



Tampa Letter Carrier

Volume 8 - Issue 4

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

Tampa, Florida

April 2009

President's Report

by Jim Good

President - Branch 599

Branch Update

It's been pretty hectic around the office lately, what with the Interim Route Adjustment Process wrapping up, the T-6 Strings being realigned, our postmaster being detailed to the "Great White North" (maybe a temporary detail or maybe as a reward for a job well done?), a new OIC being placed in charge and a plethora of other goings on. I thought I would take a few minutes this month and try to keep everyone apprised on some of the things that are happening in the cities and areas represented by our branch.

First things first. As I stated in last month's article, as a result of this process there were sixteen routes lost and one new route formed in the offices represented by Branch 599. Starting around April 1st the local teams will begin to review the data compiled during the first sixty (60) days after the adjustments were put into place to ensure that the routes are as near to eight hours of daily work as possible. A new PS Form 3999 must be completed reflecting the current authorized travel pattern and schedules. Some clarification is still needed regarding these reviews and will hopefully be available from the headquarters level prior to beginning the reviewing process.

We are currently having problems, resulting in a large number of disciplinary letters being issued, with what management is labeling as "unprofessional estimates". Most, if

not all of these issues could be avoided if the carriers would just fill out Form 3996 when overtime and/or auxiliary assistance is needed. I realize that in the past management did not enforce, or in some cases even request that carriers fill out these "help slips", but with the current state of the postal service and management trying their best to squeeze every last second out of carriers it is absolutely essential that every carrier fill out this form every time they are going to be "on the clock" more than eight (8) hours. After your receipt of all the day's mail (with the exception of the "hot case"), if you realize that you will need help or overtime *you must request this form from your supervisor!* It is also management's responsibility to make sure that you fill out this form. This form should cover from the time that you begin tour until the time that you end tour. And remember, it is an estimate. You should try to be as exact as possible, but no one is perfect. And if something should happen between the time that you turn in the 3996 and the time that you are ready to hit the street (such as getting an additional 10 or 15 Certified Letters to deliver) that will affect your estimate, you should request the 3996 back from your supervisor and change your estimate. I'm sure that the supervisor would rather have you let them know you need an additional twenty minutes before you leave for the street than to have you call at 3:00 pm and let them know then. So please, get in the habit of requesting this form, asking for a signed copy from your supervisor so that you have proof of your request for overtime and/or assistance, should you need it in the future, and let management know in advance if you need help so that they can plan their day accordingly.

Most, if not all of the T-6 Strings in Tampa and Brandon have been realigned in the cases where the Carrier Techni-

cian lost a route. A few errors were made by me but were rectified. The next step in the process is to allow the unassigned regular carriers to choose, by seniority, one of the residual vacancies that have yet to be filled. Should there not be enough volunteers then unassigned regulars will be assigned by juniority. I have just received an updated list, from USPS Southeast Area management, of offices that have released their withholding of positions for excessing purposes. There are still some offices that are withholding for the Flat Sequencing System (FSS) implementation, and until they have reached their goal for positions withheld no PTFs will be converted to Full Time Regulars. The postal service is also still under a hiring freeze.



I have heard that a second round of "early outs" is in the works. It is rumored that there may be some kind of an incentive attached to this round, whether it be a monetary one or a "forgiveness" for service time or age. As of now it is just that, a rumor!

Finally, as we are all aware, the economy, including the Postal Service, is hurting financially. I hope that every single employee of the USPS and the NALC thanks God every day for their

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Branch Meeting

Thursday, April 2

7:30 PM

at the Union Hall

Branch 599 Officers

| | | |
|--------------------------|------------------|-------------------------------|
| PRESIDENT | Jim Good | (813) 417-8877 |
| EXECUTIVE VICE-PRESIDENT | Dook Ramotar | (813) 404-4380 |
| VICE-PRESIDENT | Gilbert Cabanas | (813) 855-0516 |
| 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 | Eddie Berroth | (813) 493-5224 |
| Commerce | 33602 | Pedro Jimenez | (813) 727-9280 |
| Forest Hills | 33612 | Stephen Hall | (813) 494-4669 |
| Forest Hills Annex | 33613 | Rocky Randels | (813) 766-2604 |
| Hilldale | 33614 | A. Sam Santilli | (813) 215-7595 |
| Hilldale Annex | 33634 | Butch Smith | (813) 889-3915 |
| Hyde Park | 33606 | Tom Cobert | (813) 694-0711 |
| Interbay | 33611 | Sammy Graham | (813) 832-6644 |
| Interbay | 33629 | Brian Obst | (727) 458-0679 |
| MacDill | 33608 | Sammy Graham | (813) 832-6644 |
| Palm River | 33619 | J.C. Howard | (813) 621-1976 |
| Plant City | 33565 | Varick Reeder | (813) 746-0238 |
| 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 | John Rowland | (813) 770-7769 |
| 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 |

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The opinions expressed in this publication are those of the writers, and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of Branch 599.

