



Tampa Letter Carrier

VOLUME 19, ISSUE 4

APRIL 2020

NOTICE

Due to CoronaVirus concerns and Social Distancing requirements per the CDC, our APRIL 2 BRANCH MEETING HAS BEEN CANCELLED.

Any questions or concerns, please call the Branch Office at 813.875.0599.

Around The Horn from The President's Desk



**Tony Diaz
President
Branch 599**

Brothers and Sisters, COVID-19

Everyone's life has been changed and affected by COVID-19 (Coronavirus Disease 2019). The everyday things we take for granted; restaurants, doctor and dentist appointments, hospital visits, nursing home visits, funeral services, birthday parties, sporting events, shopping at malls, concerts, retirement parties, weddings, schools, and graduations...all cancelled.

Social Distancing may become more incorporated in people's everyday routine moving forward after the current health crises. Being more cautious with hygiene by washing hands more fre-

quently, sanitizing things you touch, being cautious with things you do touch. The caution and vigilance may be instilled in all of us like the Social Distancing after this health crisis comes under control. The hand sanitizers, sanitizing wipes, and disinfectant sprays will more than likely be more a part of our household supplies as a precaution to avoid the mass-hysteria we are experiencing now.

Updates with the ever evolving, ever changing Corona-virus continue to be released from the Center for Disease Control (CDC) and passed on in mandatory stand-up talks. I have been in contact with our Business Agent's

Office, attended District Meetings, and been a part of District telecoms to pass the information to our stewards.

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends you help protect yourself and your community from COVID-19. Wash your hands frequently with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom, before eating, and after blowing your nose, coughing or sneezing. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer

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**Branch 599
serving
Brandon
Plant City
Sun City
Tampa**

**Branch 599
Meeting
Thursday
May 7
7:30 PM**

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National Association of Letter Carriers, Branch 599,

3003 W Cypress Street, Tampa FL 33609-1698, 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.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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Presidents Emeritus	Garland Tickle • Orbe Andux • Donald Thomas Michael Anderson • James Good • Alan Peacock		

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, Varick Reeder 315.491.6234				
Brandon	33510/11	David Rivadeneira	813.661.1636	813.403.9525
Brandon	33510/11	Luis Cruz	813.661.1636	813.431.3223
Carrollwood	33618	Eddie Berroth	813.961.2962	813.493.5224
Commerce	33602	Cynthia Williams	813.242.4507	813.778.4373
Forest Hills	33612	JR Sanchez	813.935.2954	773.849.6229
Forest Hills Annex	33613	Nick Cullaro	813.935.2954	813.541.8159
Hilldale	33614	Michael Smith	813.879.4309	813.326.0717
Hilldale Annex	33634	Latoya Dupuy	813.879.4309	305.414.3527
Interbay/Port Tampa	33611/16	Jonathan Jones	813.831.2034	813.293.2208
Interbay/Peninsula	33629	Clement Cheung	813.831.2034	813.758.5910
Palm River Annex	33619	Pam Benton	813.663.0048	813.475.0753
Plant City	33564	Varick Reeder	813.719.6793	315.491.6234
Produce	33610	Frank Webb	813.239.4084	813.340.0300
Ruskin/Sun City Ctr	33570	Cherry Berry	813.634.1403	585.230.0266
Seminole Heights	33603	Walt Rhoads	813.237.4569	813.389.1708
Sulphur Springs	33604	Milly Minsal	813.237.4569	813.446.2572
TCA/Hyde Park	33606	Tom King	813.873.7189	727.504.3866
TCA/Peninsula	33609	Michael Williams	813.873.7189	813.541.3092
TCA/West Tampa	33607	Michael Williams	813.873.7189	813.541.3092
Temple Terrace	33617	Michael Cipriano	813.988.0152	401.787.1510
Town 'N Country	33615/35	Brian Obst	813.884.0973	727.458.0679
Ybor City	33605	Maurice Rice	813.242.4507	813.334.3189

Around The Horn from The President's Desk

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with at least 60% alcohol. Avoid close contact with people who are sick, and stay home when you are sick. Remember, if you are well, follow CDC's recommendations: don't wear facemasks unless you are caring for someone who is sick (and they are not able to wear a facemask). Facemasks may be in short supply and they should be saved for caregivers.

