



Tampa Letter Carrier

Volume 5 - Issue 8

A.R. "Tony" Huerta NALC Branch 599

Tampa, Florida

August 2006

President's Report

by Jim Good

President - Branch 599

Who's Running The Show?

I've been dealing with the U. S. Postal Service for over thirty-two years, either as an employee or an NALC officer, and I thought that I had seen everything when it came to mismanagement and downright stupidity in the upper levels of authority. Boy, was I wrong!

Bill Brown, Vice President, Area Operations for the Southeast area, is responsible for all postal operations including mail processing and distribution, customer service and sales and administrative operations. Brown reports only to Patrick Donahoe, Deputy Postmaster General and ultimately to Postmaster General Jack Potter.

Now imagine this. You are looking for a career with the USPS. You sign up on the Internet, take an entrance exam and are placed on the rolls to be hired when your name comes up according to your test results. Or you are already working for the postal service in another part of the country and have applied for a transfer to an office in the Suncoast District. Either way, one lucky day you receive a letter from the postal service stating that you have been accepted for either the new job or the transfer. You take the family out for a celebratory dinner, put your house up for sale (if you are going to transfer), and give notification to your current employer that you have been hired/transferred to Florida and are resigning your current position. You sell your house, pack up the family and are ready to start a new career in the sunshine state.

Then out of the blue, two days before the day you are scheduled to start orientation, you receive a phone call saying, "Sorry, the Southeast area is now under a hiring

'pause' and you will not be starting your new job in the Suncoast District."

Sound unbelievable? Well, guess what. That is exactly what happened to a number of new hires and transferred carriers who were scheduled to start working in the Southeast area on Saturday, July 8, 2006. They received notification by telephone on Thursday saying don't bother coming, and you won't be paid. One of these transferred carriers actually got the call on Friday (the day before he was scheduled to start) while he was driving to Tampa! I was told by the manager of personnel that the employees who were making the calls were actually in



Bill Brown

tears while they were listening to the stories told by the carriers scheduled to be hired/transferred.

Then on Saturday (the day they were scheduled to start) some of the transferred carriers got another call saying they *would* be transferred and to report for 1/2 day of orientation on Monday the 10th. The people who were scheduled to be hired off of the roster as new carriers are still out of luck. Their plans for working for the USPS have been put on hold, and they now have no job to go back to. I attended that orientation, where I was told these horror stories and spoke with the manager of personnel by phone. As it turns out, the decision came

down from Mr. Brown's office. I spoke with an assistant to Judy Willoughby, our National Business Agent, and was told that this was happening throughout the Southeast area and that President Young was aware of the situation.



I don't know for sure whether it was Bill Brown or Patrick Donahoe who put this hiring "pause" into effect in the manner they did, but I have a number of questions for whoever is responsible. First, what is going through their head? How can they think so little of the people that work for, or have applied for, a position as a city letter carrier? Second, doesn't the integrity of the United States Postal Service mean anything to them? I know of no other business that would schedule the hiring of employees, give them a starting date, have them resign their current positions and then go back on their word and refuse to hire them.

But it really goes even deeper than these questions. When our city carriers are working ten hours a day, six days a week why would they institute a hiring "pause"? In Tampa there are not enough part time flexible carriers to replace the carriers who are on annual leave, so every station goes into each day at least one or two routes down. Overtime in Tampa is averaging over 15%. WE NEED HELP DESPERATELY! The postmaster knows it, the station managers know it, the floor supervisors know it, and the carriers know it more than anyone else.

So why would any decent management official totally disrupt the lives of the people who deliver the country's mail (and those who hope to in the near future), and tarnish the good name and reputation of the United States Postal Service? I do believe they have lost their minds and I hope that Postmaster General Potter agrees and removes them from their positions. It's time for them to be retired.

Branch Meeting
Thursday, August 3
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	Brian Obst	(727) 458-0679
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	Brian Obst	(727) 458-0679
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	

A.R. "Tony" Huerta NALC Branch 599

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**RETIREES BREAKFAST
(In Tampa)**

First Monday of Every Month

9:00 AM at

The Coffee Cup

4407 N. Hubert

in Drew Park

**RETIREES BREAKFAST
(In Brandon)**

Second Tuesday of Every Month

8:00 AM at

Buddy Freddy's

134 Gornto Lake Rd S.

in Brandon

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

Executive Vice-President's Report

by Detlev Aeppel

Executive Vice-President - Branch 599



The Good Stuff

Summer is one of the toughest times of the year for letter carriers. On the one hand we have the scorching heat and the oppressive humidity. On the other hand we have the torrential down pours of rain. Ah, Florida. You've got to love it.

