

# Tampa Letter Carrier

## From the Desk of the President

Jimmy Carter, the 39<sup>th</sup> President of the United States, has passed away at 100 years old. His loss will be felt throughout the world. His time on earth was spent in service to others. He will always be remembered for his winning of the 2002 Nobel Peace Prize *for his decades of untiring effort to find peaceful solutions to international conflicts, to advance democracy and human rights and to promote economic and social development.*

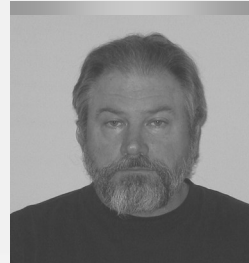
His tireless work with Habitat for Humanity to help provide homes for those in need will always be a lasting legacy, a true measure of the man who rose from humble beginnings to lead our nation. He never forgot who he was, and he passed in the same home that he owned with his wife Rosalynn, who preceded him in death, in Plains GA. He was a great man who should always be remembered. Rest in Peace, President Carter.

Our Branch is once again running the *Disaster Relief Foundation Challenge* to help raise funds for this needed and worthwhile organization. Remember, this foundation, which was established by President Emeritus Fred Rolando, is for members of the NALC. It is a way that we may help our own in times of disaster, as many of our members are aware of following the two recent hurricanes that struck our area this past year. We all can help simply by making a small donation, as all the small donations add up to become a large donation to the foundation. I also would like to remind you that the first \$500 donated will be matched by myself, and the office that donates the most money will have a catered breakfast for their office by myself as well. Ask the Brandon Carriers how their breakfast was last year. I am confident that we can do much better in raising funds this year so please dig deep to help our Disaster Relief Foundation. You have till February 28 to donate as part of the challenge, so see your steward or contact the Branch office to make your donation.

### Executive Board Positions

Last month it was posted that our Branch Recording Secretary resigned his position so I will speak about the position as part of my election year information on Executive Board Positions.

**The Recording Secretary** is responsible for taking the minutes of the Executive Board and Branch meetings, and transcribing them for records, as well as reading them at future meetings. Reading communications received by the Branch at meetings, maintaining the Branch Bylaws, and maintaining and updating the Sick/Annual Leave balances of the President, Vice President and Office Manager, and other duties as assigned by the President.



Brian Obst  
President  
Branch 599

## Branch 599

serving

Brandon

Plant City

Sun City

Tampa

## Branch 599 Meeting

Thursday

February 6

7:30 PM

### Tampa Letter Carriers Hall

315 W Busch Blvd

Suite C

Tampa FL 33612

Additional parking is  
available in the lot  
before our building.

(Continued on page 3)

## Branch 599 Office

315 W Busch Boulevard, Suite C  
Tampa FL 33612

813.875.0599

www.nalc599.com

Brian Obst  
President  
erif\_lor@hotmail.com

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

Rodna Kimelman Kirk  
Office Manager  
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 cell 727.458.0679	erif_lor@hotmail.com
<b>Vice President</b>	Michael Smith	813.326.0717	mosmith46@gmail.com
<b>Recording Secretary</b>	Maria Afful	347.457.7316	
<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>	Bonita Lattimore	813.756.9676	
<b>Health Benefit Rep</b>	Detlev Aeppel	813.505.7914	
<b>Director of Retirees</b>	John Gebo	813.503.1256	
<b>Trustees</b>	Milly Minsal, Ch.	813.446.2572	
	Andre Hinton	931.980-5169	
	Cynthia Williams	813.778.4373	
<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	656.215.2467
Brandon	33510/11	Osceola Williams Sr.	813.661.1636	210.445.1369
Carrollwood	33618	Edward Carrillo	813.961.2963	
Commerce	33602	Deonte Barron	813.247.2416	
Forest Hills	33612	Lord McWilliams	813.935.2954	
Forest Hills Annex	33613	Robert Rosenfeld	813.935.2954	954.991.2672
Hilldale	33614	Jose Gomez	813.879.4309	917.743.6948
Hilldale Annex	33634	Maria Afful	813.879.4309	347.457.7316
Interbay/Port Tampa	33611/16	Mike Dennis	813.831.2034	813.361.9103
Interbay/Peninsula	33629		813.831.2034	
Palm River Annex	33619	Sheryl Jones	813.663.0048	
Plant City	33563/64		813.754.3590	
Produce	33610	Tahesia Judkins	813.237.4084	
Ruskin/Sun City Ctr	33570	Bert Fristad	813.634.1642	813.352.0864
Seminole Heights	33603	Paul Sardinas	813.237.4569	813.650.3504
Sulphur Springs	33604	Sean O'Connell	813.237.4569	
TCA/Hyde Park	33606	Josh Villa	813.873.7189	203.278.6485
TCA/Peninsula	33609		813.873.7189	
TCA/West Tampa	33607		813.873.7189	
Temple Terrace	33617	Rudy Dahlback	813.988.0152	
Town & Country	33615/35	Cesar Sanchez-Pizarro	813.884.0973	813.368.4791
Ybor City	33605	Leddyon Lewis	813.247.2416	

