



Tampa Letter Carrier

VOLUME 21, ISSUE 5

MAY 2022

Around The Horn from The President's Desk



Tony Diaz
President
Branch 599

Brothers and Sisters,
My February article this year focused on Investigative Interviews. What they are, how to conduct yourself, and what to expect with the process. Recently we had a couple of Investigative Interviews that defied what my February article was intended to accomplish. Meaning, we had a few members, during an Investigative Interview fail to cooperate, having a defiant attitude, and basically not answering any questions. The Employee and Labor Relations Manual (ELM), 665.3 Cooperation in Investigations, requires all postal employees to cooperate with postal investigations.

Let me reiterate, employees must cooperate in any postal investigation, including Office of Inspector General investigations. The Postal Service may take disciplinary action against an employee when he or she fails to cooperate during a normal investigatory

interview that does not cross the threshold into a criminal investigation.

As I previously stated, **you answer truthfully, answer to the point, and do not vary from the question.**

As for Criminal investigations, on the surface it would appear to put the employee in an impossible position. Should an employee answer questions even if the answers may result in criminal charges, or should the employee refuse to answer, risking the possibility of discipline for *failure to cooperate* in an investigation? This problem was resolved by the federal courts in the Kalkines and Garrity decisions. The Kalkines warning requires employees to make statements and cooperate, even if it could lead to being disciplined or discharged, but provides criminal immunity for their statements. An example of a Kalkines warning, though the exact wording may vary, could read something like

this: You are being questioned as part of an internal and/or administrative investigation. You will be asked a number of specific questions concerning your official duties, and you must answer these questions to the best of your ability. Again, failure to answer completely and truthfully may result in disciplinary action, including dismissal. Your answers and any information derived from them may be used against you in administrative proceedings. However, neither your answers nor any information derived from them may be used against you in criminal proceedings, except if you knowingly and willfully make false statements. This warning means the employees must be truthful, but can do so without their answers being used against them in

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Branch 599
serving
Brandon
Plant City
Sun City
Tampa

Branch 599
Meeting

Thursday
May 5
7:30 PM

Branch 599 Office

3003 W Cypress Street
Tampa FL 33609-1617
813.875.0599
Fax 813.870.0599
www.nalc599.com

Tony Diaz
President

tony_diaz599@verizon.net

Office Hours

Monday – Friday
7:30 AM – 4 PM

Rodna Kimelman Kirk
Office Secretary
nalc599@verizon.net

Tampa Letter Carrier

Tony Diaz
Publisher

Phyllis R. Thomas
Editor
editor.nalc599@gmail.com

Branch 599 Office
813.875.0599

National Association of Letter Carriers, Branch 599,

3003 W Cypress Street,
Tampa FL 33609-1698,
publishes the *Tampa Letter Carrier* monthly. The opinions expressed in this publication are those of the writers and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of Branch 599, NALC. It is the policy of this publication that all articles submitted for print must be signed by the writer.

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>
President	Tony Diaz	813.875.0599 cell 813.598.9635	tony_diaz599@verizon.net
Vice President	Brian Obst	727.458.0679	erif_lor@hotmail.com
Recording Secretary	Michael Brink	813.875.0599	nalc599@verizon.net
Financial Secretary	Alan Peacock	813.892.9378	apeacock.nalc@verizon.net
Treasurer	John Gebo	813.503.1256	jgg7d7@aol.com
Sergeant-at-Arms	Michael Williams	813.541.8327	mwilliams4215@gmail.com
MBA/NSBA	Michael Anderson	813.967.1615	mikey020@msn.com
Health Benefit Rep.	Detlev Aepfel	813.505.7914	dcaepfel@aol.com
Director of Retirees	Alan Robinson	813.843.9762	arob715@gmail.com
Trustees	Lori McMillion, Ch.	813.263.7101	lorraine.mcmillion@gmail.com
	José Oliva	813.299.8442	joliva1938@gmail.com
	Jim Good	813.417.8877	jgood1206@gmail.com
Labor Management	Michael Williams	813.541.8327	mwilliams4215@gmail.com
	Clement Cheung	813.758.5910	ccheung@tampabay.rr.com
Presidents Emeritus	Garland Tickle • Orbe Andux • Donald Thomas Michael Anderson • James Good • Alan Peacock		

