



Tampa Letter Carrier

Volume 5 - Issue 7

A.R. "Tony" Huerta NALC Branch 599

Tampa, Florida

July 2006

President's Report

by Jim Good

President - Branch 599



A Total Waste of Money

On Thursday, June 2nd, the day of our branch meeting, I was told by a number of carriers that a team of station managers had been assembled to observe the casing habits of the carriers throughout the Tampa Installation. They were going to begin their observation the next day at Sulphur Springs Station. Now I know, as do all the city carriers, that they can expect to be supervised at any and all times during the day. I did have a few questions, however. Why was this going to happen on a Friday, the lightest day of the week as far as mail volume goes, and why did management feel a need to have an entire team of managers do the observations instead of the supervisors assigned to the station? So I decided to go out to Sulphur Springs the next morning and see how things were going. There was also something else I wanted to look at, but I'll bring that up later.

When I got there around 7:30 or so, all the carriers were hard at work, with managers watching over their shoulders and filling out 1838c's. I talked to a few of the managers and was told that the reason they were

there was because the carriers were not living up to the DOIS projections. Evidently supervision believed that many times there was undertime to be recovered and the carriers were not voluntarily admitting to that fact. It's the same old thing. It has been agreed nationally that DOIS cannot be used to set office standards, yet locally, supervision tries to use DOIS to intimidate the carriers and come into a station *en masse* because the numbers say they are not performing up to what DOIS says they should. Management believed that they were prolonging their office time so that they could leave the office the same time they do every day. On this particular day there was almost no caseable mail, so the carriers were pulling down by 8:00-8:30. So of course the managers were coming up to me and saying, "See, when *we're* here they get out early." I explained to them that the carriers were getting out early because there was no mail, and asked why, if the carriers were doing such a terrible job casing, didn't the supervisor see what they were doing wrong and correct the situation? I was told that the supervisor couldn't be everywhere at once and see everything that was going on. Which brings me to the other reason I went out to the station that day.

In most stations the supervisor's desk is placed in the middle of the workroom floor so he/she can observe the carriers. That's the way Sulphur Springs is now, but that's about to change. Construction has begun on a platform, approximately

15' by 15', raised about 12-15" off the floor, surrounded by a 3-3 1/2' wall in which to house the supervisor. I was told about this by the shop steward the night of the branch meeting and I couldn't stop laughing. What possible logical reason could there be for this pedestal? Couldn't the money be better spent on additional ventilation systems for the LLV's to improve working conditions during the six, seven or more hours the carriers are on the street?

I emailed the postmaster for some answers and was told the money was not coming from her budget, that she was putting in some ventilation systems even though she didn't have to and to mind my own business!

Well, maybe she doesn't agree but that is my *only* business; looking out for the well being of the carriers and trying to help improve their working conditions. While it's true that she is responsible for having ventilation systems installed in a few vehicles it's also true that these platforms, which I have been told will be installed in additional stations, are a total waste of money. Maybe the cost doesn't come out of her budget, but it certainly comes out of the USPS's budget. And so it continues.

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Branch Meeting
Thursday, July 6
7:30 PM

Branch 599 Officers

PRESIDENT	Jim Good	(813) 960-3759, cell 417-8877
EXECUTIVE VICE-PRESIDENT	Detlev Aeppel	(813) 907-9685, cell 505-7914
VICE-PRESIDENT	Gilbert Cabanas	(813) 855-0516, cell 597-7396
RECORDING SECRETARY	Cindy Perez	(813) 766-1220
FINANCIAL SECRETARY	Tony Diaz	(813) 598-9635
TREASURER	Michael Anderson	(813) 681-5688
TRUSTEE(Chairman)	Henry Dupree	(813) 621-6471
TRUSTEE	Jose Oliva	(813) 873-2747
TRUSTEE	Terry Franklin	(813) 657-9690
SERGEANT-AT-ARMS	J.C. Howard	(813) 621-1976
MBA / NSBA	Albert Guice	(813) 621-7931
HEALTH BENEFITS	Lance Jones	(813) 220-1292
DIRECTOR OF RETIREES	John Gebo	(813) 985-5474, cell 503-1256
LABOR - MANAGEMENT	Eric Fleming	(813) 310-8274
LABOR - MANAGEMENT	Brian Obst	(727) 507-0135