Self check

Every morning, take a deep breath and hold it for more than 10 seconds. If you complete it successfully without coughing, without discomfort, stiffness or tightness, etc., it proves there is no fibrosis in the lungs. This would indicate no infection. In addition, everyone should ensure your mouth and throat is moist and never dry. Take a few sips of water every 15 minutes at least. Should the virus get into your mouth, drinking water or other liquids will wash it down through your throat and into your stomach. Once in your stomach, the stomach acid will kill the virus. If you do not drink enough water regularly, the virus can enter your windpipes and into your lungs. This puts you in danger.

Things to know

- If you have a runny nose and any coughed-up substance, you have a common cold.
- Coronavirus is a dry cough with no runny nose.
- The Coronavirus is not heat-resistant, it hates the sun.
- If someone sneezes with the virus, it takes 10 feet before it drops to the ground and is no longer airborne.
- If it drops on a metal surface it will live for at least 12 hours. Wash your hands ASAP with a bacterial soap should you come in contact with a metal surface.

- On fabric it can survive for 6-12 hours, normal laundry detergent will kill it.
- Drinking warm water is effective for all viruses, try not to drink liquids with ice.
- Gargle as a prevention, a simple solution of salt and warm water will suffice.
- And of course, wash your hands frequently, as the virus can only live on your hands for 5-10 minutes. What happens during that short period of time is...you rub your eyes, scratch your nose, or touch your mouth.
- **Make an emphasis to drink plenty of water.**

Symptoms

- It will infect the throat; you will have a sore throat lasting 3-4 days.
- The virus then blends into a nasal fluid that enters the trachea and then the lungs causing pneumonia. This takes about 5 to 6 days.
- With the pneumonia comes high fever and difficulty breathing.
- The nasal congestion is not like the normal kind. You will feel like you are drowning.

These symptoms warrant immediate medical attention. -CDC

Post-retirement debt collection

There was a very good article in the January 2020 Postal Record, written by Dan Toth, Director of Retired Members. In regard to carriers who receive a written notice from the USPS (letter of demand) claiming a debt is owed. This has happened to a few retirees in Branch 599. The main reason the letters of demand are issued, from my experiences, are carriers using advanced annual leave then they retire and never have the opportunity to earn the annual leave used. USPS paychecks have a breakdown on annual leave status; please pay atten-

tion to the earned annual leave. Should you receive a written notice from the USPS, claiming a debt, do not sit on it and just ignore it. The Postal Service may refer the claimed debt to the U.S. Treasury Department. Once a referral to Treasury is made, the amount allegedly owed can be increased by hefty penalty and finance charges. Whether correctly calculated or inaccurate, post-retirement debts can also be deducted from Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS) or Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS). Please contact our Branch Office should you receive a letter of demand.

Quick Hits:

Information you should know

*Thrift Savings Plan Changes:

Partial Withdrawals

Before these changes, you were limited to one partial withdrawal in your lifetime, either an age-based in-service withdrawal (when 59 1/2 or older) or a partial post-separation withdrawal. Now, there is no limit of the number of partial withdrawals you can take after separating from federal service (except that you won't be able to take more than one every 30 calendar days). You can take partial withdrawals while you are receiving post-separation installment payments, and having taken age-based in-service withdrawals does not prevent you from taking post separation partial withdrawals.

*Walmart Sunday is looking to be bigger than Amazon Sunday...

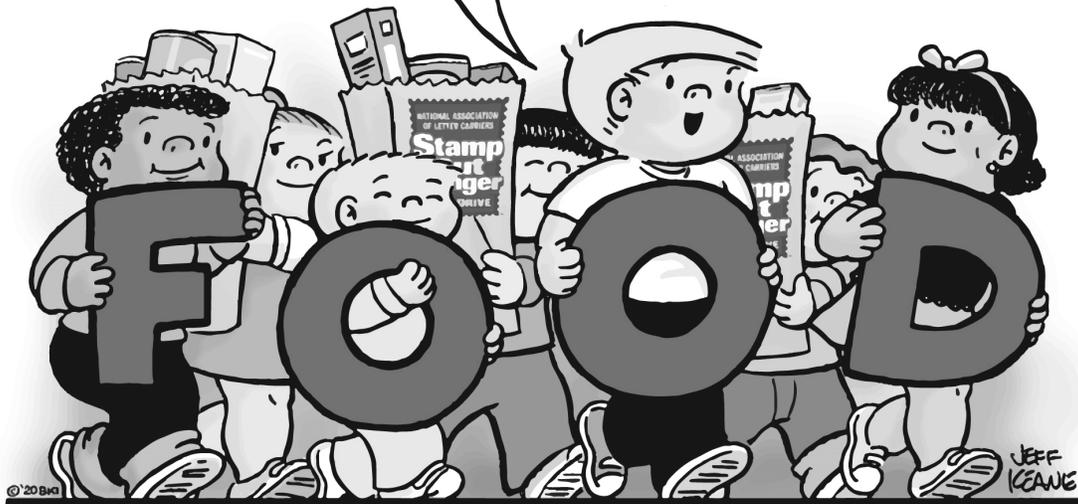
*6 in 1 casing or consolidated casing expansion has been put on hold, looks like another big USPS mistake...