Management is still trying to do more with less. Senior letter carriers continue to retire with regularity and management continues to fail to replace them either with new hires or with transfers. Article 3 of the National Agreement discusses management's rights and responsibilities. As any steward can attest management is quick to point out their own rights as outlined in Article 3. However, Article 3 also places on management the responsibility, among other things, to ensure that there is adequate staffing to handle the work load. As we all know, management is failing to meet this responsibility. Now they have even declared a hiring "pause". This makes absolutely no sense. To make matters even worse it's vacation season and carriers are off on choice leave and in some cases sick leave or military leave. This all puts a huge burden on carriers every day.

Recently I was doing some overtime tracking and noticed a carrier had worked seven and one quarter hours on a certain day and had used annual leave to cover the other forty five minutes. I feel this is a sad waste of annual leave. The carrier was contractually guaranteed eight hours that day without the use of annual leave. He had finished early (it was a Saturday) and returned to the station. Rather than piece-meal his annual leave away, he should have preserved it and put it to use that would have best benefited him instead of management. This carrier should have stayed till the end of his tour. He could have easily remained gainfully employed or at the very least viewed a training film or worked on his edit book or done general housekeeping tasks at his case.

Annual leave is one of the best benefits we receive as USPS employees. Most letter carriers get between 156 hours and 208 hours of annual leave per year. Annual leave is the good stuff. This summer I used my annual leave to spend a week at Boy Scout camp in the Georgia mountains with my son and the other boys of Troop 177. We climbed a mountain and enjoyed the awesome view of the valley below together from an overlook

rock. We went white water rafting and I saw the look of excitement in their eyes. I watched as my son and his buddies learned self responsibility and working together. I saw the looks of weary satisfaction on their faces as we journeyed home. In August I'll use annual leave to attend the NALC national convention and take part in the union business conducted there.

Many of us have been working six day weeks and ten hour days. Many are forced to work overtime when not on the list. Many are forced to work overtime when we just don't want any more. Let your annual leave be your "you" time. Use your annual leave to recuperate. Use your annual leave well. We'll cover for you.

In Solidarity..

President's Station Visits

Commerce	Wednesday	August 9
Seminole	Friday	August 11
Sulphur Springs	Wednesday	August 23
Ybor	Friday	August 25
Hyde Park	Wednesday	August 30
TCA 07	Friday	September 1
TCA 09	Wednesday	September 6
Produce	Friday	September 8
Interbay 33611	Wednesday	September 13
Interbay 33629	Friday	September 15
Forest Hills .	Wednesday	September 20
Forest Hills Annex	Friday	September 22
Hilldale	Wednesday	September 27
Town & Country	Friday	September 29

TLC, Inc. Board of Directors Meeting Summary

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm by Chairman Obst. The minutes of the previous meeting were accepted as read. The financial report was given by John Gebo. Building manager's report by Mike Anderson. There have been problems with the air conditioners in the hall. Three compressors must be replaced and both air conditioner units in the recreation room must also be replaced for a total cost of \$11,579.00. A motion was made, seconded and passed to repair and replace the necessary a/c units. The ice machine is not working and will be repaired this week. A motion was made, seconded and passed to start collecting a \$300.00 deposit on all future hall rentals. The new doors have been installed. A new contract that was submitted by Hillsborough County Sheriff Gee, regarding the use of off-duty deputies as security guards for rentals, was read by Chairman Obst. He appointed a committee to look into other alternative security guards. A motion was made, seconded and passed to donate \$500.00 to the "Make a Wish Foundation". The meeting was adjourned at 8:45 pm.

Jim Good, Secretary, Tampa Letter Carriers, Inc.

Health and Welfare Report

Joseph Keane, retiree, passed away.
 Louis Lopez, retiree, passed away.
 Paul Kazmarek, recovering from surgery.

Health Benefits Alert

Medical Alert: If you are 65 and qualify for Medicare benefits and **YOU DID NOT** elect to, or did not purchase a Medicare Part D prescription plan, and you elected to remain with the NALC and use Caremark as your prescription provider, you need to contact Caremark at the number on the back of your membership card. Ask them if they are your primary or secondary provider. If they are the primary, you are okay. If they tell you they are the secondary, follow the information below.

Medicare has erroneously notified the NALC that members have chosen to have some other insurance company pay for your prescriptions. Because of this Caremark has to block your prescription refills because they have become the secondary provider and this other insurance company is now your primary provider and Caremark will fill **NO** prescriptions for you.

