

Branch 599
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Sun City
Tampa

Tampa Letter Carrier

Official Notice

of Nominations & Elections of Delegates to the 73rd Biennial NALC National Convention in 2024

Nominations for delegates to the 2024 NALC National Convention that will be held in Boston MA, August 5-9, will be accepted at regular branch meetings on October 5 and November 2, 2023, at our Branch hall located at 315 W Busch Boulevard, Suite C, Tampa FL 33612. The meeting is scheduled to begin at 7:30 PM.

Members must be present to accept nominations or have a written notice on file prior to the time and the presiding officer declares nominations closed.

Members must have attended 8 Branch meetings per year for the 2 years prior to the convention to be eligible as paid delegates; others nominated/elected will need to cover all of their own expenses.

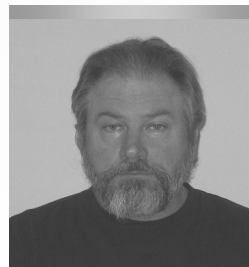
Any member having applied for, or served as a supervisor within the last two years, including detail to an acting supervisory position, is ineligible for nomination.

In the event the number of nominations exceed the number of delegates allowed to our Branch, an election will be conducted with the results announced at the regular branch meeting on December 7, 2023.

From the Desk of the President

November is a month of changing leaves, falling temperatures, and turkey dinners. It is also the month where we begin preparations for the coming new year. There are several issues that we need to address starting in November through the end of December to get ready for the beginning of 2024, and this article is going to address some of the more important ones.

First - on November 1, the Postmaster's office will be sending out the Memorandum for the Beginning of the New Leave Year and the Choice Vacation Period for Calendar Year 2024. This letter establishes the information for the New Leave Year and the process for Choice Leave application for 2024. Along with this letter the Postmaster's office will send to each station a complement seniority roster for all



Brian Obst
President
Branch 599

(Continued on page 3)

Branch 599 Meeting

Thursday
November 2
7:30 PM

Our new Hall
315 W Busch Blvd
Suite C
Tampa FL 33612

Additional parking is available in the lot before our building.

Branch 599 Office

315 W Busch Boulevard, Suite C
Tampa FL 33612

813.875.0599

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www.nalc599.com

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Tampa Letter Carrier

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Please submit any and all articles to be published in the Tampa Letter Carrier to the Editor via email at editor.nalc599@gmail.com and also to the Branch Office at nalc599@verizon.net no later than the 5th of each month in order for us to meet our time limits to the publisher.

Officers

<i>Position</i>	<i>Officer</i>	<i>Phone</i>	<i>Email</i>
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Sergeant-at-Arms	Luis Cruz	813.431.3223	
MBA/NSBA			
Health Benefit Rep	Detlev Aepfel	813.505.7914	
Director of Retirees	John Gebo	813.503.1256	
Trustees			
	Lori Mcmillion, Ch.	813.263.7101	
	Alan Peacock	813.892.9378	
	Milly Minsal	813.446.2572	
Labor Management	J.D. Lewers	813.528.5519	
	Clement Cheung	813.758.5910	
Presidents Emeritus	Garland Tickle · Orbe Andux · Donald Thomas Michael Anderson · James Good · Alan Peacock · Tony Diaz		

Shop Stewards

<i>Station</i>	<i>ZIP</i>	<i>Steward</i>	<i>Station No.</i>	<i>Steward's No.</i>
Tampa Stations/Branches Chief Steward, Mike Smith				
Brandon	33510/11	David Rivadeneira	813.661.1636	813.326.0717
Brandon	33510/11	Osceola Williams Sr.	813.661.1636	813.403.9525
Carrollwood	33618	Tina Bausch	813.961.2963	210.445.1369
Commerce	33602	Cynthia Williams	813.247.2416	813.892.2282
Forest Hills	33612	J.R. Sanchez	813.247.2416	813.778.4373
Forest Hills Annex	33613		813.935.2954	773.849.6229
Hilldale	33614		813.935.2954	
Hilldale Annex	33634		813.879.4309	
Interbay/Port Tampa	33611/16	Mike Dennis	813.879.4309	
Interbay/Peninsula	33629	Marie Brown	813.831.2034	813.361.9103
Palm River Annex	33619	Dianna Todd	813.831.2034	727.331.9907
Plant City	33564	Todd Soulor	813.663.0048	813.505.5647
Produce	33610	Matt Rodkey	813.754.3590	508.615.6517
Ruskin/Sun City Ctr	33570		813.237.4084	813.562.8744
Seminole Heights	33603	Matt Fernandez	813.634.1642	
Sulphur Springs	33604	J.D. Lewers	813.237.4569	813.237.4569
TCA/Hyde Park	33606	Josh Villa	813.237.4569	813.528.5519
TCA/Peninsula	33609		813.873.7189	203.278.6485
TCA/West Tampa	33607		813.873.7189	
Temple Terrace	33617	Mike Cipriano	813.873.7189	
Town & Country	33615/35	Alma Hidalgo	813.988.0152	401-787-1510
Ybor City	33605	Maurice Rice	813.884.0973	718.930.7769
			813.247.2416	813.334.3189

From the Desk of the President

(Continued from page 1)

the carriers assigned to each section to accommodate the seniority leave selection process, as identified in the Local Memorandum of Understanding (LMOU). It is suggested that all carriers review the letter when it is posted to ensure that there are no problems with the Choice Leave process.

