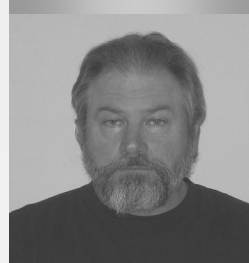


# Tampa Letter Carrier

## From the Desk of the President

Hello and welcome from the new offices of Branch 599 here at 315 W Busch Boulevard, Suite C. It has been a challenging period as we moved from our old digs at 3003 W Cypress Street to these new offices. I want to express the position of the Executive Board members as to how enthused we are about the new offices we have just finished moving into. There are a great many advantages for the Branch membership that are afforded to us by making this move. One advantage is that our new location will allow for the installation of a computer lab for the training of all our stewards. This lab will allow the stewards to have all training materials at their fingertips as well as all research materials for grievance processing to help bring all our stewards into the digital



Brian Obst  
President  
Branch 599



age for grievance processing. Also, our new building is what is known as a smart building and comes complete with alarm system, electronic door locks and securi-

ty cameras to ensure the safety and security of the property.

The most important benefit of our move is the securing of the financial footing of the Branch going into the future as the profits from the sale of our previous building allowed for the purchase of this property as well as setting the Branch on secure financial ground for the future.

At the present time, we are adjusting to the move and getting acclimated to our new surroundings while we wait for the engineering reports on the specific construction issues we need to address to open up our building so that we will have meeting space available in the new building.

Under the thought that *All Good Things Must End*, we have ended our relationship with our old Union Hall on Cypress Street. As of February 28, we are no longer associated with the property, and it has passed on to its new owners. The building, which was built by letter carriers for letter carriers, was a great home for our Branch and for many years was also a hub of community activity. The hosting of local concerts, dances, weddings, political rallies, and charitable dinners/functions made the hall an integral part of the community. Now as the years have moved on, needs have changed, but one

*(Continued on page 3)*

Branch 599  
serving  
Brandon  
Plant City  
Sun City  
Tampa

## Branch 599 Meeting

Wednesday  
April 12  
7:30 PM

*Until further notice, all meetings will be held at*  
American Legion Hall  
3204 W Cypress Street  
Tampa 33607

## Branch 599 Office

315 W Busch Boulevard, Suite C  
Tampa FL 33612

813.875.0599

Fax 813.870.0599

www.nalc599.com

Brian Obst  
President  
erif\_lor@hotmail.com

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

Rodna Kimelman Kirk  
Office Secretary  
nalc599@verizon.net

## Tampa Letter Carrier

Brian Obst  
Publisher

Phyllis R. Thomas  
Editor  
editor.nalc599@gmail.com

Branch 599 Office  
813.875.0599

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

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

## Officers

<i>Position</i>	<i>Officer</i>	<i>Phone</i>	<i>Email</i>
<b>President</b>	Brian Obst	813.875.0599 <i>cell</i> 727.458.0679	erif_lor@hotmail.com
<b>Vice President</b>	Michael Smith	813.326.0717	
<b>Recording Secretary</b>	Matt Fernandez	786.247.4185	
<b>Financial Secretary</b>	Alan Robinson	813.843.9762	
<b>Treasurer</b>	Tony Diaz	813.598.9635	
<b>Sergeant-at-Arms</b>	Luis Cruz	813.431.3223	
<b>MBA/NSBA</b>	Michael Anderson	813.681.5688	
<b>Health Benefit Rep</b>	Detlev Aeppel	813.505.7914	
<b>Director of Retirees</b>	John Gebo	813.503.1256	
<b>Trustees</b>	Lori McMillion, Ch.	813.263.7101	
	Alan Peacock	813.892.9378	
	Milly Minsal	813.446.2572	
<b>Labor Management</b>	J.D. Lewers	813.528.5519	
	Clement Cheung	813.758.5910	
<b>Presidents Emeritus</b>	Garland Tickle · Orbe Andux · Donald Thomas Michael Anderson · James Good · Alan Peacock · Tony Diaz		

