



# Tampa Letter Carrier

Volume 8 - Issue 9

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

Tampa, Florida

September 2009

## President's Report

by Jim Good

President - Branch 599

### MIARAP: Staying Informed

Letter carriers have been bombarded with changes in the way that their routes and T-6 Strings have been adjusted since the beginning of 2009 and the implementation of IARAP. Our National officers were able to negotiate these changes because of the recent drastic reduction in mail volume. Recently retired President Bill Young offered U. S. Postal Service national leadership a new method of route adjustments that would save them vast amounts of money resulting from a new method of route inspections while also recouping savings by eliminating routes because of a drop in volume. Carriers benefited by having their routes adjusted based on their actual clock rings as well as their input as to what possible changes might have a positive effect on the inspection results. All routes were adjusted to as close to eight hours as possible, but as with all methods of route adjustments the times used to move territory were the times of the carriers who lost the territory. Carriers picked up territory based on the time it took another carrier to deliver that territory. No one will actually find out if the adjustments will result in an eight hour route until the carrier gaining the territory sees how long it takes them to do the new route. Since the new MIARAP process is scheduled to be done twice a year through November of 2011 we should be able to keep up

with the changes and have most, if not all of the routes very close to eight hours soon.

A few of the problems that will not go away are what territory is taken from a route and what territory is added. I have spoken with, or read, through branch newsletters, that this is the main complaint coming out of the process. Carriers have the idea that because they bid on a certain route, and that route had all curb line delivery prior to the adjustments that it should remain all curb line delivery after the adjustment. While I understand the carriers' frustration, and I understand that carriers wait for and bid on a certain route based on the type of delivery, the fact is that management owns the route. When one or two routes are abolished, as is now happening, that territory must be spread out throughout the adjoining area. This can sometimes cause a route to change in composition from curb line to dismount or park & loop.

In 2002 National Arbitrator Briggs held that a route change of greater than 50% does not constitute an abolishment. With that ruling our National Business Agent's office's position is that a route can keep as little as a few stops from the original route and not have to be considered an abolishment. This means that the only remedy to the situation for the carrier is for him/her to bid off of the route if they are unhappy with the adjustment. It is a bitter pill to swallow and I know that the three appointed union representatives that are our half of the adjustment teams are doing their utmost to make the adjustments proceed as smoothly as possible.

Another situation that is arising is when a route is abolished and the positions

(routes and T-6 strings) held by carriers junior to the carrier whose route is abolished are posted for bid in-house. Because of our long-standing past practice of bidding in-house when this abolishment takes place these positions are posted for bid by all the carriers in the affected station. In order to post the T-6 strings in this category they must be full strings. When these strings, and routes also, are vacated for posting we occasionally are forced to change the composition and/or day off of the route or string. We try to keep the disruption to the positions as limited as possible, but as I said occasionally days off must be changed. Whenever these changes are made they are always done by seniority.



These are changing times and the issues that are arising are issues that do not happen very often. Because of this many carriers, and some times new stewards, are unaware of the correct procedures to follow. If anyone has any questions about a certain procedure or issue that cannot be answered by their shop steward please feel free to call me at the union hall. You have every right to understand and be aware of the rules and regulations regarding any aspect of the National Agreement. There are sections of the contract that we may not like or agree with, but we, as well as management, must follow the correct procedures.

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**Branch Meeting**

**Thursday, September 3**

**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	Detlev Aeppel	(813) 505-7914
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) 264-9801
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	Phil Chirico	(813) 657-3180
Carrollwood	33618	Eddie Berroth	(813) 493-5224
Commerce	33602	Dook Ramotar	(813) 767-0322
Forest Hills	33612	Stephen Hall	(813) 494-4669
Forest Hills Annex	33613	Rocky Randels	(813) 766-2604
Hilldale	33614	A. Sam Santilli	(813) 215-7595
Hilldale Annex	33634	Butch Smith	(813) 889-3915
Hyde Park	33606	Tom Cobert	(813) 694-0711
Interbay	33611	Sammy Graham	(813) 832-6644
Interbay	33629	Brian Obst	(727) 458-0679
MacDill	33608	Sammy Graham	(813) 832-6644
Palm River	33619	J.C. Howard	(813) 621-1976
Plant City	33565	Varick Reeder	(813) 746-0238
Port Tampa	33616	Sammy Graham	(813) 832-6644
Produce	33610	Maggie Lancaster	(813) 317-7522
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	Dennis Lorenzo	(813) 966-3989
Tampa Carrier Annex	33609	Dennis Lorenzo	(813) 966-3989
Temple Terrace	33617	Warren Sumlin	(813) 486-7612
Town & Country	33615	Brian Obst	(727) 458-0679
Town & Country	33635	Brain Obst	(727) 458-0679
Ybor City	33605	Detlev Aeppel	(813) 505-7914

