



Tampa Letter Carrier

Volume 8 - Issue 7

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

Tampa, Florida

July 2009

President's Report

by Jim Good

President - Branch 599

FSALC Biennial Convention

The Florida State Association of Letter Carriers held their Biennial Convention from Thursday, June 11th through Friday, June 12th in Naples. The bylaws of the FSALC mandate that the convention will begin at 1:00 pm on Thursday through 5:00 pm and 9:00 am through noon on Friday.

The first order of business, after the rules are read, is the nomination for the next convention city and for the officers that will be elected to serve for the next two years. At this year's convention the elections resulted with some major changes of officers. John Giordano, who had served as president for the past twenty-eight (28) years, was soundly defeated by Matty Rose, former Region Nine Business Agent. Al Friedman, Executive Vice-President of Clearwater Branch 2008, was elected as Vice-President by acclamation when then Vice-President Mark Travers decided not to run for re-election. O. D. Elliott was successful in his bid for re-election as Secretary (a position that he has held for twenty-six years) and St. Petersburg Branch 1477 Executive Vice-President Joe Henchen kept his District 2 Chair-

man position by defeating Clearwater Branch 2008 President Steve Halkias. Branch 599 wishes the newly elected executive board the best of luck during the next two years.

The delegates to the convention were honored to have National President Bill Young and National Executive Vice-President Fred Rolando (soon to be National President) in attendance. Fred explained the new MIARAP Process and how it differs from the recently completed IARAP Process. As you all know by now, the new process will involve the carriers and their input to a much larger extent than the previous IARAP process.

President Young spoke next and explained that one of the reasons he came to Naples for the convention was to thank the Florida Delegation for the years of backing and support that we have given him. He said that the reason he signed the MIARAP Memo was because it came down to a matter of choice. We either had to give back, the way that the United Auto Workers did when they gave back retirees' medical benefits and their COLAs, or allow the USPS to adjust routes based on the dramatic drop in mail volume.

President Young said that was a "no brainer", seeing as how under the new process the carriers will have their routes adjusted based in a large part on their clock rings and actual time used. President Young will be retiring July 3rd, but said that he will be available to help Fred in any way

that he can.

After the convention was over the FSALC Training Seminar began. A number of diverse classes began at 1:45 pm on Friday until 5:00 pm. These included such topics as Basic EEO, taught by Administrative Judge Anna Laman; OSHA Compliance; Thrift Savings; FMLA taught by Assistant District Director Kathleen Noel; Branch Finance Reporting taught by Dept. of Labor Rep. Joel Belinc, and many more subjects. These classes were open to all shop stewards and branch officers who attended the convention/training seminar.



The seminar continued on Saturday with more classes in the morning and a legislative general session in the afternoon. National Business Agent Judy Willoughby completed the weekend by giving an explanation of the changes to the new Joint Contract Administrative Manual that was recently posted on our national website.

Hopefully the printing will soon be completed and we can order a copy for all the shop stewards. Now if we can only teach the supervisors and managers how to read!

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Branch Meeting

Thursday, July 2

7:30 PM

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) 967-1615
TRUSTEE (Chairman)	Henry Dupree	(813) 621-6471
TRUSTEE	Jose Oliva	(813) 873-2747
TRUSTEE	Terry Franklin	(813) 657-9690
SERGEANT-AT-ARMS	J.C. Howard	(813) 621-1976
MBA / NSBA	Albert Guice	(813) 621-7931
HEALTH BENEFITS	Lance Jones	(813) 264-9801
DIRECTOR OF RETIREES	John Gebo	(813) 985-5474, cell 503-1256
LABOR - MANAGEMENT	Brian Obst	(727) 458-0679
LABOR - MANAGEMENT	A. Sam Santilli	(813) 215-7595

