



Tampa Letter Carrier

From the President's Desk



Alan W. Peacock
President, Branch 599

I cannot tell you how proud I was of the turnout for the *Save Six-Day Delivery Rally* and the tremendous response we received from the traffic that was so heavy by the Carrollwood Post Office. This event was a joint project of all the branches in the area: 1477 from St. Petersburg, 2008 from Clearwater, 1779 from Lakeland along with a great turnout from 599 in Tampa. National and State officers attended our rally, which is all on the NALC.org website. Included in the support were affiliates from the West Coast Central Labor Council AFL-CIO and NALC members and former officers from all over the state and other parts of the nation.

DeliveringforAmerica.com has really put a lot of attention and spotlight on what the nation really wants from the USPS. When they say that they are doing what the customers want, they are talking about what the lobbyist want if they

could get our network and take away the competitive advantages that we currently have. We do not need to reduce service; it is already showing from the effects of poor management tactics... how you can chase customers away or give them misrepresentation of the excellent service we can provide. The private sector has already stated that they would increase rates 500% above what the USPS offers and think how there would be less cost containment for the competitors' rates that are already 300% higher than the USPS now. The Postmaster General is only one part of the problem, but he probably stands to gain a lot more personally than his bloated \$500,000 plus salary and compensation package he receives now by assisting the effort to dismantle this federal agency that provides universal mail service for everyone wherever they reside or do their business. Of course we all enjoy the advantages of technology

and how much time we have absorbed ourselves with it, but there are still competitive edges to keeping the USPS viable and adjusting as they always have to improvements that are economical and efficient. Unfortunately, the USPS has also been too shortsighted to accept something that was too costly and ended up being too wasteful in the long run. Too much technology creates wasted training time and adjustments that in the end fail to accomplish the goal it was intended for. It all come down to one simple premise: if it is labor intensive it will continue to be even if you move one function of the labor that was an office function and now it is a street function...one side decreases and the other increases. Use of logic not just logistics could function to a greater achievement of the prospective goals if it were well

(Continued on page 3)



Branch Meeting
Thursday
May 2
7:30 PM

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Tampa Letter Carrier

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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.

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	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 2
June 6

Shop Stewards

will Meet

Tuesday 7 PM
April 30
June 4

Shop Stewards

Station	ZIP	Steward	Station No.	Steward's No.
Tampa Stations/Branches Chief Steward, Brian Obst				727.458.0679
Brandon	33510/11	Detlev Aepfel	813.661.1639	813.505.7914
Carrollwood	33618	Eddie Berroth	813.960.8894	813.493.5224
Commerce	33602	Pedro Jimenez	813.242.4507	813.727.9280
Forest Hills	33612	Rocky Randels	813.935.2954	813.766.2604
Forest Hills Annex	33613	Nick Cullaro	813.935.2954	813.541.8159
Hilldale/Annex	33614/34	Varick Reeder	813.874.6809	315.491.6234
Hyde Park	33606	George McEndree	813.873.7189	813.935.0244
		Tim Hurlstone, Alt.	813.873.7189	813.367.7718
Interbay/Port Tampa	33611/16	Marie Brown	813.831.2034	727.331.9907
Interbay/Peninsula	33629	Sammy Graham	813.831.2034	813.454.3319
		Clement Cheung, Alt.	813.831.2034	813.758.5910
Palm River Annex	33619	J.C. Howard	813.663.0048	813.310.0689
Plant City	33564	Don Wiseman	813.719.6793	813.713.6273
Produce	33610	John DeRosa	813.237.4280	813.850.8418
Ruskin/Sun City Ctr	33570	George McClelland	813.634.1403	813.270.5035
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	Troy Figueroa	813.873.7189	813.403.1644
TCA/West Tampa	33607	Don Wiseman	813.873.7189	813.713.6273
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)

thought out before it was implemented. The method of trying to make labor achieve something that doesn't work is too counterproductive and only creates resistance to work in cooperation for the best results.

