



Tampa Letter Carrier

Volume 4 - Issue 12

A.R. "Tony" Huerta NALC Branch 599

Tampa, Florida

December 2005

President's Report

Ongoing Education

As I sit down to write this report, Branch 599's Executive Vice-President Detlev Aeppel is in Silver Springs, Maryland attending a comprehensive six-day *Arbitration Advocate Training Course*. This course is being held at the *George Meany Center* and all expenses are paid for by the National Association. The course is being taught by Ralph Goldstein, NALC National Director of Education. Classes run from early morning until late afternoon, followed by another four hours or so of evening study time to prepare for the next day's classes. The week is culminated by two mock arbitration hearings where the participants each take a turn presenting different portions of the arbitration case. At the end of the course each successful trainee will be given a *Certificate of Achievement* acknowledging the completion of the course and certifying him/her to advocate arbitration cases for the *National Association of Letter Carriers*. National Business Agent Judy Willoughby takes the training one step further. During each of the first four arbitration cases that Detlev is involved in he will be

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accompanied by Judy, Regional Administrative Assistant (RAA) Kenny Gibbs, RAA Nancy Quick, or RAA Jeff Siciunas.

What this means to you as a member of Branch 599, is that there will now be two active arbitration advocates available to represent the interests of the members in arbitration. It also means that Detlev will be available to help teach the station shop stewards how to be more effective in building case files so that, if a grievance goes to the arbitration level, the union will have a better chance of receiving a positive award. Because of the fact that Detlev is a part-time officer, he will also be available to arbitrate cases, at the expense of national, in other parts of Region 9 as needed. I want to congratulate Detlev on being chosen for this course and know that his training will be an additional asset to our branch.

Now I want to update the Brandon carriers. A *Labor Management Meeting* was held on November 9th at the Brandon Post Office. In attendance for management were Postmaster Greg Tafelski, Supervisor Phil Speights, and Acting Supervisor David Rivadeneira. The union was represented by Executive Vice-President Detlev Aeppel, Brandon Shop Steward Terry Franklin and I. I went over all the statements, comments and concerns voiced by the carriers at the meetings that were held last month. Postmaster Tafelski responded to these comments and concerns. We had a two hour discussion with everyone giving

their input on how the work environment in Brandon could be improved, with the agreement that management would try to engage in more open and professional



communication with the carriers. It was also decided that the carriers would use the proper forms (3996's and 1571's) when giving their estimates for daily auxiliary assistance and/or overtime, and that doing so should help alleviate the morning confrontations with management. I know that the work environment in Brandon has deteriorated since the previous postmaster left, and I hope that Postmaster Tafelski is sincere in his efforts to improve this situation. My office, in conjunction with Shop Steward Franklin, will closely monitor conditions and act accordingly.

I hope everyone had a happy Thanksgiving Day and want to wish all carriers a very Merry Christmas and a Happy Holiday Season. I think everyone can agree that we, as letter carriers and union members, have much to be thankful for.

Branch Meeting

Thursday

December 1, 2005

7:30 PM

Branch 599 Officers

PRESIDENT	Jim Good	(813) 960-3759, cell 417-8877
EXECUTIVE VICE-PRESIDENT	Detlev Aepfel	(813) 907-9685, cell 505-7914
VICE-PRESIDENT	Gilbert Cabanas	(813) 855-0516, cell 597-7396
RECORDING SECRETARY	Cheryl Clothier	(727) 385-7337
FINANCIAL SECRETARY	Tony Diaz	(813) 598-9635
TREASURER	Michael Anderson	(813) 681-5688
TRUSTEE(Chairman)	Henry Dupree	(813) 621-6471
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	Lance Jones	(813) 220-1292
DIRECTOR OF RETIREES	Jack Newman	(813) 805-2942
LABOR - MANAGEMENT	Eric Fleming	(813) 310-8274
LABOR - MANAGEMENT	Brian Obst	(727) 507-0135
MAPS COORDINATOR	Chris Albrecht	(727) 791-7162

Presidents Emeritus

Michael Anderson	Orbe Andux
James Butler	Milton McConnell
Don Thomas	Garland Tickle
Lenin Perez	

