



Tampa Letter Carrier

Volume 7 - Issue 10

A.R. "Tony" Huerta - NALC Branch 599

Tampa, Florida

October 2008

President's Report

by Jim Good

President - Branch 599

Retirement: Now or Later?

A recent survey taken, and published in the Federal Times, shows that nearly eight out of ten federal workers feel that they are on track or ahead of schedule in planning and saving for retirement, yet less than four out of ten have sufficient knowledge on how to invest their money. The survey also found that less than half of the employees have attempted to calculate how much money they will need to retire in the lifestyle that they are accustomed to.

As most carriers know there are two different retirement systems covering City Letter Carriers. Those hired prior to December 31, 1983 are covered under the Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS) and those hired after that date are covered under the Federal Employee Retirement System (FERS).

The qualifications for voluntary retirement in the two different systems vary greatly. The retirement eligibility date for CSRS employees is the earliest date that you meet both the age and service requirements for optional retirement. They are as follows; age 55 with 30 years of service, age 60 with 20 years of

service or age 62 with 5 years of service. FERS employees may retire and receive a full, immediate annuity if they are at least age 62 with five years of service or age 60 with 20 years of service. They can also retire when they reach their Minimum Retirement Age (MRA) with 30 years of service or at their MRA with as little as 10 years of service, but with a reduced benefit. That reduction is 5 percent for each year they are under age 62 when they retire, unless they have at least 20 years of service and their annuity begins at age 60 or later.

The Postal Service has now decided to offer a Voluntary Early Retirement (VERA) for City Letter Carriers. The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) approved this VERA which will be effective on February 28, 2009. The basics of this "early out" are as follows: Fifty (50) years of age with twenty (20) years of creditable federal service or any age with twenty-five (25) years of creditable federal service. These criteria must be met by February 28, 2009 or you will not be eligible to retire. CSRS employees will lose 2% for each year under the age of fifty-five (55). FERS employees, without a CSRS component will see no reduction. *(Complete information regarding this VERA, including thirteen pages of Frequently Asked Questions, can be found at: <https://liteblue.usps.gov>)*

For normal Immediate Retirement, once you figure out when you are eligible to retire you must figure out how much your annuity will be. You

can request an annuity estimate from Shared Services, the department that has taken over for the Personnel Department that was formally stationed right here in Tampa. They have been given the responsibility of processing the retirement applications. They are also responsible for explaining the retirement process and answering any questions that arise as you are completing the application. And there will be questions! How much life insurance should I carry over into retirement, am I eligible to carry over any life insurance, should I elect a full or reduced spousal annuity, or none at all? What is the best day of the month to retire, or does it make a difference? How much credit will I receive for my accumulated sick leave, or will I receive any credit?

As you can see, you will probably need some type of assistance if you want to ensure that your retirement application process goes smoothly. The entire retirement process is now handled by HRSSC (Shared Services). I will be happy to meet with any member and assist them in completing the necessary paperwork. I am familiar with the process and will do everything in my power to make sure Shared Services does their job. We now have the availability to retire earlier than normal, but the timeframe for doing so is very limited. Please go to the *liteblue* website soon if you are thinking of taking advantage of this offering.



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Branch 599 Officers

PRESIDENT	Jim Good	(813) 417-8877
EXECUTIVE VICE-PRESIDENT	Dook Ramotar	(813), 404-4380
VICE-PRESIDENT	Gilbert Cabanas	(813) 855-0516, cell 597-7396
RECORDING SECRETARY	Mike Brink	(813) 661-1106
FINANCIAL SECRETARY	Tony Diaz	(813) 598-9635
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	Brian Obst	(727) 458-0679
LABOR - MANAGEMENT	A. Sam Santilli	(813) 215-7595