Our Past Guides Us to the Future

Where the past guides us for the future is by relating where we come from to where we are today. This study can relate to so many factors in our lives and in our culture and even our organization. This branch was chartered in 1924 right in the middle of the Great Depression; imagine what a letter carrier's life was like during that time. We hear a lot of stories from retirees about what things were like in the 50s, 60s and 70s and how much different it was than today. This organization built our branch's union hall in the mid 1950s and through that time until the early 80s there were constant renovations that kept adding to what we have today. That was not by accident or without commitment and sacrifice and with the idea that future letter carriers would take the same kind of pride that their predecessors had laid the groundwork for a place of unity and brotherhood. Today the apathy of this organization is taking that groundwork and treating it like a Florida sinkhole. We are all entitled to our opinions and as a democratic organization we should have the same mutual respect in the exercise of those opinions as we expect to be treated in our workplace. Something we take for granted by contractual protections shouldn't be different in the manner of how we conduct our business. If we are transparent and every member is informed about what our purpose and goals are doesn't mean that they have to roll over and accept what is in a plan that they don't have an interest in it. When decisions are made they must be for the maxi-

mum benefit of all members, not just a fraction. We all know that representation is the true groundwork of our union and that without leadership and knowledge and the ability to properly train and educate advocates for that purpose we will certainly be consumed by those who want nothing more than to eliminate our livelihood and way of life. Throughout the NALC, dues are collected by National and they take their portion...one third and out of that one third before they return the other portions to the state and local branches, they utilize theirs for salaries, expenses, training, education, and representation and for the cost of their building. My point is that there comes an argument about using dues for buildings and throughout this organization's branches, state organizations, business agents' offices and the National headquarters building, all comes from dues structure. When the Department of Labor changed the labor laws effective in 2011 that were going to require consolidated reporting of all organizations assets or filing of two labor reports for branches with holding corporations and branch assets, we decided to dissolve the holding corporation [TLC] and consolidate all assets. Everything that we have and what the holding corporation had, belongs to the members of A.R. Tony Huerta Branch 599, Inc. There is no separation of any assets; they all belong to all the members...over 1 million dollars worth of assets. Now our biggest part of that asset is our building and it is in need of repair and our current property insurance company just went into receivership. The next big question is: will we be able to still get coverage for our property with the damage we have to the roof and what about liability if something falls on someone? Even though we will probably never need a work stoppage fund after what Reagan did to the Air Traffic Controllers who were the last federal

employees to strike, who were all fired and their national president sent to prison, we will continue to get the pittance return from the investment of the work stoppage fund. When you go full circle from where we came from to where we are today, the big difference is that little organization that began that charter in 1924 had a futuristic vision and dedicated themselves to each other and the future members that would follow. That was a bond that shows strength in numbers and sacrifice for all and their motto which still should be ours is that, *harm to one is harm to all*.

Now, let's talk about representation:

what is the price and value of representation? When I started as a steward in 1975, we were paid \$5 for attending a steward training meeting and \$5 for attending the branch meeting and that was it. We worked hard and fought hard to protect and defend our members. We would go to one or two State training seminars a year and on our own time. Today we have the best paid stewards in the country and they have a difficult job to perform under the climate we are in. The fact that we pay them isn't for an incentive to get them to be stewards it is for the sacrifice they make for time away from their family, time that they could relax and enjoy something else outside of work. Apparently it isn't any incentive or we would not have to furnish outside stewards to so many offices as we currently do for Brandon, Plant City and Sun City Center. This all comes with an increased cost of that representation because outside stewards unlike workplace stewards are paid by the branch and not on the Postal clock. The amazing side of this is that the concerns for representation versus the cost of maintaining our property can't

(Continued on page 5)

