



Tampa Letter Carrier

Volume 8 - Issue 5

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

Tampa, Florida

May 2009

President's Report

by Jim Good

President - Branch 599

OWCP Facts, Once Again

I have recently become involved in a number of cases representing Branch 599 letter carriers who have been injured on-the-job and are having difficulties dealing with the Office of Workers' Compensation Program (OWCP). One of my duties as branch president is to assist and represent branch members in the filing and appealing, if necessary, of the proper forms to ensure your rights designated by OWCP. These rights are granted and protected under the Federal Employee Compensation Act (FECA). In order for you to be protected, however, you must follow certain procedures, rules and time limits.

It has been some time since I have written regarding this subject, and lately a number of carriers have called because their claims have been denied. In some of these cases the claims were denied because more medical evidence was requested by OWCP and either not enough was provided, it did not go into enough detail, or it was submitted untimely.

When you are injured on the job there are a number of things that you need to do to ensure that you will receive the care and compensation that you are entitled to under the Office of Workers' Compensation Program for Federal Employees. If you fail to do these things properly, or within the appropriate time limits, you may forfeit some

of these entitlements.

First, it is your responsibility to notify your supervisor immediately when you are involved in any type of accident, whether it is a vehicle accident or an industrial accident. Then you must fill out a form *CA-1*, "Notice of Traumatic Injury". Your supervisor should give you this form to complete; if not, then you must ask for it. After completion make sure that your supervisor gives you a receipt of filing that will show the date and location where the injury occurred, as well as the date the form was filed. Although the employee has up to three years to file this form, it should be filed immediately to ensure that you will receive *Continuation of Pay (COP)*. The USPS will continue to pay the wages of an injured employee, after the first three days, for up to 45 calendar days provided medical evidence is submitted within ten days of the filing of the CA-1. (Leave used for the first three days will be restored if you are out of work for fourteen days)

When you are injured on-the-job you have the right to go to the doctor of your choice for treatment. If you can not be seen by your doctor immediately, you may go to a hospital emergency room for initial treatment, and then go to your choice of physicians for further treatment. Prior to going to either the emergency room or the doctor of your choice you will be given a Form CA-16 signed by your supervisor. This form authorizes medical treatment for a period of sixty days. Management must give you this form if you file a CA-1 within seven days of the injury. Once you choose a physician, however, you must remain under his/her care unless referred by him/her to another doctor or get approval from OWCP. If you file a claim

for traumatic injury, and the claim is subsequently denied, any COP that has been paid to you must be paid back in the form of sick leave, annual leave, or money.



These initial procedures are extremely important. I have recently been involved in cases where proper paperwork was not filled out in a timely manner and as a result the carrier forfeited his right to COP. When this happens the carrier may still qualify for compensation for lost work hours and paid medical bills, but may have to wait four to six weeks or longer to receive that compensation.

Do not trust your supervisor to inform you of your rights and responsibilities. If you have any questions or concerns when you are injured on the job call the union office for advice. It is always better to err on the side of safety and see a doctor or the emergency room immediately if you are injured.

I have also received phone calls from carriers who are reluctant to submit medical documentation or work restrictions to their supervisors. You do not have to submit any medical documentation to your supervisor. Medical documentation regarding on the job injuries
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Branch Meeting

Thursday, May 7

7:30 PM

at the Union Hall

Branch 599 Officers

PRESIDENT	Jim Good	(813) 417-8877
EXECUTIVE VICE-PRESIDENT	Dook Ramotar	(813) 780-6254
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) 264-9801
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

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

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Articles must be submitted no later than the fifth of the month. Submit articles as .txt, .rtf, .doc or .wpd documents attached to email sent to newsletter@nalc599.com.

RETIREES BREAKFAST
(In Tampa)
First Monday of Every Month
9:00 AM at
The Coffee Cup
4407 N. Hubert
in Drew Park

RETIREES BREAKFAST
(In Brandon)
Second Tuesday of Every Month
8:00 AM at
Buddy Freddy's
134 Gornto Lake Rd S.
in Brandon

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

Running With You

Moves and Changes

We all heard the sayings “What goes around comes around”, “Do unto others what you would have them do unto you” etc etc. More sayings to this effect and more on this topic later. I would like to congratulate the faithfulness of the new stewards that were installed this year. They picked up the load of those who have retired, gotten weary, or transferred to other stations.

