

Tampa Letter Carrier

Volume 9 - Issue 3

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

Tampa, Florida

March 2010

by Jim Good

President - Branch 599

President's Report

67th Biennial Convention Preparation

s everyone involved already knows, plans are well underway for the National Association of Letter Carriers' 67th Biennial National Convention. The delegates have been elected, their names have been submitted to our national office, and we are awaiting instructions on how to proceed with choosing and reserving rooms at our choice hotels. We will follow the same procedure as we have for at least the past eight years; that is to try and reserve rooms at the host hotel for all delegates who desire to stay there and then attempt to reserve rooms for the remainder of the delegation at other hotels within the NALC block.

I have been notified of a new procedure for hotel room reservations that will be in effect this year. After national receives the list of qualified delegates they will complete the registration process and send the convention credentials back to the branches. Along with these credentials will be instructions on accessing a special website for the Anaheim Housing Bureau/Passkey Site with a special NALC web address and code provided by national. By using the internet to make reservations we will be able to see what rooms (at

specific hotels) are available. No longer will we have to wait for weeks or months to find out if we received our first choice of hotels. As far as airfare goes, I will once again be contacting the same travel agent as in the past. This will allow those who choose to fly together with other delegates, and have the branch pay for the airfare directly, the ability to do so. If a delegate chooses to make his/her own travel arrangements he/she will be reimbursed for the airfare up to the amount that they would have paid if they had flown with the airline booked through the travel agent. As far as the monetary allowances for delegates goes, the branch, in the past, has paid for the airfare charges (as explained above), up to ½ the cost of five nights at a hotel room at the cost the branch pays at the hotel reserved by the branch, and per diem. The final decision on how much the branch will pay is voted on by the membership.

It seems that whenever we start to prepare for an upcoming convention I hear members make comments about "a free vacation", or how the delegates go there just to party and have a good time. While it's true that the delegates do have their food and travel paid for, as well as half of their room costs, they are there to represent all the members who don't go. Delegates must use their own annual leave, as well as traveling on Sunday. There are also workshops

held twice daily; 7:30 am and late afternoon. So although the delegates do have some free time to see and



visit the city where the convention is held, they also are responsible for attending the convention and voting, knowledgeably, on many different issues that affect all of the membership. Issues like constitutional amendments, resolutions, and in every other year delegates nominate national officers for election.

So if you have never attended a national convention why not consider being a delegate. To be a paid delegate you must be a member in good standing of the branch, must attend eight out of twelve branch meetings for each of the two years preceding the convention and sign up in October or November (of the year preceding the convention) to be nominated for election as a delegate. It really is an awesome sight to be in the same hall with eight or nine thousand other letter carriers and be part of the process in guiding the direction your union will take.

Branch Meeting
Thursday, March 4
7:30 PM

Branch 599 Officers

PRESIDENT	Jim Good	(813) 417-8877
EXECUTIVE VICE-PRESIDENT	Dook Ramotar	(813) 767-0322
VICE-PRESIDENT	Gilbert Cabanas	(813) 855-0516
RECORDING SECRETARY	Mike Brink	(813) 661-1106
FINANCIAL SECRETARY	Tony Diaz	(813) 598-9635
TREASURER	Michael Anderson	(813) 967-1615
TRUSTEE	Silven Zimmerman	(813) 380-3731
TRUSTEE	Jose Oliva	(813) 873-2747
TRUSTEE	Terry Franklin	(813) 657-9690
SERGEANT-AT-ARMS	J.C. Howard	(813) 621-1976
MBA / NSBA	Albert Guice	(813) 621-7931
HEALTH BENEFITS	Detlev Aeppel	(813) 505-7914
DIRECTOR OF RETIREES	John Gebo	(813) 985-5474, cell 503-1256
LABOR - MANAGEMENT	Brian Obst	(727) 458-0679
LABOR - MANAGEMENT	A. Sam Santilli	(813) 215-7595

Presidents Emeritus

Michael Anderson Orbe Andux

Don Thomas Garland Tickle

A.R. "Tony" Huerta NALC Branch 599 3003 W. Cypress St. Tampa, Florida 33609-1617 Tel: (813) 875-0599 Fax: (813) 870-0599 email: nalc599@verizon.net website: http://www.nalc599.com

The National Association of Letter Carriers Branch 599, 3003 W. Cypress Street, Tampa, Fl 33609-1617, publishes the *Tampa Letter Carrier* monthly.