If this has happened to you, act immediately to get the situation cleared up. First call Medicare at 1-800-633-4227. Tell them you were enrolled in error. Ask for the name and phone number of the part D carrier you were enrolled with. Call the provider at the number Medicare gave you. Tell them you need instructions on how to **DISENROLL**. Follow their instructions. If you need help with this please call me at 813-220-1292 after five PM.

In unity,
 Lance Jones
 Health Benefits Representative—Branch 599

August Meetings:

- Tues 8-1-06 - Shop Stewards Meeting
 Union Hall, 7:00 PM
- Thur 8-3-06 - Branch Meeting
 Union Hall, 7:30 PM
- Tues 8-22-06 - TLC Board Of Directors Meeting
 Union Hall, 7:00 PM
- Thur 8-31-06 - Executive Board Meeting
 Union Hall, 7:00 PM



President Good presents a 60 year membership pin to Seymour Adel

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

LARGO, FL 33770-3063 CELL: 727-543-0705 FAX: 727-585-9367

bilmor@tampabay.rr.com

Unionism

by Brian Obst

Chief Steward - Branch 599

NALC: A History of Community Service

The National Association of Letter Carriers is known throughout the country as an organization whose members take not only their jobs seriously but also their position in their respective communities as well.

Throughout the history of this union its members always strive to do whatever they can to assist members of the community through various programs. These programs are many and varied from community to community and we will not be able to touch on all of them but we will hit some of the high points in this discussion.

Throughout the nation the National Association of Letter Carriers is recognized for the good work they do in helping out the local food banks of the community with the once a year Letter Carrier Food Drive. This public service does more to help raise food for the homeless and needy of our communities in one day than any other drive in the country. Many food banks would go without for a good part of the year if it wasn't for this annual drive. The letter carriers do this to help out in the community and they ask no reward for their actions because it is a part of being a member of any community, you help out when and where you can. The idea that a family will be able to sit down and have a decent meal instead of possibly going hungry is reward enough for the letter carrier. This year Branch 599 placed third in the country with over 1.3 million pounds of food collected. The people of the Tampa Bay area really answered the bell this year and also pushed Branch 1477 to number two in the country while Branch 2008 Clearwater came in at number four nationally. Over 4 million pounds of food was collected in this area. Way to go Florida. That's the way to help out

your communities.

Another way the NALC helps the community is through the good work of the MDA. The NALC has always been a big supporter of the Jerry Lewis MDA Telethon and I'm sure this year will be no different. Locally we have recently turned our efforts towards MDA to see where we could help. President Jim Good revived our Street Corner Blitz program after several years of inactivity and with the help of Drive Coordinator Eric Fleming we were able to raise over \$16,000 for MDA with our recent 3 hour Blitz, that brings our current three year total to almost \$50,000. The carriers and other volunteers are to be congratulated for their efforts and we all hope that our small part will one day help eliminate the disease once and for all.

The holiday season is when perhaps our most emotional drive occurs. The Toys For Tots Toy Drive is one of the greatest community involvements I have ever had the pleasure to be associated with. The idea of a child waking up on Christmas morning without any presents under the tree is simply unthinkable. I feel truly blessed when I see how the community responds to the Toy Drive each year and I know that the letter carriers are pleased to be able to assist the Marines in this worthy cause. The smiles on the faces of the children makes it all worthwhile.

I would like to touch on the Shriners Hospital and the availability of care for children in need. The Shriners have always been there for children and their hospitals attend to children with burn injuries or orthopedic problems. However, many people do not know that these areas of treatment may be available to them. The letter carriers of Tampa have embarked on a program

in conjunction with the Shriners where all letter carriers in Branch 599 will be given information cards so they can pass the 800 number and basic information to community members who may



have a need for Shriners assistance. This is simply another way the letter carriers can help meet the needs of their community. On a personal note, I can really relate to the Shriners and what they do for those in need. My grandson had a serious bone disorder in one of his legs and he had to go through several years of treatments and operations and the Shriners were there for him. I am happy to say that he has no ill effects from his previous problem and is enjoying life to the fullest, thanks to the Shriners.

I would like to give special recognition to Branch 2008 Clearwater for their continuing support for The Alzheimer's Family Organization. For those of you who are unaware, Branch 2008 has for the past 7 years held their annual Gong Show to raise money for this worthy organization and I highly recommend that you contact the Branch for this year's show as it is a great time for all and helps raise these needed funds.