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Branch 599 Shop Stewards

Brandon	33510	Terry Franklin	(813) 657-9690
Brandon	33511	Terry Franklin	(813) 657-9690
Carrollwood	33618	Freddie Nimphius	(813) 968-7491
Commerce	33602	Dook Ramotar Sr.	(813) 780-6254
Forest Hills	33612	Warren Sumlin	(813) 486-7612
Forest Hills Annex	33613	Eddie Alvarez	(813) 892-6553
Hilldale	33614	Gilbert Cabanas	(813) 855-0516
Hilldale Annex	33634	Lance Jones	(813) 220-1292
Hyde Park	33606	George McEndree	(813) 935-0244
Interbay	33611	Dean Minter	(813) 767-6538
Interbay	33629	Jim Knotz	(813) 832-6644
MacDill	33608	Jim Knotz	(813) 832-6644
Palm River	33619	J.C. Howard	(813) 621-1976
Plant City	33565	Misty Bauer	(813) 681-6890
Port Tampa	33616	Dean Minter	(813) 767-6538
Produce	33610	Eric Fleming	(813) 310-8274
Ruskin / Sun City Center	33570	Jack Hencoski	(813) 633-5422
Seminole Heights	33603	Tony Diaz	(813) 872-1542
Sulphur Springs	33604	Matt Kokich	(813) 431-3686
Tampa Carrier Annex	33607	Ken Lee	(940) 368-4771
Tampa Carrier Annex	33609	Pedro Jiminez	(813) 727-9280
Temple Terrace	33617	Mike Anderson	(813) 681-5688
Town & Country	33615	Brian Obst	(727) 507-0135
Ybor City	33605	Detlev Aepfel	(813) 505-7914

TAMPA RETIREES BREAKFAST

First Monday of Every Month

9:00 AM at

The Coffee Cup

4407 N. Hubert

in Drew Park

BRANDON RETIREES BREAKFAST

Second Tuesday of every month

8:00 AM at

Buddy Freddy's

134 Gornto Lake Rd S.

in Brandon

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. It is the policy of this publication that all articles submitted for publication must be signed by the writer. All articles are subject to editing and revision at the discretion of the publisher & editor. Please submit articles to the branch office no later than the tenth of the month. Submit articles as .txt, .doc or .wpd documents attached to email sent to: newsletter@nalc599.com

Jim Good - Publisher

Kit Kelley - Editor

Unionism

by Brian Obst

Working Out of Schedule - Article 8

Labor Management Representative - Branch 599



As regular letter carriers we all operate under a set schedule of reporting times and tour ending times. When any carrier is worked outside of this set schedule, the National Agreement provides for compensation at the rate of one and one half times the standard rate of pay the carrier is entitled to receive normally. Most of us know this to be the overtime rate of pay and for work outside the normal end of tour time this would be correct. However many carriers are currently working during the hours prior to the normal start of tour and this is what is referred to as *out of schedule time* and it is this time we shall be discussing now.

When a carrier is requested by his supervisor to clock on to work earlier than his normal begin tour time, it is a request for that carrier to work out of schedule and this time up until the normal begin tour time is to be recorded as *out of schedule* and paid at the one and one half time rate mentioned previously. Normally this isn't a problem because most times the carrier goes into end of tour overtime and all the time is paid at the overtime rate. The problem manifests itself when the carrier works an eight hour day. Failure to work to your scheduled end tour time will result in management failing to pay the out of schedule rate of pay for the time worked out of schedule. This failure then causes you to be improperly compensated for you're out of schedule work. Right now some of you are thinking, "So what? It's only a little time and it isn't worth worrying about." I am here to let you know that by the end of the year you could be allowing management to fail to compensate you for quite a hefty sum of money. I can only assume that you find your time as

valuable as I find mine to be and you should be paid properly for any time that you work for the Post Office.

As an example let's look at two carriers, Carrier Al Johnson and Carrier Bob Smith. Both of the carriers have set schedules with 0730 starting times and 1600 end tour times. Carrier Johnson works the following schedule for the week in question: Saturday 0630-1500, Monday 0700-1700, Tuesday 0700-1700, Wednesday 0730-1600, Thursday 0730-1730, Friday 0600-1430.

