

Tampa Letter Carrier

From the Desk of the President

Greetings, dear reader. August has arrived and that means several things for us, first it means that the National Convention is about to begin. Members of the NALC from around the nation will begin to descend on Boston, Massachusetts in preparation for a five-day gathering where the membership will direct our national leadership as to the wishes of the members for our direction going forward into the future. Awards will be presented; guest speakers will come to address the membership and there will probably be some speeches from political figures as well. The overall goal of the National Convention is to help educate the membership via the numerous classes offered each day, both morning and afternoon, as well as the membership via motions, floor discussion, and bylaw proposals/amendments providing direction for our national leaders to move our organization in the direction the membership desires.

Remember, our leaders are elected by the membership, and the membership, via the convention, provides direction for the national leadership. As it is always said, the membership in attendance at the convention is the supreme authority of the Union. Members who are elected delegates to the convention have a duty to ensure that any actions of the convention are always done for the best interests of the entire membership of our Union.

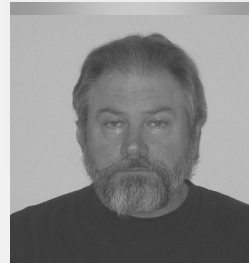
While I am referencing the convention, this article will gloss over the main topics, as they have not yet occurred, but by the time you read this the convention will have ended. A full accounting of the convention and anything that happens there will be recounted in next month's article.

I can tell you that I was contacted by the National offices this week and informed that our Branch was going to be the recipient of another award, this time for our newsletter. I submitted our newsletter for consideration, and we were happy to hear that we were awarded Third Place for Overall Excellence in a Newsletter in the NALC. This award is the acknowledgement of the dedicated, hard-working members of our Executive Board who write monthly articles to provide important information to all the members of our Branch. Also let us not overlook the most important member of our newsletter team, our editor, Phyllis Thomas. Phyllis always goes the extra mile to ensure that we have an excellent publication, her skill and knowledge make us look like Pulitzer Prize winning authors instead of simple carriers masquerading as writers. I for one am most thankful that we have her on our team as our editor and offer my heartfelt thanks for a job well done.

Step B Decisions

Our Branch recently received some Step B decisions on issues filed throughout the city

(Continued on page 3)



Brian Obst
President
Branch 599

Branch 599
serving
Brandon
Plant City
Sun City
Tampa

Branch 599 Meeting

Thursday
September 12
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

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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@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

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Sergeant-at-Arms	Luis Cruz	813.431.3223	
MBA/NSBA	Bonita Lattimore	813.756.9676	
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Director of Retirees	John Gebo	813.503.1256	
Trustees	Milly Minsal, Ch.	813.446.2572	
	Andre Hinton	931.980-5169	
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	Clement Cheung	813.758.5910	
Presidents Emeritus	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>
Tampa Stations/Branches Chief Steward, Mike Smith				813.326.0717
Brandon	33510/11	David Rivadeneira	813.661.1636	656.215.2467
Brandon	33510/11	Osceola Williams Sr.	813.661.1636	210.445.1369
Carrollwood	33618	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	Michelle Saneus	813.935.2954	954.991.2672
Hilldale	33614	Jose Gomez	813.879.4309	917.743.6948
Hilldale Annex	33634	Maria Afful	813.879.4309	347.457.7316
Interbay/Port Tampa	33611/16	Mike Dennis	813.831.2034	813.361.9103
Interbay/Peninsula	33629		813.831.2034	
Palm River Annex	33619		813.663.0048	
Plant City	33564	Roberto Torres	813.754.3590	609.521.6730
Produce	33610	Tyreke McGruder	813.237.4084	813.856.8469
Ruskin/Sun City Ctr	33570	Bert Fristad	813.634.1642	813.352.0864
Seminole Heights	33603	Paul Sardinas	813.237.4569	813.650.3504
Sulphur Springs	33604	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		813.884.0973	
Ybor City	33605	Maurice Rice	813.247.2416	813.334.3189

From the Desk of the President

(Continued from page 1)

and I want to provide some language from some of them for you:

On the issue of **Steward Superseniority**, the team ruled in favor of the Union and explained as follows: *Under the superseniority clause of Article 17, stewards cannot be transferred from a facility or tour where letter carriers are working, unless there is no other city letter carrier job left. This prohibition from involuntarily transferring a steward to another station or installation applies to both temporary and permanent reassignments of stewards.* They ordered the individual to be returned to their previous station and paid a monetary award.

On the issue of **failure to post vacancies within 14 days of going vacant**, the Team ruled on two cases, the following: *The parties agree management violated Articles 15, 19, and 41 of the National Agreement when the subject routes were not posted for bid within 14 days of becoming vacant. Management is directed to comply with the posting provisions outlined in Article 30 and 41 and shall cease and desist future violations.*

Likewise, the parties agree that a violation of Article 15 of the National

Agreement was proven regarding compliance with multiple Step B decisions, Pre-Arbitration settlements, and precedent setting Formal A settlements and is therefore issued a cease and desist. Management is directed to comply with grievance resolves and arbitration awards as detailed in Postal Service Policy Letter (M-01517). **To be clear, it does not matter whether the delay is caused by local management, human resources, HRSCC, or any other entity, if a route is not posted for bid within fourteen (14) calendar days from the day it becomes vacant or is established, it is a violation of the National Agreement.** (Emphasis added). The Team ordered payment to the successful bidders or whom-ever the route is awarded to in the amount of \$450 – 10 positions over the two cases.

