

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**

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JULY, 2020

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

PARK POINT SAFETY

Between October 1996 and March 2014 four letter carriers were killed, while twelve others were severely injured, with most not able to return to duty. All but one of these accidents occurred while the carriers were working the mail from the rear of their vehicles.

As letter carriers there are many safety challenges, we face each and every day that demand our attention and awareness. One of those is park points.

Park point locations generally are at an intersection of two streets intending for 4 relays. This limits the amount of vehicle movements. Mail volumes, terrain, curb line boxes, traffic, safety, average lot frontage, and eliminating deadheading may cause some variations

In preparing this article I had the privilege to speak with a few carriers willing to share their message.

Dan Hohenstein from Denver, CO Branch 47, was struck by an inattentive teenager. The teenager was driving an SUV at 30 miles per hour when he struck Dan and pinned him between his vehicle and the SUV — crushing his legs. Dan estimates that he lost \$80,000 to \$100,000 over the course of 3 ½ years, because he no longer can work on the overtime desired list. Dan also had another career besides

NEXT BRANCH MEETING: THURSDAY, JULY 9, 2020 AT THE LETTER CARRIER HALL

being a carrier. He was a high school and college hockey referee for 25 years and can no longer referee. Dan needs more surgery which includes a knee replacement. He stated that he was given little sympathy from management. In fact, they have been threatening his job since he has returned to duty.

Dan would like every carrier to know -- even if you think you are parked in a safe spot, do not take anything for granted. Always be aware, use your flashers and limit how much you work from the back of the vehicle.

July 17, 2012 at 2:50 PM Letter Carrier Keith Wagner of Branch 79 in Seattle, was struck after he had just closed the back of his van. An impaired driver hit a car that was parked behind his vehicle. Keith's initial injury was an open fracture in his left leg that affected his tibia and fibula. Weeks and months later, he started having complications in both hips, back, right knee, both shoulders, and a blood clot in his left leg below his knee to his waist that took 4 surgeries to resolve.

Keith would like you to know to be constantly aware of dangers and don't put yourself in harm's way. He hasn't worked since his accident and with 2 more surgeries to go his return is still unknown.

Joel Cabrera of Branch 1100, San Gabriel, CA was struck while working the mail from the rear of his vehicle on May 14, 2013. Joel said, "*I think it must have been 4 days after the accident when I woke up in my hospital bed thinking that I had had a bad dream. But it wasn't a bad dream. My worst fears were realized when I took a look at my legs and saw a mangled jumble of flesh. I was about to embark upon a grueling schedule of orthopedic surgeries and drug induced experiences normally reserved for battlefield soldiers.*"

Joel's message for you is to evaluate the safest park point locations and make the necessary changes for the sake of those letter carriers who have no idea what kind of hardship they could endure.

On March 21, 2014, David Betts from Exeter NH Branch 44 was struck by a distracted driver who was picking up sandwich off the floor of his car. That resulted in a collision that tossed David into a tree squeezing him between it and the vehicles. He ended up with a 7 to 8-inch laceration on the

left side of his head and his scalp was peeled off of his skull. The head injury required daily draining for a week. He had a bruised left foot, a separated shoulder, and blood clots in his left leg. However, the worst part of this whole experience was watching his pregnant wife deal with the trauma to their family. At 6'3" David felt helpless while watching his wife take care of all their responsibilities by herself.

David Betts message is that accidents don't just affect you, but they affect your family, coworkers, community and route you serve.

In wrapping up, ask yourself these questions; **1)** are my park points safe? **2)** Are they exposed to heavy traffic? **3)** Is there a safer place to park? Evaluate your park points with your supervisor's. If that effort does not correct the unsafe parking points, then get the attention of your shop steward immediately.

I would like to give a special thank you to Dan Hohenstein, Keith Wagner, Joel Cabrera, and David Betts for sharing their stories-NOW GET THE PARK POINT MESSAGE OUT!!!!

