

Tampa Letter Carrier

OLUME 15, ISSUE I

JANUARY 2016

Around The Horn from The President's Desk

Happy New Year to all Branch 599 Brothers and Sisters! May the 2016 year bring prosperity, good health, peace, and the conversions of many, many CCAs.

As we begin another year, we are faced with many challenges in 2016. This is a Presidential election year and it is the final year of the NALC's collective bargaining contract with the United States Postal Service. We are also coming off the third consecutive year with 600 plus grievances filed by the stewards and officers of Branch 599. Several zones begin 2016 with no union steward which will need to be covered by Branch officers.

Breaking News

One more CCA was converted to fulltime regular carrier effective December 26, 2015!

Information

On November 13, the US Postal Service announced that it had made \$1.2 billion in operating profit in Fiscal Year 2015. This marks the second consecutive year in which the Postal Service's operating profit has exceeded

\$1 billion, NALC President Fredric Rolando said in a statement following the release of the agency's 2015 financial report. This is a remarkable achievement for a government entity that receives no taxpayer money and whose business model until recently was seen by some as being unsustainable. Equally important, he said, this impressive performance results from two ongoing structural factors: As the economy continues to improve from the worst recession in 80 years, letter revenue is stabilizing. And as the Internet drives online shopping, package revenue is skyrocketing, boding well for the Postal Service's future.

The president observed that the annual report arrived just as USPS was preparing for its busiest time of year. Historically, the Postal Service does well financially during a fiscal year's first quarter, since that October through December period includes the alwaysbusy holiday season, Rolando said. That's expected to be all the more true this year, he said, given that USPS was projected to deliver 15.5 billion pieces of mail in December—not only cards

and letters, but also an estimated 600 million pack-



Tony Diaz President Branch 599

ages, with the latter an increase of 10.5% over last year's volume. The president said that these financial results were neither a fluke nor a one-year wonder. Fiscal Year 2015 is the third straight year when the Postal Service has recognized an operating profit—that is, the money it earned by selling stamps and services exceeded the costs of delivering the mail. In fact, he said, in the past two years alone, USPS' earned revenue actually left its operations \$2.4 billion in the black. Moreover, the changes stem from structural factors—an improving economy and the increase in online shopping.

Any talk of deficits, losses or red ink has nothing to do with the mail, Rolando said, but rather with congressional politics: the 2006 decision by a lame-duck Congress to compel

(Continued on page 3)

Branch 599 Meetings

Thursday January 7 7:30 PM

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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.

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Shop Stewards

Station	ZIP	Steward	Station No.	Steward's No.		
Tampa Stations/Branches Chief Steward, Brian Obst 727.458.0679						
Brandon	33510/11		813.661.1636			
Carrollwood	33618	Freddie Nimphius	813.961.2962	813.263.7895		
Commerce	33602	Pedro Jiminez	813.242.4507	813.727.9280		
Forest Hills	33612	Nick Cullaro	813.935.2954	813.541.8159		
Forest Hills	33613	Ed Humphries	813.935.2954	813.787.3914		
Hilldale/Annex	33614/34	Varick Reeder	813.879.4309	315.491.6234		
Hyde Park	33606		813.873.7189			
Interbay/Port Tampa Interbay/Peninsula	33611/16 33629	Jackie Allen Clement Cheung	813.831.2034 813.831.2034	813.508.1440 813.758.5910		
Palm River Annex	33619	Pam Benton	813.663.0048	813.475.0753		
Plant City	33564		813.719.6793			
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		813.873.7189			
Temple Terrace	33617	Warren Sumlin	813.988.0152	813.486.7612		
Town 'N Country	33615/35	Brian Obst	813.884.0973	727.458.0679		
Ybor City	33605	Detlev Aeppel	813.242.4507	813.505.7914		

Around The Horn from The President's Desk

(Continued from page 1)

the Postal Service to pre-fund its future retiree health benefits. USPS is alone among public and private entities in the United States in being required to prefund these benefits, he noted. No one is obliged to do this for even one year in advance, Rolando said, yet the 2006 law forced the Postal Service to pre-fund 75 years' worth of future retiree health benefits. If Congress fixes the pre-funding fiasco it created, the president said, the Postal Service will be able to focus on addressing the evolving communications landscape while continuing to provide its customers—residential and commercial alike—with the world's most-affordable delivery network.

