

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 656

VOICE OF BRANCH 1477

DECEMBER, 2024



**Happy Holidays From
Joe, Chris, Greg, TC
and the Executive Board**



ELECTION

The Branch By-Laws amended February 26, 2016, provide for the election of officers and delegates shall be held by Mail Balloting in accordance with the NALC Constitution and NALC Regulation governing Branch Elections Procedures. **The Election Date (by which all ballots must be received) will be the date of the Regular Branch Meeting on December 12, 2024.** Ballots will be mailed to the home addresses of eligible members no later than November 2, 2024.

Ballots must be mailed back to the Election Committee, PO Box 737, Pinellas Park, Florida, 33780 and must be received by 11 am, on December 12, 2024. The Election Committee will collect the ballots, bring them to the hall and begin the tally. Write-in votes are not permitted.


The President and Executive Vice President by virtue of their office, shall be Paid Delegates to the FSALC 2025 State Convention, which is August 14-16, 2025, held in Orlando, FL.

Open Season is November 11 – December 9, 2024.

The Federal Benefits Open Season ends at 11:59pm Eastern Time on Monday December 9, 2024, for the Federal Employees Dental and Vision Insurance Program (FEDVIP) and the Federal Flexible Spending Account Program (FSAFEDS). Open Season for the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program (FEHB) ends at 11:59pm, in the location of your electronic enrollment system, on Monday December 9, 2024.

Postal Service employees, Postal annuitants, and their eligible family members: You may continue to participate in the Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB) Program through December 31, 2024. Your first opportunity to select a plan under the new Postal Service Health Benefits (PSHB) Program will be during Open Season in 2024.

NEXT BRANCH MEETING AT THE HALL AND VIA ZOOM: THURSDAY, DECEMBER 12, 2024

<p>Inside This Issue:</p> <p>President's Report by Joe Henschen 2-3</p> <p>Executive Vice President article—Hubble's Troubles by Chris Hubble 3-5</p> <p>Minutes of the Branch by Recording/Financial Secretary Ken Grasso 5-6</p> <p>Union's Data Page 7</p> <p>Calendar 8</p>	 <h1 style="margin: 0;">PRESIDENT'S REPORT</h1> <p style="margin: 0;"><i>By President Joe Henschen</i></p> <p style="margin: 0;"><i>Twitter @ JaHe1</i></p>
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There have been constant calls to the hall relating to the United Parcel Service's current contract and wondering how does the Tentative Agreement match up to it. The information below came from Florida State Chair, and Branch 2008 President Al Friedman whose daughter and son-in-law work for UPS. Then I've added the USPS comparisons.

Let's break down the UPS contract to see if it stands up to the TA in wages and benefits.

UPS: First how are they different? **60%** of the 500,000 employees are part-time.

USPS: Contractually the number of City Carrier Assistants who may be employed in any reporting period shall not exceed 15% of the total number of Full-time Career City Carriers in that District. Additionally, for changes in the business environment, 8,000 CCAs may be hired. The number of such City Carrier Assistants who may be employed in any reporting period shall not exceed 8% of the total number of Full-time Career City Carriers in that District. (23%)

UPS: Starting pay for Part-time today is \$21.00 an hour, with a minimum of 3 hours and a maximum of 5 hours per day. The average time to make full-time is 4 to 6 years.

USPS: Starting Pay after ratification \$22.13, working Full time hours. The time to conversion to Full time is 24 months or less depending on the Installation and residual vacancies.

UPS: Starting Full-time driver pay today is \$23.00 per hour as a cover driver, which means if there are no routes to drive you work in the warehouse.

USPS: A City Carrier working at Step G would be \$28.07 after ratification, having worked Full time hours for 4.42 years.

UPS: After 4 years as a cover driver your pay is increased to \$38.00.

USPS: After another 4 years as a City Carrier pay would increase to \$34.11 after ratification.

UPS: All employees receive 9 Paid holidays.

USPS: Career receives 11 paid holidays with CCAs receiving 7 paid holidays after ratification.

UPS: They receive NO COLA raises, only contractual raises.

UPS: DOSEN'T offer a 401K match, only a discount to buy their stock.

USPS: A FERS employee may contribute a percentage of basic pay up to a maximum of 10 percent or a whole dollar amount which does not exceed 10 percent of basic pay. Contributions are withheld each pay period. Employees receive an automatic contribution of 1% of the basic pay. Additional contributions are matched dollar for dollar for the first 5% of contributions and 5% for contributions above 5% and less than 10%.

