's Dan Clancy punches the clock for the last time.

Dan Clancy receives parting gifts from the Branch.



Medford's Larry Tiner



Larry Tiner (second from left) is congratulated on his retirement by his friends in Medford, Shop Steward Steve White, Branch 34 President Bob Lind and Shop Steward Mike Ash.



Medford's Larry Tiner sorts his last case.



Larry's beautiful wife talks to one of his former co-workers.

Roxbury's Roosevelt Wilder



Roxbury's Roosevelt Wilder is assisted in putting on his retirement jacket by Branch 34 Secretary-Treasurer Kevin Flaherty.



Roosevelt Wilder receives hearty congratulations on his retirement from Roxbury Shop Steward John McCormick.



Roosevelt Wilder bids a farewell to his Roxbury friends and co-workers.

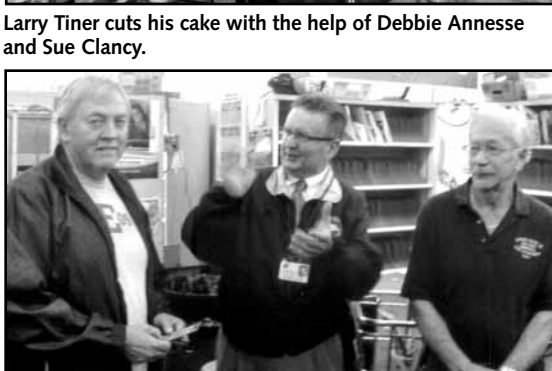
Stoneham's Kevin Lee and Ron Olson



Kevin Lee and Ron Olson receive congratulations from Stoneham Shop Steward Larry Last.



Branch 34 President Bob Lind offers some kind words to Ron Olson.



Branch 34 President Bob Lind offers up a round of applause to new retirees Kevin Lee and Ron Olson of Stoneham.



Branch 34 President Bob Lind presents a retirement watch to Stoneham's Ron Olson.

Roxbury's Hayward Meyers receives good luck from Branch 34 President Bob Lind.

Roxbury's Hayward Meyers



Hayward draws applause as he says goodbye and receives gift from Roxbury Shop Steward John McCormick.



Roxbury's Hayward Meyers has the last word on his retirement day.

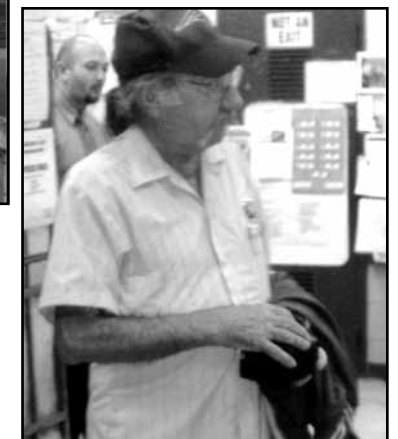
North Weymouth's Billy Campbell



North Weymouth's Billy Campbell is congratulated by Branch 34 President Bob Lind.



North Weymouth's Billy Campbell examines his new Branch 34 retirement jacket.



Billy Campbell says farewell to his North Weymouth co-workers.

Back Bay Annex's Frank Grover



Back Bay Annex's Frank Grover receives a farewell kiss from Shop Steward Robin O'Donnell as Louie Kneeland looks on.



Back Bay Annex's Frank Grover shares a laugh with a co-worker and Bob Lind.



Back Bay Annex's Frank Grover receives his retirement jacket from Branch 34 President Bob Lind.



Frank Grover shows his Back Bay Pride!

AROUND THE BRANCH

You've Got Mail, and a Friend – Michael Starck

By Roy Harris

The dogs always remember. At least when it comes to the person who brings the mail.

Before my family moved to the South Shore from Los Angeles, our border collie Omaha would angrily charge the screen door at the mere sight of a gray uniform. The animosity was mutual; letter carriers approached our porch warily, and left rapidly. The only words I remember saying to them were apologies.



Hingham Postal Carrier Michael Starck has served the World's End neighborhood for 25 years.

So on that day 16 years ago when an affable **Mike Starck** first pulled his postal service van into the driveway of our new home in Hingham's World's End neighborhood – reigniting Omaha's war whoops – I winced, and warned him: All mailmen are

her sworn enemies. "We'll see about that," he said with one of the warm laughs that soon became a fixture of his afternoon visit. And he gently tossed two biscuits right at Omaha's nose.

