



Tampa Letter Carrier

Volume 5 - Issue 10

A.R. "Tony" Huerta NALC Branch 599

Tampa, Florida

October 2006

President's Report

65th Biennial Convention

I want to begin this article by thanking Branch 599 and Tampa Letter Carriers, Inc. for allowing me and all the elected delegates to attend the Miami/Las Vegas 65th Biennial Convention. I say the Miami/Las Vegas Convention because it was originally scheduled for Miami, but because of a lack of union hotels and other factors it was moved to Las Vegas. It was a great honor to represent our members at what turned out to be the largest NALC convention in history, with almost 9200 delegates in attendance.

National President Bill Young started things off with a very informative keynote address. He updated the delegation on the current status of the postal reform legislation, stating that President Emeritus Vince Sombrotto originally called for postal reform in 1994. He stated that the NALC will take all steps necessary to stop any reform bill that does not protect our goals "...to advance reform that will strengthen the USPS while protecting the pay, benefits and collective bargaining rights of letter carriers." He went on to say, "Our routes are at the heart of our day-to-day jobs. The members know that. You all know that. Be assured that we will spare no effort in our continuing struggle to

effort in our continuing struggle to deal with route adjustments fairly—by agreement if possible, by battle if necessary." In addressing the upcoming contract negotiations President Young said, "...negotiating contracts is the single most important thing we do as a union...", and that the NALC will "...seek pay increases that reward letter carriers for their contributions to the success of the USPS."

President Young made it very clear that their still exists serious flaws in the DOIS system, and that these flaws contribute to problems on the workroom floor. Young said "...enforcing the contract and finding ways to improve the day-to-day working conditions of letter carriers are just as important as negotiating a contract in the first place." The national level grievance over DOIS has forced the postal service to address these flaws and talks have resumed, but he stated that we will pursue relief through national arbitration if necessary.

On the political front, President Young spoke about his new *Gimme 5 for COLCPE* program. He has established a goal of 6% of the membership being enrolled through direct deposit, which would equate to an increase of 50%. There are currently 11,000 members donating through *Gimme 5*. He spoke of the new *field plan* that redefines the roles of the national business agents, the state legislative chairs, and the new positions of congressional district liaisons (CDLs). He stated that every congressperson should be on

a first-name basis with their NALC CDL. He then introduced two of the four original co-sponsors of postal reform, Representative Danny Davis (D-IL.) and Representative Tom Davis (R-VA.). They each addressed the delegation and spoke on postal reform as well as many other issues important to letter carriers.

Finally, I'm happy to report that President Young was re-elected by acclamation. Florida's own, Director of City Delivery Fred Rolando, ran unopposed for the position of Executive Vice-President. Our National Business Agent, Judy Willoughby, won by acclamation, as did all of the other incumbent national officers. For complete election results, go to <http://www.nalc.org>.

Our Labor Day Picnic was a great success with over 400 members and their families gathered at the union hall for a day of fun, games and great food. I know everyone had a good time and if you missed it, plan on attending next time around. We will also be having a Christmas Party sometime in mid-December, so why not plan on meeting with your fellow workers and taking advantage of one of the great things that your union has to offer?



by Jim Good

President - Branch 599

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Branch Meeting
Thursday, October 5
7:30 PM

Branch 599 Officers

PRESIDENT	Jim Good	(813) 960-3759, cell 417-8877
EXECUTIVE VICE-PRESIDENT	Detlev Aeppel	(813) 907-9685, cell 505-7914
VICE-PRESIDENT	Gilbert Cabanas	(813) 855-0516, cell 597-7396
RECORDING SECRETARY	Cindy Perez	(813) 766-1220
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	John Gebo	(813) 985-5474, cell 503-1256
LABOR - MANAGEMENT	Eric Fleming	(813) 310-8274
LABOR - MANAGEMENT	Brian Obst	(727) 507-0135

