

# 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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VOICE OF BRANCH 1477

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## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

*By President Joe Henschen*

*Twitter @ JaHe1*

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 or 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 that a Carrier wants to deal with an aggressive supervisor in front of a workroom floor full of 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 the supervisor.

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?

**NEXT BRANCH MEETING AT THE HALL AND VIA ZOOM: THURSDAY, MARCH 9, 2023**

A large number of Branch members 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.

The NALC Letter Carrier Resource 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. It includes a no-nonsense way to deal with the process of making the morning estimate.

<sup>1</sup> "How to Say What You mean Without Being Mean" WikiHow

## ***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.

### ***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.

***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.

***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.

***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.

**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.

**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 supervision know where you are and how long you think it will take you to finish. Ask your supervisor whether they 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.

**Complete a 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. It could be mail you were instructed to "manage".

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. 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.



## Hubble's Troubles

*By Executive Vice President,  
Chris Hubble*

### ***A "fair days' work for a fair days' pay" ...***

USPS employees are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that reflects favorably upon the organization and perform their duties in the most safe and efficient manner.

With that said, management also has the obligation to set the tone of how all employees are treated and to maintain an atmosphere of *"dignity and respect"*. Pressure to make the numbers and meet workload projections, unhappy with a carrier's performance or a personal dislike is no reason to treat an employee with a lack of dignity and respect.

One of the many tasks as a steward is to recognize such behavior. Under no circumstance is there ever a legitimate reason for a letter carriers' supervisor

and/or manager to treat an employee in any way which lacks dignity and respect. Too often, a few supervisors, even managers make carriers feel incapable, with no hope insight. We need to empower those who worry about retaliation from their supervisor or simply out of fear of admitting they're being bullied or harassed.

We need to pay attention to the problem and not make it worse by going down to their level either. We should pick our fights wisely with respect to the Joint Statement on Violence in the workplace (M-01242). The Joint Statement is intended for those managers and/or supervisors who are constantly causing disruption and harassing employees.

What would illustrate the inappropriate conduct of a supervisor, manager, or even a postmaster.

To describe what took place, the employee must capture what exactly happened, identifying the tone and the words that were used by the individual. The description should be able to put the person who reads the words right in the middle of the event, as if it were themselves. It does not have to be one event either, it may be on several occasions.

If you see an employee being harassed, intimidated, threatened, and/or bullied, you or I should be willing to step forward and say something. All too often abusive managers and/or supervisors attack our ability to fight for what is right by causing many of our rank to fear stepping forward.

Be empowered...be strong and help those others that may be in need, you are not alone.



## Editor's Corner

*By Editor/Webmaster,  
Judy Dorris*

The Branch would like to welcome our new members who came on board from 1/15/2023 through the present.

Names are in alphabetical order by Office Installation but not Relative Standing, as follows:

### **Ellenton**

Brittany Gilyard-Gardner  
LaJawn Gladney  
Elizabeth Jones

### **Largo**

Mary Bulakites

### **Pinellas Park**

Jose Vanga

### **St. Petersburg**

Joshua Beardsley  
Terry Blease  
LaSean Brown  
Nick DiFrancesco  
Dontrell Dunn  
Scott Kasperowicz  
Taylor Langkamp  
Brittany Shephard  
Robert Smith  
Crystal Venuti  
Dale Woosley

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## Minutes of February 9, 2023 Membership Meeting



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

Meeting called to order at 7:00 p.m. by President Joe Henschen.

Residence: Cell: (727) 743-5395 Home: (727) 772-8383 ganneken@msn.com Palm Harbor, FL	Business: (513) 621-4787 (800) 543-0379 Fax: (513) 621-0483 Postal Fax: (888) 724-7882
<b>ROY TAILORS UNIFORM CO., INC.</b> Postal Uniforms - Shoes Your Union Preferred Uniform Company Spouse of NALC Branch 1477 Member	
TERRI ANNEKEN Sales Representative	1905 Dalton Avenue Cincinnati, Ohio 45214

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

**Minutes of previous meeting:** Motion to accept the December's Minutes as printed in the Twig by Brian Andrews, seconded by Jim Grazioso. Motion passes.

