

The Twig of the Branch



Branch 1477 West Coast Florida Letter Carriers



Serving:

**St. Petersburg — Largo — Dunedin — Pinellas Park — Indian Rocks Beach
Punta Gorda — Englewood — Bradenton Beach — Palmetto — Ellenton**

VOLUME 610

VOICE OF BRANCH 1477

SEPTEMBER, 2020

Inside This Issue:

President's Report <i>by Joe Henschen</i>	1-3
Executive Vice President article—Hubble's Troubles <i>by Chris Hubble</i>	3-4
Editor's Corner <i>by Judy Dorris</i>	4
Branch Welfare Reports	5
Letter Carriers' Donor Drive	5
Scholarship Award	6
Meeting Attendees	6
Union's Data Page	7
Calendar	8



PRESIDENT'S REPORT *By President Joe Henschen* *Twitter @JaHe1*

Early Street Afternoon Sortation

In the early 90's the St. Petersburg Installation implemented a program entitled Expedited Preferential Mail (EPM). Carriers in delivery units operating under EPM procedures receive, sequence, and prepare mail using the same work methods as those in non-EPM delivery units. Generally, only preferential mail was cased in the morning while non-preferential mail was cased in the afternoon. Of course, this was prior to DPS and all mail was cased into delivery sequence. This program is in the M-39 121.21. I recall when it was rolled out, Carriers in 33709 were on the street within 30 minutes the first day and rattling mailboxes at 7AM on a Saturday Morning. Once the calls started coming in from scared or upset patrons the program was cancelled.

On July 16, 2020, USPS notified NALC of the Early Street Afternoon Sortation (ESAS) test that was scheduled to begin on July 25 in approximately 400 test sites.

The Suncoast District has 6 test sites, 3 of these sites are in Branch 1477. The Largo Main Office, St. Petersburg Crossroads and Gulfwinds Stations.

The test was explained as a way to "reset" the 24-hour clock. It required the carriers in the test sites to report on July 25th, load DPS, No Linear Measured (NLM) flats from the hot case, SPRS, flats, obtain accountable pieces, keys and move to the street. Once on the street the MDD Scanner load feature would be used to scan all parcels. Hot case mail would be worked in with the DPS on the first day.

NEXT BRANCH MEETING: THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 10, 2020

On the Clerk side the requirements were to have the distribution Clerks all begin by working parcels. In normal operations the Clerks have different tasks that they do in the morning, but the test requires the Distribution Up Time (DUT) for parcels to be sorted earlier. Once the breakdown was well into the morning, a Clerk would move to work the Hotcase and another to the Cage to work the accountables. The problems with the Clerk side of the test is that there is just no room for 3 or 4 Clerks to get into the confined space around the boom bar code sorter to identify the route and social distance at the same time. The DUT is important for this test to be successful.

Back to day 1, once off the street the Carriers would case all mail distributed throughout the day, pull it down, tray it and leave it on the ledge for day 2. On day 2 the cased mail would be added to the morning return and the day starts over.

The ESAS initiative substantially alters delivery practices and procedures outlined in the Handbooks M-39 and M-41. These changes directly impact terms and conditions of employment of City Letter Carriers in violation of Article 19 of the National Agreement.¹

The NALC's position is that the ESAS test imposes restrictions on Letter Carriers' morning casing duties which conflict with M-39 Section 121.211. Similarly, the ESAS test prevents carriers from withdrawing mail in violation of M-41 Section 223.11. Additionally, letter carriers do not obtain accountable items until after they have pulled the mail from the case in violation of M-41 Section 262.1.

On Monday, July 27th when the Carriers arrived, the instructions changed. Carriers now case all spotted flats (NLM) and SPR's before pulling the route down. Some office time returned.

The ESAS test raises the same fundamental interpretive issue that NALC has raised in previous national level disputes: whether the Postal Service may suspend compliance with the National Agreement or applicable regulations under the guise of conducting a "test." It remains our position that management may not unilaterally implement tests which are inconsistent with regulations outlined in handbooks and manuals without first reaching an agreement with the Union.