Branch 599 Shop Stewards

Brandon	33510	Terry Franklin	(813) 657-9690
Brandon	33511	Phil Chirico	(813) 657-3180
Carrollwood	33618	Gilbert Cabanas	(813) 855-0516
Commerce	33602	Dook Ramotar Sr.	(813) 780-6254
Forest Hills	33612	Warren Sumlin	(813) 486-7612
Forest Hills Annex	33613	David Camuy	(813) 892-6553
Hilldale	33614	Gilbert Cabanas	(813) 855-0516
Hilldale Annex	33634	Lance Jones	(813) 220-1292
Hyde Park	33606	George McEndree	(813) 935-0244
Interbay	33611	Dean Minter	(813) 767-6538
Interbay	33629	Marie Brown	(813) 832-6644
MacDill	33608	Marie Brown	(813) 832-6644
Palm River	33619	J.C. Howard	(813) 621-1976
Plant City	33565	Misty Bauer	(813) 681-6890
Port Tampa	33616	Dean Minter	(813) 767-6538
Produce	33610	Eric Fleming	(813) 310-8274
Ruskin / Sun City Center	33570	Jack Hencoski	(813) 633-5422
Seminole Heights	33603	Tony Diaz	(813) 872-1542
Sulphur Springs	33604	Matt Kokich	(813) 431-3686
Tampa Carrier Annex	33607	Mike Sovan	(813) 872-0709
Tampa Carrier Annex	33609	Brian Obst	(727) 458-0679
Temple Terrace	33617	Detlev Aeppel	(813) 505-7914
Town & Country	33615	Brian Obst	(727) 458-0679
Ybor City	33605	Detlev Aeppel	(813) 505-7914

Presidents Emeritus

Michael Anderson	Orbe Andux
James Butler	Don Thomas
Garland Tickle	

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The National Association of Letter Carriers Branch 599, 3003 W. Cypress Street, Tampa, FL 33609-1617, publishes The Tampa Letter Carrier monthly. **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. Please submit articles no later than the first of the month. Submit articles as .txt, .doc or .wpd documents attached to email sent to: newsletter@nalc599.com

Jim Good - Publisher

Kit Kelley - Editor

**RETIREES BREAKFAST
(In Tampa)**

Monday, July 10, 2006

9:00 AM at

The Coffee Cup

4407 N. Hubert

in Drew Park

**RETIREES BREAKFAST
(In Brandon)**

Second Tuesday of Every Month

8:00 AM at

Buddy Freddy's

134 Gornto Lake Rd S.

in Brandon

Executive Vice-President's Reportby **Detlev Aappel***Executive Vice-President - Branch 599****Earlier Starting Times***

What is the 24 hour clock and what does it mean to letter carriers? The 24 hour clock is used by the plant (GMF) to schedule events necessary to process the mail. It is a timetable of what needs to be done by when so that mail can be processed and sent to the stations for delivery.

The USPS has a national goal of having 100% of letter carriers off of the street by 18:00. There is also the goal of having 95% of letter carriers off of the street by 17:00. That goal is the basis for the so called *5 o'clock window of operation*.

Once the mail arrives at the plant the next goal is 80% cancellation by 20:00 (8 o'clock). Cancellation is the first step of the actual sorting process whether the sorting is by automation or by hand. Until May the Tampa GMF had been struggling to cancel 50% to 60% by 20:00. Since May Postmaster Nancy Fryrear has been scrutinizing the cancellation process. Now the plant is canceling 87% of the mail by 20:00.

Other goals pop up during the night. Out going primary mail should be ready by 23:00 and out going secondary mail should be ready by 24:00. Mail that needs to be transported by Fed-Ex, the airlines, or other non-USPS carriers should be assigned by 02:30. Individual trips by USPS carriers have dispatch times ranging from 0400 to 09:00. Finally, DPS mail should have completed its second pass through the machines and be ready to be sent

to the stations by 07:00.

If the mail is off the street by 18:00 then the DPS should be ready for transport to the stations by 07:00 the next morning. If the goal of having the mail off of the street by 17:00 is met then the DPS should be ready for transport to the stations by 06:00 the next morning. The earlier DPS arrives at the stations the earlier letter carriers can punch in and begin their assignments. Instead of 07:30 and 08:00 starting times we should see starting times of 06:30 and 07:00 or earlier where appropriate.

Of course, this will also make it incumbent on management to schedule clerks properly so that the rest of the mail (parcels, flats, and accountables) is available to the letter carriers when needed.

On a different subject, Friday, June 16th was the date of this year's MDA Street Corner Blitz. It was hot, tiring work but over \$16,000.00 was raised by 202 letter carriers and other volunteers in about 3 hours time. Although this was less than was collected last year, it still counts as a huge success for the victims of muscular dystrophy. The top collectors this year were Brandon, with \$1885.78, Town 'n' Country Station, with \$1791.24, and Temple Terrace Annex, with \$1556.03.