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, Brian Obst 727.458.0679				
Brandon	33510/11	Osceola Williams Sr.	813.661.1636	210.445.1369
Brandon	33510/11		813.661.1636	
Carrollwood	33618	Tina Bausch	813.961.2962	813.892.2282
Commerce	33602	Cynthia Williams	813.242.4507	813.778.4373
Forest Hills	33612	JR Sanchez	813.935.2954	773.849.6229
Forest Hills Annex	33613	Becky Jones	813.935.2954	209.535.2449
Hilldale	33614		813.879.4309	
Hilldale Annex	33634		813.879.4309	
Interbay/Port Tampa	33611/16	Victoria Reeder	813.831.2034	813.525.1685
Interbay/Peninsula	33629		813.831.2034	
Palm River Annex	33619	Pam Benton	813.663.0048	813.475.0753
Plant City	33564	Todd Soular	813.719.6793	813.719.6793
Produce	33610	Matt Rodkey	813.239.4084	813.562.8744
Ruskin/Sun City Ctr	33570	Cherry Berry	813.634.1403	585.230.0266
Seminole Heights	33603	Michael Smith	813.237.4569	813.326.0717
Sulphur Springs	33604	J.D. Lewers	813.237.4569	813.528.5519
TCA/Hyde Park	33606		813.873.7189	
TCA/Peninsula	33609		813.873.7189	
TCA/West Tampa	33607	Michael Williams	813.873.7189	813.541.8327
Temple Terrace	33617	Juan Andujar	813.988.0152	813.377.7266
Town 'N Country	33615/35	Brian Obst	813.884.0973	727.458.0679
Ybor City	33605	Maurice Rice	813.242.4507	813.334.3189

Around The Horn from The President's Desk

(Continued from page 1)

criminal proceedings. Remember, your answers are very important to the defense of your case and should be vital to the thorough and objective investigation that management is obligated contractually to conduct.

One more time, **you answer truthfully, answer to the point, and do not vary from the question.** This is extremely important as the language in essentially all issued discipline will state in some variation that during your Investigative Interview you failed to provide a satisfactory explanation to avoid the issuing of this discipline. Your defense (steward) will attack this statement with your proper/truthful answers.

—Postal Record

Letters of Demand

I need to touch on the importance of what to do should you receive a Letter of Demand. If you receive a Letter of Demand from the USPS, you need to address it immediately. NALC Director of Retired Members, Dan Toth, wrote in his article in the January 2020 Postal Record: *Retired letter carriers who receive a written notice from USPS claiming a debt is owed should visualize flashing red lights and imagine loud sirens signifying extreme danger.* This also includes active carriers as well. He also says, *If a letter carrier receives such a notice and does nothing, the Postal Service may refer the claimed debt to the U.S. Treasury Department. Once a referral to Treasury is made, the amount allegedly owed can be increased by hefty penalty and finance charges. The total amount owed can be deducted from a Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS)*

or Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS) pension, from a Social Security benefit, from a federal tax return, or from other federal benefits. If the LOD is not addressed, a collection agency may get involved. Dan points out, *All of this may happen even if the claimed debt is in error. Right or wrong, real or invented, correctly calculated or wildly inaccurate, post-retirement debts that are referred to Treasury can result in additional penalties and enforcement actions, such as confiscation.*

Although retired employees generally lose access to the grievance process, a retiree who receives an invoice or notice of debt from the Postal Service can initiate a grievance through the local branch of their former employing office. Should you be issued a LOD, please see your steward and/or for retirees, call our Branch Office.

—Information from Director of Retired Members, Dan Toth, Postal Record

Quick Hits:

Information you should know

President Biden signed the Postal Service Reform Act of 2022 (H.R. 3076) into law on April 6. The president's signature comes after the bill passed with massive bipartisan majorities in the House in February and in the Senate in March.

Annette Taylor, an NALC member who delivered mail for 32 years, introduced President Biden at the signing ceremony. Taylor, who served in the Air Force for eight years before beginning her career as a letter carrier, previously served as the president, vice president and

recording secretary of Annapolis MD Branch 651. She is the current vice president of the Maryland State Association of Letter Carriers.