Presidents Emeritus

Michael Anderson	Orbe Andux
Don Thomas	Garland Tickle

Branch 599 Shop Stewards

Brandon	33510	Terry Franklin	(813) 758-3061
Brandon	33511	Phil Chirico	(813) 657-3180
Carrollwood	33618	Dook Ramotar	(813) 404-4380
Commerce	33602	Pedro Jimenez	(813) 727-9280
Forest Hills	33612	Stephen Hall	(813) 494-4669
Forest Hills Annex	33613	Alan Robinson	(813) 843-9762
Hilldale	33614	A. Sam Santilli	(813) 215-7595
Hilldale Annex	33634	Gilbert Cabanas	(813) 597-7396
Hyde Park	33606	Tom Cobert	(813) 694-0711
Interbay	33611	Sammy Graham	(813) 832-6644
Interbay	33629	Jim Tobin	(813) 716-3696
MacDill	33608	Sammy Graham	(813) 832-6644
Palm River	33619	J.C. Howard	(813) 621-1976
Plant City	33565	Jim Davis	(813) 961-6865
Port Tampa	33616	Sammy Graham	(813) 832-6644
Produce	33610	Maggie Lancaster	(813) 317-7522
Ruskin / Sun City Center	33570	Jack Hencoski	(813) 685-9034
Seminole Heights	33603	Tony Diaz	(813) 598-9635
Sulphur Springs	33604	Matt Kokich	(813) 431-3686
Tampa Carrier Annex	33607	Dook Ramotar	(813) 404-4380
Tampa Carrier Annex	33609	Dennis Lorenzo	(813) 966-3989
Temple Terrace	33617	Warren Sumlin	(813) 486-7612
Town & Country	33615	Brian Obst	(727) 458-0679
Town & Country	33635	Brain Obst	(727) 458-0679
Ybor City	33605	Detlev Aeppel	(813) 505-7914

A.R. "Tony" Huerta NALC Branch 599
3003 W. Cypress St.
Tampa, Florida 33609-1617
Tel: (813) 875-0599 Fax: (813) 870-0599
email: nalc599@verizon.net
website: <http://www.nalc599.com>

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Articles must be submitted no later than the fifth of the month. Submit articles as .txt, .rtf, .doc or .wpd documents attached to email sent to

newsletter@nalc599.com

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

Read the *Tampa Letter Carrier* online at
<http://www.nalc599.com/newsletter.htm>

Running With You

by Dook Ramotar

Executive Vice-President - Branch 599

\$2 Billion



A few weeks ago Running With You attended a meeting with President Good and Detlev Appel for the union, along with management team on how to conduct the minor route adjustment, within the contract and participation from the carriers whose routes would be involved.

On discussion and talks conducted with the union in Clearwater, who probably will agree to this agreement, along the terms discussed, it seems fair to both parties involved if done along the lines they seemed to agree to.. At the meeting I voiced my opinion on concerns I have for this. I know there would be supervisors who would work against the agreement because they like to lord it over carriers with intimidation, and threats. There would be others who would do all they can to let this work. Both management and carriers know what I am saying is true.

If the talk is successful and terms agreed on by the union and management on the minor route adjustment, both parties have to work together in unity and respect for the USPS to survive. Remember the days when you were called in the office with your steward for an investigative interview? (sometimes without your steward).

To gather facts of an incident that recently happened. The interview would begin, this is an investigative interview which may lead to discipline up to the removal of the postal service, do you understand? you answer yes..

After the interview is finished, you wait and sweat it out, waiting for the outcome of the interviews. Sometimes, nothing came out of it. Other times, you were disciplined and you grieve it.

Today the investigative interview begins like this: this is an I.I. Which would lead to discipline. I put the word [would] in there because this is what is happening from this steward experience after the I.I., A few days later you get a letter of warning which is the first step of the removal process. Wait a minute- higher up would scream its not. A discussion is, well for one, there are few discussions given today, unless you consider that the supervisor would talk or shout at you on the workroom floor to stop doing this or that, without taking you into the office for a one on one talk.

When the process begins, you get the letter of warning, and you grieve it. (management word for things carriers does wrong to their point of view..)

(Time wasting practices.) The steward begins his investigation, this process would use up to x amount of hours after it is finished using time that could be spent by the carriers - steward, supervisors, managers, etc. and others.

(Isn't this not time wasting practices.) I.I begins sometimes that the supervisors walked with you on the route before going out they would ask the question how are you going to be today carrier replies ok I guess. (To those uneducated of the USPS

procedures, it's a long story.)

Anyway you leave, do your route and you get done early and come back in would you say you should get a pat on the back? Wrong. What you get is a letter of warning, (first the I.I) then the letter of warning.

On the top of this article is the word \$2 billion who said those words.. Post master general John Potter. He said this is how much the USPS would lose somewhere in the neighborhood of this amount this year. He also said the USPS needs to do more to reduce bureaucracy, cut costs, and embrace technology.

I hope management as well as the workers in the USPS heed PMG warning and act according with mutual respect for one another and complete loyalty to the USPS so we can succeed. Two years ago we were fine, now we're losing money. Anyone listening?

Letter carriers can do but so much. Its management turn now.

Until next month, this is Running With You

"It is not enough to understand, or to see clearly. The future will be shaped in the arena of human activity, by those willing to commit their minds and their bodies to the task."- Robert Kennedy

Health and Welfare

Temple Terrace Annex Carrier Richard Eber is recovering at home after a hospital stay.

