



The Satchel



Volume 18

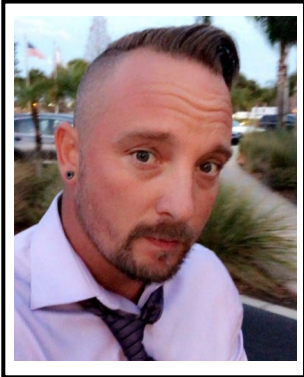
January 2024 Issue 1

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF

THE HEART OF FLORIDA LETTER CARRIERS, BRANCH 1779 NALC, AFL-CIO

ARCADIA-AUBURNDALE-BARTOW-FT. MEADE-FROSTPROOF-HAINES CITY-LAKELAND-MULBERRY-SEBRING-WAUCHULA-WINTER HAVEN-ZEPHYRHILLS

President's Message



Josh Breault
President

Christmas is over! We have made it through another year. We can finally breathe again.

With that said, I'd like to talk a little about training and mentorship. The Branch has been providing training classes to the members for a few years now. We've had trainings almost every time one of

our offices went through a mail count in the past.

In 2023, we provided 3 general membership trainings at the hall where members learned how to handle their reporting requirements, how to handle management, and much more. This year, we will have at least 3 more of these trainings. We had guest speakers for all 3 trainings in 2023. The first, Corey Walton from the From A to Arbitration Podcast talked. The second, State President Al Friedman taught us about the Joint Statement on Violence and Behavior in the Workplace. The third was our very own, RAA Ben Paul from the Business Agents office.

While I believe Branch trainings are essential for helping members be more successful and less anxious at work, more is needed. Many of us know exactly what to do in most situations. However, we have many new members joining our ranks... and some older members who are still uninformed. This is why mentorship is so important.

New employees go through Carrier Academy. This is a classroom setting where they learn about the job. We all know that you can't learn this job outside of a mail truck. Therefore, they also get a minimum of 3 days with a certified OJI, or On-the-Job Instructor. OJIs have been certified to train new

employees. However, the Postal Service's training programs are lacking, to say the least. Instructors become trained by going to a classroom most of the day to learn people skills. In class, you do things like writing how to make a peanut butter and jelly sandwich as a team.

There is no mention of the Standard Letter Carrier Training Guide, what to teach, or how long to teach it for. The Standard Letter Carrier Training Guide has the exact knowledge that we should be teaching new employees every day of training. That list should be filled with the trainers initials at the end of the 3rd day.

There is a sign-off sheet that should be signed by the trainer and the Union. If the OJI believes the new employee would benefit from additional training, they make that recommendation to management. However, none of this has been happening in most locations because OJIs aren't being trained properly. Thankfully, our Business Agent and newest RAA are working on getting District to fix this. So what can we do now?

We've all heard and probably uttered the words, "this person isn't going to make it." This is not the right attitude for a Union. We need to do better. Take the new employee under your wing. Give them tips to succeed. Observe them loading their vehicle and let them know how they can improve. Your acquired skills as a Letter Carrier were not there on day one, and neither will theirs be.

A little kindness goes a long way.

We used to be brothers and sisters, looking out for each other. We should be so still. The Postal Service has changed a lot in the last few years. That doesn't mean we have to lose our fraternal bond.

(continued on page 4)

The **Satchel** is published monthly by The Heart of Florida Letter Carriers, Inc, Branch 1779 NALC, AFL-CIO. The opinions expressed in this publication are those of the writers and not the Editor of The Satchel. Articles for publication must be submitted to the Editor on the Friday following the monthly Union meeting, articles and pictures must be submitted digitally. Minutes from the previous month will appear on page 3. Any part of **The Satchel** may be published by other news media. Contact the Editor at: postalbenpaul82@gmail.com, or at the mailing address on the back cover for inquiries.



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Joshua Breault – President



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*Alternate	Tony Norris	863-648-4265
Florence Villa	Tony Norris	863-648-4265

Branch Address:

Union Hall - 2434 Golfview St, Lakeland, FL 33801

Follow us on Facebook:
Branch 1779 National Association of Letter Carriers

Look for us on YouTube!

Visit the Branch's website:
nalc1779.com



Have you visited the Branch website yet?

NALC1779.com

The website is your immediate link to a wealth of information at your fingertips. If you are a member of the branch, and you haven't signed up yet, all you need to do is log on and an email will be sent for verification. Once you've been verified you'll have access to all the member benefits of the page.

Also, the branch website is the ONLY location for the Zoom link to the monthly meeting, so visit and sign in today!

NALC1779.com



**EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING MINUTES
December 14, 2023**

Members present: Melissa Ross, Tony Norris, John Mitchell, Josh Breault, Bill Rokosz, Barbara Meurer, Stacey Logue, Darian Polonia, Meaghan Hart, Enrique Rosado, Robert Ross, Nick Roller and Aliya Smith.