# Just for the Health of It

The new year is a time of reflection, renewal, and resolutions to do better. Unfortunately, we are often unsuccessful in following through on our goals. Our health plan is aware of the struggles we go through and has help available for us achieving two of the most common resolutions: weight loss and quitting smoking.

**Real Appeal** is an online weight loss program that uses behavior change coaching, easy online access, and tool kits for success. The program uses small, steady, sustainable steps to a healthier future. A Clinical Advisory Board oversees your progress and guides you through the addition of each new tool and idea.

Live online group sessions are led by your coach with the flexibility to re-

schedule anytime. You are not visible in the sessions, so how you participate is up to you. You will use fitness, food, and weight trackers to log your progress every day. You will also receive a free success kit which includes a food scale, exercise DVDs, and guides.

Real Appeal is available at no additional cost as part of your health plan benefits. Get started at [nalc.realappeal.com](http://nalc.realappeal.com).

If you wanted to quit smoking but were unsuccessful, it may be time to join the 4.3 million others that found a better way with **Quit for Life**. Quit for Life will help you create a personalized Quit Plan.

A coach will help you create a plan and offer guidance at every step. You will

have access to online resources to manage triggers, track progress, and connect with others trying to quit. You may get gum or patches at no additional cost to curb cravings and double your chances of quitting for good. There is even a mobile app to help you set your quit date, receive tips to beat cravings, and message your coach 24/7.

Quit for Life is available at no additional cost as part of your health plan benefits. Get started at [quitnow.net/nalchbp](http://quitnow.net/nalchbp) or call 1-866-QUIT-4-LIFE.

Here's to your health.....

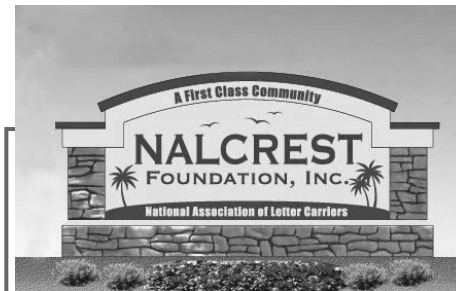
*Detlev*



Detlev Aeppel  
Health Benefit Rep.  
Branch 599



May 10



Your NALC Retirement Community in Central Florida – [NALC.org](http://NALC.org) under the Member Benefits tab.

## From the Desk of the President

*(Continued from page 1)*

### 6-day Route Counts and Inspections

Management throughout the country is preparing to begin to perform 6-day route counts and inspections, so it is recommended that all carriers familiarize themselves with the guidelines for route inspections. The Members Only page (button is immediately below Search) of the [NALC.org](http://NALC.org) website has available the class materials from the National Convention for Mail Counts and Route Inspections under Chapter 2 of the M-39. I highly recommend that you log on to the page and

review this material. Also, we are expecting to receive copies of the Carrier Route Protection Handbook that all carriers should use to ensure their routes are being done properly in preparation for the upcoming inspections. Be Prepared so we get the best outcome.