Finally, there was a case on **Office Break scheduling** and the ruling was as follows: *The parties agree that management violated the National Agreement by failing to honor the local Union's decision to opt for one office and one street break, as outlined in Section 242.341 of Handbook M-39. Management will comply with Article 19 of the National Agreement as it relates to carrier breaks, and*

future violations may result in additional remedies. Management will immediately institute the local union's selection of every letter carrier receiving one 10-minute break in the office and one 10-minute break on the street. The office break for the Tampa Installation shall not commence until at least one (1) hour after the carrier's start time.

All these decisions also contain the language, *In keeping with Step B Decisions, this settlement is precedent setting in the installation.* These decisions had been delayed due to backlogs at Step B, but be aware—your stewards and officers are always working for you to resolve contractual issues that affect you on the job.

Workers' Comp Issues

I want to take a moment to touch on Workers' compensation issues when you are injured on the job. If you sustain an injury on the job, it is your responsibility to report it to management immediately. This is for your own benefit, as failure to report the injury may result in the denial of a Workers' Compensation claim to cover said injury. It does not hurt to report an injury, but failure to report gives management the ability to controvert your injury claim and then you need to fight to get treatment and coverage for the injury. The last page of the newsletter shows basic information on what you should do in the event of an on-the-job injury, please read and heed, as this information is for your benefit.

To be yourself in a world that is constantly trying to make you something else is the greatest accomplishment.

— Ralph Waldo Emerson

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

Brian Obst



Remembering 9-11 The Lives Lost, The Survivors, The First Responders, The Patriots, and all the health and mental health issues they still endure.

Calendar

Shop Stewards

Tuesday

September 10 7:00 PM

315 W Busch Blvd, Suite C

Executive Board

Thursday

September 12 6:30 PM

315 W Busch Blvd, Suite C

Branch 599

Thursday

September 12 7:30 PM

315 W Busch Blvd, Suite C

Retirees' Breakfasts

Tampa

Monday

September 9 9:30 AM

The Cuban Sandwich Shop
10434 N Florida Avenue 33612

Temple Terrace

Tuesday

September 10 10:00 AM

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

Note:

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

Retired...but Not Tired

Last month I addressed the importance of staying active in retirement life. I wrote on aquatic exercising and finding activities to keep us moving. After that article, I was curious to discover what activities are popular for retirees in the Tampa Bay area.

With year-round sunshine and easy access to beaches and parks, the outdoors is always available for anything you might want to do. I read that Tampa was ranked #4 on the best places to retire list in the United States, 2022-2023, by *US News*.

Popular local activities to mention: Tampa Bay Buccaneers, Lightning, and Rays games; the Straz Center for Performing Arts to enjoy Broadway plays; the Florida Aquarium; the river walk through downtown Tampa for walking and biking, and where you find the Tampa Bay History Center. Lowry Park/Zoo Tampa, Parks and Recreation Centers offer a variety of

different activities, visit Ybor City for historical tours, the Tampa Theatre, and Tampa Bay Downs for horse racing. Many of these offer senior discounts.

Tampa also offers many, many restaurants to choose from, where early bird specials are available. There is no excuse not to get out and enjoy retirement life, don't let it pass you by. We have all worked hard to enjoy our time.


Remember retirees, if it is your birthday month and you attend our Retirees Breakfast, your breakfast is paid by Branch 599.

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

John





John Gebo
Director of Retirees
Branch 599



Union-Made


Back to School Shopping Guide






Folders

- Roaring Spring
- Trapper Keeper




Clothing

- Carhartt
- Oshkosh B'Gosh
- Wigwag




Drinks

- Dasani
- Gatorade
- Minute Maid
- Mott's Juice
- Tropicana
- Welch's Juice





Snacks


- Dole
- Jell-O
- Keebler
- Oreos
- Ritz Crackers




Tissues

- Kleenex
- Puffs







Be an Ethical Consumer



Labor 411



From the Vice President's Desk

It is that time again. The summer months are ending, and the best time of the year is near. September is the beginning of the holiday months. The duties of a steward are increased just by the mere fact that many carriers are taking time off for the holidays. Management's focus goes from having too much auxiliary assistance to none. So now is a good time to review what should happen when scheduling for the holidays.

The contract directs management to ensure the holiday schedule is posted the Tuesday prior to the holiday. It is the steward's responsibility to check whether management has posted the schedule. If the schedule is not posted as directed, a violation occurs, and a grievance must be filed immediately.

As a steward, I have heard just about every excuse as to why the schedule was not posted on time by management. Do not allow management to interfere with your duties as a steward. File the grievance upon noticing the schedule is not posted.

Article 11, Section 6. Holiday Schedule reads:

11.6.A. The Employer will determine the number and categories of employees needed for holiday work and a schedule shall be posted as of the Tuesday preceding the service week in which the holiday falls.

Management's main goal is to make sure there are enough carriers to support the holiday. Subsection B explains that the objective of holiday scheduling is to allow as many full-time and part-time carriers off as possible. If management isn't using the correct procedure to accomplish this, the contract is violated, and a grievance must be filed.

11.6.B. As many full-time and part-time regular schedule employees as can be spared will be excused from

duty on a holiday or day designated as their holiday. Such employees will not be required to work on a holiday or day designated as their holiday unless all casuals and part time flexibles are utilized to the maximum extent possible, even if the payment of overtime is required, and unless all full-time and part-time regulars with the needed skills who wish to work on the holiday have been afforded an opportunity to do so.

