



Tampa Letter Carrier

From the President's Desk



Alan W. Peacock
President, Branch 599

The rumor mill is at full capacity; when we hear something of interest to all of you, then you will be the first we inform. We have been targeted, as it seems all workers in any government capacity have been, whether they are federal, state or local agencies. The most recent example was the payroll tax extension

recently signed into law that will require newly hired federal and postal employees to

The district plans to begin 6-day route counts and inspections starting March 24 and running through May 26.

pay nearly \$1,000 per year in higher pension contributions to help fund the payroll tax extension for others. According to *Federal Times*, the Postal Service may have to resort to buyouts and early-outs to accomplish its plans for aggressive downsizing. I wouldn't be surprised if they tie in some legislation in order to assist paying for this as well. In regards to these proposals, we have planned a Retirement Seminar to take place April 1, at our hall. This is

for your education and planning whether you are eligible, just planning, or even recently retired and need information regarding your benefits. We have joined with our brothers and sisters from fellow unions to provide this opportunity to any union member. See the flyer in this newsletter for more

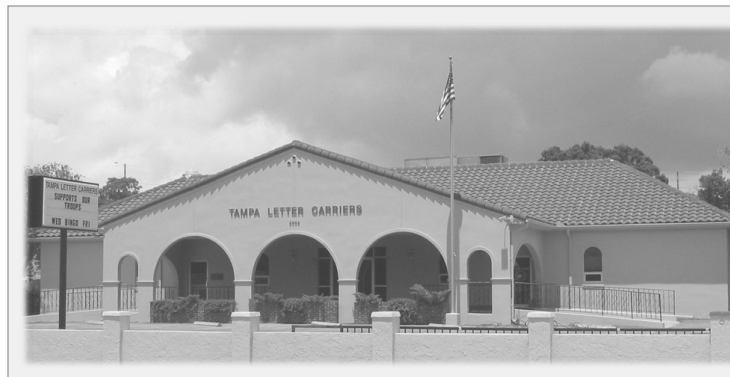
information. Currently there is negotiation with some unions pertaining to incentives, but man-

agement does not know or won't state which unions they are, only that they hope it will be for all of them.

Monday, March 5, a Union Leadership meeting was held with Branch Presidents and selected leaders from throughout the Sun-coast District. This meeting was hosted by new District Manager Nancy Rettinhouse and her staff. The meeting started with the Postmaster General's video regarding plant closures. He states that we have 461

facilities that are running at 50% of their capacity due to declining mail volume. There was other information regarding that in 2000 only 5% of the population paid bills online and today 60% pay bills online. Even with plant optimization, plant closures, and relaxed standards they expect to lose \$1.3 billion in revenue from lost business. They expect hundreds of excessed clerks and mail handlers. They have approximately 300 TEs (temporary employees) in the district carrier craft so they don't anticipate excessing unless their plan to eliminate six-day delivery is approved. Currently there is a 30-day freeze in the district for all reassignments. The district also plans to begin 6-day route counts and inspections starting March 24 and running through May 26; Tampa, Brandon and Plant City have been notified that

(Continued on page 3)



Branch Meeting
Thursday
April 5
7:30 PM

Branch 599 Office

3003 W Cypress Street
Tampa FL 33609-1617

813.875.0599

Fax 813.870.0599

www.nalc599.com

Alan W. Peacock
President

apeacock.nalc@verizon.net

Office Hours

Monday-Friday

8 AM – 4:30 PM

Rodna Kimelman Kirk

Office Secretary
nalc599@verizon.net

Tampa Letter Carrier

Alan W. Peacock
Publisher

Phyllis R. Thomas
Editor
editor@nalc599.com

Branch 599 Office
813.875.0599

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 Branch 599, NALC.

