



Tampa Letter Carrier

Volume 9 - Issue 7

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

Tampa, Florida

July 2010

President's Report

by Jim Good

President - Branch 599

Protect Yourself

In case there are any carriers out there who haven't noticed it, Tampa is suffering from a massive shortage of letter carriers. I don't mean to leave the other cities represented by Branch 599 (those being Plant City, Sun City/Ruskin and Brandon) out of this article, but these carriers represented by our branch aren't suffering the way that Tampa's are from a lack of manpower. I'll bet there have been at least thirty or forty carriers who have retired in the past 1 ½ years, and no Part Time Regular letter carriers have been hired to replace them. About six months ago I was told by then Postmaster Nancy Fryrear that Tampa had been authorized to hire twelve *Transitional Carriers*. Unfortunately, someone dropped the ball on that one and by the time Tampa management was ready to sign the contracts on those twelve, Suncoast District had lowered the number that we were allowed to hire to three. (By the way, nepotism in Tampa is acceptable.)

As a result of this massive shortage of carriers, management is squeezing all they can possibly squeeze out of the workforce that they have. Of course there are some managers and supervisors who know how to motivate carriers to get the most out of them in a humane manner, but not all. What I want to address here is the importance of doing your job in a safe manner and following the

rules as they are written in all the handbooks and manuals. I understand that not all carriers study the handbooks and manuals, and they really don't study the contract; they just want to come to work, do their job and go home.

Not too long ago there were a couple of carriers who were put off the clock for being outside their vehicles when the engine was running. Neither one of them was away from their vehicle delivering mail when this happened; they were standing right next to the vehicle. But these were still safety violations, and an accident could have happened. A few years ago these violations would probably have been handled with a simple discussion, but with the mandate on safety and the possibility of a runaway accident resulting from this type of incident, serious discipline was issued. The postmaster and I settled this discipline in a very fair manner, but everyone needs to understand that what was once an acceptable practice may not be acceptable now. **Protect yourselves.** If you're out of the seat of your vehicle, turn the engine off, set the parking brake and take out the keys.

Now I want to address some of the ridiculous, outrageous, and obvious violations of the contract that management is trying to get away with. In a station where they have a carrier on every route, they are scheduling a regular to come in on his/her SDO, bumping the T-6 off of their assign-

ment, and then sending the junior regular carrier (even if he has a permanent bid on a route) out of the station. This has been done more than once at a particular station. Of course the union has filed a grievance, but it goes beyond that. To bump a regular carrier off of his/her bid assignment and send them out of the station lowers morale in that station, as well as the station they are being sent to. Management claims they must get the mail delivered, and that's true, but what about doing the right thing and staffing the city with enough employees to do the job? Wake up! It doesn't take a genius to figure that out. That's just one example of how badly we need additional carriers. Management is also forcing overtime on a daily basis to carriers not on the Overtime Desired List, sometimes contractually and often times not. Again, grievances are filed, but these grievances cost the postal service money. Then they wonder why they are losing money at the rate that they are.

Now about the *National Reassessment Process*. The first of what will be five scheduled arbitration cases

(continued on page 6)



Branch Meeting

Thursday, July 1

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	Silven Zimmerman	(813) 380-3731
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	Detlev Aeppel	(813) 505-7914
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	James Dobson	(813) 661-1636
Carrollwood	33618	Eddie Berroth	(813) 493-5224
Commerce	33602	Dook Ramotar	(813) 767-0322
Forest Hills	33612	Alan Robinson	(813) 843-9762
Forest Hills Annex	33613	Nick Cullaro	(813) 541-8159
Hilldale	33614	A. Sam Santilli	(813) 215-7595
Hilldale Annex	33634	Julio Acosta	(347) 538-9381
Hyde Park	33606	Tom Cobert	(813) 694-0711
Interbay	33611	Sammy Graham	(813) 832-6644
Interbay	33629	Jim Tremblay	(813) 323-6534
MacDill	33608	Sammy Graham	(813) 832-6644
Palm River	33619	J.C. Howard	(813) 621-1976
Plant City	33565	Varick Reeder	(315) 491-6234
Port Tampa	33616	Sammy Graham	(813) 832-6644
Produce	33610	John DeRosa	(813) 850-8418
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	Don Wiseman	(813) 713-6273
Tampa Carrier Annex	33609	Tom Cobert	(813) 694-0711
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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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
La Septima Café
140 Parsons Ave.
in Brandon

