

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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PRESIDENT'S REPORT

By President Joe Henschen

Twitter @ JaHe1

I'll start by wishing you all a happy New Year! I hope 2024 finds grace for you and your families.

As 2023 began to wind down, several members of the Branch Executive Board had the opportunities to attend a Regional Rap Session, a Committee of Presidents Meeting, and a National Rap Session, all in the hopes of getting information to report regarding the NALC/USPS Contract Negotiations. As 2024 arrives, still nothing to officially report. However, the handwriting may very well be on the wall for the Handbook M-39's chapter 2 which sans a memorandum to the contrary containing the guiding rules for Route Count and Inspections. It is clear that the M-39 language may be replaced by a technologically enhanced process (currently being used) eliminating the unilateral relied upon for many years. The 2022 Memo was set to expire on December 31, 2023.

NALC and Postal Service agree on TIAREAP extension until May 31

Pursuant to the memorandum of understanding MOU Re: Extension of the **Technology Integrated Alternate Route Evaluation and Adjustment Process** 2022-2023, NALC and the Postal Service have agreed to an extension of the joint route evaluation and adjustment process until May 31, 2024.

The Technology Integrated Alternate Route Evaluation and Adjustment Process (TIAREAP) is an agreed upon process by the national parties that utilizes teams of NALC and USPS representatives to evaluate and adjust city delivery routes.

In the extension, the national parties also agreed to add an additional opt in period to include delivery zones for evaluation and adjustment under this process. That opt in period will be conducted from January 8, 2024, through January 12, 2024.

NEXT BRANCH MEETING AT THE HALL AND VIA ZOOM: THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 8, 2024

Approved requests for special inspections pursuant to Handbook M-39, Chapter 2, Section 271 will continue to be forwarded to the TIAREAP district lead team (DLT) for scheduling of evaluation and adjustment under the joint process.¹

On a number of occasions, our national officers have discussed the negotiations for our next contract includes making the TIAREAP a permanent part of the handbooks. If or when this happens not much should change in the way a Carrier should conduct themselves while delivering mail.

As mentioned above this process of evaluating routes uses NALC and USPS representatives to evaluate and adjust city delivery routes. They do this by evaluating the GPS locations along the routes line of travel. They can only see what the GPS data tells them. The rest comes from consultations with the Carrier whose data is being reviewed.

These are the items that the Teams argue over:

Park & Loop.

Can you explain your work methods? Is it the same every day? **First**, it's important to know if your route is correct in your Edit book. Are you parking at the end of a four block "loop" or is your park point in the middle. If the latter is true, on high volume days the loops can be carried individually without overloading your satchel. Two blocks down the even and up the odd then back to the vehicle to reload. If you have oversized parcels on any given day, they can be dismounted as you drive to the park point or heading to the next point.

On a lighter volume day, the loops should be combined to make the loading time a little less. The TIAREAP Joint Teams recognize about 3 minutes to "relay" or load a satchel for the next loop. Of course, if you can explain the need for additional time, it will be accepted by the team.

Secondly, while at a relay stop, it is not necessary to ensure that your DPS is free of undeliverable mail. Most Park and Loop routes are pulled down and ready to grab the flats, cased SPRs and residual letter mail, add the DPS mail be getting a handful ensuring the last letter is the last stop of the loop, lock the vehicle and go. If you are combining loops as I described earlier, it's ok to pull the first 2 blocks forward and rubber band the next half loop

for the satchel. Again, grab the DPS and start the loop. At the end of a loop any undelivered mail can be sorted in the sculch tray.

A couple of things that you need to be constant with, SPRs (small parcels and rounds) are credited the same as flats for office time. If a Carrier does not case these pieces the route's (or root) office time will be skewed, and additional time at the relay points sorting to identify SPRs for each loop will be required. This sometimes results in missing a delivery resulting in the need to backtrack, also deducting time during an evaluation.

Curbside.

