



Tampa Letter Carrier

Volume 8 - Issue 6

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

Tampa, Florida

June 2009

President's Report

by Jim Good

President - Branch 599

MIARAP

I was in Las Vegas for the National Rap Session from April 24th through the 26th. The main topic of discussion was the new *Modified Interim Alternate Route Adjustment Process* (MIARAP), a follow up memorandum signed by NALC President William H. Young and USPS Vice-President of Labor Relations Doug Tulino. The purpose of this memo is to review any routes that were already adjusted using the Interim Alternate Route Adjustment Process signed on October 22, 2008, and adjust all routes in the country that had not previously been adjusted using the October 22nd process.

The methodology used in this adjustment process is one that our National officers have been trying to convince management, at the headquarters level, to adopt for many years. The carrier's actual office and street times are used, in conjunction with any and all comments and suggestions the carrier may offer through consultations both prior to and subsequent to the proposed adjustments. One of the flaws in the initial process, based on the October memo, was the fact that there was little or no uniformity in the manner that the consultations were conducted. That will change in the new modified process.

The modified process will go like this: First, the branch president or his/her designee, and the local postmaster or his/her designee will be paired up. They will be responsible for identifying vacancies, noting data integrity issues, provide local seniority lists etc. They will then conduct an initial round of scripted consultations with the regular carriers on the route (or an agreed upon replacement carrier), followed by another scripted consultation once a tentative adjustment has been offered. These pairings of union and management officials are called Local Office Contacts. They may provide their comments, along with the information they have gathered from the consultations, to the District Evaluation and Adjustment Teams.

These District teams are responsible for data analysis, route evaluation and adjustments and oversight of the carrier consultations. They are also responsible for communicating with the Local Office Contacts to gather information needed to evaluate and adjust the routes. District Evaluation and Adjustment Teams will consider all info provided such as actual times, 3999's (for the purpose of moving territory), fixed office times, mail volumes and carrier comments for the purpose of route evaluation and adjustment. All data and adjustments will be sent to the District Lead Team.

The District Lead Team will be responsible for scheduling evaluations and adjustments so that all needed

adjustments can be completed within the appropriate time frame. These lead teams will be responsible for resolving disputes brought forward by the District Evaluation and Adjustment Teams, ensuring that valid 3999's are available and assigning COR technicians in offices where COR is scheduled to be used for adjustments.



It looks like everything is in place for a smooth evaluation and adjustment process. As I stated earlier there was a problem with consistency during the carrier consultations in the initial IARAP. This has been taken care of with the scripted consultations. There was also a lack of training at all levels during the previous process. This has been addressed and all union officials involved are being trained.

All we, as carriers, need to do is speak freely and openly during the consultations. This is your chance to share information about your route that can make it more efficient and logical to case and deliver. It also gives you the chance to have your route adjusted to as close to eight hours as possible; whether that means adding to or taking away from the route. Either way, it's a win-win situation.

Branch Meeting

Thursday, June 4

7:30 PM

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Branch 599 Officers

PRESIDENT	Jim Good	(813) 417-8877
EXECUTIVE VICE-PRESIDENT	Dook Ramotar	(813) 767-0322
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
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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	Dook Ramotar	(813) 767-0322
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
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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) 767-0322
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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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
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in Brandon

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

Running With You

Change Is Coming

The minor route adjustment conducted at the stations are being implemented. Running For You asked around and some carriers were pleased; others, too soon to tell, meaning they did it for only two days. Since we were a part of the adjustment it will work out unless management decides to put a spoke in the wheel.

It was a pleasure to fill in for two weeks whilst the president was off. To those who called to seek help, hopefully I was able to answer their question.

A couple of weeks ago I was talking to Shop Steward Warren Sumlin who informed me he would be off for two weeks vacation. I asked where? He said he was going to the Bahamas by boat. I asked if it was a cruise and he answered no, by fishing boat. I said Be careful. This Monday I got a call their boat capsized in the Bahamas but they were ok. I later read it in the St. Pete Times. Thank Goodness for him not being in any other danger. Losing material things we can replace but one's life, that's another story.

I was happy to see him this Tuesday at the Steward's meeting, thanks to the device they bought before going on their fishing journey.

As Carriers, sometimes we are set in our way but we need to remember that the mail volume is not there anymore and it does not

look like its going to get better. We all receive mail every day, look at the mail you receive previously and what you are receiving now.

