



Tampa Letter Carrier

Volume 6 - Issue 9

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

Tampa, Florida

September 2007

President's Report

by Jim Good

We Did It

On July 12th the National Association of Letter Carriers and the United States Postal Service reached a tentative agreement on a new contract. By now I am sure you all know the basics of the tentative agreement, which includes an 8.85% general wage increase over the term of the five year contract. Our National Officers were also successful in keeping the COLA's in place, but they did have to settle for a 5% increase in the carriers' share of Health Benefits cost by the end of the contract. Even with that increase, however, letter carriers are still paying 7% less than other federal workers towards health care.

The important thing, at least in my opinion, is the reason why management called our bargaining team back to the table even though the contract had been set for arbitration. President Young, during the Region 9 Rap Session the weekend of July 28th, stated that after the branches' informational pickets throughout Florida (and other areas of the country) Postmaster Potter called him and said that he wanted to resume talks. At that point in time thirty-five sena-

tors had signed on to S1457, which as you know would forbid contracting out mail delivery in areas where there is more than one delivery per mile. The letter carriers, who participated in these informational pickets, as well as the rural carriers, family members and friends, got the word out to their elected representatives. We also got the word out, through the different media sources, regarding the direction the USPS was headed involving contracting out the nation's mail delivery service. And neither the public nor the elected officials were very happy with what they heard. The result of our efforts is a negotiated contract that you all will have had the chance to study and decide whether or not to accept.

Although I have not, at the time of my writing this article, received a copy of the tentative contract and the memorandums that will take effect if it is passed, I have been briefed in part. One major victory President Young shared with those at the Rap Session involves the Contract Delivery Service routes in specific areas represented by Branch 599. The first memo protects all existing city carrier work from subcontracting for the life of the five year contract. Secondly, in delivery units where there are no rural carriers all CDS routes will be abol-

ished and the territory will be delivered by city letter carriers. In units where there are rural routes and city delivery routes, a moratorium will be put into effect, for six months following ratification, on all new outsourcing while a task force studies public policy considerations and growth management. NALC will continue to seek co-sponsors of S1457 and House Resolution 282, while keeping key congressional committees advised of the task force committee's findings. Other memoranda of understanding address the National Level Grievance on DOIS, eliminate all city carrier casual employees (with Transitional Employees being hired in their place), third bundle issues on park and loop routes, flat sequencing and bereavement leave.

While one can always find fault in any negotiated agreement, simply by the nature of give and take, I highly endorse this tentative agreement and thank our national officers for all the time and hard work they put into it.



President - Branch 599

Official Notice of Nominations and Election of Officers of Branch 599, Tampa, Florida

Nominations

Nominations for the election of officers of Branch 599 will be held at the regular Branch meetings on October 4, 2007 and November 1, 2007, at 7:30 p.m. at the Union Hall, 3003 West Cypress St, Tampa, FL 33609. Candidates must accept nominations at the time made or, if absent, in writing. Candidates may accept nominations for only one office. Self nominations are acceptable.

Nominations will be held for the following Branch offices: President, Executive Vice-President, Vice-President, Recording Secretary, Financial Secretary, Treasurer, Sergeant-at-Arms, Three (3) Trustees, MBA/NSBA Representative, Health Benefit Representative, Director of Retirees, and Two (2) Labor/Management Representatives. The terms of office will be for three (3) years beginning January 19, 2008.

Election

The election will be conducted by secret ballot on December 6, 2007 at the Union Hall, 3003 West Cypress St, Tampa, Florida. The polls will be open during the times decided at the regular branch meeting on October 4, 2007. Any member who for any reason will be unable to vote on December 6th may vote by absentee ballot. Requests for absentee ballots should be made by telephoning the Union Hall at (813) 875-0599 (8:30 a.m.-5:00 p.m.) beginning November 2, 2007 through November 21, 2007.

