



Tampa Letter Carrier

Volume 1 - Issue 6

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

October 2002

President's Report

by Jim Good

President - Branch 599

It seems that we have come to a point in time where the working relationship between management and city carriers has been stretched to the limit. In times past, really not that long ago, coming to work in the morning to case and carry your route was a very pleasant experience. Although it's true that I am no longer an active carrier, I do have fond memories of my twenty-four years delivering mail. I also remember how things began to deteriorate shortly before I was elected President. All of a sudden management decided that the carriers who had been delivering their routes for years no longer possessed the ability, wherewithal or honesty to give a fair estimate of how long their daily routine would take them. Computer programs were developed that would inform the front line supervisors of the amount of time each carrier would need to case, pull down, and carry their route. Now these same computer programs are being used as the sole basis for determining the amount of time each carrier needs to complete their assignments.

Because of conversations I have had with carriers while visiting stations throughout the area represented by Branch 599, and through numerous phone calls I have received from carriers who felt intimidated and harassed by management, I feel a need to explain the proper procedure for requesting auxiliary assistance and dealing with supervisors who make unrealistic demands. Keep in mind that it is every employee's responsibility to act, and react, in a respectable manner.

When you first realize, after you have received your last dispatch, that you will not be able to complete your assignment in eight hours, taking all mail available for delivery,

it is your responsibility to request a Form 3996, Carrier-Auxiliary Control. *The supervisor must give you the form if you request it.* Fill the form out completely and return it to the floor supervisor, *requesting a signed copy for your records.* It is then the responsibility of the supervisor to inform you as to what you are supposed to do. He can approve your request for assistance, approve overtime if you are on the ODL (or force you to do the overtime if he/she does so contractually), or disapprove your request. The supervisor can also question you as to why you need the extra time.

The fact that he/she may question you is not a problem, the problem arises when the supervisor says something like: **"My printout says you should be able to cleanup and be back within eight hours. You will take all the mail and be back in eight hours! Don't bother to call me with any excuses, just do it and be back on time"**. I know it seems impossible to believe that a supervisor (or station manager) would talk to an employee like that, but the twenty or so carriers throughout the city that have related those statements to me can't all be lying.

So how do you, as a conscientious letter carrier, handle a situation like that? Very simple. You inform the supervisor that the printout may say you will be all right, but you are the person delivering the mail and you know the amount of time you will need. (Make sure that you ask only for the amount of time that you need. The supervisor does have the right to do street supervision). Then ask the supervisor what you should do when you get on the street and realize that you do indeed need the time you have asked for. Should you call in, bring back the mail, or work the overtime? It is their job to instruct you.

(continued on page 4)

ELEGATE NOMINATION

Nominations of delegates for the Florida State Association of Letter Carriers' Convention 2003 will be held at the Union Meetings on October 3rd and November 7th, 2002. The election of delegates, if necessary, will be held at the December 5th Union Meeting. The Union Meetings are held at the Union Hall, 3003 W. Cypress Street, Tampa, FL @ 7:30 PM

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Tampa Letter Carrier

The National Association of Letter Carriers Branch 599, 3003 W. Cypress Street, Tampa, FL 33609-1698, 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 NALC 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 be published in The Tampa Letter Carrier to the branch office no later than the tenth of each month, in order for us to meet our printing deadline .

Jim Good - Publisher
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Brandon	33510	Jim Brophy	813-875-1680
Carrollwood	33618	Duane Dosal	813-920-7991
Commerce	33602	Dook Ramotar Sr.	813-780-6254
Forest Hills	33612	John Watts	813-971-5525
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Forest Hills Annex	33613	Ella Winner	352-583-0626
Hilldale	33614	Gilbert Cabanas	813-855-0516
Hilldale Annex	33634	Lance Jones	813-968-9369
Hyde Park	33606	George McEndree	813-935-0244
Interbay	33611	Phillip Brockman	813-831-3807
Interbay	33629	Sammy Graham	813-837-6257
MacDill	33608	Sammy Graham	813-837-6257
Northdale	33624	Freddie Nimphius	813-968-7491
Palm River	33619	J.C. Howard	813-621-1976
Plant City	33565	Ray Chesser	813-759-2033
Port Tampa	33616	Sammy Graham	813-837-6257
Produce	33610	Henry Dupree	813-621-6471
Ruskin/Sun City	33570	Jack Hencoski	813-633-5422
Seminole Heights	33603	Tony Diaz	813-872-1542
Sulphur Springs	33604	Albert Guice	813-621-7931
TCA	33609	Alan Peacock	813-962-0646
TCA	33607	Mark Winklepleck	813-837-2227
Temple Terrace	33617	Michael Anderson	813-681-5688
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Don Thomas