James Graham, brother of Interbay Carrier and Shop Steward Sammy Graham, has passed away.

Honorary member Bill Moran is in Clearwater Morton Plant Hospital recuperating and doing fine.

Arslan Uniform Drawing

The Arslan Uniform prize for the October Branch 599 meeting will be \$150.00.

If you are in attendance at the meeting on October 2nd and your name is drawn, you will win the \$150.00 donated by Bill & Shirley Moran of Arslan Uniforms.

Why not come to the meeting, hear what is going on in your union, and maybe win some money?

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

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

Things You Should Know

Methods

I guess methods to deliver our mail will continue to change for the Postal Service. It appears upper management will try new methods because they can't improve on the old methods. Even though no one likes route inspection, neither side can agree on a better method for a fair jointly implementation program. With the continuing dropping of our first class mail volume and carriers retiring at the rate of 4 a month, the Postal Service is going over different ways of capturing the savings.

Many rumors are circulating over ways to capture this under time savings. One thought seems to be through minor adjustments or just eliminating full routes by reversion. The only problem is that there is not a fair method to add streets without current data less than 18 months with a current 3999. A trial method was verbally agreed upon, this will be tested at Interbay Station. Five months, January to May was picked with average street times, without touching the office time. Also consultations were to be

done with the carriers involved. A carrier and a supervisor were chosen to be on this team, neither one from Tampa, in order for this program to be neutral. There are some other methods that management has tried to implement in different areas.

One would be changing office times or adjusting street time with their COR program. Hopefully we can continue to implement our verbal agreement so we can save money and time for the company. Management may still try to implement their other methods. I feel without a joint effort there will not be a non-intrusive agreement, which always leads to grievances.

There is news of an early out program but this has not been offered to the letter carrier craft. Frankly, there isn't much to this offer because CSR workers will be penalized 2% a year under the age of 55. The FERS workers would receive a supplement annuity until they reach 62 years old, then social security would begin again. This provided you have 25 years of service at any age, or 20 years of service over the age of 50. There are no lump sum attached to this program in any way. So, please go over all these numbers before you take this early out because you then may

by Gilbert Cabanas

Vice-President - Branch 599

have to work another job elsewhere.



Now, let us thank our national union leaders for our great cost of living raise in our contract which now stands at about 1,500 for September 2008. And, if you would really like to thank these union leaders, please join in our Gimme 5 COLCPE program. You can join this program through the payroll deduction for only \$5 a pay period. Not much money for the wonderful cost of living raise all carriers have received. Why is this so important for our National Leaders? Because then they have a fix amount available for distribution at their level. These funds will be used to back the congressional leaders that are union-friendly. At the Boston convention this year, about 1,000 carriers signed up for this great cause. On Thursday, about 6,000 carriers that were involved in this program proudly wore their *New Trifecta* t-shirts.

So, please won't you join in this great effort which benefits everybody just give back a little, only \$5 a pay period.

Flash

Taking the Time

I'm taking the time to write this article in our news letter because I felt it's important for all of the Brothers and Sisters of Branch 599 to take the time to get involved. Currently I am on detail to Tampa for minor route adjustments as the union representative, and will return to my route in the Brandon Post Office when they release me.

Carriers, take the time you need to ask for your shop steward. It is your right. It is very hard to file a grievance while on break, clocking on or off the clock, or while the steward is casing mail. Supervisors should give you the time with the steward, and any assistance needed for you and the steward to complete your route. The steward will then inform management of the time needed to interview carriers and research the case to

see if a grievance is warranted.

To the carriers who took the time to come to our Labor Day picnic, *thank you*. I was happy to see some new faces at this year's picnic. It seemed the kids were having fun getting their faces painted and they enjoyed the games going on outside. The magic show appeared to keep them entertained.

A thank you needs to go out to Phil Chirico and his family. Lori, Phil's wife, manned the front door and accepted donations for M.D.A., and their 3 boys helped with cotton candy, snow cones and drinks. Thank you Travis and Tucker (my fiancée's sons) for volunteering your time to help me setup and get the picnic going. Thanks to all the Brothers and Sisters who helped me make this years Labor Day picnic a success.

I will once again be in charge of the Christ-

by Terry Franklin

Trustee - Branch 599

mas Party and will be looking for brothers and sisters of this branch to volunteer their time to help out. Please call me if you would like to take the time and volunteer.