### City Carrier Seniority and CCA Relative Standing

New City Carrier Seniority and CCA Relative Standing lists have been distributed to the shop stewards for posting in all the stations, so check to ensure they have been posted in your stations.

At this time, I want to share the lyrics of a song that while poignant, it is also hopeful:

...Time waits for no-one  
It really doesn't matter much to me  
I know the best times are timeless,  
you'll see...

—*Time Waits for No One* by Ambrosia  
(Songwriters: Burleigh Drummond, David Robert Pack, Christopher North, Joseph Puerta)

Until next month I leave you as always.... **Knowledge is the Key.**

*Brian Obst*  
President

## Calendar

### Shop Stewards

Tuesday

**February 4 7:00 PM**

315 W Busch Blvd, Suite C

### Executive Board

Thursday

**February 6 6:30 PM**

315 W Busch Blvd, Suite C

### Branch 599

Thursday

**February 6 7:30 PM**

315 W Busch Blvd, Suite C

### Retirees' Breakfasts

#### Tampa

Monday

**February 5 9:30 AM**

The Cuban Sandwich Shop  
10434 N Florida Avenue 33612

#### Temple Terrace

Tuesday

**February 13 10:00 AM**

Bob Evans Restaurant  
off Fletcher near I-75  
12272 Morris Bridge Road

#### Note:

Any carrier, active or retired, is welcome to attend the retirees' breakfasts, and on your birthday, the Branch will pick up the tab for your breakfast; simply provide the receipt to the Branch office for processing.

## Retired...but Not Tired

*Thank you* to the retirees who attended the Retirees Dinner on Sunday, January 19. With the deadline for my article this month, before the dinner, I cannot give you a report at this time about the evening. However, the number who had called in to reserve a spot as of the January 7 deadline was 125. It is always a great way to welcome in the New Year and see all my fellow retirees. The dinner has been a big success every year that we have dined at Maggiano's Italian Restaurant, located at Westshore Plaza. I expect another wonderful experience this year. We had looked at other venues again, but we seem to end up at Maggiano's. They provide the best value, and the quality of food and service has never disappointed. There are many new retirees who signed up to attend this year and I hope to speak to all of you.

For those of you who have never attended a retiree's dinner, it is normally held on

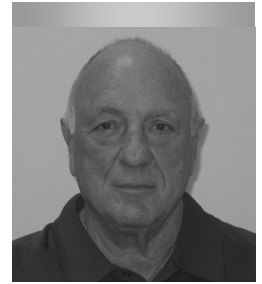
the third Sunday of January, and it is advertised in our Branch Newsletter. Please think about joining us next year, you never know who you might run into and have a chance to reminisce about the old times.

Next year we will have an Installation Dinner with the Retirees Dinner to welcome in our newly elected Branch 599 officers.

**Remember retirees, if it is your birthday month and you attend a monthly breakfast, your breakfast is paid by Branch 599.**

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

*John*



John Gebo  
Director of Retirees  
Branch 599

## The Position of Recording Secretary has been Filled

I am happy to report that the position of Recording Secretary has been filled by the appointment of Hilldale carrier, Maria Afful, on January 9. We welcome her addition to the Executive Board and we are sure she will be a positive asset to the

team.

*Thank you* to all who showed interest in the position.

*Brian Obst*  
President

Groundhog Day	February 2
Super Bowl Sunday	February 9
Valentine's Day	February 14
NBA All Star Game/ Daytona 500	February 16
Presidents' Day	February 17

If retirees from your station gather, please let us know when and where so that we can post it.  
Contact John Gebo if you want to start a gathering for your station!



# From the Vice President's Desk

## New Beginnings

I am proud to begin this year as your Chief Steward. One of my main responsibilities is to ensure that everyone is treated with dignity and respect. The newly elected stewards in each station have also taken on this same responsibility.

The union's overall mission is to look out for the welfare of its members. So, what does that mean for us? The union has provided us with employment in the workforce for decades. In the summer of 1972 when our brothers and sisters stood strong and went on strike, they secured our future. The union began to frame a strong backbone to stand up for the degradation of pay, working conditions, and benefits for carriers.