I would like to thank all letter carriers and issue them all a hearty "Well Done" on behalf of all our communities and ask that we all keep up the good work.

In Brotherhood,

Brian Obst - Shop Steward
Town and Country

Safety on the Street

It has come to my attention that there are still carriers in Tampa who are exiting their vehicles and leaving the engine running. **This is totally unacceptable!** There is **no excuse** for any carrier to allow this to happen. It is totally preventable. Take the keys out of the ignition every time you get out of your vehicle.

There have been two rollaways/runaways in Tampa in the last year. Fortunately, no one was injured and the carriers are still working for the postal service. Please do not put yourself in a position where you could be the cause of someone being seriously injured or killed.

Members of the Tampa Safety Committee are conducting street observations and will be on the lookout for safety violations. Please observe all safety rules and regulations.

Jim Good, President - Branch 599



NALC Food Drive Coordinators, left to right, from Branch 2008 (Al Friedman), Branch 599 (Lori McMillion) and Branch 1477 (Joe Henschen) presenting plaques to Suncoast District Manager Mike Jordan and Communication Specialist Gary Sawtelle for their help in facilitating delivery of over eight million Publix bags to every residential address in Florida. These three branches came in second (1477), third (599) and fourth (2008) in the country in food collected, for a total of 4.2 million pounds.

N.A.L.C. BRANCH 599 - LABOR DAY PICNIC

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 3, 2006 12-4PM

MUSIC

INSIDE – LOCAL ARTIST 12:00-4PM

OUTSIDE – KARAOKE 12:30-3PM

FOOD

PROVIDED BY “CATERING BY THE FAMILY”

HAMBURGERS, HOT DOGS, CHICKEN, BEER, SOFT DRINKS AND WATER COTTON CANDY, SNOW CONES

KIDS

FACE PAINTING – 12:30-3:30

BALLOON SCULPTURES – 12:30-3:30

GIGANTIC WETSLIDE/MOONWALK – ALL DAY

SACK RACE, PONY RIDES – 12:30-3:30

RELAY RACES

EVERYONE

EGG TOSS, WATER BALLOON TOSS, BILLIARDS

COST - \$5 PER FAMILY OF 5, \$2 EACH ADDTL PERSON-(SEE YOUR SHOP STEWARD)

Proceeds will be donated to MDA

And The Beat Goes On

by Ray Wallace

The Postal Warehouse

Congratulations to the Brandon Carriers for being the top office on the MDA drive.

Executive Vice-President Aeppel wrote in his July article about how many carriers refuse to go out to collect. No one likes to ask for money on the street and when you first start, you do feel a little uncomfortable. However, when the people see that vest with the words, "Give for MDA", and the money starts flowing from the windows, you get a rush, a feeling that you are doing something great. If you could see a child in a wheelchair and realize that the money you are collecting will help MDA with the money needed for that wheelchair, then how can you refuse to go out?

Branch 599 is going to have a Labor Day picnic on Labor Day weekend and Brandon Shop Steward Terry Franklin is in charge. I'm sure he will need some helpers. If you have the time, volunteer to help. Hope to see you all there.

Wow, did you read President Jim Good's

July article where he said Postmaster Nancy Fryrear told him to mind his own business? All goes to prove you don't get to be the Tampa Postmaster by being a nice person. I remember when Ms. Fryrear was nice but I guess those days are gone forever. Another price a person pays to go up the ladder in Postal management.

When are they going to hire enough people in Tampa so that all carriers don't have to work six days a week? I have a carrier friend that can't get a day off. After 30 years in the Post Office he is extremely tired. If a carrier is not on the overtime list, they should not be forced to work, especially after putting in 30 years. From what I hear, the retirees outnumber the new hires. People can't wait to get the hell out anymore. The Post Office is not the nice place it once was. Management never was any good but now, from what I hear, it's really the pits. Service is a thing of the past.

The President of Branch 1477 West Coast Florida wrote an article in the July issue of his branch paper. He said that in a station visit to Largo, he found 25 to 30 feet of mail stacked up on most routes and in St. Petersburg, one route had 60 feet. He said maybe they should change the name from U.S. Postal Service to U.S. Postal Warehouse and should change the motto from We Deliver to You Mail It, We

Stack It. This is not new. This goes on year after year. What a disgrace! Why big stores keep sending their circulars to the Post Office is a big mystery. In any private company in the world, the managers who would allow this to happen would be fired. Only in the Post Office do they promote them.

