



Tampa Letter Carrier

From the President's Desk

Loyalty above Everything except Honor and Integrity That You Can Trust

During my 40 years of membership in NALC Branch 599 I have experienced every facet of representation for our members. From the very first step all the way up to arbitration, I have served as a defender of the underdog and have always maintained that position win, lose, or draw without compromise. It has always been a privilege and an honor to be selected to represent you whether through a grievance, an EEO complaint, assist you with your OWCP claim, or even defend your rights through testimony at the National Labor Relations Board. As your Branch President the past three years, I have had the distinct pleasure of directing other leaders of our Branch on your behalf during some of the most trying and difficult battles and you should be proud of the job they have done. As we move forward and continue that battle, I am hoping for the

opportunity to make the transition for the next leaders a very smooth and efficient one. We have been fortunate to have strong guidance from our past leaders that nurtured and educated the leaders of today so that we can provide them the same guidance into the future.

Our challenges are many, but the history of the National Association of Letter Carriers has stood up to the challenges in the past and will continue to do so in the future. We are members of one of the best organized and successful Branches in the National Association of Letter Carriers. Through all the tremendous efforts of our members we are one of the most honored and respected branches for every community event from the NALC Food Drive, *Making a Muscle* for MDA, collecting for *Toys for Tots*, and any call for help in our community and our nation. We have



Alan W. Peacock
President, Branch 599

hosted every rally for *Saving America's Postal Service* in our area and we are loved by our customers. But there is still a lot of work to do and our challenges are many. Thank you for allowing me the privilege of being your President the past three years. Thanks for all your support and sacrifice during the good times and the tough times. I also want you to know that I appreciate the opportunity to step down to serve as your Vice President and hope to be able to continue to lift this Branch and its members up. I will never elevate myself to diminish the members nor ever forget it is your voice that should always be heard and honored; this is your Branch and your Union, we just ask to be your advocates.

Our Hall

All of you know that we as a Branch have been struggling for some time

(Continued on page 3)



Branch Meeting

Thursday
January 9
7:30 PM

Branch 599 Office

3003 W Cypress Street
Tampa FL 33609-1617

813.875.0599

Fax 813.870.0599

www.nalc599.com

Alan W. Peacock
President

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Monday-Friday
8 AM – 4:30 PM

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Tampa Letter Carrier

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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	Alan W. Peacock	813.765.0599 office 813.875.0599	apeacock.nalc@verizon.net
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Recording Secretary	Michael Brink	813.661.1639	recording.sec@nalc599.com
Financial Secretary	Gilbert Cabanas	813.855.0516	financial.sec@nalc599.com
Treasurer	Ray Garcia	813.787.3640	treas.ray@nalc599.com
Sergeant-at-Arms	J.C. Howard	813.310.0689	
MBA/NSBA	Al Guice	813.422.4967	
Health Benefit Rep.	Terry Franklin	813.758.3061	
Director of Retirees	Lance Jones	813.220.1292	
Trustee Chair	Lori McMillion	813.263.7101	
Trustees	John DeRosa	813.850.8418	
	Warren Sumlin	813.486.7612	
Labor Management	John Rowland	813.770.7769	
	Warren Sumlin	813.486.7612	
Presidents Emeritus	Garland Tickle • Orbe Andux Donald Thomas • Michael Anderson James Good		

Executive Board Meets

Thursday 6:30 PM
January 9
February 6

Shop Stewards will Meet

Tuesday 7 PM
January 7
February 4

Shop Stewards

Station	ZIP	Steward	Station No.	Steward's No.
Tampa Stations/Branches Chief Steward, Brian Obst				727.458.0679
Brandon	33510/11	Detlev Aeppel	813.661.1639	813.505.7914
Carrollwood	33618	Eddie Berroth	813.960.8894	813.493.5224
Commerce	33602	Pedro Jimenez	813.242.4507	813.727.9280
Forest Hills	33612	Rocky Randels	813.935.2954	813.766.2604
Forest Hills Annex	33613	Nick Cullaro	813.935.2954	813.541.8159
Hilldale/Annex	33614/34	Varick Reeder	813.874.6809	315.491.6234
Hyde Park	33606	George McEndree	813.873.7189	813.935.0244
		Tim Hurlstone, Alt.	813.873.7189	813.367.7718
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	J.C. Howard	813.663.0048	813.310.0689
Plant City	33564	Brian Obst	813.719.6793	727.458.0679
Produce	33610	John DeRosa	813.237.4280	813.850.8418
Ruskin/Sun City Ctr	33570	Aric Person	813.634.1403	813.545.7779
Seminole Heights	33603	Tony Diaz	813.237.4569	813.598.9635
Sulphur Springs	33604	John Rowland	813.237.4569	813.770.7769
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 Aeppel	813.242.4507	813.505.7914

Congratulations! to our newly elected officers

Our new officers will be installed the night of January 18.