The same goes for curbside delivery methods. Reloading the delivery vehicle tray should be done as efficiently as possible. All the same principles apply. If the sculch cannot be used as you go, at each location that requires re-loading then sort the undeliverable mail at that location.

All Parcel Accountable Delivery.

No matter the makeup of your route, parcels and special service items should be handled the same way. Take your scanner to the door when dismounting or delivering to the apartment door and scan the parcel at the delivery point. When/if a carrier scans a bar code at the vehicle and lays the scanner on the seat, all the time is lost walking to the door, taking an elevator etc., now is charged as stationary time. Time set idle is bad during the evaluation, and not easily explained.

Delivery Points

Finally, even on light days, it is important that every delivery is approached. If on a foot route that has no mail for an address the entire task (loop) should be visited every day. Curbside that has no mail at the end of the block should still be driven in order to protect the Carrier Route.

Let me close like this. We all have ways we believe are more efficient in our Jobs. I've said it before, I'm sure an auto worker seating the lug nuts on a vehicle as it rolls off the assembly line can complete the task if only 4 lug nuts are installed.

As is the case with the USPS, the employer owns the Route and the Carriers by contract own the work. It is important that the entire job is done daily as instructed so the wheels do not fall off.

¹NALC.org News and Information January 3, 2024

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Hubble's Troubles

By Executive Vice President,
Chris Hubble

Managing Arrow Lock Key accountability....

The Postal Service has attempted to implement a new process for managing Arrow/Modified Arrow Lock Key accountability. In this process, Mobile Delivery Device-Technical Refresh (MDD-TR) and Mobile Delivery Device-In Office (MDD-IO) scanners are used to transfer Arrow Key accountability by scanning employee identification badge and Arrow Key barcodes.

In this new process, a Carrier can “check out” or receive a key without a signature, return a key without an accountable clerk or supervisor present and transfer accountability for an Arrow Key to another Carrier by following the “Arrow Key Management” workflow on the MDD-TR. Implementation of this accountability process is in conflict with the provisions of postal handbooks and manuals and does not change the Letter Carrier’s responsibility when handling Arrow Keys as outlined in Sections 261 and 43 of Handbook M-41, City Carrier Duties and Responsibilities. [Emphasis added]

A Carrier’s responsibility when receiving Arrow Keys outlined in Section 261 of Handbook M-41 (Page 35) states:

261.2 Receipting for Accountable Items

261.21 Keys

A numbered check is issued to each employee. When you surrender the check, you will be given a set of Arrow and/or padlock, and/or truck keys. (In some instances, a signature is used in place of a numbered check.) The keys are on a chain which must be securely fastened to a belt or clothing. Keys must be returned at the end of the tour of duty. [Emphasis added]

Section 43 of Handbook M-41 details the procedure for a carrier to gain clearance for accountable items:

43 Clearance for Accountable Items

431 Keys

Turn in mail keys in exchange for assigned key check or signature clearance. [Emphasis added]

The NALC urges any member who receives instructions related to this process that violates the language above of the M-41 to inform the Union Steward and file a grievance. [Emphasis added]

Additionally, USPS has provided guidance under this process advising the use of PS Form 1106 to clear Carriers of Arrow Key accountability. PS Form 1106 has been rescinded by the Postal Service since March 23, 2023. The use of this form should be brought to the attention of the Union Steward. [Emphasis added]

PS Form 1106 Has Been Rescinded

Effective March 23, 2023, the Postal Service™ has rescinded PS Form 1106, *Arrow Key — Daily Accountable Log*. Please recycle any current hard copy versions of this form.

PS Form 1106 is no longer available on the Postal Service Policy Net website. Any further announcements about PS Form 1106 will be made in a future *Postal Bulletin*.



