



Tampa Letter Carrier

VOLUME 13, ISSUE 2

FEBRUARY 2014

Around The Horn from The President's Desk

Brothers and Sisters, here is hoping everyone's New Year has begun safe and happy. This is Edition I, From The President's Desk and the first month of the year has been fast and furious. First I surrendered the route I had held down for over 23 years and retired from being a letter carrier with 33.5 years of loyal service on January 3, 2014. Let me tell you when you serve the same route for that long, the relationships you develop over time with your customers can be very attaching. You become part of their family, part of the small community, your customers have become true friends, and some friends for life. You watch children grow up, go to college, get married and have their own children. You watch adults grow older and become grandparents and retire, and the elderly, you keep an eye on. Until you retire, you do not realize the impact and impressions you make as a letter carrier. I will miss the day to day interaction with my fellow carriers and co-workers in my office. I have worked with some great

people along the way, some are very good friends away from work, it had been a pleasure. We accomplished a lot at Seminole Heights Station 33603; for many years we fed and provided gifts for up to three families for the holidays, what a wonderful experience. I personally fed customers on my route that were struggling, and they never forgot. I always took pride in my service to my customers; sometimes it was not included in my estimate, but I provided the customer service the public deserves. It was always a priority and that is what makes the letter carrier so important and vital to our communities nationwide.

I then began the transition period, working side by side with outgoing President Alan Peacock. I want to thank the new Vice President Alan Peacock for working with me during the transition period. Answering all the questions and providing the information concerning the union operations. Directing me to where information is

located in the office and reviewing active events. I look forward to meeting with all the stewards and officers and setting up committees with carriers that are willing to get involved and make a difference. We will always accept carriers wanting to get involved, from community activities to branch business to becoming a union steward...get involved. I look forward to visiting the stations and seeing all of you; I will always be a letter carrier.

Making a difference during the holidays
Speaking of making an impact on the community, I want to give a shout out to the carriers at **Ybor/Commerce Station**. The joint effort between management and the carriers made a Christmas very special for an east Tampa family. They collected



Tony Diaz
President
Branch 599

**Branch 599
Meeting**

Thursday
February 6
7:30 PM

(Continued on page 3)

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@yahoo.com

Office Hours

Monday-Friday

8 AM – 4:30 PM

Rodna Kimelman Kirk

Office Secretary
nalc599@verizon.net

Tampa Letter Carrier

Tony Diaz
Publisher

Phyllis R. Thomas
Editor
editor@nalc599.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.com no later than the 5th of each month in order for us to meet our time limits to the publisher.

Officers

Position	Officer	Phone	Email
President	Tony Diaz	813.765.0599 office 813.875.0599	tony_diaz599@yahoo.com
Vice President	Alan Peacock	813.892.9378	apeacock.nalc@verizon.net
Recording Secretary	Michael Brink	813.661.1639	recording.sec@nalc599.com
Financial Secretary	Gilbert Cabanas	813.855.0516	financial.sec@nalc599.com
Treasurer	John Gebo	813.503.1256	jig7d7@aol.com
Sergeant-at-Arms	J.C. Howard	813.310.0689	
MBA/NSBA	Al Guice	813.422.4967	
Health Benefit Rep.	Lance Jones	813.220.1292	
Director of Retirees	Don Thomas	813.963.0653	paswede@hotmail.com
Trustees	Maggie Lancaster	813.317.7522	joelunaticplayer@aol.com
	Lori McMillion	813.263.7101	
	Jose Oliva	813.299.8442	
Labor Management	Alan Robinson	813.843.9762	
	Warren Sumlin	813.486.7612	
Presidents Emeritus	Garland Tickle • Orbe Andux Donald Thomas • Michael Anderson James Good • Alan Peacock		