Love at first bite.

Each neighbor hereabouts has similar stories about **Michael Starck**. But since he makes one house call at a time, of course, there's little opportunity to share such tales. So when this much-beloved public servant happened to let it slip a few months ago that this was his 25th year serving World's End, our neighborhood association hatched a plot: We'd throw a surprise party for Mike.

For weeks, neighbors kept the secret. Then on June 16, working with Hingham Postmaster James **John Donovan** as our co-conspirator, we created a ruse to tell Mike he was needed after his Saturday rounds at the home of one of the neighbors. In the backyard were 50 World's Enders, prepared to share memories, a cake and a giant thank-you letter marking his silver anniversary on the route.

Postmaster Donovan presented Mike with a citation, and recognized his veteran employee's "extraordinary work ethic, which is nothing less than admirable."

But more than any official acknowledgment, the unexpected appearance of so many grateful postal patrons – and their children, who score bubble gum from him the same way their dogs score biscuits – clearly floored Mike.

He called his wife with what he knew seemed an improbable excuse for lateness – "I'm at a party – and it's for me!" After convincing her, he turned back to the neighbors: "I'm blown away. I can't tell you



The neighborhood celebrated Michael Starck's milestone with a surprise party.

how much this means to me."

Little did we know.

Later we would learn how Mike, who often has shared with us the loss of our loved ones, told his ailing mom about the extraordinary surprise party. It proved, he said, that he'd made the right choice of a career. In fact, it was one of the last conversations they had. His mother died less than a month later.

When many neighbors turned out at the wake to console him, it seemed the most natural thing in the world. As natural as taking a few minutes that Saturday afternoon to honor the man who always brightened our afternoons.

We wondered why we hadn't done it sooner. We thought of how silly it is to wait until year-end to say thanks with a card or

a tip, when someone like Mike touches our lives every day.

Perhaps it's something your own neighborhood group can organize, if you have a letter carrier even remotely as valuable as our Mike.

With each "mail call," we can tell that for Mike, the warm memories of being celebrated in this fashion have changed everything. And for the neighbors, too. There's so much more to say, once the barking up and down the street begins, signaling the arrival of our friend, the mailman.

The dogs always remember.

Roy Harris is a journalist and author who lives in Hingham with his wife, Eileen McIntyre.

(Reprinted from the Patriot-Ledger, October 12, 2012.)

Conte Stands Out Amid Somerville High's Struggles

This is a story about Ryan Conte, who is the son of Woburn Letter Carrier Vigo Conte.

By Dan Ventura

These are the dog days for Somerville High football.

The team is struggling along with an 0-7 record and prospects don't look good with No. 2 Everett on the horizon for this weekend. There is ample opportunity for senior lineman **Ryan Conte** to become a clubhouse cancer and bemoan his fate while others throughout the commonwealth are enjoying their moments in the spotlight.

But that wouldn't be Conte. The 6-foot-4, 250-pounder arrives at practice 20-30 minutes early every day and remains the hardest worker in the program.

"He's very dedicated, worked out twice daily in the offseason to become a better player," said Somerville coach **Tony Gulla**, who returned to coach the Highlanders after

spending the last eight seasons as an assistant at Olympia High School in Orlando, Florida. "He's a leader and does everything we ask of him."

A life-long resident of Somerville, Conte was talked into playing football by **John Wallace**. A fellow lineman who earned a scholarship to UMass, Conte credits Wallace with making him the player he is today.

"Me and John are really good friends going all the way back to hockey, and he's the one who convinced me to play football," Conte said. "We still talk all the time. He tells me to be cool, be patient and work hard because good things will happen to me."

Wallace speaks from experience. Like Conte, he experienced very little success in terms of wins and losses, but his skills were too hard to overlook as evidenced by the scholarship. Gulla has coached his share of quality linemen in nearly 25 years, and says Conte could be the second best lineman he's

coached behind **Gosder Cherilus**, now starting for the Detroit Lions.

"I'm not going to say he's as good as Gosder," Gulla said, "but he's as good as anyone else I've had. When I was coaching in Florida, we had a lineman (**Shawn Curtis**) who has 20 Division 1 offers right now, and I'd put Ryan right there with him. He does everything you want an offensive lineman to do – finishes his blocks, gets right up on them and pancakes them."

"Some lucky program is going to get a diamond in the rough."