The Associated Press story about the report noted the Postal Service's \$1.2 billion operating profit in Fiscal Year 2015 and other positive news, and it quoted two people—NALC President Fredric Rolando and USPS Chief Financial Officer Joseph Corbett, with Rolando quoted more than Corbett. The Federal Times story had a good headline (Postal Service revenue gain allows 'limited flexibility' to invest) and it did an effective job of getting in both good and bad financial news.

-Postal Record

Quick Hits:

Information you should know
*) Success – Letter Carriers/MDA
Golf Tournament: Great success,
great time, great scores, great gifts,
great feedback, great weather! We
surpassed even what we were hoping
to collect for MDA. In this our 2nd
annual tournament we set records for
the number of golfers (90), a record

for hole sponsors (24), a record for raffle ticket sales (\$1,300), a record for donated gifts, and a record for total monies collected (\$5,500). This amount added to the monies collected throughout the year (\$1,500) gives Branch 599 \$7,000 for the Muscular Dystrophy Association. This amount is one of the largest (post street corner collections) donations to MDA. This is not a one man production, however, I could not have covered all the ground without my co -chairman to this event, Forest Hills retiree Alan Robinson. Special thanks to Alan, we solicited for donations easily over 100 businesses and restaurants, you name it, we had it donated. Also, thanks to Carrollwood carrier Dennis Lorenzo for his relentless pursuit of businesses up and down Dale Mabry Highway and Vice President Alan Peacock for having a truck donated for a hole in one contest (someone got within 5 feet). Not to leave anyone out, thanks to all the carriers who participated in the event by golfing, getting donations, getting hole sponsors, getting extra teams, helping with registration (Sulphur Springs carrier Debbie McEndree), helping with raffles and helping drive around the Wing House Girls (Forest Hills carrier/steward Nick Cullaro), photography (retiree Lomax McIntyre), and assisting the chipping and putting contests (Hilldale carrier and steward Varick Reeder and his son). Thanks to all!

Here is some feedback from the tournament: Paul Meyer, golf teaching pro, Tampa Bay Golf Network wrote 11/23/2015: Kudos to the postal carriers

for their MDA fundraiser event at Heritage Isles yesterday! You need to put this on your calendar!! Excellent organization, excellent leadership!!!! 100 golfers in 4 hrs 15 min!!! Great raffle prizes! Thanks for a great event mail boys!!!

- *) Imagine a customer walking into his/her hometown post office, going to the clerk and signing over his/ her paycheck for deposit or asking to take out a small, short-term loan. Sounds crazy, right? But it wasn't that long ago that post offices acted as banks. And if Senators Elizabeth Warren (D-MA) and Bernie Sanders (I -VT) have their way, post offices will be the people's banks once again. The reasons these senators have decided to make postal banking part of their legislative agendas is not primarily because it's good for the Postal Service, but because it would benefit the poorest class of Americans—those known simply as the unbanked. That it also might financially aid the cash-strapped Postal Service is a side benefit. USPS could partner with banks to make a critical difference for millions of Americans who don't have basic banking services because there are almost no banks or bank branches in their neighborhoods, Warren wrote in a Huffington Post op-ed in 2014. -NALC.org
- *) Any contract negotiation news throughout the year will be included in my articles or in the newsletter.

Happy New Year!

Look forward to talking to you again on the next

Around The Horn
from the President's Desk

Sharing Our Members' Joys and Sorrows

Our deepest sympathy

and prayerful support is extended to the family of Leroy Thomas Jr. [retiree] whose passing was November 28.

TOYS FOR TOTS

Tampa Postal Federal Credit Union

[coordinated by Barbie Buggica, Pam Mitchell and the their staff] donated 35 bicycles and dozens of toys to Toys for Tots from their staff, credit union members, and community partners.





