



Tampa Letter Carrier

Volume 3 - Issue 5

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

May 2004

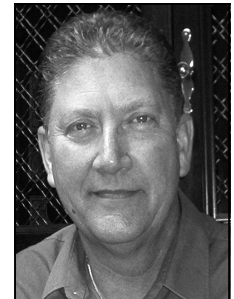
President's Report

by Jim Good

President - Branch 599

In this month's article I will try to update the membership on all the issues, old and new, that are affecting the carriers in our branch. In this era of probable postal reform, ever changing policies that affect the duties of letter carriers, and management's constant pressure to squeeze every minute of work out of each carrier it is imperative that we are educated in our duties and our rights under the National Agreement.

effective April 17th. Jose was excessed on September 7, 2002, and we welcome him back from his long absence. The result of the arbitration regarding his excessing was due March 28th, but the arbitrator who heard the case has a long history of late decisions and is living up to his reputation.



The new Branch 599 website is up and running. Our webmaster, retired letter carrier Kit Kelley (who is also the editor of this newsletter), has been working hard to put it together and has done an outstanding job. He has included links to many NALC branch websites around the country, as well links to State Associations, National Business Agents sites, letter carrier sites, government agency sites, and much more. There is a *Members* section with a message board where carriers can log on, after they register and their membership status has been confirmed, and discuss issues involving individual stations. You will also be able to communicate, through this message board, with carriers throughout the nation and discuss things that are happening in their part of the country. So go to www.nalc599.com and find out just how much information is now available to help you stay in tune with your ever changing role as a letter carrier.

The first part-time flexible conversion to full-time regular in at least three years took place on April 17th as well, with more to follow soon. Through minor adjustments, made prior to the route adjustment moratorium that took place on April 3rd, 29 new routes and 6 new T-6 strings have been created. This will allow more PTF's to be converted in the near future.

As mentioned in the previous paragraph, a *Nationwide Moratorium on Route Inspection* went into effect on April 3, 2004. This memorandum not only put an immediate temporary halt to *all* route inspections and adjustments, it also calls for a *Cased Mail Verification* to be done by every city carrier in the country. Our national president, Bill Young, said "...This is an historic leap by the NALC and the Postal Service toward resolution of a nagging source of stress and conflict. The freeze gives us time to conduct tests to determine just what the cased mail volume really looks like in today's delivery

(continued on page 4)

The last excessed letter carrier, Jose Vega, has finally been returned to Tampa

**BRANCH
MEETING
THURSDAY
MAY 6
7:30 PM
AT
THE
UNION HALL**

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TRUSTEE	Butch Smith	813-933-4676
TRUSTEE	Brian Obst	727-507-0135
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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. It is the policy of this publication that all articles submitted for publication must be signed by the writer. All articles are subject to editing and revision at the discretion of the publisher & editor. **Please submit articles to the branch office no later than the tenth of the month.**

Jim Good - Publisher

Kit Kelley - Editor

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NALC BRANCH 599 WEB SITE:

<http://www.nalc599.com>

Shop Stewards

Brandon	33510	Jim Brophy	813-875-1680
Brandon	33510	Miroslaw Oldziej	813-661-1106
Carrollwood	33618	Freddie Nimphius	813-968-7491
Commerce	33602	Dook Ramotar Sr.	813-780-6254
Forest Hills	33612	John Watts	813-971-5525
Forest Hills Annex	33613	Eddie Alvarez	813-264-6532
Hilldale	33614	Gilbert Cabanas	813-855-0516
Hilldale Annex	33634	Lance Jones	813-961-9067
Hyde Park	33606	George McEndree	813-935-0244
Interbay	33611	Brian Obst	727-507-0135
Interbay	33629	Brian Obst	727-507-0135
MacDill	33608	Brian Obst	727-507-0135
Palm River	33619	J.C. Howard	813-621-1976
Plant City	33565	Misty Bauer	813-719-6793
Port Tampa	33616	Brian Obst	727-507-0135
Produce	33610	Eric Fleming	813-310-8274
Ruskin/Sun City	33570	Jack Hencoski	813-685-9034
Seminole Heights	33603	Tony Diaz	813-598-9635
Sulphur Springs	33604	Matt Kokich	813-469-9753
TCA	33607	Anthony Moran	813-872-0709
TCA	33609	Pedro Jiminez	813-677-6014
Temple Terrace	33617	Mike Anderson	813-681-5688
Town & Country	33615	Brian Obst	727-507-0135
Ybor	33605	Detlev Aepfel	813-907-9685

