



Tampa Letter Carrier

VOLUME 21, ISSUE 1

JANUARY 2022

— Notice —

Until further notice, as has been our practice, everyone attending Branch Meetings is required to wear a facial mask...your cooperation is appreciated.

Around The Horn from The President's Desk

Happy New Year!

to all Branch 599 Brothers and Sisters.

May the 2022 year bring peace, prosperity, happiness, good health, and many retirements and conversions!



Tony Diaz
President
Branch 599

Let's bring in the New Year with some good news...

Branch 599's MDA Golf Tournament big success!

Our 8th Annual Branch 599 MDA Charity Golf Tournament was another great time for all! The tournament was Sunday, November 14, again at Heritage Harbor Golf and Country Club for the 7th consecutive year.

The staff at Heritage Harbor loves our tournament, rating it one of the best run tournaments they host annually. Each year we have improved on our totals, thanks to hard work, great sponsors, and all of you who contribute. This year for the second year, presented some difficult hurdles due to COVID. However, even with the hurdles, with many of our previous

business donors still reeling financially and many past golfers still not participating in social events...we were successful. I am proud to announce we presented MDA with a check in December for **\$13,471.87** for the 2021 year. This is a golf tournament record, besting the pre-COVID year tournament in 2019! This was as gratifying as any other year because there was still the unknown. Who would sign-up to golf? What sponsors would be able to donate? Well, we got our answers loud and clear. First, the day could not have been more beautiful, not a cloud in the sky. The golfers showed up in force, 120 of you, that is an accomplishment on its own.

We thank all the golfers who came out and those who were so generous with our raffle. *Thanks* to the hole sponsors, and to all our donors. *Thanks* to all the volunteers who came out to help with registration, raffle ticket sales, 50/50 raffle sales, taking pictures, and assisting with the putting contest. *Thanks* to Branch 599 for the \$500 donation to assist with the raffle prizes; the quality of prizes drove up our raffle collections. Finally, there are no words that can describe the effort by our Golf Tournament Coordinator, Alan Robinson. His tireless efforts we see every year, but the effort was really unmatched

(Continued on page 3)

Branch 599
serving
Brandon
Plant City
Sun City
Tampa

Branch 599
Meeting
Thursday
January 6
7:30 PM

Branch 599 Office

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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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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, Brian Obst 727.458.0679				
Brandon	33510/11	David Rivadeneira	813.661.1636	813.403.9525
Brandon	33510/11	Luis Cruz	813.661.1636	813.431.3223
Carrollwood	33618	Tina Bausch	813.961.2962	813.892.2282
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	Juan Andujar	813.935.2954	813.377.7266
Hilldale	33614	Brian Obst	813.879.4309	727.458.0679
Hilldale Annex	33634	Latoya Dupuy	813.879.4309	305.414.3527
Interbay/Port Tampa	33611/16		813.831.2034	
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	Todd Soular	813.719.6793	813.719.6793
Produce	33610	Jerry J.D. Lewers	813.239.4084	813.528.5519
Ruskin/Sun City Ctr	33570	Cherry Berry	813.634.1403	585.230.0266
Seminole Heights	33603	Michael Smith	813.237.4569	813.326.0717
Sulphur Springs	33604	Stephen Hall	813.237.4569	813.494.4669
TCA/Hyde Park	33606	Alan Robinson	813.873.7189	813.843.9762
TCA/Peninsula	33609		813.873.7189	
TCA/West Tampa	33607	Michael Williams	813.873.7189	813.541.8327
Temple Terrace	33617	Mike 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

(Continued from page 1)

the past two years. Over the months leading to our tournament, Alan was determined to make the tournament another success, as he has done all 8 years. This tournament has become a *must attend* tournament, it is an event. Alan will tell you though, the success is a team effort, and it takes all of us, our friends, neighbors, family members, strangers, and good-hearted people. We will begin the planning for the 2022 version, our 9th Annual MDA Tournament early this year. Hopefully any of you who did not or were not able to donate or play in 2021 will join us this year! We are looking for title sponsors to help pay the expenses associated with organizing the big event. *Thanks to all!*

Managing your annual leave hours

As we begin the new year, here are a few things to consider to assure you have enough annual leave hours at the end of the year to cover any annual leave you've have approved. I received several calls from members towards the end of the year that were in that position. Those who had annual leave approved prior, for later in the year, and did not have the hours to cover it and just thought they could use leave without pay (LWOP). Well, those members found out that's not the way it works.