Note: Each office must use as many copies of this form as necessary to record all keys — this				
Office Name				
Pre-filled Information			Sign-Out Section (Remove Keys)	
	Route Number (C000, R000)	Serial Number	Carrier Name (Print Name – First, Last)	Carrier Signature
1				
2				
3				
20				
			Sign-Out Clerk/Management (Print Name – First, Last)	
			Sign-Out Clerk/Management (Signature)	
Carrier: By signing the respective lines above corresponding to Route Number and Serial Number, I hereby acknowledge that I have completely read the latest Service Talk on Arrow Keys and that I fully understand my responsibilities for usage, safety, and accountability of Arrow Keys.			Sign-Out Clerk/Management: By signing the respective corresponding to the Clerk Sign-Out and Clerk Sign-In acknowledge that the information on this form is accurate Keys listed on this form have been accounted for.	

Minutes of December 14, 2023 Membership Meeting



**Recording/Financial
Secretary**
Ken Grasso

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

Invocation by Greg Welsh.

Pledge of Allegiance: led by President Joe Henschen.

Minutes of previous meeting: No motion was taken to approve the Minutes due to lack of a quorum.

Application of New Members: by Ken Grasso—Alisha Henry, St. Petersburg, Jacob Sloss, St. Petersburg, Jennifer Almadovar, St. Petersburg, Sebastian Martinez, St. Petersburg, Cortez Fogerty, St. Petersburg, Zack Rodriguez, Largo

Branch by the Numbers: As of the recent dues roster has 836 Active Members with 811 paying dues, 4 are on Military Leave, 9 paying direct, 7 CCAs on Break in Service, 4 CCAs Resigned, 1 pending Arbitration. Retirees 555 (with 5, 1189's not processed). (89 Gold Cards). 1396 Total Members.

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

Treasurer: Chuck Cavicchio—Balances for October were read by Chuck Cavicchio but not voted on for lack of a quorum.

Director of Retiree Affairs: O. D. Elliott—Talked about the retirees who did not take Medicare Part B when they turned sixty-five and the issue of the 10% penalty imposed for every year, they do not take it. New Law for Postal Retirement of a 1-time grace period of 6 months available for those to sign up for Part B without a penalty for the New Medicare Health Plan. No date on when this becomes available.

Director of Insurance: Tom Phillips—Eyeglass

Report: 12 Members for \$700 and 5 Dependent \$92 for total of \$792.

Trustee Report: Brian Andrews—We will be meeting after the Holidays to go over the books.

Vice President Report: Greg Welsh—We must stand up and help new CCA's because this job is not as easy as some may think.

Executive Vice President:

Sad Report:

- Gene Carroll, Retiree St. Petersburg—Recovering from surgery.
- Albert Williams, St. Petersburg, Gold Card Member—Wife passed away.
- Clay Hansen, Carrier Indian Rocks Beach—Mother-in-Law hospitalized.
- Clay Hansen—Underwent appendectomy surgery.

Glad Report:

- Ben Toussaint, Open Air—Wife had a baby girl they named Josey.
- TC Boulton, Office Secretary's Granddaughter and Carrier Donny DeMilita's Daughter is graduating from college.

Presidents Report:

We have been going through records for retention and purging records in accordance with NALC Finance and Administration Guidelines. Scanning things to a permanent hard drive.

Spring 2024 COP is coming up in March in Jacksonville. Will bring it up next month for approval.

November 17-19, 2024 National Rap Session- President Henschen attended and no latest updates about the contract negotiations.

Last month we had to cancel the South Branch meeting which we will be having next week.

Heather Manley was introduced as the LCPF Coordinator who also spoke at the Stewards Meeting to the members.

Voting Results of Delegates to the 2024 National Convention. The nominated members received the following number of votes. The Branch mailed 1269

ballots with 353 ballots returned (27%). Several votes were disallowed for a variety of reasons as follows:

- 10 ballots returned undeliverable as addressed.
- 6 ballots were disallowed, returned without a secrecy envelope.
- 13 ballots were disallowed with no signature on the envelope.
- 4 ballots were disallowed with the secrecy envelope signed.
- 1 ballot was improperly marked.
- 5 ballots were in P.O. Box since 2019.

