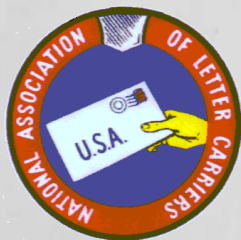


# The Twig of the Branch



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 619

VOICE OF BRANCH 1477

JULY, 2021

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## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

*By President Joe Henschen*

*Twitter @ JaHe1*

**Newton's Third Law States There is identical and reverse reaction for every action.**

When two bodies interact, they *apply force on each other that are equal in magnitude and opposite in direction.* – Isaac Newton

While Newton's laws of motion may seem obvious to us today, centuries ago they were considered revolutionary. The three laws of motion help us understand how objects behave when they are standing still, when moving and when forces act upon them.

Why does it have to be so relevant to interactions on the workroom floor.

It's commonly believed that an eye for an eye is the best policy—stand your ground, hold your own, fight back. Certainly, assertiveness is an admirable

trait because being too passive might make you a doormat that others will walk all over. Being assertive or speaking your opinion does not have to equate being mean; there are ways to stand up for yourself while remaining polite, compassionate, and thoughtful. Sometimes the best way to give someone what they deserve is to give them the exact opposite: fight all your battles with kindness.

Think for a minute about a Postmaster or Manager that barks orders at his or her supervisors. The supervisor may take on the persona of the demeanor of that person of authority.

Certainly, the supervisor does not like to be "called out" on a telecon or in the Manager's office anymore than

**NEXT BRANCH MEETING HELD VIA ZOOM: THURSDAY, JULY 8, 2021**

a Carrier wants to deal with an aggressive supervisor in front of a workroom floor full of his/her peers.

That's the turn it takes most every time. When a supervisor is treated poorly it makes it OK to treat an employee the same way. When an employee is faced with an abusive supervisor it makes it OK to send the action in the direction of Newton's 3rd law and apply force equally in magnitude and opposite in direction.

It doesn't have to be this way. Who should break the trend and maybe dial back the magnitude of the abuse and exude some kindness?

A large number of Letter Carriers are forced to work in an environment that is less than desirable because a supervisor may direct verbal abuse at an employee and the employee gives it right back.

It's my experience that an abusive Manager feels empowered for their actions due to promotions and wage increases. In turn, supervisors feel they need to act the same to garner the same advancement.

The chance for abuse to stop at the necessary higher level is slim. Supervisors either Full Time or in Relief should recall how they were treated while carrying mail. Usually that's a driving force for going into management – to do better. Some, even one time Steward(s) complained when treated unkind sometime in their career.

Kindness, though typically considered to be a weakness, is actually a strength. It is much more challenging to hold your tongue and speak positively toward others, especially those who have wronged or mistreated you. Being kind is more challenging and more honorable.<sup>1</sup>

This is not an idea that is directed at the craft employees. Carriers that are treated with a little respect have always returned the kindness and trust with the same. It falls to supervision to understand. Instructions given even by a higher-ranking Supervisor/Manager with rancor does not have to be communicated to the Craft the same way.

Compassionate dialogue begets a willingness to return the empathy.

It's not easy all the time. It's never easy on the first try, but over time it will improve your own mood, too, if you remember that instead of tearing someone down to be on your level, you've lifted the two of you up with kind words or gestures.

It may help your corner of the workroom floor; it may be contagious.

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<sup>1</sup> "How to Say What you mean without Being Mean"  
WikiHow

## Letter Carrier Resource Guide

This all-in-one guide was created for all letter carriers to obtain important information pertaining to every stage of their career. The guide includes updated rights and benefits, and relevant changes to these rights and benefits, as letter carriers progress from city carrier assistant to career status. The guide includes chapters on NALC structure, health benefits, pay, uniforms, workroom floor issues, community service, legislation, and much more.

### PS Form 3996, Carrier-Auxiliary Control.

PS Form 3996, Carrier-Auxiliary Control is the form you use to request overtime or auxiliary assistance on your daily assignment. You should always fill out PS Form 3996 when you believe the route you were assigned to carry has more work than you can complete within eight hours, or you believe you cannot complete all of the work assigned to you for the day within your scheduled time. You will also receive this form to complete and track the amount of time you spend providing assistance or work on part of another route.