Presidents Emeritus

Michael Anderson	Orbe Andux
Don Thomas	Garland Tickle

Branch 599 Shop Stewards

Brandon	33510	Terry Franklin	(813) 758-3061
Brandon	33511	Phil Chirico	(813) 657-3180
Carrollwood	33618	Eddie Berroth	(813) 493-5224
Commerce	33602	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
Palm River	33619	J.C. Howard	(813) 621-1976
Plant City	33565	Varick Reeder	(813) 746-0238
Port Tampa	33616	Sammy Graham	(813) 832-6644
Produce	33610	Maggie Lancaster	(813) 317-7522
Ruskin / Sun City Center	33570	Jack Hencoski	(813) 685-9034
Seminole Heights	33603	Tony Diaz	(813) 598-9635
Sulphur Springs	33604	John Rowland	(813) 770-7769
Tampa Carrier Annex	33607	Dennis Lorenzo	(813) 966-3989
Tampa Carrier Annex	33609	Dennis Lorenzo	(813) 966-3989
Temple Terrace	33617	Warren Sumlin	(813) 486-7612
Town & Country	33615	Brian Obst	(727) 458-0679
Town & Country	33635	Brain Obst	(727) 458-0679
Ybor City	33605	Detlev Aeppel	(813) 505-7914

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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

by Dook Ramotar

Executive Vice-President - Branch 599

Route Adjustment Process

Running with you would like you to take careful consideration of the new memorandum of understanding signed by the USPS and the N.A.L.C. This is your future even for those who have a few years to retire or those long term, this is not to be taken lightly.

Modified Interim Alternate Route Adjustment Process (M.I.A.R.A.P.) Recently I was in the meeting with Stewards from other stations. Where this process was explained to us by both the U.S.P.S. And N.A.L.C. higher up and as far as Running With You gathered from their explanation, this sounds like a win win proposal for all concerned. The U.S.P.S. has tried various ways to intimidate u.s. Carriers in doing route evaluation two days, six days, etc. But, it was never fair even when they adjusted the routes to their figures and satisfaction. The routes always came out longer and more than eight hours all in trying to justify their figures. They became losers. It was never fair because the Carriers were never involved and when they adjusted the routes and used discipline on the Carriers, the routes still didn't balance up to their expectations. With this new M.O.U. signed by both parties where we will have equal say on what we can do in 8 hours and what we can not do using our own records with their office records it will give both parties the figures needed to make the routes near to 8 hours as possible.

This is not to say that after these routes are adjusted there will not be any more adjustments. I for one believe this can be an ongoing process for a while since mail volume plunged by 14% maybe more in the second quarter of 2009 (Jan-March) at the meeting attended by u.s. management hinted they may use incentive to the mailers to get them to start using the mail again, but this would take awhile due to tightening credit, rising

unemployment etc. according to reports by USPS higher ups 1.9 billion dollars was lost quarterly by the U.S.P.S. That's why I mentioned the routes adjusted will not stay the same do to the declining volume and loss of Revenue. This I believe would be an ongoing process until the economy picked up and get back to normal .

It is set up for Commerce to move to Ybor by the end of the month and Hyde Park to move to T.C.A. the same time. As I see this by moving these two stations where would management put these two managers? Is it too much to say since the Carriers and Clerks, etc., are being asked to contribute to the survival of the U.S.P.S., the Supervisors, Managers, or the Higher Ups are beyond reach? Just asking. To me the company belongs to all of us and if one segment is hurting then we all should step up to help. We are in this together so let's contribute to our survival.

As reported by Lori on The Food Drive, we collected more food this year then previous years. Is it because not only are we hurting but, appreciate our blessings and want to reach out to those less fortunate? My grandfather told me a story years ago about a man who was desperate and wanted to kill himself? He went up a tree and said, "All I have left is this one banana." So he ate the banana and threw the peeling on the ground. As he looked down, there was a guy who saw the peeling and said, "how lucky I am for this food"? and he ate the skin. The man observed that and came down the tree and went home. We may think we are not well off but there are others far worse than some of us.

