



# Tampa Letter Carrier

## From the Desk of the President

Since the 4<sup>th</sup> of July is upon us, I feel compelled to print some important words not only for our country but for all its inhabitants as well:

***The unanimous Declaration of the thirteen united States of America, When in the Course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.***

*We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. — That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, — That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to affect their Safety and Happiness.*

The members of the 13 States had banded together to declare their intention to separate themselves from the government of the King of Great Britain based on his unwillingness to provide for the well-being of the people. The transgressions against the people were listed as follows:

*He has refused his Assent to Laws, the most wholesome and necessary for the public good.*

*He has forbidden his Governors to pass Laws of immediate and pressing importance, unless suspended in their operation till his Assent should be obtained; and when so suspended, he has utterly neglected to attend to them.*

*He has refused to pass other Laws for the accommodation of large districts of people, unless those people would relinquish the right of Representation in the Legislature, a right inestimable to them and formidable to tyrants only.*

*He has called together legislative bodies at places unusual, uncomfortable, and distant from the depository of their public Records, for the sole purpose of fatiguing them into compliance with his measures.*

*He has dissolved Representative Houses repeatedly, for opposing with manly firmness his invasions on the rights of the people.*



Brian Obst  
President  
Branch 599

Branch 599  
serving  
Brandon  
Plant City  
Sun City  
Tampa

## Branch 599 Meeting

Tuesday  
August 8  
7:30 PM

*Until further notice, all meetings will be held at*

The American Legion  
Post 111  
6918 N Florida Avenue  
Tampa 33604

**Note**  
**Change of Location**

(Continued on page 3)

## 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  
editor.nalc599@gmail.com

Branch 599 Office  
813.875.0599

**National Association of Letter Carriers 599**, 315 W Busch Boulevard, Suite C Tampa FL 33612, publishes the Tampa Letter Carrier monthly. The opinions expressed in this publication are those of the writers and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of Branch 599, NALC. It is the policy of this publication that all articles submitted for print must be signed by the writer.

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

## Officers

<i>Position</i>	<i>Officer</i>	<i>Phone</i>	<i>Email</i>
<b>President</b>	Brian Obst	813.875.0599 <i>cell</i> 727.458.0679	erif_lor@hotmail.com
<b>Vice President</b>	Michael Smith	813.326.0717	mosmith46@gmail.com
<b>Recording Secretary</b>	Matt Fernandez	786.247.4185	
<b>Financial Secretary</b>	Alan Robinson	813.843.9762	
<b>Treasurer</b>	Tony Diaz	813.598.9635	
<b>Sergeant-at-Arms</b>	Luis Cruz	813.431.3223	
<b>MBA/NSBA</b>			
<b>Health Benefit Rep</b>	Detlev Aepfel	813.505.7914	
<b>Director of Retirees</b>	John Gebo	813.503.1256	
<b>Trustees</b>			
	Lori McMillion, Ch.	813.263.7101	
	Alan Peacock	813.892.9378	
	Milly Minsal	813.446.2572	
<b>Labor Management</b>	J.D. Lewers	813.528.5519	
	Clement Cheung	813.758.5910	
<b>Presidents Emeritus</b>	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>
<b>Tampa Stations/Branches Chief Steward, Mike Smith</b>				813.326.0717
Brandon	33510/11	David Rivadeneira	813.661.1636	813.403.9525
Brandon	33510/11	Osceola Williams Sr.	813.661.1636	210.445.1369
Carrollwood	33618	Tina Bausch	813.961.2963	813.892.2282
Commerce	33602	Cynthia Williams	813.247.2416	813.778.4373
Forest Hills	33612	J.R. Sanchez	813.935.2954	773.849.6229
Forest Hills Annex	33613		813.935.2954	
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	Bert Fristad	813.634.1642	813.541.8514
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	Rigo Molina	813.873.7189	813.455.4186
TCA/West Tampa	33607		813.873.7189	
Temple Terrace	33617		813.988.0152	
Town & Country	33615/35	Vic Figueroa	813.884.0973	845.380.6386
Ybor City	33605	Maurice Rice	813.247.2416	813.334.3189

## From the Desk of the President

*(Continued from page 1)*

*He has refused for a long time, after such dissolutions, to cause others to be elected; whereby the Legislative powers, incapable of Annihilation, have returned to the People at large for their exercise; the State remaining in the mean time exposed to all the dangers of invasion from without, and convulsions within.*

*He has endeavored to prevent the population of these States; for that purpose obstructing the Laws for Naturalization of Foreigners; refusing to pass others to encourage their migrations hither, and raising the conditions of new Appropriations of Lands.*

*He has obstructed the Administration of Justice, by refusing his Assent to Laws for establishing Judiciary powers.*

*He has made Judges dependent on his Will alone, for the tenure of their offices, and the amount and payment of their salaries.*

*He has erected a multitude of New Offices, and sent hither swarms of Officers to harass our people, and eat out their substance.*

*He has kept among us, in times of peace, Standing Armies without the Consent of our legislatures.*

*He has affected to render the Military independent of and superior to the Civil power.*