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Tony Diaz	813-872-1542
Matt Kokich	813-469-9753

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Christian Albrecht 727-791-7162

Presidents Emeritus

Milton McConnell	James Butler
Garland Tickle	Orbe Andux
Don Thomas	Michael Anderson
Lenin V. Perez	

RETIREES BREAKFAST
First Monday of every month
9:00 AM
at
The Coffee Cup
4407 N. Hubert
in Drew Park
(NE corner of MLK & Hubert)

PROPOSED BY-LAW ADDITION BRANCH 599-Article VI, Section 1 (H): The President of Branch 599, NALC, shall at the end of each elected term be paid for one-half of his/her accumulated sick leave balance. The remaining one-half of his/her accumulated sick leave balance will be carried over into the next term, if he/she is re-elected, or forfeited if he/she retires or returns to the carrier craft. Dated: April 1, 2004

PROPOSED BY-LAW CHANGE TAMPA LETTER CARRIERS Article 7 Sec 3 reads: A meeting of the members of Tampa Letters Carriers, Inc., will be held on the first Thursday of each month at the Union Hall, immediately following the Branch 599 meeting. The minutes of the previous month's Tampa Letter Carriers Board of Directors meeting will be read at this time. Any member, in good standing, may speak at this meeting. Any member, in good standing, may also submit proposed by-law additions or changes, signed by at least three members in good standing, which will be posted for thirty days and voted on at the next monthly meeting of Tampa Letter Carriers, Inc.

PROPOSED TO READ: A meeting of the members of Tampa Letter Carriers, Inc. will be held on the first Thursday of the month at the Union Hall immediately following the Branch 599 meeting, only when necessary to conduct business requiring the vote of the membership. This meeting will be for the purpose of allowing the membership to vote on any by-law(s) that have been introduced at the Board of Directors meeting of Tampa Letter Carriers, Inc. Any member, in good standing, of Branch 599 NALC, may attend the monthly meeting of the Board of Directors Tampa Letter Carriers, Inc., held on the fourth Tuesday of each month. At that meeting they may bring forth their business and address it to the Board of Directors, they also may introduce any by-law change or additions, signed by at least three members, in good standing, which shall be posted for thirty days and voted upon at the scheduled meeting of Tampa Letter Carriers, Inc. *(continued on page 10)*

The President's Report *(from page 1)*

units. Getting a firm idea of cased mail volume is essential because there have been too many disagreements over the figures entered in the DOIS to place any confidence in those numbers. For the next two months letter carriers, with branch designees backing them up, will have the right to agree to the figures before they are entered into DOIS".

I agree with President Young's premise that the carriers' confidence in managements' volume figures will reduce stress and reduce the number of confrontations between carriers and supervisors. Hopefully management will find where the flaws are in their DOIS program and make the changes necessary to ensure that the correct numbers are entered into the system. This *Cased Mail Verification* will also get the carriers in the habit of taking a daily inventory of the amount of mail they are going to deliver and wake management up to the fact that the carrier is the one that delivers the mail and knows how long it will take to complete their routes.

I do think, however, that the local branches should have been given more advance notice of this volume count. Had the branch presidents been given earlier and more concise directions as to how the count was to be done there would not have been so many changes made during the initial phase of the count.