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**RETIREES BREAKFAST**  
**(In Tampa)**  
**September 14, 2009**  
**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

### Belt Tightening

**T**he second round of the discussion between the team on the route adjustment process has now been completed at Commerce. The results were they lost one route and one was made an auxiliary.

There were a few minor disagreements along the way, but overall things went well, and if I must say, most of the carriers were happy about the outcome of the adjustment with the team but nevertheless were glad of this process where they were consulted before and after than the other way around where in six days they had no say whatsoever in the outcome of the adjustment.

With the USPS losing nearly 3 billion dollars so far this year, and projected to lose up to seven billion at the end of this fiscal year, we all need to contribute to the better of a successful USPS in the future where we could wake up the next day knowing we have a job to go to.

This being said, management in the USPS needs to understand that not only are the carriers involved in the belt tightening but all areas in management as well, and from running for you point of view at Commerce for now there is not too much you can twist out of the carriers without them working without breaks and in an unsafe atmosphere. Which would lead to discipline and possible suspension or removal.

With this in mind, there is a race between two stations on who would be receiving the most intimidations, such as (I.I.) investigative interview, letters of warnings, etc. on the carriers.

Running for you was involved within the past 3 weeks on having to represent carriers at 2 stations, the steward at one of them and 5+ others, and did 5 at the other station with few pending, why is this happening to carriers who management needs to get their full cooperation than the other way around.

Some of the questions asked were last month when we walked (rode) with you, you took x amount of time with x amount of mail to deliver and this month with the same amount of mail, same amount of deliveries, you took 5+ minutes to deliver what a question to ask, there are so much possibilities to cover, too hot, rain, questions asked by customers, etc., what management wants to hear is that you had 5 deliveries on that day, and delivered them in 4 minutes, then you are in their good graces, otherwise tough, you're out.

I for one, does not see where management in having less carriers to supervise yet is taking the same or more time to see that the job gets done.

Stupid me, I forgot that they do get the job gets done earlier but the remainder of the time they go through the carriers work like a fine tooth comb and then asked tough questions like why did you need to go to the bathroom 3 times instead of one, or why did you need to talk to the customer who just asked you a question. Lets not get carried away, we don't need to take a time out to answer questions. In answering the questions, we take time out of service and delay deliveries.

by **Dook Ramotar**

*Executive Vice-President - Branch 599*

When I was transferred from New Jersey to Florida, I later looked on the seniority list. I believe then that I was about 700+ in seniority, which had over 800 carriers. Recently, I had a new seniority list and I would have been number 386? We lost so many carriers, yet I don't see where we lost any supervisors or managers if the trend continues we would be left with more supervisors and managers than cashiers.



Now that commerce is on board I hope that the rest to follow will be as smooth or smoother and we can get the job done with little or no difficulty. Lets not procrastinate and intimidate the carriers and let them as professionals do the job they were hired to do, bear this in mind, many of them are doing their jobs with dignity and respect more longer than many of the supervisors and managers.

Until next month, This is Running With You.

*"Some of us will do our jobs well and some will not, but we will be judged by only one thing-the result."*

*Vince Lombardi*

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### Arslan Uniform Drawing

The Arslan Uniform prize for the September 3<sup>rd</sup> Branch 599 meeting will be \$260.00. If you are in attendance at the meeting and your name is drawn, you will win the \$260.00 donated by Bill & Shirley Moran of Arslan Uniforms.