The opinions expressed in this publication are those of the writers, and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of Branch 599.

All articles are subject to editing and revision at the discretion of the publisher & editor.

Articles must be submitted no later than the first of the month. Submit articles as .txt, .rtf, .doc or .wpd documents attached to email sent to <code>newsletter@nalc599.com</code>.

Branch 599 Shop Stewards

Brandon	33510	Terry Franklin	(813) 758-3061
Brandon	33511	James Dobson	(813) 661-1636
Carrollwood	33618	Eddie Berroth	(813) 493-5224
Commerce	33602	Dook Ramotar	(813) 767-0322
Forest Hills	33612	Alan Robinson	(813) 843-9762
Forest Hills Annex	33613	Nick Cullaro	(813) 541-8159
Hilldale	33614	A. Sam Santilli	(813) 215-7595
Hilldale Annex	33634	Julio Acosta	(813) 889-3913
Hyde Park	33606	Tom Cobert	(813) 694-0711
Interbay	33611	Sammy Graham	(813) 832-6644
Interbay	33629	Brian Obst	(727) 458-0679
MacDill	33608	Sammy Graham	(813) 832-6644
Palm River	33619	J.C. Howard	(813) 621-1976
Plant City	33565	Varick Reeder	(315) 491-6234
Port Tampa	33616	Sammy Graham	(813) 832-6644
Produce	33610	John DeRosa	(813) 850-8418
Ruskin / Sun City Center	33570	Jack Hencoski	(813) 685-9034
Seminole Heights	33603	Tony Diaz	(813) 598-9635
Sulphur Springs	33604	John Rowland	(813) 770-7769
Tampa Carrier Annex	33607	Don Wiseman	(813) 713-6273
Tampa Carrier Annex	33609	Dennis Lorenzo	(813) 966-3989
Temple Terrace	33617	Warren Sumlin	(813) 486-7612
Town & Country	33615	Brian Obst	(727) 458-0679
Town & Country	33635	Brain Obst	(727) 458-0679
Ybor City	33605	Detlev Aeppel	(813) 505-7914

RETIREES BREAKFAST

(In Tampa)
First Monday of Every Month
9:00 AM at
The Coffee Cup
4407 N. Hubert
in Drew Park

RETIREES BREAKFAST
(In Brandon)
Second Tuesday of Every Month
8:00 AM at
La Septima Café
140 Parsons Ave.
in Brandon

Read the Tampa Letter Carrier online at http://www.nalc599.com/newsletter.htm

Running With You

By The Book

I irst, let me say Happy New Year, though it is a belated one. Due to circumstances, I could not participate or write an article in last month's newsletter. Every New Year, we all make resolutions. I personally don't and maybe some of you also don't, but for those who do, I hope you try your utmost to keep the good ones and work on the bad ones- ones we should not entertain.

I talked to a carrier at a station I visited recently. The carrier said, "Dook, there's not too much mail to case. Deliveries are down." So here is my take on this. We all know that deliveries are down. We should try our utmost to work with the rule to give a good estimate of our workload each day and document our work and deliveries for that day.

Through MIRAP, the USPS has taken out routes this past few months and now with the second round of the MIRAP, we have some routes back. Even with less mail to case, the territory added on the routes have more deliveries so you may have less time in the office but more time on the street.

Running With You would like all carriers to make a resolution for the New Year that you will fill out your 3996 and document your deliveries for that day, because when they come again to look at your route, you will have a paper trail of your time spent in the office and street. Remember when you request addition time for your assignment for the day be sure to include any deviation for express additional parcels, extra accountable items, not for getting more than normal DPS. Also, should you have to take a trip, document start and end of the trip.

Recently, a carrier at one office told the supervisor he has down time, so they gave him a trip. He did everything right, documented his time, came back into the office and did not see any Supervisor or Manager, so he kept busy doing things that he should have done in the A.M. The result, he got a letter of warning requesting discipline. We grieved the discipline and it went to the B Team where they knocked it down to a discussion. This happened only because he notified the supervisor of his undertime and did the rest by the book.

