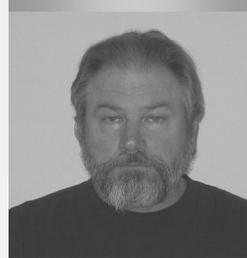




Tampa Letter Carrier

From the Desk of the President

Another year has passed us by and it is now 2024; a new year of hope and promise has arrived. Time seems to be just rushing by as it feels like only yesterday that the year had begun as I prepared to assume the reins of leadership of our Branch of this great union.



Brian Obst
President
Branch 599

This past year was one of many changes for our Branch, as it was the beginning of a new administration after the December elections as well as the closing of an era with the sale of our Branch home, the Letter Carriers Hall on Cypress Street, and the purchase and move to our new home at 315 W. Busch Boulevard.

Our Branch has seen and mourned the passing of retired members who dedicated many years of service to this Branch, as well as relatives of Branch members and employees. Time always marches on and those lost will surely be missed, but the missing members are being replaced with many new members who are joining the Branch and will most assuredly help see us well into the future.

The future of our Branch is bright and only getting brighter as time moves on and the *State of the Branch* is strong and getting stronger each day.

The building construction, while it has been taking longer than expected, is almost completed. The final touches are being finished as you read this. The new restrooms' partitions/stalls and doors are being installed. Minor paint touch-up work remains to be completed after the above installations are finished, followed by final inspections and industrial cleanup. Please try to make it a point to come out and see your new Union Hall when you can, I think you will be pleasantly surprised.

The Branch is on solid financial ground, as the proceeds of the sale of our old building have been invested by our trustees in interest bearing CDs, earning a substantial rate of interest that should keep the Branch on rock solid financial ground for many years into the future. It is the feeling of the executive board that there should be no financial worries for the Branch going forward.

Representation is an area where our Branch needs to step-up, as it is an area where we have been lacking a bit recently. Many members who were representing the Branch as stewards and/or officers have retired or have given up their positions in the Branch. It is imperative that we train our replacements so there is no lack of representation when people move on. If a station has lost their shop steward, they are at the mercy of management with no representation in house. Yes, Branch officers are still available, but if there are a number of vacancies, our officers can only be at one location at a time so there is always the danger of management taking advantage of carriers. I was a steward for twenty-five years and I can tell you from experience that if there is no

(Continued on page 3)

Branch 599
serving
Brandon
Plant City
Sun City
Tampa

Branch 599 Meeting

Thursday
January 4
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

Fax 813.870.0599

www.nalc599.com

Brian Obst
President
erif_lor@hotmail.com

Office Hours
Monday – Friday
7:30 am – 4 pm

Rodna Kimelman Kirk
Office Secretary
nalc599@verizon.net

Tampa Letter Carrier

Brian Obst
Publisher

Phyllis R. Thomas
Editor
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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

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Recording Secretary	Matt Fernandez	786.247.4185	
Financial Secretary	Alan Robinson	813.843.9762	
Treasurer	Tony Diaz	813.598.9635	
Sergeant-at-Arms	Luis Cruz	813.431.3223	
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Director of Retirees	John Gebo	813.503.1256	
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	Clement Cheung	813.758.5910	
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	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	813.935.2954	813.778.4373
Forest Hills Annex	33613		813.935.2954	773.849.6229
Hilldale	33614		813.879.4309	
Hilldale Annex	33634		813.879.4309	
Interbay/Port Tampa	33611/16	Mike Dennis	813.831.2034	813.361.9103
Interbay/Peninsula	33629	Marie Brown	813.831.2034	727.331.9907
Palm River Annex	33619	Dianna Todd	813.663.0048	813.505.5647
Plant City	33564	Todd Soulor	813.754.3590	508.615.6517
Produce	33610	Matt Rodkey	813.237.4084	813.562.8744
Ruskin/Sun City Ctr	33570		813.634.1642	
Seminole Heights	33603	Matt Fernandez	813.237.4569	786.247.4185
Sulphur Springs	33604	J.D. Lewers	813.237.4569	813.528.5519
TCA/Hyde Park	33606	Josh Villa	813.873.7189	203.278.6485
TCA/Peninsula	33609		813.873.7189	
TCA/West Tampa	33607		813.873.7189	
Temple Terrace	33617	Mike Cipriano	813.988.0152	401-787-1510
Town & Country	33615/35	Alma Hidalgo	813.884.0973	718.930.7769
Ybor City	33605	Maurice Rice	813.247.2416	813.334.3189

From the Vice President's Desk

Happy New Year to all?