Carriers, some of you choose to take the time to go to the Rays, Bucs, and Bolts games, and other carriers choose to take the time for *Pampered Chef*, jewelry parties, and a night out, but choose not to take the time to attend the once a month branch meetings where your job, and the future of your job, are discussed. A strong union is responsible for your pay, which affords you these things and more.

Please take the time and thank you for your time.

Around The Horn

Get Involved

Brothers and Sisters, I write to you this month with a touch of frustration in my message. My frustration stems from the lack of participation, lack of involvement, lack of concern and just plain lack of interest shown by the large majority you. From the monthly Branch Union meetings to our annual Labor Day Picnic to our annual Kids Christmas Party to our annual Retirees/Installation Dinner to our annual MDA Stop Light Collection to COLCPE contributions or to signing up to receive important emails through the e-Activist Network, you always see the same people volunteering their time. It certainly is not from a lack of effort from many of our Union Leaders. Through countless articles throughout the years, invitations, give a ways, contests or requests, large portions of you simply do not care to get involved. Most of us do have families, and all of us have commitments, chores, tasks, errands and responsibilities, however as a Union Officer I juggle my schedule in order to be available for my Union functions. It is

very important to me to be accessible to help provide whatever service we are providing for our membership. While a number of our Branch functions center on family events and providing an opportunity to join together with fellow Branch members, protecting our jobs is the number one priority. With the Postal Service at one of the most critical stages in its history, our Branch provides its members with many functions and avenues to better educate and inform you of critical events directly related to your job. Branch 599 has appointed excellent event coordinators that strive to produce the finest product possible, whether it is a social setting or educational. It was our last function that prompted this article, the annual Labor Day Picnic. While event coordinator Terry Franklin did a wonderful job again of orchestrating a successful event, we struggled with involvement in covering all planned activities. The scrambling that went on behind the scenes to properly staff everything should never be an issue with the number of active and retired members Branch 599 has on the roster, over one thousand. Despite that, everything went well with 400 active and retired members and their families in attendance, thanks to the small number of tireless, dedi-

cated members. First we must involve the remaining Union Leaders that are not participating, especially the Shop Stewards, their role is vital, not only to their participation but to your involvement. They must promote the different events, being in the Stations with you. All members are always welcome, and should you feel inclined to assist in any production or have any ideas to improve with attendance, please contact the Branch office and your name would be relayed accordingly.



Financial Secretary - Branch 599

Quick Hits: Information you should know

Wanted to thank Branch 599 for sending myself and five other stewards to a two day Arbitration training seminar in St. Petersburg last month. The class was very educational and well presented. The material covered insight on actual cases with prudent information that made the cases successful.

Look forward to talking to you again on the next *Around The Horn*

Health Benefits Report

Changes Coming

At the national convention in Boston, Tim O'Malley, NALC Director of Health Benefits, said that by the year 2010 the NALC health plan would mirror the health plan that has a color in its name. I think it will surpass any and all health plans available to carriers including the one with the color. Some major changes are coming that were not revealed at the convention and to that end a special meeting/training seminar has been scheduled for the end of this month which I will be attending.

I'm very excited about what will be

happening to our plan. Director O'Malley has worked very hard and diligently to bring our plan forward and the list of improvements is already long. He has made himself accessible to any and all to listen to their input and ideas. He is dedicated to making our plan carrier oriented. Next month I will be able to bring you up to date on what we have to look forward to, so please attend the meeting where I will be able to address your individual questions and talk with anyone interested more extensively.

Remember a \$5.00 a pay period donation to COLCPE helps bring a better future for your family and mine. I donate. Won't you do the same?.

by Lance Jones

Health Benefits Representative - Branch 599

We still have cost of living adjustments (due to COLCPE) while a lot of unions have lost theirs. Don't forget the \$1400+ a year raise you're getting this fall.

Giving just \$120 a year of that to COLCPE is cheap insurance for the same sort of income increases in the future.

In unity,

Lance Jones



Unionism

by **Brian Obst**

Chief Steward - Branch 599

Article 27 Employee Claims

You are at work and you are wearing a brand new uniform. You walk past a crab cage on the workroom floor and you hear a loud tearing sound. Your new uniform shirt has been ripped by a piece of the crab cage that is sticking out and caught your shirt as you squeezed past on the crowded workroom floor. What can you do?

This is a situation for which Article 27 is specifically designed. Article 27 Employee Claims is for damage or loss of personal property. It is necessary to understand exactly what is meant by personal property to fully understand the workings of Article 27 so several definitions are in order:

Personal Property: Cash, Jewelry, Clothing, Carrier Uniforms and non motorized bikes. There is exclusion for automobiles and their contents and motorized bikes as damage to these items are handled through the Federal Tort Claims Act.