Branch 599 Shop Stewards

Brandon	33510	Terry Franklin	(813) 657-9690
Brandon	33511	Phil Chirico	(813) 657-3180
Carrollwood	33618	Gilbert Cabanas	(813) 855-0516
Commerce	33602	Dook Ramotar Sr.	(813) 780-6254
Forest Hills	33612	Warren Sumlin	(813) 486-7612
Forest Hills Annex	33613	David Camuy	(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	Robert Doval	(813) 727-9241
Interbay	33629	Marie Brown	(813) 832-6644
MacDill	33608	Marie Brown	(813) 832-6644
Palm River	33619	J.C. Howard	(813) 621-1976
Plant City	33565	Misty Bauer	(813) 681-6890
Port Tampa	33616	Robert Doval	(813) 727-9241
Produce	33610	Eric Fleming	(813) 310-8274
Ruskin / Sun City Center	33570	Jack Hencoski	(813) 685-9034
Seminole Heights	33603	Tony Diaz	(813) 872-1542
Sulphur Springs	33604	Matt Kokich	(813) 431-3686
Tampa Carrier Annex	33607	Mike Sovan	(813) 872-0709
Tampa Carrier Annex	33609	Brian Obst	(727) 458-0679
Temple Terrace	33617	Detlev Aeppel	(813) 505-7914
Town & Country	33615	Brian Obst	(727) 458-0679
Ybor City	33605	Detlev Aeppel	(813) 505-7914

Presidents Emeritus

Michael Anderson	Orbe Andux
James Butler	Don Thomas
Garland Tickle	

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Jim Good - Publisher

Kit Kelley - Editor

**RETIREES BREAKFAST
(In Tampa)**

Monday, October 2, 2006

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

Buddy Freddy's

134 Gornto Lake Rd S.

in Brandon

Executive Vice-President's Report

by Detlev Aeppel

Executive Vice-President - Branch 599

Know Your Rights

Do you know your Weingarten rights and why they are important? To most of us this is a rhetorical question. Of course letter carriers know about these rights and the importance of invoking them as needed. Only inexperienced letter carriers and new hires would be uninformed on the subject of Weingarten rights, right? Unfortunately this is not the case.

Weingarten rights are a part of federal labor law which gives employees the right to representation in any investigatory interview that the employee reasonably believes may lead to discipline. An investigatory interview is when management is searching for facts in an attempt to determine an employee's guilt or to decide whether or not to impose discipline. If you reasonably believe that an investigatory interview could lead to discipline you are entitled to union representation. Management and postal inspectors are not required to inform you of your rights to representation. The union steward cannot exercise Weingarten rights on your behalf. You must make the request for union representation yourself. In addition to having representation during the interview the Weingarten rule also gives you the right to a pre-interview consultation with a steward. The right to pre-meeting consultation also

applies to postal inspection interrogations. The steward will make notes of the actual questions and record the answers you give. The Weingarten rule allows the steward to assist you during the interview. If a question is confusing or if you are not sure about your answer you may consult with the steward. It would be a violation of your rights if management attempted to restrict the steward's right to speak or tried to force the steward to be a passive observer. The Weingarten rule does not apply to official discussions since they are not discipline and are not grievable. You also do not have a right to union representation during fitness-for-duty exams.

There has not been a flood of carriers signing up for automatic COLCPE contributions but the number is increasing. The time has come for all carriers to get off of their wallets and sign up for automatic COLCPE contributions. All of our livelihoods and futures are at stake whether you are a PTF, full time regular, CSRS or FERS retiree. It is absolutely essential that the COLCPE fund has a regular, predictable income from the membership so that resources can be budgeted wisely and plans can be made. President Bill Young has made it clear that he does not want sporadic contributions to COLCPE. He wants a steady, predictable stream of con-

tributions. We still do a COLCPE 50/50 during our branch meetings and I think that is a good thing because it gives the members a little bonus incentive to attend. Maybe you will win a few bucks! If you do win, take the money. If you are not an automatic contributor it must be because you can not afford to give a dollar a week and you probably need the money. If you are an automatic contributor you are already doing your part to save our futures.



Some members have expressed discomfort with the idea of signing up for automatic contributions. I don't get it. President Young has made it so easy with the Gimme 5 campaign. How uncomfortable will these members be if their pay and benefits are slashed, or their retirements reduced? Lobbying congress is the game at hand to protect ourselves and our families and save the USPS. If we are unwilling to play that game then we are like the fellow in the old joke that brings a knife to a gun fight. The time has come for all letter carriers to play to win.

In solidarity...