Conte received some interest from UMass and UNH, along with some of the Ivy League schools. Conte knows full well that the interest might have been greater if he played elsewhere, but he wouldn't trade his high school experience for anything, regardless of overall records.

"This is my home. I grew up in Somer-



Somerville lineman Ryan Conte smiles while posing with coach Tony Gulla. Conte has been a bright spot for the winless Highlanders.

– Photo by Ted Fitzgerald

ville and always wanted to play for Somerville High School," Conte said. "I want to keep playing hard, trying to motivate everyone to keep pushing for that first win."

Dan Ventura writes for the Boston Herald.

(Reprinted from the Boston Herald, November 1, 2012.)

Unsung Hero

Auburndale Carrier Alerts Customer, Gas Company Finds Leak

USPS Training Technician **Nancy Hoey's** neighborhood in Auburndale is safer thanks to Letter Carrier **Robert Fadden**, and she's giving him the credit and thanks.

She tells the story: "On Friday, Sept. 7, 2012, when I came home from work at approximately 4:30 p.m., the gas company was on my street. They were there until midnight.

"Sunday, I was speaking to my neighbor and she told me that the mail carrier (Bob) had told her he was concerned, because he smelled gas at her front steps. She told me, she always enters her home through the back door (so that's why she probably

didn't smell anything).

"She immediately called the gas company which found a gas leak at her residence; it took them the whole evening to repair the leak. Everyone was surprised to see them working so late into the evening, so we assume it was serious.

"Thankfully Bob told her, or else as this could have been a totally different story."

Hoey wrote Fadden's manager at the Auburndale Post Office, **Bob Hanley**, about the incident saying, "Please extend our thanks from all the residents!!!"

(Reprinted from Greater Boston Views, September 16, 2012.)

★ ★ To Our Troops! ★ ★
Thank You For Your Service
and Your Sacrifice!

**BRANCH 34
SUPPORTS YOU!**

Retirement Corner

Retirement Forum – Only the Beginning

When last we met, Branch 34 had just sponsored a “retirement forum” at Florian Hall in Dorchester. **Ron Hibbs**, a financial advisor for FEDERAL EMPLOYEE BENEFIT SERVICES out of Glen, NH was your speaker. The forum attracted approximately 125 Letter Carriers and their spouse. Hibbs did a good job of explaining the basics of CSRS and FERS, but please understand that this information is readily available on line at such sites as FederalTimes.com, OPM.gov, and NARFE.org, as well as publications sponsored by NALC (Questions and Answers on CSRS, and Questions and Answers on FERS). As many Letter Carriers and Federal Employees across the nation begin the quest for retirement, there will be a lot of “financial consultants/advisors surfacing on the horizon. Although they serve a purpose, understand that this is not a good will tour for the benefit of Americas Letter Carriers. Annuities and commissions can often be the goal.

When I started this column a few years back, my intent was solely to generate questions, answers and thought provoking investigation into **OUR RETIREMENT**. Postal

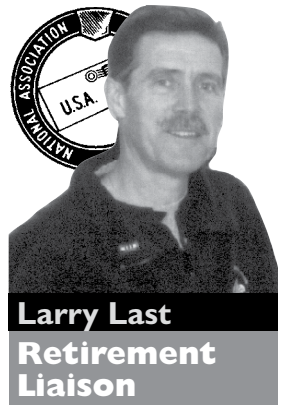
employees, arguably the nation’s largest full time employer, receive literally no counseling with regard to their retirement. Questions and answers were nearly impossible to have engaged. When I asked why the USPS and NALC didn’t embrace the thought of having retirement seminars, the answer was a resounding, “CAUTION”. No one wanted to take the chance of giving retirement advice. So, I approached Branch 34 President **Bob Lind** and asked him to take a chance on a “retirement column” designed to have Letter Carriers ask questions and generate thought about their most crucial resource: their retirement. I would present the column as an editorial of sorts. I didn’t necessarily want to give advice, but give scenarios and case studies that Letter Carriers could relate to. The purpose was to generate thought. Have Carriers question their retirement. And it’s working! The number of Letter Carrier, both active and retired that has contacted the Branch and me has been more than encouraging.

President Lind has allowed me to embark on what I believe will be a long overdue “retirement forum” for Letter Carriers, by Letter Carriers. We are presently working

on putting together a power point presentation leading into an open forum question and answer period. This is what was clearly missing during the Florian Hall seminar in August. I believe this is what Letter Carriers have been looking for. This endeavor will take some time to put together, but our hope is that we will have this ready after the New Year. The Branch will keep everyone

updated with a Flash when the date and site are finalized.