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

Around The Horn

by Tony Diaz

Financial Secretary - Branch 599

Our Jobs, Our Fight

Brothers and Sisters, for those of you who missed our last June branch union meeting, you missed a tremendous meeting. Several guests speakers were in attendance, highlighted by the *Florida State Association of Letter Carriers President*, and long time friend of Branch 599, Matty Rose. He was accompanied by FSALC Vice President Al Friedman.

For those of you who have never been fortunate enough to hear Matty speak, I hope you will one day. He speaks from the heart with an incredible wealth of knowledge. He is a retired letter carrier, a former shop steward, a former branch president, and was the NALC Region 9 National Business Agent.

As he stands as President of the FSALC, his fight now is not with management, his fight (our fight) is lobbying on Capitol Hill. As I have mentioned to you numerous times in my articles, Congress is where our fight is to save our jobs. Matty reiterated my thoughts with his COLCPE request. There is a necessity for all carriers to contribute to COLCPE, which is the single most important weapon we have in our arsenal.

Additionally, we need to become involved in, and support, the *e-Activist* network, which is free. You will receive periodic e-mails with instructions on who to con-

tact. In numbers, we can be more of a force in supporting our legislative efforts. All of us need to be familiar with *House Resolution 173 (HR173)*, as it is vital to the continuation of 6-day mail delivery.

Many of you have probably never heard of it and may be wondering what a house resolution would have to do with your job. Well, it has a whole lot to do with our jobs, and this is why the NALC's legislative lobbying must be a big time player on Capitol Hill. As of the Memorial Day recess there were 195 co-sponsors signed on, expressing the sense of the House that the United States Postal Service should take all appropriate measures to ensure the continuation of its 6-day mail delivery service.

Matty seemed certain the list of co-sponsors would increase, supporting the NALC's fight. NALC President Fred Rolando has consistently argued eliminating Saturday delivery would make the Postal Service less attractive to those who want to send something during the weekend, and would undermine future revenue generation. Several senators have openly voiced their disapproval towards the USPS proposal to cut service, noting the Postal Service provided a vital lifeline.

Make it a point to get involved, starting with contributing to COLCPE, by joining the *e-Activist* network, and by attending Branch 599 monthly meetings. You *can* make a difference.

Quick Hits: Information you should know

*) The 2010 Letter Carriers' Food

Drive collected a record 77.1 million pounds of food. Wow! Even with the economy struggling the food kept coming. This year's record breaks last year's total of 73.4 million pounds of donated food. Special congratulations to Branch 599 for collecting over 2 million pounds of food.



This is an enormous accomplishment, make branch 599 the number 1 branch in food collection in the entire country. Al Friedman spoke about the Food Drive and congratulated Branch 599. I am looking forward to attending the national convention this summer to participate in the official ceremony crowning Branch 599 as the national Food Drive champ.

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

Health & Welfare

We are sad to announce that Brandon carrier Mary Jurgens' 20 year old son, Michael, was in an accident and passed away June 7, 2010. Our deepest condolences go out to Mary and her family.

Condolences go out to Scott Koffler and his family on the loss of his mother-in-law.

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Bill & Shirley Moran

Retired Letter Carrier Branch 1477 St. Petersburg

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A Point of Personal Privilege

by Leslie Ray Garcia

They Have It Wrong

The Postmaster of the United States and the other executives of the Postal Service continue to maintain the extreme and often-quoted estimate that the USPS is on track to accumulate a \$238 billion deficit by 2020. They erroneously believe that the only means to rectify this red ink is to slash craft employee jobs and to scale back service to five day deliveries. However, they have failed, and neglected to state, that the USPS has been driven down this road by making extremely poor political and managerial choices.

These same individuals do not mention accounting errors, either deliberate or accidental, that have smothered and crippled the service with huge pension liabilities that are as unsustainable as they are unreasonable. Many of these “experts” foster the fantasy that the USPS is no longer a necessary nor a vital business because of the *warp speed Internet*, and they denote our delivery service as *snail mail*. Yet these same individuals stated the parcel post business was not financially sound and are now trying to regain that business via costly advertisements for Flat Rate Priority Package mail.

