



Tampa Letter Carrier

From the President's Desk

Save America's Postal Service

Over six months have expired since the September 27 *Save America's Postal Service* rallies began in all the Congressional Districts. In April we staged another rally at all the Senators' local offices during their Easter recess. The countdown toward the 2012 elections and the future of the Postal Service lies somewhere between now and November's decisions by the elected and the electors. It is difficult to know what will transpire because there is so much at stake for our Company, the Nation and the ultimate outcome that a divided house creates. What we are going through is like a bad divorce where ideology and preservation of one's personal status creates a family tragedy. This is what is creating our work environment as well as the ills of our nation. It is always easy to point fingers instead of finding purposeful solutions. The

latter actually requires some compromise with the understanding that nothing always works one way or no way. In summation a lot of time seems to continue to eclipse and very little progress is being made.

Closings and Excessing

Regarding that time that is passing by, local 60-day advance notices began going out to employees at the plants pertaining to closings that would cause excessing procedures. This has an affect like a double-edged sword, bringing the plant optimization plan into effect, along with logistics and excessing issues. To us that means withholding events again that hold up our positions for losing craft's full-time excessed employees. Along with that comes frustration to our craft, especially to Transitional and Part-time Flexible Carriers regarding work hours and promotion possibilities. Until legislation is passed that



Alan W. Peacock
President, Branch 599

would eliminate any delivery days we shouldn't expect that our craft would begin any excessing. Currently, we are short on manpower in the carrier craft, thus the advertisement for other crafts to reassign to our craft as part-time flexible. That is also another reason why we will be the last craft to be offered an incentive to retire.

Route Inspections

Two offices have already completed route inspections with no major issues brought up at either Brandon or Plant City. The results remain to be seen until after all data is analyzed and the adjustments take place. One route inspection class was provided before their inspections took place and very few members attended. Another was provided before Forest Hills' inspections took place. Also, there was a

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Branch Meeting
Thursday
May 3
7:30 PM

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It is the policy of this publication that all articles submitted for print must be signed by the writer.

Please submit any and all articles to be published in the *Tampa Letter Carrier* to the Editor via email at editor@nalc599.com no later than the 5th of each month in order for us to meet our time limits to the publisher.

Officers

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| Trustee Chair | Lori McMillion | 813.263.7101 | |
| Trustees | John DeRosa | 813.850.8418 | |
| | Warren Sumlin | 813.486.7612 | |
| Labor Management | Sam Santilli | 813.215.7595 | |
| | John Rowland | 813.770.7769 | |
| Presidents Emeritus | Garland Tickle • Orbe Andux | | |
| | Donald Thomas • Michael Anderson | | |
| | James Good | | |

