



Tampa Letter Carrier

Volume 1 - Issue 2

A.R. "TONY" HUERTA - NALC BRANCH 599

JUNE 2002

President's Report

by Jim Good

By the time you read this article you will have received, and hopefully returned, your ballot to vote on the ratification of the tentative National Agreement between the National Association of Letter Carriers and the United States Postal Service. Our National President, Vincent Sombrotto, and the entire Executive Council should be congratulated for achieving a negotiated contract for the first time in many years. Mr. Sombrotto has announced that he will not seek reelection, so I'm sure that he is pleased to be able to present the membership with an agreement that they will be able to vote on as a result of his final contract negotiations. The total annual pay raises for the five-year term of the tentative contract will be 7.1%. This does not include COLA raises or step increases. I will go into more detail regarding the specifics of the proposed contract at the June 6th branch meeting.

I'm sure you are all aware of the on-going route inspections being conducted within the Tampa Installation. Management has assured me, on several occasions, that they want to work with the Union so that we will have a fair and equitable adjustment of all city delivery routes in Tampa. That is an admirable goal, but it cannot be done by talk alone.

After the inspection, and before the adjustments are made, each carrier should be given the opportunity to give his/her opinion about the proposed adjustments. The "**Management of Delivery Services**", **Handbook M-39**, states: "**The carrier should now be consulted con-**

cerning any proposed relief or addition recommended for the route and the reasons for the adjustment. The comments and recommendations of the carrier and whether there is agreement or disagreement with the adjustments along with reasons should be entered on Form 1840". It goes on to say: "**The postmaster or designee must consider the comments of the individual who inspected the route, consult with the manager of the delivery unit, and consider suggestions from the carrier serving the route.**" This does not mean that management has to do what the carrier suggests, but at the very least they have to ask for your opinions and consider your suggestions.

A number of routes that have already been inspected have proposed changes that will drastically change the make-up of the route. It is the Union's opinion that if a route is changed so dramatically that it barely resembles the original route (51% or more) it should be considered abolished and the carrier assigned to that route should have the opportunity to bid on any route in that section that is held by a carrier junior in seniority to him/her. Management does not agree with this position and the Union will have to proceed within the Grievance-Arbitration Procedure for a resolution to this matter.

The most important thing that every city carrier must do during route inspection is to case and deliver his or her assigned route according to the rules set forth by (continued on page 3)

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

WATTS LINE	4
OUTSIDE THE LINE	5
AND THE BEAT GOES ON	6
FOOD DRIVE PHOTOS	7

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Jim Good - Publisher
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President's Report *(continued from page 1)*

management in the M-41, "**City Delivery Carriers Duties and Responsibilities**". Following these rules and regulations will help to ensure that a fair inspection is conducted and will help to minimize the possibility of discipline from an over-zealous inspector/supervisor. It seems that the inspection team has been instructed to deduct every second of what they consider to be un-authorized time in an effort to show the largest time savings possible. While the Union agrees that mail volume is down, and a number of routes may have shown a need to have deliveries added to them, by adding too much time to a route management will only be creating a situation where carriers will be requesting overtime on a daily basis. This is not the objective of route inspections.

Finally, on May 11th we participated in the 10th Annual NALC Letter Carriers' Food Drive. While the final totals

were not in as of the time of publication, all those involved in the tabulation of the food collected have said that we will have a record-breaking year. I want to say a special thank you to Cheryl Clothier, this year's Food Drive Coordinator. She got a late start, due to the fact that we were both new to the administrative end of the drive, but through much hard work and many long hours she made everything happen. Thanks also to all the carriers who gave of their own time in helping at the stations and driving the collection trucks. It's that type of commitment that makes a Union strong!

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The Watts Line

The city of Tampa is currently conducting route inspections. Management started March 30th at the Forest Hills Annex. The Annex started with 17 regular routes and one auxiliary. After the inspection of all the routes, and after the carriers were counted and ridden with for six days, management has decided to cut three routes and the auxiliary out of the Forest Hills Annex.