Tampa Letter Carriers, Inc. Director Vacancies

There are currently two vacancies on the TLC Board of Directors. Any Branch 599 member in good standing who wishes to be considered to fill one of these vacancies should write a request and submit it to: Tampa Letter Carriers Director Vacancies, 3003 W. Cypress, Tampa, FL 33609. If you have previously submitted a request for a director position you must re-submit. All applications must be received by October 20, 2006.

President's Station Visits

Table with 3 columns: Station Name, Day, Date. Rows include Temple Terrace, Carrollwood, Palm River, Hilldale Annex, Sun City, Plant City, Brandon 33510, and Brandon 33511.

Health and Welfare Report

The wife of Manuel Garcia, Jr., retiree, passed away.
The father of Forest Hills city carrier Bennie Andrade passed away.

TLC, Inc. Board of Directors Meeting Summary

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Obst at 7:30 pm. The minutes of the previous meeting were accepted as read. The financial report was given by John Gebo. The building manager's report was given by Mike Anderson. A motion was made and properly seconded to replace the compressor in the air conditioning unit in the front of the hall at a cost of up to \$2,000.00. Discussion. Passed. A motion was made and properly seconded to purchase a laptop computer for the branch. This computer could be used during upcoming route inspections. Discussion. Passed. A motion was made and properly seconded to purchase a replacement computer for the Vice-President's office. Discussion. Passed. Motion to adjourn. Passed. Meeting adjourned at 7:45 pm.

Jim Good, Secretary - Tampa Letter Carriers, Inc.

October Meetings:

- Tues 10-3-06 - Shop Stewards Meeting
Union Hall, 7:00 PM
- Thur 10-5-06 - Branch Meeting
Union Hall, 7:30 PM
- Tues 10-24-06 - TLC Board Of Directors Meeting
Union Hall, 7:00 PM
- Thur 10-26-06 - Executive Board Meeting
Union Hall, 7:00 PM

Flu Shots

Flu shots will be given by the USPS at our union hall on Thursday, November 2, 2006, from 6:00 pm until 8:00 pm. This is the night of our regularly scheduled branch meeting. The flu shots will be free for any current postal employee, with retirees being charged approximately \$20.00. Employee ID badges must be shown to receive the free flu shots.

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

Unionism

by Brian Obst

Chief Steward - Branch 599

The Steward and You

As we go through our daily routine at work, we all will sooner or later have a problem where we need assistance from our shop steward. Whether it is a violation of the overtime rules, being caused to work beyond 12 hours in a day, or 60 hours in a week, or possibly a discipline issue, the steward is there on the front line ready to provide assistance when needed.

Who are these men and women who serve the carriers as the shop stewards and why do they do it? Well, the first part of the question is easy to answer. They are your fellow carriers who work beside you every day. They are not really that much different from you except that they have shown a desire to help protect you from management and management abuse of our *national agreement* with the Postal Service. These carriers serving as stewards were not born to this job and some never thought that they would ever be serving in this capacity but they are doing so nonetheless.

The second part of the question is, why do they do it? I can only speak for myself as to why I do this job but I think when you talk to your steward you may find similar reasons for many stewards. My reasons are simple. First and foremost, I felt that it would be to my benefit if I knew the rules so I could protect myself from problems and abuses which we all see happen on a daily basis. Some would say that this is a selfish reason and they would probably be right. However, I

don't necessarily think it is a bad way to start out as a steward. My reasoning comes from the fact that as I developed as a steward, through training and experience representing carriers, I found that my job is extremely important to all the carriers I represent and, if I was good at my job as a steward, I could assist them through dealings with management. I think we have all found that, when there is someone you can count on for assistance, we stop worrying about dealing with management and can concentrate on the job at hand, which is delivering the mail.

Many of you reading this article may be wondering, how do I get to be a steward? This is the easy part. The way to start is to attend a steward training session on the Tuesday prior to our monthly branch union meeting. This will expose you to the other stewards in the branch and allow you to get some of the basic information imparted to our stewards monthly. Then, if you are interested, you can meet with our branch president and other members of the Executive Board who can fill you in on the election procedures for steward elections, which come up yearly in December. The most important thing to remember is, it is not how much you do or do not know that matters. You will attend many training sessions so knowledge is constantly growing. What matters is the desire to do the job properly and a willingness to be there for your brother/sister carriers when they need you. It is important that the branch always have volunteers for the steward positions since the steward is there to see all the things happening in his/her station. When

there is no steward in the station and an outside steward is required, many things that are happening that are wrong may be missed since the outside steward is not there to see and know that things are happening that are incorrect.