All articles are subject to editing and revision at the discretion of the publisher & editor.

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

Adjustments

Running with you has ended his 1st anniversary as the Executive President a month or so ago. Its been an experience and a privilege as I try to do the best I can for the benefit of the Carriers of Branch 599. It wasn't an easy ride but I intended to fulfill my elected duties. For years I was also a member to the J.L.C. board (more on this later).

With the treatment given to Carriers in the Tampa Area especially at the T.C.A., its about time for some good news. Meetings held with the Union and management on the adjustment of the routes with the carrier's input. Hopefully there will be 8 hour routes not only there but in all the offices in the US and territories. There is low volume in mailing but that does not constitute the routes are 5 and 5 hour now and undertime is there everyday.

Last week at the meeting held at the TCA 07 Carriers were told that at least 1 route and probably an auxiliary would be created in the adjustment- what a difference from what management did during the recent route inspection held there a few months ago. We expect the carriers to be honest in their evaluation of us, yet we refuse to do the same towards them. That being said, from here on out, lets hope things will be more reciprocal by management and carriers in the future. And that management will take into consideration concern of the carriers, for example.

Management was issuing LOW left and right to carriers for not filling out their 3996. Grievances were filed and Running with You talked with the carriers. Over 80% said the previous supervisors never gave them help slips to fill out; each one took each other's word for what time they will need that day and given trips. This will include in only Estimate for their route not for the trips being given out to carriers. All these carriers got were one 3996 for the trips they were given, not two, one for their route and one for the trips. This being done for years, how do you change a system overnight? No one questioned unprofessional Estimate and these are carriers with at least 20 plus years of carrying mail, neither were there LOW for unprofessional Estimate passing out as it is being done now.

Were there Carriers lying before? No, this was the way the operation worked and management chose to let this process continue without any discipline so now we have new management team. They chose to impose discipline left and right without getting the input of the carriers involved. Question- "why do you need half hour? Well, I have so and so. Ok, I have a half hour trip." This question and answer occurs before the carriers have their full compliment of mail and accountables. Now, the supervisor sometimes gives out a 3996 for the overtime the carriers asked on their route do. Therefore, according to the supervisor, you need only one half hour off which you only have one. One 3996 to prove and this one is for the trips given out for you to carry, no mention is made for the overtime as held for on your own route.

Running With You has questioned and interviewed carriers on the matter and got statements from them to the effect that this system is only now being stopped due to grievances being filed and the L.O.W. Unprofessional Estimate being issues to carriers after management explained to carriers they need to fill out the 3996 for their own O.T. Things are slowly being changed and getting better.

Now to the comment I made at the beginning of this article on being a member of the T.L.C. for years. Well, I got a call from the Vice President asking if I got a letter from T.L.C. I said no (I am not a member of the T.L.C. this year due to my own personal reasons. I did not run for a seat). At the Steward meeting I was asked by the treasurer whether I had a new address. I said no- T.L.C. sent a letter to my name, Doo Ramotar Executive Vice President Branch 599 NALC, 2111 W Sewaha St. Zephyrhills Fl. 33548. The letter went back R.T.S. No such street unable to forward. I found this either funny or exciting due to the fact I get all correspondence from Branch 599 to my home address including the monthly news letter, also including correspondence from President Jim Good to the best of my knowledge none was ever sent to said Dook. Why do we have this address in our system? Signed Jim?

Now for the letter that was sent to me:

Dear Dook,

by Dook Ramotar

Executive Vice-President - Branch 599

Tampa Letter Carriers Inc has held their monthly meeting February 24th 2009, New Ways were to lower spending- Resulting in review of branch offices cell phones being paid by T.L.C. Resulting in the cell phone for Executive Vice President Doo Ramotar \$90.00 and Vice President Gilbert Cabanas \$45.00.



