

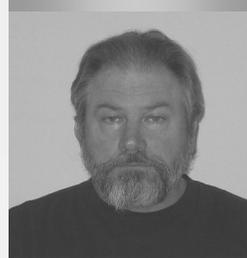


Branch 599  
serving  
Brandon  
Plant City  
Sun City  
Tampa

# Tampa Letter Carrier

## From the Desk of the President

Throughout this edition of this newsletter, you will find numerous mentions/articles on the passing of longtime Sulphur Springs Letter Carrier, Paul *Paulie* Falica. His passing has had an effect on many people both inside our Branch as well as the community as a whole, and the outpouring of thoughts and emotions related to his passing find a home in our newsletter so that all who read it will know who Paul was and that he had a profound effect on all that he met in life, and he will be missed due to his untimely passing.



Brian Obst  
President  
Branch 599

I need to address other issues that the membership should be brought up to date on this month.

### NALC Disaster Relief Fund

First, we had an ongoing donation contest for the NALC Disaster Relief Fund – where the station with the highest total of donations for the fund would receive a catered breakfast from the President and Vice President. The contest ended on January 4 and the winner was the Brandon Station (*cue trumpets*). Brandon managed to collect \$516 for the Disaster Relief Fund and will have received their breakfast by the time you read this article. Pictures will be posted in next month's newsletter. Other donations were collected from Interbay Zones 11/16, but overall, the rest of the stations failed to submit any donations, which was rather disheartening. Overall, our Branch raised \$557 and because we exceeded \$500, the President and Vice President each matched \$250, bringing our total donation to the Disaster Relief Fund to \$1,057, which was mailed to our National offices on January 7. We will do this again in the future and hopefully we will get a better turnout from all stations next time.

### Safety Captains needed

Throughout the city, many of the stations are missing Safety Captains. Safety Captains are needed in all stations to help assist and maintain the safe environment needed for all employees. The Safety Captain position is voluntary, and each Captain is part of the overall Safety Team for the installation. The job is not difficult and doesn't require tons of time and investment, just a keen eye to areas where unsafe situations crop up and a willingness to address the issues. The Safety Captain will work within their own station, documenting and pointing out safety issues to be addressed, and take part in installation-wide meetings to help ensure that our workplaces are safe for all employees. Remember, safety is everybody's responsibility. If you can help out by stepping up as the Safety Captain in your office, please call our Branch office and provide your name and station, and I will get back to you to help get you started.

(Continued on page 3)

### Branch 599 Meeting

Thursday  
February 1  
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.

## 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	mosmith46@gmail.com
<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>			
<b>Health Benefit Rep</b>	Detlev Aepfel	813.505.7914	
<b>Director of Retirees</b>	John Gebo	813.503.1256	
<b>Trustees</b>	Milly Minsal, Ch. Andre Hinton	813.446.2572 931.980-5169	
<b>Labor Management</b>	J.D. Lewers Clement Cheung	813.528.5519 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 656.215.2467
Brandon	33510/11	Osceola Williams Sr.	813.661.1636	210.445.1369
Carrollwood	33618	Brian Jackson	813.961.2963	813.352.9481
Commerce	33602	Cynthia Williams	813.247.2416	813.778.4373
Forest Hills	33612	J.R. Sanchez	813.935.2954	773.849.6229
Forest Hills Annex	33613	Nick Cullaro	813.935.2954	813.541.8159
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	Marie Brown	813.831.2034	727.331.9907
Palm River Annex	33619		813.663.0048	
Plant City	33564		813.754.3590	
Produce	33610	Terryka Gray	813.237.4084	813.446.5888
Ruskin/Sun City Ctr	33570		813.634.1642	
Seminole Heights	33603	Paul Sardinas	813.237.4569	813.650.3504
Sulphur Springs	33604	Morgan Kalish	813.237.4569	689.299.2936
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	Miriam Rojas	813.988.0152	727.253.1309
Town & Country	33615/35		813.884.0973	
Ybor City	33605	Maurice Rice	813.247.2416	813.334.3189

# From the Desk of the President

*(Continued from page 1)*

## Executive Board

Our Executive Board is going through some changes right now, as longtime Trustee Chair Lori Mcmillion and Trustee Alan Peacock are both stepping down from their positions after the February 1 meeting. We thank both of them for their dedication to the position and their service to the Branch over the years and wish them well into the future. I have appointed retired Ybor Carrier Andre Hinton to replace Lori Mcmillion and we are currently looking for a replacement for Alan Peacock.

We are still looking for a replacement for the vacant MBA/NSBA position.

Please contact me if you are interested in either one of these positions on our Executive Board.

## Staff

We have hired a new Building Manager to replace departed Building Manager Alan Robinson. Our new Building Manager is retired Sulphur Springs Carrier, Walter Rhodes. Walter is a previous steward and has the requisite skills needed to perform the job and will be a welcome addition to the office team. *Congratulations, Walter, and welcome aboard.*

## Stamp Out Hunger Coordinator needed

I know that it is a few months away,

but it is never too early to begin preparations for this year's NALC Food Drive. The drive takes place on the second Saturday in May, so let's all start to look ahead to this year's drive! If anyone is interested in helping, we are looking for a Food Drive Coordinator for this year's event. We were third in the Nation last year and first in our Branch size, so let us see if we can do even better this year.