Carrier Smith worked his normal schedule as well as his SDO for a total of 48 hours with 8 hours being overtime. Carrier Johnson has worked 52.5 hours with 12.5 hours being overtime. However, if we look closer at Carrier Johnson's hours we can see that he has been shorted compensation for 2.5 hours of out of schedule work as well as 2.5 hours of guarantee time for his scheduled hours. On Saturday Carrier Johnson started work 1 hour early at the behest of management yet he was let go in 8 hours so management only paid the carrier for an 8 hour day. Clearly the carrier worked 1 hour out of schedule and should be compensated at the one and one half time rate for this time. Also, the carrier has a set schedule with an end tour time of 1600 so he is owed one hour of guarantee time since management allowed him to end tour early.

As one can see, the hours and dollars can add up quickly so one must be vigilant to ensure that the compensation is correct when working out of schedule.

Stewards should keep a watchful eye on the clock ring reports when figuring weekly overtime to ensure that the contract is being followed and that carriers are being paid properly for their work hours. Also, watch out for management attempting to bypass change of schedules by consistently working carriers out of schedule and letting them leave work early. You will hear every excuse in the book as to why they do it but if it is needed by the carrier for personal convenience, it must be done on a change of schedule form, signed by the steward and supervisor. The carrier is not permitted to work overtime when on a change of schedule. One would think that the supervisors would enforce this as it prevents them from having to pay out of schedule pay but for some reason they just don't do it properly.

Remember the contract was written the way it is for a reason and the steward has the responsibility to enforce compliance with the contract for the benefit of all carriers. All carriers play by the same set of rules so let us ensure that they are being followed properly for all.

Knowledge is the key. Know what your contract says and you can be certain that you can prevent future problems from less knowledgeable members of management.

In Brotherhood,

Brian Obst
Shop Steward - Town and Country

TLC, Inc. Board of Directors Meeting Summary

The October 25th meeting was called to order by Chairman Obst at 7:00 pm. The reading of the minutes of the previous meeting were accepted as read. Financial report by John Gebo. Building Manager's report by Jack Newman. The flag has been replaced. A report was given on the recent fire inspection that was done and the building passed. The sheriff's department has raised their prices for hall rentals. The Pepsi machine has been removed and replaced with an ice cooler because not enough product was being used. The ice machine has been repaired and Jack is waiting on a quote for a maintenance agreement. Old business: Recommendation to contribute \$500.00 to Judeo-Christian Foundation. Discussion. Motion was made, seconded and passed. New business: Motion was made and seconded to have a Christmas dinner for TLC Directors and Bingo workers. Discussion. Passed. Meeting was adjourned at 7:35 pm.

Jim Good, Secretary, Tampa Letter Carriers, Inc.

Branch 599 Christmas Party

Branch 599 will hold its second annual Christmas Party on Sunday, December 18th from noon until 3:00 pm at the Union Hall. Santa Claus will be here for pictures, as well as cookie decorating, games, toys for all the kids and plenty of food and drinks. Please see your shop steward to sign up so we will have an idea of how many will be attending. Retirees please call the union hall.

December Meetings:

Tues 11-29-05 - Shop Stewards Meeting
Union Hall, 7:00 PM

Thur 12-1-05 - Branch Meeting
Union Hall, 7:30 PM

Tues 12-27-05 - TLC Board Of Directors Meeting
Union Hall, 7:00 PM

Thur 12-29-05 - Executive Board Meeting
Union Hall, 7:00 PM

Attention All Members

The Tampa Letter Carriers, Inc. By-laws, Article 2, Section 11 reads: "When a vacancy occurs on the Board of Directors, and there are no alternates available to fill that vacancy, any member, in good standing, of Branch 599 NALC may submit a written request to be considered to fill the vacancy. The Board of Directors will decide by a majority vote as to whether the applicant(s) will be appointed".

Because of the resignation of two board members TLC will be accepting applications for these two positions. Any member who wishes to be considered to fill these vacancies must submit his/her name to the following address by December 20, 2005. Tampa Letter Carriers, Inc., 3003 West Cypress, Tampa, FL 33609-1617. These new directors will serve the remainder of their appointed term, which will end on election day in December of 2006.

