



Tampa Letter Carrier

Volume 7 - Issue 4

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

Tampa, Florida

April 2008

President's Report

Know Your Duties

I have recently encountered a number of different scenarios where carriers have been placed into situations that could have, and in some cases did, result in serious discipline. Some of these situations arose because of actions on the part of the carriers and some because of overzealous supervisors/managers, but most could have been avoided if the carriers had been a little better educated concerning the duties of their positions.

I would venture to say that a large percentage of veteran carriers, those with at least five to ten years of service under their belt, are very comfortable with their knowledge of the duties of a letter carrier. But it is very easy, when you are performing the same duties day in and day out, to become complacent and forget some of the things that you have learned over the years and are expected of you as a letter carrier.

One of these duties is to let management know if you are going to be late returning from the street.

As soon as you realize that something has occurred during the day that will cause you to be late returning, you need to call the office and report this to your supervisor. They have the responsibility of directing you as to what you are to do.

Don't make the decision to stay out and deliver past the time you are scheduled to return or decide that you must bring back mail so as to make it back on time. You are not paid enough money to make those decisions. Ask the people who get paid the big bucks; your supervisors. That way there will be no question as to what you are supposed to do.

A carrier was recently removed for delaying mail so as to return on time, and the union was fortunate enough to win the case through arbitration. The carrier was returned to work with back pay and the removal was reduced to a fourteen day suspension, but it all could have been avoided if only the carrier would have called the office and asked for instructions on how they were to handle the situation.

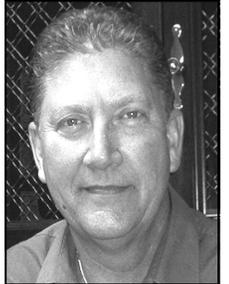
Another situation arose when a carrier was delivering to an apartment complex where residents very rarely pulled the mail from their mailboxes. The carrier was parked quite a distance from the bank of mailboxes and rather than carry the accumulated Advos and Flyers

back to the station to be reviewed (after being placed in the UBBM tub) the carrier tossed the "vacant apartment" mail directly into the trash can.

The carrier didn't stop to think that he was doing anything wrong since he knew the apartments were vacant and the bulk mail would be discarded anyway. Had the carrier followed proper procedure, and handled the mail the way that he was taught from the beginning of his career, the situation would have been avoided.

I guess what I'm saying is this: Take the time to think about what your duties consist of and what the proper methods are. You will never find yourself in trouble if you do your job by the book. That book is the M-41.

If you ever have a question as to what you should do give your supervisor a call. Put the ball in his/her court and let them make the decision. That's what they get paid for.



by Jim Good

President - Branch 599

IN THIS ISSUE

<i>RUNNING WITH YOU</i>	3
<i>RETIREE HAPPENINGS</i>	5
<i>AROUND THE HORN</i>	6
<i>AND THE BEAT GOES ON</i>	7

**Branch Meeting
Thursday
April 3
7:30 PM**

Branch 599 Officers

PRESIDENT	Jim Good	(813) 417-8877
EXECUTIVE VICE-PRESIDENT	Dook Ramotar	(813), 404-4380 cell
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	Eric Fleming	(813) 310-8274
LABOR - MANAGEMENT	A. Sam Santilli	(813) 215-7595

Branch 599 Shop Stewards

Brandon	33510	Terry Franklin	(813) 657-9690
Brandon	33511	Phil Chirico	(813) 657-3180
Carrollwood	33618	Dook Ramotar	(813) 404-4380
Commerce	33602	Rickey Robinson	(727) 409-1911
Forest Hills	33612	Warren Sumlin	(813) 486-7612
Forest Hills Annex	33613	Alan Robinson	(813) 843-9762
Hilldale	33614	A. Sam Santilli	(813) 215-7595
Hilldale Annex	33634	Bill Mandikas	(813) 263-8636
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	Eric Fleming	(813) 310-8274
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	John Duffield	(813) 899-2405
Town & Country	33615	Brian Obst	(727) 458-0679
Town & Country	33635	Brain 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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All 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

What's Going On

February 11-12-13 In the absence of President Good, who was on union business, I was fortunate enough to hold down the job of acting in his capacity. During the three days I was acting in place of President Good, I fielded calls from carriers with concerns and also calls from the higher up in the Post Office. Some of these calls I had answers, others I had to get in contact with President Good who reassured me before he left that he was only a phone call away, which made me feel a little more at ease for those three days.

"As cold water is to a thirsty soul, so is good news", one writer of the good book wrote. So it is that running with you would like to share with the members that during the past month, the union was able to get a removal rescinded and also had the good fortune of getting 3 P.T.F. to regular status.