If you ever worked in the Brandon Post Office, whether retired or transferred to another station (such as Bob Norman, who transferred to Tampa), or you are still active but close to retiring, we would like to see you at the Brandon Luncheon on Tuesday, October 10th. It will be held at Buddy Freddy's on Route 60, Brandon, at 2:00 p.m.

I don't know how many of you remember Luther Sands. He was the first union president of Brandon when they had their own local. He is also a past president of the Florida State Association. Luther, now residing in Bushnell, recently celebrated his 80th birthday. He called me and said he hopes to make that luncheon. Hope to see a lot of you there.



A Point of Personal Privilege

by Leslie Ray Garcia

You're In Good Hands

To those that think the powers to be at L'Enfant Plaza care about the longevity of the USPS, you need go no further than to look at the two multi-million dollar contracts made with two of our largest competitors. The first of these contracts was with Federal Express and it seems that before the ink was dry, Fed Ex purchased additional jet aircraft and vehicles that have air conditioning. This company transported priority mails and express mailings but not on Saturdays because they are closed! The newest contract is with United Parcel Service and UPS is enlarging their major hub and hiring approximately 5,000 employees. Where did the USPS get the money for this new contract with UPS when they state that there is no money in the budget to hire additional letter carriers? Maybe they got the money from the union endorsed *Customer Connect* program. As of June 2, 2006, letter carriers have drummed up new business to the tune of \$180 million dollars. What are the letter carriers' rewards for our diligent efforts? Can you guess? I think we have a winner! Yes, it is an increase in discipline.

The Bush administration has killed the leader of the Iraqi Al-Qaeda, Abu Musab al-Zarqawi and allegedly thwarted an attempt to blow up the Sears Tower in Chicago but these terrorists had no explosives and no definite plans for this operation. They seem to have been simply talking about it. The FBI supposedly thwarted a plan that was to initially have bombed the Holland Tunnel in Manhattan but was later changed to the PATH tunnel that would have flooded lower Manhattan including Wall Street. An Osama wannabe, Amir Andaloussi was captured in Lebanon in April of this year and is the mastermind of this terrorist plot. Yet, this news was leaked to the media one year to the day of the July 7th bombings in London. There was no comment from the FBI or the New York Police Department about the investigation which has been kept under wraps since April. As far as flooding Manhattan this would have defied the laws of physics because Manhattan is above sea level and, without a sophisticated plumbing system, this is impossible. What may have been flooded would have been some basements in Manhattan. The news media printed a blurb stating that the Bush administration had the CIA close down its unit

hunting Osama bin Laden. It seems Bush, Inc. planted a story that Osama was consolidating his power over al-Qaeda and was an ever growing threat. Something doesn't add up here. The CIA isn't hunting Osama anymore and Bush has stated he isn't important any longer, so how is bin Laden becoming an increasing threat? These terror alerts seem to be coincidental and seem to be an attempt to reinforce the claim by Republicans that they are the political group strong on national security, especially with the 2006 mid-term elections on the horizon. Karl Rove and company seem to be playing the *fear card* to win the upcoming elections, like they did in 2004.

Congressman Jack Murtha, a Democrat, has gone on record that the US military should withdraw from Iraq to points close to that country to stop the death of our troops because they are no longer being seen as liberators but they are seen as occupiers. The Republicans have attacked this policy as "*cut and run*". All democrats that advocate Congressman Murtha's plan are being labeled as cowards and even traitors. The majority of those Republicans who have slandered the supporters of Murtha's plan were never in combat and most did not even serve in the military. Some of these individuals include George W. Bush, Dick Cheney, Charles Hastert, Bill Frist, Rick Santorum, Jon Kyl, Saxby Chambliss, Rudy Guiliani, Karl Rove, Newt Gingrich, Jeb Bush, George Pataki, Sean Hannity, Rush Limbaugh, Bill O'Reilly, Charlie Daniels and Ted Nugent. By the way, Congressman Jack Murtha is a decorated U. S. Marine who served honorably in Vietnam.

In a 52-46 vote, Republicans defeated a bill to increase the federal minimum wage from \$5.15 to \$7.25 by 2008. On 6/22/06 in the business section of the Tampa Tribune, a writer stated that the bill was not relevant because Florida has the wages set at \$6.40 per hour. \$5.15 an hour is \$10,712.00 per year, \$6.40 an hour is \$13,312.00 per year and \$7.25 an hour is \$15,080.00 per year. The poverty level for all Americans is near \$21,000.00 per year or about \$10.75 an hour. Earlier this year Republicans voted themselves a salary increase while denying minimum wage workers of this country a small pay raise.

