

The Twig of the Branch



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VOLUME 667

VOICE OF BRANCH 1477

DECEMBER, 2025



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



ELECTION

The Branch Bylaws 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 11, 2025.** Ballots will be mailed to the home addresses of eligible members no later than November 20, 2025.

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 11, 2025. 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 NALC 2026 National Convention, which is August 3-7, 2026, held in Los Angeles, CA.

Open Season is November 10 – December 8, 2025.

The Federal Benefits Open Season ends at 11:59 pm Eastern Time on Monday December 8, 2025, 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 11:59 pm, in the location of your electronic enrollment system, on Monday December 8, 2025.

NEXT BRANCH MEETING AT THE HALL AND VIA ZOOM: THURSDAY, DECEMBER 11, 2025

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PRESIDENT'S REPORT

By President Joe Henschen

Twitter @ JaHe1

Looking Back, Preparing to Move Forward....

Without a doubt 2026 will bring a number of challenges for Letter Carriers locally as well as across the entire organization. Although it is not easy to navigate constant attempts at rule changes and issues in the workplace for the first time, most of these challenges will be nothing senior Carriers have not faced before.

What is different are the challenges we face with attempts to change the structure of the entire United States Postal Service. Not all workplaces have a mechanism in place to address issues that arise but thanks to our rights afforded us in the collective bargaining agreement, we do. With collective bargaining aside from our benefits that have been negotiated and are universal throughout the entire country, we have the right to address issues by filing a grievance to address violations of our rights.

Experienced Shop Stewards and Officers know that some of the workplace problems brought to their attention are clearly not grievances, for instance, purely personal disagreements between two Letter Carriers. Others such as severe disciplinary actions obviously are grievable. Many, if not most problems however fall somewhere in between these two extremes and may sometimes be difficult to pigeonhole.

The National Agreement defines a grievance as follows:

A grievance is defined as a dispute, difference, disagreement or complaint between the parties related to wages, hours and conditions of employment. A grievance shall include, but is not limited to, the complaint of an employee or of the Union which involves the interpretation, application of or compliance with the provisions of this agreement or any local Memorandum of Understanding not in conflict with the agreement.

This language explains that most grievances will involve the National Agreement or a Local Memorandum of Understanding. However other types of disputes that may be handled within the grievance procedure may include violations of one of the many postal handbooks or manuals, or of enforceable agreements between the NALC and USPS such as the Joint Statement on Violence and Behavior in the Workplace.

Decisions of the Office of Workers' Compensations Programs (OWCP) are not grievable matters. OWCP has the exclusive authority to adjudicate compensation claims, and to determine the medical suitability of proposed limited duty assignments. Disputes concerning the rights of ill or injured employees, such as claims concerning fitness-for-duty exams, first aid treatment, and compliance with regulations concerning OWCP claims, may all be addressed in the Grievance Procedure.

This is a very vanilla description of what is and what isn't a grievance. It's the gray area between them and are the most difficult for some new Stewards to navigate. The leadership of the Branch sets aside the third Thursday of each month specifically for Steward education. These training classes, although mandatory for Stewards, are dedicated to contract information and grievance handling, and are open to any member that wants to attend.

Additionally, NALC Region 9 which represents City Letter Carriers in Florida, Georgia, North and South Carolina has implemented an extensive education program that is offered throughout the year. Branch 1477 has scheduled a number of our Stewards and Officers for participation in these courses to help the Steward identify issues as they occur. Allowing violations of the contract to happen even once, most always make it take place again. It is every member's responsibility to communicate with the Branch Stewards and Officers to ensure this does not happen.



Hubble's Troubles

*By Executive Vice President,
Chris Hubble*

About the NALC and the Constitution.....

The National Association of Letter Carriers (NALC) is the sole representative of City Delivery Letter Carriers employed by the U.S. Postal Service.

Since it was founded in Milwaukee in 1889, the NALC has had a long and distinguished history of defending the rights of Letter Carriers before abusive supervisors, unfair presidential administrations and indifferent Congresses. The NALC is the only force that fights to protect the interests of City Letter Carriers.

On March 17, 1970, Letter Carriers in New York City led a general postal strike against what was then known as the Post Office Department to protest poverty-level wages. Carriers and other postal workers throughout metropolitan New York—and soon in other cities across the country—followed suit. This successful strike by nearly a quarter-million Postal Workers led to the August 12, 1970 signing of the Postal Reorganization Act which, among other things, gave NALC the authority to bargain collectively for National Agreements with the newly created United States Postal Service.