## Our new Hall!

The construction on our new Hall has been completed and we are looking to have an open house to allow all to come see it while spending some relaxing time with other members of the Branch, so keep your eyes and ears peeled as there will be an announcement in the near future on the scheduling for this event.

## Deliver the Cure

As many of you have noticed, we were unable to put on our annual golf tournament for the Muscular Dystrophy Association due to a number of reasons, chief of which was the lack of volunteers to help with the scheduling, canvassing the community for donations for raffles, and increased costs for the golf course fees. We will attempt to get the tournament going again this year, but we will still need assistance, as Alan Robinson is not able to do this alone anymore as it is a

daunting task. Anyone who can assist, please contact our Branch office, and we will help get things started. We appreciate any and all help, as the MDA is NALC's charity of choice, and this tournament provides a sizeable donation each time we run it.

## Retirees Dinner

Our Retirees Dinner went off without a hitch and a great night of fellowship, good food, and drink was had by all. Approximately 110 people were in attendance to honor our retirees. This dinner is a free benefit for our retirees every year, so let's keep the upward trend of more attending each year. Check out the pictures (there will be more in next month's issue) to see what you missed this year and plan to be with us next year.

Finally, I have to say that even though we had a tough time during the holiday season this year, losing several carriers/members, we will persevere and move into the future with a dedication to making things better for all Branch members.

*If you want to live a happy life, tie it to a goal, not to people or things.*

– Albert Einstein

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

*Brian Obst*  
President



## Calendar

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

### Shop Stewards Wednesday

**January 30 7:00 PM**  
315 W Busch Blvd, Suite C

### Executive Board Thursday

**February 1 6:30 PM**  
315 W Busch Blvd, Suite C

### Branch 599

Thursday  
**February 1 7:30 PM**  
315 W Busch Blvd, Suite C

### Retirees' Breakfasts

#### Tampa

Monday  
**February 5 9:00 AM**  
Mama's Kitchen  
9312 N Florida Avenue 33612

#### Temple Terrace

Tuesday  
**February 13 10:00 AM**  
Bob Evans Restaurant  
off Fletcher near I-75  
12272 Morris Bridge Road

## Just for the Health of It

The NALC Health Benefit Plan (NALCHBP) has an exciting new program for those of us with heart health or high blood pressure concerns. This new program is called Hello Heart. Hello Heart is a program that helps you track, understand, and manage your heart health using an app that you download to your phone. This program is no cost to eligible members. Members get a free blood pressure monitor that connects to the app on your phone. Hello Heart strictly follows HIPAA guidelines to save information. Saved information is 100% private to you. Only you have access to your information.

If you choose to sign up for Hello Heart you will get:

1. A FREE FDA cleared blood pressure monitor which connects to your phone.
2. Access to blood pressure, cholesterol, activity, and medication tracking technology.
3. Explanations of what your numbers mean.

4. Personalized tips for maintaining a healthy heart.
5. Progress reports you can review or share with your doctor.
6. Auto-imported lab results with personalized explanations.
7. Access to the support team for questions via phone or email.

If you are a NALC Health Benefit Plan member or adult dependent with blood pressure readings of 130/80 or above, or are taking blood pressure medication, you are eligible to enroll. Simply text *NALC89* to phone number 75706 or go to [join.helloheart.com/NALC89](http://join.helloheart.com/NALC89) to sign up.

Here's to your health.....

*Detlev*



Detlev Aeppel  
Health Benefit Rep.  
Branch 599

## Mail Call

Brothers and Sisters, it's Black History month. The idea of having Black History month in February is moronic, because it should have been in June, and mean, because it is the shortest month of the year even in leap year.

The 2024 theme is *African Americans and the Arts*, spanning the many impacts Black Americans have had on visual arts, music, cultural movements, and more. Events to learn more are everywhere, like:

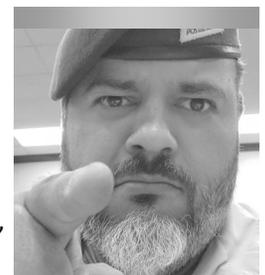
- The Tampa Bay History Center's third annual Black History Month Reception, an evening of inspiration, recognition, and cultural celebration. It is set to take place on Friday, February 23, at 6:30 PM (doors open at 5:30).

- USF's Exhibition Black History starting Monday, February 12 – Thursday, February 22.

If those dates don't work for you, check your community events calendar and find another.

Participating in these events will not only broaden your mind, but will help to contribute towards a healthier mind. Enjoy it!