Second – The Notice of Nominations for Shop Stewards needs to be addressed. The nomination package was distributed to all stewards at the October steward meeting and this information needs to be posted on the workroom floor for a period of two weeks. During the first two weeks of November the Steward must select a non-interested party (Someone not running for Steward) to read the information provided to all members in the station and open the floor for nominations for the position of Shop Steward. All the people nominated need to be recorded, in alphabetical order, on the attached nomination sheet. After calling for nominations three times with no further nominations, the nomination process is closed for that day. This must take place two days in a row (not Friday and Saturday) so that anyone off on their SDO will be in attendance on the second day. If a carrier is nominated and does not accept the nomination, they are not recorded on the form; only carriers nominated who accept nomination are recorded on the form. The form

must be posted with all nominations for a period of two weeks and if needed, an election will be held after that time frame. If an election is required, all names for the election are to be provided to the Branch office by November 15, so that ballots can be prepared and returned to the offices for the election, which should take place no later than the first week in December.

Third – If you have been attending the monthly Branch meetings, you are aware of the ongoing Nominations for National Convention Delegates for the National Convention, scheduled for Boston MA for the week of August 5-9, 2024. These nominations will conclude at the close of the November Branch meeting and the Sergeant-at-Arms will verify those nominated members who qualify as paid delegates. Should there be a need, an election for delegates will be held in December.

Veterans Day

Once again, Veterans Day is upon us and as a proud Navy Veteran, I would like to remind all that this special day is to honor those of us who stood in defense of our country, to defend our way of life by taking an oath to defend against all enemies both foreign and domestic so those at home could sleep without worry. It is said that all veterans signed a check for a value up to and including, if necessary, their

lives in defense of their oath to defend the country. Keep that in mind this Veterans Day and if you see a veteran, don't forget to say *thank you*, as they all appreciate the recognition of a job well done.

Hall Renovation

As you may already know, our Union Hall is undergoing renovations to make it what we had in mind when we purchased it. The major parts are almost finished and soon the work will be completed, and we will have a sparkling new meeting space to go along with our new offices and computer lab. Once the renovations are completed, we will be scheduling a coming out event to showcase the new hall, so keep your eyes and ears open for the scheduling of this event and make sure you come check out your new Union Hall.

When I was 5 years old, my mother always told me that happiness was the key to life. When I went to school, they asked me what I wanted to be when I grew up. I wrote down 'happy'. They told me I didn't understand the assignment, and I told them they didn't understand life.

– John Lennon

Until next month I leave you as always....**Knowledge is the Key.**

Brian Obst, President



November

- 5th Daylight Savings Time Ends
- 7th Election Day
- 11th Veterans Day – We appreciate your service!
- 23rd Happy Thanksgiving!

Calendar

Meetings are subject to change due to any upsurges of COVID.

Shop Stewards

Tuesday

October 31 7:00 PM
315 W Busch Blvd, Suite C

Executive Board

Thursday

November 2 6:30 PM
315 W Busch Blvd, Suite C

Branch 599

Thursday

November 2 7:30 PM
315 W Busch Blvd, Suite C

Retirees' Breakfasts

Tampa

**Temporarily Postponed
until further notice**

Mama's Kitchen
9312 N Florida Avenue 33612

Temple Terrace

Tuesday

November 14 10:00 AM
Bob Evans Restaurant
off Fletcher near I-75
12272 Morris Bridge Road

Just for the Health of It

In 2020, the NALC Health Benefit Plan added coverage for a Continuous Glucose Monitor (CGM). This was welcome news to members that are diabetic and needing to monitor their blood sugars. The CGM allows them to monitor blood glucose levels at any time without needing to stick themselves for a blood sample. The CGM was made available to members through CVS Caremark.

Unfortunately, when the process was finalized with CVS Caremark, there was an inadvertent coding glitch which allowed a non-formulary CGM, the Freestyle Libre, to bypass all the prior authorization guidelines. When the oversight was discovered,

a correction was made which resulted in the non-formulary Freestyle Libre to be denied prior authorization.

The current preferred product is the Dexcom CGM. If your doctor believes that you should continue receiving the non-formulary Freestyle Libre CGM, your doctor must submit a prior approval for review and consideration.

Here's to your health.....

Detlev



Detlev Aeppel
Health Benefit Rep.
Branch 599

Mail Call

Brothers and Sisters, I have been a member in good standing since 2015. During that time, my only view of our Union was that of our local hall. I was finally able to participate in a smaller version of a national convention, a Regional Rap Session. The region included the following states: Florida, Georgia, and both North and South Carolinas. The rap session was held in Orlando, October 6 and 7, and went from 8 AM – 5:30 PM. After a two-and-a-half-hour State of the Region Address, where a politician showed up, I split up from the other 599 members and I went to take the lectures that interest me. Throughout the two days, multiple politicians visited, currying support, of course. All the lectures were conducted well, by extremely knowledgeable members, who gave plenty of breaks.

Yeah, yeah, Sarge, tell us about the afterhours stuff.

So **no**, we didn't act like either frat boys or 80's rockstars at anytime when not at the rap session lectures. Get your heads out of the gutter. Orlando is a great place for diverse and unique restaurants and entertainment, and we did take part in some of that.

I will say that this rap session was an eye

opener. I learned that there is so much more I should learn about our contract and how we address its violations. I learned that we should always endeavor to build a better and stronger union so that our interests should be a priority to all politicians. I learned that although I am no longer a steward, I would be foolish not to be just as informed as they are.

All right, how can I get in on these conventions?

Well let me start by informing you that our Branch paid for my room and gave me a per diem for food. The way to go to conventions as a paid delegate is simply to go to eight out of twelve meetings per year for two consecutive years. Some of you have gone to at least one convention; tell your station mates about your experiences. If time permits, I hope my next union event will be The National Convention. So, come on over to our meetings, check out our new modern remodeled union hall, located at 315 W Busch Boulevard, Suite C, Tampa 33612. I'll be there to sign you in!
Sarge



Luis Cruz
Sergeant-at-Arms
Branch 599

From the Vice President's Desk

Are you ready to take the next step?

It is that time of year again. The holiday season is coming fast, and everyone is getting ready for the new year. As for the Branch, we are preparing your representation for the coming year. Steward nominations and selections will begin next month. Now is the time to begin thinking about who will represent you and your interest for the coming year.