Treasurer's Report – March 2013



Ray Garcia
Treasurer
Branch 599

February 28 BB&T **Operating Account** \$9,444.92

Deposits

NALC Secretary Treasurer	\$18,911.47
NALC Secretary Treasurer	735.75
Lakeland Letter Carrier Newsletter	324.70
MDA Donations [6]	219.00
Donation [Richard Barnabei]	210.00
Retiree Dues [5]	120.00
William Bill Moran Newsletter Ad	50.00
Rec Room	19.00
BB&T Interest	.09

Expenses

Branch Officer Salaries [13]	\$1,757.34
Branch President Salary [2 PP]	4,921.60
Branch President Health Benefit [2]	326.04
Branch President Reimbursement	96.20
Branch Office Secretary Salary [2 PP]	2,400.00
Branch Office Secretary Health Benefit	741.00
Branch Vice President Reimbursements	984.32
Branch Treasurer Reimbursement [QuickBooks]	249.95
Branch Steward Salaries [18]	2,595.00
Branch Steward Reimbursements [6]	1,119.46
Health Benefit Rep Back Pay [14]	350.00
Editor/Webmaster Salary [monthly]	160.00
Webmaster Reimbursement	118.01
Building Manager Reimbursement	55.55
Security Guard during Branch Meeting	45.00
IdenTrust Electronic Signature [2]	150.00
IRS Taxes [form 941 Feb]	2,954.20
MDA Donation	1,423.00
Donation to Richard Barnabei	210.00
Postmaster [2]	800.00
QuickBooks Intuit Online [monthly]	24.95
Verizon [phones & internet]	366.29
AT&T Wireless	94.23
Staples [office supplies]	514.34
BB&T Online Service	14.95
BB&T Fee	2.00

February 28 BB&T **Building Fund Account** \$32,830.21

Deposits

Hall Rentals [3]	\$4,856.67
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Expenses

Transfer moneys to 3 Regions Bank accounts	\$25,000.00
Building Manager Salary [monthly]	600.00
Rental Agents [3]	419.00
City of Tampa Police Security	205.00
Custodial Services [clean & setup hall—3]	750.00
Building Manager Reimbursements [3]	217.28
Rental Refunds [2]	1,100.00
Repair Rec Room	289.00
FL Dept of Revenue [Sales Tax]	91.00
City of Tampa Utilities	451.00
TECO Gas	110.98
Crenshaw Termite & Pest Control	39.59

Accounts as of March 31, 2013

BB&T Operating Account	\$10,249.70
BB&T Building Fund	8,833.98
MidFlorida Credit Union Savings	254.98
MidFlorida Credit Union CD	100,000.00
Regions Bank Operating Account	19,000.00
Regions Bank Building Fund	1,000.00
Regions Bank Convention & Training Fund	5,000.00
Regions Bank CD	50,000.00
USAmeriBank CD	200,000.00
USAmeriBank MM [Training Fund]	CLOSED
Total Balance Available	\$394,338.66

Retirees Breakfast

Monday May 6 9 AM Coffee Cup
4407 N. Hubert Avenue, Tampa

Sunday Work Party at the Hall

May 5 9-11 AM

Around the Horn—The Great Building Debate



Tony Diaz
Vice President
Branch 599

Brothers and Sisters, the union hall debate is at the forefront again... should we sell or not? Should we repair or not? At last month's Branch 599 union meeting, a proposed bylaw change was defeated that would have placed \$150,000 into the building fund for much needed repairs. The membership spoke at the April 4 meeting, and after much discussion and questions, a close vote chose to keep the money in the work stoppage/strike fund and not repair the building. Over the last month I have been asked many, many times what my opinion and position is in regards to the bylaw change and our union hall.