Change is coming and we have to adapt. The years of 9 & 10 hour routes are by-gone. Now it would be less mail but longer routes. For those of us with years of service we know how much caseable mail we used to have. Not anymore, and with the FCAT sorting machine on board there will be even less mail to case in the morning. So lets get on board with the new minor route implementation and be fair in our route evaluation when we meet to discuss our route and how long or short it is.

I've written about the 5 day delivery the USPS is trying to promote. I said it then and I'll say it again, bad idea. Bill Young, our President, testified before Congress on this idea, read it on the May Postal Record and also what three other Presidents said of this 5 day delivery position:

"There is no desire and it is certainly over Congress' dead body that they'll get a five-day delivery. Mentioning those things sucks all the oxygen out of the discussions while we are collectively fighting as hard as we can get HR 22 passed"- A PWU President William Burrus. "I think there needs to be some streamlining in Middle management. We've got too many people that are not actually handling the mail telling people that are handling the mail what they need to do and how they need to do it." Rural Car-

rier President Don Cantriel.

"One thing I caution that you should not do is go to five day delivery. I think that would drive people to the internet. The first time your credit card bill goes late, they are going to say "The heck with this, I can go online and do all that stuff and save myself the postage." Mail Handlers President John Hegarty. When I wrote a couple of months ago on five day delivery, these Presidents did not testify, but now they are pretty much saying what I said, bad idea.

I was at a station recently on an investigative interview. I asked

by Dook Ramotar

Executive Vice-President - Branch 599

the Supervisor where was so and so, he replied "Went back to carrying mail". (He was a 204 B) This past week I learned of two other 204 B who went back to carrying mail. One carrier is back temporarily as 204 B.



What upper management needs to do is cut out the waste in their departments the way they are doing with the carriers- less mail-long routes = less Supervisors, less managers etc. Hold accountable those who abuse their positions by picking at carrier who are giving 110% by disciplining them so they can show upper management how tough they are. These are all waste of time and money. I wonder whether management ever stops to check how much a letter of warning given to a carrier costs the USPS. I'm not speaking about a deserved L.O.W., I'm talking about something frivolous.

The carriers have a program which is used toward their traveling to and from Point A to Point B. Can we not initiate a program which can tell the supervisor this L.O.W. is frivolous and to drop it? Will there come a day this happens? Probably, but I won't bet on it.

Running for you in last month article mentioned the new Stewards who partake in the training in Orlando. I failed to mention Steward Maggie Lancaster (my bad) any-ways congratulations Maggie for partaking in the training. Keep up the standard and you will be successful. (and to think I sat next to you at the Training). Well until next month, this is "Running With you saying", Press On.

"Treat a man as he is and he will remain as he is. Treat a man as he can and should be and he will become as he can and should be." Johann Wolfgang Von Goethe

Arslan Uniform Drawing

The Arslan Uniform prize for the June 7th branch meeting will be \$230.00. If you are in attendance at the meeting and your name is drawn, you will win the cash donated by Bill & Shirley Moran of Arslan Uniforms. Why not come to the June meeting, hear what is going on in your union, and maybe win some big money? Hope to see you there on June 4th.



Recent retirees Lonnie Thompson, George West, Dennis Crowley, and Debbie Redden, with President Jim Good at the May branch meeting.

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And The Beat Goes On

Be Thankful

What month will this be in? I have no idea. I can't believe how often I lose track of when these newsletters go out. The problem is when I was working every day I was writing the date. Now that I'm retired I very seldom write it down and some days when I wake up, I wonder to myself, "Is today Tuesday or Saturday?" Who the hell knows and really who cares?

I pray you can all live long enough to retire. A lot of our brothers and sisters didn't have that opportunity. Like everything else in life, it's a big adjustment. Some find it very easy as they never enjoyed working in the first place and some, like this writer, loved working and found it very hard not to work. I especially liked the pay check every two weeks, and the overtime also.

I spent seventeen years in the house painting trade in New York. In the painter's union the only guarantee was that I would be paid the wage and I would work seven hours a day. I never got sick leave or annual leave. If you were sick two days,

you got paid for three. If you took a week off, you lost a week's pay. You paid for your own health insurance and life insurance also. When I first started in the Post Office in my 30s, it was hard to adjust to getting paid once every two weeks. Now I get paid once a month.

I know there a lot of postal employees who never did anything but work for the Postal Service and they're spoiled rotten. They complain about everything. The poor shop steward had to listen to all of their petty complaints as I did in Brandon for almost twenty years.