The NALC is governed both by the **NALC Constitution** and by the will of delegates to NALC's biennial national conventions.

The NALC's democracy is firmly rooted in a written constitution that spells out election procedures, officers' duties, convention responsibilities, and other key matters.

NALC's constitution has evolved over the years to meet the Union's changing needs and to strengthen members' control over Union affairs.

The **NALC Constitution** sets the governance structure for the national organization, including National Officers and local branches. It also contains provisions related to state Letter Carrier Associations, the U.S. Letter Carriers Mutual Benefit Association and the NALC Health Benefit Plan.

The constitution requires NALC to hold a National Convention of elected Delegates from every branch

every two years. The convention is the Union's supreme governing body. The convention may amend the constitution. In addition to considering amendments, Delegates at the convention discuss key issues in standing committees and set national policy for NALC. In addition, Delegates to every other convention nominate National Officers for election to four-year terms.

If you as a member would like more control over Union affairs, not just at the National level but at the local level too.....

scan the QR code
and read the



**CONSTITUTION for the
Government of Subordinate and Federal
Branches.**

Minutes of November 13, 2025 Membership Meeting



**Recording/Financial
Secretary**
Ken Grasso

Meeting called to order at 7:02 p.m. by President Joe Henschen.

Invocation: Greg Welsh.

Pledge of Allegiance: led by President Joe Henschen.

Minutes of previous meeting: Motion to accept previous minutes of last month's meeting as printed in the November Twig, by Jim Bumbul, seconded by Anthony Roger. Motion passes.

Branch by Numbers: As of the latest dues roster, 755 Active Per Capita, 735 Members paying dues. Retirees 565 (123 Gold Cards) – 1320 Total Members.

Recognize Interpreters: Kelli Bins and Katy Gyan.

At this time, we will take Nominations of Officers for the 2026-2028 Term of Office and Nominations for Delegate to the 2026 National Biennial Convention. The Finance committee recommends we send a total of 15 to the National Convention. Motion by Eric Short, seconded by O.D. Elliott. Motion passes.

President Henschen handed the podium over to Vice President Greg Welsh to begin nominations for President.

Nominations for the Office of President: (Listed how they will appear on the Ballot)

- (1) Chris Hubble
- (2) Joe Henschen

Podium handed back to President Henschen.

Nominations for the Office of Executive Vice President:

- (1) Anthony Roger is elected Executive Vice President by acclamation.

Nominations for the Office of Vice President:

- (1) Greg Welsh
- (2) Alan Pollard Jr.

Nominations for the Office of Recording/Financial Secretary:

- (1) Ken Grasso is elected Recording/Financial Secretary by acclamation.

Nominations for the Office of Treasurer:

- (1) Chuck Cavicchio is elected Treasurer by acclamation.

Nominations for the Office of Editor:

- (1) Daevid Brown
- (2) Jillian Iulucci

Nominations for the Office of Director of Retiree Affairs:

- (1) O.D Elliot is elected Director of Retiree Affairs by acclamation.

Nominations for the Office of Director of Insurance:

- (1) Tom Phillips is elected Director of Insurance by acclamation.

Nominations for the Office of Sergeant at Arms:

- (1) Donny DeMilta is elected Sergeant at Arms by acclamation.

Nominations for the Office of Trustee: (Vote for 3)

- (1) Shiela Bradley
- (2) Brian Andrews
- (3) Patrick Jacques
- (4) Eric Short

Nominations for Delegate to the 2026 National Biennial Convention

The following members were nominated for Delegate and will appear on the ballot in the following order:

- (1). O.D. Elliott
- (2) Chuck Cavicchio
- (3). Greg Welsh
- (4). Wyatt Stribling
- (5). Ken Grasso
- (6). Anthony Roger
- (7). Tiffany Naughton
- (8). Donny Demilta
- (9). Eric Short
- (10). Jim Bumbul
- (11). Tom Phillips
- (12). Alan Pollard
- (13). Patrick Jacques
- (14). Brian Andrews
- (15). Daevid Brown
- (16). Scott Archbold
- (17). Chris Hubble
- (18). Joe Henschen
- (19). Karen Peck
- (20). Javier Urrutia
- (21). Nadia Alwani
- (22). Laurann Rose
- (23) Jillian Iulucci
- (24). Ken Domingos
- (25). Shiela Bradley
- (26). Scott Held