NALC is proud to have contributed to the efforts over the last 12 years that resulted in this bipartisan legislation that brings us together today, Taylor said. *This legislation will help position the USPS to provide the service that the American people deserve. Mr. President, the Postal Service is an essential facilitator of our democracy and our economy. We know there is more to do to secure its long-term viability, but today is a huge step forward. My union stands ready to assist you.*

With this bill, we're repealing the pre-funding mandate and setting the Postal Service on a more sustainable and stable financial footing, President Biden said. We're guaranteeing that the mail will continue to be delivered six days a week. And the bill increases transparency by requiring the Postal Service to develop an online public dashboard updated weekly with local and national service performance data. Today, we enshrine in law our recognition that the Postal Service is fundamental to our economy, to our democracy, to our health, and the very sense of who we are as a nation.

After 12 years of fighting for meaningful postal reform, NALC is gratified to see President Biden sign this bill into law, NALC President Fredric Rolando said. I would like to thank every NALC member who helped us get here. Your solidarity and activism were instrumental in this bill's path

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Sharing Our Members' Joys and Sorrows

Our deepest sympathy and prayerful support is extended to Maeordrie & **Darryl Jones** [Sulphur Springs] and family at the passing of their daughter, Tamika, March 21; and to **Alan Peacock** [Financial Secretary/President Emeritus], Emily Cannon [daughter/member of Branch 1477], and family at the passing of his wife, Bea, April 9.

Healing prayers and get well wishes are extended to **Phyllis Thomas** [Branch 599 Newsletter Editor/wife of President Emeritus Don Thomas]; she was recently diagnosed with a serious health issue.

Gold Card Recipients

Branch 599 is proud to recognize the following six Gold Card recipients.

Gold Cards commemorate 50 years of loyal membership to the NALC. The six became members of the National Association of Letter Carriers in 1972. *Congratulations* to the following recipients:

John Zuilkoski
Walter Richards
Paul Pawlowski
William Sherman
Robert Portugues
Benny Gettys

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

Shop Stewards	Tuesday	May 3	7:00 PM
Executive Board	Thursday	May 5	6:30 PM
Branch 599	Thursday	May 5	7:30 PM
Retirees Breakfast	Tuesday	May 10	10 AM

Bob Evans, 12272 Morris Bridge Road, Temple Terrace

Around The Horn from The President's Desk

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 to becoming law.

I would also like to commend the bipartisan work on this bill that was led by Chairwoman Carolyn Maloney (D-NY), Ranking Member James Comer (R-KY), Chairman Gary Peters (D-MI) and Ranking Member Rob Portman (R-OH). This legislation

will put the Postal Service in a better position to grow and adapt to the evolving needs of America's households and businesses.

Today, we celebrate this historic victory for letter carriers, the Postal Service and all Americans who depend on our universal service. We look forward to continuing working

with members of Congress and the Biden Administration on reforms that will further strengthen the Postal Service and improve the work and lives of our members.

–*nalc.org* April 6, 2022

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

Unionism – What has the Union done for me?

It is a fact that people have very short memories. Many talk about the good old days with fond recollection of that time gone by, yet they fail to remember the struggles and/or problems that occurred in those past times. The same can be said for many members of our fine Union. I can tell you that I hear it said by many members: *What has the Union done for me?*

While things today are much better than they were in the past, there are still ongoing battles that the Union must fight to keep things for the membership on a forward moving direction. Today's greatest problem with the membership is that it is suffering from the successes of the past. Many of the members have not had to suffer from the problems of the past and they have the opinion that things will always be as good as or better than they are right now. They don't see behind the day-to-day operations to realize just what the Union does for them.

First one must understand what the Union is before you can understand what it does for you.

Labor Union: An organization of workers formed for the purpose of advancing its members' interests in respect to wages, benefits, and working conditions.

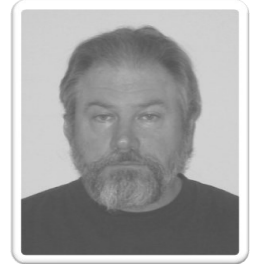
As defined by *Webster's* we can see that the Union is a collective made up of members of the same group who band together to address their common agenda. The power to bargain with management is increased as it is no longer you individually, attempting to get management to deal with

issues; it is everyone together, in the Union.