Don't get me wrong, at times there are some major issues and thank God there is the NALC union to protect us all. Whether you realize it or not, you have one of the best paying and best benefit jobs in the USA, especially for needing just a high school education and for just delivering the mail. Be thankful for all you have and that you are still working.

On April 28, the Brandon retirees met at Buddy Freddy's in Brandon. In attendance were Ron Burkett, Bill Lister, Lou Fowlkes, Chuck Pullman, Phil Singletary, Dick Arnold, Jose Hernandez, Helen, Karen, Jean

by Ray Wallace

Myers, Charley Decker, Denny Nelson, Jim Fowke and yours truly.



It was a good showing. We always wish there could be more. I always make the phone calls and send the emails to say what date we're meeting. Unlike Tampa, we only meet every few months and if an active carrier wants to come over and say hello, they are more than welcome.

Some of you may not realize that the Brandon Post Office has not been in existence that many years. The first carriers were Luther Sands, now 83, Lou Fowlkes, and Lloyd Webb, among others. It started in late 1960 and from that time until the year 2000 there were a total of 90 carriers. I worked with thirteen who died too young.

So go to your retirement meeting and your union meetings and spend an hour with the folks you spent half of your life working with. I do not go to the state or national conventions any more but I still go to the branch union meetings as it's always nice to hear (sometimes you can't as so much talking is going on in the back) what's going on with the union in 2009.

Special Delivery

No Mail Receptacle?

Ask anybody this question, "What is the job of the Postal Service?" The answer will always be, "To deliver the mail and give good service to everybody." After all, service is half of our name.

But this does not apply to new construction in this area such as small strip malls. Management requires the landlord to install central delivery units. Sometimes the landlord does not comply with this "requirement". When this happens, the tenant's mail is returned as "undeliverable as addressed" or "no mail receptacle". Through no fault of their own, these customers are not entitled to any mail delivery or collection.

These NDCBU units are very expensive and in these tough times there are many vacancies which translate to lost revenue

for the landlord. In the past, we used to supply these units to the customers, but the Postal Service is also going through tough times. Management's argument sounds something like this, "I'm not going to pay you to go to each door."

Whether it's a business or residential delivery, isn't the majority of most routes individual delivery? It only takes a few minutes to provide this service and it is a shame that this is happening. In the case of a large apartment complex or office building, it is necessary to have central delivery units. A small strip mall with a few units is not in this category.

If we alienate the public, we will not have a future. We all took an oath to deliver the mail. Our customers are trusting us to do that.

by Joe Restivo



Around The Horn

Handling Stress

Everyone is familiar with stress. Stress comes in many forms and affects people of all ages and all walks of life on a daily basis. In small doses, stress can actually be beneficial to us. It is only when the stress becomes too great, affecting our physical or mental functioning, that it becomes a problem. Which leads me to stress in the Postal Service, while it has always been prevalent, the level has intensified. With all the changes going on within the USPS; the uncertainty of the financial stability, the cutbacks, the changing of our routes, the dwindling mail volumes, the reduction in the work force, under time, route splitting, DOIS, forced overtime, did I leave anything out that could contribute anymore stress? No wonder why there are so many people stressed out these days at the USPS, both craft and management. As I mentioned, in small doses, stress can help give us increased energy and alertness, even helping to keep us focused on the problem at hand. People may refer to the experience of this type of stress as feeling "pumped" or "wired." As the level of pressure gets too great, stress eventually surpasses our ability to cope with it in a positive way. Often, people describe themselves as being stressed out, burned out, or at wits end (I can't take this anymore). At this point, it is important to find positive and productive ways to deal with the stress and, more importantly, to address the person or situation that is causing the stress. Only you can assess your level of tolerance to stressful situations. The experience of stress is highly individualized. What maybe overwhelming stress for one person may not be perceived as stress by another. Excess stress can manifest itself in a variety of emotional, behavioral, and even physical symptoms, and the symptoms of stress vary enormously among different individuals. Common physical symptoms often reported by those experiencing excess stress include sleep disturbances, muscle tension, headache, gastrointestinal disturbances, and fatigue. Emotional and behavioral symptoms that can accompany excess stress include nervousness, anxiety, changes in eating habits including overeating, loss of enthusiasm or energy, and mood changes. Of course, none of