As I mentioned I was a T.L.C. member for years and these bills were paid for by T.L.C. and now do to the recession they are being cut, nothing in the letter made mention of the President of Branch 599 cell phone being paid for but not cancelled by T.L.C. The Vice President cancelled his as of now, I did not.

Wishing all well until next month.

The right to be heard does not automatically include the right to be taken seriously.

Hubert H. Humphrey (1911 - 1978)

Arslan Uniform Drawing

The Arslan Uniform prize for the April 2nd Branch 599 meeting will be \$210.00.

If you are in attendance at the meeting and your name is drawn, you will win the \$210.00 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 big money?

Hope to see you there on April 2nd.

Health & Welfare

We are sad to announce that long time Branch 599 unionist Emilio Perez passed away on February 15, 2009.

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

Join
Us

SUNDAY, APRIL 26, 2009

“We Care Day”

Employee Safety & Health Fair

Event Location:

NALC Union Hall
3003 W Cypress St
Tampa, FL 33609

11:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.

Sponsored by:

Tampa Post Office, NALC Branch 599, Tampa P&DC,
Tampa Safety & Health Committee, Suncoast District Diversity Committee.
Participating agencies and services being provided include:

American Red Cross

Emergency/hurricane preparedness, First aid kits

Animal Control

Back to Work Physical Therapy

Massages, body fat analysis, back analysis

Bicycle Safety

Bicycle helmets (Amscot Financial)

EAP

Entertainment

Ergo Team

Florida Highway Patrol

Granite Lab

Hillsborough County Extension Office

Healthy eating - Obesity

LLV Mirror Station

National Marrow Donor Program Registration

National Safety Council

OSHA / NIOSH

Poison Control Center

Safe Kids Coalition / St. Joseph's Children Hospital

Suncoast District Diversity Committee

Financial Planning, eCareers/Leadership Skills Bank & more

Suncoast Safety

Tampa Eye Clinic

Tampa Fire Rescue

Tampa Postal Federal Credit Union

Training DVD's

United Way of Tampa Bay

University Community Hospital

Dermatologist for skin cancer assessments & more

Wasserman Uniforms

Wishart Safety

YMCA Recreation Center

Door Prizes
and
much, much more.....

Passport Services (Employee's & Family)

Bring original birth certificate/long form for children 17 & under or naturalization certificate proving citizenship, current photo ID (driver's license, military or government ID), passport photos available on site. **Payment by Cash or Checks only.** If Children names are different than parent, please provide marriage and/or death certificates, divorce or adoption decrees. Both parents are required for children under age 16.

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

Open to all Suncoast District Employees and Family!

Around The Horn

by Tony Diaz

Change

Brothers and Sisters, seems we hear the word change mentioned frequently either at our Station or at home. Change defined is: to alter, to modify, to vary, to transform, to adjust, to revolutionize, or to amend. Usually when a change is made, or changes are made, the process is intended to: make improvements, make corrections, revise, rework, or fine tune.

No matter how you word it, no matter how you approach it and no matter what the circumstances are, **Letter Carriers hate change.** Having recently completed the Interim Route Adjustment Process, my experience over the past several months justifies this old myth. However, that being said, the majority of you understand these minor adjustments are essential to the future of the Postal Service. Change will become an ongoing occurrence while the Postal Service fights to survive the recession we continue to experience.

As we know mail volumes have continued to fall, in fact, 27% since the Interim Route Adjustment data was compiled for May and September. To no one's surprise, should this pattern continue, many of the routes that were adjusted, will need to be looked at once more in the near future. Change again, and whether it be myself or another appointed NALC representative, we will all face it. How much change? no one knows, not even the top brass in Washington do.

The Postal Service never envisioned the situation deteriorating so badly, so quickly. Should you ask why, there are simply no accurate answers to the following questions. How long will the economy be on the down turn? How far will mail volumes drop? How many advertisers lost by these eco-

nomie times will return in the future? The uncertainty is troubling and unsettling to most of us.

We obviously are not alone, at least we are still employed. We have not, as of yet, heard the "L" word, unlike many, many businesses. You know the dreaded "layoff" word, this by the way has not happened within the Postal Service since the great depression. You see what is happening around us, unemployment is skyrocketing, companies are folding or are hanging on in financial ruins, big businesses are consolidating and subcontracting out departments overseas. For that matter, look what is happening on your own routes, just ask the question, How is it going? I personally have gotten some eye opening answers. So as we all wish to retire from the United States Postal Service, again, change will be a imperative to it's existence.