What does it take to be a steward?

This is an open question filled with numerous opportunities and satisfactions for new and seasoned stewards alike. I want to address a few items that involve being a steward. Keep in mind that situations arise that are not usual, but the right steward will be able to address each and every situation accordingly.

The job of a steward entails rights afforded by the National Agreement (contract) under Article 17:

The right to investigate and process grievances on the clock.

Management's desire to issue discipline to carriers and violate the contract requires a steadfast steward. Investigating and processing grievances is one of the most important tasks for stewards. Carriers rely on the stewards to understand and be able to apply the contract without fail to their situation. Stewards must be knowledgeable in understanding and interpretation of the contract.

The right to the information to investigate and process grievances.

The contract also gives stewards the right to obtain information pertaining to the grievance. An information request by the steward aids in the development of the grievance for the carrier. Management may or may not provide all information to the steward as requested but this doesn't or shouldn't deter the steward from completing the grievance on behalf of the carrier.

The right to attend meetings to represent letter carriers.

Stewards attend a monthly meeting consisting of informational based classes which develop their knowledge of the contract. All stewards are charged to attend and participate in these classes. The National Business Agent's office also conducts various training classes throughout the year which continue to enhance the steward's knowledge of the contract.

Superseniority

An awesome caveat of being a steward is superseniority. With superseniority, stewards are protected from being transferred from a facility or tour where carriers are working – unless there is no other city letter carrier job left. This protection is detailed in the contract.

Some may say the job of the steward is not as entailed as it seems on paper. The responsibilities of stewards include being an educator, a counselor, problem solver, and a negotiator to name a few. Yet, the job doesn't stop there. Stewards must always enforce the contract. Management will assume they are the only ones who know the contract, but this isn't always the case. Stewards are trained continuously on the contract daily, monthly, and yearly. The extensive training received by stewards doesn't stop after a grievance is filed.

Stewards must also be a steward of the workplace. Carriers look to stewards for advice, answers to questions, and comradery. Stewards should be an example to other carriers in their work performance, attendance, attitude, and working relationship with management. Stewards should always be the one new CCAs seek out for advice or guidance when dealing with the job.

Stewards' jobs are not absolute. Management will always attempt to get the upper hand on carriers. A dedicated steward can stop these



Mike Smith
Vice President
Chief Steward
Branch 599

actions before they become a grievance by being a vocal partner for all carriers. The actions of stewards are worthy of appreciation. The job isn't easy, but knowledge is the key to success!

The time is now to step up and be a part of the solution instead of the problem. Stewards are carriers who have taken on the job of protecting your rights and enforcing the contract. Will you be the one to say enough is enough and I want to take a stance against management?

To get there we must work together!

Mike



at nalc.org

Get involved!

Your future depends on it!

Sharing Our Members' Joys and Sorrows

Our deepest sympathy and prayerful support is extended to Bonnie and **President Brian Obst** and family at the passing of his brother, Fredrick J., August 11 in Greenville NC; and to **J. D. Lewers** [Labor Management Rep/ Sulphur Springs carrier] and his wife Amy Huynh-Lewers at the passing of their aunt, Katherine Storelli, October 7.

Waller and Rosario Retired!



Brian Obst and Dawn Waller



Brian Obst and Gilbert Rosario

President Obst presented **Dawn Waller** [TCA] and **Gilbert Rosario** [Town & Country] with their retirement pin and gratuity at our October meeting.

Bread of the Branch

I want to thank Clement Cheung for the article on our Thrift Saving Fund (TSP). It was a start on explaining the different investment options. I would like to take the article one step further. Yes, you get a match on your contribution up to 5%. The match is dollar for dollar on the first 3%, then fifty cents per dollar on the next 2% on a per day basis. Once you decide on the amount you could comfortably contribute, you need to decide your risk level. Understanding what each fund represents can make your decision easier. If you feel the importance of investing, but need more explanation of each fund, then you should contact the TSP at tsp.gov or 877-968-3778, Monday – Friday, 7 AM – 9 PM.

Choosing an "L" fund with a target year of when you will be ready to retire is a great option. You can have more than one "L" fund. These "L" funds adjust the risk level for you depending on the number of years left until maturity. An "L" fund moves toward less risk as it nears its maturity date. I will add that you can do both "L" target date funds as well as individual

fund(s) allocations. It is imperative for you to contribute a minimum of 5% from each pay period.

I have heard many workers say they don't understand how the market works so they put all their money in the "G" fund. This may sound like a sure bet to investing, but it earns the least interest, therefore your money grows slowly and you lose out on better compounding of interest.

The "C" fund follows the S&P 500 largest companies in the stock market. Yes, your money will fluctuate between gains and losses in the "C" fund, but the chances of you losing ALL your money in there would result from the collapse of all 500 companies.

Please diversify and do your research on all the funds available.

Yours in Service,
Lori



Lori McMillion
Trustees Chair
Branch 599

Employee Assistance Program

info is at nalc.org

Choose Workplace Issues, hover over Safety & Health, and choose Employee Assistance Program.

It's confidential for you and your loved ones.

Matt Speaks: A Call to Organize

Labor Needs you!

According to the Urban Dictionary in the entry for *It is what it is*, you will find various definitions, but this one sounded just right: *A way of demonstrating apathy; an unwillingness to evoke change; a way of saying "It's not of interest to me."*

– Warrior against apathy

It sounds harsh. But in the end, what started off as an innocent phrase I'm sure, has taken up a life of its own and become this word: Apathy. Another way of saying *I just don't care*. Do we letter carriers seriously want to cast ourselves with the leaves? the dirt? the sand? **We are Workers**. We built this country.