All evidence indicates that everyone of the 9-11 hijackers came from the Arabian Pen-

insula or Pakistan. Yet, why was the main hunt for their associates limited to Latin American nations that favored anti-Bush presidential candidates? The President of Venezuela, Hugo Chavez, is and was one of these individuals. Chavez furnished cheap oil to the Bronx and other poor communities throughout the United States. President Chavez offered to sell oil to the Bush administration for \$50 a barrel which would have lowered gas at the pumps to around \$2.00 a gallon but Bush, Inc. turned Chavez down. It seems President Bush is loyal to the Saudi Arabia controlled OPEC cartel but not to the electorate of the United States of America.



Something right out of *The Twilight Zone* happened in a county in Albuquerque, New Mexico during the 2004 US Presidential election. It seems George W. Bush swept Precinct# 512 with 206 votes while only 166 ballots were cast. In Precinct# 558, 319 votes for Bush were produced by a total of 178 absentee ballots. Democratic Precinct# 14 reported 114 out of 207 ballots showed no mark for Kerry/Edwards and democratic stronghold Precinct# 46 had over half of the absentee ballots recorded as no choice for President. Almost every precinct recording more votes than registered voters went to Bush/Cheney camp but almost all precincts with huge ballots that were uncounted went to Kerry/Edwards. It seems every case and every time all extra votes were for Bush/Cheney but all votes lost were for Kerry/Edwards. There were 3,107,490 provisional ballots distributed in the 2004 election but 1,090,729 of these ballots were rejected. In Iowa there were 36,811 uncounted ballots and Bush/Cheney had a winning margin of 10,059 votes, in New Mexico there were 33,981 uncounted ballots and the Bush/Cheney's winning margin was 5,988 and in Ohio the uncounted total was 239,127 and the victory margin for Bush/Cheney was 118,599. There is evidence that on several poll tapes the tally of votes for Kerry/Edwards were not shown because Kerry/Edwards were not listed as "Candidate Choices." The exit polls at 1:05 AM had the male vote at 51% for Kerry/Edwards and 49% for Bush/Cheney. The female vote was at 53% for Kerry/Edwards but 47% for Bush/Cheney. At 6:41AM it seems goblins and poltergeists finally released thousands of locked up voters from their booths to change the exit poll numbers as follows: Male voters 47% for Kerry/

Around The Horn

by Tony Diaz

*Financial Secretary - Branch 599****Gimme 5 for COLCPE***

Brothers and Sisters, each month for the past several months the Postal Record has been aggressively pushing the "Gimme 5 for COLCPE". Just a brief reminder; COLCPE stands for Committee on Letter Carrier Political Education and the object is to prepare the union for the 2006 and 2008 election seasons. In March, NALC President William H. Young announced the campaign and the goal is simple: to get as many active NALC members as possible to commit to giving at least \$5 per paycheck. Here again is how to go about that; you can contribute \$5 a pay period through PostalEase or \$10 a month through electronic funds transfer directly from your bank account. Retirees may also contribute \$5 a month from their annuity. You can sign up on line by going to the NALC homepage and click on to the Gimme 5 caption. The goal is to double the size of COLCPE so the NALC will be able to support hundreds of letter carrier volunteers who will work on critical election campaigns. Raising that much would restore

the political action committee's ranking as one of the top 10 PAC's in the country, a position it held consistently throughout the 1980's. At the beginning of the campaign we had dropped to 37th place - behind both UPS and FedEx. These corporations have agendas that threaten letter carrier jobs and benefits. Increasing automatic contributions from 2.5% to 5% would allow the union to better plan its political activities knowing there will be a consistent source of income. "We need friends in the White House and in Congress who support legislation that benefits letter carriers and all working families," President Young said, "COLCPE helps us get friends like these elected." Between February and April, about 1000 members signed up to push the total to 7892, an increase of 15.3%. From April to July 1st, that total had increased to 9450, and the goal is 10,000 before the National Convention in August. T-shirts will highlight the special COLCPE Day set for Thursday, August 17 in Las Vegas. The shirts, designed to honor those who have signed up for automatic deductions by July 15, also will be given to anyone who make

individual contributions in 2006 by July 1. A sea of roughly 7500 "Gimme 5 for COLCPE" tees will be worn throughout the day. I am excited to be part of this campaign as I recently began electronic funds transfer from my bank account. In previously years I had been making donations by check once a year until realizing how important it is for the union to know what monies it can rely on monthly. The COLCPE campaign is about saving our jobs and you can contribute for 50 cents a day. Its somewhat amazes me that many of our Branch 599 members are not on board with COLCPE.