You are required to inform management when you believe you have more than eight hours work or cannot complete what you have been assigned within your normal schedule for the day. Below are the steps to take to inform management and some advice in handling the situation.

**1. Verbally inform your manager when you believe you can't complete your assignment in 8 hours.** This language requires every letter carrier to tell the manager when you cannot carry all the mail distributed to your case in 8 hours or within your normal schedule. Management is required to tell you what they want you to do. Follow the manager's instructions. If you still believe you will not be able to finish your route in 8 hours, proceed to step 2 and request a PS Form 3996. Be prepared to explain why you cannot complete the assignment in 8 hours.

This may require a rough cull of your parcels or a riffle of your DPS Mail to determine where the mail volume is on your route on any given day. 2,500

pieces of DPS heavily weighted in Centralized Delivery sections of your route usually takes longer than on mounted or walking deliveries.

**2. Request PS Form 3996.** Explain that the instruction you were given by your supervisor does not change the fact that you cannot complete your assignment in 8 hours and request a PS Form 3996. No matter what your manager says to you, say the words “I am requesting a 3996” and explain the reason(s) for your request.

**3. Fill out the form completely.** Complete instructions on how to properly fill out PS Form 3996 can be found on the back of the form itself.

**4. Keep your cool.** Don’t lose your cool. This whole exercise is sometimes very insulting, but you will do nothing to help yourself by getting excited or becoming angry and possibly losing your temper. If your manager denies your request for overtime or assistance, state to him or her that you will do your best. Then politely ask what they want you to do in the event that all the mail isn’t delivered by the time they want you back. Often, their answer will be something like, “I just told you what I want you to do” or “Deliver all the mail and be back in 8 hours.” Your manager has just put the ball back in your court and placed you in a situation where you can’t honor his or her instructions.

**5. Don’t argue.** There’s no sense in arguing with your manager at this point. It will not help your cause to stand there and argue as your manager has already made up his or her mind. The only thing you will accomplish by arguing with your manager at this point is to become frustrated and angry. The smartest thing you can do at this point is to just say “OK, I’ll do my best” and ask for a copy of your PS Form 3996 Section 122.33 of Handbook M-39 requires managers to provide you with a copy if you request it.

Finish your office work and go to the street. Do the best that you can. Take your breaks where you are supposed to. Take your lunch when and where you listed it on the PS Form 3996 you filled out.

**6. Don’t make any decisions.** Letter carriers get paid to deliver mail; Managers get paid to make decisions. This is the point of the confrontation where many letter carriers make a mistake by forgetting about how our current system works.

The best way to handle this situation is to call your supervisor, per local instructions. If you have no

local instructions, try calling at least an hour and a half to two hours before the time you are scheduled (approved on PS Form 3996) to be back.

Let him or her know where you are and how long you think it will take you to finish. Ask your supervisor whether he or she wants you to bring the mail back or finish the route. If your supervisor isn’t available, ask for the station manager or postmaster and talk to him or her about it. **Make a note of who you spoke to, what time it was, and what your instructions are.** If no manager is there, leave a message with the person who answers the phone and **be sure you know who you are talking to.**

**Don’t ever return mail to the office and leave it** without getting instructions on what to do with the mail from a manager! Make a note of what instructions you were given and what time it was.

### **PS Form 1571, Undelivered Mail Report**

PS Form 1571, Undelivered Mail Report is the form that letter carriers use to record undelivered or curtailed mail. You will use PS Form 1571 when mail assigned to your route is not delivered **for any reason.** It could be mail your manager or supervisor instructed you to leave in the office or mail you were unable to deliver on the street. If you did not deliver the mail, then the reason, amount, and type must be recorded on this form.

List the undelivered mail on the form PS 1571 and in the remarks (reason for non-delivery) list the reason. Dog Interference may be a reason to return mail without delivery. More often than not, when you call and get instructions to “Cut the Retail Me Not”, “**per management instruction**” should be entered.

The Letter Carrier Resource Guide is available online at [NALC.org](http://NALC.org). To order a printed version of the Letter Carrier Resource Guide, log on to the Members Only section of the NALC website, click the checkbox below the image of the guide and a copy will be mailed to your NALC address of record.

The Resource Guide can also be viewed on the [Branch1477.org](http://Branch1477.org) website under Links.