The results were as follows:

1	Chris Hubble	262
2	Joe Henschen	241
3	O.D. Elliott	214
4	Ken Grasso	206
5	Greg Welsh	184
6	Tom Phillips	182
7	Judy Dorris	160
8	Chuck Cavicchio	157
9	Tiffany Naughton	141
10	Sandra Pagan	135
11	Suzette Brown	128
12	Clay Hanson	125
13	Eric Short	121
14	Sheila Bradley	116
15	Heather Manley	110
16	Kalani Mosman	108
17	Patrick Jaques	104
18	Erica Baker	104
19	Jim Bumbul	103
20	Brian Andrews	94
21	Donny DeMilta	93
22	Ken Domingos	92
23	A.J. Pollard	91
14	Heather Vincent-Gates	89
25	Scott Held	86
26	Scott Archbold	84
27	Mike Oster	75
28	Terry Johnson	66
29	Wyatt Stribling	66
30	Javier Urritia	66
31	Chris Kotonski	59
32	Anthony Roger	57
33	Bruce Millar	40

2024 Region 9 Training Schedule

January Steward College. We have sent in 2 applications but are waiting to see if they have been accepted.

NALC Advocate Continuing Education Training in Marietta, Georgia on January 19-21, 2024. President Henschen has been asked by Region 9 to take part in this training program.

March Region 9 Formal A and Beyond coming up in 2024. We have submitted a couple of names to attend this.

We had some wind damage to the trees around the property. We have reviewed bids taken over the last few years and the Executive Board has recommended we hire a Tree Service, but we cannot vote on that tonight because we do not have a quorum.

RAA Jeannette Triana was in Florida this week reviewing the Letter Carrier Academies and in St. Petersburg today. She now has a list of deficiencies in the Facility and will be working to make changes.

Over the last several months several members have expressed a desire to be an Academy Instructor or an On-the-Job Instructor. If still interested let us know.

Door Prize Drawing:
Lotto – Scratch Off Ticket
 Mike Hancock

Patrick Jacques
 Branch 1477 Trustee

I want to say thank you to all our Union members and express a deep sense of gratitude to all that voted for me to attend the National convention in Boston this year. It is an honor for me to be representing our branch. I plan to observe, learn, and contribute more as a Union official.

Our Union equals: livelihood, freedom, and security. We show up to work with a sense of career security, we do our best that day, and we go home we a sense of security knowing that our Union is negotiating the best for us during our career. These are facts to always remember as a constant reminder.

Thank you for your support, the Union is strong and makes the force solid!



Director of Insurance

By Tom Phillips

I hope everyone had a Happy Holiday.

Thank you for electing me to be a delegate to the national convention.

Now that open season has ended, I hope you switch to the New NALC Health Benefit Plan. Here is some additional benefits information.

NALC Health Benefit Plan Broad Vaccine Administration Network

When the NALC Health Benefit Plan is the primary payor for medical expenses, the plan will cover FDA-approved vaccines when administered by a pharmacy that participates in the NALC Health Benefit Plan Broad Vaccine Administration Network. The following are existing tools and services that are available to NALC-HBP members with the high option:

Member Access Portal

In the fast paced, technology-driven world we live in today, it is more important than ever to have the information you need accessible when you need it. To have quick access to the Plan's Member Access Portal, use the Plan's Mobil app, which is available for download on both iOS and Android Mobil devices. Once registered, you can get real-time deductible and out-of-pocket accumulations, view your claim history, and communicate with NALC HBP representatives directly through the app. In addition, the app includes the ability to download your Explanation of Benefits, review wellness incentives, order Member ID cards and direct sign-on links to Cigna®, CVS Caremark®, Optum®, Hinge Health® and Amwell®. Your personal health information is stored in a single, safe, password protected place accessible only to you or your designated personal representative.

Personal Health Notes

Members have access to a Personal Health Notes page within the Member Access Portal. It is a helpful tool used to create and keep up-to-date records of:

- Medications
- Allergies
- Emergency Contacts
- Physicians / Pharmacies / Hospitals
- Immunizations
- Medical Conditions

Access Personal Health Notes through the Member Access Portal on our website at www.nalchbp.org or by using our Mobil app. Once signed into your portal account, click the Notes button.