UPS: Every 2 years all driver's routes go up for bid, and bidding is by seniority.

USPS: No real "retirement" routes.

UPS: There is no ODL list, all overtime is volunteered by seniority daily.

USPS: The Tentative Agreement creates 3 separate overtime desired lists i.e., working up to 12 hours on

regular scheduled days, those wanting to work 8 hours on their NS Days, and those wanting both. There was no change to Work Assignment Overtime Lists.

UPS: Paid vacation starts with 3-9 years and is 2 weeks and 5 option days.

USPS: Category 4, less than 3 years 4 hours for each full biweekly pay period, i.e., 104 hours (13 days) per 26-period leave year. The 13 days of leave is available in the first year rather than waiting 3 years for a vacation. Category 6, 3 years but less than 15 years 6 hours for each full biweekly pay period plus 4 hours in last full pay period in calendar year, i.e., 160 hours (20 days) per 26-period leave year.

UPS: After 15 years, 4 weeks, and 7 option days.

USPS Category 8, 15 years or more. 8 hours for each full biweekly pay period, i.e., 208 hours (26 days) per 26-period leave year.

UPS: After 20 years, 5 weeks, and 7 option days.

UPS: After 25 years 6 weeks, and 7 option day.

UPS: **THERE ARE NO SICK LEAVE DAYS!** They use the option days to call in sick.

USPS: Full-time employees. 4 hours for each full biweekly pay period — i.e., 13 days (104 hours) per 26-period leave year. Part-time employees. 1 hour for each unit of 20 hours in pay status up to 104 hours (13 days) per 26-period leave year.

UPS: If you run out of OPTION days and call in sick, it's without pay.

USPS: This is protection from serious illness or injury off the job.

UPS: At The beginning of the year, you must pick all your vacation leave, and you can't cancel any of it, ~~once picked~~ you must take it.

UPS: There are NO vacation days to carry over, if you still have option days you will get paid out for those days.

USPS: Leave Carryover. A Letter Carrier may carry over up to 440 hours (55 days) of accumulated annual leave from one leave year to the next. That number is adjusted per memorandums of understanding re: 520 hours in 2020.

UPS: Top-pay drivers under the new contract were at \$41.00 an hour, by the end of their contract in **2028** they will be at \$49.00 an hour.

USPS: Step P Carriers upon ratification will be at

\$39.03, by the end of the contract will be at \$40.36 as of November of 2026, while already bargaining for another contract.

Retirement at UPS, whatever age you retire has the formula to figure out how much based on your years and salary on the job.

USPS: Retirement is based on 3 prongs, the annuity funded by the USPS, your TSP account and matching contributions, and Social Security. It is transparent, you can monitor your account anytime.

Once you retire only you and your spouse have health care coverage.

Once you are eligible for Medicare, UPS doesn't offer any more health insurance.

USPS: in the Postal Reorganization Act, you can take your PSHB health plan into retirement virtually eliminating health care expense.



Hubble's Troubles

*By Executive Vice President,
Chris Hubble*

Darkness in and of itself...

So, on November 5th, we found ourselves once again dealing with delivering mail beyond the "gloom of night". With the later starting times, we'll have Carriers ending tour no earlier than 17:50 for an 8-hour day ... around the same time the sun sets.

There is no blanket policy regarding delivery after dark because the issue to contend with is whether a particular Carrier on a particular route can safely deliver the mail. It comes to this; each Carrier must weigh individual circumstances about the type of delivery and surroundings.

Working in the dark does not just mean working without light either. One of the reasons that working in the dark causes problems for us is because a flickering light source causes the pupils to have to constrict and dilate many times quickly, and repeatedly. The light source could be a headlamp, which by the way is not a requirement for the Letter Carrier craft. It could be turning the interior lights on and off in your vehicle prior to attempting a delivery. Working in the dark also means limited visibility meaning hazards and areas of risk can often be missed. Perhaps it is the work we do all the time but on an unfamiliar route. There is a temptation to push through the darker months without adequate

consideration for maintaining a safe working environment.

The point is, when you take away the light, you add risk. Darkness can contribute to an unsafe situation. For example: You are on a walking route, it is not well lit, and you trip over a crack in the sidewalk and, a few feet later, you stumble over something else. Studies have shown that the chance of being involved in a workplace accident can be up to 36% higher during hours of darkness, which highlights the importance of maintaining a safe working environment during “Daylight Savings Time”.