Please send any questions that you would like to have discussed to Branch 34.





Larry Last
Retirement
Liaison



MOVING?
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Melvin A. Vieira, Sr. Melvin A. Vieira, Jr.

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If you have moved, please notify the Branch directly, Personnel does not notify us of change of addresses.

Name _____

Address _____

City/State _____

Zip _____

Send change of address to:
Branch 34 NALC
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Active letter carriers:
Contribute
to **COLCPE**
using PostalEASE

by phone.....or online

Contribute on the web at
liteblue.usps.gov

Carriers can also go online to use PostalEASE. With PostalEASE, carriers can contribute directly from their paychecks every pay period. Through PostalEASE you can designate COLCPE as one of your three payroll "allotments."

Letter carriers can contribute directly to COLCPE (NALC's Committee on Letter Carrier Political Education) from their paychecks every pay period using the Postal Service's PostalEASE. Through PostalEASE you can designate COLCPE as one of your three* payroll "allotments."

- 1 Be sure you know your 8-digit Employee ID Number (on your paystub) and 4-digit USPS Personal Identification Number (PIN). If you cannot remember your PIN, call PostalEASE at 1-877-4PS-EASE (1-877-477-3273), select "1", enter your 8-digit employee ID number, and select "2" to have your PIN mailed to you.
- 2 Create your own Account Number by inserting in the spaces at right the first seven digits of the ID number that appears above your name on the back cover of your Postal Record.

YOUR 17-DIGIT ACCOUNT NUMBER:

0 0 3 4 9 5 2 5 3 5
(First 7 digits of ID number on Postal Record label)

*****AUTO** 8-DIGIT 84321
XXXXX 08 9 LC 9876 W13 08
JOHN CARRIER
1234 MAIN STREET
ANYWHERE, US 84321-9999

3 Now you are ready to call PostalEASE toll-free at 1-877-4PS-EASE (1-877-477-3273)

- When prompted, select "1" for PostalEASE and then enter your 8-digit Employee ID Number and your USPS PIN
- Select "2" for payroll options
- Select "1" for allotments
- Disregard instruction to complete Allotment Worksheet and select "2" to continue
- Select "3" to add a new allotment
- Enter the following Financial Institution Routing Number: **0 6 4 0 0 0 1 7**
- Select "1" to continue processing allotment
- Select "1" to "enter the allotment now"
- Enter your 17-digit Account Number from above
- Enter "1" for Checking
- Enter amount of allotment: \$ _____ .00 per pay period. If amount is correct, select "1"

* If you already have three allotments, you must cancel one to contribute to COLCPE through PostalEASE. To do so, follow the instructions at left but instead of selecting "3" to add a new allotment, select "2" to cancel an allotment.

After completing your entry, do not end the call until you hear the following:

Confirmation Number: _____
Your allotment will become effective on: _____
Your allotment will be reflected in paycheck dated: _____
Keep this information for your records and future reference.

By making a COLCPE allotment through PostalEASE, you are doing so voluntarily with the understanding that your monthly contribution is not a condition of membership in the National Association of Letter Carriers or of employment by the Postal Service, nor is it a part of union dues. You may refuse to contribute without any reprisal. COLCPE will use the money it receives to contribute to candidates for federal office and undertake other political spending as permitted by law. Your selection shall remain in full force and effect until cancelled through the PostalEASE system. Only NALC members, NALC executive and administrative staff, and their immediate household family members may contribute to COLCPE. Contributions to COLCPE are not deductible for federal income tax purposes.

- 1 Be sure you know your 8-digit Employee ID Number (on your paystub) and your 4-digit USPS Personal Identification Number (PIN). If you cannot remember your PIN, call PostalEASE at 1-877-4PS-EASE (1-877-477-3273), select "1", enter your Employee ID Number, and select "2" to have your PIN mailed to you.
- 2 Create your own Account Number by inserting in the spaces at right the first seven digits of the ID number that appears above your name on the back cover of your Postal Record.

