



# Tampa Letter Carrier

VOLUME 18, ISSUE 2

FEBRUARY 2019

## Around The Horn from The President's Desk



**Tony Diaz**  
President

Brothers and Sisters, 2019 has begun with a bang! Six (6) new CCA conversions in the first month of the year. The first conversion, CCA Eddie Rodriguez, from Sulphur Springs Station was converted to fulltime regular carrier on January 5. This was followed by five more conversions on January 19, to include Jerome Baltimore Sr., Hilldale; Juan Conil, Produce; Crystal Fenwick, Hilldale; Mark Fuentes, Hilldale; and Johnny Brito, Town N' Country. **Congratulations to our newest full time regular carriers!**

The #1 CCA on the relative standing list (CCA seniority list) is Akira Rumlin, Interbay Station.

### **Wounded Warriors Federal Leave Act of 2015: Update**

2019 has brought us more good news; the Wounded Warriors Federal Leave Act of 2015 received a facelift that is absolutely a benefit that disabled veterans deserve. No more *one year and done!* A new Memorandum of Understanding M-01901 outlines the policy guidelines. Are you a veteran with a

**30% or higher service-connected disability rating?** If so, you are eligible for the updated Wounded Warriors Leave Act. Eligible Employees Definition: **All employees who have a single or combined service-connected disability rating of 30% or more are eligible for Wounded Warriors Leave.** Even if you qualified and used the benefit once in the previous years it has been offered, while it was a one-year and done benefit. Before the new changes, The Wounded Warriors Federal Leave Act of 2015 did not even require the USPS to provide this benefit to all veterans with a service-connected disability rating of 30%. The Postal Service recognizes the value that veterans add to the workforce. Consequently, it has determined that it is both appropriate and desirable for the Postal Service to grant additional amounts of leave for the purpose of medical treatment. **Now for those who qualify, a new balance of 104 hours Wounded Warrior Leave will be credited at the beginning of each year.**

History – In September, 2016, the United States Postal Service implemented, as required by law, the Wounded Warriors Leave Act. Certain veterans who were employees of the US Postal Service became eligible to have credited and use up to 104 hours of a newly-created and distinct category of leave called Wounded Warriors Leave (WWL). The creation of Wounded Warriors Leave came about in response to the passage of the Wounded Warriors Federal Leave Act of 2015, which allows qualified employees to use this new category of leave to undergo medical treatment for a service-connected disability rated at 30% or more.

Disabled veterans generally are required to attend regular medical appointments to maintain their health and to continue their eligibility to receive their veterans' benefits. Frequently, it is unavoidable that such appointments

Branch 599  
serving  
Brandon  
Plant City  
Sun City  
Tampa

### **Branch 599 Meeting**

Thursday  
February 7  
7:30 PM

*(Continued on page 3)*

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National Association of Letter Carriers, Branch 599, 3003 W Cypress Street, Tampa FL 33609-1698, publishes the *Tampa Letter Carrier* monthly. The opinions expressed in this publication are those of the writers and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of Branch 599, NALC. It is the policy of this publication that all articles submitted for print must be signed by the writer.