*He has combined with others to subject us to a jurisdiction foreign to our constitution, and unacknowledged by our laws; giving his Assent to their Acts of pretended Legislation.*

*For Quartering large bodies of armed troops among us.*

*For protecting them, by a mock Trial, from punishment for any Murders which they should commit on the Inhabitants of these States.*

*For cutting off our Trade with all parts of the world.*

*For imposing Taxes on us without our*

*Consent.*

*For depriving us in many cases, of the benefits of Trial by Jury.*

*For transporting us beyond Seas to be tried for pretended offences.*

*For abolishing the free System of English Laws in a neighbouring Province, establishing therein an Arbitrary government, and enlarging its Boundaries so as to render it at once an example and fit instrument for introducing the same absolute rule into these Colonies.*

*For taking away our Charters, abolishing our most valuable Laws, and altering fundamentally the Forms of our Governments.*

*For suspending our own Legislatures, and declaring themselves invested with power to legislate for us in all cases whatsoever.*

*He has abdicated Government here, by declaring us out of his Protection and waging War against us.*

*He has plundered our seas, ravaged our Coasts, burnt our towns, and destroyed the lives of our people.*

*He is at this time transporting large Armies of foreign Mercenaries to complete the works of death, desolation and tyranny, already begun with circumstances of Cruelty & perfidy scarcely paralleled in the most barbarous ages, and totally unworthy the Head of a civilized nation.*

*He has constrained our fellow Citizens taken Captive on the high Seas to bear Arms against their Country, to become the executioners of their friends and Brethren, or to fall themselves by their Hands.*

*He has excited domestic insurrections amongst us, and has endeavoured to bring on the inhabitants of our frontiers, the merciless Indian Savages, whose known rule of warfare, is an undistinguished destruction of all ages, sexes and conditions.*

The people had stated their grievances numerous times and were rebuffed at every turn, so they acted in the only way left open to them, revolution by declaring themselves independent of the British laws and established new governance among themselves. This was a dangerous path for them to take yet 56 brave men took pen in hand and signed the Declaration in spite of the dangers they then would have to face. The men who helped to found this great Nation did so with faith that their actions were needed and would ultimately lead to a better future for all people living in the new United States of America. Men like **Thomas Jefferson, Ben Franklin, Samuel Adams, John Adams**, and the man who would sign his name boldly and extra large so they could not miss him, **John Hancock**, would help lead the way to the future for this new country.

Without these great men and the 51 others who signed, I shudder to think where this country would be today. I believe we all owe them a debt of gratitude and I am thankful every 4<sup>th</sup> of July for their actions.

I would like to point out that these men banded together, the same as a Union does to address their concerns and grievances. The parallels between what we do as a Union and what they did in forming a new government/country are clear, we represent all the letter carriers in the Postal Service and they represented all the people in the new country. Our issues deal with similar issues as they did, representation, safety, our lives and livelihood. Remember the words:

***We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.***

*(Continued on page 4)*

## Calendar

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

**Until further notice,  
Branch Meetings  
will be held at  
American Legion  
Post 111  
6918 N Florida Avenue  
Tampa 33604**

### Note Meeting Changes:

#### Shop Stewards

Tuesday

August 1 7:00 PM  
315 W Busch Blvd, Suite C

#### Executive Board

Thursday

August 3 6:30 PM  
315 W Busch Blvd, Suite C

#### Branch 599

Tuesday

August 8 7:30 PM  
American Legion  
Post 111  
6918 N Florida Avenue  
Tampa 33604

#### Retirees' Breakfasts

Tampa

Monday

August 7 9:00 AM  
Mama's Kitchen  
9312 N Florida Avenue 33612

#### Temple Terrace

Tuesday

August 8 10:00 AM  
Bob Evans Restaurant  
off Fletcher near I-75  
12272 Morris Bridge Road

## Financial Secretary

The longer that I am working at this position, the more I am learning. As I learn the program from National, there is a ton of info on our website that is accessible to me. Since taking over my new position I have reviewed from the beginning of 2022, and there is a large portion of dues that are owed to the Branch. When a member is on OWCP, the member will be required to pay their union dues directly to Branch 599. The reason for this is that your union dues are not being deducted from your paycheck while on OWCP.

If you are in a non-pay status, your dues are not being deducted from your paycheck. The difference being that you are not being paid. Upon returning to work or returning to some type of pay status, you will then be required to pay all back dues directly to Branch 599. While on OWCP or non-pay status, the national portion of your dues is still automatically deducted from our total collected dues, even though we are not receiving our portion of your dues.

In other words, we are paying National dues for all members if they are showing as active members on our roster, regardless of their pay status, so it is up to the local branch to recover dues that are owed because National has already taken their part whether we got paid or not. That is the reason the dues must be paid to us.

In the next few weeks, I will be sending out letters to members that have been on OWCP or non-pay status regarding their dues. If you receive a letter in the next few weeks, it is not any type of threatening letter; just to inform you of our bylaws. Remember when you are on OWCP or non-pay status you are still being represented by Branch 599.