Executive Board

Meets

Thursday 6:30 PM

May 3

June 7

Shop Stewards

will Meet

Tuesday 7 PM

May 1

June 5

Shop Stewards

| Station | ZIP | Steward | Station No. | Steward's No. |
|--|----------|-------------------|--------------|---------------|
| Tampa Stations/Branches Chief Steward, Brian Obst 727.458.0679 | | | | |
| Brandon | 33510 | Terry Franklin | 813.661.1639 | 813.758.3061 |
| | 33511 | Terry Franklin | 813.661.1639 | 813.758.3061 |
| Carrollwood | 33618 | Donna Dayton | 813.960.8894 | 813.417.5589 |
| Commerce | 33602 | Pedro Jimenez | 813.242.4507 | 813.727.9280 |
| Forest Hills | 33612 | Alan Robinson | 813.935.2954 | 813.843.9762 |
| Forest Hills Annex | 33613 | Nick Cullaro | 813.935.2954 | 813.541.8159 |
| Hilldale | 33614 | Sam Santilli | 813.874.6809 | 813.215.7595 |
| Hilldale Annex | 33634 | Varick Reeder | 813.889.3913 | 315.491.6234 |
| Hyde Park | 33606 | George McEndree | 813.873.7189 | 813.597.4112 |
| Interbay/Port Tampa | 33611/16 | Marie Brown | 813.831.2034 | 727.331.9907 |
| Interbay/Peninsula | 33629 | Sammy Graham | 813.831.2034 | 813.454.3319 |
| Palm River Annex | 33619 | J.C. Howard | 813.663.0048 | 813.310.0689 |
| Plant City | 33564 | Varick Reeder | 813.719.6793 | 315.491.6234 |
| Produce | 33610 | John DeRosa | 813.237.4280 | 813.850.8418 |
| Ruskin/Sun City Ctr | 33570 | | 813.634.1403 | |
| Seminole Heights | 33603 | Tony Diaz | 813.237.4569 | 813.598.9635 |
| Sulphur Springs | 33604 | John Rowland | 813.237.4569 | 813.770.7769 |
| TCA/Peninsula | 33609 | Brian Obst | 813.873.7189 | 727.458.0679 |
| TCA/West Tampa | 33607 | George McClelland | 813.873.7189 | 813.270.5035 |
| Temple Terrace | 33617 | Warren Sumlin | 813.988.0152 | 813.486.7612 |
| Town 'N Country | 33615/35 | Brian Obst | 813.884.0973 | 727.458.0679 |
| Ybor City | 33605 | Detlev Aepfel | 813.242.4507 | 813.505.7914 |

From the President's Desk

(Continued from page 1)

retirement seminar that was held in April and about 150 union members attended, most of them were from NALC. This seminar provided mostly financial planning advice; any future seminar may be conducted like a rap session where more of you can get specific questions answered.

Focus on Saving Our Jobs!

In several recent newsletters there have been many articles that refer to differing views regarding our building and I think it is time to put these issues to rest. There was a recent motion to bring the building up for sale and it failed by a very large number of those present and voting. The building has

nothing to do with the trend of declining membership and the reduction of expenses that are necessary based upon the number of members we have. While we are in the fight of our lives for the future of our jobs we need to be more concerned about the matters that are relevant to that fight. Certainly fewer members come to meetings and certainly there is no lifeline for the replacement of retiring members. If the time comes and the total membership is given a proxy vote on the future of our building whether they want to sell it or not, then they will already have been given all the necessary information they need to make their decision. Until that time it is truly necessary that we focus on our jobs.

Right now we need to focus on the legislation and the other outside events that can determine what our future is going to be like. We need everyone to give their input and their efforts to galvanize our organization to help save our jobs and our union. While this is taking place we will continue to do everything we can to enforce agreements that provide for a safe and harmonious workplace where all employees are treated with dignity and respect.

Fraternally Yours in Unity and Solidarity,
Alan Peacock
 President, NALC Br 599



**SATURDAY
MAY 12, 2012
LETTER
CARRIERS
FOOD DRIVE**

PUT YOUR NON-PERISHABLE DONATION IN A BAG BY YOUR MAILBOX.
WE'LL DELIVER IT TO A LOCAL FOOD BANK.

NATIONAL PARTNERS

Campbell's Valpak UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE United Way AFL-CIO FEEDING AMERICA Uncle Bob's self storage AARP DRIVE TO END HUNGER

Sign up with the NALC e-Activist Network

to receive periodic e-mail action alerts and information on issues important to NALC members. Join together with thousands of your fellow active and retired letter carriers to make your voice heard!

