

# 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 657

VOICE OF BRANCH 1477

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## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

*By President Joe Henschen*

*Twitter @ JaHe1*

2025 certainly looks as if there will be some challenges for us as we are without a Route Adjustment Process agreement that allows for Branch participation. We have been given notice that several St. Peterburg offices will be inspected in the coming months in a unilateral process outlined in the M-39 Management of Delivery Services Handbook.

As we begin January we have St. Petersburg Northside 33702, 33716 scheduled for the Week of April 26<sup>th</sup>, and Gulfwinds 33707, 33711 and 33715 scheduled for the week of May 17<sup>th</sup>. With more to be scheduled in the fall I am sure.

The St. Petersburg S&DC 33713 and 33714 zones scheduled for the week of April 12<sup>th</sup>, will be evaluated under an Alternate Route Adjustment Process (ARAP) Memorandum established for Sorting and Distribution Centers established after June 1<sup>st</sup>, 2024. It is still an RCI of sorts but not one guided by Chapter 2 of the M-39.

It is best to forget those dates and realize that every day is a Route Count and Inspection. No matter if you are a Regular Route Carrier, a Carrier Technician, an Unassigned Regular, a PTF or a CCA. Each and every delivery should be completed as if someone is right behind you. Actually, they are strapped to your hip in the form of the scanner and all its bells and whistles.

There should be no reason anyone fails to take the necessary time to deliver or attempt every special service item requiring a signature. This includes Central Delivery locations. The item should be taken to the door with that day's mail and returned to the box if delivery cannot be made.

It all starts in the morning when matching workload to work hours. Do not be forced to accept a computer projection as gospel. Some items are missed or skipped because an unrealistic amount of delivery time is

**NEXT BRANCH MEETING AT THE HALL AND VIA ZOOM: THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 2025**

agreed to or forced on a Carrier fifteen minutes after begin tour. Management has a tool and so do you.

**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. Even 1,250 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 composure. 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 send a RIMS message to your supervisor at a prescribed time per local instructions. If you have no local instructions, try sending the message at least an hour and a half to two hours before the time you are scheduled (approved on PS Form 3996) to be back. When possible snap a pic with your phones camera to memorialize your efforts to communicate.

Advise supervision where you are and how long you think it will take you to finish. Include a request for instructions, whether they want you to bring the mail back or finish the route. Finish with (Please Advise) **Remember to be professional** and concise in your communication these things are like social media everyone can see it.

**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 in the remarks (reason for non-delivery) section 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 in this section.

Note to Auxiliary Assistance: the best way to ensure promotions and route assignments is to protect each other’s assignment. Ensuring accurate and complete delivery may take a few minutes a loop or take longer. That is the job we were all hired for.

Some people may be hired in other jobs to dig ditches. They should dig the ditch with pride as deep and square as required. Actually, I had that job once as a Local #108 Sod Carrier.

Be proud of the job you do every day. Do the entire job you were hired for every day.

through an RCI, thus they are not familiar with the process. With that said, Eddie is putting together additional training for Region 9 on how to educate and assist branches on how to file proper grievances on Mail Counts and Route Inspections. Region 9 is being preventive to ensure branches are properly educated on the subject matter and has assigned Region 9 Subject Matter Experts (SME) to coordinate with throughout the process.

The Region 9 SMEs will consist of two (2) experts from each district in Region 9 to develop, with assistance from the region 9 office training on Mail Counts and Route Inspections. The intent is to have the Region 9 SMEs work together with the branches to ensure the necessary training and that needed grievances are filed, and the contractual provisions are properly followed.

Eddie shares that this will be a huge effort and is assigning a Regional Administrative Assistant (RAA) to oversee the process like they did with TIAREAP, which means there will be communication, and attention to detail.

Region 9 has scheduled a weeklong Mail Counts and Route Inspection Training at the Region 9 office, which will take place this February. Eddie shared that with the short notice, with the onslaught of these Mail Counts and Route Inspections, it is vital he get this information out to the branches so that they can be ready to address management’s violations with respect to the route adjustments. Eddie also shared that there’s no doubt that management is going to play games and try and abolish routes, so it is very important that we educate our members and work together.

In addition to the training needed, in the Region 9 office they will be developing grievance starters on issues arising from Mail Counts and Route Inspections, creating materials for Letter Carriers to utilize during the week of inspection, and will be working with the SMEs in real time.

That said, the branch has recommended that we send two (2) Stewards to the training of two (2) separate installations. Anthony Roger from the St, Petersburg S&DC and Chuck Cavicchio from Dunedin. Both evolved with TIREAP and are familiar with route inspections.

The knowledge they gain from the training will be invaluable to share with the Carriers of the offices scheduled for inspections. We plan on having training on how to fill out PS Form 1838c (Mail Count) which the Carriers will complete every day of the six-day count week of inspection as well as how



## Hubble’s Troubles

*By Executive Vice President,  
Chris Hubble*

### **Mail Counts and Inspections**

Eddie Davidson, the National Business Agent for Region 9 represents Letter Carriers in Florida, Georgia, South Carolina, and North Carolina which embodies over 36,000 Letter Carriers has received messages from Presidents all around the region concerning management’s intent to schedule six (6) Day Mail Counts and Route Inspections (RCI). Eddie has requested every branch send these notices to his office who are receiving them from management for all scheduled Mail Counts and Route Inspections.