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

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# Shop Stewards

Station	ZIP	Steward	Station No.	Steward's No.
Tampa Stations/Branches		Chief Steward, Brian Obst		727.458.0679
Brandon	33510/11	David Rivadeneira	813.661.1636	813.403.9525
Carrollwood	33618	Eddie Berroth	813.961.2962	813.493.5224
Commerce	33602	Cynthia Williams	813.242.4507	813.778.4373
Forest Hills	33612	JR Sanchez	813.935.2954	773.849.6229
Forest Hills Annex	33613	Nick Cullaro	813.935.2954	813.541.8159
Hilldale	33614	Sam Wantje	813.879.4309	941.979.6485
Hilldale Annex	33634	Robert Doval	813.879.4309	813.727.9241
Interbay/Port Tampa	33611/16	Jonathan Jones	813.831.2034	813.293.2208
Interbay/Peninsula	33629	Clement Cheung	813.831.2034	813.758.5910
Palm River Annex	33619	Pam Benton	813.663.0048	813.475.0753
Plant City	33564	Varick Reeder	813.719.6793	315.491.6234
Produce	33610	Frank Webb	813.239.4084	813.210.7940
Ruskin/Sun City Ctr	33570	Bert Fristad	813.634.1403	813.352.0864
Seminole Heights	33603	Walt Rhoads	813.237.4569	813.389.1708
Sulphur Springs	33604	Steve Hall	813.237.4569	813.494.4669
TCA/Hyde Park	33606	Michael Smith	813.873.7189	813.326.0717
TCA/Peninsula	33609	Michael Williams	813.873.7189	813.541.3092
TCA/West Tampa	33607	Michael Williams	813.873.7189	813.541.3092
Temple Terrace	33617	Michael Cipriano	813.988.0152	
Town 'N Country	33615/35	Brian Obst	813.884.0973	727.458.0679
Ybor City	33605	Maurice Rice	813.242.4507	813.334.3189

# Around The Horn from The President's Desk

(Continued from page 1)

must be scheduled during normal work hours and letter carriers in the past were therefore often required to use LWOP to attend those appointments. Wounded Warriors Leave should provide some relief to those who are eligible and must receive necessary treatment. This new benefit is available to any career or non-career employee who meets the eligibility requirements.

## Initial Eligibility

Newly hired eligible employees or those returning to the Postal Service will be credited with 104 hours of Wounded Warriors Leave following the Postal Service's receipt of documentation supporting the employee's eligibility. Wounded Warriors Leave will be available for use retroactively to the first day of their enter-on-duty date, or the current leave year, whichever is later, for use through the end of the leave year.

## Additional Eligibility

Eligible employees will be credited with 104 hours of Wounded Warriors Leave on the first day of each leave year, and the leave is available for use until the last day of the leave year.

## General

It is the employee's responsibility to notify the Postal Service of his or her eligibility before requesting Wounded Warriors Leave. Employees must provide documentation to the HR Shared Service Center from the US Department of Veterans Affairs certifying that the employee has the requisite level of service-connected disability.

## PS Form 5980 Treatment Verification for Wounded Warriors Leave

is the application form to apply. You can download the form by visiting the NALC website at [nalc.org](http://nalc.org) or by going to Google and typing in USPS PS Form 5980 or you can also ask your steward or call the union office for the form.

## Employees with Pending Disability Determinations

Eligible employees with pending disability determinations who at any time during any leave year receive a 30% or more disability rating will be eligible for leave retroactively to the first day of that current leave year. Any leave without pay (LWOP) or leave used while the determination is pending will be reimbursed and replaced with Wounded Warriors Leave, as appropriate, up to the maximum number of hours allowed. Wounded Warriors Leave may be retroactively applied for only the most current leave year and for no more than 104 hours.

## Carryover

Wounded Warriors Leave must be used during the leave year in which it is credited and will not be carried over. No employee may accrue more than 104 hours of Wounded Warriors Leave during any leave year.

## Foreseeable Leave

All employees requesting Wounded Warriors Leave must do the following:

- A. Submit their request on PS Form 3971, Request for or Notification of Absence, in advance to the appropriate supervisor; and
- B. Designate the reason for the absence as *other* and write *Wounded Warriors Leave* in the appropriate space provided.

## Unforeseeable Leave

The Postal Service makes an exception to the advance approval requirement for unexpected treatment that qualifies for Wounded Warriors Leave. When the need to use Wounded Warrior Leave is not foreseeable, the employee must notify the appropriate supervisor of the following items:

- A. The employee's treatment;
- B. The expected duration of the absence; and
- C. The applicability of Wounded Warriors Leave as soon as possible.

