



A.R. Tony Huerta
Branch 599

Tampa Letter Carrier

From the President's Desk



Alan W. Peacock
President, Branch 599

Quite a lot has occurred in the past month and all the stewards and officers in addition to some volunteer work offered by some members and their families have done some outstanding things. Without the assistance of the following people the installation would have not been as successful. They were Will Tolliver, Don Thomas and his nephew Adam Risinger, Ray Garcia, Gilbert Cabanas, Joe Oliva, and John Gebo. And most of all thank God for Mandy Cabanas; without her help we would still be decorating tables. The banquet was attended

Post Office closings and consolidations are going to continue as the new Postmaster General came to office with his ax sharpened.

by about 250 members and their guests. Our National Director of Retired Members, Ernie Kirkland, was the installing officer and guest speaker. Matty Rose, President of Florida State Association of Letter Carriers also

was tapped to assist in the ceremony. Both shared their words of wisdom with us and encouraged us all to get more involved, especially from the legislative standpoint. The main emphasis was on the attack of our jobs and benefits. Each of us can assist in fighting that attack by taking out a little job insurance known as COLCPE [Committee On Letter Carriers Political Education]. I know everyone of us has our own budget crisis to deal with in this economy or with circumstances we face from time to time, but when we can afford five dollars a pay period to help fight to keep what we have earned, it is worth it. There was a time when carriers had to buy their own uniforms and there were no benefits to speak of and the pay was nowhere close to what it is today.

Remember this recession wasn't caused by the working class and they aren't the ones who received the huge stimulus either.

Post Office closings and consolidations are going to continue as the new Postmaster General came to office with his ax sharpened. Unlike consolidations, closings are a little more difficult. They involve more hearings with local, state and federal governments. There is a large public outcry when it comes to closing their local post office. Our representatives in Washington would serve the taxpayers and our customers a greater service if they would correct the outrageous burden of the pre-funding expense that is costing the Postal Service 5.5 billion dollars a year toward the 75-year

(Continued on page 4)



Branch Meeting
Thursday
March 3
7:30 PM

Branch 599 Office

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

Officers

President	Alan W. Peacock
Vice President	Tony Diaz
Recording Secretary	Michael Brink
Financial Secretary	Gilbert Cabanas
Treasurer	Ray Garcia
Sergeant-at-Arms	J.C. Howard
MBA/NSBA	Al Guice
Health Benefit Rep.	Terry Franklin
Director of Retirees	Lance Jones
Trustee Chair	John Gebo
Trustees	Joe Oliva Lori McMillion
Labor Management	Sam Santilli John Rowland
Presidents Emeritus	Garland Tickle • Orbe Andux Donald Thomas • Michael Anderson James Good

Executive Board will Meet

Thursday 6:30 PM

March 3
April 7
May 5
June 2
July 7
August 4
September 1
October 6
November 3
December 1

Shop Stewards

Station	ZIP	Steward
Brandon	33510	Terry Franklin
	33511	John Lykins
Carrollwood	33618	Eddie Berroth
Commerce	33602	Pedro Jimenez
Forest Hills	33612	Alan Robinson
Forest Hills Annex	33613	Nick Cullaro
Hilldale	33614	Sam Santilli
Hilldale Annex	33634	Julio Acosta
Hyde Park	33606	Tom Cobert
Interbay	33611	Loney Cason
Interbay/Peninsula	33629	Jim Tremblay
MacDill AFB	33608	Loney Cason
Palm River Annex	33619	J.C. Howard
Plant City	33565	Varick Reeder
Port Tampa	33616	Loney Cason
Produce	33610	John DeRosa
Ruskin/Sun City Ctr	33570	Jack Hencoski
Seminole Heights	33603	Tony Diaz
Sulphur Springs	33604	John Rowland
TCA/Peninsula	33609	Tom Cobert
TCA/West Tampa	33607	Don Wiseman
Temple Terrace	33617	Warren Sumlin
Town 'N Country	33615/35	Brian Obst
Ybor City	33605	Detlev Aeppel

Shop Steward Meetings

Tuesday 7 PM

March 1
April 5
May 3
May 31
July 5
August 2
August 30
October 4
November 1
November 29

Around the Horn

Brothers and Sisters, this month I wanted to update you to get you caught up on some Branch business. To first mention, I have received a number of positive responses regarding my article last month addressing the importance of personal statements. Several members, believe it or not, have never realized the importance of a solid statement. One member expressed they had never thought about a statement being challenged and the effects that it might have on a case. Thanks to you all for the responses!