*The Suncoast District paid out \$4.2 million in accidents in the months of Oct-Nov-Dec.

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

Still scheduled as of date that
this newsletter was printed.

THIS SPELLS
HELP FOR LOTS OF
FAMILIES THIS
YEAR!



LETTER CARRIERS' FOOD DRIVE

SATURDAY, MAY 9, 2020

PUT YOUR NON-PERISHABLE DONATION IN A BAG BY YOUR MAILBOX.
WE'LL DELIVER IT TO A LOCAL FOOD BANK.

National Partners



Unionism – Displaying Pride in Your Job and other thoughts...

Working for the Postal Service is a job with many benefits for the employee. Many of these benefits are the result of hard work at the bargaining table by your national officers each contract cycle.

This month we will turn our attention to one or two specific benefits that have been gained through the years by national officers of the N.A.L.C.

First let us discuss the benefit of a uniform allowance. The uniform allowance is a monetary stipend provided to all carriers on a yearly basis by the postal service. This stipend is to provide the carriers with the ability to obtain the various uniform items we wear to perform our duties on a daily basis. The items are things such as: shirts, hats, shorts, slacks, shoes, socks, belts, jackets and foul weather gear – to name a few. These items are available through approved dealers so the quality of the items can be maintained.

The uniform allowance currently stands at \$464 yearly on your anniversary date. The anniversary date is determined by one of the following 90 days of work or 120 days on the job, whichever comes first. This anniversary date remains the same for your entire career and it is important to remember this date, as if you fail to use your annual allowance by the anniversary date it will be lost for that year. Also important to know is the one-time additional credit for CCAs obtaining their first allowance after conversion to career regular status. This credit amounts to an additional \$107 along with the standard \$464 to help with the first year's uniform purchases.

As you can see, our national officers have bargained a great benefit to assist

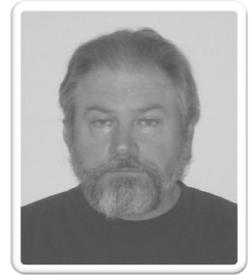
carriers in obtaining the uniforms required to do the job. With all this I am wondering why I continue to see carriers out of uniform or in uniforms that do not conform to the standards required of the carrier craft. While it is understood that it will take several years to accumulate all the uniform items required, there is no reason not to have the basics of the daily uniform with the first allowance. There should be no need to wear nonapproved items such as: non-postal headgear, fancy colored socks, tennis shoes that do not conform to the requirements (i.e. black non slip). If you fail to obtain more than 1 postal hat, then you must buy one out of your own money if you need another one until your next yearly allowance hits. Spend your allowance wisely and you should never have a problem. See your steward for the information on the local uniform suppliers in the area.

I mentioned Pride in your Job in the header and I think that if you are going to work as a carrier it is an important part of your job that you display that pride in how you wear your uniform. Now before you get all up in arms about how the uniforms get dirty because we do dirty work, I understand that. Remember, I am also an active carrier myself and I know how dirty the uniforms can get. That said, it is important that you wash your uniforms regularly and maintain them as best as you can. When you come to work you should not look like you just rolled out of bed, your uniform should not look like it was ironed with a cold rock and you should not smell like you haven't had a shower in weeks. I know this is brutal, but I have been exposed to these types of things throughout my 23-year career and it is important that this stops. Having Pride in your

appearance goes a long way with customer service as we are the Postal Service to those customers we deliver to daily and your lasting impression is how you look and how you do your job. Take some Pride in your appearance and it will go a long way to helping you become the best employee you can be.

I would also like to touch on the benefit of annual leave. Annual leave guidelines are detailed in Article 10 of the National Agreement so I will not attempt to go into all of them in this article, but I want to touch on the carryover guidelines and the potential of loss of unused annual leave.