Jim Good, Secretary - Tampa Letter Carriers, Inc.

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

Health Benefits Report**by Lance Jones***Health Benefits Representative - Branch 599****Health Fair Update***

By the time this hits print we should be in the middle of *Open Season*. So I'll touch on the important issues first. If you're not the person in your family who makes the decision on health insurance, please, for your family's sake, make sure that person reads this article. All health insurance plans will go up between 10% and 12% this year, including ours. We have NOT lost or given up any benefits. The new prices are: for Self, only \$37.97 Biweekly; for Self and Family just \$59.07 Biweekly.

The plan now covers abdominal aortic aneurysm screening for men ages 65 through 75 with a smoking history. It now pays a maximum of \$135 per day, up to 50 days in a calendar year for nursing services. You now pay 10% of mental health and substance abuse on In-Network inpatient services provided by a hospital or other facility. Previously you paid nothing. I think this is the most beneficial change of all: the plan now allows that you pay NOTHING for covered outpatient lab services performed by *Quest Diagnostics*. Previously you paid 15%.

There has been some clarification in language. The most important (I believe) are the following: Routine sonograms are included in routine prenatal care; professional services includes services of physicians or urgent care centers; and nutritional therapy for self-management of diabetes is included in the coverage. They clarified that oral chemotherapy drugs ARE covered under the Prescription drug benefit. There are a few others that are all listed on page 11 of the 2006 NALC Health Plan booklet.

I would be remiss if I didn't point out that there are two things that come with our plan that very few others have. First, our plan has Health Benefit Reps to help you and advise you. NO other plans have them. You are simply on your own. Second, we have what is known as Care Patterns. This is a program where if you have a managed disease such as asthma, diabetes, chronic heart condition, etc., you can call our health care professional for advice and guidance 24 / 7, 365 days a year. This would be very important to parents of young children with some of these dreadful diseases. I know a few other plans may

offer similar services but I'm not off base saying that the NALC's Care Patterns program has been the role model.



I would like to pass on some interesting information that was given to us at the health fair. Did you know that Letter Carriers are the healthiest of all the crafts in the Post Office? We are. Do you know that nearly 94,000 —yes that's right NINETY-FOUR THOUSAND— of those healthy carriers belong to other health benefit plans? Plans that cost as much or more than ours. Did you know that we are now ranked 3rd overall out of the nearly 250 health plans to chose from? Think about that when choosing a health plan during Open Season this year and come on home to the NALC's plan. I know it's the best deal for the dollar out there.

On behalf of the Executive Vice President and myself, I would like to thank the membership for sending us to this year's Health Fair.

In Unity,
Lance Jones

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

A Point of Personal Privilege

by Leslie Ray Garcia

What's Going On

On September 11, 2000, which was about two months before the *stolen election* happened in Florida, the price of regular gasoline was at \$1.389 per gallon and there was a Democrat in the White House. Just about eight months later the price of regular gasoline had risen to \$1.499 per gallon but then there was a Republican in the White House. On January 30, 2005, the price of regular gasoline was \$1.839 and there was still a Republican in the White House. Some nine months later the price of regular gasoline was \$2.659 with a Republican in the White House. Gasoline prices for regular as of November 6, 2005 are \$2.519 a gallon. I saw the price of regular gas at \$2.479 on November 7, 2005. Yes, the price of regular gas is on the decrease. Yet during those 9 months the price of regular in Tampa had been as high as \$2.999 a gallon (maybe even higher in other parts of Hillsborough County). On October 27, 2005, Exxon oil company posted record profits for the last quarter despite the damage done by Hurricanes Katrina, Rita and Wilma to the tune of \$100 billion dollars. The Clinton administration gave a directive to the automobile industry that was to take effect by 2006 in which all autos were to achieve 25 miles to the gallon but the Bush Administration withdrew this directive. Why was this done? All you have to do is to read the history behind George W. Bush.