The ESAS test cannot be providing any sort of valuable data. It is the worse time to attempt something like this. Prime choice leave, the FFCRA,

quarantining and management's abuse of the Standard Training Program resulting in a retention rate for CCAs of 44.5% in St. Petersburg. That and add poor scheduling practices results in 5/9 routes open going into each day requiring mandating non ODLs and WAO daily. None of this will allow the data to be accurate.

NALC has requested a meeting with the Postal Service to discuss this interpretive dispute.

That's not all, Management plans to consolidate all cases to 1 piece of equipment or in some cases a case and a wing. The following is a recent post on NALC.org. This is an important change to the Letter Carrier work methods.

USPS looks to reduce Letter Carriers' casing equipment

The Postal Service sent NALC a copy of a stand-up talk for City Letter Carriers intended to explain the goals of its latest unilateral delivery initiative. It is called Post Office Sortation Equipment Reconciliation (SER).

In the stand-up talk, USPS states *"From a city delivery perspective, our goal is to convert as many city routes as possible to one, six shelf, evenly spaced 124 and provide efficient and effective customer service."* A 124 is the main Letter Carrier case with the shelf where we place our mail as we sort it. USPS also states, *"In order to do so, it is essential that we seek your valuable input as carriers, to finalize the cell size changes. This is vital because, as the expert on the route, you can readily identify addresses that may require additional or less sortation space. In order to complete this as planned, we will be starting Carrier consultations soon regarding these changes to our Carrier sortation equipment by obtaining your input."* At the end of the stand-up talk, we are reminded of the importance of *"vigorously focusing on the efficiency of our operations"*.

If supervisors or managers do not consult with and obtain your input prior to implementing this initiative, or if they ignore the valuable input you provide, you should inform a NALC branch representative.

Handbook M-39, *Management of Delivery Services* and Handbook M-41, *City Delivery Carriers Duties and Responsibilities* both contain provisions regarding case cells or separations, as

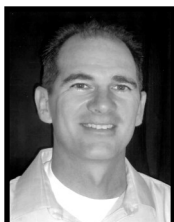
¹ NALC.org News and information

well as casing equipment.

If changes to case configurations are implemented that violate those handbooks, then a grievance should be filed citing a violation of the appropriate provisions. If needed, NALC branch representatives should contact their NALC national business agent for guidance.

We have requested additional information from the Postal Service and once we receive that information, we will be providing the NBAs with more detail regarding this initiative.

When a tour talk is conducted regarding this change please advise your Branch Officers.



Hubble's Troubles

*By Executive Vice President,
Chris Hubble*

Burnout....

Burnout can leave people feeling exhausted, empty, and unable to cope with the demands of life. If you feel exhausted, start to hate your job, and begin to feel less capable at work, you are showing signs of burnout. (Mayo Clinic) The COVID pandemic, weather and unreasonable time pressure to deliver routes is making it more and more difficult to go to work every day. City Carrier Assistants are working 14 days or more with no days off, and not just in the office they are assigned to. Not to mention working 12 or more hours in one day. The morale is at an all time low. CCA's are requesting days off and getting the run-around. I want to share several memos and provisions that address hours of work and the application for leave.

M-01833 is a jointly developed document which provides a mutual understanding of the national parties on issues related to CCA's. Question 21 asks, "Is there a limit on the number of hours CCAs may be scheduled on a workday?"

Yes, CCAs are covered by Section 432.32 of the Employee and Labor Relations Manual, which states: Except as designated in labor agreements for bargaining unit employees or in emergency situations as determined by the PMG (or designee),

employees may not be required to work more than 12 hours in 1 service day. In addition, the total hours of daily service, including scheduled work hours, overtime, and mealtime, may not be extended over a period longer than 12 consecutive hours. (Emphasis added)

Question 25 asks, "Can CCAs be required to remain on "stand-by" or remain at home for a call-in on days they are not scheduled to work?" **No.**

MM-01915 addresses the possibility of unknowingly spreading the coronavirus which explains in relevant part:

"... the parties agree that in postal installations with 100 or more work years of employment, to minimize the possibility of exposure to the coronavirus or the possibility of unknowingly spreading the coronavirus to a larger portion of the workforce by working in multiple facilities, to the extent possible all city letter carriers will work in their employing facility for the duration of this agreement."