President	Tony Diaz	Health Benefit Rep.	Lance Jones
Vice President	Alan Peacock	Director of Retirees	Don Thomas
Recording Secretary	Michael Brink	Trustees	Maggie Lancaster
Financial Secretary	Gilbert Cabanas		Lori McMillion
Treasurer	John Gebo		Jose Oliva
Sergeant-at-Arms	Julius Howard	Labor Management	Alan Robinson
MBA/NSBA	Al Guice		Warren Sumlin

*Leadership and learning are
indispensable to each other.*

—John F. Kennedy

From the President's Desk

(Continued from page 1)

to make a decision about how to proceed in the future especially regarding our building. I want to tell a story about something I saw in a movie titled *Promised Land*. This movie was a story all about corporate America trying to buyout rural farms for the purpose of developing oil from their farmlands. The corporate people would come in and sell the poor working farmers a lot of bull about how worthless their land was going to be if they didn't take the offer. They would promise the farmers greater things than they ever had. Some land owners bought into it for the money, but some didn't. The Corporation came with all kind of side deals and proposals that seemed too good to be true, and they were. The moral of the whole story was when one of the corporate raiders realized he was trying to destroy something that reminded him of his own past that had meant so much to him. He remembered how every year he and his grandfather would paint the barn on their farm and he once asked his granddad why they painted the barn every year. His grandfather replied, *It's our farm and our barn; if we don't take care of it then who else will?* So that brings us to the barn that is ours and if we don't take care of it, then who else will? We have two options on the table to deal with this

matter; both are good plans to get the job done and it will be up to the members to decide which one they want. Making that decision should be based upon your thoughts and feelings and you should never be disrespected on voicing your opinion or made to believe you don't have the ability to make your own decision in the matter. At this time, this is our Hall as it has been since 1955 and it is our responsibility to take care of it as it has taken care of us. When someone thinks that it is not worth the money to maintain, understand that it is the largest part of our total assets and it is not losing value the way many of the investments did that weren't being watched during the stock market crash. We are more solvent now than we have been in many years and with the dues structure and the growth of members we should be in a better position to maintain our Hall and give back to our members. Representation will continue to be our number one focus as we have filed more grievances this year than in the past fifteen years and the dues structure will continue to provide for training to prepare our representatives to do the job in the most competent manner.

Reimbursements of Dues

Now let us move to the next matter that is to be decided and that is the effort to comply with our national leaders and their request to stop making

dues reimbursements. This goes against most of the arguments about wasting money that is meant for representation, and we have established dues to provide for greater ability to fund training and for conventions. It is time to stop paying back dues reimbursements and structure the funding for representatives based upon the level of representation they provide. As representatives become better trained and they are appointed to greater responsibilities, then they deserve to be compensated upon that basis. It is solely up to the membership to make the decision whether to continue giving back dues that are not on an equitable basis or to fund properly based upon the level of representation provided to the membership. The meeting on January 9 will be one of the most important meetings in many years and it is important that you attend and let your voice and your vote decide the future course of your Branch as well as your Union.

On behalf of all your officers and stewards, I want to wish each of you a Happy, Healthy, and Prosperous New Year! I look forward to working to better our organization as your Vice President (Emeritus).

Fraternally in Solidarity and Unity,

Alan Peacock
President, NALC Branch 599

Sharing Our Members' Joys and Sorrows

Our deepest sympathy

and prayerful support is extended to the family of slain Carrier Tyson Barnette [Cheverly MD] and to Emilio Chervoni [Brandon Custodian] and family at the tragic loss of his son.

Tim Marx Retired!



President Peacock recognized **Tim Marx** [Hilldale Annex 33634] during our December Branch meeting and presented him with a check from the Branch for his retirement.

Delegates you elected to attend the 2014 NALC National Convention

NALC National Convention will be held in Philadelphia PA, July 21-25.

