



Tampa Letter Carrier

From the President's Desk



Alan W. Peacock
President, Branch 599

May was an eventful month: Arbitration, Senate Bill 1789, the 20th NALC Food Drive, not to mention all the attention that has come to the forefront with local attention on a very serious national problem concerning IRS fraud and identity theft. The number one concern that I hear from our members is: when will the Postal Service become

Proactive instead of Reactive? It is a difficult answer to provide

The number one concern that I hear from our members is: when will the Postal Service become more Proactive instead of Reactive?

considering that we work for an agency that is so numbers-driven that performance is overshadowed by the concept of our creation to provide universal service. To understand that concept in which every address across our nation gets the same identical standard of service to whatever mode of delivery that is provided regardless of any cost factors. Also take into consideration that this

agency is governed by a Board of Governors and a Postal Regulatory Commission and is under control of Congress as to how it will develop pricing and any decisions affecting its budget. Now throw in the fact that those governors, commissioners and congressmen rarely, if ever, have even stepped into any postal facility and have any true under-

standing of what that operation actually entails. From the outset we

were just supposed to be a service that breaks even... not make a profit. Then the genius of Congress decided to saddle us with some expenses beyond the budget that was designed to break even and still maintain that concept of universal service. Don't forget that while they strapped on those extra expenses they also denied us the ability to raise costs; cost on products and services to maintain

that universal service. So by now you get the point as to why the Postal Service is not Proactive. It has become more like a mental patient in a straight jacket and can't figure its way out of anything. Every effort that is made to address employees' concerns comes across as double-talk and continues to point fingers at the employee. REALLY? Do you really think the employees are that stupid and can't see that their concerns are meaningless and looked upon as just unjustified gripes? The impression that you are lucky to have a job and that we are all dealing with the same problems is just not going to fly. If there is not a more concerted effort to restore mutual respect and civil and professional behavior then the collapse will intensify at a greater pace than the decline in mail volume. This is not much

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Branch Meeting
Thursday
June 7
7:30 PM

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

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

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Presidents Emeritus	Garland Tickle • Orbe Andux		
	Donald Thomas • Michael Anderson		
	James Good		

Executive Board

Meets

Thursday 6:30 PM

June 7

July 5

Shop Stewards

will Meet

Tuesday 7 PM

June 5

July 3

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	813.935.0244
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)

different than a play or a movie where you lose your audience and you also lose your ratings; it is too hard to get them back.

Identity Theft at USPS

Regarding the identity theft—we have been contacted by several members who have received letters from the Postal Service pertaining to their records being taken home by a supervisor. If you have received one of these letters, please send a copy to the Branch to be included in the file. There are apparently over a hundred cases of this careless control of employees' records nationwide. To this date, nothing has been done to the individual who confiscated these records without proper release, violating privacy and HIPPA laws. Locally, it was shrugged off as being like a teacher working on homework. I really don't recall any medical or personal records on any homework from grade school through college. This office has requested that identity theft protection be provided for all employees whose records were taken out of the workplace. If that had been a craft employee, I guarantee we would be fighting a removal case... nothing like a fair playing field in this company when it comes to craft and management.

6-day Route Count and Inspections

Now that the first round of the Six Day Route Count and Inspections are over for Plant City, Brandon and Forrest Hills offices there are no more scheduled inspections for the period that ends May 25, 2012. The interesting side of these inspections that just ended is twofold. One, did they actually gain anything more than they would have through the interim process that costs very little, and two, what was the savings gained versus the cost of travel, per diem and housing for the