these signs or symptoms means for certain that there is an elevated stress level since all of these symptoms can be caused by other medical and/or psychological conditions. It is also known that people under stress have a greater tendency to engage in unhealthy behaviors, such as excessive use or abuse of alcohol and drugs, cigarette smoking and making poor nutritional choices (chocolates, ice cream, candy, chips), than their less-stressed counterparts. These unhealthy behaviors can further increase the severity of symptoms related to stress, often leading to a "vicious cycle" of symptoms and unhealthy behaviors. We should all have a pretty good idea as to which of our co-workers handles or could handle a stressful situation better than another. Some let the smallest of things affect their disposition or demeanor, others just "let it go". Turmoil away from the work place could cause a stressful condition and thus may result in changed moods from a normally "stable" person. Financial hardships, marital and relationship issues, personal or family health problems may all contribute to stress levels. The best treatment for stress is to prevent getting into situations that are likely to overwhelm your ability to cope. This is not always possible because the stressors (stress situations) may often come from outside sources that are beyond your control. A first step in stress management is exercise. You see, since the stress response prepares us to fight or flee, our bodies are primed for action. Exercise on a regular basis helps to turn down the production of stress hormones and neurochemicals. Thus, exercise can help avoid the damage to our health that prolonged stress can cause. In fact, studies have found that exercise is a powerful antidepressant, anxiolytic (combats anxiety), and sleep aid for many people. I know a carriers



by Tony Diaz

Financial Secretary - Branch 599



first response could be, I walk or work in the sun all day, the last thing I want to do is exercise. No denying that, so if it is impossible for you, one other alternative is meditation. For centuries in Eastern religious traditions, the benefits of meditation and other relaxation techniques have been well known. Now, Western medicine and psychology has rediscovered that insight, translated it into simple nonspiritual methods and established its effectiveness. One or two 20-30 minute meditation sessions a day can have lasting and useful effects on health. Advanced meditation can even significantly control blood pressure and heart rate as well. These are much healthier alternatives than having to rely on medications. Should you need help, the Postal Service offers E.A.P. (Employee Assistant Program), try it out, don't let stress ruin your life.

Note: Around The Horn Article assisted from information compiled from MedicineNet.com

Quick Hits: Information you should know

*) MIARAP (Modified Interim Alternate Route Adjustment Process) will be arriving at your Station soon. All City Delivery Routes will be evaluated in 2009.

*) Fifth Contract Cola, there was no projected accumulation toward the fifth regular cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) for letter carriers under the 2006-2011 National Agreement.

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

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The Cutting Edge

by Marilyn Cutting

Finding Balance

Last month I wrote an article. No, you didn't miss it. I never sent it in. I showed it to one person. They said it was good and they really liked the end. So I re-read it and changed my mind about submitting it. Why? What could I have possibly written that was so bad? It wasn't that it was bad but I felt that maybe it wasn't real.

I started the article about how we have all become a number in the post office. Before DPS, before DOIS, we all had names with our routes. Now, instead of "Good morning, Marilyn...", I am given my DPS and DOIS numbers and asked how I will be that day. We have come so far with automation but lack so much in communication.

I lamented that because of our constant barrage every day of numbers that it's

become a hassle some days just to show up at work. Between the numbers and the constant changing of the rules almost daily, it's stressful to be at work. So in that other article (the one I didn't send in), I wrote that perhaps a better way to deal with work and stress would be to have some hobbies and other interests other than work.

Go home kiss your family, get into a hobby, go to church, or just volunteer. So what's wrong with that suggestion? Nothing. It was and is the only thing I think that will keep one's sanity intact. What made me change my mind about sending it in was---

Here I was going to send in an article about keeping your sanity by substituting your bad day with thoughts or deeds of something good. That day I allowed myself to get stressed at work---over work. I was to my limit of patience over everything that was going on that day. So, did I stop and say to myself it's a job, take a deep breath, or say a

prayer and get centered as I had written before? No. I continued to have that bad stressed out day all day long and brought it home with me.

So when I re-read that article I thought how easy that was to write and how hard it is to actually achieve. That's why I am now rewriting it. I saw through myself that I let many things affect my mood. Everyone comes to work with their family, their children, their money problems, their marriage problems on their minds. All of that affects their personality and work day. We can all say it shouldn't but in reality we know that it does. We can leave it at the door but as I said earlier it's hard to do some days.

I know I must work every day to achieve some balance. I need to let go of situations, to learn what to fight for, and what not to. It could mean the difference in my sanity and the insanity of dealing with this job.