We, as postal employees, know that the mail volume has decreased recently. As Letter Carriers we know that the routes in the City of Tampa have not been inspected or adjusted in some offices in five to seven years. What bothers me personally, as a branch officer and as a letter carrier, is that management is using this as an excuse, along with the newly installed DOIS program, to harass and intimidate carriers to go faster without regard for customer service. The hand-held computer that the route inspectors are using calculates everything carriers are doing during the entire day and deducting any time wasting practices they observe. It also subtracts that time from total time used on the days of inspection. It is very important for letter carriers to become familiar with form 1838c (this form is used to record the piece count and all other functions performed in the office), and

by John Watts

Form 1838 (this form is a summary, input by management, of the information copied off of the 1838c).

Make sure the piece count and all line items are correctly transferred to the Form 1838. Form 1840 (this form is a weekly summary of the six day mail count) is a representation of the total office and street time from the 1838c and the 3999's. Form 3999 is a form, used by management, to document, along with the DCD (the hand-held computer) every move a letter carrier makes on the street.

When management calls you into the office to discuss your performance during the week of inspection it is very important that you request to have your shop steward present. The steward will assist you in understanding why management discounted so much time from your total route time and help you talk with management as to why this time should not be subtracted from your total time taken from the actual clock rings. Management, in the city of Tampa, wants to make their budget, and by observing what took place during route inspections at Forest Hills station, they are going to achieve their budget no matter what.

This I Know

Having gone through route inspection last month and having been instructed to, for instance, "discourage customers from distracting you from your duties", I waited for the carrier consultation to take place to find how I had done. I was informed they had found a way to isolate the time it took me to breathe and they had deducted it off of my office and street times because they were not going to build that time into my assignment every day. Not since SIX & TWO have I seen management act so unenlightened. They are cutting too many positions so it looks like this summer V time will be common. In my twenty two years in the Postal Service I have learned that when things like this happen it is better to laugh and make jokes about it than to cry. With that in mind, I would like to share something I got over the Internet with you.

THINGS YOU'D LOVE TO SAY AT WORK
(and still might):

by Michael Brousseau

I see your point, but I still think you are full of _____.

How about never ? Is never good for you ?

I see you have set aside this special time to humiliate yourself in public.

I am really easy to get along with once you people learn to see it my way.

I will try being nicer if you will try being smarter.

I am out of my mind, but feel free to leave a message.

It sounds like English, but I cannot understand a word you are saying.

Ahhh...I see the screw-up fairy has visited us again.

I like you. You remind me of when I was stupid.

You are validating (*continued on page 5*)

Outside The Lines

by Leslie Ray Garcia

Federal Express has a \$1 billion dollar contract with the United States Postal Service to transport our priority and express mails faster (a plus). Fed Ex does not transport our mails Saturdays, Sundays or holidays (a minus). CMU is supposed to save office time for the letter carrier craft (a plus). The Central Markup Unit [CMU/CFS] cost \$15 million dollars to implement and about \$5 million dollars a year to update (a minus). CFS machinery forwards all mails according to the COA's (a plus). This machinery only forwards mails that are spelled correctly (a minus). The Scanner Program cost \$700 million dollars to improve service (a plus). This program doesn't deliver the mails (a minus). Delivery Point Sequence [DPS] machinery sorts 30,000 letters an hour (a plus). On a nationwide basis, this machinery mis-sorts an average 2.5 million pieces of mails daily (a minus). DPS machinery sorts letter mail for letter carriers because of the high volume (a plus). The DPS volume of letter mail has decreased below the 70% turn on figure but letter carriers still can not case it (a minus). The USPS hires you for a 30 year career (a plus). Yet this same USPS spends those entire 30 years trying to fire you (a minus). USPS Management has received \$250 million dollars in bonuses (a plus). The USPS has a debit in excess of \$1.7 billion dollars (a minus). Six [6] day mail counts have returned (a plus). The daily mail volume returns to normal or increases after the count is finished (a minus). Managements' mathematics are faultless (a plus). $2 + 2$ [according to Albert Einstein] still equals 4 (a minus). The USPS has an efficient safety program (a plus). Craft employees have to drive vehicles with recap tires (a minus).