A new year for new beginnings. Again, I would like to thank all 2023 stewards and extend a warm congratulations to all the new stewards of 2024. Our work is never complete, so put on your thinking caps and get ready for an awesome ride of knowledge. Always remember that your Branch officers are here to assist in any way possible, you are not alone on your new journey.

The past year has been quite active for everyone. We have seen grievance after grievance on just about anything imaginable. Most grievances have been on the sticky topic of overtime. As a refresher, I would like to go over some areas in the National Agreement which relates to overtime.

Article 8 provides guidance on overtime. Several areas in Article 8 can be interpreted wrong and may cause issues with management assigning or carriers performing overtime.

Overtime Assignment Rules

From the Desk of the President

(Continued from page 1)

steward in the station, management is violating the contract. With no steward to protect the carriers anything can happen, and it is mostly things that are not good.

Being a steward is a job that anyone can do, as there is a large network of assistance for the stewards in the city. We have steward training meetings monthly, and we have a computer lab designed to assist stewards with the ins and outs of grievance filing, case preparation, case investigation, and hearing of cases at the first step of the process. The lab also has access to the past twenty-five years of grievances from this Branch, so one can see how previous cases have been handled and

Apply to Full-time Employees.

The introduction to Article 8.5 clarifies that its provisions as a whole apply only to full-time regular or full-time flexible employees who are needed to work overtime. This provision does not require management to use a full-time employee desiring to work overtime in preference to a PTF or a CCA working overtime.

Management normally has the right to assign overtime work to full-time employees rather than to a PTF or CCA. An exception to this general principle is management's requirement to provide auxiliary assistance before requiring letter carriers not on the ODL or Work Assignment List to work overtime on their own route on a regularly scheduled day.

What does this mean? When a carrier has overtime on their own route, management has several options on how to distribute the overtime. The first overtime memorandum signed by the postal service and our national union included the Letter Carrier Para-

how cases have been settled previously so the new steward or the experienced steward can always handle any case that comes their way. The officers of our Branch's executive board are always available to assist with any issues that arise, and all their phone numbers are listed in this newsletter on page 2, so don't be afraid to call and ask questions as we are all happy to be of assistance.

As I enter my second year as president, I can assure you that the Branch is on a solid course straight and true for our members. Representation is still our focus, but I am asking the membership for some help in filling the positions that are currently vacant, so our representation does not

graph which provided strict guidance on assigning overtime on a carrier's own route.

Implementing Memorandum

on Letter Carrier Paragraph.

A memorandum of understanding signed December 20, 1988 (M-00884) further explained the requirement to seek to use auxiliary assistance before requiring letter carriers not on the ODL or Work Assignment List to work overtime on their own route on a regularly scheduled day. CCAs are considered as auxiliary assistance. Accordingly, management must seek to use CCAs at either the straight-time or regular overtime rate prior to requiring letter carriers not on the ODL or Work Assignment List to work overtime on their own route on a regularly scheduled day. Management must seek to use all of

(Continued on page 5)



Mike Smith
Vice President
Chief Steward
Branch 599

suffer.

The saddest aspect of life right now is that science gathers knowledge faster than society gathers wisdom.

—Isaac Asimov

I want to express my thanks for the faith you have placed in me to be your president as we embark on another year with the hope that things will always get better as long as we keep working towards that goal.

I leave you, as always....

Knowledge is the Key!

Brian Obst
President

Calendar

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

Shop Stewards *Wednesday*

January 3 7:00 PM
315 W Busch Blvd, Suite C

Executive Board

Thursday
January 4 6:30 PM
315 W Busch Blvd, Suite C

Branch 599

Thursday
January 4 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
January 9 10:00 AM
Bob Evans Restaurant
off Fletcher near I-75
12272 Morris Bridge Road

Bread of the Branch

With our annual receipts being over \$100,000 every year, our Branch must file an LM-2 financial report form with the U.S. Department of Labor. The LM-2 is for every private or federal government sector labor union as well as public employee local unions with one or more private sector union members. It is detailed and very long, consisting of many pages. These pages, which are signed by our President and Treasurer, include information on our 1) assets and liabilities, 2) receipts for income and their sources, 3) salary, allowances and expenses of officers and employees of the union 4) loans, 5) other disbursements; all during our fiscal year.