Thanks to all the volunteers who participated and a special thanks to Ms. Robin Perez and Bay Gulf Credit Union who donated the use of their change counter and currency counter and verified the totals.

Thanks and well done also goes out to Eric Fleming who once again coordinated the blitz and along with Branch 599 President Jim Good scrambled to cover collection sites when some carriers inexplicably refused to participate. Hey people, it's about kids in wheel chairs. Forget the petty grudges! In addition 37 of the 239 people signed up to participate failed to show up for some reason or another. Some had unforeseen events come up. Others just "forgot" and some simply didn't care enough to show up.

It has been proven that the amount of funds collected is dependent on the number of people participating. Each volunteer collected approximately \$80.00. So if 202 people collected over \$16,000.00 then maybe 37 more people could have collected nearly \$3000.00 more!

In Solidarity...

**Proposed By-Law Change**

Article XV

Section 6:

Currently reads: All station stewards shall receive \$85.00 per month for allowed expenses. All station stewards shall receive \$45.00 for attending monthly shop stewards training meetings. The president, executive vice-president shall be paid \$45.00 a month for attending the monthly shop steward training meetings.

Section 6:

To include: The above mentioned stewards and officers shall not have any reduction in pay, due to illness, dependent care, on annual leave or any valid circumstance that would keep them from attending such meetings.

(This proposed Bylaw change will be voted on at the August Branch Meeting.)

Health and Welfare Report

The father of Plant City carrier Leo Sykes passed away.

Alicia Gebo Green, former Brandon carrier and daughter of retiree John Gebo, gave birth to twin girls on May 25th.

TLC, Inc. Board of Directors Meeting Summary

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm on May 23, 2006 by Chairman Obst. A moment of silence was had in memory of Jack Newman who passed away on May 15th. The minutes of the previous meeting were accepted as read. The financial report was given by John Gebo. Jim Good gave a report on the building upkeep. A discussion was had on the vacant Building Manager position. A motion was made to appoint Mike Anderson as the new Building Manager. Passed. A committee will be formed of people who want to work during hall rentals. A motion was made for TLC to give \$30,000.00 to the branch for delegates' expenses for the Las Vegas National Convention in August. \$15,000.00 will be given immediately for reimbursement of receipted airfare. Discussion. Passed. A motion was made by Aeppl to make the entire building, including front offices smoke free. Discussion. Passed. A motion was made and passed to name the recreation room after Jack Newman. A plaque will be made and hung in the recreation room, and a sign will be placed above the entrance door. The Donation Committee report was given by Kit Kelley. He made a recommendation and motion to donate \$500.00 to Mary Martha House. Discussion. Passed. Meeting adjourned at 8:40 pm.

Jim Good, Secretary

Tampa Letter Carriers, Inc.

July Meetings:

Thur 7-6-06 - Branch Meeting
Union Hall, 7:30 PM

Tues 7-25-06 - TLC Board Of Directors Meeting
Union Hall, 7:00 PM

Thur 7-27-06 - Executive Board Meeting
Union Hall, 7:00 PM

Attention All Newsletter Article Writers

Beginning August 1, 2006, the new deadline for submission of articles for the next month's issue will be the first day of the month prior to publication. This means that August 1st is the deadline for submission of articles to be included in the September newsletter, September 1st is the deadline for the October issue, etc.

We appreciate your articles and thank you in advance for your help and cooperation in this matter.

Kit Kelley

Editor – Tampa Letter Carrier

ARSLAN UNIFORMS

Bill & Shirley Moran

Retired Letter Carrier Branch 1477 St. Petersburg

Honorary Member Branch 599 Tampa

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Unionism

by Brian Obst

Chief Steward - Branch 599

Weingarten Rights

The right to representation during any investigative interview which the individual has a reasonable belief may lead to disciplinary action is referred to as the *Weingarten Rule*.

The Weingarten Rule may only be applied to meetings that are investigative interviews, where management are searching for facts and trying to make a determination of innocence or guilt of the employee. These interviews help management make a decision whether to impose discipline in those cases being investigated. The interviews we are speaking of are the standard management *Investigative Interviews (I.I.)*, as well as *Postal Inspector interrogations*.

Remember that an individual only has Weingarten representation rights where they have a reasonable belief that the investigation could lead to disciplinary action against them. The determination of "reasonable belief" is based upon the circumstances of each individual case. Simply because the supervisor says "...there is no need to worry, it's just an investigation..." does not negate or remove the reasonable belief of the carrier that the interview may indeed lead to discipline.

