



Tampa Letter Carrier

Volume 9 - Issue 9

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

Tampa, Florida

September 2010

President's Report

by Jim Good

President - Branch 599

Branch 599 Update

I'm sure that all of you are aware of the passing of Branch 599's Executive Vice-President Dook Ramotar. Dook had been ill for quite some time, but chose to keep on working right up until the end. He was a long time shop steward at Commerce Station before retiring from the Postal Service and being elected to the Executive Vice-President position almost three years ago. I appointed him as the Commerce Shop Steward last year when a vacancy occurred. A bylaw change was submitted and approved by the membership that did away with the Executive Vice-President position, so I will not be appointing a replacement. Unfortunately Dook passed away during the National Convention so none of his friends, who were delegates, myself included, were able to attend his funeral services. All of our prayers and

condolences are with Dook's family.

The National Convention was a very interesting and educational experience. I can honestly say that at this convention there were more delegates that attended the optional morning and late afternoon classes than at any convention in the past. Every delegate attended at least a few of these classes, with some delegates attending all of the classes offered. There were also nominations of National Officers for the new four-year term. The following were some of the officers elected by acclamation: Fred Rolando, President, Timothy O'Malley, Executive Vice-President, George Mignosi, Vice-President, Lew Drass, Director of City Delivery and Jane Broendel, Secretary-Treasurer. Judy Willoughby, our National Business Agent for Region Nine, was also elected by acclamation. All of the National Resident Officers were elected by acclamation, so no ballots will be mailed out for voting in our region.

There will be elections held in five other regions for National Business Agent.



There were quite a few resolutions that were voted on by the delegation. These resolutions were sent to the appropriate Union authority: Either the Negotiating Committee, the Director of Legislation or the Executive Council. The appropriate committee then addressed the convention with their approval or disapproval and the delegation voted to agree or disagree with the committee. In all cases the delegation agreed with the committee. There were three resolutions that sought to change the authority of the National Officers regarding route adjustments, asking that in order to change the way route adjustments were done would require a vote of the entire membership. These three were also defeated, continuing to give

(continued on page 5)

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 7, 2010 and November 4, 2010, 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, 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 15, 2011.

Election

The election will be conducted by secret ballot on December 2, 2010 at the Union Hall, 3003 West Cypress St, Tampa, Florida. The polls will be open from 3:00 pm until 8:00 pm, or during the times decided by the election committee at the regular branch meeting on October 7, 2010. Any member who for any reason will be unable to vote on December 2nd 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 5, 2010 through November 18, 2010.

Branch 599 Officers

PRESIDENT	Jim Good	(813) 417-8877
VICE-PRESIDENT	Gilbert Cabanas	(813) 855-0516
RECORDING SECRETARY	Mike Brink	(813) 661-0516
FINANCIAL SECRETARY	Tony Diaz	(813) 598-9635
TREASURER	Michael Anderson	(813) 967-1615
TRUSTEE	Terry Franklin	(813) 657-9690
TRUSTEE	Silven Zimmerman	(813) 380-3731
TRUSTEE	Jose Oliva	(813) 873-2747
DIRECTOR OF RETIREES	John Gebo	(813) 985-5474, Cell 503-1256
SERGEANT-AT-ARMS	J.C. Howard	(813) 621-1976
MBA / NSBA	Albert Guice	(813) 621-7931
HEALTH BENEFITS	Detlev Aeppel	(813) 505-7914
LABOR—MANAGEMENT	A. Sam Santilli	(813) 215-7595
LABOR - MANAGEMENT	Brian Obst	(727) 458-0679

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	Pedro Jimenez	(813) 727-9280
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

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

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.

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
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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

Becoming A Better Driver

How do you become a safer driver? Is it great driving ability, or many years of driving experience? No, none of these factors can match your complete attention to your surroundings. Yes, focus ability is the number one factor in becoming a safe driver. Number one thing, try not to have any inside disruptions; no radio, no headphones, or idle thoughts while driving. Why? Because nothing is more important than your complete attention while you are driving. Remember, an accident can occur within less than two seconds. This accident can now lead to an injury. One accident can completely change your life and more important, your family's life. Not to mention, some form of discipline will be applied to you, plus all of the extra expenses that will arise from this accident. So you see, one accident can become a huge problem, not just for your career, but your family's lifestyle. So isn't your complete attention worth it to your career? Driving and delivering mail is a hard enough job; don't add any distractions

to yourself.