Motion to accept the January's Minutes that are on the tables and posted on the Branch Website by Terry Johnson, seconded by Shiela Bradley. Motion passes.

**Branch by the Numbers:** As of PP 01 the Dues Roster has 825 Active Members with 787 paying dues. We have 30 members as No Deductions, 3 are on Military Leave. 8 paying direct, with 18 on LWOP. 6 members resigned, 3 Members returned from LWOP this pay period. Retirees 554 (86 Gold Cards). 1379 total members.

I would like to welcome Kelly Bins of Absolute Quality Interpreting Services.

**Treasurer:** Chuck Cavicchio—Checkbook balances and total investments were read by President Henschen. Motion to accept the Report of the Treasurer and send to the trustees for audit by, Jim Grazioso seconded by Chris Hubble. Motion passes.

**Director of Retiree Affairs:** O.D. Elliott—Excused

**Director of Insurance:** Tom Phillips—Eye Glass Plan – 15 members in month of January totaling \$758.00. 5 dependents totaling \$239.00, for combined total of \$997.00.

**Political District 13 Liaison:** Tom Phillips—Social Security Fairness Act reintroduced in the House of Representatives.

**Trustee Report:** Brian Andrews—Trustees met and books are up to date and in order through December.

**Editor/Webmaster:** Judy Dorris—Excused

**Executive Vice President:** Chris Hubble—I'd Like to thank the Branch for bringing me back up to Full Time Officer. TIAREAP is ongoing and in St. Pete we added 11 new Routes and nationwide over 300 Routes.

**Welfare Reports:**

**Sad:**

- Lam Do, Carrier St. Pete—Mother passed away.
- Danny Nix, Carrier Open Air—Had extensive surgery and is recovering.

**Glad:**

**Promotions to FTR:**

Amanda Justus—Dunedin

Carolyn Herrington—St. Pete

Zedrik McLaurin—St. Pete

Aaron Tonzola—St. Pete

Andrew Jensen—St. Pete effective March 11

Jay Negron—Punta Gorda

**Presidents Report:**

**Installation of Stewards for 2023** took place with President Henschen giving the Oath of Office to those in the Hall and on Zoom.

- **Bradenton Beach**—Brian Andrews
- **Dunedin**—Scott Held
- **Ellenton**—Mark Patrick
- **Indian Rocks Beach**—Tim Cox

**Largo:**

- **Zone 71/78**—Eric Short
- **Zone 70/73**—Adam Deveau

**Seminole:**

- **Zone 76/77**—Donny DeMilta
- **Zone 72/74**—Mike Oster
- **Palmetto**—Sheldon Jones
- **Englewood**—Josh LaGrew
- **Pinellas Park Zone 82**—Heather Manley
- **Pinellas Park Zone 81**—Josh Wheeler
- **Port Charlotte**—Erika Baker
- **Punta Gorda**—Dennis Leach

- **Open Air**—Scott Archbold / Alt—Ross Cassidy
- **Northside Zone 2**—Tiffany Naughton / Alt-Suzette Brown
- **Gateway**—Branch Hall
- **Euclid**—Wyatt Stribling
- **Midtown Zone 5**—Javier Urrutia
- **St. Pete Beach**—Cheryl Anderson

**Gulfwinds:**

- **Zone 7, 15**—Olbin Flores-Elvir
- **Zone 11**—Mike Hancock
- **Madeira Beach**—Patrick Jacques

**Crossroads:**

- **Zone 9**—Heather Vincent—Gates / Alt—Jody Dodd
- **Zone 10**—Patrick Jacques / Alt—Ken Domingos
- **Midtown Zone 12**—Patrice Cannonier / Alt—Gary Johnson
- **Main Office Zone 13**—Anthony Rogers / Alt—Scott Holderbaum
- **Main Office Zone 14**—Alan AJ Pollard / Alt—Devonne Grant
- **Northside Zone 16**—Tonya Lee / Alt—Kalani Workman

There will be a number of Stewards and Alternates at the Hall on Thursday, February 16, 2023 for training from 12:00-4:00.

