



Tampa Letter Carrier

Volume 7 - Issue 7

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

Tampa, Florida

July 2008

President's Report

Every Last Drop

I worked for the Postal Service for over thirty-one years, and I can honestly say that I have never seen the mail volume as low as it is today. We all know that the economy is in a very bad way, what with the real estate market in the toilet and oil prices going through the roof, and I believe these issues have had a big effect on the drop in volume. It doesn't make much sense for advertisers to mail out catalogs trying to sell their wares to people who are having a hard time paying for the every day necessities of life. Fancy gadgets, expensive clothes, plasma TVs and other high tech gadgetry have to take a back seat to filling up the family car to get to and from work.

The U. S. Postal Service has been hit hard by the current recession (and I do believe that we are in a recession, even though all the economists are fearful of labeling it as such). The latest issue of the "Federal Times" states that the postal service has a fleet of more than 217,000 vehicles, most of them diesel powered. They say that the agency has gone so far as trying to limit the number of left-hand turns these vehicles make. The reason? Idling in left-hand turn lanes wastes fuel. Last year the postal service spent \$1.7 billion on fuel, including fuel for the aircraft it relies on, and that figure is expected to rise to \$2.3 billion this year. For every one

cent increase in the price of a gallon of gas, the fuel costs for the USPS goes up \$8 million annually.

So it is natural, and fiscally responsible, for management to try and raise the productivity level of the workforce. That being said, there is a limit on how much you can squeeze out of an employee. I think that management has just about reached that limit. Our National Agreement is based on the premise of "A Fair Day's Work for a Fair Day's Pay". That is what we should strive for as letter carriers. If you report to work in the morning and, after you have received all your mail for the day you know that you will finish your assignment before your eight hour tour is completed, let your supervisor know that you have some extra time because of the light mail volume. On the other hand, if you know that you do not have extra time before your scheduled end tour, or if you need auxiliary assistance and/or overtime to get your assignment done, then follow the proper procedures as a professional letter carrier. Remember, you are the person responsible for making a professional estimate, not the supervisor. If you let management dictate your leaving and return times and agree with them when you know that they are wrong, then you are the one who will end up being disciplined if you do not make the estimate. Don't ask for more time than you need, give them your best *estimate*.

USPS management, at the Local and even the Area level, is being micro-managed. They are being given goals that are, in my opinion, unattainable. They are being instructed that every piece of mail must be delivered every day; that they are not *permitted* to curtail non-preferential mail until later in the week when the volume is lighter and the carriers have more time available within

by Jim Good

President - Branch 599



their eight-hour tours. They are expected to capture any "undertime" that the carriers may have because of the drop in mail volume. Never mind that it may take a carrier ten minutes to drive to get to a twenty minute trip. Now local management (station managers and supervisors) are being told that they do not have the authority to bring in a carrier on their day off unless they get permission from one of the two Area Managers. It is unfortunate that station managers are not trusted enough to schedule their own employees without going to their superiors for approval. And if that's not enough, I'm being told that once again upper management (read as Postmaster, Area Managers, etc.) is going to be mandated to "ride" with some of the "worst" routes in the city, I guess as some form of intimidation. I really don't see what other purpose it could possibly serve.

They want to get every minute out of every carrier. Sometimes I think that management believes carriers are robots and delivering mail is an exact science. What ever happened to respecting the employees who actually do the work?

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Branch Meeting

Thursday, July 3

7:30 PM

at the Union Hall

Branch 599 Officers

PRESIDENT	Jim Good	(813) 417-8877
EXECUTIVE VICE-PRESIDENT	Dook Ramotar	(813), 404-4380 cell
VICE-PRESIDENT	Gilbert Cabanas	(813) 855-0516, cell 597-7396
RECORDING SECRETARY	Mike Brink	(813) 661-1106
FINANCIAL SECRETARY	Tony Diaz	(813) 598-9635
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TRUSTEE (Chairman)	Henry Dupree	(813) 621-6471
TRUSTEE	Jose Oliva	(813) 873-2747
TRUSTEE	Terry Franklin	(813) 657-9690
SERGEANT-AT-ARMS	J.C. Howard	(813) 621-1976
MBA / NSBA	Albert Guice	(813) 621-7931
HEALTH BENEFITS	Lance Jones	(813) 220-1292
DIRECTOR OF RETIREES	John Gebo	(813) 985-5474, cell 503-1256
LABOR - MANAGEMENT	Eric Fleming	(813) 310-8274
LABOR - MANAGEMENT	A. Sam Santilli	(813) 215-7595