*Sarge*



Luis Cruz  
Sergeant-at-Arms  
Branch 599

# From the Vice President's Desk

The 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment of the Constitution states in part:

*All persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the State wherein they reside. No State shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States; nor shall any State deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws.*

—constitution.congress.gov/constitution/amendment-14)

Equal protection under the law, is the short term of the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment which is at times misinterpreted or misunderstood. I would like to address how the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment applies to carriers in a defensive posture. I have participated in many investigative interviews and often hear this question, *Do you understand what due process is?* The answer is mostly yes, yet many don't. So, let's take a walk down the legal field for a minute. I'm not a lawyer nor have I studied law, so I'll do my best to explain due process as it pertains to the grievance procedure.

Due process as defined by Merriam-Webster is:

1. *a course of formal proceedings (such as legal proceedings) carried out regularly and in accordance with established rules and principles – called also procedural due process*
2. *a judicial requirement that enacted laws may not contain provisions that result in the unfair, arbitrary, or unreasonable treatment of an individual – called also substantive due process*

Article 16 of the National Agreement defines the term *Just Cause* which is the precursor for discipline. Carriers should become familiar with this

section of the National Agreement. Due process and just cause works hand in hand. Management is aware of this segment of the agreement and may attempt to circumvent the contract. Stewards are trained to counteract management's tactics and uphold due process.

## Just Cause Principle

*The principle that any discipline must be for "just cause" establishes a standard that must apply to any discipline or discharge of an employee. Simply put, the just cause provision requires a fair and provable justification for discipline.*

*Just cause is a term of art created by labor arbitrators. It has no precise definition. It contains no rigid rules that apply in the same way in each case of discipline or discharge. However, arbitrators frequently divide the question of just cause into six sub-questions and often apply the following criteria to determine whether the action was for just cause. These criteria are the basic considerations that the supervisor must use before initiating disciplinary action.*

**Is there a rule?** *If so, was the employee aware of the rule? Was the employee forewarned of the disciplinary consequences for failure to follow the rule? It is not enough to say, "Well, everybody knows that rule," or "We posted that rule ten years ago." You may have to prove that the employee should have known of the rule. Certain standards of conduct are normally expected in the industrial environment and it is assumed by arbitrators that employees should be aware of these standards. For example, an employee charged with intoxication on duty, fighting on duty, pilferage, sabotage, insubordination, etc., may be generally assumed to have understood that these offenses are neither condoned nor acceptable, even though management may not have issued specific regulations to that effect.*

## Is the rule a reasonable rule?

*Management must make sure rules are reasonable, based on the overall objective of safe and efficient work performance. Management's rules should be reasonably related to business efficiency, safe operation of our business, and the performance we might expect of the employee.*

**Is the rule consistently and equitably enforced?** *A rule must be applied fairly and without discrimination. Consistent and equitable enforcement is a critical factor. Consistently overlooking employee infractions and then disciplining without warning is improper. If employees are consistently allowed to smoke in areas designated as No Smoking areas, it is not appropriate suddenly to start disciplining them for this violation. In such cases, management loses its right to discipline for that infraction, in effect, unless it first puts employees (and the unions) on notice of its intent to enforce that regulation again. Singling out employees for discipline is usually improper. If several similarly situated employees commit an offense, it would not be equitable to discipline only one.*

**Was a thorough investigation completed?** *Before administering the discipline, management must make an investigation to determine whether the employee committed the offense. Management must ensure that its investigation is thorough and objective. This is the employee's day in court privilege. Employees have the right to know with reasonable detail what the charges are and to be given a reasonable opportunity to defend themselves before the discipline is initiated.*

(Continued on page 6)



Mike Smith  
Vice President  
Chief Steward  
Branch 599

## Sharing Our Members' Joys and Sorrows

**Our deepest sympathy** and prayerful support is extended to Linda and family at the passing of her husband, **Willie J. Grant** (retiree), December 11; to Christopher, Melissa, and family at the tragic passing of their father, **Paul Falica** (Sulphur Springs), December 18, while delivering on his route; and to Josephine, John and family at the passing of their brother, **Nicholas Garcea** (retiree), January 2.

### 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.*



Restrooms are completed.

## From the Vice President's Desk

*(Continued from page 5)*

**Was the severity of the discipline reasonably related to the infraction itself and in line with that usually administered, as well as to the seriousness of the employee's past record?** The following is an example of what arbitrators may consider an inequitable discipline: *If an installation consistently issues five-day suspensions for a particular offense, it would be extremely difficult to justify why an employee with a past record similar to that of other disciplined employees was issued a 30-day suspension for the same offense. There is no precise definition of what establishes a good, fair, or bad record. Reasonable judgment must be used. An employee's record of previous offenses may never be used to establish guilt in a case you presently have under consideration, but it may be used to determine the appropriate disciplinary penalty.*

**Was the disciplinary action taken in a timely manner?** *Disciplinary actions should be taken as promptly as possible after the offense has been committed.*

**Corrective Rather than Punitive.** *The requirement that discipline be corrective rather than punitive is an essential element of the just cause principle. In short, it means that for most offenses manage-*

*ment must issue discipline in a progressive fashion, issuing lesser discipline (e.g., a letter of warning) for a first offense and a pattern of increasingly severe discipline for succeeding offenses (e.g., short suspension, long suspension, discharge). The basis of this principle of corrective or progressive discipline is that it is issued for the purpose of correcting or improving employee behavior and not as punishment or retribution.*

As stewards, we have an obligation to all carriers to ensure that due process is adhered to. Charges by management are not absolute. Any charge must be proven through the grievance process whereas the charge is reviewed and concluded. The charge must be an established rule or policy that is equally administered among all carriers. Carriers are given the opportunity to defend alleged charges during investigative interviews.