Cost Comparison Tools – compare costs for covered medical services.

Telehealth Virtual – Urgent Care Visits – on demand virtual visits 24/7 for non-emergency medical conditions.

Telehealth Virtual – Nutrition Counseling Services – virtual nutrition counseling from home.

Telehealth Virtual – Women's Health Services – virtual, specialized care for women's health concerns.

Real Appeal® (Weight Loss) – one-on-one and group coaching for weight loss.

Hello Heart – Virtual remote care of cardiac conditions, including high blood pressure.

Musculoskeletal (MSK) Program Hinge Health – Virtual musculoskeletal program to help overcome back and joint pain.

MyCVS™ On the Go – accessing a CVS pharmacy through your smartphone or Mobil device.

24-Hour Health Information Line – The 24- hour information line uses nurses / clinicians to provide care information to members who call with symptom – based questions or concerns.

Complex and Chronic Disease Management – the program assists in managing chronic health conditions.

Diabetes Care Management Program – Transform Care – this program helps deliver better overall care and lower costs for members with diabetes.

CareAllies – Well informed (Gaps in Care Program) – provides timely personalized information to help members reach and maintain a healthy lifestyle.

Solutions for Caregivers – designed for members caring for an elderly relative, disabled dependent,

friend or neighbor, the Plan offers Solutions for Caregivers.

Cigna Plus Savings® (Non-FEHB Benefit) – The Cigna Plus Savings® Program is a dental discount program that provides members and their families dependents discounted fees on dental services.

Lab Savings Program – The Lab Savings Program provides covered diagnostic services through LabCorp and Quest Diagnostics for free.

Wellness with Rewards – The NALC Health Benefits Plan wants to reward you for reaching your health and wellness goals! You can now earn valuable health savings to use toward eligible medical expenses.

FLU & Pneumococcal Vaccine – When the NALC Health Benefit is the primary payor for your medical expenses, the the seasonal flu vaccine, pediatric / adult pneumococcal, and shingles vaccines will be paid in full when administered by a pharmacy that participates in the NALC Health Benefit Plan Broad Vaccine Administration Network.

Health Assessment – The Health Assessment is an online tool that analyzes your responses to health-related questions and gives you a personalized plan to achieve specific health goals. As a bonus for being proactive, we offer a choice of valuable incentives (health savings reward).

Annual Biometric Screening- A biometric screening is a clinical assessment that provides your physician with an evaluation of your key health measures.

Healthy Pregnancies, Healthy Babies® Program- Enrolling in the Healthy Pregnancies Healthy Babies® program is an important step toward a healthy future for you and your baby. This is a voluntary program for all expectant mothers.

Well-Child Visits- The Plan covers well-child visits, examinations, and other preventive services as described in the Bright Future Guidelines provided by the American Academy of Pediatrics.

Quitting Tobacco Use- The cost-free Quit For Life® Program offers a variety of tools to help you succeed at quitting smoking, including a Quit Coach® staff member who will work with you to create an individual plan to make it a successful quitting process.

Your Health First Disease Management Program

- If you have a chronic health condition, there may be times you need extra help. Your Health first is a coaching telephone or online program that is available at no extra cost to you.

Behavioral Health Services- Optum® is a recognized leader specializing in behavioral health care and substance use services and provides our mental health and substance use disorder benefits.

Telemental Health- The plan offers outpatient Telemental Health services through Optum®. Telemental Health provides convenient access to virtual visits for mental health assessments and mental health treatment from the convenience of your home or office.

Substance Use Disorder (SUD) Program-

Optum’s Substance Use Disorder Helpline is available 24/7 to our members. You always have immediate access to a licensed clinician. The clinician can arrange for an almost immediate face-to-face evaluation with an In Network expert who can create a unique care strategy.