Article 10.3.b states the following: *Care should be exercised to ensure that no employee is required to forfeit any part of each employee's annual leave.* Letter carriers may carry over 440 hours of annual leave from year to year, but any amount over 440 hours is forfeited by the employee. Supervisors should exercise care to assure that no bargaining unit employees have to forfeit any part of their annual leave. The employee should make sure to submit leave requests to ensure no loss of annual leave but at the end of March yearly. Management is to review those carriers with excessive leave balances to ensure they have submitted enough requests to cover the needed leave to prevent loss by the employee. If the employee has not submitted requests to ensure no loss, then management can assign a leave period to ensure there is no loss of leave. I believe that the employee knows better what time



Brian Obst
Vice President
Branch 599

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Sharing Our Members' Joys and Sorrows

Our deepest sympathy and prayerful support is extended to Ellen and family at the passing of her husband, **Barry Holcomb** [retiree], March 6; to Branch 599 President, **Tony Diaz** and family at the passing of his father, Bennie, March 6; to **Johnny Davis** [retiree] and family at the passing of his wife, Juanita, March 3; to **Bernida Smith** [Palm River] and family at the passing of her father, Eddie, February 23; to Chief Steward **Varick Reeder** [Hilldale] and family at the passing of his brother, Leonard Jr., March 21; and to **Tom Scott** [Plant City] and family at the passing of his brother, Kevin, March 20.

Santilli Retired!

Congratulations to
Anthony Sammie Santilli [Hilldale]
 who received his retirement pin and
 gratuity from President Tony Diaz
 during our March Branch meeting!



Sam Santilli and Tony Diaz

Unionism — Displaying Pride in Your Job and other thoughts...

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off they would prefer so it is a good practice to ensure you make the requests yourself rather than letting management select it for you.

The information discussed in this article comes from the JCAM Articles 10 (Leave) and Article 26 (Uniforms) and I recommend that you take the time to educate yourself as to what our agreement has to say on these topics.

One more thing this month, **Coronavirus**. We have all heard the service talks and we see and hear the news daily so it should come as no surprise that daily operations have changed.

Suffice it to say that we all are concerned with how things are going on a daily basis and it is the desire of both the NALC and the postal service that all employees go home each day healthy and return to work in the same condition. Life in general has taken a strange turn and many of us worry about dealing with this virus. It is best if everyone follows the advice of the CDC and wash your hands regularly. Be cautious and take the recommended precautions in the performance of your duties as well as your home life. The postal service is doing what it can to obtain the items recommended for use (i.e. hand sanitizer, disposable wipes, gloves and masks)

for the workers, but as you have no doubt seen, they are currently in short supply. I know it is frustrating, but try not to take out your aggravation on postal management, as it changes nothing and only causes unneeded friction in the workplace. If you have issues, ensure to contact your steward and the union will address the areas we can. Stay healthy and work safe and we will all come out of this crisis safely.

Until next month — Remember, as I always say, **Knowledge is the Key.**

Brian Obst
 Vice President

Shop Stewards will Meet

Tuesday 7 PM

May 5
June 2

Branch 599 Meeting

Thursday 7:30 PM

May 7
June 4

Executive Board Meets

Thursday 6:30 PM

April 2
May 7

Sunday Work Party

at our Hall 9-11 AM

May 10
June 7

Retirees Breakfasts

Monday May 4 9 AM

Denny's Restaurant at Dale Mabry & Spruce
2004 N Dale Mabry Highway, Tampa

Tuesday May 12 8 AM

Bob Evans Restaurant off Fletcher
12272 Morris Bridge Road, Temple Terrace 33637

Special Thanks

I want to send a special thank you to all my Branch 599 Brothers and Sisters who reached out to my family and I with condolences, kind words, flowers, donations, and prayers when hearing of the passing of my dad on March 6. Your support during this difficult time was very much appreciated. Those of you who attended the service on Sunday March 15 amid concerns of the Coronavirus and social distancing, thank you.

My dad was a special man, always there to support me and he loved his family. My mom and dad were married for 66½ years. I am appreciative of our relationship over the years. As his neighbor, I was able to see my dad every day. Cruises, baseball games, dinners, and home projects...we did it all together. He was 90 years old and lived a full life.

Thank you dad, we miss you so much already.



A.R. Tony Huerta Branch 599

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