You see at the beginning of your career, you can easily lose track of the amount of leave you have throughout the year. It gets easier as and if you begin to carry over hours from year to year. The Postal Service offers annual and sick leave. You receive 13 days (104 hours) of annual leave per year the first 3 years. This increases to 20 days (160) hours of annual leave per year after 3 years. The increase tops out at 26 days (208) hours of annual

leave per year after 15 years of service. So how many hours can you carry over from year to year without losing annual leave hours? The answer is 440 hours, 11 weeks, however, the past 2 years, due to COVID, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed and is currently in place that allows for a 520 hour carry over. Managing your hours is important; this is about keeping track of your balance as you take annual leave throughout the year. Knowing you are going to have enough days to cover is a priority. Here is why, every year, by November 1, a Memorandum for All Stations and Branches, known as the *leave letter*, is released for posting in all offices. The *leave letter* explains the dates for choice leave submission, officially called the Advance Commitment Period. This submission period begins the second Monday in December and lasts 3 weeks. The *leave letter* also states, in the last paragraph...**Note: All prior approved annual leave will be considered cancelled should an employee run out of annual leave. Annual leave must only be submitted if an employee's earned annual leave balance is sufficient to cover the period requested.**

Do not place yourself in a position where you have purchased travel tickets and a hotel room to then be notified you do not have the annual hours to cover your approved leave.

Quick Hits: Information you should know

NALC Disaster Relief Foundation can help members affected by recent storms.

NALC is deeply saddened by

the destruction and loss of life caused by the devastating storms and tornadoes across the South and Midwest last weekend. We send our deepest condolences and sympathies to all those who lost a loved one due to these horrific storms.

Thankfully, no letter carrier injuries have been reported to NALC headquarters. For NALC members who suffered damage from these storms, the NALC Disaster Relief Foundation is here to help. The NALC Disaster Relief Foundation provides hands-on relief and receives donations to offer financial grants to those affected by natural disasters. You can apply for a relief grant by submitting the form that is online.

The NALC Disaster Relief Foundation relies on donations so that we can continue to help our brothers and sisters who are affected by natural disasters like these. If you would like to make a contribution, visit nalc.org/disaster.

Donations can be mailed to:
NALC Disaster Relief Foundation
100 Indiana Avenue NW
Washington DC 20001-2144

—*nalc.org* December 15, 2021

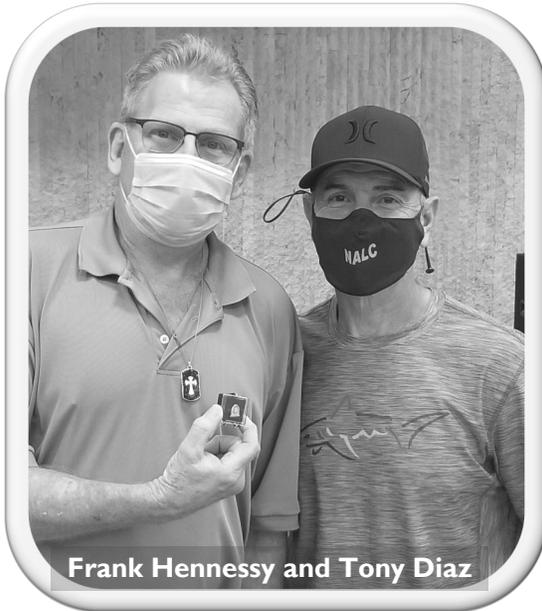
Look forward to talking to you again
on the next *Around The Horn*



Sharing Our Members' Joys and Sorrows

Our deepest sympathy and prayerful support is extended to Connie and family at the passing of her husband, **John Goodrich** [retiree], December 11; to Karen and family at the passing of her husband, **Kenneth McPeak** [retiree], September 26; to Lou Conte and family at the passing of her husband, **Matthew Matt Rezanda** [retiree], December 13; to **Richard Ricky Johnson** [Carrollwood] and family at the passing of his mother, Yasiko, November 20; and to **Evelyn Fossitt** [Interbay] and family at the passing of her sister-in-law, Selina, November 24.