## To simplify,

This Wounded Warriors Leave should be processed automatically if your Form 50 shows the disability of 30% or more. The 104 hours would go into a separate category to be used only for the treatment of your service-related disability of 30% or more. This is not intended for regular doctor's appointments, for regular sick days, or for other ailments, and it is not added to your earned sick leave. A carrier may exercise his/her right to the benefit of the Wounded Warriors Leave by providing documentation from the Department of Veterans Affairs or on any Office of Personnel Management (OPM) certification form, if it is not included on your Form 50.

WWL will still be a *use it or lose it* situation, so any remaining balance at the end of the year will not be carried over to the next year or cashed in. However, a new balance of 104 hours of WWL will be credited to those letter carriers who qualify at the beginning of each year. This new policy is scheduled to go into effect in January 2019.

—Postal Record, December 2018 and MOU-01901

## Quick Hits:

### Information you should know

#### \* Info on the 2019 USPS Postage Rate Increase:

The US Postal Service implemented new postage rates for most mailing and shipping products on Sunday, January 27, 2019.

*Summary of the 2019 Postage Rate Increase for Domestic Mailing:*

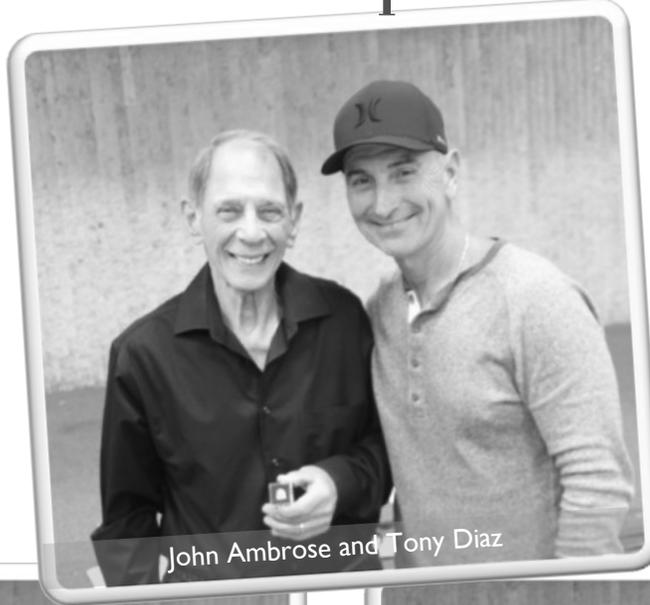
The First Class Mail Letter (1 oz.) rate for postage purchased at the Post Office increased by five cents to 55¢ from 50¢. Each additional ounce for a First Class Mail letter will cost 15¢ (a decrease from 21¢).

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

# Sharing Our Members' Joys and Sorrows

Our deepest sympathy and prayerful support is extended to the family of **Roderick Lucas** [Produce] whose tragic passing was January 5; to the family of **Miguel Cuervo** [Retiree] whose passing was December 29; and to **José Vasquez** [Palm River] and family at the passing of his mother, Raquel Torres, January 13.

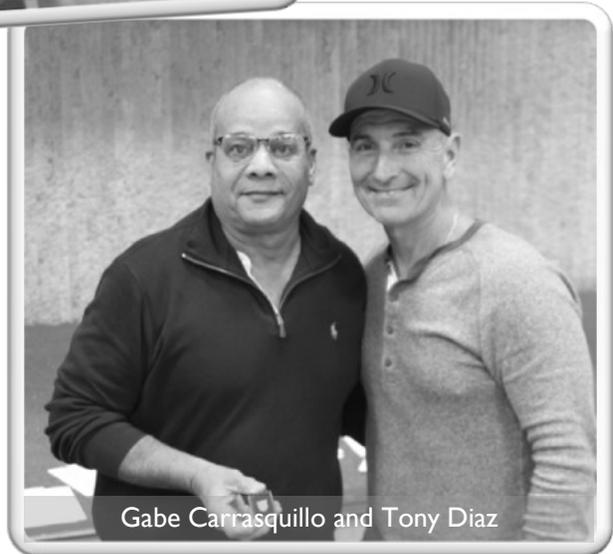
## Ambrose, Ortiz and Carrasquillo Retired!