Why not come to the meeting, hear what is going on in your union, and maybe win some big money? There have been many changes happening that affect your daily work, so you really need to keep informed regarding your rights. What better place to keep updated than at the branch meeting? Hope to see you here on September 3<sup>rd</sup>.

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### Tampa Retirees Breakfast - September 2009

The Tampa Retirees Breakfast, normally held at the Coffee Cup Restaurant on the first Monday of every month, will be held on September 14<sup>th</sup> this month because of the Labor Day Holiday.

Hope to see everyone there at 9:00 A.M. on the 14th.

# ***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*

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## **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**

## A Point of Personal Privilege

### Health Care Part I

At the time of this writing it appears that three groups, the insurance industry, Republicans and the Blue Dog Democrats have defeated President Obama's promise to provide an affordable universal health care plan by the August recess for all Americans! This plan was to include a public option, acceptance of patients with pre-existing conditions, the right of choice by the patient of a physician and would allow the physician to dictate and administer the specific medical care needed.

The venom and negativity from these three groups include statements: it is a failed Canadian and European plan, it includes planned parenthood provisions, it pays for unnecessary abortions, it will force seniors to die because of eliminating and decreasing health care, the costs are too high, it will put private insurers into bankruptcy, it is socialism, it will destroy Medicare, the plan will put a political bureaucrat between the patient and the doctor and it has an employer mandate to insure all employees. These 3 groups are ignoring 72% of all

Americans that want an affordable national health plan that will force major insurance companies to be competitive with each other! The majority of Americans want a plan that includes both a patient option and the inclusion of the treatment of individuals with a pre-existing condition. Also neglected is the fact that 53% of the electorate selected Barack Obama because of the promise of "CHANGE!" Change that would affect and improve: the economy, education and health care. Of which the Blue Dog Democrats seem to have memory loss.

A major point used by the Republicans revolves around the disclosure from an advisory health company called "The Lewin Group." The Lewin Group is totally owned by United Health Care which is one of the nation's largest private insurers. Lewin is part of Ingenix which happens to be a subsidiary of United Health Care. Ingenix was found guilty in the state of New York for helping to shift medical expenses to consumers by distributing false data. The parent company and insurers were supplied by Ingenix with data that understated the "usual and customary" doctor fees that insurers use to determine the reimbursement to

consumers for out-of-network care. United Health Care paid a \$50 million dollar settlement to the New York attorney general and a \$350 million dollar settlement to the AMA going back to 1994.

The profits of the top 7 insurers over the last 7 years has risen by 430% while real wages of working Americans have flat lined even though health care premiums continue to rise. United Health Care insured over 70 million US citizens in 2008 or approximately 25% of our population. In 2008, UHC's profit was \$18.5 billion dollars. In 2008 the yearly salaries of just 3 executives at UHC were: President and CEO, Stephen Hemsley, \$9.4 million dollars; CFO, George Mihan III, \$3.8 million and Executive Vice President, Anthony Welters, \$12.4 million. United in the 2nd quarter of 2009 had a profit of \$859 million dollars which is a 169% increase over the preceding years. Now they are projecting a 2009 profit of \$87 billion dollars and the profit margin for all private insurers to reach 155%.



by Leslie Rav Garcia

(continued on page 6)

## Suncoast Scoop Blog

Suncoast Postal Employees now have their own blog: *The Suncoast Scoop!* *The Scoop* is a way to spread the word about the special people, events and life we share as Suncoast District postal employees.

We will accentuate the positive and strive to recognize the good things people are doing during these difficult economic times. And, *The Suncoast Scoop* is loaded with special deals and discounts exclusively for postal employees to Busch Gardens, Universal, Tampa Rays, and Tampa Bay Lightning.

Check it out! Register and get it sent to your home email! Go to <http://suncoastscoop.blogspot.com/> to learn more and to sign up.

## Detlev's Report

by Detlev Aeppel

### After MIARAP

**W**ith the current session of the MIARAP route adjustments now complete letter carriers should no longer be engaging in daily conflicts with their supervisor about their estimates, right? Right...

The fact is supervisors will continue to challenge letter carriers regarding their daily estimates. Most supervisors regard this daily challenge as part of a supervisor's duty to ensure the efficiency of postal operations. Unfortunately, many supervisors only rely on DOIS projections to determine what their expectation of carriers' estimates will be.

