

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 658

VOICE OF BRANCH 1477

MARCH, 2025

Inside This Issue:

President's Report by Joe Henschen	1-2
Proposed Bylaw Changes	2-4
Minutes of the Branch by Recording/Financial Secretary Ken Grasso	4-6
Meeting Attendees	6
Union's Data Page	7
Calendar	8



PRESIDENT'S REPORT

By President Joe Henschen

Twitter @JaHe1

Redesigning the Steward's Role in Branch 1477

For many years the introduction to the Steward Meeting Attendees listed in the back of the Twig of the Branch Newsletter included:

"The Shop Steward of this Union are the eyes, ears, and the voice on the workroom floor. Without someone to represent all Union Letter Carriers.

Management would steamroll craft employees at every turn to get results that they desire. If you think that you have problems now, take a second to contemplate what it would be like if management had no opposition. Not a pretty sight, is it? Support your Shop Steward and show management that we are united. The Steward is the key to a strong Union."

On Thursday, February 13th, I installed the Stewards to serve the members of the Branch for the 2025 term. Nineteen Stewards are returning, having served for more than two years. We also have five that are stepping up for the first time. Two Stewards are moving up from serving as an Alternate Steward after attending a year's worth of monthly Steward trainings.

I want to recognize and thank Heather Gates, Patrice Cannonier, David Mills, Heather Manley, Chris Kotonski, Dennis Lynch, and Scott Archbold for serving the members as Stewards in recent years but now have decided to step away for a time. There are times when we all need a break. I know that each of you can always rely on these members to assist you or assist the 2025 Certified Stewards if needed.

The Branch has thirty-one delivery units with twenty-seven Stewards, four covering multiple units. Backing up these leaders are nine Alternate Stewards that cover for the Steward while NS or on leave. According to our Branch Bylaws, Alternate Stewards are appointed by the Branch President the same way a Steward is

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

assigned to fill a vacancy after Steward elections.

Your 2025 Stewards names and contact information appear in the back of this edition of the Twig of the Branch and should be your resource for information when needed.

On February 25th and 27th the Stewards were split into two groups and brought to the hall for orientation and training. The training is conducted by Myself, Executive Vice President Chris Hubble, Vice President Greg Welsh, and Treasurer Chuck Cavicchio (full time officer) covering a wide range of topics.

Over the past three years, we have been redesigning the Steward's role. We currently have two Stewards using personal laptops, have added nine Branch owned laptops that are or will be soon in the hands of our more experienced Stewards and have given them access to our Grievance Manager program. This allows them to research and prepare files to address issues that arise on the workroom floor, and file grievances. As this occurs, I and our other Officers can see the file as it develops and assist the Stewards with a roadmap for a successful grievance.

The Grievance Manager Program is loaded with the contract, handbooks and manuals, forms, and grievance templates. These templates called "Starters" are developed by the National, Regional and local Officers and Stewards. We can update them for any new topic or violation scheme that management has dreamed up. Currently we have

two experienced Stewards login in addressing issues in the program. Computer training for those with Branch PCs will be scheduled soon.

Recently, we were asked to assist in talks to reduce distracted driving. The reason for the request is Management has rolled out a program named POD(s) The "Safety Play" has National, Regional and local POD teams out on the street to catch you being distracted. If an observation is made of cell phone use, of any kind, seat belts improperly used, they will be stopped and taken off the clock and issued an emergency placement (suspension)

Within a day of the POD information being received by our National Business Agent, a Grievance Starter template was sent to the Regional Branches and locally we uploaded the Starter into the Grievance manager for the Stewards to access. (I should include we have no idea what the acronym POD stands for)

Part of our Steward Role redesign is to reduce the hours your Steward spends representing the members off the clock at home. There is always reading and learning done off the clock however, when the need to file a grievance is evident, the violation should be addressed on paid Union time. When a supervisor or manager violates the National or Local Agreement to save time or anything that harms a Carrier, it should be obvious in their minds that it's going to cost them Steward time to interview the Carrier harmed, time to investigate the violation, time to write the grievance and time they will have to answer the grievance.

The following proposed Bylaw changes were read at the February 13th General Membership Meeting and will be discussed and voted on at the March 13th General Membership meeting.

Article 6 Section 2. Executive Vice President: Delete 2.F.

