



Tampa Letter Carrier

VOLUME 14, ISSUE 12

DECEMBER 2015

Around The Horn from The President's Desk

Merry Christmas to all Branch 599 Brothers and Sisters!

I hope to see many of you at the NALC Health Plan Seminar held at our Branch hall on Sunday, December 6.

As we near the end of another year, we are approaching the filing of 600 grievances for the 2015 year. That's a lot, and we will be close to matching or surpassing last year's total grievances of 609. The system we work under is flawed, defective, and costing the USPS millions of dollars, and the problem(s) is/are getting worse. In looking at the total grievances filled by Branch 599 since 2010, here are the figures: 466 in 2010, 372 in 2011, 365 in 2012, 637 in 2013, 609 in 2014, and in 2015 we're approaching 600 with December remaining. Without looking at all the grievances filed by the Branch over all the years, this may be the first time ever Branch 599 is over 600 grievances for three consecutive years. Management has taken the approach to just get the mail delivered and worry about the consequences later, or

just pay the grievance. This is where we are at, our stewards are extremely busy filing grievances and getting involved in carrier issues, plus carrying their own routes. I hear from them regularly, morning, afternoon, and night, extending their day to represent our members. Issuing discipline is where we are, and we will grieve the discipline and make management prove there was *Just Cause* for the issuance. Please request to see your steward as soon as you are issued any discipline, and also make your steward aware if he/she is not. There are time limits that must be met with the process of filing a grievance; the sooner the steward is aware, the better.

Lunch Breaks

Lunch Breaks are 30 minutes in duration, not to be combined with afternoon breaks, comfort stops, or rearranging mail. There are certain circumstances, because of location or a travel situation where your lunch may be calculated over 30 minutes. These situations are anomalies; lunch breaks are 30 minutes. If you start lunch

from your last delivery, eat lunch and deliver your next delivery in 30 minutes, you should have no issues.

Extended lunch breaks are coming under scrutiny with the constantly updated tracking, Delivery Management System (DMS). Carriers will need to be accountable for their time and expect to be questioned should their lunch last over 30 minutes. Should you be stopped for directions or an unexpected traffic jam delaying you during your lunch break, make a note, these situations should not be a daily occurrence. Should you deviate from your authorized lunch destinations, you should notify management of your intentions. You must have a reason if you need to change one of your three choices; revise your PS Form 1564-A. You may revise your form as needed; you do not have to be new on a route to update



Tony Diaz
President
Branch 599

Branch 599 Meetings

Thursday
December 3
7:30 PM

(Continued on page 3)

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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 5th of each month in order for us to meet our time limits to the publisher.

Officers

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	Warren Sumlin	813.486.7612	
Presidents Emeritus	Garland Tickle • Orbe Andux Donald Thomas • Michael Anderson James Good • Alan Peacock		

Shop Stewards

Station	ZIP	Steward	Station No.	Steward's No.
Tampa Stations/Branches		Chief Steward, Brian Obst		727.458.0679
Brandon	33510/11	Grant Daniels	813.661.1636	850.210.4906
Carrollwood	33618	Eddie Berroth	813.961.2962	813.493.5224
Commerce	33602	Detlev Aepfel	813.242.4507	813.505.7914
Forest Hills/Annex	33612/13	Nick Cullaro	813.935.2954	813.541.8159
Hilldale/Annex	33614/34	Varick Reeder	813.879.4309	315.491.6234
Hyde Park	33606	Joe Bitz	813.873.7189	813.465.0004
Interbay/Port Tampa	33611/16	Clement Cheung	813.831.2034	813.758.5910
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	Christopher Woodside	813.719.6793	813.924.6869
Produce	33610	Elvin Rodriguez	813.239.4084	646.346.3288
Ruskin/Sun City Ctr	33570	Aric Person	813.634.1403	813.545.7779
Seminole Heights	33603	Walt Rhoades	813.237.4569	813.389.1708
Sulphur Springs	33604	Steve Hall	813.237.4569	813.494.4669
TCA/Peninsula	33609	Troy Figueroa	813.873.7189	347.403.1644
TCA/West Tampa	33607	John Lacko	813.873.7189	347.453.4562
Temple Terrace	33617	Warren Sumlin	813.988.0152	813.486.7612
Town 'N Country	33615/35	Brian Obst	813.884.0973	727.458.0679
Ybor City	33605	Detlev Aepfel	813.242.4507	813.505.7914