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	Dook Ramotar	(813) 404-4380
Commerce	33602	Rickey Robinson	(727) 409-1911
Forest Hills	33612	Warren Sumlin	(813) 486-7612
Forest Hills Annex	33613	Alan Robinson	(813) 843-9762
Hilldale	33614	A. Sam Santilli	(813) 215-7595
Hilldale Annex	33634	Gilbert Cabanas	(813) 597-7396
Hyde Park	33606	Tom Cobert	(813) 694-0711
Interbay	33611	Sammy Graham	(813) 832-6644
Interbay	33629	Jim Tobin	(813) 716-3696
MacDill	33608	Sammy Graham	(813) 832-6644
Palm River	33619	J.C. Howard	(813) 621-1976
Plant City	33565	Jim Davis	(813) 961-6865
Port Tampa	33616	Sammy Graham	(813) 832-6644
Produce	33610	Eric Fleming	(813) 310-8274
Ruskin / Sun City Center	33570	Jack Hencoski	(813) 685-9034
Seminole Heights	33603	Tony Diaz	(813) 598-9635
Sulphur Springs	33604	Matt Kokich	(813) 431-3686
Tampa Carrier Annex	33607	Dook Ramotar	(813) 404-4380
Tampa Carrier Annex	33609	Dennis Lorenzo	(813) 966-3989
Temple Terrace	33617	Sean John	(617) 513-6467
Town & Country	33615	Brian Obst	(727) 458-0679
Town & Country	33635	Brain Obst	(727) 458-0679
Ybor City	33605	Detlev Aeppel	(813) 505-7914

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

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

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

newsletter@nalc599.com

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

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

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

Running With You

Do Your Job

Since Running For You began writing articles in our local newsletter as Exec. V.P. I mentioned what happened during the month's past. Last month I wrote I sat in on an arbitration; I will from now on try to follow through of decisions received. For now I ask, "Why do you laugh?" or "What makes you laugh?" I believe we do so differently.

In article written by Gary H Mullins, our National V.P., in The Postal Record (May 2008: seen on the Internet) that the Post Master General plans to cut 2,400 manager positions. This made me laugh; my reasoning is that the Managers union will fight this. Also, the managers will themselves show to those high up that they are also needed. For one thing, each of us know what's going on in their offices. (Managers trying to get undertime from everyone) They will show that they are needed, the carriers are not to be trusted and once they can show the undertime gathered each day this will justify keep their jobs.

To my fellow carriers, do your job as if the supervisor is with you or walks with you each day. Give a professional estimate; therefore, if they do go with you all will be ok. I heard in some offices there is a note by the time clock showing how much undertime you will have

on that day and which route you will get a trip from. This is before you even clocked in or seen what kind of mail you have for your route! Ridiculous you say? Maybe, but its happening and probably will get worse, as they will try to intimidate you daily. Management can try to rule by intimidation but don't let yourself be intimidated. Managers can accomplish their mission only through the effective use of people. How successful a manager is in working with people will to a great measure determine whether or not the goals of the Postal Service are attained. M39-115-2

Sometimes they will claim your demonstrated ability: When I went with you, you did the route in this amount of time. Now their translation of demonstrated ability is, once you did it in this time, you can do so everyday. To this I say, then give me a special route check and lets see how long or short the route is. It would be to management advantage if they feel you have undertime every day. What are they waiting for in not checking the route and add on to it? They won't do it because its to their advantage to intimidate on a daily basis. No one can do the job in the same amount of time each day; meaning, today I did it in 5 hours but tomorrow 5 hours is not possible. Each day the work varies, the weather, your body, your customers etc. etc.

by Dook Ramotar

Executive Vice-President - Branch 599

Enough said- now to the arbitration which I attended, the union were successful in getting the carrier job back. Remember what I also said in being interviewed: get representation, don't go in one on one or one on two. (Big mistake.)



