



Tampa Letter Carrier

Volume 7 - Issue 8

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

Tampa, Florida

August 2008

President's Report

66th Biennial Convention

On July 21st the National Association of Letter Carriers convened their 66th Biennial Convention. For those of you who have never attended a national convention, or been part of a delegation of seven, eight, or sometimes nine thousand fellow letter carriers, I can only say that you should go if you ever get the opportunity. It is an awesome experience that you will never forget. This gathering of delegates, from all fifty states and the territories of Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands, serves many purposes.

Each morning starts with educational classes with varying topics, ranging from Contract Administration, City Delivery, and Health Benefits to Retirement, Mutual Benefits Association news and the Letter Carrier Food Drive, just to name a few. These classes run from 7:30 until 9:30 am and are repeated every afternoon from 2:15 until 4:15 pm.

These classes are voluntary in nature, not a mandatory part of each delegate's schedule, but many of our branch's delegates attend numerous classes to keep updated on national current events and hear the latest news and facts directly from our national officers who teach the classes. These same officers/instructors are available immediately

after class for individual conversation, if you are quick enough in getting to the front of the line.

The convention is called to order at 10:00 am each day and runs until 2:00 or 3:00 pm, depending on the amount of business needing to be covered. One of the most important agenda items dealt with at the National Convention is resolutions submitted by branches and state associations. If approved by the convention delegation, these resolutions become the policy of the union. The National Resolution Committee examines each resolution submitted to see if it has been submitted previously, if it is in the best interests of all our members, and if it will weaken or strengthen our union. The committee then gives its recommendation as to whether or not to pass the resolution and the vote of the convention delegates is taken. If the resolution is passed, it becomes our position on this particular issue.

On the second day of the convention another important item of business takes place, which is the vote on constitutional amendments. The importance of this part of the convention was shown in detail at the 65th Biennial Convention in Las Vegas in 2006. Amendments to Article 1, Section 2 and Article 8, Section 7, were passed that took away an individual state association's ability to finance training and education seminars (giving that responsibility to the National Business Agent's office) and shift those funds to legislation. This gave President Young the backing he needed to move forward with his *Field Plan for the Future*, which established Congressional District Liaisons (CDLs). These CDLs are union members appointed at the state level who work closely with their congressional representatives, keeping them informed as to current legislation that will

by Jim Good

President - Branch 599



benefit the Postal Service and the National Association of Letter Carriers.

Many union members and fellow letter carriers sometimes joke about the delegates and the "paid vacations" they receive by being elected to attend these conventions. There are just a few things that everyone needs to remember about these delegates. First, anyone can be a paid delegate. Branch 599 is permitted to send as many as fifty-two delegates to the convention, although never once have we met that limit. To become a convention delegate, all a member has to do is attend eight branch meetings each year for the two years preceding the convention. Second, every delegate is at the convention on his own time, with the exception of the branch president.

That means that this year twenty-five branch members gave forty hours of their own vacation time to represent the almost eleven hundred members of Branch 599. I invite you all to start coming to branch meetings so you can qualify to do the same.

Thanks to all of this year's delegates for your commitment.

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Branch Meeting

Thursday, August 7

7:30 PM

at the Union Hall

Branch 599 Officers

PRESIDENT	Jim Good	(813) 417-8877
EXECUTIVE VICE-PRESIDENT	Dook Ramotar	(813), 404-4380 cell
VICE-PRESIDENT	Gilbert Cabanas	(813) 855-0516, cell 597-7396
RECORDING SECRETARY	Mike Brink	(813) 661-1106
FINANCIAL SECRETARY	Tony Diaz	(813) 598-9635
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	A. Sam Santilli	(813) 215-7595

