



Tampa Letter Carrier

Volume 9 - Issue 8

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

Tampa, Florida

August 2010

President's Report

67th Biennial Convention

The NALC 67th Biennial Convention will convene the week of August 9th. I just received a letter from Judy Willoughby, our national business agent, reporting that 941 delegates from Region Nine have been registered to attend. A total of 498 of these delegates are from Florida, with only nineteen attending from Branch 599. Our branch normally sends between twenty-five and thirty delegates so this year we will have a few less attending. The fact that the convention is being held in Anaheim, California may have had an effect on that number, especially since for the first time in the history of our branch (that I am aware of) the delegates will have to reach into their own pockets to pay for some of their expenses.

While there will be some free time to explore the sights in and around Anaheim, the main purpose of the trip, of course, is to handle the business of the union. Educational workshops and breakfasts are scheduled for mornings prior to the 10:00 A.M. general sessions, and these workshops are repeated in the afternoon after the general sessions are over. Some of the subjects of the workshops include the Contract Administration Unit, NALC Health Benefit Plan, Branch Trustee Training, Mutual Benefit Association Training, Branch Secretary Training, and many more. As you can see, there are plenty of training classes available for the delegates who want additional training, such as the shop stewards and officers.

When the General Sessions convene, the business of the union is the main

concern. Amendments are debated on the floor and voted on by the delegates. These amendments are printed and handed out prior to the debate so that the delegates can become familiar with them and be ready for discussion. Resolutions are also voted on by the delegation after receiving a recommendation of either approval or disapproval by the appropriate committee or the Executive Council.

There are also many events that are planned in the evenings after business is over. In Anaheim there will be a baseball game between the Los Angeles Angels and the Kansas City Royals on Tuesday night, a dinner honoring the national officers who have retired since the last convention, and numerous tours available throughout the convention week.

So as you can see it will be a memorable week for the delegates. Being involved in the inner workings of our union is something that is hard to describe. Most members only see what is visible from the outside looking in. They see the results of the meetings between the union and management during contract negotiations, such as increases in wages and benefits. They also see the representation that they receive when they are treated unfairly by management or step a bit out of line. The union is always there to help them get out of a jam or make sure that management follows the guidelines of the national agreement. Most don't get a chance to see what it looks like when 9,000 fellow letter carriers are gathered in a hall voting on changes that may affect the way things will be done in the future. They miss the feeling of camaraderie you get by meeting with letter carriers from across the nation and discussing how things are done in their city.

The good news is that any member can

attend the national convention as a paid delegate. All that you must do is attend eight branch meetings each year for the two years prior to the year of the convention. Branch 599, because of the numbers of members, is currently allowed to send fifty-two delegates to the national convention. Delegates are nominated at meetings in November and December of the year prior to the convention, and every nominated delegate who qualified was elected to attend as a paid delegate. Branch 599 has always been very fortunate in that we have had bingo and the rental of the union hall to bring in money to be used for conventions, shop steward training, dues rebates for the officers and stewards, Labor Day picnics, Christmas parties, and so on.

However, we now find ourselves in a financial situation where we may lose these amenities. There are a number of factors that have caused this problem. There has been a huge reduction in revenue from bingo, the worst financial crisis since the great depression, and a 50% to 60% drop in hall rentals. Our branch union hall, built in the early 1950s to be used not only as a union hall but more importantly as a community-gathering place, has outlived its usefulness. Where once it was the only place in the neighborhood to get mar-

(continued on page 5)



by Jim Good

President - Branch 599

Branch Meeting

Thursday, August 5

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	Terry Franklin	(813) 758-3061
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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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
La Septima Café
140 Parsons Ave.
in Brandon

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

Things You Should Know

by Gilbert Cabanas

Vice-President - Branch 599

Reporting an EEO Complaint

Do you feel that you're being discriminated against, overly harassed, or disciplined at every turn? Here is the phone number in case of an EEO issue: 1-888-336-8777. You can use this number to record a brief summary of your issue. Then in about ten days you will receive a form from the Postal Service to be filled out. You can now detail your issues in a brief summary and mail this form back to the Postal Service. The local EEO office managers Janice, (877-0695) or Lisa, (877-0356), will then schedule an appointment date for your redress case.