Shop Stewards

Station	ZIP	Steward	Station No.	Steward's No.
Tampa Stations/Branches		Chief Steward, Brian Obst		727.458.0679
Brandon	33510/11	Warren Sumlin	813.661.1636	813.486.7612
Carrollwood	33618	Eddie Berroth	813.960.8894	813.493.5224
Commerce	33602	Detlev Aepfel	813.242.4507	813.505.7914
Forest Hills	33612	Alan Robinson	813.935.2954	813.843.9762
Forest Hills Annex	33613	Nick Cullaro	813.935.2954	813.541.8159
Hilldale/Annex	33614/34	Varick Reeder	813.879.4309	315.491.6234
Hyde Park	33606	George McEndree	813.873.7189	813.597.4112
Interbay/Port Tampa	33611/16	Marie Brown	813.831.2034	727.331.9907
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	Mike Thomsen	813.719.6793	303.916.3196
Produce	33610	Elvin Rodriguez	813.237.4280	646.346.3288
Ruskin/Sun City Ctr	33570	Aric Person	813.634.1403	813.545.7779
Seminole Heights	33603	Walt Rhoades	813.237.4569	813.389.1708
Sulphur Springs	33604	J.D. Lewers	813.237.4569	813.528.5519
TCA/Peninsula	33609	Troy Figueroa	813.873.7189	813.403.1644
TCA/West Tampa	33607		813.873.7189	
Temple Terrace	33617	Warren Sumlin	813.988.0152	813.486.7612
Town 'N Country	33615/35	Brian Obst	813.884.0973	727.458.0679
Ybor City	33605	Detlev Aepfel	813.242.4507	813.505.7914

Around The Horn from The President's Desk

(Continued from page 1)

money and purchased gifts for a family that otherwise would not have had a Christmas. They are now in the process of adopting this family to continue their support. There was local news coverage and a video was posted on postalnews.com. Congratulations to all who stepped up for a great cause; that is what the holidays are about. In the past I have heard many great stories like this from other stations making charitable contributions to their communities. The letter carrier has always been there.

From the Contract Administration Unit

dated December 23, 2013.

This new Memorandum of Understanding discusses **Voluntary Early Retirement counseling**, M-01829, a National level case. For those carriers, age and service time eligible to retire, and for those that are not quite eligible, this MOU may mean a possible Voluntary Early Retirement (VER) in the near future. However, before anyone starts seeing dollar signs, this does not mean there will a cash incentive to accompany VER. We will keep an eye out for the next step. It reads:

Dear Mr. Rolando:

Re: Q06N-4Q-C 09285802

Class Action

Washington DC 20260-4100

On several occasions our representatives met in pre arbitration discussion on the above captioned grievance. Time limits were extended by mutual consent. The issue in this case is whether the Postal Service is required to provide individual retirement counseling prior to a Voluntary Early Retirement (VER) decision irrevocability date when counseling is requested by a VER-eligible city letter carrier. After reviewing this matter, we agree to resolve this grievance based on the

following:

1. The parties agree that when the Postal Service offers a VER, it will abide by the provisions of the Employee and Labor Relations Manual concerning retirement counseling and the settlement in national case number Q01 N-4Q-C 07150373.
2. Human Resources Shared Service Center (HRSSC) will ensure that there are sufficient appointments available for employees applying for the VER provided eligible employees follow the application procedures and timelines for requesting such appointments.
3. In the unanticipated circumstance that VER counseling appointments requested pursuant to paragraph 2 are not available for all eligible employees prior to the irrevocable date, the national parties will expeditiously engage in discussions to address this issue. In the event agreement is not reached, the union may initiate a national-level dispute over this matter pursuant to the provisions of Article 15 of the National Agreement. Such grievance will be handled on an expedited basis including, if necessary, national-level arbitration scheduling.
4. If the parties are unable to reach agreement through the process provided for in paragraph 3, any employee who requests an appointment pursuant to paragraph 2 and does not receive an appointment prior to the irrevocable date may withdraw his/her VER application by submitting written notice to HRSSC in writing no later than ten calendar days following the irrevocable date. The terms of this paragraph are without prejudice to the position of either party should the union initiate a national-level grievance pursuant to paragraph 3.

Quick Hits:

Information you should know

*) I am looking forward to the Retirees/Installation Dinner on January 18. I am assisting President Peacock with the planning and the event should be a fun time. A great menu is planned with many out of town guests, and entertainment. It is a celebration for our retirees with an installation for all the Branch officers. The collection of State Officers, Branch Presidents and former Branch Presidents will be impressive. There was a wealth of knowledge and experience converged together. To the retirees, which I am now classified as that myself, I look forward to visiting with you as I do every year and hope to see many of you every month at the retirees breakfast, the first Monday of every month. January 6 will be my first as a retiree...come out and join us for breakfast at the Coffee Cup Restaurant in Drew Park, 4407 N Hubert Ave at 9 AM.