CDL District 11 Political Report

On The Home Front

Wish I could write a light hearted funny article but the times don't warrant that. There's not much to joke or laugh about with the attack against Florida's working families and middle class. Following is a synopsis of what's going on in our state legislative bodies and some of it is being conducted behind your back.

I'm not attacking nor am I picking on any one party. I will vote for whoever I feel will do the best job for Americans so please understand what follows are facts anyone can find by reading and listening to the news. Here goes....

In the Senate, **SB 956** and **SJR 1908** were written and introduced by the Republican Party in our current legislative session just before its *summer vacation*. **SB 956** (this is mirrored by **HB 7149** in the House so these comments will address both) is a massive election code re-write bill and will render defunct a multi-million dollar data base the tax payers just finished paying for. In the final days of this session these re-write bills of Florida's election

code were crafted in the dead of night by key leaders in the legislature. These measures have been fast-tracked and have received almost no testimony and very little debate. (Debate and public comment were banned outright in the house; does this sound like your rights are being protected there?)

The measures are now going to be voted on in both the Senate and House. An unprecedented coalition of voting rights organizations and groups representing seniors, the disabled and minorities formed to stop this. These legislative leaders have only succeeded in bring Florida politics into the national limelight once again. Articles in newspapers, radio and television nationwide have openly and soundly criticized the bills and especially the underhanded, undemocratic way they have been introduced. Supervisor of elections across Florida, and even Governor Crist, have all raised red flags.

Under these bills it will be almost impossible for groups such as ours to register their members to vote; it will be completely impossible for non-partisan organizations to offer legal advice or voter protection services at the polls; citizens will in essence lose our right to petition to put a proposed amendment on the ballot; and Florida voters will lose their right to

by Lance Jones

Congressional District Liaison - Branch 599

change their address on election day and will have to use the dreaded provisional ballot. This is where the loss of the millions of dollars they already spent comes into play: seniors will be forced in effect to pay a *poll tax* (which is illegal) by being required to purchase state sanctioned identification cards in order to vote and citizens will in essence lose our right to petition to put a proposed amendment on the ballot.

SJR 1908 (this is mirrored by HJR 1013 in the House and, as above, these comments will address both). This is hands down an *anti-worker constitutional amendment*. On April 21, 2009, the so-called *Secret Ballot* amendment was heard on the Florida House floor. This amendment has been lobbied for by Florida's most powerful corporate special interest lobbyist to deny Florida's workers the benefit of the *Employee Free Choice Act*. This amendment will give CEOs and corporations the constitutional right to fire, harass and intimidate workers trying to organize. This means the whole of the nation's workers

(continued on page 11)



Things You Should Know

Helping Children

I've been appointed by President Jim Good to be this year's branch coordinator for our Annual Street Corner Blitz for the MDA. On April 13th, Mr. Good and I met with OIC Mike Figlia to discuss plans for this year's events. Mr. Figlia has more than done his share for a successful MDA collection drive. We can wear our uniforms and request a *Change of Schedule* (COS) in order to start our intersection collections by 4:00 PM.

Now if we can enlist enough carriers to volunteer an hour of their time we will have a successful collection run. We are in the middle of a deep recession so our MDA children need us more than ever. If we can provide a carrier on each appointed intersection for the hours from 4 P.M. to 6 P.M. then we will have a col-

lection with the maximum positive results. So please, after you fill out a COS, be a volunteer for this much needed cause.

Remember that the moneys collected by us will be used only by our local MDA children. Some of the causes are worthwhile summer camp programs, needed equipment, and medicines to fight this terrible disease. All of us have our own lives and difficult problems to worry about in these terrible times. The MDA children only have volunteers to try to make a difference in their lives.

We can accomplish much by volunteering one hour of our time, maybe even change a child's life, or brighten the child's summer. So, even if you work past 5:00 on that day (June 5th) you can still help out by relieving someone on your station's corner.

During the last two weeks of May, Nick

by Gilbert Cabanas

Vice-President - Branch 599



Leaume, one of the MDA directors, and I will be visiting every Tampa station in order to enlist volunteers for this great cause. Our visits at the stations will last ten minutes each. This effort has the backing of OIC Mr. Figlia. So now all we need is the most important piece of this equation which is your spare time. If we can cover each lane at all our station intersections, we will accomplish this year's objective (which is raising money for our local children).