Until next Time,  
*Alan*



Alan Robinson  
Financial Secretary  
Building Manager  
Branch 599

## From the Desk of the President

*(Continued from page 3)*

On the job, we expect that management will accord us with the intention of honoring our National Agreement and the issues we bargain in good faith over such as wages, hours, and working conditions. Our national officers are currently negotiating our new agreement and I am certain that they will be successful in bringing home the best agreement they can negotiate for the membership to ratify.

### Don't ignore heat safety!

I would like to take a moment to touch on safety on the Job. Remember, we are now in the most brutal days of heat in Florida and I remind you that your personal safety is of paramount importance. If you are having difficulty with the heat and you need to take a comfort stop, please do so. Comfort Stops that are reasonable and necessary are part of the job so don't

allow any manager or supervisor tell you otherwise. If management is giving you a difficult time over this, notify your steward and file a grievance under Safety. If your office has broken air conditioning, please notify our Branch office immediately, so we can get on the case to ensure it is taken care of as soon as possible, as well as getting fans and portable units to assist in cooling the building until the repairs are completed. I don't have any desire to read about any more carriers dying due to heat related issues anywhere in the Postal Service let alone here in Branch 599.

*Don't judge each day by the harvest you reap but by the seeds that you plant.*

Robert Louis Stevenson

Until next time I leave you as always....

**Knowledge is the Key.**

*Brian Obst, President*

# From the Vice President's Desk

## Another Voice Another Vote

The political season is upon us. I would like to pass on some information that will quash some misleading thoughts about what the National Association of Letter Carriers (NALC) does during the political season and throughout the years leading up to the general election. Additionally, I would be remiss in not mentioning the Hatch Act which is an important piece of legislation that governs our actions during the political season.

We are all aware of political action committee (PAC) funds that are used to support political opponents. The NALC has a PAC fund (Letter Carrier Political Fund) which supports candidates who are concerned about the laws affecting carriers. The myth that the NALC only supports one political party is false. The NALC lobbies throughout the year to solicit members of both parties who are in line with the views of the NALC. During the legislative session in 2022, the NALC was instrumental in soliciting a bipartisan vote using our political fund which led to the downfall of the Postal Accountability and Enhancement Act (PAEA) (prefunding mandate) of 2006. The NALC is unambiguous in whom to support. As letter carriers, it is our responsibility to support those who support us. Take the time to reconsider supporting the NALC Letter Carrier Political Fund.

As the media begins to focus more on

### Publishers Note

For information to all readers: The Union is forbidden from using your dues money to support any political candidate in any way. Unlike UPS, FedEx, and others—we are not permitted to utilize any of the money paid in dues from the membership in this fashion. This is the reason for the Union Political Action Committee (PAC) which is known as the Letter Carrier Political Fund. This fund is used to support our political agenda and donations made to political candidates who are supporting the issues that benefit the Postal Service and the Union, also known as our jobs. Donations to this fund are voluntary and the candidates we donate to are bipartisan as our issues are supported by all parties and those that support us get support from us. If you would like to know how to donate to the fund, please go to [NALC.org](http://NALC.org) – place the cursor on government affairs, then slide down to political, and across to the Letter Carrier Political Fund and click. There you will find information on the various ways to contribute to help our leadership with getting our concerns and issues addressed in Congress.

Brian Obst, Publisher

the political aspect, now is a good time to pass on some valuable information as to what is and what is not appropriate on the workroom floor. We may all have our own political opinions, but voicing your opinions on the workroom floor or coercing another carrier to accept your viewpoint is not permissible under the law. I would like to take this opportunity to advise everyone on what is prohibited in our line of work under the Hatch Act.

The Hatch Act, passed in 1939, is a federal law that regulates the partisan political activities of most executive branch employees as well as certain state and local employees. The statute seeks to balance the government's interest in an efficient and impartial workforce with employees' rights to participate in the political process. The Act is binding and does not steer away from its intentions. Voicing political opinions in the workplace is prohibited.

The Act generally defines *employee* as any individual employed or holding office in (a) an *executive agency* or (b) a position within the competitive service that is not in an *executive agency*. This definition broadly extends to nearly all federal civilian executive branch employees, including postal service employees. The Act goes further to explain what is prohibited. The Congressional Research Service (In Focus, April 20, 2020) stated:

*In its current form, the Act prohibits*

*all covered federal employees from engaging in political activity while on duty; on federal property; while wearing a uniform or official insignia; or in a government vehicle. This restriction covers, for example, distributing campaign materials, displaying campaign materials, wearing partisan political buttons, T-shirts, or signs, posting comments to social media sites that advocate for or against partisan political parties, candidates, or groups, or using any email account to distribute content that advocates for or against partisan political parties, candidates, or groups while on duty.*

As you can see, the Hatch Act provides specific actions that are prohibited. The NALC and Postal Service stand strongly behind the prohibitions of the Hatch Act. It is everyone's responsibility from management to carrier to ensure that any political statements or actions on the workroom floor are not overlooked. Stewards are additionally tasked with being proactive to ensure that carrier's opinions are not openly voiced on the workroom floor to prevent violations of the Hatch Act.

To Get There We Must Work Together!