Running with you and V.P. Gilbert Cabanas wrote about our phones being taken away by T.L.C. Well, Running With You was given a phone recently and please guys copy this number to

reach me anytime 813-767-0322 you probably will still reach me at the other number but this will be the best choice. A note of thanks to Commerce



Carriers John Hicks and Pedro Rodriguez for helping in the MDA Collection for Jerry Kids also Tom and Roman from Hyde Park. Retiree Vince and Myself, special thanks to Dook JR. who also participated in the collection. Remember "All final decisions regarding the evaluations and the adjustments of the routes are made jointly by a team consisting of a letter carrier representative and a management representative." " This is a joint process that acknowledges the value of the regular carrier's input regarding the evaluation and adjustment of the route." "There will be two consultations conducted with the regular carrier the first will be the initial consultation to obtain the regular carriers input regarding evaluation of the route. The second consultation will be the adjustment consultation to obtain the carriers input regarding the proposed adjustment to the route"

Happy Fathers Day to all from Running With You

"A good objective of leadership is to help those who are doing poorly to do well and to help those who are doing well to do even better. "

John Rohn

Arslan Uniform Drawing

The Arslan Uniform prize for the July 2nd Branch 599 meeting will be \$240.00. If you are in attendance at the meeting and your name is drawn, you will win the \$240.00 donated by Bill & Shirley Moran of Arslan Uniforms.

Why not come to the meeting, hear what is going on in your union, and maybe win some big money? Hope to see you here on July 2nd.

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***

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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

Things You Should Know

MDA Station Visits

On our very first visit to a station, we encountered some difficulties. We were supposed to show a DVD for our presentation concerning the MDA Drive but the station's TV wasn't operable. Now Nick, MDA director and I had to improvise on the importance of the program for the MDA children.

Guess what? The very next station, the same thing occurred. Their TV was also not working. By now, Nick and I concluded that it was faith for us to sell our MDA program by floor explanations. The following day, we completely abandoned the DVD idea for the stations.

Our station visits were supposed to be faxed well in advanced to all station managers, yet, a few managers seems surprised to see us, or maybe they just forgot about the fax. Still, most managers were very accessible

to our visits and allowed the time to explain our MDA program. One manager even went to great lengths by opening the floor with his own convincing speech on the importance of our MDA Drive. This manager not only endorsed our event, but stated that he would also be on the stations intersections to help gather donations. I began to wonder how this open floor endorsement would help that stations final total MDA numbers, money wise. It's going to be very interesting when the final totals are in what effect those open endorsements were to the stations.

On the opposite extreme, we encountered the floor supervisor at another station that asked Nick and I to wait in the break room until he called us. This gem of a supervisor didn't want us on the floor until he was ready with his floor count. We could easily tell how important this MDA Drive was for this gem. I can't wait until the final totals are in for all the buildings to see what affect those two extreme attitudes had on the stations counts. I can only hope that all the station manag-

ers, shop stewards, and supervisors would be on the same page to ensure an overall station's success. A complete endorsement of this event is the most important part in enlisting enough volunteers to ensure a successful MDA Drive It never ceases to amaze me how different each station in our city reacts to the same problems. Management always complains about the poor behavior in some carriers, yet the same poor behavior exists in some floor supervisors.

I only hope that this poor behavior doesn't have a direct correlation with a poor turnout in that station. When upper management endorses any event then all involved should be on the same level of backing. The complete endorsements of all our endeavors are very necessary for the success of our existence.

by Gilbert Cabanas

Vice-President - Branch 599



Muscular Dystrophy Association Totals by Stations & Intersections

Commerce & Hyde Park	Kennedy & N. Dale Mabry	\$ 373.05
Seminole Heights & Sulphur Springs	Busch Blvd. & Florida	476.35
Tampa Carrier Annex	Dale Mabry & Columbus	548.64
Produce Station & Ybor City	40th & Hillsborough	181.55
Interbay	Gandy & Dale Mabry	801.31
Forest Hills Station	Fowler & Nebraska	413.37
Forest Hills Annex	Bearss & Florida	635.19
Hilldale Station	Himes & Hillsborough	522.80
Town n' Country Station	Memorial & Hillsborough	518.10
Temple Terrace Annex	56th & Busch Blvd.	1083.47
Carrollwood Station	Fletcher & N. Dale Mabry	1019.50
Palm River Annex	U.S. 301 & S.R. 60	660.76
Brandon Post Office	Providence & Lumsden; Parsons & S.R. 60	582.30
Sun City Center Post Office	S.R. 674 & U.S. 301	402.66
Total		\$8219.05

Around The Horn

by Tony Diaz

Financial Secretary - Branch 599

MDA Stop-Light Blitz

Brothers and Sisters, I delayed writing my article this month until the conclusion of our annual MDA Stop-Light Blitz. My reasoning was to thank all the Carriers who volunteered and made the sacrifice in dealing with the heat, rain, pollution, and the traffic. However, I am so disappointed in the overall turnout and lack of participation, I have changed the direction of my article.