JARAP review [Joint Alternative Route Adjustments Process] is winding down without a whole lot of territory movement throughout the district. Many of you may not have even known the process was being conducted. The results included: auxiliaries being added to and in a few stations, auxiliaries were made into full routes. The JARAP review process was aimed to revisit only those routes that had been targeted as overburdened or short. In a few cases, routes were evaluated and there were no changes warranted. It turned out to be more tweaking as opposed to full-blown changes. So now we have completed IARAP [Interim Alternate Route Adjustment Process], MIARAP [Modified Interim Alternate Route Adjustment Process], MIARAP II, JARAP, and JARAP review. This time around only two teams were activated for Tampa and surrounding cities. As a result we were forced to cover territory in Pinellas, Pasco and Hernando Counties.

With the latest RAP now *wrapping-up*, I will be able to concentrate on my elected office. I will now be more available to involve myself in the transitional period, which is well

under way with your new administration. There has been much accomplished in a short period of time; your new officers are becoming familiar with their new positions. February's Branch Union Meeting was the first conducted under the new administration. President Peacock presided over the membership with a full agenda prepared.

The next couple of months will be busy with several national events. Financial Secretary/Treasurer

JARAP Review turned out to be more tweaking as opposed to full-blown changes.

Training just concluded at the end of February. The President, Financial Secretary, and Treasurer attended this important training in Orlando. The training was very important with several key financial changes

beginning this year. Later this month, I will attend a National Rap Session in Myrtle Beach, with National President Fred Rolando scheduled to attend and address the delegation. There is also a Committee of Presidents [COP] meeting the final weekend of this month in Cincinnati. This meeting will begin to outline the NALC strategy for the upcoming contract negotiations, as well as other pertinent issues.

Tampa Letter Carriers, Inc., also has a new administration. Newly appointed Chairperson Don Thomas has been extremely busy in the early stages. There have been committees selected, a new building manager appointed, and the TLC website has been updated. The website has added more information and a new look with all the rental prices and terms. We have had some early success as rentals seem to be picking up. A big 3-day event was just booked and we are awaiting additional deposits for upcoming events. New marketing ideas for our Branch rentals are being discussed for implementation. Any

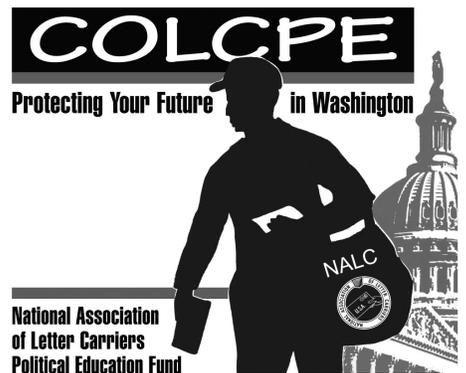


Tony Diaz
Vice President
Branch 599

ideas from you, the membership are welcomed. Contact the Building Manager's office, 813.877.4785; we need your involvement in acquiring rentals.

We have received overwhelming support from our surrounding Branches and in turn we have supported several of their events. Several Branch 599 officers attended an Alzheimer's fund raiser that Al Friedman from Branch 2008 organizes. I was invited and attended the Branch 1779 Installation Dinner. So *thanks* to Steve Halkias and Al Friedman from Branch 2008, Steve Fore and John Mitchell from Lakeland Branch 1779, and Les Stroup and Joe Henshen from Branch 1477 in St Petersburg. Long time friend of Branch 599, Matty Rose, the Florida State Association of Letter Carriers President, has also offered his support.