Hennessy and King Retired!



Frank Hennessy and Tony Diaz



Tom King and Tony Diaz

President Diaz presented **Frank Hennessy** [TCA Hyde Park] and **Tom King** [TCA Hyde Park] with their retirement pin and gratuity at our December meeting.

Stress Relievers

Health Benefit Report

As if our lives were not filled with enough stress, the COVID pandemic has heightened everyone's stress levels. Stress can cause health issues, mood swings and unhappiness. So how do we manage stress?

Stress relievers can help restore calm and serenity to your chaotic life. You don't have to invest a lot of time or thought into stress relievers. If your stress is getting out of control and you

need quick relief, try one of these tips.

Get active

Virtually any form of physical activity can act as a stress reliever. Even if you're not an athlete or you're out of shape, exercise can still be a good stress reliever.

Eat a healthy diet

Eating a healthy diet is an important part of taking care of yourself. Aim to eat a variety of fruits and vegetables and whole grains.

Avoid unhealthy habits

Some people may deal with stress by drinking too much caffeine or alcohol, smoking, eating too much, or using illegal substances. These habits can harm your health.

Meditate

During meditation, you focus your attention and quiet the stream of jumbled thoughts that may be crowding your mind and causing stress. Meditation can instill a sense of calm,

(Continued on page 8)

Unionism — Year End Thoughts

As the days wind down to the end of another year, I want to expound upon some thoughts from this year passing into next year.

This year has been my 24th year in the Postal Service and throughout the many years I have seen one constant — Management can always be counted upon to violate the provisions of our working agreement (The National Agreement) and if one is not vigilant, they will get away with these violations.

All offices get to elect a shop steward to help police the application of our National Agreement to ensure that management does not violate its provisions. I am aware that after steward elections this year that several offices throughout our Branch have not elected a steward for representation going into the new year. I am concerned as to what thought process is being used by the members in those offices by failing to elect a representative to assist in representing the carriers in those offices. The union is a cooperative organization where all parties work together for the same goal, yet these offices seem to be disinterested in doing their part to assist the union as a whole so they can be properly represented. It is imperative that every office have a local steward in-house so actions from management that violate our National Agreement can be addressed directly. An outside steward can only address what they witness or are informed about in the grievance process. Having no steward reduces the ability of your Branch to represent you under the National Agreement.

Being a steward is not a bad thing, and simply because you are inexperienced should not hinder you from the position as there is a wealth of experienced

people in the Branch that you can reach out to for help. We have steward training meetings monthly and as Vice President I make myself available for separate training classes on all aspects of stewardship, all you need do is reach out and the assistance is available. I recommend that members consider becoming a steward as it also helps one understand the workings of our National Agreement and one's responsibilities under it. I don't expect that everyone who becomes a steward will remain on for 24 years like me, but you never know, it might be something that gets in your blood like it did with me. Please give this some consideration and help your Branch protect you and the other members.

Another issue that I have seen through the years is many members seem to think that the National Agreement only applies to them when they want it to. The feeling they have is, if the contract is getting in the way of some good deal that they have been able to work out on the side with management that it should not get in their way. The reason we have a National Agreement is to specifically address the terms of wages, hours, and working conditions for all carriers. Many of the items negotiated in the agreement are interlocked with other items and to change one affects many others. For example, being late for work by say 15 minutes causes one to have to use some type of leave (i.e., LWOP, Annual or Sick). Many carriers don't understand why they just can't work 15 minutes over to make up the 8-hour day, but that would be in effect, a schedule change, and there are guidelines governing that issue and failure to get a schedule change would mean the extra 15 minutes should be paid as overtime not straight time as it is

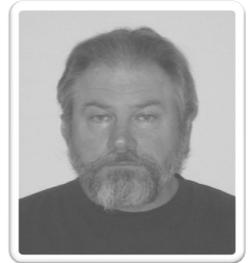
outside of your regular work schedule. As you can see, it becomes very convoluted.