Substance Use Disorder Care Management Program-

This clinical care management outreach program through Optum® provides ongoing support for those individuals impacted by substance use readmissions and relapse.

*NALC Branch 2550 President Jerrel Kinloch

NALC HEALTH BENEFIT PLAN
20547 Waverly Court
Ashburn, VA 20149
703 729-4677

888 636-6252

Mental Health and Substance Abuse	877 468-1016
OAP Network Providers	877 220-NALC
Precertification	877 220-NALC
Prescription Drug Program	800 933-NALC
Caremark’s SPS	800 237-2767
Fraud Hotline	888 636-NALC
Telehealth	888 541-7706
Health Benefits Representative Tom Phillips	727 458-4127

The NALC Health Benefit Plan HBR Report

Important Medicare Information

Make sure to mark your calendars for a Special Enrollment Period (SEP) that will be offered to most Postal Service annuitants and their eligible family members.

Starting April of 2024, individuals who are eligible for Medicare Part A and are not currently participating in Medicare Part B, will have a six-month opportunity to select Medicare Part B without incurring a late enrollment penalty. As part of the Postal Reform Act, the USPS will pay the late enrollment penalty.

Keep in mind, if you were previously eligible for Medicare Part B and chose not to enroll but now have experienced some regrets, this one-time SEP is significant to your health and finances.

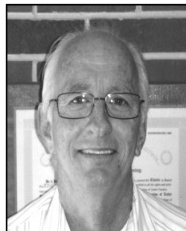


Heather Manley
Branch 1477
Letter Carrier Political Fund
Coordinator

A Special Thank You

As I sit here today contemplating how to begin this letter, I can't help but to rock back and forth in pure unabashed excitement. I am so thrilled and incredibly honored to be going to Boston. The responsibility of being a delegate is a gown I wear with pride and will utilize this time to be of service to my fellow members. As a steward, I have learned a great deal about not only my own humanity, but the chasms in which we sometimes find ourselves in when being the advocate third party. It's not a job for the faint of heart in that it tests you in incredibly unpredictable ways. While it has its challenges, it's been overall a net positive in helping me grow as a person. I've been witness to some connections and understandings that I may not have been otherwise. I've seen both managers and carriers abort their biases in favor of logic and watched their working relationships flower. It's amazing what we can accomplish when we try to truly see one another's perspective. That's the power of being unionized, we have a seat at the table. We have a voice. We have a force that should never be taken for granted as it is a wealth that not many have. So thank you for allowing me this opportunity to speak on your behalf at the national gathering. I will learn, I will grow, and I will voice your sentiments in the setting where progress is the main theme.

From the bottom of my heart, thank you.



Legislative Update

By Gene Carroll, CDL District 15

On Nov. 1, Sen. Alex Padilla (D-CA) introduced the Equal COLA Act (S. 3194). The bill would ensure that cost-of-living adjustments are applied equally to federal retirees.

Under current law, there is a discrepancy between COLA increases for Civilian Service Retirement System (CSRS) and Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS) retirees. COLAs for CSRS retirees are determined by the rate of inflation measured by the Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers in the third quarter of a year compared with the third quarter of the previous year. COLA benefits for FERS retirees are based on the same percentage change; however, the increase is limited, based on certain criteria.

If the CSRS COLA increase is more than 3 percent, FERS retirees receive 1 percent less than the full annual COLA. If the CSRS COLA increase is between 2 and 3 percent, FERS retirees receive a 2 percent COLA. If the CSRS COLA increase is less than 2 percent, FERS retirees receive the full annual COLA.

For example, earlier this year the Social Security Administration announced a 3.2 percent COLA increase for 2024. Therefore, CSRS will receive this 3.2 percent boost in benefits while FERS retirees will only receive a 2.2 percent increase.

Sens. Ben Cardin (D-MD), Patty Murray (D-WA), Bernie Sanders (I-VT), Chris Van Hollen (D-MD) and Elizabeth Warren (D-MA) were all original co-sponsors of S. 3194. Rep. Gerry Connolly (D-VA) introduced a House version of the Equal COLA Act (H.R. 866) in February. The House version has 43 co-sponsors—40 Democrats and three Republicans.