Another thought to consider while driving are your left hand turns, try to make as few as possible. Either make your left hand turns with an arrow light on it, or drive an extra block or two for a safer turn. Why? Because left hand turns do account for about 30% of our accidents. Another thing to consider in your daily routine, don't back up if not at all necessary. Your visibility is very poor and small objects cannot be seen when backing up. Please try not to place your vehicle where you must back out, instead, back into a parking space if at all possible. Also, try to avoid changing lanes whenever possible. Again, visibility is poor when traveling to your left. Be extra careful when driving in and around parked vehicles, this also exposes the left part of your vehicle. This is why I think that your complete focus is necessary in order to overcome any obstacles or threats on the road. Try to drive under the posted speed limits is another thought to consider especially in inclement weather. Driving under the speed limit will help you adjust to most problems that can occur on the road. All these helpful hints can help you prepare to ac-

quire better driving habits. But remember, your complete focus with as few disturbances as possible is your key to a long and safe driving career. You are not alone when an accident occurs, your family, your career, or maybe someone's life is on the line. If that thought now arouses your attention, or perhaps even scares you some, that's alright because a lot of good people are counting on your safe return to your daily life every day. Becoming a safe driver is not an accident or a coincidence, but it does take your complete focus while driving every single day. Your thoughts must be on how to avoid an accident and be aware of your surroundings in front of you while driving. Please work on trying to become a safe driver, obtaining all of these simple habits can accomplish this goal one day at a time. And if you're wondering how I know that all of these habits can contribute to you becoming a safer and better driver, I practiced all of these habits every day for the 39 years that I drove for the Postal Service.



by Gilbert Cabanas

Vice-President - Branch 599

Arslan Uniform Drawing

The Arslan Uniform prize for the September 2nd Branch 599 meeting will be **\$390.00**. If you are in attendance at the meeting and your name is drawn, you will win the **\$390.00** 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 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? We're approaching the \$400.00 mark in our jackpot, and the last couple of months some well-known names have been drawn, but for some reason the carriers who normally are here for the meetings were not here that night. So don't take that chance. Come to the meeting and maybe you'll go home with an extra \$390.00 in your pocket.

Health & Welfare

Dook Ramotar, Executive Vice-President of Branch 599 for the past three years and long-time Commerce shop steward, passed away on August 10, 2010. Dook had been ill for quite a long time but continued to work until the week that he passed away. He will be remembered as a dedicated unionist and representative of Branch 599 members.

Director of Retirees John Gebo lost his mother-in-law, Annie Crusoe Anthony. We have also lost the father of carrier Gary Nisson. Our deepest condolences go out to the families of the deceased.

Get well wishes go out to Interbay carrier Cheryl Clothier who is recuperating from knee replacement surgery and to retiree Jimmy Fernandez who is recuperating from hip surgery. Hope you both have a speedy recovery.

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Bill & Shirley Moran

Retired Letter Carrier Branch 1477 St. Petersburg

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Retired But Not Tired***The Best Union Hall
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Dear brothers and sisters of Branch 599, How are we all doing? Cold winter, hot summer. After what you see happening all over the world, we're not too bad off.

We had a nice crowd of retirees at our August 2nd breakfast. Along with President Good, we had fifteen retirees in attendance. First-timer, Bill Travis received his free breakfast as President Good picks up the tab for first-timers. So, if you retirees want a free breakfast, come on down. Other Retirees in attendance were Oliva, Krezel, Holt, Lundy, Thomas, Jones, Adel, Fritts, Quintanilla, Ohmstede, Thran, Follman and this writer. I thought it was a great showing for this time of year. Even retirees take vacations, even though our vacations are 365 days a year.

Maybe it was because the word is out that TLC, Inc. has decided to sell the union hall and property. I believe that the entire membership of Branch 599 should determine this. Why the big rush? Before the August 5th branch meeting, a special meeting was called to amend Section IV of the Articles of

Incorporation. This was done to make sure that Branch 599 would receive all assets of TLC, Inc. Who said TLC, Inc. is going to be legally dissolved?