route inspectors at the higher cost and replacement cost at their offices? Then again, maybe there wasn't any replacement cost for these badly needed management positions. After all, we had postmasters, station managers and supervisors all joining in on this party. For instance, at Brandon, carriers reported that inspectors were telling them to hurry on their routes because Happy Hour at Embassy Suites was from 5 to 7 and that would have assured us we didn't break the 1700 window of operation. Sounds too familiar about the horrors that surround the operational window AND ALL THE SAFETY AND CUSTOMER SERVICE ISSUES. When it comes to the discussion of austerity and the world economy, we seem to be a test site for it in our nation and we all can truly believe in the perfection of technology and trust that it relieves all the financial burdens on employers and corporations. Not one bit of that technology or any machinery will help support the future benefits of today's workers like the way the current workforce can. When you control inflation and recession then you can control future cost and that usually starts at the top where the greatest consumption takes place and the least amount of honesty and integrity exist. As for our Union, it has fought hard to deliver for this country and our members. Remember to make the call when you are asked and support the only cause that is concerned in preserving your job for you and the provisions for your family.

Thank You!

Finally, I want to *thank all the volunteers* that helped make the 2012 and 20th NALC Food Drive a huge success... with Co-coordinators Lorie McMillion and Maggie Lancaster and committee members Debbie McEndree and Annette Robinson. Thanks also to all the volunteers that assisted with the distribution of over 4.5 million Publix

bags: Tony Diaz, Alan Robinson, Annette Robinson and friends John and Patty Hester and their granddaughter Gabby Gray, Phil Chirico and his two sons, Debbie McEndree and neighbor Henry Pichal, and of course, Maggie Lancaster. Also thanks to our branch building manager/photographer, Lomax McIntyre, for his help the day of the drive. Great job by all!

Fraternally In Unionism and Solidarity,
Alan Peacock
President, NALC Br 599

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

April 2012

Ray Garcia
Treasurer
Branch 599



April 1 BB&T Operating Account	\$12,576.19
Deposits [16]	\$22,436.47
Officers' Pay [13]	\$6,986.62
Branch Office Secretary [1]	2,400.00
Stewards Pay [19]	2,845.00
Stewards Lost Wages [2]	877.58
Building Manager	600.00
Editor/Webmaster	160.00
Security Guard	45.00
Retirement Gratuities [4]	750.00
NALC Retiree Pins [10]	50.00
Meeting Expenses [7]	396.25
CPA/Attorney	450.00
QuickBooks Online	24.95
Petty Cash	201.38
Computer Repair	105.00
AT&T Wireless and Verizon	457.87
Ablemark	1,658.85
Sam's Club Card	70.00
Staples Credit	805.63
United Memorial [8 Bibles]	300.64
Taxes [Dept of Treasury (2)]	2,250.48
Taxes [FL Dept of Revenue]	499.51
BB&T Service Charge	14.95
<hr/>	
April 30 BB&T Operating Account	\$11,410.90
BB&T Building Fund	32,491.11
MidFlorida Credit Union Savings	254.87
MidFlorida Credit Union CD	100,000.00
Regions Bank CD	50,000.00
USAmericBank CD	200,000.00
USAmericBank Training Fund	18,374.54
Total Balance Available	\$412,531.42

Sharing Our Members' Joys and Sorrows

Get well wishes & prayers

are sent to **Michael Crowder** [Interbay] who is at Cypress Palms Assisted Living, Largo; to **Russell Person** [retiree] while in rehab recuperating from surgery; to **Manuel Garcia Jr.** [retiree TCA] who is recuperating from back surgery; and to **Chuck Munkle** [Town n'Country] while recovering from surgery, at home.

Our deepest sympathy

and prayerful support is extended to the family of **Linda Bullington** [retiree, Temple Terrace; TCA] at her passing; to **Matt Gibson** [Hilldale] and family at the passing of his wife; and to **Michael Giovinco** [Hilldale] and family at the passing of his mother, Susan, May 1.