The records necessary to prepare our LM-2 each year must be maintained for a minimum of five years. Local Trustees are to verify that records are maintained. These

records are always available to our members upon request. So, if you are ever curious about what any Branch 599 officer makes each year, come take a look.

These forms also become public record when filed with the U.S. Department of Labor.

I hope you become more educated on what your Branch is doing for you and how your dues are being handled.

I hope you all had a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year moving forward!

Lori



Lori McMillion
Trustees Chair
Branch 599

Mail Call

Brothers and Sisters, congratulations on the successful completion of another year. It was an eventful year.

The robberies of carriers for arrow keys set in motion a stronger union effort during contract negotiations to curb management's desire for more centralized mailing systems. Carriers are more vulnerable to robbers due to the stationary nature of these systems.

Management's brilliant (*sarcasm*) decision to replace LLVs with the Metris garbage. I am reminded of the other brilliant decisions made by management, i.e., relinquishing some parcel service which was the precursor to the creation of FedEx, UPS, and DHL, or my personal favorite USPS Cargo Airlines. We have the best and brightest leading us, don't we?

Along with other smaller events, I can tell

you that I am glad 2023 is in the rear view. However, 2024 is promising to be as eventful and interesting. We are all hoping for and completion of contract negotiations and the back pay and other benefits, like CAA time buyback, to kick in. Fingers crossed; we get that one. 2024 is a national election year and the EDDMs (Every Door Direct Mail) will be coming in full force. Laural Lee will make my fingers bleed. Just remember the *no talking politics while working* policy.

Anyway, it has been my pleasure writing these articles up for you, and I wish everyone a better New Year!

Sarge



Luis Cruz
Sergeant-at-Arms
Branch 599



Your Officers, Stewards, and Staff
wish you a safe, healthy, prosperous, and
Happy New Year!

From the Vice President's Desk

(Continued from page 3)

the following to provide auxiliary assistance:

- *PTFs at the straight-time or regular overtime rate*
- *CCAs at the straight-time or regular overtime rate*
- *Available full-time regular employees such as unassigned or reserve regulars at the straight-time rate*
- *Full-time carriers from the ODL at the regular overtime rate*

The answer is clear that overtime for a carrier who desires to work only eight hours in a day must be taken away and given to one of the above carriers. Management has questioned the Letter Carrier Paragraph many times concerning own-route overtime. A violation occurs if management does not provide auxiliary assistance as stated above.

Taking overtime a step further includes the Overtime Desired List (ODL). Carriers can voluntarily sign-up for overtime quarterly on the ODL as Work Assignment, 10 hours, or 12 hours. During this period, any carrier not desiring to perform overtime will have the opportunity to not sign the list. Carriers who sign the ODL must perform overtime prior to a non-ODL carrier.

National Arbitrator Mittenthal ruled in H4N-NA-C-21, April 11, 1986 (C-05860), that an employee on the ODL does not have the option of accepting or refusing work over eight hours on a non-scheduled day, work

over six days in a service week or overtime on more than four of the five scheduled days in a service week; instead an employee on the ODL must be required to work up to 12 hours in a day and 60 hours in a week before management may require employees not on the ODL to work overtime.

This ruling clearly states that a carrier on the ODL cannot, without a valid reason, refuse to perform overtime. Management has also questioned this ruling but has not been successful in defending their position. Stewards must be mindful of the requirements set by the National Agreement concerning carriers on the ODL.

The final point I would like to make is mandatory overtime. Management will use the term *mandated* to apply to carriers who do not desire to work overtime. The National Agreement gives specific guidance on mandating carriers.

Mandatory Overtime.

One purpose of the ODL is to excuse full-time carriers not wishing to work overtime from having to work overtime. Before requiring a non-ODL carrier to work overtime on a non-scheduled day or off his/her own assignment on a regularly scheduled day, management must seek to use a carrier from the ODL, even if the ODL carrier would be working penalty overtime. However, if the ODL does not provide sufficient qualified full-time regulars for required overtime, Article 8.5.D permits management to move off the list and require non-

ODL carriers to work overtime on a rotating basis starting with the junior employee. This rotation begins with the junior employee at the beginning of each calendar quarter. Absent an LMOU provision to the contrary, employees who are absent on a regularly scheduled day (e.g., sick leave or annual leave) when it is necessary to use non-ODL employees on overtime will be passed over in the rotation until the next time their name comes up in the regular rotation.