Damage or Loss: Must be a minimum of \$10 to qualify for the claims process.

Article 27 has some requirements that must be met if a claim is to be filed and paid. First you must be able to answer two questions

1. *Was it necessary for the employee to have the damaged or lost item in their possession at work?*
2. *Was the value of the item so great that the employee should not have risked losing or damaging it at work?*

In examining the above questions

think about what they mean, Is it reasonable and/or necessary for someone to wear a \$3000 dollar watch to work, or a \$2000 diamond ring? These are the thoughts of the previous questions and while I may have picked extreme examples I think you get the picture.

The claim form PS2146 is used to file claims for loss. When this form is filed one must present the proper documentation, information on depreciation as well as wear and tear of the item. These items are used to verify the claim and set the proper value for any potential payout.

The time limits for filing your claim are within 14 days after the loss or damage was suffered. Contractually the employee is expected to know the proper procedures as well as the time limits for filing a claim.

Once the claim form is filled out and it, plus the supporting documentation

as well as recommendations from the Employer and the Steward will all be forwarded by the Employer to the B Team within 15 days for determination. Should the B Team decide to Impasse the claim appeal rights to Arbitration would apply as normal with any grievance.

The information for this article is taken from the JCAM and I recommend that you take the time to read it when you get a chance.

Remember, knowledge is the key.

Yours in brotherhood,

Brian Obst
Chief Steward - Branch 599



Labor / Management Representative

Eric Fleming, one of Branch 599's Labor / Management Representatives, has resigned his position.

He has returned to law school to continue his education in the hopes of becoming an attorney.

As a result of this I am appointing Brian Obst to replace Eric in this position.

Jim Good
President - Branch 599

And The Beat Goes On

Off The Clock

I hear that the Labor Day picnic was very nice and a good amount of people were there. I had every intention of going but had a back problem and it was best to stay home and rest.

I heard through the grapevine that a few long time Brandon Letter Carrier's are running their butts off. Now, I could understand why a new carrier would do that, but for carriers with a lot of years in the post office it doesn't make sense. Also, the most mistakes happen when you are in a hurry, of course your friendly manager loves it when you get done extra early and we all know if you have an accident or get caught breaking a law, your manager will do everything in their power to defend you. Yeah right, tell me another one!

There is not much the Union can do about carriers that constantly go fast on the street, but I do hope they are enforcing the contract in the office.

There was one scab in Brandon who every day I caught him casing his mail off the clock before starting time. Before I got on the clock I would walk all over the office

(as shop steward) to make sure this was not going on. I told the carrier he was not to work off the clock and it was for his protection as well, in case he got hurt while off the clock. Well, needless to say, this carrier could care less what the shop steward said. I then brought it to the floor manager's attention, who at that time was Ms. Nancy Fryrear, and told her since this carrier would not listen to yours truly, it was up to management to make sure this did not happen.

What was said? I don't know, but a week later this carrier was at his case throwing mail off the clock. That day I went to Ms. Fryrear and told her that I had no choice but to file a grievance and that this carrier is paid time and 1/2 for the time he was throwing mail off the clock.

I will never forget the next day, Ms. Fryrear said she was giving the carrier an *Official Discussion*, and asked if I would be in the office when she did so. Whether I should have done so or not, I don't know, but I did. Ms. Fryrear then told the carrier he would no longer work off the clock, period. The carrier then turned to me and started telling me off, that none of this would have happened were it not for the lousy, no good union. I then told Ms. Fryrear that I am in here at your request only – but I will not tolerate being told off and that you will defend me and the union that I stand for.

Well, the carrier never worked off the clock again.

All I can say is it's one hell of a tough job being a good shop steward, and if you want everyone to like you, don't be a shop steward. It's not only the scabs. One case, I got a *Letter of Warning* for a union carrier resolved so that, if he stayed out of trouble for 3 months from the date of my meeting with the Postmaster, the *Letter of Warning* would be dropped. I felt good that I got that. The carrier then said, "Damn, Ray, that's lousy! Why didn't you get it three months from the date of the incident?" I replied, "Can't you stay out of trouble for 3 months from today?"