Do you know that only 35% of all Americans and 50% of rural residents have no access to any form of broadband at their homes and that these Americans totally rely on the USPS for most of their communications, i.e., letters, magazines, newspapers? Our executives shrug off

the fact that more than 200,000 employees drive more than four million miles in all types of weather and deliver more than one half billion pieces of mail daily. They conveniently fail to state our business contracts commercial airlines to ship most of our mails throughout the USA within a matter of hours. We even contract out some shipments of our mailings to our competitors, such as Fed Ex.

The USPS provides delivery to remote areas of the United States, to such places as the swamps of Louisiana by air-boat (I don’t like alligators, spiders and snakes), to the Idaho River of No Return Wilderness (white water rafting), by single engine planes to the frozen tundra of Alaska (too cold for me), and even hike mail to the Havasupa Indians on the floor of the Grand Canyon (what a park and loop route!). Some of these remote places do not have electricity, telephone service, or any other form of communication other than the USPS.

Of course these deliveries are not profitable to such businesses as Fed Ex and UPS but the USPS provides the most important ingredient to these areas: SERVICE! The USPS has the largest network of retail stores in the world with more locations than McDonald’s, Starbucks and Wal-Mart combined, which are visited by more than seven million Americans each day. “We need the Postal Service,” says Illinois Congressman Danny Davis, a member of the House Subcommittee that oversees the nation’s post offices. Postal Regulatory Commission (PRC) chair Ruth Goldway states “...the service is part of the fabric of

the nation.”

The wrecking crews of L'Enfant Plaza apparently do not consider this business as necessary and vital to American society. The approach taken by the “*legion of doom*” is to slash and dissect the USPS piecemeal. They want to go to five day delivery, close thousands of postal facilities, and cut 26,000 full time and 13,000 part time positions through attrition and layoffs. This is their only response to the economic decline in our revenues--- slash, cut, reduce (service) and lay off! Senator Susan Collins, a Maine Republican, sums up this madness: “The Postal Service cannot expect to gain more business, which it desperately needs, if it is reducing service.”

Should the restructuring that is proposed by the Postmaster General proceed, it will not achieve nor will it result in his supposed “*leaner, more market responsive*” business. Most of the proposals presented by our executives can only lead to an inevitable privatizing of the USPS. However, our biggest ally against privatization is President Barack Obama. President Obama said, “...privatization is a bad idea most of the time because often times what you see is companies want to buy those parts of a government-run op that are profitable and they don’t want to do anything else. So, for example, the USPS; everybody would have to have high-end parts of the business that Fed Ex and UPS are already in – business to business,

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President's Report *(from page 1)*

was heard on June 8th, the second was started on June 17th, with at least one more day planned to finish that case. Arbitration cases cost at least \$3,000.00 or more each, so again I ask, why is the postal service losing money? The union is winning a large majority of these NRP cases, so maybe the postal service will realize they are wrong and go back to treating injured carriers the way that they used to treat them prior to the implementation of NRP. Let's hope so, but I wouldn't bet on it. They haven't shown much common sense recently.

Personal Privilege *(from page 5)*

you make a lot of money. But do they want to deliver that post card to a remote area somewhere in rural America that is a money loser? Well, the U.S. Postal Service provides universal service. Those companies would not want to provide universal service."

"You are never giving, nor can you ever give, enough service."

James R. Cook

Arslan Uniform Drawing

The Arslan Uniform prize for the July 3rd Branch 599 meeting will be **\$370.00**. If you are in attendance at the meeting and your name is drawn, you will win the **\$370.00** 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? There have been many changes happening that affect your daily work, so you really need to keep informed regarding your rights. What better place to keep updated than at the branch meeting?

Hope to see you there on July 1st.

Eye Care Advice For Aging Eyes

Growing older and getting reading glasses seem to go hand in hand, just like getting gray hair or wrinkles as you age. But that doesn't have to be the case if you take steps to care for your eyes as you age.