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

Position	Officer	Phone	
President	Alan W. Peacock	813.765.0599	apeacock.nalc@verizon.net
		office 813.875.0599	
Vice President	Tony Diaz	813.598.9635	dcoach9@tampabay.rr.com
Recording Secretary	Michael Brink	813.661.1639	recording.sec@nalc599.com
Financial Secretary	Gilbert Cabanas	813.855.0516	financial.sec@nalc599.com
Treasurer	Ray Garcia	813.787.3640	treas.ray@nalc599.com
Sergeant-at-Arms	J.C. Howard	813.310.0689	
MBA/NSBA	Al Guice	813.422.4967	
Health Benefit Rep.	Terry Franklin	813.758.3061	
Director of Retirees	Lance Jones	813.220.1292	
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

April 5

May 3

Shop Stewards

will Meet

Tuesday 7 PM

April 3

May 1

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)

they will be included. The good news is, they only plan to ride two days and they are not mandated to use the COR [carrier optimal routing] process to do adjustments. There are also plans to have a district-wide training for Dispute Resolution Teams which hasn't been done in almost ten years. Currently there is a huge backlog of cases due to the lack of one of the teams in the district since a manager member retired last November and two trained management members have refused to work on the B Team. There is a new B Team management member scheduled to be trained the end of March. Last year we averaged just over thirty grievances per month and currently we are averaging about forty-five per month. The entire union members present all indicated the workplace climate and how it has deteriorated extremely in all levels. Personally, I voiced the fact that employees are treated as if they are the problem and not allowed to be part of the solution. The latest VOsE [voice of employees] gave management the lowest approval ratings in the last ten years. The aver-

age the past decade was 63% approval and this year only 32% approval. In Tampa some offices reported 100% disapproval or 0% approval; it doesn't get any lower than that. The whole thing in a nutshell could change drastically only if Congress gets off its duff and rights the shipping company it has been sinking for the past five years. They should also consider that the success of the US Postal Service also affects another 8 million jobs and that is a lot of voters to contend with. Another bright spot for us... the last time there was an increase in mail volume was during election year... so bring on the campaign literature!

We should encourage everyone we know to become a registered voter if they are not already. In addition we should encourage them all to vote by mail and then they don't have to be concerned over re-districting issues that are being fought in the state legislatures or the courts. Many citizens think that you can only vote by mail if you are not home to vote in your

district. That is not true and it is no different than voting early which does not have to be at your district polling place. As Americans we get disgusted by the bickering between candidates and sometimes feel that it is a waste of time to vote. That is an excuse for lack of concern unless it affects you directly. Any freedom that becomes devalued can easily become a freedom that is lost. Our system may not be perfect for all the people, but it is still a right to be cherished. Many nations that still don't have that right, know people who would die for it. Also, we are proud to stand up and fight for those who would love to have the freedom we take for granted.

Something we should all think about that is a quote from Abraham Lincoln, "With public sentiment nothing can fail, without it nothing can succeed."

As Always in Unity and Solidarity,
Alan Peacock
President, NALC Br 599

Any freedom that becomes devalued can easily become a freedom that is lost.

Retirement Seminar

We are having a seminar that will help you better understand your Postal Benefits. The seminar is called **Retirement / Understanding Your Postal Benefits**; presentations by Brad Pate from Federal Employee Benefit Agency and John Jewett from Government Employees Benefits. This is for those planning retirement as well as those who need a better understanding of their benefits.

Itinerary:

- Thrift Savings Plan (TSP)
- Survivor's Annuity
- Post Retirement
- Federal Employees Group Life Insurance (FEGLI)

Open to all NALC, APWU, NAOMHU, NRLCA members.

Contact: Alan Peacock, President, NALC Branch 599 813.875.0599
Jane Sells, President, APWU Branch 259 813.876.1697
Nick Mozar, President, NAPMHU Local 318 407.855.2550

Location: Tampa Letter Carriers Hall, 3003 W. Cypress Street, Tampa FL 33609

Date and Time: Sunday • April 1, 2012 • 1-3 PM

RSVP by March 26 if you are planning to attend.

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!

Go to www.nalc.org and click Sign-up in the e-Activist box.