I'd like to remind every employee of the U.S. Postal Service that you must watch what you do so as to not bring a bad name to the U.S. Postal Service when we're on or off the clock. My personal feelings on this are if a carrier does something wrong off the clock, and it's no way connected to the Postal Service, why should the Post Office get involved in it at all? But as we all know the Post Office does, and many a letter carrier has been terminated because of. So be very careful out there and watch out for number one - you.



by Ray Wallace

CDL District 11 Political Report

Voting Picks

Election time is upon us again. One thing to think about in today's political atmosphere is maintaining a bi-partisan approach to who you vote for. It has become more and more important to vote for candidates that are going to support legislation that will advance you and your family's lifestyle. On that note, I would point out that the NALC and the AFL-CIO headquarters spend a great deal of time and effort researching the candidates nationwide at all levels of the election process. From this they produce a list of candidates who do support legislation favorable to us. I feel these recommendations should be given considerable weight in making a decision on whom to vote for. They do not favor political parties but the candidates themselves. Much more research by teams of people has been put into these recommendations at the national

level than we can do on our own. So these recommendations are not the voice of one person nor are they telling you how to vote. The following is a list of recommendations from the AFL-CIO for the upcoming local elections. I hope it helps you in your decision making process and please share it with other voters in your household.

In unity,
Lance Jones

The following is a list of recommendations by the AFL-CIO Central District of Florida and is not necessarily the opinion of Branch 599 or its officers:

US Congress, District 11: Kathy Castor (D)
301 W. Platt St., #385, Tampa, FL 33606

US Congress, District 12: Douglas Tudor (D)
P.O. Box 1220, Riverview, FL 33568

Florida House, District 52: Rep. Bill Heller (D)
P.O. Box 2886, St. Petersburg, FL 33731

by Lance Jones

Congressional District Liaison - Branch 599

Hillsborough County

Property Appraiser: Rob Turner (R) 2635 W. Prospect Rd., Tampa, FL 33629

Supervisor of Elections: Phyllis Busansky (D) P.O. Box 272359, Tampa, FL 33688

Tax Collector: Doug Belden (R) 1128 Shipwatch Cir., Tampa, FL 33602

County Commission, District 6: Kevin Beckner (D) 12911 Vicksburg Dr., Tampa, FL 33625

School Board, District 7: Stephen Gorham (NPA) 4515 Ethan Way, Plant City, FL 33563

Manatee County

Public Defender: Adam Tebrugge (D) 2337

(continued on page 9)



A Point of Personal Privilege

Once A Hero, Always A Hero

Senator John McCain seems to be doing all the right things. He espouses his vision for America's place in the world by quoting Presidents Kennedy and Reagan. McCain wants the U.S. to be strong against our enemies and states "I want us to rise to the challenges of our time, as generations before us rose to theirs." He addresses the audience as "...my friends." McCain tells them, "It still remains within our power to make in our time another, better world than we inherited." Many Americans including Democrats see a war hero whose courage was strengthened in a North Vietnamese POW camp (the Hanoi Hilton). They portray him as "...the decent patriot of the middle ground and steady hand for difficult times."

The media and political pundits have yet to call Senator McCain a flip-flopper. I imagine they excuse him because of his age and because he is a Vietnam war hero. Another Vietnam war hero and Democratic Presidential candidate was not given such leeway when he changed his mind on national issues. Senator John Kerry was declared a flip-flopper by the media and especially political pundits. A double standard that seems to be quite effective in defeating democratic candidates.

First, on the issue of immigration McCain argued that "border security will be ineffective no matter how formidable the barriers." He believed, sponsored with Senator Ted Kennedy and favored the establishment of a temporary worker program in order to achieve comprehensive immigration reform. However, in the January 30, 2008 debate McCain said he wouldn't vote for the comprehensive immigration reform bill and has since become a proponent of border security first. He has even gone so far as to speak out against his own legislation!

Second, many see him as a maverick who spoke out against the illegal tortures of Abu Ghraib. Yet he voted for legislation that helped make torture legal.

Third, "They see a reformer who acts

against lobbyists and political favors." The reasoning is that he supposedly makes decisions solely based on principles without political considerations playing a part. John McCain in the past spoke out and accused the Pentagon of being in cahoots with defense industry lobbyists. Since becoming the Republican nominee for President, McCain has gone on and on praising a pointless war in Iraq which is wasting trillions in so-called defense dollars. What happened to decisions based on principles?

Fourth, Senator John McCain has a record of supporting President Bush on 90% of Bush's policies and legislation. This is not the record of a maverick.

Fifth, when asked how many homes he owned, he referred the question to his advisors. This is not being a straight-talker.