Treasurer's Report



March 2012

Ray Garcia
Treasurer
Branch 599

| | |
|---------------------------------|---------------------|
| March 1 BB&T Operating Account | \$14,347.83 |
| Officers Pay [14] | \$10,234.39 |
| Branch Office Secretary [1] | 3,600.00 |
| Stewards Pay [17] | 2,210.00 |
| Stewards Lost Wages [2] | 330.11 |
| Employees [2] | 760.00 |
| Monthly Expenses [15] | 5,582.59 |
| Rental Workers [2] | 397.00 |
| Training Seminar [2 days] | 399.00 |
| Union Meeting Expenses [3] | 134.64 |
| Retirement Gratuity [3] | 450.00 |
| Income | \$19,888.59 |
| March 31 BB&T Operating Account | \$12,229.85 |
| MidFlorida Credit Union | 254.75 |
| MidFlorida CD | 100,000.00 |
| BB&T Building Fund | 30,176.10 |
| Regions Bank CD | 50,000.00 |
| USAmeriBank Work Stoppage CD | 200,000.00 |
| USAmeriBank Training Fund | 17,793.22 |
| Total Balance Available | \$410,453.92 |

Sharing Our Members' Joys and Sorrows

Get well wishes & prayers are sent to **Michael Crowder** [Interbay] who is at Cypress Palms Assisted Living, Largo; and to Gary Stone [Forest Hills] while he is recovering from surgery.

Our deepest sympathy and prayerful support is extended to **Regina Wilson** [Forest Hills] and family at the passing of her husband, Robert N., March 14; to Colleen and family at the passing of her husband, **Bernard J. Bauman Jr.** [retiree, Hilldale], March 24; and to **Eric Fletcher** [Palm River] at the passing of his father.

Doc, Goldie, Leroy & Ismael Retired!



Doc Roder
and Alan Peacock

President Alan Peacock recognized **Henry 'Doc' Roder** [Temple Terrace],



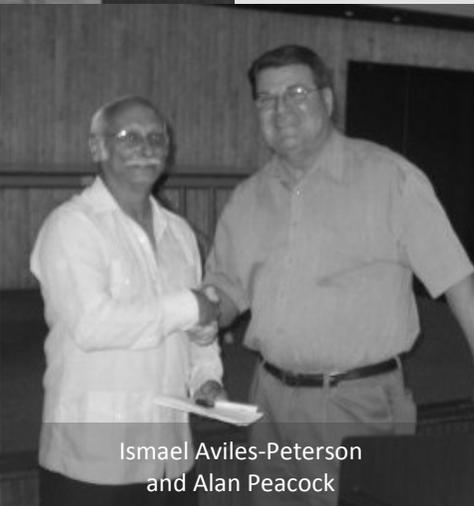
Goldie Behymer [Interbay],
Leroy Chow [Sulphur Springs],

Goldie Behymer
and Alan Peacock



Leroy Chow
and Alan Peacock

and **Ismael Aviles-Peterson** [Seminole Heights] during our Branch meeting in



April and presented them with a check from the Branch for their retirement .

Ismael Aviles-Peterson
and Alan Peacock

Around the Horn

Brothers and Sisters, this month I dedicate my article to my longtime friend and retired Union Brother

Bernie Bauman.

Sunday morning, March 25, I received a phone call from Forest Hills Shop Stewart Alan Robinson. It was a phone call I knew was inevitable, however, it was a phone call I did not want to receive. Alan informed me that our longtime friend and retired Union Brother, Bernie Bauman, passed away during the night. Alan visited Bernie on Friday night and when we spoke on Saturday, he informed me Bernie was in critical condition and might not make it through the weekend. For those of you who never met Bernie, let me just say, he was a wonderful human being. I began carrying mail with Bernie in 1980. In fact, in my *Around The Horn* article dated August 2011, I spoke about Bernie and the type of person he was. All the things I said in that August article about Bernie I meant and I would like to share that article with you again:

August 2011

At this time I want to congratulate a longtime fellow letter carrier and union brother who retired about a month ago. This newly retired carrier I speak of is Bernie Bauman, from Hilldale Station, a great person, and a longtime friend. Bernie and I began our postal careers in 1980; he actually began several months before me. He was a tremendous help to me as I began my postal career. I thank you, Bernie, for your guidance and patience on our MVS runs at 4:30 in the morning. In 1980, PTFs were scheduled to transport mail from the main facility to all the Stations and Branches. Bernie and I volunteered to be scheduled almost every morning for the MVS runs along with current carriers Chuck Jaudon and Greg Jorissen. In fact, we covered MVS runs in the early AM, collections in the PM,

and in between were sent to a Station to carry a route. (On the current carrier seniority list, we are ranked between #14 and #18, with Bernie finishing his career at #17). Bernie was a guy who would make you forget how early you were at work with his humor, one liners, or a good hell-raising story. I also have had the opportunity to drink a few beverages with Bernie on Sundays at Buccaneer games, as we both have been longtime season ticket holders. I have enjoyed our conversations and just hanging out over the years away from the work environment. Bernie has had some serious health issues as of late and I can only hope he has a long and enjoyable retirement. Great job by the carriers at Hilldale Station for showing up in force at last month's union meeting to celebrate with Bernie; I know that meant a lot to him!!! So Bernie, along with your coworkers from Hilldale Station and your friends around the city, a special letter carrier cheer just for you, hip-hip hurrah, hip-hip hurrah, hip-hip hurray. A job well done, and thanks for making things a little more bearable in the sometimes stressful settings we work in. Who knows Bernie, without your humor, guidance and bad jokes, I might not have made my probation and lasted for 31 years. Hope to continue seeing you on Sundays at Raymond James Stadium.

In the recreation room after the August union meeting, we had a great time with Bernie celebrating his retirement. While Bernie's illness weakened him physically, his sense of humor never wavered. Bernie was still telling jokes and stories and laughing throughout the evening. While I was having a conversation with Bernie, he laughingly told me, "Tony, now with my retirement, you can now move up one spot on the seniority list." My reply without a laugh was: Bernie, you know I would be content to stay one spot behind you if it meant your health would improve

and allow you to keep working.

To no one's surprise, leave it to Bernie to request anyone who attended his service to wear Buccaneer attire. It was an awesome sight to see everyone and I mean everyone wearing Buccaneer gear. My throwback #47 John Lynch jersey was a fitting way for me to pay tribute to my longtime friend who adored the Bucs. As bad as the Bucs had been lately, we always talked about the glory years and #47 was a significant symbol during those years. The pastor performing the service did a remarkable job. He loved the Buccaneer jerseys and shirts and commented it was a wonderful tribute. There were so many great things to say about Bernie and it seemed to bring you back to a laugh, wait a minute...that's what Bernie always did. His memories will never change that. My condolences go out to Bernie's loving wife, Colleen; his supportive sons and his entire family. Thanks again, Bernie, we will all miss you.

Quick Hits: Information you should know

*) The latest e-Activist e-mail I received discusses the attention that needs to be directed toward S.1789 and H.R. 2309, it reads as follows:

Dear Tony,
As you know, we are opposing S.1789 as it is currently constructed. As the Senate takes up the debate on the bill next month, the NALC is hopeful that we can continue to work with any senator who is interested in strengthening the legislation.

NALC cannot support legislation that aims to slow mail delivery by cutting Saturday delivery service, wiping out tens of thousands of jobs, just to continue an onerous mandate to pre-fund future retiree health benefits that no



Tony Diaz
Vice President
Branch 599

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Rally for *Save America's Postal Service* was April 12 outside Senator Bill Nelson's Office



Things You Should Know



Gilbert Cabanas
Financial Secretary
Branch 599

The question of our work stoppage fund continues to be a subject of great concern.

There seem to be as many different opinions on this subject as there are leaders. I do agree that this money should be addressed as to its disbursement only by a vote of the entire membership.

One thought on the subject is for this money to be used as a financial help among our members if they lose their jobs. Who will decide which members will be helped? Will it be the carrier with the most seniority or the carrier with the most dependants? Or even the oldest carrier? There are many questions and concerns to be decided if and when that issue occurs.