Furthermore, the Suncoast District put out additional guidance which states in part that "to the extent possible all City Letter Carriers will work in their employing facility for the duration of this agreement". This language includes CCAs.

When it is necessary to send a carrier to another office to work, the following precautions should be followed:

1. The supervisor/manager and steward in the losing office will jointly determine which Carrier will go to the gaining office;
2. If there is concern from either the loaned Carrier or those in the gaining office about the loaned carrier entering the facility, the mail will be placed on the dock or somewhere outside where it can be loaded without entering the building; and
3. If a loaned Carrier does not bring a vehicle from the losing office, the gaining office will have appropriate cleaning supplies for the carrier to sanitize the vehicle which will be used.

If any of the aforementioned has not been followed, request to see your shop steward so they can investigate it and file a grievance.

The application for leave is submitted by completing a PS Form 3971...in duplicate. Both the

requesting employee and the supervisor have responsibilities when using this form. The supervisor is responsible for approving or disapproving application for annual leave by signing Form 3971, a copy of which is given to the CCA employee. If a supervisor does not approve an application for leave, the disapproved block on Form 3971 is checked and the reasons given in writing in the space provided. When a request is disapproved, the reasons for disapproval must be noted.

Our Local Memorandum of Understanding (Item 12) further explains the procedures for the for submission of applications for leave which provides in part:

- (3) All leave applications for "other leave" will be submitted by the Carrier, in duplicate, and handed to the Supervisor who will initial the request at the time of submission. A copy will be given to the Carrier as a receipt.
- (4) Applications for other leave shall not be denied on the speculation that overtime or Sick Leave may be used, if the number permitted to be off had not been reached.
- (5) Leave applications for other leave shall be decided on within three (3) working days to included Saturday.

If any of the above is not carried out by the supervisor, and you have a dispute regarding your leave request, provide a copy of the PS Form 3971 to your shop steward so they can investigate and address the issue.

Protecting yourself and knowing your options

As Letter Carriers, we quickly become skilled at identifying and taking measures to avoid or eliminate hazards on our route each day. Unfortunately, there is a silent hazard we often overlook, perhaps because, on the positive side, it can boost our mental health, warm us on those cold chilly days and make us feel good: the sun. Although we probably obtain plenty of Vitamin D each day, ultraviolet radiation from the sun has damaging and sometimes serious complications.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), skin cancer is the most common form of cancer in the United States; the three most common types are basal cell and squamous cell carcinomas, and melanoma.

Some preventive measures you can take are:

- Always use sunscreen.
- Try to find a shady place when sitting or standing for long periods of time.
- Wear a hat, sunglasses or clothing that provides protection.
- Avoid tanning, even though you think you need that glow.

According to the American Academy of Dermatology, it is estimated that one in five Americans will develop skin cancer in their lifetime. However, when caught early, skin cancer is highly treatable. A good habit to start is a monthly skin check. Not only will this allow you to become familiar with your skin, you will be able to detect changes early.

Common warning signs:

- A new or unusual spot on the skin
- A mole or spot that has a variation or more than one color
- A small lesion that has irregular borders
- Spots that change in size or evolve
- A spot that may be sore or bleed and does not seem to heal after time

These are not the only signs, but they are a good starting point. If you notice anything new, changing or unusual, it is always best to consult a health professional. You can locate a PPO dermatologist by calling 877-220-NALC or visiting the Cigna HealthCare OAP Online Provider Directory on nalchbp.org.