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Lenin V. Perez

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

One of the main reasons that some supervisors are using this tactic is because a certain percentage of carriers feel intimidated by it. They go to the street, feeling like they may be disciplined if they aren't able to live up to the expectations placed upon them, so they don't take their street break and/or they cut their lunch short. They take unsafe short cuts that could result in an accident. The end result is that they save time for management at the expense of their health and safety.

In summary, do the same professional job that you have always done. Don't ask for more time than you need, but don't be bullied or intimidated into risking your health, both mentally and physically, by succumbing to a supervisor's unrealistic demands.

On another note, the junior full-time letter carrier in Tampa was involuntarily excessed to Pinellas Park. This is the first time a carrier has been involuntarily excessed. There were only three carriers who volunteered to leave the installation in lieu of the excessed four carriers, so one carrier had to be excessed. Please be aware that your Union Officers are filing grievances regarding the excessing

issues and doing their utmost to convince management in Tampa to open their eyes and cease these outrageous violations of the National Agreement. Hopefully common sense will soon prevail.

I was able to convince management in Tampa to withdraw the excessing notice, issued to a junior city carrier, which would have transferred him to the mail handler craft. There are two residual mail handler positions currently being withheld for excessed clerks and carriers, and hopefully they will be filled by the clerk craft before we go through another round of excessing.

As you can see, there are many major changes going on within the Tampa Installation. Management has made it their priority to try and squeeze every last minute out of every letter carrier. We have always been a Union filled with hard working, dedicated employees with a strong history of taking pride in our jobs. Let's continue in that tradition and not let the actions of a few managers dissuade us from giving our customers the service that they have come to expect!

In solidarity!

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The Watts Line

by John A. Watts

Executive Vice-President - Branch 599

The other day I overheard a SCAB (a non-union member) make the statement that the "Union is not as strong as it used to be". Well, I think the person that made that statement, and any other brother or sister letter carrier that is not in the Union, better wake up and smell the roses.

- Letter carriers are in the top 5% of Blue collar wage earners in this country.
- Letter Carriers have a guaranteed job with a no layoff clause until the year 2006.
- Letter carriers will receive cost of living and an annual pay raise for the next 4 years.

This Union has fought on behalf of all Letter Carriers whether or not they are in the Union. The Shop Stewards and local Union officers have been subjected to harassment and discipline by management solely for trying to enforce the Local and National Agreement.

In Branch 599 we are 95% Union members. Everyone has to remember that Florida is a right-to-work state, which means the companies that are unionized are allowed to hire employees and they are not required to join the union. In most northern states you can not even get a job without a union card. So we have 5% of Letter Carriers taking a free ride while the other 95% pay for their pay raises, benefits and representation and to make sure their rights at the work place are protected.

The average hourly wage earner in the state of Florida that is not represented by a union makes \$9.00 an hour. Letter Carriers that are at top pay make \$20.87 an hour. Our Union dues are \$18.30 a pay period. So for a 1.1% investment of your yearly salary you are getting over a 100% return on your investment. If you are not in the Union, consider paying your fair share and join your brother and sister Union members and show management that the Letter Carriers in the city of Tampa, Brandon, Plant City, and Sun City Center are all united.

It has been 3 months since our routes have been adjusted at Forest Hills and the Forest Hills Annex. It is mutually agreed by management and the Union that some of the routes are out of adjustment as the expected drop in mail volume never materialized. Management is now going around to the carriers with overburdened routes and getting their input as to what it will take to get these routes to as nearly 8 hours a day as possible. Hopefully in my next article I will be able to state that the overburdened routes have been adjusted properly.

In the Federal Times the Postmaster General stated that the Postal Service was not going to lose as much money as was first reported, that next year we would make a profit of about \$600 million. In this writers opinion, this turnaround is because of the hard work of Letter Carriers. Management take note: If you treat your employee with dignity and respect, you will have a more productive employee who likes coming to work.