I can tell you without hesitation that my more than eight years as a steward have been the most rewarding years I have spent on this earth. There is no better feeling than when I have been able to help a brother/sister carrier with a problem they are dealing with. While this job has more than its share of frustration, the benefit of doing it outweighs the frustration completely.

These are the thoughts of one steward and I invite anyone who might have an interest in the position to contact me at a steward meeting, branch meeting, directly by phone or in person, and let's talk. It is my personal belief that there are many great stewards out there that simply haven't tapped into their potential yet. I look forward to meeting and speaking with many of you in the near future. Let's keep our team of qualified stewards fully stocked for the benefit of all the members of our branch.

Remember that knowledge is the key.

Yours in brotherhood,

Brian Obst
Shop Steward -Town and Country



Branch 599 Labor Day Picnic - 2006

And The Beat Goes On

by Ray Wallace

Retire And Stay In The Union

If you are paying union dues, when you retire there is no reason why you can't continue as a union retiree. I've never seen much written about this and maybe you don't know the procedure. Union dues is one of the few things that goes down when you retire. It is only about twenty dollars a year and is taken out of your retirement check. However, you must fill out a form to have this done. Make sure you ask your shop steward or call the union office before you retire and they will be able to give you directions on how to continue on as a union member.

It use to be that when you were about to retire, you would be invited to go talk to a counselor that you spoke to personally. In Brandon, you saw someone in the Post Office in Lakeland, on the clock. Now I understand this has all changed and you talk to someone out of state, on the phone. What a shame to lose that personal contact.

Over the years, as a shop steward, I've seen so many carriers that gripe about everything from not enough overtime to complaining that someone got an hour more than they did, to this and that. They would sometimes file a grievance when no grounds for a grievance really existed. When the shop steward didn't get them what they wanted, he was "a bum"!

The problem is that some of us don't realize that we have one of the best jobs in the U.S.A. and only need a High School education. There are very few jobs around that will give all that you get from overtime, sick leave, annual leave, holidays and medical insurance.

Recently I read where an employee of a private company worked there for twenty years, had never taken sick leave, got sick but could not go back on the requested date and, as a result, was fired at the age of 53. What a damned shame. I have a son who drives a tractor trailer and he recently got a week off, with pay. He told me, that is the first time in fifteen years he ever got paid when he was off.

Stop complaining and be thankful for what you have and pray that the NALC can keep it all for you in the future. Support and stay in the union! All over the U.S.A., unions are on the way out. The NALC is one of the last strong unions and it can only stay that way with you staying and paying dues.

While I'm giving out advice, *save your money!* I found out first hand all the things that can happen to you when you're retired and the overtime stops coming in. The cost of everything is up, higher than most of us ever thought could happen. Houses that a few years ago were selling for \$80,000 are now selling for \$300,000 and up. Gas is close to \$3.00 a gallon, and rents, insurance and cars are higher. A family of four with an income of \$25,000 a year are on the poverty list. If you don't have the money to back you up, or if you make some wrong decisions, God help you. Give it a lot of thought before you hand in those retirement papers.

I received two emails in July that there was going to be a retirement party at the Brandon Post Office for Chuck Pullman. They both said, "Come to the party." I replied that I didn't think the Brandon Postmaster would let Ray Wallace in the door. They said that he was away on annual leave. A nice time was had by all.

It was great seeing all of my former co-workers. Most had put on weight and looked older. There was enough food for an army and a nice cake. Most said they couldn't believe Chuck had finally done it as from the day he started, every year, he said this is my last one. All spoke to me about their postmaster. Both clerks and carriers said how bad he is to all, even sneaking behind cases and watching their every move. I wonder, *who is doing his job as postmaster?*



I worked in three different Post Offices over the years and very seldom saw the postmaster on the workroom floor. I used to ask Postmaster O'Neill why he wasn't on the floor more and he used to tell me that's why he had floor supervisors.

About the Brandon Retiree Luncheon: When I hear talk about the Tampa retiree luncheon, I'm not sure but I think it is for retirees only. In Brandon, we include the spouse or significant other. I don't know how it is today but in years past Brandon had picnics with all employees from the postmaster down and all had a very good time. Some were held on the beach at Longboat Key and the money for this came from the sale of coffee, candy, etc., in the swing room.