## Shop Stewards

<i>Station</i>	<i>ZIP</i>	<i>Steward</i>	<i>Station No.</i>	<i>Steward's No.</i>
<b>Tampa Stations/Branches Chief Steward, Mike Smith</b>				
Brandon	33510/11	David Rivadeneira	813.661.1636	813.326.0717
Brandon	33510/11	Osceola Williams Sr.	813.661.1636	813.403.9525
Carrollwood	33618	Tina Bausch	813.961.2963	210.445.1369
Commerce	33602	Cynthia Williams	813.247.2416	813.892.2282
Forest Hills	33612	J.R. Sanchez	813.935.2954	813.778.4373
Forest Hills Annex	33613		813.935.2954	773.849.6229
Hilldale	33614		813.879.4309	
Hilldale Annex	33634		813.879.4309	
Interbay/Port Tampa	33611/16	Mike Dennis	813.831.2034	813.361.9103
Interbay/Peninsula	33629	Marie Brown	813.831.2034	727.331.9907
Palm River Annex	33619	Dianna Todd	813.663.0048	813.505.5647
Plant City	33564	Todd Soulor	813.754.3590	508.615.6517
Produce	33610	Matt Rodkey	813.237.4084	813.562.8744
Ruskin/Sun City Ctr	33570	Bert Fristad	813.634.1642	813.541.8514
Seminole Heights	33603	Matt Fernandez	813.237.4569	786.247.4185
Sulphur Springs	33604	J.D. Lewers	813.237.4569	813.528.5519
TCA/Hyde Park	33606	Josh Villa	813.873.7189	203.278.6485
TCA/Peninsula	33609		813.873.7189	
TCA/West Tampa	33607		813.873.7189	
Temple Terrace	33617		813.988.0152	
Town & Country	33615/35	Vic Figueroa	813.884.0973	845.380.6386
Ybor City	33605	Maurice Rice	813.247.2416	813.334.3189

## From the Desk of the President

*(Continued from page 1)*

thing has not changed and that is the mission that the hall was fulfilling for the carriers, as providing for the future for our carriers. The sale of the hall has provided a financial benefit for the membership by allowing us to obtain a new home for the Branch going forward and has also established a secure financial footing for the Branch going into the future. Let us not look back with sorrow at the loss of the



Union Hall we all knew and loved, but let us rejoice in the thought of the carriers that had the foresight to prepare the Branch for the future, all those years ago, that have now had that foresight come to fruition in our new Union Hall. Remember history is always with us as long as we ensure it is never forgotten and the history of our old hall has been transported with us to our new hall.

### Million Mile Awards!

Recognition, everybody likes to be recognized for their achievements. On February 16, 2023, thirty one (31) of our City Letter Carriers were recognized for their dedication to Service and Safety with the coveted Million Mile Award for 1,000,000 miles of driving or 30 accumulated years driven without a preventable incident. It takes dedication to the job and attention to detail to ensure you reach this mark, and the recognition of these carriers is well deserved. The award ceremony had a number of speakers extolling the value of the accomplishment of the awardees and each carrier was presented a plaque, signed certificate from the National Safety Council, a Million Mile pin and an award from the Postal Service in recognition

of their accomplishment. Special congratulations go out to Tampa Postmaster Jaquelyn Villemaire for putting together this wonderful award ceremony. The awardees are listed below, so if you see one of them, don't hesitate to congratulate them on their accomplishment:

Donnett M. Cervantes  
Steven M. Glover  
Elba Gonzalez  
Larry M. Hall  
James C. Hamilton Jr.  
Mary A. Kress  
Fidel Linares  
Mathew L. Loechelt  
Francisco Montalvo  
Brad G. Perez  
Julio Pesquera  
Joseph B. Plant Jr.  
Cash Randels  
Joseph L. Restivo  
Reinaldo J. Saltares  
John W. Syron III  
Karen E. Valdespino  
Frank Vazquez  
Jose R. Vazquez  
William Alvarado  
Peter Vaile  
Joe Villa  
Brian Langel  
Robert DeSantis  
Paul Falica  
John Rowland  
Michael D. Fisher  
Angel M. Hernandez  
Joann B. Kubly

### Stamp Out Hunger support needed

Our national Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive is rapidly approaching, and preparations are underway for this year's event. The second Saturday in May, May 13, is the date of this year's drive, so let us strive to make it better than last year, always moving forward. The potential of us possibly not having bags for this year has come up, as the cost has caused our previous bag sponsors to pull out for this year. While State President Al Freidman has been able to get some commitments for bag sponsors, we are well short of

what is needed, so please see your steward for bag sponsor information, in the event that you may have businesses or individuals that you service on your routes that might consider helping our drive with bag sponsorship donations. If you need further information, please contact me through the office at 813-875-0599. We are also looking for any assistance with support for the day of the drive, so please don't be afraid to step up to help out. Remember this drive goes to help those in the community who are having difficulties meeting the needs of themselves and their families when it comes to feeding their families/ themselves.

### COLA

The latest Cost Of Living Allowance (COLA) has been determined to be \$208 and it will be reflected by a raise in your hourly pay beginning on the March 11 pay cycle. The new pay chart is available on the NALC website at [nalc.org](http://nalc.org).