This Article is a reprint from Branch 709's "The Grapevine" Volume 15 Issue 1, authored by Dean Jones.

I ran across this article and wanted to share the message with each of you.

In 2014 at a NALC Biennial Convention in Philadelphia I attended a Safety and Health Workshop that was attended by these Letter Carriers many of whom were interviewed by the author. The presentation has never really left me.

Each of these Brothers told their stories of how the accidents occurred and the residual injuries they still suffered with for years after the accident: Columbus, OH Branch 78's Doug Poole; Spokane, WA Branch 442's Keith Wagner; Garden Grove, CA Branch 1100's Joel Cabrera and Lydia Ray; Denver, CO Branch 47's Dan Hohenstein; New Hampshire Merged Branch 44's Dave Betts; and Pawtucket, RI Branch 55' Timothy Fournier.

These Carriers had a bond that reached out beyond themselves. When a Park Point accident occurs anywhere in the country, these men reach out to support the injured worker for

support in the long recovery.

I urge you to point your local safety captains and committees in the direction of Park Point Safety and to keep these Carriers in your thoughts.



Hubble's Troubles

*By Executive Vice President,
Chris Hubble*

Heat is not an excuse for performance issues...

Do you agree with the above statement? Yeah, me neither. For the last week, we've had heat indexes above 100 degrees. If you're in an LLV, that number could be well above that. With that said, carriers are encouraged to take additional breaks in designated climate-controlled or shaded areas when necessary to mitigate the impact of excessive heat.

Additionally, carriers returning from an absence or illness may be especially vulnerable to the effects of excessive heat and are especially encouraged to take necessary breaks. Carriers taking an extra break should use their MDD to send a text message to their supervisor at the beginning of the break (indicating the break location) and another text message at the conclusion of the break.

Don't be pressured and/or intimidated in sacrificing your safety. If you feel that the heat is getting to you, reach out before it's too late.

Here are key pieces of advice from the NALC safety and Health:

- Hydrate before, during and after work. Prevention is important, so make sure to maintain good hydration by drinking at least 8 ounces of water every 20 minutes.
- Utilize shade to stay cool. When possible, use shaded areas to stay out of direct sunlight.
- Know the signs of heat stress. You should understand what heat stress is, and how it can affect your health and safety. Here are some things to look out for:

- Hot, dry skin or profuse sweating
- Headache
- Confusion or dizziness
- Nausea
- Muscle cramps
- Weakness or fatigue
- Rash

Finally, it's important to notify your supervisor or call 911 if you're experiencing signs of heat-related illnesses.

<https://www.nalc.org/news/nalc-updates/do-not-put-yourself-in-danger-from-excessive-heat-and-sun>

Welfare Reports

SAD:

- **Ed Richards, Retiree St. Pete—Passed Away**
- **Wayne O'Riley, Carrier Crossroads—Grandfather Passed away.**
- **John Levitt, Retiree St. Pete—Passed away.**

GLAD:

- **Nicole Olmstead and Mike Dudley, Carriers St. Pete Main—Got married!**
- **Devonne Grant, Carrier St. Pete Main—Son graduated from Boca Ciega High School with honors.**



Vice President

By Zulma Betancourt

Daily Logs and Stationary Events

Hello all!

It's come to our attention that many Carriers have had questions about management's daily logs and "stationary events" lunch breaks for Letter Carriers and CCA's. These lunch breaks are to be 30 minutes within an 8-hour workday along with two paid 10-minute breaks which must be separate from each other. Lunch and day breaks are not to be combined and will not "even out" at the end of the day. The 30-minute lunch break is automatically deducted from your paycheck after you have worked approximately 6.01 hours during your 8-hour workday so you must be sure to take your lunch break at a good time. Be sure to familiarize yourself with the authorized lunch locations for each of your routes. You can check out what those lunch locations are by referencing to the Form 1564-A in the route book, which shows times for authorized lunch breaks, locations for authorized lunch stops and where carriers are able to leave their routes for lunch.