If management allows one carrier to get away with the same charge, then just cause doesn't exist, and due process is not present. Arbitrators have ruled in the past that if just cause is violated, due process is additionally violated in some cases.

To get there we must work together!

Mike

# Matt Speaks: The Divine Call of Letter Carrying

## ***The Post Office and the genesis of American Civilization.***

I've always believed that the Office of the President of the United States has the easiest qualifications, but it's the hardest job to get. According to the U.S. Constitution under Article II Section I: *No Person except a natural born Citizen, or a Citizen of the United States, at the time of the Adoption of this Constitution, shall be eligible to the Office of President; neither shall any person be eligible to that Office who shall not have attained to the Age of thirty five Years, and been fourteen Years a Resident within the United States.*

Why 35? The National Constitution Center (NCC) cites a quote by James Monroe, the fifth President of the United States as one reason: *The Constitution has provided, that no person shall be eligible to the office, who is not thirty five years old; and in the course of nature very few fathers leave a son who has arrived to that age.*

Friendly reminder, that was written in 1788.

Still, the NCC also cites this seemingly mystic explanation by Tench Coxe who was a continental congressional member: *In America, as the President is to be one of the people at the end of his short term, so will he and his fellow citizens remember that he was originally one of the people; and that he is created by their breath. Further, he cannot be an idiot, probably not a knave or a tyrant, for those whom nature makes so, discover it before the age of thirty-five, until which period he cannot be elected.*

Well...let's move along shall we?

Two days before the United States was born, on July 2, 1776, George Washington issued the following orders to the continental army from New York: *The fate of unborn millions will now depend, under God, on the courage of*

*this army. Our cruel and unrelenting enemy leaves us only the choice brave resistance, or the most abject submission. We have, therefore to resolve to conquer or die.*

Thirteen years later following the victory of the American Revolutionary War, at his inaugural address, he said: *It would be peculiarly improper to omit, in this first official act, my fervent supplications to that Almighty Being who rules over the whole universe, who presides in the councils of nations and whose providential aids can supply every human defect, that his benediction may consecrate to the liberties and happiness of the People of the United states a Government instituted by themselves for these essential purposes; and may enable every instrument employed in its administration to execute with success, the functions allotted to his charge.*

One of the instruments employed was creating The Postal Act of 1792 which was signed into law by our first president. According to the National Postal Museum at the Smithsonian: The Post Office Act of 1792 was the most important single piece of postal legislation enacted in the early republic... among the issues that Congress debated were rate structure, privacy, and procedures for the establishment of new postal routes. The Post Office Act of 1792 codified the presumption that Congress would retain primary control over postal policy—a presumption that remained a cornerstone of that policy until the service was restructured under the Postal Reorganization Act of 1970.

Section 1 formally established the very first routes.

Section 4 of the act required the Postmaster General and deputy postmasters to make the following oath: *I do swear (or affirm as the case may be) that I will faithfully perform all the duties required of me, and abstain from*

*every thing forbidden by the law in relation to the establishment of post-offices and post-roads within the United States.*

It was an act with TEETH. Under Section 11 it reads: *And be it further enacted, That if any deputy postmaster, or other person authorized by the Postmaster General, to receive the postages of letters, shall fraudulently demand or receive any rate of postage, or any gratuity or reward, other than is provided by this act for the postage of letters or packets on conviction thereof, he shall forfeit for every such offence, one hundred dollars, and shall be rendered incapable of holding any office under the United States.*

Probably the most intriguing piece of the act is Section 17. If Section 11 had teeth, Section 17 was the bite. Let's look shall we?

*And be it further enacted, That if any person or persons shall rob any carrier of the mail of the United States, of such mail, or if any person shall rob the mail, in which letters are sent to be conveyed by post, of any letter or packet, or shall steal such mail, or shall steal and take from or out of the same, or from or out of any post-office, any letter or packet, such offender or offenders shall, on conviction thereof, suffer Death.*

The Postal Service has a unique legacy in that it was part of the mere *idea* of the country. It is mentioned in the constitution under Article 1 Section 8 where the document details the powers of congress. The power to establish post offices and post roads is the sixth power listed. This power entrusted by



Matt Fernandez  
Recording Secretary  
Branch 599

(Continued on page 8)

## Retired...but not Tired

I find it very troubling, the number of crimes on letter carriers that I read and hear about. It is very sad, the lack of respect for the blue letter carrier uniform now, compared to back in the day. When and why did the blue uniform that demanded so much respect become a target? Crimes on letter carriers are a federal crime, which apparently does not matter. I am amazed where I read there have been 2,000 reported attacks on letter carriers since just 2020. While many are robberies for the collection keys, letter mail and parcel robberies are also common. The thieves are looking for the gift cards and cash being mailed, and packages worth value. When these criminals are caught, they must be federally prosecuted to stop this dangerous trend.