This is a clear violation of the DOIS Memorandum of Understanding and should not be tolerated by letter carriers. Other factors could and should be taken into account when determining a fair estimate of letter carrier work.

Now that routes have been adjusted letter carriers have very important information literally at their finger tips. All regular carriers received copies of the 1840-R's for their routes. This document will tell them what office and street time their routes were adjusted to on an

average day. This is the starting point. Now the letter carrier can add or subtract time needed from these basic office and street times as the workload dictates. A careful study of the facts every day will yield a letter carrier's daily estimate. The letter carrier must then take these facts and share them with the supervisor as support for the estimate given. This is not an imposition on or an insult to the letter carrier. This is the process called for in the M-41.

Current indications are that the MIARAP process will be used again in a few months when the current adjustments are revisited.

Management is contractually required to conduct new 3999's on the routes that have just been adjusted. These 3999's are just an all day ride along. The 3999 should be conducted on a typical day. This process will verify the actual line of travel for the route and will establish the carrier's own time for the sector segments of his route.

Letter carriers should make every effort to carry their routes in their usual professional manner during 3999's. Normal 3999's conducted after an adjustment are not supposed to intimidate or coerce the letter carrier. This process is NOT to be confused with a One Day Mail Count. In a One Day Mail Count all mail is

counted and the carrier is followed just like in a Six Day Mail Count. In a One Day Mail Count all letter carriers are encouraged to exercise their right to count all the mail for themselves.



The MIARAP process depends heavily on letter carrier clock rings as basic data. It must be noted that proper clock ringing is essential to ensuring fair treatment for letter carriers. Letter carriers must be sure to perform office functions on office time and street functions on street time.

Letter carriers must identify to routes that they give office or street assistance to no matter how briefly. Form PS-3996 must be used and properly filled out so that the assisted route gets proper time credit as well as the letter carrier's own route getting proper time credit. Care should be taken so as not to cheat yourself out of travel time to your route in the morning or from your route in the afternoon. Form PS-3996 is also necessary when the PM supervisor reviews the day's clock rings for errors or omissions.

In Solidarity...

### Personal Privilege *(from page 5)*

"Rarely has an argument more dramatically highlighted the philosophical question of whether in a democracy, the government should represent the people's interests or an industry's. The counter argu-

ment, of course, might be that if the health insurance industry hadn't dissatisfied so many customers-indeed forcing many sick people into bankruptcy because of excessive fees, denial of coverage and gaps in permitted medical treatments-there wouldn't be so many Americans ea-

ger for a public option..." reported Robert Parry of Consortium News.

*"Nothing sways the stupid more than arguments they can't understand."* Cardinal de Retz

## CDL District 11 Political Report

*Our Pensions*

**W**ant a good reason to give to COLCPE well the following should be the slap in the face to open everyone's eyes.

Many pensions in the private sector are from the unions not the employer and are protected by numerous federal laws so many in fact it is a specialty in the practice of law. These pensions (because of those laws) are most certainly the only guaranteed pensions that exist unless they go broke and that's not likely.

Our pension on the other hand is only guaranteed by the federal government, which is not subject to those same federal laws that protect the union pensions (funny isn't it, our government can actually work outside of the laws it creates). Our union, as with all federal unions, cannot protect your pension and does not administer our pensions. The federal government does. The following was released to the press on July 24<sup>th</sup>. Pay attention to the areas in bold print, read them once or twice and let it sink in especially the last quote.

Amendment 1522 was offered by Sen. Daniel Akaka (D-HI) and Sen. Collins to make several improvements to CSRS and FERS. It was withdrawn by the sponsor. The Akaka-Collins amendment would allow accumulated unused sick leave to be credited for FERS employees toward their annuity, much like CSRS employees, and provide retirement equity for federal employees throughout the United States and the U.S. territories.