### Political actions Affect You

Calling all carriers: Needed—members to sign-up for the Letter Carrier Political Fund to help support the legislative/political activities of the NALC in support of our jobs and the Postal Service in general. I know you have heard it said more than once: All it takes is one swipe of the pen to wipe out all we have gained through all the years of collective bargaining. Congress controls the Postal Service and the passage of bad bills through Congress can and does hurt the Postal Service, thereby hurting us the letter carriers and our jobs. If you don't believe this just look back at the pre-funding mandate from 2006 that was passed through Congress, and it took us 17 years to get it removed as it was bankrupting the operations of the Postal Service by tying our hands financially. It was no accident that the

*(Continued on page 4)*

## Calendar

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

**Until further notice,  
Branch Meetings  
will be held at  
American Legion Hall  
3204 W Cypress Street  
Tampa 33607**

### Note

#### Meeting Changes:

##### Shop Stewards

Tuesday  
April 4 7:00 PM  
315 W Busch Blvd, Suite C

##### Executive Board

Thursday  
April 6 6:30 PM  
315 W Busch Blvd, Suite C

##### Branch 599

Wednesday  
April 12 7:30 PM  
American Legion Hall  
3204 W Cypress Street  
Tampa 33607

##### Retirees' Breakfasts

###### Tampa

Monday  
April 3 9:00 AM  
May 1 9:00 AM  
Denny's Restaurant  
at Dale Mabry & Spruce  
2004 N Dale Mabry Highway

###### Temple Terrace

Tuesday  
April 11 10:00 AM  
May 9 10:00 AM  
Bob Evans Restaurant  
off Fletcher near I-75  
12272 Morris Bridge Road

## From the Desk of the President

*(Continued from page 3)*

attempt to reduce delivery days and hours of service were attempted during this time, all of which would have led to the downfall of the Postal Service as a whole, allowing Congress to break up the service, selling it off in pieces to private industry. If you go to the NALC website and click on the Government Affairs tab, then under Political click on the Letter Carrier Political Fund and it will show you numerous ways to sign-up to donate to the fund. Remember, all the raises and benefits you have come from negotiations and we want to protect them going forward. Please consider joining and donating to the fund. You won't miss the money and the benefits are more than worth it.

#### Branch Vacancies need to be filled

Interested in becoming part of our Executive Board? There is an upcoming vacancy that I will be looking to fill and if you are interested in getting involved in the opera-

tion of the Branch and the Union as a whole, this could be your opportunity. Interested parties, contact me through our Branch number, 813-875-0599. Also, to the carriers at Hilldale, Temple Terrace, Forest Hills 13 zone and TCA zones 7 + 9, you still have no stewards and we need to fill those positions. Surely there are individuals in these stations who want to get involved in helping ensure that management honors the terms of our contract when dealing with the day-to-day operations of the carriers on the job. No one wants to be taken advantage of or treated poorly, but someone needs to step-up and be a part of the solution to assist your Union in representing you and other members of your stations.

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

**Knowledge is the Key.**

*Brian Obst*  
President

## Mail Call

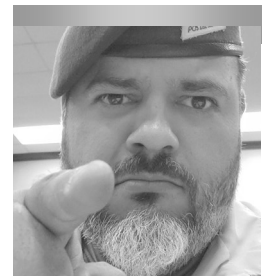
Brothers and Sisters, knowledge is power. Would you purchase a home without reading the contract? or seek medical insurance without reading the policy? NO.

The Employee and Labor Relations Manual (ELM), Management of Delivery Services Handbook (M-39), City Delivery Carriers Duties and Responsibilities (M-41), and USPS-NALC Joint Contract Administration Manual (J-CAM) are all available on the NALC app and website. Every member of our branch should be familiar with each of these documents to better understand their duties, responsibilities, and most importantly...your rights. Unfortunately, most carriers haven't heard of some of the above documents, if any.

Stewards utilize these documents when developing grievances. If you haven't done so already, I suggest you get acquainted with the above documents to help you determine if you have justification to file a grievance and to better assist Stewards with your grievances.

In closing, You are the Union, and it is incumbent on you to learn as much as you can to have a successful career with the United States Postal Service.

*Sarge*



Luis Cruz  
Sergeant-at-Arms  
Branch 599



The Letter Carrier Political Fund is a non-partisan political action committee (PAC) established for the purpose of electing qualified candidates who support letter carriers and who are committed to maintaining a strong and innovative U.S. Postal Service. Learn more at [nalc.org](http://nalc.org).



# From the Vice President's Desk – Are Statements Really Needed?

What does it mean to give a statement of accuracy? As stewards, we are often denied statements by carriers because they don't want to get involved, which hinders our investigation. But many statements received by stewards do not contain the right information that tell the story. Statements are wanted and needed to clarify what actually took place.

A good statement should answer the following: who, what, where, when and why. However, a statement may not answer every question and still give a clear explanation of the incident.

## **Who was involved in the incident?**

Letter carrier(s), supervisor, or manager. Every incident involves someone or something. The name of the person is needed to know exactly who was involved. Giving the person's name allows the steward to ask them questions during the investigation, if necessary.