As all know, John Roberts is now the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court. During his Senate hearings there were many requests from Democrats to the White House for documents that they felt necessary to have in order to confirm. Yet the White House refused to allow those specific documents to be evaluated. I have to question those denials because here is a man that is to head the highest court in the land but the White House refuses to allow all material to be released. When you or I are sworn in in a court of law, we have to tell the truth the whole truth and nothing but

the truth, so help (you) me God. Why wasn't Roberts held to the same high standard as average Americans? Then there was the nomination of Harriet Miers which was withdrawn because of the howling from the religious right and other Republicans. Some of the Republicans blamed the withdrawal on one sided debates in news releases, press conferences, radio and TV talk shows and the editorial pages of newspapers. The controlling entity for many of these media sources is Clear Channel. This company donated thousands of dollars to the Republican party. I guess if you don't get your way you take your ball and go home.

What happened to President Bush's promise to return integrity to the White House? I guess lying (the rush to war with Iraq), bearing false witness (the outing of a CIA agent because her husband told the truth), thou shall not kill (over 2,000 American soldiers killed, over 10,000 wounded and tens of thousands of innocent Iraqi civilians killed because of a lie), and invading a sovereign nation (thou shall not covet thy neighbors house) are all now morally right. I guess being only 60% morally correct is returning the integrity.

On a party-line vote the Republican controlled House Agriculture Committee approved budget cuts Friday, October 28, 2005 that would take away food stamps from an estimated 300,000 people and could cut off school lunches and breakfasts for 40,000 children. This action came after the government reported that the number of people who are hungry because they can't afford to buy enough food rose to 38.2 million in 2004, an increase of 7 million in just 5 years and which represents almost 12% of US households. The GOP states that this is an effort to curb federal spending by \$50 billion dollars. Our compassionate president proposed these cuts this year. A boomerang just hit me in the head and gave me a great way to reduce our federal deficit: remove the tax break for the wealthiest 2% of Americans and

save close to a trillion dollars, withdraw our troops from Iraq and stop the war and save over \$250 billion dollars, and stop giving tax breaks to companies that out-source American jobs to foreign countries, which should give the coffers an additional \$100 plus billion dollars. But no, this administration is going to *stay the course*, even over the bodies of our dead military personnel and the livelihoods of the American poor and middle class workers.



A letter from West Chase Property Manager Nicole Michael stated that residents with red flags on their rural mail receptacles have until the end of the year to change the color. Of course this individual stated she may have misinterpreted the rule and suggested to those residents affected to wait for clarification before changing their mailbox flags. Many residents have filed petitions in protest of any color change. I think there is a statement in a USPS manual that states the flag on the receptacle must be 'RED' and that the mailbox must be no lower than 36 inches from the ground to the bottom of the box. It can be no higher than 54 inches from the ground to the top of the box. The house numbers (street address) must be visible from the street if on the house from the mail receptacle or the numbers must be placed on the same side from which the letter carrier approaches the mail receptacle. The mail receptacle has to be approved by the US Postmaster and be specifically a rural type box.

"Greater love hath no man than this, that he lay down his friends for his political life."

Jeremy Thorpe

And The Beat Goes On

by Ray Wallace

Postal Management & Removals

Well as you all know I missed November issue. You know why? I was moving. Since I came to Florida in 1971 it was the seventh time. I hope the next move is to the cemetery (not too soon though!). I now live in Riverview. I left Brandon in 1998 and I can't believe all of the apartments, stores, restaurants and even new roads. Wow! People, people and more people. As I drive around I wonder if any one works. No matter day or night, it's always busy.

With the high cost of homes these days (and the rents are not cheap either), where do all these people work to make that kind of money? I hope they're not all out selling drugs. Florida has never been known to be a high paying job market; in fact, the post office is one of the best paying jobs around.

I hope you all read the November article by our president, Jim Good in regard to how Tampa management is applying discipline. A *removal* has to be the scariest thing that can happen to any craft employee. The worst discipline I ever received was a five day suspension without pay, the first ever in Brandon while doing my job as shop steward. The carriers each gave me a few bucks to supplement what I would lose. John Bailey, then

president of branch 599, told me to take their names down as I would be paying it back. The arbitration was almost a year later. It's like being in court with both sides represented by national. Each puts his/her hand on the Bible and swears that they will tell the truth.