## Hubble's Troubles

By Executive Vice President,  
Chris Hubble

### ***Back in the saddle...***

After two years working at the Hall as a full-time officer, I am now back on my bicycle route at the "Historic" Open Air Post Office in downtown St. Petersburg delivering mail again. Although I was eager to see how management would treat me as a branch union officer who was fulltime and now back to craft, they welcomed me back and regarded me just as they do all the other carriers at Open Air.

For instance, my first week back I worked more overtime in one week than I have in many years as a non-odl carrier. I was even mandated on my non-scheduled day! I got to experience firsthand the reason why the branch has processed so many grievances in just the past two years, as well as the frustration of so many carriers working in today's work environment,

Working fulltime at the hall, we appealed seven hundred and fifty-nine (759) Formal A grievances my first year. That equates to over 14 a week. To date, we have appealed five hundred and fifty (550) Formal A grievances. That is 21 Formal A grievances a week. We are well ahead of last year's grievance work. The stewards are working as hard as they can to police the workroom floor and enforcement of the National Contract, the number of grievances reflects that. Many of those grievances were overtime violations. We have been successful with many of said grievances. Good, bad, or indifferent, there have been times in which management mandated properly.

With the pandemic and numerous memos excusing employees from work, it was not uncommon to arrive at work and have seven (7) or more routes open resulting in mandating and/or forced to carry your own overtime.

As a result of the continued effects of the COVID-pandemic, five previous Memorandums of Understanding (M-01910, M-01913, M-01915, M-01916, and M-01941) agreed upon by NALC and USPS have been extended through August 6, 2021. Although leave taken under the FFCRA may not be used as the basis for disciplinary or corrective

action. Other leave taken for COVID-19-related reasons between Feb. 29 and May 17 also may not be cited in discipline for failing to maintain an assigned schedule under ELM 511.43.

There have been many changes in the time I was away, not only downtown, but also the increase of parcels and SPR volumes. Not to mention the weight I gained sitting in front of a computer handling grievances. Other changes for me were the "out for delivery" and the "load feature" scan(s) on the MDD. Do not get me wrong, I think it is good thing for the USPS to try and catchup with other delivery services to better serve our customers.

With that said, the time it takes to do those other "additional" office and/or street functions were not built into the route(s). It took me fifteen additional minutes just to pull SPR's out of the hamper and scan them before I cased them.

M-41 Section 222 provides:

*e. Casing Letters in the Vertical Flat Case: Residual mail is cased in the same case with the vertically cased flats. Letters and flats are withdrawn and strapped out together in a single bundle. The DPS letter mail is carried separately as a second bundle. Note: In both DPS methods (d and e), carriers serving foot or park and loop deliveries may carry up to three bundles of mail. Carriers serving curblin, central, or dismount deliveries are not restricted to a specific number of bundles of mail.*

M-41 Section 222.52 also provides in pertinent part:

*Sort stiff cardboard articles, X-ray pictures, etc., and large newspapers and magazines on ledge, usually by relays on foot routes, and then route them in sequence of delivery. A letter may be reversed in the letter separation for a customer receiving a parcel or odd-sized article which cannot be routed in the letter separations. This will serve as a reminder when on the route that there is a large or odd-sized piece for customer.*

As stated above, the scanning and casing of SPR's is an "office function". Furthermore, there is the scanning of parcels prior to loading the vehicle. As well as "pre-paid acceptance" scan(s). These are both added street allied time.

The M-41 Section 322.31 explains:

*Load parcel post directly into the vehicle from*

*hampers or sacks. Normally separate the parcels in delivery sequence. Make a mental note of the first parcel delivery point. When this parcel has been delivered, make mental note of the next, and so on, until all parcels have been delivered. For any parcel that does not fit into the customer's mailbox or parcel locker (when available), an attempt to deliver must be made at the customer's door. If no one is available to receive the parcel, follow the procedures in 322.311 and 322.312.*

In addition to using the scanner, there was the having to wait for the supervisor to review the delivery of said parcels and SPRs. *"Did you deliver this parcel?"* Of course, I am a professional letter carrier. The supervisor would then reply, *"You have to scan this one"*. I already did, I am not falsifying information, but if you are instructing me to, I would like to speak to my steward. Just be professional and respectful if, or should I say when you find yourself in the same scenario. I recall issues in the past in which the scans had not registered until later. Speaking of the accuracy, how about the *"You are 3,000 feet from your delivery, do you want to proceed...yes or no?"* I am at the front door, is this a trick question....