Presidents Emeritus

Michael Anderson	Orbe Andux
Don Thomas	Garland Tickle

Branch 599 Shop Stewards

Brandon	33510	Terry Franklin	(813) 758-3061
Brandon	33511	Phil Chirico	(813) 657-3180
Carrollwood	33618	Dook Ramotar	(813) 404-4380
Commerce	33602	Rickey Robinson	(727) 409-1911
Forest Hills	33612	Warren Sumlin	(813) 486-7612
Forest Hills Annex	33613	Alan Robinson	(813) 843-9762
Hilldale	33614	A. Sam Santilli	(813) 215-7595
Hilldale Annex	33634	Gilbert Cabanas	(813) 597-7396
Hyde Park	33606	Tom Cobert	(813) 694-0711
Interbay	33611	Sammy Graham	(813) 832-6644
Interbay	33629	Jim Tobin	(813) 716-3696
MacDill	33608	Sammy Graham	(813) 832-6644
Palm River	33619	J.C. Howard	(813) 621-1976
Plant City	33565	Jim Davis	(813) 961-6865
Port Tampa	33616	Sammy Graham	(813) 832-6644
Produce	33610	Eric Fleming	(813) 310-8274
Ruskin / Sun City Center	33570	Jack Hencoski	(813) 685-9034
Seminole Heights	33603	Tony Diaz	(813) 598-9635
Sulphur Springs	33604	Brian Obst	(727) 458-0679
Tampa Carrier Annex	33607	Dook Ramotar	(813) 404-4380
Tampa Carrier Annex	33609	Dennis Lorenzo	(813) 966-3989
Temple Terrace	33617	Sean John	(617) 513-6467
Town & Country	33615	Brian Obst	(727) 458-0679
Town & Country	33635	Brain Obst	(727) 458-0679
Ybor City	33605	Detlev Aeppel	(813) 505-7914

A.R. "Tony" Huerta NALC Branch 599
3003 W. Cypress St.
Tampa, Florida 33609-1617
Tel: (813) 875-0599 Fax: (813) 870-0599
email: nalc599@verizon.net
website: <http://www.nalc599.com>

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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

Under Time

You walk through the door to begin your tour. A note is by the clock: "Carrier Whomever you have a trip on Route 000 due to the fact D.O.I.S says you will have under time."

This is pretty much the norm of the day. I mentioned this subject previously and I feel that it needs to be mentioned again. This is no more than intimidation by the upper management to get you to do more and more but there is just so much more you can do without not having to give up your lunch (30 minutes) breaks (10 minutes) and forbid it if you have to take any bathroom breaks.

Years ago at Commerce a carrier agreed to cut his breaks and do certain things if the Post Master would agree to case and carry his Route for the day. Maybe we should have the upper management have the supervisor put in the D.O.I.S numbers, have the carriers case the route, and then let the manager run the office and the supervisor carry the route that day with the under time he estimated it will

take to do the route and come on back in

If there isn't any under time on that day, the carrier will carry the route and the supervisor will carry another route with under time. This way the supervisor can say "Hey! I did the route and I know how long it takes in the street."

In today's environment I would agree to the suggestion. The carrier should have a clipboard to point out the mistakes of the supervisor. But this won't ever happen. The supervisor knows one day delivery is not delivering 5 days a week 52 weeks a year.

There are so much more in delivering the mail that management does not take in to account.

At one station recently a carrier had an accident with an individual walking against the light. The individual was cited and given a ticket for being in the wrong. Do you think that was the end of it? No! the carrier was put off the clock in a no pay status.

This is the summer months and we have to look out for the kids as well as the adults jaywalking. We try to do our best

by Dook Ramotar

Executive Vice-President - Branch 599

everyday. Mistakes happen and when they do whether its our fault or not we are the ones held responsible.



Therefore we have to be careful and to do so takes time. Where in the 1838 does management give us credit to do our job in a safe manner each and everyday?

So we go back to the word under time. What if as carriers we mention to the supervisor did you give me credit for being a careful driver today?

Running with you, until next month,

Dook Ramotar Sr.

"It's not that I'm so smart, it's just that I stay with problems longer."