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	Freddie Nimphius	(813) 263-7895
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	Sam Santilli	(813) 215-7595
Hilldale Annex	33634	Bill Mandikas	(813) 263-8636
Hyde Park	33606	John Livingston	(813) 253-3651
Interbay	33611	Brian Obst	(727) 458-0679
Interbay	33629	Brian Obst	(727) 458-0679
MacDill	33608	Brian Obst	(727) 458-0679
Palm River	33619	J.C. Howard	(813) 621-1976
Plant City	33565	Terry Franklin	(813) 657-9690
Port Tampa	33616	Brian Obst	(727) 458-0679
Produce	33610	Eric Fleming	(813) 310-8274
Ruskin / Sun City Center	33570	Jack Hencoski	(813) 685-9034
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	Dennis Lorenzo	(813) 966-3989
Temple Terrace	33617	Frank Pereira	(813) 610-1801
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

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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. All articles must be submitted no later than the fifth 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

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>

Executive Vice-President's Reportby **Detlev Aeppel*****What Can You Do?***

Something interesting happened at the Regional Rap Session recently held in Daytona Beach. As expected, NALC President Bill Young was at the podium explaining the details of the new tentative national agreement that had just been reached and the Memorandums of Understanding that addressed several thorny problems facing letter carriers. These problems included DOIS, contracting out, and third bundle work methods. As you no doubt already know, this tentative agreement package will be mailed out to the membership for ratification. If everything goes right we will have a new contract ratified by Labor Day. During his presentation Bill Young asked all those who had written their congressman to ask them to support anti contracting out legislation if they would please stand up. Next Bill Young asked all those that had participated in the one day informational picket if they would please stand up. Looking around the room I saw that about two thirds of the 500

or so NALC "activists" were standing. President Young looked around the room and said, "This is YOUR contract. Your efforts brought management back to the bargaining table." As I stood there those words really hit home. I thought back to that Friday afternoon at the informational picket and those stalwart souls that carried the signs and pounded the pavement. There were retirees, officers, stewards, rank and file members, and even a new hire. Some came early and some arrived when they could. Everyone was on the same mission. Then I thought about the list of Branch 599 members that had committed to the e-Activist program. That list is a remarkably diverse collection of assorted retirees and active members. And yet, despite their differences they were all committed to doing what must be done for the benefit of us all.

All too often we hear letter carriers ask what "the union" is doing about some problem or concern. The answer is right there in front of them. The union gives its members the opportunity to behave as unionists. If you are offended by management's perverse fascination with contracting out letter carrier work

Executive Vice-President - Branch 599

the union gives you the opportunity to give to COLCPE and to become an e-Activist so as to personally lobby your representative on Congress. If you are tired of daily confrontations about leaving time, returning time, and what DOIS says then the union will inform and train you on methods to stifle management's belligerent attitude and quash their unreasonable expectations. The union is the membership. The union is only as strong as what the members will get off of their butts to accomplish. Hopefully this was made clear to the one third of the NALC "activists" that had to remain seated at the rap session. Hopefully this is clear to those among us that have failed to sign up as e-Activists or have refused to commit to automatic COLCPE contributions. Let's all do our part.



In Solidarity...

Summary of TLC Board of Directors Meeting of July 24, 2007

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm by Chairman Obst. The minutes of the previous meeting were accepted as corrected. The Financial report was given by John Gebo. Building manager's report by Mike Anderson. The painting in the hall and conference room is finished. Another estimate was received for remodeling the bathrooms (\$75,000.00). Discussion. Both toilets in bathrooms by the recreation room need replacing. Motion to buy kickplates for the doors. Passed. Motion to pay up to \$570.00 to get six trees trimmed. Discussion. Passed. Motion to buy blinds for up to \$600.00 for Bingo Boards. Passed. Donation committee report by Adam Noble. A thank you letter was read from Meals on Wheels. Recommendation to donate \$500.00 to the Arthritis Foundation. Discussion. Friendly amendment to reduce to \$250.00. Accepted. Passed.

Old Business: The treasurer reported that a meeting was held with CPA Don Collado. John Gebo, Mike Anderson and Jim Good were there to discuss changing to W-2's instead of 1099's. Everything is taken care of. John Gebo reported that Colonial Bank will loan us \$100,000.00 for five years to remodel and update the restrooms. The mortgage payments will be approximately \$2200.00 per month.

New Business: Motion to have the hall floor stripped and waxed. No second. Motion to pay Mike Anderson for the hours he submitted for extra time while the painters were here. Discussion. Passed. Motion to contact two more financial institutions for loan rates and to get estimates to replace the sewer line from the men's restroom to the street. Seconded. Passed. Motion to adjourn. Meeting adjourned at 8:25 pm.