Craft employees are being downsized to save moneys (a plus). The craft employees' workloads are being increased (a minus). DPS machines operate in climate controlled [air conditioned] environment (a plus). Letter carriers operate vehicles in [non air-conditioned environments] climates ranging from below 0 degrees to +120 degrees (a minus). To improve service letter carrier begin tour times have changed (a plus). Letter carriers get to have supper with their customers rather than their families (a minus). The National Agreement between the USPS and NALC entitles craft employees to utilize annual and sick leaves (a plus). Craft employees have to turn in medical documentation when scheduling medical appointments on their [SDO] scheduled days off (a minus). Flats will be eventually D.P.S.'s (a plus). Letter carriers are not octopuses (a minus). The USPS may allow the Unions the right to strike (a plus). Remember what happened to the Federal Air Traffic Controllers (a minus). The "Transformation Plan" is a necessity (a plus). A failure by USPS Management in not allowing the NALC to have a consistant, active, positive and constructive role in the "TP" (a minus).

"Show me a good and gracious loser, and I'll show you a failure." - Knute Rockne

Think About It

This I Know *(continued from page 4)*

my inherent mistrust of management.

Please have faith in your Branch and National officers and do your part by doing your assignment according to the Handbooks and Manuals.

William C. Doherty Scholarship Fund Award Winner

It is my pleasure to announce that the son of one of our members, Patrick J. Seul Jr, is one of fifteen National winners of the William C. Doherty Scholarship Fund. His father, Patrick Sr, works at Town & Country Station. Patrick will receive \$800.00 annually for the next four years. Please join me in wishing Patrick "Good Luck" as he enters college and congratulations on his accomplishments thus far!

by Jim Good

And The Beat Goes On

by Ray Wallace

The Branch paper looks great. As we all read in the May issue, our new Vice-President, Dean Minter, had to resign due to medical reasons. A damn shame after just getting the position. We wish you much luck with your health, Dean. As we all know – no matter how much you have in life, if you don't have good health "you ain't got nothing."

So congratulations to Mike Brousseau who was appointed to the position. Also we have as new Director of Retirees, Jack Newman, who has always gone above and beyond in every endeavor he has done for Branch 599.

It's a shame to read in the President's Report that management would like to discontinue the system of Binding Arbitration. Well we all know why: they have been losing their shirt for most of the past 30 years.

Thank God for the Letter Carriers, our Union--the NALC--has had the resources to prove to an Arbitrator that what management said about their "lousy" work force was not true.

How long will the Postal Service survive in the electronic world of e-mail, fax, etc. that we live in today?

I think since my time with the Post Office there has always been a threat of some kind on the job of the Letter Carriers. Six day delivery or the elimination of it is always there.

What hasn't the Post Office tried? They spend millions and never get no where. They for sure don't, and will never, trust. Their most valuable asset of all is YOU, the Craft Employee. So now, more than ever, the Craft Employee has his job on the line.

What can you do about it? The number one thing you can do is – **if you're not in the union, you join.** Management loves to see people quit the Union. Why? **Because, the Union stands up for the employee.** Management does not want to see a strong Union.

What is a few dollars out of your high pay? How did you ever get the money you make? The benefits you

have? The contracts you have? For sure not from friendly management.

Have you ever thought about where you would be or what you would be making if you were not an employee of the US Postal Service? With the majority only having a high school education?

Let me give you a little insight into the outside world. When first out of school I went into the house painting trade in New York and became a pro. I was Union and made top wages. Because of the weather and loss of time and no benefits, I went into the Post Office in 1966. I moved to Florida in 1971 and, to make some extra money, went to a painting contractor for a work wage of \$8.00 an hour.