Effective Saturday 2/11/2023 Executive Vice President Chris Hubble will again be serving full time for the members of the Branch.

Region 9 NBA Eddie Davidson called a WebEx Meeting for all the Presidents in the State of Florida. Misty Wenger will serve as RCAA as well as Dexter Lester.

RAA Anthony Ali will handle Arbitration Scheduling and the TIAREAP, RAA Ben Paul will oversee the Step B Decisions for the Region. Eric Sloan will

handle General Contract Issues, Article 7/8 and Mergers. NALC at the National Level are pushing to merge branches that do not have an Executive Board to represent the members.

Some of the other Topics that were discussed:

- Issues with Crossing Crafts with the Rural Carriers
- Attendance Reviews
- Alternative Dispute Resolution Process adherence to the standard training program.
- OWCP Development letters being sent.
- Crime Reports
- Delayed Mail Report—due every Friday
- Step B Oversight is now going to take place where the NBA and all RAA's are reviewing all Step B decision.

Locally, we will implement our own oversight using Board Members actively in Formal A cases and we will review the Informal A appeals dropped at the hall.

Steward College Training coming up in February. The Executive Board recommended sending up to 3 Stewards to this. Costs are \$372 for Airfare, \$377 for Room, \$160 per attendee, Total cost \$909 per attendee. A motion was made by Eric Short seconded by Tom Phillips. Motion passes. Only 2 Stewards were able to accept to attend Heather Manley, Pinellas Park and Adam Deveau, Largo. President Henschen will be attending also at the Regions request and Expenses as an instructor.

**2023 Training and Events:**

**COP Detroit, Michigan:** March 11—13, 2023, Airfare \$657, Room Rates 2 nights \$584, Per Diem \$160 for \$1404 per attendee. The Board recommended sending Executive Vice President and President to the Detroit COP. Motion by Shiela Bradley seconded by Patrick Jacques. Motion passes.

**St. Petersburg Grand Prix –** March 3rd—5th, 2023 Sunshine City Carriers Charities MDA group are looking for 10 volunteers each day to help staff concessions the weekend. Last year our 4 booths raised over \$4800 for MDA. If you need more

information or wanting to volunteer contact the hall.

**Food Drive Saturday May 13, 2023**, Letters to Food Banks and Volunteers are being prepared now. More information will be coming up.

**Regional Training in Orlando Florida May 4-7, 2023** Room rates are \$149. This is a Steward's Training which could be an intermediate level. We will discuss more once we get an agenda.

**FSALC Convention/Training, Naples, Florida August 24-26, 2023.** We are sending 18 Delegates to Convention which starts August 24, 2023 at 1:00 pm and ends at Noon August 25, 2023. NBA contractual training starts at 1:00 pm August 25, 2023 and ends August 26, 2023 at 5:00 pm. More discussion on Stewards attending the Training will be forthcoming.

**NALC Region 9 Rap Session October 5-7, 2023, Myrtle Beach SC.** At this time, we haven't received any information on which hotel but would like to send a few Board Members to this.

#### **Future Convention Sites**

**73<sup>rd</sup> Convention in 2024 is August 7-9 in Boston Massachusetts.**

**74<sup>th</sup> Convention in 2026 is Aug 3-7 in Los Angeles California.**

**FECA Bulletin 23-02 Processing Claims** for COVID 19 after January 27, 2023. You will use Ca2 rather than Ca1 if there is no clear, identifiable incident or incidents over a single day or work shift. Discussion about an Emergency Placement that was overturned and put the Employee back on the Rolls to go through the proper procedures.

An issue that was involving a transferee that was transferred to another city through a mutual swap but then he returned. He was told he had to go back to the installation he originally did a mutual swap with. National Officials got involved but declared that he couldn't just come back and bypass 74 employees on Reassign.