Please be sure to call your representative about this appointment. The local office does not have to call or mail your representative this confirmation date although they sometimes do. Even though I am the branch's EEO representative, you have the right to choose anyone you wish to represent you. So, if you feel more comfortable with someone from your station, or any other officer to represent you,

just be sure to write their name on the EEO forms. I have handled over 30 cases in the past four years and have resolved many of them.

I do feel that our redress hearings can resolve many issues before they advance to a formal hearing status. This process can save the Postal Service a countless amount of money as long as our hearings are held in an open and fair exchange atmosphere. I have also been involved in a new pre-redress process, where we meet prior to a mediator being hired at a great cost to the post office. The key to any successful resolution is for both parties to be able to listen and exchange thoughts fairly.

So if you feel like a victim at your office, don't continue to stew over your problems alone. Please call the union office or myself in order to go over your issues. Once we go over all of your issues, we can determine the validity of your case. Remember at the scheduled EEO redress meeting, which is held at the airport, a local EEO officer, a mediator, and your supervisor will be in a room in order to discuss your issues. You will now be able to explain all of your concerns in

order to reach a settlement that must be fair for everyone involved. So try the redress procedure. Where else can you discuss your concerns in front of your supervisors alongside your representatives?



Please join our COLCPE at the *gimme 5* level. This is our political action fund. What a small price to pay for the protection and security of our future. Remember this money only funds those candidates who support the legislation priorities of letter carriers. As the 6 day delivery bill H.RES.173 is a must for our future, we must continue to educate these members of Congress on our issues. Also, we can support our own future by not paying anything online. So buy a stamp and save a job.

It seems like the recession has finally hit our union hall because our building expenditures are so high and revenues so low that the hall will now be sold. That will be a sad day because we have occupied our hall for over 50 years.

TLC, Inc. Executive Board Meeting Summary

June 22, 2010

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Tony Diaz at 7:00 pm. The Building Manager's Report was given by Mike Anderson. The front A/C unit in the hall is broken down. It needs to be replaced at a cost ranging from \$6368. to \$10,000. Questions were raised about financing for this unit. Mike will have another company come out and check out all three units to see what they need. A motion was made and seconded to have Mike get the front A/C fixed for \$6368.00. Amended to have Mike get two additional estimates and then make the decision himself about which company to use. Passed.

A motion from March's meeting to sell the building was brought back to the table. It was amended to list the property for \$1.5 million with the same realtor that was previously spoken to. A lengthy discussion was had. Passed.

Mike brought up the fact that State Rep. Cruz wanted to use the hall in August for a job fair. Motion was made to not donate the hall to anyone. Motion was withdrawn.

Meeting adjourned at 8:30pm.

Jim Good,
Secretary - TLC, Inc.

Health & Welfare

Our condolences go out to retiree Sy Adel on the passing of his wife Ruth on June 24th.

Condolences also go out to Brandon carrier Monica Reid and her family on the passing of her husband on July 8th.

Condolences also go out to the family of retiree John Surowiec, who passed away in April.

We also wish a speedy recovery to retiree Ray Garcia, recovering from throat surgery, and to Gladys Wallace, wife of retiree Ray Wallace, who is also recovering from surgery.

ARSLAN UNIFORMS

Bill & Shirley Moran

Retired Letter Carrier Branch 1477 St. Petersburg

Honorary Member Branch 599 Tampa

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

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

bilmor@tampabay.rr.com

TAMPA LETTER CARRIERS PRESENT

BINGO

COME JOIN THE FUN

EVERY WEDNESDAY AND FRIDAY

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

AT THE TAMPA LETTER CARRIERS HALL

3003 W. CYPRESS ST.

TAMPA, FL. 33609 813-877-4785

Retired But Not Tired

Independence Day

Dear Brothers and Sisters of Branch 599, Independence Day, commonly known as the Fourth of July is our annual celebration of nationhood. It commemorates the passage of the Declaration of Independence by the Continental Congress on July 4, 1776. Just thought I would refresh some of our minds. By the way, it is not a paid holiday for retirees!