Sen. Akaka was forced to withdraw his amendment when Sen. Tom Coburn (R-OK) filibustered against the measure for an hour and twenty minutes. To quote Senator Coburn, R-OK, "By the way, if you are a federal employee and unhappy with me trying to defeat this amendment, you should pay attention to something. There is no guarantee to your federal pension based on the economics we face today in this country. *If you think it is guaranteed, you have another thought coming because the world economic system is going to determine whether we can honor that pension. That is what is coming. We are very close.*"

Has it sunk in yet? Next year our federal Representatives and our Senators are going to have to come up with a better balanced budget. Our pensions are a major target. It's one of the easiest places they have to go to in order to save money. The only protection you have is the friends your union has on Capitol Hill. The only way the union gets those friends is through COLCPE, period!

Is this sinking in yet? If you want to work 20, 30 or 40 years and take a reduced pension then don't give to COLCPE. If you want to work 20, 30 or 40 years and have federal laws change that will adversely effect you, then don't give to COLCPE. Not giving to COLCPE is the best insurance you can't buy to sell your benefits down the drain because not giving doesn't cost you one red cent. So if that's what you want, then don't give to COL-

by Lance Jones

Congressional District Liaison - Branch 599

CPE.



If this article doesn't wake you up to give to COLCPE, then I give up. It can not be plainer than the nose on your face. It's not a question of your politics and your opinions that "...national only gives to Republican/Democrats..." or whatever lame excuse you come up with not to give. What does it matter? The fact is that national and only national can get you the hundreds of friends you need on Capitol Hill to protect you and what difference does it make what their political persuasion is so long as they are on our side?

It's a question of your benefits, your pension and everything you've worked for since you've been with the postal service. If you can't give five dollars a pay period (and I seriously do not believe that any carrier cannot afford ten dollars a month), then at least give a dollar a pay period. But do something.

I'm going to make hundreds of copies of this article with the date mentioned above because when they start taking away your pension, and other benefits the union negotiated for you and you come down to the union hall hollering and screaming, "What the hell is going on? What's the union doing about this?"...well, **you ARE the union and you did not give to COLCPE.** There's your answer.

In Unity,

Lance Jones  
Health Benefit Representative

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

See your Shop Steward - Retirees call the union office at 875-0599



**SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 6, 2009 12-4:00 PM**

## **FOOD**

**PROVIDED BY "CATERING BY THE FAMILY"  
HAMBURGERS, HOT DOGS  
BARBEQUED CHICKEN  
BEER, SOFT DRINKS AND WATER – ALL DAY  
COTTON CANDY, SNOW CONES, ICE CREAM**

## **KIDS**

**FACE PAINTING – 12:30-3:30  
GIGANTIC WETSLIDE  
2 MOONWALKS – ALL DAY  
SACK RACE**

## **EVERYONE**

**EGG TOSS  
WATER BALLOON TOSS**

A \$5.00 donation, per family, for MDA  
is requested and will be accepted at the door

## Simple Safety Tips to Protect Your Home

**H**ome may be where the heart is, but it also is where the hazards are.

A survey of 1,000 Americans revealed startling statistics indicating that many of us are at risk of incurring injuries in our own homes every day, some of which could even be fatal, according to a recent study by BRK Brands and The Lehigh Group -- makers of the First Alert brand and Crawford-branded garage and home workshop organization products, respectively. As proud supporters of the nonprofit Home Safety Council (HSC), First Alert and Crawford are joining with HSC to spread the word about potential home hazards and tips for protecting loved ones.

The HSC research reports that Americans suffer nearly 21 million preventable household injuries each year.

"Sadly, many home accidents might have been prevented with proper planning and simple safety precautions," says Deborah Hanson, director of external affairs for First Alert and The Lehigh Group.

Focusing on some of the most common household hazards, Hanson offers three easy ways to increase the level of safety at home:

### Be armed with alarms

Installing smoke and carbon monoxide (CO) alarms will immediately help improve the safety of your home and family. According to the HSC, alarms that detect smoke cut the risk of fire-related fatalities nearly in half.

Although the BRK/Lehigh survey revealed 95 percent of Americans have smoke alarms in their homes, the study also showed that one in 10 Americans have never changed the batteries. Further, more than half have dangerously silenced smoke detectors by removing batteries or removing entire units from walls or ceilings.

"After installing alarms, it is critical to check them regularly to make sure they are in good working condition," says Meri-K Appy, president of the HSC. "We advise homeowners to test alarms monthly and to install fresh batteries at least once a year. Also, if smoke alarms are more than 10

years old, replace them."