When I carried mail, this is something we honestly did not

think about or worry about. I caution all of you to be careful, know your surroundings, and stay visible. If you are being robbed, stay as calm as possible, give up what they are looking for, and try to remember features of the robber while calling 911.

We must restore respect for letter carriers and the postal blue, and stop these attacks.

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

*John*



John Gebo  
Director of Retirees  
Branch 599

## Veterans Buzz



February is Black History Month. Looking back in history brings several groups of African American military veterans to mind who paved the way for the future. African

Americans have served the military as far back as the Revolutionary War through the present conflicts throughout the world.

Several notable groups demand attention. The Buffalo Soldiers of the U.S. Army, The Tuskegee Airmen, and Montford Point Marines. Although many may not know of the significance these groups of African American military men played in history, it is worth researching. The actions

of these African American men set the standard for many who may not have been given the opportunity to serve or fill various positions in the military.

Let this month be the celebration of African American veterans from John Martin, first African American to serve in the Marine Corps, to Benjamin O. Davis, first African American General in the Air Force, to Henry Ossian Flipper, first African American to graduate at West Point, to the last African American recruit. The path has been laid. Celebrate the accomplishments of African Americans to the military.

Semper Fi!



Mike Smith  
Vice President  
Branch 599

## Matt Speaks: The Divine Call of Letter Carrying

*(Continued from page 7)*

the people was utilized and articulated on paper and sent to the father of our country, George Washington, to be signed into law. The Constitution itself was a full articulation of the principles of the Declaration of Independence, of which it was the channeling of a people that were descendants of another people that came from a faraway land that merely wanted to worship God and made the journey across the ocean, and this God that they wanted to worship was the one articulated in The Bible. And so, my friends, I ask...is it really that bold to say that Letter Carrying is a divine calling? The answer is an absolute NO.

Brothers and sisters, in solidarity we can take this fact into our hearts. We can draw from it's strength. Though there may be others who only wish to sabotage our profession and raise its fists against us, God always assures us the victory. For any divine calling is invincible. And thus, any work we do with faith in promise, will lead us to the promised land.

***And the LORD shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones: and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not.***

—Isaiah 58:11

*Matt*

## From the Treasurer's Desk – 13th Edition

Brothers and Sisters,

Last month I mentioned that I would re-submit a past article about the US Postal Strike of 1970 for this month, however, after the tragic death of Branch 599 veteran letter carrier, Paul Falica, I had to prioritize my articles.

Paulie, as he was called, was a 40-year NALC member and an outstanding USPS employee. On Monday, December 18, as I am certain many of you have heard, Paulie was tragically killed in what was a hit and run accident while on his deliveries. I was notified on that Monday afternoon by Branch 599 President, Brian Obst, when he asked me if I knew a Paul Falica, to which I responded yes, I worked at Sulphur Springs with him before I became Branch President. I then asked Brian, *What's up with Paulie?* just before Brian gave me the horrible news. I could not believe what I was hearing. Since the accident, I have spoken to many carriers who worked with Paulie at Sulphur Springs, both active and many who are now retired, all were in disbelief, all very saddened. His office was shaken, expectedly by the news of their coworker, there in the morning, not to return to the office after his deliveries.

I was able to speak to the number one senior carrier at Sulphur Springs, Sam Darrigo. Sam, like Paulie, is coming up on his 40-years of service and agreed to talk about his coworker and friend for this article. He said the news about Paulie was extremely difficult. He has spoken to Paulie on a daily basis before work and on breaks since Paulie transferred to Tampa in the early 1990s. Sam said, *Sulphur Springs was Paulie's family and he loved his job. He took pride in servicing his customers like so many of us veteran carriers do. You spend more time with your co-workers on a daily basis than you do your own family. We will all miss Paulie, he was a true professional. This is a true tragedy.*

Paulie from New York, was a NALC member since being hired. He was a beloved coworker, beloved by his customers, a true professional, and a friend to so many, like Sam stated.

When I would visit Sulphur Springs as Branch President, I would walk by Paulie's work area and ask him, *You are not retired yet?* Paulie would answer, *I am starting my second 30-year career, I will never retire.* Paulie loved going to work and interacting with his coworkers, he also loved his customers. I was interviewed by several local news agencies, and I was able to speak about our friend, Paulie. A man who you never saw without a smile, without a nicely pressed uniform; a friend we will miss, and a Letter Carrier for life.