Let me say, honestly, this is a very tough decision for me personally, as many of you know I am very active in

the upkeep of this hall, whether I am organizing work parties on Sunday mornings or just going to the hall to do any project that needs to be done. I love this hall and what it has represented to this union and to the community over the years. However, I was able to sit back and listen closely to the debate with an open mind, because our ultimate goal is to do what is the best for this union and Branch 599. I appreciated the members who came to last month's meeting to speak their mind, the democratic way. There is obviously a great divide as to what should be done with this hall. To keep the hall (that our forefathers and union members helped build), that has been home to Branch 599 for decades and make big-time repairs. Or, to sell the hall and find a smaller building for office space, a conference

room, and a hall for monthly union meetings. The great divide has no parameters though, it is not necessarily the newer members (who do not have the history with the hall as do the retirees) versus the retirees wanting to do whatever is necessary to keep the hall. I observed both active members and retiree members for and against this decision. My position is to do what is in the best interest of this Branch and to explore all options in order for all of us to be able to have a clearer perspective. While the hall is our home and a landmark, we cannot allow the building to drain our funds and compromise our ability to represent our members. Can we balance both? Can

(Continued on page 6)

From the President's Desk

(Continued from page 3)

even provide an advocate in a work location that could actually save some of the cost of the representation they appear to have affection for. Priorities for some but not for all, sacrifice of a few for the good of so many. If you are a leader then stand up and be a leader, but understand there is no room for self interest in true leadership.

There have already been three new hire CCA orientation classes and the hiring is continuing with new events open. We have a lot of concerns about the accelerated training that is taking place and the knowledge that casing training was eliminated from the carrier academy training. We all need to reach out to the new carriers and give them guidance and support. When CCA carriers ask you what are the benefits of joining the union remind them the current contract negotiations cost NALC over 2 million dollars and if there is another negotiation in 2016 it

will probably cost even more to prevent the Postal Service from returning CCA carrier with a career path back to TE carriers again with no career path. The only conversions that are totally guaranteed by the current contract are that all PTF carriers will be converted to full time by the end of contract. Nothing can be taken for granted as long as there is a segment of Congress that wants to dismantle the Postal Service and privatize mail delivery. What is even more disheartening is that they have the support of our current Postmaster Privatize General. What's in his wallet? Not the sanctity of the mail or the universal delivery for all Americans or all the protections that exist with current federal regulations. One does not have to look too far to see that the method of balancing the callous budget problems are by taking from coffers that were not generated for the misspending, Social Security, Postal and Federal retirement plans, and State employee retirement plans...are all

attacks on working class Americans.

This is starting to look like where our ancestors came from. You can work and we will feed you low class citizens that don't deserve to earn a living wage and a decent retirement. That's why we feel strong about union membership and the advocacy of all workers, and a strong middle class. One member recently stated to me that he would rather spend more on COLCPE, our political action fund, than on dues because he understands the political battles we are up against, yet less than 10% of our members contribute to COLCPE. COLCPE, E-activist and membership are the glue that bind us in the battle to protect our livelihood, our benefits, and to fight to keep this historic institution viable and *Delivering for America*.

Fraternally in the Bond of Unionism,
Alan Peacock
President, NALC Branch 599

A Point of Personal Privilege

I have been a dues paying member of AR *Tony* Huerta Branch 599 NALC since May 27, 1972, and I was deeply disappointed that on April 4, 2013, a needed bylaw change was defeated by a narrow margin of 30 votes for and 24 votes against. An additional 6 votes were needed to pass this vital bylaw. It is a disgrace that only 54 members attended this important meeting out of over 500. A two-thirds majority (see Article XVII Section 1 of the Branch by-laws) was needed to pass this bylaw because it dealt with moneys. To refresh those individuals that could not take the time to attend the Branch monthly meeting, this bylaw was an attempt to take \$150,000 out of the Work Stoppage Fund and place it in the Building Fund, strictly and solely for the upgrade of the deteriorating and rotting roof that had been sorely neglected prior to 2011! It also would have provided this, our union building with 3 SER energy efficient AC units to be placed on the ground for better maintenance. It should be noted that some of those voting and speaking out against the bylaw proposal were officers of the previous administration that did nothing to rectify this pre-

existing condition! These same individuals want to sell this long-serving building for a profit. A profit that will more than likely be squandered and poorly invested as in the past. I was told that some individuals did not like specific wording in the bylaw, yet they did not contact us about their concerns or go up to the microphone to say so.