We used to be a close-knit group and got to know each other on and off the clock, including families. So let's keep it going. If you're working and know the retirees, or if you're retired from Brandon, we hope to see you at Buddy Freddy's on Tuesday, October 10th at 2:00 p.m.



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

Branch 599 Labor Day Picnic - 2006



A Point of Personal Privilege

by Leslie Ray Garcia

One Flew in the Pigpen

I wonder how many individuals have heard of a company called ChoicePoint? This company is one of many Bush / Cheney no bid contractors for the Department of Homeland Security. ChoicePoint was founded by Derek Smith in 1994. Financially nothing rather exceptional was happening to this company until September 11, 2001. A few months after the attack Forbes magazine wrote, "The war on terror hasn't been decided as of yet, but a few winners are emerging. High up on the list of businesses that will benefit...ChoicePoint, Inc." ChoicePoint is currently the largest personal profile database company in America and an instrumental leader in the *fear industry*. ChoicePoint Bode Technologies division was given a \$12 million contract to identify by DNA testing pieces of corpses found from the Trade Center Twin Towers in Staten Island garbage dump. It seems that since 9/11 the main product produced by ChoicePoint is *us*. This includes lists of your medical prescriptions, your donations to any organization or candidates, your credit cards and credit ratings, your saving, checking and investment accounts, your driver's license and driving record, arrest records if any, your voting record and books that you read or buy. Isn't this similar to fascism? This huge database is stored in the computers that are owned by CEO Smith. This is equivalent to operating like the FBI but in reality it operates as a private KGB because ChoicePoint keeps files on *us* that the U. S. Constitution prohibits the FBI from obtaining. This "*liberal law*" that our founding fathers placed on paper simply states that our government can't spy on citizens of the United States unless they are suspected of a crime. There is no law preventing or prohibiting a private company from obtaining this type of information. *The USA Patriot Act* has allowed Congress to outsource this job. This act allows the government to pay ChoicePoint for this information while it is illegal for the government to obtain it using the FBI or other federal agencies. ChoicePoint supplied the information used in the illegal scrubbing of the

voter rolls of Florida in 2000 and in Ohio in 2004. Since ChoicePoint's founding just a few years ago, it's revenues have reached over a billion dollars.

I have a question for many of you. What types of legislation have the Republicans introduced that benefit the working class that Democrats have blocked? Remember actions speak louder than words. And in this case, Republicans speak with a forked tongue! The following legislation has been sponsored and supported by Democrats: Social Security; Medicare; Medicaid; Minimum Wages; Universal Health Care; Family Medical Leave (FMLA); GI Bill; Child Labor Laws; Safety in the Workplace; Food Stamps; 40 hour workweek; Workman's Compensation; Overtime pay (time and half); Equal Employment Opportunity; After school programs; Scholarship Programs; Collective bargaining by Unions that include seniority rules, sick time and vacation time; Smaller classroom sizes; environmental legislation; death benefits; VA benefits, etc. However, these *liberal ideas* are denigrated by these compassionate and family value conservatives. These same conservatives that supported Bush in 2004 seem to be distancing themselves from him with elections on the horizon. They are even stating they are "*conservatives*" like Reagan. It is estimated that 40% of all union workers vote for Republicans just because they act like *Rambos* even though these conservatives' military records indicate they are sheep in wolves clothing.

The war in Iraq has now reached the length of World War II. More and more politicians are agreeing that this was the wrong war at the wrong time. Iraq is predicted to split apart because of the power struggle between the Kurds, the Shiites and the Sunnis. The Kurds and Shiites have control of the major oil fields in their respective provinces in the North and in the South but the Sunnis are located in the middle of the country where there is mostly desert. Iran seems to be supplying the insurgents with arms and training. The US military is spread too thin in Iraq to be a force to stop this type of warfare. Our forces are being

sent back into combat even though most have completed three or more tours and many of the inactive reserves are being called to active duty. Why have more troops been killed since Bush's "*Mission Accomplished*" aircraft carrier photo op on May, 1, 2003? What happened to our troops being welcomed as liberators? If the mission was accomplished, why aren't our troops being withdrawn? (Did you read where the Republican-controlled Congress voted down an effort to investigate the no-bid military contract given to Halliburton, who supplies the war effort?) Yet this administration is going to "*stay the course*."