The most difficult adjustment when there is a territory loss is the friendships that you develop over time, in many cases a long period of time. I know I have watched young kids grow up and become adults, going to college and having children of their own. We will all make new friends and relationships in the new areas we absorb, that is who we are, that is what makes Letter Carriers such a vital part of America's daily life.

Quick Hits: Information you should know

*) We continue to experience an above-average rate of retirements. Many have been contemplating retirement for some time, and now with the uncertainty throughout the Postal Service, have de-

ecided this is the right time. Good Luck to all!!

Financial Secretary - Branch 599



*) H.R.22, is a bipartisan bill, would allow the USPS to prefund its future health care obligations on a more realistic schedule. It would preserve the pre-funding requirement but allow USPS to **immediately** pay its share of current retirees' health insurance premiums out of the existing Postal Service Retiree Health Benefits Fund, which now holds \$32 billion. H.R. 22 cannot solve all the Postal Service's problems – postal management and the postal unions will have to do their part. But without it, the continued viability of the Postal Service is in serious jeopardy – a danger that threatens a key infrastructure industry that is central to the economic recovery. H.R. 22 is not a bailout. The bill does not require the allocation of any taxpayer funds -- rather, the bill simply allows USPS to tap into the existing postal retiree health fund, while increasing the balance in the fund each and every year by an average of \$2 billion. Nor would H.R. 22 in any way reduce benefits or relieve the Postal Service of its future retiree health obligations. Indeed, if H.R. 22 were enacted, USPS would still pre-fund its future retiree health costs at a greater rate than any company in America and would still amortize any remaining unfunded liability over 40 years, beginning in 2016. (Information compiled from NALC Fact Sheet, www.NALC.org)

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

President's Station Visits

| | |
|------------------|--------------------|
| Sun City 33570 | Tuesday, March 31 |
| Plant City 33564 | Thursday, April 2 |
| Brandon 33510 | Tuesday, April 7 |
| Brandon 33511 | Wednesday, April 8 |

Unionism

Cooperation with Management

Management desires cooperation with the union on many issues daily in the Postal Service; in fact it is a cornerstone of our working relationship in the Postal Service. This is one of the reasons for the National Agreement which is negotiated on behalf of all letter carriers by our national officers. This agreement draws the lines that must be followed by management as well as for carriers to follow and it is not open for discussion on a local level to change any of these terms.

All too often in my job as a steward I hear from management that this contract doesn't make any sense in this time of economic difficulty for the Postal Service and we need to be realistic in what we do on the job. This is management's excuse to violate the agreement and do as they feel in an attempt to "make the numbers" without any consideration for the carriers they are working. How would you like to come in to work and be at the mercy of the supervisor for your hours of work that day? What if the 8 hour guarantee was suddenly not adhered to by management, what would you do? This is what management would have us agree to do in this time of economic difficulty.

The National Agreement is the guiding

document which sets the terms for employment, hours of work and rates of pay for that work and numerous other conditions of work that we deal with daily as letter carriers. In a recent edition of the *Postal Bulletin*, President William Young spoke on the issue of cooperation with management and he ended with this thought:

"We must be mindful of the critical difference between contract amendment/contract violation on the one hand, and creative, positive cooperation on the other."

President Young is clear that he encourages cooperation where appropriate. What this means is that any cooperation with the Postal Service must be done on a contractual basis and if the requested cooperation is in violation of the terms and provisions of the National Agreement then it cannot be done on a local level. The procedures for making changes or amending the National Agreement require management to submit considerations for change or amending through their superiors in Washington, DC, and then if the Postal Service wishes to proceed, they will meet and discuss these considerations for change at the national level. Any attempt to make changes on the local level should be met immediately with grievances on said actions taken by management, even when they say that the union has said

by Brian Obst

Chief Steward - Branch 599



we should cooperate with management.

On a local level please remember that any time a manager or supervisor says that the local president has signed off on some particular item and no grievance is warranted that you should ask several questions. First ask to see the signoff management is speaking of and second ask when the supposed signoff was done, management will not have any answers to these questions as they are normally blowing smoke in an attempt to prevent you filing a grievance. If you have this happen to you in your station also make a call to your president and get first hand knowledge of the situation as this will also let your president know who is attempting to do this so he can take appropriate action for the union against the management individual.