I participated with the carriers at Carrollwood in the Food Drive and I say this: in all my years at Commerce I never saw this much food! Thanks to all and thanks Carrollwood. At the MDA Drive recently, I also was at Carrollwood. We collected at Dale Mabry and Fletcher. Jim Burrill, Brad Perez, Gary Stone and Tom Tonkyro. Scott Bollinger had his 2 kids and his wife too. I had my 2 boys and we did a good job in spite of the heat. Thanks guys! Hopefully next year we will have some more participants.

Remember this number: 2,400. The number of Managers the Postmaster General said will lose their jobs. This could be the new carrier next to you later on. Like I mentioned previously, what makes you laugh?

"I don't know why we are here, but I'm pretty sure that it is not in order to enjoy ourselves." Ludwig Wittgenstein

Things You Should Know

More Injuries for...

The new trend out there appears to be causing longer street time. We all know this makes the job of a letter carrier harder. More and more carriers are opting to retire, averaging two to four per month, with the decrease of first class mail and the luring of flat sorting sequence machines in our near future. All of these are pressing factors that will lead the Postal Service to increase the frequency in which they check routes or minor adjustments in order to capture any lost street time according to their data base numbers. I think that these factors might also increase our injuries, especially back, foot and knee problems, the most prevalent in our craft. The real danger with these injuries are that they also the ones that are most often challenged within the Office of Workers' Compensation Program, OWCP. So, an

injury that occurs within your eight-hour tour of duty is called a Notice of Traumatic Injury, this is filed on a C.A.1 form. This injury is fully compensated by the OWCP. All doctors' bills, hospital bills are paid as well as a percentage of your salary. If you ever have recurrence of that same injury, a CA-2a notice must then be filled out for future compensation.

Some other purviews under the CA-2a are (1) a return of symptoms of a previous injury without an intervening cause or new injury, or (2) inability to perform light duty due to the original injury. Now, if your injury develops over a period of time by performing your daily job duties, this is filed as a C.A.2, which is a Notice of Occupational Disease. So, remember to have those forms properly filled out by a doctor in a timely manner, which can be then compensated by the OWCP. The first 45 days, with the exception of the first three days, are paid with Continuation of Pay (COP). The COP is requested while filling out the proper

by Gilbert Cabanas

Vice-President - Branch 599

section of the Form CA-1.

If it is necessary for you to be off of work for more than 45 days, a Form CA-7 must be filled out and submitted at that time. The first three calendar days from the date of injury are not compensated. A CA-7 is submitted for compensation at two week intervals after COP runs out, along with medical documentation saying that you are incapacitated and unable to work.

The C.A.16 form must be filled out by your doctor for authorization of your examination of treatment for your original examination in the case of a traumatic injury; this must accompany a CA-1 form. Finally, the C.A.20 form will need to be filled out by the attending physician, which serves as the physician's report of your injury. These are some of the required forms that must be filed whenever anyone is *continued on pg. 5*



ARSLAN UNIFORMS

Bill & Shirley Moran

Retired Letter Carrier Branch 1477 St. Petersburg

Honorary Member Branch 599 Tampa

***NEED UNIFORMS IN A HURRY?
SHOP BY PHONE FROM HOME***

320 PATLIN CIRCLE EAST PHONE: 727-584-4307

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bilmor@tampabay.rr.com

TAMPA LETTER CARRIERS PRESENT

BINGO

Come join the fun

EVERY WEDNESDAY AND FRIDAY

**DOORS OPEN AT 5:30
GAMES START AT 6:30**

AT THE TAMPA LETTER CARRIERS HALL

3003 W. CYPRESS St .

Tampa, Fl . 33609 813-877-4785

Around The Horn

by Tony Diaz

Financial Secretary - Branch 599

To Inform and Educate

Brothers and Sisters, I was approached by a co-worker shortly after last months local newsletter was mailed out. The brother wanted to know more about my article on COLCPE. I was somewhat surprised after all the articles, newsletters, bulletins and the GIMME 5 campaign he was unaware of the NALC's political action fund. I gladly answered his questions and explained in detail the purposes of COLCPE and reiterating the importance of being a big player on Capital Hill. Being able to lobby Legislators when certain Bills are before us that could directly impact the Letter Carrier. He was also unaware the NALC actually planned Lobbying Sessions such as the one I recently attended in D.C. until he read about it. My next conversation with him will explain the necessity of becoming an e-Activist. While I was taken back a little by the conversation, it is for this reason that Around The Horn was created. This is a reason other editors in this local paper (The

Tampa Letter Carrier), take the time to write their articles. To inform, educate, update and to provide pertinent information for the membership to read that will be helpful. Whether it is my article or someone else's or the National publication (The Postal Record) or on the Internet (NALC Homepage), educate as much as possible.