We know that most automobile drivers have loose change in their cars and we have a great need for that change for our children. So, please help collect that loose change on June 5th for our annual MDA Drive and I'm sure that you will feel better on your way home to your own children.

Food Drive Report

Food Drive 2009

I expect nothing less when I get to work on the Monday following the food drive than to be asked, "How'd we do on the food drive?" "Pretty good!" I say. But to be honest, I don't really know that soon. Food is still arriving at the airport dock through the following Friday. What I can tell you is, when we left the warehouse at 10 PM Saturday, there were over 135 boxes filled with food! That is roughly half of what is collected that day. The other half stays with the box truck and their volunteers and taken directly to their food bank. Their count gets called in by about Wednesday of the next week. During my conversation on Wednesday night with Tampa Bay Harvest Coordinator, Will Carey, I received a count of 1,250,000 lbs. As much as I'd like to thank all Carriers from all branches, Mr. Carey asked me to send his Thanks as well. He wants you all to know he really appreciates what we do. Every year I still learn about this operation that extends beyond the NALC Food drive. I learned Mr. Carey takes our food we collect and spreads it out among 110 Churches, Food kitchens and organizations. I got curious with what happens at these food pantries, so I called one for an interview. They are called LightHouse

Mission and they are in Riverview. I spoke with Pastor Greg Massey who warmly obliged to answer my to-the-point questions:

Q: How many people do you feed?

A: 75 people, 3x's a day.

Q: How do people find out about you and your services?

A: By advertisement; we display in jails and Churches and we are listed as a food pantry with Hillsborough County.

Q: How long does the food last?

A: The food from Letter Carrier day will last us 9 months to 1 year. Letter Carrier day provides us with 75% of all food we use.

Wow! That is impressive! He also said they make 30 baskets of food to hand out to families numerous times of the year. They also have a rehabilitation program that last 18 months. If you would like more information on LightHouse missions, you can call Pastor Greg Massey at 813-293-2889.

I can proudly announce that as of Thursday, we have a new record and total of at least 1,690,000 lbs of food, with some still on the South dock to be picked up! Spread the word because you all deserve to brag with numbers like this. And there will be more to be collected from the airport. That means we broke

by Lori McMillion

Food Drive Coordinator - Branch 599



the 2006 record of 1,351,500. Now my special "Thank you" goes out to the following people: As always, Jim Good for being my mentor; Gary Sawtelle for doing an awesome job on media coverage; Mike Botticello for the use of higher power with the boxes and pallets; Fran O'Donnell, Brenda and Delma, for allowing me time away from my route; rural carrier Mike Smith for being my sidekick on the Channel 13 shoot; retired carrier Lance Jones, who happily chauffeurs me around to take pictures; MVS drivers Mr. Ross, Mr. G. Johnson, and Mr. Philmore, for putting in solitary work to get food from closed stations; carrier Mark Andrew for helping out at the warehouse and Interbay station; my fiancé, Larry, and his good friend Dave King, who drove the fork lifts and unloaded boxes; and of course my wonderful daughter, Alaina, who happily put in 15 hours of community service that day.

I also want to mention two letter carriers who did show up at the warehouse to volunteer, shop stewards Varick Reeder and Steve Hall. Happiness and good health to us all. Happy Fathers Day.

Lori McMillion
Branch 599 Food Drive Coordinator



Chante Royal



Julio Acosta



Crystal Evans and Betty Morales



Joe Villa



Jacquetia Marks



A Point of Personal Privilege

Rome Wasn't Built In A Day

What President started the belief that, "Big Businesses will police themselves without government interference?" Most haters of Democrats / Liberals will say Jimmy Carter or Bill Clinton but that is incorrect. It was Ronald Reagan. This finally came to pass when the Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act of 1999 was passed by a Republican majority in the Senate. The Act repealed the wall that had been put up in the Great Depression to keep banks separate from commercial banks, separate from insurance firms, etc. This allowed what many will call a feeding frenzy that was impossible to regulate. An example of this was when Citibank bought out Travelers Group Insurance which morphed into Citigroup. The Commodity Futures Modernization Act of 2000 was another blow to governmental regulations. The Act took the 'horrible burden' of government regulations off of Wall Street. This allowed financial companies to keep balance sheets looking good even though they were making risky deals, credit default swaps and collateralized debt obligations. Furthermore, this legislation allowed these practices to be utilized without Federal Regulation or oversight which made them exempt! How do you spell bailout, AIG? Why is President Obama taking such criticism from the pundits for this? Where is the finger pointing for the Republican controlled Congress and Republican White House?