**Door Prize Drawing:** Lotto Ticket Winner  
**Vicki Weber**

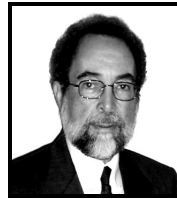
## **MDA Fundraiser Event**

**St. Pete Grand Prix  
March 3-5**

**Come out and support  
this great cause!**

**Volunteers needed for all 3 days**

**Contact: Sandra Pagon  
(813) 454-9269**



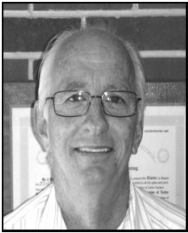
## **Retiree Update**

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

### **Keep Your Membership**

When considering retirement, I urge you to continue your NALC membership. To do so, you complete a PS Form 1189. The retiree dues are considerably less than the dues for active members. (Dues for retirees of Branch 1477 are only \$1.91 per month or \$22.90 per year.) NALC retirees are unique when compared to retirees of other labor unions. Retirees of most unions aren't allowed to serve as Delegates to Conventions, serve as local, state or national officers or actively participate in the operation of their locals. NALC retirees, on the other hand, have all the rights of active members, with the only exceptions being they cannot vote on ratification of National Agreements, Local Memorandums, or proposed work stoppages. They can campaign for and serve as delegates to State and National Conventions, serve as Branch, State or National Officers and they can participate in and have a voice in the operation of their Branch.

Additionally, members of Branch 1477 (active and retired) are entitled to reimbursement each year (of up to \$60 for self and \$50 for spouse) for out-of-pocket expenses for eye examinations or purchase of eye glasses. Finally, Branch 1477 is available to assist retired members concerning possible changes to their retirement due to personal changes in their lives such as divorce, death of a spouse, remarriage, etc. We also provide assistance to your survivors in the event of your passing.



## Legislative Update

By Gene Carroll, CDL District 15

On Jan. 9, Reps. Garrett Graves (R-LA) and Abigail Spanberger (D-VA) reintroduced the Social Security Fairness Act of 2023 (H.R. 82). This bill would repeal the Government Pension Offset (GPO) and the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP), which are parts of Social Security law that unfairly reduce or sometimes eliminate Social Security benefits for millions of federal annuitants, including former Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS) Letter Carriers.

WEP reduces earned Social Security benefits for CSRS employees and for Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS) employees, who also receive a public pension from another job not covered by Social Security. In addition, WEP affects employees who move from a job in which they earn Social Security to a job where they do not earn the Social Security benefit.

GPO affects CSRS employees and spousal benefits of people who work as federal, state or local government employees if the job is not covered by Social Security. GPO currently reduces by two-thirds the benefit received by surviving spouses who also collect a government pension.

The bill, which received a supermajority of cosponsors in the 117<sup>th</sup> Congress, already has 59 cosponsors. Despite consistent bipartisan support, the legislation has proved difficult to pass due to the price tag. NALC will continue actively working to gain support for this bill so letter carriers can receive the full benefits they earned.

The House and Senate are finalizing committee assignments for the 118<sup>th</sup> Congress. The House Committee on Oversight and Accountability (COA) and the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs (HSGAC) are the primary congressional committees with jurisdiction over the Postal Service and federal employees.

COA functions to ensure the efficiency and effectiveness of the federal government and its agencies, while providing accountability. Similarly, HSGAC has broad jurisdiction over government operations and focuses on the effectiveness of all federal agencies. Because these committees have

jurisdiction over the Postal Service, it is important to familiarize these committee members with letter carrier issues. With many new members serving on these committees, including in leadership roles, NALC will prioritize working with these members on our key issues.

“NALC applauds President Biden for recognizing that unions are the strength of the American workforce. We appreciate his support of organized labor, and we commend him for calling on Congress to pass the PRO Act, which would give all workers the ability to organize and negotiate higher wages, better healthcare and retirement benefits, and safer working conditions.