Editor's Corner

*By Editor/Webmaster,
Judy Dorris*

Before I became a Retired Letter Carrier I spent a lot of time in my LLV. The USPS didn't give much thought to protection from the sun in the design of the LLV. Letter Carriers with curbside routes who spend long hours in their LLVs are sitting behind a large windshield that does not have any sun film at all to protect them. There really is no escaping the sun when driving. If the past is any indication, September and October days will have extremely hot temperatures in Florida for carriers in Florida.

Welfare Reports

SAD:

- Eland Wilson, Retiree St. Pete—Passed away.
- Mike Fulop, Retiree St Pete—Passed away.
- John Levitt, Retiree St. Pete—Passed away.
- Perry Lloyd, Retiree St. Pete—Passed away.
- Bob Naja, Retiree Largo—Passed away.
- John Sylvia, Retiree Largo—Passed away.
- Charles Tays, Retiree Largo—Passed away.
- Ken Dittmer, Retiree—Wife Lorenda passed away.
- Alicia Gary, Carrier Pinellas Park—Brother passed away.
- Mike Proper, Retiree Open Air—Mother passed away.

GLAD:

Ken Grasso, Retiree St. Pete—Celebrated his 43rd Anniversary with wife Pauline.

Shiela Bradley, Carrier St. Pete—Great Great Aunt celebrated her 104th birthday.

Tonya Lee, Carrier St. Pete—Daughter received her Bachelor's Degree.

Congratulations to those parents who have children that are heading out to Dorm rooms.



LETTER CARRIERS' DONOR DRIVE

National Partners



Please donate what you can to a food bank in your community.

1. Go to nalc.org/food
2. Select your state
3. Choose a food bank in your area
4. Make a contribution

It's that easy. All collections stay in the local community.

#NALC #stampstohunger #donordrive #lettercarriers #fooddelivering

Branch 1477 will match the first \$1000.00 in donations made at nalc.org/food crediting a food drive in our area(s)

George B. and Annie R. Elliott Scholarship winner:



Hannah Hester
(Daughter of Larry Hester, Dunedin)

I would like to start off by saying thank you to Branch 1477 for awarding me with the George B. and Annie R. Elliott Scholarship. I am so grateful to have this opportunity!

I graduated from Land O' Lakes High School in June of 2020. I was a part of the Early Childhood Development course for all four years of high school. Through the program, I earned my Child Development Associate. I was also able to volunteer at my church's nursery and a few preschools around my area to get experience working with young children outside of my high school class. Throughout my senior year, I had a job working at a preschool where I was an assistant teacher within different classrooms. Lastly, I have been a part of an internship program at my church for the past two summers, where I have been able to build leadership skills within several areas of my life.

In high school, I was able to complete one year towards my AA. In the fall, I will be attending PHSC for one more year to finish off my AA. Then, I plan on transferring to a university in Florida (unknown) to major in Elementary Education. I chose this major because I have always been passionate about teaching and helping children!

Meeting Attendees

The following Officers attended the Executive Board Meeting led by President Joe Henschen on August 6th:

Chris Hubble

Joel Baez

Ken Grasso

Judy Dorris

O.D. Elliott

Clay Hansen

Willie Cochran

Brian Andrews

Tom Phillips

Chuck Cavicchio

Steward's Meeting

The Steward's Training Meetings are being held via Zoom. The following stewards attended the August 20th meeting led by President Henschen:

Chris Hubble

Chris Kotonski

Sam Haddad

Tom Phillips

Harry Nieves

Patrick Jacques

Donny DeMila

Eric Short

Josh LaGrew

Anne Winkelbauer

Denise Clark

Joel Baez

Bill Barki (Venice)