Recommendations from the Executive Board in the form of a motion:

There are no motions from the Executive Board this month.

Tony Norris, Recording Secretary

**BRANCH MEETING MINUTES
December 21, 2023**

President Josh Breault upon verification from Sergeant at Arms Robert Ross that a quorum was present opened the meeting with 18 members present, 13 in person and 5 via zoom.

Meagan Hart led us in the Pledge of Allegiance and was followed by a moment of silence.

John Mitchell made a motion to accept the November Branch meeting minutes as they appear in the newsletter. Seconded by Chris Armstrong motion passed.

Josh Breault announced he would have steward training on the second Wednesday of the month at 6pm at the hall.

New members to our union are Basilia Soto, Natalie Garcia and Harold Warren from the Winter Haven P.O., Nicholas Grubb from Frostproof P.O., Norma Gonzalez Bartow P.O.

Stacey Logue read the financial report for the past month.

Motion to adjourn at 8:30pm by John Mitchell, seconded by Cory Gibson, motion passed.

Tony Norris, Recording Secretary

WEINGARTEN RIGHTS

Federal labor law, in what is known as the Weingarten rule, gives each employee the right to representation during any investigatory interview which he or she reasonably believes may lead to discipline (*NLRB v. J. Weingarten, U.S. Supreme Court, 1975*). The Weingarten rule does not apply to other types of meetings, such as:

- **Discussions.** Article 16.2 provides that “for minor offenses by an employee ... discussions ... shall be held in private between the employee and the supervisor. Such discussions are not discipline and are not grievable.” So an employee does not have Weingarten representation rights during an official discussion (National Arbitrator Aaron, H1T-1E-C 6521, July 6, 1983, C-03769).

- Employees do not have the right to union representation during fitness-for-duty physical examinations.

The steward cannot exercise Weingarten rights on the employee’s behalf. And unlike Miranda rights, which apply in criminal matters, the employer is not required to inform the employee of the Weingarten right to representation.

For more info on your rights see pages 17-6/7 of the JCAM, or ask your steward.



President Breault presenting a plaque to Food Drive Coordinator Barbara Meurer as the branch collected over 250,00 pounds!

(continued from cover)

Let's work on making it stronger as the Postal Service changes, work on building our camaraderie and stretching our Union.

Wishing you a Happy New Year!

In solidarity always,

Josh



Kira Munn

Executive Vice
President

Executive Vice President's Report

Hey Everyone!

First and foremost, WE DID IT! Another peak season behind us! I hope each and every one of you were able to spend some good quality time with your families this holiday season.

Second, our refresher dinner is the end of January, the 27th to be exact. Tickets are on sale now,

so just ask your steward for tickets. I hope to see yall there.

Third, I want to talk about some of the things that were talked about during the National Rap session in New Orleans this past November. National Secretary/Treasurer Nicole Rhine started it off with talking about a new electronic process for our non-deduct members. National Assistant Secretary/Treasurer Mack Julian talked about an electronic way to submit by-law changes for each branch. It is all done in real time and fast tracks by-law change approvals from the NALC Committee of Laws.

National Director of Safety and Health Manny Peralta talked about health and safety and let us know that over 250 carriers have committed suicide because of such hostile work environments that we have to deal with on the daily. He then went on to quote Corey Walton and said that all of management are liars, cheaters, and stealers. We MUST fix these work-room floors and NOT allow management to talk to us any kind of way, to not berate us on the work-room floor, and to not allow any hostility. 250 carriers taking their own lives is such a sad thing to sit there and have to hear. Work should never be so bad that a person takes their own life because they feel like they can't

handle it.

National Executive Vice President Paul Barner talked about what the Contract Admin Unit is responsible for and that they are working on developing new stewards, creating a grievance guide to include grievance starters, updating the MRS, and so much more. Assistant to the President Danielle Fake-Mormon discussed how we have 59 full time DRT teams with 17 back up teams that have been activated. Greg Dixon talked about arbitrations and how in 1970, we had 55,219 arbitrations while in the last year we've only had 411 files go to arbitration. We currently have 4,258 files pending arbitration and 3,454 that haven't been scheduled yet.

National Vice President James Henry, who I am a bit biased towards and think is one of our best National Officers, talked about how the MRS is now updated in real time. Director of City Delivery Chris Jackson talked about the TV monitors being placed in certain offices, and talked about a few different arrow key pilots to try and keep our carriers safer with all the thefts going on around the nation. He also talked about the possibility of another commercial off the shelf vehicle that some areas may have while we wait for the NGDV.

Our National President, Brian Renfroe, then talked about our contract negotiations. Sadly, there is nothing new in that arena. He says that we are still in the selection process for a neutral Arbitrator. Wages and an all career workforce are the two main issues that are still in dispute. The other three main issues we're encountering during negotiations is route adjustments, Article 8, and uniforms.