Jim Good, Secretary
Tampa Letter Carriers, Inc.

Branch 599**Annual Labor Day Picnic****Sunday, September 2nd****12:00 - 4:00 PM****at the Union Hall**

Branch 599 will hold our annual Labor Day Picnic on Sunday, September 2, 2007, at the union hall.

The picnic will be held from noon until 4:00 pm, with plenty of food and games for all ages.

Please contact your shop steward or call the union hall so that we can make sure we know how many will be attending. Donations for the Muscular Dystrophy Association will be accepted at the door.

ARSLAN UNIFORMS

Bill & Shirley Moran

Retired Letter Carrier Branch 1477 St. Petersburg

Honorary Member Branch 599 Tampa

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Unionism

by Brian Obst

Article 30 Local Implementation

As I write this article I await a package from the National offices of the NALC. This package is the information on the new tentative contract with the ratification paperwork and ballot. Since it is my feeling that this new agreement is in the best interests of all members of the NALC, I am sure it will be ratified by the membership. That being the case it is time to turn our attention to Local Implementation, Article 30.

Local Implementation is also known as the Local Memorandum of Understanding or LMOU. Article 30 allows for the local parties to locally negotiate certain work rules and other terms of employment. This period of negotiation is set in the new contract so as to allow a thirty day period to commence for negotiation on twenty two items that will be detailed later in this article. Article 30.A also provides that the current LMOU shall remain in force, provided that it is not in conflict with the National Agreement and unless it is changed by the local implementation procedure, a result of an arbitration award or settlement from either parties impasse from the presently effective LMOU.

The local negotiations will take place during a thirty day period following ratification of the new National Agreement. Local leadership of the Union will appoint a committee for the negotiations and this committee will meet with Local Management during the thirty day negotiation period to try to hammer out an agreement on the following twenty two items.

1. Additional or longer wash-up periods.
2. The establishment of a regular work week of five days with either fixed or rotating days off.
3. Guidelines for the curtailment or termination of postal operations to conform to orders of local authorities or as local conditions warrant because of emergency conditions.
4. Formulation of local leave program.
5. The duration of the choice vacation period.
6. The determination of the beginning day of an employee's vacation period.
7. Whether employees at their option may request two selections during the choice vacation period, in units of either five or ten days.
8. Whether jury duty and attendance at National or State Conventions shall be charged

to the choice vacation period.

9. Determination of the maximum number of employees who shall receive leave each week during the choice vacation period.
 10. The issuance of official notices to each employee of the vacation schedule approved for such employee.
 11. Determination of the date and means of notifying employees of the beginning of the new leave year.
 12. The procedures for submission of applications for annual leave during other than the choice vacation period.
 13. The method of selecting employees to work on a holiday.
 14. Whether "Overtime Desired" lists in Article 8 shall be by section and/or tour.
 15. The number of light duty assignments within each craft or occupational group to be reserved for temporary or permanent light duty assignment.
 16. The method to be used in reserving light duty assignments so that no regularly assigned member of the regular work force will be adversely affected.
 17. The identification of assignments that are to be considered light duty within each craft represented in the office.
 18. The identification of assignments comprising a section, when it is proposed to reassign within an installation employees excess to the needs of a section.
 19. The assignment of employee parking spaces.
 20. The determination as to whether annual leave to attend Union activities requested prior to determination of the choice vacation schedule is to be part of the total choice vacation plan.
 21. Those other items which are subject to local negotiations as provided in the craft provisions of this agreement.
 22. Local implementation of this agreement relating to seniority, reassignments and posting.
- These 22 items are discussed in the JCAM, which provides direction to specific areas of the contract that deal with each item that is locally negotiated. It is highly recommended that you get a copy of the JCAM to read and familiarize yourself with this information, as your Local Branch will request your input on items that you would like to negotiate and changes you would ask for prior to the onset of the negotiation period.

Items being negotiated that a resolution is not able to be reached may be impasse and

forwarded to arbitration however it should be noted that the burden is on Management to show that continuation of the existing provision would represent an unreasonable burden to the Postal Service, the Union has no such burden when seeking to change to the LMOU. Only the 22 items are allowed to be impasse. During the negotiation period and any subsequent impasse arbitrations the current LMOU remains in force until changes are agreed to or instituted by arbitration decision.