Should you request time and it was denied, be sure to call ahead of time if you cannot make it back and that you still need additional time. Don't forget to keep copies of your 3996 and any other request made for time.

Here are some numbers for you to feast on, taken from The Federal Times: 16.6 billion cards, letters and packages expected to be delivered between Thanksgiving and Christmas vs. 19 billion last year. This is a loss of 2.4 billion. 3 billion letters mailed over the

holidays.

by Dook Ramotar

830 million cards, letters, packages expected to be mailed December 14th, the busiest mailing day of the year. (Holiday Season).

6-92 million, average number of cards, letters and packages, processed daily during the holidays.

Though these numbers seem significant, we have our work cut out for us by giving service to the public so they can use the USPS and continue our service with them.

We probably can expect more of the same this year as it relates to MIRAP, Management continuing to attempt to squeeze the carriers dry, but let's not give them the opportunity to do so. Let our resolution this year be to go by the book and keep them off our backs.

"Our problems are man-made, therefore they may be solved by man. No problem of human destiny is beyond human beings." John F. Kennedy

Arslan Uniform Drawing

The Arslan Uniform prize for the March 4th Branch 599 meeting will be \$330.00. If you are in attendance at the meeting and your name is drawn, you will win the \$330.00, donated by Bill & Shirley Moran of Arslan Uniforms.

Why not come to the meeting, hear what is going on with your union, and maybe win some big money? There have been many changes happening that affect your daily work, so you really need to keep informed regarding your rights. What better place to keep updated than at the branch meeting? Hope to see you here on March 4th.

COLCPE Drawing

There will be a drawing for a \$100.00 Gift Card for Ruth Chris' Steak House at the March branch meeting. We will put the names of all direct deposit donators in a hat and draw a winner. We will also include in the drawing the names of anyone who signs up for a direct deposit donation of \$5.00 per pay period (\$10.00 per month for retired members) during the meeting. Please bring the member ID number off of your Postal Record Magazine (or just bring your address label or entire magazine)

Special thanks goes out to TCA 33607 carrier Will Toliver for donating the Gift Card.

Health & Welfare

Get Well wishes go out to Sulphur Springs carrier Richard Johnson and Town & Country carrier John Pfeiffer.
Our sincere condolences go out to Town & Country Carrier Jose Clemente and his family on the passing away of his Father Tito. Services were held in Puerto Rico.

ARSLAN UNIFORMS

Bill & Shirley Moran

Retired Letter Carrier Branch 1477 St. Petersburg

Honorary Member Branch 599 Tampa

NEED UNIFORMS IN A HURRY? SHOP BY PHONE FROM HOME

320 PATLIN CIRCLE EAST PHONE: 727-584-4307

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

bilmor@tampabay.rr.com

TAMPA LETTER CARRIERS PRESENT BINGO

COME JOIN THE FUN

EVERY WEDNESDAY AND FRIDAY

DOORS OPEN AT 5:30 GAMES START AT 6:30

AT THE TAMPA LETTER CARRIERS HALL

3003 W. CYPRESS ST.

TAMPA, FL. 33609 813-877-4785

Unionism by Brian Obst

Weingarten Rights

I thas recently come to my attention that one of our brother carriers was approached by a Postal Inspector, who asked if he could ask him some questions. The carrier said ok and spoke with the inspector for a while. The carrier stated that the inspector was a nice guy, who even gave him some tips on how to prevent getting into trouble. Shortly after this investigative interview the carrier received a suspension based on the answers given to this nice Postal Inspector.

Brothers and sisters let me tell you that the Postal Inspectors do not come around to shoot the breeze with you just for fun, nor do they care for you in any way other than getting you to answer questions that can and usually do lead to you receiving discipline.

Anytime that you are approached by a Postal Inspector and/or an OIG agent wishing to ask you questions you should do two things. First ask if the questions you are going to be asked could lead to disciplinary action and second ask for your Union Steward for representation in any interview, this is known as invoking your Weingarten Rights.

The right to representation during any investigative interview which the individual has a reasonable belief may lead to disciplinary action is referred to as the Weingarten Rule.

The Weingarten Rule may only be applied to meetings that are investigatory interviews, where management are searching for facts and trying to make a determination of innocence or guilt of the employee. These interviews help management make a decision whether to impose discipline in those cases being investigated. The interviews we are speaking of are the standard I.I. (Investigative interview) as well as Postal Inspector interrogations.