The BRK/Lehigh study revealed even more alarming findings about Americans' use -- or lack thereof -- of CO alarms. Despite nearly daily media reports of deaths and injuries from CO poisoning, nearly half -- 47 percent -- of all U.S. homeowners do not have CO alarms in their homes.

"Consumers are generally more aware of the dangers of home fires because fire is something they can see, feel and understand," says Hanson. "Carbon monoxide is especially dangerous because it attacks without warning and can be deadly."

Known as "the silent killer," CO exposure is the No. 1 cause of accidental poisoning in the U.S. The colorless, odorless gas can originate from anything that burns a fossil fuel -- such as a gas furnace, stove, water heater, barbecue grill, wood-burning fireplace or car.

For the best protection smoke alarms and CO alarms (or a combination unit) should be installed on every level of the home (including the basement) and in every bedroom or sleeping area. For whole home protection, Hanson suggests interconnected alarms, which signal alarms through multiple alarm stations in the home if a threat is detected in a single room. This gives residents more time to react and get everyone to safety. First Alert's ONELINK wireless offerings provides homeowners the protection of interconnected alarms without needing to call an electrician to install them in the home's electrical system.

### Extinguish fear (and flames)

Another home safety must-have, according to Hanson, is a fire extinguisher, especially critical during the early stages of a fire. Still, more than a quarter of Americans report not owning a fire extinguisher, according to the BRK/Lehigh survey. And, more than one-third of those who do own a traditional home extinguisher say they would not feel "very confident" operating it should a fire ignite.

One easy-to-operate solution is Tundra Fire Extinguishing Spray. Effective on cooking

oil, fabric, wood and electrical fires, this 14-ounce point-and-spray can covers a wider surface area and provides users with more time to fight a fire than conventional fire extinguishers.

### Get a grip on garage dangers

When it comes to home safety, one of the most often overlooked areas of the home also is one of the most dangerous. Each year, the garage is the site of thousands of unintentional injuries ranging from punctures and poisoning to fatal falls.

According to the BRK/Lehigh survey, nearly four in 10 Americans have tripped over an item in their cluttered garage; more than a quarter have hit an object when opening a vehicle door; and 22 percent have accidentally hit or run over something when parking.

Hanson suggests giving your garage a quick safety makeover with these tips courtesy of the HSC:

- \* Store shovels, rakes, lawn chairs, gardening tools, bikes and other sharp and large objects on the wall and out of high-traffic areas.
- \* Store ladders horizontally. This prevents tipping and discourages children from climbing on them.
- \* Make sure poisonous products have child-resistant caps, are clearly labeled and are stored out of sight and reach of children.
- \* Keep floors and steps clear of clutter and immediately clean up grease and spills.
- \* Mount a fire extinguisher and an emergency preparedness kit in the garage and make sure every family member knows where they are and how to use them.

For home safety tips, visit <http://www.firstalert.com> or <http://www.homesafetycouncil.org>.

*Courtesy of ARAcontent*

## Around The Horn

by Tony Diaz

*Financial Secretary - Branch 599***Overtime Desired List**

**B**rothers and Sisters, I have been asked several times to bring back an Around The Horn article written last year pertaining to Article 8 of the National Agreement. My viewpoint was intended to clarify and help explain some of the obstacles Union Stewards were and still are encountering. So here it is Take 2...As we all witness the many changes currently taking place in the daily operations of our jobs (much more this year than last year), the same can be said about the manner we go about enforcing Article 8 of our National Agreement. More specifically Article 8, section G, which reads, Full-time employees not on the "Overtime Desired" list may be required to work overtime only if all available employees on the "Overtime Desired" list have worked up to twelve (12) hours in a day or (60) hours in a service week. This language seems clear-cut, black and white, very understandable, but is it? No it is not, in fact, Article 8 has become a real concern, it has become frustrating, and it has become an area of uncertainty (gray areas). Article 8 Section G has evolved into an issue in which we must pick our battles, be certain a good case is prepared and supported with sufficient data and information. We must avoid a decision at the B Level that could impact future cases negatively by filing grievances just to file them. Each case must be dealt with individually and must be investigated thoroughly before proceeding. As many of you are aware the major obstacle confronting us is the 1700 Window of Operation. When filing an overtime grievance and it eventually is sent to the B Team Level, you can bet the 1700 window weighs heavily in a B Team decision. The 1700 "Window of Operation" was negotiated in our Local Agreement years ago when carriers were working excessive hours, (12 hours a day) in an attempt to get carriers back before dark, now it is biting us in the a#s. While it is an item that can be renegotiated at the Local Level, both parties must agree to open an Item. In the past there were ways to deal with the 1700 window and be successful, we were winning grievances and at one time getting ODL carriers paid up to 12 hours for violations. As time passed, decisions at the B Level were being settled at 10 hours for violations. However, with the decreasing mail volumes and