Treasurer's Report

February 2012

Ray Garcia
Treasurer
Branch 599



Income

Dues, Adjustments, Printing [12]	\$20,024.86
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Operating Expenses

Officers [15]	7,266.08
Branch Office Secretary [2 PP]	2,400.00
Health Benefit [Branch Office Secretary]	654.00
Health Benefit [President]	327.60
Stewards [17]	2,210.00
Stewards Lost Wages [2]	232.14
Retirement Gratuities [2]	400.00
Tax Attorney/Accountant [2]	2,650.00
Editor/Webmaster	160.00
Work 3 Hall Rentals [Kirk]	325.26
Work 1 Hall Rental [Reeder]	93.74
Petty Cash Replenishment	279.77
Security Guard [Branch Meeting]	45.00
Rec Room Food [2]	127.20
Lodging in Tallahassee [2]	902.16
National Convention Deposit	2,550.00
Staples Credit	518.40
Verizon Internet & Phone Service	362.84
AT&T Mobility	94.55
QuickBooks [monthly]	24.95
Great American Leasing [2]	649.82
Akita Copy Products [copier]	633.46
CIT Konica Printer	203.00
Ray Anthony Printing [business cards]	266.64
Lost Check	40.00
Taxes IRS	3,831.19
Taxes Florida State [3 months]	449.28
End of Month Operating Balance	\$14,362.63
Banking Accounts	\$400,494.34
Grand Total of Accounts	\$414,856.97

Retirees Breakfast

Monday April 2 9 AM

Coffee Cup

4407 N. Hubert Avenue

Gregg Jorissen Retired!



Gregg Jorissen and Alan Peacock

President Alan Peacock recognized **Gregg Jorissen** [Hilldale] during our Branch meeting in March and presented him with a check from the Branch for his retirement .

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 **Gabe Carrasquillo** [TCA/ West Tampa] who is recuperating after a recent hospitalization.

Our deepest sympathy

and prayerful support is extended to the family of **Jose Lebron** [retiree] whose passing was February 13; to **Shelley Rivera** [retiree] at the passing of her daughter; to **Michael Howard** [retiree] at the passing of his father; to **Rick Santana** [TCA/ Hyde Park] at the passing of his mother; to **Herman Green Sr.** [TCA/Hyde Park] at the passing of his brother; and to **Guadalupe Bautista** [Commerce/Ybor] at the passing of his brother, Joe Hernandez.

Request for Annual Leave Donations

Nancy Tracy, a carrier at Forest Hills Station is recovering from surgery after an accident, is requesting annual leave donations. Her LSP number is 12-4G-335-0660 a PS Form 3970-D *Request to Donate Leave* can be accessed at <http://blue.usps.gov/formmgmt/3999.htm> or from your immediate supervisor, HRSSC at 1-877-477-3273 option 5 or union representative. A donor may not donate leave to his or her supervisor.

Mail PS Form 3970-D with parts I & II completed to:

USPS/HR Shared Service Center
Leave Sharing Program Coordinator
Benefits and Compensation
PO Box 970400
Greensboro, NC 27497-0400

Around the Horn

Brothers and Sisters, as I have mentioned on numerous occasions, the NALC has become a big-time legislative player in an effort to preserve our benefits and save our jobs. My article this month will include a report on the three-day Legislative Lobby Corps I attended with our Congressional District Liaison (CDL), Sam Santilli, in Tallahassee. Before my report though, I want to point out just how important our legislative mission really is. For those of you who **do not** continue to monitor the events directly effecting our jobs, who **do not** log on to NALC.org, and who **are not** an e-Activist and rely on my article to keep informed, let's take a look at what is transpiring legislatively around us.

While we were in Tallahassee conducting our legislative business, we were receiving the February 2012 *Postal Record*. A special COLCPE issue, titled *COLCPE—The bridge to a strong postal future*. This issue is dedicated to heighten the importance of our COLCPE campaign. Then the following week all e-Activists received two e-mails; the following are from the desk of our National President:

Dated 2/15. Dear Tony,
As early as tomorrow (Thursday) morning, the House will consider H.R. 3813, the Securing Annuities of Federal Employees (SAFE) Act of 2012. However, if the SAFE Act as introduced by Rep. Dennis Ross (R-FL) became law, it would be anything but “safe” for federal workers—including postal workers.
In fact, it would put your retirement security at serious risk.