At the first Step One then Vice President Barney Weatherford told the manager that a five day suspension was severe punishment for a first time offense. You know what that manager said? "If we were in private enterprise, I would have fired Wallace." After he said that I was thinking, "If we were in private enterprise, I would have knocked you on your ass." But I didn't. We all know we're the underdog in the post office and as such we have to remain cool under the most adverse conditions. This is not always easy to do. They do have the upper hand. So remain cool and go by way of the grievance procedure, where the lies and the facts are put before the arbitrator.

I found out that management will sell their soul for the post office. That manager put his hand on the Bible and then lied. I told nothing but the truth on all that happened. The arbitrator saw through the lies and I was cleared 100% and I did pay that money back. But I also learned from it. I did learn to remain cool. Being a shop steward is one of the toughest jobs for a craft employee. Some of

the people you are representing are not always easy to deal with either.

The new Tampa postmaster is not the person I once knew.

Nancy Fryrear was a caring, honest person. With those feelings towards fellow employees how could you ever go up the ladder of success in the U.S. Post Office? From what I always saw, the manager who treated people the worst, had the most grievances filed against him and cost the post office thousands in lost arbitrations, was the person who went to the top.

I hear President Jim Good saying since Fryrear became post master the amount of carriers up for termination is at an all time high. So watch your step out there. Now we know how she became the postmaster.

President Good also spoke about Brandon and the problems there with the postmaster. Let's pray that the new year of 2006 will be a better one for all of the carriers both in Tampa and Brandon.

I don't hear anything about Sun City or Plant City so let's hope all is good there. I hope you all have a merry Christmas and a healthy and happy new year in 2006.



Around The Horn

by Tony Diaz

Financial Secretary - Branch 599

Asset Protection



Brothers and sisters, first of all I want to express my gratitude to the membership of Branch 599 for sending the branch officers and stewards to the State Training Seminar in Orlando. The business was conducted at the Sheraton Safari Hotel October 28-30. Classes were taught by well-qualified instructors and were very informative and diversified.

One of the more enlightening topics, and one we don't think about until later on in our lives was asset protection. Eventually all of us will pass on and it is never too early to plan and prioritize for the future. Discussions included Wills, Trusts, Power of Attorney and Health Care Issues and taking the proper steps to insure your investments be left in the hands of those you desire. Designating a beneficiary through any of these documents will make life much easier for those you choose. Since there are many different options available how do we choose that which is best suited for our particular interests and their protection. For instance, is a Living Will best for you, or a Revocable Living Will? Perhaps an Irrevocable Trust Agreement is best, or maybe a Revocable Living Trust? What about a Durable Power of Attorney, do I need one? All of these are important questions, but each of us has different life situations. What is best for one may not be best for another. Since this

writer is not a certified attorney I would suggest going to a financial attorney (or a certified elder attorney). These attorneys are specialists and can guide you to make the proper decisions. You may change or modify these decisions at a later date if you desire or need to.

I can however help you with your postal-related benefits that will ensure your money goes to the correct individual(s). Most of us have four benefits that need a beneficiary: 1. Thrift Savings, 2. Life Insurance, 3. Retirement and 4. Unpaid unused leave. Many do not consider #4 to be a benefit. However, if you do have annual leave remaining, you need to provide for its coverage.

There is two ways to check out your investments: 1. Call personnel and make an appointment to view your file(s) in the Records Room, that is room 230 at the GMF located at the Tampa International Airport. The hours to view are 2pm - 4pm on Tuesday and Thursday. However, since many of us work our days off, you may be able to call and set up an appointment outside the designated times. The contact person is Chauncey Fuller and the phone number is 877-0821, or contact your personnel representative and let them contact Mr. Fuller. 2. There are your lists of forms you can acquire through personnel and have them sent to your station or home for you to fill out. Here they are: A: Form SF 2823 - Designation of Beneficiary for Federal

Employees' Group Life Insurance (FEGLI) Program; B: Form 1152 - Unpaid Compensation of Deceased Civilian Employee (unused annual & paycheck); C: Form TSP-3 - Thrift Savings Plan; D: Form 3102 - Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS) or Form 2808 - Civil Service Retirement System (choose the system you are under).