zero curtailed mail, it has become difficult in some cases to even ask for the 10 hours when seeking a resolve for a grievance. Instead, the safe question is, what is the appropriate remedy? There have been resolves for 9.5 hours and rulings that management was within their rights to force. Based on the calculations of the workload and mail volume availability, there have been decisions rejecting a reward to the ODL carriers not maxed out. Declining mail volumes are now affecting opportunities for early starts. Once commonplace, early starting times are not permitted without permission from the area managers in large part because of the decreasing mail volumes. Many Stations have experienced later starting times. Declining mail volumes have also affected work available in the P.M. (afternoons), when ODL carriers had the opportunity to case up curtailed bulk mail after their return from delivery at 1700. At that time mail was cased on his or her own routes or wherever mail was available in an effort to maximize the list. Again, with zero mail being curtailed, there simply isn't any (or very limited) of that P.M. work available. Low volume Stations such as Palm River, Ybor and Seminole Hts. are affected more as opportunities to maximize are less. In speaking to two veteran shop stewards at those Stations, we are experiencing similar problems with Article 8. I wanted to share with you a recent situation at Seminole Hts. Two non-ODL carriers were forced in on a Holiday weekend. While one of the carriers forced was needed to cover the workload for the day, the second carrier forced was questionable. Was it necessary to force the second carrier? Could the route have been split among the ODL carriers available? Should the ODL carriers have been notified to begin tour at 0700? I began fact finding and formulating these types of questions. First figuring the total time the regular carrier used, his actual office time and his street time to determine how much time it would take to cover the route. Travel time must be added should trips have been issued. Since no ODL carriers were brought in early, my calculations to find available hours would begin at 0700 (half hour early) until 1700. For this individual case 9.50 hours would be the maxing out of the ODL carriers, taking into account the workload and mail availability. On this particular day there was not a full complement of ODL carriers present and the ones that were available already had trips. Still, I was hoping to find enough hours needed to cover the route. Again I was using the 9.50 hours instead of 10 hours based on the fact the mail volume was very low and there wasn't going to be any curtailed mail to provide casing opportunities at the end of the day (after 1700). I took the hours the available ODL car-

riers actually worked and subtracted that figure from the 9.50 hours. For example 9.50 hours minus 8.50 hours equals 1.0 hour still available to carry trips. That morning there were three ODL carriers in the break room available to begin tour at 0700. Reminding my supervisor that non-ODL carriers were being forced, I questioned why he would not at least start these ODL carriers early. Two obstacles came into play; 1) the truck was late and there was no mail available to be cased, and with the handful of letters existing, carriers would have been waiting around for the mail to be distributed once the truck did arrive. 2) We have a modified carrier in our office that begins at 5:30AM (cases only) and he already had that handful of letters cased on more than half of our 19 routes. Feel the frustration; these are dilemmas we must deal with, each case being a separate entity. Continuing, with no work available, the carriers were not started early, the opportunities to capture that time now is much more difficult. There ended up being about 5.75 hours remaining to cover the route. The total street time alone used on the route was 5 hours and 37 minutes, with no travel time yet included. I withdrew my grievance at the Informal A Level since I could not capture enough time to even cover the street time used on the route. If I could have at least covered the street time, the modified carrier would have absorbed the office time needed. This case would have been a disaster sending it up for a B Level decision. I am hopeful you have a better understanding of the obstacles that are presenting themselves when defending what was at one time, the easiest to enforce, Article 8. Frustrating, you bet, a challenge to overcome even more so. For those who wish to continue to recognize Article 8 as it once was; you need to really pay attention to the content of this Around The Horn issue, this is reality. We can still prevail however we must be diligent in our efforts. **Quick Hits: Information you should know:** \*) The 6 day work week vs. the 5 day work week is a hot topic that the NALC and the Postal Service have very different viewpoints. Stay tuned, this is a decision that could affect 25 thousand Letter Carriers. \*) 2nd MDA collection will be Sept 4 !!! for those who could not participate in the 1st collection, we have narrowed the intersections to three and they are all very busy. We need you to volunteer for a Great cause.