Mike Smith  
Vice President



Mike Smith  
Vice President  
Branch 599

## Sharing Our Members' Joys and Sorrows

**Our deepest sympathy** and prayerful support is extended to

**Mirosław Oldziej** [Brandon] and family at the passing of his mother, Danuta Oldziej, June 5 in Connecticut; to

**Mike Smith** [Vice President] at the passing of his sister, Carol Goff, July 5; to **Mike Williams** [TCA] and family at the passing of his sister-in-law, Sheryl Williams, June 25; and to the family and friends of **Joanne Cannon** [FSALC District 2 Legislative Chairperson, Past President of Branch 1753 Bradenton], July 10.

### Well wishes

and prayers are extended to **Michelle Lucas** [Town & Country] as she recovers from surgery.

### Congratulations!

to Bonnie & **President Brian Obst** at the birth of their third great-grandchild, Valerie Gogle, born July 17.

### Employee Assistance Program

info is at [nalc.org](http://nalc.org)

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

*It's confidential for you and your loved ones.*

## Mail Call

Brothers and Sisters, we are halfway through the summer of 2023. We have had several heat advisories asking citizens to stay indoors, and despite that we kept and will keep making our deliveries. I cannot stress enough to continue to hydrate at night, before work, and throughout your workday; take advantage of any shade for a respite from the scorching sun, and eat light meals. The heat will sap your strength and make you tired sooner than in cooler months.

Try to reduce your stress as much as you can, and if you need help, speak to someone or try USPS Employee Assistance

Program (EAP) [usps.ndbh.com/EAP](http://usps.ndbh.com/EAP) or call 800.327.4968 (800.EAP.4YOU). Get the help you need, there is no shame in doing so.

In closing, with a healthy body and mind we will get through this summer with a smile and maybe you might find yourself on the beach pulling a silver bullet from your iced-up Yeti 110.

*Sarge*



Luis Cruz  
Sergeant-at-Arms  
Branch 599

## Retired...but not Tired

### Retirees Breakfast Reminder

Retirees are invited to join fellow retirees for breakfast once a month. Retirees have two opportunities to attend breakfast: #1, the first Monday of the month (unless there is a holiday) at Mamas Kitchen, 9 AM, located at 9312 N. Florida Avenue; #2, the second Tuesday of the month at Bob Evans, 10 AM, located at 12272 Morris Bridge Road, Temple Terrace. As Director of Retirees, I will continue to push different ways for retirees to get together; share a story, catch up on the latest news, or just to say hello. I hope to see more retirees join us!

Are you thinking about retirement? Are you ready? Will you be ready? Are you nervous? Can you afford it? Will it be necessary to find a part-time job? Will you regret retiring? These questions are all valid, they are real feelings. If you are eligible and are closing in on retirement, a monthly chart of your expenses will help you keep track of your spending. What are your total bills? What are you spending your money on? Is your retirement salary and Social Security enough to cover your expenses? Do you need to use your TSP to make the monthly bills? You will know when it is time to retire, but be ready and be certain

you can live a good life while doing all the things you enjoy. If you are not sure about your finances, a financial advisor might be the way to go, to have a piece of mind.

I have been retired since 2004; the Postal Service has afforded me a good retirement.

The new Branch offices at 315 W. Busch Boulevard are in a more modern setting than our old letter carriers hall. It is an office building and after construction will host our Branch meetings. It is a smart building and has many bells and whistles. The process to find the building was a long one. I applaud those who helped secure the sale. Work is ongoing and the changes have been very positive. The plaques and pictures from the old hall were moved to the new building and are being mounted, to help preserve our history. I invite those members, both active and retired, who have not visited our new office to do so, and you will be pleased

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



John Gebo  
Director of Retirees  
Branch 599

# Matt Speaks: What If?

## ***A frightening scenario of a possible future....***

### ***A plea to organize.***

Many years later, the recorder secretary of what was once the local branch of the National Association of Letter Carriers (NALC) could still remember the day a radical Congress was elected to formally abolish by federal law, all organized labor. It happened within the shadow of a moment. And there was not a whimper of protest by the masses against the so-called *Free Labor Law*.

The name was a misnomer and overnight, thousands of labor contracts were suddenly extinguished. This *Free Labor Law* then paved the way to pass further legislation to ban organized labor altogether. First, labor activists were arrested, then Unions lost power and influence and had to liquidate their assets. Their funds transferred over to the state. The NALC was amongst the last of the organized labor movements in American history. It was an America that had lost all respect and zeal for labor. For though the rich would proclaim themselves titans of industry, the workers all knew through The Spirit that it was they who built America.

The recorder secretary was looking through the glass window of the old union hall in what was once the boardroom. It was pouring rain and he could still recall the good ole days. When letter carriers *en masse* gathered for general membership meetings. When quotas were not just barely met—they had actually in those days far exceeded them ten times. Where a spirit of camaraderie incited the letter carriers to fight for what was right. To gather together to debate, to laugh in between, and to debate again and though disagreements would sometimes come, they were still united in the trinity of Labor demands: Wages, Hours, and

Conditions. They had a common enemy, a common destiny, and they were united through love of their profession and brotherhood.