Last month N.A.L.C. gave their usual Stewards training and many attended for the first time. They used their leave to be better informed at their training to help their fellow Carriers at work, instead of saving it to spend time with their families.

John Roland- Sulphur Springs, Ed Berroth-Carrollwood, Butch Smith Hill Dale Annex, Steve Hall-Forest Hills, Rocky Randels-Forest Hills Annex Varick Reeda- Plant City Congratulations guys and keep attending these trainings. You learn and get valuable information to share with your fellow Carriers at work.

Something new that was discussed and passed onto us was the FMLA dependant care forms. The old ones we used are no longer accepted. There is a new form now and your steward should have a copy to share with you. “I Repeat, the old forms are no longer accepted ask your Steward for a

copy of the new forms” when going to the doctor for yourself and family. There were other classes and information valuable to us in our ongoing work of defense of the contract. Say Thank you to your Steward every now and again to encourage them.

Also useful to us is the first phrase of the interim route adjustment is probably finished by now. Another round to fine tune is underway shortly. Lets give our cooperation to make this a success which is beneficial to us all in the long run and for the success of the USPS to survive in these hard economic times.

By June 30th of this year there is a move to transfer to stations to other sites.

I was in a meeting about two weeks ago where they explained that Commerce which a few years ago moved from Florida Ave to Hyde park will move to Ybor and Hyde Park will join Tca 07 and 09. This is what I mentioned in the beginning of this article. Years ago Commerce moved from Florida Ave to join Hyde Park and the Carriers and Commerce weren't accepted favorably there. It took some time, and I believe they finally worked together. So to those Carriers whose station these Carriers will move into, remember we are all working for the same company lets try to get along in the success of the USPS. Lets try to put our petty differences aside and unite as one office and continue the best service to our customers. Many moves and changes are

by Dook Ramotar

Executive Vice-President - Branch 599

being made by other companies for their benefits and the USPS is doing these moves for their success.



There is a lot of movement in the USPS shifting from one job to another in the Tampa area even the Post Master is on detail. What running for you would like to see, is the shifting of other people in other capacity could save even more and that is to bring down the level of grievances being filed. In offices where this happens switch personnel who probably can get along with the Carriers and see what happens. If Grievances continue, move them. If they drop, keep them so not only the morale would improve but production as well. Since the USPS is looking to save by streamlining even to the point of five days delivery-think of the savings if management and labor could work out there differences at the lowest level and not have to move it on to the point of Arbitration.

This probably wont happen because when power goes into the wrong hand of the wrong individual its hard to take it away. I've seen this first hand at other levels were individuals wont even perform even to the point of not doing anything and this is sad as not only production and service suffer but morale as well.



Alan Alvarez, Linda Bullington & Darlene Compton, recent retirees, with President Good at the April 2nd branch meeting.

Arslan Uniform Drawing

The Arslan Uniform prize for the May 7th Branch 599 meeting will be \$220.00. If you are in attendance at the meeting and your name is drawn, you will win the \$220.00 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 here on May 7th.

Health & Welfare

Best wishes for a speedy recovery to Hyde Park carrier William Helsel.

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Around The Horn

by Tony Diaz

Financial Secretary - Branch 599

Situation Critical

Brothers and Sisters, there is so much currently going on, it is enough to make your head spin. However, considering all the important topics I would care to discuss with you this month, the financial state of the Postal Service unambiguously takes precedence. The disturbingly low contributions to COLCPE by our membership and updated T.L.C. (Tampa Letter Carriers Inc.) news will become my focus for next month's Around The Horn editorial.

Postmaster General Potter went before Congress to again stress our grave situation. His opening comments (Wednesday-3/27) reiterated the Postal Service will run out of money this year unless it gets assistance, he is seeking permission again to cut delivery to five days a week. Remember Potter first raised the possibility of delivery cutbacks in January, but the idea has not been warmly received in Congress. "We are facing losses of historic proportion. Our situation is critical."