On Nov. 21, the House Ways and Means Subcommittee on Social Security held a hearing on the Social Security Fairness Act (H.R. 82). The bill would repeal the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) and the Government Pension Offset (GPO), parts of Social Security law that unfairly reduce, or sometimes eliminate, Social Security benefits of public employees, including letter carriers, who have

earned pension benefits from public employee pension plans such as the Civil Service Retirement System.

The hearing was held at the St. George Fire Department Station 60 in Baton Rouge, LA, a city in Rep. Garrett Graves's (R-LA) district. Graves co-leads the bipartisan bill with Rep. Abigail Spanberger (D-VA).

Witnesses, all from Louisiana, included Patrick Yoes, national president of the Fraternal Order of Police; Ann Dugas, retired state employee; Bernard Piro, retired firefighter; and Paula Porter, retired teacher.

The hearing brought awareness to the issue through the testimonies of the witnesses who are affected by the WEP and GPO. Several witnesses said they did not know about the impact of these provisions until after they retired and that they likely would have considered different careers had they been informed. Others stated that if these provisions are not overturned, it will be more difficult to recruit and retain employees.

NALC President Brian L. Renfroe and Louisiana State Association of Letter Carriers President Troy Scott submitted comments to the committee for this field hearing explaining how the WEP and GPO affect letter carriers and the importance of repealing the provisions.

The next step for the bill, which has 301 co-sponsors, to move forward in the House is for the Committee on Ways and Means to schedule a markup.

"NALC appreciates the subcommittee holding a hearing on this important legislation," President Renfroe said. "Far too many letter carriers and other public servants are victimized by the WEP and GPO. They work hard and pay into Social Security throughout their careers and deserve to receive the full benefits they have earned. We urge Chairman Jason Smith (R-MO) to prioritize this issue and hold a markup on H.R. 82.

NALC

Presidents Report Continued from page 2

Just about as soon as I hit send, a call came in from a Branch Delivery Unit.

Providing Assistance to Another Carrier

If you're instructed to carry part of another route, regardless of if you are sent to "look" another Carrier up and assist at the end of the day whether on "projected undertime" or for overtime, a PS Form 3996 should be provided to you indicating this additional work. If it's a message on the scanner request a PS form 3996 upon your return to the office. Either way make sure you fill out the bottom of PS Form 3996 showing both your travel and delivery times for whatever assistance you are carrying.

If you don't believe you can complete the work in the amount of time authorized, explain to the supervisor why this is true. For example, let's say you have a light day, and your supervisor tells you that you will be assigned an hour of work off your assignment to make up for your undertime. Let's also say you believe you have seven and a half hours of work on your own route after considering the time it will take to deliver your route, get back, and clean up compared to the time it would take you to travel to the route you are to assist deliver then return to the office. In this example, you believe the additional one hour of work that your supervisor wants to assign to you will cause you to work a half hour of overtime. Make sure to explain this clearly to the supervisor.

Then let's say the supervisor agrees that maybe you have a point and assigns you a 30-minute pivot but doesn't take into consideration the necessary travel time for the pivot or other factors. This should also be explained to the supervisor as these other factors will also cause you to be late.

If you can't get your supervisor to agree with you in either case, explain your position regarding your workload and handle this situation in the same manner as above. You should always notify management verbally and with a PS Form 3996 (if and when you are still in the office) whenever you believe additional work assigned to you because of projected undertime will cause you to work overtime. If your supervisor asks you again to explain why you needed the time (the next day/week) you'll have your copy of the PS Form 3996 and your notes to refer to. Oftentimes, supervisors record the extra time used over what was approved

in the morning as “unauthorized” overtime on PS Form 1017-B, Unauthorized Overtime Record.