The season for giving: Sulphur Springs letter carrier, **John Jacox**, brought smiles to many kids for Christmas. John and his wife, instead of buying each other Christmas gifts purchased all the toys shown at right.



Your Branch Officers, Stewards, and Staff Wish You a Safe, Prosperous, Healthy, and Happy New Year!



Photo from 1912 shows a motorized cart that was designed to receive mail from the boxes via a chute that dumped directly into the cart.

The Birdseye View

The following article is dedicated to the numbers because numbers tell the truth and never lie! As I have been involved with the National Association of Letter Carriers for over 42 years, there has always been one thing that we all have in common, our numbers. We started with a badge number... now you have an EIN employee identification number. The day comes when you get your own route number and associated vehicle number and some people never change that first route number their whole career, but this is quite rare unless you are one of the few who bid on a route that senior carriers thought they couldn't get awarded but you bid anyway. We always said it doesn't cost anything to place a bid. Of course getting your own route also leads to something you have to deal with every day, your base numbers from inspection of your route. How you going to be today is asked before you have your final receipt of mail. Believe it or not some of you never know what to answer because you don't even know what your base time numbers are and many don't care to know, or leave themselves to the magic of manufactured numbers by someone that also has no knowledge of your route or its base numbers. Then this leads to a number of other scenarios and some number of disputes as well. When you fail to meet the manufactured number it may lead to unauthorized overtime or unprofessional estimate charges. Then comes a grievance number your steward will have to file to defend you from the discipline that could have been avoided if you are professional at your job and know how to properly make an estimate in accordance with the M-41 Handbook - Letter Carriers Duties and Responsibilities. When we don't learn to do our job correctly and leave it to the whim of others that also don't know, it puts a burden on a number of others and to the Union and the Postal

Service as well. Even in years when we are showing an increase in operational profits due to the efforts of hardworking employees, we also have had a record number of grievances that impede that hard earned profit from our sales of products and services. Yes the Postal Service itself imposes many unnecessary issues itself, but all parties are responsible and that is the numbers that don't lie.

As we go through the holiday season there are a number of records continuing to be broken; amount of package delivery well exceeded the records of first quarter of fiscal year 2015. This will also lead to another successful year of operating profit in spite of the burdens financially placed upon the US Postal Service for the past 10 years. Without the prefunding imposed the Postal Service would have made operational profit for every year, even through the entire Great Recession. Numbers never LIE!

Now focus on the numbers of our own organization, NALC Branch 599, and what percentage of our members are actively involved. Out of our 546 active letter carriers, 517 are union members...that equates to 94.7% that support all of our collective bargaining cost for the 29 non-members that receive the same benefit from contract negotiations. Out of the total 127 CCAs, 101 are members...that equates to 79.5% are members, supporting the 26 non- members in all negotiations that affect all CCAs. Overall active membership is 91.8% support the remaining 8.2% that accept the benefit that is provided by our collective bargaining expense. We welcome all carriers to be members and join in the collective efforts that we fight for every day for working class letter carriers and their families. We will have contract negotiations in 2016 that will be hard fought and expensive, every penny worth of effort in the tough

economic times we are in to keep from giving back hard fought wages, benefits and working conditions. The



Alan Peacock Vice President Branch 599

last contract negotiation that went through negotiation, mediation and arbitration for over a year cost the union over \$2 million. For all those non-members it was free, the Numbers Never Lie. Someone once said, *Liars never figure and figures never lie!*

Now as much as I appreciate all the active and retired members, we average about 45 members at each branch meeting and that is continuously all time lows for this branch that is still actively pursuing everything that is beneficial for all union and working families in America. We are veterans, voters, community activists, and we pledge to the flag of the United States of America. God Bless America and God Bless the National Association of Letter Carriers. Happy New Year... hope to see more numbers in 2016.

Note: There will be a meeting of all delegates for the 2016 National Convention after the January 7 Branch meeting; we will vote on the order of choices for hotels that we submit to the housing committee.

Fraternally Yours For the Benefit of All Union Members, Alan Peacock Vice President NALC Branch 599 NALC Congressional District 14 Liaison



John Brown Retired!