The USPS lost \$2.8 billion last year and is looking at much larger losses this year. Reducing mail delivery from six days to five days a week could save \$3.5 billion annually, Potter also urged changes in how the post office pre-pays for retiree health care to cut its annual costs by \$2 billion, which I thoroughly covered several months back. PMG Potter also raised the question, If the Postal Service does run out of money, which bills will be paid and which will not? Ensuring the payment of workers' salaries comes first, he said, but other bills may have to wait. Asked if layoffs would occur, Potter said it is possible but he hopes avoidable. Subcommittee chairman Stephen F. Lynch, D-Mass., said "With the Postal Service facing budget shortfalls, the subcommittee

will consider a number of options to restore financial stability and examine ways for the Postal Service to continue to operate without cutting services." The financial stability of the Postal Service is "critical to the American expectation of affordable six-day mail delivery." Early retirement will again be offered to 150,000 workers, 1,400 management positions have been eliminated and six of the 80 district offices have closed in cost-cutting efforts. Potter said he expects 10,000 to 15,000 workers to accept the early retirement offer.

I strongly disagree with PMG Potter, with no incentives offered, the early retirement plan will be unsuccessful and will not approach those figures. Dan Blair, head of the independent Postal Regulatory Commission, suggested that other savings are possible through closing small and rural post offices - something Congress has resisted in the past. He added that it may be necessary to increase the limit on the amount of debt the post office can carry. Blair also noted that Congress could consider appropriating money to help the post office. The agency does not receive a taxpayer subsidy for its operations, although Congress does subsidize overseas voting and free mail for the blind. NALC President William Young, stressed in his testimony

that the Postal Service is not seeking a taxpayer bailout, "but we are here to ask the Congress for help."

**Quick Hits: Information you should know**

*) The Food Drive is May 9th, let us all give a great effort, no matter what the circumstances are with the USPS. This is an important event, an opportunity for our Union and for you individually to give back to the less fortunate. Many more people will depend on the NALC Food Drive this year.

*) To any new retirees and those on the verge of retirement, we hope you continue your membership with the NALC. It is very simple, fill out a form 1189, it will require a CSA number. Your number will be sent to you by mail several weeks after you retire. Return your form 1189 to the Branch 599 Union Office and I will take it from there. The good part is you only pay \$20.00 per year, yes \$1.67 per month, to keep updated with the Postal Record and with our local Newsletter. That's a deal!

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



Unionism

by Brian Obst

Chief Steward - Branch 599



Cross-Crafting

In this time of short-staffing and Five O'clock Window the carriers are put under immense pressure to get the job of delivering mail accomplished in shorter and shorter time frames. One of the issues that has once again reared it's ugly head is Cross-Crafting.

Cross-Crafting is simply defined as workers in one craft working, either by their own accord or by direction, in another craft. Examples of this would be a clerk casing mail for a route assignment, a carrier sorting mail into distribution cases, a supervisor delivering mail, etc. The topic of cross-crafting is covered in Article 7 of the National Agreement and a majority of the information in this article will come directly from the text of the JCAM 2005 edition that covers this article.

Management is given certain rights to assign workers to work across craft lines, however there are guidelines that must be met prior to Management taking this kind of action. Article 7.2.B states: "In the event of insufficient work on any particular day or days in a full-time or part-time employee's own scheduled assignment, Management may assign the employee to any available work in the same wage level for which the em-

ployee is qualified, consistent with the employee's knowledge and experience, in order to maintain the number of work hours of the employee's basic work schedule."

Article 7.2.C states: "During exceptionally heavy workload periods for one occupational group, employees in an occupational group experiencing a light workload period may be assigned to work in the same wage level, commensurate with their capabilities, to the heavy workload area for such time as Management determines necessary."

There is also a Memo of Understanding between the USPS and NALC from August 19, 1995 which deals with the cross crafting issue. This memo states that it applies to "all categories of bargaining unit employees in the office/facility/installation who were covered by the 1978 National Agreement." This statement is cause for the exclusion of Rural Carriers from the Cross-Crafting issue and carriers are not permitted to be cross-crafted to rural assignments and rural carriers are not permitted to be cross-crafted to city carrier assignments except in "Emergency Situations".

