



Tampa Letter Carrier

Volume 5 - Issue 11

A.R. "Tony" Huerta NALC Branch 599

Tampa, Florida

November 2006

President's Report

Keeping Informed to Protect Your Rights

Branch 599 currently has over twenty-five branch officers and/or station shop stewards that have been elected to serve and protect the contractual rights of our members. Some of these officers deal with the financial operations of our branch, while others help the office run smoothly by helping with the administrative duties. One thing that all the officers and shop stewards have in common is the need for continual training to be able to fulfill their elected duties.

This training is received in many different ways. As the president, I receive regular updates through the National Business Agent's office in the form of national memorandums, educational materials from the National Director of City Delivery, memos from the Executive Vice President and Vice President's offices and from other national officers. I also attend Committee of President's Meetings twice a year, as well as Regional and National Rap Sessions.

When it comes to the training of our officers and shop stewards, there are many different ways of keeping them up to date. Our National Sec-

retary-Treasurer Jane Broedel has sponsored numerous workshops, some through her office and some through the Department of Labor, to keep the relevant officers informed of the ever changing Labor Laws. Financial Secretary Tony Diaz, Treasurer Mike Anderson, and I have attended these classes in different cities throughout the country so that we can stay current with these new laws and protect the interests of Branch 599.

The branch shop stewards are given the opportunity to attend training seminars twice a year to stay on top of the latest arbitration decisions and memorandums of understanding that affect the working conditions of city letter carriers. During these seminars classes are also given on a wide variety of subjects for new and seasoned stewards.

One such seminar was just completed in Cocoa Beach on October 15th. I am proud to inform you that sixteen shop stewards and/or officers attended this seminar. All of these attendees were there on their own time, either on a change of schedule or on annual leave. This shows the dedication that your representatives have in their continuing education so that they can better protect the rights of members of Branch 599. Classes were given for new stewards (this class was held all day Saturday and was taught by our National Business Agent's Regional Administrative Assistant Nancy Quick), Branch Finances, OWCP (given by Kevin Finn, OWCP Specialist for the Department of Labor),

Effective Branch Communication, Formal "A" Process, and Rap Sessions for branch presidents and arbitration advocates.



by **Jim Good**

President - Branch 599

Every officer and steward who attended this seminar was mandated to be involved in classes during the entire seminar, and all did so. So the next time you see your shop steward or one of your branch officers, take a minute to say "thank you" for the dedication and time they take out of their personal life to stay informed. As the saying goes, knowledge is power. Your representatives are doing all in their power in stay informed to better serve you, the member.

Nominations & Election of Delegates to the 2007 Florida State Association of Letter Carriers Convention

Nominations for delegates to the 2007 Florida State Association of Letter Carriers Convention will be held at the regular branch meetings on November 2, 2006 and December 7, 2006.

The meetings will be held at 7:30 pm at the union hall, 3003 West Cypress, Tampa, FL 33609. Election of delegates, if necessary, will be held at the December 7th branch meeting at 7:30 pm at the same location.

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DIRECTOR OF RETIREES	John Gebo	(813) 985-5474, cell 503-1256
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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	Gilbert Cabanas	(813) 855-0516
Commerce	33602	Dook Ramotar Sr.	(813) 780-6254
Forest Hills	33612	Warren Sumlin	(813) 486-7612
Forest Hills Annex	33613	David Camuy	(813) 892-6553
Hilldale	33614	Gilbert Cabanas	(813) 855-0516
Hilldale Annex	33634	Lance Jones	(813) 220-1292
Hyde Park	33606	George McEndree	(813) 935-0244
Interbay	33611	Robert Doval	(813) 727-9241
Interbay	33629	Marie Brown	(813) 832-6644
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Palm River	33619	J.C. Howard	(813) 621-1976
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Port Tampa	33616	Robert Doval	(813) 727-9241
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Town & Country	33615	Brian Obst	(727) 458-0679
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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)**

Monday, November 6, 2006

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 Reportby **Detlev Aeppel***Executive Vice-President - Branch 599****Those Minutes Will Count Against You***

Route inspections at Ybor Station, Seminole Heights, and Forest Hills Annex have just been completed. For the most part the carriers did a good job of filling out the 1838-C forms that are the backbone of the inspections. As you know, the NALC won a national grievance which gives the letter carriers the responsibility to fill out the forms on five of the six days of inspection. On the sixth day, the actual day of inspection, the inspector fills out the 1838-C. The letter carrier has the responsibility to count the mail on five days as well as the right to verify the count on the sixth day. The overwhelming majority of letter carriers understood these rights and responsibilities so the inspections proceeded in a relatively smooth manner.