On Friday December 22, in case you have not heard, bond was denied for the individual responsible for the fatal accident. He will remain in jail, as he was driving on a revoked license because of several convictions for driving with a suspended license. The suspended license stemmed from two convictions for driving under the influence.

On Friday, December 29, there was a memorial service and police-escorted motorcade that began at Sulphur Springs Post Office. It was an emotional service. The motorcade left Sulphur Springs heading north on Nebraska Avenue with all postal vehicles in a line, plus personal vehicles that joined in. The motorcade was covered by most of the local news agencies and included two helicopters. I walked several blocks down Nebraska and stood acknowledging all the vehicles that passed by me. It was impressive seeing all the postal trucks one after another. The trucks proceeded down Nebraska to the area of Paulie's route and drove past the corner where the fatality occurred. A great tribute to a wonderful man.

*Thank you, Sam Darrigo, for sharing your thoughts.*

### Quick Hits: Information you should know

The NALC Executive Council has selected sites and dates for national conventions through the 2030 year:

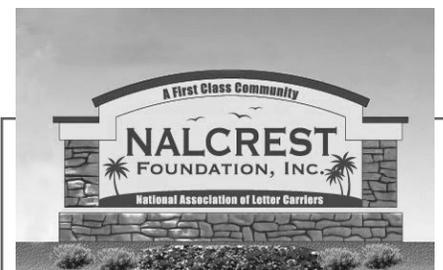
- 2024 in Boston,
- 2026 in Los Angeles,
- 2028 in Minneapolis,
- 2030 in Honolulu.

Remember, the 2020 convention that was scheduled to be held in Honolulu was canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

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



Tony Diaz  
Treasurer  
President Emeritus  
Branch 599  
Nalcrest Trustee



NALCREST – your NALC Retirement Community in Central Florida. Check it out at [NALC.org](http://NALC.org) under the Member Benefits tab.

# Paul *Paulie* Falica

July 6, 1954 – December 18, 2023

**Family** – defined by Webster’s as: the basic unit in society traditionally consisting of two parents rearing their children.

*also:* any of various social units differing from but regarded as equivalent to the traditional family

Family deals with the closeness of individuals who may or may not be from the same traditional family unit but for all intents and purposes the individuals consider themselves as family. When we look at traditional families, we consider them based on relationships and shared life activities, such as birthdays, weddings, births, deaths, etc.

As letter carriers, we have found that when we perform our duties in the community where we work, we can be perceived as family members due to our continual presence in the lives of those members of the communities that we serve. Part of our job is being the eyes and ears of the communities we serve, and this leads to the development of a relationship with the members of the community that becomes more like a family bond as the years go by.

You are probably wondering where I am going with this line of thought, so I won’t keep you in suspense any longer. We lost a valuable member of our extended family on December 16 – Letter Carrier Paul *Paulie* Falica was killed in a hit and run accident while delivering mail on his route in Sulphur Springs. His passing has left a huge hole in the lives of the members of the community he served as well as with the

other carriers and postal employees that he worked with.

Paul was a Letter Carrier for 10 years in New York prior to his transfer to Tampa and he worked here in Tampa for another 30 years. He always had a smile for everyone he met, and he was beloved in the community he served, with many people stating that he was more than the mailman – **HE WAS FAMILY.** The community was struck by his sudden loss and after his passing they rose en masse to put together a procession of police escorted postal vehicles to honor Paul, followed by a candlelight vigil for him where all could help each other to come to terms with his loss. Flowers, markers, and memorials were placed at the scene of the accident to remind those who passed by that this man was a loved family member of the community. News media covered the event and helped show all who watched that the mailman, this mailman, was more than just a man delivering letters to a box.

If there is an upside to this tragic loss, it is the showing of just how many people we actually touch in our day-to-day lives and how much better we are for that interaction with the community at large.

As a former sailor, I wish Paul *Fair Winds and Following Seas*, and I thank him for all he has done as a Letter Carrier, Postal employee, and a man. He is missed by all.

*Brian Obst*  
President







## A Letter Carrier's Life

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

The Letter carrier's life is one of constant grind. Every morning we get up, get dressed and open the front door thinking about our loved ones still sleeping inside.

We work in a world that is filled with emotion, danger, and other people's ways of life. A world that is busy moving always around a clock telling the time.

A letter carrier watches as the days pass by on their own routes with many of their own customers' kids growing up and living their own lives.

We see people get married and sometimes divorced. We see people move in, move out, and some settle down till even the end of their own time through life's course.

Paulie was a letter carrier that was on his route for 30 years and saw the way the world changed or stayed the same throughout all those years.

He came to work early and sometimes had to stay late. Paulie worked in the light and sometimes into the early night to make sure customers did not have to wait.

Paulie was dedicated to the people that he served and almost always came to work with a smile is what he preferred.

He will forever be missed at Sulphur Springs Station in our hearts and minds without any hesitation.