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



Treasurer's Report



Ray Garcia
Treasurer
Branch 599

January 2011

EXPENSES	
Monthly Salaries after Deductions	
Stewards and Duo Positions	\$3,086.94
Outgoing President total payout	\$20,622.21
Incoming President - 2 weeks	\$1,040.14
Vice President	\$1,300.13
Branch Office Secretary	\$1,956.54
Recording Secretary	\$94.35
Treasurer	\$597.49
Director of Retirees	\$23.59
Trustee	\$37.74
MBA/NSBA Rep	\$114.17
Outgoing Newspaper Editor	\$349.09
Total	\$29,222.39
Branch Meeting	
Refreshments	\$152.42
Retirement Gratuities	\$350.00
Security Guard	\$45.00
Total	\$547.42
Branch	
Office Expenses	\$1,427.29
Petty Cash Renewal	\$211.33
Rental Payment	\$600.00
Taxes	\$5,716.22
NALC Secretary/Treasurer	\$90.00
Postmaster for Postage	\$488.90
Subscription Federal Times	\$89.00
Retiree/Branch Officer Banquet	\$6,303.26
(Funeral) Flowers	\$74.90
Total	\$15,000.90
Grand Total	\$44,837.71

From the President's Desk

(Continued from page 1)

commitment, that no other agency or even any private corporation would be or is required to provide. The affect that this pre-funding is having, relates directly to closing of offices, elimination of thousands of jobs as well as adding to the stress level that this country is already experiencing from the worst recession in the past 80 years.

On a local note, many offices are dealing with situations where there are changes being made without informing the branch office or the steward in the particular station. These involve anything from standard operating procedures to collections affecting routes outside of JARAP reviews [Joint Alternative Route Adjustments Process]. This office along with the stewards are working diligently to insure that any discrepancies that occur with regard to our agreements or the contract will be complied with. The process for these matters may not be as expeditious as some may like, but one must understand when some matters cannot be resolved at the immediate level, it leads to a lengthier timetable. In some cases there have to be time limit extensions or there are cases that have gone to a higher level that are remanded back to a lower level and that adds additional time. In a perfect world there would be a representative at every station to deal with all the employees' concerns, but that is not always the case and that requires other scheduling and time extensions. Please be patient and understand that we will deal with all your concerns.

The Treasurer, Financial Secretary and President of the branch will be attending training in Orlando, February 27- March 1. The training involves rule changes for the Department of Labor reporting procedures that took effect January 1, 2011. Due to those changes and the timeliness in making the end year report that is required 90 days after the end of the fiscal year 2010, the Executive Board recommended sending the Vice-President to the Regional Rap session in Myrtle Beach, March 10-13. The Executive Board also recommended sending the President to the Committee of Presidents meeting in Cincinnati, March 26-28. We are taking every measure to keep our commitment and not send more officers than are necessary in order to keep the expense within our budget and still provide the best representation to our members.

I would like to leave you with a quote from Maya Angelou: *There is a world of difference between truth and facts. Facts can obscure truth.*

Fraternally Yours,
Alan Peacock
President, NALC Branch 599

To New Jobs

It appears that our first month in office has passed without too much fanfare. We are still trying to figure out what our exact jobs entail, but we will solve all of our problems one day at a time. We have however, paid all of our bills on time and still have maintained a balance in our checking account, so...so far so good.

This new position is so completely different from anything I have done for the past 20 years in the Union.

I do believe that we will all learn our new positions between us simply by helping one another. With my past position, I was always concerned with some form of discipline that always occurred among our carriers while working. So, your main thoughts were always to solve, settle, or rescind whatever form of discipline management imposed upon our carriers. This is a tough job to live with as a Shop Steward, because those thoughts are always on your mind. A good Shop Steward is always trying to solve a problem, no matter how small other carriers may feel that problem is in their minds. When a carrier has a problem on the workroom floor, a good Shop Steward will have the same problem.

Our hall has been with us since the 1950s, so we must preserve this legacy for our future members.

This is what makes the job so tough on an everyday basis, a constant concern that the Shop Steward always has. So why did I do that job for so long? Because I liked the challenge. If a Shop Steward cannot live with the challenge every day, then you will not survive in that job.

Now I am concerned with all of the checks that have arrived in our office, which must be deposited, tracked and copied for our records, along with the expenses. These expenses must be well within our budget so we don't live beyond our means. We are going to try to maintain a healthy balance in our checking account at the end of each month. We will try not to buy anything with next month's money this month because that's how one can quickly get into the red.