Alan Peacock
Tony Diaz
Varick Reeder
Larry Tharrington
Magdalene Lancaster
Troy Figuero
John Rowland
Brian Obst
James *Box* Boczarski
Debra McEndree
George R. McEndree
Bill Langgle
Patrick Kresel
Phillip Burnison
Cash *Rocky* Randels

Warren Sumlin
Eddie Berroth
Lance Jones
Detlev Aepfel
Jim Good
Tom Borderieux
Pedro Jimenez
Gilbert Cabanas
Terry Franklin
Lorraine McMillion
Don Thomas
Stephen Hall
Nick Cullaro
John Gebo
Jose Oliva

Around The Horn

(Continued from page 5)

We are committed to identifying the true causes of these safety issues and addressing them in a way that provides the highest level of safety to letter carriers and highest level of service to postal customers. NALC will spare no effort to keep letter carriers safe.

More information will be available in the near future.

With the later starting times, carriers are being subjected to unsafe and unhealthy conditions. This will hopefully be an opportunity for you to share these concerns. In the meantime, if you are in a situation you feel unsafe while

delivering...call your supervisor for direction. If you are not satisfied with the response...fill out a PS Form 1767, accompanied with your statement.

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

Sunday Work Party
at our Hall

January 12 9-11 AM

Retirees Breakfast

Monday January 6 9 AM

Coffee Cup

4407 N. Hubert Avenue, Tampa

Around The Horn



Tony Diaz
Vice President
Branch 599

Brothers and Sisters, I want to send a heartfelt thank you for all the support I received during the Branch elections. I am honored and humbled by the entire process. The opportunity to speak to many of you as I traveled to the stations was special. I have visited several stations since the election and the response has been tremendous. Again *thank you*, I am excited to work with the new administration. I hope to see all of you at the Installation/Retirees & Active Members Dinner on the 18th of January at the Letter Carriers Hall... see your steward for details.

Personal Statements

How important are they?
How detailed should they be?
When should I write it?
Does it really make a difference?

Answers: very, very, immediately if possible, yes

This month I looked through my *Around The Horn* archives to find my article that discusses the importance of personal statements and their affect on a grievance. As a Shop Steward, I can tell you, a solid statement can be vital to the success of a case. **Statements are the starting point to a grievance.** This is your opportunity to tell what you saw or witnessed; this is the *your side of the story*. Whether it is for a situation involving you or a fellow carrier, your statement matters. One solid piece of advice and it is the best advice I can give to anyone writing a statement—tell the truth, tell the truth, and tell the truth. Do not fabricate a story, do not stretch the truth, do not make assumptions, and do not make allegations. Remember, should management challenge or dispute your statement, it is imperative that your side of the story is precise, consistent, and accurate. The integrity of your statement can make an impact on the case. Pay attention to detail; the little things may be important. The most effective way to insure a

statement is as factual and precise as possible is to write it immediately on the day the *situation* occurs. This will insure your thoughts are fresh in your mind. If you have a memory like mine, this is the best way. However, if it is not possible to write the statement immediately, then write down notes or specifics about an incident that will trigger your memory for when you are able to sit down and write it.

Reminders such as, a date(s), a time, who was involved (names), what was actually said, a street name, an address, a tag number, who else might have been a witness, a time line, what may have caused the incident, etc. Again, keeping these thoughts fresh in your mind will eliminate any uncertainty. Uncertainties such as, well I think I saw this, or I believe it was the 3rd of the month, or was it him/her or the other guy, was this said first or was that said first, I think I had 5 certified letters that day. Be certain!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Your statement can also become a source for who a steward may want to interview. If you identify others who also witnessed what you saw, heard or have previously experienced a similar situation; the steward would want to interview them. This witness could shed additional light on the case and verify a position or direction a steward may be leaning towards.

Begin by writing a rough draft of your statement with all of your thoughts and data. Let your steward review your rough draft before finalizing your statement. There may be some information in one part of your statement that contradicts another part. Your steward may also question a part of your statement and ask if you are absolutely sure you saw this or are you sure you heard that. There may be information that is irrelevant or inappropriate or simply not needed to include.

Hopefully this article emphasizes the

significance of a personal statement and is helpful in organizing your thoughts.

Quick Hits: Information you should know

*) Next building work party:
Sunday, January 12, 9-11 AM.