First and foremost, let me thank all the Carriers who did volunteer their precious time, job well done! With tough economic times facing us all, speculation was the collection would more than likely be down from previous years. That part is acceptable, that part you can't control. What is not acceptable was the lack of involvement by our Membership, for whatever reason, that part can be controlled.

For those of you not aware the NALC and Branch 599 collects money annually for the Jerry Lewis Telethon, which benefits the Muscular Dystrophy Association. This year, June 5th was the date selected to assemble and "pound the pavement" for Muscular Dystrophy. M.D. is a group of hereditary diseases all marked by a progressive deterioration of muscles.

Seminole Heights (my Station), annually partners with Sulphur Springs Station on the busy corner of Busch Blvd and Florida Ave. Having participated in the MDA Stop-Light Blitz for countless years, at this corner, I must tell you

this was by far the worst turnout ever.

I do want to thank the 5, that's right 5 Carriers who showed up to support this charity. You heard it right 5 Carriers from two combined Stations. That is Pathetic!! Coverage was lousy, and in a bad economy that equals disaster. We usual assemble 14 to 18 carriers to successfully cover the thousands of passing motorists.

My territory was the southern part of the intersection, the Northern traveling traffic. With one person covering the four lanes, it was impossible to reach all the potential donors. In fact, some drivers took a double look to see if I was just another homeless solicitor walking the streets, that is embarrassing!!

I want to understand why, I want to bridge the gap, I want to correct the problem, so this lack of involvement does not occur again. I want to understand so we do not punish this charity, punish the kids, who benefit from this wonderful foundation. Are you mad at the USPS? Are you mad at your Manager? your Supervisor? Are you mad at the Union? your Steward? Are you mad at your Lawn Guy? your Pool person? your Spouse?

If for any pre-mentioned reasons you missed this year's MDA Stop-Light Blitz, shame on you. This is not the stage to express a personal vendetta by not joining your fellow Carriers and sacrificing your much needed time. Hopefully you did not show up so the Blitz would be unsuccessful.

While the final count was down a considerable amount, I can tell you it has motivated me to assist in organizing a possible second Stop-Light Blitz. This is a fantastic opportunity for you, once a year, to make a difference.



Again, for those who did volunteer, a special THANKS for a job well done under the circumstances.

Quick Hits: Information You Should Know

*) State Convention/Training Seminar will be held June 11-13, I will report back to you any important information next month.

*) NALC President William H. Young has officially announced his retirement date. He will retire July 3, 2009, having served 43 years as a Letter Carrier and 30 years as an NALC Officer.

President Young was a very effective during his terms in office. His last hurrah was to negotiate our current 5 year contract (2006-2011). He was very vocal on Capitol Hill and helped promote the NALC to become a big time player in the Legislative Arena . Good Luck Bill Young.

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

And The Beat Goes On

by Ray Wallace

Then and Now

When I read Marilyn Cutting's article in the last issue of this newsletter, I then realized how out dated my article was. I as a retiree, was talking about the way things used to be and I for sure would pray that today's letter carriers are no longer complaining about all of the little things that do happen, but thanking some one that they're still working and that they are working for the U.S. Post Office. As bad as it may be with all of the changes to the routes, you still have a job to go to every day.

So many people we all know do not, now that is stress, not knowing how you can keep your home, now you're going to buy food. Who ever thought any of us would ever see things this bad in our lives? I never thought the post office would just not have mail to deliver. I know years ago when automation was just starting out we would joke that one day we would have our case installed next to the exterior of the building and we would case the mail and jump in our postal vehicle and off we would go. Now a few years later that is almost a reality. Letter sorting and now flat sorting machines plus no mail and doubling up of all the routes.