Around The Horn from The President's Desk

(Continued from page 1)

your form. A restaurant may have changed owners and you do not like the food quality, or it shut down, or a new restaurant may have opened up you want to eat at. Many carriers bring their lunch and eat on their route to take advantage of the entire 30 minutes.

What is a PS Form 1564-A? It is a US Postal Service form, DELIVERY INSTRUCTIONS, and you can find the form under your case ledge inside your route book. If you have not updated your 1564-A, please request a new form and provide the information. Handbooks and Manuals, M-39, 126.5b states:

(2) The carrier has the option of selecting up to three locations for lunch. When authorizing lunch places, give consideration to reasonableness of location from the standpoint of suitable eating places, and in particular to the reasonableness of the distance from the route to the eating place and back to the route. If at all possible, the authorized lunch stops should be on the line of travel.

Form 1564-A, right side, there is a place for Lines of Travel, Authorized Lunch period, Location(s) of Authorized Lunch, and Approximate Break Location(s) for both the regular carrier and the replacement carrier as well.

DMS (Delivery Management System), can be a great tool for carriers also. If you are consistent every day, same pace, same routine, and no deviations unless necessary, 30 minute lunch, 10 minute break, a couple of comfort stops during the day, the tracking can verify you are doing your job.

Next work party will be in January due to the Health Benefit Seminar on December 6.

**Quick Hits:
Information you should know**

***) Penalty Overtime Exclusion**

As referenced in Article 8, Sections 4 and 5, of the National Agreement between the NALC and the US Postal Service, the December period (during which penalty overtime regulations are not applicable) consists of four consecutive service weeks. This year, the December period begins Pay Period 26-15, Week 2 (Dec. 5, 2015) and ends Pay Period 01-16, Week 1 (Jan. 1, 2016).

***) Fact:** Almost 25% of the members of the NALC are veterans of the US Armed Forces.

***) Caution with 2016**

Self Plus One health benefit
Employee premiums are higher than their *Self and Family* employee premiums. This is due to the fact that the government contribution formula ended up with a lower percentage (government share) for *Self Plus One* than it did for the *Self and Family* premium. This increases the percentage that the enrollee has to pay for *Self Plus One*. This affected our 2016 enrollee premium for *Self Plus One*. We encourage our enrollees with only two people to stay in the *Self and Family* option. Our *Self and Family* premium for an active letter carrier is \$131.71 (biweekly).

***) City Letter Carriers received a 1% general wage increase in November.** The paycheck boost, which took effect November 14, is the third under the terms of the 2011-2016 National Agreement between NALC and the USPS finalized by arbitrator Shyam Das (the "Das award"). It is the last of three general wage increases in the National Agreement.

In addition to this 1% increase, City Carrier Assistants (CCAs) will receive an additional 1.5% increase. Under the terms of the National Agreement, all letter carriers received a 1% general wage increase in November of 2013 and a 1.5% increase in November of

last year. The contract also provided for variable cost-of-living adjustments (COLAs) for career carriers based on changes in the Consumer Price Index and fixed additional raises for CCAs. Like past general wage increases, these will be calculated from the pay rate at the start of the contract—the wage increase percentage multiplied by the pay rate at the beginning of the current National Agreement, before any COLAs or wage increases are included—and added to current pay rates. **General wage increases and COLAs are some of the many benefits that all letter carriers, working together as part of their union, have secured, NALC President Fredric Rolando said.**

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



NALC e-Activist Network

Make your voice heard, sign up for e-Activist at www.nalc.org



LETTER CARRIER POLITICAL FUND

DELIVERING NALC'S MESSAGE TO WASHINGTON



Please bring an unwrapped TOY to our Branch's December meeting!