President Franklin D. Roosevelt in his State of the Union Address on January 6, 1941, said: *As men do not live by bread alone, they do not fight by armaments alone. Those who man our defenses, and those behind them who build our defenses, must have the stamina and the courage which come from unshakable belief in the manner of life which they are defending. The mighty action that we are calling for cannot be based on a disregard of all things worth fighting for. The Nation takes great satisfaction and much strength from the things which have been done to make its people conscious of their individual stake in the preservation of democratic life in America. Those things have toughened the fiber of our people, have renewed their faith, and strengthened their devotion to the institutions we make ready to protect.*

My friends, liberation from unjust conditions should be what it should be: **Reality!**

If the system isn't working, then why don't we do something? Let's channel our power into organizing.

The Hatch Act restricts political activity, yes **but!** Nowhere does it say we

can't be patriots. Joining a union is a patriotic act. We care for our fellow workers. We encourage our fellow workers to engage in labor organizing. That includes things such as coming to the meetings and letting your voice be heard. It means getting to know your union. It means learning. But above all, it means to know this word: **Struggle**.

According to Oxfam's media brief entitled *Profiting from Pain*, published on May 23, 2022: *The cost-of-living crisis comes on top of the ongoing COVID-19 crisis, which has seen governments and the global community fail to prevent the biggest increase in extreme poverty in over 20 years. This failure can fairly be described as catastrophic: more than 20 million people have died due to the pandemic and, across the world, each and every dimension of inequality has skyrocketed.*

This is inequality that kills, contributing to the death of at least one person every four seconds. Only the richest are immune. Not only are they immune, but billionaires have objectively benefited from these multiple crises. Their wealth has soared, in large part due to the incredible sums of money that governments have injected into the global economy. This has driven up asset prices and, with them, billionaire fortunes.

Under *The State of Inequality* in its report: *Billionaire wealth and corporate profits have soared to record levels during the COVID-19 pandemic, while over a quarter of a billion more people could crash to extreme levels of poverty in 2022 because of coronavirus, rising global inequality, and the shock of food price rises supercharged by the war in Ukraine. Oxfam's research has found that: Billionaires have seen their fortunes increase as much in 24 months as they did in 23 years. Billionaires in the food and energy sectors have seen their fortunes increase by a billion dollars every two days. Food and energy prices have increased to their highest levels in decades. New food billionaires*

have been created. The combined crises of COVID-19, rising inequality, and rising food prices could push as many as 263 million people into extreme poverty in 2022, reversing decades of progress. This is the equivalent of one million people every 33 hours. At the same time, a new billionaire has been minted on average every 30 hours during the pandemic. This means that in the same time it took on average to create a new billionaire during the pandemic, one million people could be pushed into extreme poverty this year.

Underlining these findings is a simple statement again from Oxfam: **The very existence of billionaires and record profits while poverty and inequality are both on the rise is damning proof of a failing economic system.**

We all have our stories. The letter carrier who is at the same time a single parent with two kids, who has to make it to the post office and deliver a route, and possibly having to pick up the kids late because a route was dropped. The young newlywed CCA who wants to start building a life with his love who barely has enough footing to stand on. A carrier who has to take in more of her family because they have nowhere else to go, as the economy has decimated them and driven them out of the land. And now she has to care for them too.

This is what *It is what it is* has led to. A dramatic fall from what was expected of us by our forebearers and an America that is one of waste and darkness. One of fire and pandemic. One where the oligarchs have turned the working classes against each other. The common people fight amongst each other

(Continued on page 8)



Matt Fernandez
Recording Secretary
Branch 599

Veterans Buzz



Happy 248th Birthday, Marines!

This month is special to me and my fellow Marines. A meeting at Tun Tavern on November 10, 1775,

started the most elite fighting force in the United States. No, I'm not saying the Marines are the best, but we are. I may be a little biased. Since 1775, the Marines have been on the front lines fighting for our freedom along with our counterparts. Keep going strong, Devil Dog!

Happy Veterans Day!

November is additionally special due to the awesome branches of our military and members who have served. Veterans Day should not only reflect on those who served, but also those who have given their lives fighting for our freedom. In travels during my service time, I have come to appreciate all branches of our military. It isn't whether one branch is better than the other, but the comradery between each is amazing. We have all served one common cause and it shall not be forgotten—freedom.

I must reflect on current conflicts and understand what each service member is going through. It's tough being away from your loved ones, kicking sand or sleeping in brush every day. This is the life chosen by the few for the benefit of many. Veterans appreciate being honored.

I recall my visit to the Vietnam Memorial one summer. I was one year into my tour and never gave thought to visiting the memorial. While attending training in Quantico VA, I decided to visit the monuments in DC. When I saw the Vietnam Memorial, I wept. I spoke to several veterans at The Wall who had served in Vietnam. It was very humbling. You come home, but the conflict never leaves your side.

To my fellow veterans, I want to personally thank you for your sacrifices and service throughout the years. I am grateful to know many of you and I hope everyone takes the time to say *thank you for my freedom*.

Semper Fi!



Mike Smith
Vice President
Branch 599

Veterans Crisis Line

veteranscrisisline.net or dial 988 & press 1 24/7, confidential crisis support for Veterans and their loved ones.
You don't have to be enrolled in VA benefits or health care to connect.

Matt Speaks: A Call to Organize

(Continued from page 7)

while the corrupt get to continue their games in swindling us and forget that people come before profit. We are Letter Carriers. For the majority of Americans, we are the face of the government. But what we represent should be its soul. We see residents every day. We watch the community while we deliver our route. We acknowledge their existence with a smile or a wave of the hand when quite possibly that within their darkness, they feel they are nothing. Labor organizing gives the people hope. It gives them liberation and a devout fervor for things that are right.

When we ban together, brothers and sisters, we must not forget what we learn in Struggle. Labor Organizing is a public act. It's a heroic act.

