



# Tampa Letter Carrier

VOLUME 20, ISSUE 2

FEBRUARY 2021

## Around The Horn from The President's Desk

### 1 CCA converted to fulltime regular on January 30! More to come in February.

*Congratulations* to Vincent Rodriguez, CCA from Carrollwood Station, as the top Relative Standing CCA he was converted to career/fulltime regular on January 30. Vincent began on September 16, 2017.



**Tony Diaz**  
President  
Branch 599

**Brothers and Sisters**, as we begin the 2021 year there are things to look forward to, especially after a 2020 year from hell. #1 The NALC has a new tentative collective bargaining contract with the USPS through May 20, 2023. #2 Vaccines are being distributed by two major companies, Moderna and Pfizer, with the expectation to help control the spread of the deadly virus. But I want to focus on the big news. As most of you have heard, there is a tentative contract agreement pending ratification vote of the membership. After months of negotiating through the pandemic, a tentative agreement was reached without an arbitrator. The ratification ballots were scheduled to be mailed out the week of January 11 and members were encouraged to approve the new

deal. The contract includes something for everyone from CCAs to top pay regulars. The contract is 44 months in length; going back to September 21, 2019 through May 20, 2023.

#### Some of the highlights are:

7 cost of living adjustments (COLA) and 4 general wage increases. Beginning November 19, 2022, a new top Step P will take effect, paying an additional \$444 annually for those carriers who have been at top pay Step O for 46 weeks. For CCAs the days of working 30 to 36 months and beyond as a non-career before being converted to a career status are over. CCAs now will automatically be converted to career status upon reaching 24 months of relative standing. All career letter carriers will receive 7 COLA increases based on

the Consumer Price Index. Two COLA payouts are retroactive, #1 effective February 29, 2020, in the amount of \$166 annually. #2 effective August 29, 2020, in the amount of \$188 annually. That leaves 5 more to be paid every 6 months for the remainder of the contract. The 4 wage increases will include all regular career letter carriers as well as non-career. #1 1.1% effective November 23, 2019, #2 1.1% effective November 21, 2020, #3 1.3% effective November 20, 2021, #4 1.3% effective November 19, 2022.

CCAs also receive an additional 1.0% for the 4 dates. 2.1% effective November 23, 2019 (retroactive), 2.1% effective November 21, 2020 (retroactive), 2.3% effective November 20, 2021, 2.3%

Branch 599  
serving  
Brandon  
Plant City  
Sun City  
Tampa

Branch 599  
Meeting  
Thursday  
February 4  
7:30 PM

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**National Association of Letter Carriers, Branch 599,**

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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.com and also to the Branch Office at nalc599@verizon.net no later than the 5<sup>th</sup> of each month in order for us to meet our time limits to the publisher.

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# 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	David Rivadeneira	813.661.1636	813.403.9525
Brandon	33510/11	Luis Cruz	813.661.1636	813.431.3223
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	Juan Andujar	813.935.2954	813.377.7266
Hilldale	33614	Brian Obst	813.879.4309	727.458.0679
Hilldale Annex	33634	Latoya Dupuy	813.879.4309	305.414.3527
Interbay/Port Tampa	33611/16	Clement Cheung	813.831.2034	813.758.5910
Interbay/Peninsula	33629	Clement Cheung	813.831.2034	813.758.5910
Palm River Annex	33619	Pam Benton	813.663.0048	813.475.0753
Plant City	33564	Warren Sumlin	813.719.6793	813.486.7612
Produce	33610	Jerry J.D. Lewers	813.239.4084	813.528.5519
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	Stephen Hall	813.237.4569	813.494.4669
TCA/Hyde Park	33606		813.873.7189	
TCA/Peninsula	33609		813.873.7189	
TCA/West Tampa	33607	Michael Williams	813.873.7189	813.541.3092
Temple Terrace	33617	Lori McMillion	813.988.0152	813.263.7101
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)*

effective November 19, 2022. The additional 1.0% for the CCAs is in place of the COLAs paid to only regular carriers.