Weingarten Rights are not automatic and they cannot be exercised by your steward for you. The only way you can exercise your Weingarten Rights is to ask to have your steward represent you during *any* investigative interview, whether by local management or Postal Inspectors. Remember that an investigative interview is one where management begin to ask you questions about anything. Management are good about asking you to come in for an official discussion but then start asking you questions.

Federal courts have determined that you are entitled to a pre-investigative interview consultation with your representative (steward) as one of your Weingarten rights. This right also extends to any

Postal Inspector interrogation so do not let the Postal Inspectors talk you out of your rights. The Postal Inspectors will try to get you to go through the interview without representation by saying things like "...its just a couple of questions..." or "...if you didn't do anything wrong, you don't have anything to be afraid of...". Remember this: When a Postal Inspector goes into his own personal Investigative Interview as the interviewee, he always takes in a representative with him. so you should do no different.

Always ensure that you request your representative prior to any investigative interview and refuse to answer any questions until the representative has arrived and you have had your pre-interview consultation. ***Simply inform management or Postal Inspectors that you want to cooperate but that you will be unable to answer any questions until your representative arrives, and reaffirm your request for your steward before proceeding.***

During the interview process, Weingarten states, you are entitled to assistance from your representative. While we all know that management would rather have the steward in the interview as a *silent* presence, this is neither required nor advisable. ***The steward is there to assist you during the interview and if management refuses to allow the steward to do so a grievance on violation of Weingarten rights would be filed and management could find themselves unable to use the results of the interview in any pending action against the interviewee. Remember your steward is there to help and may be an active vocal presence during the interview, getting clarifications and preventing badgering of the interviewee.***

This is a brief introduction on Weingarten Rights and most of this information has been taken from the 2005 edition of the JCAM in Article 17. Please go to this and read all the information and

speaking with your steward if you have any questions.

The best advice I as a steward can provide you on this matter is that any time management or the Postal Inspectors ask you to come into the office to submit to an investigative interview, that you clearly state for them that you wish to cooperate but that you desire your steward present and that you will not answer any questions until your steward is present and you have had time to consult with them first.

Remember that these people are not your friends and the whole purpose of investigative interviews and Postal Inspector interrogations is to develop evidence against you for the purpose of disciplinary action.

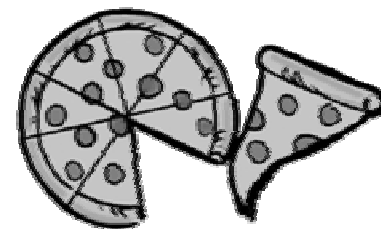
Be smart always have representation with you.

Remember: Knowledge is the key.

Yours in Brotherhood,

Brian Obst

Steward - Town and Country Station

**Free Pizza!**

Free pizza & soft drinks will be provided by the Tampa Postal Credit Union at the NALC Branch 599 meeting at the Union Hall, July 6th, 7:30 PM.

Congressional District Liaison Report

by Lance Jones

Congressional District Liaison - District 11

Postal Reform Update

Postal reform is alive and moving. House Government Reform Chairman Tom Davis, R-VA., has said "We're close..." to naming House conferees and approving the first Postal Service overhaul bill in 30 years. He expects conferees to be named and the conference report voted on by the July 4 recess.

One stumbling block seems to have been overcome. They may have reached an agreement on the language that addresses how the agency (Post Office) would be allowed to spend its growing escrow fund. The exact language is not yet available and the NALC has not yet issued any statements on it. So we need to be ready to respond if it's not going to be good for

us. An article dated June 1st by Jessica Brady in the *Congress Daily* quotes Senate Homeland Security and Government Affairs Chairwoman Susan Collins, R-ME as saying she felt "confident that we've reached a solution" on how the agency would be allowed to use the monies held in the escrow fund.

A major stumbling point to Postal Reform still remains however. Both versions (House and Senate) would shift the cost of postal workers military pensions to the Treasury Department. This would add a projected \$27 billion to the federal deficit. The Post Office and its workers is the only government agency to have ever paid this. As a result of P.L. 108-18, the Postal Service is singled out as the only agency required to pay for pension benefits earned by its employees during prior military service. In this way the cost of those benefits is passed on to postal

customers even though the whole country benefits from the existence of our armed services.



Please stay informed and be prepared to take the necessary actions should it become necessary. This is your job, your future. It's not a joke. It's here and it's happening. Just this last May, major unions representing the workers of Alcoa Aluminum have voted to accept contracts that included health benefit cuts. In Japan, their parliament voted to privatize the postal service. If you remember your history, Japan's postal service was modeled after ours and is probably one of the few worldwide that handles the volume per capita that we do.