Now back to our original topic. It still mystifies me when someone says to me: *What has the Union done for me?* It seems like these people just assume that management loves them and would be happy to go to the ends of the earth to satisfy them. They just assume that if the Union was gone that things would be better because there would be less interference with their own personal agenda at work. The sad part with these people is they have never had to suffer at the hands of management like our previous brothers and sisters did. If history has taught us anything, it is that management is not our friend.

Management had to be brought to the bargaining table kicking and screaming and our brothers and sisters went out on strike to gain benefits that carriers enjoy today, and they did this at great personal risk to themselves. The members, many of them working more than one job and still getting assistance because they were still below the poverty line, forced management to address issues of pay and benefits for the workers. They gained the right to collectively bargain with management instead of what had previously been a system of collectively begging and getting whatever management wanted to give or not give.

What has the Union done for me... well let's take a look at some of the things the Union did/does for you:
Ensures a living wage for workers with contractual guaranteed raises.
Overtime for hours worked in excess of 40 hours weekly.



Brian Obst
 Vice President
 Branch 599

An 8-hour workday with the guarantee of overtime if you have to work more than 8 hours.

Sick leave and annual leave earnings so you get paid if you are sick and get vacation time.

Guarantee time so that you have a schedule to work, not at the whim of management.

Cost of living allowance so our paycheck isn't eaten away by inflation.

These are just some of the items negotiated by the Union for the members, that with a stroke of the pen could be taken away, so the Union must stay vigilant in its dealings with management to protect what has been gained in the past. Additionally, the Union has also provided the following:

The **NALC Health Plan**; my personal favorite.

The **Mutual Benefit Association** that has insurance plans for disability and retirement planning.

NALCREST, the NALC Retirement Community in Central Florida providing housing accommodations in a planned development community so members have a place they can retire to if they want, at a reasonable cost.

The Union has been providing for its members for numerous years and shall continue to do so, but for the

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Updated Postal Service Face Covering Policy

March 29, 2022

With the number of confirmed COVID-19 cases continuing to decline across the country, state, local and tribal jurisdictions have revised their pandemic mitigation measures and have stopped their mandatory face covering policies and social distancing practices. The Postal

Service has decided to align with these national changes.

Effective immediately, the Postal Service will no longer require any postal employee to wear a face covering while at work. All previous Postal Service face covering policies are rescinded. Employees may continue to voluntarily wear a mask or face covering if they are so inclined.

The Postal Service will remain diligent and continue to monitor the COVID-19 situation and will make modifications to this policy as needed. The Postal Service will continue to provide face coverings for any employee who requests one.

Doug A. Tulino
Deputy Postmaster General and
Chief Human Resources Officer



Our deepest appreciation
to those currently
serving our country.

Unionism — What has the Union done for me?

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Union to maintain its strength moving forward, it does require something from its members. It requires action, support, and volunteers. Shop Stewards are the backbone of the Union, working on the front lines in support of the mission of the Union. Contract compliance is their responsibility in representing the membership. The job is a volunteer position and requires the individual to work to serve the membership as someone else has worked to serve you previously. With members retiring it is imperative that others step up to replace the retiring members. The time to act is before

the current members retire, while the knowledge they have acquired over the years is available to be passed on. This process keeps the Union strong, as we are constantly learning new information, but we never want to lose the information learned previously. I implore newer members to consider stepping up as you are the future of this Union and its ongoing strength will be determined by how willing you are to take on the mantle of leadership

It seems to me that the Union goes far above when providing for its members. It took some very forward-thinking members to fund the items

listed above and through proper management the benefits have only strengthened through the years.

I guess the best way to sum this up is with a rephrasing of one of the quotes of former President John F. Kennedy:

Ask not what your Union can do for you; ask what you can do for your Union.

Remember, you are the U in Union.

Until next month I leave you...

Knowledge is the Key.

Brian Obst
Vice President

Proposed Bylaw Change

ARTICLE VI Duties of Officers Duties of Trustees

Section 11, (A)

Currently reads as follows:

The Trustees shall examine and report to the branch the condition of the books of the officers at least once every four (4) months, compare the vouchers and records and see that they correspond with the collections and disbursements. They shall have custody of all branch property and shall perform such other duties as the Branch Bylaws may require of them. The Board of Trustees shall be known as the Trustees of A. R. "Tony" Huerta Branch 599 of the National Association of Letter Carriers of the United States of America.