Quick Hits: Information you should know
*) Wanted to thank all the carriers who braved the traffic and the heat to collect for MDA. The thirteen thousand plus dollars collected was actually a good figure considering many carriers were unable to get to their designated corners until after 5:00. I will challenge our MDA coordinator Eric Fleming, who by the way did an excellent job again this year of organizing the collection to work for one more Stop Light Blitz this year. I would hope to see all the carriers who missed this MDA collection to participate the next time, stay tuned.

*) The NALC, Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive collected a staggering 73.1 million pounds of food, Nationally, more than 2.4 million pounds more than last year. This concluded the 16th year of collecting and brought the National all time total to more than 909 mil-

lion pounds. Locally our grand total was 1,223,180 pounds that is awesome!! Congrats go out to West Coast Florida Branch 1477, they took top honors Nationally, collecting 1,717,218 pounds. The bay area Branches always contribute huge donations and always rate very high.

*) The 66th Biennial NALC National Convention is only a few weeks away. An amazing 8,852 Delegates have been registered, making it one of the largest in NALC History. For your information, the largest delegation to attend a National Convention was ...at the 2006 Las Vegas Convention, 9,199 attended in the desert. The NALC will converge on Boston from July 21-25 with the opening general session scheduled for 10:00 a.m. on the 21st. I will be Boston and plan to report my week to you on my next ATH following our return.

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



Continued from pg. 3 injured performing their everyday job duties. So, before you sign or receive any form from your floor supervisor for any injury you must fill out the correct

forms. The correct forms will make the difference between receiving compensation benefits or being forced to exhaust your own personal benefits, like your healthcare. I know that I have written about

our required forms for compensation before on past articles, but this problem continues to occur. So, please fill out the proper forms when injured or you risk losing your own benefits.



MDA Stoplight Blitz

"Mary Lou Jackman-William Corbeau" Scholarship Application

(Please do not reduce the size of this application)

Name of Student _____ Female _____ Male _____
(print legibly)

Street Address _____

City, State, Zip Code _____

Contact phone number _____

NALC Branch # _____

Member's Name (must be printed legibly) _____

This is to certify that the above named member of the FSALC is a member in good standing.

(Must be signed by Branch President or Secretary)

Signature Branch President or secretary

date _____

Return all applications to:
Jesse A. Costin, FSALC Director of Education
232 Glen Eagle Circle
Naples, Florida 34104

The following requirements must be adhered to in order to qualify.

1. Student must have graduated from an accredited high school or have a GED.
2. Student must be a dependent of a member or the spouse of a deceased member of the FSALC who has not remarried.
3. Applicant must enroll as a full-time student in an accredited college or university, and submit proof of enrollment to receive the funds if awarded. (DO NOT INCLUDE NOW)
4. Applications must be postmarked on or before June 30, 2008.

This scholarship award is based on a random drawing, not on academic records or qualifications. There will be four scholarships awarded - two for a female, and two for a male - each in the amount of \$2000. The drawing will be held during the NALC Convention in Boston, Massachusetts.

Unionism

Steward's Rights Under the National Agreement

Article 17 of the National Agreement deals with Representation, more specifically Union Representation, and the information contained in this article details the rights of Stewards in their representation of the carriers under their charge.

Under Section 17.3 these rights are spelled out and it is these rights where we will direct our attention in the following paragraphs.

The first of the rights of the Steward is "The right to investigate and adjust grievances and problems that may become grievances". As a Steward it is your responsibility to police and enforce the National Agreement. This is done in a variety of ways, including but not limited to taking grievances from members who feel they have been aggrieved, filing grievances on behalf of members when you become aware of a contractual violation, speaking with Management about issues in an attempt to prevent grievable situations, and maintaining a proactive position in safety and service talks to prevent situations from becoming grievance issues. The ways available for the Steward to accomplish this are through investigation which can consist of interviewing carriers and Management and other witnesses, reviewing relevant documents, files and records as well as writing case statements. Remembering that in investigations the word "Relevant" is the key as we may not simply go on a "fishing expedition" any requests must be related to the issue at hand in our investigation. While we have the right to the information, Management has a responsibility to provide us the information in a timely manner for our investigation or there can be consequences to them as the grievances progress through the system.