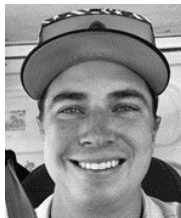
The new scanners are super-fast and touchy, too. Have you had the MDD go hay wire on you yet? It logged out on me during scanning a SPR for delivery. I had to log back in with no idea if I had lost all the prior scans.

When I began my career as a letter carrier 28 years ago as a PTF working sixty hours a week, I was in the office casing for three hours or more and only on the street for five hours...six hours if you had a piece. The best part was that we were punching out by 4:30! Today's carriers are in the office under 2 hours with a six and a half to seven-hour street time. Add a piece to that and carriers are on the street for eight hours and punching out hopefully by 7.00 PM. Often, it is 8.00 PM or later!

When speaking with prior CCAs I worked with and whom are now PTFs, they have shared with me the changes in just the last two years have been difficult. They would willingly look up carriers to help on their routes two years ago. Now, it is every carrier for themselves just trying to get off by 7.00 PM! Now I find myself in the same situation.

That said, I am proud to be back working side by side with my brothers and sisters in a common

cause. Oh yeah, and halfway to losing that weight I gained working at the hall in only two weeks!



## Sergeant at Arms

**Clay Hansen**

Summer heat is here, and for the new CCAs that have come through academy, be sure to be prepared for your first summer as a carrier.

Last year my wife purchased a fancy thermal scanner thermometer (thanks covid) that measures room temperature. I decided to bring it in to work one day just to see how hot my LLV really gets. I waited until midday and took a reading aimed directly at my steering wheel and the thermometer read 124 degrees, not taking account for the humidity making it feel even worse.

You'll see plenty of carriers doing different things throughout the day to stay cool, and you'll slowly figure out what works best for you. My recommendation is to wear a moisture wicking undershirt, I prefer long sleeve dri fit shirts because it also keeps the sun off your arms. Also freeze a bottle of water or two that you can pour on your head or a cooling towel throughout the day after a park and loop or after a large cluster box. Last but not least HYDRATE. I've never drank so much water in my life until I became a carrier, I also have a zero sugar Powerade/Gatorade as well to give a little flavor. Please be careful and know the signs of heat illness/stress and let someone know if you are showing symptoms as soon as possible. As always stay safe and email me with any concerns regarding the Carrier Academy.

[Claybranch1477@gmail.com](mailto:Claybranch1477@gmail.com)



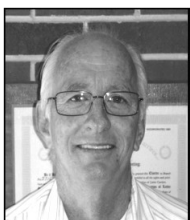
## Retiree Update

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

In my May article, I wrote about the problems of one of our lady carriers with a terminal disease seeking a disability retirement and the problems she encountered with HR services and OPM. Although saddened that it took so long to get her case resolved, I am pleased that that matter has now been resolved. Thanks to her Congressional Representative, my Representative, Charlie Crist, and the efforts of Nina in the NALC's Retirement Dept., her disability retirement has been approved.

Now that the NALC and USPS have a new National Agreement, it seems that many more carriers who are eligible are applying for retirement, which makes sense because they will get the retroactive raises figured into their annuities.

Recently, I've had a few enquiries about restarting the monthly Retirees' Breakfasts. With Covid 19 seeming to be on the wane and day to day activities beginning to take on a more normal appearance, I think it might be a good idea. At present, I'm considering attempting to restart them in August. First, I want to check with the restaurants we used for Largo, Pinellas Park and St. Petersburg to see if they would be willing to accommodate us as before. If so, I will have a notice posted on our website and in the Twig.



## Legislative Update

*By Gene Carroll, CDL District 15*

On May 19, 2021, Senate Committee Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs (HSGAC) Chairman Gary Peters (D-MI) and Ranking Member Rob Portman (R-OH) introduced the bipartisan Postal Service Reform Act of 2021 (S. 1720), a bill that aims to provide financial and operational stability to the Postal Service. The bill mirrors H.R. 3076, which was introduced by House Committee on Oversight and Reform Chairwoman Carolyn Maloney (D-NY) and Ranking Member James Comer (R-KY) and advanced out of committee last

week. With the makeup of the Senate being evenly split 50-50 and legislation needing 60 votes to pass, having 10 original Republican cosponsors is an important accomplishment. If all remaining Democrats support this important legislation, this bill could be signed into law.