As per **Article XVII Bylaw Rules**

Changes Section 2:

A defeated amendment shall not be submitted in like form for at least six (6) months thereafter.

One officer spoke against the proposed bylaw and brought up the issue that an individual was offering us an estimated \$1.5 million for the building. An energy efficient building would be built in the rear of our property (at whose cost?) and would be able to have a maximum capacity of 150 people with parking. The building known as A.R. *Tony* Huerta Branch 599 would be torn down and business condos would be built on that site. My question is, will the union have to pay monthly mortgage payments, monthly rental payments, or will it be free (**which I doubt**)? Of course there are the yearly bills to be paid which

amount to over \$200,000. In about 7 years that \$1.5 million would be depleted! After that Branch 599 would once again be paying the monthly bills: electric, gas, water, garbage, telephone service, internet service, maintenance of a 7-year old building, the salaries of all officers, stewards, the building manager, security guard, editor/webmaster, funding for conventions, training seminars, and COP meetings that include room and board plus mileage or air fare. You then have expenditures for stewards that have to be reimbursed for lost wages because of grievance time at other stations. Then there is the pay to the vice president when replacing the president for 2 or more days at the president's hourly rate.

This is speculation, but suppose the new building needs major repairs... where will that money come from? I guess a mortgage will have to be placed on the building to pay for it just like the supposed new restrooms were



Ray Garcia
Treasurer
Branch 599

(Continued on page 7)

Around the Horn—The Great Building Debate

(Continued from page 5)

we get the money we are looking for in this market or do we need to make the repairs and keep the hall until the market opens up? Is it worth keeping the building and making the repairs for what we can find as a new home? Is a new home inevitable? These questions must be answered.

What's next?

Since the bylaw was defeated, we are still looking at expensive repairs to keep the building running safely and efficiently. I support listing the building for sale, to gauge what the market could/would bring. The listing of the

union hall will give both sides of this debate a professional perspective as to where we are and what serves us best. Some say the market is on the upswing, some say the market still needs time; hopefully we will have answers soon. We are at a point where we need to act one way or the other. Stay tuned, stay educated!

Quick Hits:

Information you should know

*) The 21st annual NALC Food Drive is Saturday, May 11. It is important everyone does their part to promote and contribute to this great cause. The local food banks depend on our collection.

Let's wear our pins, distribute posters, and talk it up on our routes. Remember, good public perception is vital for community support of the Letter Carrier.

*) Tampa **will not** open local negotiations; both sides have no desire to open the process this time. Our local negotiating team was prepared in the event the local was opened. We had been meeting and conference calling to gather thoughts to insure we had a plan.

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

The Nightmare

I was instructed to be on the crime scene at a local convenient store when I ran into a person I used to *call* my best friend. He was with his new girlfriend in a brand new SUV. They were stuck in traffic and he shouted out to me from an open window that he needed to get through because they had to make it to the airport. I thought it must be nice, then I had to force myself again, to forget the way it was. I don't even think he recognized me. I hadn't seen him in almost a year. What a year it has been. Today is Monday, March 24, 2014. The anniversary of when it all

started.

Let me take you back. I attended a rally for the union in an effort to keep six-day delivery. When I arrived at the location, which was Carrollwood Station, not many carriers were there. My thoughts were: it's early. I parked and went over to the now former Branch President Alan Peacock to get a sign. I was carrying a chair to sit on as I had a permanent disability with my feet then. Listen to me, *I had*. I still have the plantar fasciitis, which it is still referred to, but now that doesn't mean anything today since the USPS no longer

participates in OWCP.