Reports of Officers:

Treasurer: Chuck Cavicchio—Read ending balances for October, A CD comes due next month offering 3.8% renewal. Finance Committee met and recommended keeping CD at Grow Financial for 10 months at 3%. Reallocate Auto Fund (\$31,368.36 into these 4 accounts: \$10,351.56 into Payroll, \$10,665.24 into General Fund, \$5,175.78 into Convention Fund, \$5,175.78 into Entertainment Fund. Motion to accept Treasurer's Report by O.D. Elliott, seconded by Javier Urrutia. Motion passes. Finance committee recommended what is available in the Auto Fund checkbook which is \$16,169.80 and split it between Building Fund and Convention each totaling \$8,084.80 and do this at the end of the year. Motion by Patrick Jacques, seconded by Terry Johnson. Motion passes.

Director of Insurance: Tom Phillips—Spent 3 days at the Health Benefit Seminar in Orlando, went over some of the differences between BCBS and NALC Insurance. NALC No longer allows other Federal employees to join our Health Plan due to OPM higher costs for us if we include them.

Political District 13 Liaison: Tom Phillips—Need more cosponsors on bill HR 1065 Protect our Letter Carriers Act, HR 70 Oppose Postal Privatization and Senate Bill 1522 Fairness Act and several other important bills.

Vice President Report: Greg Welsh—Most Fridays I get to meet with new CCAs and give them a chance to sign up to be a Union member. Thank those who are working for you.

Executive Vice President Report: Chris Hubble—Grievance Workload since last meeting

Grievance Workload since our last meeting: 70 Informal A, 27 sent to Formal A, 21 appealed to Step B for total of 118 files processed.

Welfare Reports:

Sad:

- Joe Foster, Retiree St. Pete—Wife passed away.
- Jackie Davenport, Carrier Crossroads—Had shoulder Surgery.
- Russell Hertlein, Northside—Had shoulder surgery.
- Mike Morcillo, Retiree St. Pete—Had shoulder surgery.
- Nicole Dudley, St. Pete—Grandfather passed away.
- Oria Allen, Open Air—Sister was hospitalized.

Glad:

Janel Redmond, Seminole—Had a baby.

Promotions:

- Gabriella Colon—Ellenton was promoted to PTF 10/18/25. (24-month conversion)
- Marlena Ashley—Seminole was promoted to PTF.
- We have added 7 more ORNA UARs making a total of 24 promotions.

Retirees:

Patty Gamble—Midtown

Ralph Mezzi—Crossroads

President's Report

Last Thursday we had NALC National President Brian Renfroe held a Virtual Meeting to communicate a planned Food Drive to assist the Local Food Banks that have been hit hard by the Government Shut Down. It is going to be awhile before the pantry's are back to serving the communities. The Plan is to raise funds for these organizations and donate to each of our Banks. Monies raised will be matched by the NALC and contributed directly to the Food Bank or Pantry we select. Our Executive Board will be looking into this to see if we can participate in it to raise money for these Pantry's. We work with 4 Food Banks during the regular Stamp out Hunger Food Drive.

South Branch Meeting

Due to the holidays, we have arranged to hold a South Branch meeting on Wednesday December 3 at 6:30 P.M.

During our last Executive Board meeting we discussed campaign ads being put in the Union Newsletter. After learning our National Union does not recommend putting campaign ads in the newsletter, the Executive Board has ruled that no Campaign Ads will be printed in the Newsletter. All reasonable requests to distribute campaign literature at a candidate's expense will be honored.

Today President Henschen cleared the Post Office Box. It contained 61 ballots cancelled between 11/7 and 11/30/2024. It contained 11 ballots cancelled between 12/7 and 12/14/2024 and 7 ballots cancelled after 12/14/2024. Most of the postmarks were 335. This was very troubling and will be addressed with the MPOO at Tampa.

Door Prize Drawing: Lotto – Scratch Off Ticket

Nadir Alwani



Retiree Update

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

Since repeal of the Windfall Elimination and Pension offset bill, beginning in January of 2025, Civil Service (CSRS) retirees who had previously been getting only approximately 40% of any Social Security to which they were entitled, began getting the full amount retroactive to January 2024. Since then, I have received several calls from affected retirees who weren't aware of the repeal and were concerned about this sudden increase. I mentioned in a recent article that I assisted with the retirement papers of a Civil Service carrier retiring after 44 years of service. He stated that he had never worked anywhere but the Postal Service, but his wife received a significant amount from Social Security. He thought he would be entitled to some of her Social Security if she predeceased him. I pointed out he is entitled now to an amount equal to ½ of what she gets in Social Security.