Remember, we did try loaning money in the early '60s and most of that money was not returned to the Union fund. Shortly thereafter, that loaning

fund system was stopped because when folks are in a desperate financial situation, it always takes time to recover from both financial needs. One of our leaders said that we don't need to be in the rental business. Do we need to be in the loaning business? I don't think so. How could we ever recover from such a financial loss? At least in the rental business, in the last 50 years we have never lost money. I do understand that rentals do not bring in enough money to support the entire hall's bills. But it doesn't have to pay all bills because this rental money is just a supplement to help with the Union dues money fund. I believe that our rental money is a lot like Social Security checks...it doesn't pay all the expenses, but it's nice to have the extra money to help out with whatever needs arise. Besides, as one of the Branch's elected officers, I just gave my personal opinion on the best use of the work stoppage money. Which by the way, I did

contribute to that fund when it started in the early '70s. I don't feel that anyone's personal opinion on the welfare of our hall needs to be criticized or discussed in our newsletter. That might be something that management would do to our carriers instead of working together for a possible solution. The work stoppage fund is now the concern of the entire membership and must be addressed intelligently by all. I will say that loaning money to carriers is a noble thought, but is a financial risk. We could lose our only insurance policy and that insurance policy is what separates us from all other Branches. This is why I feel using our money in the hall's maintenance is a win-win solution for us. First, we will receive a better rental fee for our hall and finally, a better price for our hall if we ever decide to sell it.

Around the Horn

(Continued from page 5)

other employer in the nation faces. We already have set aside \$45 billion, enough to pay for decades of retiree health premiums. The focus now must be on investing in a new business model with a viable business strategy.

Unfortunately, the Postal Service does not have a viable business strategy, which it made clear earlier this week when Postmaster General Pat Donahoe effectively endorsed H.R. 2309 at a

House subcommittee hearing. That radical bill, sponsored by House Oversight and Government Reform Chairman Darrell Issa (R-CA), aims to dismantle the USPS by abrogating the employees' union contracts, slashing delivery services and shuttering major portions of the USPS' networks at a cost of 200,000 jobs.

For S.1789 to offer a fundamental alternative to the Issa-Donahoe plan, we believe it must be amended to maintain quality service, restore the

USPS' capacity to grow and preserve good postal jobs for veterans and other Americans.

In Solidarity,
Fredric V. Rolando, President
National Association of Letter Carriers

Keep yourself updated—become an e-Activist.

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

Sunday Work Day at the Hall

May 6 9-11 AM

On the Brink



Michael Brink
Recording Secretary
Branch 599

I enjoy getting my Branch Newsletter each month and reading the articles and opinions. In the past I have refrained from submitting an article or opinion for the newsletter. However, I find myself becoming increasingly frustrated with the very limited amount of time that I am presented during our monthly meetings with which to “voice” my opinion. My time, of course, whether busy with the duties as Recording Secretary or thinking of how I would like to see a particular topic or motion proceed, is often relegated to the task at hand; that of listening, writing, reading, or on occasion, speaking to the members present at the meetings.

As a relatively new inductee to the Leadership of this Branch, (I accepted a leadership position in 2008), during many of the meetings I sometimes find myself wondering why exactly this Branch was formed? I would think this question to many of you is easily answered. Many members I believe would say something akin to, “Branch 599 was formed to promote solidarity of our local Letter Carriers with regard to mandates and directives as laid out and handed down by the NALC and to assist and train those members whom seek information and knowledge with regards to Contract and Letter Carrier issues.”

I looked for a reason in our By-Laws and it states that, “The object of this Branch is to unite all employees who are eligible for membership...into one harmonious body for their mutual benefit and to assist NALC in its efforts to improve the condition of its entire membership.”