There are several things you can do to keep safe while delivering when it is dark. Be proactive, what could you be doing differently? Perhaps changing the line of travel so that at the end of the day, you may have more deliveries that are well lit. If you are on a walking route and it is not well lit, then you may want to avoid cutting across lawns, especially if you are unfamiliar with the route. You want to walk where it is safest. If the area is not well lit, it becomes more difficult to finger the mail while walking since you may not be able to see the addresses and/or delivery alert cards and look where you are walking. It becomes more difficult to tell where the barking dog is when it is dark. A patron may mistake you for a trespasser. You are the only one who can keep yourself safe.

Arbitrators have ruled that “**darkness in and of itself is not unsafe**”. In addition, arbitrators have generally approached the question of whether employees are justified for refusing to work in a particular place or in a particular fashion because of what the employee believes are unsafe conditions. First, there is the “**iron rule**” (JCAM page 41-27) stating that an employee must “*obey now and grieve later.*” Second, there is a narrow exception to that rule which permits an employee to disobey where he or she has a reasonable or good-faith belief that to obey would cause imminent danger to life or limb. A mere belief that a safety hazard exists is usually insufficient reason to disobey an order.

The “*obey now and grieve later*” is clear. If instructed to continue and/or return to the street, attempt to do so. If the hazard(s) still exist and you choose to bring back the mail because you feel unsafe, you will need to be able to defend the decision with specific safety problems on the deliveries you brought back on a PS Form 1767 Report of Hazard, Unsafe Condition or Practice.

That said, darkness could contribute to hazardous conditions. Section 133.1 of the M-41 applies to all unsafe conditions including dogs, road hazards, faulty equipment, and weather, among others. It states: Always exercise care to avoid personal injury and report all hazardous conditions to the unit manager. (See part 812 for vehicle safety)

While Carriers should not curtail or eliminate any scheduled delivery, sometimes safety concerns will limit opportunities for safe delivery. In the event you attempt and are unsuccessful in safely accessing a delivery point, Carriers should always report the situation to management and complete a PS Form 1571, Undelivered Mail Report. Enter the circumstances related to the curtailment of mail, sign the form, attach it to the mail, and give it to the supervisor or manager on duty. Under Article 41.3.g of the National Agreement, Letter Carriers are entitled to a duplicate of the PS Form 1571 and should always request a copy.

It is management’s responsibility to provide a safe environment for work. It is not the intent of any Carrier or of this branch to endorse or encourage the unnecessary curtailment of any mail. It is about each Carrier’s safety and the protection of the mail in our charge and management’s responsibility to manage.

In addition to working in the dark, you may find yourself in a position in which you reach the 12-hour and/or the 60-hour work limit.

JCAM page 8-19 explains:

Maximum Hours-60 Hour Limit. *National Arbitrator Mittenthal ruled in H4N-NA-C 21 “Fourth Issue,” June 9, 1986 (C-06238) that the 12-hour and 60-hour limits are absolutes—a full-time employee may neither volunteer nor be required to work beyond those limits. This rule applies to all full-time employees on the ODL or Work Assignment List except during the Penalty Overtime Exclusion Period (December).*

Limitations regarding full-time employees not on the ODL or Work Assignment List, PTFs, and CCAs are governed by ELM Section 432.32. ELM Section 432.32 rules apply during the penalty overtime exclusion period (December). (Step 4, E94N-4E-C 96031540, February 25, 1998, M-01272).

The 12/60 limitations are inclusive of all hours, including any type of leave taken, consistent with the 20-hour overtime limit (see M-00859 below).

Accordingly, holiday leave pay is credited toward the 12/60 limitation. Additionally, if an employee works on a holiday for which holiday leave is paid, those hours worked in excess of the holiday leave hours paid would also count toward the 12/60 limit (Step 4, 190N-4I-C-94023487, June 9, 1994, M-01180).

In H4N-NA-C 21 “Third Issue,” September 11, 1987 (C-07323) Arbitrator Mittenthal ruled that an employee sent home in the middle of a scheduled day, because of the bar against employees working more than 60 hours in a service week, is entitled to be paid for the remainder of his or her scheduled day.

A recent St. Petersburg Installation Step B Decision

reads in relevant part:

This language makes clear the 12-hour and 60-hour limits are absolute, and no employee may volunteer, or be required to work beyond those limits. The parties agree that once an employee reaches their daily or weekly maximum hours, said employee is permitted to end tour and shall face no adverse action for doing so.