## **What happened during the incident?**

This is the most important part of the statement. A very detailed description of what happened is vital to the investigation. Giving half of what happened will only hinder the steward's ability to conduct a thorough investigation and could come back to hurt the carrier. Don't spare any details, everything is important.

## **Where did the incident happen?**

Did the incident happen on the workroom floor, the carrier's case, the parking lot, or a customer's residence? Be exact in giving the location.

## **When did the incident happen?**

This refers to the time of day, morning, noon, or evening. Provide an estimate, if unknown.

## **Why did the incident happen?**

Possibly a catch-22 question, but necessary to understand why the incident happened. An explanation of the facts should make this question easier to answer.

Every time a carrier receives discipline, the steward will ask for a statement. Carriers are reluctant to provide a statement for various reasons: I don't want to tell on my fellow carrier(s), I didn't see or hear anything, or at times they just don't provide one to the steward. The necessity of giving the steward a statement is important to receive the best defense.

A thorough statement is the carrier's version of what really happened. Management will conduct an investigative interview (II) and deduce from the II that the carrier deserves discipline. Without a statement from the carrier, there's no way of knowing if management was justified in issuing discipline. The carrier's statement will either agree or refute management's description of what happened. Here's a common scenario:

*Management conducted an II and issued discipline to carrier Jones for failure to deliver a parcel to 453 W. Ohio Ave. on March 2, 2023. Carrier Jones was assigned to the route and worked on the day in question. Carrier Jones requested and spoke to steward Dunbar after receiving the discipline. Steward Dunbar asked carrier Jones to provide a statement regarding the parcel.*

*On March 2, 2023, I, Marcus Jones, was assigned to route 008. I received my parcels and used the load feature to scan all parcels in my hamper. I reviewed the look ahead feature on my scanner and did not have any unloaded parcels. I left the station and began delivering my route.*

*After lunch, approximately 1:30 p.m., I received a call from supervisor Adams asking about a missing parcel a customer called on from 453 W. Ohio Ave. I told supervisor Adams that I did not have a parcel for that address, but I would look again through my remaining parcels. I*



Mike Smith  
Vice President  
Branch 599

*looked and did not see a parcel for the address. I called supervisor Adams and*

*told him that I didn't have the parcel. I completed my route and returned to the station.*

*After dispatching my outgoing mail, I checked with the night supervisor Rice, and he said I was cleared. I clocked out and left.*

Signature  
Date

The missing parcel was in the hot case and delivered the next day. Management issued discipline on the premise Carrier Jones had the parcel and put it in the hot case after he returned to the station. The discipline was expunged and removed from his permanent file.

Carrier Jones' statement gave a clear explanation of what happened on the day in question. Without the statement, the discipline would easily remain in Carrier Jones' permanent file for 2 years. The statement also gave steward Dunbar several items to counter management's issuance of discipline.

As we can see, statements are quite important. Carriers that don't or won't provide a statement are relying on an empty promise. Statements are the best defense against discipline. Not only do statements clarify what happened, they give the carrier the time and space to tell their story. *Don't let management tell both sides, give a statement.*

To get there, we must work Together!

Mike Smith  
Vice President



# National Association of Letter Carriers

OF THE  
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA



TO WHOM THESE PRESENTS COME, GREETINGS FROM BRANCH 2008

BROOKSVILLE	HOLIDAY	PALM HARBOR	SPRING HILL
CLEARWATER	HUDSON	PORT RICHEY	TARPON SPRINGS
DADE CITY	NEW PORT RICHEY	SAFETY HARBOR	

The Annual NALC Branch 2008 Muscular Dystrophy Golf Tournament will be held on Sunday May 7th 2023, with a 7.30am Shotgun Start at Meadow Oaks Golf Club, Hudson, Fl. 34667

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone # \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone # \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone # \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone# \_\_\_\_\_

Please print all names so we will be able to read them.  
The fee for each player will be \$55, cash or check, no credit cards. Please pay prior to the event. The fee will include golf & cart, and a lunch.

The format will be a 4-person, best ball scramble

Prizes will be awarded to 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> place as well as longest drive and closest to the pin for both men & women.

All men will tee off from the white tees and the women the red tees. After teeing off, players will select the ball they'll play and the next shot will be taken within 1 club length.

Proper golf attire must be worn by all players at all times, no jeans or tank tops are allowed. There will also be a putting contest, 3 balls for \$5.