Congratulations to John Brown [Brandon], who received his retirement pin and gratuity from President Tony Diaz during our December 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





January 16, 2016
Tampa Letter Carriers Hall

Dinner served at 6 PM

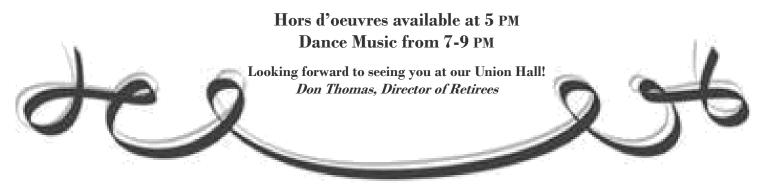
RSVP by January 8, 2015 Branch Office 813.875.0599

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!



Retiree Station

As I sat looking around last night at our Branch 599 monthly union meeting, the hall was nearly empty. Take away your officers, those that attend to go as paid delegates to state and national conventions, and just a handful remain.

What has changed over the years? I think everything and then I realize not everything has changed. The one constant is that management has gotten more and more demanding; pushing carriers harder and harder from what I see and hear. Never before have the demands on letter carriers been so demanding and what you do is so visible with all today's technology. Know that you are being pushed harder and harder...the best you can do is your best each and every day. When you start disregarding safety rules or cutting corners to get the job done faster, you may make your supervisor happy, however, should you get in an accident disregarding safety rules, you and you alone will be the one disciplined. Do

the best you can every day and follow all safety rules; they are in place to protect the USPS and you the carrier.

The Union is each of us, yet very few take one night a month to attend Branch 599 meetings, which are on the first Thursday of the month. Think about all the time we put into other events in our lives that we chose to do; what is your job worth that supports your family? Is one night a month asking too much to learn about your job and take part in your union business? You pay dues, which give you REPRESENTATION first and foremost, a vote, and a voice in what happens in our UNION. The Union fights for each of us on a daily bases!

Who among you will step up and serve Branch 599 in the future? Will it be you or you? Each of you has something to offer that could make Branch 599 a better union, however, for this to happen you need to start getting involved. It takes more than paying dues to run

Branch 599, it needs our involvement and fresh ideas from members! What will you do in the future to im-



Don Thomas
Director of Retirees
Branch 599

prove our Union and the USPS? Both need your involvement.

Typing this, many names have come to mind that have served Branch 599 in the past; they gave of themselves that we would have it better today. We have a solid history of members that have stepped up and served our membership over the years and many are still serving. The past is the past, the future belongs to you, the active members, and what will you do?

In the words of President John F.
Kennedy with one word changed,
replacing country with union:
Ask not what your union can do
for you—ask what you can do for



Health Benefit Plan

Seminar

your union.

was held at our hall, December 6. Pictured are President Tony Diaz; Health Benefit Plan Director Brian Hellman; Executive Assistant to Brian, Beth Morris; and FSALC President Al Friedman.

\$7,000 Donation to MDA!



Branch 599 President Tony Diaz presented a \$7,000 donation to the Muscular Dystrophy Association. Our 2nd Annual Golf Tournament collected \$5,500 with the additional \$1,500 collected throughout the 2015 year. This year's tournament raised \$2,500 more than last year. Thanks to all!



A Blunderful Blizzard of Boz

There is a great deal of honor having served our community as a postal worker. When people were made aware of my career, they often inquired about my duties. I proudly told them that not only was I a carrier, but that I had full blown letters.

Being able to tell stories such as this to Mr. Lewers on my right and Ms. Harrison-Best on my left made me eager to come to work every day. But alas, I must now confine my vain attempts at being a humorist to these very pages.

The rural carrier who does the route on which I live will sometimes attend Sunday Mass at St. Thomas, other times at St. Peter the Apostle, and still other times at Queen of Peace. He is what you might call a roamin' Catholic.

A couple of days after Thanksgobbling, my cautious friend Sam saw the following headline: TURKEY DOWNS RUSSIAN AIRCRAFT. He wondered, could this be an act of revenge?