The next step will be the actual adjustments. Mr. Fred Cullaro will once again be doing the adjustments. He has agreed to take input from the union and the letter carriers as well as local management when determining what adjustments to make. Hopefully this

process will create well adjusted routes that everyone can live with. This will be even more important as upper management continues to inflict unreasonable budget cuts and under staffing on the delivery operation. If the routes are out of adjustment it will be even more impossible to reach these "pipe dream" goals.

It has come to my attention that some supervisors and managers are telling letter returning carriers returning in the afternoon to punch in to the office operation (722) as soon as they arrive at the station and then unload their vehicles and dispatch the collected mail so as to make the five o'clock window. If you are told to do this non-contractual clock ring then of course you must obey but absolutely and positively ask for your steward and file a grievance each and every time you are told to do this. Falsifying a clock ring is a serious offense! You can be disciplined for it. Clocking into the office operation while still doing street functions also has another negative effect on letter carriers that may be less obvious. For the pur-

poses of DOIS, office time is office time, whether it is in the AM or in the PM. Let's say that you are a typical letter carrier and you performed your AM office duties in an efficient and effective manner. Now when you return you are instructed to clock to the office and then finish your street duties. This may take only 5 or 10 minutes but those minutes will count against your morning office time. On paper your efficiency will go down. If your manager is questioned about this lowered efficiency by their boss they will NOT stick up for you or confess that they instructed you to falsify your clock rings so as to make the so called five o'clock window. Instead the manager will promise to press you harder the next day so as to show the expected level of office efficiency. Don't get sucked into this losing proposition. You know the right thing to do.

In Solidarity...

**Tampa Letter Carriers, Inc.
Director Vacancies**

There is currently one vacancy on the TLC Board of Directors. Any Branch 599 member in good standing who wishes to be considered to fill this vacancy should write a request and submit it to: Tampa Letter Carriers Director Vacancies, 3003 W. Cypress, Tampa, FL 33609. If you have previously submitted a request for a director position you must re-submit. All applications must be received by November 20, 2006.

Thanksgiving Food Drive

The APWU will be conducting a Thanksgiving Food Drive to supply Thanksgiving dinners to needy families in the Tampa Bay area. Branch 599 encourages all carriers to help out in this worthwhile effort by dropping off non-perishable food items or cash donations (to help in the purchase of turkeys) at our union hall, 3003 West Cypress St. The APWU will make arrangements to pick these items up the week of Thanksgiving. Please help our fellow union members bring a little joy to the needy families in our community!

OUT THERE



Meetings Dates:

- Thur 11-2-06 - Branch Meeting
Union Hall, 7:30 PM
- Tues 11-28-06 - TLC Board Of Directors Meeting
Union Hall, 7:00 PM
- Thur 12-07-06 - Executive Board Meeting
Union Hall, 6:30 PM

Flu Shots

Flu shots will be given by the USPS at our union hall on Thursday, November 2, 2006, from 6:00 pm until 8:00 pm. This is the night of our regularly scheduled branch meeting. The flu shots will be free for any current postal employee, with retirees being charged approximately \$25.00. Employee ID badges must be shown to receive the free flu shots.

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

The National Agreement and You

We are all employees of the United States Postal Service and as employees we are given guidelines to follow in the daily performance of our duties. The National Association of Letter Carriers is the union that negotiates on behalf of all city letter carriers and the National Agreement is the contract that governs both parties in our daily performance of our duties as letter carriers. At the present time the national officers of the N.A.L.C. are involved in attempting to gain a negotiated settlement of a new National Agreement as the current one expires this November. I would like to address the National Agreement and its meaning to you, the everyday carrier.

The members of the N.A.L.C. Executive Council are currently negotiating on behalf of all city letter carriers for our new National Agreement. You may ask – how do they know what I want in the new contract? The answer is easy. This process should begin well in advance of the national convention, at the local level. These concerns are presented to the Contract Administration Unit in the form of resolutions. The CAU then studies these resolutions and decides if they have already been adopted at past conventions. If not, the CAU then presents the resolutions to the delegates of the convention with their recommendation of approval or disapproval. While I, like all the other elected members and officers of both the local branches and national offices, attempt to know as much as possible, nobody will ever know everything. This procedure allows all members to become involved in the decision making of a well negotiated contract.