Additionally, the reason for the guidelines in the first place is to protect carriers from management changing your work hours at their whim whenever they want. Much thought was put in the formulation of the terms of the National Agreement and the steward has the responsibility to ensure contract compliance by management. This means that all members and nonmembers alike are governed by the National Agreement and must follow its terms.

In my 24 years in this great union, it has been my distinct pleasure to perform my duties representing the membership. This Branch has seen fit to send me to Step B training that allowed me to serve as a Step B representative over a 5-year period of time, helping in contract enforcement issues around our district as well as our installation. I was selected to attend NALC Leadership Academy in Washington DC to learn more about the workings of representatives of our union on a local, regional, and national basis to assist myself and our Branch with representation issues. Throughout the many years, this Branch has sent me to many state and national conventions where I was able to expand my base of knowledge as a union representative, all to the benefit of our membership. I take this time to ask you to join me in this quest to provide the best representation for our members.

Finally, as we go through this holiday

(Continued on page 7)



Brian Obst
Vice President
Branch 599

Proposed Bylaw Changes

ARTICLE VII

Fees, Dues, Fines and Assessments

Section 1. B & C

Currently reads as follows:

(B) Annual dues shall be the pay of a City Carrier Grade 1, Step O, payable in advance at the rate of one hour per pay period. A member placed in a LWOP status for more than thirty (30) days shall not be required to pay Union dues until the member is returned to a pay status. A member placed in OWCP status will be required to pay their Union dues directly to the Union's Financial Secretary.

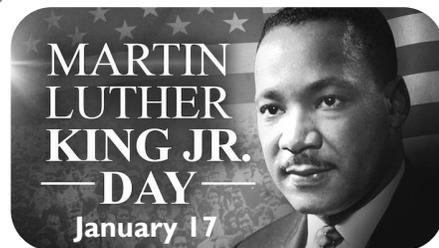
(C) Retired members prior to October 1982 will be required to pay dues of \$25.20 per year directly to the Financial Secretary. All retired members collecting OWCP benefits will be required to pay dues of \$25.20 per year directly to the Financial Secretary. All other retired members will be required to pay dues of \$2.10 per month deducted from their retirement annuity.

Proposed to read as follows:

(B) *Annual Dues shall be the pay of a City Carrier Grade 2, at the Exceptional rate of \$32.00 per pay period. A member placed in LWOP status for more than (30) days shall not be required to pay their Union dues until the member is returned to pay status. A member placed in a OWCP status will be required to pay their dues directly to the Unions Financial Secretary.*

(C) *Retired members prior to 1982 will be required to pay dues of \$26.04 per year directly to the Financial Secretary. All other members will be required to pay \$2.17 per month deducted from their retirement annuity.*

Bylaw proposal signed by: Alan W. Peacock, John J. Gebo, and José R. Oliva



Be the peace you wish to see in the world.

Voting is the foundation stone for political action.

I have decided to stick with love. Hate is too great a burden to bear.

He who is devoid of the power to forgive is devoid of the power to love.

Region 9's District Retirement Seminar

The Region 9 District Retirement Seminar was a big success, held at Tampa Letter Carriers Hall on Sunday, November 21, from 10 AM – 2 PM. Jerry Lonergan from the Business Agent's Office conducted the seminar. State President Al Friedman also spoke on important retirement information. The seminar had been planned for a while, but with COVID it had been delayed. Branches from St. Petersburg 1477, and Clearwater 2008 joined those from our Branch 599. There should be another seminar later in 2022.

Proposed Bylaw Changes

ARTICLE VII

Fees, Dues, Fines and Assessments

Section 1. E

Currently reads as follows:

(E) The Branch Action Fund Account currently capped at \$350,000.00 (three hundred fifty thousand dollars) for the purpose deemed by the membership for any Branch Expense. Such funds shall be under the control of the Trustees and shall be used only for expenses determined by the membership of NALC (National Association of Letter Carriers) Branch 599 as required by a two-thirds (2/3rds) vote of the members voting when properly notified in accordance with the Constitution of the National Association of Letter Carriers and the Bylaws of NALC Branch 599. These funds shall be set aside in an appropriate savings institution earning a guaranteed interest rate. The interest rate on these funds shall be deposited in the General Fund to be used exclusively for Branch expenses as deemed by the membership.