There seems to be, in my opinion, a group on the TLC, Inc. Board of Directors that want this to happen. Instead of working on how to cut expenses and save our union hall, all I hear is that our union hall is now a liability instead of an asset. If this was the case, why did we take on a major remodeling expense less than three years ago?

"The Best Union Hall in the Country" is more than an outdated building. Over the years, how many compliments and praise has this building received from national officers, union brothers from all across the country who have attended functions at our hall. This union hall has a lot of history behind it and a lot of fond memories to both old and young carriers who donated their time and effort to make this union hall what it is today. As you can tell, for this writer, it is not an easy thing to see the sale of our union hall. I am sure a lot of you feel the same.

TLC, Inc. up until recently paid all expenses to maintain the building and

some of Branch 599 expenses. TLC, Inc. also paid for branch officers and shop steward dues reimbursement at the end of the year, for national and state conventions, and more. Recently Branch 599 has picked up some expenses that they should have been paying all along. TLC, Inc. would be in a much better financial position today if this had not happened.

Why are we selling our union hall and property when the market is at an all time low? Shouldn't we be looking at ways to preserve our union hall that was once known as *"The Best Union Hall in the Country"*?

Our next Retirees Breakfast will be held on September 13, 2010, the second Monday of the month. Enjoy your Labor Day weekend.

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

Fraternally,
John Gebo



Director of Retirees - Branch 599

Presidents Report *(from page 1)*

our elected leaders the authority to do their jobs as they see fit.

Finally, as everyone has probably figured out by now, there will be no Labor Day Picnic this year. This is the first year since my being elected president that we have not had a picnic, but it can't be helped. With income down and expenses up, with the number of recent retirees and the drop in monies coming from national from union dues, we need to watch how we spend. As you know, the branch has picked up quite a few of the bills that we didn't pay before. That's fine, but we have to

make sure that we have the money to pay those bills without digging into our savings by changing our bylaws. We'll do what we have to do to get through these lean times, and hopefully we'll do it by standing together. I hope that everyone understands that no one wants to sell our building! That being said, it is the responsibility of the TLC board to be fiscally responsible and act in the best interests of Branch 599. The members of Branch 599, who are also members of TLC, deserve no less!

Branch Meeting***Thursday******September 2******7:30 PM***

Around The Horn

by Tony Diaz

Tips for Dealing with Stress

Brothers and Sisters, this month I wanted to talk about stress. Stress is actually a normal part of life that can either help us learn and grow or can cause us significant problems. We all have slightly different stress responses due to our genetic makeup. How an individual manages stress and stressful situations is important to one's health and could affect quality of life. Stress is defined as a mentally or emotionally disruptive or upsetting condition occurring in response to adverse external influences and capable of affecting physical health, usually characterized by increased heart rate, a rise in blood pressure, muscular tension, irritability, and depression. As the Postal Service continues to experience financial struggles, the ongoing route changes, with the impending contract negotiations in 2011 and the fight to save 6-day mail delivery, stress in our workplace may become overwhelming. So how does one attempt to combat this condition? As I further educated myself about stress, an article in our own NALC Health Benefit Plan Report caught my eye. According to this Report there are ten techniques to help to minimize stress and become a healthier person. I found these techniques simple but attention-grabbing, hopefully they will be helpful should someone feel they need help.

1) Think Positive, Having a positive approach to life can help us meet stresses head-on.

2) Exercise, Make time in your schedule for regular exercise. Do it with friends who can help you keep your commitment, or do it alone and use the time for reflection.

3) Take Control, While you may not be able to change everything, notice the things you can change. Accept the things you can't do anything about, and don't worry about them. Take control of your life.

4) Listen to Your Body, Pay attention to what the voice of your body is telling you. The body speaks to us in many ways: headaches, stiff necks, high blood pressure, or an upset stomach. When you "hear" messages, you may be pushing yourself too hard. Slow down, relax.

5) Take a Mental Vacation, Sometimes we feel so worn out or frustrated that we reach the "I can't cope" level. That's a good time for a mental vacation. Find a place where you can be alone. Lie down, close your eyes, and visualize a calming place for you. Breathe deeply and slowly. Enjoy relaxing for several minutes. When you are feeling better, open your eyes.