## **Street MSP scans will be eliminated**

Managed Service Point (MSP) scans: This MOU states that no later than 60 days from the ratification date of the 2019 collective-bargaining agreement, MSPs will be removed from the street delivery portions of city letter carrier routes. *—Postal Record*

## **Annual leave in lieu of holiday pay**

Fulltime and PTR letter carriers who work their holiday, at their option, may elect to have their annual leave balance credited with up to eight hours of annual leave in lieu of holiday leave pay. Such leave will be subject to all applicable rules for requesting and scheduling annual leave and shall be combined with annual leave and counted as annual leave for purposes of annual leave carryover. Article 11, Sections 3 and 4 will be modified accordingly if the contract is ratified. *—Postal Record*

## **Back-pay provisions for carriers and recently retired carriers**

A full back-pay calculation for all letter carriers (career and non-career alike), covering all paid hours since the expiration of the 2016-2019 contract, will be made as soon as practicable. These back-pay calculations will include the November 23, 2019, and November 21, 2020, general wage increases (plus the 1% additional increase for CCAs on those dates) and the January 2020 and July 2020 COLAs for career letter carriers. It will take some time for the Postal Service to complete the more than 205,000 back-pay calculations, so it is impossible to know right now the exact pay period in which back pay will

be issued. **Carriers who have retired since September 2019 will receive the back pay for hours worked up until their retirement—and their annuities will be adjusted accordingly.** (Depending on their date of retirement, it is possible that the two COLAs and the two general wage increases may slightly raise their high-3 average salary and, therefore, their monthly annuities.) *—Postal Record*

## **New 24-month automatic conversion of CCAs to career status**

Upon ratification, CCAs who have not been converted to career status by the time they reach 24 months of relative standing in their installation will now be converted to PTF career status in their installation, rather than continuing as non-career employees. This automatic conversion after reaching 24 months of relative standing will take place in every size office throughout the country, providing full fringe benefits and peace of mind to non-career carriers. Those CCAs who have reached 24 months of relative standing without being converted to career will be converted to PTFs and placed in a new PTF Step AA in Table 2. The Step AA hourly rate will equal the fulltime Step A hourly rate, and PTFs in Step AA will receive proportional COLAs as described above. The waiting period in PTF Step AA to PTF Step A will be 46 weeks. Upon conversion to fulltime, regardless of the PTF step they currently are in, PTFs will be placed in the fulltime step commensurate with their number of weeks as a PTF, and retain their time credit toward the next step. Conversions to career status detailed above will be effective as soon as practicable, but no later than 60 days from the ratification date of the 2019 National Agreement (for CCAs who already

have 24 months of relative standing at that time) or the first day of the third full pay period that follows the date on which a CCA achieves 24 months of relative standing in the future. Additionally, effective June 19, 2021, the CCA Step CC hourly pay rate (currently \$17.29) will be eliminated and CCA Step BB and its higher pay rate (currently \$17.79) will become the new entry step for newly hired CCAs. *—Postal Record*

## **Qualifying period—exception for city carrier assistants**

This MOU states that CCAs with a minimum of 90 days of service prior to conversion to career status without a break in service are exempt from the 90-day qualifying period in ELM 512.313. Previously, all newly converted employees, regardless of time in service, were required to complete 90 days of employment as a career employee prior to being allowed to take annual leave. This has been a contention since CCAs began, it is now cleared up. *—Postal Record*

## **Uniform allowances**

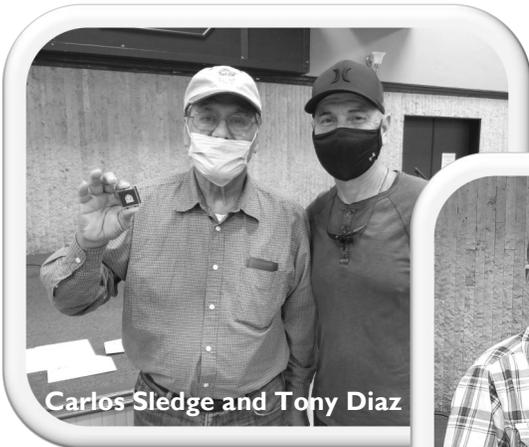
Under Article 26 of the current contract, letter carriers in 2019 were entitled to a uniform allowance of \$464 annually, with an additional credit of \$107 for newly eligible career carriers. The proposed contract calls for a 5% increase in 2021 and a 2.5% increase in 2022 in the annual uniform allowance for career city carriers. The allowances for the next two years would be as follows: May 21, 2021: \$487, plus an additional \$113 for a newly eligible carrier. May 21, 2022: \$499, plus an additional \$116 for a newly eligible carrier. *—Postal Record*

## **Opting Duration**

Letter of intent to update the JCAM

*(Continued on page 4)*

# Sledge, Potts, and Weimer Retired!



Carlos Sledge and Tony Diaz



John Potts and Tony Diaz



Bill Weimer and Tony Diaz

President Tony Diaz presented **Carlos Sledge** [Interbay], **John Potts** [TCA], and **William Bill Weimer** [Interbay] with their retirement pins and gratuity at our January Branch meeting.