The contract allows for volunteers to work on holidays. Management shall post a holiday volunteer list prior to the holiday schedule. Carriers are directed to sign the list requesting to work or not. Management must accept the request of the carrier. Any carriers requesting not to work shall not be required unless no other carriers are available to work without mandating.

The pecking order for holiday mandating begins with the carrier(s) who are on their scheduled day off. The next available carrier(s) are those on their holiday. Remember, management must abide by the contract and maximize all available casuals and part-time flexibles prior to mandating a regular on their holiday.

11.6.D. Qualified CCAs will be scheduled for work on a holiday or designated holiday after all full-time volunteers are scheduled to work on their holiday or designated holiday. They will be scheduled, to the extent possible, prior to any full-time volunteers or non-volunteers being scheduled to work a nonscheduled day or any full-time non-volunteers being required to work their holiday or designated holiday. If the parties have locally negotiated a pecking order that would schedule full-time volunteers on a nonscheduled day, the Local Memorandum of Understanding will apply.

Another area that is questioned most about holidays involves holiday payment. The contract is very clear on when a carrier is eligible for holiday pay.

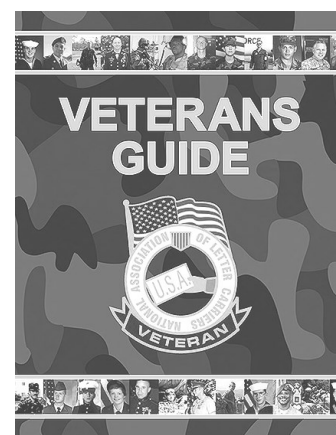
11.2 Eligibility. To be eligible for holiday pay, an employee must be in a pay status the last hour of the employee's scheduled workday prior to or the first hour of the employee's scheduled workday after the holiday.



Mike Smith
Vice President
Chief Steward
Branch 599

The holidays are valuable time to spend with family. Everyone desires to do so and should be able to enjoy the holidays. Another responsibility for stewards is to ensure this can happen if possible. Management will attempt to go around the schedule if possible. Don't allow management to interfere with your duties for your carriers.

To get there, we must work together!
Mike



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

Sharing Our Members' Joys and Sorrows

Our deepest sympathy and prayerful support is extended to Jewell and family at the homegoing of **Angus Plez Grace Sr.** [retiree], July 26.

Employee Assistance Program

info is at nalc.org

Choose Workplace Issues, hover over Safety & Health, and choose Employee Assistance Program.

It's confidential for you and your loved ones.

Veterans Crisis Line

veteranscrisisline.net or dial 988 & press 1 24/7, confidential crisis support for Veterans and their loved ones.

You don't have to be enrolled in VA benefits or health care to connect.

Down the Building Manager's Rhoad

After lots of digging up dirt and changing out parts, the sprinkler system is up and running properly. The landscaping of the property is being worked on a regular basis to keep the property looking good.

And, as always, collecting gently used uniforms. We go through them as quickly

as they are donated, so *thanks to all* who have contributed, they are very appreciated by the new hires....please, keep 'em coming!

Walt



Walt Rhoads
Building Manager
Branch 599

Just for the Health of It

The Postal Service is making more information available about the coming changes to our health benefit plans. As most of you have come to realize, the Postal Service is in the process of changing how health benefits for regular carriers and also for retirees will be handled. Most employees will be moved from the FEHB (Federal Employees Health Benefits) system to a subgroup within FEHB called PSHB (Postal Service Health Benefits). These changes will occur during the next open season, November 11 – December 9, 2024. You will receive a new identification card. This card will replace the current ID card. The new plan will have two phone numbers. One number will be designated for members still in FEHB. The other number will be designated for PSHB members only. Those in PSHB will continue to use the number they are currently using: 888-636-6252.

The new enrollment portal for all PSHB enrollees is still under construction. All postal employees will use this new site to enroll, remove, or make changes to their health benefit plan choice. The completed portal will include a *Decision Support Tool* where members will be able to compare plans and their benefits.

New enrollment codes will be used for members in PSHB.

High Option Self Only	77A
High Option Self Plus One	77C
High Option Self and Family	77B

CDHP Self Only	77D
CDHP Self Plus One	77F
CDHP Self & Family	77E

You will be notified by OPM when these changes take effect. This notice will tell you the plan you will be enrolled into if you do not make a selection during Open Season. Before Open Season, HBP will send out information packets regarding 2025 PSHB benefits. Once you have enrolled in the NALC HBP PSHB you will receive a welcome packet detailing the plan option you have chosen.

The Medicare integration component of the Postal Reform Act will require future Postal Service retirees within PSHB to enroll in Medicare Part B when they become eligible. There will be exceptions to Medicare Part B integration:

1. Any postal employee who is retired before January 1, 2025
2. Any active postal employee who is 64 or older as of January 1, 2025
3. Those who do not reside in the US
4. Those who receive benefits provided by the Department of Veteran Affairs or Indian Health

If you meet the criteria in number 3 or 4, you can apply for an exception to the requirement to enroll in Medicare.

Here's to your health.....