6) Rest, A well-rested body is more resistant to stress. Do something relaxing before bedtime: a peaceful walk, a warm bath, a warm drink.

7) Nourish Your body, A properly nourished body is more resistant to stress. Adopt a consistent practice of healthy eating. Choose foods high in fiber and low in saturated fats and cholesterol. Eat plenty of vegetables, fruits and whole grain products.

8) See the Humor, Sometimes stress can be reduced if we see the humor in tense situations. Just laughing reduces stress!

9) Enjoy a diversion, Learn the art of diverting yourself into something you really enjoy. Go see a movie. Get a hobby and do it often. Take a class. Read a good book. Listen to music. Goof off. Go out with friends. Volunteer.

10) Use Time Efficiently, Try this strategy to maximize use of your time. Divide all your tasks into three categories. A's are essential to your life goals. B's are important but not essential. C's are trivial, forget about them. Do A's first, and at the time of day

when you are most alert and creative. Set your sights on your top priorities and let others slide away.



So which techniques apply to you, all, just one, or maybe you have not knowingly used any of these techniques in a stressful situation. Looking at this list, there are several I use, 1,2,5,7, and 9. Exercising (#2), in my mind takes care of (#5), Mental Vacation and (#9), diversion, I am very focused on my workouts and block everything else out. (#7), Proper nourishment is vital to a healthy mind and body, both needed to help fight off anything. (#1), I make an attempt to think positively with everything I do, it keeps me upbeat. Make your own list and remember, Manage your stress, you need to stay in control and reduce the impact before it becomes detrimental to your health.

Consider this from famous author and therapist Virginia Satir: *"Life is not what it's supposed to be. It's what it is. The way you cope with it is what makes the difference."*

Quick Hits: Information you should know

*) Remember only Congress can authorize any reduction in the number of delivery days. At this time 238 House Members have signed on as co-sponsors of H.R.173. The NALC is fighting to keep 6-day delivery, our battle will be won on Capitol Hill not at the bargaining table. For those of you unfamiliar with H.R. 173 -- it is a bill "expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that the United States Postal Service should take all appropriate measures to ensure the continuation of its 6-day mail delivery." (NALC website)

(continued on next page)

We Own The Last Mile

Health Benefit Update

The NALC Health Benefit Plan has reached a significant milestone. Our plan turns 60 years old this year.

The NALC Health Benefit plan started from very humble beginnings. It all began with \$5000.00 borrowed from the Union treasury. The original staff was 2 clerks on loan from the NALC Headquarters. The Plan's first home was just one room on H Street NW in Washington, D.C. Letter Carriers had to pay 100% of the premiums themselves. Monthly premiums were \$6.35 per month and total Plan membership was 4,116 people. The Plan's original benefits were modest: \$10.00 daily hospital room payment, \$200.00 miscellaneous benefits (such as x-rays lab fees), a surgical schedule with a \$200.00 limit, and total maternity benefits of \$50.00.

By the 1990's the Plan was employing a staff of 520 and had a membership of 220,000. The plan moved into a building in Ashburn, Virginia specifically designed for the Plan. But in 1997 OPM ordered the Plan to rebuild

monetary reserves. OPM revealed that they would terminate the NALC HBP if we did not comply with their terms. Premiums were raised and benefits were lowered. This resulted in a substantial number of active and retired letter carriers leaving the plan during the 1997 open season.

During the next ten years the Plan worked steadily to rebuild the reserve, improve benefits and regain lost membership. The last three open seasons were especially successful in growing our membership. In 2007 we saw 5,534 new members, in 2008 we saw 26,080 new members, and in 2009 we saw 6,596 new members. Today our Plan services 233,537 members!

Most people agree that the NALC HBP is a great insurance value and provides better coverage at a lower cost than our primary competitors. The biggest issue holding back new members from joining is that their primary physician is not a member of the NALC HBP network of preferred providers. This is easily remedied. If you would like your doctor to join our network you need only take him or her an enrollment form and ask them to join our network of preferred providers. Often

by **Detlev Aepfel**

Health Benefits Representative - Branch 599



that is all it takes. Doctors know the reality of today's health benefit plans. Almost all health care providers belong to several preferred provider networks already. Once they fill out the enrollment form and submit it to the NALC HBP it only takes four to six weeks to complete the process and establish their membership.