I would have thought after attending several of the TLC Board meetings, many Executive Board meetings, and countless General Assembly meetings, I would find myself inclined to be of the opinion that our purpose falls somewhere in between the above stated cause. However, as of late, I would be

more honest if asked what the purpose of this Branch is if I replied that it is more inclined to subordinate the needs of the local Letter Carrier to the management and maintenance of a building. There, I’ve gone and said it! Remember this is an opinion piece.

Being the Recording Secretary and having access to the Minutes of meetings (at least since 2008), I did a little research into this subject of whether or not we have, with the recent downturn in our economy and continued aging of a 56 year old building, begun moving our focus more toward building issues rather than on Letter Carrier issues or has this building and its natural decline been a point of interest for much longer?

Many of you are aware that with the opening of the new Seminole Hard Rock Casino in 2004 and the downturn in our economy since late 2007, the Branch has lost a great deal of its benefits that were derived by the Hall over the years through TLC’s hosting primarily, twice weekly Bingo.

Fortunately for my research, it turns out that last month’s article by a previous President of the Branch and former Director of TLC, outlines the building maintenance and repair needs have indeed been large and of quantifiable financial importance since the late 1990’s. That writer, in his defense of TLC’s fiduciary handling of its finances and responsibility to the Branch, mentions several specific cost outlays in recent years in the effort to maintain our aging Hall.

A review of the minutes since I took office reveals that in November 2008 the Branch sought legal advice as to the feasibility of how the Branch could help TLC resolve or help diminish its money problems. With a go ahead from counsel, the Branch voted in January 2009 to purchase computers, servers and software from TLC. The following month, the Branch took over the costs

for the production and mailing of the Newsletter. Later in August 2009, the Branch was called upon by TLC for further financial assistance and the Branch purchased almost \$10,000 worth of office equipment and furniture from TLC. A committee was then formed by TLC to look into ways TLC could recover from the financial situation it found itself. The Branch itself began proposing By-Law changes in November 2009 that would restrict financial payments or reimbursements to the Officers and Stewards as the Branch was now beginning to show less financial strength due to the assistance given TLC. In January 2010, the Branch agreed to pay rent to TLC in the amount of \$600 per month with a \$7200 lump sum payment for the prior year rental. February 2010 brought members together to attend a special meeting where TLC leadership shared with the Branch members its “State of the Building” report which clearly outlined the need for additional money to help support an aging building. Rentals were at an all time low and operating costs were continuing to climb. In May of 2010, the Branch financials reported the lowest rates of return in the history of the Branch. The stark reality was that the assets that we did have were not growing. In July 2010, TLC’s Chairman announced that a decision was made by TLC’s Board of Directors to list the Hall for sale with a realtor. The following year in March 2011, the Branch approved a motion to pay all future TLC Verizon bills and to pay the \$160 monthly cost to the editor of the Newsletter. President Peacock announced in June 2011 that he would no longer seek the Branch’s approval to send him to every meeting afforded the President due to our diminishing finances. In August 2011, our outgoing building manager of the past four years gave an

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On the Brink

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unbiased report to the TLC Transition Committee on the numerous maintenance repairs and equipment failures that needed immediate attention. A Special Meeting was held and a motion was made to dissolve TLC and distribute any of its remaining assets to Branch 599. The vote in favor was unanimous. In September 2011, with no more TLC, the Branch approved a motion to pay a building manager \$600 per month to oversee the needs and maintenance of the building.

At present writing, Letter Carriers find ourselves facing a National Contract that is currently in mediation because the USPS walked away from the negotiation table. By the time readers receive this newsletter, it is entirely possible and, in my opinion, probable, that our National Contract will proceed to binding resolution before an arbitration panel. Letter Carriers face Congressional and State Legislative challenges with regards to our Collective Bargaining Rights and the continued assault on our history of service to the American public, in the form of six day delivery, from both Congress and the Executive Branch. An un-biased observer would likely agree that our Organization faces critical challenges. Challenges that are real and present day!