That said, let's look at some of the negotiated issues in the contract that are important to all the membership. Overtime rules are in the contract for the reason of ensuring that management distributes the overtime equitably and that those who do not want overtime are not constantly forced to work it. This said, it is impor-

tant that all members are following the negotiated rules. I have had a number of members ask me to break the rules for them but it seems like they forget that the rules are for every carrier and they must be followed for the benefit of all, not one individual. The eight hour guarantee for a regular carrier called in on his/her day off is important and must be followed by all carriers as well as management. Simply stated, if you are called in on your SDO you are guaranteed eight hours of work or eight hours pay in lieu thereof. This means that you are going to get eight hours of pay if you are called in and you clock in to work. It is also the carrier's responsibility to work the eight hours unless instructed to go home earlier. Your steward should be on the lookout for this during the weekly Overtime Equity review at each station. One other item on the eight hour guarantee is that if you as a carrier are not able to work the eight hour guarantee then management is **PROHIBITED** from working you on that SDO. This means if you have a doctors appointment and you are not able to complete 8 hours then you cannot work on that SDO; there is no provision for working five hours and going home and being paid for eight hours. This is important and was negotiated by the national parties for a reason so if you are having issues with this I urge you to contact your steward to get the issue resolved.

Another issue I want to touch on is bidding for vacant assignments. Article 41 of the National Agreement addresses this issue as does clarifying language in the Local Memo of Understanding. This is a negotiated right of bidding for so called "Preferred Bids" and this is open to all carriers that have cleared their 90 day probation period. Management is required to post a chart of all vacancies of five days or more in an area where all carriers are aware of it and can access it for the purpose of applying for a opt. Understand that posting of vacancies on the leave calendar is not sufficient to meet the requirement for posting for preferred bids.

Also understand that bidding for a vacant Carrier Technician assignment is not covered under Article 41. You should refer to Article 25 for rules governing these higher level assignments. Although Form 3971 is used for both an opt and a higher level assignment, any Grade 1 career carrier who has completed their probationary period may apply for a temporary Carrier Technician position that will be vacant for five days or more.



The National Agreement is the single most important document that you will come into contact with during your career in the Postal Service. This document is so important that the national officers send you a copy upon its completion and ratification by the membership. I urge you to read the Agreement when ever you have a chance. While some of the language is dry and you may not feel it applies to you, I can assure you that *knowledge* of the agreement is the *key* to protecting yourself from unsavory management officials. It is also the key in helping you to understand what is expected of you when dealing with the everyday issues on the job. Knowledge of what the Agreement says helps to ensure that you are being paid properly for the job that you are doing every day. It can also help you defend yourself against improper disciplinary actions initiated by members of management who are unaware of the provisions and guidelines of the National Agreement. On this matter, I speak from experience and I hope that none of you have to experience it first hand as I have. Should you be so unfortunate as to have it happen to you, it is important that you have more knowledge than those attempting to discipline you. If you are knowledgeable enough or aware you can generally avoid disciplinary issues in the first place.

This is simply one person's view and I would be more than willing to sit and discuss this subject (*continued on page 6*)

And The Beat Goes On

by Ray Wallace

The Union Got Us Our Benefits

This newspaper goes out to quite a few. At the Labor Day Picnic I was talking to O.D. Elliott, President of the St. Petersburg Branch, and he told me he still reads my article every month. I told him I read his every month also. I have known O.D. since the mid 70s when he was the Vice President and John Bourlon was the President.

Little do any of us realize how fast time is going. There are so many I knew from the Florida State Training, and Local and National Conventions, who are retired or gone to the *Post Office in the sky*. One was a personal friend, John Giordano, Past President of Local 36, New York City. John lived at Nalcrest after his retirement for many years. John passed away in early 2005 and his wishes were carried out and no one was told except Vince Sombrotto.