Often we hear the union isn't doing anything for us. Well, running with you is sharing these 2 examples with the members because nothing is said doesn't mean we're not doing anything. Think about the present economic situation we're in, this carrier doesn't have to worry about his job and those 3 P.T.F. don't have to worry about working their holidays anymore or not getting paid for holidays etc.

Route inspections are going on and they were recently completed at Hillsdale Station 33614. Allegedly 1 + routes will be gone. Let's see when the paperwork is finished.

Running With You went through a few route inspections and I'd like to share some examples. Deliver your route

each day as if the supervisor is with you- so when they do walk with you, you won't be nervous. Take your lunch/breaks, comfort stops, drive defensively, take your keys out of the ignition, etc. Make every effort to deliver your accountable mail and parcels instead of just writing a notice and leaving it for the customer to pick up.

Remember that this is your opportunity to let the inspector see that this is how long your route is on the street. Be honest and sincere in what you do.

Each Tuesday *Running With You*, oversees the stewards report on overtime tracking, we started off a little shaky but now most are keeping up with their tracking and are up to date.

Thanks very much for the time spent by our treasurer, Mike Anderson in getting together valuable information he can present to the stewards during their monthly meeting. *Running With You* in the office this past Tuesday and seeing first hand the time he spent getting together the information needed so us stewards will be equipped to do

our job in defending the carriers and to make it a little easier for us. Thanks Mike.



I would like to request to the members if possible- that I do roll call at the end of the union meeting so you can get credit for attending. Last month was my first time doing so, and it was a little difficult because some signed instead of printing their names. We still have to get used to reading and knowing everyone's name. Please print at least one, if not both names. Thanks.

Don Thomas and Ray Garcia will read a few bylaws at the March meeting. *Running With You* wholeheartedly supports these bylaws and would like the members to come and support these bylaws by voting for them at the next union meeting. Thanks, Dook

"He who refuses to embrace a unique opportunity loses the prize as surely as if he had failed."

William James

Arslan Uniform Drawing

The jackpot for the drawing sponsored by Bill Moran and Arslan Uniform is up to \$90.00.

James Bergos' name was drawn at the March meeting, and since he was not in attendance, \$10.00 was added to the pot.

Just show up for the branch meeting in April, and if your name is drawn, it's your money. On top of that, you might learn something new about what's going on concerning your job.

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

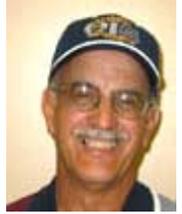
Route Check

It appears that the days of stress and anxiety are back again. No, I don't mean our income tax returns. I am talking about the dreadful route adjustments now in progress in Tampa. Even though the stress and anxiety days are over for Hilldale Station as their route check concluded on 2/29/08, Hilldale Station did lose one regular and one auxiliary in this adjustment. The only good thing is that it was a junior route that was eliminated, so at least the bumping procedure will be at a minimal. Of course the bad part is that most routes were impacted in this process. But when the Post Office has 12 hours to move in territory, most routes will lose or gain new streets. Now these carriers must learn new streets and customers in order to adapt to their new surroundings. But don't worry, the Post Office will allow sufficient time to learn their new territory. Now these

dreadful route check crew will be going to Forest Hills and then to Commerce Station. So I guess the stress and anxiety level will be shifted to these carriers. I sincerely hope that one day we can eliminate these stressful and cost wasting practices known as Route Check. I hope that one day we can agree to a fair formula within our basic standard street and office time. Why would the Post Office spend all this time and money recording and maintaining this data and then not agree to a proper fair procedure which would allow to apply this technology. Can you imagine a plan that would eliminate these fruitless days, not to mention those unnecessary hours lost with that procedure? Could it be that management enjoys the pleasure of finding these hours called time wasting practices? If that is the real reason for this practice, then all our data is another wasted practice. So let's get together with this data and work out a solution we can agree on. We have data that shows one month of office and street time, along with one month standard office and street time. We also keep records

by Gilbert Cabanas

Vice-President - Branch 599



for one year office and street time along with one year standard office and street time. This data can be matched with our average and actual office and street time against the evaluated office and street time. I have seen an evaluated one year chart for one of our stations, and those numbers are within minutes of our average time against the evaluated time. What we will need in this new process is that management keeps up current 39.99 street time in order to conclude this new adjustment plan. So let's hope that someday we can discuss a fair method which will allow us to apply all of our technology on routes. Because with our declining market share, we better agree on new ways to increase our total revenue. Just think, no more route check days, could this be possible?

Retired But Not Tired

Cheaper Plan or Better?

Dear Brothers and Sisters of Branch 599, are you getting what you're paying for? Recently I received a phone call from a retiree's wife. After listening to her complaints about her health benefit plan, I asked her what provider she had. She informed me she was covered by GEHA, which is Government Employees Health Association. When she mentioned GEHA, it rang a bell.