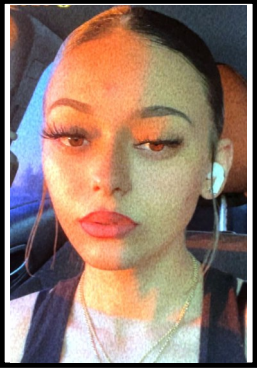
I know we all want a new contract, but PLEASE keep in mind, we could have had a new contract months ago...it would have been a contract similar to the clerks or Rural carriers, and we deserve more because we work harder and are more professional.

I hate to say this, but please be patient as our national officers continue to negotiate and get us the very best contract we could have.

Until Next Time,

Kira





Aliyah Viruet-Smith
MBA Rep/Steward

Greetings fellow brothers and sisters, please allow me today to introduce to you the Retirement Savings Plan: your guide to Financial Security with the NALC.

The Retirement Savings Plan offered by the MBA is more than just a typical annuity. It is a comprehensive financial solution that can make a significant difference in your retirement years, providing you with worry-free financial well-being. With

this plan, you can receive extra cash every month during your retirement. By making small contributions, starting from as little as \$15 per pay period, you can build up substantial savings through an interest-bearing annuity that guarantees above-market returns. Flexibility is at the core of our Retirement Savings Plan. You have full control over how much you contribute and how often, allowing you to tailor the plan to your unique financial situation and goals.

Additionally, the program offers certain tax advantages based on the options you choose, and your spouse is eligible to participate as well. By joining the Retirement Savings Plan, you also gain access to the many benefits provided by the Mutual Benefit Association (MBA). With a legacy of over a century, the MBA is known for its dependability, ensuring that every policyholder receives reliable savings and insurance plans. Moreover, the MBA operates with low overhead costs and zero fees, enabling us to pass on maximum savings to you. We have also made the process simple and risk-free.

Applying for the Retirement Savings Plan is straightforward - just fill out an application, and you'll receive your policy to review for 30 days. If you're not completely satisfied for any reason, you can return it for a full refund of any premiums paid. With us, there's no risk involved. One of the biggest advantages of the Retirement Savings Plan is the guaranteed growth of your money. Enjoy a high rate of return that surpasses the rates offered by most banks.

Moreover, the MBA provides a guaranteed minimum interest rate on your retirement savings, ensuring that you have peace of mind even during uncertain economic times. Take control of your retirement future with the Retirement Savings Plan offered by the MBA. Secure your financial

well-being and enjoy worry-free retirement years with our reliable, affordable, and straightforward solution.

The MBA Retirement Savings Plan offers individuals the opportunity to invest government and corporate securities of exceptional quality. This provides significant tax advantages, with the growth in your account being either tax-deferred or tax-free. If you opt for the Traditional IRA, you may even qualify for tax deductible contributions up to \$7,000 based on your age and income. When it comes to contributing to the plan, you have the flexibility to choose how and how much you want to contribute.

The most convenient method is through automatic deductions from your paycheck, with a minimum payment of \$15 per pay period. However, you can easily adjust your contribution amount, pause, or resume payments, or make lump sum payments at your convenience. MBA will handle the automatic deductions for you, or alternatively, provide you with monthly or annual billing options.

Additionally, you have the freedom to select the annuity plan that best suit your needs. Whether you prefer a Roth IRA or a Traditional IRA, the choice is yours. Furthermore, you have various options for receiving your retirement savings, including monthly payments for life, joint annuity payments for the lifetimes of two individuals, or a lifetime annuity with a minimum guarantee of 5, 10, 15, or 20 years.

In case of financial emergencies, you can make early cash withdrawals from your Retirement Savings Plan. After one year, you can withdraw money as needed, subject to certain minimums and restrictions. However, during the initial six years of participation, there will be a "surrender charge" on the withdrawn amount, in addition to any potential IRS penalties. Alternatively, you also have the option to surrender your plan and receive its cash value. Choose the MBA Retirement Savings Plan to secure your financial future with a range of investment options, tax advantages, and flexible terms that align with your unique needs and circumstances.

City Carrier Assistants (CCAs) have the option transfer their Traditional IRA funds to the Thrift Plan when they transition to becoming career letter carriers. It is important to mention that Surrender charge will be waived solely for this circumstance. However, it should be noted that the Thrift Savings Plan is currently not equipped to accept transfers from Roth IRAs.

(continued from page 5)

For any comments or questions please don't hesitate to shoot me an email and I would be more than happy to assist you!

Happy writing,

Aliyah



Nick Roller

Trustee/Steward

Happy New Year Branch 1779!