But those were the good ole days. The hall was brilliantly lit all those years ago, but then it became dim. It was raucous with life but then began to suffer a terminal disease.

He could still remember when the hour came and the executive board gathered in for what was to be its last meeting and the word was given.

*Meeting has begun*, said the president of the branch as he slammed his gavel and all the officers took their seats. The president spared not an instant to inform the terrible news. *I regret to inform you that because of the radical Congress and their Free Labor Law, the NALC has been officially dissolved.*

The executive board members were incredulous, but then again it was no surprise. Despite their best efforts, many carriers were swindled into thinking that management was all without exception, benevolent and enlightened. They actually always had your back. They would honor benefits and even increase them! No exception! To always give them what they needed and a fair hearing. And that management would always treat them with respect. The letter carriers didn't need a Union. It was their enemy!

Letter carriers began to be lax about the Union, and solidarity, and standing up for labor rights. And so as the years passed, meeting attendance declined and fresh blood filling idealists were suddenly in short supply and the void was filled with bad management, with legislators following close behind.

And thus, letter carriers *en masse* were swindled and became corrupt. They became lax. They dropped down their guard and then like the rest of the working classes were handed over to the disposal of the oligarchs. Who



Matt Fernandez  
Recording Secretary  
Branch 599

oppressed them, exploited them, and brainwashed them into thinking that unrestrained management was actually true freedom and that any union that would fight for workers' rights was a chain. They only needed to be freed! was the new government's cry. The word *Scab* suddenly became a badge of honor.

The president spoke again, *This means management can now do whatever it wants. It can harass carriers, steal their hours, and shortchange them on their pay. They can even force them to work 80-100 hours a week!*

*My goodness*, said the treasurer who lifted his face as the lights flickered because of the rain that was turning into a ferocious thunderstorm in the blackest night. The President looked up with tired eyes, *They're forcing them to take a 75% pay cut and health benefits have been stripped away, and also their thrift savings is being confiscated to help fund the service. Every single carrier's thrift savings is now reduced to \$0.*

The recorder secretary sighed and said, *If only people came to the meetings, and if only we were united like the good ole days and when everyone was united to fight for workers' rights!* The labor management representative spoke next, *Yeah, but look at what it's come to if there are no quotas, no meetings, and thus we were stagnated and no one cared. Our warnings fell on deaf ears. My last service talk had my fellow carriers actually boo me down and told me to shut up and after everything I had done to help them...once they were my friends, but now they hate me!*

(Continued on page 8)

## Bolio Retired!



Brian Obst and Kerry Bolio

President Obst presented **Kerry Bolio** [Interbay] with his retirement pin and gratuity at our July meeting.

## A peek into...



Our New Boardroom

## Just for the Health of It

July 28 is World Hepatitis Day. Hepatitis is an inflammation of the liver. We all know that our liver is a vital organ, but we may not know what the liver does. Our liver processes nutrients, filters the blood, and fights infections. Many things can damage our livers and cause hepatitis. Some medications, certain toxins, some medical conditions, and excessive alcohol use can all trigger hepatitis.

Hepatitis can also be contracted through a viral infection. This mostly happens through contact with infected blood, blood transfusions, contaminated hypodermic needles and syringes, body fluids, ingesting contaminated food, and childbirth. Hepatitis can have short term and long term effects. Long term hepatitis is the leading cause of liver cancer.

Symptoms of hepatitis can last from several weeks up to as long as 6 months. Many people have no symptoms and don't know they are infected. Symptoms of hepatitis include: fever, fatigue, loss of appetite, nausea, vomiting or abdominal pain, dark urine and clay colored bowel movements, joint pain, and jaundice.

The CDC recommends all adults get tested at least once and women get tested during each pregnancy.

*Detlev*



Detlev Aeppel  
Health Benefit Rep.  
Branch 599

## Matt Speaks: What If?

*(Continued from page 7)*

The trustee spoke next, *NO! There has to be a way! The strike fund! What happened to it?! We did have one*, the Vice President said. *The problem is that after the free labor law was passed, the security forces came in to crack down on potential strikes or protests. The few letter carriers who were left and weren't swindled rose up, but then quickly put down and terminated.*

The other officers said nothing. What was there left? A darkness had swept the land. Organized labor was dead. Every single postmaster in America was now on the prowl for letter carriers. They could do this openly with impunity.

The president sighed as tears streamed down his cheeks and fell on the meeting table, *Motion to adjourn?* he asked. Having seen no objections, he slammed the gavel.

**Get Involved! Don't let this future happen!**

## From the Treasurer's Desk – 7th Edition

Brothers and Sisters, you may have read or heard this next story. But for those who did not, I thought it important to make you aware. We should never forget the perils letter carriers face in the completion of their daily appointed rounds. Living in the Tampa area, we are very familiar with the circumstances of this story. With the rising heat index throughout our country, there are few jobs impacted more than being a letter carrier. The sweltering heat, non-air conditioned delivery vehicles, pushing and pushing to get the mail delivered quicker, and later starting times are real safety and health concerns.