I was talking to an old time Branch 599 retiree, Quintanilla, who has been retired longer than most of you have been working. He told me when he first started at the post office he made three trips to the business routes. The first part of my own route was all stores, then on to the relay box to pick up mail for the residential part and all with

a mail bag on your shoulder. When done at a early time, you would go back to the post office and at your case would be bundles of first class only to be delivered on a second trip back to the stores you did on your first trip.

Also, in those days the letter carrier did all of his own forwarding of mail in his own handwriting and he wrote up the forms for all the magazines. There was no end to the amount of mail. The worst was seeing the *Readers Digest* come into the office. It seemed like everyone got the *Readers Digest* and on a walking route you could only carry so many tied on to the side of the mailbag, with bundles of letters inside the bag, plus all of your flats. When you left the relay box you felt like a mule with all of the weight you were carrying. Those were very tough days for very little money.

I will never forget once after a hard day of walking I'm at the last relay box of the day and as I'm putting the mail into my bag, a car drives up and a drunk gets out. He says, "Could you please do me a big favor?" I said, "What?" He then gives me the address of where he lives and says, "I want to get my check into the bank ASAP, could I get it now?" I look, and sure enough there is his letter, right at that address and I give him his mail.

Twenty minutes later, as I'm walking up the stairs to his house (in New York there is nothing but hills and stairs to each house; the only way I made it was because then I was young) and on top is a old guy sitting in a rocking chair and he says to me, "Hey boy, I sure hope you

got my check." And I thought to myself, "Uh oh, this don't sound good...". I asked, "What is your name?"



and he says, "I hope you didn't give it to my no good brother! Did you?" I replied, "Oh no, I wouldn't do that." My mind was racing as I actually had. Damn! Well, I then tell him, "Sometimes the checks come in late. It will be here tomorrow." The regular had called in sick that day and I was praying he would be back the following day and he was. Thank God I never heard a thing about it, but it was the last time I ever gave out mail without asking for I.D. Another reason I lost my hair: stress.

In the *Tampa Tribune* on May 16, 2009, a writer named Greg McColm wrote a very good article about unions. That is something that is very rare these days, that anyone would write anything good about a union.

President Good told me he can not copy articles that were in the Tampa Tribune so all I can do is talk about it. In it the writers says it was the unions that made America have a middle class and if we are going to keep America a middle class nation, we need to bring back the unions.

The big problem now is most everyone is making the big bucks and all of the benefits you now enjoy came about from your union brothers before you. The young workers of today never have been without and, so to speak, everything has been handed to them on a silver platter.

It's when you have nothing that you will struggle to have more. This is how unions started.

Health Benefits Report

by Lance Jones

Beat the Heat

Happy Fathers Day to all our Letter Carrier Fathers!

Welcome to summer. Here you go another hot summer ahead so I'm writing my article this month on Heat Exhaustion and Heat Stroke.

Heat Exhaustion - the lesser form of heat related illness but still dangerous. It usually will develop after several days of exposure to high temperatures and inadequate replacement of fluids. Those most prone to heat exhaustion are the elderly, people with high blood pressure, and people working or performing physically exertion in a hot environment. We all do the latter and some of us are effected by the first two just remember the more you fit into a pattern the more susceptible you are to have an episode.

Warning sign of heat exhaustion can include heavy sweating, paleness, muscle cramps, tiredness, weakness, dizziness, headache nausea and/or vomiting and fainting. The skin can be cool and moist the pulse rate will be fast and weak and breathing will be fast and shallow left untreated heat exhaustion could progress to heat stroke *which is a medical emergency*.

Cooling measures that could be effective are cool, non-alcoholic beverages, rest, cool shower, bath or sponge bath, an air conditioned environment, and always wearing light weight clothing.

Heat Stroke - a form of hyperther-

mia with an abnormally elevated body temperature with accompanying physical and neurological symptoms. Unlike the less severe forms of heat related illnesses, *heat stroke is a true medical emergency that can be fatal if it is not properly and promptly treated*.