Look forward to talking to you again on the next Around The Horn

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Retirees Report

by John Gebo

*Director of Retirees - Branch 599***Get Involved**

Dear Brothers and Sisters of Branch 599, on July 10, 2006, I picked up Brother Joe Oliva to go to the Retirees Breakfast at the *Coffee Cup*. It was my first time attending and, much to my surprise, there were ten retirees at the breakfast, including fellow retiree, President Jim Good. Not only was the food great, but also the fellowship. We talked about the "days of old" and how it was then and how it is now. Most of us agreed that things were better back when we carried mail than now. Carriers were much closer to each other and stuck together. Carriers on their own would help each other to get out of the office and take a trip without management knowing. I guess those days are long gone. Thanks to postal management for screwing up a good job.

Other things that we talked about were our health plan, thrift savings, political action and some good old B.S.

It was a very enjoyable breakfast with my fellow retirees. Please join us next month for

the Retirees' Breakfast. I am sure you will enjoy it as much as I did. Tell a friend, bring a friend. If there is any retiree in the Temple Terrace area that needs a ride to attend the breakfast, or you have any questions, please give me a call - 985-5474.

On August 13th, Branch 599 will be sending 29 delegates to Las Vegas to the National Convention. Approximately one-third of the delegates are retirees. With the size of the membership we have, the National By-Laws state 1 delegate for every 20 members. So, actually we could be sending roughly 50 delegates. The point I am trying to make once again is "GET INVOLVED". At this year's convention, one of the most important things is the nomination of future national officers. These are the people who will be negotiating your next contract. Let's make sure we vote for the right people. We retirees find it hard to understand that active carriers aren't more concerned about their livelihood and the union. If retirees care, why don't active carriers care?

It was good to see some new faces at last month's meeting, along with the old ones.

It still amazes me that carriers know the way to the union hall to receive their gratuity check. There are some carriers who have been members for years and never seen the inside of the union hall. A carrier once asked me where the union hall was located. This was a carrier who had over ten years as a member and didn't know where the union hall was. I think the only reason he asked then was because he had an appointment with the president to see about getting out on stress. Let's show up to our union meetings and functions, not just to get a gratuity check out to drop out of the union.

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

Fraternally,

John Gebo

**Personal Privilege** (from page 8)

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Edwards while 52% were for Bush/Cheney and female voters were split evenly 50% for Kerry/Edwards and 50% for Bush/Cheney. It seems that more Democratic ballots are spoiled more readily than any Republican ballots especially during the 2000 and 2004 Presidential Elections. I guess Republicans are more devious than Democrats and maybe Republicans have a better recipe to cook the books than Democrats. The Republican recipe was tested in 2000, practiced in 2004 and will be perfected by 2008.

"I want to know the truth."
George W. Bush

Summer Travel (from page 11)

& Resorts, for example, is offering summer Getaway Packages designed for couples or families, including relaxing features like gift bags, late checkout, complimentary breakfast and special rates on their Sleep Number beds, which allow sleepers to individually personalize their comfort on each side of the bed. Oftentimes, intangible benefits like these make the difference in any hotel stay and make your vacation more enjoyable. Radisson hotels offer Express Yourself guest check-in service, where guests can check-in via www.radisson.com at their convenience up to seven days in advance of their arrival, providing an expedited check-in and note special service preferences (such as requesting a room on a high or low floor) to have more control over their hotel stay.

Befriend a local

There's no better way to learn your way around a new town or environment than by asking a local, such as a hotel concierge or front desk person. It's a great way to learn about the best places to eat,

the best sights to see, and the best ways to get around an unfamiliar area. Asking a local will not only help you avoid unnecessary headaches and unpleasant experiences, it will oftentimes make your trip more memorable.

Keep a checklist

It's a good idea to make a checklist of things you'll need before packing for your trip, but it's an even better idea to bring that list along. By adding the things you acquire on your trip, you'll have a ready-made list for packing when it's time to return. This is a great way to make your return a stress-free and enjoyable part of a great summer getaway.

For additional travel tips, visit <http://www.freetraveltips.com>. For more information on Radisson and the Getaway Packages, visit <http://www.radisson.com/Getaway>. For more information on the Sleep Number bed, visit <http://www.selectcomfort.com>.

Courtesy of ARA Content

Dangers of Overdoing it in the Summer Heat

With longer days, warmer temperatures, and an abundance of sunshine, it's no wonder so many of us take to the outdoors for summertime fun. While it feels great to be outside for recreational activities and exercise in the summer, too much exertion can lead to serious health problems.