Management may seek non-ODL volunteers rather than selecting non-volunteers on the basis of juniority. Normally, carriers not on the ODL may not grieve the fact that they were not selected to work overtime.

A key point in this section is that management must use a juniority list when assigning carriers overtime on their own route after maximizing ODL carriers. If management does not show the assignment of overtime evidenced by a juniority list, a violation occurs.

The assignment or execution of overtime can be tricky. Understanding the basics can and will assist in the proper carrying out of overtime. Don't rely on management to do the right thing when it comes to overtime. Your knowledge of Article 8 is very important to ensure management is following the contract.

To get there we must work together!

Mike

Sharing Our Members' Joys and Sorrows

Our deepest sympathy and prayerful support is extended to the family and friends of **Fabian St. Louis** (Town & Country), whose passing was December 4.

The Financial Guy

As we finish out the year, it is amazing what I have been able to learn about this position as financial secretary. As a member of the National Association of Letter Carriers, there are pins and awards that carriers earn as their years start to add up. As a member, each carrier should receive a pin once you have hit the 25-year mark and then a pin every 5 years after that. Those that reach their 50 years as a union member receive a gold card. This is the first I have seen one of them, it is very nice. Since I've been in office, four letter carriers have received their gold card, with more to be presented at our January meeting. If you are to receive a gold card, I will be reaching out to you to ask you to attend the January meeting. I have just ordered an award for 70 years of being a member! We are hoping to get in contact with the recipient and have them attend the January meeting. This is quite the accomplishment that I'm sure not many carriers achieve. I ordered a large amount of pins and as soon as they come in from National, I will be mailing them out or presenting them at the next meeting. We would prefer that each recipient come to

the meeting so they can be recognized as being a longstanding member of Branch 599.

The *second notices* have been mailed out to carriers that owe dues to the Branch. If you received a letter from Branch 599, please contact me at the Branch office (813-875-0599) to discuss this matter or make an appointment to come in to discuss it. If these payments are going to cause any type of financial hardship, a payment plan can be worked out. The last thing we want to do is have someone removed from the union; that is exactly what will happen if payments or some type of arrangements are not made. If you have NALC health insurance and are removed from the union, you are putting you and your family at risk of having your health insurance canceled. Please do not let this happen.

Until the next time,
Alan



Alan Robinson
Financial Secretary
Branch 599

Just for the Health of It

Most of us have a vague idea what Telehealth is all about. Some of it is obvious. If you need to see a doctor for a minor health issue outside of office hours and you don't need an emergency room you can visit a doctor virtually, on the internet via Telehealth. This is wonderful for minor injuries or illnesses that call for a simple diagnosis and prescription.

Few of us realize that Telehealth can also help us achieve a healthier lifestyle. With the new year, did you resolve to eat healthier but don't know where to start? Using the NALCHBP Telehealth app you can meet with a registered dietitian to get personalized nutrition information. Get a personalized strategy with meal plans, recipes, and support from home. This support is available for the whole family, including

children. Nutritionists can help with diabetes, digestive disorders, eating disorders, food allergies, general wellness, kidney disease, oncology, prenatal and postpartum nutrition, sports nutrition, and weight management.

Appointments are available any day of the week including weekends and evenings. All you need to do is download the NALCHBP Telehealth app or visit nalchbptelehealth.org to get started.

Happy New Year!

Here's to your health.....

Detlev



Detlev Aeppel
Health Benefit Rep.
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: On Authoritarianism and Good Governance

Proper Leadership needed in the latter times.

It is now 2024! With a new year comes robust determination. I want to start the new year and talk about authoritarianism and righteous leadership. I need not go through much of the history of the world to prove that wicked men and women have always stubbornly persisted in their delusional quests for absolute power.