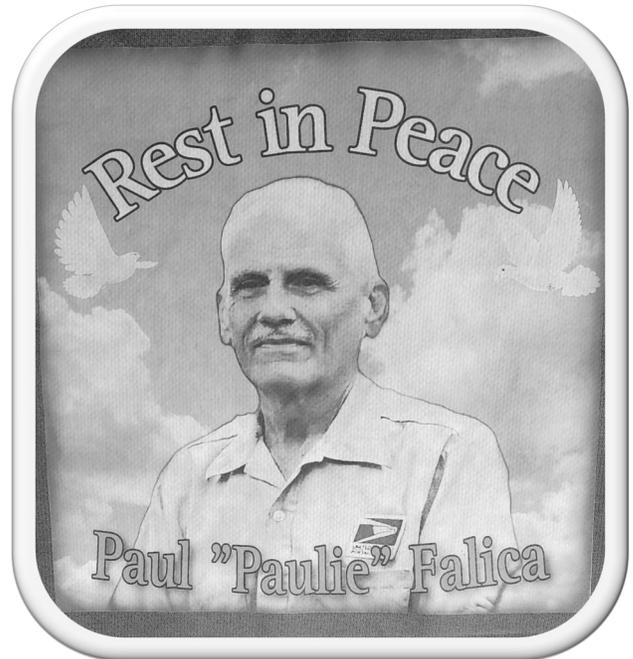
Miss you, Paulie,  
*JD*

From Paulie's obituary at [claytonfuneralhome.com](http://claytonfuneralhome.com):

Paul was born and reared in Brooklyn NY; he moved to Spring Hill in 1993. He was a lighthearted man who loved to joke around and make people laugh.

He is survived by son, Christopher Falica & wife, Samantha of Manahawkin; daughter Melissa Falica & fiancé, Ken of Freehold; 3 grandchildren; and former wife, Donna.

A graveside service was held on Friday, December 29, 2023, in Resurrection Cemetery, Staten Island NY.



(T-shirt design)





## Paul Paulie Falica

Good day to all,

*Thank you to all* that donated for the memorial service of our beloved Sulphur Springs carrier, Paul Paulie Falica. Everything turned out nicely! It was a nice surprise to be told there were more donations being given by other stations, and not just Sulphur Springs. So, I'd like to express my appreciation to Sun City, Carrollwood, and Temple Terrace stations for your monetary donations.



Milly Minsal  
Trustee Chair  
Branch 599

We also received two crosses that were donated by complete strangers. They are Dennis of WGS (Wood Grain Stains) who I found on Facebook marketplace and Mario Pagan, a Tampa area carpenter that lives on Sam Darrigo's route. Neither of these two gentlemen knew Paulie, but on short notice and over the holidays, were extremely honored and humbled by our requests and built two crosses for the accident site. Along with the crosses, flower arrangements were purchased with the donations which were placed at the accident site, as shown in the photographs. You may have also noticed the photograph magnets of Paulie that were on the first vehicle in the procession. We will hang one magnet at the station and the other will eventually be mailed to his family in New York. Lastly, a *huge thank you* to Elina Flournoy, Paulie would be speechless seeing the fuss that was had over making sure we held a service for him. To Glynis Alexander for having the beautiful shirts made for the candlelight vigil. Paulie was part of our work family and will be greatly missed. His smile, smirk, jokes, and New Yorker's accent will be engraved in our hearts and minds for the rest of our lives. May Paulie rest in eternal peace.



For those of you that would like to know, the remaining contributions will be donated to a nonprofit charity in Paulie's name to benefit children in the Sulphur Springs area. The nonprofit charity, G3 Life Applications, is located in the Springhill Park Community Center at 1000 E Eskimo Avenue, Tampa FL 33604. They teach and reach children K-12. This program assists children with tutoring on school subjects, mentoring, assisting them with applying to colleges, and much more. If you'd like to know more or would like to donate, go to [G3lifeapps.org](http://G3lifeapps.org).



*Milly*

Shirts created by Jennifer Baker, 813.405.7052

Cross with the photograph created by woodworker, Dennis of WGS, 813.294.7632

2nd Cross with the name plaque created by carpenter, Mario Pagan, 813.578.1998

Car Magnets by The Advertising Team, 6741 N Armenia Avenue, Tampa 33604, 813.932.3929

Flower arrangements by Artistic Florists of Tampa, 9205 N 26th Street, Tampa 33612, 813.932.6116



Brian Obst, Jasper Etheridge, Mike Smith



Brian Obst, Don Renner, Mike Smith

## Awards and Recognition

As president of the Branch, I had the distinct honor in January, to present several awards to members of our Branch in recognition of their service in the National Association of Letter Carriers.

Retired Carrier, **Jasper R. Etheridge**, has reached that point in his service that many of us strive to attain – he has been a member of the National Association of Letter Carriers for 50 years, a feat certainly worthy of recognition and celebration! Jasper received his 50-year lapel pin and his 50-year Gold Card, which signifies his 50 years of service as well as showing his paid-up dues for life status. I was able to read his citation from National President Renfro, and I join all Branch members in offering my congratulations on this achievement.