Finally, for those of you who may not have heard, our National Business Agent Matty Rose retired effective April 2nd. Matty was the NBA for Region 9 for the past thirteen years and was the senior NBA in the nation. He is a good friend of Branch 599 and his knowledge and experience will be missed. The good news is that Judy Willoughby, a former Regional Administrative Assistant to Matty, was appointed by President Young to replace him and became the first female NBA in the history of the NALC. Judy is a dedicated union advocate who I know will prove to be a strong National Business Agent.

ARSLAN UNIFORMS

Bill Moran

Retired Letter Carrier Branch 1477 St. Petersburg

Honorary Member Branch 599 Tampa

NEED UNIFORMS IN A HURRY?

SHOP BY PHONE FROM HOME

320 PATLIN CIRCLE EAST

PHONE: 727-584-4307

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

wfm505@tampabay.rr.com

The Watts Line

by **John A. Watts**

Executive Vice-President - Branch 599

Last month, when I was giving a list of non-union letter carriers, I inadvertently left out the Brandon Post Office. Fifty percent of the non-union carriers that are represented by Branch 599 work at the Brandon Post Office. The officers and members of Branch 599 send a cordial invitation for all non-union carriers to join the NALC and be part of the proud tradition of this union.

As you read this article, the agreement between the USPS and NALC at the national level should be in full swing. The mail count verification that began April 12th and runs through May 28, is an important step in showing management that the DOIS system can work if the carriers and the floor supervisor can agree without confrontation on the work load on a carrier's route on any given day. There are three things that carriers must become aware of: 1. The percentage to standard that you are evaluated at in the office (your casing speed). 2. The piece count that is input into DOIS to show the number of letters and flats that you cased on your route. 3. The net street time that is input into DOIS to show how long your delivery on the street is going to be.

We as letter carriers (and the NALC) have always

stated that a route is built to an individual. I believe this test and count is going to be used to come up with a new, less costly, less confrontational way to adjust routes in the future.

I strongly suggest that everyone be as accurate as possible on counting your mail and make sure the supervisor inputs the right information into DOIS. This will be verified by the shop steward or union designee at every station.

I have heard rumors this study is going to result in an *evaluated route* system. The NALC will never ever give up the hourly wage that was so strongly fought for by our predecessors. If you want to know more about the *evaluated route* system ask our brother and sister rural carriers how they lost out.

Think about it.



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

Outside The Lines

by Leslie Ray Garcia

I was sorry to hear that NBA Mattie Rose retired recently. I remember when Mattie was President of the Miami branch and was an instructor on grievance procedures at the state's shop steward training seminars. I also remember when Mattie first ran against Wayne White for the NBA position and was not on the national ticket but won. Mattie will be sorely missed by this writer. He might have been short in height but he was not short in intestinal fortitude!

There is a buzz in the air about a memorandum in reference to any type of route inspections. As all of you know, route inspections of any type are a pain in the...! The figures that are input are a figment of management imagination. Let's hope that this is beneficial to all letter carriers throughout the nation. I know from all the inspections I've been through that it put a strain on my home life. I wasn't fit to live with for that week but I am lucky my wife is very understanding and puts up with my attitude (among other things).

I have read on the Postal-bytes discussion list at <http://lists.rollanet.org/mailman/listinfo/postal-bytes> that many branches are having problems with their managers on this issue with regard to the memo. I guess they think they'll be losing control of their "weapons of mass destruction"?

An interesting point was recently discussed by several carriers. The question asked was why aren't there any PTF, casual or TE supervisors? After a short discussion, a general conclusion was that it could save the USPS millions of dollars in revenue but that would be too logical!

By now every letter carrier is counting his or her "linear" footage on a daily basis. This is supposed to be agreed to between the floor supervisor and you. It has been stated that a foot is a foot is a foot of mail, no matter the size. The count will even itself out over the week. Say what? I believe that this will be turned against craft once all the figures are in and will be applied to interim route checks, but only in management's favor! Now, for a real kick in the lower extremities: management has come up with a plan to scan every movement away from the case by letter carriers. Bathroom, drink of water, getting COAs, etc., and every movement for the delivery of the mails while on the street. I talked to a UPS driver

about the delivery of items and he said their bosses haven't come up with this idea as of yet. I wonder how much money it will cost to implement this idea. Will we see a pay increase for letter carriers having to do more work once this practice is implemented? Why does the USPS always seem to come up with ideas to make this job more difficult?