"When the temperature soars and humidity rises, it is time to take precautions to avoid dangerous health consequences such as heat exhaustion, heat stroke and overexposure to the sun," says Dr. Sean Robinson, assistant professor of education at Argosy University/ Washington DC and ACE-certified personal trainer.

Seniors, children, and people with chronic illnesses are most susceptible to heat exhaustion and stroke, however, everyone is at risk. Many tell-tale symptoms and warning signs are associated with heat exhaustion, including dry mouth, fatigue, dizziness, headache, weak and rapid pulse, and cool, clammy, pale skin. And many of these symptoms take several hours to appear.

"The early symptoms of heat exhaustion can sneak up on us," explains Dr. Robinson. "Some people feel a bit lightheaded and weak, and

might have a touch of nausea. The serious problems develop when symptoms are ignored and additional fluids are not taken right away." Dehydration - and the resulting loss of electrolytes such as sodium - is the primary cause of heat exhaustion. Dr. Robinson advises people to stay well-hydrated and take in extra salt. "Drink even though you don't feel like it - you can't count on your thirst mechanism to prompt you."

Heat stroke is the most severe form of heat illness and is a life-threatening emergency. It is the result of long, extreme exposure to the sun, in which a person does not sweat enough to lower body temperature, reaching over 103 degrees. People suffering from heat stroke may experience extremely serious medical conditions, including hot, dry, red skin; no sweating at all; disorientation, hallucinations, or delirium; convulsions; and a loss of consciousness.

"Heat stroke can occur within 10 to 15 minutes of the first symptoms. If treatment is not given immediately, permanent damage can occur to internal organs," says Dr. Robinson. He also emphasizes that heat stroke is a medical emergency. "Call 911 or transport the victim immediately to a hospital." While waiting for medical help, Dr. Robinson advises that an attendee



to a heat stroke victim should move him or her to a cool place indoors and lower the body temperature by wrapping the victim in wet sheets, wet clothing or ice packs.

Summer is always a great season to enjoy and be physically active in the fine weather and outdoor opportunities. Knowing the signs of heat exhaustion and heat stroke, and what to do when one is exposed to these conditions, will help keep you, your family and friends healthy and safe during the dog days of summer.

Courtesy of ARA Content

Summer Travel - Tips to Keep Your Trip Relaxing

If you're like many Americans, the arrival of summer means it's time to travel. According to the Travel Industry Association of America, visiting friends and relatives, and going to a beach or lake are some of the top activities planned by most summer travelers. Whatever your plans, the following tips from Radisson Hotels & Resorts can help keep your summer trip what it should be -- convenient, relaxed and fun.

Plan ahead

As simple as it seems, there are many ways planning ahead can save undue stress down the road. For example, if your trip involves driving, take time to visit the Department of Transportation Web site or auto club, if you are a member, for road conditions, closings and rest areas along your route. If your trip involves flying or other mass transit, be sure to plan your transportation to the airport to allow ample time for unexpected delays. Planning ahead always saves far more time than it takes -- and will get your trip off to a stress-free start.

Pack light

Overpacking is all too common, and it can literally weigh a trip down. One simple trick is to plan outfits around one or two color themes. This allows you to mix and match articles of clothing, requiring fewer complete outfits. Also bring clothes that can be layered depending upon the temperature. Travel with as few pieces of luggage as possible. Consider rolling clothes rather than folding, which allows for tighter packing without wrinkling. The inside of shoes is a great and often unused source of extra space as well. Finally, to identify your bags faster, put a distinguishing luggage tag or ribbon on the handle to spot them easier at baggage claim.

Enjoy the ride

Road trips can be an enjoyable way to see the country and reconnect with family and loved ones. Think of ways to make the ride a fun one before departing. Consider buying new music or an audiobook to enjoy together. Or take the road less traveled and take in some

interesting tourist or educational sights. Also, take advantage of the time to talk with kids and family.

Fly right

By booking your flight early and requesting specific seats you can make your flight more enjoyable. Seats next to wings often provide the smoothest ride, while bulkhead and emergency seating provides the most legroom. If you'll be in a hurry once the plane arrives, request a row near the front of the plane. Because every airline offers different amenities, it is also a good idea to bring headphones, a travel pillow, or even a sleep mask -- anything to make your flight more comfortable and help you arrive rested.

Look for perks

If you're staying in a hotel during your trip, be sure to consider summer deals and perks before booking. Many hotels offer special amenity packages to summer travelers. Radisson Hotels

(continued on page 10)

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