Branch 599 President Tony Diaz and 2015 Toys for Tots Coordinator/Vice President Alan Peacock attended the Toys for Tots kick-off on October 30 to help promote Letter Carriers' Toys for Tots Day, December 5.



Merry Christmas
and Happy Holidays
from your Branch Officers,
Stewards, and Staff

The Birdseye View

As we have all entered into the holiday and Christmas season, personally, I want to wish all of you the blessings of health and happiness for you and your families. My greatest wish is for peace in this troubled nation and world and that all our service men and women could all be home with their families during the holidays. We should all take time to remember those that we have recently lost, whether family or friends, and continue to have the faith that we will see them again; it is always tough to have that empty chair this time of year. When we have an opportunity we should always attempt to make a good memory, for sometimes that is all we have to sustain their memories. Often we are so absorbed in work that we leave little time to attention of loved ones and we don't want that to be regretful later on when they are not with us. Happy Holidays and God Bless You and Your Families!

Health Benefits

This time of year is also a time to make decisions during Open Season for benefits such as health, dental, vision, and flexible spending accounts. As for me, my experience which has involved over a million dollars of catastrophic care which cost me a pittance, I will always be indebted to our union plan... NALC Health Benefit Plan. They have always been there for me and my family and they are the best plan for the best price of all plans available. You have all the choices available that you desire for you and your family. This plan is the best and that is why many federal agency employees are associate members in our plan even though they could choose from any Federal Employee Health Benefit Plan. It's a union plan run by the members and administered by Cigna PPO. The latest plan available is Self Plus One

Letter Carrier Toy Drive takes place on Saturday, December 5.

and it will require everyone to decide on whether they would prefer this to a family plan. Personally, I will keep my family plan; the difference in price doesn't add up, but that's my opinion. For those of you who are not sure, our Director of Health Benefits, Brian Hellman, will be at our hall on Sunday, December 6, 2015, from 10 AM to 12 PM to address all your concerns.

A recent survey of the postal industry indicated that this industry hires millions of American workers and is responsible for over 1.4 trillion dollars of the American economy, which equates to about 1 out every 20 dollars of our total economy for work in only the mailing industry. When you add that to the fact that all investments into the United States Treasury, which we are the third largest investor, with billions in accounts, why would any representative of the American citizens desire to dismantle something so valuable? Oh, I forgot that would probably lead to another Wall Street bailout of their corporate friends to the detriment of the American public and working class jobs.

Toys for Tots

The 2015 Toys for Tots campaign kicked off October 30, at a warehouse located at 5050 10th Avenue just off 50th Street, behind Church's Chicken. The kickoff was well attended by community sponsors and hosted by Major Ed Zaleski and GySgt Barrett of the Marine Corps Reserve. One keynote speaker, Dave Andreychuk of the Tampa Bay Lightning, talked on the value of community service. For the first time since our local involvement of 18 years, there was not one official from the US Postal Service. This is also marked by another year without approval of the G10 permit to allow the Marine Corps Reserve to have notification sent out to postal customers of the Letter Carrier Toy



Alan Peacock
Vice President
Branch 599

drive that takes place on Saturday, December 5, as we have always picked up donated toys on the first Saturday in

December. We have always scheduled the drive on that day when there is no penalty overtime and it is before the peak Christmas mailing dates. We will make every attempt to use social media and hope some of our news and radio stations will help get the word out early and not the day of the drive when the notice is too late. We have also been told that the Post Office lobbies were not going to allow Toys for Tots boxes as they have always done in the past. We are looking at alternative ways to circulate flyers to stores and businesses to get the word out to the public. Postmaster's office did have someone from their administrative staff inquire about arranging to have a Marine in dress blues come do a photo op the day before the Letter Carrier drive at Customer Postal Connect with 100 businesses for help to have them donate toys for the drive. Every little bit helps fight against something the Grinch (Congress) would do to disrupt Christmas for those that have very little to enjoy. Bah Hum Bug to that...we will struggle to get the job done, but every child deserves a little Christmas! We plan to have a little Christmas party the night of our December 3 meeting for all that attend and please bring a new unwrapped toy to help kickoff our drive that Saturday. Merry Christmas and Semper Fi to all the children that depend on our efforts in our community to give them some Christmas cheer to remember!