I must tell you a true story of how far this paper goes. Sometime in the late 1970's, while visiting relatives in New York, I went to my old Post Office and asked where a certain carrier I used to work with was. I was told that he had become a postmaster. What a big

surprise as he never hit me as being management material. Well, I called that office on Route 6, in the rural section of Westchester County, New York and asked if Billy S. was there. The reply was that *Mr. S.* was out to lunch. I called back a few hours later and when Postmaster Billy got on the phone, I said, "I heard you were in need of a professional letter carrier." Billy replied, "If I could find one, yes. I would hire him on the spot." I said, "You're talking to one." He told me to keep talking and he was sure he would recognize my voice. Then he said, "Ray Wallace, where the hell are you?" I told him I was just down the road and he invited me to come on down and go out for a drink.

Well, when I got to his office, the only change was that he had grown a beard. He reached up on a shelf and brought down a copy of the *Tampa Letter Carrier* newsletter. Much to my surprise, he pointed to *"And The Beat Goes On"* and said he couldn't believe what I was saying about our Post Office.

While we were having a drink he said, "Ray, where would either of us be were it not for the Post Office?" He went on to tell me to look at the good money, the security and benefits we could thank the Post Office for. I said, "No, it's thanks to the NALC union that we have

it all. If it were not for the union going on strike (as we both did, putting our jobs on the line), the Post Office would still be paying us \$2.50 an hour and very few benefits. He said, "I can't believe what you are writing is true." I told him, "You should transfer to the state of Florida and you will find out it is all true." I knew then that our friendship was over, with him brainwashed as a manager and me always a union craft employee.



A few years later, at a National Convention, I asked the President of Local 693, White Plains, New York merged, if he knew where Billy S. was. He said, "Yes, we know Postmaster Billy S. very well. He was terminated for sexual harassment of a female employee." Well, as we all know, anything is possible in the Post Office.

If you read everything that is put out by the NALC and your local union, you know that our contract is being dealt with this year. One of the major issues will be our health care. The U.S.P.S. will be pushing very strong to reduce their contributions. This bothers this writer very much. Another is, we may
(continued on page 7)

Unionism *(from page 5)*

matter at length with any interested party. Simply contact me and we can make arrangements for time.

Last, but not least, I would like to address the subject of non-members. I know that this publication does not go to non-members but I would like to appeal to all the members who read this publication to help your branch leaders and try to get non-members to join the union. The non-member is a

carrier like you except he is taking a free ride at your expense. He/she is reaping all the benefits of membership but not contributing to the fight the membership goes through daily.

Take some time to talk to these non-members and show them the benefits of membership and let's see if we can get to that 100% organized number that we all would like to see. If you are not sure about who is or isn't a member, contact Tony Diaz at (813) 598-9635 and he can help you out.

Yours in Brotherhood,

Brian Obst

Shop Steward - Town & Country

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

And The Beat Goes On *(from page 6)*

all be put under one health plan. So be aware of what may happen to us all, both active and retired.

Published reports show that America has one of the worst health care situations in the world. President Bush's Social Security Commission has recommended cuts in guaranteed benefits of about 25% for many employees covered by FERS. (Remember, he's the guy some of you helped put in office.) A judge has already ruled that United Airlines can default on its pension plans. Delta and Northwest Airlines are seeking approval to cut jobs, pensions and health plans. Look at Ford and General Motors! The list goes on and on and you can be sure that the Postal Service is watching all of this. As a result, we need to have representatives in Congress that care about the letter carrier and our issues. We need to get them elected and re-elected to Congress. Give to COLCPE! I'm having it taken out of my retirement check. I'm sure you can afford to do likewise.

And the beat goes on . . .



A Point of Personal Privilege

by Leslie Ray Garcia

Lies But No Consequences

President Bush continues his efforts to “stay the course.” It seems to this writer that he is following the path and body language of Senator Joe McCarthy except where McCarthy emphasized communist or communism, Bush substitutes terrorist or terrorism. Bush always blames someone else whenever there is a mistake. Should the Republicans continue their dominance in the House and Senate? And with two more years left on the President’s term of office, what is next on the White House’s agenda?