“NALC also recognizes President Biden’s commitment to working with Speaker McCarthy on addressing the debt limit crisis. As we have seen in the past, federal employees, including letter carriers, have been an easy target in these types of negotiations. We urge the President to reject any proposals that seek to reduce or eliminate federal retirement benefits, or that would require public servants to pay a larger share for negotiated benefits that NALC members depend on.

NALC

**Burgandy Chair  
with Large Ottoman  
\$75**

**9’ wide x 8’ high wooden  
bi-fold door with lock and key**

**Best Offer**

**(727) 434-0197**



## Carrier's Rights during Investigatory Interviews and other News & Information

Article by Chris Hubble

### Investigatory interviews — rights and warnings when questioned...

Letter carriers have the right to union representation in investigatory interviews conducted by managers, postal inspectors, or USPS Office of Inspector General (OIG) agents. It is important to understand your rights in these situations, but it is also critical to understand the different types of warnings a postal inspector or an OIG agent may issue you when an investigatory interview crosses over into the realm of a possible criminal investigation.

The 1975 U.S. Supreme Court decision in *NLRB vs. J. Weingarten* gives each employee the right to representation during any "investigatory interview which he or she reasonably believes may lead to discipline." These rights are commonly referred to as **Weingarten rights**. The Postal Service is not required to inform you of these rights. A steward cannot exercise these rights for you. If you are asked a question by management that you believe could lead to discipline, you are responsible for requesting your shop steward. Management is required to provide a steward upon request. Once a steward has been provided, you have the right to a private discussion with the steward before the interview continues. You also have the right to a steward's assistance, not just a silent presence. The employer would violate your Weingarten rights if it refused to allow your representative to speak or tried to restrict the steward to the role of a passive observer.

When an investigatory interview is being conducted by law enforcement officers, such as postal inspectors or an OIG agent, an employee may be read warnings. The most well-known warning is **Miranda**. Most people are familiar with this warning from watching crime programs on television. Once this warning is given, anything you say can be used in a court of law to try to prove guilt. If you are given a Miranda warning, you should consult with an attorney before answering any questions. Postal inspectors and OIG agents often present a PS Form 1067, Warning and Waiver of Rights and request that employees sign it. By signing this form, postal employees waive their Miranda rights. Letter carriers should not sign PS Form 1067 without first consulting with an attorney. If you do sign a PS Form 1067, anything said from that point forward

can be used against you in a court of law.

Since **ELM Section 665.3** requires all postal employees to cooperate with postal investigations, the Postal Service may take disciplinary action against an employee when he or she fails to cooperate during a normal investigatory interview that does not cross the threshold into a criminal investigation. This would appear to put the employee in an impossible position. Should an employee answer questions, even if the answers may result in criminal charges, or should the employee refuse to answer, risking the possibility of discipline for "failure to cooperate" in an investigation?

This problem was resolved by the federal courts in the **Kalkines** and **Garrity** decisions. The Kalkines warning requires employees to make statements and cooperate, even if it could lead to being disciplined or discharged but provides criminal immunity for their statements. This warning means the employees must be truthful but can do so without their answers being used against them in criminal proceedings.

A Garrity warning advises suspects of their criminal and administrative liability for any statements made, but also advises suspects of their right to remain silent on any issues that may implicate them in a crime. The Garrity warning helps to ensure suspects' constitutional rights. It also allows federal agents to use statements provided by suspects in both administrative and criminal investigations. If you are given a Garrity warning, you should consult with an attorney before answering any questions. (Contract Talk July 2015)

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### OTHER NEWS & INFORMATION...

The seventh and final regular cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) for career letter carriers under the 2019-2023 National Agreement was \$208 annually following the release of the January consumer price index (CPI). This increase was added to every step in Table 1 and Step P in Table 2, and then applied proportionately to Steps A through O in Table 2. The increase has been applied to the pay chart. The increase will take effect March 11, 2023.