Detlev



Detlev Aeppel
Health Benefit Rep.
Branch 599

Matt Speaks: The Sickness of the Flames

Mental health And Heat

Much has been made aware to us Letter Carriers of the dangers of an ever-heating planet. Regardless of our views as to the causes of such phenomena, no one can deny that it has taken a bearing on the human race. Just this year in Saudi Arabia during the annual Hajj pilgrimage, 1,300 people died as a direct result of the excruciating hot temperatures. Vox reports: *The [Saudi] government [had] tried to mitigate some of the risks of conducting Hajj in such weather, including sending texts to pilgrims asking them not to go outdoors during the hottest parts of the day; misting and fanning walkways; and providing free water, in addition to training medical responders to deal with heat-induced illnesses. But that's just not enough; improved medical infrastructure, flexible or staggered schedules for conducting different ceremonies; and more shading or pavilions for worshipers are just some of the simple ways the kingdom could address the problem.*

Physical issues from the heat are definitely worthy of note, but I want to focus on a different side effect: Mental Health.

My friends, I can tell you on a personal level that whenever I wash my face after a day at the Post Office in the heat, I feel it akin to *washing the demons away*. At times, a memory I had thought buried in the past will resurface. Maybe it's an embarrassment, perhaps it's a regret.

According to the National Library of Medicine, Moustaq Karim Khan Ronyand and Hasnat M. Alamgir in a Health Science Report says: *In an era defined by rapid and visible climate change, the intricate relationship between environmental shifts and human health has come under intense*

scrutiny. Among many concerns, the impact of rising temperatures on mental health has emerged as a compelling yet often overlooked and under investigated facet. As global temperatures soar to unprecedented levels, its impact on physiological and psychological health is becoming a serious health issue. The influence of extreme heat on mental well-being is assumed/thought to be profound. This burgeoning field of research is shedding light on the multifaceted ways in which rising temperatures can erode the delicate balance of the mind and a comprehensive understanding of the issue is directly needed.

The Baylor College of Medicine writes: *Excessive heat causes changes in emotions and behavior that can result in feelings of anger, irritability, aggression, discomfort, stress and fatigue. Heat alters those behaviors because of its impact on serotonin, the primary neurotransmitter that regulates your mood, leading to decreased levels of happiness or joy and increased levels of stress and fatigue. The most vulnerable groups affected by heat and mental health include people with preexisting conditions and people who use substances like alcohol. People who already suffer from stress, anger or anxiety will experience increased serotonin.*

Dr Martin Paulus however, for the Anxiety and Depression Association of America (ADAA) cautions: *Even though these studies tell us a lot, there's still a lot we don't know. We need more research to understand how hot weather affects different types of mental health problems, what the 'danger zone' temperature might be for mental health, and how being inside vs. outside might make a difference. In conclusion, these studies show that hot weather and climate change can make mental health problems worse. This is a big deal, and it's something that doctors, hospitals, and people who make health policies*

need to pay attention to. We also need more research to help us understand and deal with this problem better.

Stunningly, these heat-related mental illnesses have even led to the unthinkable as Apoorva Mandavilli for the New York Times states: *High temperatures are strongly associated with an increase in suicides, researchers have found. Heat has been linked to a rise in violent crime and aggression, emergency room visits and hospitalizations for mental disorders and deaths – especially among people with schizophrenia, dementia, psychosis and substance use. For every 1 degree Celsius (or 1.8 degrees Fahrenheit) increase in temperature, scientists have estimated that there is a nearly 5 percent increase in the risk of death among patients with psychosis, dementia or substance use. Researchers have reported a 0.7 percent increase in suicides linked to rising temperatures, and about a 4 percent to 6 percent increase interpersonal violence, including homicides.*

The Center for Addiction and Mental Health reports the following: *Although the cause of depression during summer is not yet known, possible contributing factors might include heat and humidity and longer days. Additional stressors occurring during summertime have also been observed such as:*

- *Disruption in routine/schedule/habits due to vacation or children being out of school.*
- *Change in sleep and eating habits due to disruption in routine.*
- *Not being able to participate in some summer vacation or outdoor activities due to limited finances.*

(Continued on page 8)



Matt Fernandez
Recording Secretary
Branch 599

Let's Talk about Safety and power surges

Within the last week, I had to replace my washer which suddenly quit. I called an appliance repair service and when they inspected my old washer they found the user interface panel, main control board, and most of the wiring inside was burnt. The service tech told me that with so many afternoon thunderstorms, they have had nonstop calls regarding power surges caused by lightning. Lately with the high temperatures during these summer evenings, an exceptionally high number of thunderstorms have been occurring, so I want to go over steps that can be taken to avoid others having a similar situation.

First, I would like to talk about power surges themselves. There are two different kinds of power surges that can lead to damage caused by lightning strikes. One way that a power surge can occur is through a direct strike which may hit a power line or something else connected to a line sending a sudden increase in voltage. Next, there is a process called inductive coupling which comes from a magnetic field generated by a lightning strike. When inductive coupling occurs it is like a radio antenna picking up a signal from a radio station that is sent to your stereo. The magnetic field generated by lightning strikes can damage small electronic components over time, shorting out appliances.

Secondly, let's talk about some of the measures you can take to protect your house and appliances from power

surges. Surge protectors are a great way to handle power surges because they reduce the amount of voltage by shorting it to ground or by blocking voltage that is too high over a safe threshold. You can use power strip surge protectors or even a whole house surge protector that is hard wired directly into your electrical box.

Another way to block power surges is by turning off breakers in your electrical panel to areas of the house that are not in use. One more way is to unplug devices and appliances during lightning storms. This also helps for when the power comes back on after a storm, by lightening the amount of power load that would come on all at once.