I also have to try to track every carrier who is in our Union or not for whatever reason, separated, retired, deceased, or any new member that signs up. This must be done every two weeks because the carrier's payroll accounts change all the time.

In this current recession, we must be very careful with our expenditures.

When one is working with other folks' money one cannot be too careful about how you spend that money. Also, we will bring any and all of those expenditures before the union meeting every month so as to not go over our budget.

We now must not only meet a budget, but try to save some money for the hall's future maintenance. We cannot continue to live in our great hall without maintaining it to a certain standard within our surroundings. First of all, in order to rent this great hall it must be kept in great condition, simply because the hall's rentals are a big part of the hall's survival. So, we must do a better job at saving money for its maintenance. Our hall has been with us since the 1950s, so we must preserve this legacy for our future members. Our job is easy, maintain our hall and pass on this responsibility. This same theory can be applied to our lives, save a little money every year so you can maintain yourself in the future. Remember, you will get old but you don't have to be poor in your old age. No one will take care of you when you are old, that is simply up to you.



Gilbert Cabanas
Financial Secretary
Branch 599

T-shirts can be ordered



Stamp Out Hunger
Food Drive is in May.

T-shirt order form is on Florida State Association of Letter Carriers' website: www.fsalc.com



5-Day is the Wrong Way T-shirt
order form is also on the www.fsalc.com site.

A MESSAGE FROM YOUR FELLOW UNION MEMBERS

The candidates listed below were screened by union members from 12 local unions participating in the endorsement process of the West Central Florida Federation of Labor, AFL-CIO Central Labor Council, and approved by the Council body. They were found to be supportive of worker issues and are deserving of your support.

Tampa Mayoral & City Council Election March 1

Mayor
Bob Buckhorn

City Council, District 4
Harry Cohen

City Council, District 1
Mike Suarez

City Council, District 5
Frank Reddick

City Council, District 2
Mary Mulhern

City Council, District 6
Charlie Miranda

City Council, District 3
Jason Wilson

City Council, District 7
No recommendation

Early Voting Sites

Early voting for the General Election begins February 14 and ends February 26, 2011

County Center
601 E. Kennedy Boulevard
Tampa, FL 33602

West Tampa Branch Library
2312 West Union Street
Tampa, FL 33607

Robert L. Gilder Elections Service Center
2514 N. Falkenburg Road
Tampa, FL 33619

North Tampa Library
8916 N. Boulevard
Tampa, FL 33604

C. Blythe Andrews Library
2607 East Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard
Tampa, FL 33610

New Tampa Regional Library
10001 Cross Creek Boulevard
Tampa, FL 33647

Jan Kaminis Platt Regional Library
3910 South Manhattan Avenue
Tampa, FL 33611

Pd. Pol. Adv. Paid for by the WCCFL COPE CCE independent of any candidate.
West Central Florida Federation of Labor, AFL-CIO CLC
PO Box 76108, Tampa, FL 33675
Phone: (863) 583-3330 Email: wccffofl@tampabay.rr.com

Sharing Our Members' Joys & Sorrows

Jerry Sainz retired!



Alan Peacock and Jerry Sainz

President Alan Peacock recognized **Jerry Sainz** and presented him with a check from the Branch for his retirement [Hilldale] during our Branch meeting on February 3.

Congratulations! **Orbe Andux** is our latest member to receive his gold card as a 50-year NALC member.

Recovering **Michael Crowder** [Interbay] is in Health South Largo, for rehab after suffering a stroke.

Hector Hernandez [Carrollwood] was injured [not at work] and is scheduled for surgery; he'll be out of work for a few months.

Our deepest sympathy and prayerful support is extended to Adelfa Lopez and family at the passing of her husband, **Albert S. Lopez** [retired Carrier], February 3; to the family of **Debora Lea Corbett** [retired Carrier], February 11; to **William Travis** [retired] and family at the passing of his mother; to **Sue Chin** [Interbay] and family at the passing of her mother; and to **Matthew Loechelt** [Town N'Country] and family at the passing of his father.