Just like the House bill, S. 1720 would repeal the mandate that the Postal Service pre-fund decades' worth of health benefits for its future retirees, which was enacted through the Postal Accountability and Enhancement Act (PAEA) of 2006, embracing the bipartisan USPS Fairness Act (H.R. 695 and S. 145). In addition, the legislation maximizes participation in Medicare once active postal employees (as of January 1, 2023) retire and reach age 65. Annuity holders as of January 1, 2023 will be given the choice of whether to remain in the existing FEHBP system or participate in the postal version of the program that requires enrollment in Medicare Parts A and B – and retirees over the age of 65 who have chosen not to enroll in Medicare Part B will be given a one-time opportunity to do so with no late-enrollment penalty. Annuity holders who elect to remain in the existing FEHBP will not be required to enroll in Medicare. NALC also successfully lobbied to ensure exceptions to the requirement to enroll in Medicare for those covered under other insurance arrangements (such as the VA) and for those who live in a place where there are not Medicare-participating providers. S. 1720 also includes language that requires the Postal Service to maintain "integrated" delivery of both mail and packages six days a week. If this bill becomes law, the six-day requirement would be a statutory mandate. Since 1983, the policy mandate to deliver mail six days a week has had to be renewed annually in the appropriations process. This bill would eliminate the need for the annual fight to maintain this mandate.

Last month, the Postal Service Reform Act of 2021 ([H.R. 3076/S. 1720](#)) was introduced in the House of Representatives and in the Senate. NALC strongly supports these bills, the first major postal reform legislation in 15 years, because the bills address two of NALC's top priorities:

- The repeal of the mandate that the Postal Service pre-fund decades' worth of health benefits for its future retirees.
- A reform of the Federal Employees Health Benefit Program (FEHBP) to maximize participation in Medicare when active postal employees (as of January 1, 2023) retire and reach age 65.

Many members may have questions about the FEHBP and Medicare provisions included in these bills. Unfortunately, misinformation about them is common. Let us start with the proposed changes in FEHBP.

### **FEHBP reform**

Under the legislation, postal employees and annuitants would participate in a restructured FEHBP program. All the major plans now available to participants – Blue Cross Blue Shield, the NALC HBP, Kaiser, etc. – would continue to be offered to postal employees and retirees as a postal-only version of their FEHBP plans. But their premiums would be significantly reduced because postal participants would be placed in a separate risk pool with new rules regarding Medicare enrollment.

The new legislation would not change a current postal annuitant's right to decide whether they want to enroll in Medicare. Although 90 percent of current postal annuitants are automatically enrolled in Medicare Part A (hospital services) and nearly 80 percent of them voluntarily enroll in Medicare Part B (medical services), no current annuitant would be required to enroll in either Medicare Part A or Part B. All active employees under the age of 64 (as of January 1, 2023) would be automatically placed in the postal version of the health plan they choose, and if retired upon reaching Medicare age, they would be enrolled in Medicare (absent the exceptions discussed below).

Active postal employees (as of January 1, 2023) who are 64 and older AND all current postal annuitants as of that date would be given the choice of whether to join the postal-only version of FEHBP plans (integrated with Medicare) or remain in the non-postal version of such plans, depending on whether they want to enroll in Medicare Part B, which currently carries a premium of \$148.50 per month. The reason most annuitants already choose to enroll in Medicare Parts A & B when they turn 65 is because enrolling virtually eliminates any out-of-pocket costs such as deductibles and co-payments. However, under the proposed law, current annuitants (as of January 1, 2023) would decide whether to enroll. Those who do not want to enroll in Medicare would remain in the non-postal version of their FEHBP health plan – and the Postal Service would continue to pay the government's share of their premiums.

The postal-only plans in FEHBP will be regulated and operated in the same way current FEHBP plans are regulated and operated today. There will be an

annual Open Season that will allow participants to choose among a range of plans with separate rates for postal and non-postal participants.