The body normally generates heat as a result of metabolism, and is usually able to dissipate it by radiation of heat through the skin or by evaporation of sweat. *However, in extreme heat, high humidity, or vigorous exertion in the sun, the body may not be able to dissipate the heat and your body temperature rises, sometimes up to 106 degrees F or higher*.

The other cause of heat stroke is dehydration simply because you won't be able to sweat fast enough to get rid of the heat build up in your body. People most susceptible to heat stroke are infants, the elderly (especially people with heart disease, lung disease, kidney disease, or those who are taking medications that make them vulnerable to heat stroke), athletes and *outdoor workers* who are exerting themselves in the sun.

Symptoms of heat stroke can mimic those of a heart attack and sometimes a person experiences symptoms of heat exhaustion before progressing to heat stroke. Symptoms are nausea, vomiting, fatigue, weakness, headache, muscle cramps and aches, and dizziness. However some people can develop symptoms of heat stroke suddenly and rapidly with no warning.

Common signs of heat stroke are high body temperature, the absence of sweating with hot red or flushed dry skin, difficulty breathing, strange be-

havior, hallucinations, confusion, agitation, disorientation, seizure and coma.



Health Benefits Representative - Branch 599

Treatment of Heat Stroke - victims must receive *immediate* treatment to avoid *permanent organ damage*. First and foremost, cool the victim. Get them to a shady area, remove clothing, apply cool or tepid water to the skin (a spray works well maybe from a bottle or garden hose), fan them to promote sweating and evaporation, and place ice packs under the armpits and groins. Monitor body temperature with a thermometer and continue cooling efforts until the body temperature drops to 101 to 102 degrees F. Notify emergency services (911) immediately.

Preventative measures are to avoid becoming dehydrated and to avoid vigorous physical activities in hot and humid weather. If you have to perform physical activities, be sure to drink plenty of fluids (such as water and sports drinks), and avoid alcohol, caffeine and tea (throw out those iced teas everyone, these may lead to dehydration). The body needs its electrolytes (such as sodium) replaced as well as fluids if you sweat excessively for prolonged periods of time. Wear hats, light-colored clothing, lightweight and loose fitting clothes.

Have a safe and happy summer and be sure to get some relaxation on those summer vacations

In unity,

Lance Jones

Unionism

Continuing Education in the NALC

Picture if you will... a carrier who is so well educated in contractual matters that he can help his steward identify problems and issues before grievances need to be filed. No you are not in the Twilight Zone; you are dealing with a carrier who has discovered the ability to continue to educate themselves in the NALC.

Do we all know what is meant by continuing education? This is the idea that one never has enough knowledge and the search for as well as the need of knowledge is always ongoing. In the NALC the officers and stewards who you elect to represent you are always looking for more knowledge to ensure that they can provide you the best representation possible. When your representatives go into any type of negotiation, be it grievances or contract negotiations, they want to be the best educated person in the room. The NALC has provided educational opportunities for all of it's members in the form of Training Seminars, Rap Sessions, Conventions as well as detailed schooling for subjects as varied as B Team Representative, Arbitration Advocate and the class I am currently attending, Leadership Academy. All of this training is designed with one purpose in mind – To ensure that your officers and Stewards are the best trained people there to represent you.

What I would like to address here is what you can do to assist with training for yourself on a continuing basis. This is for all members not just the regular carrier who is not in-

involved in steward or branch officer work. As you know part of your fixed office time allows for five minutes weekly for the review of billboard postings in the office. The information posted on these boards is made available so you are able to keep up to date on issues such as safety meetings, service talk's issues, postings or reversions of positions and many other issues which one should be aware of on the workroom floor. Also the fixed office time also allows for five minutes weekly for you to review handbooks and manuals. You might say what can I review in five minutes and I would say that you have a route book binder at your case which has a copy of the M-41 contained inside. This is the carrier bible that tells you how you are supposed to perform your daily duties. Knowing the contents of this handbook will allow you to be aware when management attempts to tell you how to do your job in the wrong way you can educate them on the proper way that you are required to perform your duties. Remember these are guaranteed times weekly that you have that should be used for the stated purpose, when we fail to use the time all we do is provide management an argument to reduce our fixed offices times and take away educational opportunities available to us all.