H.R. 3813 had been rolled into the transportation bill known as H.R. 7, but it was announced today that since H.R. 7 did not appear to have enough votes to pass, Speaker John Boehner (R-OH) was allowing H.R. 3813 to come to the House floor for a vote on its own as stand-alone legislation.

Instead of “securing” them, **Ross’ H.R.**

3813 seeks to deeply cut the annuities of those who retire after 2012 even as it would increase the cost to employees for such benefits dramatically, so for new hires—**effectively cutting the take-home pay of all federal and postal employees.**

The bill would increase current employees’ contributions to the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS) by 1.5 percent over three years. Ross claims his measure is necessary to help reduce the federal deficit, but the real agenda appears to be to attack public employees. A fair deficit reduction bill would not focus solely on the benefits of hard-working public servants, and a real deficit reduction bill would balance broadly applied spending cuts with progressive tax reforms.

In addition, for FERS employees who retire after 2012, H.R. 3813 would eliminate the Social Security Supplement for anyone retiring before they are eligible for Social Security benefits. It would reduce the multiplier from 1.1 percent to 1 percent for anyone who retires at age 62 or after, cutting benefits between 9 and 10 percent from the current formula. New employees hired after 2012 would pay 4% of salary into FERS, would be compensated on their highest five years of earnings instead of their highest three, and they would be calculated with a 0.7 percent multiplier instead of the 1 percent that is currently used.

As you know, FERS provides a modest defined-benefit pension that makes up about 40 percent of a federal worker’s total annuity, a crucial supplement to Social Security benefits and the Thrift Savings Plan. This “three-legged stool” strategy is a sensible approach to retirement security that helps the government recruit and retain excellent employees.

The Ross bill is not just an attack on federal/postal employees and their pensions—it’s an attack on the entire middle class.

Click here [house.gov/representatives] to find your representative’s phone number here in Washington, and then **call him or her right**

now and say that you’re tired of Congress thinking that it can use federal employees’ benefits as a convenient piggy bank to pay down the national debt, to pay for highway and transit improvements, to pay for a payroll tax extension, or to use our hard-earned money for anything other than to pay for the retirement benefits we deserve.

Tell your representative to stand up to this latest attack on the middle class and to vote against H.R. 3813.

In Solidarity,
Fredric V. Rolando, President, NALC

Dated 2/16, Dear e-activist,
I am writing to update you on congressional action here in Washington with regard to H.R. 3813 [afl.salsalabs.com/o/5875/t/0/blastContent.jsp?email_blast_KEY=74340].

Rather than vote on H.R. 3813 now, the House leadership instead has scheduled a vote to extend the payroll tax cut, and has decided to hold off on taking up H.R. 3813 until after the Presidents’ Day recess.

This is not welcome news, as lawmakers have since found another way to continue the assault on federal and postal workers through the payroll tax cut extension legislation. While House Republicans have agreed to extend the payroll tax holiday for the remainder of 2012 without requiring that it be offset by other federal savings, I’m afraid the devil remains in the details.

There is an unemployment insurance extension provision in the bill that is slated to be paid for through an increase in retirement contributions from future federal and postal employees. This would raise contributions to 3.1



Tony Diaz
Vice President
Branch 599

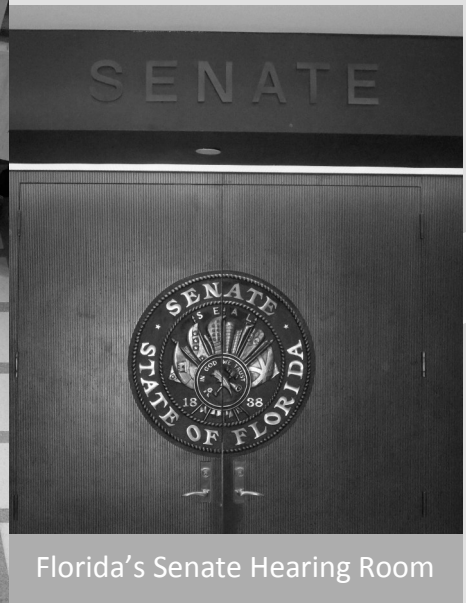
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NALC arrived in force at our Capitol in Tallahassee