Eugene Gates, a letter carrier with the US Postal Service (USPS), died recently while delivering the mail during a heat wave in Dallas, Texas. He was 66 years old and had been a letter carrier for 38 years. He was an Army veteran. Gates was based at the Lakewood Post Office in Dallas. After he had left for work on Tuesday, June 20, Gates texted his wife Carla to warn her that it was already 88 degrees at 7:30 AM. He cautioned her to be safe. The air conditioning in his postal vehicle, however, was broken. Gates later collapsed in a homeowner's front yard. The homeowner called 911 and tried to save Gates by administering CPR until the ambulance arrived. Gates was brought to the nearest hospital, where he later died. On the day of Gates' death, the heat index (that is what the temperature feels like to the human body when relative humidity is factored in) was 115 degrees. This was the hottest heat index in the Dallas-Fort Worth area since the 1980s, according to NBC. A heat index of between 103 and 124 degrees is dangerous and entails significant risk of heat cramps and heat exhaustion, according to the National Weather Service. Prolonged exposure or physical activity under these conditions increases the risk of heat stroke. USPS had recently changed letter carriers' starting time from 7:30 AM to

8:30 AM, allegedly motivated by staffing issues. This schedule change has increased workers' exposure to the hottest hours of the day. After Gates' death, USPS restored its previous starting time.

Gates took his job seriously, Carla told a local FOX affiliate. He had no major health problems and always took a cooler, water, tea, and juice with him on hot days. *He went to his regular medical appointments, he went on a regular basis, she told the local FOX affiliate. My God, he walks eight miles a day, eight miles a day, mail to 400 homes, he did this for 36, 38 years. He knew how to prepare for the weather.*

Carla suspects that Gates died of a heat-related illness. *Being hydrated still didn't save him, she told the Dallas Morning News. No person, I do not wish this on anyone, she told FOX. The postal service needs to change the way they are handling this mail system in the heat. I'm not saying not deliver mail, maybe when the heat is extreme like Tuesday, maybe deliver mail at different times.* She called for earlier, split and later shifts to help workers avoid the hottest part of the day.

The families on Gates' route remember him fondly. Megan Lucas, who also spoke to FOX, said that Gates had been delivering her mail for more than a year. She often tried to give Gates a cold towel and water whenever she saw him delivering mail on hot days. *He loved his job. He loved the neighbors, said Lucas. That's so sad that a wife is mourning her husband—and children and grandchildren. This neighborhood will definitely mourn him.*

As of this writing, no official cause has been given for Gates' death. His family is awaiting the results of an independent autopsy that they requested. The Occupational Safety and Health Administration is also investigating the death.

When Carla tried to get in touch with

human resources at USPS, she was given the runaround. She described communication from USPS about her husband's benefits as *awful*. A week after Gates' death, the agency still had not called her to offer its condolences. A representative of NALC Branch 132, of which Gates was a member, visited Carla but refused to comment on whether the heat may have contributed to Gates' death. A 38-year career, to end this way is extremely sad. The perils of a letter carrier!

—nalc.org



Tony Diaz  
Treasurer  
President Emeritus  
Branch 599  
Nalcrest Trustee

### Quick Hits:

#### Information you should know

In staying with the importance of knowing our National officers—the bio of our Assistant Secretary-Treasurer, Mack I. Julion. Mack was elected Assistant Secretary-Treasurer by acclamation in 2022 at the 72nd Biennial Convention in Chicago. Julion began his career as a letter carrier in Chicago IL, in 1997 and joined Branch 11. He served his branch as steward, sergeant-at-arms, and branch auditor. In 2008, NALC President William Young appointed Julion to the post of Regional Administrative Assistant for Region 3. The next year, Branch 11 elected Julion as Branch President. He was reelected Branch President by the members in 2012, 2015, and by acclamation in 2018. Julion is also an arbitration advocate and intervention specialist. NALC President Fredric Rolando appointed Julion as a national trustee in May 2018 to fill a vacancy before he was elected to the position by mail ballot of NALC members later that year. He also is a member of the Chicago Federation of Labor's Executive Board and delegate to the National Executive

(Continued on page 10)

## Garner and Garcia are 50-year Members!



President Obst presented  
**Leland R. Garner** and **Leslie Ray Garcia**  
with their Gold Cards signifying 50 years of  
NALC membership, during our July meeting.

### The 50 Year Gold Card Achievement

The NALC honors its retirees in a unique way. Our retirees are an integral part of our organization and, as such, retain both their membership and union rights. But more than that, when they have belonged to the NALC for 50 years or more, we honor them with either a gold card membership card, a lapel pin, or a plaque. The gold cards are presented to our 50-year members (since 1939). Not only does this Gold Card signify 50 years of membership in this Union but it also allows the recipient to remain a member without the continuing payment of dues and/or special assessments. It is indeed a Life Membership. Most of our branches make quite an occasion of the actual presentations, and the national president writes a letter to the retiree expressing their personal gratitude for the member's continuing support of NALC over the years.