Emergency Situations are defined in Managements Rights Article 3 of the National Agreement. Article 3.F states

that Management has the right: "To take whatever actions may be necessary to carry out its mission in emergency situations, i.e., an unforeseen circumstance or a combination of circumstances which calls for immediate action in a situation which is not expected to be of a recurring nature."

This provision gives Management a very limited right to make cross-craft assignments. Management's desire to avoid additional expenses such as penalty overtime does not constitute an emergency.

It has been recognized by arbitrators that there are specific limits on Managements ability to assign across craft lines and Arbitrator Richard Bloch in a national level decision from 1982 interpreted the language of Articles 7.2.B + C as follows:

"Taken together, these provisions support the inference that Management's right to cross craft lines is substantially limited. The exceptions to the requirement of observing the boundaries arise in situations that are not only unusual but also reasonably unforeseeable.

(continued on page 9)

President's Report *(from page 1)*

or industrial accidents should be submitted to Injury Compensation, P. O. Box 39443, Tampa, FL 33630. FMLA documentation should be submitted to the FMLA coordinator at the USPS, 5201 Spruce St, Tampa, FL 33630.

If you follow these procedures from the date of your injury it will make the entire process of dealing with OWCP go much more smoothly and ensure that you are covered for any future medical bills that may arise resulting from your approved case.

If for some reason your claim is denied, you will still have the ability to file an appeal of the decision. There are three types of appeals. First, you can request a hearing; either a Review of the Written Record, in which you can submit additional written evidence for review, or an Oral Hearing, where you and your representative can testify and submit additional evidence. Both of these types of hearings are conducted by a Hearing Representative. Secondly, you can request Reconsideration, where you can submit additional medical or legal evidence which you believe will establish

your claim. This appeal will be heard by someone different than the officer who denied your claim. Last, you can request a review by the Employees' Compensation Appeals Board. (ECAB)

As you can see, a claim filed for compensation as a result of an on-the-job injury can be complicated and time consuming. That is the main reason that it is so important that everything is done properly from the very beginning.

Things You Should Know

Current Events

It now appears that this really slow economy has impacted our Union along with the rest of the country. Mr. Ramotar, our executive vice president, and I have lost our cell phone privileges as of March 2009. Please don't try to contact us through those old cell numbers after that deadline. Everyone can still call us through our home phone numbers that are still listed in our newsletter. Please continue to call me for all your EEO complaints through my home phone number too.

The route adjustment teams have finished their initial route and will revisit all the stations for their 60 day review. Those same teams will return to their original work station for any further adjustments. Please be prepared for more adjustments as it seems that the failing economy has not hit bottom.

It also seems that our retirement average of about 4 letter carries retiring a month will continue on course. On the subject of retirement, please be careful when retiring in the middle of, or later in the year. Remember that the annual hours given to you in Janu-

ary need to be earned during the entire year of working. So don't exhaust your entire balance of annual if retiring in the latter part of the year, because OPM can now deduct those hours as a debt, which would then be deducted from your retirement check. Just last year, one of our carriers did retire in September 2008 and had exhausted all of his annual leave, so now the final three months of annual were assessed as a debt. So please try to carry a little annual leave at the balance of each year in order to avoid a similar problem for you.

Also when you do retire, your annual leave hours will be paid to you after your first check on your retirement date. This will help you through the period of your retirement date and your first retirement check which is about 6 weeks later. So try to prepare and save for that day as that retirement day will arrive with or without a plan.

Just as you had a life at the Postal Service, you must have a plan for life after your career. Remember you can always call any retired officer when considering your retirement date to better understand your final numbers for your check. Always try to consider retiring at the end of the month, so your retirement date can begin to count during the next month.