Remember as referenced above that an individual only has Weingarten representation rights where they have a reasonable belief that the investigation could lead to discipli-

nary action against them. The determination of "reasonable" is based upon the circumstances of each individual case. Simply because the supervisor says that "there is no need to worry it's just an investigation" does not set the determination of reasonable belief for the interviewee.

Weingarten Rights are not automatic and they cannot be exercised by your steward for you. The only way you get your Weingarten Rights is to ask for your Steward to represent you during any investigative interview whether by local management or Postal Inspectors. Remember that an investigative interview is one where management begins to ask you questions about anything, management is good about asking you to come in for a discussion and then start asking you questions.

Federal Courts have determined that you are entitled to a pre-interview consultation with your representative (steward) as one of your Weingarten rights. This right also extends to any Postal Inspector interrogation so do not let the Postal Inspectors talk you out of your rights. The Postal Inspectors will try to get you to go through the interview without representation by saying things like "its just a couple of questions" or "if you didn't do anything wrong you don't have anything to be afraid of". Remember this, when a Postal Inspector goes into an Investigative Interview as the interviewee they always take in a representative with them so you should do no different. Always ensure that you request your representative prior to any investigative interview and refuse to answer any questions until the representative has arrived and you have had your pre-interview consultation. Simply inform management or Postal Inspectors that you want to cooperate but that you will be unable to answer any questions until your representative arrives and reaffirm your request for your steward before proceeding.

During the interview process Weingarten states that you are entitled to assistance from your representative. While we all know that management would rather have us in the interview as a silent presence this is not the case. The steward is there to assist you during the interview and if management refuses to allow the steward to do so a grievance on

violation of Weingarten rights would be filed and management could find themselves unable to use the results of the interview in any pending action against the interviewee.



Chief Steward - Branch 599

Remember your steward is there to help and may be an active vocal presence during the interview, getting clarifications and preventing badgering of the interviewee.

This is a brief introduction on Weingarten Rights and most of this information has been taken from the 2009 edition of the JCAM in Article 17. Please go to this and read all the information and speak with your steward if you have any questions.

The best advice I as a steward can provide you on this matter is that any time that management or the Postal Inspectors ask you to come into the office to submit to an investigative interview that you clearly state for them that you wish to cooperate but that you desire your steward present and that you will not answer any questions until your steward is present and you have had time to consult with them first. Remember that these people are not your friends and the whole purpose of investigative interviews/Postal Inspectors interrogations is to develop evidence against you for the purpose of disciplinary action. Be smart always have representation with you. Remember -Knowledge is the Key.

Yours in Brotherhood,

Brian Obst Chief Steward

And The Beat Goes On

Help Save Your Job

hat a great free meal the retirees had on Saturday night, January 16th, at *Boizao*. It was the first ever Retirees Dinner with no music and no dancing and no long winded talks by a national officer. John Gebo, Director of Retirees, who went out of his way to find an exceptional, different restaurant which all enjoyed, and President Jim Good spoke for only a few minutes. There were about 60 in attendance, only two from Brandon, Phil Singletary and his wife.

This writer sat opposite past Branch 599 President Garland Tickle and his beautiful wife who drove in from North Carolina (a long way to go for a free meal). But Garland likes to stay in touch. Garland told me he was one of the original carriers that started letter carrier bingo back in the late '60s and he thought it would never take off. I told him, "Well here it is 40 years later and it's still going, not as strong as it used to with the current recession and, sorry to say, a lack of caring to play by the retirees' wives and also the active." You need to come to the union hall on Wednesday and Friday nights by 5:30 for early bird or 6:30 for regular games and enjoy a night, maybe win some money, and enjoy the company of many others while supporting your local

union.

As you all know, things are not good in the post office. I was told by a Brandon carrier that they have a shortage of clerks and the mail sits and the carrier has to start later and they are not hiring any where. The Postal Service is talking about going to a five day delivery. This would be the most radical change to the post office in its 230 plus year history. The NALC has told the post office this is not a sensible solution to the problem of no mail.