Please make checks payable to: Suncoast Carriers for MDA

Mail the completed application and the check to: NALC Branch 2008  
230 N. Pinellas Ave. Tarpon  
Springs, FL 34689

SUNCOAST LETTER CARRIERS BRANCH 2008 • 230 N. PINELLAS AVE. • TARPON SPRINGS, FL 34689-3420  
PHONE (727) 939-2001 • FAX (727) 938-2005





# National Association of Letter Carriers

OF THE  
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA



TO WHOM THESE PRESENTS COME, GREETINGS FROM BRANCH 2008

BROOKSVILLE	HOLIDAY	PALM HARBOR	SPRING HILL
CLEARWATER	HUDSON	PORT RICHEY	TARPON SPRINGS
DADE CITY	NEW PORT RICHEY	SAFETY HARBOR	

## The National Association of Letter Carriers Branch 2008 Annual Muscular Dystrophy Association Golf Tournament Registration for Hole Sponsor

The National Association of Letter Carriers Branch 2008 Golf Tournament is an annual event to raise money for Muscular Dystrophy. This year's tournament will be held on May 7th 2023 at Meadow Oaks Golf Club, Hudson, FL. Your participation is needed to help us help them find a cure for this terrible disease.

Sponsoring a hole on this great course is a way to help Letter Carriers raise money for MDA and promote your business as well.

Cost- \$35 per hole

You receive a sign on a hole and a free advertisement in our monthly newsletter which reaches over 750 members in five counties. Just include a business card. Also, your contribution is tax deductible.

Please fill out and return the form by April 26th, 2023 to assure your spot on the course. Make checks payable to: Suncoast Letter Carriers for MDA

Mail the completed form and check to: NALC Branch 2008  
230 N. Pinellas Ave.  
Tarpon Springs, FL 34689

Business Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address & Phone # \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Contact Person \_\_\_\_\_

Patrick Mullen  
Vice President  
NALC Branch 2008

727-204-9567

SUNCOAST LETTER CARRIERS BRANCH 2008 • 230 N. PINELLAS AVE. • TARPON SPRINGS, FL 34689-3420  
PHONE (727) 939-2001 • FAX (727) 938-2005



## Sharing Our Members' Joys and Sorrows

Our deepest sympathy and prayerful support is extended to **Mike Smith** [Vice President, Branch 599] and family at the passing of his mother-in-law, Joanie Mills, March 14.

## Health Benefit Report

As letter carriers, we know we are going to spend a great part of our time out of doors. While many of us enjoy this time out of the office, it is important to remember that with increased sun exposure comes increased risk of skin cancer.

The American Academy of Dermatology tells us that skin cancer is the most common form of cancer in the United States. In fact, one in five Americans get skin cancer during their lifetime. We all know the importance of wearing sun protection such as sunglasses and hats, as well as applying plenty of sunscreen. Florida has the second highest number of melanoma diagnoses after California.

When properly treated, melanoma is very survivable. Melanoma caught and treated early, has a 99% average five-year survival rate. Melanomas that have spread to the lymph nodes have a 71% survival rate. This drops to 32% once the melanoma metastasizes to distant organs. The good news is that 82% of melanomas are localized and therefore highly survivable. Let's debunk some myths about skin cancer.

**Myth 1: I have dark skin, so I cannot get skin cancer.** While it is true that those with lighter skin have a higher incidence of skin

cancer, patients with darker skin have a higher incidence of death due to skin cancer.

**Myth 2: I am too young to get skin cancer.** Melanoma is the most diagnosed cancer among adults aged 25 to 29.

**Myth 3: Cloudy Days = No Skin Cancer.** Although clouds have some UV blocking properties, UVA rays can still get through them and cause a burn. Remember that even a low UVA index can cause a burn.

**Myth 4: I shouldn't go outside if I burn easily.** Research has shown that wellness benefits received from exercising outdoors can be far more significant than the same activity performed indoors.

**Myth 5: Skin cancer itches.** Most skin cancers do not itch. The vast majority of skin cancers are detected during screening by a dermatologist.

**The best way to avoid skin cancer:** Wear a hat, sunglasses, and sunscreen, and schedule a yearly screening with your dermatologist!



Detlev Aeppel  
Health Benefit Rep.  
Branch 599

## Retired...but not Tired

### Staying Active

Retirees, it is important to stay physically active. Adults aged 65 and older need: **At least 150 minutes a week** (for example, 30 minutes a day, 5 days a week) **of moderate-intensity activity such as brisk walking.** Or they need 75 minutes a week of vigorous-intensity activity such as hiking, jogging, or running. At least 2 days a week of activities that strengthens muscles.

Staying active can help with **lowering your risk of heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes, and some types of cancer.** Also, improve your strength and balance so you can prevent injuries and stay independent. It might help lower your pain levels. Many

people agree that an *exercise buddy* keeps them going. Take a walk during the day with a fellow retiree or your spouse or family member. Try a dance class – salsa, square dancing, and the YMCA has a Silver Sneaker Program – it's up to you, but it is available. Use family gatherings as a time to play team sports or do outdoor activities. A few tips to keep you young.