Anyhow, there we were at the rally marching in a huge circle on Dale Mabry Highway. I was sitting at one end of the circle in my chair. Although not many showed up; the ones that did were very enthusiastic. They would carry signs in the circle, then retrieve another one, rotating them out as there were many more signs than people. Of course, we all had at least two, and some creative guys and girls managed three. The traffic on Dale Mabry was



John Rowland
Labor Mgt Rep;
Shop Steward
Branch 599

(Continued on page 8)

A Point of Personal Privilege

(Continued from page 6)

paid. (Brothers and sisters, read my monthly Treasurer's report. The income and expenses are itemized each and every month which has never been done prior to 2011). Yes, we have a new bylaw that will have \$1 a month placed in the Building Fund per member and \$1 a month placed in the Convention & Training Fund per member, however, this will not take effect until Pay Period 8. That fund will eventually increase, but if the roof should collapse or the remaining one and one half working rooftop ACs quit working, that fund will be depleted! We have been told that there would have to be major structural repairs to the roof to place new rooftop AC unit/s there because of the weight of each unit. Our building insurer is now in receivership and I don't know if we have insurance to cover a possible collapse of the roof nor do I know if we are covered should a law suit be placed against us if a collapse occurred during a rental in which people are injured.

Some individuals spoke on the issue of representation and the use of the work stoppage fund for that purpose. (The stewards of Branch 599 are one

of the **highest paid stewards** in the entire country. I remember when I was a first time steward; we were paid \$5 a month that maxed to \$90 a month and I had to handle all grievances, OT issues, etc. as far as Step 3. Now stewards are paid \$150 a month and have, OT issues, etc. to prepare a grievance for the B-team). The history behind this work stoppage fund goes back to 1970 when 17 states went out on an illegal strike. Tampa and Florida voted not to go out on strike! This work stoppage fund was established and its sole intent was strictly to pay for the defense of our arrested Branch President and the operation of the Branch office should a strike occur! It was not set up to pay moneys to letter carriers or their families nor was it to fund representation! Today, the Branch expenses exceed \$200,000 a year. If there were a called strike and it lasted at its worse, a year, the \$350,000 would be almost depleted! (Of course everyone that would go out on strike would be fired because of federal law and the USPS could hire part-time no-benefit workers at wages below the minimum. How many remember a union called PATCO? If not look it up on the internet!) On the issue of a strike, I

doubt very seriously if there would be more than 100 members on the picket line. The rest would cross the line! (We can't get enough people monthly to help clean around the building now, or to collect for MDA, etc.) Most of those 100 would probably be retirees that know the consequences of not having a contract protected by the Union. The Union through negotiations has gotten every worker, scab, or union member the wages and benefits that are now **forced** to be given to each worker by the USPS. Brothers and Sisters, you should know by now that management talks about caring for you as individuals, however, if you are that gullible...*I have a bridge to sell you for \$1.5 million dollars!* In other words, management talks the talk, but they don't walk the walk!

A motion did pass to seek options on listing the building. This is the beginning of the end, as far as I'm concerned, of one of the most beautiful Union Halls in the nation! I believe that those that spoke out against the bylaw have their own agenda to sell the building and do not have the love and welfare of the building or the Branch membership in mind or in soul.

The Nightmare

(Continued from page 7)

moderate for the Sunday before Easter. The response was well received as noted by cars beeping their horns in support with shouts out of open windows. And of course, there were the one or two hecklers. One of the local TV stations came out and took some footage, but later we were informed the story didn't run. We were told it was due to the bad weather. Yes, the day began overcast and dreary, then quickly became dark with what were supposed to be light thunderstorms. Yet, as the rain came down heavy at times, the few carriers manning the circle held their ground. What else would any good carrier do? Unfortunately, the plans to cook up something afterwards were spoiled. The rally ended with inches of water puddling in almost every spot you could walk. The passing cars now had their windows shut without any yells of support or beeping horns. The drivers probably didn't even notice us any longer because of the heavy rain. We slowly dispersed into our vehicles and called it a day.