Before I begin this article I would like to thank all of our members for your hard work throughout the holiday season. You brought a lot of smiles to not only children, but adults alike. Most of all I would like to thank those CCAs that worked relentless hours providing assistance. With that being said, I chose to write this month's article

about CCAs and how the National Agreement benefits you.

I've heard CCAs say things like "the contract does not benefit me as a CCA" or "I'll become a member when I make regular." Well, I'm here to tell you that paying membership dues leads us to being a better, stronger union. Membership dues pays to send your stewards to contract training, branch officers training, and OWCP training.

So let's dive into the National Agreement (NA) and how CCAs benefit from having bargaining rights as defined in Article 1 of the National Agreement (NA).

First, I want to talk about Article 7 of the NA. This article separates crafts from performing duties into the other craft except where there is an emergency, i.e., an unforeseen circumstance or a combination of circumstances which calls for immediate action in a situation which is not expected to be of a recurring nature. So, if management is sending you out to help deliver rural routes or assist rural carriers deliver parcels because of a call out or two you should contact your steward and ask to file a grievance.

Second, I would like to make you aware of Article 41. Article 41 covers everything from the process of posting vacated routes timely, CCAs temporary bidding rights, to miscellaneous provisions such as having a stool to sit on while casing your

mail. CCAs are converted once a route is not bid on. Imagine if this article was not in place.

CCAs could be waiting a long time to make regular. Can you imagine if management had full power of when CCAs are converted or how long they would have to post a vacant route?

Next, and in my opinion the most important is Article 19 titled Handbooks and Manuals, specifically Handbook M-41 City Carrier Duties and Responsibilities. Every carrier should have received this handbook in carrier orientation and taken the time to familiarize yourself with it. Just as a reminder, this Handbook is also inside each route carrier book found at your case. The M-41 describes your duties such as safety, casing mail, withdrawal of mail, pulling down your route, park and loop methods, curbside delivery methods, and return to office duties. If you are following the language within Handbook M-41 you have probably noticed that these responsibilities and duties may take you a little longer to deliver your route. That's okay folks. If we all take the time to learn how to properly deliver our routes in accordance with Handbook M-41 we would have a solid core of carriers that rarely face discipline, provide exceptional service to our customers and have a good quality of life.

Finally, Article 16 of the NA and the principles of discipline and proving a Just Cause. CCAs have protections under our bargaining agreement such as a right to representation. Management has the burden of proof in any discipline brought forth. There are 6 criteria that management must meet for management to prove a Just Cause which rarely happens. CCAs in their probationary period have grievance access rights, except for discipline. This actually applies to all new employees, whether or not you are career. If we are successful with our current contract negotiations, and get an all career work-force, then all carriers will have those rights.

Hopefully I have helped any CCA that has questions as to why they are a member or why they should become a member. Remember, a union is a body of people working together to achieve excellence. Please do your part to be well informed about your duties and responsibilities.

In Solidarity,

Nick





The Heart of Florida Letter Carriers
Branch 1779 NALC, AFL-CIO
\$1000.00 Scholarship Application 2024



 Student's Name

 Branch 1779 Member's Name

 Street Address

 Station/Office Employed

 City/State/Zip

 Relationship

 Phone (Include area code)

 Phone (Include area code)

 Date of Graduation or year in High School

Retired: Yes No

 College you have been accepted by

 Email

 Signature of NALC Member (or spouse if deceased)

 Date

Scholarship Regulations

- The Branch will award a total of two (2), one-thousand dollar (\$1,000) scholarships annually, one to a male child, and one to a female child of members in good standing.
- Applicants must be High school seniors or students currently enrolled in college. Grandchildren of members in good standing are also eligible to apply for and receive a Branch scholarship.
- All scholarship applications must be mailed to Branch 1779 with a clear postmark no later than February 10th of each year.
- A drawing to determine the winners will be held at the February Branch meeting, and subsequently announced in the Branch newsletter.
- First runners-up shall be chosen in the event a winner is unable to accept the scholarship. In the event there are no applicants in either the male or female category, the first runner-up in the category with applicants shall be awarded the second scholarship.
- Scholarship amounts shall be paid directly to the college or institution that the winner(s) are enrolled in.

The Heart of Florida Letter Carriers
Branch 1779 NALC, AFL-CIO
2434 Golfview Street
Lakeland, FL 33801



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Branch Notes:

Branch Phone Number 863-899-6821
Next Union Meeting is January 18, 2024 @ 7:30 p.m.
Your hall is located at 2434 Golfview St, Lakeland, FL - Doors open at 5:00 pm

**Happy New year from the Officers and Stewards of
Branch 1779!**

**Refresher Dinner tickets will be available now from
officers and stewards. Cost is \$10 per person, with
that refunded at the door.**

**Ticket sales end on January 15, so don't miss out!
It will be held at the Music Ranch in North Lakeland
on January 27, 2024. We hope to see you there!**