What seems to be forgotten by the supporters of the Republican Party and of George W. Bush are the six reasons given for going to war in Iraq: 1) "We tried diplomacy and it had failed." 2) "War was the only option." 3) "Saddam Hussein had weapons of mass destruction, in great quantities, deployed to the front lines to be used against our troops." 4) "Saddam Hussein either already had nuclear weapons, or was in the process of developing them." 5) "Saddam Hussein was connected to Al Qaeda and, at least indirectly, involved in September 11th." 6) "Saddam Hussein and his WMDs were an immediate threat to the United States, which is why we couldn't give UN inspectors any more time."

Contrary to the popular belief of the *political pundits* such as Limbaugh, O'Reilly, Hannity, Novak, Coulter and Robertson, to name a few, President George W. Bush did not have to send troops to invade Iraq because there were no WMDs and no terrorist. Bush stated that there was a connection between Hussein and Al Qaeda but there is no documentation to justify this rash statement. GW's administration has implied that the torture at Abu Ghraib and other detention facilities have been done by a few bad apples but there is a secret memo that states these tortures were authorized at the highest level of the administration. Can you say "Bush and Cheney"? The Bush administration lambastes leakers but officials within the inner circle of the executive branch have

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Around The Horn

Las Vegas Convention Report

Brothers and Sisters, having just returned from the 65th NALC Biennial National Convention in Las Vegas, I wanted to give you a summary from the business conducted throughout the week. First I want to thank Branch 599 and TLC for sending me as a paid delegate to what I believe will rank as one of the most important national conventions in the 117-year history of the NALC. The week began (Monday 8/14) with a powerful Keynote Address delivered by President Young. With all the energy and passion, and with the strong support from the record number 9,199 delegates assembled at the Las Vegas Convention Center, President Young rallied the masses to an eventual standing ovation. Delegates from all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Guam, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands, from 715 branches, listened intently as President Young spoke with great pride, confidence and showed how truly honored he is to represent and lead our great union. To guide the NALC into the future, a future with many important issues and obstacles that threaten our jobs and livelihood. Issues such as Postal Reform Legislation and upcoming contract negotiations with the United States Postal Service highlighted the agenda. First though, the delegation showed their overwhelming support by electing/re-electing the entire top nominated officers. The proposed slate was solid, in fact, including the National Business Agents, there will only be one required election from Region 11, and all others won by acclamation.

Postal Reform: With the Bush Administration threatening the Postal Reform Bill, President Young spoke of the giant fight ahead and the importance of a strong union. We must support friends we need in both parties through COLCPE contribu-

Personal Privilege (from page 8)

illegally leaked information that Valerie Plame was a CIA operative in order to discredit her husband, Joe Wilson. Bush has stated to the public that all wiretaps of Americans had court warrants that allowed this practice but there is evidence that these were warrant-less wiretaps. GW's admini-

tions, by continuing to develop a network of e-Activists and with endless lobbying by our legislative activists and our professional staff in Washington. The plan is to continue to mobilize our members and build political alliances with leaders in the mailing industry and other postal stakeholders to advance reforms that strengthen the USPS while protecting the pay, benefits and collective bargaining rights of letter carriers. Every congressional legislator and senator will now have his/her personal letter carrier liaison, and we will be in a position to start changing the direction the country is heading with power in numbers. Speaking of numbers, President Young was thrilled that e-activists reached 150,000, and an extra \$100,000 was collected at the convention by delegates not yet signed up through payroll deduction or electronic checking but wanting to show support for his COLCPE-GIMME 5 program. Thursday was GIMME 5 Day, with all contributing delegates wearing white tee shirts with the big GIMME 5 logo in the back, what a sight, the support was overwhelming.