Alicia Gary

Clay Hansen

Zulma Betancourt

Jim Grazioso

Willie Cochran

Shiela Bradley

Brian Andrews

Bert Lewis

Ben Hamilton

Scott Held

Tiffany Naughton

Anthony Roger

BRANCH 1477 PHONE DIRECTORY

UNION HALL: (727) 531-1477

UNION FAX: (727) 531-1478

EMAIL: branch1477@tampabay.rr.com

WEBSITE: branch1477nalc.org

OFFICERS OF BRANCH 1477

PRESIDENT

Joe Henschen. (727) 608-6772

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT

Chris Hubble. (727) 643-8087

VICE PRESIDENT

Zulma Betancourt (813) 597-8363

RECORDING/FINANCIAL SECRETARY

Ken Grasso. (727) 744-2578

TREASURER

Chuck Cavicchio. (727) 798-8506

EDITOR

Judy Dorris. (727) 403-2173

DIRECTOR OF RETIREE AFFAIRS

O.D. Elliott. (727) 608-6027

DIRECTOR OF INSURANCE

Tom Phillips. (727) 458-4127

SERGEANT AT ARMS

Clay Hansen. (727) 744-2456

TRUSTEES:

Willie Cochran. (727) 687-4163

Brian Andrews. (941) 748-5594

Joel Baez. (787) 629-3596

STEWARDS OF BRANCH 1477

St. Petersburg:

Crossroads 9	Ken Domingos	(716) 598-1205
Crossroads 10	Ben Hamilton	(727) 735-5125
Euclid	(Union Hall)	(727) 531-1477
Gateway	Tom Phillips	(727) 458-4127
Gulfwinds 7	Zulma Betancourt	(813) 597-8363
Gulfwinds 15	" "	" " "
Gulfwinds 11	Joel Baez	(787) 629-3596
Madeira Beach	Patrick Jacques	(727) 218-2721
Alt	Greg Welsh	(727) 804-4726
Midtown 5	Shiela Bradley	(813) 335-7783
Midtown 12	Harry Nieves	(787) 564-4993
Alt	Willie Cochran	(727) 687-4163
Northside 2	Tiffany Naughton	(954) 448-3720
Northside 16	Tonya Lee	(813) 270-2918
Open Air	Tony Mells	(727) 385-8579
St. Pete Beach	Cheryl Anderson	(727) 531-1477
St. Pete Main 13	Anthony Roger	(813) 574-9971
Alt	Johnnie Booker	(941) 580-1714
St. Pete Main 14	Alan Pollard	(727) 667-4254
Alt	Dee Grant	(727) 225-9272

Bradenton Bch	Brian Andrews	(941) 748-5594
Dunedin	Chuck Cavicchio	(727) 798-8506
Ellenton	Bert Lewis	(941) 266-2109
Englewood	Josh LaGrew	(763) 232-8954
Alt	Kris Beal	(813) 500-0841
Indian Rocks Bch	Denise Clark	(407) 474-9038
Largo 70/71	Jim Grazioso	(727) 410-6492
Largo 73/78	Eric Short	(727) 251-9846
Palmetto	Sheldon Jones	(941) 580-1058
Pinellas Park 81/82	Alicia Gary	(973) 981-2174
Punta Gorda	Chris Kotonski	(330) 212-1777
(PC Annex)	Sam Haddad	(941) 219-9306
Seminole 72/74	Anne Winkelbauer	(708) 692-6540
Seminole 76/77	Donny DeMilta	(727) 430-4413

Auxiliary 181		
President	Joyce Keller	(727) 541-2194

Congressional Liasons:

District 13: Tom Phillips (727) 458-4127

District 15: Gene Carroll (727) 742-1640

The Twig of the Branch is published monthly by Branch 1477 West Coast Florida Letter Carriers. Articles and opinions printed herein are those of the writer and do not necessarily reflect those of Branch 1477 or the NALC. We invite all members to contribute material for possible publications. The editor reserves the right to edit or reject such material for reasons of good taste, legality, space, or the good of the Branch. Articles should be of general interest, be 350 words or less and be submitted by email to the branch by the 10th of the month.



Branch 1477, N.A.L.C.
5369 Park Boulevard North
Pinellas Park, FL 33781-3421

NON-PROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
ST. PETERSBURG, FL
PERMIT 5489

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

September, 2020

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1 (TBA)	2 (TBA)	3 Executive Board	4	5
6	7	8	9	10 General Membership (Zoom)	11	12
13	14	15	16 (TBA)	17 Steward's Meeting (Zoom)	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			