## Sharing Our Members' Joys and Sorrows

**Our deepest sympathy** and prayerful support is extended to the family of **Robert Fernandez** [Retiree], whose passing was January 10; to **Otis Grant** [Produce] and family at the passing of his youngest brother, Ulysses Saxon Grant, December 9 in Houston TX; to **Pablo Torres** [Town 'N Country] at the passing of his father, Alfredo, December 21; and to **Marissa Lovett** [Temple Terrace] at the passing of her father, Andre, January 6.

## Around the Horn from The President's Desk

*(Continued from page 3)*

language to clarify that employees on a hold down have the option of ending their hold down at any time after their conversion takes place and assume their new assignment when they are assigned pursuant to Article 41.1.A.7.

*—Postal Record*

### Leave Sharing

Modified to include the following as one of the qualifying reasons for eligibility to receive donated leave: "...to care for a child born to or placed for adoption with the employee within the twelve months prior to taking leave."

*—Postal Record*

### Quick Hits:

#### Information you should know

\*Nationally, 40 letter carriers have lost their lives to COVID 19.

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

## Unionism — Tentative Agreement and Union Benefits

*(Continued from page 5)*

These are just a small sampling of what the Union has done for you.

That is my opinion for this month, but remember as always...  
**Knowledge is the Key.**

Until next month.

*Brian Obst*  
Vice President

# Unionism – Tentative Agreement and Union Benefits

Welcome to 2021, a new year with all the promise of excitement yet to come! The Buccaneers are playing for the NFC Championship with a possible shot to play in the Super Bowl right here in our backyard, a feat never accomplished in the history of the Super Bowl. The Lightning begin defense of the Stanley Cup won after the season last year and the Rays begin preparations to defend the AL Championship won last year after just falling short in the World Series. Locally things are great and can only get better!

Now after that brief sports segment let's turn to our new contract. You should have received your ratification ballot in the mail by the time you read this and it is appropriate to discuss the issues with the proposed agreement.

As I am sure you have seen, many people have turned to social media to express their satisfaction or displeasure with the tentative agreement. While I don't agree with this method, it is the right of all members to have their say on the potential agreement. I only have a few questions for those who rise in opposition to the proposed agreement:

1. ***Have you ever negotiated any agreement with an adversarial party?***
2. ***Are you aware that just because you want something and you think it should be done, is not a slam dunk that the other party will agree with you?***
3. ***Do you understand that our national officers are empowered by the membership to negotiate on our behalf to obtain the best contract they can?***
4. ***Do you understand what the continuing COLA and layoff provisions do for the members of***

***this Union?***

5. ***Do you understand that you get a pay raise each year of the proposed agreement (including back pay for the missed COLAs and 1% pay increases for 2 years)?***
6. ***Do you understand that if the parties are unable to reach an agreement on a contract that it goes to binding arbitration? I underline the word binding as it is important to understand that there are no guarantees that the arbitrator will see things through the Union point of view and whatever the arbitrator decides is what the parties are stuck with – like it or not. One only needs to look back a few years to see when the arbitrator decided to cut the pay of the TEs by 7 dollars an hour.***

As a steward and when I was an active member of the B Team, I always understood that it is generally better to be able to decide the case at hand than to send it to someone else to decide because you don't know how the next group to read the case will decide to go with it.

In any negotiation it is always understood that you are probably not going to get everything that you want, and neither is the other party. It is important to determine what you can get and what is most important to providing the best agreement going forward. Something that seems to be passed over or missed in one negotiation might have a better chance of coming to fruition in the next agreement based on changes that occur between negotiations.

I understand the difficulties we all face daily on this job and I know that we all would love to get a major raise in pay

every time a new contract arises, unfortunately that isn't always going to happen. Take the long view and see how much better you are doing than when you first started, and I think you will be surprised at how well our national officers have done for us over the years.

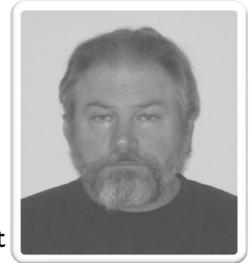
I for one, heartily endorse the tentative agreement and will have no problem voting to ratify the agreement and I would recommend to all the readers of this article to follow suit.