Let’s rehash some of what has already transpired since 2000. When President Bush assumed office there was a budget surplus. Yet within six months it was turned into one of the largest deficits in US history. He is the first wartime president to issue a tax cut. Even though only the wealthiest 2% benefited from it. Bush is the first President to order an invasion of a sovereign nation. Yet that nation did not attack the United States. Bush sent American troops to invade Iraq to find weapons of mass destruction. None were or have been found. He said Saddam Hussein helped Al Qaeda. Saddam gave no assistance to Al Qaeda because they hated each other. The Bush administration says that the torture at Abu Ghraib and elsewhere was the work of a few bad apples in the military. The torture was sanctioned at the highest levels of the executive branch. Bush lambastes leakers in the government. Officials in the administration illegally leaked the name of an active CIA operative. Bush has repeatedly stated to the public that all wiretaps of Americans were ordered pursuant to court warrants. The fact remains that he was authorizing warrantless wiretaps. This administration has asserted that Americans as well as foreigners can be imprisoned indefinitely. This eliminates Article I section 9 of the Constitution of the United States that deals directly with habeas corpus. Often when Congress passes a bill and Bush signs it, he adds

a signing statement which implies he has the right to disregard the provisions when they conflict with his interpretation of his powers.

In a column in the Carrollwood section of *The Tampa Tribune* on 9/13/06, the columnist Charley Reese wrote: “My fondest hope for this political season is that every Republican senator and representative up for re-election is defeated. Most Democrats are leftists and socialists and most of their rhetoric reflects that, as do the issues they support. Most Republicans, however, are big fat hypocrites who campaign as conservatives when in fact, judged by their actions and their votes, they are no more conservative than Pol Pot or Karl Marx. A true conservative would balance the budget, would vote against all foreign aid and would practice an isolationist foreign policy. A true conservative would make sure corporations pay their fair share of taxes, would cut out all subsidies to big business and would take whatever steps were necessary to stop the shipping of manufacturing jobs overseas and the import of vast numbers of illegal aliens, who are a source of cheap labor...”

Recently, a “made for television” miniseries titled “The Path to 9/11” was shown on ABC. The writer/producer of this is Cyrus Nowrasteh and he is an outspoken conservative of Persian descent whose family fled Iran after the overthrow of the Shah. Govindini Murty, an actress/writer and co-director of the Liberty Film Festival wrote in a review for a right-wing online news page: “...The Path to 9/11 is one of the best, most intelligent, most pro-American miniseries I’ve ever seen on TV, and conservatives should support it and promote it as vigorously as possible. This is the first Hollywood production I’ve seen that honestly depicts how the Clinton administration repeatedly bungled the capture of Osama bin Laden.” Nowrasteh, during the miniseries, makes a number of oft-debunked allegations that Clinton allowed bin Laden to remain alive and

free. He failed to include a quote from an article written in the *Washington Times* in 2003, by Roger Cressy, National Security Council senior director for counter terrorism from 1999-2001, where Mr. Cressy states, “...Mr. Clinton approved every request made of him by the CIA and the U.S. military involving using force against bin Laden and al-Qaeda.” Here is a partial list of the initiatives submitted by President Clinton. The following is a partial list of initiatives suggesting what Clinton wanted done: screen checked baggage, screen carry-on baggage, passenger profiling, screen training, screen passengers (portals) and document scanners, deploy existing technology to inspect international Air Cargo, provide additional air/counter terrorism security, explosives detection training, augment FAA security training, Customs service was to be furnished with explosive and radiation detection equipment at ports, anti-terrorism assistance to foreign governments, improve domestic intelligence, have critical incident response teams for Post-Blast deployment, additional security for federal facilities, firefighters/emergency services financial assistance, public building and museum security, improve technology to prevent nuclear smuggling, have a critical incident response facility, counter-terrorism fund, explosive intelligence and support systems and an office of emergency preparedness. These initiatives were never followed up on by the Bush administration. Within the Clinton administration’s security council “threat meetings” were held three times a week to assess conspiracies. Clinton raised the issue of terrorism in virtually every important speech he gave during the last three years. Clinton was thwarted in every attempt to track down possible suspects. The reactionary right, such as Senators Jesse Helms and Trent Lott, were dismissive of Clinton’s anti-terrorist legislation. Texas Senator Phil Gramm gutted the portions of legislation that would have attacked financial underpinnings of al-Qaeda networks from (continued on page 9)