Florida's Capitol



Florida's Senate Hearing Room



Congressional District Liaison Sam Santilli, State Legislative Liaison Jim Good and Branch 599 Vice President Tony Diaz

Congressional District Liaison Sam Santilli, and Branch 599 Vice President Tony Diaz represented Branch 599 at Legislative Lobbying that was arranged by our Florida State Association of Letter Carriers. FSALC requested two members from each of Florida branch to convene in Tallahassee, February 8-10. This was a first of its kind politically arranged gathering in Tallahassee by the FSALC. The objective was to join forces with the AFL-CIO and support legislation for the working families.

(Continued from page 5)

percent for new or rehired employees starting in 2013—an increase of 2.3 percent, up from the 0.8 percent current FERS employees contribute.

This future workforce has no voice on this issue, and diminishing the value of these solid middle-class public-service jobs is unfair and misguided.

While the NALC supports unemployment insurance for the nation's workforce, we believe in shared sacrifice, not in targeting the next generation of federal and postal workers to pay for such a safety net on their own.

Please call your legislators both in the House **and** in the Senate and urge them to remove the provision in the payroll tax cut extension bill that would require all new federal and postal employees to foot the bill for continued unemployment insurance.

- To find the phone number for your member of the House of Representatives, click here [house.gov/representatives].
- To find your senator's number, click here [senate.gov/general/contact_information/senators_cfm.cfm].

We need to keep the pressure on—the assault won't stop here.

Thank you for your quick response on this very important action.

In Solidarity,
Fredric V. Rolando, President, NALC

We are under attack.

These are just a few of the Bills/Resolutions the NALC is fighting, you can find the others listed on the NALC.org website, please log on. As for the Resolutions listed above, the majority of you in the workforce are under FERS. The proposed changes would significantly impact your retirement. You can make a difference, do not take it sitting down, we are strong in numbers and we all must act when called upon. Become an e-Activist for free, it may inspire you then to contribute to COLCPE.

Don't be that person to say when something does happen, I should have done more to save my benefits or save my job. Would-a, should-a, could-a.

Lobbying in Tallahassee

The Florida State Association of Letter Carriers requested two members from all the Florida Branches to convene in Tallahassee, February 8-10. This was a first of its kind politically arranged gathering in Tallahassee by the FSALC. The objective was to join forces with the AFL-CIO and support legislation for the working families, to which we are all a part of. It was a planned "unique venture to the State Capitol." Upon arriving on Feb 8, we gathered at the AFL-CIO headquarters for our briefing. Sam and I were joined by a familiar face and newly appointed State Legislative Liaison (SLL), Jim Good. All the CDLs around the state will be reporting to Jim. The entire NALC group was given a brief tour of the Capitol, the place we will conduct our business over the three days. We were shown their Senate hearing rooms and House of Representatives hearing rooms.

Depending on the Senate Bills or the House Resolutions we were supporting/opposing depended on where we would attend the hearings. The agenda provided a calendar of the day's events and the legislative Issues the NALC/AFL-CIO was supporting or opposing. Sam and I have the same House Representative (Cruz) as well as the same Senator (Joyner). We were able to visit Senator Joyner's office and spoke to her aid about several issues and inquired how the Senator viewed our issues. It is clear that the legislators are aware of the NALC and the potential power in numbers we possess. Sam and I were prepared and educated ourselves on the issues of concern and proudly represented Branch 599 and the entire NALC. While supporting the working families, we were promoting the NALC and the bills and resolutions that

directly affect all Letter Carriers. The two most important hearings we attended were Senate Bill 2038, pertaining to the Privatization of Correctional Facilities and an Educational Bill pertaining to increasing the standards for the Bright Futures requirements. Both Bills would directly affect the working class by eliminating jobs and denying many an education opportunity.