Just as the leadership at National headquarters, and on the local level, we have women and men who have taken the step to be a representative of carriers. In January 2025, a number of stewards took an oath to do as our sisters and brothers did in the past, protect your pay, working conditions, and benefits. Please join me in saying *welcome and thank you* for being a security blanket for me.

Now as we continue throughout the year, be supportive in the decisions they will make which may not always be favorable. Stewards perform a thankless job that most carriers would not attempt. Dealing with management with just estimates is about all some may desire to interact with. Yet your steward must be mindful of every situation when they may face management that affects your pay, working conditions, and benefits.

Recently in my travels around different stations, I have been approached with another subject that will be forthcoming, route inspections. Handbook M-39, section 271 reads: *When Required Special route*

*inspections may be required when one or more of the following conditions or circumstances is present:*

- a. *Consistent use of overtime or auxiliary assistance. (When the X-Route process is utilized, routes may be "built up" to no more than 8 hours and 20 minutes during the interim period, see Memorandum of Understanding dated September 17, 1992.)*
- b. *Excessive undertime.*
- c. *New construction or demolition which has resulted in an appreciable change in the route.*
- d. *A simple adjustment to a route cannot be made.*
- e. *A carrier requests a special inspection and it is warranted.*
- f. *Carrier consistently leaves and/or returns late.*
- g. *If over any 6 consecutive week period (where work performance is otherwise satisfactory) a route shows over 30 minutes of overtime or auxiliary assistance on each of 3 days or more in each week during this period, the regular carrier assigned to such route shall, upon request, receive a special mail count and inspection to be completed within 4 weeks of the request. The month of December must be excluded from consideration when determining a 6 consecutive week period. However, if a period of overtime and/or auxiliary assistance begins in November and continues into January, then January is considered as a consecutive period even though December is omitted. A new 6 consecutive week period is not begun.*
- h. *Mail shall not be curtailed for the sole purpose of avoiding the need for special mail counts and inspections.*

Management does not have a say on when or whether a carrier can request a special route inspection. If you have met the requirements as directed by Handbook M-39, it is your option to

request a special route inspection.

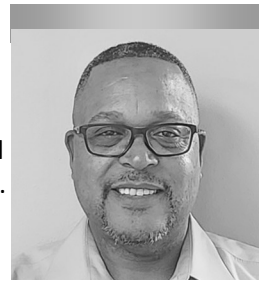
Carriers requesting a special route inspection should request to see your steward to

complete the necessary paperwork. Be mindful that all requests for a special route inspection may not be approved. The Branch office shall be kept in the loop during the entire process.

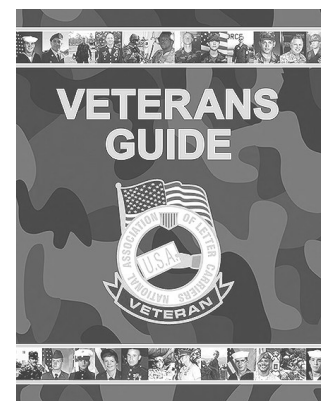
Understand that the thankless job of a steward is very important to all. Stewards are the beginning and at times, the end of a grievance or situation that requires attention. Again, thank your steward and be supportive of their courage.

*To get there, we must work together!*

Mike



Mike Smith  
Vice President  
Chief Steward  
Branch 599



NALC's Veterans Group developed this *Veterans Guide* as a quick reference for valuable information relating to military service and the Postal Service. The online version of the *Veterans Guide* contains links throughout that connect you to relevant information. Find the Veterans Group at [nalc.org](http://nalc.org) under Community Service.

## Sharing Our Members' Joys and Sorrows

**Our deepest sympathy** and prayerful support is extended to Carol and family at the passing of her husband, **Harold Frantz** [retiree], December 16; and to Pat and family at the passing of her husband, **Jasper Ray Etheridge** [retiree], January 5.

**Healing prayers and get well wishes** are extended to **Annette** [Financial Secretary Alan Robinson's wife] as she recovers from a serious automobile accident; and to **Bill Mandikas** [retiree] as he recuperates from another heart surgery.