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



John Gebo  
Director of Retirees  
Branch 599

### 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.*

# From the Treasurer's Desk –3rd Edition

Brothers and Sisters, over the past several months I have been in contact with the Trustees at Nalcrest for the opportunity to become involved in the decisions that come with maintaining a retirement community. First though, how many of you are aware the National Association of Letter Carriers has a retirement community? Well it does, and it is called Nalcrest. It is a retirement community just for letter carriers. It is located in central Florida just south of SR 60, midway between Tampa and Vero Beach, just east of Lake Wales.

Nalcrest features 500 garden-style apartments, arranged in clusters of 4 to 12 apartments, and all are on ground level. Efficiency, 1-bedroom, and 2-bedroom apartments are available, starting from \$383 per month. All are leased unfurnished on a yearly basis. Rental fee includes trash removal, free Wi-Fi, interior and exterior maintenance, and use of all recreational facilities. The property is huge and offers many, many amenities. You must be retired letter carriers and members in good standing with NALC, and no pets are allowed. Currently there are 292 members on the waiting list. Alan Robinson, our Branch 599 Financial Secretary's late dad, Frank, lived at Nalcrest and loved the community. Many remember Frank for going fishing every single day.

Back to my story...I had been asked to attend a few once-a-month meetings, but was unable to, still serving as your Branch President. On February 28, I attended my first meeting at Nalcrest and it was an honor to conduct business with such high profile and respected union leaders, to include: Trustees, Matty Rose, Don Southern, and National President Emeritus Fred Rolando. (Fred was our installing officer at the final event held at our Tampa Letter Carriers Hall, January 21.) The full day meeting had a lengthy agenda covering many issues and concerns. Nalcrest has some tough decisions upcoming, and the discussions were plentiful. Several guests were

invited to discuss various topics from expansion to water and sewer upgrades, and pool issues. The decisions made by the trustees must be made within a budget, so prioritizing is important. This was Don Southern's last meeting as a trustee at Nalcrest. The trustees, appointed by then President, Fred Rolando, helped save Nalcrest from failure. Don will be involved in the appointment of his replacement. A decision will be coming soon and I am one of three to be considered for the trustee's position. Regardless of who is chosen, it was a great experience and I am honored to just be considered for the trustee vacancy. I will report on the new trustee next month.

**A little history:** Nalcrest was a dream that became a reality. The idea of a retirement community just for letter carriers first emerged in the 1950s. NALC President William C. Doherty had traveled to post-war Europe, where he was inspired by similar retirement communities sponsored by labor unions, religious groups, and fraternal organizations. Doherty proposed at the NALC's 1954 biennial convention in Cleveland that NALC start its own affordable non-profit retirement community. The union found a lovely location on the shore of 15-square-mile Lake Weohyakapka in Polk County FL. Over the years it has been fascinating to see this dream become so successful. The waiting list is long, with the affordable rental pricing and amenities...get your name in now to plan for the future. *—nalc.org*

## Quick Hits:

### Information you should know

This month, in staying with the importance of knowing our National officers is the bio of our NALC Secretary Treasurer, Nicole R. Rhine. Nicole was re-elected secretary-treasurer by mail balloting of NALC members in 2022. Rhine, a member of Lincoln NE Branch 8, became a member of NALC as soon as she joined the letter carrier craft, attending branch meetings and state

conventions regularly. *I couldn't wait to become a member of the union, she said. I learned at an early age what unions stood for and could accomplish because my mother worked at a packing plant and belonged to one.*



Tony Diaz  
Treasurer  
Branch 599

At the branch level, Rhine served stints as assistant steward and steward. She was elected branch secretary in 1998, a role she held until her election as branch president in 2004. For 3 years starting in 1998, Rhine was also the Nebraska State Association of Letter Carriers' legislative representative, until her election as state association president in 2001. Rhine was a Region 5 arbitration advocate from 1999 to 2006. In 2006, she was appointed as a regional administrative assistant by NALC President William Young to fill a vacancy. Then, in 2009, NALC President Fredric Rolando appointed her national assistant secretary-treasurer to fill a vacancy. That appointment was affirmed when Rhine was elected assistant secretary-treasurer in 2010 during the 67th Biennial Convention in Anaheim. She was elected secretary-treasurer by acclamation in 2014 during the union's 69th Biennial Convention in Philadelphia, and was reelected by mail balloting of NALC members in 2018.

*It was my desire to educate letter carriers of their rights and to defend them when those rights were violated that inspired me to assume my other union roles over the years, she said. I am excited about the opportunity to serve the membership as a whole after being able to do so previously at the local, state and regional level. Rhine holds a journalism degree from the University of Kansas.* *—nalc.org*

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



## Million Miler Recipients

received their awards on February 16. *Congratulations!*  
Our members are named in President Obst's article.



Brad Perez



Frankie Vasquez



Mary Ann Kress



John Syron III

Tampa Postmaster Jaquelyn Villemare, MCSO Bryan LaLonde, President Brian Obst, and Treasurer Tony Diaz are pictured with each recipient.