Whether it be in the workplace, in schools, and especially in governments, we have all formerly or currently dealt with **...them that decree unrighteous decrees, and that write grievousness which they have prescribed** (Isaiah 10:1)

The historian and political philosopher Hannah Arendt once wrote in her seminal book *The Origins of Totalitarianism*: **The ideal subject of totalitarian rule is not the convinced Nazi or the convinced Communist, but people for whom the distinction between fact and fiction (i.e., the reality of experience) and the distinction between true and false (i.e., the standards of thought) no longer exist.**

It is in that sad state of affairs where change becomes almost impossible. The people slag and pave the way for more outrages and because no one speaks out, then collectively the nation, the business, and/or the school suffers. *When God judges a nation* the reformer John Calvin is attributed to have said, *He gives it wicked rulers.*

Sukehiro Hasegawa, Chair of the Hiroshima Peacebuilders Center Council, writes: **The first attribute is the leaders' commitment to national interest. Identity and unity. In conflict-prone countries, personal rivalry and animosity are the main causes of armed conflict and struggle. It is imperative that national leaders exercise self-discipline and place national interests and unity above their personal**

agendas. (United Nations Chronicle April 2015, No. 4 Vol. LII, Implementing the 2030 Agenda: The Challenge of Conflict)

This principle can easily apply to a business or a school. Mr. Hasegawa cites as paramount that a good leader must place himself before the people. In other words, in our case, good leadership must place the interests of the workplace first. Identity and unity in all cases have to do with people. Not inanimate things that bear no empathy but are merely tools which only ever useful when human beings are in the equation because people have the greatest value in any organization. It is the engine that presses forward the goal. The task at hand.

The second point he makes is about personal rivalry and animosity and how they are the main causes of conflict. In the Bible, we have the example of King Saul being jealous of David following his latest victory over the Philistines. In the scriptures we read that women came out singing and dancing with musical instruments and with joy they meet with King Saul, **And the women answered one another as they played, and said, Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands. And Saul was very wrath, and the saying displeased him; and he said, They have ascribed unto David ten thousands, and to me they have ascribed but thousands: and what can he have more but the kingdom? And Saul eyed David from that day and forward.** (1 Samuel 18:7-9)

Following this we read: **And Saul spake to Jonathan his son, and to all his servants, that they should kill David.** (1 Samuel 19:1)

His wickedness reaches a fever pitch when enraged that Ahimelech the priest gave assistance to David, and rebuked by the same that David is not the villain Saul believes him to be, Saul commits his greatest atrocity:

And the king said unto the footmen that stood about him, Turn, and slay the priests of the LORD... (1 Samuel 22:17)

Immediately following their slaughter, we read that the city of Nob was subjected to the sword and many others perished. All because of a wicked man who only loved power at the expense of everything else.

In business we need not fear the literal sword, but violence takes many forms. USA.gov defines workplace harassment as: **Unwelcome conduct based on a person's race, color, religion, sex, national origin, older age, disability, or genetic information. Harassment includes: offensive jokes, objects, or pictures, name calling, physical assaults and threats, and intimidation.**

USA.gov further says that: **Harassment is unlawful when: Enduring the conduct is required to continue employment and it creates a work environment that is intimidating, hostile, or abusive.**

A 2009 United Nations report entitled *What is Good Governance?* conducted by the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific it states: **Bad governance is being increasingly regarded as one of the root causes of all evil within our societies.**

On good governance, the report states: **Good governance has 8 major characteristics. It is participatory, consensus oriented, accountable, transparent, responsive, effective and efficient, equitable and inclusive, and follows the rule of law. It assures that corruption is minimized, the views of minorities are taken into account, and that**

(Continued on page 10)



Matt Fernandez
Recording Secretary
Branch 599

NALC Branch 599
Retirees Dinner

Sunday, January 14, 2024
5-9 PM ♦ *Dinner at 5:30*



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

Menu

Stuffed Mushrooms ♦ Balsamic Tomato Bruschetta
Italian Tossed Salad ♦ Maggiano's Salad
Shrimp Fettuccine Alfredo ♦ Chicken & Spinach Manicotti
Oven-Roasted Pork Loin w/Balsamic Cream Sauce ♦ Parmesan-Crusted Cod
Fresh Grilled Asparagus ♦ Gigi's Butter Cake ♦ Chocolate Layer Cake
♦ Each guest will receive 1 Free Alcoholic Drink per guest ♦

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.*

Let's Talk about Safety for On Foot Delivery

There are many different forms of delivery that take place while delivering the mail. The different types of delivery routes are Foot Route, Curbline Motorized, Bicycle, Park and Loop, or Dismount. (M-39) One form of delivery that I would like to cover is on foot delivery. This can happen on any of these routes where the carrier is delivering on their own two feet, so let's talk about some of the things that carriers should be aware of.