Sunday Work Party at the Hall

June 10 9-11 AM

Our National Convention Delegates will Meet

Thursday June 7
Immediately following Branch Meeting

[Convention is July 23-27, 2012]

Lori McMillion plans to prepare a meal for our Branch Meeting

Thursday July 5

Around the Horn

Brothers and Sisters, there is so much information to write about this month concerning our jobs! However going with the *safety first* motto, I begin with a troubling story that placed one of our union brothers in a very dangerous situation. By now most of you should be aware the month of April produced two mail thefts that have put carriers on high alert. Within two weeks and a couple of miles of each other in the 33604 zone of Sulphur Springs Station the crimes have occurred. The once treasured and seemingly beloved Letter Carrier was the target of a robbery and kidnapping at gun point. Yes as mind-boggling as that sounds it is unfortunately true. The cause for both occurrences was the lure of fraudulent income tax returns. The name of the victim is not mentioned in this article. I felt it necessary to make all of you aware that our uniforms do not represent invincibility they once did. There is so much money involved in these returns and scams that we have become an apparent easy target. Hopefully there are arrests made and this violence ends. Hopefully the United States Government puts an end to the fraud. The Tampa Police Department, Postal Inspectors, and the FBI have aggressively canvassed the neighborhood(s) in force. I noticed no less than twenty-five undercover officers in the Sulphur Springs parking lot ready to patrol the streets in the days following the second incident.

Let's begin with the first incident, which occurred as the carrier was delivering a park and loop. With the vehicle parked and secured, the thieves used a nearby rock and shattered the window to the door opposite the driver's door. They then grabbed about half a tray of mail and fled in a vehicle. Upon arriving to the vehicle (LLV), the carrier called the Station and the police. No one was injured, the Postal Inspectors were able to determine

what addresses were affected by the mail remaining in the LLV and where the carrier had last delivered. No arrests were made to this point.

The second incident is troubling and violent, so much so that the carrier is questioning whether the anxieties can be overcome and a return to carrying mail is possible again. The day began as a normal day, doing the job Letter Carriers do...deliver the mail out in the neighborhoods. The carrier was in the LLV leaning over the tray(s) of mail when a jab or poke in the mid-section was followed by "don't look at me or I will shoot you." The carrier, stunned at this point, did look up at the criminal and the gun then was pointed to the side of the head, and again, "I told you not to look at me, if you do it again I will shoot you." The carrier then offered the perpetrator the keys to the LLV and asked to leave. The response, "no I want you to drive where I tell you." At this point the carrier tried to stay calm and cooperate. The thief was standing next to the carrier inside the vehicle on the step, with the gun still at the head region. The driving continued for a brief period and then at an empty lot the carrier was told to pull over. The carrier then was instructed to "get in the back of the truck on your knees and face the back door." As the carrier told the story to shocked and appalled coworkers gathered together at Sulphur Springs, (emotions took over for the victim) "I thought that was the end, all I could think about was my 8 year old daughter." At that point, you could really feel the toll the ordeal had taken on this carrier. The carrier continued to stay knelt down and when there was no further movement or sounds in the truck he got up and drove to safety. After calling for help, within minutes a swarm of police, Postal Inspectors, and other agencies arrived. About half a tray of mail was stolen in the ordeal; more importantly the carrier was not

physically harmed.

Both thefts had one thing in common—the regular carriers were not on their routes that day. A coincidence? No one knows; we can speculate one way or another. The carrier involved is currently under a doctor's care and is out for 30 days. "I have my moments" he told me, "one minute I am fine and the next I have anxieties." The carrier, a PTF, has filed a CA-1 and upon his return, whenever that time is, will begin in a different station.

Before completion of this article I had the carrier verify the contents for accuracy. I also asked for any closing comments, tips, or thoughts that should be included. "Some advice: try to stay calm, do not, I repeat *do not* plead; they will feed on that and it will be worse. Do not react and try to be a hero; I had thoughts of doing something like that, speeding up and crashing the LLV into a wall or tree at a high speed to injure the suspect. I again remembered my daughter and thought otherwise."

On Sunday, May 6, *The Tampa Tribune's* front page article "Mail carriers fear thieves" brought to light the seriousness Letter Carriers face. President Alan Peacock was featured as well as quotes from several unnamed carriers. If you did not read the article, you can find it archived at TBO.com or call the Branch office for a copy. Be aware of your surroundings—do not take your safety for granted.