*) With the upcoming route inspections we will be offering route inspection classes at the union hall. Every office, at this point is scheduled to be inspected, these classes will be very helpful and could affect the outcome of your inspection. See your union steward for scheduling; the first route inspection class will have been completed when you receive the newsletter.

*) The next work party will be held on February 9, 9-11 AM.

Look forward to talking to you again on the next *Around The Horn* from The President's Desk

Proposed Bylaw Changes

ARTICLE XV – Station Stewards

Section 6

Currently reads as follows:

All Station Stewards shall receive \$100.00 per month for allowed expenses. All Station Stewards shall receive \$50.00 for attending monthly Shop Stewards Training meetings. The President and Vice-President shall be paid \$45.00 a month for attending the monthly Shop Steward Training meetings. Shop Stewards and Officers shall not have any reduction in pay due to illness, dependent care, annual leave or any valid circumstances that would keep him/her from attending such meetings.

Proposed to read as follows:

All Station Stewards shall receive \$100.00 per month for allowed expenses. All Station Stewards shall receive \$50.00 for attending monthly Shop Stewards Training meetings. Shop Stewards and Officers shall not have any reduction in pay due to illness, dependent care, annual leave or any valid circumstances that would keep him/her from attending such meetings.

Signed by: Mike Brink, Brian Obst, Detlev C. Aeppel, Jim Good, Lance Jones

ARTICLE IV – Officers

Section 7 & 7 (A)

Currently reads as follows:

Station Stewards must attend at least two-thirds of the Branch meetings or Stewards Training meetings each year from the time they are elected or appointed for dues reimbursement.

(A) All dues to be reimbursed at the close of each year. If a member holds more than one (1) position as outlined Article IV, Section 6 and 7, only one (1) reimbursement shall be allowed.

Proposed to read as follows:

Station Stewards must attend at least two-thirds of the Branch meetings or Stewards Training meetings each year from the time they are elected or appointed to be eligible for the reimbursement of an amount equivalent to his/her regular monthly dues which is deducted from his/her pay, less any amount retained, reimbursed or returned to the NALC.

(A) An amount equivalent to his/her regular monthly dues which is deducted from his/her pay, less any amount retained, reimbursed or returned to the NALC shall be reimbursed at the close of each year. If a member holds more than one (1) position as outlined in Article IV, Section 6 and 7, then only one (1) reimbursement will be allowed.

Signed by: Mike Brink, Brian Obst, Detlev C. Aeppel, Jim Good, Lance Jones

Sharing Our Members’ Joys and Sorrows

Our deepest sympathy and prayerful support is extended to Rickey Robinson [Commerce] and family at the passing of his mother, and to Dawn Waller [TCA/Hyde Park] and family at the passing of her father.

Shop Stewards will Meet

Tuesday 7 PM
February 4
March 4

Executive Board Meets

Thursday 6:30 pm
February 6
March 6

The Birdseye View

Not only stepping down this month, but also stepping back to the title of my old articles before being in the position of President. As Vice President I will be the same person I have always been and continue to work with the members of our branch to protect our contract and strive to improve the working environment that has continued to deteriorate since the advent of pre-funding and failing American economy. It has been a pleasure to work beside Tony Diaz as my Vice President and I can only hope that I can be as helpful to him in his presidency. Along with our Chief Steward Brian Obst we will continue to be the leadership that directs our stewards in the everyday conflict that hopefully will improve under the new Officer in Charge, Chenise LeDoux. We have had a brief meeting with Ms. LeDoux and we will refrain from any opinion at this time, but as you already know we call them as we see them. Unfortunately we have had to see too many of them in recent years that are just passing through or detailed in then out. According to a comment from their staff they are movers and shakers, and we let them know that they are moving but we are not shaking. There is a good reason why we do what we do as representatives, it is because they have manuals and contracts that they are responsible to and have agreed to, then they agree to disagree and call it their right. There are a lot of matters that could be corrected if only there was better communication, but the main reason for lacking communication is to see what sticks before we do something about it. I always thought that the Joint Contract Administration Manual (JCAM) was designed to prevent that from happening, but there are those in lower places who just don't abide by what has already been decided in higher places.