When I retired and needed some extra income (also bored to death), I went to a painting contractor. They asked me if I had a car and if I was reliable? Why these questions? I asked what he was paying. Well, could you believe only \$8.00 an hour. (No wonder he asked about my car – who can afford one earning only \$8.00 an hour?) I replied, "You got to be kidding. They were paying that 30 years ago." He said "Well, if you're as good as you say you are, I'll give you \$12.00, no benefits and no overtime. No nothing. You work and you get paid. You don't work, you get nothing".

Well carriers, if it were not for the Union and NALC and what we have gained in the past 30 years, we would still be at those low wages also.

I know a postal retiree who is working for Wal-Mart. He has told me they are making millions and they hate Unions and pay nothing to the employees.

Be thankful for all you have. Join the Union. If carriers keep dropping out, the Post Office could become another Wal-Mart. Think about it.

ATBGO

2002 Letter Carriers Food Drive



Food Drive Report

Hello Branch 599. It is now a week after the Food Drive and Route Inspections. Whew!! On May 11th, our Food Drive was a huge success! Food was everywhere. Pallet boxes were overflowing with canned goods and dry goods. Extra boxes were ordered for all stations and they were running out of them. This year though, there seemed to be more dry goods than canned goods (which weigh) less. This probably caused our count to be down from last year. We had good participation for our Rural Brothers and Sisters. I witnessed supervisors and carriers in personal vehicles going to routes to pick up food for those who have park-n-loops and apartments. Unfortunately we do have things go wrong even though you plan, plan, plan. It's just Murphy's Law. We were short 3 MVS drivers due to sick calls on the mail side of the house. We had witnesses that some people were stealing bags of food

by Cheryl Clothier

that were hanging from mail boxes. Also some of our own City Carriers decided not to deliver the Soup Cards, Flyer hand outs or bags. I receive calls daily about this from customers. In order to make this drive a big success, it takes all of us to do our part. It only happens once a year and is a great way for the Carriers to help the community. This year we collected 775,525 lbs. of food. I was very proud to be the Food Drive Coordinator this year and have already started on next year's drive. I want to Thank all of our Carriers (Rural and City) for their hard work on the 2002 NALC Food Drive.

Thanks.

Cheryl Clothier

Postal Bytes

by Kit Kelley

The great English philosopher Sir Francis Bacon said "Knowledge itself is power." In hopes of empowering you through the acquisition of knowledge, I offer the following Internet resources for letter carriers. These web sites and other Net resources offer carriers the opportunity to learn how to defend and protect our interests at a time when we seem to be faced with unprecedented adversity. They also offer us a chance to connect with carriers from around the country to build powerful, effective alliances that make our collective knowledge, experience and wisdom a force for positive change within the USPS. Let's plug in and turn on the juice.

<http://www.nalc.org> This is the web site of the NALC. You can check the latest news, view pay charts, and download forms for grievances. Several USPS manuals are available including the M-39, M-41 and the ELM. There is a lot of good stuff here.

<http://www.postalwatch.org> This is a non-profit corporation that monitors the postal service to protect individuals and the business sector from adverse postal actions and abuses. The web site offers mostly recent national postal news but has covered management abuse of employees as reported in the national media including a recent series reprinted from the Lake Worth Herald.

<http://www.fedupfeds.org> This site is a lifesaver for federal employees who are injured on the job. Those postal employees who have had to file OWCP claims know firsthand that getting accurate information to OWCP in order to get their claim accepted and handled properly is a must. This resource offers links and information to cover just about every OWCP problem the injured federal employee faces. Check out this web site and join their mailing list to learn more.

<http://www.postaleeo.com> This is site for those who need to file an EEO. You can read Publication 133 online and find out what is covered by EEO and how to file a complaint. There are summaries of numerous court cases and a chat room for postal employees.

<http://www.osha.gov/index.html> The Occupation Safety & Health Administration arm of the Department of Labor offers a wealth of information via this site. You can find manuals, statistics, directives, travel health advice, Anthrax information and much more.