Now if the achievement of reaching the milestone of 50 years in the National Association of Letter Carriers is worthy of recognition, I have to tell you that our next award absolutely floors me. **Donald E. Renner**, I have to say, I am in awe of you and your service to the Postal Service and the National Association of Letter Carriers. Understand that I am 65 years old and Retired Carrier Renner has been a member of the NALC for longer than I have been alive. Don has

reached 70 years as a member of the National Association of Letter Carriers and has been recognized by the National offices with a special plaque that reads:

**National Association of Letter Carriers  
Honors  
Donald E. Renner  
For More Than 70 Years of  
Loyalty, Integrity and  
Unselfish Participation As A  
Member Of Our Union**

It was my honor to present, along with Vice President Mike Smith, the plaque and citation from National President Renfro to Don.

All carriers should understand that these two members of our Branch are a large part of the foundation of the Union we belong to, and we are standing on their shoulders as we move into the future.

On behalf of all members of Branch 599, I congratulate you both on your significant achievements!

Brian Obst, President

*Please keep our Branch Office  
updated with your contact information.*

## The Financial Guy

Letters were sent out last month inviting the letter carriers that were to receive their 50-year pin and gold card to the January meeting for recognition of their accomplishments. Only two carriers came out to receive their pins and gold cards. Although we would have liked for all to be there, we know that would be impossible. As stated last month, the others will be receiving theirs through the mail.

I would like to take this time to recognize all these individuals for being members of the National Association of Letter Carriers for over 50 years. Attending the meeting to receive his award was **Jasper Etheridge**. Mr. Etheridge stated that he plays golf four times a week; all I can say is, here is a man that is enjoying his retirement to

the fullest. Others that we wish to recognize not in attendance are **Oscar Alvarez Jr., Arthur Bell, Paul Cerney, Nicholas Garcea, Angus Grace Sr., Roger Harmon, Kenneth Hodge, Kermit Shoemaker, and James Taylor**. On behalf of NALC Branch 599, we would like to thank each individual for 50 years of being a member of the National Association of Letter Carriers.

One individual attending the meeting received a very special award. **Mr. Donald Renner** received a pin and a plaque for **70** years of being a member of NALC. That is not a misprint, **70** years of being a member of NALC. Mr. Renner stated at the meeting that he began his carrier in 1952, let that sink in for a few minutes. Mr. Renner also stated that he still goes out walking

each morning and talking with his neighbors just as he did when he was walking his route talking with his customers. As I sat at the meeting and looked around, it was interesting to see the expressions on everyone's face. On behalf of NALC Branch 599, *thank you for 70 years of being a member!* Mr. Renner, you are an inspiration to every letter carrier that has ever worn the blue uniform. May God bless you and your family.

Until the next time,  
*Alan*



Alan Robinson  
Financial Secretary  
Branch 599

## Awards to Recognize Branch Members who have reached 50 years as NALC Members

When I became President, one of the first things I noticed was a backlog of recognition awards that had not been addressed to the membership. Over the next couple of months, I hope to be able to rectify this issue by providing the recognition that these members deserve.

During our January Branch meeting, we were able to recognize retired letter carriers, **Jasper R. Etheridge** and **Donald E. Renner**, for their service to the NALC and presented them with the 50-year gold card and a 70-year plaque to Don.

We had several more 50-year gold cards to award, but those carriers

were unable to attend the meeting, so we will mail their gold cards and citations to them. I want to recognize them here:

### Branch 599 50-Year Gold Card Recipients

**Oscar Alvarez Jr.**

**Arthur F. Bell**

**Paul M. Cerny**

**Nicholas Garcea**

**Angus P. Grace Sr.**

**Roger K. Harmon**

**Kenneth Hodge**

**Kermit S. Shoemaker**

**James M. Taylor**

I speak for all the members of Branch 599 when I offer my congratulations for reaching this milestone award and remind you of the change to paid-up for life dues as a Gold Card holder. *Well done to all!*

Brian Obst, President

# Our Retirees Dinner was a huge success!



# Held at Maggiano's Italian Restaurant – January 14





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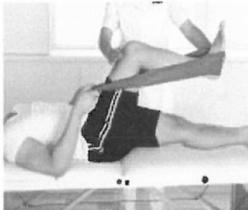
**If you are injured, here are some very simple steps to follow.**

1. Notify Your Supervisor Immediately. (The Supervisor has up to 10 days to file your claim with OWCP).
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 FED-HURT OWCP Specialist.



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- 📍 Tampa / Temple Terrace Bush Gardens

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- 📍 Miami / Hialeah

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# 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,**

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

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.



National Association of Letter Carriers  
 599 Tampa Florida Inc.  
**315 W Busch Boulevard, Suite C**  
**Tampa FL 33612**  
 813.875.0599 Fax 813.870.0599  
 www.nalc599.com  
 Tampa Letter Carrier  
 Volume 24 · Issue 2 · February 2024

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