# Making it Home Safely

Returning home safely should be our number one priority. Yes, as letter carriers, our job is to deliver the mail, however, we are to do so as safely as possible. Often, we carriers get caught up looking at the mail, mailboxes, and addresses, forgetting to pay attention to our surroundings. Watching our surroundings should be a huge focus since robbery of mail carriers has soared. According to NBC and ABC news articles, who obtained their information from the Postal Inspection Service, robbery of carriers has tripled and armed robberies have quadrupled from 2018 to 2021. Though I have not found actual numbers for 2022, we know that crimes against carriers have not ceased. Therefore, we must stay vigilant by keeping our heads on a

swivel.

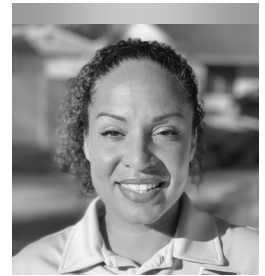
- ◆ As you're driving, keep an eye on your mirrors. This ensures you're not being followed and you're able to see anyone approaching your vehicle.
- ◆ As you're walking up driveways and through parking lots, look through car windows to the other side to make sure there is no unsuspecting person waiting to make you a victim.
- ◆ As you're walking around corners, don't walk along the side of the building/structure, give yourself distance. This allows more visibility of what's around the structure before you turn the corner.
- ◆ If you see something or someone that looks suspicious, make a mental note (ex. vehicle make and model,

what a person was wearing and what direction they were headed), then contact the proper authorities.

If you feel unsafe, leave for your safety and contact 911 first. Once you're in a safe location, contact management. Practice these techniques in your professional and personal lives to keep as safe as possible.

Let's make it home safely to our loved ones.

*Milly Minsal*  
Trustee



Milly Minsal  
Trustee  
Branch 599

# Let's Talk Safety

Every day, letter carriers are hitting the streets walking and dismounting routes with one thing in mind and that is getting our job done. We work hard every day through rain, heat, cold, and basically all weather conditions that Mother Nature can throw at us. Unfortunately, we forget sometimes to be wary of our surroundings because the delivery of the mail can be not only physically taxing, but also mentally. One thing to keep in mind is to always look for signs of *man's best friend*. These days people are bringing their dogs everywhere it seems, whether that be to their jobs, on transit, for walks, or even grocery shopping. Dogs seem to be everywhere more than ever. Now myself, I love dogs, but I always keep in mind that every dog can

bite. Here are some simple commands to think of if ever confronted by a dog, whether it be on the route, at home, or even grocery shopping.

*Stop!*

*No!*

*Back!*

*Sit!*

Just those four commands might elicit a response from *man's best friend* because the owners of the dog possibly use the same commands. When giving these commands, you should be facing the dog to let the dog know that you are giving the commands and you are in control. One thing to keep in mind is, don't run if you can avoid it, slowly back away keeping the dog in your line

of sight. If you run from the dog, it will think it is a sign that you are re-treating and will chase to attack. Also, as letter carriers, it is imperative that you carry your dog spray and be familiar with how to use it. Remember, handle in palm to make sure the sprayer is facing away from you and try not to spray into the wind. It is never a good day when you dog spray yourself and get bit by the dog. *Ouch!*

*J.D. Lewers*  
Labor Management Representative  
NALC Safety Task Force Rep. Branch 599



J.D. Lewers  
Labor Management Rep.  
Branch 599



# **Are You Ready?**



## **Retirement Seminar**

Region 9 Instructor Jerry Lonergan

Sunday, April 2, 2023

Branch 1477 Letter Carriers Hall  
5369 Park Boulevard  
Pinellas Park FL 33781

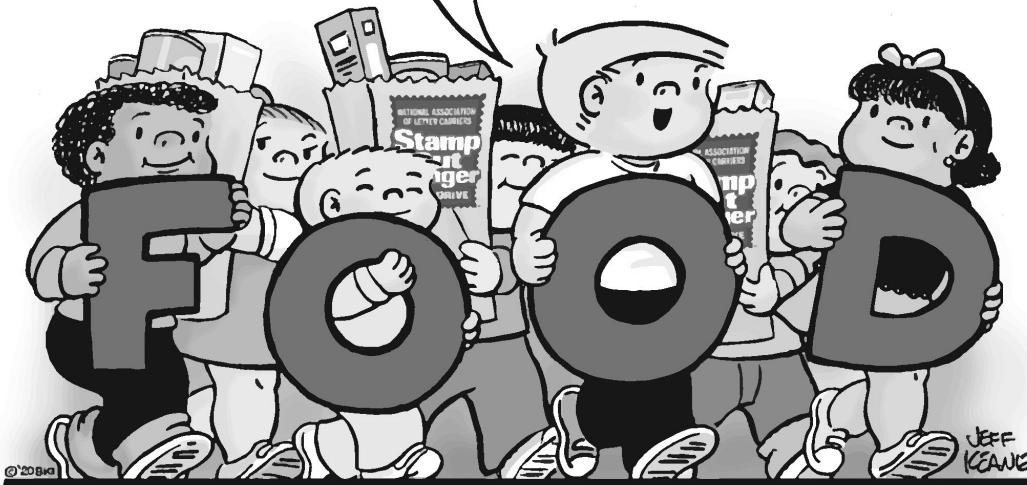
10 AM – 2 PM

Class intended for those who are eligible and/or close to retirement. Spouse welcome.