Proposed to read as follows:

(E) The Branch Action Fund Account currently capped at \$350,000.00 (three hundred fifty thousand dollars) for the purpose deemed by the membership for any Branch Expense. Such funds shall be under the control of the Trustees and shall be used only for expenses determined by the membership of NALC (National Association of Letter Carriers) Branch 599 as required by a two-thirds (2/3rds) vote of the members voting when properly notified in accordance with the Constitution of the National Association of Letter Carriers and the Bylaws of NALC Branch 599. These funds shall be set aside in an appropriate savings institution earning a guaranteed interest rate. All the interest earned by these funds shall be reinvested in that particular fund and at maturity the interest earned by that fund is to be withdrawn and deposited into an account agreed upon by the Trustees and thereafter, used exclusively for Branch expenses as deemed by the membership.

Bylaw proposal signed by: Michael Brink, Jim Good, José R. Oliva, and Brian Obst

Unionism — Year End Thoughts

(Continued from page 5)

season, I ask you to try to provide guidance and assistance to all of our new members who are trying to learn the proper way to do this job that we have been working all these many years. Remember back to when you first started and consider providing some encouragement to the newest that may be having difficulty in developing the skill needed to perform at their

best, because we all were there once, and in most cases, someone was there to provide these things for us.

It is my sincere hope that this holiday season finds you all to be well and that you and yours enjoy your time together. I look forward to a new year full of promise and I prepare for the many issues that will present themselves that we all will be tasked with, steadfast in

the knowledge that together we can overcome any obstacle placed in our path, if we work together.

Merry Christmas, Happy Holidays, and Happy New Year! I leave you at the end of this year as I always do, remember.....

Knowledge is the Key.

Brian Obst
Vice President

Mike Williams on Career Day



Mike Williams, TCA, volunteers every year for a career day; this is his son's 4th grade class. Mike says the kids always have interesting questions...

Happy New Year! from your Officers, Shop Stewards, and Staff

Stress Relievers

(Continued from page 4)

peace and balance that can benefit both your emotional well-being and your overall health. You can also try deep breathing anywhere.

Laugh more

A good sense of humor can't cure all ailments, but it can help you feel better, even if you have to force a fake laugh through your grumpiness. When you laugh, it not only lightens up your mental load but also causes positive physical changes in your body. Laughter fires you up and then cools down your stress response. So read some jokes, tell some jokes, watch a comedy or hang out with your funny friends.

Connect with others

When you're stressed and irritable, your instinct may be to isolate yourself.

Instead, reach out to family and friends and make social connections. As this can be tricky right now, try connecting through Zoom.

Try Yoga

With its series of postures and controlled-breathing exercises, yoga is a popular stress reliever. Yoga brings together physical and mental disciplines which may help you achieve peacefulness of body and mind. Yoga can help you relax and manage stress and anxiety.

Get enough sleep

Stress can cause you to have trouble falling asleep. When you have too much to do – and too much to think about – your sleep can suffer. But sleep is the time when your brain and body recharge.

Keep a journal

Writing down your thoughts and feelings can a good release for otherwise pent-up emotions. Don't think about what to write – just let it happen. Write whatever comes to mind. No one else needs to read it, so don't strive for perfection in grammar or spelling.

Seek counseling

If new stressors are challenging your ability to cope or if self-care measures just aren't relieving your stress, you may need to look for reinforcements in the form of therapy or counseling. Therapy also may be a good idea if you feel overwhelmed or trapped, if you worry excessively, or if you have trouble carrying out daily routines or meeting responsibilities at work, home, or school.

Fisher Family update

November 30, 2021

Dear Branch 599 Members,

We wanted to be sure to send a letter to be read at your next meeting. Please know that we would have shared more at the golf tournament, but the amazing energy and hopefulness was the biggest focus of the event. It was certainly amazing!