*) From *NALC.org*, in an effort to address mail delivery issues past the traditional delivery hours:

NALC announces creation of network to address safety issues

*Network also will address offices
with routine mail delivery well past
traditional delivery hours*

Dec. 9, 2013—NALC President Fredric V. Rolando has released the following statement on a new joint effort to identify and address safety issues that pose threats to America's letter carriers:

The dedicated men and women who deliver our nation's mail should not work in environments that pose threats to their health or safety. I approached the Postal Service with the idea of identifying and addressing what poses such threats. After a meeting with high-level USPS management, we have agreed to establish a nationwide network to jointly look at offices with safety issues, whether during the daylight hours or after dark, and at those offices that routinely deliver mail well past traditional delivery hours.

This nationwide network will identify the cause of these issues in each office and address them based on the facts and needs of each office. While there are common causes of some problems, the causes of safety issues often differ from office to office, so the solutions will differ as well. Identifying the causes will involve looking at all factors including letter carrier start times, transportation schedules, staffing, route adjustments and the structure of routes, just to name a few.

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On the Brink...

Last month a proposed bylaw change to release the Branch's Work Stoppage Fund of \$350,000 to the will of the membership, more specifically, to the will of the 55 average members who show up and vote at the monthly Union Meetings, was voted upon. This was a very important and financially impactful bylaw change proposal that several of our fellow brothers and sisters submitted for consideration. If passed it would reduce the Branch's financial *cushion* by some two-thirds. A notice, via newsletter, was mailed out to the members of Branch 599 announcing that this vote was to take place at the November 2013 meeting. At that meeting a vote was taken and of the approximately 80 members who showed up, 54 members voted for the bylaw change and 19 members voted against. Since this bylaw change proposal had to do with Branch funds, it took a two-thirds majority to pass, which it did. It passed by a 6 vote margin. Six members voting the opposing way could have shut down this debate for another 6 months. Fortunately or unfortunately, depending on your point of view with regard to this issue, a brother noticed that the submitted draft that was disseminated in the newsletter was in error and therefore the vote was nullified. Now the bylaw change proposal must be resubmitted and brought before the membership again for a vote.

For those members who did not attend the April 2013 meeting 6 months ago, a similar bylaw change proposal was submitted to release the Work Stoppage Funds to the will of the membership and it was defeated. In November, 6 votes could have changed how the Branch dispenses with 86% of its total financial reserves. For those of you who are reading this article and decided that you were just too busy to attend or don't really care to drive to the Hall once a month and participate for whatever reason, realize that 6 of your

votes would have defeated this latest attempt to take 86% of our Branch Capital Reserves and release their control to the average voting block of those 55 members who regularly attend the monthly meetings. Many of these faithful regular attendees are retirees who have endearing and heartfelt connections to this great Hall as many of them recall brighter and happier memories of times gone by. Unfortunately, those memories are just that, memories! The Hall is just a place where an average of 55 brothers and sisters meet on a monthly basis. Forgetting the memories and the history, this Hall is simply a building. Nothing more, nothing less!

Let me be clear and state that I firmly believe that the members who attend the meetings and vote on the various motions and bylaw change proposals have every right to voice their opinion and render a vote. The members present have the right to discuss each matter before the membership, either for or against. Each member is given the opportunity to speak his/her mind on the subject on the floor at the appropriate time. Ultimately a vote is called for and taken. Sometimes this writer's vote and opinion are nullified by the majority of the members. Other times it is affirmed. Either way, this Union membership and the outcome of **each vote affects the way in which we, as a Branch, operate and conduct business.** I believe that each member has the right to agree or disagree with regard to every subject and cast his/her vote as they choose. This writer may not agree with every opinion or vote, but I strongly believe that it is the will of the majority that attend and participate in the discussion and vote their hearts that prevail.

In November, I spoke **AGAINST** this bylaw change proposal. Not because it affects the Work Stoppage Fund because I believe that **IF** this fund is no longer necessary, the Trustees should

look to change it by submitting a proper bylaw change proposal to release the funds to be more wisely invested so that a better return on our investment could be utilized for the members and representatives of this Branch who attend our National and State Conventions, Rap sessions, COP meetings, Leadership Academy and who take advantage of the many Steward Training and Legislative opportunities offered. These funds and the interest generated could be used to better the Union and its membership by representing this Union in what it stands for and represents: **Brothers and sisters working together to inform, instruct and protect our rights as Letter Carriers.**

In my opinion, this bylaw change proposal was poorly written, redundant and grammatically flawed. It was signed and approved by a majority of the current Branch officers. It would also be supported by a majority of the newly elected Branch officers. As worded, it released **86% of our Branch capital reserves** to preserve a 12,000 square foot building which is *utilized* to employ two full-time employees annually and allows for an average of 55 members to attend a monthly meeting to conduct Union business. Those meetings in the past used to be dedicated to Union causes and concerns. In my opinion, the past five to six years have seen the majority of our unrest centered on the repair or replacement of an aging and deteriorating building, **NOT** Union causes and Letter Carrier concerns!