The next right is "The right to paid time to conduct the previously mentioned activities". Simply stated, stewards are granted time on the clock for all reasonable activities including but not limited to, interviewing the grievant, supervisors and any other potential witnesses, filling out forms and writing briefs and statements, reviewing records, files and documents to aid in the processing of the grievance. Management once again has an obligation to provide this on the clock

time for grievance processing and failure to provide it will be the cause of other grievance issues and possible reprimand as the process progresses up the line. It is also important to point out that Management may not determine in advance how much time a steward reasonably needs to investigate a grievance. Arbitration rulings have determined that "the determination of how much time is considered reasonable is dependant on the issue involved and the amount of information needed for investigation". Also "any employee must be given reasonable time to consult with his/her steward and such reasonable time may not be measured by a predetermined factor". As you can see the National Agreement protects the ability to perform the steward work on the clock and allows for reasonable time to be used, let us ensure that we are not abusing this right.

The right to obtain Management information, including supervisor's personal notes of discussions held with employees and Postal Inspectors memos and personal notes, is detailed in more specific detail in Article 31 so I will leave this for another time. Suffice it to say that we have the right to various sources of information so long as the request is relevant to the investigation and Management has a duty to provide the information in a timely manner.

Stewards enjoy the right of Super Seniority when it comes to issues of transfer or reassignment. The basic idea here is that if a steward had to worry that he could be transferred or reassigned by management he would have concerns about enforcement of contractual issues. Take away the fear of Management retaliation and the steward can be secure in his/her position and do the job properly and without reservation.

Finally the right of employee's to steward representation during an Inspection Service interrogation. This right falls under what is known as "Weingarten Rights" and comes from Federal Labor Law. This right gives each employee the right to representation during any INVESTIGATORY INTERVIEW WHICH HE/SHE REASONABLY BELIEVES MAY LEAD TO DISCIPLINE". This right only applies when the meeting is an Investigatory Interview – when management is searching for facts and trying to determine the employee's guilt or to decide whether or not to impose discipline. This means that during an official discussion, the issuance of a letter of disci-

by Brian Obst

C hief Steward - Branch 599



pline or a fitness for duty evaluation the right is not in effect. The key term is "a reasonable belief" that he/she could be subject to discipline as a result of the situation and whether or not the belief is "reasonable" depends on the circumstances of each individual case. The steward needs to ensure that all carriers under his charge understand that the steward may not invoke "Weingarten" for the carrier; the carrier must make the request for the steward to be present for it to happen. Once this has happened the steward is there to assist the carrier and not just to be a silent observer so his presence should be helpful in the interview process ensuring the rights of the carrier are not trampled by management.

This information is taken from the 2004 edition of the JCAM (Joint Contract Administration Manual) and *(continued on page 6)* is available for review in every station. I suggest that if you have any questions that you read it completely and contact your steward to answer any questions you may have regarding these rights. Remember that your steward is just like you with the exception that he/she has volunteered to be there to represent you in your dealings with management for your benefit.

Yours in Brotherhood,
Brian Alan Obst
Steward/Town and Country

Health and Welfare

We are sad to announce the following carriers have passed away:
Retired Carrier Emil Spolarich
Retire Carrier Frank Carreras
Retired Carrier Steve Hall
Our deepest condolences go out to their families

Arslan Uniform Drawing

The prize for being present at the July meeting is up to \$120.00. Just come to the meeting and if your name is drawn you win the money. You might learn something too!

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Tampa FL 33609-1617
(813) 875-0599 fax (813) 870-0599
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Tampa Postal FCU understands the current economy may be squeezing your budget. To help out, you are invited to skip one or all your loan payments during the month of July or August. For full promotion details and restrictions and to complete the form to Skip-A-Payment:

- 1) Visit Any Branch Location
- 2) Call 800.782.4899
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