Finally, several members have asked about the Catch-22 their children find themselves in as they turn 22 years of age prior to January 1, 2011, and are now no longer covered under our plan. The problem being what to do until they are once again eligible for coverage. OPM is establishing the rules for this transition period. Once children reach 22 years old they will need to enroll in COBRA insurance coverage through shared services until the new rules are in place.

NALC Health Benefits Plan was created by letter carriers to provide insurance benefits to letter carriers. It's your company. Make good use of it!

In Solidarity...

Around The Horn *(from page 6)*

*) H.R. 5746, will now be sent to the full Committee on Oversight and Government Reform for further action. A House subcommittee has voted 8-1 to support this bill. The bill is intended to address the Postal Service's financial problems. If passed, the bill would implement many of the postal Regulatory Commission recommendations. There are already 35 co-sponsors of H.R. 5746. "This legislation marks the first huge step toward financial solvency for the United States Postal Service and will help strengthen the case against eliminating a day of mail delivery. Subcommittee Chairman Stephen Lynch (D-

MA) offered a substitute amendment which simply clarified a few areas of the bill, including a section that now clearly states that this legislation will have no impact on any individual's benefit. This change was made to satisfy the concerns of the other federal employee organizations." (NALC website)

Keep yourself updated, know what is happening on the Legislative front. The NALC web page has all the information you will need, this fight is to save many Letter Carrier jobs !!! Become an NALC e-Activist.

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

Over the Cutting Edge

by Marilyn Cutting

The “You’re the Worst” Talk

This morning we got the “you’re the worst station in the city” talk again. If I’ve heard it once, I’ve heard it a thousand times. Come on now, you’d think they’d come up with some new motivational lines by now! Did I say motivational? Ha!

In all the years the Post Office has been around they still haven’t a clue on how to motivate their employees. Telling me I am the worst doesn’t make me jump up and run. Does it do that to you? It doesn’t even make me want find out what is so bad because we’ve heard it so many times the point is now moot.

We have been followed. We have been ridden with. We have been threatened with inspections. We have been counted and not told about it until that morning. Our start times have been moved back and forth. Yet, as some have said, our “blue shirted backs” still come to work every day and carry this Postal Service.

This “blue shirt” delivers mail with a heat index of 105-107 degrees. This “blue shirt” delivers in thunderstorms. This “blue shirt” delivers in cold weather. This “blue shirt” puts up vacant routes, splits them up, and then carries a trip on it. This “blue shirt” sells our services to the customers. We are the front line out there *every single day*.

I have been to two “Get Motivated” seminars. The speakers ranged from Rudy Giuliani, Lou Holtz, to General Colin Powell. Every one of them has said that their success was built on motivating the people that they work with. General Powell said that he always spoke to and praised everyone who surrounded him down to the people who cleaned his office. Everyone was an important factor to him in achieving his success.

This is the biggest fact that the Post Office has failed to see. I can’t tell you when was the last time we had any awards given out in our station for anything. We were talking to each

other after the “you’re the worst talk” about when will we ever get to hear the good things we all do every day: the safe driving, the no sick days taken, the customers that we help on our routes who send complimentary letters, getting back by 5 o’clock. We get tired of supervisor after supervisor stepping on our “blue backs” to get promoted but never acknowledging the “blue backs” who helped them get there. They constantly say that we are a team but then only look at themselves as the achievers.

I feel because I am a “blue shirt” that there is no respect for my achievements, for my dreams and goals, and for everything that I do every day. I’m just one more “blue shirt” that is a number on a piece of paper that must perform to a machine’s figure.

Too bad the Post Office misses the big picture of the “blue shirt” achievements. Until they do they will continue to stumble along and ask themselves why don’t the “blue shirts” work harder for us.



Branch 599 President Jim Good congratulates Jim Dobson and Carl Newsome on their retirement from the USPS

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Driver Safety Instructor - Suncoast District

Fixed Object Safety

Hello Brothers and Sisters, it is time for the *Safety Issue of the Month*.

This month we are dealing with an issue that is affecting the district and the Tampa area very profoundly.

Fifty percent of all motor vehicle accidents in Tampa involve striking stationary objects. This number is rather alarming since striking stationary objects is clearly the most preventable class of accidents.