Again, if you do find yourself in a position in which you do return to the office with mail, report it to your supervisor and complete a PS Form 1571 to document the curtailed mail.

Being cautious costs you nothing. Lack of cautiousness can cost you your life.

Minutes of November 14, 2024 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 the previous meeting: Motion to accept September's minutes by Terry Johnson, seconded by O.D. Elliott. Motion passes. Motion to accept October's minutes by Kyle Garlow, seconded by Scott Archbold. Motion passes. A member then mentioned an issue about the procedure needed to make a motion to change a bylaw. President Henschen explained briefly on the process.

Application of New Members: by Ken Grasso –

- Timothy Himes—Largo
- Angel Warf—Largo
- Evince Lucius—St. Pete
- Cody Chesser—St. Pete

- Gabriella Colon—Ellenton
- Akeem Thompson—St. Pete
- Jukobi Gamble—St. Pete
- James King—St. Pete
- Geoffrey Beattie—St. Pete
- Francis Bohan—St. Pete
- Courtney Webb—St. Pete
- Edwin Berio—Largo

Branch by the Numbers: As of the PP 19 dues roster, 788 Active 771 Members paying dues. Retirees 558 (125 Gold Cards) – 1346 Total Members.

Recognize from Absolute Quality Interpreting Services Kelly Bins.

President Henschen then addressed the Finance Committee and Trustees with and apology after last month's meeting where a member was questioning the books. We are fully transparent as a branch, and anyone is welcome to attend an audit with the trustees.

Treasurer: Chuck Cavicchio—Read ending balances for October. Motion to accept Treasurer's Report by Eric Short, seconded by Kyle Garlow Motion passes.

Director of Retiree Affairs: O.D. Elliott—Been receiving calls about keeping their health insurance for the upcoming year. The short answer is you do not have to do anything. COLA in January for CSRS retirees is 2.5% and 2.0% for FERS retirees.

Director of Insurance: Tom Phillips—Open Enrollment starts November 11 through Dec 9. You can call me if you have any questions about signing up. No Eye Glass Plan payouts for October.

Trustee Report: Brian Andrews—Trustees are meeting on Sunday. You must use any money in your FSA account.

Vice President Report: Greg Welsh—Briefly talked about the Tentative Agreement. Retirement is worth all the stuff you are going through now.

Executive Vice President: Chris Hubble—We processed 72 cases at Informal A. 6 cases appealed to Formal A, 4 cases appealed to Step B.

Welfare Reports:

Sad:

- Bob Peters, Retiree St. Pete—Passed away.
- Richard Sutton, Retiree—Passed away.
- Eugene Wilzinski. Retiree St. Pete Beach—Passed away.

Glad:

CCA Promotions

Karen Peck—Largo
Paul Fenochietti—Seminole
Jim LaBlanc—Largo
John Sonoga—Largo
Laurance Deleon—Seminole

Presidents Report:

On November 12, the House of Representatives passed the Social Security Fairness Act in a 327-75 vote. H.R. 82 that would repeal the Windfall Elimination Provision and the Government Pension Offset. The identical Senate companion bill (S.597) has 62 bipartisan cosponsors which is enough to pass. Time to reach out to your senators and encourage them to pass this bill.

The Executive Board has recommended we send a combination of 15 delegates and members for training to the FSALC State Convention August 14-16, 2025, in Orlando Florida. Motion by Terry Johnson, seconded by Greg Welsh. Motion passes. Region 9 is having a Summer Legislative/Contract Training, we will discuss later.

FSALC State Convention August 14-16, 2025, will be in Orlando at the Double Tree across from Universal Studios.

Nominations of Delegates to the FSALC State Convention: They are listed on the ballot in the order that they were drawn:

1. Donny DeMilta
2. Joe Henschen
3. Sandra Pagan
4. Wyatt Stribling
5. Sheldon Jones
6. Patrick Jacques
7. Javier Urrutia
8. Jody Dodd
9. Tiffany Naughton
10. Patrice Cannonier
11. Nadir Alwani
12. O.D. Elliott
13. Shiela Bradley
14. Kalani Workmen
15. Daevid Brown
16. Erica Baker
17. Jim Bumbul
18. Suzette Brown
19. Anthony Roger
20. Brian Andrews
21. Scott Archbold
22. Ken Grasso

23. David Mills
24. Chris Kotonski
25. Scott Held
26. Kyle Garlow
27. Ken Domingos
28. Laurann Rose
29. Chuck Cavicchio
30. Eric Short
31. AJ Pollard
32. Greg Welsh

Proposed Bylaw Change Read “BRANCH 1477 NALC EYE GLASS PLAN” will be discussed and voted on at the November General Membership Meeting. This Bylaw change proposes to change the amount of reimbursement for members from \$60 to \$70 per application per year. The Bylaw change proposes to change the amount of reimbursement for dependents from \$ 50 to \$60 per application per year. Voting took place with Proposed Bylaw being passed 38 yes, 2 no.