President Bush inherited a record surplus of \$236 billion dollars in 2001 even though pundits and Republicans continue to state they inherited a recession in 2001! In reality, according to the National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER), the recession began in March 2001, two months after President Bush took office and not until Bush initiated his first tax cut program. The non-partisan Congressional Budget Office (CBO) projected a 10 year surplus of \$5.6 trillion dollars prior to 2000. However, in 2004, the CBO projected a 10-year deficit of \$2.7 trillion dollars! This would be a loss of \$8.3 trillion dollars. The House of Representatives Minority Leader, John Boehner (R) of Ohio stated that Republicans want to help Obama find "responsible solutions to the

challenges facing our nation, but thus far congressional leaders in the president's own party have stood in the way." The Congressman has called for a federal spending freeze for the rest of the year. A writer, David Brooks stated, "after a decade of profligacy, the Republicans have decided to demand a rigid straitjacket at the one moment in the past 70 years when it is completely inappropriate." The Republicans, in a united front with most of their minority members, voted a resounding "NO" on the passage of the stimulus package! They fail to mention that when they were in the majority in the House of Representatives, the Senate and the White House that they bullied many a piece of legislation into law without "bi-partisan" support. Now that they are in the minority the shoes are on the other foot? Yet when President Obama has tried to seek support for his programs to stabilize the economy from the Republican minority he has been rebuked!

Dan Froomlin of the Washington Post wrote "the voters sent President Obama to Washington with a mandate (not a George W. Bush mandate) to change the way this town works. But the decision by GOP Senator Judd Gregg to withdraw as the Commerce Secretary is the latest sign that the Republican Party has no interest in going along." The Republican Senator said, "The bottom line is, this was simply a bridge too far for me." Gregg believed that there were differences in ideologies for his refusal? (Like maybe his vote in the Senate was necessary to defeat or to filibuster the bill?) Apparently, he wanted to be the Commerce Secretary before he didn't want it? On the floor of the Senate on March 11, 2009 he attacked President Obama's budget plan and called for a responsible budget. He indirectly spoke against educational funding, increasing taxes on those making over \$250,000 and government control or regulation. The Senator stated that the brunt of the new tax proposals could affect small businesses that are the back bone of our economy. Where was his concern, when no bid contracts to large corporations were allowed? Senator Gregg stated that small business owners add to the employment of citizens. He did not mention that there has been a national jump in unemployment to 8.1% under the Bush Administration and a majority of unemployed were because of the closing of those same small businesses. The N.H. Senator failed to mention that throughout the 7 plus years of the two undeclared wars that the budget figures did not include the cost of

by Leslie Ray Garcia

them! I guess the cost was placed in that "lock box" that Republicans used to spuff and attack Al Gore about. Gregg failed to disclose the figures of the individuals without health insurance was not 40 million from the Bush Administration but was more than 80 million. What kind of fuzzy mathematics is this? Gregg spoke on the issue that the GDP was higher under the Bush Administration but he failed to state that corporations made billions of dollars at the expense of those earning less than a living wage. He failed to state that the tax cuts implemented by the Bush Administration deeply affected educational funding, health care, affordable energy, government oversight policies and the infrastructures of all state, county and local governments. Since the introduction of a new budget by the Democrats the Republicans have submitted their version...in general the GOP alternative is to give more tax breaks to the wealthy 2% and to cut monies from entitlement programs. You know the socialist programs of Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, Education, Green Energy, VA Benefits, Food Stamps, Unemployment Insurance, Workman's Compensation, etc.



President Obama should withdraw the olive branch of bipartisanship because of the actions that the Republicans took in the House of Representatives. Louise Slaughter (D) Representative of New York wrote, "The bill, as it came to the Rules Committee, the last stop before the floor vote, already incorporated 12 Republican amendments. The Rules Committee then added the 11 amendments: 6 Democrats and 5 Republican, in addition to a complete Republican substitute, and a motion to recommit. They were unable to muster the votes necessary and lost on bipartisan votes. House Republicans may have come together to vote against the final bill but they split on their own amendments with 40 to 60 Republicans voting with Democrats. Some Republicans even voted against their party's alternative bill and it failed on the floor. The GOP alternative didn't have a final price tag and consisted entirely of tax cuts that would have actually raised taxes for 26 million American families. In 2 years, the