At one time, one of our past presidents dropped the NALC Health Benefit Plan for GEHA, the GEHA plan being cheaper. After dealing with GEHA, the following year he was back in the NALC Health Plan. The point here is like everything else, you get what you pay for. Cutting corners or trying to save a buck is not always the way to go. One catastrophic illness today can run up in the

hundreds of thousands of dollars. As we get older we need a good health plan. Next Open Season make the right choice. Think about the NALC Health Benefit Plan.

It seems to me after every election of branch officers there is some kind of controversy; from suing someone, accusations of not abiding by the labor laws and guide lines set by the NALC and branch, and on and on. It amazes me how certain individuals come out after elections just to stir the pot.

If you attend union meetings year in and year out, you know who they are. Candidates for branch officers have been on slates and have had endorsements from anyone who wants to endorse them. So why is there a problem when a President endorses someone. Let's stop all the B.S. and support the officers that were elected.

by John Gebro

Director of Retirees - Branch 599



The thought of having the Retirees Breakfast at the union hall has been dropped. After talking to some of the retirees, it just wouldn't be feasible. Too many factors. Who likes what kind of eggs, grits, home fries, toast, pancakes, bacon, sausage, ham, coffee, juice... How about one morning for coffee and donuts or Danish? Bet we could even get the branch to pay for it. Let me know what you think.

Thanks to all those who were in attendance at the March 3rd breakfast. Those in attendance were Bobeau, Adel, Jones, Rossell, Freeman, Dupree, Ramotar, Rodriguez, Holt, Follman, Munns, Brennan, Lundy, Edge, Thran, Fritts, Thomas, Cabanas, Gasperment, and this writer.

(continued on page 7)

Around The Horn

Stewards Can Help

Brothers and Sisters, I recently encountered a situation that I relied on an old article I had read to help me deal with the matter at hand. Have you ever been put in a position of trying to help a co-worker or a fellow union member with a personal issue or issues? I read an article in the Steward Update Newsletter back in 2006 that addressed this issue. The article titled Helping Troubled Co-Workers was very interesting and I wanted to share some of the excerpts with you. Most steward duties involve seeing that the union contract is honored, advising and assisting carriers with work related issues. It would not however be unusual to find a steward serving in the role of Dear Abby, trying to help co-workers deal with personal problems that find their way onto the job. I guess it just comes with the territory. A Shop Steward must accept the challenge, and while not having the training a social worker does, a steward can play an important role. The challenge is how you help these people without being a “busybody”. For instance, referring troubled co-workers to the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is excellent advice a steward can provide without probing to deeply into some of the personal issues. This advice not only can help the individual going through the bad times, but also may benefit everyone else in that Station. The article addressed questions like; How does a steward approach a co-worker who seems headed for trouble? How do you make that referral without being seen as judgmental or intrusive? When do you push the issue? When do you back off? Knowing the ser-

vices available that may be helpful (EAP, counseling and other helpful services available) is important. When making a referral, have a brochure, a phone number or an address to give to the troubled individual. Most people in pain welcome the inquiries of a concerned person, and need to be reminded that help is available. EAP’s are comprehensive programs offered as a benefit to employees. They are generally a 24-hour crisis intervention, assessment, short-term counseling with referrals to helpful recourses within a community. Problems that are usually addressed include substance abuse, mental health concerns, workplace stress, financial difficulties, family and relationship problems, marital difficulties, physical illness and a host of other life stressors. A Shop Steward may encounter two different scenarios, the willing worker and the resistant worker. Where the willing worker might be more inclined to listen and accept the advise, there still might not be a response or an admission to the severity of the problem. The resistant worker may require more persuasion and a need to push a little. For example, you tell him/her “As your steward, I want to talk with you about getting in trouble with the supervisor. Remember, I am on your side.” You present some EAP information and be prepared to name the troubling behavior. For example, “People say you’re spending hours on the phone, fighting with your husband/wife. It is not only affecting you but all the people who work around you. The supervisor is going to come down on you, if he/she hasn’t said anything to you already.” When the angry response begins, interrupt and say “Look I am your steward not a family counselor, but I can direct you to some professional guidance, and

by Tony Diaz

Financial Secretary - Branch 599

it’s free. Here is a brochure (or a number), it is the smart thing to do. Do not let your husband/wife control your life, and make you lose your job.” Unfortunately, not every worker will accept help and may have to learn the hard way. Try as you might, you won’t be able to get through and this experience is very frustrating. At this point your co-worker will hopefully find his/her “bottom” and get assistance. The Steward, at this point is not to blame, the effort was made. To sum up, I approached my situation with compassion, personal knowledge and humility, trying to give the best advice for the individual and the entire work place. It seemed to make a difference, this time.