Around The Horn

by Tony Diaz

Postal Reform Effort Derailed

Brothers and Sisters as I prepared to write this month's article, my subject matter just did not have the importance as some of the pressing issues currently pertaining to the future of the Letter Carrier. Last month I reviewed with you a number of the proceedings at the 65th biennial Convention and mentioned several actions that had been taken to strengthen our position on many of the key issues. Postal Reform, a top priority of the NALC, has fallen a little short of its goal in Congress at this time. Being an active e-Activist, I received a very important e-mail on Saturday (9/30/06) at approx. 5:00pm from our National President William H. Young. The contents of the e-mail contained the reason(s) why our union leaders could not agree with this version of the Postal Reform Bill. The main sticking point was a change in our Workers' Compensation Policy, a three-day waiting period for injured letter carriers before they could go on continuation of pay (COP). It is very sad that an issue like OWCP could derail this important legislation on the Senate side. Passage was made more difficult because negotiations were working against the clock since congress

will be adjourning for the upcoming elections. Hopefully after the recess parties can reconvene and attempt to iron out the sticking points. It seems that, for the Bush administration, it is always easier to pick on those who are less fortunate than others. The nation's injured letter carriers and other postal employees were an easy mark. But without any real justification as to why a change in the COP rules was necessary, President Young was unwilling to accept it. He thanked Senator Susan Collins, Senator Tom Carper, Representative Tom Davis and Representative Henry Waxman for all the time and effort they have given to passage of this legislation. These are the legislators that are friends of the Letter Carriers; they understand the needs we have and are helping us fight to retain the benefits the Bush administration wants to destroy. Special thanks went out to Senator Daniel Akaka, who stood up for us in the Senate throughout the discussions. His unwavering belief that injured postal employees be treated fairly demonstrates why NALC worked so hard to help him triumph in this month's primary elections in Hawaii. It is important to know that from the beginning President Young has maintained that our union would not support any postal reform bill and will continue to work with all parties in adoption

of meaningful postal reform. Again it is important for you that are not active to get on board. By becoming an e-Activist you get the latest updates, and should we need to send messages by e-mail or written letters to a particular legislator, we can send that message with strength by numbers. Just log on to the NALC website and go to the e-Activist section, click on and fill out the form, it is free. Also by becoming a contributor to COLCPE, we can help friends like Senator Akaka become victorious in their elections. I have tried to emphasize the critical times we are faced with; the upcoming elections, contract negotiations, and postal reform. Stay tuned; I will continue to inform the membership of the current important issues.



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

Personal Privilege (from page 8)

dealing with foreign banks and financial institutions that were being used to launder Al Qaeda money.

Item 9 of the Local from 11/6/02 to 11/20/06 Determination of the Maximum number of employees who shall receive leave each week during the choice vacation period. The maximum number of employees who shall receive leave each week during the choice vacation period is as indicated below:

January 10%...February through the

Saturday preceding Thanksgiving 15%...The week of Thanksgiving 14%...The week after Thanksgiving EVEN YEARS 14%...The week after Thanksgiving ODD YEARS 10%...December 10%. In applying the above requirements the following rounding rules apply: .01 - .49 Round Down .50 - .99 Round Up. This 10%, 14% and 15% includes leave for National and State conventions; military leave for two employee positions per week during the months of May, June, July and August; and long-term sick leave where it can be reasonably projected that employees who are on extended sick leave will not be available to work. (Defined to be 30 days or more for purposes of annual leave administration)

Item 10 The Issuance of Official Notices to each Employee of the Vacation Schedule approved for such employee. Each letter carrier will submit, following selection of his/her choice vacation period (s), Form 3971 in duplicate, filling in all applicable items. A copy, signed by the responsible supervisor, will be returned to each letter carrier within four (4) weeks of the final date of the submission period.

"If this were a dictatorship, it'd be a heck of a lot easier, just so long as I'm the dictator."

George W. Bush
December 18, 2000

Congressional District Liaison Report

by Lance Jones

Congressional District Liaison - District 11

Election 2006

President Bush's demands for change in Postal Reform altered the bill enough so that the NALC could not support it. So, no Postal Reform from this congress. This is why we have to do our most to elect politicians to office who are *working-family friendly and labor friendly*.

It's important this year to study the voting records of the people running for office. Study and research for yourself. Rely on good honest sources but double check your information. Most important, don't just vote only party lines.

We face three important races in our area. They are Congressional District 9, Congressional District 11 and the governor's race. In the two congressional races, the NALC is backing both of the Democratic Candidates. In the governor's race, Branch 599 has endorsed Jim Davis.

The District 9 Democratic candidate is Phyllis Busansky and her web site is <http://busanskyforcongress.com/>. Phyllis has been endorsed by Senator Bob Graham, Rahm Emanuel (DCCC), Governor Mark Warner (Virginia), Betty Castor, General Claudia Kennedy, Senator Max Cleland (Georgia), former Sheriff Walter Heinrich, Cindy Hall, President - Florida AFL-CIO, American Federation of Teachers and the National Education Association. Check out her website to be better informed.

