



Tampa Letter Carrier

Volume 6 - Issue 1

A.R. "Tony" Huerta NALC Branch 599

Tampa, Florida

January 2007

President's Report

by Jim Good

President - Branch 599

Happy New Year?

As we say goodbye to 2006 and begin a new year we, as NALC members and employees or retirees of the U. S. Postal Service, have to wonder about our future. By now everyone should be aware of the outcome of the negotiations for a new contract. I was not surprised that the postal service refused to bargain in good faith. I knew, however, that President Young and our National Officers would try to stay optimistic and do everything in their power to negotiate a contract that they felt was worthy of ratification by our members. I also knew, based on the actions of the postal service during the past four or five years, that Postmaster General Potter had an agenda that did not include the best interests of letter carriers.

As far back as 2001 it was clear that the USPS had a goal of contracting out the delivery of mail. It started in Tampa with the International Mall and has continued with highway contracts being offered for bid on any new development where the postal service could save money by doing so. It spread into the West Palm Beach area with a vengeance. A multitude of grievances were filed by Branch 599 in Tampa, as well by West Palm Beach Branch President Mel Rexroth. We were successful in cases where city carriers had begun delivery to the new develop-

ments, but not so in cases where we had never delivered mail. Contracting out has recently become the norm in South Florida, and President Young made it clear, at the Committee of President's Meeting in Minneapolis this past fall, that the future of city letter carriers' jobs was being threatened by this form of privatization. Now it seems that negotiations for a new contract were stymied because of the postal service's position on the issuance of highway contract routes. The future of letter carriers is now at stake, and I am confident and optimistic that President Young, along with newly elected Executive Vice-President Fred Rolando and the rest of our National Officers will meet this challenge and be successful in protecting our rights and our jobs.

Now for the good news. As you have probably heard postal reform legislation has passed the senate and is awaiting President Bush's signature. This legislation has maintained universal six-day delivery and resolved the military pension and escrow issues in favor of the USPS. The one negative point in the reform bill is a three day waiting period, *for postal employees only, not all federal workers*, for injured employees to qualify for continuation of pay (COP). Supporters of this three day waiting period say it is necessary to discourage frivolous claims. They do not acknowledge, however, that if the claim is indeed frivolous, and therefore not approved by the Office of Workers' Compensation Programs, the employee must repay the COP that was used with sick leave, annual leave or money! Although this is not a perfect reform bill it will allow the postal service to compete in today's climate of e-mail, online bill payments and the drop in first class mail volume.

As I said earlier Florida's own Fred Rolando was recently installed as NALC National Executive Vice-President. I have personally known Fred since 1996, and have never met a man with more dedication and knowledge on matters involving letter carriers. Under President Young's tutoring and grooming he will be ready to take over the position of president whenever he is needed.



Our shop stewards will have the honor of being installed by President Young on January 20th at the Retirees/Installation Dinner at our union hall. Our National Business Agent Judy Willoughby will also be here, so make plans now to attend. Active carriers should see their shop steward and retirees should call the union hall. My best wishes for a very prosperous and Happy New Year!

Retirees Dinner- Dance & Shop Steward Installation

Branch 599 will hold the annual Retirees Dinner/Installation of Shop Stewards on Saturday, January 20, 2007 at the union hall. The doors will open at 6:00 pm, with dinner being served at 6:30 and the installation of shop stewards to follow.

The installing officer will be NALC President William H. Young. National Business Agent Judy Willoughby will also be attending, so this should be a very enjoyable, interesting and informative event.

Active members, please see your shop stewards for tickets. Tickets are \$10.00 for two, which will be reimbursed at the door. Retirees must call the union hall at 875-0599 to have their tickets mailed to them.