In Unity,

Proposed Bylaw Change

ARTICLE V
Section 15:

Currently reads:

Any member elected as a delegate to either the national or state convention, or any national conference, must attend at least eight (8) meetings per year for the two (2) years preceding the convention he/she attends to qualify as a paid delegate. These mandatory sixteen (16) meetings shall begin on January 1st two (2) years prior to the convention year and end on December 31st the year before the convention.

Change to read:

Section 15a:

Any member elected as a delegate to either the national or state convention, or any national conference, must attend at least eight (8) meetings per year for the two (2) years preceding the convention he/she attends to qualify as a paid delegate. These mandatory sixteen (16) meetings shall begin on January 1st two (2) years prior to the convention year and end on December 31st the year before the convention.

Section 15b:

Any paid delegate to the national convention shall be required to attend at least one workshop, as assigned by the convention committee chairman, and submit a written report on said workshop to the convention committee chairman prior to the end of the convention. Reports will be submitted for dissemination to the membership at the next branch meeting following the convention.

(This proposed Bylaw change will be voted on at the August Branch Meeting.)

And The Beat Goes On

by Ray Wallace

Missing Jack

As you all know, Jack Newman passed away very suddenly at the Union Hall on Monday, May 15th.

If you have been reading these articles for any length of time, you will have read about all the things I said about Jack when he was alive. All that knew him knew of his dedication to Branch 599. He was truly an exceptional person and I doubt we will ever see another as dedicated.

The next time you go into the hall, look up at the ceiling. It is all new. One of Jack's dreams was to replace the ceiling, have the walls repainted and new doors installed. They started the ceiling the day he died.

As a volunteer worker on bingo every Wednesday and Friday, Jack was my boss. He was the best. I will miss him very much and I know all of the bingo workers feel the same. One night recently, something didn't go right and someone said, "Do you think that's Jack's spirit?" I replied, "Hey, maybe you are correct, who knows?" If were possible

for a person's spirit to come back, then we can be sure Jack Newman's spirit would forever be checking in at 3003 Cypress Street.

* * *

Our past president, Lenin Perez, was recently sentenced to twenty-one months in prison, followed by three years on probation. In addition he must refrain from any employment or consulting related to Labor Unions and/or OWCP cases. It is my understanding that he pled guilty to taking a kickback for referring an injured postal employee to a particular doctor.

It's a damned shame that a person like Lenny, who has so much knowledge about the law, and who has helped many in the union, had to resort to breaking the law and disgracing Branch 599 nationwide, just for the sake of making an extra buck.

This reminds me of the conviction of the Enron executives who were making millions, yet could not resist the temptation of taking more money illegally.

We have sex addicts, drug addicts and money addicts. They just can't seem to resist the temptation. And how many more that have not been caught? We all

read about these things but to have it happen in our very own branch was a shock to us all.



Because of the dishonor Lenin Perez brought upon the branch, the members present at the union meeting on June 1st voted to remove Lenny's title of President Emeritus.

* * *

It bothers this writer very much that one of the best presidents we had, John Bailey, never had the chance to hold the title of President Emeritus. John Bailey helped many carriers and was very well known by all. John ran for National Business Agent but because he got a very late start in the race, he lost that election.

During Bailey's last term in office he became very ill and decided to let Vice President, Donald Thomas take over and finish his term. Sadly, John passed away suddenly of a heart attack at the young age of 49.

ATBGO



A Point of Personal Privilege

by Leslie Ray Garcia

The Same Old Stuff

It seems that the letter carrier craft is once again under the micro (management) scope. Letter carriers are not meeting the goals and numbers established by 'DOIS.' We are being told daily that the office times are below the allotted numbers. Micro management states that we are talking too much and walking around too much. Yet the figures do not indicate that more raw mail volume is being sorted by non scheme trained clerks at the hot cases and carriers are having to take many of the letters and flats to the correct routes within the station. Hence more walking and talking is being done. No time is allotted to separate the mis-sorted mixed mails carriers receive in the AM for the station clerk to resort back together at the hot case. Then there is CFS. The carrier sends the forwardable mails to the unit but the name is misspelled or the address is incorrect. The carrier gets the mails back with the yellow sticker that says "unable to forward no record on file". The carrier wastes time to correct a \$15 million dollar a year postal program.