In 2015, when we moved into our current home, Ardin was able. All three of our children were thriving and growing. He could climb up the spiral staircase and explore our new home freely. The sunken living room was a small hurdle. He navigated and enjoyed the adventure of the fort his daddy built hidden into the attic upstairs. A hidden room with a secret door. As each day and month and year passed, it became harder for him to climb. As he began to fail, we would help boost him, step by step up to play and join his siblings, and let him slide himself back down again step by step safely.

Today he is totally unable to lift himself up the stairs. He no longer wants to try, as it is just exhausting for his body. We relocated his brother to share a

room with him downstairs and now use the secret fort as a storage room for extra items. The sunken living room that was initially a small hurdle has become our biggest focus to renovate as the falls he suffers come hard when he tries to get from one level to another. He uses a surrounding wall to brace himself up the step or even into the front door.

You have had the privilege with us to watch Ardin grow. These years have been amazing, but also changing in ways that only his body can explain. This year at the tournament, you can much more see his genetics fighting to be seen and robbing him of the normal development of a child. This year we have seen him fail. Falls are a daily event, modifying our home has become a must as safeguarding his body is a priority. Visits to a specialist in Boston every 6 months are in our plans for the years foreseeable. Our doctors' teams in Tampa are always nearby, with specialists that have become a part of our family.

We face a challenge, but this tournament proves something great. We do not stand alone. We see each face at this event. We hear the heartfelt words

and know that the people investing in this event are investing in a hope that is bigger than we can see with our eyes. When we leave these tournaments, we carry with us the hope that each person is paying in.

As we listened during the event, Ardin sat admiring and holding his gifts. He was so enamored with all the items, particularly the cup with his name. He has never had a cup with his name. Monday morning, he filled it full and carried it all week as his favorite item. He didn't do this because he never has cups to drink from, but rather because he felt honored, cherished, and special for the event that he had the privilege to attend. We are so thankful for your Branch to participate in *Deliver the Cure* and have great hope that our efforts will give results to not just our small family, but the large number of individuals that fight our same battle. You are appreciated and seen for the great things you do, and we thank you from the very bottom of our hearts. Thank you for pouring in your hope that a cure will change the lives of many.

Sincerely,
Randy and Erin Fisher



Our year-end donation to MDA!

Branch 599 President Tony Diaz and Golf Tournament Coordinator Alan Robinson proudly hold the big check for \$13,471.87 to the Muscular Dystrophy Association.

Branch 599's donation was a result of our MDA Golf Tournament and the 50/50 raffles at our monthly Branch meetings. The amount raised from the golf tournament was a record, significantly higher than the previous record in 2019. This donation will go a long way, as donations to MDA were down significantly for the 2021 year, still due to the COVID affect.

Thanks to all who contributed to this success!

A.R. Tony Huerta Branch 599

Retirees Dinner

Sunday January 16 5-8 PM

Dinner at 6 PM



Maggiano's Italian Restaurant

WestShore Plaza, 203 Westshore Plaza, Tampa FL 33609

Spaces Limited to 100 People, COVID Social Distancing Restrictions will be followed.

Call Branch Office to Reserve a Spot 813.875.0599

No Later than January 8, 2022

BYOB – Setups Available

Member +1 ♦ Non-Retirees \$40 per person

If you are unable to attend, please contact the Branch Office to cancel no later than January 11; this will save the Branch from paying for your reservation.



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<http://www.mrtherapycenter.com>

NOTICE

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

Shop Stewards will Meet

Tuesday 7 PM

January 4

February 1

Executive Board Meets

Thursday 6:30 PM

January 6

February 3

Branch 599 Meetings

Thursday 7:30 PM

January 6

February 3

March 3

April 7

May 5

June 2

July 7

Retirees Breakfasts

Monday *Date to be Announced* 9 AM

Denny's Restaurant

at Dale Mabry & Spruce

2004 N Dale Mabry Highway, Tampa

Tuesday January 11 10 AM

Bob Evans Restaurant off Fletcher

12272 Morris Bridge Road, Temple Terrace 33637



A.R. Tony Huerta Branch 599

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www.nalc599.com

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