"Stationary events" are documented electronically so remember to think from one point to the next during the workday. This includes additional wash up times that need to be accounted for as we continue to ensure our safety during the COVID-19 epidemic. Try to remember not to combine any of your other breaks with your wash up times except for wash ups during lunch times within reason.

There may be times in which a scanner can have a low battery or malfunction which can cause problems in the daily logs. Remember - the eye in the sky doesn't substitute for management of personal observations. ^{1 2}

In addition to the aforementioned breaks, all letter carriers are entitled to reasonable comfort stops during their day. Most reasonable comfort stops will not be deducted from the carrier's actual time as long as they are within reason and are not habitual. If there is a discrepancy in the "stationary events" and any breaks you have taken and questions arise from it, speak to the steward. You can also call Union Hall for assistance with any miscommunications as well.

Stay Safe Everyone!

1. Letter Carrier's Daily Log <https://www.nalc.org/workplace-issues/city-delivery/body/Letter->
2. Lunch and breaks 242.341, M-00834 Pre-arb, <https://www.nalc.org/workplace-issues/resources/resourceguide/Letter-Carrier-Resource-Guide>.



Editor's Corner

By Editor/Webmaster,

Judy Dorris

Sanctity of the Mail...

The Postal Service requires its employees to adhere to very high standards of integrity and fidelity. These standards are set for them in the Code of Ethical Conduct, which you can obtain from your supervisor.

Foremost among these standards is the requirement that employees preserve the sanctity of the mail. Mail is private property entrusted to the letter carrier for safe passage and delivery to its intended recipient. Any compromise of the mails or other violations of these standards may lead to discipline or removal from the Postal Service. In addition, there are federal statutes pertaining to willful and knowing delay, obstruction, or theft of any mail.

Definitions of sanctity include: holiness, saintliness, godliness, a sacred thing; ultimate importance and inviolability.

When you were hired you signed PS Form 8139, *Your Role in Protecting the Security of the United States Mail*. This form is your pledge to uphold public trust and protect the security of the mail. This document, along with many others, is retained in your official personnel file for your entire career. (You can access your Personnel file via LiteBlue) Be mindful of this pledge when performing your letter carrier duties.

New letter carriers often work under great time pressures because of unfamiliarity with some work assignments. As a result, some are tempted to seek shortcuts that are not proper. Do not fall into this trap – you must take extreme care not to be

involved in any action or practice involving the mistreatment of the mail. As if that wasn't enough, now you must be even more vigilant about your safety due to COVID-19. Carelessness can get you into serious trouble. If you need extra time to complete a work assignment, inform your supervisor by submitting PS Form 3996, *Carrier-Auxiliary Control* and ask for appropriate instructions.

If you always treat the mail as if it were your own, or belonged to a family member or friend, you will never fail to provide **sanctity of the mail**.

Letter Carrier Resource Guide



Retiree Update

*By Director of Retiree Affairs,
O.D. Elliott*

It seems that with any disaster facing our nation there are people who use it to try and con our citizens out of their money. Presently, with the problems and fears many Americans, especially retirees, have dealing with the COVID pandemic, there has been a spike in predators trying to gain access to your social security. For that reason, this article is a reprint, in part, of a previous article.

We're all familiar with Book of the month clubs, beer of the month clubs, etc. Well, as retirees, we need to be aware of scams of the month. Regularly, there are new scams targeting retirees. One of the newest is a telephone scam, scaring retirees by taking advantage of our Social Security system's role as a reliable foundation of economic security for all of us. These scammers call and ask people to "reactivate" their Social Security numbers by buying gift cards and transferring the codes to the scammers.

So here are the facts:

- **Scammers can fake out your caller ID.** Just because your phone says that the Social Security Administration is calling you doesn't mean that they are.
- **Government employees will not threaten to take away benefits** or ask for money or personal information to protect your Social Security card, number or benefits.