Sixth, McCain stated in 1999, "Certainly, in short term, or even long term, I would not support repeal of Roe v. Wade, which would force X number of women in America to undergo illegal and dangerous operations." But on February 18, 2007, he stated, "I do not support Roe v. Wade, period. It should be overturned." This appears to be a change because of political considerations.

Seventh, in 2000 McCain referred to Jerry Falwell, Pat Robertson and their constituents as "agents of intolerance." In his 2008 bid, McCain has gone out of his way to win the support of those individuals he previously had vilified. He even delivered the commencement address at Falwell's Liberty University in 2006.

Eighth, is the issue of the environment, in which he believes that there should be more off shore drilling and clean energy. However he dodged a crucial vote on the future of clean energy in America and, out of 535 Members of Congress, he is the only politician to miss every single key legislation vote on the environment in 2007.

Ninth, McCain has given well publicized speeches deriding the influence of money in politics. Yet McCain has no problem filling his war chest with money from special interest groups and lobbyists. It seems his leadership P.A.C., "Straight Talk America", brought in millions of dollars from individuals at American Defense International, Microsoft's government affairs office, JP Mor-

by Leslie Ray Garcia



gan Chase, and two of Washington's top lobbying firms - Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld, and DCI Group. From 1993 to 2000, McCain received more money from the corporations of the media than any other sitting member of Congress. He has many current and former telecom lobbyists serving at the highest levels of his campaign. I guess you reform others first.

Tenth, when Senator Barack Obama opted out of the public financing system for the general election, Senator McCain attacked Obama by stating, "This election is about a lot of things but it's also about trust. It's also about whether you can take people's word. This is a big deal, a big deal. He has completely reversed himself and gone back, not on his word to me, but the commitment he made to the American people." Yet McCain has completely reversed himself and has consistently gone back on his own word on public financing during his campaign. He has drawn accusations of hypocrisy this year when he backed out of public financing for the primary campaign, yet he received a \$4 million loan when he used the promise of utilizing public finance.

"It isn't what we don't know that gives us trouble, it's what we know that ain't so."

Will Rogers

Voting Picks (from page 8)

Ixora Ave., Sarasota, FL 34234

Pasco County

Clerk of Circuit Court: Paula O'Neil (R)
8231 Danbury Ln., Bayonet Point, FL 34667

Sheriff: Kim Bogart (D) 7642 Plathe Rd., New Pt. Richey, FL 34653

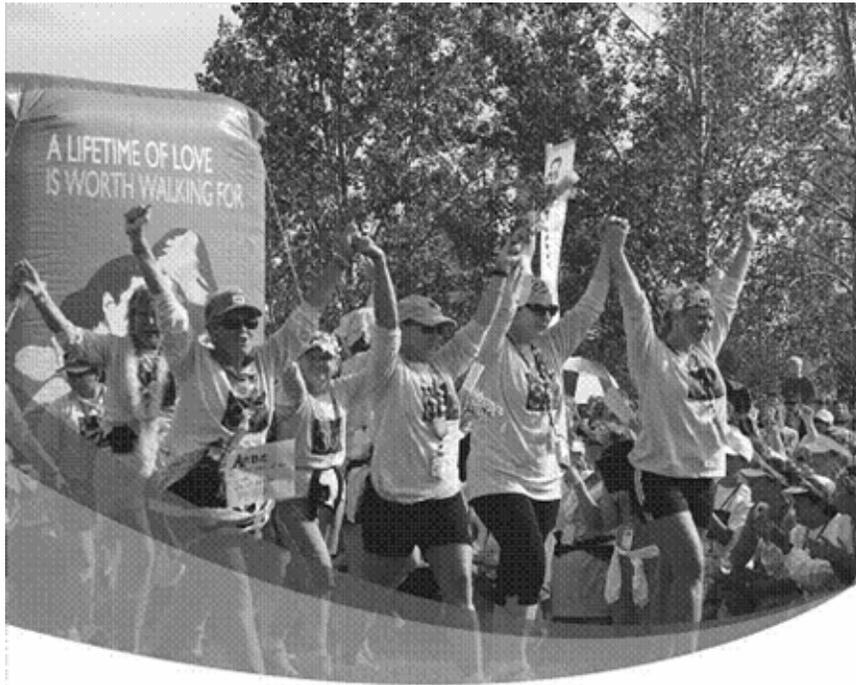
Superintendent: Steven Donaldson (D)
P.O. Box 482, Elfers, FL 34680

County Commission, District 5: Ginny Miller (D) 5534 Tropic Dr., New Port Richey, FL 34653

Pinellas County

Sheriff: Randall Jones (D) P.O. Box 5741, Clearwater, FL 33758

(continued on page 11)



THE BREAST CANCER 3-DAY.
BECAUSE EVERYONE DESERVES A LIFETIME.