Quick Hits: Information you should know

*) The second regular cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) for letter carriers under the 2006-2011 National Agreement is \$458. The increase is effective for the pay period beginning March 15 and will be reflected in paychecks on April 4.

*) Get involved with the Safety and Health Committee at your Station. Report any unsafe conditions to your Safety Committee Members or complete a form PS 1767 (Report of Hazard, Unsafe Condition Practice). Reporting an unsafe condition or practice may save you or a co-worker from an accident and an injury!

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

And The Beat Goes On

Lunches, Bingo & More

I see in John Gebo's March article "Retiree Happenings", he mentioned my name and wrote that if I made it to the Tampa Retirees Breakfast, President Jim Good would pay for my breakfast. Darn, John! Where is the restaurant, in a place called Drew Park? Do you know what a gallon of gas cost these days? You want me to drive across Tampa for a free breakfast, plus who gets up early any more? Not me! In Brandon we have a Retirees Lunch at 2 PM. When I first retired I got a job on a golf course to cut the greens. Before I started I called the owner and told him I appreciate you hiring me but the more I thought of the start time, 6AM, I just couldn't do it. When I retired I threw my alarm clock away. Sorry, John. Even for a free meal I don't get up early. Ha ha.

Brandon had their Retiree Luncheon on Monday, March 10 at Buddy Freddy's. I picked that date because retiree George Bell, who lives in Arkansas, would be in the area at that time. It's always nice to see George when he is in Brandon and this was a good time for us all to convey our condolences to him and his wife on the recent loss of their 32 year old son Randy in February due to a gun shot wound.

Wow! An article last month was written by Don Thomas, Jr. It's been a long time, Don. It was a good one, too. I have to say Don is correct on how a union retiree is treated as a branch officer. Just after I retired, Former President Perez made me a shop steward in Brandon and when I went to the

Post Office about an issue, one of the managers said, "Ray, I'd like to take you out on the street in my car and show you some things." Unbelievable! I was in shock; me a shop steward, riding in the managers car on the street. In twenty years as a shop steward that had never happened. I was no longer on their payroll, no route to carry – a big difference.

I've had some active carriers tell me mail volume is way off from years past and we all know most of the reasons why. One is the computer and e-mails between people. How many still write letters? But I do hope you letter carriers are still using the mail to send in your payments, bills, etc. I have noticed that most companies say, "Why don't you have direct deposit to your account? No more envelopes, stamps or worries about it getting lost." Also we all know the Post Office itself forced big advertisers to go to the newspapers as the Post Office could care less about the date a sale was going to be held on. Samples in the mail years ago were very common. When was the last time you saw one in the mail? Now they, too, are in the newspaper. Remember, all of this we're talking about affects your job. Keep paying those bills by mail.

Did you know that Branch 599 has Letter Carriers Bingo every Wednesday and Friday, all year at the union hall? As long as you're 18 years of age or older, you can play. The cheapest game set is \$10.00 and there are also specials sold during the games. Early bird games starts at 6:30 pm and regular games at 7:30pm. Most of the time you're out by 10:30 pm and a lot of the proceeds go to local charities. These outfits often come and express their thanks to the bingo players.

by Ray Wallace



You can win as much as \$250.00 in several of the games. Some special games pay out even higher amounts and, of course, some games pay out lower amounts. The bingo chairman is (drum roll, please) John Gebo, and his volunteer bingo workers are active or retired carriers from Branch 599.

So come on down to 3003 Cypress St. Get away from the DVD, TV set, get out of the house, get a baby sitter, get a group together and look at your newly decorated union hall with new bathrooms. Talk to your brother and sister carriers. Support Branch 599. If you don't know how to play, we'll show you. Just bring your money! Not everybody wins, but your odds are better than lotto.

Would you believe some of the bingo players have been playing Letter Carriers Bingo for thirty years? We need new folks. Hope to see you there.

Retired But Not Tired *(from page 5)*

Next Retirees Breakfast will be on April 7, 2008. Hope to see you then. Call a retired friend, say "Hello", invite him or her to the next branch meeting or breakfast.

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

Fraternally,

John Gebo

The Cutting Edge

by Marilyn Cutting

Inspections

Inspections. One word that is feared by carriers. One word that is fraught with deception. One word that will change your working life.

Here at Hilldale Station we endured a one week inspection. Rumors abounded that “they” were looking to cut three routes. Now we were challenged! The challenge began with either the carrier or in inspector counting the mail. We all had either someone standing behind us or within eyeball length watching us. Every once in a while you’d catch one of them writing something on their clipboard. Sometimes they would stop you and ask what you were doing – for instance, when I was making labels for my apartment’s new customers they wanted to know if this is what I did every day. I said with five apartment complexes that would be Yes!