Many things have happened since. First of all, a few months after the rally the union put on nationally, Postmaster General Donahoe moved forward with his plan to end *normal* Saturday delivery. Months later he announced his decision to make even deeper cuts in delivery days as advised by Congressman Darrell Issa and Senator Tom Coburn to the BOG (Board of Governors). The two congressmen advised the BOG and Donahoe to not only consider cutting out Saturday, but strongly suggested moving to 4 or even 3 delivery days of letter mail, just as long as Parcel Post, Express Mail and Priority mail was being delivered on 6 days, so the USPS could turn to a 100% Part-Time Flexible workforce. Here were two congressmen encouraging the United States Postmaster General to ignore the laws passed by congress. Of course, he had

already done so without any admonishment by congress when the delivery standards were *relaxed*, he refused to make the mandated payments to the Retiree's Healthcare Pension Fund (which I thought then was a good idea) and had already announced changing Saturday delivery. Since these moves were made without any consequence, the postmaster felt emboldened to begin making whatever decisions he felt were *necessary*.

Let me explain. After ending normal Saturday delivery, mail volume took a huge drop, which presented reasons to cut *normal* delivery to 4 days. The downward death spiral the union feared would happen had begun! This decision led to further drops in mail volume, which led to lowering *normal* delivery days to 3. The public outcry was completely ignored by the BOG. During this time, the postmaster pulled out of the FEHB and created a standalone healthcare plan which he had previously announced. It was a catastrophically bad idea for the craft employees, and management's plan was designed after the likes of congress' medical coverage. Then he followed through with his decision to manage the USPS pension plan, separating it from the federal government. By doing so, he announced there would only be one retirement pension for craft employees, that Civil Service and FERS would be combined. This move foreclosed the ability to participate in the TSP (Thrift Savings Plan) and all accounts were transferred to the newly created USPS pension fund. Due to the extreme drop in mail volume over the following months, the postmaster announced there would no longer be delivery of letters and flats by the USPS. These particular services would be placed upon the private sector, and the monopoly of the mailbox would now end with access being shared, further ignoring current law. To celebrate the new year (2014), I re-

ceived a letter through private sector delivery, along with all full-time carriers, from the USPS that I would be forcibly retired within 30 days. This retirement plan consisted of one choice of two options. The first was to accept a 50% reduction in my retirement benefits, or I could be placed in a voluntary position anywhere in the government to receive 100%. Furthermore, the letter stated the USPS absorbed the Retiree's Healthcare Pension Fund to cover lost revenue. I was advised to accept the Volunteer Program, as it included the option to purchase healthcare insurance at a reduced rate. If I chose to retire at the 50% rate, then I was informed I would be on my own concerning healthcare until I reached the age of 70 years. By the way, congress had just passed a new bill a month ago to entitlements and *adjusted* the age for Social Security and Medicare. What a way to start the New Year! I immediately advised the union and learned the USPS is choosing to ignore any collective bargaining agreements, so I made the decision to accept the Volunteer Program. At least this would allow me to select any position I had previously held or applied to, rather than just being assigned. I was in the Air Force for nearly six years, but at the age of 52 going on 53, I didn't have any desire to be back in the military. So I took a volunteer position with the Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office since I had applied there before joining the Air Force. That's how I ended up here, consequently making room for my old best friend to get through traffic congestion. He had retired in 2013 after investing in numerous rental properties which were now funding that retirement.

I just woke up from this nightmare and felt a strong urge to put it in writing. I never thought I could imagine anything like this occurring, but I did. And some of this is true.

Unionism—Clichés

*I get by with a little help from my friends...*The Beatles had it right. Unfortunately most people don't get it.

As letter carriers, we live that saying every day. The mail we deliver is received at its place of origin and various processing facilities, transportation and most importantly, people handle that mail prior to us receiving and delivering it to our customers.