In conclusion, power surges are not something we think about often, but with this unusual amount of afternoon thunderstorms that we have been experiencing, it is something you should consider. Not only can power surges be costly, but they can really affect our daily lives. Now more than ever we are dependent on many electronic devices to wake us up, make our coffee, and pretty much ingrained in every aspect of our lives that keep us functioning.

J.D.



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

Matt Speaks: The Sickness of the Flames

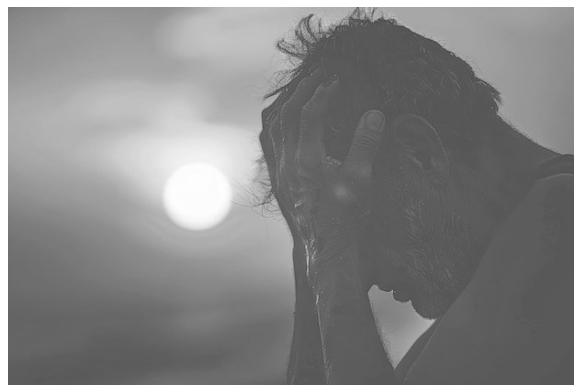
(Continued from page 7)

- *Health reasons preventing participation in summer activities which could lead to isolation and sadness and feeling of loneliness.*
- *Anxiety or avoiding participating in some outdoor summer activities due to concern about physical appearance.*

The United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has calculated that between 1979-2022, a total of 14,000 American fatalities have been attributed to excessive heat. With the parallel increase of violence as Ms. Mandavilli articulates, we can be assured the numbers technically are much higher when you account for what results from the sickness of the flames.

Brothers and sisters, our thirst may be quenched with water, sweat may be wiped away with the back of our hand, and a breath may be caught during a break. But these are not

enough to lift
anguish. It is



imperative, the conversation must be had. As C.S. Lewis writes in *The Problem of Pain*:

Mental pain is less dramatic than physical pain, but it is more common and also more hard to bear. The frequent attempt to conceal mental pain increases the burden: It is easier to say 'My tooth is aching' than to say 'My heart is broken'.

Matt

From the Treasurer's Desk – 20th Edition

Brothers and Sisters,
The 73rd Biennial National Convention was held August 5-9, in Boston, Massachusetts. Due to newsletter deadlines, unfortunately, I was not able to follow up on last month's article titled *What can we expect? An anticipated forecast.* I will give a detailed report on the National Convention next month. We will at that time know if my anticipated forecast was correct.

In June, I wrote about some of the issues and observations I had with TIAREAP, the technology-based route inspections. The Technology Integrated Alternate Route Evaluation and Adjustment Process officially ended on May 31, however, any offices still not completed with the route adjustments are/were able to continue. It appeared TIAREAP might be a negotiated item in our ongoing contract talks with the USPS. Overall, the process has been really accurate, using the carriers' actual times. Yes, there are challenges, for instance, carriers bidding on a new route during the process and carriers being out of work for an extended period of time. The route times in cases like these could be derived from perhaps the T-6, or even perhaps a CCA, if they are not racing through the route, or historical data. We attempt to use a representative time for those particular routes. During consultations, feedback from the carriers is very important, and has been tremendously helpful when moving territory. When carriers disagree with the territory that was added or removed from their routes, the evaluation period is critical.

60-90-day Evaluations

The evaluation period should be a 60-to-90-day period, however, in some offices the evaluation period lasted longer. **I cannot express enough how important this period is for the carrier to prove that their route is over 8 hours.** This may have been communicated during their consultation. I

advise all the carriers **to do the right things** during your evaluation period.

1. Be consistent with your daily deliveries.
2. Take your lunch break.
3. Take both breaks.
4. Make sure your clock rings are accurate.
5. Inspect your vehicle, daily and correctly.
6. Properly load your vehicle (do not overload your gurney, make as many trips as it takes to your vehicle, and use the load feature.
7. If your route was split on a day or you gave away a piece/trip from your route, make sure those who gave you auxiliary assistance entered their time that it took them.
8. Carry your scanner with you at all times.
9. Carry your route in order.
10. **Do not case DPS.**
11. Scan packages where you stand, at the point of delivery.

We can gain routes back if carriers follow these steps, and **do the right things.**

Quick Hits:

**Information you should know
Maximum annual leave carryover amount of 520 hours extended into the 2025 leave year.**

NALC and the USPS have agreed to a memorandum of understanding (M-02002), extending the annual leave carryover limit. Regular workforce career employees covered by the USPS-NALC National Agreement may carry-over 520 hours of accumulated annual leave from leave year 2024 to leave year 2025. The Memorandum does not change the provisions in the Employee and Labor Relations Manual (ELM) for payment of accumulated leave. This MOU will expire with the conclusion of the 2025 Leave Year. While this may not affect a lot of carriers, this extension is great news for those who have not taken all the leave that was

accumulated during the COVID-19 and several years after.

Department of Labor announces proposed rule to protect workers in extreme heat.

The US Department of Labor (DOL) released a proposed rule with the goal of protecting millions of workers from the significant health risks of extreme heat. The rule would require employers to establish a Heat Injury and Illness Prevention Plan (HIIPP) that includes specific elements outlined in the proposed rule necessary to protect workers from the dangers of excessive heat.

The proposed rule will be published in the Federal Register and will call for public comments. The DOL also anticipates a public hearing after the close of the written comment period.