Organizing for struggle is a patriotic duty. Does it not say in our Constitution: *We the People*? Does it then make sense that those who are supposed to be our voices don't look like us? We sweat. We have dirt under our fingernails

and we tire and many of us are constantly wondering *How am I going to put food on the table?* or *Will I make enough money for rent?* Labor Organizing then is the number 1 task at this present time for us letter carriers and our allies. We must show ourselves to be a great and powerful force.

Those who wish to exploit the laborer have immense influence, but their wills lag because they think they have us. It's when the workers, understanding our condition, throw the powerful off guard and topple them from their seats. And that's how Labor wins. Understanding this, we can save the Constitution. We can save our country.

For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building. According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon.

(1 Corinthians 3:9-10)

Matt

Don's Deliveries – Patriot Guard Riders

The below article is a repost from June 2020; permission to copy was obtained through Jeff Brown. I'm sharing this with you as President Emeritus and a Patriot Guard Rider; we stand flag lines and provide motorcycle escorts for veterans when requested by the family. We *must* be asked to be present; this is done at no cost, as we are volunteers honoring our brother and sister veterans. It is truly an honor and a privilege for Phyllis and I to be able to do this. You can go to patriotguardriders.org to make your request. The USPS is the largest employer of veterans...Patriot Guard Riders are here for you, all you have to do is ask. Once you complete your request, a Patriot Guard Rider will get in touch with you, to set up your wishes.

History of the Patriot Guard Riders

The idea of bikers attending military funerals to pay their respects is nothing new. Many veteran and biker organizations have been doing it for years. However, with the birth of the Patriot Guard Riders (PGR), the concept has expanded nation-wide and gives riders and non-riders, vets and non-vets, people from all walks of life the opportunity to demonstrate their honor and respect for those who serve our nation.

Having served in the U.S. Air Force during the Vietnam War, Jeff *Twister* Brown, like so many others of that era, had been discharged and returned to civilian life some 30 years ago. In May of 2005, at the urging of some friends in a motorcycle enthusiast's forum, he made the annual *Run for The Wall* which culminated at the Vietnam Memorial with hundreds of thousands of riders in the *Rolling Thunder* Memorial Day Parade in Washington DC. As is the case with many veterans, this was a life-changing event for him. He recounts having an epiphany on about the third day of the ride. *I was lying awake in my tent, trying to process everything I had*

been experiencing, when it finally dawned on me...I served four years in the US Air Force over 30 years ago, and this was the first time I ever felt like a veteran.

After returning home to Broken Arrow OK, he became friends with some of the Rolling Thunder members in nearby Coweta. One day they asked him to ride to a military funeral with them as they joined up with a group of American Legion Riders from Kansas. Members of the Westboro Baptist Church (WBC) were planning to demonstrate at the funeral service of a local soldier who had been killed in Iraq. The plan was to make sure this group did not interfere with the funeral for this hero. This led to Brown attending two or three more funeral missions later on in Oklahoma and Kansas. In early November, *Twister* heard a news report that PFC David Jeffery Martin was being buried on November 8, 2005 in Edmond OK and that the WBC planned to picket. He could not find any details regarding the time and place of the funeral, and, in disgust, was forced to go to the WBC website to find the funeral details. Not knowing for sure if any other riders would be there, Jeff decided to head for Edmond to honor PFC Martin. Once on the road, he had about a hundred miles to think. He decided then and there to form an organization utilizing the internet to make riders and veterans aware of upcoming funerals for fallen heroes. Arriving at the church, he had no trouble finding other bikers; the parking lot was full. He located the group of Kansas American Legion Riders he had ridden with before and told them of his idea. Seeing that there was a definite need, they agreed to help however they could.

When he got home that evening, he drafted an email explaining the need and the plan for the Patriot Guard Riders. That very night he began sending it out to motorcycle and veteran's



Don Thomas
President Emeritus
Branch 599

groups across the nation. The response was virtually immediate.

Within hours, replies from across the country began pouring in with people wanting to join and support the fledgling effort. Soon, other volunteers with needed skills came forward to tackle issues of web presence, public relations, and a myriad of other tasks. To everyone's surprise, the newly formed PGR had struck a nerve across the nation. Within a matter of days, a preliminary website was launched and the membership in the PGR exploded. Quickly, an initial organizational structure was formed to include national leadership and state captains to insure uniformity in this *army of volunteers* across the country. Within the first year, the Patriot Guard Riders grew from a grassroots effort begun in Broken Arrow OK to over 70,000 members spread across every state in the nation. The Patriot Guard Riders and its almost 400,000 volunteer members, has become a national symbol of regular Americans doing the right thing.

Saluting our veterans and wishing each of you a safe and happy Veterans Day while you enjoy a day off and free meals!

Don

*Welcome Home
and Ride Safe*

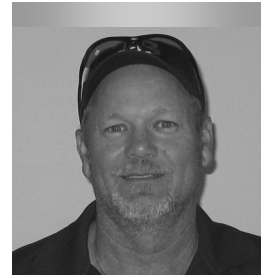
The Maintenance Guy

By the time this article is published, we will hopefully be near completion of the hall. Demolition started on September 11 and lasted about 2 weeks. Concrete floors had to be cut to put plumbing in for new restrooms. All the basic plumbing is in and has been inspected. Currently, all new ductwork is being put in and all electrical work is being done. As soon as this is completed, the inspections must be done, and so on. As I write this article, the hall is beginning to be put back together. I will say again, this is a slow process with numerous bumps in the road. At least once a week the head engineer stops by to check on the progress being made.

At the executive board meeting last month, a building committee was formed to make decisions on the construction of the hall. The executive board felt this was necessary so that

one person would not be making all the decisions. The committee consists of Lori Mcmillion, Mike Smith, and me. On September 29, we met at the hall to look over samples of flooring and tile. Flooring for the hall and tile for the restrooms have been decided on as well as baseboards. Decisions on paint colors will come soon. All decisions made by this committee will be keeping in mind any recommendations by the professionals. Remember, this is our hall and we plan on calling it home for a long time.