Past and present officers, leaders and members of the TLC and Executive Board have wrestled with whether or not we, as a Branch, should repair or sell this building. Many of us have seen this discussion go in both directions

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Michael Brink
Recording Secretary
Branch 599

On the Brink...

(Continued from page 6)

over the years depending on our leadership and the many motions brought to the floor in this regard for the consideration of those members present at the time of voting. Two commercial realtors have spoken to us on the issue of whether or not to sell or preserve this building. Both realtors recommended **AGAINST** putting any additional capital into the repair of this building as it would be **unwise!**

I believe, as many of you know by now, that the **business of this Branch and Union is to represent Letter Carriers NOT to provide a rental venue!** I believe our purpose is to have a heart for what is important in our continued fight against the current leadership of the United States Postal Service and its mission to break the Union's Collective Bargaining position and ignore our Contract agreements. Each of us is aware that the current CEO is making concerted efforts to attempt to change the Postal Service in such a way that we no longer provide 6-day delivery of an outstanding product and provide great service to our customers as Letter Carriers.

Perhaps if one could separate his/her heart from the discussion and imagine this scenario:

Four investors walk into the Hall on one of our meeting nights and propose to the members present that they be allowed to have **UNLIMITED access to 86% of our TOTAL Branch Capital Reserves** to invest in a building down the street. *Let me say that again, they wish to have **UNLIMITED access to 86% of our TOTAL Branch Capital Reserves.*** The investors tell us that the building is a 12,000 square foot building that is in need of considerable repair and that **a majority of our 86% capital investment would be spent on reconditioning the**

building. However, once the repairs are made, the building would be rented for a variety of reasons to members of the community. The investors tell us that we could utilize the current offices and conference room located on site both during and after the repairs are made and that our two full-time employees could meet with members and clients in the four office spaces available at this location. The building also has a conference room that could be reserved for us when necessary and on a set date the members would be allowed to access the building once a month to conduct their normal business meetings.

When we ask what our return on this major investment would be to the Branch, we are told by the investors that there is no historical data that has been collected to determine what our return on our investment would be, **but that any profits realized would be deposited back into the Branch account to be utilized for any future building maintenance concerns or other business brought before the membership and only spent on such concerns if approved by a two-thirds vote of the members present!**

The investors also tell us that initially **there is no way to know how much of the 86% investment would be spent on the restoration and repairs but that ANY expenditure of the 86% capital used for the building would, OF COURSE, require the approval by the voting members present at our monthly meetings.**

Brothers and sisters, realize that we, as a Branch, **would have a total of 14% of our capital reserves left over to provide for the mission of this Branch which should be working together to protect our rights as Letter Carriers...**

Don't be fooled into thinking if this proposed bylaw change is approved that the votes of those faithful few who attend the monthly meetings, again mostly retirees, will fall primarily towards the use of these funds for Letter Carrier issues. In this writer's opinion, a vast majority of the \$350,000 will be used to repair and restore a building which no longer serves a useful purpose other than a place to meet and conduct business, no matter how much history has occurred in the building!

Think about your investment in this Branch, not with your heart, but with your risk meter! What person, investor or member in their right mind would make this sort of investment? If this bylaw proposal is resubmitted and approved, that is EXACTLY what we will be agreeing to; an unwise and costly business mistake that will affect our ability to represent the Letter Carriers of Branch 599.

Don't be the member who does not bother to come to the meetings and voice your concerns and render an informed vote! Come to your monthly meetings and see where your dues are being spent. If you do not, don't be surprised and complain when the mission of your Branch changes dramatically from Letter Carrier representation to the repair, support and maintenance of a 60-year-old building that is being propped up in the hopes that possible future rentals will provide the necessary income for the Branch to represent and support Letter Carriers!

Let your voice be heard! Come to the monthly meetings, get informed, participate and vote!