3 Now you are ready to go online to liteblue.usps.gov

- Enter Employee ID and PIN and click "log on"
- Click on "Postal Ease"
- Click on "I agree"
- Enter Employee ID and PIN again and log in
- Click on "Allotments/Payroll NTB"
- Click on "Continue"
- Click on "Allotments"
- Enter the 9-digit Financial Institution Routing Number: **0 6 4 0 0 0 1 7**
- Enter your 17-digit Account Number from above
- Enter Account type as "checking"
- Enter amount of your contribution
- Click on "validate"
- Click on "submit"
- Click "print page" to see and print your confirmation number for your records



Contribute to **COLCPE** monthly from your bank account via Electronic Fund Transfer

Every month on the 1st of the month, COLCPE will automatically (and without a fee) deduct from your bank account the amount you choose to contribute.

Please fill out and mail this coupon with a voided check to:
NALC-COLCPE
100 Indiana Ave. NW
Washington, DC 20001-2144

I hereby authorize my bank to deduct from my checking account monthly the sum of:
 \$25 \$20 \$15 \$10 \$5 Other: \$ _____
and forward that amount to NALC's Committee on Letter Carrier Political Education (COLCPE). I make this authorization voluntarily and may revoke it at any time by notifying the NALC COLCPE Committee in writing.

Signature: _____ Date: _____
Name (please print): _____
Social Security Number: _____ OR Postal Record number: _____
Address: _____
City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

By making a COLCPE Electronic Fund Transfer authorization, you are doing so voluntarily with the understanding that your monthly contribution is not a condition of membership in the National Association of Letter Carriers or of employment by the Postal Service, nor is it a part of union dues. The guideline amounts listed above are merely suggestions, and you may contribute more, less or nothing at all without advantage, disadvantage or reprisal. COLCPE will use the money it receives to contribute to candidates for federal office and undertake other political spending as permitted by law. Only NALC members, NALC executive and administrative staff, and their immediate household family members may contribute to COLCPE. Contributions to COLCPE are not deductible for federal income tax purposes.

Attach a voided check here

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RETIREES!

4 easy ways to start your allotment!

Contribute to **COLCPE** directly from your ANNUITY

Retired NALC members have the option of making voluntary COLCPE contributions directly from their monthly CSRS or FERS annuities, a convenient way to make regular donations to the political action fund similar to the

payroll system available to active carriers. The amount you decide to contribute will come out of your annuity each month. Choose a method below. Before you begin, you'll need your CSA retirement claim number.

Phone: Call the NALC Retirement Office at 202-662-2877 anytime, or toll-free at 800-424-5186 Monday, Wednesday and Thursday from 10 a.m. to noon and from 2 to 4 p.m. (ET).

Internet:

- Go to www.serviceline.opm.gov
- Enter your CSA number, beginning with the letter A and ending with a zero. SAMPLE: A22222220
- Enter your PIN (Personal Identification Number). If you don't know it, click *Using Services Online* for help in getting one.
- Once you've entered your CSA number and PIN, click *Log In*.
- On the next page, click *Allotments to Organizations*.
- Click *START*.
- Select *Natl Assn of Letter Carriers - COLCPE*.
- Enter the amount of your monthly contribution
- Click *SAVE*
- On the next page click *YES* (if correct), then print the next page for your records.

Coupon: Detach and complete the coupon below and mail it to NALC Headquarters.

Mail: Send a letter to Office of Personnel Management, Retirement Operations Center, Boyers, PA 16017. Be sure to include your CSA number, the amount you want to contribute monthly, and the organization name: National Association of Letter Carriers—COLCPE.

For Retired Members

I wish to contribute to COLCPE, the political action fund of the National Association of Letter Carriers. I understand the Office of Personnel Management will withhold the amount below from my monthly annuity payments.

Mail completed coupon to: NALC Retirement Department, Attention: COLCPE, 100 Indiana Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20001-2144.

Name (please print): _____ Branch: _____
CSA or Social Security number: _____ Phone: _____
Signature: _____ Date: _____

I wish to contribute monthly:
 \$25 \$20 \$15 \$10 \$5 Other: \$ _____

By making a contribution to the Committee on Letter Carrier Political Education, you are doing so voluntarily with the understanding that it is not a condition of membership in the National Association of Letter Carriers nor a part of union dues. You may refuse to contribute without reprisal. COLCPE will use the money it receives to contribute to candidates for federal office and undertake other political spending as permitted by law. Your selection shall remain in full force and effect until cancelled through the Office of Personnel Management. Contributions to COLCPE are not deductible for federal income tax purposes.

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