Cooperation is important but let's ensure it is contractual and still protects the rights we have under the National Agreement.

Remember, *knowledge is the key.*

Yours in Brotherhood

Brian Obst - Chief Steward
Branch 599

President's Report *(from page 1)*

job. I know that when I hired in back in 1974 I knew I would never get rich, but I also knew that I would always have a job. I feel the same way now.

The postal service gave me the opportunity to raise my family in a good lifestyle. Without the NALC I would not have been able to keep up that lifestyle and live the way I am now. So let's do all we can to help the postal service survive through these tough times.

Through Customer Connect let's see if we can drum up new business to help generate more revenues and work hours for our PTF brothers and sisters.

The postal service has never had to lay off carriers; let's do all we can to help them continue that heritage. Let's all do the best job we are able to do. That's all that anyone can ask. That's all that *management can ever* expect from us!

NALC Service Award Pins

Any NALC Branch 599 member who has reached the following number of years as a member should let either their shop steward or the union office know and we will order the appropriate service pin for them: 5, 10, 15, 20 or 25 year pin.

Any member who is within six month's of being eligible for a fifty year service pin and gold card should also let us know.

FSALC Director of Retirees Report

by **Matty Rose**

FSALC Director of Retirees

I Missed The Gettysburg Address

I looked all over for some cold weather gear, long johns, ski gloves, old sweaters, heavy socks, and a knitted hood that made me resemble a bank robber. It took me several hours being on this scavenger hunt. One trip to the mall, and to the local thrift shop, produced the bounty. You see a Florida guy doesn't need more than some shorts and tee shirts to make a fashion statement. However, for this trip I was prepared for an arctic blast.

I was off to Washington, D.C. to attend the Inaugural festivities, leaving Saturday, January 17, 2009. After securing the proper garments the second situation was housing. That was remedied by having friends and union colleagues in D.C. and surrounding areas. I was familiar with D.C., since my years as an NALC National Business Agent (NBA) for Region 9 brought me to D.C. various times for many reasons.

Why Did I Want To Go

My adult life has been involved with union activities, 42 years plus with the NALC. Approximately 4 ½ years ago I retired from my position as NBA. I not only made a significant lifestyle change, I decided to relocate from South Florida to Central Florida. I went cold turkey from daily union issues to contemplating how I stay involved without being consumed with full time matters. Remember, I'm a retired union letter carrier.

A life long involvement does not come with a dimmer switch. The workload of a full time union representative changed, however, the philosophy did not. The involvement was on a lesser scale as an activist and focusing on the Legislative battle ground. I was elected Director of Retired Members for the FSALC in 2007. Once the permanent

relocating to Central Florida was complete, I started attending the union meetings and functions at the three local branches in my area. Periodically I would attend my branch 1071 meetings and functions in South Florida. I was a delegate to the state and national conventions, training sessions and most union related gatherings.

The State Director of Retirees primary responsibility is legislation. As a result of that, my involvement in local and national political awareness was an enjoyable endeavor. My new home is located in Congressional District 24. Prior to the November 4, 2008 elections District 24 was held by Representative Tom Feeney, a Republican, three-term anti-worker, anti-union, right wing hypocrite whose political views mirrored that of George W. Bush. I vowed I would not live in a district whose representative's philosophy was opposite of all that I believed in and worked for all my life. One sure thing: I was not moving out of the district. The only alternative was to replace Feeney with a representative who fostered worker friendly values.

So when NALC President Young called for NALC members to work with the AFL-CIO's Labor 2008 I jumped at the opportunity. I worked with the local chapter of the AFL-CIO and with other activists from affiliate unions. The mobilization was officially activated about two months prior to the election. Labor 2008 revolved around interacting with union families to get out the vote and cast their ballot for the candidates that supported worker and retiree issues. The final result was the election of Barack Obama, and District 24 congressional representative Democrat Suzanne Kosmas. The two counties that we concentrated on were Volusia and Flagler, both were RED counties which we turned BLUE.

A steady stream of NALC members and families worked all aspects of the campaign along side of the other union members. Days, nights, and weekends were the work routine. I will confirm one fact, which is what I have known all my union life. The NALC is the leader for securing job and benefit security, more than our brothers and sisters in other unions.