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RECORDING SECRETARY	Cindy Perez	(813) 766-1220
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TREASURER	Michael Anderson	(813) 681-5688
TRUSTEE(Chairman)	Henry Dupree	(813) 621-6471
TRUSTEE	Jose Oliva	(813) 873-2747
TRUSTEE	Terry Franklin	(813) 657-9690
SERGEANT-AT-ARMS	J.C. Howard	(813) 621-1976
MBA / NSBA	Albert Guice	(813) 621-7931
HEALTH BENEFITS	Lance Jones	(813) 220-1292
DIRECTOR OF RETIREES	John Gebo	(813) 985-5474, cell 503-1256
LABOR - MANAGEMENT	Eric Fleming	(813) 310-8274
LABOR - MANAGEMENT	Brian Obst	(727) 507-0135

Branch 599 Shop Stewards

Brandon	33510	Terry Franklin	(813) 657-9690
Brandon	33511	Phil Chirico	(813) 657-3180
Carrollwood	33618	Brian Obst	(727) 458-0679
Commerce	33602	Dook Ramotar Sr.	(813) 780-6254
Forest Hills	33612	Warren Sumlin	(813) 486-7612
Forest Hills Annex	33613	Alan Robinsom	(813) 843-9762
Hilldale	33614	Sam Santilli	(813) 215-7595
Hilldale Annex	33634	Bill Mandikas	(813) 263-8636
Hyde Park	33606	John Livingston	(813) 253-3651
Interbay	33611	Robert Doval	(813) 727-9241
Interbay	33629	Marie Brown	(813) 832-6644
MacDill	33608	Marie Brown	(813) 832-6644
Palm River	33619	J.C. Howard	(813) 621-1976
Plant City	33565	Brian Obst	(727) 458-0679
Port Tampa	33616	Robert Doval	(813) 727-9241
Produce	33610	Eric Fleming	(813) 310-8274
Ruskin / Sun City Center	33570	Jack Hencoski	(813) 685-9034
Seminole Heights	33603	Tony Diaz	(813) 872-1542
Sulphur Springs	33604	Matt Kokich	(813) 431-3686
Tampa Carrier Annex	33607	Mike Sovan	(813) 872-0709
Tampa Carrier Annex	33609	Dennis Lorenzo	(813) 966-3989
Temple Terrace	33617		
Town & Country	33615	Brian Obst	(727) 458-0679
Ybor City	33605	Detlev Aeppel	(813) 505-7914

Presidents Emeritus

Michael Anderson	Orbe Andux
James Butler	Don Thomas
Garland Tickle	

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Jim Good - Publisher

Kit Kelley - Editor

**RETIREES BREAKFAST
(In Tampa)**

First Monday of Every Month

9:00 AM at

The Coffee Cup

4407 N. Hubert

in Drew Park

**RETIREES BREAKFAST
(In Brandon)**

Second Tuesday of Every Month

8:00 AM at

Buddy Freddy's

134 Gornto Lake Rd S.

in Brandon

Executive Vice-President's Report

by **Detlev Aepfel**

Executive Vice-President - Branch 599

An Event You Won't Want To Miss

The holiday season is now behind us and hopefully you all found some time to share with family and friends. Now its time to put away the decorations and settle down to endure the long dreary winter. But wait! We are letter carriers. We have the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. holiday to take some of the sting out. And then there will be the President's Day holiday in February. Thanks to our union negotiated benefits we will soon have a couple of more chances to enjoy family and friends.

As you probably already know, the NALC was not able to reach a negotiated contract last Fall and now we must prepare for interest arbitration. Although this will be a costly and arduous process I am confident that we will prevail. Pound for pound the NALC has some of the best leaders in organized labor. Management has indicated by their outrageous behavior that they want a fight. You can rest assured that Bill Young and crew will give

management plenty of opportunity to regret their foolish decision.

Mark your calendars now. Branch 599's Retiree's and Installation Dinner will be on Saturday the 20th of January. The guest speaker and installing official will be none other than NALC President Bill Young himself. This will be a wonderful opportunity to get the latest scoop on the contract process directly from the source. This will be an exciting event that you won't want to miss. Contact your shop steward to reserve your tickets and plan to attend.

As you may remember, Branch 599 filed a city wide class action grievance staffing grievance last Fall. That grievance wound it's way through the system and is now awaiting an arbitration date after being impassed by the B-Team. The issue was clear. Tampa did not have enough carriers to deliver the mail. According to management's own DSSA figures we were short 35 carriers needed to get the job done. To meet it's obligation to see that the mail

got delivered management resorted to forcing carriers not on the ODL to provide the auxiliary assistance needed to get the job done.