The health and safety of letter carriers always comes first, NALC President Brian L. Renfro said. NALC has fought for more than a decade in several avenues to achieve protections for our members from the dangers we face working outdoors in excessive heat. While progress has been made, a national rule that requires employers to provide comprehensive prevention is the ultimate solution. We appreciate Acting Secretary Julie Su for her engagement with our union and for prioritizing this important issue. NALC fully supports implementation of this proposed rule.
—Nalc.org

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



Tony Diaz
Treasurer
President Emeritus
Branch 599
NALCREST Trustee

vote411.org

is an invaluable, non-partisan resource for voting info which includes registration. Be sure your registration is up-to-date!

Mail Call

Brothers and Sisters, I could write about the national election, bla bla bla, etc.; but to give you all a small respite from politics, I will write to you about an existential threat for all Carriers.

Although dogs remain a serious concern for letter carriers, did you know that stinging insects, such as bees, wasps, hornets, and/or yellow jackets, pose a real and constant threat to anyone who approaches a mailbox?

An insect bite is an unpleasant experience. According to the Mayo Clinic, about 10 percent of people who get stung by a wasp and/or other insect have a bit stronger reaction (large local reaction) than from a mosquito bite, with signs and symptoms such as: extreme redness or swelling at the site of the sting that gradually enlarges over the next day or two.

Only a limited portion of the population, one or two people out of 1,000, is allergic or hypersensitive to wasp and/or other insect stings. But it's serious business and should be avoided. Wasps nest in hidden places. What better hiding place than a mailbox? Not everyone has problems with wasp nests and every mailbox, of course, is not a hazard. But remember, wasps can move in very quickly. Sometimes nests can be set up overnight.

Ok, Sarge, watch out for wasps, but what do we do about a nest that affects delivery?

Well, never get too close to a mailbox during delivery. If you disturb a wasp nest and you are too close, your LLV may end up full of wasps trying to sting you. My experience is that wasp nests can be found inside the mailbox near the opening or underneath the mailbox.

Once you have identified the existence of a nest that impedes delivery, you will need to decide whether to deal with it yourself or get someone else to handle it.

If the wasp nest is small and easily accessible, you may be able to physically remove it. Use a long stick or pole to knock down the nest; or you can ask your custodian for wasp spray

to use on your next tour of duty.

No way, Sarge, I don't do insects.

Look, I can relate, I hate wasps and their friends. I call them danglers. If the nest is too big and/or the insects are too aggressive, contact:

- USPS Management to alert them of your problem and allow them to decide what to do.
- The mailbox owner, to have the resident or apartment management staff dispose of the nest.

Sarge, what should I do when I get stung?

Do not panic. Let's not make a bad situation worse. Carefully move away from the nest. Contact Management and your Union Rep to report the incident. Request urgent medical attention if, a child is stung more than 5 times, an adult is stung more than 10 times, or anyone who is stung in the mouth or throat, as swelling in these areas can block the airways. Make sure you get all the documents you will need for the ER visit: nalc.org/workplace-issues/injured-on-the-job.

Yes, I hate wasps, possibly more than most. I regularly inspect the mailboxes on my route for nests and eliminate them when I find them.

Sarge, I hate them too, why do they even exist?

Wasps are probably best known for disrupting summer picnics, but they are actually very important in keeping the ecosystem balanced, providing us with natural pest control. Without wasps, the world could be overrun with spiders and other insects. So, if you can avoid the spray and just topple their nests, they will eventually realize their eviction and move away.

Sarge



Luis Cruz
Sergeant-at-Arms
Branch 599

Take Action!

- ◆ Enough Is Enough: Protect Our Letter Carriers Act
- ◆ Support the Federal Retirement Fairness Act
- ◆ Expand care options for injured federal workers
- ◆ Support the USPS Shipping Equity Act
- ◆ Support the continuation of USPS door delivery
- ◆ Repeal the Windfall Elimination Provision and the Government Pension Offset



At nalc.org, choose the Government Affairs tab, then Legislative Action Center.

Under Take Action, click Read More. Then follow the directions.

Labor Day – What You Should Know but Probably Don't

Observed the first Monday in September, Labor Day is an annual celebration of the social and economic achievements of American workers. The holiday is rooted in the late nineteenth century, when labor activists pushed for a federal holiday to recognize the many contributions workers have made to America's strength, prosperity, and well-being.

On June 28, 1894, Congress passed an act making the first Monday in September of each year a legal holiday, and it was signed into law by President Grover Cleveland, making the first Monday in September of each year a national holiday.

Many Americans celebrate Labor Day with parades, picnics, and parties – festivities very similar to those outlined by the first proposal for a holiday, which suggested that the day should be observed with – a street parade to exhibit *the strength and 'esprit de corps' of the trade and labor organizations* of the community, followed by a festival for the recreation and amusement of the workers and their families.

American labor has raised the nation's standard of living and contributed to the greatest production the world has ever known and the labor movement

has brought us closer to the realization of our traditional ideals of economic and political democracy. It is appropriate, therefore, that the nation pays tribute on Labor Day to the creator of so much of the nation's strength, freedom, and leadership – the American worker.

So, remember whenever you hear anyone talking down organized labor, saying it is bad for America, saying you don't need unions, the history of our country tells a different story. Without the workers in this country, big business would be lost. If big business had its way, unions would be abolished and workers would be at the mercy of the business owners. Do any of you believe that the owners (management) would provide substantial benefits to the workers? Remember, throughout history it took organized labor to force management to the bargaining table to get the hard-earned benefits that American Workers have today. Just look back to the Great Postal Strike of 1970. Without it, where do you think the postal letter carriers would be today? I shudder to think of what it would have been like, knowing the history before the strike.