If considering any EEO redress complaint, remember the burden of proof is always on you. But if you feel that you have been harassed, singled out, or disciplined based on a difference of age, race, or gender, you can file a complaint with the Labor Department at (813) 872-0503. The Labor Department will mail you a form that must be filled out and returned to them within 10 days.



by Gilbert Cabanas

Vice-President - Branch 599

This form is easy to fill out with just a short summary of your complaint along with the name of the person that was treated more favorably than you. You can also list any settlement plan that you might consider in order to avoid any further mistreatment. You will then receive a meeting date for all parties involved to be held at the airport for a discussion on the settlement.

If a settlement is concluded at this meeting, all present will sign and receive and a copy of this agreement. But in any case, your settlement will be discussed at length with your supervisor, representative, and a mediator. If a settlement is not reached at this meeting, your complaint will be forwarded to a higher EEO department for further review.

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Unionism (from page7)

There is no reason to find that the parties intended to give Management discretion to schedule across craft lines merely to maximize efficient personnel usage; this is not what the parties bargained. That an assignment across craft lines might enable Management to avoid overtime in another group for example, is not, by itself, a contractually sound reason. It might be shown either that there was "insufficient work" for the classification or, alternatively, that work was "exceptionally heavy" in one occupational group and light, as well, in another.

Inherent in these two provisions, as indicated above, is the assumption that the qualifying conditions are reasonably unforeseeable or somehow unavoidable. To be sure, Management retains the right to schedule tasks to suit its need on a given day. But the right to do this may not fairly be equated with the opportunity to, in essence, create "insufficient" work through intentionally inadequate staffing. To so hold would be to allow Management to effectively cross craft lines at will merely

by scheduling work so as to create the triggering provisions of Subsections B + C. This would be an abuse of the reasonable intent of this language, which exists not to provide means by which the separation of crafts may be routinely ignored but rather to provide the employer with certain limited flexibility in the fact of pressing circumstances. ..."

It is clear that while Management must have certain rights to operate in an emergency it may not abuse those rights. The remedy for violation of the cross-crafting issue is a "make whole" remedy involving the payment at the appropriate rate for the work missed to the available, qualified employee who had a contractual right to the work.

Other examples of cross-craft violations could be Management or clerks delivering express mail when overtime carriers are available to make said deliveries, Management or clerks delivering trips to the street to carriers. An exception to this would be if a carrier loads, unloads and rides with the mail and the supervisor or clerk was simply providing the transportation for the carrier to do the

job.

This issue is very important to all carriers and if you feel that you have seen or been affected by a cross-crafting issue in your station I recommend that you fill out an 0-13 form, dated, requesting to see your steward to file a grievance. Ensure that you have the date, time, personnel involved in the violation and the violation itself written down to assist your steward in proper processing of the grievance. Once again the majority of the information for this article comes directly from the text of the 2005 edition of the JCAM and it is available in every office in Tampa. The office copy is available to all to review at any time so please make the time to review the information it contains when you can. If you have any questions on the material covered in this article please feel free to contact me and we can talk.

Remember, knowledge is the key. Until next month, I remain yours in brotherhood,
Brian Obst
Chief Steward - NALC Branch 599

MDA Street Corner Blitz

The Branch 599 Annual Street Corner Blitz, to collect contributions for the Muscular Dystrophy Association, will be held on Friday, June 5, 2009. Our branch coordinator this year will be Vice-President Gilbert Cabanas. Gilbert and I met with OIC Mike Figlia on April 13th to discuss plans for this year's event.

Acting Postmaster Figlia gave the branch his blessing and the backing of his office for a successful one-day collection. We will be permitted to wear our uniforms, and more importantly, the carriers will be able to apply for *Change of Schedules* so that they can be in place at their appointed intersections by 3 or 4 o'clock. It is proven each year that the best and easiest way to have a successful drive is to get the largest number of volunteers covering as many intersections as possible.

Gil, along with MDA representative Nick Reaume, will be visiting every station to try and enlist carriers to volunteer an hour or two for this very worthwhile cause. As I said, you will be permitted to apply for a *Change of Schedule (COS)* so that you can get off and on the corners by 3:00 - 4:00 o'clock. But please, if you fill out a *COS*, make sure it is done to get off early for the MDA Drive. In past years we have seen some carriers fill out *COSs*, supposedly to volunteer, then get off early and go home. We only need you all for an hour or so each, so why not give an hour of your time to help raise money to fight this terrible disease?