Management also resorted to denying leave due to the "needs of the service". While the contract does provide for mandating forced over time under very narrowly specified conditions management used forced OT as a crutch on nearly a daily basis. It should be further noted that denial of benefits such as leave is almost unheard of in our contract. Hopefully the arbitrator will see things our way and mandate adequate staffing for Tampa and put an end to supervisors blithely quoting "needs of the service." What our service really needs are enough employees to carry out our mission.

In Solidarity...



Toys for Tots Toy Drive Report

by **Lori McMillion**

Toys for Tots Toy Drive Coordinator - Branch 599

All letter carriers deserve a standing ovation! This year's Toys for Tots collection was enormous. The pile of toys collected went about nine feet high and the whole length of the warehouse building. The Marines in charge, Sgt. Bridgeforth and Sgt. Solomon, were amazed at the amount of toys collected. They also expressed their thankfulness to letter carriers for doing a marvelous job. It was explained to me that 80% of all the toys collected for this event comes from the letter carriers drive. When you figure last year's count served 79,000 children, with each child getting about four toys, that amounts to a ton of smiles and joy for all who are involved. Everyone agrees that we collected more than last year even though early in the evening I had my doubts. The night was long and my job of coordinating was finished by 8 PM. There are people who deserve special recognition as well and I would like to express my gratitude for them. They are Jim Good, for being my guide and partner (your help is immeasurable!); Pat Desarno for volunteering at the stations and warehouse; and our box truck suppliers and drivers, The Marines, Electric Supply, Bay Area Disaster, and U-Haul. These drivers have one of the hardest jobs in the program and they worked diligently. I also want to thank Tim Williams, from Electric Supply and Stan Sakowski from Share Services for stressfully coordinating the route of the trucks and tackling problems that arise with it.

Also thanks to Sgt.Maj..(ret) Wayne Tucker and his wife Pat for directing the warehouse and hanging out with the crowd. Your patience serves as an inspiration to me. Thanks also go out to the Marines who helped unload the trucks as they came in. Thanks to Debbie Nix for the wonderful meal provided by *Jazzy's BBQ*, and to the U.S. Postal Service for allowing me the time to do what I needed in preparing for the big day. Finally, thanks to all the volunteers, including my daughter Alaina, who helped bag toys for the needy families.

Thank you to everyone who I may have missed or needs another pat on the back. We all did an awesome job and deserve to be proud of the accomplishment, whether recognized by the media or not. I hope I can make some changes next year as far as getting the word out. My family and I wish you all a Happy Holiday. (Happy=enjoying well being and contentment. Holiday=a day of freedom from work.)



TLC, Inc. Board of Directors Election Results

On December 14, 2006 nominations and elections were held for the 2007-2008 Tampa Letter Carriers, Inc. Board of Directors.

Director Jose Oliva, having received the most votes in the previous election (for the 2005-2006 terms), will serve for two additional terms without the need for election.

The directors (listed in the next column) were voted into office by acclamation, there being eighteen members nominated for eighteen director positions.

Thanks to these members who give up their own time to ensure the upkeep of our union hall and watch over the interests of our members.

Jim Good
Secretary - Tampa Letter Carriers, Inc.

TLC Board of Directors

Brian Obst	Chairman
Detlev Aeppel	Vice Chairman
John Gebo	Treasurer
Jim Good	Secretary
Jose Oliva	Trustee
Mike Brousseau	Trustee
Lance Jones	Trustee
Cheryl Clothier	Director
Adam Noble	Director
Al Guice	Director
Mike Stewart	Director
Fernando Quintanilla	Director
Ray Wallace	Director
Pat Desarno	Director
Mike Anderson	Director
Tony Diaz	Director
Dook Ramotar	Director
Eric Fleming	Director
Terry Franklin	Director

January Meetings

Tues 1-2-07 - Shop Stewards Meeting
Union Hall, 7:00 PM

Thur 1-4-07 - Executive Board Meeting
Union Hall, 6:30 PM

Thur 1-4-07 - Branch Meeting
Union Hall, 7:30 PM

Tues 1-23-07 - TLC Board Of Directors Meeting
Union Hall, 7:00 PM

ARSLAN UNIFORMS

Bill & Shirley Moran

Retired Letter Carrier Branch 1477 St. Petersburg

Honorary Member Branch 599 Tampa

NEED UNIFORMS IN A HURRY?