It is important to note that the LMOU may not be inconsistent with the National Agreement, that is to say that the National Agreement rules and the LMOU may not be in contradiction to the National Agreement. Also all locally agreed upon Memorandums are included as a part of the LMOU and updated with each new agreement.

This provision of the National Agreement covering Local Implementation is exceptionally important and all members should make the time to read and understand the information in Article 30 and seek council with your Executive Board of your local branch prior to the establishment of the coming local negotiation period so as to provide for the best possible outcome for your LMOU. The information for this article came from the JCAM and is put forth for your benefit with some of my own opinion, please seek out the information yourself to make an informed decision on this information.

As always Knowledge is the Key.

Yours in Brotherhood,
Brian Obst
Chief Steward



Chief Steward - Branch 599

Health & Welfare

Sam Santilli, son of Hilldale carrier Anthony "Sammy" Santilli passed away.

Retired letter carrier Valentino "Pinky" Picciandra passed away on August 7th.

Sulphur Springs carrier Linda Wiles is recovering at home from surgery.

A Point of Personal Privilege

There Shouldn't Even Be A Question!

The evidence to impeach President George W. Bush and Vice President Dick Cheney should not be held in doubt. When President Clinton lied to the American people and lied to Congress with regard to the statement "I did not have sexual relations with that woman" impeachment proceedings were sought. Shouldn't lying to Congress and to the American people "to con them into a bogus war qualify as grounds for impeachment?" The preponderance of evidence is so abundant and overwhelming that even the Senators that voted to impeach Clinton in 1999 should have no qualms or misgivings about which way they should vote. Currently there are 25 Republican Senators still in office that voted to impeach Clinton and I wonder if they will eagerly vote to impeach Bush and Cheney? A specific document (on a plain piece of common paper) reads as follows: "The President, Vice President and all civil Officers of the United States, shall be removed from office on impeachment for and conviction of treason, bribery and other high crimes and misdemeanors." (Article II, Section 4 of the Constitution of the United States of America)

In the spring of 2002, President Bush was informed during his intelligent briefings that U. S. Intelligent Agencies believed it was unlikely that Saddam Hussein was an imminent threat to the United States. This document was given to President Bush in early October 2002. On a one page summary of a highly classified document from the National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) which the Department of Energy and the Department of State's Bureau of Intelligence stated that the tubes were "intended for conventional weapons." In early January 2003 the NIE furnished President Bush with a report (titled "Nontraditional Threats to the U. S. Homeland Through 2007.") that stated that Saddam Hussein would not launch an unprovoked attack against the United States, either directly, or indirectly by working with terrorists. The following are some of the statements that President George W. Bush and Vice President Dick Cheney and which other members of the administration used to justify the necessity, urgency, imminent danger to invade and overthrow the Saddam Hussein regime!

"Many of us are convinced that Saddam Hussein will acquire nuclear weapons fairly soon." Dick Cheney August 2002; "Right now, Iraq is expanding and improving facilities that were used for the production of biological weapons." George W. Bush 9/2002 to the United Nations General Assembly; "Iraq has made several attempts to buy high strength aluminum tubes used to enrich uranium for a nuclear weapon." George W. Bush 9/12/2002; "The Iraqi regime possesses biological and chemical weapons, is rebuilding the facilities to make more, and according to the British government, could launch a biological or chemical attack in as little as 45 minutes after the order is given." George W. Bush 9/28/2002; "Iraq has stockpiled biological and chemical weapons, and is rebuilding the facilities used to make more of these weapons. We have sources that tell us Saddam Hussein recently authorized Iraqi field commanders to use chemical weapons - the very weapons the dictator tells us he does not have." George W. Bush 10/2002; "We've also discovered through intelligence that Iraq has a growing fleet of manned and unmanned aerial vehicles that could be used to disperse chemical and biological weapons across broad areas." George W. Bush 10/7/2002; "We know that Iraq and the Al Qaeda terrorist network share a common enemy-the United States of America. We know that Iraq could decide on any given day to provide a biological or chemical weapon to a terrorist group or individual terrorists. Alliance with terrorists could allow the Iraqi regime to attack America without leaving any fingerprints." George W. Bush address to the nation 10/7/2002; "This is a man that we know has had connections with al Qaeda. This is a man who, in my judgment, would like to use al Qaeda as a forward Army." George W. Bush 10/14/2002; "Intelligence gathered by this and other governments leaves no doubt that the Iraq regime continues to possess and conceal some of the most lethal weapons ever devised." George W. Bush 3/2003; "The British government has learned that Saddam Hussein recently sought significant quantities of uranium." George W. Bush State of the Union Address 2003; "Our intelligence officials estimate that Saddam Hussein had the materials to produce as much as 500 tons of sarin, mustard and VX nerve agents. In such quantities, these chemical agents could kill untold thousands. He's not accounted for these materials. He has given no evidence that he has destroyed them." George W. Bush State of