National Contract Negotiations: With our current agreement with the USPS to expire at midnight on November 21, 2006, negotiating will begin August 28. The 2001-2006 contract, with its unprecedented term of five years, served this union well. Our eighth and final COLA has reached \$790, effective the pay period beginning September 29. This last COLA raise will pay top rate carriers \$49,218 annually, an increase of \$6,583 or \$253.19 per pay period since the beginning of the contract. Our officers and staff have been preparing for bargaining for months. President Young will serve as the chief negotiator during this round of bargaining. The Las Vegas convention was important in making the decisions and set the priorities for the contract talks and I was glad to be a part of it. We will fight to keep the benefits we have acquired in the past, resist the threat of outsourcing to private contractors our delivery

stration has asserted their right to void habeas corpus and indefinitely imprison citizens and foreigners. President Bush signed a bill forbidding torture yet he added a "signing statement" implying the right to disregard its provisions when this law conflicted with his interpretation of his powers. Bush believes he has carte blanche to ignore these specific statutes and international law because of self

jobs and not allow any attempt to unfairly shift the burden of health care costs from the Postal Service to our members. With the city carrier craft being the single largest craft in the Postal Service since 2005, we are a vital part to the success of the USPS and hopefully top management will bargain in good faith.

In closing, The 65th Biennial convention left me with a sense of pride and unity, a belief everything is in place to provide our National Leaders with the recourses to lead us successfully into the future. With the support of key quest speakers, from House Committee Chairman Tom Davis (R-VA) to House Representative Danny Davis (D-IL) to freshman Democrat Representative Debbie Wasserman of Florida and Las Vegas favorite Democrat Shelley Berkley, we have powerful legislators in places vital to our success. Finally I was very moved at the ceremony to pay tribute to President Emeritus Vincent R. Sombrotto. As all of us should know the former president was instrumental in leading the NALC through some very tough times and was still President in 2001 when our present contract was negotiated. President Young did not hesitate to thank the former president for grooming him to become a successful leader, and acknowledged his tireless efforts benefiting all of us. And while showing his age, Vincent R. Sombrotto still commanded the attention of all delegates and exemplified the presence that made him a powerful and successful labor leader. Again I thank Branch 599 for the opportunity to represent you.

Look forward to talking to you again on the next [Around The Horn](#)

granted powers to the Commander in Chief that can not be found anywhere in the Constitution.

If this is left to fester by Americans, this will cause a domino effect that will inevitably eliminate checks and balances that will basically destroy our fundamental liberties. One of these freedoms is found in the 4th Amend

(continued on page 10)



by Tony Diaz

Financial Secretary - Branch 599

Personal Privilege (from page 9)

ment that guarantees us due process against unreasonable searches and seizures. This is just the tip of the iceberg of the violations to our constitution and international law. As for me, Bush has failed to carry out his oath of office to "preserve,

protect and defend the Constitution of the United States."

Asked recently what Iraq had to do with the attack on the World Trade Center, Mr. Bush testily responded, "Nothing...", adding that "...nobody has ever suggested in this admini-

stration that Saddam Hussein ordered the attacks..." Plausible denial ability?

"There are two levers for moving men: interest and fear."

Napoleon Bonaparte

Branch 599 Labor Day Picnic - 2006



AN IMPORTANT MESSAGE FROM BRANCH 599

Jim Davis FIGHTS For Working Families



✔ **Supports Workers.** Jim Davis voted to support funding for critical job-training programs and to protect unemployment benefits and overtime pay for Florida's workers. (H.R. 27, Vote #48, 3/2/05; H.R. 3030, 2/4/04; H.R. 2660, 7/10/2003)

✔ **Preserves Our Retirement Security.** Jim Davis has signed the AFL-CIO pledge to protect Social Security. He opposes efforts to privatize Social Security. (AFL-CIO Pledge)

✔ **Advocates for Our Health Care.** Jim Davis voted against increasing insurance premiums for working families and voted against creating special protections for negligent HMOs. (H.R. 525, Vote 426, 7/26/05; H.R. 2663, 8/2/01)



Charlie Crist Threatens Working Families

Charlie Crist supports private school vouchers, which take money away from our public schools, and weakening the class-size amendment. Crist threatened the union rights of school employees and voted against increased access to health care. (St. Petersburg Times, 10/11/01; Crist Education White Paper, Palm Beach Post, 8/5/01; Tampa Tribune, 9/2/01; Tampa Tribune, 10/13/98)



SUPPORT CANDIDATES WHO SUPPORT WORKING FAMILIES

VOTE Nov. 7

FLORIDA • GOVERNOR

How you vote is a personal decision. Branch 599 has carefully researched the candidates' records and believes Jim Davis is the best choice for working families. For more information, contact Branch 599 at 813-877-5491 or the Florida AFL-CIO at 850-224-6926.



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