The next challenge: how to case mail that isn’t there that week! Case in point our mail volume seemed suspiciously heavy the week before (rumors said that plant sent it all out to be done before inspections). Inspection week the volume drops! Coincidence? Not according to management who claims our volume is just getting low. We all have eyes, we can see what goes on when we have these inspections. I get so incensed that they insult our intelligence to say that the volume is low. I keep a running tab on my DPS and general volume. I know when it’s not right.

Challenge number three: Getting

followed (or ridden with) for two days. One day is for observation the other is an actual count. It just so happened that the majority of us were counted on a non-third bundle day. As expected many of us came back early. They offered either to let us use annual or watch a film. So I’m thinking, why should I use my annual for something they created (no mail volume) and when I want a day off later in the year I won’t have it. Plus we got this inspiring talk that morning of “how we had no mail that morning and we needed to be out on the street and not worry about what happened if we came back early, we would get paid”. I decided to stay and watch the film. As I’m watching another engrossing postal film my mind wanders to talks from management of how we need to save – save – save money because the Post Office isn’t doing so well. They’re cutting clerks, they’re cutting back on overtime, there’s no mail volume and here I sit with others wasting time and money.

Challenge number four: We get pulled into the office. At Hilldale we call it “walking the green mile” after the Steven King movie about death row inmates. They are going to discuss the inspections with each one of us individually. First question is on the inspectors – were they professional and fair. Number two question, was the mail volume fair – No, No, and No! O.K., so those answers were duly noted somewhere on that questionnaire I’m sure of, “what are your suggestions on what to add to your route” was the last question I gave them my answer which I’m sure was again duly noted somewhere.

Challenge number five: One month later our routes have been readjusted. Most of us had 30 minutes under time when they averaged our weeks out.

We walk the “green mile” again to see what was changed. Surprise! None of our suggestions were implemented. Instead our routes were “squared” off (Oh, I’m so beginning to hate that word “squared” too!) A “square” will change your route – from driving to apartments; from all driving to now incorporate apartments; from a fairly decent route to one with over 1100 stops! 30 minutes under time has become a 30 minute headache and heartache. As I explain to some customers why I was losing their particular condo’s, to the Post Office they are only an address. To me, they are customers that I have served for six years. We’ve shared stories and heartaches. They are friends.

All in all we lost one route and an auxiliary. We will now begin the task of remaking our cases; dealing with hand offs to one another as DPS and the flat sorter will probably not catch up to us for a while. We’ll have to deal with all that stress and learn a new route too. I can’t wait until they come along with DOIS figures and they say we aren’t making the numbers. All this rerouting our routes was based on the previous carrier’s times, not ours. So how will the DOIS figures be calculated?

As usual all the carriers will absorb whatever they throw at us. We care. We care about our jobs and how we do them. We care about the customers we serve.

Next on the chopping block are the rural carriers with a two week inspection. Beware they are coming to a station near you! It all starts with one word – Inspections!

SUNDAY, APRIL 13, 2008

“WE CARE DAY”
EMPLOYEE SAFETY &
HEALTH FAIR

NALC
Branch 599
Union Hall
3003 W Cypress St
Tampa, FL 33609
11:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.

*Join us at the Health & Safety Fair for you and your family.
Participating agencies and services being provided include:*

Blood Screenings

Value of test panel—\$295.00

Employee cost—\$18.00

Family members—\$80.00

UCH Occupational Health

Dermatologist for skin cancer assessments

Podiatrist for feet check and foot health

Osteoporosis check

Blood Pressure checks

Bicycle Safety

Bicycle helmets

Hillsborough County Health Dept

Obesity, Nutrition, Hydration, BMI, BP checks

Back to Work Physical Therapy

Massages, body fat analysis, back analysis

Tampa Eye Clinic

Vision Health Screenings

Safe Kids Coalition

Poison Control Center

American Red Cross

Emergency/hurricane preparedness

First aid kits

And much, more...

*The Suncoast District Diversity Committee will also be hosting a
Multicultural Celebration
with food, fun and entertainment for the entire family.*

Sponsored by: Tampa Post Office, NALC Branch 599,
Tampa P&DC, Tampa Safety & Health Committee,
Suncoast District Diversity Committee

**Proposed Bylaw Changes
To Be Voted on at the May 1, 2008 Branch Meeting**

**Article V
Elections**

Section 1:

Currently reads:

Nominations for elective officers shall be made every three (3) years at the regular October and November meetings and the elections shall be held at the regular meeting in December.

Proposed to read:

- A. Nominations for elective officers shall be made every three (3) years at the regular September and October Branch meetings
- B. The election will be conducted by mail-out ballots.
- C. The election date is the first Thursday in November. All ballots must be received in the designated post office box by the Wednesday prior to that date.

Section 3:

Currently reads:

No less than 45 days before each election the Tampa Letter Carrier or the Postal Record shall give notice of election, stating the offices for which election shall be had and the time, place and manner for nomination and election.