### 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.*

## Veterans Buzz



The New Year has brought about a change to the Veterans

Administration online sign-in options. I decided to get my new login account now, and I had a time reordering some medicine due to the changes. So, I am going to help my fellow veterans, in hopes that you won't go through what I had to endure.

The VA online services (VA.gov, the VA Health and Benefits mobile app, and several VA online services) will require a new account to be set up for access. You will not be able get into MyHeathVet with a username and password after January 31,

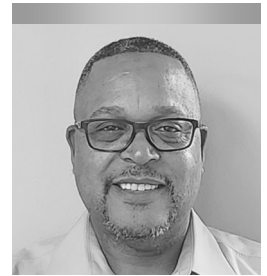
2025, or DS Logon after September 30, 2025.

You must set up another account using either IDme.com or

Login.gov to enter any online VA accounts. The VA has a site to assist – [www.va.gov/sign-in-changes](http://www.va.gov/sign-in-changes). I noticed a few changes that jumped out to me after I gained access. I will be reporting on these in the coming months. Please take the time to go ahead and get your new access completed before the deadlines.

Semper Fi,

Mike



Mike Smith  
Vice President  
Branch 599

## Mail Call

Brothers and Sisters, information, and the knowledge of where to obtain it is key to your success during your career and retirement. For April's issue, I referenced some of the material members would need to help them succeed during their careers. It is equally important to discuss some of the things you will need for your retirement.

*But Sarge, retirement is a long way away for me. I'll have plenty of time before I'll need to research it.*

Wrong. Retirement assessment and preparation is something you should not put off. Wait too long and you will miss the opportunity to build your TSP/401k as high as possible, for example. It is also important to have a life plan for your retirement, as in, how will you occupy your time? etc...

*Ok Sarge, I'll check it out, quit pestering me. But where should I start?*

Quarterly, all postal employees should receive a letter at their offices. The letter contains either an invitation to a retirement seminar or to get individual infor-

mation about insurance and retirement benefits.

Our Branch has two wonderful people, Director of Retirees John Gebo and Health Benefits Rep. Detlev Aeppel, who await you to contact them. I'm sure they would be happy to answer your questions or lead you to someone who can.

Finally, try group think; getting together with your brothers and sisters to exchange information is another great way to start.

If you are already retired, it does not mean you should stop asking questions. Laws and policies change and a benefit you enjoyed may have changed or may no longer be there. In addition, there might be a new benefit or policy you may not be aware of. Just remember, Knowledge is Power, never stop learning all you can.

Sarge



Luis Cruz  
Sergeant-at-Arms  
Branch 599

# Cruising

It is my pleasure to report that the Fisher family has purchased a new wheelchair accessible van for transporting Ardin and his family. With the help of the donation that Branch 599 made to the family from the golf tournament we were able to help them with making this dream come true. I would personally like to take this time to thank the Branch for voting on this, to donate 50% of the money raised to the family. It truly touches me to know we had a part in making this happen. We have watched this young man deal with the progression of this horrible disease for the last 10 years. The rest of this article was written by Erin Fisher who is Ardin's mom and wanted to share with everyone.

## From Broken to New

2024 brought new experiences to our family. From traveling to staying still and working to bring life back to a sense of normalcy, this year has been one of growth and reflection.

Ardin's severe fall in September, which resulted in a broken left femur, remind-

ed us how much we still need to prepare for. Oma's diagnosis and progression showed us the importance of honoring time, as it is incredibly precious. The passing of our family's best helper ever, Klezmer (our dog), broke our hearts and still brings tears for the hole he left behind.

But—Ardin continues to walk and now has an incredible power wheelchair, made possible through the dedication of his neurologist, Dr. Brenda Wong, and the efforts of PRIDE Enterprises and Jacob at Numotion Orlando. Oma still shares her contagious laugh and holds on to her purpose to remain able and active. Finnegan steps up with his big heart, trying to fill some very big shoes.

To those who stand beside us—like Alan Robinson and the crew at Branch 599—we celebrate the arrival of our new mobility van, which now allows us to do things we couldn't have imagined at the start of 2024.