This brings me to the crux of my article. Do we continue to collect and distribute necessary and needed funds that this Branch and its members pay for Representation for Letter Carrier causes and issues or do we allow these funds to be siphoned off for the upkeep and repair needs of an aging building? Do we continue to spend precious Union time at our monthly meetings to discuss the financial and physical needs of a building that has outlived its usefulness? Or do we follow through with the elected representatives of TLC's decision of nearly two years ago to list this property for sale? This is a decision the membership should make, but should

make with no emotional attachment. Our Hall, this building, is just that, a building. A building we use as our meeting place once a month with a portion used on a daily basis to support the membership in its administration. It is this writer's opinion, and it could be said my opinion was shared by inference of the action (or inaction in this case) of TLC two years ago when the decision was made to sell the Hall, that the building, our building, is slowly draining this Organization's time and money and misdirecting our purpose.

Some would say that we need to pay someone to appraise the property before we list it so we will know its value. Anyone that knows Real Estate will tell you that the property is only worth what the market forces will bear. In other words, the property is only worth what someone is willing to pay for it, regardless of what the Seller says it is worth. Besides, trying to get an already cash strapped organization with an average of 55 voting members to agree to spend more money on an already sore and emotionally divisive subject is not likely to happen!

To be frank, this property is worth more to a Buyer as a vacant lot than as a property with a 56 year old, decaying building on it. The appeal to a majority of prospective buyers would be the property, not the building. This way a builder, developer or prospective buyer could build to suit on the vacant lot.

When a motion was made by this writer in January 2012 asking the members to approve the Branch getting three Commercial Realtors to prepare for the Branch a free market analysis to determine what the market says the property is worth and then follow through and list the property for sale with one of those Commercial Realtors, the motion was defeated. During the discussion, one member asked, "If we sell the Hall, where would we meet?" One possible answer to that question could be the

following.

Imagine this possibility: What if an Agent, who could think outside the box with creativity, had the foreknowledge to imagine a scenario where, through his/her contacts, this Agent could seek out a Developer who saw the potential in this property? What if that Developer contractually agreed, with restrictions, to a Joint Venture with the Branch in that we provide him/her the front one acre of the property, essentially replatting the property into two, one acre plats? What if through this contract, the Branch then allowed the Developer to construct the necessary and needed infrastructure to provide for and construct a new building for the Branch on the back one acre of the property, a building that the Developer would build for the Branch to our specifications? This newer building could be capable of supporting 100-150 members with office spaces, bathrooms, mechanical room, a conference room and an entertainment room. It could be built to be energy efficient and the surrounding area and landscape could be aesthetically attractive. What if our new building was constructed as the focal point of the property? What if the signage, our sign, remained in front and on top of any other signage erected on the property? What if, under this contract, this new building was built for the Branch, to our specifications, by the Developer and we were not asked to pay a dime for it?

How can that be? The Developer would make his/her profit from constructing office out-buildings, of course, with restrictions agreed upon by both parties, on the front one acre of the property after razing the existing building. Imagine our building in the center-rear of the property. Picture two or four office type buildings, one or two on the east side of the property and one or two on the west side of the property. Each of

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Unionism

Please allow me to deviate from my normal written line of thought this month to address something that strikes close to home for all of us.

As a member of this Union I read my newsletter and National magazine regularly and I notice that through the years we lose many of our members through illness and this is difficult for we remember them from good times prior to the onset of the illness that eventually took their lives. While we all understand that death is a part of the circle of life it doesn't make the loss any less difficult for many to accept. Also, with long-term illnesses one has some time to try to come to grips with the potential or impending loss. I understand this as I lost my father three years ago and the cancer that took him was diagnosed only thirty days before it took his life. I still feel the loss every day.