This I Know

by Michael Brousseau

Vice-President - Branch 599

With mail volume up this month, the route adjustments of last spring have turned into un-adjustments. In my twenty-three years as a carrier, I have never gotten so much overtime, even more than after the SIX & TWO debacle. Carriers are getting injured on the job at a rate I have never seen before. Each one of these injuries taxes the manpower available to do the routes in our station in a timely manner. Thirty and forty-story buildings should not be getting their mail at 4:00 PM or 5:00 PM just so a station can have two less routes. It is no wonder the term SNAIL MAIL (as the online community refers to the POSTAL SERVICE) is gaining in public acceptance.

I have plenty of talent and vision, I just don't give a damn.

I'm already visualizing the duct tape over your mouth.

I will always cherish the initial misconceptions I had about you.

Thank you, we're all refreshed and challenged by your unique point of view.

The fact that no one understands you doesn't mean you're an artist - just that you're in management.

THINGS YOU'D LOVE TO SAY AT WORK (and still might) :

Please have faith in your Branch and National officers and do your part by doing your assignment SAFELY and according to the Handbooks and Manuals.

Remember What An 8 Hour Route Is?

by Don Thomas

President Emeritus - Branch 599

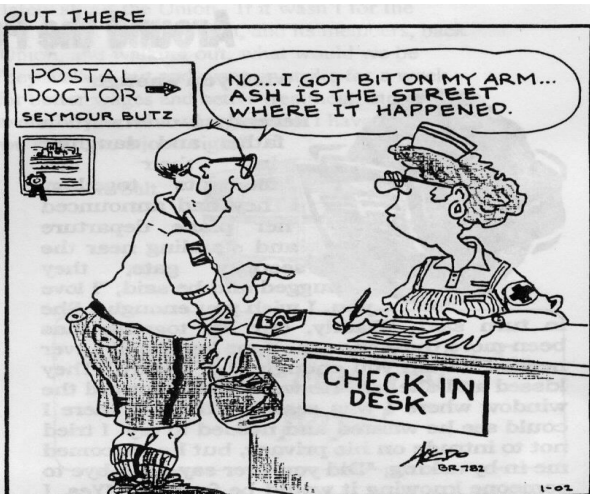
As I write this we are at the halfway point in our route inspection, if one could call this an inspection. Mail volume is down. Does this surprise anyone? Not really. The mail we are getting is mostly in delivery sequence. We just follow the mail around the case, placing it in the proper slot. Not all that difficult. Based on this controlled mail, management will come up with new *demonstrated ability* numbers for each of us and then expect us to produce at this unrealistic level when the mail returns to its normal flow pattern.

We as carriers can only do the best that we can do with what we are given, as we have in the past and will continue to do in the future. With that thought in mind, once you have delivered your new route and if you need overtime on three or more days a week, you have the right to request a special route inspection. I encourage you to see your shop steward, who can give you the form to request a special inspection and advise you on what you need to do. I have been told that carriers who are requesting a special inspection are being told they do not qualify. At this point, if you feel you do qualify, you have the right to file a grievance. It is only one of the options we have at our disposal, but it's a starting point.

Realizing that most do not want to go through another inspection, they will not ask for a special inspection. They will live with the daily confrontation over one's estimate, which in my opinion is not good for craft or management. I firmly believe that it is better to request and complete a special inspection when qualified, to take the pressure off craft and management. Sometimes we

need to stand up and do the right thing. If enough of us keep inspecting our routes until we get a fair eight-hour route, what would happen? Maybe an eight-hour route? One can only hope. Does anyone who has been inspected, then adjusted, remember what an eight-hour route is? Sure seems worth the effort to me to find out.

The route examiners who have gone with me so far have been very professional and the inspection to this point has gone well, at least as well as one could expect with the mail that we have had. We, as well as the route examiners, can only work with what we receive during the inspection and then let the pieces fall where they will. From what I hear, carriers are crying all the way to the bank, even making penalty pay. Never thought I'd see the day that the Postal Service would be paying out all this penalty pay. I'm glad that I don't have to justify paying out all this overtime and penalty time! But then how could you, or anyone else for that matter? Does anybody out there know how the station managers can justify this to the postmaster or how the postmaster can justify this to the district manager, or how the district manager can justify this to...and on and on? One would think that at some point, someone in authority is going to ask why, or who approved all of this? I'm really glad that person is not me. In the meantime, I will continue to deliver the route that management sets up for me to the best of my ability.