Proposed to Read:

Notifications

In the election year, notification of elections shall be published in the July and August issues of *The Tampa Letter Carrier* or *Postal Record*, stating the offices for which the election will be conducted and the time, place and manner for nomination and election.

Every effort must be made in a timely manner to ensure that each member is notified of the pending election, which could also include mailing letters to members and posting the information in stations on the union bulletin boards.

Section 6:

Currently reads:

The President shall at the meeting in which nominations are made, appoint an Election Chairman to serve on election night.

Proposed to Read

A. Election Chair and Committee appointment

The President shall at the meeting in which the first nominations are made, appoint an Election Chair and select volunteers to serve on Election Committee.

B. Observers

1. Each candidate is entitled to have an observer present during the following procedures:
Preparation and mailing of ballots

Pick up of returned ballots and re-mailing new ballots
 Receipt and opening of ballots
 Counting, tallying, and totaling of ballots
 Recording of tally sheets.

2. Observers must be notified of dates and times for each procedure.
3. A candidate is permitted to serve as his or her own observer.
4. Observers do not have to be members of the branch.

Comments: Observers serve as an additional safeguard for candidates and members to assure a fair election. Observers have the right and a duty to inform the Election Committee of any violation in the election procedures and to challenge any voter who is ineligible to vote.

The following further clarifies the role and limitations of election observers:

- a. Candidates can use alternate observers (for example, illness, breaks, emergencies)
- b. Observers may make lists of the names of members voting, so that candidates will be able to determine whether any unauthorized person voted.
- c. Observers should not assist in conducting the election (for example, by helping to count votes).
- d. Candidates may have as many observers as necessary to observe the actual counting of ballots. Thus, if there is more than one counting table at a single location, observers may be present at each table.
- e. Observers have the right to maintain their own tabulation during the counting of ballots.

C. Campaign

1. The branch must treat all candidates equally; any and all privileges extended to one candidate by the branch must be extended to all candidates.

Comments: An example of equal treatment: if the branch permits one candidate to copy a membership list, all other candidates must be allowed to copy it.

There are no exceptions to the requirement of equal treatment. The Department of Labor scrutinizes this aspect of elections very closely and will set aside elections based upon even minor violations.

2. The branch must honor all reasonable requests to distribute campaign literature at a candidate's expense.

Comments: This provision is often troublesome for local branches, primarily due to different interpretations of the term "reasonable". If at all feasible, the branch should distribute campaign literature when asked to do so. For example, the branch should not refuse to distribute literature merely because it has a small staff which cannot handle the extra work load. Instead, the branch could hire temporary help to prepare and mail the literature, and charge the cost of the temporary help to the candidates. Treating all candidates the same by refusing to distribute campaign literature does not fulfill the intent of the law.

In the event a candidate cannot afford to distribute literature, the branch does not have to distribute literature free of charge. However, if the branch distributes literature for one candidate without charge, then it must do the same for all candidates.

In order to avoid complaints of unequal treatment, branches should advise all candidates *in advance* of the conditions under which it will distribute literature, and should promptly advise all candidates of any changes in those conditions.

3. The branch can neither censor campaign literature nor require that branch representatives be permitted to read the literature before it is distributed.
4. The branch may not use branch dues, assessments or similar levies or contribute anything of value to promote one candidate over another, or discriminate against any candidate. Branch funds, however, may be used for all notices and for all other expenses necessary for conducting the election.

Comments: This provision is commonly violated in branch elections. The bottom-line is that the branch is *absolutely prohibited* from criticizing or endorsing *any* candidate in a union-financed newspaper, publication, or letter.

On the other hand, publication of information sheets with biographical data is permissible, providing all candidates are given an equal opportunity to submit data and the data for each candidate are given equal space and prominence. Similarly, providing newspaper space for candidates to present their views is permissible, providing all candidates are given an equal opportunity to submit their statements and are given equal space and prominence in the branch paper. The branch can also sponsor a debate at a branch meeting. However, all candidates must be informed of the time and date of the debate and must be given an equal opportunity to express their views at the meeting.

5. The United States Postal Service may not contribute money or anything of value to the campaign of any candidate.
6. Branch officers and candidates may not campaign on union time.
7. Branch officers and candidates may not use branch funds, employees, office space, telephones, facilities, equipment or materials to campaign.

Section 7:

Currently reads:

The polls shall open and close as decided upon at the meeting when nominations are made, provided, if an emergency arises, the Branch may vote to extend the closing hour, or in the event a second ballot is necessary the President shall determine the time the polls open and close for such second ballot.