First off, every carrier should have a satchel available along with dog spray. If these tools are not being provided, then make sure that you let your steward know so proper steps can be taken to make these tools available. It states very clearly in the M-39 under Section 121.314:

Carriers must use a satchel when delivering on foot, except for authorized dismount deliveries.

Secondly, when delivering mail on foot, fingering the mail while walking can be a hazard. The M-41 Handbook Specifically states under section 133.2:

Do not finger mail when driving, or when walking up or down steps or curbs, when crossing streets, or at any time it would create a safety hazard to carriers or to the public.

This is further emphasized in the EL-814 Postal Employee's Guide to Safety, Section IX:

A. Fingering Mail

Never finger mail while driving, walking up and down stairs or curbs, crossing streets, or at any other time the practice could create a safety hazard to you or to the public.

This means anytime fingering the mail while walking can present a safety hazard...don't do it. A lot of times, carriers are in such a rush to get the mail delivered to the next box that they fail to realize the hazards that are in front of them.

Lastly, what kind of hazards can there be when delivering on foot? Well let's take a look at what the EL-814 has to say on this matter under section IX:

Mail Delivery:

B. Hazardous Conditions

Pay close attention when you are walking in order to avoid lawn depressions, stones, bits of wood, children's toys and other tripping hazards.

You are not required to risk personal injury from icy steps, broken or rotten steps or porches, protrud-

ing nails or sharp edges on mailbox-es, or similar hazardous conditions. Use PS Form 1767, Report of Hazard, Unsafe Condition, or Practice, to report any of these problems to your supervisor.

Alert replacement carriers to any hazardous conditions by completing PS Form 1766, Hazard Warning Card.

Section D. of the EL-814 goes on to talk about Animals and Insects:

1. General Rules

You are not required to deliver mail when an animal threatens you. Use extra care in making deliveries when dogs or other animals are loose on your route.

Please be safe out there during this holiday time when we will be delivering huge amounts of packages, cards, and everything else into the dark not only in the vehicle but on foot.

J.D.



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

Half Staff

Have you ever noticed that American flags are flying at half staff and you have no clue as to why? There is a way for you to receive free Half Staff Notices. You can do an internet search: half staff alerts. Then choose a website that appeals to you. It will have a sign-up for email alerts. I chose flagsexpress.com several years ago. Notices tell you the reason and length of time that flags are to be flown at half staff. This is especially important to know if you have a flag pole of your own.

USA.gov/flag says that flags are most often flown at half staff to mark the death of a government official, military member, or first responder; a national tragedy; Memorial Day or another national day of remembrance.

Start the new year with a little more information!

Phyllis
Editor

Retired...but not Tired

I feel very fortunate to be entering my 20th year of retirement from the United States Postal Service. I retired in 2004 and it really does not seem that long ago. I mention this because as I was reading on nalc.org, under News and Information, dated November 17, 2023, I was saddened to read about *Recent letter carrier deaths*. As I read the ages of those brothers and sisters who were listed, I thought, how young, and how they will be deprived of reaching retirement. Some listed were letter carriers for over 20 years...you just never know. God bless these brothers and sisters, I thought it was worth listing their names, in case you missed them.

On-duty deaths

On September 30, Robert Jones of Houston TX Branch 283 passed away while on duty following a vehicular hit-and-run. Brother Jones was a letter carrier for 7 years. He was 29 years old.

Boston MA Branch 34 member Khalid Farrouj died on October 10 after being found unresponsive in his postal vehicle on October 2. Brother Farrouj served his community as a letter carrier for 22 years. He was 61 years old.

On November 14, Cincinnati OH Branch 43 Member Andrew Donisi passed away while on duty due to heart failure. Brother Donisi began carrying mail earlier this year. He was 38 years old.



John Gebo
Director of Retirees
Branch 599

On November 16, Decatur AL Branch 1314 member Eurial Triplett died while on duty following a severe asthma attack. Brother Triplett was 20 years old and began his career as a letter carrier in 2022.

Off-duty deaths

Michael Guffey died on October 4 after a motorcycle accident. Brother Guffey was a letter carrier for 22 years and was a member of Athens TN Branch 1897. He was 49 years old.