Hope you all had an enjoyable Fourth of July. For the first time in over thirty-five years that I can remember, it was a *rain out*. Some things we can control, but the weather is not one of them. Still, all in all, I had a great weekend. I watched the parade at Bradenton Beach on Saturday with the family and the grandchildren. Sunday there was the brunch buffet at the clubhouse and the rest of the time, eating, drinking, and of course, napping.

To sell, or not to sell? Sell high, buy low. If you haven't heard by now, the Board of Directors of TLC, Inc. is putting your union building and property up for sale. A short time ago, TLC Inc. Chairman Diaz sent out a letter to all members inviting them to attend a meeting to discuss the financial situation of TLC, Inc. The attendance was very poor, but then again, the attendance at the union meetings is just as poor. Does anyone care about the future of their jobs or their investment?

We are going through some very tough times right now with the economy, six-day delivery, and contract negotiations that will affect both active carriers and retirees. Each one of us has an obligation to get involved before it is too late. Remember, United We Stand – Divided We Fall and fail. Please don't let this happen.

I enjoyed sitting with C. Fritts (retiree)

by John Gebo

Director of Retirees - Branch 599

at last month's meeting. We shared some great stories reminiscing.



On a sad note, my deepest condolences to Sy Adel on the loss of his wife, Ruth.

The next Tampa Retirees Breakfast is August 2, 2010, at the Coffee Cup in Drew Park. Hope to see you there. It would be great to see some new (old) faces. You don't have to be retired. Some of you active carriers could learn something from us, like how to survive and enjoy working for the United States Postal Service.

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

Faternally,
John Gebo

Presidents Report *(from page 1)*

ried, hold a wedding reception, dance on the weekends, etc., there are now an endless number of alternatives. As the elderly bingo players, who have come to our hall for over thirty years to play bingo (but more importantly to socialize with their friends), pass away, the younger crowd goes to the *Hard Rock Casino*, instead if Bingo to get their kicks. Because of this, bingo receipts are down by 60% or more. Weddings are getting smaller in numbers so the newlyweds who once hosted a 400-500 person reception in our hall are now looking for a smaller venue.

Because of these reasons, and many more which can be found in the "Special Report" found in Brother Tony Diaz's article on page eight of this newsletter, Tampa Letter Carriers, Inc., has put our branch union hall and accompanying land up for sale. If we sell the building and property (and I

say "if" because TLC has committed to sell only if we are offered a fair price), we will build a smaller, more reasonable size building for the branch. Many other branches throughout the country have found themselves in similar situations and have solved the problem in the same manner as what we propose to do, by downsizing.

So please stay involved and informed. Every member is welcome to attend the TLC, Inc. Board Meetings. They are held on the fourth Tuesday of every month at 7:00 pm at the union hall. And of course every member should attend the monthly branch meetings which are held the first Thursday of every month at 7:30 pm at the union hall, at 3003 West Cypress St., in Tampa.

But rest assured that your union officers and shop stewards will always be

here to represent you. The size of the building makes no difference; it's the dedication of the brothers and sisters who have devoted their time and effort to educating themselves so that they are prepared to go to bat for you. I, as well as every other board member of Tampa Letter Carriers, Inc., have thought long and hard about our decision to sell our beautiful building. We all realize the hard work and dedication that was put into building this hall, but it has become a business decision. It is the responsibility of the Board of Directors of TLC, Inc. to do the fiscally responsible thing, and in this case that is to offer the property for sale and see what offers that will bring. Understand that TLC and the union will work as one towards one goal: to protect the interests of the members of Branch 599.