<http://www.postalworkersonline.com> This site is packed with information for postal employees. There are discussion boards, a postal bookstore featuring postal related books and videos. You can find mutual transfer information, commentary from the media and others, classified ads and postal icon graphics for use on your own web site.

<http://www.rollanet.org/~gary/> This is a great letter carrier site with many links to other letter carrier related sites including personal sites of letter carriers and some branch sites. There is an archive of issues from an online newsletter including a series on dealing with route inspections.

<http://www.disgruntledzone.com> A hodge-podge of things postal by a non-postal employee. There are some interesting things here including some comics, news articles, and even postal fiction. The site has a discussion board for posting, reading and responding to messages from web surfers.

<http://www.disgruntledpostalemployees.com> This site is maintained by two carriers and offers employees the opportunity to vent via email, surveys and through articles submitted for publication on the web site. Check out their No Faith Hedge Fund to see where they think things are heading.

Besides the web, you can also connect with postal employees (and others) in the **alt.snail-mail** newsgroup on the **Usenet**. The Usenet is a collection of thousands of discussion groups categorized by subject matter. People post messages which you can read and respond to. You can also post your own messages for others to read and comment on. You will need a news reader to download, read & reply to the messages. Both Outlook Express and Netscape Messenger include news readers for use with the news groups. A free standalone reader - **Free Agent** - is available at <http://www.forteinc.com>. You will need to know the names of your news and mail servers to set up your news reader but you should be able to get this information from your Internet Service Provider's home page on the web.

I hope you find these Internet resources useful and empowering. Please share your discoveries with your brother and sister carriers. A horde of knowledgeable letter carriers is a powerful force against which abusive postal managers can not prevail.

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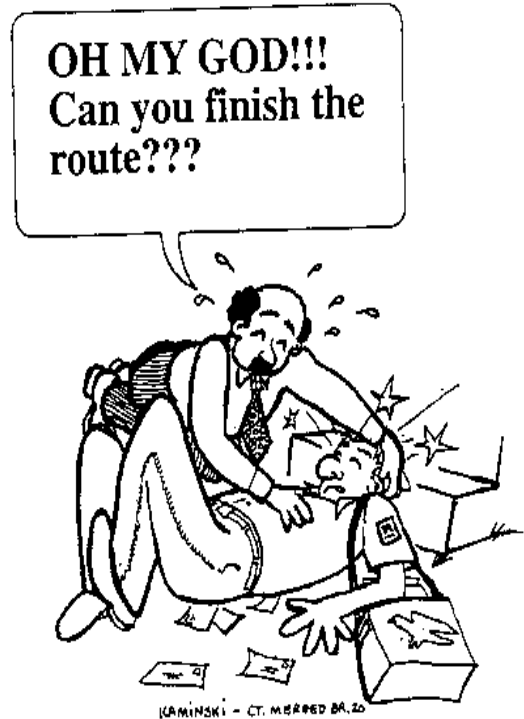
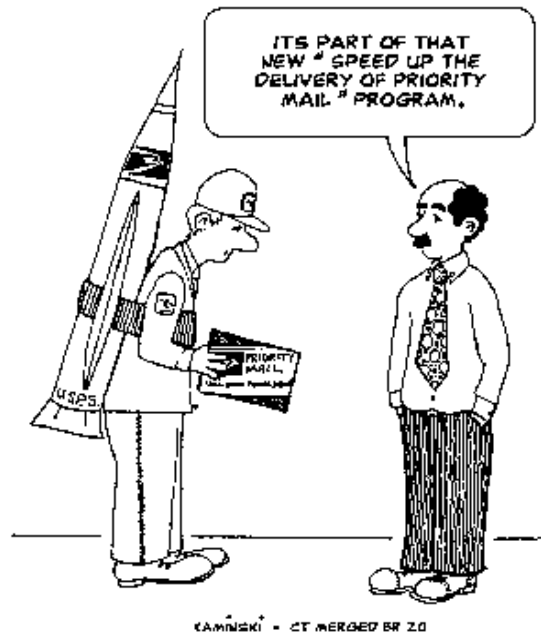
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