Until next time,
Alan



Alan Robinson
Financial Secretary
Building Manager
Branch 599



Work Continues!



Let's Talk about Light Duty

While I was attending the Florida State Association of Letter Carriers Convention, one of the classes I was most interested in was *Light Duty*. It is important to understand what employees must furnish and what obligations management has when it comes to making requests for work after an off-the-job injury. Light duty is different from Limited duty, as Limited duty involves an on-the-job injury. The provisions of Article 13 of the Joint Contract Administration Manual govern voluntary requests for light duty.

JCAM page 13-1

The provisions of Article 13 govern voluntary requests for light duty work by employees who are temporarily or permanently incapable of performing their normal duties as a result of illness or injury.

Now one important thing to note is that the light duty provisions covered under Article 13 unfortunately do not cover City Carrier Assistants and only apply to Full-time and Part-time Flexible employees.

With that out of the way, let's talk about what is required from the Full-time or Part-time Flex employee in order to make a temporary request for light duty per the class on Light Duty and the JCAM under Article 13.2.A.

1. Requests can be made regardless of length of service.
2. All requests must be submitted in writing.
3. All requests must be supported by a medical statement from a licensed physician or by a written statement from a licensed chiropractor.
4. The employee bears any cost connected with the statement required under this section.
5. The employee must agree to submit to a further examination by a physician designated by the installation head, if requested.
6. The Postal Service will be responsible for any costs when it requests a second medical examination.

7. The employee may specifically seek light duty or may seek other assignment within his/her medical limitations.

It is important to note that temporary requests for Light Duty are different from permanent reassignments to Light Duty, which is outlined in section 13.2.B.1. of the JCAM: *Any ill or injured full-time regular or part-time flexible employee having a minimum of five years of postal service, or any full-time regular or part-time flexible employee who sustained injury on duty, regardless of years of service, while performing the assigned duties can submit a voluntary request for permanent reassignment to light duty or other assignment to the installation head if the employee is permanently unable to perform all or part of the assigned duties. The request shall be accompanied by a medical certificate from a physician designated by the installation head giving full evidence of the physical condition of the employee, the need for reassignment, and the ability of the employee to perform other duties. A certificate from the employee's personal physician will not be acceptable.*

So, what are the differences listed under Article 13.2.B.1. of the JCAM when it comes to permanent reassignment to Light Duty as opposed to temporary request for Light Duty?

1. An employee must have five years of postal service to be eligible to apply for permanent reassignment due to a non-job related injury or illness.
2. It must be submitted with a statement from a physician designated by the installation head not from an employee's personal physician.
3. Postal Service pays the cost for medical examination and it will be scheduled by the Post Office.

Lastly let's talk about what is Management's Obligation when it comes to employees making light duty requests. This is governed by Article 13.2.C. of

the Joint Contract Administration Manual.

Installation heads shall show the greatest consideration for full-time regular or part-time flexible employees requiring light duty or other assignments, giving each request careful attention, and reassign such employees to the extent possible in the employee's office. When a request is refused, the installation head shall notify the concerned employee in writing, stating the reasons for the inability to reassign the employee.

So, what are Management's Obligations under 13.2.C. of the Joint Contract Administration Manual and per the class on Light Duty?

1. Installation heads are required to make a bona fide effort to identify light duty work.
2. Management must give the matter 'the greatest consideration' and 'careful attention'.
3. If Management does not provide the requested light duty work, it has an obligation to explain in writing why light duty work is unavailable.

These are the obligations of the employee and management when it comes to Light Duty reassignment, both temporary and permanent.

In closing, attending the classes provided by FSALC Convention has helped me in so many ways, giving me and others a working knowledge to provide the best representation for our membership in the years to come. Thank you.

J.D.



J.D. Lewers
Labor Management Rep.
Branch 599
NALC Safety Task Force
Representative

From the Treasurer's Desk – 10th Edition

Brothers and Sisters,

Is a photo worth more than your job?

Unfortunately, the lure of social media has struck again within our Branch's active members. I have seen or been made aware of several of our active carriers carelessly posting on various social media platforms. This go-round, Tik-Tok and Facebook are the platforms that have landed our carriers in trouble. Over the years, I have written articles on the severity of this subject, probably a dozen times. These latest occurrences have again prompted me to address this issue, and the importance to resist temptation.

Social Media: URGENT REMINDER

Again, as a reminder, posting to social media sites such as, Facebook, texting, Twitter, Messenger, SnapChat, Google+, Instagram, YouTube, MySpace, TikTok and others...is getting carriers in trouble.



Posting pictures while working in uniform, posting pictures after work in uniform...**Stop it.** Calling out sick and showing up on a social media platform at a restaurant, or hair salon, at the airport, at the beach, at a party, a sporting event, or shopping mall, is not intelligent and very careless. In addition, being on OWCP for an on-the-job injury, unable to perform your letter carrier duties and showing up on social media engaging in activities is just a formula for your claim to be rescinded...**stay off social media.**

All USPS employees must follow Postal Policies regarding social media. These policies are outlined in the Administrative Support Manual (ASM), section 363 (social media). It is also referred to and located under Postal Bulletin 22322.

Retired...but not Tired

The letter carrier job has certainly changed over the years. While we had our issues on the workroom floor, it seems that disputes are an everyday occurrence on today's workroom floor.

A big problem seems to be promoting CCAs to supervisor when they have not been able to become professional letter carriers yet. Back in the day, supervisors spent time in our craft and learned the ins and outs of delivery. When they became supervisors, they had a better understanding of how to run a workroom floor. Of course, there were exceptions, and they were just bad supervisors, but for the most part, they had an idea of what the job entailed. How can someone supervise a group of carriers that has

This is where policies, procedures, and responsible use of social media is discussed.