### **Special protections**

NALC lobbied aggressively for the inclusion of special exceptions that are contained in the legislation. Future postal annuitants who do not need Medicare because of coverage by the Veterans Administration or by another non-FEHBP program or who cannot use Medicare because they live in a place (for example, overseas) without Medicare providers would be allowed to enroll in the non-postal version of their FEHBP plan. We also worked to include a provision to give current annuitants who did not enroll in Medicare Part B at age 65, but who now wish to do so, a one-time opportunity to enroll in Part B without the late enrollment penalty that currently applies. That penalty, which raises Part B premiums by 10% for each year after age 65 that a retiree delays enrollment, is very expensive.

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## **Minutes of June 10, 2021 Membership Meeting**



***Recording/Financial  
Secretary***  
***Ken Grasso***

**Meeting called to order** at 7:00 P.M. by President Joe Henschen.

### **Ground Rules were read for Zoom**

If you have questions, please instant messenger or chat directly with Chris. Or hang on, and I'll give you an opportunity to ask those questions in a little bit.

**Invocation** by: O.D. Elliott.

**Pledge of Allegiance:** led by President Joe Henschen.

Motion to accept minutes as printed in the Twig of the Branch. Motion to accept by O.D. Elliott, Seconded by Jim Grazioso.

**Branch by the numbers:** Members 763 with 728 paying dues. We have 35 members recorded as No

Deductions of those 5 are on Military, 4 paying directly to the Branch, 4 are awaiting OWCP, and we have 14 on LWOP. Retirees are 543, with 85 being Gold Card Members for a total of 1306 Members.

Joe recognized Kelly Bins from Absolute Quality Interpreting Services.

**Treasurer:** Chuck Cavicchio: Excused. Joe read the report. Motion to accept the report by Chris Hubble, Seconded by Willie Cochran.

**Director of Retiree Affairs:** O.D. Elliott – 9 more Carriers seeking Retirement Counseling.

**Director of Insurance:** Tom Phillips—Discussed new COVID Guidelines.

**Trustee Report:** Brian Andrews—April's Books were audited, and all were in order. Will be meeting in the next week or so to do May's books.

**Political Liaison District 13:** Tom Phillips—2 new Postal Bills being introduced.

**Editor/Webmaster:** Judy Dorris—No Report.

**Vice President:** Zulma Betancourt—No Report.

**Executive Vice President:** Chris Hubble—Personal Privilege, I went back to Craft after being full time in the office for a 2 years. Also, grievances are on a rise from the same time in 2020.

## **Welfare Reports:**

### **Sad Report:**

- Zulma Betancourt, Vice President—Mother passed away. (Rudy's Mother-in-Law)
- Bob Kaufman, Retiree St. Pete—Passed away.
- Ingrid Heise, Carrier Punta Gorda—Had an LLV accident.
- Brenda Stamper, Retiree Clerk/Union Member Pinellas Park—Husband passed away.
- Alicia Gary, Steward Pinellas Park—Had shoulder surgery.
- Ken Grasso, Branch Secretary—Wife is still ill and in the hospital.
- Norm White, Retiree St. Pete Open Air Station—

Son passed away.

- Karen Banks, Carrier Punta Gorda—Mother is seriously ill.

### **Glad Report:**

Mike Novak, Port Charlotte Annex—Recently retired.

**Unfinished Business:** Motion to have the Air Condition replaced by Metro Air, as recommended by the Executive Board. Motion to accept the bid by Clay Hansen, Seconded by Sheila Bradley. Motion passed.

**President's Report:** Joe Henschen

COVID – 19 Suncoast Numbers: 1778 total confirmed cases.

I've been on several telecons with the Region and National officers to discuss some items that are happening since our contract was ratified. I have a lot of updated information for you.

**Fred Rolando, NALC President** spoke at great length on the following:

Back Pay scheduled for mid to end of July.

On June 19, the Pay Scale will change to eliminate Step CC from the CCA Schedule Table 3. Effectively giving the CCAs a .50 per hour raise.

Some glitches in the contract roll-out: Converted CCA Terminal Leave was not paid out timely in Pay Period 10. The USPS cites the number of conversions as the reason. The Terminal Leave Pay-outs are scheduled for PP12.