Quick Hits: Information you should know

*) In last month's tribute article to Bernie Bauman I failed to talk about a very special speech given during the wonderful service many carriers attended. I wanted to acknowledge Bernie's longtime coworker, Marilyn



Tony Diaz
Vice President
Branch 599

(Continued on page 7)

May 12 *Stamp Out Hunger* Food Drive was huge success!



Things You Should Know

Obligation/Responsibility...

Do these words strike a core with any of you? If you look it up in the dictionary, these words do interlace with each other. The bottom line being a sense of duty on your part. Why would I bring up these words to you? I feel that all of us should have an obligation responsibility to each other concerning our job. Don't you feel that you have the responsibility to do all you can to stop the Senators /House of Representatives that are trying to destroy our careers? Don't you feel that you have an obligation to write, call, or even rally in those folks' home offices? Yes, you probably want to tell me that you are paying your Union dues in order to help our cause, but are you too busy in your life to help us voice our cause by phoning or writing to those folks in Congress? Today's issue is much more than a pay raise or some of your rights being voted away. This bill S1789 that's in Congress right now will slowly dismantle our jobs

in the next 2 years. I know that there are some of you that may even enjoy the thought of no Saturday delivery, but at whose expense will no Saturday delivery come? What comes next? Will we lose our sole rights to all those mailboxes? It seems that little by little our whole apple profit is being sliced away, slice by slice. Will those folks in Congress next give UPS or FedEx the right to our mailboxes in the street? How long can the USPS survive if any of those issues are voted and passed?

What can we do to stop these current attacks on our jobs? You still have the right to vote against the same people who are attempting to destroy your job. You could make it your responsibility to know who these people are that are voting against your right to make a living. Then you should use your responsibility to vote against those people who voted for that S1789 bill. If you cannot decide the people that voted against our bill, then vote for

anyone that is not in office right now. I feel that is the only right thing to do, if those folks don't care about our jobs, then why should we care about their job? If enough of those people that are in Congress right now are voted out in the next election, maybe then they will understand what losing your job is all about? These people were voted into Congress to represent the people in their districts, not to destroy 40,000 jobs. Let's not allow 100 Senators to dictate our lives. Do your duty, help in any way you can, together we can stop the attacks on our jobs. Being too busy is not a good excuse because someone you know might lose their job. So whether it's your obligation to vote, or you have the responsibility to help with our issues...you can exercise your right to vote against those who don't understand or care enough about our rights to survive.



Gilbert Cabanas
Financial Secretary
Branch 599

Around the Horn

(Continued from page 5)

Cutting, for treating us all with a very moving presentation on the life of Bernie. She did a great job of holding it together to present a reflection of the life of a great human being, and our friend. Thanks Marilyn.

*) On a personal note, I want to share with you the wonderful experience my family and I were fortunate enough to observe at my son's graduation ceremony. My son graduated from the University of Central Florida on May 3 with a degree in Civil Engineering. He

was recognized on stage with the highest grade point average (4.0) in his class of 1250 graduating engineers. Being a proud dad doesn't begin to explain my emotions at the ceremony.

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





Unionism – Safety and You

Recently there has been quite a lot of concern about carriers and safety. It is a concern that all carriers have on a daily basis as we are constantly exposed to situations where our health and wellbeing are at risk.

Recently the concern has turned toward vehicle operation and our responsibilities under the guidelines of the Postal Service as well as the local laws. One would think that it is common knowledge that one should follow the laws of the local civilian authority when operating a motor vehicle, but evidently there is cause for concern. It was reported that some members of management had made statements averring that following the local laws was a time-wasting practice, but I am here to tell you that this is not true.

As Postal employees, we are provided guidelines on the proper performance of our duties. One of the manuals provided for carriers is the **EL-814 Handbook Postal Employee's Guide to Safety**. Recently, management in the Tampa installation made sure all routes were provided a copy of this publication and service talks on carrier-related safety issues associated with driving were provided in all stations. A review of this manual shows on page 39, the following information:

B. Civil Laws

You must obey all state and local traffic

laws when driving any Postal Service vehicle. You will receive no special privileges or rights as a Postal Service driver. Police citations for traffic violations are your personal responsibility. Promptly report them to your supervisor while on duty.