Another educational opportunity available to all carriers is the NALC website at <http://www.nalc.org>. The NALC website provides access to the National Agreement as well as the JCAM. These documents are on the website in PDF format and can be reviewed in the privacy of your own home at your leisure. Long time readers of my articles will remember that I regularly make requests to go to the JCAM to review

by Brian Obst

Chief Steward - Branch 599



the information I speak of in my various articles. I do this because there is much more information available there than I could possibly put into one article. There are also any number of Postal Handbooks and Manuals available from our website. This is a reference source that most of your stewards and Branch Officers use with regularity while representing you with Postal Management. Imagine how much assistance you could be to your steward as well as yourself if you could look for information to ensure you were doing your job correctly and you could understand whether there was a grievance issue that needed to be addressed on the workroom floor. When management is aware that the carriers are well educated they generally will stop trying to violate the National Agreement because they know that just because the steward might not be there that doesn't mean that no one is aware of their violation and it will be reported and addressed.

Nalc.org has a bar on the home page and if you click on departments a menu will drop down. Select Contract Administration and the page that comes up will have the access to all the handbooks, manuals and the JCAM for your review. I highly recommend that you take the time to check into this information as it can only help you on the job. Knowledge is something that once obtained they can never take it away from you.

I end as always with the thought that **Knowledge is the Key.**

A Point of Personal Privilege

by Leslie Ray Garcia

Socialism Is Evil!

When Ronald Reagan was elected his first major piece of legislation was to quickly cut income taxes on the rich. He reduced the tax from 70% to 27%. Reagan then reduced and severely cut corporate taxes (<http://www.cbpp.org/10-16-03tax.htm>) which in turn are the lowest in the industrialized world. This caused the red ink on our deficit to flow so heavily that Reagan doubled the tax paid by individuals earning \$40,000 or less a year (FICA). However, a huge surplus was accumulated for the Social Security Trust Fund but was never realized because during Reagan's 8 years he borrowed more moneys from this trust than the grand total of presidents from George Washington to Jimmy Carter! This new Gilded Age became the rise of the super wealthy of which hadn't been seen since "the Robber Baron era of the 1890s or the Roaring 20s." Reagan's tax cuts eliminated America's investment into every critical area of our infrastructure. "The Golden Age of the Middle Class between the 1940s and the 1980s" came to a sudden if not an abrupt end because of the consistent borrowing of huge amounts of FICA moneys that were never repaid.

George W. Bush quickly followed Reagan's design and added new chapters to the legacy. Bush allowed 5 million people to slip on to the roles of poverty, nearly 7 million Americans lost their health insurance, median household income decreased nearly \$1300 a year, 3 million manufacturing jobs were lost, 3 million workers lost their

pensions, home fore closures became the highest on record, personal savings accounts dipped below zero and that hasn't happened since the "Great Depression," real earnings of college graduates has decreased by 5%, entry level wages for high school female and male graduates have fallen by over 3% and wages and salaries are now at the lowest level share of the GDP since 1929.

With the election of a democratically controlled White House, Senate and Congress several members of the news, as well as the Republican minority, are accusing efforts to correct the economic problems of this country as being socialism. The Bush national debt grew to more than \$4 trillion dollars because of the total neglect of the economy and President Obama will add to the debt which OMB estimates to be \$10.4 trillion dollars because of necessary bailouts. A report from "the Center for Budget Policy and Priorities reports, 42% of the 'fiscal deterioration' and explosion of the deficit are precisely due to the Bush tax cuts. Barack Obama is trying to implement those so called socialistic programs by taking corrective actions that make a \$634 billion dollar down payment on repairing health care, reduce taxes on 95% of working American families that are making less than \$250,000 a year, invest more than \$100 billion dollars for clean energy technology, bring our troops home from Iraq on a firm time-table, allow the Bush tax cuts to expire, increase grants to help families pay for college, half the deficit by 2013, increase funding for government oversight organizations such as the SEC and CFTC (entities that policed businesses on Wall Street), lay out the exact cost on all programs and how to pay for them, stop unnecessary government subsidies, expand

access to early childhood education and improve schools, guidelines for better negotiated prescription drug prices, expand access to family planning, cap pollution that causes global warming and make polluters pay to support clean energy innovations.