Nicole Kimbrough passed away on October 4 due to complications from COVID-19. Sister Kimbrough was a member of Tuscaloosa AL Branch 1096 and was a letter carrier for 25 years. She was 49 years old.

Jeffrey Jewers of Denver CO Branch 47 passed away on October 18 after an accident while on vacation. Brother Jewers was a letter carrier for 25 years. He was 53 years old.

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

John

Matt Speaks: On Authoritarianism and Good Governance

(Continued from page 7)

the voices of the most vulnerable in society are heard in decision-making. It is also responsive to the present and future needs of society.

We go back to the story of David. Following his victories and the death of Saul, he becomes King over Israel and in one of the most moving acts in the scriptures, he shows mercy whereas his contemporaries were bankrupt of such virtues. ***And the King said, is there not yet any of the house of Saul, that I may shew him the kindness of God unto him?...*** (2 Samuel 9:3)

After being told of one such named Mephibosheth who was destitute and crippled. David sends for him: ***And David said unto him, fear not: for I will surely shew thee kindness for Jonathan thy father's sake, and will restore thee all the land of Saul thy father; and thou shalt eat bread at my table continually*** (2 Samuel 9:7)

All eight major characteristics are met by this single act of David.

he inquires the question of showing kindness openly to people and not in secret. He is ***accountable, transparent, responsive, effective and efficient*** because he is making himself known of what policy he means to take and wastes no time to do the right thing. His mercy to Saul's family proves David is ***equitable and inclusive and follows the rule of law***. It assures that ***corruption is minimized*** because to David, leadership was a stewardship given to him by God. Good leadership is a great responsibility. The ***views of minorities are taken into account*** in this case, the heir to what had once been the ruling dynasty and now he lives far away from the palace a cripple. ***That the voices of the most vulnerable in society are heard in decision-making*** in that now he will eat forever at David's table. ***It is also responsive to the present and future needs of society.***

It is to this, the last of the great characteristics of good leadership that the Chronicler writes of David later which would define the King's legacy: ***So David reigned over all Israel, and executed judgment and justice among all his people*** (1 Chronicles 18:14)

Matt

From the Treasurer's Desk – 12th Edition

Brothers and Sisters,

Hear our voices

In 2023 there were 312 labor strikes involving roughly 453,000 workers. This compared to 180 strikes involving 43,700 workers just 2 years prior. From the Hollywood screenwriters, to the nation's largest health care organization, to the United Auto Workers, labor actions are being heard throughout the country. In addition, the threat to strike resulted in labor deals in 2023. These labor deals produced higher pay and better working conditions. The threatened strikes were from UPS drivers, airplane pilots, and aerospace manufacturing. With the success of the walkouts, the potential for additional labor actions could follow and become the norm.

Future walkouts could include Casinos in Detroit and the defense contractor, General Dynamics. While these strikes put an emphasis on wages, the working conditions, which include staffing and scheduling, are equally as important. Since the pandemic, the labor market has experienced less workers resulting in increased hours for those employees at work. This is felt throughout the labor industry, causing frustration and burnout. Even Starbucks workers are participating in a series of labor actions throughout the holidays. There have been more work days lost

to strikes/walkouts in 2023 than any year in 2 decades.

–All information researched online

This brings me back to the U.S. Postal Strike of 1970. Wikipedia states: *The U.S. Postal Strike of 1970 was an eight-day strike by federal postal workers in March 1970.* For those of you who are not aware of the Postal Strike, our wages, benefits, and collective bargaining we benefit from and utilize today is a direct result from the strike of 1970. In 2020 the 50-year anniversary of the strike that brought the nation to a halt and solidified the NALC was celebrated. Next month I will re-submit my past article about the U.S. Postal Strike of 1970.

Quick Hits:

Information you should know

- In case you missed it, please read my second published NALCREST article in December's Postal Record. It includes some interesting facts about our popular retirement committee.

Federal Retirement Fairness Act reintroduced in House

On October 19, Reps. Derek Kilmer (D-WA), David Valadao (R-CA), Don Bacon (R-NE) and Gerry Connolly (D-VA) introduced the Federal Retirement Fairness Act; legislation that would allow certain federal employees to make catch-up retirement contributions for time

spent as non-career employees after December 31, 1988, making it creditable service under the Federal Employees Retirement System.