This can be true whether management talks to you about it or not. If you think this is true in your case, request to see your shop Steward so they can investigate the matter and file a grievance on the improper use of the PS Form 1017-B if the extra time you worked after being instructed to finish the route is being recorded as “Unauthorized Overtime.”

Here is the short version: **1.** Verbally inform your manager that you can't make it in 8 hours. **2.** Follow your manager's instructions. **3.** If you still can't make it in 8 hours, request a PS Form 3996 from the supervisor and explain the reason(s) why you need one. **4.** Fill out the form completely and list the types of mail you have as well as any other circumstances that are present. **5.** Keep your cool and request a copy of your PS Form 3996. **6.** Don't argue with the supervisor or manager. **7.** Don't make decisions - that's what your supervisor or manager gets paid to do in our current system. Call back to the office for further instructions. Follow the instructions you are given. **8.** Handle requests for overtime or auxiliary assistance due to delivering on other routes in the same manner. Following these procedures makes it much easier to defend you if disciplined! You also make it possible for the union to pursue a grievance forcing management to stop recording this time as “unauthorized” in the first place, thereby avoiding a discipline situation altogether.

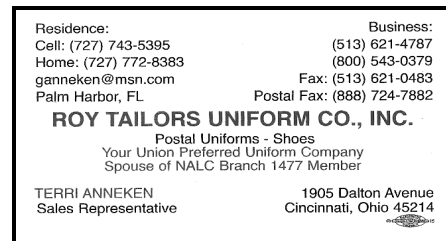
Without going into a detailed explanation of entitlement between the Overtime Desired List (ODL) and Work Assignment Only Carriers (WAO) to overtime now, let's just say, as a WAO Carrier, you have done all this in the morning and been approved to work an hour of overtime on your own assignment, when suddenly another Carrier arrives on your route with instructions to assist. Regardless of the morning estimate and overtime approval, you must follow the instructions of the manager. There are always avenues to address the matter through the grievance procedure. There is no justification for expressing frustration toward the employee instructed to assist. Save that for the grievance. There is not a good reason for the verbal abuse of anyone attempting to follow instructions they too were given by the supervisor. Doing so results in hard feelings and splits among Carriers on the workroom floor. You must take a deep breath; help prepare the mail for the assisting Carrier, organize your mail, equipment and return to the office.

The following day, when you begin tour, review the

workhour workload report posted in your unit, (the WH - WL posting is a requirement of the TIAREAP explained in the earlier article) to ensure you have been given credit for auxiliary assistance in that prior shift. politely request time to meet with your steward. Explain that you believe a violation of Article 8 occurred yesterday.

I was given this advice early on in my career: **1)** Every day is a route inspection. **2)** Always do it the same while on the street. **3)** Ask for what you need, use what you ask for. **4)** Do not let a supervisor's instruction divide the unit.

Thanks



Steward Meeting Attendees

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

November 30th:

Heather Manley, Donny DeMilta, Wyatt Stribling, Tiffany Naughton, Eric Short, Scott Archbold, Olbin Flores-Elvir, A.J. Pollard, Scott Held, Patrick Jaques, Mike Oster, Heather Vincent-Gates, Brian Andrews, Erica Baker, Ken Domingos, Suzette Brown, Kalani Mosman

South Meeting

December 20th:

Joe Henschen, Erica Baker, Chris Kotonski, Dennis Leach, Ingrid Heise

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Alt	Ken Domingos	(716) 598-1205
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Alt	Patrick Green	(813) 671-4770
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Gulfwinds 7,15	Olbin Flores-Elvir	(913) 671-0397
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St. Pete Main 14	Alan Pollard	(727) 667-4254
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Indian Rocks Bch	(Branch Hall)	(727) 531-1477
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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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February, 2024

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1 Executive Board	2	3
4	5 Pinellas Park Retiree Breakfast	6 St. Pete Retiree Breakfast	7 Largo Retiree Breakfast	8 General Membership Meeting	9	10
11	12	13	14	15 Steward's Meeting	16	17
18	19 Presidents' Day	20	21 South Branch Meeting	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29		