Proposed to Read

Pre-Election Duties of Election Committee

- A. The Election Committee is in charge of the preparation of the ballots for the election. The Committee may prepare up to 5 percent more ballots than the number of eligible voters to replace any spoiled by the voters. All ballots must be safeguarded by the Committee *at all times*.
- B. Any Reasonable method for listing candidates on the ballots may be used provided that no candidate is unfairly promoted or disadvantaged. Acceptable methods include the following:
 - Listing candidates alphabetically.
 - Listing candidates in order of their nominations.
 - Listing candidates on a rotating or *Australian* ballot.
 - Listing candidates as a slate, provided voters are allowed to choose among individual candidates. To avoid any misunderstanding, the voting instructions must specifically inform the voter that he or she need not vote for the entire slate.
- C. Incumbent candidates and/or slates may be listed first only if that is the established branch practice.

- D. Except for nicknames, ballots must not include any identifying information about the candidate. Therefore, any reference to incumbency anywhere on the ballot is prohibited.
- E. Instructions on the ballot should state that if a voter signs his or her name on the ballot, the entire ballot will be void.
- F. Arrange with postal officials for a special restricted-access post office box to be used solely for the receipt and storage of voted ballots. Do not use the union's regular post office box or union office for the receipt of voted ballots. Instruct postal officials that ballots must be released only at a specified time on the ballot return deadline date and only to Branch 599's entire Election Committee.

If postal officials will not allow a special restricted-access post office box as stated above, then arrange for a post office box and follow these instructions for securing the only key: The post office box key must be picked up by entire committee, sealed in an envelope, and signed over the seal by all committee members. Election Committee Chair is to place the sealed envelope in the Branch's floor safe, in the presence of committee members and any observers present, for security until ballots are picked up by entire committee. Committee members must verify that the key envelope has not been tampered with by signing and dating the envelope in the presence of any observers.

- G. Arrange with postal officials for a second post office box for ballot packages returned undelivered. This post office box will serve as the return address on the ballot package mailed to members.

The Election Committee, in the presence of observers attending, will pick up returned ballots from this post office box, obtain the correct address, and mail a new ballot to the corrected address. The Committee must retain all returned ballots, unopened.

Section 8:

Currently reads:

Any member wishing to vote shall go to the Chairman of the Election Committee, and if eligible to vote, according to the records of the Financial Secretary, he/she shall sign for and receive a ballot. The members shall proceed to mark his/her ballot in the proper manner, fold it neatly, and place it in the ballot box.

Proposed to Read

Conducting Mail Balloting

- A. Observers may be present at each mail balloting procedure listed below.
- B. At least twenty (20) days before the election date [election date is the first Thursday of November], the Election Committee must mail first-class to all eligible members at each member's last known home address:
 1. Instruction for voting and the deadline for returning marked ballots
 2. A ballot [see Section 7 for more information on preparation of ballots.]
 3. A plain envelope marked "secret ballot envelope"
 4. A prepaid, business reply or stamped envelope, addressed to the Election Committee at a post office box, with a space for the member's signature and printed name.
- C. Mail voting instructions must be clear and instruct the voter to do the following:
 1. Mark an "X" or "√" in the squares next to the candidates of your choice. Do not sign your name—otherwise your ballot will be voided. Do not mark the ballot in any other way.

2. Place the marked ballot in the secret ballot envelope. Do not mark the secret ballot envelope.
 3. Place the secret ballot envelope in the reply envelope.
 4. Seal the reply envelope.
 5. Sign and print your name in the upper left-hand corner on the reply envelope—otherwise the ballot will be voided.
 6. Mail the reply envelope so that it is received no later than the specified date [the Wednesday prior to the first Thursday of November].
- D. The morning of the first Thursday of November, all mailed ballots should be collected by the Election Committee at the post office box, and brought to the tally site.
- E. The tally should be conducted immediately by the Election Committee.
- F. The name on each envelope should be checked against the list of eligible voters to verify the identity and hence, eligibility of the voters. If a ballot is challenged, it must be put to one side and the procedures described in Section 13.1. should be followed in the processing of these ballots.
- G. The reply envelope should then be opened, separated from the secret ballot envelopes, and preserved along with all other election materials. The secret ballot envelopes should be placed in a ballot box.
- H. Only when the verification process has been completed for all ballots, should the secret ballot envelopes be opened, ballots removed, and counted.

Section 11:

Currently reads:

The ballots shall be counted immediately after the closing of balloting and the results announced to the membership.

Proposed to Read

A. Counting the Ballots

1. Observers are entitled to be present when the ballots are picked up.
2. Challenged ballot envelopes must be put to one side and the unchallenged ballots counted separately.
3. The Election Committee must count the ballots carefully in accordance with the following rules:
 - a. If a voter has signed his or her name on the ballot, the entire ballot is void.
 - b. Write-in votes must not be counted. However, a write-in vote does not invalidate the rest of the ballot.
 - c. If a voter has incorrectly voted for more than one candidate for an office(s), the ballot is void only for the office(s) incorrectly marked.
 - d. Keep all voided ballots.
4. The Election Committee must count the number of used and unused ballots and the number of persons who voted, and write these numbers on the voting register.