—*nalc.org*

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

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## From the Treasurer's Desk – 7th Edition

*(Continued from page 9)*

Board of the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists. In addition, Julion serves on the Chicago Amalgamated Bank Labor Council, University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC) Labor Advisory Board, and the Chicago local advisory board for United Way Emergency Food and Shelter Programs. He graduated from NALC Leadership Academy in 2006. Julion cites the work and life of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. as an inspiration to his own personal journey. *I believe we are all called to serve, he said. My work in the labor movement is consistent with the core principles of my Christian faith and it is a continuation of Dr. King's fight for social justice.* Julion has an associate degree

from Harold Washington College in Mental Health: Addiction Studies and has completed labor courses at UIC and the National Labor College. Mack is the father of six and resides in Westchester IL, with his wife, Veronica, who also is a letter carrier. As assistant secretary-treasurer, Julion said he is committed to working hard for NALC members. *I am excited about the opportunity to continue to serve our members and make the best possible decisions for the well-being and future of our great union.*

—*nalc.org*

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

# Hard Fought Benefits Negotiated by the NALC

One of the things that we all look for in a job is pay and benefits. Today let us talk about benefits and how they were attained. Through the years, postal management did whatever the political winds of the day dictated. The letter carriers through our union basically had to beg and plead for raises and benefits. We endured false promises and suffered until the membership decided that enough was enough and letter carriers went on strike in 1970. Without a long drawn-out article about the strike, let it suffice to say that the NALC and the letter carriers were able to win the battle and begin the process of negotiating with the Postal Service over wages, hours, and working conditions to secure the basic rights and benefits that we all have today. Make no mistake about it, if the union had failed, there would be none of the benefits that we take for granted today as letter carriers; management did not provide them out of the goodness of their heart, they only did it because they were forced to do so at the bargaining table. At this time when our national officers are working hard to negotiate our new working contract, it is a good time to look at some of the hard-earned benefits that the union has been able to gain for us.

Negotiations between the NALC and the Postal Service have resulted in an array of benefits being offered to letter carriers. These benefits include the Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) and Flexible Spending Accounts (FSA). These benefits not only contribute to the financial well-being of us, but also foster a sense of security and support. This essay will delve into the advantages of TSP and FSA, highlighting their significance and impact on letter carriers.

## Thrift Savings Plan

The TSP is a retirement savings plan specifically designed for federal employees, including those working in the USPS. It enables employees to save for their retirement by contributing a

portion of their pre-tax income, which will be matched by the employer's contributions, into various investment funds. The TSP offers several benefits to the individual using it:

1. **Retirement Security:** TSP provides postal employees with a secure and reliable platform to save for retirement. By participating in TSP, employees have the opportunity to build a substantial nest egg throughout their careers, ensuring financial stability in their golden years. If you are a FERS employee hired before August 1, 2010, you have a TSP account that the postal service is contributing 1% into even if you are not contributing to it. The next 3% will be matched dollar for dollar and the next 2% is matched at 50 cents on the dollar, meaning that if you contribute 5% you will gain a 5% matching contribution from the postal service, doubling your investment.
2. **Tax Advantages:** One of the key advantages of TSP is its tax benefits. Contributions made to TSP are tax deferred, meaning they are deducted from the employee's taxable income in the current year, potentially reducing their overall tax liability. Moreover, the investment gains in TSP are tax deferred as well, allowing the account balance to grow faster over time. That means your adjusted gross income is lower and paying fewer income taxes.
3. **Diverse Investment Options:** TSP offers a range of investment funds to suit employees' risk tolerance and financial goals. These funds include both traditional and Roth options, as well as various index funds and lifecycle funds. This diversity empowers employees to tailor their investment strategy to their individual preferences.

## Flexible Spending Account

As a result of NALC and Postal Service bargaining, letter carriers have access

to a Flexible Spending Account which offers several financial advantages:

1. **Health Care Expenses:** The FSA allows employees to set aside a portion of their pre-tax income to cover eligible medical expenses not covered by their health insurance plans. This includes expenses such as co-pays, deductibles, prescription medications, and even certain over-the-counter items. By utilizing an FSA, you can reduce out-of-pocket healthcare expenses and effectively manage your budget.
2. **Dependent Care Expenses:** In addition to healthcare, an FSA also covers qualified dependent care expenses, such as childcare or eldercare. This benefit provides peace of mind to employees, as it assists in managing the costs associated with caring for dependents, allowing them to balance work and family responsibilities effectively.
3. **Tax Savings:** Similar to the TSP, participating in an FSA offers tax advantages. Contributions to an FSA are made on a pre-tax basis, reducing an employee's taxable income. This results in potential tax savings, making the FSA an attractive option for individuals seeking to optimize their financial situation.

## Health Care Coverage

In addition to retirement and flexible spending benefits, your union has negotiated with the Postal Service to provide comprehensive health care coverage to our letter carriers. This



Clement Cheung  
Labor Management Rep.  
Branch 599

*(Continued on page 12)*

# Veterans Buzz



## Happy 248<sup>th</sup> Birthday, US Army! *(I know I'm late)*

The Department of Defense (DOD) has taken a major step in the history of the US

Army. Earlier this year, the congressionally mandated Naming Commission directed the name change of several Army bases. The commission's mission was to provide removal and renaming recommendations for all DOD items *that commemorate the Confederate States of America or any person who served voluntarily with the Confederate States of America*. These actions are just the beginning of a long line of designations which took place during and after the Civil War.