Albert Einstein

Things You Should Know

Your Route

First I would like to congratulate my friend Mr. Bill Mandikas on his retirement from the Postal Service. I worked with Bill at the old Hilldale station for about 15 years. It appears that another friend from Hilldale has also decided to retire, Mr. Chuck Rackett. Both will be missed as their vast experience and great service will be hard to duplicate, may both have a long and healthy retirement life. I doesn't appear that the Postal Service will need to offer an early out packages, not at the rate the letter carriers are retiring. In May there were 4 carriers that opt out, this month there were another 5 that retired. So why would the Postal Service offer any early out packages, when retiring from the Post Office might be the real insensitive. I understand that the Postal Service replaces our retirees with PTFs or TE employees

but doesn't promote the junior employee anymore. I have now joined Dook as the other retiree to serve as a Shop Steward. I have been assigned to the Steward at the Hilldale Annex. Also, I am still in charge of the EEO program for Tampa. There are still a few letter carriers that work at the annex that were there at the old Hilldale Station in 1993. I heard that our rate of accident have not reduced since last year [2007], could these accidents be linked to our under time-DOIS program. Please try to focus on your driving every day because any accident can be pivotal for your career, especially if involved with a customer. Now I know that the under time is being tightened which will make your routes longer, but your driving focus must be your main concern. So not only is DOIS computing your mail volume every day, you are also expected to perform your street duties in the same manner every day. So if you carry 12 feet of mail with your 3rd bundle on Tuesdays/Wednesdays, those numbers can be matched against any Tuesdays/Wednesday with the same volume. Your

by Gilbert Cabanas

Vice-President - Branch 599

loading time is also recorded every day with similar numbers in order to determine any down time. This system may be right or wrong, but your should know your own volume of mail because the computers have that information. So if the Postal Service knows your loading time, office time, and street time, with different volumes of mail, don't you think you should? Now I know that most carriers just do their job every day without and regards to their volume of mail. This is your route so please become familiar with your volume of mail that controls the size of your route. When your every day performance and volume of mail can be used/ compared against you, it is your job to become familiar with that data.



ARSLAN UNIFORMS

Bill & Shirley Moran

Retired Letter Carrier Branch 1477 St. Petersburg

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Around The Horn

by Tony Diaz

*Financial Secretary - Branch 599***Route Inspections**

By now all of you should realize with the decreasing mail volumes that management is out to recoup, regain and recover as much under time as possible. To accomplish this carriers can expect to be counted in the office and followed on the street.

You will hear much more about Form 1838-C and Form 3999. Should Management decide to count your mail (1838-C) they must give you a days notice, should they decide to follow you on the street (3999), no notification is required. Casing standards are as follows, 18 letters per minute and 8 flats per minute for route evaluation and adjustment purposes. Upon request, you have the right to verify the examiners count. Remember, the examiner must act as an observer and not a supervisor. You should not be told to change the way you deliver your route, deliver your route as you do on a daily basis.

The NALC and the Postal Service have agreed that there is no standard or minimum street pace that a carrier is required to maintain. Do not allow yourself to be intimidated into speeding up on the day of inspection. The examiner may not set the pace for you; for exam-

ple, they should not walk in front of you with a quicker pace. The examiner should however maintain a position to observe you, usually at your side or behind you. There should be no discussion of the route evaluation or the mail volume with you throughout the day.

Here are some delivery tips you should know; do not finger mail when walking up or down stairs, steps or curbs, when crossing streets, or at any time it might create a safety hazard to yourself or to the public. Do not finger mail while driving or hold mail in your hands or on your lap while the vehicle is in motion. You should cross lawns to deliver mail only if there is, in your opinion, no safety hazard, such as a dog, slippery surface, snow or ice (maybe not in Tampa), uneven terrain (very important in avoiding spraining ankles or tripping) or other unusual obstacles. The examiner may not instruct you to cross lawns that you do not cross during the year. Only during street supervision, separate from the route examination, may a supervisor order you to cross a specific lawn that he/she believes is an obvious shortcut. Should you not agree with the supervisor see the shop steward to look into your situation. Be familiar with your job, there are handbooks and manuals that cover everything you need to know.

Quick Hits: Information you should know

*) The third COLA has reach \$956, equaling 46 cents per hour, or \$36.78 per pay period. This one may reach into the fifties per hour before all is calculated.