Hits: Information you should know

*) **Contract update:** Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service Director George Cohen announced Monday that he has appointed attorney Joshua Javits as mediator to assist NALC and USPS in reaching a new collective-bargaining agreement. An impasse was declared after USPS declined on January 20 to extend talks toward a contract. Once mediation begins, the NALC and USPS will have 60 days to reach an agreement. If they fail to do so, the issues will then be submitted for final and binding resolution before an interest arbitration panel, which under law must consider all the evidence presented by both parties. *Source, nalc.org*

*) Matty Rose has stepped down as FSALC President to take over the operations at Nalcrest (a retirement community for Letter Carriers). Al Friedman (former Vice-President) has been appointed as new State President.

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

Sunday Work Day at the Hall

April 8 9-11 AM

*Finish Organizing Shed,
Repair Lawn Equipment &
Maintain Grounds*

Things You Should Know

Building manager. Have you heard that term before? Have you ever wondered what a building manager is and why we need one? After a few months without one and just winging it, we hired a building manager; his name is Lomax McIntyre Jr., a retired Letter Carrier by way of Hyde Park Station. Now for a few examples of things he is responsible for and under

his care: all the working lights and bulbs, maintenance of the air conditioners, the four restrooms and supplies that are needed to maintain them, and the kitchen area and stoves must also be in working condition. The entire rental of our hall is solely his responsibility. This entails the displaying of the building at the customer's discretion and time frame. Next the scheduling for all and any events which he feels are for

the benefit of our Union. He must be discreet with screening all potential customers as to not jeopardize the hall's structure and maintenance. He must also schedule the security for all events, schedule a worker, schedule a cleanup crew and the set-ups for that event. He must keep track of the scheduling for the



Gilbert Cabanas
Financial Secretary
Branch 599

(Continued on page 9)

Work Days at the Hall



Super Bowl Sunday, February 5

Standing: George McEndree, Steve Hall, Howard Sykes, Tom Borderieux, Pat Krezel, and Dennis Lorenzo Jr.
Kneeling: Tony Diaz and Cash "Rocky" Randels

Cash Randels brings the heavy machinery; he is always available for volunteer work.



March 4

Standing: Pat Krezel, Steve Hall, Alan Peacock, Tom Borderieux, and Ben Getty [Mike Fite took the photo]
Kneeling: Rocky Cash Randels and Tony Diaz

A special thank you to those who gave their time and skill to help cleanup and maintain our property!

The next work party will be April 8. Please contact Tony Diaz for details.

Let's keep our union hall beautiful!

Things You Should Know

(Continued from page 8)

workers and the cleaning crew's work. Finally, he must check out the building for any damages after each event; this process will help him decide if and how much of the deposit is to be refunded to the customer after each event. There are no set hours for this building manager job just as long as all this work is completed with each event. Remember, if anything does go wrong with any of these procedures, the building manager is held responsible.

Workers' Compensation

Here are a few thoughts on OWC and

remain in our roster in a no-ded status: Remember that National deducts a per capita and State dues from our reimbursement check. What this means is that all other Union dues' members are paying for those OWC members' share of those on nonpaying status. The Union must seek those back dues from the OWC members. So if you are out on Workers' Comp, the Union is not collecting your dues and we will mail you a letter on that issue with the amount due. Please inform the Union of your status when out on Workers' Comp and how you can repay the back dues on your account. The Union will work out a payment plan for you if

necessary. If you are not yet in retired status, you must continue to pay active letter carrier dues until that day. It is the Branch's responsibility to collect any dues owed and in the worst case scenario, if a member refuses or fails to pay all Branch dues owed, the branch can write National and request membership to be cancelled for non-payment of dues. Please don't place the Union in that position when a phone call or reply to the Branch can solve that simple problem. Your NALC health benefits and Union dues are your responsibility and must be paid in order for you to stay in the plan.

Facts You Should Know

In the last two month's newsletters there were articles that listed a number of untruths regarding our Union Hall. Now normally I would have just let this misinformation go unchallenged, but the statements that were made tarnished the reputation of not only our recently dissolved holding company, Tampa Letter Carriers, Inc, (TLC), but also a great number of dedicated board directors that served with me for the ten years I was a director and officer of this corporation. So let me clear the air and tell everyone the real facts regarding TLC and their handling of the incoming funds they received from the rental of the hall and the receipts from Letter Carrier Bingo. By the way, both of the authors of the articles served on the board of Tampa Letter Carriers for periods during the times in question.