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I'M WALKING.

Oct 31-Nov 2 TAMPA BAY

I'm Rocky Randels, NALC Tampa Letter Carrier at FHA and I'm taking an incredible journey to help end breast cancer forever. On the dates above, I will walk 60 miles in the Breast Cancer 3-Day for Susan G. Komen for the Cure. On behalf of the NALC, I will carry a special cache of envelopes with the Breast Cancer stamp, one of which will be presented to the Mayor of Tampa, Pam Iorio demonstrating to the city of Tampa that the NALC Letter Carriers of Branch 599 are committed to providing Community Service and Public Awareness, but **I NEED YOUR HELP**. Please consider doing what you can to help support the effort. You can reach me at 813-766-2604 or see your steward. Thank you.

It's amazing what can happen IN ONLY 3 DAYS.

Retired But Not Tired

by John Gebo

Election News

Dear Brothers and Sisters of Branch 599,

On July 20th to July 25th, 2008, I had the privilege of being a paid Delegate to the National Association of Letters 66th Biennial Convention. I along with 24 other members of Branch 599, attended the Convention which was held in Boston, Massachusetts, home of the World Champion Boston Celtics and Boston Red Sox. A lot of history in Bean Town.

The next National Association of Letters Carriers Convention will be held in Anaheim, California. The cost for the Convention in Boston was over \$25,000. What will it be in 2010 in Anaheim? I think we should consider a By-Law change for the qualifications for being a paid delegate.

On Monday, July 20, 2008, Senator Hillary Clinton addressed the Convention Delegates. Senator Clinton is a friend of all Letter Carriers. This is shown by her voting record and support she has given to the NALC. She said "If you want to protect your job security, wages, health benefits and COLA's, we need to send a Democrat to the White House." With that said, Senator Clinton firmly endorsed Senator Barrack Obama.

The Convention Delegates later endorsed Senator Obama for President of the United States of America. Please vote on November 4, 2008 and support the candidates who are Union friendly and friends of the Letter Carriers.

At the Convention they give awards for different achievements by branches s. One was for branches who give most to COLCPE. Most of you know this is our political action fund. You read it in the Postal Record, the Tampa Letter Carrier and hear if from Branch Officers and Shop Stewards, yet Branch 599 has a dismal 4.2% who give. "Gimme '5'.

I don't believe that there is any retiree or active member who can't afford to give 5 dollars a month or pay-period. To protect your job and retirement for 5 dollars seems awfully cheap. Are carriers and retirees really that cheap? 4.2%, what a joke. By the way, that 4.2% represents 42 letter carriers out of 1,000 members. Please sign up, get involved and please vote.

Our annual Labor Day Picnic on Sunday, August 31, was a great union branch event. It has always been very successful and a great day for families to get together and

have a great time with our union brothers and sisters. This is what unionism is all about.



After missing the last three *Retirees Breakfasts*, it was great seeing and talking with some of the retired brothers. Thanks to those who were in attendance at the August breakfast, Dupree, Deignan, Stoffer, Bobeau, Lundy, Munns, Good, Oliva, Adel, Krezel and Follman. Remember, this is an open breakfast so any letter carrier who would like to join us is welcome. I am sure we can teach you the correct way to carry mail, keep your supervisor happy and avoid a *L.O.W.* Next breakfast at the Coffee Cup on October 6. Hope to see you there.

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

Fraternally,
John Gebo

Voting Picks (from page 9)

County Commission, District 5: Norm Roche (D) 1880 Oak Park Dr., South, Clearwater, FL 33764

County Commission, District 7: Ken Welch (D) (I) 2400 Madrid Way So., St. Petersburg, FL 33712

School Board, District 1: Janet Clark (NPA) (I) 836 - 5th St. North, St. Petersburg, FL 33701

School Board, District 4: Ken Peluso (NPA) 36949 US Hwy. 19, North, Palm Harbor, FL 34684

Branch Meeting**Thursday****October 2****7:30 PM****at the Union Hall**

A.R. "Tony" Huerta NALC Branch 599
3003 West Cypress Street
Tampa FL 33609-1617
(813) 875-0599 fax (813) 870-0599
<http://www.nalc599.com>

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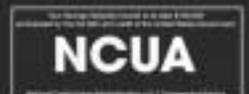
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*Offer valid through December 31, 2008. All applicable entries are automatically entered into the random drawing. Restrictions may apply.