Recently, I received a call from one of our women CSRS retirees. She stated that after retiring in 2012, she worked another job to get Social Security benefits. When she applied for Social Security, she began receiving just over \$200 a month (40% of what she would be entitled to once the Windfall Elimination and Pension Offset Act was repealed. Her husband who was deceased had been getting approximately \$1400 a month in Social Security. In 2025, after the repeal of the Windfall Elimination and Pension Offset went into effect, she began receiving the \$1400 her husband had been receiving before he passed away. She also began receiving an additional \$500 a month which represented the change to the Social Security she had been receiving. She felt it was incorrect to receive the \$1400 her husband had been receiving plus the additional \$500. She contacted an attorney who told her there was no problem, that she was now entitled to the amount her husband had been receiving, plus the additional based upon her own Social Security earnings. She contacted me, because she didn't feel the attorney had given her correct information. I told her she was right, that because of the repeal of the Pension Offset, she would be entitled to the \$1400 her husband had been receiving, but not the \$500 she would have been entitled to based upon her own Social Security earnings. I suggested she set the \$500 per month aside in an interest-bearing account, because once Social Security caught the mistake, they would bill her for that extra. I contacted the NALC Retirement

Department to make sure I gave her correct advice. Nina in the Retirement Department said setting the extra amount aside in an interest-bearing account was good, but also suggested she write a letter to Social Security explaining the situation and mail it Certified with a return receipt so that she would have written record of notifying them of the mistake.

Should any of our CSRS retirees still have questions concerning Social Security benefits, please contact me or the NALC Retirement Dept.

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

Steward Meeting Attendees

**Meetings are held at on Zoom and led by
President Joe Henschen and Executive Vice
President Chris Hubble.**

November 20th:

Laurann Rose, Scott Archbold, Eric Short,
Wyatt Stribling, Jody Dodd, Karen Peck,
Scott Held, Jillian Iuliucci, Tim Cox,
Javier Urrutia, Donny DeMilla, Daavid Brown,
Brian Andrews, Eria Baker, Al Baldwin,
Olbin Flores-Elvir, Anthony Roger, AJ Pollard,
Patrick Jacques, Ken Domingos,

South Meeting Attendees

October 23rd:

Lisa Barth, Dean Kauffman, Erica Donaldson,
Sam Haddad, Steve Delceg, Rui Almeida, Josh
LaGrew, Joseph Bailey, Chris Kotonski,
Joe Henschen, Chris Hubble

BRANCH 1477 PHONE DIRECTORY

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DIRECTOR OF RETIREE AFFAIRS

O.D. Elliott. (727) 608-6027

DIRECTOR OF INSURANCE

Tom Phillips. (727) 458-4127

SERGEANT AT ARMS

Eric Short. (727) 251-9846

TRUSTEES:

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	Ken Domingos	(716) 598-1205
Euclid	Wyatt Stribling	(727) 480-6121
Gateway	Jillian Iuliucci	(727) 458-1623
Gulfwinds 7,11,15	Olbin Flores-Elvir	(913) 671-0397
Madeira Beach	Patrick Jacques	(727) 218-2721
Midtown 5	Al Baldwin	(727) 754-0199
Alt	Tony Cook	(727) 244-3194
Midtown 12	Gary Johnson	(316) 209-3764
Northside 2	Tiffany Naughton	(727) 642-5466
Northside 16	Javiar Urrutia	(813) 484-2499
Open Air	Nadir Alwani	(813) 305-6136
Alt	Scott Archbold	(727) 422-4766
St. Pete Beach	Laurann Rose	(727) 226-3291
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	Devin Price	(803) 944-2706
Ellenton	The Hall	(727) 531-1477
Englewood	Josh LaGrew	(763) 232-8954
Indian Rocks Bch	Tim Cox	(727) 481-5348
Largo 71/78	Daavid Brown	(727) 657-5606
Largo 70/73	Karen Peck	(727) 418-1990
Palmetto	Sheldon Jones	(941) 580-1058
Pinellas Park 81/82	Javier Urrutia	(813) 484-2499
Punta Gorda	Erica Donaldson	(941) 661-5196
PC Annex	Erica Donaldson	(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

Congressional Liaisons:

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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December, 2025

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