(continued on next page)

Personal Privilege (from page 10)

Democratic bill would create 3.6 million jobs. The substitute by the Republicans was 1.2 million - a third as many as the Democratic bill that passed the House. President Obama even met with House Republicans more times in two weeks to discuss this legislation than President Bush did with the House Democrats in two terms. The Republicans were certainly allowed in the process, but they wanted to obstruct." The Republicans stated that there are over 9,000 earmarks (pork) in the stimulus package and the Democrats are at fault. However, in looking at the supposed 'pork' the Republicans have many millions of dollars more than the Democrats? One Republican Congresswoman, Michelle Bachman of Minnesota states that she has never received any earmarks...yet checking the record in 2008 she received \$3,767,600. I

guess she meant she didn't receive any in 2009? There are currently four Republican Governors that are refusing to receive stimulus moneys for their states. They are Haley Barbour of Mississippi with an unemployment rate of 7.2%, Bobby Jindal of Louisiana at 5.3%, Marshall Clement 'Mark' Sanford Jr. of South Carolina at 8.4% and Rick Perry of Texas with 5.7%. I think these individuals are posturing for the 2012 Republican nomination for President by playing politics at the expense of the citizens of their respective states! Senator Gregg and his fellow members of the Republican party are and were complacent in the current problems that this country is having to deal with during President Obama's first 100 days and possible his entire term of office. During the 8 years of Republican control, corporations of all types reaped billions of

dollars of profit all the while they shipped good paying jobs overseas at the expense of the American workers, especially Union paying jobs. They allowed corporate giants into the hen-house with no over sight and the golden egg called the American Dream has been diminished if not eliminated. I believe the party of 'NO' has failed to devise any plan to get this country out of this serious recession other than to lower taxes for the wealthiest 2%! This inherited recession should be called a depression and President Obama's recovery plans will take time because of the many issues and problems that were left totally unattended and completely neglected by the 8 plus years of the Republican controlled Congress and the Bush Administration.

"One fifth of the people are against everything all the time."

Robert F. Kennedy

Political Report (from page 7)

will benefit from the *Employee Free Choice Act* except in Florida. Don't all American workers deserve the same employment protections?

SJR 1908 is unnecessary. The right to a secret ballot in all federal, state and local elections is already protected in Article VI of Florida's Constitution and the U.S. Constitution. The *Employee Free Choice Act* does not take away the right to a secret ballot in union elections. It simply gives the workers themselves the right to choose how they will form their union instead of the corporations as it is under current law. SJR 1908/HJR 1013 will strip Florida's teachers, firefighters, police officers, and other public workers of their rights under the *Public Employee Relations Act*. So the people that teach our children, defend our neighborhoods from crime, put their lives on the line to save our homes from burning, collect our garbage, and do an outstanding job doing the everyday business of our communities will get treated as second-hand citizens. Talk to the hand, Mr. Legislator! The face ain't listening.

Think about this: Increasing union membership is the tide that lifts all boats. It helps build stronger communities, a healthier economy, and is the best way to rebuild the middle class. Now that you've thought about that, take a moment and reflect on how great your life is because

you're a union member.

Call your State Representative and State Senator **now** at both their local and Tallahassee offices to tell them to vote "no" on Senate SB 956, SJR 1908, House HB 7149, and HJR 1013. You will find your state senate and congress district numbers on your voter registration card or you can get both their local office and Tallahassee office numbers by following these links:

The Florida Senate:
<http://tinyurl.com/qgasyn>

Florida House:
<http://tinyurl.com/bcrlw>

[The web addresses (or URLs) were shortened to fit in this newsletter column without wrapping to the next line. Editor]
From the looks of the original web addresses, it looks to me as though our state senators want a lot of extra effort from us, or maybe they just don't want your opinion.

Please give to COLCPE through payroll deduction. It's cheap insurance for your children's future.

In unity,
Lance Jones
Congressional District Liaison - Branch 599

Health & Welfare

The father of retired carrier Ron Shumate, Mallard Shumate, passed away in March.

The father of Plant City carrier William Newsom passed away on April 24.

Palm River Carrier Harry Georges passed away on May 3.

We send our sincere condolences to all the families.

Best wishes for a speedy recovery to retiree Russell Person who is recovering from surgery.

A.R. "Tony" Huerta NALC Branch 599
3003 West Cypress Street
Tampa FL 33609-1617
(813) 875-0599 fax (813) 870-0599
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