Common sense must be exercised at all times when on any social media site. Rules and regulations must be followed and it is time again to emphasize the importance of staying away from social media while in uniform.

In addition, when using social media in a personal capacity, employees may not speak for or act on behalf of the Postal Service. All uses of social media related to official USPS business require management's consent.

Be smart and be aware at all times. Do not put yourself out there and regret it!

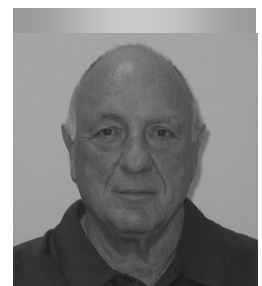
Quick Hits: Information you should know NALCREST update

As of September 19, there are 344 members on the NALCREST waiting list wishing to become a part of our popular community. This equals an approximate 3-year wait. Those of you planning to retire within a few years and would like to move out to NALCREST, I would suggest calling the NALCREST office to place your name on the list. You must be a NALC member in good standing; you can be an active carrier when you add your name. However, you must be retired when your name is next to be called. Don't be left out of the opportunity to join retired NALC members from around the country.

**Look forward to talking to you again
on the next *Around The Horn***



Tony Diaz
Treasurer
President Emeritus
Branch 599
Nalcrest Trustee



John Gebo
Director of Retirees
Branch 599

no clue? It makes no sense.

This is why it is so important to know your job and know the contract. It protects you and gives you an idea if management is giving you false information. I would suggest you ask your steward or call the Branch office with any questions regarding contractual issues. I knew the contract well, as a steward it was important when representing our members. Just a little advice from a long-time retiree.

So, as Roy Rogers and Dale Evans said, *Happy Trails to you until we meet again.*

John

NALC Branch 599
Retirees Dinner

Sunday, January 14, 2024

5 – 9 PM

Dinner at 5:30



Maggiano's Italian Restaurant
Westshore Plaza
203 Westshore Plaza
Tampa FL 33609

Call our Branch Office to Reserve a Spot

813-875-0599

No Later than January 4.

Retiree Member + 1 – paid by Branch.

Extra people or Active Members – \$45 per person.


*If you called in a reservation and are unable to attend,
please contact our Branch office to cancel no later than January 4;
this will save the Branch from paying for your meal.*

Why should I join NALC's PAC, the Letter Carrier Political Fund?




The Letter Carrier Political Fund is a non-partisan political action committee (PAC) established for the purpose of electing qualified candidates who support letter carriers and who are committed to maintaining a strong and innovative U.S. Postal Service. Learn more at nalc.org.

- The Letter Carrier Political Fund identifies and contributes to candidates who support issues important to letter carriers.
- Joining the LCPF provides letter carriers with the opportunity to build electoral and legislative power required to ensure decisions that impact their lives are made with their best interests in mind.
- Only NALC members can contribute to the LCPF.
- Union dues are not used, **and cannot be used**, for political contributions.
- LCPF contributions are voluntary and can stop at any time.
- There is no open season.
- We encourage LCPF members to make suggestions for political contributions and to attend local fundraisers.
- LCPF members are encouraged to attend local events for members locally who support letter carrier legislative priorities.







NALC Disaster Relief Foundation



Make a donation by

WE ACCEPT
ALL MAJOR
CREDIT CARDS

- credit card
- check
- money order
- cash

The foundation is a 501(c)(3). Your contribution to the NALC Disaster Relief Foundation may be eligible for a tax deduction. It is recommended you seek further advice from your tax advisor.

The foundation was created to fill a need identified by many branches in the face of disasters, including wildfires, hurricanes, and tornadoes.

Branches wanted to know where they could send desperately needed supplies and money, but there wasn't a central location, NALC President Fredric Rolando said. That's why we created this foundation, to reflect the will of the members and make it easy for them to help others in need quickly and efficiently.

The foundation has been set up to function in two ways: by providing hands-on relief and by receiving donations as a

means to offer financial grants.

NALC is in the process of creating response teams throughout the country. People on the teams will receive disaster relief training from charitable organizations and government agencies, including the American Red Cross, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA).

Basic supplies, including uniforms and food, will be available for those who need them in the future.

Learn more under Member Benefits on nalc.org.

Birdseye View

During times of government uncertainty, there are many citizens that stay the course to bring common values to our nation and to keep the safety and security for all.

As a union member, the same opportunity is afforded to all our members that stand up and pay their dues equally and follow our Bylaws that are in effect; any member that is concerned should have a copy of our Bylaws that are current. Our Bylaws reflect the correct, lawful way of how

our Branch business transpires for the legal use of our business and protection of the dues you pay. Also, gain the knowledge, don't just be a member that doesn't get involved, and if you cannot make a meeting, you can at least get the information from our Bylaws; ask your Steward to provide you a copy.

When our building renovations are finally completed, members should take time to visit it to see the opportunities that are available for gaining

knowledge and possibly even use one of the computer portals that may be available. We are at 315 W Busch Boulevard, near Florida Avenue, which is more central for our membership overall.

Fraternally in Solidarity,
Alan



Alan Peacock
Trustee
President Emeritus
Branch 599

*Please keep our Branch Office
updated with your contact information.*

Introducing our Newsletter Editor and Webmaster

It was recently brought to my attention that we here at Branch 599 have been undergoing a youth movement, with the addition of numerous CCAs and transfers in from around the country. With this in mind, it is the considered opinion of the leadership of Branch 599 that we should take this opportunity to introduce the editor of our newsletter and webmaster of our online presence, Phyllis R. Thomas, to the many new and possibly some of the older members of the Branch.