Proposed Bylaw Changes

Please Note: There are 2 different proposals for Article VII, Section 1 (E).

ARTICLE VII – Fees, Dues, Fines, Assessments

Section 1: Paragraph (E)

Currently reads as follows:

The present Job Action Fund Account will be capped at \$350,000.00 (three hundred fifty thousand dollars) in case of a work stoppage. Such funds shall be under the control of the Trustees and shall be used for no other purpose. These funds shall be set aside in an appropriate savings institution earning a guaranteed interest rate. The interest on these funds shall be deposited in a Convention Fund, to be used exclusively for National Conventions, State Conventions, State Training Seminars and National and State Rap Sessions.

Proposed to read as follows:

The Branch Action Fund Account currently capped at \$350,000.00 (three hundred fifty thousand dollars) for the purpose deemed by the membership for any Branch Expense. Such funds shall be under the control of the Trustees and shall be used only for expenses determined by the membership of NALC (National Association of Letter Carriers) Branch 599 as required by a two-thirds (2/3rds) vote of the members voting when properly notified in accordance with the Constitution of the National Association of Letter Carriers and the Bylaws of NALC Branch 599. These funds shall be set aside in an appropriate savings institution earning a guaranteed interest rate. The interest on these funds shall be deposited in the Branch Action Fund to be used exclusively for Branch expenses as deemed by the membership.

Signed by: Gilbert Cabanas
John Gebo
Eddie Berroth
Donald H. Thomas Jr.
Stephen M. Hall
John DeRosa
Leslie Raymond Garcia
Tony Diaz
Alfred Rosello
Pedro N. Jimenez
John P. Rowland
Henry DuPree

Proposed Bylaw Changes

Please Note: There are 2 different proposals for Article VII, Section 1 (E).

ARTICLE VII – Fees, Dues, Fines, Assessments

Section 1: Paragraph (E)

Currently reads as follows:

The present Job Action Fund Account will be capped at \$350,000.00 (three hundred & fifty thousand dollars) in case of a work stoppage. Such funds shall be under the control of the Trustees and shall be used for no other purpose. These funds shall be set aside in an appropriate savings institution earning a guaranteed interest rate. The interest on these funds shall be deposited in a Convention Fund, to be used exclusively for National Conventions, State Conventions, State Training Seminars and National and State Rap Sessions.

Proposed to read as follows:

The monies in the present Job Action Fund will be divided into four (4) separate parts.

- (A.) The first portion will consist of \$110,000 (one hundred and ten thousand dollars) which will be added to the current “Branch 599 Building Fund.” This fund will be designated and used exclusively for the upkeep and maintenance of the building.
- (B.) The second portion will consist of \$100,000 (one hundred thousand dollars) and will be added to the current “Branch 599 Convention & Training Fund.” This fund will be designated and used exclusively for National & State Conventions, Rap Sessions, Shop Steward Training Seminars and any other events deemed necessary to train Branch Officers and Branch Representatives to better represent our Branch members.
- (C.) The third portion will consist of \$40,000 (forty thousand dollars) and be designated “The Branch 599 Recreation Fund.” This Fund will be used exclusively for events such as Labor Day Picnics, Christmas Parties, Installation & Retirees’ Dinners, etc.
- (D.) The fourth portion will consist of \$100,000 (one hundred thousand dollars) and will be designated “The Branch 599 Emergency Fund.” This Fund will be used exclusively for emergencies as deemed by a 2/3rds vote of the membership at a regularly held General Assembly Meeting or Special Meeting called for that purpose. This fund and the monies therein will remain untouchable and accessible only by an approved 2/3rds majority vote with such vote to be held and conducted under the same rules, policies and methods as a proposed By-Law change as outlined in Article XVII, By-Laws Rules for Changes.

Signed by: Lorraine McMillion
Larry Tharrington
Magdalene Lancaster
Detlev C. Aeppel

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 stewards shall receive \$135.00 per month for allowed expenses. All stewards shall receive \$50.00 for attending monthly Shop Stewards Training. The President and Vice-President will receive \$50.00 for attending Shop Steward Training.

Shop Stewards who are appointed a Formal “A” Representatives shall receive \$115.00 per month for additional expenses. Stewards and Officers shall not have any reduction in pay due to illness, dependent care, Annual Leave, or any valid circumstance that would keep him/her from attending any such training or responsibilities.