We are planning for Route Inspections

and will hold classes at Tampa Letter Carriers Hall. During our last inspections the turnout for these classes were very small and left the impression that few take this seriously. This is your job and your route and the knowledge you gain can be very useful toward the outcome of the results of your inspection. Every office is scheduled to be inspected this year unless District does something similar to last year and cancels some. All but two offices scheduled last year were canceled and they are scheduled this year as well. We can't foretell if or when any action could change so it is in our best interest to be prepared for these inspections.

It will be interesting to see how the early scheduled inspections go as compared to the ones scheduled after daylight savings time resumes on March 9, 2014. I can hear management now, crying about how it took longer delivering in the dark. Oh the irony of the sweet sound when they admit it is harder and slower to deliver in the dark. Of course when they adjust the first four offices inspected they will have to live with that data that they chose the inspection period to use. Then again they also picked a period for one of our associate offices that definitely will be affected by seasonal changes that occur after April. They are masters at disguising the facts and figures that we have to deal with year round. NALC has created a National Task Force for dealing with the issues of delivery in the dark and are looking at all the safety factors that are involved. Safety of our employees, customers and their children depend on some sound reasoning and less dependence on the demand of the, *I have to have it now* mentality of our eCommerce society.

On the eReassign and hopeful conversion process we have cases pending at

the B-Team and there is continued movement of carriers reassigning to the area. The one thing we know is that there are still 30 reserve carrier residual vacancies that have yet to be filled that we feel confident will be decided in the Dispute Resolution Team (DRT) process or through arbitration. We are asking for remedy retroactive to November 2, 2013. Time will tell if the mountain of grievances we have filed this past year will yield the decisions we request, but either way we will continue to fight for what we feel are contractual violations.

Let's all resolve to make our Branch stronger and more united to work together for the common support of each other. Let's gain in our knowledge and share it with each other to make the best decisions that lead us to right any wrongs that are brought against our brothers and sisters. Stay the course and support our National leaders through eActivist and COLCPE for the battle in Congress and any attempts to diminish the agency we all labor for. Take pride in serving America's customers of the US Postal Service and uphold all the standards that make us the best in the world.

Yours in Solidarity and Unionism,
Alan Peacock, Vice President



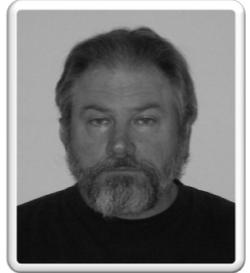
Alan Peacock
Vice President
Branch 599

**Sunday
Work Party
at our Hall**

February 2 9-11 AM

Upcoming Route Inspections

Things You Need to Know



Brian Obst
Tampa Stations/
Branches
Chief Steward
Branch 599

All offices in the Tampa Installation have been scheduled for 6-day route counts and inspection during the early part of 2014, so it is a good time to remind you all of the importance of performing properly prior to as well as during the inspection process. The NALC has put together a handbook several years ago called *The NALC Route Protection Program* with the goal in mind of assisting all carriers with the proper procedures that both parties must follow during the inspection process. If you are aware of the proper guidelines that must be followed it is much easier to determine when management is attempting to slant the process and improperly adjust the routes against the carrier's best interest.

All carriers were provided a copy of the pocket version of this program so you should have it available for refreshing yourself on the important issues you need to know. If you have lost or misplaced this handbook you can always find it on the NALC website, nalc.org, under the City Delivery tab on the Department tab located on the home page.

I am going to provide some excerpts from pages 1-7 through 1-10 of the NALC Route Protection Program that are important to emphasize:

On each day during the week of count and inspection, you should case and deliver the mail as usual. Except on the day

of inspection, you will count every piece of mail and complete Form 1838-C Worksheet.

*On the day of inspection, the **route examiner** will conduct the mail count and fill out the Form 1838-C Worksheet. Upon request, you have a right to verify the inspector's count. This is an important right and you are strongly encouraged to insist that you be allowed to verify the count. This includes all DPS, S999, and any machine counted mail as well.*

Perform your job as usual!! To ensure a fair and reasonable evaluation, you must perform your duties and travel your route in precisely the same manner during the week of inspection as you do throughout the year. This cannot be stressed enough. (M-41 Section 915)

*During the week of count and inspection there should be **no changes to normal distribution procedures or clerical schedules**. The normal cutoff time for distribution should be observed. (M-39 Section 221.133)*