Unionism

by Brian Obst

Steward's Rights under the National Agreement

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Finally the right of employee's to steward representation during an Inspection Service interrogation. This right falls under what is known as *Weingarten Rights* and comes from federal labor law. This right gives each employee the right to representation during any **INVESTIGATORY INTERVIEW WHICH HE/SHE REASONABLY BELIEVES MAY LEAD TO DISCIPLINE**. This right only applies when the meeting is an investigatory interview – when management is searching for facts and trying to determine the employee's guilt or to decide whether or not to impose discipline. This means that during an official discussion, the

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

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

Yours in brotherhood,
Brian Obst

**Arslan Uniform Drawing**

The Arslan Uniform prize for the August 5th Branch 599 meeting will be **\$380.00**. If you are in attendance at the meeting and your name is drawn, you will win the **\$380.00** donated by Bill & Shirley Moran of Arslan Uniforms. 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? The last couple of months some well-known names have been drawn, but for some reason the carriers were not here that night. Don't let that happen to you. Come to the meeting and maybe you'll go home with an extra **\$380.00** in your pocket!

We Own The Last Mile

Their Own Worst Enemy

Well, in the words of that old horror film *Poltergeist*, "They're back!" The alternate route adjustment process has moved on to the next phase which is called the Joint Alternate Route Adjustment Process (JARAP). This is the FOURTH round of adjustments in EIGHTEEN months! JARAP is probably very close to what the new alternate adjustment process will be when finally agreed to and added to our national agreement as a bona fide adjustment process. The latest version has language added that provides for extra information for the letter carrier and additional input from the local parties. At least that is the plan. In some cases this reality is all but impossible to achieve.

The JARAP process calls for both parties, management and the union, to choose certain letter carrier routes or delivery zones for review and adjustment if needed. There was no limit set on either party's ability to choose. The union went about this task in a logical and prudent manner by asking every letter carrier if they needed their route adjusted. Carriers that said yes had their route added to the list. Management in Tampa took a very differ-

ent approach. Management in Tampa boldly declared that they wanted all the city carrier routes adjusted. According to them it simply needed to be done and that was that. Bear in mind that the JARAP did indeed say either side could pick routes or whole zones and that their choice was not limited. There was no cap on how many routes or zones were selected and neither party could object to the other party's choices.

All this tough talk from management was not unexpected but then reality set in. Management in Tampa was their own worst enemy. Management in Tampa had failed miserably in meeting their requirement to have a new and current 3999 for all the routes they wanted adjusted. At the start of the JARAP process nearly half of the routes in Tampa did not have a valid 3999 on file. As discussed in previous articles, a current 3999 with the proper line of travel on a representative day and with the regular carrier for each route is necessary before any evaluation or adjustment can be attempted on any route. Due to management failure to have 3999s for all the routes, the whole process was put on hold for many Tampa delivery zones while management scrambled to complete the required 3999s. This has put a huge burden on the whole adjustment process from the carriers, to the local parties, to the DEAT Teams, to the AMS

by Detlev Aepfel

Health Benefits Representative - Branch 599

system, as everyone was compelled to complete their tasks in the very limited time the JARAP process provides.



The JARAP system is not perfect but it is a whole lot better than what we had. It is a shame that management foot dragging spoiled a good opportunity to fine tune the letter carrier routes that needed it while leaving routes that were not in need of adjustment in peace.

Health Benefits Update

According to Tim O'Malley, the NALC Health Benefit plan has submitted its proposal for 2011. This includes benefits and costs. The negotiation process will take several months to complete and may be done by mid-August.

Members should be advised that some aspects of the "*Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act*" take effect in 2014 but some changes will take effect sooner. For federal employees, eligible dependents will be allowed to remain covered until age 26, effective January 1, 2011.

In solidarity...

Carrier Craftsmanship

Get Involved!

Hello fellow union brothers and sisters. Sam Santilli here to let you know that even though my dad told me never to volunteer for anything, I did not listen and, well...I am now your new Congressional District Liaison (CDL).

I'm okay with it because it seems that politics will play a major part in our new contract in 2011.

What I'm not okay with is all the free-loaders who call themselves letter carriers that are in our union, that do not donate to COLCPE (\$5 a pay period), or sign up for E-Activist (it's free), and do not know their routes or their jobs. All they do is go to work, collect their paycheck, and are

ignorant on issues pertaining to their jobs. So, as Michael Jackson says, (and don't quote me) take a look at the man or woman in the mirror.