Signed by: John Gebo
Eddie Berroth
Donald H. Thomas Jr.
Stephen M. Hall
Nick Cullaro
Tony Diaz
Alan Peacock
Leslie Raymond Garcia
Gilbert Cabanas

Proposed Bylaw Changes

ARTICLE IV – Officers

Sections 6 & 7

Currently reads as follows:

Section 6:

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 each year during their term of office of the President, Vice-President, Recording Secretary, Financial Secretary, Treasurer, Sergeant-at-Arms, MBA-NSBA Representative, Health Benefits Representative, Labor Management Representatives, Director of Retirees, Station Stewards and the Board of Trustees composed of three members.

Section 7:

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:

Section 6: Proposed to be rescinded and removed from By-Laws

Section 7: Proposed to be rescinded and removed from By-Laws

Section 7(a): Proposed to be rescinded and removed from By-Laws

Signed by:

John Gebo
Eddie Berroth
Donald H. Thomas Jr.
Stephen M. Hall
Alan Peacock
Tony Diaz
Leslie Raymond Garcia
Gilbert Cabanas

Unionism—Why are we our own worst enemy?



Brian Obst
Tampa Stations/
Branches
Chief Steward
Branch 599

I have been working for the Postal Service for over 13 years and I can't for the life of me figure out why carriers insist on being their own worst enemy.

Our national officers work tirelessly to obtain a fair contract that ensures we are compensated fairly for the job we perform. In that contract are the protections that they have bargained that protect our members from the many abuses, past present and future, which management attempts to bring down on all of us. All of the stewards use the contract to protect the carriers and see that they get treated fairly in all situations. Yet I constantly observe carriers forgetting to do even the simplest tasks to assist in their own protection.

Let us remember that the contract is written to protect all carriers and when you attempt to circumvent its terms for your own gain it affects all of the carriers as well. I realize that sometimes carriers fail to understand the reasoning behind some of the contractual provisions and they think that it won't hurt if they don't follow them in their own issues because it makes things easier for them. What has to be understood is that the contract is for all of us no just one individual and the only way that it works is when all parties follow its guidelines

Let us look at some examples:

A carrier wants to only work a couple of hours on her/his SDO [Scheduled Day Off] and s/he goes home after 2 hours. The carrier says s/he agreed that s/he didn't want the overtime and signs off on a 3973 stating so. This is not allowed under the contract due to the guarantee clause in Article 8. Carriers have argued with me that they should be allowed to do this. What they fail to realize is that if there was no guarantee clause, management would be able to adjust your hours at their beck and call. Suddenly you could be scheduled to come to work at noon on

your SDO and work whatever they wanted and this would also bleed over into your regular schedule to the point where you might find yourself working whatever hours they wanted you to work. It is important to see the big picture when dealing with contractual issues. Remember it is not only about you; the Union is a collective made up of all its members and is stronger when all are working together for a common goal.

What about leave situations? There are guidelines for the handling of leave in both the National Agreement as well as the LMOU. We don't get to ignore these simply because they interfere with what we want. These guidelines were established to provide a fair opportunity for all to utilize their leave benefit and attempts to contravene these guidelines for one's own personal gain is wrong and causes problems that affect all carriers. I know that we all cannot get the amount of time off that we might like, but this is no reason to try to work out deals with management to bypass contractual guidelines as they are for the protection of all. Remember the rule you try to skirt by today will be the one that you need to protect you next time.

Also remember that Article 1 of the National Agreement clearly states that the NALC is the exclusive bargaining agent for wages, hours and working conditions. I tell you this so that when management comes to you, either individually or in a group, and attempts to get you to agree to some change in any of these you will understand that they are violating the National Agreement and no matter how much it might seem like a good idea at the time, you should contact your Union representative to notify them of the incident. As exclusive bargaining agents for our craft, the NALC can bargain on your behalf and if the issue is beneficial and does not cause any problems it may indeed be able to be worked out. If management is trying to do it outside of the proper

bargaining method there is usually something bad associated with it.

In addition to those examples presented above I would like to touch briefly on the use of forms. The Postal Service seems to have a form for everything and I am aware that they can be a pain to fill out. I must point out that these forms, no matter how worthless you might think they are, will provide you with protection from management's abuse and attempted discipline if you simply use them properly. The 3996 form for auxiliary assistance is a form you fill out if you require overtime or auxiliary assistance on your assignment. The directions are on the form and if you need help your steward will be only too happy to work with you on them, as they will protect you from management when dealing with estimate issues. The 3189 Request for Temporary Schedule Change form has a spot for the Union to sign off on all schedule changes; failure to get a Union signature invalidates the request. Management may not act on the request until it has been signed off by the Union and if they approve a request without a Union signature it will be cause for a grievance on the issue.