Fraternally and Faithfully for
Community and Working Families,
Alan Peacock
Vice President NALC Branch 599
NALC Congressional District 14 Liaison

A well deserved farewell to Fernando *Quint* Quintanilla



Longtime retiree and Branch 599 member Fernando *Quint* Quintanilla passed away on October 22, 2015; he was 93 years old. Quint served in the US Navy during WWII, aboard the USS New York. After serving our country Quint was hired by the United States Postal Service in 1953 and immediately joined the NALC (National Association of Letter Carriers) and became active in union activities with Branch 599. Using his construction skills he learned through the G.I. Bill, he was instrumental in the expansion of our beautiful Letter Carriers Hall. His craftsmanship, the wood trim over the entrance arch and the colorful design tile work throughout the interior of the Hall will forever be part of his legacy. Quint retired from the USPS on December 31, 1985 after over 30 years of service. Staying involved in the union, he worked bingo and was very involved in the Branch's former holding company, TLC. A member of the Executive Board for many years, Quint was two months shy of being retired 30 years. Despite the fact that he had not been active for several years, Quint was a proud member of NALC Branch 599 for 62 years.

Thank you, Fernando Quintanilla, for your devotion to Branch 599. Your efforts along with the efforts of the many retirees have provided the blueprint that has been vital to the continued success of A.R. Tony Huerta Branch 599.

Interbay's Veterans were honored



Interbay Office had a ceremony at its flag pole to honor their veterans.

Sharing Our Members' Joys and Sorrows

Our deepest sympathy

and prayerful support is extended to the family and friends of **James Shenefield** [Interbay]; to **Mike Howie Howard** [Town 'N Country] and family at the loss of his son, David [28 years old], November 14; and to **Bill Mandikas** [retiree] and family at the passing of his mother, Helen Fedorka Perry, November 14.

Interbay carrier tragically killed

James Shenefield, 30, a carrier at Interbay Station was tragically killed in a motorcycle accident shortly after midnight, Sunday, November 8. James was recently converted from CCA to regular. He was extremely excited when he was converted to regular and ready to officially begin his Postal career. James was not married and did not have any children but had many friends at Interbay Station.



Retirees Banquet

January 16, 2016

Tampa Letter Carriers Hall

Dinner served at 6 PM

RSVP by January 8, 2015

Branch Office 813.875.0599

Our Branch is providing the meal for Retiree and One Guest.

Other/Additional Guest tickets are \$20 each and *must* be paid for by January 8.

BYOB Setups and Beer will be provided at no charge...

ice bucket, Coke, Diet Coke, Sprite, and Diet Sprite.