All I can say is *GET INVOLVED!* Donate to COLCPE, sign up to be an E-Activist, see your shop steward, or call the union office to get involved. Get up off your butt and we can do this together.

As of this writing, HR 173 (*Six Day Mail Delivery*) has 225 co-sponsors out of 435. It seems that the House of Representatives is behind six day delivery. To see if your representative supports six day delivery, go online to the NALC website at

<http://www.nalc.org>

or go directly to the list of sponsors at

<http://tinyurl.com/38ngpvo>

by Sam Santilli

Congressional District Liaison - District 11

If his or her name is there, in support send him or her a thank-you letter. If they don't support HR 173, send them a letter and tell them why they should support HR 173.



Oh yeah, I do mean send a real letter with a stamp, after all that's what our job is, delivering letters, and if you pay your bills online, shame on you for taking money out of your own pocket.

That's my bitch....What's yours?

Around The Horn

by Tony Diaz

*Financial Secretary - Branch 599***Special Report**

This month I wanted to update the membership on the status of Tampa Letter Carriers, Inc. (T.L.C.). As our economy continues to struggle, all of us either know or have heard of someone affected financially. From billionaires and huge corporations to our own neighbors and mom and pop companies. Rock solid institutions we thought would survive any economic hurdles are facing tough, tough decisions.

Well, brothers and sisters, T.L.C. has not been spared from the down economy and we continue to face financial problems. Rentals, which at one time were one a week are almost non-existent. Potential renters are looking for smaller venues and corporations, with limited budgets are not renting. Bingo, which for years paid for the majority of the branch expenses, can no longer do so. The bingo proceeds are down significantly, and while it brings in a cash flow, after expenses, the flow is now a trickle.

We have notified the entire membership with an informational letter seeking ideas to battle the financial problems of T.L.C. We have held a special meeting for all active and retired Members to address and discuss these financial issues. And while there were many ideas, they were temporary solutions to a big problem. We have unsuccessfully attempted to sell the empty lot across the street from our union hall, which we no longer use. The selling of the property was an effort to attain cash to facilitate the need for building repairs and for building maintenance. There has been a long going campaign (moving very slowly) to sell pavers at \$50.00 each, proceeds going to repairs. We have now exhausted all avenues to generate revenues. Consequently, the T.L.C. Board has voted, after a motion was made and properly seconded, to list the Letter Carriers Hall and the property for sale.

Believe me this is the last thing the board wanted to do, or even consider. The motion itself has been tabled for several months with hopes of a solution, an idea, a remedy. Now the reality of our situation has come to fruition. As Chairman of T.L.C., and as a proud member of Branch 599, in this my 30th year, there is no one who loves this building more than I do. I respect the history of this building, I respect the sacrifice all of those brothers (many

deceased) made and the vision they had.

For those of you who are not aware, much of this building was built by hand back in the day by dedicated Branch 599 members in their spare time. From the floors to the walls, these proud members would work on days off, after work, and on Sundays. It is truly remarkable. This building at one time was "The" community gathering place. It was "The" venue for an important wedding or event. So it is understandable there will be disappointment and frustration from both retired and working members over this news.

From a business prospective this is the right decision. We now have an aging building in need of many expensive repairs. We have a huge hall that is not utilized. In the informational letter sent out to all the members, the extensive list of these repairs was included. We are currently replacing one of the three air conditioning units at the cost of \$6,400.00. Additionally, we are having the second unit (middle) rewired, as there was a problem with the previous wiring. The remaining two units were purchased at the same time as the unit being replaced. We are hopeful they last through the hot summer months. While the funds are not available for the purchase of this one unit, it was a neces-

sity.

The other big expenses are the roof and the parking lot. With every heavy rain we hope for no leaks on a roof that needs replacing. We have been fortunate. A heavy rain out of the West causes water to seep down one of the walls inside. The exterior walls need to be sealed. The parking lot is crumbling and pieces and cracks are abundant.

I can go on and on. I hope you get the picture. We will be meeting with a commercial real estate broker July 12-16 to review appraisal information.