Looking from the Outside

Jaime R. Rodriguez
Retiree
Branch 599

In writing this article, my first thought that comes to mind is the sincere and honest way that Dook Ramotar wrote his article. When Dook started his article for the branch paper, he asked me what name to give his article. My suggestion was based on my favorite oldie *Stand by Me* and I asked him, *How about STANDING WITH YOU*. He replied, *How about Running With You?* [*Running with You* became my favorite reading; I miss it.] I met Dook through JC Howard. When Dook came into our branch he made contact with JC and Julius (JC) told me that Dook wanted us to help and teach him the ropes as a union shop steward. In no time Dook was off and running to the point that after a while JC and I would call on him for his expertise and the three of us walked together handling many grievances for our brothers and sisters.

Dook was an extraordinary human being. He was very intelligent, a good

communicator, and he was very pleasant with everyone he dealt with involving all carriers, clerk and management. We all loved and miss him.

I came home for the period that Dook was running for executive vice president and we hit the campaign trail starting at five-thirty in the morning; that election resulted in a draw. The second time around became very interesting; we created this idea because of the closeness to the Christmas holiday: we made a holiday greeting card for every station we visited and left boxes of Krispy Kreme Doughnuts. The end result, we all know. Dook was an outstanding union officer and in his entire endeavor he always gave it his best. He left us too



early and he had a lot to offer.

At the installation dinner of the Branch 599 officers I know that Dook was standing by the flag smiling and giving us a thumbs-up. He was dedicated to his union and the people that he served at his station.

When Alan Peacock decided to run for branch president, he told me that Dook wanted him to run and I told Al, *I'm sure you got his support*. Dook wasn't treated well by the past administration in our union. His last days were made difficult; one thing for sure, Dook never complained.

Dook was an honorable man and a great father to his children. I will miss you, Brother.

Members & Guests Enjoyed Retirees Banquet and Installation of Officers





Ernie Kirkland
National Director of
Retired Members
installed new officers

Matty Rose, President
FL State Assn Letter Carriers
assisted with installation



Retirees Corner

On February 7, retirees met for breakfast at the *Coffee Cup Restaurant*. In attendance were, Sy Adel, Norman Bobeau, Bill Mandikas, Sherwood Rubin, Jim Stoffer, Ted Freeman, Darius Lundy, Don Holt, Ray Etheridge, José Oliva, Don Stephens,

Jim Follman, John Gebo, Alan Peacock, Kent Thran, Cecil R. Edge, and Denio Sanchez a good time was had by all.

Remember, everyone is invited to come to the breakfast held on the first Monday of each month. The next breakfast will be on March 7 at the *Coffee Cup* on Hubert Street. So come join us!

As I stated at the last Union meeting, for those of you unable to attend, if there are any activities or social events you would like us to start, let

me know and if we can get enough people to participate I WILL DO everything in my power to get it off the ground. Just to throw out a few ideas, we could do a Pinocle club, a Poker club, a Euchre club or maybe fishing charters or poker boat trips. Let me know if you're interested and we'll get together and have some fun!

In Unity,
Lance Jones



Lance Jones
Dir. of Retirees
Branch 599

Retirees Breakfast

Monday March 7 9 AM

Coffee Cup

4407 N. Hubert Avenue, Tampa

More Photos of Retirees Banquet & Installation of Officers



Thank you,
Dee Skinner,
Iris Aeppel, and
Rodna Kimelman
Kirk for sharing
your photos with us!



The New Year has brought new responsibilities to several of our brothers and sisters and we all need to help in any way we can. As the new chairperson for TLC, it is very obvious to me that we have a lot of work ahead of us. We will need to hire professionals for some jobs and there is also work that we the members can do. This is going to be a major expense, but one that must be met if we are going to preserve our Hall. The upside to all of this is we have an offer to buy our property across the street. Those funds will allow us the cash needed

We must set up a *budget*, to save money for the future needs of our Hall.

to pay for the roof and air conditioning work that is needed. This will also go a long way towards paying off the construction loan for remodeling the bathrooms to be ADA compliant, or we may have enough cash left to pay off our loan. We have two thoughts on this: first pay off the loan, and second sit on the money in case of an emergency while we pay interest on the loan. Then we must set up a *budget*, to save money for the future needs of our Hall. We cannot continue to spend money the way it has been spent in the past, as it is no longer coming in as abundantly as it once did. We can and we must adjust our spending to that of the cash coming in minus what we are setting aside for repairs and future maintenance needs. We can get this done together working as one for the good of our Union Hall. What are you willing to do to help our aging Hall?