## Unionism

by Brian Obst

## The Shop Steward

**A**s a shop Steward your rights and duties are spelled out in the National Agreement and the JCAM as listed below:

### 17.3 Section 3. Rights of Stewards

*When it is necessary for a steward to leave his/her work area to investigate and adjust grievances or to investigate a specific problem to determine whether to file a grievance, the steward shall request permission from the immediate supervisor and **such request shall not be unreasonably denied.** In the event the duties require the steward leave the work area and enter another area within the installation or post office, the steward must also receive permission from the supervisor from the other area he/she wishes to enter and **such request shall not be unreasonably denied.** The steward, chief steward or other Union representative properly certified in accordance with Section 2 above may request and shall obtain access through the appropriate supervisor to review the documents, files and other records necessary for processing a grievance or determining if a grievance exists and shall have the right to interview the aggrieved employee(s), supervisors and witnesses during working hours. **Such requests shall not be unreasonably denied.** While serving as a steward or chief steward, an employee may not be involuntarily transferred to another tour, to another station or branch of the particular post office or to another independent post office or installation unless there is no job for which the employee is qualified on such tour, or in such station or branch, or post*

*office. If an employee requests a steward or Union representative to be present during the course of an interrogation by the Inspection Service, such request will be granted. All polygraph tests will continue to be on a voluntary basis.*

Notice I have taken the liberty of highlighting the phrase “*such request shall not be unreasonably denied*”. I have done so because it seems that many stewards are being denied their right to investigate and receive information for grievance processing. Remember these things are your rights as a steward and management must comply with said requests.

Any failure of management to comply with these requests should result in a grievance being filed under Article 17.3 and Article 31. Also charges with the National Labor Relations Board of unfair labor practices by management of the Postal Service can also be filed if the practice is ongoing and abusive.

As a steward you are charged with contract enforcement, this means that if you observe a violation of the contract you do not have to wait for someone else to file a grievance on the issue. You as the steward may file a grievance on behalf of the individual or class that is violated and begin your investigation immediately.

Just remember that we are prohibited from going on “a fishing expedition” so you must have some evidence of a violation that you want to investigate, your observation is enough to start the investigation.

Chief Steward - Branch 599

The job of a steward is a difficult one due to the many ethical challenges it presents to the steward. Remember that you represent all the carriers in your appointed area and you must treat them all equally. There should never be any situation where you treat one carrier differently than you treat the rest, no “good deals” for friends and no looking the other way on issues of contract violation. It might seem like a small matter that causes no harm/no foul but later on it will normally come back to cause you a great deal of trouble.



Remember the writers of our contract negotiated long and hard to get what it contains and there is reason for all the terms it contains and the job of a steward it to ensure management complies with the terms that the parties have agreed to. Don't let yourself become ensnared in requests by carriers or management to “look the other way” because this won't hurt anyone, as it leads you down the path of potential labor charges against yourself and the Union as a whole for improper representation.

You were elected as a steward because your fellow carriers felt that you could properly represent them and they count on you to do so, don't let them or the Union down by not doing so properly.

Until next month, *knowledge is the key.*

Brian Obst  
Chief Steward

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1989	8.5
1990	8.0
1991	7.5
1992	7.0
1993	6.5
1994	6.0
1995	6.0
1996	6.0
1997	6.0
1998	6.0
1999	6.0
2000	6.0
2001	6.0
2002	6.0
2003	6.0
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2007	6.0
2008	6.0
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