The Branch received some correspondence from the NALCREST Retirement Homes. They are asking for donations to help with the cost of painting the buildings. The Executive Board recommends we donate \$2000 from the General Fund to cover the cost of a 4 plex building. Motion by O.D. Elliott, seconded by Kyle Garlow. Motion passes.

At the 2024 National Convention in Boston, the delegates had to put the names of their guests on the delegate list. With 3 of the delegates not all the guests came to the convention. The hotel charged those extra people and the delegates were not aware of the extra cost. The Executive Board recommended that the Branch absorbs the extra charges for a total of \$465.86. Motion by O.D. Elliott, seconded by Tom Phillips. Motion passes.

Door Prize Drawing: Lotto – Scratch Off Ticket

Laurann Rose
AJ Pollard



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Tom Phillips. (727) 458-4127

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Eric Short. (727) 251-9846

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Shiela Bradley. (813) 335-7783

Brian Andrews. (941) 807-5669

Patrick Jacques. (727) 218-2721

STEWARDS OF BRANCH 1477

St. Petersburg:

Crossroads 9	Jody Dodd	(727) 768-2562
Crossroads 10	Heather Gates	(727) 460-8852
Alt 9 & 10	Ken Domingos	(716) 598-1205
Euclid	Wyatt Stribling	(727) 480-6121
Alt	Patrick Green	(813) 671-4770
Gateway	Jillian Iuliucci	(727) 458-1623
Gulfwinds 7,15	Olbin Flores-Elvir	(913) 671-0397
Gulfwinds 11	The Hall	(727) 531-1477
Alt	Olbin Flores-Elvir	(913) 671-0397
Madeira Beach	Patrick Jacques	(727) 218-2721
Midtown 5	Javier Urrutia	(813) 484-2499
Alt	Janice Pantoja	(813) 385-7000
Midtown 12	Patrice Cannonier	(786) 200-0957
Alt	Gary Johnson	(316) 209-3764
Northside 2	Tiffany Naughton	(727) 642-5466
Northside 16	David Mills	(727) 677-8992
Alt	Javier Urrutia	(813) 484-2499
Open Air	Scott Archbold	(727) 422-4766
Alt	Dan O'Dell	(941) 315-0699
St. Pete Beach	Laurann Rose	(727) 525-6920
Alt	Jacob Lovelace	(618) 477-6492
St. Pete Main 13	Anthony Roger	(813) 574-9971
St. Pete Main 14	Alan Pollard	(727) 667-4254
Alt	Anthony Roger	(813) 574-9971

Bradenton Bch	Brian Andrews	(941) 807-5669
Dunedin	Scott Held	(727) 418-5742
Alt	Chuck Cavicchio	(727) 798-8506
Ellenton	Jocelyn Pagan	(646) 417-0392
Englewood	Jon Robinson	(740) 919-7687
Indian Rocks Bch	Tim Cox	(727) 481-5348
Largo 70/71/73/78	Daavid Brown	(727) 657-5606
Alt	Eric Short	(727) 251-9846
Palmetto	Sheldon Jones	(941) 580-1058
Pinellas Park 81/82	Heather Manley	(727) 244-0665
Punta Gorda	Chris Kotonski	(330) 212-1777
PC Annex	Erica Baker	(941) 661-5196
Seminole 72/74	Eric Short	(727) 251-9846
Alt	Donny DeMilta	(727) 430-4413
Seminole 76/77	Donny DeMilta	(727) 430-4413
Alt	Eric Short	(727) 251-9846

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District 13: Tom Phillips (727) 458-4127
District 15: Gene Carroll (727) 742-1640

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



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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

December, 2024

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2 Pinellas Park Retiree Breakfast	3 St. Pete Retiree Breakfast	4 Largo Retiree Breakfast	5 Executive Board Meeting	6	7
8	9	10	11	12 General Membership Meeting	13	14
15	16	17	18	19 Steward's Meeting	20	21
22	23	24	25 Christmas Day	26	27	28
29	30	31				