by Leslie Ray Garcia

the Union Address 2003; "We believe he has, in fact, reconstituted nuclear weapons." Dick Cheney 3/16/2003; "Every nation in our coalition understands the terrible threat we face from weapons of mass destruction...Every victory in this campaign and every sacrifice serves the purpose of defending innocent lives in America and across the world from the weapons of terror. We've destroyed the base of a terrorist group in northern Iraq that sought to attack America and Europe with deadly poisons." George W. Bush 3/ 27/ 2003; "We found the weapons of mass destruction. We found biological laboratories. And we'll find more weapons as time goes on. But for those who say we haven't found the banned manufacturing devices or banned weapons, they're wrong. We found them." George W. Bush May 2003; "Major combat operations in Iraq have ended. In the battle of Iraq, the United States and our allies have prevailed. We've begun the search for hidden chemical and biological weapons and already know of hundreds of sites that will be investigated. No terrorist network will gain weapons of mass destruction from the Iraqi regime, because the regime is no more. We've removed an ally of al Qaeda. The battle of Iraq is one victory in a war on terror that began on September 11th, 2001, and still goes on." George W. Bush May 1, 2003 on board the aircraft carrier USS Abraham Lincoln. (Total US Military deaths 139 and 550 wounded) "There's no doubt in my mind but that Saddam Hussein had these capabilities." Dick Cheney Meet the Press 9/14/2003; "No, the intelligence I operated on was good, sound intelligence." George W. Bush ABC News 12/16/2003.

After the fall of Saddam Hussein and his regime, inspectors from the United States found that the nuclear threat of a mushroom cloud was false because Iraq's nuclear program had been dormant for more than a decade and the aluminum tubes were only used for conventional artillery shells. A 511 page bipartisan Senate Intelligence Committee report stated that prewar Iraq intelligence concluded: "Despite four (40 years) decades of intelligence reporting on Iraq there was little useful intelligence collected that helped analysis determine the Iraq's possible links with Al Qaeda."

Finally in the 9/11 Commission's final report there was no evidence of a "collaborative operational relationship between Saddam and Al
(continued on page 7)



Personal Privilege (from page 6)

Qaeda nor have we seen evidence indicating that Iraq cooperated with Al Qaeda in developing or carrying out any attacks against the United States."

Meanwhile the death toll of American military soldiers and innocent Iraqi civilians continue to rise on a daily basis. As of 7/16/2007 US Military death toll in Iraq was 3,616; in Afghanistan 412; 26,695 have been maimed in Iraq (DOD 7/11/07); The following are deaths reported by different investigators: 73,611 Iraqi reported killed (Iraq Body Count); 655,000 Iraqis reported killed (the Lancet); and 969,038 Iraqis reported killed (justforeignpolicy.org).

"Get your facts first, and then you can distort them as much as you please."

Mark Twain

The following proposed bylaw change will be voted on at the regular branch meeting to be held on September 6, 2007:

Article VII, Section 1.E
"Fees, Dues, Fines and Assessments"
Submitted August 2, 2007

Currently reads:

The present Job Action Fund Account will remain as such in case of a work stoppage. Such funds shall be under the control of the Trustees and shall be used for no other purpose.

Changed to read:

The present Job Action Fund Account will be capped at \$350,000.00 (three hundred & fifty thousand dollars) in case of a work stoppage. Such funds shall be under the control of the Trustees and shall be used for no other purpose. These funds shall be set aside in an appropriate savings institution earning a guaranteed interest rate.