A stationary object, by definition, is any object that is not moving. When you think of stationary objects you think of tree limbs and mailboxes. However, it also includes basketball hoops, trash cans, and even landscaping.

An attentive driver should be able to avoid or stop before hitting any immobile object in the roadway. The only possible causes of such an accident are:

- **Unable to see**
- **Failed to see**
- **Saw, but failed to avoid**
- **Seeing, but electing to hit anyway**

Unable to see even from a momentary lack of visual acuity, is an unforgivable excuse apart from very unusual circumstances. The potential for glare or other bright light problems should be anticipated and eliminated by the use of sunglasses. Even unplanned occurrences like foreign objects in the eye can normally be prevented by keeping windows closed while driving. If a driver has a visual impairment, he or she should obtain corrective lenses sufficient to safely perform in this environment. Drivers who use contact lenses should not use them to drive if the lenses cause even momentary visual problems.

Failed to see or simply not noticing the object is generally caused by one of three classes of problem: conflicting activities, inappropriate state of mind, or inadequate state of health. Probably most common is conflicting activities where the distraction can be manifest in many ways. Being more involved in daydreaming, listening to music, talking on the telephone, contemplating something other than driving, and staring at someone or something that catches the eye are typical distractions. Less immediate, but possibly more debilitating, are inappropriate state of mind issues like personal problems brought to the job, stress, or the failure to train oneself to laugh off the discourtesies and errors of others. All of the above limit the amount of attention available for the task at hand: driving duties. Alcohol or illegal drugs are an obvious negative influence. Less conspicuous are state of health issues that may have a similar result. Some state of health issues include: the use of legal medications, injury, illness, drowsiness, or improper diet.

Saw, but failed to avoid incidents fall into two groups: contact because the vehicle was physically unable to stop or avoid the obstacle, and contact because the driver did not perform as anticipated. A careful driver does not drive too fast for conditions or beyond the stopping or maneuvering capabilities of the vehicle. When in an unfamiliar vehicle, those capabilities should be determined before ever leaving the yard. Obstacles are identified well before action is required by scanning your surroundings. A prudent driver will take the few extra seconds to completely avoid a problem rather than cutting it close and allowing misjudgment or incompetence to cause an accident. The few seconds spent will not significantly delay the trip, but an accident will both delay the trip and cause numerous other complications.

Seeing, but electing to hit anyway is normally a bad choice, especially if the object is large enough to cause damage. A possible exception is choosing between a pedestrian, bicycles, or oncoming vehicles and a fixed object, but then any critique of the accident would more appropriately address the object being avoided, not the object ultimately being hit. Even if, given the circumstances, the choice was correct; driving defensively probably would have eliminated the need to make such a choice.



Although the phrase "*Expect the Unexpected*" is repeated throughout defensive driving training with regard to fixed objects, it is more appropriate that you *Expect the Obvious*. If the obstacle is not moving you will have to deal with it: be alert enough to do so safely and efficiently. Do not expect it to miraculously disappear or to be removed from your pathway.

I challenge every carrier in Tampa and the Suncoast District to review their routes and notate any possible stationary objects that could cause damage to their LLV. Examples of stationary objects include tree limbs, mailboxes, basketball hoops, trash cans, landscaping, and any object that is not moving. By identifying these stationary objects, we insure the safety of the LLV as well as ourselves. Remember the best policy is always to operate the LLV with the utmost safety as if you were driving your own personal vehicle.

Till next month, stay safe. If you have questions or would like a review of any safety issues in future articles please contact me at

Silven.P.Zimmerman@usps.gov

Safety Silven

The NALC National Convention 2010 in Anaheim, California



President Fred Rolando and John Faulkner of Campbell Soup present the plaque for being Number 1 in the country in the Food Drive to Branch 599's Coordinator Lori McMillion and President Jim Good



Representatives of the number one branches in the country



The delegation from Branch 599



Our delegates hard at work



More delegates working hard



President Good, Coordinator Lori McMillion & NBA Judy Willoughby

The NALC National Convention 2010 in Anaheim, California



A.R. "Tony" Huerta NALC Branch 599
 3003 West Cypress Street
 Tampa FL 33609-1617
 (813) 875-0599 fax (813) 870-0599
<http://www.nalc599.com>

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