The 90 Day Exclusion Period that disallowed newly converted Carriers from taking leave was eliminated from the contract but was incorrectly implemented for those CCAs that were promoted after March when the contract was ratified, but before May 8<sup>th</sup>. Those that converted on May 8<sup>th</sup> have no issues.

Management fumbled the pay charts and overtime rates and night differential for PTFs who have reached the AA Steps in Table 2. They relied on the old PTF to FTR conversion methodology. So, all those PTFs in AA will be receiving back pay for overtime worked.

Fred updated us on some of the Task Forces that are currently working.



City Delivery Task Force: After the 2016-2019 Contract Management stepped away from the Dignity and Respect in the Workplace Task Force and moved more toward treating everyone horribly, instead of trying to improve the working environment. With new leadership they have begun to discuss changes for Workplace Environment Improvement.

Staffing and Scheduling Task Force: This group is looking at and Route Count and Inspections, Transportation and Scheduling to try and stabilize our begin tour times a little earlier than they currently are all over the country.

Mentoring Task Force: The USPS and NALC are working on a program to better serve newly hired employees.

American Rescue Plan: Which includes EFEL and the 600 hours of paid sick leave. Management is trying to scare employees from taking this leave.

OWCP: The American Rescue Plan also included some language that if a Federal Worker contracts COVID-19 your claim will be accepted. We jumped on this for a couple of Carriers early after the American Rescue Plan was enacted, and we ran into some communication issues with OWCP.

Postal Reform: **USPS Fairness Act**: All parties are onboard with current legislation in the House and Senate. Couple of key points in the legislation is to repeal the prefund Healthcare mandate for 75 years in advance, and to make 6 day delivery the law.

Medicare Integration is also part of the USPS Fairness Act.

Part A is Hospitalization and free to individuals 65 years and older.

Part B is Medical Insurance and generally pays 80% of your approved costs and you have to pay 20% or have another Insurance Policy that will pay the 20%.

Most people pay a monthly premium, in 2021 this cost was \$148.50 for Medicare Part B.

Your Insurance Company is your Secondary payer.

If you apply late for Part B after age 65, you incur a 10% penalty per year to enroll.

The bills that are before Congress and the Senate

now will waive the 10% penalty. All the major Federal Employee Health Benefit Insurance Companies are working on a plan that will be Non-Postal Medicare Plans. They will be cheaper for the USPS and that will reduce employee's premiums down the road as well.

There is a currently a watch of Amazon by the NALC and along with other partners such as the Teamsters and some other mailers. The concern is that because of their anti-union wage and the model of their company they might drive down the rate of pay for delivery drivers in all industry. There are some Anti-trust suits going on and we are keeping an eye on those and trying to hold Amazon back from affecting other kind of delivery workers like us.

**Paul Barner, NALC Assistant Secretary Treasurer spoke on the following:**

He has been working at the direction of a lot NBAs regarding the security for online meetings.

The NALC has launched a training platform that will allow training access to a number of seminars through the Members Only Portal at NALC.org. This will allow training at State, Region and National levels to be assigned through the portal and only members may be registered by the local President. Incredibly good way to only give access to members.

All members should go to NALC.org and set up your access to the Members Only Portal. It takes a couple minutes. Register now and set-up the password so when something arises that you may have interest in, you'll have access to the training.

Paul also highlighted the NALC Store and supplies that are normally purchased through the NALC Store. This is all available online and the products are sent directly from the manufacturer.

**Manny Peralta, NALC Director of Health and Safety spoke on the following:**

There are plans in the next 2 months to conduct a conference specifically attended by Deaf and Hard of Hearing Members. Bruce, there is place in the Members Only Platform to check a box and you would then be invited to this conference. The NALC wants to ensure your needs are met and your rights are being afforded. Dave who is now in Vegas and retired can also be a part of this.

The JCAM will now be available in July.

Scholarships: We will draw the Bernard “Bernie” Baxley Scholarship and the George B and Annie R Elliott Branch 1477 Scholarships next week on Thursday June 17<sup>th</sup> at the Steward Training to allow the Scholarship Committee time to meet and prepare the Ballots.