No contract will be signed until legal advice is sought. Be assured, we will not give the Letter Carriers Hall away.

Quick Hits: Information you should know

*) JARAP is continuing throughout the District, the carrier input this time around has been much better. The loss of routes has been minimal for this phase.

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



Connective Tissue Massage

"The Ultimate Therapy for Healing"

- Helps Heal Injuries Fast
- Relieves Chronic Pain and Stress
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Safety Silven

Safe Grilling

Hello all brothers and sisters. With this being my first article, I would like to introduce myself. My name is Silven Zimmerman. I was a letter carrier for nine years (five in St. Petersburg and four in Tampa). I am currently the Driver Safety Instructor for the Suncoast District. I will be writing an article every month on different safety issues. These safety issues will deal with not only things in our postal life but also in everyday life.

I thought I would start with one of my favorite pastimes *Outdoor Grilling At Home*. I decided on this safety topic due to fact that this time of the year many of us grill out every weekend.

According to the *National Fire Protection Association*, gas and charcoal grills cause an average of 1,500 structure fires and 4,200 outdoor fires in or on home properties. With summer here, these numbers should be of concern to anyone that may want to use their grill.

To reduce the risk of fire and prevent injuries, keep these tips in mind:

General rules for barbecue grill safety

- Remember that whether you have a gas or charcoal grill, you should never use it indoors, and you should always keep it ten feet away from any buildings or combustibles.
- When using these grills on decks or patios, be sure to leave sufficient space from siding and eaves.
- Always supervise a barbecue grill when in use.
- Keep children and pets far away from grills at all times.
- Use long-handled grilling tools to allow plenty of clearance from heat and flames.
- Periodically remove grease or fat buildup in trays below the grill so that it will not be able to be ignited by a hot grill.
- Always follow the manufacturer's instructions and have the grill repaired by a professional, if necessary.

Gas

- Always check for gas leaks every time you reconnect the LP cylinder. A light soap and water solution applied to the hose will quickly reveal escaping propane by releasing bubbles. Have leaking fuel lines repaired before using.
- Clean the grill at least twice a year and check for rust. Check all parts carefully. Pay close attention to the venturi, because spiders frequently spin webs in these tubes and the web may interfere with gas flow, making the flame uneven and dangerous. Check the owner's manual for additional maintenance requirements.
- Do not use cylinder if dented, bulging, leaking, or rusted.
- Always keep the lid open when igniting the grill to prevent a buildup of gas. Do not lean over the grill when lighting the burners. If the burner fails to light or goes out while cooking, turn off the gas and keep the lid open for five minutes before trying to re-light.
- All propane cylinders manufactured after 2002 must have overfill protection devices. This device shuts off the flow of propane before capacity is reached and is easily identified by its triangular shaped hand wheel.
- Do not smoke or light a match while handling propane cylinders.

by Silven Zimmerman

Driver Safety Instructor - Suncoast District



- Do not use, store or transport your cylinder where it could be exposed to high temperatures.
- Do not store or leave cylinders in your car.
- After filling, take the cylinder home and keep your car ventilated during transport.
- Never use matches or lighters to check for leaks.
- Never attempt to repair the cylinder yourself.

Charcoal

- Never attempt to restart a flame by adding more lighting fluid.
- Use insulated, flame retardant mitts when cooking or handling any part of the grill.
- Keep a spray bottle of water nearby to handle flare-ups.
- Make sure charcoal ashes are cool before discarding. Water may be added to them, but beware of steam.

Hopefully you found this article helpful. Till next month, be safe and take care.

Safety Silven



Branch 599 President Jim Good congratulates recent retirees Alan Dexter, David Lucas, and Will Tolliver

The View From Here

Newsletter Stuff & Articles Wanted

It's been eight years (and 99 issues) of the Tampa Letter Carrier newsletter since I last wrote an article so I thought it's about time for another one. It has been quite an experience working with Branch 599 President Jim Good and the other 40 or so NALC and Branch 599 members who have published articles in our newsletter. I want to give you a little background information on how we started the newsletter, and how we get it designed, printed, and out to you. Then I want to ask you to help us in improving the newsletter by making it more fun and more inclusive.