SHOP BY PHONE FROM HOME

320 PATLIN CIRCLE EAST PHONE: 727-584-4307

LARGO, FL 33770-3063 CELL: 727-543-0705 FAX: 727-585-9367

bilmor@tampabay.rr.com

Unionism

by Brian Obst

Chief Steward - Branch 599

Grievances and You

A grievance is defined in the JCAM as "...a dispute, difference, disagreement or complaint between the parties related to wages, hours, and conditions of employment." To put it simply if you have a cause to believe that you have been wronged in any area related to wages, hours, or conditions of employment, you have been aggrieved. Wages and hours are fairly simple to understand but conditions of employment can be another matter altogether. We shall discuss in brief these items as well as several types of grievances used to protect your rights under contract.

Conditions of employment are the guidelines for your job in the Postal Service and these conditions can be found in the National Agreement as well as the many publications on the rules and guidelines for the Postal Service. An example of some of these would be the *Employee Labor Manual (ELM)*, the *Postal Operations Manual*, the *Suncoast District and Cluster Safe Driving Rules for Postal Drivers*, to name just a few. These manuals and handbooks set the ground rules for the proper discharge of the duties of the letter carrier and are considered to be some of the conditions of employment for our jobs.

During the day to day grind of our jobs there will be times where management will, by error or design, violate the items listed above

bringing cause for a grievance to be filed. The filing of this grievance can be in one of two ways; an individual grievance or a class action grievance. The following scenario will show a simple case for each type of grievance: *On June 5 carrier B. Smith was worked 12.75 hours. At week end it was discovered that 7 carriers in the station had worked past 60 hours in the week.* In the first part of the example we see that carrier Smith has reason to file a grievance for being forced to work past 12 hours in a work day in violation of the terms of Article 8 of the National Agreement. This would be an individual grievance dealing with carrier Smith only. The second part of the example shows that 7 carriers have cause to file a grievance under Article 8 for being forced to work beyond 60 hours in a work week. These seven carriers can file individual grievances or they can be consolidated into one grievance, called a class action grievance. The class action grievance addresses the problem for all the aggrieved parties at one time since the issue is the same for all the carriers involved. The resolution may be different for each carrier since the hours of violation may be different.

One common misconception when dealing with grievances is that the carrier must ask to file the grievance. The carrier may ask to file a grievance when they feel aggrieved but many times the carrier may not realize that they have a grievance issue that they should be filing on, this is where the stew-

ard comes in to help. The shop steward is tasked with the responsibility of contract enforcement and if the steward becomes aware of a contract violation it is their responsibility to take steps to correct the violation and if that means filing a grievance on behalf of the violated individuals that is what is done. Remember this when your steward comes to you with a settlement that you had not filed a grievance to get.



Your shop steward has a very difficult job. He has to represent all carriers in the shop equally and to the best of his ability. Talk to your steward and, if you feel aggrieved, do not hesitate to request to see your steward to file a grievance.

I would like to take this opportunity to welcome all the new shop stewards taking over in January and remind them that it is an important task they have undertaken and I as well as the rest of the branch Executive Board members are here for you so don't hesitate to draw upon our experience to help ease your transition into the ranks of steward.

Until next month, remember that *knowledge is the key*.

Yours in brotherhood,
Brian Obst
Shop Steward - Town and Country

Retirees Report

Annual Dinner & Dance

Dear Brothers and Sisters of Branch 599, Hope you had a special holiday season and are in good health to start the new year.

On January 20, 2007, our annual Retirees-Shop Steward Installation Dinner Dance will be held. President Good has informed me that NALC President Bill Young, will be the installing officer. Let us show President Young our gratitude for the great job he has done as president by filling the hall with retirees and active members so that he will see that Branch 599 is one of the best NALC

branches in the country. Only by your attending can this be accomplished. Mark the date on your calendar and be there. Get to see your old buddies, talk about the *good old days*, eat, drink and be merry. Retirees please call the union hall and let them know that you will be attending.