"Socialism is the theory or system of the ownership and operation of the means of production and distribution by society or the community rather than by private individuals, with all members of society or the community sharing in the work and the products." The word socialism has been utilized as another scare tactic from the party of 'NO' just as the word 'LIBERAL' continues to be used! The Republican party has followed a policy that the free market will foster economic prosperity. A theory called 'supply-side economics' which led to its popular nickname, "Reaganomics." This theory was followed by the Republican majority in Congress and the White House for nearly 10 years. A method utilized by the Republicans, take from the poor and give to rich, has initiated many a revolution of the proletariat throughout history. A no touch attitude supposedly allowed the expansion of "free markets, economic liberty, fiscal conservatism, personal responsibility and policies that supported business." The end result of this faulty theory has lead this country into the largest recession since the 'Great Depression' and we are almost at the bottom of the ladder.

"It is time in the West to defend not so much human rights as human obligations." Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn

Detlev's Report

Back At It Again

Everybody likes a nice vacation once in a while. As recent history indicates I really liked my vacation from writing a monthly article for this fine Branch 599 newsletter. But as all of us know, every good thing must end. Thanks to popular demand and several swift kicks here I am back at it again.

Last fall most letter carriers experienced something called IARAP. That was the Interim Alternate Route Adjustment Process. This process was an attempt to see if letter carrier routes could be adjusted without resorting to the expensive and painful 6 Day Count Process. IARAP used the actual clock rings from the letter carrier on the route along with the data from the 3999 ride along and input from the carrier to reach an agreement as to what the route should be evaluated at. This process was based on results from various test sites around the country including our very own Palm River Carrier Annex. This process successfully adjusted over 1800 routes in the Suncoast District to reflect the loss of mail volume caused by the current economic disaster we find our country mired down in.

Now it is time for revisits of the adjustments made to see if further tweaking is needed. Most of you are understandably surprised by this development since revisits have almost never been done after route adjustments even though management's own handbook, the M-39, calls for revisits. In addition to the revisits there will also be adjustments to units that were not ad-

justed last fall under the IARAP process for whatever reason. The new agreed to method for adjustments will be the MIARAP.

MIARAP stands for Modified Interim Alternate Route Adjustment Process. MIARAP builds on the success of IARAP and should prove just as beneficial to all parties concerned. MIARAP uses the actual clock rings from the regular letter carrier on the routes along with the input of the regular letter carrier to determine the evaluated time needed to case and carry the routes on an average day. This agreement will be used for the rest of 2009 and can be renewed for use in 2010. This means that letter carriers may not have to deal with the harassment and intimidation of the 6 Day Count Process for the rest of the life of our contract. The NALC and the USPS are continuing to work on a permanent alternate route adjustment process that will eventually be standard for all adjustments and become part of the national agreement.

Right now the biggest obstacle to overcome is the fact that management has failed woefully to conduct the 3999s called for to validate the lines of travel and assign time values to the sector segments of the routes after the last adjustment. Management in Tampa has only done 28% of the 3999s. This has resulted in a mad scramble to get all the required ride-a-longs done. When a crew of bright eyed and eager managers appears in your station to ride your route with you it should not be to harass you but rather to get this long overdue task done.

The other major difference in MIARAP that should be of interest to carriers is the improvements to the carrier consultations. There will be

two carrier consultations conducted by Local Contacts in your station, in most cases a trained steward and the station manager. They will conduct the consultations in strict adherence to proscribed "scripts". These scripts ensure fair treatment for the letter carrier without pressure or intimidation from the manager. It is very important that carriers give an honest assessment of how much time they know their route actually takes to case and carry on an average (non-Monday, non-Saturday, non-third bundle) day.

If letter carriers give serious thought to the information they provide during the consultation and if letter carriers took care to ensure they performed their clock ring moves properly during the representative month selected then there is an excellent chance that routes can be properly adjusted to reflect the time needed to do them and we can put an end to the daily "under time" battles waged between letter carriers and delivery supervisors.

In Solidarity...

by Detlev Aepfel



**Happy
Independence Day!**



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