My buddy Darrin at Seminole Heights used to work in Holiday FL. One day he saw a line of people in front of a veterinarian's office with their pets. There was a groundhog, a bunny rabbit, a bald eagle, a black cat, a turkey and a reindeer. The name of the vet's office: Holiday Animal Clinic.

My favorite ex-manager David walked into an upscale breakfast diner and asked for a French toast. The waiter replied: Vive la France!

There was a sign-maker on Warren's route. Every once in a while he'd bring him a *letter*.

Union steward Brian was on his way to an important meeting when he noticed a large tear in his dress trousers. Realizing that knowledge is the key, he knew he had to reach his tailor swift. He had to speed Hillsborough, hasten Dale Mabry and rush Linebaugh. The

Greek seamstress was waiting for him. She said: Euripides Pants? Imenides Pants!

By the way, there's a trampoline store on Alternate 19 called *Tarp-on-Springs*.

Jason of Sulphur Springs thought he could seduce a nice lady by inviting her to see his stamp collection, its beauty surpassed only by hers. *Oh*, she said, *Philately will get you nowhere*.

Confucius, Aristotle, Euclid, Nietzsche, Kant and Copernicus were all on the Orient Express, heading from Paris to, um Istanbul, and, um, wait a minute, oh, um. Gosh Dangit! I lost my train of thought.

There was an important international psychology conference in Vienna. All the big names were there: Bob Newhart, Ann Landers, Sigmund Freud. A young medical student named Lori addressed the panel. Having seen many young newlyweds hesitate before beginning intimacy, she said, how would you advise them to proceed from fear to sex, Dr. Freud? The reply came quickly. Said Freud: From vier to sechs? Das is zimple, mein friend. Funf!

Important news from the comic book crowd: A new character has been seen in Marvel. Bruce Jenner is now one of the ex-men.

My dear friend Carol, formerly of the Springs, told me something I did not know. When you make a design out of tiny chips of tile, you cannot have more than I3 adjoining pieces of the same color. This is called *the Mosaic Law*.

A number of my coworkers have Asian spouses. One of these gals had plastic surgery done on her eyes. She's okay now, but for a while she felt *disoriented*.

Sal told me this: The French philosopher René Descartes sat down at the table of a familiar café. The waitress asked him if he will be having his usual order. *I think not*, he replied. Then he vanished.

Donna (the short one) noticed this bumper sticker: My zombie friend CHEWS LIFE.



Jim Boczarski Sulphur Springs Member Branch 599

Many postal retirees go on to a second career. Just like my prostate doctor. He quit his medical job because his hands were too fat to do surgery. He decided to become a weather forecaster, since he already was a *meaty urologist*.

Albert Einstein walked into a liquor store. There he purchased sweet vermouth, rye whiskey, bitters and maraschino cherries. His friend Leo Szilard asked him what's up. Einstein replied: Just doing some preliminary research for the Manhattan Project.

My postal brother Don asked me what Antonio Vivaldi has in common with Simon & Garfunkel. Well, of course, Vivaldi wrote *The Four Seasons*, and the other two wrote about the four seasonings. (*Parsley, sage, rosemary & thyme*)

204b John works out at a gym. They posted a sign there reading WASH HANDS AFTER PILATES. Is that a biblical reference?

I heard that former Postmaster General Donahoe visited Israel after his retirement. I never said that he was completely clueless, but did he really take a harpoon to the wailing wall?

Vincent van Gough walked into his plastic surgeon's office after he recovered from the repairs done after his unfortunate experience with scissors. The doctor greeted him with this salutation: HAPPY NEW EAR!!!

Carry on! -Boz

We wish to thank our event Sponsors

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urse
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Duse
Lub YMCA









2nd Annual NALC Branch 599























Shop Stewards will Meet

Tuesday 7 PM January 5 February 2

Executive Board Meets

Thursday 6:30 PM January 7 February 4

Sunday Work Party at our Hall

9-11 AM January 10 February 7

Retirees Breakfasts

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

Tuesday January I2 8 AM Bob Evans Restaurant SR-60 & Falkenburg Road, Brandon

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