The interest on these funds shall be deposited in a Convention Fund, to be used exclusively for National Conventions, State Conventions, State Training Seminars and National and State Rap Sessions.

President's Station Visits

Temple Terrace Annex	Wednesday, September 5
Carrollwood	Friday, September 7
Palm River Annex	Wednesday, September 12
Hilldale Annex	Friday, September 14
Sun City Center	Wednesday, September 19
Plant City	Friday, September 21
Brandon 33510	Wednesday, September 26
Brandon 33511	Thursday, September 27

Branch Meeting
Thursday, September 6
7:30 PM
at the Union Hall

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

Around The Horn

Personal Condolences to Our Brother

Brothers and Sisters I begin this month by sending my personal condolences to my long time friend and fellow union brother Sam Santilli regarding the tragic death of his 16 year old son. For those of you who are not yet aware of this heartbreaking news, Sam's son, Sammy was struck in the chest by lightning and never recovered from his serious injuries.

I had the pleasure of speaking to the young man at our State Convention in June where he accompanied his Dad to hangout for the weekend. He was looking forward to beginning training and conditioning again for his upcoming soccer season at Hillsborough High School. He had an injury that prohibited him from any kind of exercise and he sounded frustrated. He told me he planned to work hard and be ready for his junior year.

He was very polite and passionate about our conversation, oh and by the way, Sam knew all of Sammy's game statistics and told me in detail about individual games and goals he had scored. Sam was very proud of his son and his accomplishments and has done an outstanding job of raising him and being there for him. He told me Sammy was his best friend and they did everything together.

I visited with Sam at his home several days after the tragedy to lend my support. While speaking privately with him while touring Sammy's room it was clear how close they were. Having two boys of my own, and being a single parent for the most part as Sam was, I know the special bond and the relationship that Sam enjoyed.

God Bless You Sam and may you find the strength to pull yourself through this most difficult time. You can depend on your Union Brothers and Sisters for

their continued support.

This leads me into this months topic I had already planned to write about which is Lightning. There was an incident at my station regarding delivering mail in lightning that prompted me to remind the membership how dangerous it is. Upon hearing the devastating news about Sammy and of two other lightning strikes that same day there really should be no doubt how devastating it can be.

Knowing the dangers of lightning and the destruction it can cause makes it hard to believe some Letter Carriers still insist on continuing their deliveries while bolts are cracking around them. That one last delivery could cost you your life. Florida has the largest number of recorded strikes in a given period during the summer season, thus the name lightning capitol of the world. The Postal creed only mentions, rain sleet and snow nowhere does it mention lightning.

While lightning is an atmospheric dis-

by Tony Diaz

Financial Secretary - Branch 599

charge of electricity, which typically occurs during thunderstorms, it can strike when a storm seems distant. A bolt of lightning can travel at the speed of 100,000 mph, and an average bolt of negative lightning carries an electric current of 40 kilo amperes. However, some bolts can be up to 120 kA, or enough energy to power a 100-watt light bulb for just under 2 months.



I could go on and on but it is up to you, don't take the chance it's only mail. If you find yourself in a situation where you feel unsafe, pull over and wait it out. Your vehicle is one of the more safer places to be. Notify your supervisor that you are caught in an electrical storm and will be delayed. Safety is supposed to be first and foremost and if you should receive any discipline for being late see your shop steward. How insensitive would that look!!!

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





President Good and Vice-President Cabanas congratulate recent retirees John Karay and Vern Kingery



New retirees John Samanka, Barry Holcomb and Jimmy Munns are congratulated by President Jim Good



Two Great Events... One day, One cause . . . Diabetes

October 6, 2007
Tampa Convention Center

Diabetes EXPO and Step Out to Fight Diabetes provide an opportunity for people to join the fight against diabetes. October 6th will be a full day of exercise, information, food and fun for all ages! Walkers will start the morning at Tampa's Convention Center Riverwalk and venture 2 miles along the waterfront, returning to join the 3,500 + crowd who will attend the second annual Diabetes Expo.

Step Out to Fight Diabetes
(8:30am-10:00am at the Tampa Convention Center Riverwalk)

- **Step Out to Fight Diabetes is a high energy walk event** designed to raise funds for research, education and advocacy programs of the American Diabetes Association.
- Families, friends and local corporations will be participating in the Walk as individuals or by forming teams to raise money, showing their support of the ADA.
- People of all ages and fitness levels can walk!