*) There are 681 active career Letter Carriers that are within our Branch 599 region. We have 662 as union members, that equals 97.2% organized, leaving only 19 non-members and the majority of those are 204b's that still count against our roster. That certainly is one of the highest percentages in the entire country.

*) With the hiring of Transitional Employees completed we are losing the battle of attrition. Many of our Brothers and Sisters eligible to retire are doing so. In past several months, Branch 599 is averaging a couple of retirements a month, including having three in May and June. Incorporate a couple of carrier transfers to other cities and career changes and I think you get my point. With the declining mail volumes don't expect to see many new employees around, outside a mutual swap or a transfer in.

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

**Health and Welfare**

We are sad to announce that retired carrier Hercules Johnson has passed away. We send our deepest condolences out to his family.

Dean Minter is recovering from knee surgery and Donald Carr is recovering from hip surgery. We wish them both a speedy recovery.

Arslan Uniform Drawing

The name drawn at the July Branch meeting for the \$120.00 Arslan Uniform prize was retired Forest Hills carrier Pat Alley. Because Pat was not in attendance, the prize will go up to \$130.00 for the August meeting. Why not come to the meeting, hear what is going on in **your** union and win \$130.00 if your name is drawn.

And The Beat Goes On

by Ray Wallace

Bad Leadership

Wow, August already. Time sure flies. Whether you're working, or retired and doing nothing, there is no stopping *Father Time*.

A few carriers said to me, Ray where is your article? I miss it. After almost twenty years of writing *And the Beat Goes On*, it is hard to stop and I miss seeing it in print also. But as I've said before, when you're not active and on the workroom floor everyday, what can you write about? I wish I was like the F.B.I. and had a few informants to give me some news about the Brandon P.O.

I have had a few stories given to me and some are hard to believe. A manager and/or postmaster would give such a stupid order that I had to call the carrier at home to verify it. "Did this really happen?", I had to ask. Especially with Scott, who was sent by the postmaster to Tampa with his outgoing mail and he did not get back to Brandon till 9 PM. And this when the postmaster himself was going this way to go home. It's hard to believe that these people are in charge of anything, much less a *First Class Post Office*.

As we all know, the Post Office is going down not only from the bad economy of the country, but from the years of *bad leadership* of the floor managers and on up the ladder to postal headquarters. Back in the 1950s, the Post Office was about the only kid on the block so to speak, especially in the parcel department. There was no FedEx, nor all the others that have sprung up all over the U.S.A., all making money from what we gave away. If it was not for the professional carriers on the street every day, and the NALC union (which has prevented many carriers from losing their jobs), the Post Office would have gone under years ago. In the past, who would have thought that the organization you work

for every day could care less about you? And God help you if you make a mistake, have an accident (even if it's not your fault), or the hundreds of others things that can happen to you out on the street. The agency you work for will do its best to terminate you.

Let me tell you a true story which is a good example of what I just wrote. This happened in the early 70s in Brandon. A T-5, on making a delivery to the street box, saw a mother tell her young daughter to run down and get the mail from the carrier. The next day the regular called in sick and they put a PTF on that route. The PTF told me that, as he drove down that street, he saw a group of young children playing across the street. He made delivery to that box and as he drove away to the next box he heard a thump. He stopped and looked in all his mirrors and saw nothing. He then proceeded on to the next box and looking again in his mirror he saw a young child laying near the cars. (As I write this I am almost crying as we lost our son on May 25th to kidney problems and I didn't realize how it has affected me.) Well, to tell you what happened, the child on seeing the mail truck ran to get

the mail as her mom had taught her to do and instead of going to the rear she went to the front and was hit by the large springs under the vehicle. They rushed her to the hospital but she had died. Needless to say the PTF was devastated as he had a little girl at home the same age. Well, the sheriff, highway patrol and postal inspectors were all involved. A different carrier told me he had a good friend who was in the Florida Highway Patrol and involved in that investigation and he said he could not believe that the Postal Inspectors did everything in their power to try to find the letter carrier guilty. You know they tore that postal vehicle apart, checking air pressure, the brakes, you name it. *He was forced to prove himself 100 % not to blame.*

A few months later the PTF became a T-5 and that route and that street were on his string. He came to me and said "Ray, I don't want to drive down that street. Is there anything you can do for me?" I asked a few carriers that were

(continued on page 7)



Recent retirees Rolando Cuevas, Jose Hernandez and John Hromalik receive congratulations and their retirement gratuity checks from Branch 599 President Jim Good

Unionism

History: Protect It

History: Protect It, Remember It But Don't Be Doomed To Repeat It

"Let us bind these people together to us with a chain that can never be broken."