The District 11 Democratic candidate is Kathy Castor and her web site is <http://www.castorforcongress.com/>. Kathy has been endorsed by Congressman Alcee Hastings, the ranking Democratic member

on the subcommittee on Terrorism and Homeland Security, by Senator Bob Graham and by several local leaders. She is a graduate of FSU Law School and has been a County Commissioner since 2002. Check out her web site.

In the governor's race Branch 599 has endorsed Jim Davis and you can check his web site at <http://www.jimdavis2006.com/>. Jim has too many endorsements to list here but you can check that out on his web site. He also has interesting and practical solutions to property taxes and the FCAT with his *Achieve Florida* plan.

HOW YOU VOTE IS YOUR PERSONAL DECISION. WHATEVER YOU DECIDE, PLEASE VOTE.

Health Benefits Report

Well, that time of year is on us again. Soon it will be *Open Season* and time to make a decision as to what insurance you choose. This year the NALC Health insurance prices for Active Carriers are, self = \$38.80 Bi-weekly, self and family = \$60.85. Price for annuitants are self = \$139.58 monthly, self and family = \$257.77 very, very competitive with other plans. If you need more information during the upcoming Open Season, which will be from November 13-December 11, call us at 1-888-636-NALC (6252). When it comes to choosing a health plan that is right for you and your family, you need to make the right decision. This can be tough, but it's a necessary one. Health insurance is one of the ne-

cessities of life. If a serious illness should occur, choosing the wrong health plan could mean financial devastation. Consumers have become wise shoppers, searching for ways to reduce out-of-pocket costs while getting the most from their health care dollar. So it's essential to take a long serious look at what you and your family's needs are and what each plan offers. I'll be attending some of the health fairs and would enjoy seeing some of my fellow carriers there so stop by if you can. The dates should be posted in all stations announcing when they will be held.

The OPM will be offering a separate Dental and Optical plan this year; it is entirely separate from your health plan and will be YOUR responsibility. The NALC and your Health Benefit representative will NOT be able to assist you with claims or problems.



**Vote
November
7**

UNION MEETING DOOR PRIZE

Bill Moran, sales representative for *Arslan Uniforms*, has come up with a new idea to try to get more members to attend branch meetings. He will put \$10.00 per month into a box and will draw a member's name at the meeting. If the member is present, they will win the money. If the member is not present, another \$10.00 will be added to the box until a member whose name is drawn is in attendance. So come on down and take a chance at winning, have some free sandwiches, keep abreast of the latest happenings affecting your career, and enjoy our very reasonably priced beverages.

AN IMPORTANT MESSAGE FROM BRANCH 599

Jim Davis FIGHTS For Working Families



✔ **Supports Workers.** Jim Davis voted to support funding for critical job-training programs and to protect unemployment benefits and overtime pay for Florida's workers. (H.R. 27, Vote #48, 3/2/05; H.R. 3030, 2/4/04; H.R. 2660, 7/10/2003)

✔ **Preserves Our Retirement Security.** Jim Davis has signed the AFL-CIO pledge to protect Social Security. He opposes efforts to privatize Social Security. (AFL-CIO Pledge)

✔ **Advocates for Our Health Care.** Jim Davis voted against increasing insurance premiums for working families and voted against creating special protections for negligent HMOs. (H.R. 525, Vote 426, 7/26/05; H.R. 2663, 8/2/01)



Charlie Crist Threatens Working Families

Charlie Crist supports private school vouchers, which take money away from our public schools, and weakening the class-size amendment. Crist threatened the union rights of school employees and voted against increased access to health care. (St. Petersburg Times, 10/11/01; Crist Education White Paper, Palm Beach Post, 8/5/01; Tampa Tribune, 9/2/01; Tampa Tribune, 10/13/98)



SUPPORT CANDIDATES WHO SUPPORT WORKING FAMILIES

VOTE Nov. 7

FLORIDA • GOVERNOR

How you vote is a personal decision. Branch 599 has carefully researched the candidates' records and believes Jim Davis is the best choice for working families. For more information, contact Branch 599 at 813-877-5491 or the Florida AFL-CIO at 850-224-6926.



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