- **Your Social Security number cannot be suspended.** It's the only one you have, for good and for ill.
- **No one from the Social Security Administration will call you and ask you to buy gift cards.**
- **The Social Security Administration will only communicate with you by mail, not pre-recorded telephone calls.**
- **If a caller asks for your Social Security number, bank account number, or credit card information, hang up immediately.**

These scams can seem simple, but they can have devastating consequences for anyone falling for them.

Auxiliary 181 News

By Dottie Tutt-Hutchinson

500 masks for Hospice health care workers! That's how many Sandy Hart made these past 3 months. And she's still making more. Bless her heart; that's a lot of sewing! What a contribution to ensure their safety during the corona virus pandemic. We are so proud to call her one of our own.

Joyce Keller called a meeting on June 3rd for our auxiliary to catch up on business, past and future. The quarantine had been lifted and for some of us this was our first venture (besides the necessary) outside our homes. Ever the great hostess, she prepared her famous chicken salad sandwiches and plenty of side dishes for us.

We're going to try to have our traditional lunch at Frida's on July 8th, at noon and the best Ice Cream Social in Joyce's home on August 30th, at 2:00. I'll call everyone around July 1st to see if you can come to Frida's.

We shared how the quarantine affected us and our families. With so many people home from work, they had the chance to clear out their closets. And with the Covid 15 (euphemism for gaining weight while staying home) Sue Elliott found herself busy altering their clothes. Joyce couldn't visit the

stations for Arslan Uniforms, so she phoned Carriers to make sure they received their allowances. Sandy's family practiced safe distancing while celebrating Mother's Day and a Memorial Day picnic with her. Some of us enjoyed gardening, biking, and just being outdoors. Our biggest complaint was the sheer boredom of watching tv for hours and not doing our favorite pastimes. Then we agreed that we were very lucky.

We sympathize with Lorie who was exposed to a nurse with the virus and is still waiting to find out if she caught it, Pat O'Donnell was hospitalized with a bleeding ulcer, and Sally Madden has had to rely on a wheelchair lately. We hope everything turns out the best for them.

Happy July birthdays to Alan Hutchinson (5), Rudy Betancourt (16), Diana Keller (21), and Shirley Moran (25). Happy anniversary to Shirley and Bill Moran on July 5.

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Meeting Attendees

Due to the change in restrictions for group size gatherings, the Executive Board was able to hold their June 4th meeting at the Hall for the first time since March. Appropriate social distancing was followed. The following Officers attended the meeting led by President Joe Henschen:

- | | |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| Chris Hubble | Clay Hansen |
| Zulma Betancourt | Willie Cochran |
| Ken Grazzo | Brian Andrews |
| Judy Dorris | Joel Baez |
| O.D. Elliott | |

Steward's Meeting

The Steward's Training Meetings are being held via Zoom. The following stewards attended the June 18th meeting led by President Henschen:

- | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| Chris Hubble | Alicia Gary |
| Chris Kotonski | Tonya Lee |
| Anne Winkelbauer | Zulma Betancourt |
| O. D. Elliott | Jim Grazioso |
| Harry Nieves | Willie Cochran |
| Patrick Jacques | Shiela Bradley |
| Donny DeMilta | Brian Andrews |
| Eric Short | Bert Lewis |
| Denise Clark | Ben Hamilton |
| Wanda Clark | Sheldon Jones |
| A.J. Pollard | Mike Dudley |
| Tiffany Naughton | Anthony Roger |

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Crossroads 10	Ben Hamilton	(727) 735-5125
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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
Alt	Suzette Brown	(727) 580-1084
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	Jonnie 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
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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.



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July, 2020

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 (TBA)	2 Executive Board	3	4 Independence Day Holiday
5	6	7 (TBA)	8	9 General Membership (TBA)	10	11
12	13	14	15 (TBA)	16 Steward's Meeting (TBA)	17	18
19	20	21	22	23 South Branch Meeting (TBA)	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	