Back around 1997, when I was first elected as a board director and treasurer of TLC, Bingo was indeed bringing in around \$100,000-150,000 per year. During that period TLC was investing those receipts in Janus Funds, Merrill Lynch accounts, and CDs for future maintenance and repairs to the hall. At

one point we had in excess of \$200,000 in these accounts. In the late 1990s, when we needed a new roof, we had the funds (I believe it was around \$40,000) put away to pay for it. Then we needed a new parking lot, to the tune of around \$20,000, new gates for \$17,000 and a new A/C unit for \$8,000, all paid for with money invested during Bingo's good years. We also paid every bill that related to the daily operation of the hall (i.e. phone, electric, water, sewer, taxes, gas, office equipment, etc.). But when Bingo started to lose its base, when less and less people came to play and the elderly that had been coming and supporting us for 30 years passed away, the profits naturally dropped off. TLC did indeed help out the union with funds, when needed and they were able, to send delegates to our Biennial National Conventions and for dues rebates to your officers and stewards. Never, however, at least in the past ten (10) years, were any TLC funds used to pay for the Labor Day Picnics, Christmas Parties or Installation Dinners. Those events were indeed paid for with union dues monies, since they were free events for the members of this branch! No TLC or

branch funds are, or ever were, used for security personnel during hall rentals. That security, as the writer of last month's article clearly knows, is paid for by the person who rents the hall.

The writer of the article asks, "Why sell the hall that is still supporting itself since the early 50s and has provided us with a comfortable allowance for all those years?" The answer is simple. The hall is in major disrepair. It needs a new roof, according to an estimate given by a professional brought in by our recently resigned Building Manager Don Thomas. This professional stated that there was no sense in painting the building until we installed a new roof. Cost? Around \$80,000 for a new one or \$35,000 for a quick fix to the old one. We need two new A/C units on the roof at \$10,000 each. We need another new parking lot, or at least a refinishing job on the existing one. Around \$150,000 would probably get the building back in shape, but would that be in the best interests



Jim Good
President Emeritus
Branch 599

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Unionism

You are the Steward...now what?

You have been elected by your brother and sister carriers as their representative in your station. What does this really mean? What are your responsibilities? How do you represent your members in the proper fashion? These and many more questions were probably running through your head shortly after your election. Let us take a few minutes of your time to analyze these questions and see if we can help you get on track.

First, as a Steward your main responsibility is to look out for the welfare of the carriers that you represent. This means that you are ever vigilant to ensure **contract compliance** from management when dealing with the day-to-day issues you will encounter in your office. As you are probably aware, this will cover things like discipline and overtime issues. As a carrier we see these issues almost daily, but they are only the tip of the iceberg when it comes to representing the carriers in your office. While it takes time to learn, the Joint Contract Administration Manual (JCAM) will cover most of the issues you will run into as a steward. It is a big book and you will find that you will refer to it in all instances of grievance work.

The JCAM is the grievance bible and you should have it with you or readily available at all times when at work. This is the agreed-upon interpretation of the terms of our National Agreement and it will help you in determining if there are contractual violations that require your attention through the grievance system. You always have a copy available in the office, as all offices were provided one when the newest edition was published. If you need to reference it when working at home it is also available on our website at nalc.org.

While a steward will file a good many grievances in the course of doing their job, it is not the only way to represent

your carriers. As a steward, you should be seeking avenues to allow you to work with management that don't always require grievances to be filed. You should seek to develop a working relationship with your supervisors and manager that allow you and them to work together to prevent situations that require grievances to be filed. Yes, I know what you are thinking – I don't trust that so-and-so, so how can I work together with him? It is not something that will happen right away, you will have to work at it to develop the necessary trust between yourself and management, but if you put the effort in you can gain a great deal of benefit for both yourself and your carriers. Imagine not having to file that grievance on overtime because you took the time to explain to the supervisor where they were making the mistake that was causing the contractual violation and you were able to get them to correct it before it became a grievable issue. Now don't get me wrong, you will still need to file grievances and I'm not advocating that you shouldn't file them. I'm only pointing out the benefits to be gained if you can develop and foster a good working relationship with management in your station.