B. Preservation of Election Records

1. After the election, the Committee must deliver all election records to the Recording Secretary [see Section 9]. The election records include:
 - a. All used, unused, spoiled, void and challenged ballots
 - b. All eligibility lists
 - c. Voting registers

- d. Mail ballot envelopes
 - e. Tally sheets
2. All election records must be preserved for one year.

Comments: Certification of the number and kind of ballots destroyed is not a substitute for preservation. Even those ballots voided because they were received late or because they were cast for an ineligible candidate must be preserved. The best way to comply with the law is to save absolutely everything.

C. Reporting Election Results

The Election Committee must report the results of the election to the membership by:
announcement during the November Branch meeting or as soon after it's conclusion as possible,
or
posting the information at all stations, or
publishing the results in the branch newspaper, or
in some other appropriate manner.

Section 12:

Currently reads:

Any member may upon request vote by absentee ballot. The notice of elections shall state how an absentee ballot may be requested including the time and place the request must be received by the Election Committee".

Such time shall be after nominations have closed, but not less than two weeks before the election. The Election Committee shall promptly send absentee ballots to all members who are entitled thereto, together with instructions and enclosures. The absentee ballots must be received by the Branch no later than Election Day. Absentee ballots shall be picked up from the designated Post Office Box by the Chairman of the Election Committee or his/her designee on the committee, in the presence of observers, and immediately brought to the place where the ballots are to be counted. The names on the outer envelopes shall be checked against the signed voting register, in the presents of observers. If any person who has sent in an absentee ballot has also signed a register, his/her absentee ballots shall be destroyed. After the eligibility of all absentee ballots has been verified, the outer envelopes shall be removed unless challenged. The secret ballot envelopes shall be mixed to prevent any possibility of identification, and the ballots removed there from and counted.

Proposed to Read

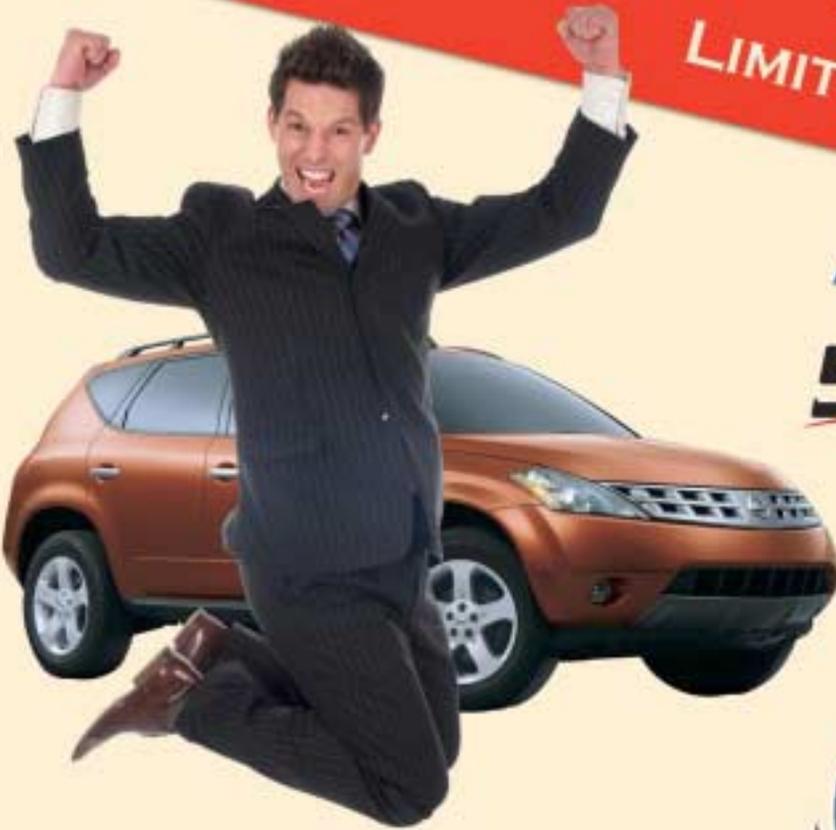
Officers Assume Office

Newly elected officers will assume office January 1, following election.

These proposed bylaw changes were submitted properly and signed by the following members in good standing: Leslie Ray Garcia, Julius C. Howard, Bill Mandikas, Sal Marsala, Donald Thomas, Matthew Resanka and Jaime Rodriguez

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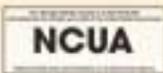
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* APR - Annual Percentage Rate. Rate received based upon credit worthiness and history. Rates subject to change without notice.