Article 6 Section 18: Add New Language

New Section

Article 6 Section 18 proposed to read:

- A. When recommended by the President and acted upon by the members present at a General Membership or Special Meeting, an Officer of the Branch may be detailed to serve full time for the Branch for representation purposes.
- B. The duties will be designated by the President and may consist of contract interpretation, grievance handling and merged City Field Representative for the Branch. Formal A meetings and duties commensurate with his/her abilities when assigned.
- C. The Officer shall receive an Annual Salary of a Q2 Top Step Letter Carrier serving as a Carrier Technician.

1. The future salary adjustments will be made with the same percentage given Letter Carriers in their salary increases.
2. Any other benefits normally paid by the USPS.
3. In such cases the compensation for the Branch officer of the office elected will be as stipulated in Article 6 Section 14 of these bylaws.

D. The Officer will earn 104 hours of Sick Leave and 208 hours of Annual Leave annually. All Sick and Annual Leave earned and used will be reported to the Branch Secretary, who will maintain records of the Officer's leave. The maximum amount of Annual Leave that may be carried over at the beginning of a new calendar year shall comply with the current National Agreement.

1. **Unused Annual Leave at the end of the term of office will be compensated for at the regular hourly rate of pay earned.**
2. **In case of death all Annual Leave earned to date of death would be converted to hours and compensation at the hourly rate of pay earned would be payable to the survivors.**

SICK LEAVE

1. When serving full time, Sick Leave earned, but unused, may be carried over each year as in the Letter Carrier Craft.
2. If death occurs while in Serving Full Time for the Branch, no compensation for accrued sick leave will be paid.
3. If optional retirement is applied for, compensation for the accumulated sick leave hours on the Branch books will be paid consistent with the U.S.P.S. program in effect in the Letter Carrier Craft.

2% gross annual wages x sick leave hours + 2080 = _____ + 12 =
monthly payments.

Formula: 2% GROSS ANNUAL WAGES x
SICK LEAVE HOURS
2080
+12
=MONTHLY PAYMENT

Or the sum of 12 formulated monthly payments paid once (1) per year.

4. If disability retirement is applied for while serving Full Time for the Branch, the detailed Officer will receive compensation for all hours accumulated at the hourly rate earned for each hour, as in the Letter Carrier Craft.
 - a. When returned to the craft, the accumulated hours will remain in the Branch. The **money** funded for the hours will remain in the fund previously established. The interest in the **money** while on deposit will remain the property of the Branch and will revert to an account **recommended** by the Executive Board **and acted upon by the members present at a General Membership or Special Meeting**. If, after returning to the craft, the detailed Officer becomes incapacitated due to illness or injury, he/she may submit a voucher for the sick leave hours used, only after all sick leave hours on the USPS books have been used. Payment for such hours will be made by the Branch Treasurer at the appropriate hourly rate of pay. If the Officer leaves the USPS for any reason, he/she will be compensated for the remaining sick leave hours as set forth in **Article 6, Section 1.E and Section 1.F of these bylaws**.
 - b. If death occurs after returning to the U.S.P.S., no compensation will be paid for sick leave to survivors.
 - c. Request for payment must be submitted at the end of the pay period, paid as in the Letter Carrier Craft.

- d. If the appointed Officer goes into Postal Management at any period of time, on return to the Letter Carrier Craft, he/she will immediately become ineligible for use of sick leave hours accumulated while a full-time Union Officer.
- e. If the Officer assumes any National Office, he/she immediately loses all benefits.

F. FUNDING

1. Each Pay Period the Branch Secretary will draw a voucher in the amount equal to the hourly rate of pay for each hour of sick and annual leave hours reported earned. The voucher will be presented to the Branch Treasurer, who will deposit that amount from the General Fund and place it into an escrow account strictly used for the purpose of leave.
 2. When another officer replaces the President in an official capacity, in a leave without pay status, the voucher for payment will be drawn on the escrow account in the amount payable rather than from the General Fund.
 3. Sick leave hours payable to person returned to Letter Carrier duties will be drawn from the escrow account.
 4. All interest earned in the escrow account will become the property of the Branch and its use is recommended by the majority of the Branch Executive Board acted upon by the members present at a General Membership or Special Meeting.
 5. A full and detailed report of the escrow account will be reported in "Report of the Treasurer" at each regular Branch meeting and is to be audited not less than quarterly by the Board of Trustees.
-

Minutes of January 16, 2025 Membership Meeting



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

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

Invocation by O. D. Elliott.

Pledge of Allegiance: led by President Joe Henschen.

Minutes of previous meeting: Motion to accept the January minutes by Terry Johnson, seconded by Anthony Roger. Motion passes.