John Ambrose and Tony Diaz



Walter Ortiz and Tony Diaz



Gabe Carrasquillo and Tony Diaz

Congratulations to **The Legend John Ambrose** [Ybor/Commerce], to **Walter Ortiz** [Palm River], and to **Gabe Carrasquillo** [TCA West Tampa] who received their retirement pin and gratuity from President Tony Diaz during our January Branch meeting!



**NALC**  
*e-Activist*  
Network

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

Get involved! Your future depends on it!

# Paying Final Respects



When the mother of deceased Produce CCA Roderick Donte Lucas II asked for a Postal presence at her son's funeral on Saturday, January 12, she had no idea what was to come.

The Produce carriers showed up in force wearing their postal blue, to show their support for their fallen

coworker, friend, and union brother.

With the approval of Postmaster Fermo, the carriers formed a 22 postal vehicle caravan behind the hearse during the procession leading to the cemetery. It was an awesome sight to see coming down Hillsborough Avenue. As the hearse arrived at the burial site

the postal vehicles veered off to return to their office.

Roderick, 22 years old, passed away on January 5, in a one-car automobile accident. By the amount of people at the funeral, Roderick had many friends and touched many many lives. He left behind a one-year old son.

# An Act of Kindness

To say retiree Julius JC Howard had a lucky night at the January 10 Branch Meeting is an understatement.

To say he has a heart of gold may be the best way to describe exactly what a kindhearted person he is.

On the meeting night, we collected \$334 for the family of deceased CCA Roderick Lucas.

JC won 2 of the evening's drawings. First, he won the rollover that had reached \$370; adding \$10 a month, no one had won the drawing for 36 months. He then followed that by winning the 50/50 raffle to benefit MDA. The collection reached \$136, half \$68 to MDA and half \$68 to JC. Not a bad night winning a cool \$438! In an unbelievable act of kindness, JC Howard donated his winnings from the

rollover drawing, \$370; the entire amount. He followed that by also donating his winnings in the 50/50 raffle, \$68.

Total for the night, going directly to the Lucas family was \$772.

That was special, generous, and an unbelievable act of kindness. *Great job JC, you have been the talk of our membership!*

## Mark your Calendar! Branch meetings will be...

February 7 • March 7 • April 4 • May 2 • June 6 • July 11  
August 1 • September 5 • October 3 • November 7 • December 5



## Deliver the Cure with MDA

Golf Tournament Coordinator Alan Robinson and Branch President Tony Diaz presented MDA Coordinator, Erin Authier with a check for **\$9,214.71** for the 2018 year!

Our 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Golf Tournament set several records and raised over **\$8,000** for the first time! The remaining contributions came from 50/50 raffles and donations throughout the year.



## 2019 Shop Stewards



  
**CPR Class #4 — Is Coming Soon!**

**Shop Stewards will Meet**

Tuesday 7 PM  
February 5  
March 5

**Branch 599 Meeting**

Thursday 7:30 PM  
February 7  
March 7

**Executive Board Meets**

Thursday 6:30 PM  
February 7  
March 7

**Sunday Work Party**

at our Hall 9-11 AM  
February 10  
March 10

**Retirees Breakfasts**

Monday February 4 9 AM  
Denny's Restaurant at Dale Mabry & Spruce  
2004 N Dale Mabry Highway, Tampa

Tuesday February 12 8:30 AM  
Bob Evans Restaurant off Fletcher  
12272 Morris Bridge Road, Temple Terrace 33637

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*Bill & Shirley Moran*

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Tampa Letter Carrier  
 Volume 18 • Issue 2 • February 2019

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