The legislation would cover letter carriers

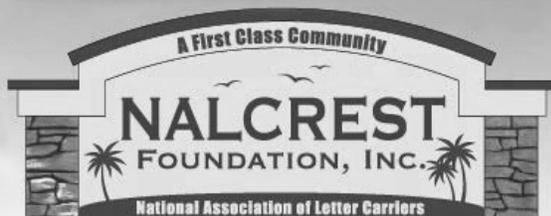
who were employed as casuals, transitional employees or city carrier assistants, providing them with greater retirement security. *NALC is pleased to see the Federal Retirement Fairness Act reintroduced in the House, NALC President Brian L. Renfro said. We urge the House to pass this bill that would benefit letter carriers and other federal employees who have devoted their working lives to public service. A significant number of active city letter carriers have worked in a non-career position, and that time is not currently creditable for retirement. This bill would change that, allowing letter carriers, and millions of other federal employees, to buy back this time and plan for their well-earned retirements. All letter carriers are encouraged to contact their representative and ask them to co-sponsor the bill.*



Tony Diaz
Treasurer
President Emeritus
Branch 599
Nalcrest Trustee

–NALC Bulletin

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



NALCREST – your NALC Retirement Community in Central Florida. Check it out at NALC.org under the Member Benefits tab.

Martin Luther King Jr. Day – January 15



*Our lives begin to end
the day we become
silent about things
that matter.*

The Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial is located in West Potomac Park at 1964 Independence Avenue SW, referencing the year the Civil Rights Act Of 1964 became law. The memorial's official dedication date is August 28, 2011, the 48th anniversary of the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom, though the ceremony was postponed until October 16 due to Hurricane Irene.

The 15 Year Battle for Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

On November 2, 1983, President Ronald Reagan signed the King Holiday Bill into law, designating the third Monday in January a federal holiday in observance of civil rights leader Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. The legislation to recognize Martin Luther King Jr. Day was first introduced just four days after his assassination on April 4, 1968. Still, it would take 15 years of persistence by civil rights activists for the holiday to be approved by the federal government and an additional 17 years for it to be recognized in all 50 states. Today, it is the only federal holiday designated as a *national day of service* to encourage all Americans to volunteer and improve their communities.

—National Museum of African American History & Culture—
Smithsonian

Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial

National Park Service

The memorial honors Martin Luther King Jr.'s legacy and the struggle for freedom, equality, and justice. A prominent leader in the modern civil rights movement, Dr. King was a tireless advocate for racial equality, working class, and the oppressed around the world.

Dr. King's memorial is the first to honor an African American individual on the National Mall. The space is a place to contemplate Martin Luther King Jr.'s legacy: a non-violent philosophy striving for freedom, justice, and equality.

Some quotes of Dr. King's that are engraved on the memorial:

*Out of the mountain of despair, a stone of hope.
Darkness cannot drive out darkness, only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate, only love can do that.*

I have the audacity to believe that peoples everywhere can have three meals a day for their bodies, education and culture for their minds, and dignity, equality, and freedom for their spirits.

The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy.

True peace is not merely the absence of tension; it is the presence of justice.

—nps.gov/mlkm



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 under Government Affairs.

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.

BRANCH 599

DISASTER RELIEF CHALLENGE

*Donations up to \$500
will be matched by our Branch President and Vice President.*

**The Branch has issued a 30-DAY CHALLENGE to all members:
Donate any amount to the Disaster Relief Fund by January 4, 2024.**

All donations will go to the NALC Disaster Relief Fund to help support NALC member families in need during a disaster. Give all donations to your Steward, or you can contact the Branch office to make your donation and get your receipt. All donations will be totaled before the January meeting.

- ❖ The station with the most money donated will be recognized with breakfast delivered by our President and Vice President!



**NALC
Disaster
Relief
Foundation**



FED-HURT

(833) 433-3487

Injury Care For ALL Federal Workers

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

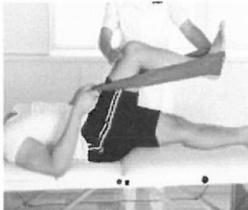
If you are injured, here are some very simple steps to follow.

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

- 📍 Pensacola
- 📍 Daytona / Ormond Beach

Central Florida

- 📍 Orlando / Airport
- 📍 Orlando / Sanford
- 📍 Orlando / Altamonte Springs
- 📍 Tampa / Palm Harbor
- 📍 Tampa / Temple Terrace Bush Gardens

South Florida

- 📍 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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