Branch by Numbers: As the recent dues roster Members paying dues 776 Per Capita and 759 deduct count pay. Retirees 556 124 Gold Cards) 1332 Total Members.

Absolute Quality Interpreting Services with Kelly Benz & Nicole.

Treasurer: Chuck Cavicchio read January ending balances. Motion to accept Treasurer's Report was not called.

Treasurer presented to President Henschen his 25-, 30-, and 35-year Union pins.

Director of Retiree Affairs: O.D. Elliott—Getting a lot of phone calls from Carriers wanting to meet with me about retiring. Had a call from a Retiree and found out he was eligible for his deferred annuity and was able to collect on it now.

Director of Insurance: Tom Phillips—Eyeglass Plan: 9 members for \$540 and 7 dependents for \$298.11 for a total of \$838.11. If you haven't checked your pay stub yet to see if you are on the correct plan that you selected, I would recommend that.

Political District 13 Liaison: Tom Phillips—A new bill has been introduced HR 70 in the House that the Postal Service will not be subject to Privatization. I received 2 letters back from each political party

thanking me for contacting them. There are 97 co-sponsors on this bill so its important to contact your representatives and ask them to cosponsor this bill.

Trustee Report: Brian Andrews—Trustees met, and November's books are in order, also reviewed Decembers Books and waiting on a receipt.

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

50 Informal A Files

15 Formal A Appeals

7 cases appealed to Step B

We were returned 7 Step B cases that were sustained because Management failed to meet with us and those cases are going back to Step B as Article 15 cases because Management did not meet with us again.

Welfare Reports:

Sad:

- James Bateman, Carrier Dunedin—Stepfather passed away and wife Holly is in the hospital.
- George Walters, Carrier Dunedin—Father passed away.
- Michele Lombardo, Carrier Largo—Was struck by a vehicle while riding a bike.
- Rick Martin, Retiree Largo—Passed away.
- Randy Hoffman, Carrier Pinellas Park—Is ill.
- Donny DeMilta, Carrier Seminole—Grandmother Gerry Bournon in the hospital.
- Michael Hayes, Carrier Open Air—Passed away.
- Colton Smith, Carrier Port Charlotte—Father passed away.
- John Rowan, Retiree St. Pete—Wife passed away.

Glad:

Rudy and Zulma Betancourt welcomed another Grandbaby.

A.J. Pollard, Steward St. Petersburg—Daughter Louann was accepted to University of Florida.

New Retirees:

Cheryl Anderson—St. Pete Beach (December)
Ed Bartholomew—Pinellas Park after 42 years.
Wil San Antonio—Dunedin
Bill Marley—Dunedin

Presidents Report:

The Executive Board at this month's meeting has recommended the following purchase: 1 PC Laptop, 1 Microsoft License and 5 backpack computer bags at a cost of approximately \$550.00. Motion to accept the recommendation by Eric

Short, seconded by O.D. Elliott. Motion passes.

Installation of Stewards

St. Petersburg:

- **Zone 1:** Nadir Alwani
- **Alt:** Scott Archbold
- **Zone 2:** Tiffany Naughton
- **Zone 3:** Jillian Iulicci
- **Zone 4:** Wyatt Stribling
- **Zone 5:** Al Balwin
- **Alt:** Tony Cook
- **Zone 6:** Laurann Rose
- **Alt:** Jacob Lovelace
- **Zone 7:** Olbin Flores-Elvir
- **Zone 8:** Patrick Jacques
- **Zone 9:** Jody Dodd
- **Alt:** Ken Domingos
- **Zone 10:** Ken Domingos
- **Alt:** Jody Dodd
- **Zone 11/15:** Olbin Flores-Elvir
- **Zone 12:** Gary Johnson
- **Zone 13:** Anthony Roger
- **Zone 14:** Alan Pollard
- **Zone 16:** Alisha Henry
- **Alt:** Alex Perez

Indian Rocks Beach: Tim Cox

Dunedin: Scott Held

Alt: Devin Price

Seminole:

72/74 Zone: Eric Short

Alt: Donny DeMilta

76/77 Zone: Donny Demilta

Largo:

78/71 Zone: Daavid Brown

73/70 Zone: Karen Peck

Pinellas Park:

81 Zone: Javier Urrutia

82 Zone: Javier Urrutia

Bradenton Beach: Brian Andrews

Palmetto: Sheldon Jones

Englewood: Jon Robinson

Punta Gorda: Jon Negrón

Port Charlotte: Erica Baker

President Henschen then read the Oath of Office to the newly installed Stewards.