I hear there a lot of carriers that are not happy with the recent adjustments made by the MIARAP process and some are over and some under. In the meantime, management is going crazy, giving out discipline. This writer started in New York in the post office prior to the famous strike put out by Branch 36 in New York City. At that time we made no money, every one was working two jobs to survive, and working conditions were lousy. But you know what, when there was a union meeting the hall was full and because of those members going out of their way to fight for a better post office and a better wage, you have what you have today.

Your union is the members, and your unions, not only in Tampa but nationwide, are having as many problems today as they had in the late '60s and early '70s. The issues may be different but the problems are still

by Ray Wallace

there and more critical today then ever. Yet the union halls during union meetings nationwide are empty. Why? Do you as a letter carrier know what is at stake?



There is a lot said at union meetings that you do not see in local papers or magazines. When a union president looks out at the attendance in the hall and sees a good amount of carriers there, they think to themselves, they do care.

Money wise and benefit wise you have one of the best jobs in the USA. today. Don't believe me, look yourself for a better one, with a letter carrier's skills. Your union at the national level is fighting, thanks to those of you who are giving to COLCPE and that to is to small an amount for the amount of carriers. You are making a good wage and yet you don't want to part with any of it, even to help save your job.

I understand postal management is looking at giving out more contract jobs, will yours be one of them?

The next union meeting is March 4th. Will I see you there?

Retired But Not Tired

Retirees Banquet

ear Brothers and Sisters of Branch 599, on January 16, 2010, the Retiree's Banquet was held, thanks to Branch 599 and the members who voted on the By-Law change. In my opinion it was a great success. Everyone that I spoke with who had attended had nothing but praise for this event; from the location, the restaurant, the food, the service and last, but not least, the camaraderie amongst the "old guys". Listening and reminiscing with past Presidents Orbe Andux and Garland Tickle brought back many memories. A retiree named Dave Bohannon, who has more stories than President Obama, was also in attendance. As anyone who has had the pleasure of

working or going to conventions with him, will tell you, he was always the first one to put his hand in his pocket to pick up the check. Ha! Ha! As some of you may not know, there are seven members who have retired from the U.S.P.S. and are Branch Officers. They are; Jim Good, President, Dook Ramotar, Executive Vice President, Mike Anderson, Treasurer, Gilbert Cabanas, Vice-President, Joe Oliva, Trustee, Al Guice, MBA Representative and John Gebo, Director of Retirees. The retired members are still a major force in the running of Branch 599. So, my hat goes off to all retired officers and retirees who were in attendance. Oh, I did have one complaint, Vinny Acuri said, "it was raining when we left". My response was I am only the Director of Retirees, not God.

As you all know, the publication of the Feb-

by John Gebo

Director of Retirees - Branch 599

ruary edition of the Postal Record was a special COL-CPE issue. What is COL-CPE? I am sure everyone has heard of it, the Committee on Letter Carriers



Political Education. Evidently, not. I am totally shocked by how few of our members contribute. There are present and past branch officers, shop stewards, convention delegates whose names are not listed. If they don't give, I guess the general membership feel they shouldn't have to contribute. I have heard the rumor carriers are known to be "cheap". Guess it is true. Five (\$5.00) dollars a month to protect your retirement, job and benefits. Brothers and Sisters, "Gimme 5". Thanks to all of those

(continued on page 7)

Around The Horn

by Tony Diaz

Financial Secretary - Branch 599

COLCPE

B rothers and Sisters, it is time to again stress the importance of COLCPE. The Committee on Letter Carrier Political Education (COLCPE) is truly the path for the future of the letter carrier. The NALC has made great strides in becoming a big time player on the political front with our COLCPE contributions. Remember COLCPE is not only important in election years! We must always be prepared to fight or support new bills or legislation that should arise. Over the years I have written several articles regarding the importance of COLCPE and having the budget to contribute to legislators that we may need for support as friends of the letter carrier. COLCPE contributions are not just a source of campaign donations to procarrier candidates, regardless of party. It provides the foundation for NALC's political action programs. These programs could range from informational walks to releasing hundreds of letter carriers to work full time in the weeks before general elections. With the Gimme 5 for COLCPE contribution program an overwhelming success a couple of years ago, the NALC is again asking every letter carrier to step up

and support COLCPE. Since 2005 tens of thousands of letter carriers have signed up for COLCPE.