These are the words of our very first president, George Washington. Washington was acutely aware of America's precarious situation and saw the development of a national postal service as a way to bind Americans together into a unified nation. While Benjamin Franklin was installed as the first Postmaster General in 1775, it actually took until 1794 for Washington's wish to become a reality.

Let us look at today and the postal events that we have been witness to under the current administration in Washington, the place named after the man with the original idea a postal service. In recent years the offices of the presidents have gone out of their way to install anti-labor men to the Postal Board of Governors. Attempts to privatize the Postal Service have been ongoing for many years, most recently with the attempts to contract out carrier positions. The next step is the program we are beginning to see throughout the country and that is the attempt to remove limited duty personnel from jobs with the Postal Service. These limited duty personnel were injured on the job and the Postal Service is attempting to find a way to rid themselves of their obligation for these individuals.

Thankfully we as members of the National Association Of Letter Carriers (NALC) had members with the foresight to see a need for organization to protect the working carrier from the people we work for (management). Without the foresight of these great men, where would we be today? The NALC was formally established in 1889 and through the previous sixteen NALC ad-

ministrations, as well as through that of current NALC president William Young, they have been fighting for carriers rights continually.

March 17, 1970, is a red letter day in the history of the NALC. In strict defiance of the back-to-work orders out of Washington, the strike went on and spread across the country like wildfire. The issues were simple: Treat the postal letter carriers like normal citizens and pay them a living wage. The eight day strike was successful in helping pass the *Postal Reorganization Act* on April 12, 1970, which provided for collective bargaining and pay increases for letter carriers.

The NALC has continued their fight on the front lines for letter carriers as proved by the latest negotiated contract, which included the removal of contract carriers in many stations around the nation and reduced ability to contract out carrier work.

I have been a letter carrier and NALC member for almost nine years now and I can tell you up-front that I don't always agree with everything done by the leaders of the union both locally as well as nationally. I can also tell you without hesitation that I support the final decisions made by our leadership 110%. Remember that this system is *one man, one vote*. If you feel strongly enough that the leadership is wrong, then let them know and follow the history of this glorious union and fight for your position.

This article is written with no agenda and has liberally taken, sometimes word for word, from the publication "*Carriers in a Common Cause*", 2006 edition. I own this book and I highly recommend all carriers obtain a copy to find out just what your union has done for you through the years. Also, if you have any non-members in your stations you might want to show them this article when you receive your copy in the U. S.

by Brian Obst

Chief Steward - Branch 599

Mail, which is hopefully delivered by a letter carrier, not a contractor. Perhaps some information is all these non-members need to make them change their minds and join the rest of us in support of the NALC.



I will be out of town for the NALC National Convention in Boston, MA, from July 20-26. Please, if you have any concerns, bring them to me or any officer of Branch 599 so we can try to get answers for you.

I'll end as always: *Remember, knowledge is the key.*

Brian Obst
Chief Steward - Branch 599

And The Beat Goes On

(from page 6)

close to that street if they would deliver it and each said, "Yes, I will." I then went to the postmaster to discuss it with him and his reply was, "The T-5 will deliver the street." I asked him, "Where is your compassion?" He said to me, "Wallace, case closed." (At that time Brandon was its own branch.)

Well, this is an example of the type of people you are working for. Be careful out there and follow all the rules.

A.R. "Tony" Huerta NALC Branch 599
3003 West Cypress Street
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(813) 875-0599 fax (813) 870-0599
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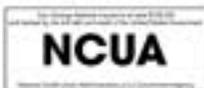
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