Our team at the Duchenne Clinic at UMass has given us hope through two newly FDA-approved medicines to

combat the progression of DMD: Agamree (vamorolone) and Duvyzat (givinostat).

Anijah continues her higher education, walking faithfully toward God's plan for her life, while Adison shows his heart and passion for growth, independence, and life skills—like driver's ed!

The new year brings a fresh chance to live bigger and better with gratitude for all we've been given.

*Happy New Year* to everyone who stands beside us, waiting with faith for God's big reveal of blessings yet to come. We can feel it—we're on the verge of something big.

*Erin*

Until next time,  
*Alan*



Alan Robinson  
Financial Secretary  
Branch 599



Anijah, Randy, Oma (Randy's mom), Ardin, Erin, Adison, and Finnegan

# National Day of Observance

First of all, I am wishing everyone a Happy New Year!

This month I would like to explain about the National Day of Observance. If you are scheduled to work on the National Day of Mourning for President Jimmy Carter, then you will be granted 8 hours of administrative leave for that day. If the National Day of Observance is a non-schedule day, then you will be granted a day of leave at a future date. PTFs will be granted 8 hours or less of administrative leave based on average weekly hours worked and CCAs will not be granted for any administrative leave. Also, the administrative leave **must be used within 6 months from the date of Observance.**

Article 10 in JCAM states that:

The parties agree that the following procedures will apply to affected employees if the Postmaster General or designee determines that the Postal Service will participate in a National Day of Observation (e.g., National Day of Mourning), subsequent to the declaration of a National Day of Observance having been made by Executive Order of the President of the United States.

1. Full-time employees whose basic work week includes the National Day of Observance as a scheduled work day but who are not directed to report for work, will be granted administrative leave for that day.
2. Full-time employees whose basic work week includes the National Day of Observance as a scheduled work day, and who perform service, will be granted a day of administrative leave at a future date, not to exceed eight hours.
3. Full-time employees whose basic work week includes the National Day of Observance as a non-scheduled day and are not directed to report for work, will be granted a day of administrative leave at a future date.
4. If the National Day of Observance is a full-time employee's non-scheduled day and the employee is scheduled to work, the employee will receive overtime pay, plus up to eight hours of future administrative leave for the number of hours worked.
5. The same provisions apply to part-time regular employees as apply to full-time employees. The total hours of administrative leave should only equal the scheduled hours for the National Day of Observance, which may be less than eight hours. However, part-time regular employees whose basic work week includes the National Day of Observance as a non-scheduled work day and who are not directed to report for work on the National Day of Observance will be granted a day of administrative leave at a future date equal to the average number of daily paid hours in their schedule for the service week

previous to the service week in which the National Day of Observance occurs, which may be less than eight hours.

6. Part-time flexible employees should be scheduled based on operational needs. Part-time flexible employees who work will be granted a day of administrative leave at a later date. The day of administrative leave will be based on the number of hours actually worked on the National Day of Observance, not to exceed eight hours. **Part-time flexible employees who are not directed to work on the National Day of Observance will be granted administrative leave at a future date equal to the average number of daily paid hours during the service Page 10-20 NALC-USPS Joint Contract Administration Manual- March 2022 week previous to the service week in which the National Day of Observance occurs, not to exceed eight hours.**
7. Transitional employees will only receive pay for actual work hours performed on the National Day of Observance. They will not receive administrative leave.
8. If an employee is on leave or Continuation of Pay on the National Day of Observance, the employee will be granted a day of administrative leave at a future date, not to exceed eight hours.
9. An employee on OWCP, AWOL, suspension or pending removal on the National Day of Observance will not be granted administrative leave. If the employee on AWOL, suspension or pending removal is returned to duty and made whole for the period of AWOL, suspension or removal, the employee may be eligible for administrative leave for the National Day of Observance if the period of suspension or removal for which the employee is considered to have been made whole includes the National Day of Observance. Such determination will be made by counting back consecutive days from the last day of the suspension or removal to determine if the employee had been made whole for the National Day of Observance.
10. **Where provisions in this Memorandum of Agreement provide for a day of administrative leave to be taken at a future date, such leave must be granted and used within six months of the National Day of Observance or by the end of the Fiscal Year, whichever is later.** However, administrative leave will not be granted to employees who are on extended leave for the entire period between the Day of Observance and six months



Clement Cheung  
Labor Management Rep.  
Branch 599

*(Continued on page 9)*

## From the Treasurer's Desk – 25th Edition

Brothers and Sisters, *thank you* to those who contacted me to let me know you enjoyed reading my article last month, *Special Thanks, Alan Robinson, A Job Well Done*. It was an article well deserved.