I hope that you can see by the examples presented that the National Agreement is there for your protection, so if you work within its guidelines you will find protection under its umbrella. The JCAM, the agreed upon interpretation of the National Agreement, is available in every office as well as on our website nalc.org and I encourage you all to take the time to familiarize yourself with its contents. As I always say –
Knowledge is the Key.

Brian Obst
Tampa Stations/Branches Chief Steward

For the Record

Well the election has concluded, the results are in, and our new president is Tony Diaz from Sulphur Springs Station. Let me be the first to congratulate Tony on his victory and give my best wishes for a successful presidency over the next three years.

At this time I want to thank those members of the Branch that provided me their support in my bid to be elected president and I now call on all members of Branch 599, regardless of who you supported, to now close ranks and help the new president to move our Branch in a positive forward

moving direction. Remember that we are all members of the same Union and we all have the same goals in mind – Providing the best representation for our members in our daily struggles against management when they attempt to violate our rights under the contract. Additionally, we must all work together to ensure long term success of the Postal Service and protect it from those individuals who would seek to destroy it.

I again send my best wishes and congratulations to Tony Diaz and ask all Branch 599 members to join me in

assisting him toward our mutual goals in representing our membership in the best way possible.

I leave you with this quote from President Abraham Lincoln – *A house divided against itself cannot stand.*

As always—**Knowledge is the Key**

Brian Obst

Tampa Stations/Branches Chief Steward



Brian Obst
Tampa Stations/
Branches
Chief Steward
Branch 599

Another Point of View

For several years now the members that attend our Branch 599 meetings have been at odds over fixing our Hall or selling it. The majority votes not to sell, which takes us to the next step... doing the needed repairs. Once again, we are divided on how to pay for this, which is not going to be cheap by any means. We have our Work Stoppage Account, which we can agree is not ever going to be used for the purpose it was set up for so many years ago.

Do we change our bylaws to use this money to repair our Hall or should we do nothing and let our Hall continue to decay more every day. This is the decision you the membership needs to make at our January 9, 2014 meeting. Each of you has a vote on how your Branch money is being used or spent, however, you must attend the meeting to vote! I am not saying or asking you to vote one way or another; I am asking that you *come out and vote*. Listen as those for or against make points about what they believe to be in Branch 599's interest, and



then cast your vote as you believe to be best.

At some point in time, we need to get beyond all this conflict over our Hall and concentrate on saving the USPS and your jobs. The jobs saved may be yours or the carrier next to you! The active Letter Carrier has the most to lose or gain by what happens to the USPS, yet you stay home and hope others will save your job for you. You have so many reasons why you do not attend Branch 599 union meetings; I can only hope those that do carry the fight for you are successful in saving the USPS. Should they

lose, how are you going to tell your family you just did not have the time or desire to fight for your job? *You* have to, at some point, take responsibility for *your* lack of action...just how important is your job to you and your family's well being? *Questions that you need to be asking yourself:*

Will I be able to earn my current wage, annual leave or sick leave at another job?

What are you willing to do to protect your family's way of life [this is about you and your family's future]? How important is your family's wellbeing to you?

Branch 599 is much more than the few members that attend meetings, it is every member and it is going to take *each of you* to step up and fight for the survival of the USPS...unless, you really do not care if the USPS survives and you believe you can do better working at another job! Bottom line...it is your life and your family; whatever you decide to do, best wishes to you and your family!

Congratulations to all our newly elected officers! You have been given the trust of our members to represent them. In these changing times, your work will be challenging and rewarding.



Don Thomas
President
Emeritus
Branch 599

*Installation of Officers
Active Members and Retirees
Banquet*

Saturday ♦ January 18, 2014

Doors will open at 6 PM

Dinner starts at 6:30 PM

RSVP by January 10

Retirees must call the Branch office to make reservations,
813.875.0599.

Tickets for active members are \$10, refunded when you attend
[the \$10 includes spouse or date].

Guest tickets are \$20 each.

Free beer and wine and set-ups for BYOB [no coolers].

DJ for dancing and music!

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