A Point of Personal Privilege

by Leslie Ray Garcia

Are You Kidding - Part III

CNN reported that Ronald Hopson, an employee of the USPS, who was the former postmaster of Lexington, South Carolina had his (modest) home bought by the USPS for nearly \$1.2 million dollars in October of 2008. This vacant, 5 acre, plot of water front property was purchased by Hopson for \$150,000 dollars in 2007. A modest home of 8,400 sq. ft. with 6 bedrooms, 4 full size baths, 2 half baths, an indoor swimming pool and spa was built on the acreage. CNN nor any other reporting agency specified that this was a member of management and not a member of craft (a letter carrier, clerk, mail-handler, etc.).

As of February 2009 the USPS has limited the purchase price of homes to only \$1 million dollars. A postal spokesman, Greg Frey said the home will be resold, as others have been. "It's not like we threw away a million dollars," Frey told CNN. "We are hoping it's going to go for the appraised value." This home was appraised at \$1,161,940 million dollars and a real estate agent in the Lexington area, David Beckroge said, "buyers for million-dollar properties are hard to come by right now." The USPS was asked what Hopson's salary was as Postmaster of Lexington but his current salary figures can only be released. Mr. Hopson has transferred to Carrollton, Texas as their new \$92,000 a year customer service manager (not including bonuses or incentive pay). His family now owns a smaller home located on a corner lot that is 13,564 sq. ft. and has a 6,091 square feet 5 bedrooms and 5 bath home on it. I guess he will have to rent a storage facility because his new home is 2,309 sq. ft. smaller.

The postal service pays between 14% and 20% of a home's value and re-

records indicate this could be as much as \$168,000 to \$240,000 per home. The USPS retains a contractor which is Connecticut based and called Cartus Relocation. Apparently Mr. Frey does not consider the moneys paid to Cartus as buying the homes. However, property records show that the Lexington home of Hopson was purchased by the USPS. Mr. Frey said, "the average cost of 1,022 homes purchased through the USPS relocation program in 2007 and 2008 was \$257,874." Fifteen of those remain on the market and of the 1,022 homes, 14 cost between \$1 million and \$2.8 million. Mr. Frey said that "all of those have been sold but typically at a loss once closing costs, attorney fees and commissions are paid."

There was no mention as to whether or not those included the price of Mr. Hopson's old home? In 2007 the USPS lost an average of \$50,542 dollars on each deal but in 2008 the average rose to \$58,397. This averaged out to be \$54,469.50 per home or a loss to the revenues of the USPS in the amount of \$54,850,786.50 for a 2-year period! How much moneys have been lost in previous years was not confirmed? It must be noted that some U.S. government agencies have a similar type of relocation service but they limit the cost of a home to under \$330,000.

GPS (Global Positioning System) fleet solutions made the announcement that an agreement was reached to start a GPS vehicle tracking projects with the USPS. Harold Gardner, Vice President of Sales, stated this 500-unit pilot is to be installed in greater Chicago land. The key expectations from this project include route efficiency, driver safety, customer service and reduced vehicle costs. As usual the total amount of money to be spent on this venture was not made available! In 2008, the USPS stated that 121 million gallons of fuel were consumed by 221,000 vehicles with 43,000 being alternative fuel and want to use bicycles to

replace vehicles that drive 20 miles a day or less.

On 10/30/2008 the USPS introduced the "T-3," which is three wheeled and a vehicle that solely runs on electricity, with a trailer. Five cities will test these new delivery vehicles, Key West, FL., Jacksonville, FL., St. Augustine, FL., Irvine, California and Sun City, Arizona. This vehicle will have a range of 40 miles and reach a maximum speed of 12 MPH. It has a trailer capacity of 450 pounds.

The operational cost of this vehicle will be about 4 cents a mile. The T-3 trailer is used to store the mail for delivery and side containers can be added to the T-3 to store additional mails. The trailer features a secure and lockable mail storage compartment and a solar panel to power the trailer's anti theft system. The letter carrier stands on the T-3 with only a crash helmet and the carrier is exposed to all types of weather.