And The Beat Goes On

by Ray Wallace

The Labor Day Picnic on Sunday, September 1, was great. It was the first one at the Union Hall in quite a few years and, judging from the attendance, a great success. Thanks to *Tampa Letter Carriers Incorporated* (TLC). It was paid for by them and it was all done by the catering firm *Catering By The Family*. You could not ask for better. Everything was great.

As always, the turnout from the Brandon P.O. was very poor. In fact, only one active carrier, Jim Brophy, was there as well as retirees Karen Pasco, Helen McMaken, A. Nubaum and yours truly. It was nice to see two X-Brandon carriers: Clark Alday and Ken Cockern. Also nice to see Ken's dad Steve, who was given the shaft by Postal management years ago when he was a Tampa Carrier.

Wow, so many writing in this paper its great. What is the reason? The new president or just from not having a paper for so long? I've been the "Lone Ranger" writing for years. I know one of the reasons was by the time each individual article got redone and put in the paper your correct spelling was misspelled. I will be the first to admit that I'm not a good speller and I do make sure the words are correct. So it was very frustrating when you saw the article in print and it was done incorrectly. I took the ribbing from clerks and carriers and it was no fun. Well, now we no longer have that problem.

From what I see, very few are not on the Internet. Isn't it all wonderful? I wish it was around when I was a Shop Steward. *Postal Bytes* is great. If you're getting

it, you know what I'm talking about and if you're not, you should be. Especially Shop Stewards. I see carriers asking questions and within 24 hours there is an answer from other carriers from all over the U.S.A.

I wrote in one time and mentioned that I had been the Shop Steward for over 17 years in Brandon, FL. A day later I got an e-mail from a carrier in Indiana asking if I knew his brother who transferred to Brandon in 1984, a Myron Thomas. I wrote the brother back and said yes, I knew his brother very well. Another time I wrote that I was retired after 32 years and I heard from a few thanking me for all I had done as a Union Representative. Every one likes to be thanked and to hear it from other carriers from through out the U.S.A. is extra special.

Did you know the P.O. receives 1.7 million new addresses a year? Mail volume is down but delivery is up so, as a result, they want to reduce the workforce nationwide. From what I hear, if you spit on the floor they will try to terminate you. Any excuse to replace the work force. Again overtime is up. Just remember you get paid by the hour. Don't cut corners, whatever they tell you to do, no matter how asinine, just do it.

Once again I had the displeasure of going to a graveside service in Brandon of a retired manager, Wayne Priess, who retired in 1984. Wayne was one of the nice guys and liked by all who worked for him. It was nice to see some of the carriers that were also there once again and it's a shame we only see each other at a wake. As the honor guard played taps I'm sure we were all thinking, "who will be next?" And I know all were thinking "Hope it's not me".

ATBGO

ARSLAN UNIFORMS

Bill Moran

*Retired Letter Carrier Branch 1477 St. Petersburg
Honorary Member Branch 599 Tampa*

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In The Know

by **George McEndree**

Yes, October is here. So that means it's officially the end of summer, unless of course we experience what we call up North, *THE INDIAN SUMMER*. This could extend summer for two weeks or more, right Crowley?

Hey, all you Hyde Park carriers: as of September 20th, you can now officially request a special route inspection. This means that any route that is 30 minutes or more over 8 hours for at least 3 days in a work week would qualify for a special route inspection. Now, I don't know if the routes that are 1 1/2, 2 hours or more qualify for this special inspection (hmmm) but you could request one anyway.

Oh, by the way, we are about to be blessed with the presence of *Big Tony*. Yep, he missed us sooo much that he's coming back.

On another note, all Branch 599 members who haven't been to union meetings should really consider attending. It's inspiring to see the tireless retirees in action month after month. It's amazing what Branch 599 has endured over the years, and how our forefathers of Branch 599 have endured over the years, and have held it together. It would be great if the union hall were filled to capacity, with new and exciting faces to offer opinions and resolutions for the future because nobody lives forever.