Did any of you read the article in the *Update-Southeast Area* magazine from the USPS that stated "Work-hours are down, productivity is up and the employee complement fell below 720,000..."? This is the first time employment has been below that number since 1993. Yet at every stand up talk we are told that we are not doing a good job. Maybe the USPS needs to hire more full-time letter carriers. In this article it stated that "...the USPS added 1.7 million homes and businesses to its nationwide network, boosting the total to 141.8 million deliveries." It further stated that costs for health benefits, fuel and an ever expanding delivery network increased only 1.7%. When the contract expires in 2006, I believe that many of our benefits, such as annual leave, sick leave, health benefits, over-time and the full time to part-time percentage, will be attacked and decreased, if not eliminated! Of course, all this may never come about should the USPS no longer recognize the NALC, APWU and other unions as the bargaining agents for craft.

How many of you read a message from the USPS's Vice President of Labor Relations out of Washington, DC., in which it said that a cease and desist mandate was issued with regard to the blatant violation by local management of "arbitration rulings"? This is running rampant throughout all branches in the US. It stated that supervisors and managers are reminded that arbitration rulings are binding and final. Managers and supervisors do not have the authority to override an arbitrator's award or a signed grievance settlement. It stated that failure to abide by these rulings "...only damages our credibility with our employees and our unions." However, it did not say that any disciplinary actions would be taken against those managers and supervisors should they fail to heed this directive. So I doubt very seriously that any of the Suncoast managers and supervisors will comprehend or follow this directive.

(continued on page9)

Whata-You Doin?

by John Gebo

Financial Secretary - Branch 599

On March 1, 2004, I retired from the rolls of the U.S. Postal Service, as many of you know. It was with mixed emotions. Not because of the daily work routine, but because of my brother and sister union members that I miss. I'll miss talking sports, joking around, busting chops, breaking shoes, and all the other BS of course. I know the carriers in Temple Terrace Annex will miss my singing. Right, Rhonda? Thanks to all the union members for the support they have given me during my career as a shop steward, branch officer and member and officer of *TLC, Inc.*

When I was shop steward at Sulphur Springs Station back in the early 80's, our station would have between 15 and 18 members show up at the union meeting every month. Back then, I guess, union members wanted to be aware of what was going on and to be knowledgeable about the National Agreement. Back then, members

would stick together as a *union*. Of course, there have always been certain cliques. But cliques aren't always bad, as some may think. Back then the so called cliques were the ones that built our beautiful hall, gave much of their free time, did the cooking for different union functions.

On the other hand, now I see cliques trying to cause dissension within our union: Members bringing false charges against our president; members getting up at the microphone, telling the President that he's out of order. Well, maybe that is one of the reasons members aren't coming to the meetings like they used to. Remember you are the union, each and every one. So when you say, "What's the union doing for me?", I say **WHATA-YOU DOIN?** The union is only as good as its membership. Hope to see you at the next meeting.



JOHN GEBO'S RETIREMENT PARTY

Birdseye View

by Alan Peacock

Imagine all the questions to be answered by the new memorandum on route inspections and adjustments. For one why did it take so long for this to come about? And why are they conducting it the way they are, and for what purpose? With the Executive Council of NALC meeting in late May to research the data and to determine how routes will be evaluated and inspected in the future, it should make for an interesting convention this summer. Hopefully the leadership of our Union will make the correct decision in regards to how our routes will be adjusted. And hopefully that they won't give into the political pressure created by *postal reform* and the current administration, with it's position on overtime pay, or should I say it's position to *eliminate overtime pay*.