Right now all of this is under attack from forces both inside and outside the Postal Service. Congress is dealing with members that seem bent on the destruction of the Postal Service and we have to constantly defend our jobs from attacks by the Postmaster General himself. The only way that we can be successful in our endeavors to keep the Postal Service operating, is for us all to help.

National President Fredric Rolando calls on all members of the NALC to step up and help out with this ongoing battle. The requests President Rolando

makes are not difficult nor do they take up all your time. They are based on a simple premise—you can get far more accomplished with a large group of people than you can with just one individual. What you are being asked to do is to assist in saving your job as well as the Postal Service as a whole. As members of the NALC, it is important that we all try to make ourselves available when we are called upon as the call only comes for important issues. Remember when the call comes, if we don't respond it might be too late later.

*No man is an island...*Our stewards are more aware of this than most carriers.

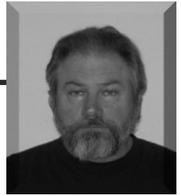
When dealing with grievance issues one must understand this saying as it is most important. When a carrier has a grievance issue and asks to meet with the steward, they understand what they consider the grievance issue to be. At the meeting with the steward the issue is discussed and the paperwork is filed with the investigation to follow. At this point many grievants tend to disap-

pear and allow the steward to handle matters alone. This is not the time to fade away; remember, this is your grievance and the steward is going to need your help to properly process the case to a successful conclusion.

It is important to ensure that you are providing your steward with any and all information you have on the issue of your grievance. This is your complaint and no one knows better than you what has happened. When the steward has all the information they can sift through it to ensure the best presentation of your issue and your availability to the steward ensures this will happen.

Just some things to think about, as always...**Knowledge is the Key.**

Brian Obst
Tampa Stations/Branches Chief Steward



Brian Obst
Tampa Stations/
Branches
Chief Steward
Branch 599



Save Six-Day Rally
Tampa, March 24



Sharing Our Members' Joys and Sorrows

Our deepest sympathy and prayerful support is extended to the family of **Cecil Edge** [retiree] whose passing was March 30; to **Sidney Storr** [Hilldale] and family at the passing of his son; to **Rick Gonzalez** [Town 'N County] and family at the passing of his father, March 23; and to Robert Fernandez [retiree] and family at the passing of his wife.



Dave Retired!
President Alan Peacock recognized **Dave Fernandez** [Interbay 33629] during our April Branch meeting and presented him with a check from the Branch for his retirement.



LETTER CARRIERS'
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SAT., MAY 11, 2013

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"Mary Lou Jackman-William Corbeau" Scholarship Application
(Please do not reduce the size of this application)

Name of Student (please print legibly) _____ Female _____ Male _____

Street Address _____

City, State, Zip Code _____

Contact phone number _____

NALC Branch # _____

Member's Name (must be printed legibly) _____

This is to certify that the above named member of the FSALC is a member in good standing.
(Must be signed by Branch President or Secretary)

Signature Branch President or Secretary

Date

Please Print Name

Please Print Position

Return all applications to:
Jesse A. Costin, FSALC Director of Education
232 Glen Eagle Circle
Naples, Florida 34104

The following requirements must be adhered to in order to qualify.

1. Student must have graduated from an accredited high school or have a GED.
2. Student must be a dependent of a member or the spouse of a deceased member of the FSALC who has not remarried.
3. Applicant must enroll as a full-time student in an accredited college or university, and submit proof of enrollment to receive the funds if awarded. **(DO NOT SUBMIT PROOF NOW)**
4. Applications must be postmarked on or before June 8, 2013. This scholarship award is based on a random drawing, not on academic records or qualifications. There will be four scholarships awarded - two for females, and two for males - each in the amount of \$2000. The drawing will be held during the FSALC Convention June 20-21, 2013.

Please do not reduce the size of this application/ Do not cut in half



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