Last month I mentioned we had 70 of our members converted to PTF and we discussed the private Investment Firms trying to gain access to your TSP. I sat through a consultation with a Carrier this week: She asked: “Are you an Investment Company? No. Are you affiliated with the USPS? No”. Yet as the meeting went on the counselor tried to sell a ROTH IRA, she stated the Carrier should drop out of the Union to save money when retired. This is the same person who said they weren’t an Investment counselor. When the Carrier responded, “If I drop the Union my Insurance is cancelled (NALC) Then she stated that retiree dues drop to \$1.91 monthly.

These are just scammers Please do not respond. Please reach out for help, do not go with a private company.

### **Local Implementations**

We were able to make a few cosmetic changes in all of our cities in our LMOUs. They remain pretty much the same with a few exceptions.

FSALC Convention: The 2021 FSALC Convention August 12<sup>th</sup> -14<sup>th</sup> at the Lake Buena Vista Palace at Disney Springs. Rooms have been reserved with 16 Branch Delegates arriving on 8/12/21 – 8/15/21 and those Stewards attending training only will have rooms 8/13/21 – 8/15/21.

Finally, a couple of months ago, Chuck Cavvichio our Branch Treasurer and Ken Grasso our Secretary came to me and said we had outstanding bills in the General Fund and that we were a little bit short because the monthly check was still a little bit away and we want to pay our bills on time. We had a discussion and I directed them to move \$5,000 from the convention fund to the General Fund to make those payments knowing that we could pay it back when the checks started to come in and we got our quarterly retirement checks.

Normally, anytime you do something like that it should be brought before the board first, but because we needed to do it immediately I waited until the next available Executive Board Meeting. I raised the issue then, we had a long discussion about it.

There was an objection, well deserved, we should have used another account instead of the Convention Fund because there is some language in the Bylaws that prohibit that. We talked about it, we’re gonna pay it back.

The requirements are that I bring it to your attention. I am. This is it. I’m putting you on notice. We moved \$5,000 from the Convention Fund to the General Fund. I will tell you within a few weeks when we get our quarterly checks for the retiree dues, we’ll redeposit that.

President Henschen answered several questions regarding working PTFs for Sunday delivery and the proper pay rate.

Motion to adjourn.

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**After the General Membership Meeting we were informed of the following Sad News:**

**Ada Capellan, Retiree Midtown—Mother passed away.**

**Winston Brown, Carrier Crossroads—Father passed away.**

### **Steward Meeting Attendees**

***Meetings are held at the Hall and on Zoom, led by Joe Henschen and Chris Hubble***

**June 17th:**

Tom Phillips, Shiela Bradley, Cheryl Anderson, Anthony Roger, Jim Grazioso, Alicia Gary, Brian Andrews, Sheldon Jones, Patrick Jacques, Tiffany Naughton, Denise Clark, Christina Johnson, Anne Winkelbauer, Donny DeMilta, Bert Lewis, Ben Hamilton, AJ Pollard

# BRANCH 1477 PHONE DIRECTORY

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<b>Gulfwinds 7</b>	Christina Johnson	(727) 564-0620
<b>Gulfwinds 15</b>	" "	(727) 564-0620
<b>Gulfwinds 11</b>	Joel Baez	(813) 817-5957
<b>Alt 7,11,15</b>	Zulma Betancourt	(813) 597-8363
<b>Madeira Beach</b>	Patrick Jacques	(727) 218-2721
<b>Alt</b>	Bob Brown	(727) 365-7783
<b>Midtown 5</b>	Shiela Bradley	(813) 335-7783
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<b>Northside 16</b>	Tonya Lee	(813) 270-2918
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<b>St. Pete Beach</b>	Cheryl Anderson	(727) 531-1477
<b>St. Pete Main 13</b>	Anthony Roger	(813) 574-9971
<b>Alt</b>	Scott Holderbaum	(813) 777-7626
<b>St. Pete Main 14</b>	Alan Pollard	(727) 667-4254
<b>Alt</b>	Dee Grant	(727) 225-9272

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<b>Dunedin</b>	Chuck Cavicchio	(727) 798-8506
<b>Alt</b>	Scott Held	(727) 418-5742
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<b>PC Annex</b>	Colton Smith	(941) 893-9356
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<b>Seminole 76/77</b>	Donny DeMilta	(727) 430-4413
<b>Alt</b>	Mike Oster	(443) 542-1052

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**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.



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## July, 2021

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