Isn't Florida the lightning capital of the world? How do you drive this in blinding rain or snow? Where is the safety belt? What about high winds of 12 plus MPH? Will this vehicle only work on flat ground? I think Florida law does not allow a motorized vehicle of any type on the sidewalks? What the exact cost of the T-3 is to the USPS's diminishing revenues has not been released as of my writing.

Wouldn't it have been better for the USPS to upgrade the LLVs by putting better insulation in them, better ventilation for circulation, better sight lines, rear lights that are activated similar to what transit buses have, backup beepers and air-conditioning units in the LLV? The safety and health of the letter carriers seem not to have been

(continued on page 11)



Retired But Not Tired

by John Gebo

Director of Retirees - Branch 599

Busy Busy

Dear Brothers and Sisters of Branch 599,

I'm back after a couple of months hiatus. Believe it or not, being retired isn't easy - doctor, dentist, lawyer appointments, traveling and the trips to see the children and grandchildren.

Last month my wife and I got to take a trip to Key West, Florida. The only other time I had been there was for shop-steward training classes. This time it was quite different. I had my own personal tour guide, my wife, Judy. She was born and raised in "Cayo Hueso" and is still very much a "Conch" at heart.

Had a great time. If you have never been there, you don't know what you are missing. (Bring lots of money.)

Anyway, that is why I wasn't in attendance at last month's Retirees' Breakfast and the Branch Meeting.

I did get to the Retirees' Breakfast in April. Also in attendance were President Good, Oliva, Dupree, Follman, Thran, Fritts, Edge, Lundy, Lazo, Holt, Krezel, and Ohmstede. At these Retirees' Breakfasts there is a lot of good information discussed. There's talk about the V.A., Social Security, Health Plans, IRAs and Civil Service Retirement, along with a lot of other B.S.

The Proposed By-law Change to Standing Rules # 3 was voted on at the March 5, 2009, branch meeting and was passed. This means, the Installation of Branch Officers, Stewards and Retirees Banquet shall be held on the 3rd Saturday in January every three years following

the December elections.

On the years without Officer Elections, there will be a Retirees Banquet organized and run by the Director of Retirees (him or her) on a date set by the Director of Retirees. The next Retirees Banquet will be the 3rd Saturday of January, 2010, which is January 16, 2010.

I am open to any suggestions as how to make the Retirees Banquet a special night for retirees and their spouses. Your input is important. My phone numbers are in the Tampa Letter Carrier Newsletter. You can also write to me using the branch address.

Next Retirees' Breakfast is May 4, 2009. Hope to see you there!



Personal Privilege *(from page 10)*

even considered much less addressed. Will this vehicle be another half million-dollar electric fiasco?

This should be fresh in all our minds as to what was said originally to a congressional committee by Postmaster General John Potter. He said that "the post office was considering cutting back mail delivery because of the economy."

"The Postal Service, like the rest of the economy, is experiencing a severe financial crisis, and I'm here today to ask for your help to protect America's postal system." He told the committee the USPS lost \$2.8 billion dollars in 2008. PMG Potter added that the post office has cut travel expenses and frozen executive salaries but I not could find any

where in his statement of eliminating or terminating performance incentives (bonuses).

The USPS released information on March 20, 2009 that there would be organizational changes in 6 out of 80 district offices which would eliminate 512 positions. They plan to reduce administration staffing in the remaining 74 districts by 15%. The 6 districts are Massachusetts (116), New Hampshire/Vermont (75), Erie (63), Central Florida (104), Spokane (71) and Central New Jersey (92).

In March of 2009 Postmaster Potter made his second appearance before a Congressional Committee requesting a bail out. He continues to ask for a 5-

day delivery approval of which he said would save the USPS several billion dollars. The PMG went so far as to say down-sizing (as I wrote above) has already begun with the closing of Post Offices, consolidation of several types of employees, etc. This apparently is not deterring management's spending of what limited monetary resources available, especially on those machines to eliminate full-time craft employment.

"To escape criticism - do nothing, say nothing, be nothing."

Elbert Hubbard

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

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