Representing your carriers can sometimes be difficult because everyone seems to have their own agenda and they don't always agree with the contractual application that guides us. Remember from previous articles, the warnings of showing favoritism and failing to be guided by the contract. A good steward treats all carriers the same and holds all to the terms of the National Agreement, both management as well as craft employees. The quickest way to lose the respect of the carriers is for them to see you treating some better than others. Remember that and you have half the battle won.

Representation will develop as your time as a steward grows; the longer you

do it the better you will get at it. I can tell you that when I started out I didn't have many people who would take the time to assist me and I spent many hours studying on my own to develop the skills I needed to represent the carriers. You on the other hand have an unlimited resource available to assist you while you develop your skills and I highly recommend that you use it. The resource I am talking about is your local Branch Officers and Stewards. In the monthly newsletter you will find all of their telephone numbers and they are all willing to assist you as you learn and develop as a steward. Our goal is to help you become the best steward you can be and hopefully you will carry the torch for the next generation of stewards for the branch. It is my opinion that in every position of our Union, both local as well as national, we should all be training our replacements so that there is never a drop-off in our ability to represent our members. If we leave the cupboards full the next ones who step forward will be able to hit the ground running and conversely if we leave the cupboards bare the ability to represent will be severely impacted in a negative way.

This small pep talk is designed to get you to see and understand the importance of the job you hold as well as show you that you have a great team behind you to ensure that you succeed and develop into a great steward. Through the months ahead there will be more articles on specific issues to help you and I am always open to suggestion on topics. If you would like more information on anything specific, don't hesitate to contact me for individualized training.

For now I leave you as always –
Knowledge is the Key.

Yours in Brotherhood, *Brian Obst*



Brian Obst
Tampa Stations/
Branches Chief
Steward
Branch 599

Facts You Should Know

(Continued from page 9)

of the union? That is a question that should only be answered by a vote of the entire membership, and will be addressed by many members in future articles if and when a motion is passed to seriously consider selling the hall.

The hall cannot support itself since Bingo is gone. Rentals alone do not bring in enough money. And to put it bluntly, we do not need to be in the rental business. When we were turning a good profit, and the surrounding community was using and benefiting from the hall as they were in the last half of the 20th century, it was not only a money maker that helped our branch financially but a source of great pride. Some members, such as Brothers Cabanas and Wallace, say we should open up the work stoppage fund for monies to use for building repairs. Brother Wallace says, "We all know there will never be a strike – so why

keep this money? The branch needs money to repair our hall. Let's do so with this." Brother Cabanas says, "that money should be used to repair our hall and make it become the greatest hall in Tampa. By law, we can never strike".

This is the time, when members of Congress like Darrel Issa and Dennis Ross are trying to break up the Postal Service, that we need to protect our Work Stoppage Fund. They are trying to break our union and take away our collective bargaining rights by the passage of HR 2309 & S 1789. We are currently not permitted to strike, based on our National Agreement, but if that agreement was somehow voided and/or nullified by congress, it's not unreasonable to think that a strike may be called. We also need to remember that if six-day delivery goes away, fully 1/6 of City Letter Carriers will lose their jobs. Some of our members may need

financial help, and our membership may feel that the Work Stoppage Fund would be able to provide that help and should be used for that purpose.

These are the facts concerning the building's needed repairs and how the income brought into TLC was allocated and spent. The membership elected a new board of directors for TLC every two years and any concerned member was permitted to sit in on any board meeting. As I stated previously, both authors of the previously mentioned newsletter articles served as directors on the board and had every opportunity to question and/or speak, and at times vote for or against any of the boards' financial decisions. As the saying goes, "you can't squeeze blood out of a turnip". When TLC had the money to save and/or invest they did so. When they didn't, they couldn't. I think at some point in our lives we've all been in the same situation.

ARSLAN UNIFORMS

Bill & Shirley Moran

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A.R. Tony Huerta Branch 599
National Association of Letter Carriers
3003 W Cypress Street
Tampa FL 33609-1617

813.875.0599 • Fax 813.870.0599
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