Presidents Report:

There was a Region 9 Webex meeting with NBA

Eddie Davidson and his staff. There were other Region 9 Branch Presidents also attending. Some of the items that each staff member discussed included:

Eileen Ford, Legislative and Political Organizer Regions 9 & 13

Some discussion on the elimination of the Social Security Supplement.

Requirement for the Union to pay the USPS for time spent by Stewards on the clock while doing Grievances. The Move to a High 5 from a High 3 when determining retirement calculations.

Anthony Ali, RAA Arbitration

Region 9 has 90 cases pending Arbitration. When scheduling arbitrations, Management has a tendency to wait to the last minute and pre-arb cases and asking to split fees cancel the date, Region 9 now NALC puts 75 cases for the same date so we do not lose the date.

Ben Paul RAA, Step B

Some cases are taking longer than usual because the Step B Teams are instructed to not sacrifice Quality over Quantity of decisions.

Before Region 9 team took office no team in Region 9 had Union successful decisions over 70%. Now Ga 94%, NC/SC 95%, FL 1 and 2 both at 90%, Florida 3 89%. Password protected Region 9 Website is being developed.

Jeanette Trianni RAA, Organizing, S&DCs

Florida, Carrier organized at 94.53%, CCA 87.65%, Total 93.56% Updated on new 2025 and 2026 S&DC sites.

Dexter Lester RAA, Protecting Letter Carriers

Protect Letter Carriers Publication

In Florida 2 we have had 16 Carriers robbed, 2 at gunpoint. The Heat Illness Prevention Plan required training is coming soon and needs to be completed.

Misty Winger RWCA

Issues with Occupational Health Nurse refusing to pay COP. (This happens locally, and we have a case at Step B.) It is tantamount to an Emergency Placement for the injury.

Justin Hill, Outside Steward

The Outside Steward all have specialties, they work closely with and monitored by the NBA Staff.

Christina Davidson, MDA and DRF

MDA is over 1 million dollars this year.

DRF Relief had 15 Carrier homes lost in California fires Locally the Branch had 27 applications for the DRF, most receiving \$5,000 each and about \$135,000 for Branch 1477 Members.

Al Friedman, Region 9 Food Drive Coordinator

We currently have 3 million bags for the Food Drive. We are looking for funding to cover Branch 1477, we need \$3,000 to cover Branch at .02 each bag.

Eddie Davidson, Region 9 National Business Agent

Region 9 is the 2nd largest Region with the most Branches in the NALC. TA voted down, if another offer made, he would bring it to the board to decide. 6 Day Counts, no one in management knows fully how to do them. Most Carriers have not gone through one. Step B Region 9 lowest back log of cases in nation.

A Proposed Bylaw Change signed by 3 members in good standing was presented and read.

President Henschen read Bylaw Proposal

ARTICLE 6, SECTION 2.

Executive Vice President—delete 2.F.

Article 6 Section 18 Add New Language

The Original Bylaw was discussed at the Executive Board who then presented it to the Bylaw Committee for approval or disapproval. The Bylaw Committee disapproved of the proposed Bylaw in its original draft; however, they offered an amended version and changed some language, and the makers of the Bylaw accepted the change.

The proposed Bylaw change will be discussed and voted on at next month's General Membership meeting.

Door Prize Drawing:

Lotto – Scratch Off Ticket

Patrick Jacques

Steward Meeting Attendees

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

January 30th:

Eric Short, Laurann Rose, David Mills, Jody Dodd, Donny DeMilta, Jillian Iulucci, Scott Held, Gary Johnson, Al Baldwin, Alan Pollard, Tiffany Naughton, Anthony Roger, Daevid Brown, Tim Cox, Brian Andrews, Erica Baker, Wyatt Stribling,, Javier Urrutia, Nadir Alwani, Olbin Flores-Elvir, Ken Domingos, Patrick Jacques

BRANCH 1477 PHONE DIRECTORY

UNION HALL: (727) 531-1477

UNION FAX: (727) 531-1478

EMAIL: branch1477nalc@gmail.com

WEBSITE: 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:

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	Alisha Henry	(618) 554-0145
Alt	Alex Perez	(786) 413-8220
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
Englewood	The Hall	(727) 531-1477
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	Jon Negron	(941) 204-3427
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

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.



Branch 1477, N.A.L.C.
5369 Park Boulevard North
Pinellas Park, FL 33781-3421

NON-PROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
ST. PETERSBURG, FL
PERMIT 5489

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

March, 2025

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