All mail must be delivered. All mail distributed to your route up to the normal established cutoff time must be delivered every day of the count week. In addition, there must be no accumulation of curtailed mail on the day preceding the count, and no mail may be curtailed on the last day of the count, (M-39 Sections 221.133, 221.134 & 221.136, M-41 Sections 921.11 & 921.13)

Examiner's Conduct: You should be

aware that route examiners must adhere to certain regulations governing their conduct. The M-39 Handbook states that the route examiner must not set the pace for you, nor should he/she forbid any rest or comfort stops. The examiner is not allowed to discuss mail volume or any evaluations of the route with you. Contact your shop steward to report a potential grievance if you feel the route examiner's conduct goes beyond what is allowed.

Perform your job as usual!! This bears repeating with emphasis. Performing your job as usual is the only way to ensure a fair and reasonable route evaluation.

It is clear that our National leaders have gone out of their way to provide us with this excellent reference guide to help protect our jobs from overzealous inspectors who would destroy our route assignments as well as our jobs. I highly recommend that you begin studying this guide in preparation for the upcoming inspections.

Next month I will be discussing the Forms 1571 & 3996 to help you understand their importance in your daily delivery assignment.

Until then remember –

Knowledge is the Key.

Brian Obst
Tampa Stations & Branches Chief Steward

Retirees Breakfast

Monday February 3 9 AM Coffee Cup Restaurant 4407 N Hubert Avenue, Tampa

Retiree Station

As I think about serving our Branch as Director of Retirees, I wonder how I reached retirement so fast! It seems like yesterday that I was a PTF doing MVS [Motor Vehicle Service] runs, then casing and carrying a route and then a trip.

First thing I want to do is thank our previous Director of Retirees, Lance Jones, for his willingness to help me with this transition of leadership. I for one, appreciate all he did in this position.

Many of our brothers and sisters have passed on, retired and moved away, or just retired that I had the privilege and honor to work with. Some served our Branch in many different ways and some paid his/her dues every payday and never asked for anything as they never needed help. All received the pay raises, COLAs, and all the other benefits won by our Union. The thing

that now comes to mind is how can we provide opportunities for us to get together and enjoy a fellowship or activity?

We have the monthly Retiree's Breakfast, which is attended by a really good group of retirees. My question to all retirees: what can be done to get more of you out to attend the breakfast and enjoy the fellowship of those you worked with? The breakfast opens the door for some good fellowship and sharing memories about what we did as letter carriers. Would a lunch at the Hall or restaurant be better? Some have stated to me that rush hour traffic was why they did not attend. I am open to any and all suggestions. I know that traffic is a real pain for me getting to breakfast and I have been one that has not attended because of the traffic. I realize different ideas on this subject have been tried in the past, only question that I have is, can we

improve this so we get more participation?

The Brandon Post Office has a Retirees Luncheon and so do Tampa Firefighter Retirees, to avoid the rush hour traffic and it works for them; not sure if that would get more of our retirees out or not, but think it would be worth the try. What do you think about this? Let us me know your thoughts!

I would like to setup an email list of retirees to send out reminders and alert you to matters that will affect our retirement. Please send your email address to me at: paswede@hotmail.com

May each retiree enjoy his/her retirement...do it your way!



Don Thomas
Director of Retirees
Branch 599

ARSLAN UNIFORMS

Bill & Shirley Moran

Gold Card Member Branch 1477 St. Petersburg
Honorary Member Branch 599 Tampa

**NEED UNIFORMS IN A HURRY?
SHOP BY PHONE FROM HOME**

320 Patlin Circle East, Largo FL 33770-3063
BILL'S CELL 727.543.0705 ▪ SHIRLEY'S CELL 727.543.0708
FAX 727.585.9367
bilmor@tampabay.rr.com



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

Tampa Letter Carrier
 Volume 13 • Issue 2 • February 2014

NONPROFIT ORG
 US POSTAGE
 PAID
 TAMPA FL
 PERMIT NO. 1285



It's Time to SHED YOUR DEBT!

Debt Consolidation – Full of Perks!

- Lower Your Interest Rates
- One, Easy to Manage Payment
- Pay Off Debt Faster



Federally
 Insured
 by NCUA.

SPEAK TO A LOAN OFFICER TODAY!

800.782.4899 • WWW.TPCU.ORG

Equal
 Housing
 Lender.