To those who continually scoff and complain and ask, *what has the Union ever done for me?* I say the following:

1. A 40-hour work week
2. Overtime for work over 40 hours weekly
3. Paid vacation time (annual leave)
4. Paid sick leave
5. Uniform allowance
6. Cost of Living Allowance and regular pay raises
7. Safer working conditions
8. Protection on the job (Union Representation)
9. 10 paid holidays yearly

In case you don't understand, management didn't give these to you simply because they are nice guys; they were hard-fought-for benefits for all carriers. Ask one of your friends outside the Postal Service and see how many of these and other benefits you get that they would love to have.

*(Continued on page 4)*



**Brian Obst**  
Vice President  
Branch 599

# Letter Carriers Memorial

*Honoring the letter carriers who have died from COVID-19*

*—nalc.org*

**Rakkhon Kim**, age 50  
Bronx NY – Br 36

**Rocco Lombardo**, age 61  
Flushing NY – Br 294

**Jody Kotowski**, age 56  
Buffalo NY – Br 3

**John Consilvio**, age 65  
Westchester NY – Br 693

**Michael Hunt Sr**, age 48  
New York NY – Br 36

**Gregory Sutak**, age 66  
Cleveland OH – Br 40

**Nazmul Haque**, age 56  
Williambridge Station NY

**Mary Crosby**, age 63  
Chillicothe OH

**Olivia Meraz**, age 59  
Phoenix AZ – Br 576

**Kerry Morrissey**, age 60  
Ames IA – Br 1081

**Donald Hunter**, age 60  
Omaha NE – Br 5

**Raymond *Doc* Dougherty**, age 70  
Philadelphia PA – Br 157

**Robert Moe**, age 89  
Bellingham WA – Br 450

**Thomas Juillerat**, age 62  
Wilmington OH – Br 43

**Theresa Torres**, age 53  
New York NY – Br 36

**Robert Fouts**, age 63  
Massillon OH – Br 238

**Benedicto Fajardo**, age 55  
Deerfield IL – Br 4739

**Unique Clay**, age 31  
Chicago IL – Br 11

**Manny Martinez**, age 64  
Fort Worth TX – Br 226

**Joseph Mercurio**, age 64  
Alton IL – Br 309

**Ivorl Davidson**, age 59  
Fort Lauderdale FL – Br 2550

**Ubaldo A/Herrera**, age 46  
Oak Brook IL – Br 825

**Martin Harris**, age 51  
Scarsdale NY – Br 693

**Raymond Earl Moore**, age 72  
Youngstown OH – Br 385

**Joseph Veckov**, age 54  
New Castle PA – Br 22

**Angela Hampton**, age 56  
Fort Lauderdale FL – Br 2550

**Paulino Huerta III**, age 56  
Mercedes TX – Br 2562

**Ana Palafox**, age 60  
Garden Grove CA – Br 1100

**Tamika Shields**, age 46  
Detroit MI – Br 1

**John Onsager**, age 76  
Eau Claire WI – Br 728

**Frank Leong**, age 63  
Manhattan NY – Br 36

**Danilo Javier**, age 60  
Bergen Co. NJ – Br 425

**Jeff Jameson**, age 51  
Oklahoma City OK – Br 458

**Johnny Tamayo**, age 69  
Pasadena TX – Br 3867

**Melvin Stahmer**, age 68  
Iowa City IA – Br 373

**Rosemary Villegas**, age 68  
Richmond CA – Br 1111

**Kevin Urquhart**, age 66  
Uniondale NY – Br 6000

**J.R. Parker**, age 76  
Philadelphia PA – Br 157

**Robert *Bob* Condon**, age 90  
Harrisburg PA – Br 500

**John Buffer**, age 79  
Frankfort IL – Br 4016



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**NOTICE**

Meetings are subject to change  
due to the upsurge of COVID-19.

**Shop Stewards will Meet**

Tuesday 7 PM  
February 2  
March 2

**Executive Board Meets**

Thursday 6:30 PM  
February 4  
March 4

**Branch 599 Meetings**

Thursday 7:30 PM  
February 4  
March 4  
April 1  
May 6  
June 3  
July 8  
August 5  
September 2  
October 7  
November 4  
December 2

**Retirees Breakfasts**

Monday *Date to be Announced* 9 AM  
Denny's Restaurant  
at Dale Mabry & Spruce  
2004 N Dale Mabry Highway, Tampa

Tuesday *Date to be Announced* 8 AM  
Bob Evans Restaurant off Fletcher  
12272 Morris Bridge Road, Temple Terrace 33637



**A.R. Tony Huerta Branch 599**

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