We don't have to look too hard to find that the current administration has a poor track record on jobs and if they think that eliminating over-time pay will somehow create more jobs, then they have no concept of how employers or greed-driven CEO's think. Bottom line, the path to creating more jobs, and an economy that leaves no one behind, starts with eliminating that greed-driven mindset that earns an average of \$100,000 to \$150,000 dollars a day to cut jobs and push workers to do more for less.

People ask why we can't get more qualified people to run for office, like the hotshot CEO's that turn

companies around and make them more profitable. For one thing, the taxpayers could not afford them, especially since many of us would have our job eliminated for their own personal gain.

The amazing thing about all the jobs lost the past few years, one would think that that would equate to 3-4 million votes for change come November but unfortunately apathy occurs on all levels. That apathy starts by making excuses that there isn't enough time to be involved when there are so many other things we would rather be doing. Then there is the position that one can't make a commitment because they are already over committed somewhere else.

It doesn't always take some astounding commitment to help make a difference. Look at the support we get from some of our allies. It is not always on a grand scale but it may make a difference. When that support becomes a stronger coalition, with partners who can have input and help mold the decision process, then there is unity that is forged that can make a huge difference.

Just as in our national affairs, when people work together, effective goals can be achieved. So can goals be achieved in our union through your commitment, through your input and through you becoming a partner in a coalition to make a difference.

BROTHER McCONNELL RECOGNIZED FOR FIFTY YEARS NALC MEMBERSHIP



Perspective

by David Brubaker

There was a man that wasn't feeling well, so he went to the doctor to find out what the problem was. While waiting in one of the rooms, the doctor came in and said, "I'm sorry Mr. Jones, you only have six months to live." "In that case," Mr. Jones replied, "I'm going to move in with my mother-in-law." Puzzled, the doctor said, "Why would you do something like that?" "Because that will be the longest six months of my life."

As I write this, I'm working my fourth station in two months. I'm not sure if the dust is going to settle here. Someone aptly stated, "It's like you're going on tour." Having recently secured back to back bids, this very unusual circumstance has prompted some to question the validity of the bidding cycle that brought this on.

I'm not challenging the wisdom of the decision. Mr. Good has eloquently explained how this was allowed to proceed. He's worked hard to bring excessed carriers back and part of the result was how this situation occurred. Personally, I don't like being in the aforementioned position because it seems as if I'm tying up two routes.

Although within reason we're allowed to write about things that are on our minds, my particular forum is not bent towards bashing management or otherwise. However, while at Forest Hills Annex one day, about 7:30AM we experienced a power outage. It lasted approximately one hour. Doors were propped open and some flashlights were found but it was still dark inside the building. Most everyone ended up outside.

Since I did not get permission to use anyone's name, I'll just state the circumstances. I suppose 30 minutes had gone by when the carrier supervisor told one of the carriers to start casing his mail. His case happened to be by an open door, allowing some light in. He rightfully protested, whereby the supervisor used her authority to give him a direct order to case his mail. Verbal ping-pong ensued and by the time things settled down the lights were back on. You would think that those in authority would use some kind of common sense.

Sorry, I got carried away... If there's anytime we should all be working together, its now. Especially with *postal reform* looming on the horizon.

Until next time.....stay informed.

Outside The Lines *(from page 6)*

I happened to notice a magazine that was selling a *Body Engine Transporter (BET)* that looked suspiciously like the *Segway* that the USPS was going to buy. The selling price of the *BET* was \$1299.95, marked down to \$999.95. The USPS was going to buy the *Segways* for \$9500. These *BET's* had a parking brake, headlights, turn signals, electric horn, thumb controls and adjustable height handbar, with a 24 volt battery that gives up to 15 miles on an 8-10 hour charge. The forward speed was 20 MPH and in reverse 6 MPH. The only problem was that it had only a maximum 300 pound load capacity.

"A good horse should be seldom spurred."

Thomas Fuller

THINK ABOUT IT

Health and Welfare Report

Jackie Glispie's mother, Mary Lou Wright, passed away.