Did you read the May 2006 issue of the *Postal Record*? The title on the front reads *What's The Deal With DOIS?* On Pages 10-12, Fred Rolando, Directory of City Delivery writes, "*DOIS cannot be used to establish office standards, so it can hardly be used to decide whether a carrier is making office standards. And DOIS cannot be used to establish street standards, because there aren't any! An office standard can only be determined by a mail count pursuant to Section 141.2 or Chapter 2 of the M-39 Handbook.*" Management continues to push DOIS projections in order to force carriers to run their routes faster each day by cutting corners like not wearing seat belts, not delivering accountable mails properly, not turning off the vehicle's engine, not setting the emergency brake, not taking the 10 minute street

break and not stopping for personal time when necessary. Carriers do these things in order to avoid confrontations with the floor supervisor. Overall, carriers want to do an excellent job everyday and management abuses this by asking the carrier to help out by absorbing extra time not incorporated into the DOIS. President William H. Young stated "DOIS isn't broken—it never worked right in the first place. What was supposed to be a data management tool has become an electronic mis-management device. It's a perfect example of 'garbage in-garbage out' technology. The scary part of it is, they are using the corrupt DOIS numbers as a basis for all their planning, budgets, staffing levels—the works. Too many carriers on the workroom floor are struggling with supervisors who believe they can use DOIS as a tool of intimidation to squeeze carriers more and more." This is extremely frustrating to me because mis-management uses these figures to "browbeat carriers" targeting new carriers and those of us that do not want confrontations on a daily basis. I understand that station managers are under pressure from Headquarters but they wanted the "big bucks." As Rolando writes, the DOIS system is inaccurate and has been "...deliberately mis-programmed to ignore elements needed to calculate a carrier's standard office time. This technical flaw is the most obvious to rank-and-file NALC members and the source of tension, conflict, and growing number of grievances."

Management continues to ignore and violate arbitration rulings, memos of understanding, the M-39 and the M-41. This is especially evident with regard to Article 8 (Overtime) of the national agreement. I am not on the OTDL but I am forced to carry trips on other routes. My assignment is residential curb line and management seems to think that I can absorb extra time. The trips given have no travel time figured into them and often are from routes on the other side of the zone. The 5PM is

enforced on a daily basis except when it is convenient for management to ignore! Management seem to think that the mail jumps out of the trays and are into mail receptacles magically. They want us to put the DPS mails into the receptacles without checking to see if the mails are correct. Quality is too time consuming while quantity is productivity!

Have you seen the new VHS tape showing us how to adjust our mirrors? We were told that we will have orange cones and a lined rectangle to drive the LLV within to properly adjust the mirrors! How much moneys was spent on this? I guess I don't see the *Big Picture*.

"If you tell the truth, you don't have to remember anything." Mark Twain



Around The Horn

by Tony Diaz

*Financial Secretary - Branch 599***Memorial Day**

Brothers and Sisters, as I began my thoughts for this month's article, I was enjoying my Memorial Day Holiday. While enjoying my holiday with my family, I realized I did not know much about this special day. What I thought I knew is that it is a holiday commemorating U.S. men and women who died fighting a war. Here is what else I found out after some research.

General John Logan officially proclaimed Memorial Day on May 5, 1868. It was first observed on May 30, 1868 when flowers were placed on graves of Union and Confederate soldiers at Arlington National Cemetery. Memorial Day began as a memorial for Civil War veterans, but after World War I, it expanded to include those who died in any war or military action for their country. Memorial Day is a United States public holiday that takes place on the last Monday of May.

It was formerly known as Decoration Day. It has become both a National Decoration Day of family graves, and the holiday that opens the summer season. It is celebrated with backyard barbecues, outdoor picnics, and parades.

Waterloo, New York was recognized by President Lyndon Johnson and both houses of Congress, as the birthplace of Memorial Day. This claim came because the town decorated the graves of Civil War veterans as early as May 5, 1866. The claim is contested by Boalsburg, Pennsylvania, which claims to have begun the practice of decorating soldier's graves two years earlier than Waterloo. Another source claims that two years after the Civil War, it was southern women in Columbus, Mississippi who decorated graves first. It is difficult to prove conclusively the origins of the day, so it is more likely it had many separate beginnings. In 1873, New York was the first state to make the day a legal holiday; and others soon followed. Now Presidential Proclamation sets the occasion.

Since the late 1950s on the Thursday before, the 1200 of the 3rd US Infantry place small American flags at each of the more than 260,000 gravestones at Arlington National Cemetery. They then patrol 24 hours a day during the weekend to ensure each flag remains standing. Since 1998, on the Saturday before the observed holiday, the boy scouts and girl scouts place a candle at each of the approximately 15,300 gravesites of soldiers buried at Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park.