Proposed to read as follows:

The Trustees shall audit the condition of the books of the Treasurer and Financial Secretary at least once every three (3) months. They shall compare the vouchers and records and see that they correspond with the collections and disbursements. They shall report to the branch the results and findings of such audit at the next regular Branch Meeting following the audit.

They shall have custody of all branch property and shall perform such other duties as the Branch Bylaws may require of them. The Board of Trustees shall be known as the Trustees of the National Association of Letter Carriers 599 Tampa Florida Inc.

Bylaw proposal signed by: Jim Good, Michael Anderson, Lori McMillion, and Detlev C. Aeppel

Annual Leave Carryover for Leave Year 2023 is 520 Hours

Memorandum of Understanding (M-01979) between the USPS and the NALC states:

The parties agree that for leave year 2023, regular work force career employees covered by the USPS-NALC National Agreement may carry

over **520 hours** of accumulated annual leave from leave year 2022 to leave year 2023.

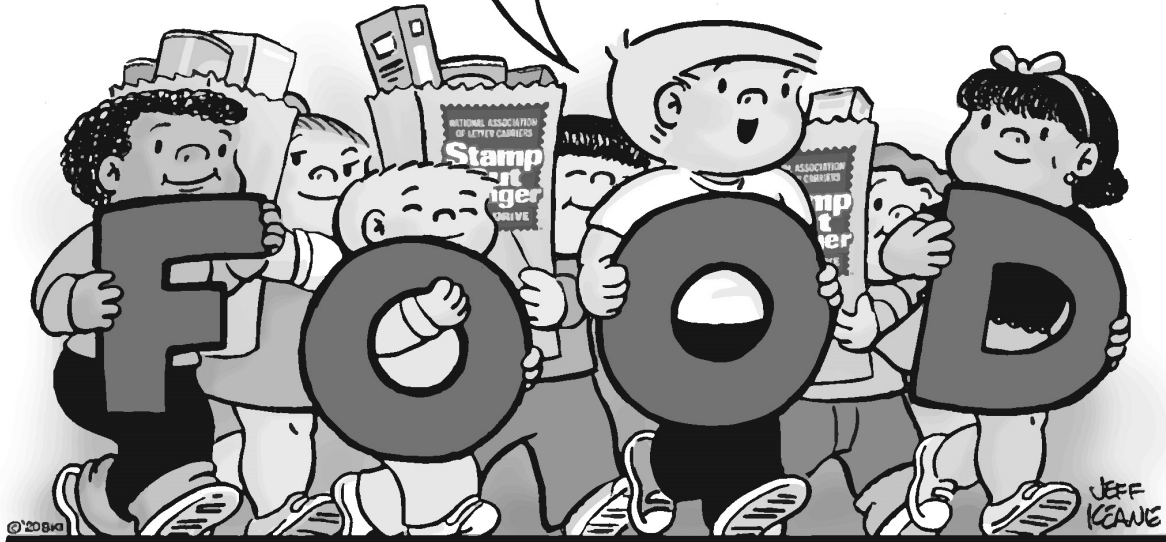
In all other respects, the ELM provisions for payment of accumulated leave are not changed because of this Memorandum.

This MOU will expire December 31, 2023.

Dated March 24, 2022

signed by Tom J. Blum, A/Vice President Labor Relations USPS and Fredric V. Rolando, President NALC

THIS SPELLS
 HELP FOR LOTS OF
 FAMILIES THIS
 YEAR!



LETTER CARRIERS' FOOD DRIVE

MAY 14

PUT YOUR NON-PERISHABLE DONATION IN A BAG BY YOUR MAILBOX.
 WE'LL DELIVER IT TO A LOCAL FOOD BANK.

National Partners



For All Branch 599 Members

We have an abundance of folding chairs in our building. In order to clear these chairs out, the chairs are being offered to Branch 599 members for \$2 each. No limit! First come, first serve, while they last.

The folding chairs have a red cushion seat. Great for extra seating for all gatherings. Convenient to store and light weight.