Personally it was self satisfying for me to have Obama elected President and Suzanne Kosmas handily beat Tom Feeney. My involvement with getting out the vote was rewarding. Most of all, it was the best for America to have a president who is in touch with reality, and does not choke on the word *union*. During the eight years Bush was in office it resulted in crippling the nation economically, creating anti-American feelings worldwide, starting two wars that made mega corporations rich, and left countless Americans dead and wounded. Billions of dollars were spent on foreign governments while the American economy nose dived to a disastrous recessionary state. When Bush declared "*mission accomplished*" he meant, "Make sure the mission statement of Wall Street was accomplished!"

George W. Bush never acknowledged organized labor. His anti-worker GOP thought pattern let healthcare go by the wayside, fought minimum wage, and allowed America to be reduced to financial disaster. So you want to know why I wanted to go? I wanted to stand in the crowd with millions of others, hand warmers activated, wearing a hat that looked like a dead animal was nesting on my head and say loudly, "BYE, BYE BUSH!"

What A Sight For My Cross Eyes

I witnessed the OBAMA EXPRESS train as it rolled through Baltimore on
(continued on page 10)

I Missed The Gettysburg Address *(from page 9)*

Saturday, visited the Senate and House buildings, attended the concert on the mall, and witnessed the inauguration having scored two tickets from my congresswoman. I stood in lines, got pushed, shoved, squeezed in trains, socialized with friends and union buddies. Oh, yes, it was cold! How cold? My hand warmers asked for hand warmers. The crowd was polite, happy and courteous. I described the massive gathering as *Woodstock with lots of winter clothes*.

Surrounded by an eclectic loud crowd, my mind drifted towards the many times I cursed George Bush, insulted as an American citizen by his babbling speech, angry at his arrogance, revolted by his cabinet and Vice President. I come to a realization. America now has a chance to recover and we will. Organized labor has a chance to seize the moment and build upon its original foundation. That is, put Americans back to work making them tax payers rather than tax burdens. Allow workers to unionize and negotiate a collec-

tive bargaining agreement, if they so desire.

Samuel Gompers, founder of the American Federation of Labor said:

*We want more schoolhouses and less jails
 More books and less arsenals
 More constant work and less crime
 More leisure and less greed
 More justice and less revenge*

I am hopeful that we can gain the spirit of what Samuel Gompers wanted for America and much more. We must ensure our rights are protected, repelling those terrorists' forces that threaten our lives and livelihood. America must be restored to the most productive and respected country in the world.

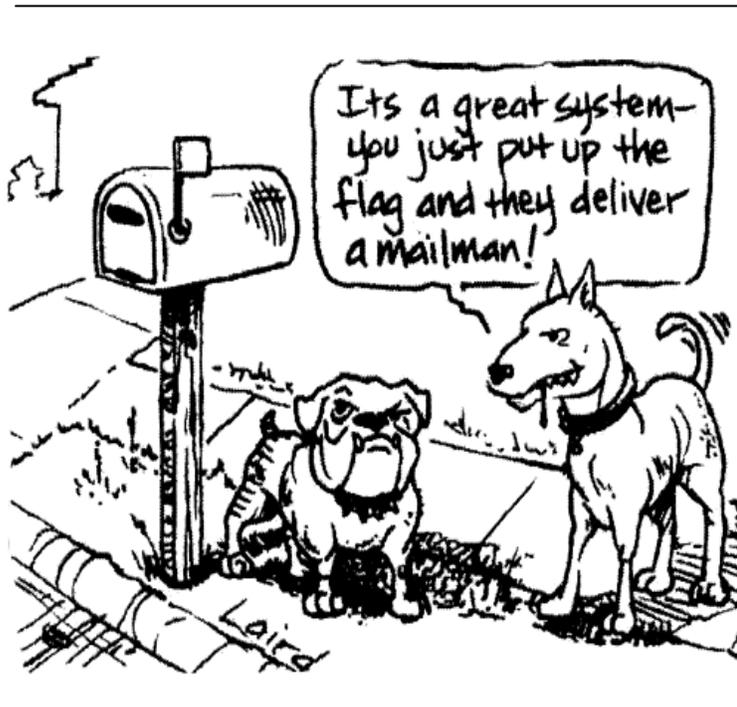
Was It The Best?

I have been involved in thousands of union meetings, seminars, demonstra-

tions, picket lines, conventions and assorted activist functions. I can say having attended the Inauguration events, it was not the best I have seen, but I haven't seen anything better in my life time. Oh sure, that tear in my eye was probably a melting snow flake. Those emotions building up were probably due to the cold. Oh yes, the feeling of being a proud American union member was overwhelming.