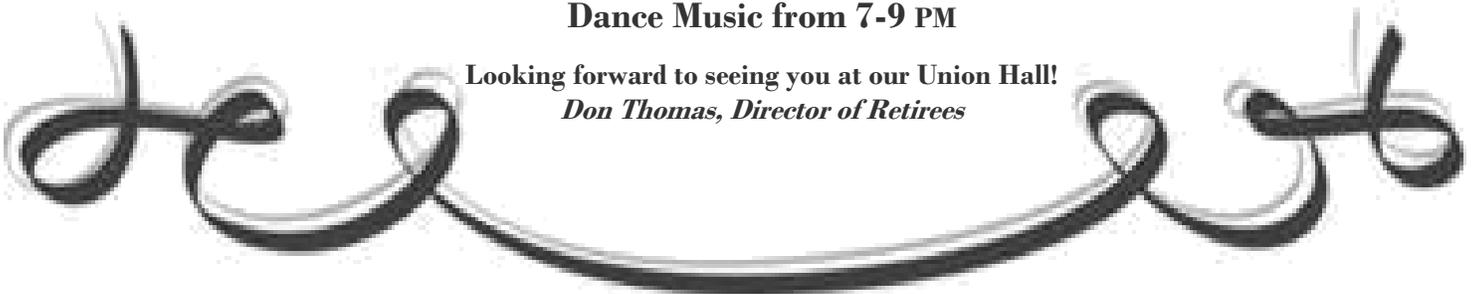
We will have a drawing for all who choose to participate; when you arrive you can each buy one ticket for \$1...drawing will be held after the meal. *One Ticket Limit...to give all participants the same opportunity at winning!*

Hors d'oeuvres available at 5 PM

Dance Music from 7-9 PM

Looking forward to seeing you at our Union Hall!

Don Thomas, Director of Retirees



NALC Health Plan

First of all, I want to let everyone know that there will be a Health Plan Seminar on December 6 at our Union Hall. The seminar will be hosted by our National Health Plan Director Brian Hellman. Please check out the flier printed in this month's newsletter for more information.

As most of you may know, Open Season for health plans began on November 9 and continues until December 15. This is the only time you can change health plans except when you have a life changing event. Please take a look at the NALC Health Plan carefully before you choose your health plan for this year. You can sign up by going to <https://liteblue.usps.gov/> or call Postal EASE at 1.877.477.3273 and enter option 1. Make sure you have your 8-digit employee ID and your USPS PIN #, also the health care plan code #. The costs and codes are listed below:

- 321 Self only High Option
\$60.69 per pay period
- 322 Self & Family High Option
\$131.71 per pay period
- 325 Self & Family NALC Consumer Driven Health Plan
\$309.80 per pay period
- KM2 Self & Family NALC Value Option Health Plan
\$249.39 per pay period

I was given a copy of a letter from Health Plan Director Brian Hellman's office. It said that the Self Plus One Plan, a new plan offered for 2016, has a rate higher than Self & Family. The reason given was because the government share was over \$32 less per month for Self Plus One. This was disappointing news because many of us thought we would get a lower rate for Self Plus One. Hopefully, next year's rates will be better for this new plan, because I for one cannot understand how or why it should cost more to insure two people than a family of four or more! So for now, Brian encourages our enrollees with two people to stay in the Self & Family Plan option.

The Self Only rate for retirees will be \$157.19 per month, with the government paying \$462.30. Self & Family will be \$343.82 with the government share of \$1,031.45.

If you are a CCA who has served 360 days, you have 3 options:

1. You can choose Self Only or Self & Family coverage in the USPS Noncareer Plan and receive a \$125 contribution towards your premium every pay day.
2. As a NALC member, you can choose Self & Family (not self only) in the Consumer Driven Plan or Value Option Plan and receive \$125 per pay period from the USPS. If

you choose Self Only for CDHP or Value Option you will not receive the \$125 contribution.

3. If you have not completed a 360 day period of service, you have only one option, the USPS Noncareer plan and receive the \$125 contribution per pay period.

Those of you who have the NALC Health Plan will receive a postcard telling you that you will get a copy of our plan on a disc. If for any reason you would rather get a hard copy of our plan, check the box on the post card and send it back to the NALC. The co-pay for PPO doctors will remain \$20 per visit except for preventive care which has no charge. The deductible is \$300 for Self & \$600 for Self & Family. There is not an annual limit on what our plan will pay.

A few of the changes for 2016 are: we expanded the Family Planning benefit to include the routine office visit associated with family planning service. We now cover an annual routine pap test for females age 21 through 65. We also will cover an annual routine Prostate Specific Antigen (PSA) for men 40 and over.