**Wounded Warriors Access Act** (H.R. 5916) Reps. Pete Aguilar (D-CA) and Chip Roy (R-TX) introduced this bill that would allow veterans to access their C-Files, which include service records,

VA exam results, and more, through an online portal and receive a digital copy of their files. The VA would be required to fulfill all requests within 120 days, streamlining the process and allowing veterans to receive their benefits faster.

Disabled veterans generally are required to attend regular medical appointments to maintain their health and to continue their eligibility to receive their veterans' benefits. Frequently, it is unavoidable that such appointments must be scheduled during normal work hours and Wounded Warriors Leave provides some relief to those who are eligible and must receive necessary treatment. This category of leave is a very important benefit to qualifying letter carriers who also are veterans. Visit [nalc.org/workplace-issues/city-delivery](http://nalc.org/workplace-issues/city-delivery) and choose the Wounded Warriors Leave tab for more information.

### **Requests for Wounded Warriors Leave (M-01901)**

**Foreseeable Leave** All employees requesting Wounded Warriors Leave must do the following:

- a. Submit their request on PS Form 3971, Request for or Notification of Absence, in advance to the appropriate supervisor, and
- b. Designate the reason for the absence as "other" and write "Wounded Warriors Leave" in the space provided.

**Unforeseeable Leave** the Postal Service makes an exception to the advance approval requirement for unexpected treatment that qualifies for Wounded Warriors Leave. When the need to use Wounded Warriors, Leave is not foreseeable, employees must notify the appropriate supervisor of the following as soon as possible:

- a. The employee's treatment,
- b. The expected duration of the absence, and
- c. The applicability of Wounded Warriors Leave.

Alternatively, the employee may use the Interactive Voice Response (IVR) system to record his or her absences. If the employee does not submit PS Form 3971 before the absence, the employee must complete the form upon his or her return to duty.



**Treatment Verification for Wounded Warriors Leave PS Form 5980**

We are no longer  
accepting  
ANY uniforms  
at this time  
at the Union Hall

## Steward Meeting Attendees

**Meeting was held at the Hall and on Zoom and led by President Joe Henschen and Executive Vice President Chris Hubble:**

### **January 19th:**

Donny DeMilta, Anthony Roger, A.J. Pollard, Tim Cox, Tiffany Naughton, Eric Short, Adam Deveau, Scott Held, Heather Manley, Cheryl Anderson, Oblin Flores-Elvir, Michael Oster, Tonya Lee

### **February 16th:**

Anthony Roger, A.J. Pollard, Tim Cox, Tiffany Naughton, Patrick Jacques, Mark Patrick, James Grazioso, Eric Short, Scott Held, Heather Vincent-Gates, Sheldon Jones, Jodie Dodd, Cheryl Anderson, Scott Archbold, Chuck Cavicchio, Wyatt Stribling, Javier Urrutia, Oblin Flores-Elvir, Mike Hancock, Patrice Cannonier, Michael Oster, Erica Baker, Suzette Brown, Scott Holderbaum

## South Meeting

### **January 18th:**

Joe Henschen, Chris Hubble, Erica Baker, Brenna Demay, Chris Kotonski, Dean Kauffman, Sam Haddad, Rui Almeida, Dennis Leach, Jonathon Negrón, Mike Katsiamakis, Colton Smith, Mark Hale, Kevin Kelly, Ingrid Heise, Noah Johnson, Kris Beal, Caleb Gaskins, Caleb McMahan

### **February 15th:**

Chris Hubble, Erica Baker, Chris Kotonski, Dean Kauffman, Sam Haddad, Rui Almeida, Dennis Leach, Caleb McMahan, Kris Beal, Megan Slantis, Kevin Kelly, Romulus Sugar

# BRANCH 1477 PHONE DIRECTORY

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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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# March 2023

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			<b>1</b> Largo Retiree Breakfast	<b>2</b> Executive Board Meeting	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>6</b> Pinellas Park Retiree Breakfast	<b>7</b> St. Pete Retiree Breakfast	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b> General Membership Meeting	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b> <u>South Branch Meeting</u>	<b>16</b> Steward's Meeting	<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>	