This should clear up any mystery on whether you need to follow the "time wasting practices" of local laws when operating your Postal vehicle.

Additionally, the Handbook clearly addresses the parking concerns that have been raised and they are on page 44 and reprinted here:

7. Parking Lots

Park in designated parking spaces only. Use designated traffic lanes only. Observe posted speed limits. Unless posted otherwise, the maximum speed is 10 mph.

Follow one-way directional signs in traffic lanes.

Observe traffic signals when entering or leaving Postal Service premises.

Do not throw litter in parking lots. Use receptacles that are provided.

Obey all posted signs in the parking and access road areas.

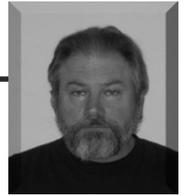
Do not park in or block fire lanes.

You will notice that I have added extra emphasis to the last line since there has been much concern about this in particular. This should clarify the issue

for all carriers.

Finally, I want to point out that the iron rule of "obey first and grieve later" that normally applies when there is disagreement with a management instruction does not always apply in situations of your personal safety. In the event that you are given instructions that you feel jeopardize your personal safety you should ask to see your steward immediately to file a grievance. You should be prepared to show that the instruction endangers your personal wellbeing and that when you notified management they failed to address your concerns. I caution you that this is a grey area and you put yourself at risk of disciplinary action for failure to follow instructions based on your actions, so be certain of all your information prior to taking this step. Arbitrators have ruled both ways on this issue simply based on the evidence you are able to present to back up your safety concerns. Always seek assistance from you steward on this issue.

Safety is everyone's concern, so be aware of things going on around you and read the available information to keep yourself safe. Until next month, Remember – **Knowledge is the Key.**



Brian Obst
Tampa Stations/
Branches
Chief Steward
Branch 599





Retirees Corner

Monday May 7, the retirees gathered at the Coffee Cup Restaurant for our monthly breakfast. In attendance were Alan Peacock, Joe Oliva, John Gebo, Jaime Rodriguez, Cloyce Fritts, Ron Biggs, Darius Lundy, Jerry Ohmstede, Kent Thran, Jim Follman, Don Holt, Pat Krezel, Lois Strauss, Ray Etheridge, Henry Dupree, Lomax McIntyre Jr., and Lance Jones. The breakfast is open to all members so come join us anytime!

Tip of the Month

When you go to buy your bread at the grocery store, have you ever wondered which was the freshest? Quit squeezing that loaf and look at the tie wraps/plastic clips on bread products. They are different colors for different

days. Here's a simple example: bread is usually delivered to stores 5 days a week...Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday. Each day has a different colored twist tie. They are:

Monday – Blue
Tuesday – Green
Thursday – Red
Friday – White
Saturday – Yellow

They are alphabetical in order: B, G, R, W, and Y. So if you're shopping on Thursday, you would want a red twist tie (fresh that day) as opposed to a white twist tie, which would be almost a week old.

It's a simple system and a quick visual

method used by the bread companies to pull the oldest products from the shelves, rather than the employees taking time to read a small printed date.

BUT, this isn't always standard, so call your favorite bread bakery and ask them what their delivery days are and if they use a color code for their bread and what that color code is. Then write it on a Post-it and put it in your wallet and you'll always have the freshest bread for your family.

In Unity,
Lance Jones



Lance Jones
Dir. of Retirees
Branch 599

Retirees Breakfast

Monday June 4 9 AM • Coffee Cup • 4407 N. Hubert Avenue, Tampa

ARSLAN UNIFORMS

Bill & Shirley Moran

Retired Letter Carrier Branch 1477 St. Petersburg

Honorary Member Branch 599 Tampa

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bilmor@tampabay.rr.com



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