Even though Veteran's Day is celebrated as well, Memorial Day has become the most important day of recognition of our armed forces. As long as there are wars, there will be veterans and casualties. We must continue to decorate the graves of those men and women whose bodies come home and remember those who don't. If the flowers take root and blossomed on the graves, it means the souls were sending back the message that they had found happiness. Long live Memorial Day!



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

TAMPA LETTER CARRIERS PRESENT

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DOORS OPEN AT 5:30

GAMES START AT 6:30

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Tampa, Fl. 33609

813-877-4785

Retirees Report

by John Gebo

Director of Retirees - Branch 599

Retired But Not Tired

Dear Brothers and Sisters of Branch 599, I'm back! Actually, I haven't gone away. I still attend our monthly union meetings and try to be involved in all branch functions, state and national conventions, along with being on the TLC, Inc. Board of Directors. I also give to COPLCE.

Because of the great loss of our beloved brother, Jack Newman, President Good appointed me to the position of Director of Retirees, to fill the remaining term of Brother Newman. On June 1, 2006, at the branch meeting, Brother Anderson officially swore me in as the new Director of Retirees.

First of all, I would like to thank President Good for this appointment. Secondly, I would like to say that I have got some big shoes to fill. In the June edition of the Tampa Letter Carrier newsletter, President Good wrote about Brother Newman and some of his accomplishments and the many positions he held. I

will give my best effort to fill those big shoes as the Director of Retirees.

On another note, I must say that I am very disappointed in the number of members who attend branch meetings. Let me say it again as I have in the past, unions are only as strong as their membership. People pay union dues and they think that's it. That alone does not make you a good union member. A good union member gets involved, especially this year, a contract year.

The wages and benefits we receive as active and retired carriers don't just fall out of the sky. They are there because of hard fought negotiations at the bargaining table. The NALC position has always been no concession - no give-backs. Well, brothers and sisters, open your eyes and see what is happening around us.

The airlines, General Motors, Ford and other major companies are cutting wages, benefits and jobs. Can it happen to us? With a strike of a pen it could happen to both active carriers as well as

retirees. We need friends in Washington. Congressmen and Senators play a vital part in our future and the future of the U.S.P.S. Without the right people in Washington, we could end up losing some of the benefits we have fought so hard for.

That is why I am asking both active and retired carriers to get involved. Please contribute to the COLCPE. Five dollars a month for retirees and five dollars a pay period for active carriers will be money well spent. It would be great to see some new faces at the branch meetings, young and old.

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

Fraternally,

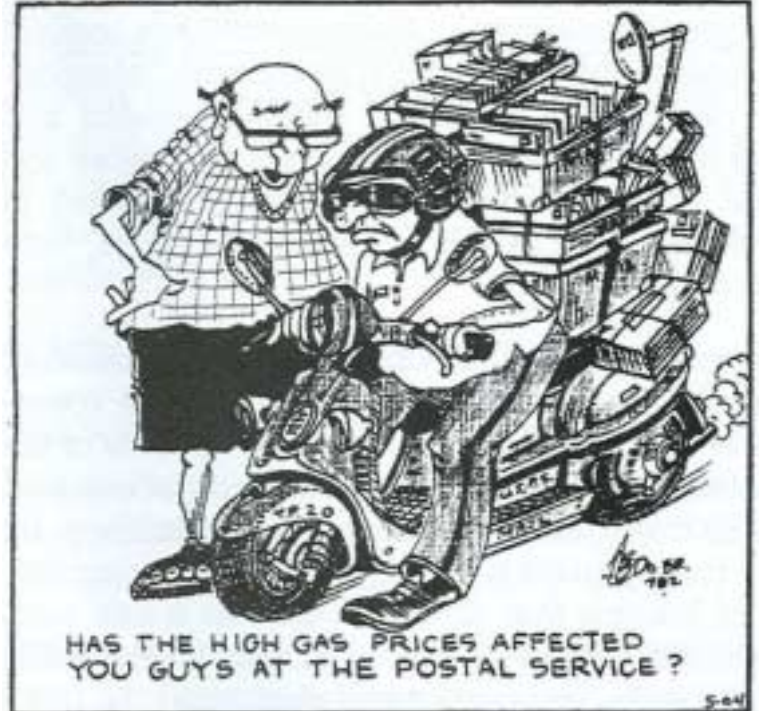
John Gebo



OUT THERE



OUT THERE



Summer Storm Safety Tips

Lightning strikes, power outages and electrical hazards in the aftermath of storms are top concerns during warm weather, and often cause injuries and death, according to the Electrical Safety Foundation International. Most of these deaths could be avoided with an increased awareness of electrical safety.

In recognition of National Electrical Safety month, Square D, the flagship brand of electrical distribution equipment for Schneider Electric's North American Operating Division, is offering advice and tips to keep homeowners safe.