Many of you read the bereavement posting which announced the passing of Supervisor Vickie Kring as a result of her being injured after being struck by a car while walking in her neighborhood. Ms. Kring wasn't a carrier or member of our Union but she was a human being and her life being ripped away from her in the manner that it was is tragic to say the least. It is the way that her life was taken that brings me to the point of this article, **Tomorrow is Guaranteed to No One.**

When we are young we are invincible and convinced that we will live forever, but as we age we discover our mortality and the older we get the more we realize that we will all have to meet our maker at some point. Death is sneaky, it can be sudden as in the case of Ms. Kring or it can take years to slowly milk the last breaths from the individual, but it will not be denied. It is important that we all understand and prepare for this eventuality so that our loved ones are not further devastated when our own demise arrives.

The Branch MBA/NSBA Representative is Retired Carrier Al Guice and he can help ensure that you have the best plan to help your loved ones should you become one of the departed. Our Health Benefits Representative is Brandon Carrier Terry Franklin and he is ready, willing and able to help you navigate the medical issues should you have a long-term illness requiring medical assistance. If you don't know these gentlemen I suggest that you check the inside of the cover of this newsletter and give them a call, as they have been elected by the membership to assist you in any way they can.

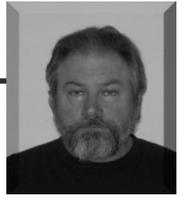
I personally want to urge each one of you reading this article to speak to your significant other and make sure that you are prepared, as prepared as one can be, in the event that you and yours are touched by the icy hand of death.

Don't wait until it is too late to make sure you are ready. Those of you who know me know that one of my favorite sayings is "Woke up and found that I had a pulse – It's going to be a great day". This saying never had more meaning to me than it did today because sooner or later I'm not going to have a pulse and I hope that I'm ready when the time comes.

The only thing I know for sure is like I said earlier – **Tomorrow is Guaranteed to No One**, so make the best of each day that you have. Tell people how you feel about them, call Mom and Dad, if they are still with you, and tell them you love them because you may not get another chance and you don't want to miss that. Live each day with gusto and enjoy them all. Be slow to anger and quick to forgive, as we are all human.

I will be back on topic next month and I appreciate you allowing me to go off on a tangent this month, but I felt I needed to say these things to all of you, for as I always say – **Knowledge is the Key.**

Brian Obst
Tampa Stations/Branches Chief Steward



Brian Obst
Tampa Stations/
Branches Chief
Steward
Branch 599



On the Brink

(Continued from page 9)

these new office type buildings front-ages would face inward, drawing the eye from the road to the center of the property, our new building, centrally located in the rear of the property. These out-buildings would of course have parking required for their patrons. We could agree that these offices would be required to close by 6pm. By right of way contract, we could agree that the rights to the vacated parking of these office buildings would remain ours after 6 pm allowing for ample parking available for any of our meet-

ings held after 6pm or on weekends. We could ask the Developer to provide access to the back of the property by way of entry from North New Jersey Avenue to the west of the property. This way, those who wish to avoid the front entrance could enter and exit from the side of the property. Imagine all of this not only being accomplished with no out of pocket expenses, but with the potential to do all this and have a six figure amount deposited into our local bank from the proceeds of the sale to the Developer. As I said, the Developer makes his/her money con-

structing and selling the out-buildings on his/her front acre. He/she first constructs a new building for us in the back half of the property, razes our existing building, and constructs new infrastructure for both acres, then constructs new out-buildings for potential office buyers while we never miss a meeting or a day of work! Just imagine. It is possible, but not unless we, collectively, can agree and are willing to list the property. We need to move forward with the business of this Union, and in my opinion, that is Letter Carrier representation!

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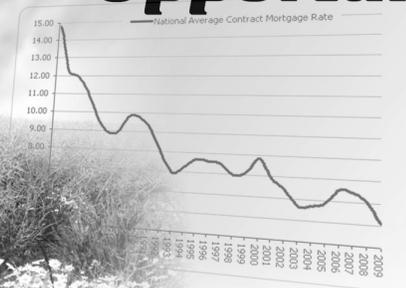
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