Call the branch office to register:  
727.531.1477



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# LETTER CARRIERS' FOOD DRIVE

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

Getting hurt on the job is a regular occurrence if you are a Federal Employee. The challenging nature of the duties and responsibilities places employees in difficult working conditions daily. Getting hurt on the job and receiving treatment should not require the same difficulty. When a Federal Employee gets injured on the job there are few options and even less qualified Physicians to help navigate those options. 4FED-HURT and D.O.L. Injury Centers along with our team of federal injury specialists are here to help navigate the claims process while the claimant receives treatment. **So, what does a Federal Employee do if they get hurt on the job?**

A **Traumatic Injury (CA-1)** is an injury that occurs on one day that presents as a singular event. An **Occupational Disease (CA-2)** is an injury that takes place over several days or months.

### If you are Injured, here are some very simple steps to follow.

1. Notify Your Supervisor Immediately.
2. File a CA-1 and CA-16 for a Traumatic Injury.
3. File a CA-2 for an Occupational Disease.
4. Write your Personal Statement describing the injury. Be specific.
5. Call 833-433-3487 to speak with a 4FED-HURT Injury Specialist.

Our team of Physicians and injury care specialists work for you, not OWCP. We will see you without an approved claim and provide OWCP with all the necessary documentation to get your claim approved the first time. We have 12 locations throughout the state of Florida ready to start your case immediately.



### North Florida

- Tallahassee  
2743 Capital Circle #106  
Tallahassee, Florida 32308
- Jacksonville  
6216 Sauterne Dr.  
Jacksonville, FL 32210
- Daytona / Ormond Beach  
305 Clyde Morris Blvd. Suite 220  
Ormond Beach, Florida 32174

### Central Florida

- Orlando / Altamonte Springs  
482 E Altamonte Dr. Suite 1006  
Altamonte Springs, FL 32701
- Orlando / Sanford  
241 Bellagio Circle  
Sanford, Florida 32771
- Orlando / Airport  
500 N Semoran Blvd Suite 101  
Orlando, FL 32807
- Tampa / Palm Harbor  
33143 US Hwy 19 N  
Palm Harbor, FL 34684
- Tampa / Temple Terrace  
Bush Gardens  
9780 N 56th St Suite A.  
Temple Terrace, FL 33617

### South Florida

- Fort Myers / Cape Coral  
11621 S. Cleveland Ave #50  
Cape Coral, Florida 33907
- Fort Myers / Cape Coral  
706 SW Pine Island Rd. Suite 105  
Cape Coral, Florida 33991
- Lake Worth / Palm Springs  
3003 S Congress Ave # 2F  
Lake Worth, FL 33461
- Fort Lauderdale / Davie  
2240 SW 70 Avenue Suite D.  
Davie, FL 33317



Are you a federal employee  
injured while on the job?  
Call our office ☎ 833-433-3487



4fedhurt.com

# Addressing OWCP issues...let's get it right

There have been many articles in our newsletter over the years regarding on-the-job injuries. These are regularly asked questions you need to know:

1. What do I do first?
2. Who do I notify?
3. What paperwork do I need?
4. Who will help me through this?

Correcting OWCP issues are time consuming, frustrating, and if not corrected can delay medical treatment that could cause more severe prolonged injuries. So how do you avoid these issues? How do you get it right?

The **answers** to the above questions should help the process.

1. Report the accident immediately, explain exactly what happened, with a time and place (address).
2. Your supervisor or manager, and if you cannot reach anyone, your steward or our Branch office. It is important to notify someone.
3. 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 downloading your forms and filling them out; this is critical to you case.

## *Other tips:*

1. **It is critical to make copies of everything; more times than not, paperwork is lost. It is difficult to re-create your paperwork.**
2. Write a detailed, thorough, complete, and legible statement. Some important information to consider, if applicable: the time, the place, the conditions, the surface(s), any contributing factors, possible witnesses, and any hazards.

## **On the Job Injury - Forms needed, simple math,**

$$CA-1 + CA-16 = CA-17$$

CA-16 must be signed by management,

Authorization for Examination and/or treatment.

Any questions...call the Branch office; ask for Brian Obst, 813.875.0599.



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**Tampa FL 33612**  
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 www.nalc599.com  
 Tampa Letter Carrier  
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