"Homeowners need to be aware that there are hidden, potentially deadly, hazards of re-electrification following a storm," says Jim Pauley, vice president of industry and government relations for Schneider Electric's North American Operating Division. "It is important they know the necessary steps required to limit those dangers. A refresher course on the basics of electrical safety is always a good thing, espe-

cially if it could mean a matter of life or death." Critical reminders include:

- * Electrical equipment that has been submerged must be serviced or repaired.
- * Be aware of submerged electrical equipment, such as electrical outlets or cords that may energize flood waters and pose a potentially deadly threat.
- * Equipment located in flooded areas that was not submerged should be inspected by a qualified person to determine whether moisture has entered the enclosure.
- * If there are any signs of moisture or damage, the equipment should be replaced or repaired.
- * Any disassembly of electrical equipment should be performed only by trained factory service personnel who are familiar with equipment design and function. Pauley points out that in the hours following severe storms, utility companies are working

around the clock to restore communities' infrastructures, giving homeowners the power needed to have lights, heat and water. In most instances, the utility itself has had to rebuild its system to restore power, before sending out its inspectors. Square D encourages homeowners to wait for a trained electrical inspector to examine their equipment before turning utility power back on, even if not requested by the utility.

"Everyone wants to get their power back on, but it's not something you should do in haste," cautions Pauley, "Not taking the necessary steps and safety precautions to re-electrifying one's home could have a devastating - potentially deadly - impact. We want to do everything we can to prevent such circumstances."

For more information on electrical safety tips, visit the Electrical Safety Foundation International at <http://www.efsi.org> or Square D at <http://www.squared.com>.

Courtesy of ARA Content

Garage Door Can Be Home's Weakest Link in Hurricane Hot Spot

The garage door is the largest moving part on your home and may pose a major threat to your property if you live in a hurricane prone region. According to the Federal Emergency Management Association (FEMA), the loss of a garage door during a hurricane can cause an uncontrolled buildup of internal pressure resulting in a blowout of the roof and supporting walls.

"Code-compliant garage doors are critical to preserving a home's structural integrity during a hurricane," says Mark Westerfield, manager of product development and engineering for Clopay Building Products, the largest U.S. residential garage door manufacturer. "Because of their size, garage doors are more susceptible to wind damage than other exterior openings - especially two-car garage doors. Unless you have a tested, hurricane resistant door installed, high winds can force it out of the opening."

With an active hurricane season in the forecast, coastal and vacation homeowners are being encouraged to make sure their property meets updated building code requirements for wind-resistance to help minimize damage and loss in the event of a storm. To meet the International Building Code, garage doors must have additional bracing, heavier gauge tracking and other necessary hardware to help keep them in place under extreme winds.

The more stringent building codes were put to the test during the last two record-breaking hurricane seasons. Houses that conformed were better able to withstand the onslaught of back-to-back storms, while many that had garage doors installed before the revised code took effect suffered significant damage, or the doors were blown out completely.

"Homeowners with an older garage door may not even realize that it poses a threat," Westerfield adds. "A reinforced door is a small investment that can minimize major damage and property loss. And, if your door has weathered a previous hurricane, it needs to be inspected for hidden damage or vulnerabilities."

He offers these tips on what to look for when selecting a hurricane reinforced garage door:

- * Determine the wind load requirements for your geographic region and make sure your garage door meets them. The local building code authority can provide code information and a professional garage door technician can perform an on-site inspection.
- * Understand "storm ready" vs. "add-on" reinforcement. Two kinds of reinforced garage doors are available. With the "add-on" system, a homeowner has to install long posts in the floor and ceiling to reinforce the door before

the storm hits, and then remove them again afterwards to resume normal operation.

"Storm-ready" models require no advance setup. Reinforcement is built into the structure of the door and is engaged by simply locking it, a timesaving convenience in the event of a sudden evacuation notice. This type of door is particularly beneficial to vacation home and rental property owners because they have peace of mind knowing that the garage door is secure as long as it's locked.

The FEMA Mitigation Assessment Team expressed concern about the poor performance of garage doors that were reinforced with an add-on system in its 2005 report on Hurricane Charley. Several homes did not have the posts installed at the time of the hurricane, which led to structural damage from wind pressure.

- * Choose a door that has heavy-duty rollers, hinges, springs and track to provide additional strength and help keep the door in place.
- * Retrofitting an older door with new hardware will not provide the structural support needed for the current building codes. It is important to have a trained garage door professional install the appropriate door for your area.

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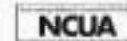
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