At our December retirees breakfast at the Coffee Cup restaurant we had eighteen members in attendance. This was one of the largest groups we have ever had. Thanks to all of you who got up on their "day off" to come and B.S. with each other. January 8, 2007, will be our next breakfast. Breakfast starts at 9:00 AM. So come on down and join us. We would

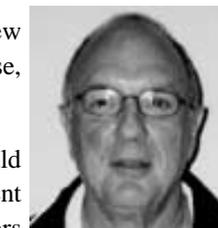
enjoy seeing some new faces and, of course, the old ones.

At this time, I would like to thank President Jim Good, the members of the Executive Board, the shop stewards and members of TLC Inc., for all their hard work and dedication during 2006.

So, as Roy Rogers and Dale Evans sang, happy trails to you, until we meet again.

Fraternally,

John Gebo

by John Gebo
Director of Retirees - Branch 599

Reprinted from the NALC Branch 2550 Venice of America Branch Bulletin

by Paul Gereffi

It's Party Time... Or Is It?

(Editors note: The following article by Paul Gereffi won second place at the recent NALC National Convention in the Best Editorial or Column category of the NALC Branch Publication Contest and is reprinted here from Branch 2550's Venice of America Branch Bulletin.)

Have you ever found out about a party that you weren't invited to? People come to work and say what a good time they had at so-and-so's house over the weekend and you realize you weren't on the guest list. Or, worse, on Saturday afternoon someone asks, "What time are you going to the party tonight?"

You're too embarrassed to say, "What party?" So you say you can't make it. (Of course, this never happened to me, just some other people I know!)

Well guess what? There's been an economic party in the making for quite a few years and YOU, my blue-collar friend, aren't invited. Neither am I, and neither are millions of other American workers. The "new prosperity" won't include us except to clean up afterwards.

You know who you are, the ones that do most of the real hard work in our society. People like construction workers, and other tradesmen, clerical workers, retail and restaurant employees, police and firemen, and other service-sector employees paid by the hour. This may soon include us postal workers. We've all been slipping behind and soon will be relegated to the lowest rungs of society. You don't believe it, do you? But it's already happening and you never felt a thing. Like a blanket that is slowly lowered over you, things have been gently closing in on the middle class.

The party-planners are those in power who decided to give powerful big business all the breaks they need to become even bigger and more powerful. The larger they get the more they can dominate the markets, put the competition out

of business and call all the shots. (See *Enron Corp.* and how they manipulated the electrical power markets before they went bust.)

More and more workers and customers are controlled by fewer, but much bigger businesses. (See Wal-Mart and how they put the Mom-and-Pop stores and small retail operators out of business, as well as some larger ones like K-Mart and FAO Schwartz into bankruptcy, and made *Main Street* in small-town America a ghost town.)

As the big companies merge they can control prices, especially on items which our economy and society depend upon. (See Mobile/Exxon, Gulf/BP and other oil mergers next time you're pumping gas at \$2 plus a gallon.)

When Ronald Reagan died in June, it was said, among his many praises and criticisms, that he laid the groundwork for the move towards a conservative, elite society where the rich get richer and everyone else gets what's left over. The poor are lazy and the middle class unmotivated, according to Reaganism. Its main theory was if business owners are prosperous enough they just might create some jobs for us little people. So let's give big business all the breaks we can and trust them to be good guys and do the right thing by showering their workers with fair pay and benefits. They called it deregulation and "Reaganomics." He called it a "trickle-down" economy. We've been "trickled on" ever since.

In the world of the upper class, and the professionals like doctors, lawyers, brokers and salespeople that cater to their needs, it means huge salaries and steady wealth building. It means that their children, grandchildren and their great-grandchildren will never have to work a day in their lives. It means the best schools and a life of pampered luxury. (Some of us are privileged enough to deliver their mail. They're the ones with the four luxury cars in the driveway who get all those dividend checks.)