We started this newsletter project not long after Jim was first elected president of our branch. Although Branch 599 had a newsletter published in the years prior to Jim's first term, the newsletter's regular publication had become somewhat infrequent and it often was distributed to stations rather than being mailed to the carrier's home. One of Jim's election promises was to restore regular publication and mailing of the branch newsletter and I told him I was very interested in being the editor of the newsletter. Jim gave me the opportunity and so this wild ride started.

Working from a previous issue produced by Don Thomas and his wife, I began to mimic and alter a similar design in Microsoft Publisher. We received several article submissions and we edited them and laid them out in Publisher. After we had the draft version sufficiently edited, the file was taken to the printer to be published. That first issue was the May 2002 Tampa Letter Carrier. This issue is our 100th and while the majority of our newsletter publication process remains pretty much the same, there have been some changes to the process over the years.

In the first few years, the newsletter was done in person at the union office using the branch's computer network and, after that initial print run by the professional printer, an office laser printer with a large hard disk drive attached to it. The process worked like this: Writers and advertisers would submit their articles and ads by email, mail or in person at the branch of-

ice. After we had received all the submissions, I would drive down to the union office and begin editing the articles and laying them out in Microsoft Publisher using a computer in the back office near the recreation room. When I finished editing and laying out the newsletter, I saved the file to newsletter folder and then Jim would read it and either approve it or suggest more editing and revising. This would go on back and forth until everything was correct (or as correct as we could make it). Then we would print some hard copies to proof-read from, which usually lead to finding more mistakes or typos requiring further editing and revising. When we finally got to the point where we thought it was finished, we started printing on the office printer which stapled and creased the 11 x 17 pages into a fold-able 8.5 x 11 booklet.

Once the printing was underway my part was finished and I would leave. But the printing, folding addressing, and stamping of 1100 copies of the newsletter would go on as the branch secretary and Jim worked to get the newsletters ready for mailing. It would usually take the rest of that day and part of the next to get the newsletters ready and mailed. In the early days it took much longer to get them to their destinations so, for example, the September newsletter had to be mailed by around the middle of August. Jim tells me that now mailing usually only takes about a week so we can mail a little later than in the beginning.

Over the years our work methods have changed a little. At some point along the way I begin to do the initial draft at my home. I would retrieve the articles and ads from the newsletter email folder and, using my own copy of Publisher, do the first draft on my computer. Once I was finished, I sent the draft copy to Jim via email and saved a copy to a flash drive. Then I would go to the union office with my flash drive on printing day and we would do the editing and printing as describe above.

In 2006 I moved to North Carolina but thanks to the Internet and our computerized publication process, I am still able to edit the newsletter from several hundred miles away. The process is very similar to how we did it before but now I submit the draft copy to Jim via my satellite Internet pro-

vider. After I complete the newsletter draft, I upload it to the branch website using WS-FTP (a file transfer program) and then I send a download link via email to Jim. He clicks the link in the email, downloading the file to the newsletter folder on the branch computer network. From there, he opens and does final edits on the newsletter before beginning the printing on the office printer.

It's not as complicated as it may sound but it is quite a task to get each issue compiled, edited, printed, and mailed. On my end it takes anywhere from four to nine hours per issue, not counting upload time, which can add as much as an hour to the job during bad weather. Because I have to use satellite Internet access (the only "broadband" Internet access available here in the rural mountains), weather can severely delay upload times, or stop uploads altogether. Once I had to Express Mail the newsletter draft on a CD-ROM because I could not establish an Internet connection over the course of several hours. Dial up Internet access is too slow (the phone always disconnects before the upload is complete) and satellite access can be interrupted by bad weather here, or in Syracuse, NY, which is where the satellite signal is bounced to from here. Fortunately we have only had that one occasion when we couldn't (eventually) get the newsletter uploaded. Most of the time things go pretty smoothly.