Obtaining and completing these forms will supersede anything on your records should getting to the records room be a hassle. So motivate yourselves to obtain these forms or get to the records room before the end of the year. Have that piece of mind that at least your postal investments will benefit the one(s) you have chosen. It's free to do! Don't forget to give those chosen beneficiaries a copy of your document(s). It will make their lives a little easier.

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



The Cutting Edge

by Marilyn Cutting

The Honeymoon Is Over

It was with a heavy heart that I read the article by our president, Jim Good, about the state of affairs of our post office. I see the truth in what he says everyday. We, the letter carriers who walk and drive the streets every day; who put up with rude customers; who incorporate what ever new "program" that is thrown to us; who endure the revolving door of supervisors; who go through sleet, snow, rain and hurricanes, are being pursued with the intention to fire us all. I agree with a statement I heard that the post office is the only place that hires you and spends the next thirty years trying to fire you. That's some incentive to tell your friends and family to sign on with the USPS!

What happened to Letters of Warning? What about verbal warnings? I understand some serious situations warrant a removal but we are not perfect. People make mistakes in their jobs every day. Now ask yourself how many supervisors have been in trouble and have been moved from one station to another. They are given second and third chances; the carriers are fired. How is it that we are so expendable?

The carriers are the front line! Every day the *carriers* deliver the mail, (not the supervisors). The *carriers* see customers face to face. The *carriers* are asked to do *customer connect* programs. Do you see a clerk or supervi-

sor out there selling our services to any businesses? NO. It's the *carriers*. We are the best sale tools the post office has.

The way we get treated every day affects our attitude. Pride in our jobs no longer exists. It's the bottom line that counts. We are no longer a person who has family problems, money problems, health problems. We're only a social security number on someone's accounting sheet. Every day we are told to run like a dog, come back by 5 o'clock, lock your vehicles, deliver your expresses by noon, scan all parcels, scan your scan points and be safe; all to fit in some figures run by a computer. Some days I feel like that proverbial dog. No...I treat my dog better.

One day I hope to retire from the post office but as I see how they treat the customers and the mail (routes sitting with weeks of review mail, sale flyers being delayed and not delivered on time, and encouraging people not to pick up their hold mail to keep the lines at the post office are down), I don't know if the post office will still be around when I am ready to retire. We are already competing with computers and other companies. They just keep shooting themselves in the foot, all to save time and money. (Where does all that extra savings go anyway?)

Now they are on a mission to get rid of the best assets they have. For what? To prove that they can and will? To further continue their great "*customer service*"

with unfamiliar carriers on routes? I always think how ironic it is when we have a service/safety talk and they read something about customer service. Their words say all the correct things but their actions (or should I say inactions) speak the truth.

We have come to a shameful, sorrowful state in the post office that we are no longer trusted (see the recent story in the St. Pete Times -- "7 Letter Carriers Fired"). The saying that says, "*We've come so far and yet we haven't.*" fits here so well. Labor relations seemed to be taking a step in the right direction towards treating each other better but as I see it now, it once again stands as an *us against them* mentality. Back to the harassment, the blaming, and the firing of the letter carriers. To what avail? To improve morale (don't see that happening too soon)? To improve customer service (nope -- don't see that either) with a new carrier on different routes every day? To help us with our shortage of carriers (we fire more than we've been hiring)?

I want to see our unions fight this with all their might. I don't want to be management's punching bag every time their new programs don't work. I don't want to feel threatened when I come to work everyday. I don't want to feel this all over my station. But I can see that the honeymoon is over.



EAP Frequently Asked Questions

What Is the Employee Assistance Program?

The EAP is a counseling and referral service staffed by master's-degree trained mental health professionals and designed to help you with your personal, job or family problems. It is a formal, non-disciplinary program that is free, voluntary and confidential.

What Kinds of Problems Does the EAP Help Resolve?

Our professional counselors are prepared to assist you with virtually any issue or problem which can affect your work performance or personal health. Some of the most common concerns brought to the EAP include:

Emotional, Marital, Family, Alcohol or Other Drug Abuse, Job Related Problems Legal/Financial, Other Problems

What Can I Expect From the EAP?