For the working class, it means scrimping just to get by, working for little more than minimum wage, with no benefits and no health insurance. It means understaffed and overburdened public schools for their children. It means retiring on a stingy pension or Social Security that leaves some elderly to choose between medicine and groceries each week. (The "golden years" of retirement may refer to the color of their *Depends*.) We deliver their mail, too. They're the ones looking for that monthly check but instead get a pile of bills.

To add insult to injury, many jobs are outsourced overseas and others are being farmed out as freelance work, with low pay and no benefits. The gap between those that have the wealth and power and the workers has been widening lately in South Florida and elsewhere. Shocking, isn't it? For most of us who already own homes it feels pretty good. But what if you wanted to move? Sure, you can get \$200,000 or \$300,000 or more for your house. But where are you going to go? Unless you're downsizing for retirement or moving to another state, you (and your equity) are kind of trapped in that house, aren't you? Imagine just starting out and trying to buy your first house. "That is a cozy little 2 bedroom, 1 bath starter home, and it needs a lot of work and a new roof, but for only \$199,000, what do you expect? (And wait until interest rates rise.) Party hearty, real estate brokers!

Speaking of rise, wait until you do sell and buy another home. Get a load of that property tax increase. Current homeowners are protected in Florida by a 3 percent cap on property taxes per year. But a new home is taxed based on the purchase price. In Ft. Lauderdale many houses on the east side of town are paying \$10,000 to \$20,000 per year in property taxes! Ouch! And how about those rising homeowner, windstorm and flood insurance rates since the state uncapped rate increases? The insurance companies sure aren't missing the party, are they?

Been to the gas pump (continued on page 7)

TAMPA LETTER CARRIERS PRESENT

BINGO

COME JOIN THE FUN

EVERY WEDNESDAY AND FRIDAY

DOORS OPEN AT 5:30

GAMES START AT 6:30

AT THE TAMPA LETTER CARRIERS HALL

3003 W. CYPRESS ST.

Tampa, Fl. 33609

813-877-4785

It's Party Time...Or Is It? *(from page 6)*

lately? \$2.00-plus and higher to fill up that SUV? Give 'till it hurts. I guess it's no coincidence that our president, vice-president, and National Security Advisor are all in the oil business. Party on dudes!

Check out the interest rate on your credit card. Remember usury laws that prevented an interest rate higher than a certain amount? That disappeared in Reaganomics and deregulation, too. Today, average credit card rates are 18-26 percent. My friendly Home Depot credit card has a not-so-friendly interest rate of 25.9 percent. These are rates that guys named "Tony Bananas" and "Louie the Lip" would have been embarrassed to charge back in the day. And credit card debt is at an all-time high. It's THEIR party and YOU can cry if you want to!

Luckily for postal workers, we've been spared the pain of the increasing gap between us and the elite class because of two factors. The first is a negotiated contract that provides us with periodic raises and guaranteed steady work. The second factor; overtime. You can bitch and moan about it all you want but overtime pay can make the difference between just making it and being comfortable.

Sometimes, with all the OT money we're making, we feel part of the party. (Look at that invitation again, it may be for kitchen help.)

Here's what it looks like without overtime. Take our top yearly base pay of \$45,000 plus, deduct 25% for taxes, health insurance, pension and other deductions and divide by 12 months.

That comes to about \$2800 a month. Write it down and look at it. Now, deduct your mortgage or rent payment, car payment, electric and water bill. Then deduct your groceries. And gas for the car. Don't forget auto insurance. Then, homeowners and windstorm and flood insurance on the house to cover all that equity to protect the bank that holds the mortgage. Last but not least, that minimum payment on that high interest credit card. (Don't forget to put something aside for the kid's college fund. Or will you do that down the road?) Look at that bottom line. Sobering, isn't it?

"Yeah, but we'll always have the OT." Let's hope (and pray) so. But the situations I described above are eating away at the extra pay we've been earning.

Consider what will happen if things change at the Postal Service, like maybe privatizing or "deregulating," as Reagan would have said. Or hiring lots of casuals. Or losing our collective bargaining rights. Or eliminating overtime for many workers. Those things didn't seem possible a decade ago but EACH of these things has been proposed in the past YEAR! When you can't sleep one night, think about what would happen if the overtime suddenly stopped. How much do we REALLY make?