So let us remember the importance of

what the Labor Day holiday stands for and recognize the sacrifices of those who came before us. When you watch that parade or attend that picnic/party/BBQ, thank the members of the labor movement that are still on the front lines looking out for American Workers.

As a little aside, these are also some of the things that Labor Day is said to signify:

- The unofficial end of summer.
- The official end of hot dog season.
- The second most dangerous holiday weekend to drive on the nation's highways.
- The official start of the NFL football season.

I hope this article provided you with some insight, and maybe some humor while teaching you about an important holiday gained for you by organized labor on behalf of the American Worker.

Enjoy your holiday with a new perspective on how it came to be.

Brian Obst
President

(Information contained in this article came from the US Department of Labor's website.)



Make a donation by

- credit card
- check
- money order
- cash

The NALC Disaster Relief Foundation was established in 2018, to alleviate the suffering of **members** affected by natural disasters, including earthquakes, tornadoes, hurricanes and wildfires. The foundation has been set up to function in two ways: by providing hands-on relief and by receiving donations as a means to offer financial grants.

Full information is on nalc.org. Choose the Member Benefits tab, then NALC Disaster Relief Foundation. You can make a donation on that page!

NALC



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Tue/Thur 8-3:30 ET

202-638-4318

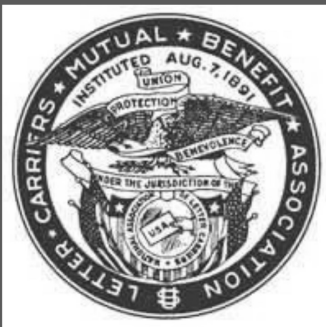
Weekdays 8-3:30 ET

www.nalc.org/mba



BRANCH 599

315 W Busch BLVD, Suite C
Tampa, FL 33612



BONITA LATTIMORE



MBA/NSBA
Representative
(813) 473 - 2786



The Birthday of Social Security and Medicare

I attended a gathering at the Shady Oaks Recreation Center in Tampa on the 13th of August in celebration of a very important event in American history, the birthday of Social Security (89th) and Medicare (59th).

Congresswoman Kathy Castor (D FL-14) was the guest speaker, and she spoke of how important these programs are to the population of our country, specifically to older Americans to allow for a dignified retirement in their older years. These programs were built and designed to provide for people as they age to ensure they can

take care of themselves in their retired years. However, Congresswoman Castor also pointed out how the Republican majority in Congress has refused to renew the Older Americans Act and how they are attempting to raise the retirement age as well as cutting Social Security Benefits for future retirees.

This issue is extremely important for letter carriers who wish to be able to retire at the end of their postal careers, as I don't believe any of us expect to be delivering mail at 70 years of age. Please investigate the issue as

it pertains directly to your future retirement plans.

Remember, your representatives in Washington are supposed to represent you, so contact your Senators and Congressmen/women to let them know how you feel and how these issues affect you. The NALC.org website has information on how to contact your representatives, so please utilize this resource.

Brian Obst
President



Brian Obst and US Representative Kathy Castor



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Charity Golf Tournament**

@

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\$100.00 per person

Optional Putting Contest \$5.00

Round of Golf / Catered Lunch

Long Drive Contest

Closest to the Pin

November 10th, 2024

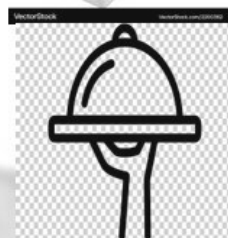
Registration: 7:00am

Shotgun Start: 8:00 am



\$4000
Gold Sponsor

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\$2000
Reception

(2) Foursomes
Hole Sign
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\$600
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Signage on Hole



\$500
Hole In One

Sign at Tee Box
Grand Prize TBD



\$250
Flag Stick

Name or Logo on Flag
Hole Sign



\$200
Long Drive / Closest to the Pin/
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\$125

Signage on Tee Box

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Application Form Due By 10/25/2024

BUSINESS NAME _____

INDIVIDUAL NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

PHONE _____

EMAIL _____

MESSAGE ON SIGN _____

SELECT YOUR SPONSORSHIP PACKAGE:

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|----------------------------|----------------------------|
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| ____ \$200 Long Drive | ____ \$600 Team Sponsor |
| ____ \$200 Closest to Pin | ____ \$1000 Silver Sponsor |
| ____ \$200 Putting Contest | ____ \$2000 Reception |
| ____ \$250 Flag Stick | ____ \$5000 Gold Sponsor |

Contact : Alan Robinson 813-842-9762 (C) / Office 813-875-0599

nalc599@verizon.net

Players Registration Form Due by 10/25/2024

GOLFER 1 _____ GOLFER 2 _____

GOLFER 3 _____ GOLFER 4 _____

MDA Federal ID # 13-1665552

Make checks payable to: **NALC Branch 599 / MDA**

315 W. Busch Blvd. Suite C, Tampa, FL 33612



Ardin Fisher was diagnosed with Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy at the age of 4 years old. Ardin is now 16 years old and has now become more dependent on mobile devices while out of our home. At home he can still get around, but falls are becoming more frequent as the muscles on his legs are becoming weaker. Ardin has two siblings that are nothing short of a miracle to help make his ever-changing life as normal as possible for a 16-year old with muscular dystrophy. Every six months we travel to Massachusetts to see a team of specialists to help us make the best decisions for him and the family. Our home is slowly changing to meet the needs of all the mobile devices. Many weekends are spent constructing ramps and meeting contractors to change our home to best fit his needs. We are in the process of trying to get the resources together for a modified van to help transport Ardin and our family.