2025 welcomes in new stewards that have stepped up to the plate to represent their respective stations/zones. These stewards will have every opportunity to educate themselves with our national contract and learn what is expected as a union leader in order to perform at the highest level. But there must be a commitment from not only the new stewards but from all returning or appointed stewards. This is not a cash grab! There must be a want to learn, a want to spend personal time to learn, a want to attend the monthly steward training meetings, a want to attend the monthly Branch meetings, a want to attend trainings throughout the year that the Branch will encourage and pay for you to attend.

I noticed last year, it seems more than previous years, many stewards attended very few Branch meetings. How can we expect new members to attend the Branch meetings if the steward is not attending? Branch meetings provide the business of the Branch and important issues brought before the membership. What's a hot topic? What do our carriers need to be aware

of? What is management planning next? You get the latest from the NBA's (National Business Agent) office and any NALC news. When I first became a steward many years ago, we were told to file a grievance, and I had to figure out what the violation was, and what article was violated. I had to read, I had to research, I had to educate myself, I attended training and meetings, and I asked as many questions as I needed. Branch 599 provides a Branch lab, with computers, printers, programs, and grievances to reference. It is available for those who wish to step up. We now have 2 full time officers (President and Vice President) to be available to guide you through the process. Nalc.org is a great place to find anything you might need contractually. It is easy to navigate through, should it be for the JCAM, Handbooks and Manuals, Materials Reference System (MRS), the latest NALC news and updates, and the NALC bulletin. There are several offices that have no stewards at this time, so there are opportunities for you to become more involved.

### Quick Hits:

#### Information you should know

Very Impressive:

NALC Chief of Staff Kori Blalock Keller named a top lobbyist for sixth consecutive year.

On December 4, The Hill magazine published its annual list of top lobbyists. NALC Chief of Staff Kori Blalock Keller was recognized as one of Washington's top lobbyists for the sixth consecutive year. The publication described the honorees as *some of the best in the business and have been go-to advocates during a year defined by unprecedented political events, legislative logjams, federal spending cut crusades and big rulemaking swings by the outgoing Biden administration.*

*Our union is fortunate to have a professional with Kori's talent, dedication, and work ethic representing letter carriers and continuing to grow our influence in the federal government, NALC President Brian Renfroe said. Even while taking on new and additional responsibilities as chief of staff over the last two years, she continues to be one of the strongest and most respected voices on Capitol Hill, with the administration, and across the federal government. We congratulate Kori on this well-deserved recognition.*  
—nalc.org

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



Tony Diaz  
Treasurer  
President Emeritus  
Branch 599  
NALCREST Trustee

## National Day of Observance

(Continued from page 8)

from that date, or between the Day of Observance and the end of the Fiscal Year, whichever is later.

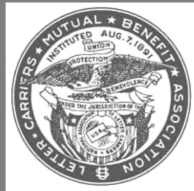
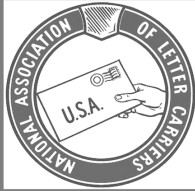
11. Administrative leave taken at a future date must be taken at one time.

12. Administrative leave to be taken at a future date may, at the employee's option, be substituted for previously scheduled but not used annual leave.
13. Administrative leave to be taken at a future date should be applied for by using the same procedures

which govern the request and approval of annual leave consistent with Local Memoranda of Understanding.