A telephone call is all it takes to make an appointment with an EAP counselor. The counselor will meet with you in a confidential setting and:

- Help you assess the problem.
- Meet with family members, as needed.
- Provide short-term counseling, as appropriate.
- Assist you in selecting other professional services and resources within your community, as necessary.
- Follow-up to ensure that you receive quality services.

How Much Will the EAP Cost Me?

There is no cost to employees who receive counseling and other services provided directly by the EAP counselor. If additional outside treatment or professional services are needed, the costs are your responsibility if not covered by your Federal Employee Health Benefits Plan or private insurance. The EAP counselor will work with you to identify the best available outside treatment program and services in line with our individual finances.

Is The EAP Confidential?

Yes, your privacy is protected by strict confidentiality laws and regulation and by professional ethical standards for counselors. The details of your discussion with the counselor may not be released to anyone without your prior written consent. Participation in the EAP will not jeopardize your job or career.

When Is The Best Time To Contact The EAP?

Don't wait too long! The sooner you seek help, the sooner your problems can be addressed. Problems left unresolved often can lead to more serious situations with a greater risk that your health or job performance will be jeopardized. If you take advantage of the help and support offered through the EAP and address your problems before they become serious, you and the U.S. Postal Service both will be winners!

For information or assistance 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, call:

1-800-EAP-4-YOU

TTY 1-877-492-7341

(1-800-327-4968)

<http://www.eap4you.com>

What A Federal Employee Should Do When Injured At Work



Report to Supervisor

Every job-related injury should be reported as soon as possible to your supervisor. Injury also means any illness or disease that is caused or aggravated by the employment as well as damage to medical braces, artificial limbs and other prosthetic devices.

Obtain Medical Care

Before you obtain medical treatment, ask your supervisor to authorize medical treatment by use of form CA-16. You may initially select the physician to provide necessary treatment. This may be a private physician or, if available, a local Federal medical officer/hospital. Emergency medical treatment may be obtained without prior authorization. Take the form CA-16 and form OWCP-1500/HCFA-1500 to the provider you select. The form OWCP-1500/HCFA 1500 is the billing form physicians must use to submit bills to OWCP. Hospitals and pharmacies may use their own billing forms. On occupational disease claims form CA-16 may not be issued without prior approval from OWCP.

File Written Notice

In traumatic injuries, complete the employee's portion of Form CA-1. Obtain the form from your employing agency, complete and turn it in to your supervisor as soon as possible, but not later than 30 days following the injury. For occupational disease, use form CA-2 instead of form CA-1. For more detailed information carefully read the "Benefits ..." and "Instructions ..." sheets which are attached to the Forms CA-1 and CA-2.

Obtain Receipt of Notice

A "Receipt" of Notice of Injury is attached to each Form CA-1 and Form CA-2. Your supervisor should complete the receipt and return it to you for your personal records. If it is not returned to you, ask your supervisor for it.

Submit Claim For COP/Leave and/or Compensation For Wage Loss

If disabled due to traumatic injury, you may claim continuation of pay (COP) not to exceed 45 calendar days or use leave. A claim for COP must be submitted no later than 30 days following the injury (the form CA-1 is designed to serve as a claim for continuation of pay). If disabled and claiming COP, submit to your employing agency within 10 work days medical evidence that you sustained a disabling traumatic injury. If disabled beyond the COP period, or if you are not entitled to COP, you may claim compensation on form CA-7 or use leave. If disabled due to occupational disease, you may claim compensation on form CA-7 or use leave. A claim for compensation for disability should be submitted as soon as possible after it is apparent that you are disabled and will enter a leave-without-pay status.

The Federal Employees' Compensation Act (FECA) is administered by the U.S. Department of Labor, Employment Standards Administration, Office of Workers' Compensation Programs (OWCP). Benefits include continuation of pay for traumatic injuries, compensation for wage loss, medical care and other assistance for job-related injury or death. For additional information about the FECA, read pamphlet CA-11, "When Injured at Work" or Federal Personnel Manual, Chapter 810, Injury Compensation, available from your employing agency. The agency will also give you the address of the OWCP Office which services your area.

Post on Employees' Bulletin Board

U.S. Department of Labor
Employment Standards Administration
Office of Workers' Compensation Programs



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