Presbyopia, a natural effect of aging, happens to just about everyone around the age of 40, even if you have had laser eye surgery. As you age, the lens in each of your eyes begins to lose its ability to change focus quickly on an object or page of text, causing blurred vision at reading distance. Chances are that you know several people who have this condition, and you may develop it yourself, now or in the future.

Some simple, yet often overlooked steps can help you take care of your eyesight as you age:

- * During prolonged intervals in front of a TV, computer or other electronic device, try blinking more often than you might normally. Every so often, look away from the device and focus on a distant object.
- * Be sure to have adequate light while reading; a simple lamp may not do the trick, causing you to strain your eyes.
- * Maintain a healthy diet. Contrary to popular belief, carrots are not the best vegetable for your eyes: spinach and other dark, leafy greens contain high amounts of lutein and zeaxanthin, beneficial antioxidants for vision.
- * Visit your eye care professional regularly.

Beyond a healthy lifestyle, there are solutions to common age-related vision problems. With presbyopia, bifocals or reading glasses (for contact lens wearers) are a common solution. However, reading glasses can be cumbersome and easily misplaced, and bifocals require you to use a magnification lens intended for reading anytime you look down, which can make mundane tasks as simple as walking down stairs unnecessarily difficult.

Bausch + Lomb's Multi-Focal contact lenses are designed with All-Distance Optics, a technology that delivers sharp, clear vision wherever you choose to focus. By using a gradual power shift across the entire lens, your eyes effortlessly adjust from up-close reading to mid-range computer work to distance vision while driving. There's no need to reach for glasses to accommodate a quick change in distance.

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Courtesy of ARAcontent

Overdraft Fee Changes Are On The Way

There are new regulations going into effect this summer that could change the way your bank charges overdraft fees for debit card purchases. Are you ready? Officials hope the changes will help consumers avoid unexpected fees, but even after the new government rules go into effect on July 1, many banks will continue to charge a fee if you opt in to their overdraft service. It's important to know how these changes might affect you and your money.

A recent Harris Poll survey reports that many consumers are lukewarm about overdraft services that allow them - for a fee - to make a purchase with a debit card or withdraw money at the ATM when they don't have sufficient funds in their checking account. In response, some banks, like Bank of America, are going one step further than what regulations require and will eliminate overdraft fees for everyday debit card transactions by no longer authorizing those types of transactions if a customer does not have enough money in their account at the time. That means if customers don't have enough money in their accounts at the time, their transactions will be declined and they won't be charged an overdraft fee.

"Our customers have been clear that they want to know if a purchase is going to overdraw their account," says David Owen, payments and products executive from Bank of America. "Our solution is simple, clear, and helps customers



control their finances by reducing the possibility of over-extending themselves with a debit card."

Do you think big overdraft fees are a fact of life when you need cash on the spot? Think again. Find out if your bank will link your checking account to another account, such as your savings account, credit card or line of credit. Bank of America says for customers enrolled in its overdraft protection program, the bank will automatically transfer available funds from a linked account to the checking account if and when they're needed to cover an overdraft. When linked to a savings account the typical cost is \$10 for each day it is used, no matter how often funds are needed. That's a big difference compared to the \$35 per purchase fee some banks will charge if you opt in to their overdraft service.

But what happens if you're at the ATM and need cash? You won't necessarily be declined if you don't have enough money in your account. While many banks don't offer this service at the ATM, starting

this fall Bank of America will alert their customers when a withdrawal may overdraw the account at one of their ATMs. Customers may still get cash after they acknowledge and accept an overdraft fee.

In the past, consumers have worried that if they're on the go, they'll have to guess if their account balance is low. Today, many banks offer mobile money management tools that can help. Find out if your bank

offers mobile banking, online banking, or text banking options so you can quickly check your account balances anywhere - in your office, at the airport, and even while traveling overseas. With a few clicks, you'll know if you're in danger of overdrawing your account. This is especially useful if you have several family members sharing a joint account. With some banks, mobile banking and online banking allow you to transfer funds so you can put money into your account before you overdraw it.

While you may or may not have paid an overdraft fee before, knowing what changes your bank is making will help you better manage your accounts and keep your finances under control. For more information about money management, savings, and planning for retirement, visit

<http://bankofamerica.com/solutions>.

Courtesy of ARAcontent

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