—Date: May 4, 2000

Clement



# NALC

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For more information:

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Tue/Thur 8-3:30 ET

**202-638-4318**

Weekdays 8-3:30 ET

[www.nalc.org/mba](http://www.nalc.org/mba)

BRANCH 599

# DISASTER RELIEF CHALLENGE

*The first \$500 in donations will be  
matched by our Branch President.*

**The Branch has issued a 60-DAY CHALLENGE to all members:  
Donate any amount to the Disaster Relief Fund  
by February 28, 2025.**

All donations will go to the NALC Disaster Relief Fund to  
help support NALC member families in need during a disaster.

Give all donations to your Steward, or you can contact the  
Branch office to make your donation and get your receipt.

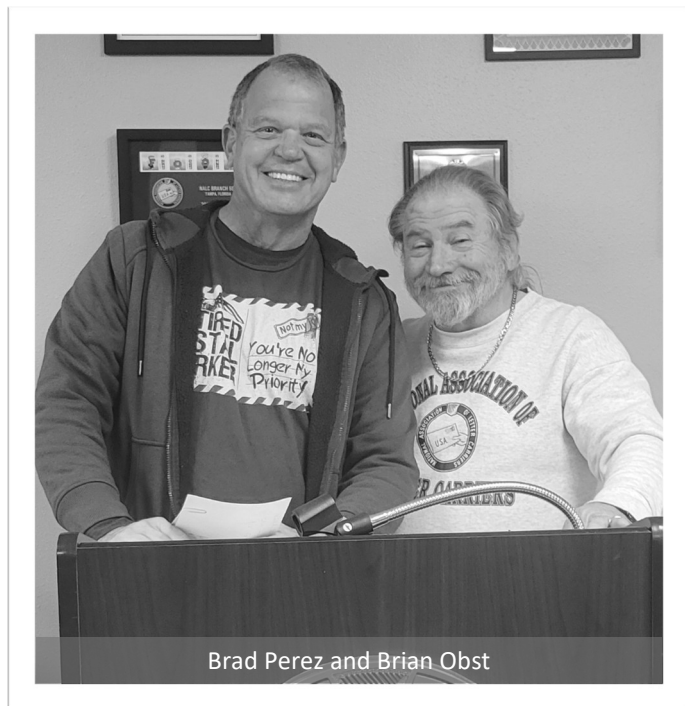
All donations will be totaled before our March meeting.

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



**NALC  
Disaster  
Relief  
Foundation**

## Perez Retired!



Brad Perez and Brian Obst

President Obst presented **Brad Perez** [Carrollwood] his retirement pin and gratuity at our January meeting.  
*Congratulations, Brad!*

## 55 year member – Burgos!



Brian Obst and Jim Burgos

President Obst presented **Jim Burgos** [retiree] with his 55-year membership pin during our January meeting.  
*Congratulations, Jim!*

## Attention Federal Workers!

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## OUR SERVICES

Dr. Tamea and Dr. Patel combine the precise methodology of orthopedics with ground-breaking physical therapy to treat:

- complex joint,
- spine,
- and all other work-related injuries.

## EXPERT TEAM

- Dr. Tamea, is a Board-Certified, award-winning orthopedic surgeon, focusing on non-invasive procedures,
- Dr. Patel studied at the University of Florida, and then went on to receive a doctorate in physical therapy.



### ORTHOPEDICS

Dr. Tamea's team will

- conduct an extensive physical examination,
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- precisely diagnosing the cause of your injury.

He will then discuss your treatment options with you.



### PHYSICAL THERAPY

Dr. Patel's team will provide

- the latest technology and therapies to treat your injury,
- work to repair and strengthen the injured area,
- train you how to prevent your injury from recurring.



### CASE MANAGEMENT

Optimal care is meaningless if your case, or necessary therapies, are denied. We provide claims managers with the information needed to approve your case and cover the care you require to heal. We get you treated and back to work!

## CONTACT FEDERAL ORTHOPEDIC SOLUTIONS :

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☎ (888) 477-2586

✉ info@federalorthopedicsolutions.com

🌐 www.federalorthopedicsolutions.com

**The Villages, Tampa, Lady Lake, Wildwood & Ocala**

# 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,**

$$\text{CA-1} + \text{CA-16} = \text{CA-17}$$

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  
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