The fact is most Letter Carriers have not gone

to read the PS Form 3999 conducted on the street inspection.

For more information on Mail Counts and Inspections, scan the below QR Code.



are questions I can't answer. The Social Security Administration will be evaluating how to implement the Act and hopefully will have the answers soon and disseminate the information to the affected retirees.

With that bit of good news, I wish you all a safe, healthy and Happy New Year!

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## Minutes of January 16, 2025 Membership Meeting



### Retiree Update

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

There's good news for many of our CSRS retirees. In 1983, during the Reagan Administration, two bills that adversely affected CSRS employees were passed. They were the Windfall Elimination Act, and the Pension Offset. Because CSRS employees didn't pay into Social Security, many Carriers held part time jobs or worked somewhere after retiring to earn credits for Social Security. The Windfall Elimination cut what they would have received in Social Security by 60%. At the same time, the Pension Offset would adversely affect their spouse's CSRS annuity should the retiree predecease them. If their spouse had worked somewhere and earned their own Social Security, their CSRS annuity would be cut.

After more than 42 years and much effort by the NALC, other Postal and Government Employee Unions, the Social Security Fairness Act, HR 82 was signed into law by President Biden on January 6, 2025. This Act repeals the Windfall and Pension Offset Act and is retroactive to January 1, 2024. I know retirees who will be getting over \$500 per month in additional Social Security payments, plus that amount for the past year. On a personal level, it means that should I predecease my wife of 54 years, she won't lose the almost \$900 a month she would have lost.

I've received calls about the change asking many questions. Retirees want to know the additional amount they will get, when it will start, etc. These



### Recording/Financial Secretary

*Ken Grasso*

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

**Invocation:** Greg Welsh.

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

**Minutes of the previous meeting:** Motion to accept previous minutes by O.D. Elliott, seconded by Scott Archbold. Motion passes.

**Reading of Official Correspondence:** by Ken Grasso - 3.

**Branch by Numbers:** As of the latest dues roster, 790 Active Per Capita, 771 member's paying dues. Retirees 564 (125 Gold Cards) – 1354 total members.

Recognize from Absolute Quality Interpreting Services Kelly Benz.

**Treasurer:** Chuck Cavicchio—read ending balances for December. Motion to accept Treasurer's Report by Terry Johnson, seconded by Chris Hubble. Motion passes.

**Director of Retiree Affairs:** O.D. Elliott—Windfall Elimination and Government Offset provisions were repealed and signed by President Biden. This will be retroactive back to January 1, 2024.

**Director of Insurance:** Tom Phillips—Open Enrollment has ended, getting calls from members who have not received their new health benefit cards. If you need any help, I will be in the office tomorrow to assist you. Eye Glass Plan, 9 members for \$511.00 and 5 dependents for \$240.00

**Political District 13 Liaison:** Tom Phillips—Be wary of any insurance company wanting to have you invest your Thrift Savings with them. Beware of that a lot of them are frauds.

**Trustee Report:** Brian Andrews—Trustees meeting in February.

**Vice President Report:** Greg Welsh—Not a bad idea to have a list of expectations for yourself and a few examples are: be a positive example, be at work every day, be a good team mate, control what you can control, be accountable for your actions, always do the right thing.

**Executive Vice President:** Chris Hubble

Grievance Workload since out last meeting:  
We processed 31 cases at Informal A. 10 cases appealed to Formal A, 7 cases appealed to Step B. We processed 7 removal notices in the past month with 3 being resolved, 2 pending a meeting schedule at Formal A. We have 1 removal and an Article 16.7 emergency placement being appealed to step B. We reported processing 7 removal cases last month and appealed to Step B. 6 cases were sustained with make whole remedy and 1 case remanded back to Formal A. Also Step B directed Florida 2 District for get with region 9 NBA to set up DRP training in the St. Petersburg installation which will include all the Informal A and Formal A Representatives.

**Welfare Reports:**

**Sad:**

- Jeff Pichtelberger, Retiree Indian Rocks Beach—Passed away.
- Tammy Weber, Retiree St. Petersburg—Is recovering at home from surgery.
- James Bateman, Dunedin—Stepfather passed away and wife Holly is in the hospital.
- George Walters, Dunedin—Father passed away.
- Michelle Lombardo, Carrier Largo—Was riding a bike and a vehicle hit her.
- Rick Martin, Retiree Largo—Passed away.
- Randy Holman, Carrier Pinellas Park—Is ill.
- Obie Allen, Carrier Open Air—Sister passed away.

**Glad:**

Rudy & Zulma Betancourt, Carriers welcomed another Grand baby.

**Retirees**

Robin Gilette, Port Charlotte-Retired late December.