Mike Brousseau's mother-in-law, Clara Kendzierski, passed away.

Lee Lerfald's father, George Remington, passed away.

Oretus Sauls, retired carrier, passed away.

Notice: Military Veteran Letter Carriers

Because of a recent change in privacy rules regarding Official Personnel Folders, and the fact that the USPS is centralizing their Personnel Departments and scanning all files into computers, you may be receiving a request for a copy of your DD214. Do not ignore this request. If you need additional time to obtain a copy of your DD214 simply call Don Russell and request an extension. He can be reached at (813) 877-0317. Please call the Union Hall if you have any questions.

Retirement Corner

by **Jamie R. Rodriguez**

In the past several months during our regular monthly union meeting, there appeared several of our brothers for their retirement presentation. They received a gratuity for their long term membership in our union. There was also a presentation honoring Brother George McClelland for his fifty plus years membership in the National Association of Letter Carriers. He was presented a gold pin and gold membership card for his membership in our union, his longevity and his dedicated service. His outstanding efforts are truly honorable and serve as an example for others to achieve.

I feel that if it was not for what took place in the weeks of April 1970, our situation would be a lot different today. Our living conditions then were meek. The base salary that we worked very hard for was not sufficient to take care of our families. It was n't unusual then that a large portion of the letter carriers clocked out at the same time to begin a second job to supplement their post office take home pay that was pitiful. Many with large families had other jobs on the weekends. I drove a taxi-cab in New York City four days a week to make a little extra money. I usually made three times what I made at the post office. However, I did not have the benefits that the post office provided even though a greater part of those benefits were paid by me as a worker.

What happened 34 years ago last month was one of the most important events that took place involving letter carriers. Letter carriers took action against the government and the President of the United States. Several NALC branches in many major cities **WALKED OUT ON STRIKE** to take productive action against the establishment for improvements in the work place. Our struggle placed in jeopardy our own personal being as we broke the law and we knew that our actions could result in possibly being convicted of a crime and perhaps the loss of our jobs.

I worked in a small township in Long Island, New York, when the call for the walk out came into our office. Amazingly, every letter carrier was eager for the call to walk out. The exception was our branch president who was hesitant in making the call. He knew the possible consequences and that he could be arrested. I was astonished when I heard the postmaster instruct him to go out there and lead the men. He said "I do not want you in here."

The second day into the strike we held a meeting to prepare for what we had to do when suddenly four F.B.I. agents presented themselves to arrest our branch president. Instantly we embraced, locking our arms around our president. We told the F.B.I. agents, "If you arrest him, you have to take us all!" They left empty handed. Later I realized that George O'Leary, the postmaster, was actually in favor of our strike. He would always give a friendly wave on his way in and out of the office. During the two week period that we were walking on the strike line, George stood out there and smoked cigarettes with us on several occasions.

The result of what took place 34 years ago is that today we reap from the vine of the tree that created the national agreement. We compelled our government to negotiate a contract with us. This truly exemplifies fairness in our system and it was a great moment in the labor movement of this country. Even today some of these same courageous souls who walked the strike line, continue to play a great part in our union as retirees. They should feel proud and should be honored as great members of this union.

(from page 3)

Article 2 Section 11 reads: When a vacancy occurs on the Board of Directors, and there are no alternates available to fill that vacancy, any member, in good standing, of Branch 599 NALC may submit a written request to be considered to fill the vacancy. The Board of Directors will decide by a majority vote as to whether the applicant(s) will be appointed.

Proposed to read: When a vacancy occurs on the Board of Directors, and there are no alternates available to fill the vacancy, the Board will notify the members and upon issuing proper notification will accept written requests from any member, in good standing, of Branch 599 NALC for consideration to fill the vacancy. The Board of Directors will decide by a majority vote as to whether the applicant(s) will be appointed. After the vacancy is filled, the applicants receiving the next three highest votes will be alternates.

These proposed by-law additions and/or changes will be voted on at the meetings on Thursday, May 6th.