So it has been quite an experience working on the Tampa Letter Carrier. I appreciate Jim and the members of the branch, and all the article writers and advertisers allowing me to work with them on the newsletter. We try to put out a good publication and we haven't missed an issue. I think that it's great that we've had 40 or so different contributors over the years. We have a bunch of regular writers who have done a great job and a whole bunch of others who send in an article from time to time. We have a better newsletter when more members contribute to it.

Which brings me to this: I would love to see more writers adding their articles to the branch newsletter. We have several hun-

(continued on page 11)

by Kit Kelley

Editor - Tampa Letter Carrier



Are We Having Fun Yet?

by Michael Anderson

Treasurer - Branch 599

Budget Matters



Times they are a changing. The USPS economy is in a downward spiral, mail volume is decreasing, and the number of carriers handling this important task of delivering the mail is also in a downward spiral. So where does this leave us?

With the branch receiving fewer dollars coming in and of course like everyone else, the bills do not decline with or as fast as the income, this leaves us in a precarious situation. 97.01% of the monies we receive come from our faithful union members. These people understand that with the economy in a shambles and the USPS oblivious to the national contract that the stewards are kept extremely busy with the grievance procedure.

The Postal Service feels the need to eliminate 60,000 employees by the September 30th deadline for the fiscal year 2010. They of course will use any tactic possible to reach this number. This of course carries a burden for the local union as %74.36 of our income goes to payroll for this extra burden of policing the contract and the burden of filing grievances.

74.36% goes to payroll
 8.84% goes to office expense
 3.30% goes to training our officers and stewards
 2.98% goes to maintaining our office equipment
 2.83% goes to the retiree's banquet this year
 1.26% goes to those who have retired this year
 0.93% goes to our meeting expenses
 0.73% goes to officer travel

0.71% goes to postage
4.06% goes to other administrative expenses including supplies and the newsletter
 100%

All of these total \$134,604.97 so far this year. As you can see the branch is no longer in the same condition as we have been in the past.

How do we correct this? We will have to come up with a good budget plan, and unfortunately this may result in some new bylaw changes. Some will be good and others may be not so good. But whatever the results may be, it will all be in the best interest of our union brothers and sisters. In the other matter, as far as income:

97.01% comes from our dues
 2.79% comes from interest
 0.16% comes from other income
0.04% comes from the newsletter.
 100%

These total \$139,063.68

So you can see we are just barely holding our own and still in the black, but not as much as we would like to be. We will be working hard to change this direction.

The View From Here (from page 10)

dred members (active and retired) and I know that most of them are interesting, eloquent, smart, and funny. I also know they have things to say. I'd be willing to bet that more than a few of them also have thought about writing an article but have for some reason not done so.

If you want to submit an article for the newsletter but think that maybe it won't get accepted, think again. We actually have trouble many months coming up with enough material to fill 8, 12 or 16 pages, which are the page signatures we use (depending on how much content we have that month). We can most definitely use more material and more writers.

Are you interested in seeing your words in print in the Tampa Letter Carrier? It is

easier to do than you may think. You don't have to be an Edward R. Murrow to get your article published here. All you need is 500 or more words of thoughts, opinions, ideas, or rants, organized in a somewhat coherent way, preferably proofread and spell-checked, and generally following our list of writer's guidelines. To see the newsletter submission guidelines and file formats, go to

<http://www.nalc599.com/writer.htm>

or send email to writer@nalc599.com.

We can help clean up and edit your article if you're worried about your writing. We would like to read what you think, what you have to say, what's bugging you, your ideas, and suggestions about your job, or your

union, or about anything else on your mind. And it doesn't have to be postal service-related. Why not give it a shot? We'd love to hear from you.

You can submit your articles to us as files attached to email sent to newsletter@nalc599.com or by digital files on CD, typewritten/printed copy, or handwritten copy, sent to the branch office at 3003 W. Cypress St., Tampa, FL 33607.

Deadline for each month's issue is the fifth day of the month preceding publication, but we have been known to accept late submissions so don't put it off if you want to submit an article. Hope to see your words here in the months ahead.

A.R. "Tony" Huerta NALC Branch 599
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