**Presidents Report:**

In St. Petersburg we currently have a Grievance involving management's failure to post an entire vacancy notice inviting bids. In this case the bids had already been awarded and implemented. This has serious implications. It has been appealed to Formal A.

We still have 6 members of the Branch in need of verification of damage for the Disaster Relief Fund. Now the focus is turned to California and the loss to NALC members. For those able to contribute, please consider donating to the DRF during this crisis. Every dollar donated goes directly to helping letter carriers in need.

We've received a lot of questions regarding the contract voting. CCAs are saying they are not getting any information about this. Here is list of members that get information: Regular members, excluding retirees, OWCP departees, and non-Letter Carrier regular members, as of 90 days prior to October 17, 2025, the date that the tentative National Agreement was reached are eligible to vote in the election.

The Social Security Fairness Act was signed into law. The Social Security Administration is evaluating how to implement this Act.

We have some contract training coming up May 16-18, 2025, with Region 9 having to set up in Miami for some summer legislative contract training. We will discuss this at the next Executive Board meeting.

The Western Region Spring 2025, Committee of Presidents in Pasadena California is Monday April 7 through Tuesday April 8. The Executive Board recommends sending a representative to this meeting if the meeting is held up due to the fires in California. The cost is about \$1450 including registration fees.

The Executive Board has recommended sending Treasurer Chuck Cavicchio and Anthony Roger to a RCI class February 18-21, 2025.

The Executive Board recommended sending Largo

Steward Daevid Brown to attend Steward College Part 2 having attended Part 1 last. The estimated expenses to the Branch are \$400 airfares, \$504 for Room, Ground Transportation \$90, and receipted expenses not to exceed \$301 for a total of \$3780 (\$1260 each).

Total Training/Travel Recommendations \$5230. The motion was made by Patrick Jacques and seconded by Chris Hubble. Motion passed.

The Bylaw Committee is working on a bylaw that would allow us to bring an Officer up Full time to work at the office. It will be posted in the Twig and read at the next General Membership meeting.

There is talk going on about an early out, but it is only directed at the clerk craft and not the Carrier craft.

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. The votes counted are as follows from highest to lowest:

- Joe Henschen—213
- O.D. Elliott—184 (FSALC Delegate)
- Greg Welsh—165
- Ken Grasso—161
- Chuck Cavicchio—124
- Tiffany Naughton—123
- Eric Short—110
- Suzette Brown—104
- Jim Bumbul—99
- Sandra Pagan—98
- Patrick Jacques—97
- Donny DeMilta—93
- Laurann Rose—86,
- Scott Archbold—84
- Brian Andrews—79
- Erica Baker—75
- Shiela Bradley—72
- Jody Dodd—71
- AJ Pollard—69
- Scott Held—64
- Javier Urrutia—62
- Chris Kotonski—62

- Kalani Mosman—61
- Ken Domingos—59
- Patrice Cannonier—55
- Anthony Roger—53
- Wyatt Stribling—50
- Sheldon Jones—50
- David Mills—47
- Daevid Brown—44
- Kyle Garlow—43
- Nadir Alwani—32

The Sergeant at Arms will need to report on the attendance of the delegates meeting attendance requirements. If you do not qualify to be a paid delegate, you can still attend as an unpaid delegate as this will be in Orlando.

**Door Prize Drawing:  
Lotto – Scratch Off Ticket**

Jon Robinson

Residence:	Business:
Cell: (727) 743-5395	(513) 621-4787
Home: (727) 772-8383	(800) 543-0379
ganneken@msn.com	Fax: (513) 621-0483
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Sales Representative	Cincinnati, Ohio 45214

**Steward Meeting Attendees**

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

**December 19th:**

Eric Short, Laurann Rose, David Mills, Jody Dodd, Donny DeMilta, Jillian Iulicci, Scott Held, Patrice Cannonier, Alan Pollard, Tiffany Naughton, Anthony Roger, Daevid Brown, Tim Cox, Brian Andrews



# BRANCH 1477 PHONE DIRECTORY

**UNION HALL: (727) 531-1477**

**UNION FAX: (727) 531-1478**

**EMAIL: [branch1477nalc@gmail.com](mailto:branch1477nalc@gmail.com)**

**WEBSITE: [branch1477nalc.org](http://branch1477nalc.org)**

## OFFICERS OF BRANCH 1477

**PRESIDENT**

*Joe Henschen. . . . . (727) 492-4009*

**EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT**

*Chris Hubble. . . . . (727) 641-8396*

**VICE PRESIDENT**

*Greg Welsh. . . . . (727) 804-4726*

**RECORDING/FINANCIAL SECRETARY**

*Ken Grasso. . . . . (727) 744-2578*

**TREASURER**

*Chuck Cavicchio. . . . . (727) 798-8506*

**EDITOR**

*Judy Dorris. . . . . (727) 403-2173*

**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:**

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

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

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.

**Congressional Liaisons:**

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



Branch 1477, N.A.L.C.  
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# February, 2025

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