And The Beat Goes On

by Ray Wallace

Did you know that our Financial Secretary, John Gebo, retired March 1st? His wife and daughters gave him a surprise party recently at the union hall. Good luck, John. We all hope you have a long, happy and healthy retirement. From what I understand, management thought he retired a few years ago.

John Watts had a good article about non-union members and then named all the stations Branch 599 represents and Brandon was not there, nor Plant City or Sun City. I have no idea how many non-union are in Plant City or Sun City, but I do know that Brandon has more than its share of *scabs* and/or *parasites*, as I like to call them. In the north when the word gets out that a carrier has quit paying union dues, every union person stops talking to that individual. It is human nature that 95% of us all like to be part of a group. Very few don't mind being alone all of the time. For this reason, the northeast has almost 99% union membership almost constantly. Mr. Watts, you're not going to get the scabs to go into the union as they have nothing to lose by *not belonging*. They get everything for nothing. Who stops talking to them? Nooobody! I've seen shop stewards joke and talk to them. Thank God for the union people that we can all enjoy so much.

A very good article from Marilyn Cutting. Very interesting to read and different. It is great to see the Branch 599 paper and great to know that it goes to the home address of the member instead of the swing room. Great to see the cartoons also. For years the president and yours truly were the only articles in the paper. I know for a fact that the majority of people do not like to write but the amount of carriers writing articles now proves Branch 599 has some good writers. Keep up the good work!

I have been writing an article in this paper without having missed more than a couple for 30 years, starting with President John Bailey (God rest his soul) and every president in between to Jim Good.

It's so hard to believe that in June of this year I'll have been retired six years. Time went too fast when I was working and it hasn't slowed down one bit since I retired. It's very hard to write an interesting article when I don't have access to the postal going-ons. When I was working it was so easy. I've asked some carriers in Brandon to inform me of what's going on. Management must have talked to them as I hear nothing. I'm not going to stop writing (yet), but I will be slowing down.

Vice-President's Report

by Detlev Aeppel

Vice-President - Branch 599

Moratorium. Wow. Just when we were getting somewhere. So far minor route adjustments have yielded 29 routes and a half dozen T-6 strings. Unfortunately the moratorium forces a halt to this process before it is finished. Commerce, Seminole, Sulfur Springs, Forrest Hills, and Forrest Hills Annex still need relief. These stations will have to muddle on at least until the Fall before getting adjustments.

So what's up with this "linear cased mail volume count" and all the controversial and seemingly haphazard rules and methods that seem to spring up daily? As of this writing no one is exactly sure what the goal of this endeavor is or whether or not it will benefit letter carriers. I for one think that letter carriers are a pretty smart bunch. We are used to taking the lemons handed to us and making lemonade! This linear count will be the perfect tool for sharpening our estimation skills. All seasoned carriers realize how important it is to know how much mail they have to case in order to make a professional estimate. This will be a great opportunity to hone these skills as well as help and encourage junior carriers to develop their estimation skills. Imagine a station where every single carrier knows how much time they will need and how to present this need to the supervisor in clear

terms. Stress on the workroom floor will decrease and intimidation will disappear. Carriers will better manage their mail which will reduce stress even further. This seems like a win-win situation even if this moratorium doesn't produce a better way to adjust routes.

Giving a better estimate makes the letter carrier's job easier. A good estimate gets the right amount of time for the work at hand. This will let the carrier do a professional job as outlined in the M-41. The days of "running like a mad dog" through the route and then congregating with other carriers until return time or working through lunch to "help out the boss" are in the very distant past. Today computers, scanners, and MSP points keep track of our work day in hundredths of an hour. Letter carriers must take breaks and lunches as authorized and perform their duties properly even if that takes longer. Programs like DOIS do not have a "helping the boss" function that calculates this time back into our routes. If we don't use this time it is lost forever. We owe ourselves as well as our employers a fair day's work for a fair days pay. Let's do it right.

In solidarity...



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