Not feeling like putting on that party hat just yet, are you?

Health & Welfare

Bryan Peacock, son of TCA Carrier Alan Peacock passed away. Services were held on Saturday, December 23rd.

A Point of Personal Privilege

by Leslie Ray Garcia

Hope Is In the Air

I can not believe what happened in the mid-term elections. The 2006 election terminated the dominance of Republicans in Congress and their "Contract With America". I hope the new House and Senate members do not roll over and play dead. The Democrats need to find out why the war effort was so botched, why an American city was left to drown and investigate the corruption at every level of our political process. Hopefully newly elected Speaker of the House and Senate Majority leaders, Nancy Pelosi and Harry Reid respectively, will lead this country in a new direction.

The Republicans are already complaining about possible investigations to come from the new Democratic majority. California Democratic Representative Henry Waxman stated that any subpoenas will be issued as a *last result*. Waxman said, "A lot of people have said to me, 'Are you going to now go out and issue a lot of subpoenas and go on a wild payback time?' Well, payback is unworthy. Doing oversight doesn't mean issuing subpoenas. It means trying to get information." This will be unlike GOP Representative Dan Burton, who issued a subpoena as assault on the Clinton administration like most people write a letter. During the Republican dominance in Congress, Democrats were shut out on decision making and oversight responsibilities. Congressman Waxman stated, "When Bush came into power, there wasn't a scandal too big for them to ignore and it's our obligation not to be repeating what Republicans have done."

The soon-to-be majority leaders

have stated that they'll be working on "...the great issues facing America." Bush has stated that his team will "...respect the results of the elections..." and they will "...put the elections behind us." Apparently his thinking is to push legislation through Congress in their final two months that will legalize his wire-tapping program and gut the 1978 Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act that limits presidential abuse of this power. Bush also wants approval of his nominations of Robert Gates and John Bolton; wants approval of the selling of civilian nuclear technology to India; wants approval of the renomination of William Myers III, a longtime lobbyist for mining and timber interests which have abused environmental laws, to the San Francisco-based United States 9th Circuit Court of Appeals; Terrence Boyle, a district court judge in North Carolina and a former aide to Senator Jessie Helms, who had a long record of insensitivity to victims of race and disability discrimination; Michael Wallace, a former lawyer for Mississippi Republican Senator Trent Lott, who has a bad civil rights record including arguing in favor of letting Bob Jones University keep its tax-exempt status, even though BJU is noted for its discrimination based on race; Peter Keisler, who is the fifth appeals court nominee for the US Court of Appeals in the District of Columbia, even though this seat was originally blocked by Republicans when President Clinton tried to fill the seat because they said that this court only needed 10 judges.

There is a report from the Election Defense Alliance (EDA), a national election integrity organization, that indicates a "...major undercount of

Democratic votes and an over-count of Republican votes in the US House and Senate races occurred across the country." The count was skewed in favor of Republicans by about 4%, or an estimated 3 million votes. "We see evidence of pervasive fraud, but apparently calibrated to political conditions existing before recent developments shifted the political landscape, so 'the fix' turned out not to be sufficient for the actual circumstances," said attorney Jonathan Simon, co-founder of EDA.



"The numbers tell us there absolutely was hacking going on, just not enough to overcome the size of the actual turnout. The tide turned so much in the last few weeks before the election. It looks for all the world that they'd already figured out the percentage they needed to rig, when the programming of the vote rigging software was distributed weeks before the election, and it wasn't enough," commented Sally Castleman, National Chair of EDA.