Phyllis is the wife of retiree, President Emeritus Don Thomas, is a past president of our auxiliary, and has been our newsletter editor/webmaster over the past 12+ years. Her knowledge of our Branch over the years and being exposed to the work of shop stewards and officers gives her the background for asking our authors questions to be sure their articles say what they mean. She tries to keep their personalities in

print, which is why she allows contractions. Phyllis' educated grasp of writing style, grammar, and context help to ensure that the articles contained in our newsletter are legible, readable, and understandable so the readers of our newsletter get the full impact of the message being sent out in each article.

Not only does she review each article and provide her suggestions on making our articles the best they can be, she also performs and designs the layout for our newsletter ensuring that it is professionally presented as a polished, finished product that all Branch 599 members can be rightfully proud of when each issue is printed and mailed out to the membership.

Our online presence is three-fold:

- First - we have a Facebook *Group*, which is private, and listed as NALC Branch 599; you must apply to join.

- Second – we have a Facebook *Page*, listed as National Association of Letter Carriers, Branch 599, Tampa FL, which is for the public to view.
- Third – is our NALC Branch 599 website at nalc599.com where you can find out all about your Branch.

I encourage all members of the Branch to utilize these resources to learn about your Branch and become an active member of our Branch. Remember, there is no *Union* without *U*.

If you have a desire to submit an article for publication in our newsletter, please send it in an email as an attached Word (or open source or rich text) document to editor.nalc599@gmail.com with a copy to erif_lor@hotmail.com; all submissions are encouraged, as we seek to make our newsletter the best that we can.

Brian Obst
President



Branch 599's Regional Rap Session Delegates

Detlev Aepfel, Luis Cruz, John Gebo, President Brian Obst, Tony Diaz, Clement Cheung, Mike Smith



Congressman Darren Soto presenting State President Al Friedman a flag flown over the Capitol to honor longtime NALC activist and Bradenton Branch 1753 President Emeritus, Joanne Cannon, whose passing was July 10.



Mock Arbitration in progress for training class.



National Chief of Staff Kori Blaylock Keller addresses the Delegates.



Branch 599 President Emeritus Tony Diaz addressing the delegation for NALCREST.

NALC Region 9 Rap Session in Orlando, October 6-8



President Obst accepting Certificate of Appreciation for 2022 Letter Carrier Political Fund Honor Roll.



President Obst accepting Award for MDA Fundraising.



President Obst accepting 2023 Food Drive Award from Christine Vela Davidson.

Our Branch can be very proud of its community service,
and its political activism for the sake of our jobs!



FED-HURT

(833) 433-3487

Injury Care For ALL Federal Workers

What Do I Do If I Get Hurt On The Job?

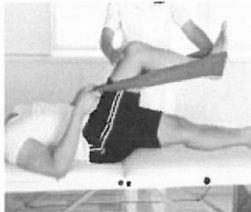
If you are injured, here are some very simple steps to follow.

1. Notify Your Supervisor Immediately. (The Supervisor has up to 10 days to file your claim with OWCP).
2. File a CA-1 and CA-16 for a Traumatic Injury.
3. File a CA-2 for an Occupational Disease.
4. Write your Personal Statement describing the injury. Be specific.
5. Call 833-433-3487 to speak with a FED-HURT OWCP Specialist.



Our Doctors Specialize in:

- Physical Medicine
- Physical Therapy
- Chiropractic Care
- Interventional Pain Management
- Functional Capacity Evaluation (FCE)



Services Include:

- ✓ Expert Claims Assistance
- ✓ Medical Exams Detailing Causation of Injury



Our team of Physicians and Physical Therapists work for you, not OWCP. We will see you without an approved claim and provide OWCP with all the necessary documentation to get your claim approved the first time.

Locations Throughout Florida

- | | |
|-----------------|---|
| North Florida | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♥ Pensacola ♥ Daytona / Ormond Beach |
| Central Florida | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♥ Orlando / Airport ♥ Orlando / Sanford ♥ Orlando / Altamonte Springs ♥ Tampa / Palm Harbor ♥ Tampa / Temple Terrace Bush Gardens |
| South Florida | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♥ Fort Meyers / Cape Coral ♥ Fort Meyers / Cape Coral ♥ Port Saint Lucie ♥ Lake Worth / Palm Springs ♥ Fort Lauderdale / Davie ♥ Miami / Hialeah |

Are you a federal employee injured while on the job?

Call our office (833) 433-3487



WWW.4FEDHURT.COM

Addressing OWCP issues...let's get it right

There have been many articles in our newsletter over the years regarding on-the-job injuries. These are regularly asked questions you need to know:

1. What do I do first?
2. Who do I notify?
3. What paperwork do I need?
4. Who will help me through this?

Correcting OWCP issues are time consuming, frustrating, and if not corrected can delay medical treatment that could cause more severe prolonged injuries. So how do you avoid these issues? How do you get it right?

The **answers** to the above questions should help the process.

1. Report the accident immediately, explain exactly what happened, with a time and place (address).
2. Your supervisor or manager, and if you cannot reach anyone, your steward or our Branch office. It is important to notify someone.
3. Register an account on ECOMP at ecomp.dol.gov. The forms needed are, CA-1, CA-16, and CA-17, know your forms, ask questions, and do not rely on management to submit your forms without verification.
4. Your supervisor and/or manager should assist you, however, this is not always the case. Do not allow management to delay you going to ecomp.dol.gov; this is critical to your case.

Other tips:

1. Your online account at ecomp.dol.gov will be available to download should you need a paper copy of any of your forms.
2. Write a detailed, thorough, complete, and legible statement. Some important information to consider, if applicable: the time, the place, the conditions, the surface(s), any contributing factors, possible witnesses, and any hazards.

On the Job Injury – Forms needed, simple math,

$$CA-1 + CA-16 = CA-17$$

CA-16 must be signed by management,

Authorization for Examination and/or treatment.

Any questions...call the Branch office; ask for Brian Obst, 813.875.0599.



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Tampa FL 33612
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 www.nalc599.com
 Tampa Letter Carrier
 Volume 23 · Issue 11 · November 2023

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