Diabetes EXPO
(10:00am-4:00pm at the Tampa Convention Center)

- Diabetes EXPO is for all people affected by diabetes and anyone interested in healthy eating and active living.
- Learn everything you need to know about diabetes under one roof including the latest on products & services and have your questions answered by medical professionals.
- Enjoy exciting speakers, healthy cooking and exercise demonstrations, **FREE** health screenings and activities for families and children!

For more information, contact the
American Diabetes Association at 1-888-DIABETES

Things You Should Know

Decrease Your Odds of An Accident

This month I would like to discuss one of my passions: safe driving. I want to share some helpful hints that may help prepare you to acquire better driving habits.

The number one thing you must have is your complete focus while driving. All your driving abilities or your long driving experience can not match this one factor, focus ability. Sounds easy, right? All you have to do is focus and you become a safe driver. Well, not quite. In order to accomplish this you must do a few simple things.

First, try not to have any inside disturbances, no radio, no headphones or idle thoughts while driving. Second thing to consider are left hand turns. Try to make as few as possible. For example, if you miss a left turn, either drive to the next arrow light, or go an extra block or two, whichever is safer. Left hand turns account for

about 30% of our accidents. Another big problem is backing up, because the visibility is so poor. So try not to back up or place your vehicle in a situation where you must back out. Remember, small objects usually can not be seen when backing up.

Be extra careful when changing lanes, or when traveling in and out around parked vehicles. Once again, your visibility is poor when moving, traveling to your left. But I feel that your complete focus can overcome many threats or obstacles on the road.

Also, try to drive under the posted speed limit, especially, in inclement weather. Driving under the speed limit can help you adjust to most problems that might arise. So your total focus while driving, with as few disturbances as possible, inside your vehicle is your key to safety.

Remember, in one split second an accident can occur, which can lead to an injury. Now this accident becomes a huge problem, not just for you, but your family and the other parties involved. This one injury can completely change your life

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and more importantly your family's life. Finally, this could lead to some form of discipline for you, not to mention all the extra expenses.



As you can see, you're not alone when an accident occurs, your family, your career; maybe even your life is on the line. If this thought scares you a little or arouses your attention, well good. Nothing is more important than your complete focus while driving. Try to remember that a lot of people are counting on you to return to your station safe every day.

Becoming a safe driver is not an accident or coincidence; it takes your complete focus every day. Your thoughts must be on how to avoid an accident and be aware of everything in front of you. So concentrate on becoming a safe driver. Obtaining these habits can accomplish this goal one day at a time. After all, what do you have to lose? *An accident.*

The Health Value of Laughter

Laughter Is Really Good Medicine

Laughter and humor are two powerful tools, helping people cope and get through threatening situations. Looking at life's situations with a sense of humor and laughter provides perspective and helps keep things in balance when life seems unfair. Humor and laughter are a source of power, healing, and survival. We often forget this when caught up in the troubles and trauma of life. Bill Cosby said, "If you can find humor in anything, you can survive it."

What You Get When You Laugh

While we are working at surviving, laughter can help us to maintain our perspective. The next time you feel like you're losing control, allow yourself a little "humor time." If you can find what's funny in a situation, your upsets might not seem as important as they once did.

Humor Gives A Sense Of Power.

There are many things in life that we have no control over and

can't change. As long as we have a sense of humor, however, we can do something -- such as minimize the hold that upsets have over us. Humor has the power to turn any situation around.

Humor Helps Us Cope.

A lot of the suffering and troubles we experience are not a result of our difficulties, but how we view them. Gail Sheehy notes in her bestseller, *Pathfinders*, that the ability to see humor in a situation was one of the four coping devices that "pathfinders," people who overcome life's crises, used as a protection against change and uncertainty. Using humor in difficult times can be one of the smartest ways of coping with them, easing our worries, and getting on with life.

Remember that laughter not only makes you feel better, but the use of humor can be a major tool for insight. George Burns said it best: "You can't help getting older, but you can help getting old. Chronologically, the clock is going to keep on ticking for all of us, but if we take a lick of humor, we can prevent a hardening of the attitudes. If we savor humor, humor can be a lifesaver."

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