It would be wonderful to see our local Branch 599 have contributions from 15% of our total members, active and retired, just 15%, we currently are below 10%. You can sign up to automatically donate five dollars (\$5) per pay period from your paycheck or monthly annuity if retired, or set up an electronic fund transfer from your checking account. We have offered to sign up members at the monthly union meetings, with some success. We also kicked around the idea of a COLCPE sign-up party at a private residence. Educating letter carriers has also helped, many carriers upon learning COL-CPE's purpose and some past accomplishments have become contributors.

Several years ago I was able to experience firsthand the process of lobbying on Capitol Hill, in Washington D.C. The NALC, through COLCPE, must continue be a recognizable big time player throughout the Country. With the financial condition of the Postal Service and the continued economic struggles, we need all the friends we can contact in high ranking places. Friends in case the Postal Service decides to make unreasonable proposals to "save the company". Please think about making that commitment and

donate to COLCPE. It's our best defense.

30

Quick Hits: Information You Should Know

- *) MIARAP, Phase 2 has been completed. February 27 was the final implementation date for the Tampa Stations and Branches. My final adjustment was Central Station, in St. Petersburg. The consultations conducted in Tampa were of better quality in comparison, and the entire process seemed much more organized. Hopefully the mail volume will increase and we will be back to add more routes to all the Stations.
- *) Loaner LLVs should be treated the same as if you were driving your regularly assigned vehicle. If the loaner LLV is not running properly or there is some issue, do not hesitate to write the vehicle up (PS Form 4565). We have received a number loaners that are running like a blender, stalling and smoking. Several loaners have had defective doors and windows, you get my point. Take the initiative, do not procrastinate and leave it for a fellow co-worker to deal with.

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

Retired But Not Tired (from page 6)

whose names were in the February edition of the Postal Record who do contribute. Without those members, our lobbyist in Washington would not be able to do the job to protect our rights as members of the NALC. Think about it...who said that Matty Rose or Ray Wallace"?

I would like to thank those retirees who show up regularly at the Coffee Cup. March 1, 2010 will be our next breakfast date. It would be great to see some new (old) faces. You don't have to be retired. Some of you active carriers could learn something from us, how to survive and enjoy working for the United States Postal Service.

So, as Roy Rogers and Dale Evans sang, "Happy trails to you, until we meet again." Fraternally, John Gebo

Tampa Letter Carriers, Inc. Volunteers Needed!

As a result of the TLC meeting that was held on February 22nd it was suggested that we solicit volunteers to paint the union hall. The outside of the building is in desperate need of a paint job. The paint is so thin that when it rains the water is leaking in through the cracks in the masonry blocks. This, of course, is causing water damage through the interior walls in the recreation room and in the dividing walls between the serving room and the main hall.

We may also need to seal the exterior walls prior to painting, so we will more than likely need volunteers for two days of work. The fascia boards will also need to be scraped and/or replaced in some areas. Because TLC cannot afford to pay a professional painter we are asking for your help. It is imperative that this work is done as soon as possible. Please donate a few hours of your time to help keep up with the maintenance of your hall. Call the union office at (813) 875-0599 and we will get back to you with a date and time for the work. It will probably be on a Sunday in a month or so.

A.R. "Tony" Huerta NALC Branch 599 3003 West Cypress Street Tampa FL 33609-1617 (813) 875-0599 fax (813) 870-0599 http://www.nalc599.com NONPROFIT ORG. U. S. POSTAGE PAID TAMPA FL PERMIT NO. 1285



Which is the **Better Deal?**

Dealerships will often promote 0% financing offers to lure in members. However, this option may not be in your best financial interest. Choosing the dealer rebates instead and financing with Tampa Postal is usually the better deal.

DEALER TRICKS EXPOSED!

You Save \$1,208 When You Choose the Dealer Rebates & Finance with Tampa Postal!

	Dealership 0% Offer	Tampa Posta Offer	
Vehicle Price:	\$20,000	\$20,000	
Dealer Rebate:	\$0	\$3,000	
Interest Rate: Loan Term:	0%	5.00%	
	48 Months	48 Months	
Monthly Payment:	\$416.67	\$391.50	
Total Paid:	\$20,000	\$18,792	



JOIN TPCU & SAVE!

800.782.4899 | www.tpcu.org