For the past 6 years our family has been a guest at the NALC Branch 599 MDA Golf Tournament. Ardin looks forward to this each year as we can drive around the golf course and see everyone that participates in this event. He always receives hats, mugs, towels and flags all personalized with his name on them. To this day, his favorite cup is one from the tournament with his name on it. Ardin is a smart and happy teen with dreams of entering college. His challenges don't change his outlook but give him perspective on how to overcome them with grace and kindness. We are faithful that all his needs will come to be. Please support this charity event for a great cause.

God bless,

Randy and Erin Fisher

NALC Convention – August 5-9



Brian Obst and Brian Renfro

President Obst accepting the **Third-Place Award**
for our newsletter's Overall Excellence from
National President Brian Renfro.



The **NALCREST** team manning
their booth at the convention:
Fred Rolando, Tony Diaz and
Matty Rose, Trustees;
and Lisa Senecal, Property Manager.



Fred Rolando, Tony Diaz, Lisa Senecal and Matty Rose

Awards, Remembrance & Promoting NALCREST



State President Al Friedman presenting President Obst with the Region 9 Championship Belt for being the top branch in Region 9 for the **Stamp Out Hunger** food drive.

Paul J. Falica
Tampa, FL Branch 599
Died 12/18/23

NALC President Emeritus Fred Rolando established a Memorial Plaque at NALC Headquarters to memorialize the letter carriers who lost their lives on-the-job. This photo is of the entry on the memorial for brother Paul Falica. It is on display in the lobby so that all letter carriers can remember the tragic loss of Paul to NALC while performing his duties here in Tampa.

Greetings from the MBA Desk!

City Carrier Assistants have an opportunity to start their retirement savings now. The MBA offers a NALC City Carrier Assistant Retirement Savings Plan for all CCAs that are members of the NALC.

When starting off as a CCA, you don't have an opportunity to start your retirement plan through USPS so it's a good opportunity to do so now through the NALC. When you join the plan, you can choose to put your contribution towards a Traditional IRA or Roth IRA and whenever you become a career employee, you can transfer the plan from the Retirement Savings Plan to the Thrift Savings Plan (this

applies to the Traditional IRA; the Roth cannot be transferred at this time).

If there are any questions regarding the CCA Retirement Savings Plan, please contact Bonita Lattimore, MBA/NSBA Representative; our Branch office; or MBA Headquarters. You can also find more information online at NALC.org/MBA for the CCA Retirement Savings Plan and other plans the MBA offers.

Bonita



Bonita Lattimore
MBA/NSBA Rep.
Branch 599

Menu

FOOD

BBQ PORK SLICED & CHICKEN
Lipton's FAMOUS BBQ SAUCE
 BBQ BAKED BEANS WITH MEAT
 CRISPY CREAMY COLE SLAW
 BAKED MACARONI AND CHEESE
 SIGNATURE GARLIC BREAD

BEVERAGES

PINK LEMONADE
 BOTTLED WATER
 SWEET TEA
 UNSWEET TEA
 BEER



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FUN







Deadline for Advance Purchase through our Branch office was August 19.
 Alec Wilcosky (contact info directly above) can help you before the day of event.

FORE!!!!!!

Our MDA Charity Golf Tournament is moving along as usual. The next 3 months are crucial to making this event a success. We now have 2 corporate sponsors, currently at \$4,000 each. Over the years our goal was to attract a corporate sponsor and was never able to do so, now we have two of them, which is fantastic!

Our biggest need right now is hole sponsors and raffle items. We challenge each station to collect money for at least a hole sponsor and one raffle item each year. If you are a retiree and

would like to get involved, a donation of some type of raffle item would be greatly appreciated. If you know of someone that might be interested in donating items for raffle or sponsorship, please let us know so we can contact them.

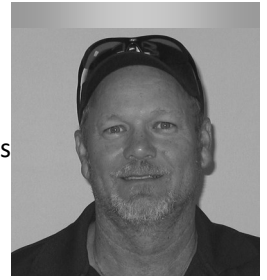
At present, the only stations that have sponsored a hole are Interbay and Brandon, which have collected over \$200 each. All the other stations should accept this as a challenge! The station that collects the most money will receive breakfast sandwiches,

bagels, or donuts for their station.

Each year at the tournament, we sell over \$3,000 in raffle tickets.

Again, remember that we are limited to 100 golfers, so if you plan on playing, do not wait until the last minute and face the possibility of being shut out.

Thanks,
Alan



Alan Robinson
Financial Secretary
Branch 599

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

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The Villages, Tampa, Lady Lake, Wildwood & Ocala

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

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

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

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

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

1. Report the accident immediately, explain exactly what happened, with a time and place (address).
2. Your supervisor or manager, and if you cannot reach anyone, your steward or our Branch office. It is important to notify someone.
3. Register an account on ECOMP at ecomp.dol.gov. 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; this is critical to your case.

Other tips:

1. Your online account at ecomp.dol.gov will be available to download should you need a paper copy of any of your forms.
2. Write a detailed, thorough, complete, and legible statement. Some important information to consider, if applicable: the time, the place, the conditions, the surface(s), any contributing factors, possible witnesses, and any hazards.

On the Job Injury – Forms needed, simple math,

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

CA-16 must be signed by management,

Authorization for Examination and/or treatment.

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



National Association of Letter Carriers
599 Tampa Florida Inc.
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