Members like Sam Dolcimascolo, Jack Newman, Ray Wallace, Michael Anderson, John Gebo, Albert Guice, Lenin Perez, Jim Good, John Watts, Gilbert, Lance, Freddy, Sammy, Henry, Tony, and all the others, I see on the first Thursday of every month. These people are not going to be around forever. It's important to know what is

happening in today's world of Postal business and what the future holds for the NALC. Things are changing and not necessarily for the best. As union members, we must stand up and be counted and voice our opinions. Union is strongest in numbers, lots of numbers. It's up to us letter carriers to save the Postal Service. If we left it up to management, the Postal Service, as we know it, wouldn't be here much longer.

Taking a popular President's quote, and putting in a twist, I say, **ASK NOT WHAT YOUR UNION CAN DO FOR YOU BUT WHAT YOU CAN DO FOR YOUR UNION.**

P.S. My wish for the month of October concerns a past President of Branch 599, who served many years, and gave many members excellent advice concerning Workers Compensation matters. He plays hardball and takes a hard stance in representing members of Branch 599. He is a man who has impeccable knowledge of our National Contract. He is a man who would get out of bed no matter what the time, whether it is midnight, 2AM, 3AM, to help a member. He would always come to the aid of his members. No matter how crazy the questions, if he didn't have the answers, by God, he would find somebody who did. The wish would be to have this past President of many years at arms length, right here at our Branch. And that person is Lenin V. Perez.

In solidarity,

Brother George HPCA

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OWCP
33 years experience

DEAN ALBRECHT
EEOC
19 years experience

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Outside The Lines

I have read the *Postal Record* for the last month and found to my astonishment that in all sections of the USA, letter carriers are having the same identical problems. Excessing, route inspections, violations of the National Agreement, increase in OWCP claims, sick leave, discipline, etc. Nothing changes with the Department of Stupid Ideas (DOSI). They continue to try to squeeze blood out of a turnip. Their *new math* is destroying what the first postmaster of the USA, Benjamin Franklin, deemed as payment to the American taxpayers: SERVICE! I believe Ben is rolling over in his grave every day at their iniquitous destruction of this commodity.

Hilldale Station (33614) will be having route (eliminations) inspections during the month of March 2003. We had a stand up talk at the station and we were handed 3 pages of "*improper work habits*" that totaled 122 items. These are items that will be redlined by the route inspectors if we continue to do these things. Boy, is this a tough place to work or what, because God only had 10 Commandments for mankind to follow.

Oh, by the way, the route inspection team is going back to Forest Hills and re-applying the new math process to re-evaluate the routes. It seems somehow or someway that the new math process that eliminated the original 7 routes should have eliminated only 4. Oops, sorry, never mind! I wonder if 3 of those 13 voluntary excessed carriers will be allowed to come back to Tampa. NOT! Next up, 13 more volunteer letter carriers are being requested to be excessed. How many personnel from management (supervision) are to be voluntarily excessed? Sorry, I mean *transferred*.

Rumor has it that two route inspectors during route inspections got medical documentation that stated it was too hot in the vehicles while they were riding in the jump seats and they would be physically unable to do route inspections. Who were their doctors? Yet management accuses letter carriers of not earning our pay and being slackers. Oh, yeah...right!

By the time all inspections around the USA are completed, it is estimated that the employment numbers of letter carrier craft personnel will total 200,000, which is a loss of 40,000 positions since the year 2000. Right now management totals 80,000 but is this total supposed to be decreased? When former Postmaster *Carvin' Marvin* Runyon took office, he "eliminated" many upper management positions (job titles). There were estimated to be about 5 regional bosses before he took office and after he left office there were about 25 bosses doing the same job. This leads me to believe that the methods of downsizing, management style, are to change job titles as follows: one Executive Vice-President changed to 5 Assistant Vice

by Leslie Ray Garcia

Presidents. These new bosses are *transferred* to different parts of the country, paid to move their families, buy new homes with interest free loans, don't lose their seniority, still receive bonuses and their pay is increased because of the new positions they assume. Hmm...let's see: \$1.5 billion dollars in the red, an increase in postal rates, an increase in the casual workforce....What's cooking?