The EDA quotes from a September 2006 study done by Princeton University Center for Information Technology Policy expose significant flaws in the electronic touch-screen voting machine the AccuVote-TS, manufactured by Diebold, Inc. These type of machines counted an estimated 10 percent of votes on Election Day 2006. In October 2006, the University of Connecticut VoTeR Center and Department of Computer Science and Engineering concluded that the optical scanners, Accuvote-OS, that tabulate votes cast on paper ballots were even more susceptible to "a devastating array of attacks." The machine in question was more widely used than the AccuVote-TS and the manufacturer of

(continued on page 9)

Around The Horn

by Tony Diaz

*Financial Secretary - Branch 599***Contract Negotiations**

Brothers and Sisters, I want to wish all of you a very Happy New Year. Hopefully 2007 will be successful and prosperous to all Letter Carriers. Having said that, I unfortunately must inform you that negotiations for a new National Agreement have failed. Despite three months of grueling talks it is clear the United States Postal Service will not agree to a contract that meets the needs of the city letter carrier. The parties worked long and hard to reach an accord and came close, but the Postal Service has now forced the NALC to seek a contract through the law's dispute resolution process. This will be done with all the energy and resources to ensure that the 224,400 career city letter carriers now employed and represented by the NALC are rewarded for their contributions. President Young has stressed the critical role of the letter carrier throughout these main table sessions and the importance of building a durable partnership to insure the future of the USPS. Instead, the Postal Service has sadly decided to abandon more than five years of growing cooperation with the NALC that dramatically improved labor relations and city delivery opera-

tions. The Postal Service has signaled its intention to pursue a policy of outsourcing city letter carrier work. It is difficult to imagine how postal management expects us to make fundamental changes and to work in tandem with them to build a positive future for the USPS, while at the same time telling us they want to eliminate our jobs. Brothers and Sisters this is a very serious policy that could be disastrous towards the future of the city letter carrier. The NALC will not stand by and allow them to do this without a battle for all the members and also fight for all Americans who want and deserve the quality of service that the city letter carriers provide. Again, some of the main proposals the NALC is negotiating, a seven-year agreement, believing an even longer contract than the recently expired 5-year deal is vital for stability, continuation of the existing COLA clause, with no changes and general wage increases of 3 percent in each of the seven years of the agreement. The proposal also tackles the problem of skyrocketing health care costs through a new and innovative approach to the issue. President Young wants nothing more than to present his members with a newly negotiated contract, as was the case with the 2001-2006 contract that was approved by 88 percent of the active mem-

bers. The next step, the dispute resolution process, by law has two procedures that can be followed, fact-finding (typically run by a jointly selected neutral fact finder), there may be a series of meetings and then a formal non-binding recommendation is issued for the terms of a new agreement. The second option is to hire a Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service to appoint a mediator - a kind of professional peacemaker in labor disputes to help the parties come to an agreement. Should these procedures not result in a contract, then the law requires the parties to arbitrate the terms of the new agreement. Hopefully these issues will be resolved and a new contract will be presented and agreed to. At press time for this article, I had not seen the disappointing final proposals from the Postal Service to share with you. I will have all the specifics next month and **I look forward to talking to you again on the next Around The Horn**

**Personal Privilege** (from page 8)

this machine is...Diebold, Inc. Coincidentally, Diebold was a huge monetary contributor to the Republican National Committee and to the 2000 and 2004 Bush campaigns.

“A nation without the means of reform is without the means of survival.”

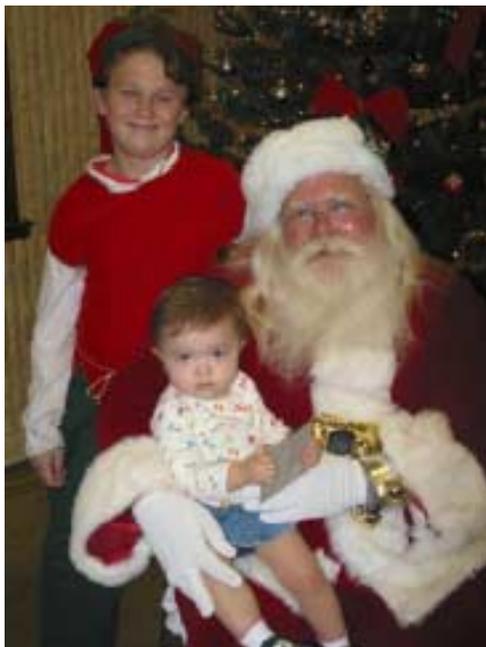
Edmund Burke

Branch 599 Toys for Tots Toy Drive 2006

Branch 599 Toys for Tots Toy Drive 2006



Branch 599 - Christmas Party 2006



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