The renamed bases are:

Fort Moore	(Benning),
Fort Liberty	(Bragg),
Fort Eisenhower	(Gordon),
Fort Walker	(A.P. Hill),
Fort Cavazos	(Hood),
Fort Gregg-Adams	(Lee),
Fort Barfoot	(Pickett),
Fort Johnson	(Polk),
Fort Novosel	(Rucker).



Mike Smith  
Vice President  
Branch 599

These changes are not only synonymous with Army bases, but base street names, posts, battle streamers, and even Navy ships named after Confederate soldiers will be changed in the coming years. This action depicts the steps we [America] are making to right the wrong of our past. I have been stationed at or visited several of these bases and will always remember the times I spent with my fellow service members.

Semper Fi!

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## Entering the next phase of negotiations

NALC has continued to negotiate for a new collective bargaining agreement with the USPS during the statutorily required 60-day mediation period. That period, which began with the formal expiration of the 2019-2023 Agreement on May 20, is set to expire on July 19. While discussions on the pay, benefits and working conditions of America's city letter carriers continue to be productive, the parties have yet to reach tentative agreement.

NALC President Brian L. Renfroe and Executive Vice President Paul Barner are working closely together along with the union's lawyers and a team of national officers and staff to reach an agreement with postal management that is worthy of the dedication and hard work of our active membership.

—July 14 on [nalc.org](http://nalc.org)

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## Hard Fought Benefits Negotiated by the NALC

*(Continued from page 11)*

includes:

1. Medical Insurance: Letter Carriers have access to a range of medical insurance plans, including options for individual coverage, coverage for dependents, and family coverage. These plans typically include coverage for hospital stays, doctor visits, prescription medications, preventative care, and specialized treatments. Health insurance is also pre-tax. Your Union is proud to offer our own NALC run health plan that meets or exceeds most of the other available government health insurance plans and I encourage you to look into it during the next open season to compare plans, you will be surprised at how good our plan is and it is run by your union for NALC members.
2. Dental and Vision Care: Recognition of the importance of dental and vision care led to the offer of

coverage for routine checkups, as well as treatments and corrective lenses. This ensures that employees can maintain good oral and visual health, enhancing your overall well-being.

Through the negotiation process your union, NALC, has ensured that the Postal Service, as your employer, recognizes the importance of supporting its employees by providing comprehensive benefits. **Thank you to our union for fighting for our benefits.** The Thrift Savings Plan, Flexible Spending Account, and health care coverage are prime examples of the commitment to the well-being of letter carriers and our families, secured by the NALC for its members.

Stay tuned...I will explain more in detail about TSP and FSA in my next article.

Clement

# Bread of the Branch

Happy summertime, Brothers and Sisters!

Your Trustees are taking careful measures to secure your future in this Branch. There has been a lot of activity happening since the sale of our old hall. We waited until the move settled to start shifting most of the sale money into certain investments. There were three brokers from different companies that the executive board interviewed. We decided to secure 1.6 million into 8 CDs with a broker through Morgan Stanley, who was referred by our new Trustee, Milly Minsal. We will be purchasing one

more CD locally and moving money into other banks to allow balances to fall under insurable amounts. This will leave enough funds to be able to comfortably afford any and all construction/remodeling that is needed in our new facility on Busch Boulevard.

I don't usually like to put numbers in our newsletter, but I felt the need to be transparent with the funds from our sale. These funds belong to all of us and it is the duty of each of us, not only the Trustees, to make sure our money goes where it should and is spent efficiently per motions and by-laws. If you would like to know more

on this subject, please attend our next Branch meeting and come talk to any Trustee.

With this, I hope you are taking serious precautions with your own personal monies and creating investments for your future.

Yours in service,  
*Lori McMillion*  
Trustee Chair



Lori McMillion  
Trustees Chair  
Branch 599

# More of our new offices

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**President Obst**  
*hard at work for the membership.*

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Brian Obst

---

**Vice President Mike Smith**  
*working on a case for the membership.*

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Mike Smith



# FED-HURT

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

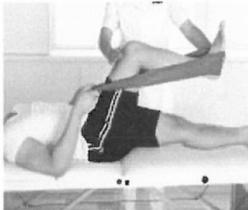
**If you are injured, here are some very simple steps to follow.**

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.



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- 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.

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- 📍 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](http://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](http://ecomp.dol.gov); this is critical to your case.

## *Other tips:*

1. Your online account at [ecomp.dol.gov](http://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.



National Association of Letter Carriers  
 599 Tampa Florida Inc.  
**315 W Busch Boulevard, Suite C**  
**Tampa FL 33612**  
 813.875.0599 Fax 813.870.0599  
 www.nalc599.com  
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\* First payment is due 60 days from loan closing and no interest for 30 days. Valid for vehicles financed directly with the credit union between June 1, 2023 and July 31, 2023. Not valid for existing loans financed with TPCU. Some restrictions apply. Contact credit union for details. \*APR- Annual Percentage Rate. Rate received based upon individual creditworthiness and subject to change without notice.