Jim Good
President Emeritus
Branch 599

Caution

with the 2016 *Self Plus One* health benefit...

See article above by President Emeritus Jim Good and President Diaz's article for more information.

Health Benefit Plan Seminar



Brian Hellman

National (NALC) Health Benefit Plan Director

Sunday December 6, 2015

10 AM – 12 PM

at

Tampa Letter Carriers Hall

Everyone Welcome!

(retired and active Carriers)

Come get answers to all your NALC Health Plan Questions

NO RSVP NECESSARY ~ Just show up!

A Blunderful Blizzard of Boz

You may remember that in the August *Tampa Letter Carrier* your blunderful Boz chose to gripe about my inability to hear Gilbert Cabanas reciting the names of applicants for membership in Branch 599. Now I seem to have difficulty hearing the name of the member chosen to win the accumulating attendance pot sponsored by Bill and Shirley Moran. Over the years I thought I heard the following names:

Clarence Merchandise
 Basil Metabolism
 Lester D. Mohicans
 Pete Moss
 Oswald Mygum
 Chris Mystery
 Cora Nariartery
 Felix Navidad
 Lou Neebin
 Ivanna Newhouse
 Willie Nilly
 Jack B. Nimble
 Evelyn O'Clock
 Justin Oldfahrt
 Xavier Onassis
 Warren Out
 Bill Overdue
 Euripides Pants
 Duane Pipe

Barbie Q. Pitts
 Stan Plicker
 Tad Pole
 Gene Poole
 Vashnu Poosikat
 Lois Price
 Oscar A. Question
 Caesar Quickly
 Jason Rainbows
 Forrest Ranger
 Mike Raphone
 Amanda B. Reckonwith
 Odysseus A. Recording
 Kurt Remarque
 Isabelle Ringing
 Dan Satango
 Ben Schwarmer
 Norm Sequitor
 Barbara Seville
 Adam Shame
 Collin Sick
 Lane Straddler
 Arch Support
 Malcom Tents
 Israel Honor Tomichu
 Mandy Torpedoes
 Dawson D. Towel
 Moishe Towelette
 Klaus Traphobic
 Aaron C. Travel
 Bud Tugly

Rachel Unrest
 Polly Unsaturated
 Fess Up
 Candy Vangough
 Uphill
 Harry Uppenwaite
 Bertha Vanation
 Jonah Vark
 Bud Vase
 Sue Veneer
 Nolan Void
 Chuck Wagon
 Walter Wallrugs
 Gail Warnings
 Knute Well
 Gustav Wind
 Sadie Word
 Eileen Toody Wright
 Sybil Wrights
 Bill Yardball
 Ken Ari Yellow
 Ann Dover Yermoni
 Hugo West Youngman
 Matt Zahball
 Pete Zapie
 Noah Zark
 Moe Zayik
 Hans Zoff

If any of these names are called, I could be your proxy.
CARRY ON! -Boz



Jim Boczarski
Sulphur Springs
 Member
 Branch 599

Holliday Retired!



Congratulations to James Doc Holliday [TCA Hyde Park], who received his retirement pin and gratuity from President Tony Diaz during our November Branch meeting.

**Branch 599 Members
 Are Encouraged to
 Join
 Our Facebook Group**

After logging into Facebook, you will find us here:
facebook.com/groups/nalc599
 You will then need to click *Join Group*.

Shop Stewards will Meet

Tuesday 7 PM
December 1
January 5

Sunday Work Party at our Hall

9-11 AM
January 10

*December's work party
is cancelled due to
Health Benefit Seminar.*

Executive Board Meets

Thursday 6:30 PM
December 3
January 7

Retirees Breakfasts

Monday December 7 9 AM
Denny's Restaurant at Dale Mabry & Spruce
2004 N Dale Mabry Highway, Tampa

Tuesday December 8 8 AM
Bob Evans Restaurant
SR-60 & Falkenburg Road, Brandon

ARSLAN UNIFORMS

Bill & Shirley Moran

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

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