Tampa management is supposed to transfer many offices (Personnel, OWCP, etc.) to Orlando. In order to get in to see someone at Personnel now, you have to make an appointment on the days they're open. Of course if you work six days a week, four of which are ten hour days, the fifth an eight hour day and the sixth your day off, when is it feasible to go to Personnel? Maybe during the week of route inspection when the *mail volume is "normal"* (the USPS definition for normal is *undertime*) you might be able to make an appointment.

Meanwhile, back at the ranch, letter carriers that are excessed voluntarily don't have retreat rights, don't get paid to move their families, don't get interest free loans to buy new homes, lose their seniority and only get a pay raise through the Arbitrated/Negotiated Contract of the National Agreement. I don't know about you but this mule is getting tired of having to be the USPS's pack animal and its scapegoat too!

"Injustice never rules forever." Seneca

THINK ABOUT IT!



Health Benefits Report

by Detlev Aeppel

Health Benefits Representative - Branch 599

An amazing thing happened while on the way to the National Convention last month. Checking in at the airport, I ran into an old friend. These things happen everyday to travelers but this time was a bit different. There waiting to be checked by security was old friend and retired letter carrier Stan Kraus. Though confined to a wheel chair by the effects of the stroke he had suffered several years ago, it was still most definitely Stanley! His memory was a bit fuzzy, but he realized he knew us from working at the post office. We chatted a bit then went our separate ways. As I walked away I heard him teasing the security guards and demanding to be frisked by a woman. That's Stanley.

I was astounded by how much he had recovered since the last time I saw him. I would not have thought it possible. A stroke is a very serious medical event similar to a heart attack. Blood vessels either burst or become blocked. Oxygen from the blood can't get to the brain and brain cells begin to die. New medical techniques are helping more people recover but the best bet is to avoid having a stroke in the first place.

The National Stroke Association (NSA) suggests nine ways to avoid stroke:

1. Know your blood pressure. Undiagnosed hypertension is a big factor.

2. Have any abnormal heart rhythm treated. It may create a blood clot that will travel to the brain.

3. Don't smoke. It doubles your risk.

4. Drink alcohol in moderation. Heavy drinking increases stroke risk.

5. Take special care if you have diabetes. It increases your odds for a stroke.

6. Exercise daily for 30 minutes even if you just take a walk.

7. Maintain a low-salt diet.

8. Get checked for circulatory disorders. They are dangerous but treatable.

Know the symptoms of stroke: sudden weakness or numbness of the face, arm or leg, especially on one side of the body; sudden blurred or decreased vision in one or both eyes; difficulty speaking or understanding speech; dizziness or loss of balance or coordination; or sudden intense headache.

According to the NSA, treating a stroke within three hours can make the difference between recovery and disability.

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October

2002

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		1 7:00 SHOP STEWARD	2 BINGO	3 7:30 UNION MEETING	4 BINGO	5
6	7	8	9 BINGO	10	11 BINGO	12
13	14	15	16 BINGO	17	18 BINGO	19
20	21	22 7:00 TLC MEETING	23 BINGO	24	25 BINGO	26
27	28	29	30 BINGO	31 7:00 EXECUTIVE BOARD		

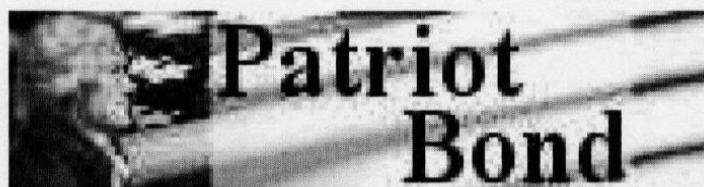


November

2002

<i>Sun</i>	<i>Mon</i>	<i>Tue</i>	<i>Wed</i>	<i>Thu</i>	<i>Fri</i>	<i>Sat</i>
					1 BINGO	2
3	4	5 7:00 SHOP STEWARD	6 BINGO	7 7:30 UNION MEETING	8 BINGO	9
10	11 VETERANS' DAY	12	13 BINGO	14	15 BINGO	16
17	18	19	20 BINGO	21 7:00 EXECUTIVE BOARD	22 BINGO	23
24	25	26 7:00 TLC MEETING	27 BINGO	28 HAPPY THANKS- GIVING	29 BINGO	30

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