Please contact our Branch office to schedule a time to come and meet with Building Manager, Alan Robinson. 813.875.0599

Jackie Robinson Day 2022



On April 15 every year, teams celebrate Jackie Robinson Day, honoring the player who broke the color barrier in **Major League Baseball** and made a great and positive impact on the league. This year, April 15 marked the 75 year anniversary of the landmark day. On Jackie Robinson Day, every player and

on-field personnel wear the number Robinson wore, 42, which was retired by the league in 1997. Locally, the Tampa Bay Rays players were all wearing specially-made socks to commemorate the historic day. April 15, 1947 was the day that Jackie Robinson played his first major-league game for the Brooklyn Dodgers.

This year, to mark the **75th anniversary of Robinson's debut**, the No. 42 on every team's jersey was Dodger blue, regardless of the team's primary colors. The league began celebrating Jackie Robinson day in 2004 and by 2009, every player, coach and umpire was wearing No. 42 for a day.



A free app for your Android smartphone (iPhone in development). The app allows real time basic clock ring entries such as “begin tour,” “office and street moves” and “end tour.” It will automatically calculate the number of hours of straight time, overtime and penalty time you should be paid each pay period based on the entries made. Once entries are made in the app, the data will be available in the Members Only portal, where it can be edited, and reports can be printed. Find it under Member Benefits...NALC Mobile App.


“Mary Lou Jackman - William Corbeau”

2022 Florida State Association of Letter Carriers Scholarship Application
Al Friedman, President

PLEASE DO NOT CUT OR REDUCE THE SIZE OF THIS APPLICATION, AND PRINT LEGIBLY

Name of Student: _____

Male Female (You must select only ONE box. If more than one child is eligible, please use a separate/additional forms.)

Address: _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

NALC Branch Name and/or Number: _____

Branch Contact Phone Number: _____

NALC Branch Member's Name: _____

Applicant/Member Phone number: _____

By signing below, I certify the above named member of the FSALC is in good standing.

Signature of Local Branch President or Secretary *Date*

(DO NOT CUT THE APPLICATION, MAIL ENTIRE FORM. PLEASE PRINT LEGIBLY)

***** TO QUALIFY, THE FOLLOWING REQUIREMENTS MUST BE MET: *****

- 1) The student must have graduated from an accredited High School or have a GED.
- 2) The Student must be a dependent of a member or the spouse of a deceased member of the FSALC who has not remarried.
- 3) Applicant must enroll as a full-time student in an accredited college or university and submit proof of enrollment to receive the funds if awarded. Winners will be notified by mail. **DO NOT SUBMIT PROOF OF ENROLLMENT AT THIS TIME.**
- 4) **Applications must be postmarked on or by July 1, 2022.** Entries received with a postmark after July 1, 2022 will not be open or returned. Only one application per applicant will be accepted

This scholarship award is based on a random drawing, not on academic records or qualifications. There will be a total of four (4) scholarships awarded - two for female applicants and two for male applicants - each in the amount of \$2000.00. **This drawing will be held during the NALC 72nd Biennial Convention, August 8 - 12, 2022 in Chicago, IL.** Winners will be notified via mail.

FOR FSALC USE ONLY

RETURN ALL APPLICATIONS TO:
John W. Mitchell
FSALC Director of Education,
C/O Branch 1779 NALC
2434 Golfview Street
Lakeland, FL 33801





Remembering
those who've sacrificed.

Memorial Day
May 30

Please remember to keep our office updated with your contact info.

You can do so via US Mail, email, or by calling.
We'd appreciate your phone numbers, address, and email address.

nalc599@verizon.net ♦ 813.875.0599



NALC
e-Activist
Network

at nalc.org

Get involved!
Your future depends on it!



A.R. Tony Huerta Branch 599

National Association of Letter Carriers
3003 W Cypress Street
Tampa FL 33609-1617

813.875.0599 • Fax 813.870.0599
www.nalc599.com

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* First payment is due 60 days from loan closing and no interest for 30 days. Valid for vehicles financed directly with the credit union between April 1, 2022, and July 31, 2022. Not valid for existing loans financed with TPCU. Some restrictions apply. Contact credit union for details.
^ APR- Annual Percentage Rate. Rate received based upon individual creditworthiness and subject to change without notice.