I continue to be active in local, state and national politics, supporting the Local AFL-CIO chapter and participating in NALC issues and functions. I will continue to seek other avenues that will benefit the membership until I can no longer do so. Although I missed the Gettysburg Address, I was there this time.

Think about it.



A Point of Personal Privilege

Are You Kidding Part II

As I wrote in my last article the USPS Postmaster General stated that we are billions of dollars in the red and requested that Congress may need to consider rescinding the mandated 6 day delivery by reducing it to 5 day daily. As most of us know the mail volume has decreased. The NALC in an effort to 'work' with management has come up with a new route check system and routes have been eliminated. The appropriate method used for this is a program that probably cost millions of dollars to invent and millions of dollars for up-keep that is a souped up version of DOIS. I think it is called CORS, not the beer but I could be incorrect?

Sometime after January 1, 2009 the price of specialty mailings such as express, priority, etc. increased. In May of 2009 the price of first class letters will increase by 2 cents. Why has the USPS lost volume and revenue? Who is in charge of our finances? I understand that no one has a crystal ball answer but for the first question maybe just maybe had the USPS zealously gone after all the businesses that use the internet for much of their orders and gotten the contract for delivery of the shipping? Would this have increased revenues? How about getting the mailing lists of individuals or businesses that used DHL to ship their merchandise? Could this have increased revenues? Do the big guys get out to drum up business instead of wasting time with their hour or longer telecom meetings? No, the USPS management is asking letter carriers to solicit those businesses but carriers have to do this within their 8 hour work day through a program that the NALC has condoned...customer connect. Since this agreement letter carriers have increased revenue by more than a million dollars a year with maybe a certificate of thank you and a management attitude of what have you done for me lately?

How many programs over the years concocted by management think tanks have cost the USPS hundreds of millions of dollars that have failed or they refuse to admit that are financially unsound? Management officials that blame letter carriers for these losses are at fault and completely

ignore their own incompetence. The USPS has consistently bought machinery that does not achieve the do everything job. Can you say DPS, CFS or now FSS? You are probably wondering what FSS is? It is another of the many abbreviations concocted by the USPS for Flat Sequencing Sorters and do you know what, they are coming to your city for every post office or station after they are brought on-line nation wide in 2010. They operate similarly to the DPS machines! Yikes! The cost of them is most likely in the billions of dollars, give or take a few letter carriers.

What is consistent with L'Enfant Plaza is that from 2004 to 2008 their personnel has increased from 10,534 to 11,370 or only 836 individuals! At the bottom of the upside down pyramid (nation wide) in 2004 letter carriers had an employment of 228,140 but in 2008 there were 211,661. This was a loss of 16,479 the actual workers called letter carriers. In 2004 there were only 77,967,046 city deliveries but in 2008 there were 79,848,415 or an increase of 1,881,369 deliveries. City business deliveries in 2004 numbered 7,185,300 and 2008 they increased to 7,436,935 or only about a mere 251,635. These figures may have decreased because of the recession. I may be incorrect with my math but in 2004 city carriers had on average 373 deliveries per route compared to the 2008 figure of 412 deliveries. This only increased routes by about 39 stops or roughly 20 minutes.

by Leslie Ray Garcia



With the ever increasing low mail volumes the new route evaluation system is adding a minimum of 30 minutes or more of street time to almost all routes? One good situation is that with less letter carriers maybe it will decrease management? Naa, naa, naa! Remember the no lay off clause has been modified in the National Agreement. If you are the junior individual this COULD or MIGHT affect you? Letter carriers if you do not already do this, learn how to deliver your route by the USPS manuals...you know by the book. This job needs to be done efficiently, timely, professionally and thoroughly. Forget what the computer prints out because it does not deliver the mails. When you try to deliver fast, you may mis-deliver the mails causing those mails to be delayed. Only the DPS, CFS and the new FSS machines can mis-sort the mails and cause them to be delayed. Those machines do not care or think about the quality of service which should be the highest priority to the USPS for our customers/patrons.

"When you've got them by their wallets, their hearts and minds will follow." Fern Naito



Ramon Guerrero, Jim Good, Tony Borkowski, Wendy Bainbridge & William Sherman pose for a photo while the recent retirees receive their retirement gratuity checks and congratulations from President Good at a recent branch meeting.

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