Our new officers are hard at work for us learning new jobs and representing us. They need our prayers and support to be the best representatives that they can be. We elected them to do a job for us...now we all need to stand with all our officers as we go forward. This is not about who you supported or who won that you did not support, it is about working together as one for the wellbeing of Branch 599. We will never all agree on the same candidate, but we all need to support the will of the majority of our brothers and sisters that voted. That is what keeps democracy working.

A word on safety when you are delivering your routes: follow all the Safety Rules that the USPS has in place. These Safety Rules are designed to protect you and the USPS. You may not like them or not understand why you have to obey them. I can give you two reasons: USPS pays you to obey them and my personal favorite...it takes you longer to deliver the mail. What a lot of Carriers fail to understand is, if you are caught disobeying any of the Safety Rules by anyone outside of your office, it is not going to matter if your Supervisor likes you because you have been saving them time by not following Safety Rules...that will not matter to the Supervisor that writes you up for unsafe habits. Do the best you can for the USPS, but not at the expense of not following the Safety Rules. Be

careful in doing your job; the job you save may be yours. If you're not sure about the Safe Driving Rules, ask your Supervisor for a copy. Get to know and understand the rules and most importantly, follow them. They are designed to protect the USPS and you. Even though management causes grievances because they don't like to follow our National and Local Agreements, it is still a great job. I felt privileged to serve my customers, more than I disliked some of the Supervisors I worked for. I also worked for some supervisors that I was proud to address as Supervisor. We experience all kinds of people and supervisors in life; we can learn something from each type...what to do and not do. Treat people and supervisors the way you expect to be treated, not the way they may treat you; two wrongs will never make things right. You stay in control of your feelings...they belong to you and no one else. You can disagree with anyone without being disagreeable. Our tempers are our downfall! Stay calm and you control the disagreement or situation. I am not saying this is easy to do, but it is well worth it when you do maintain control.

TLC will Meet

Tuesday March 22 7 PM
Conference Room

All active and retired members of Branch 599 are also *members* of Tampa Letter Carriers, Inc.

TLC Board of Directors

Chair	Don Thomas	Board Members	Fernando Quintanilla	Maggie Lancaster
Vice Chair	Tony Diaz	Alan Peacock	Gary Stone	Ralph Fultz
Treasurer	John Gebo	Bill Mandikas	George McEndree	Ray Garcia
Recording Secretary	Terry Franklin	Bill Travis	John DeRosa	Ray Wallace
		David Skelton	John Rowland	Silven Zimmerman
			José Oliva	

A Point of Personal Privilege

Come on Man!

President Obama extended the Bush Tax Cuts for the next two years in a compromise with the Republican majority in the House of Representatives and the minority of Republicans in the US Senate in order to pass other critical legislation. I consider this a sell out by the President because of the cost to our nation as a whole! According to Newsweek Magazine, former President George W. Bush *earns* \$4.2 million from paid speeches, public appearances, and other such common folk gatherings. This tax cut gave him a paltry \$187,552 extra each year. This is just on this cash and does not include the tax cuts that are available on President Bush's investment income? He, of course, was highly vocal in calling for this extension and even requested that it become a permanent law. Can you say greed? There are even more red-blooded Americans that have been extremely vocal in their efforts to extend the Bush tax cuts. I am not one of those individuals and there shouldn't be many individuals earning less than \$250,000 a year that might be included in the following list. Number one on the list of great Americans is Rush Limbaugh. His yearly salary is \$58.7 million. This extension allowed him to sock away an additional \$2,689,135 million a year in savings! Second place goes to a great American humanitarian, Glen Beck. His yearly income was less than Rush's and only amounted to \$33 million a year with only an additional \$1,512,352 million in chump change a year as a tax break. We come to Mr. Sean Hannity or as my late father called him *Little Lord Fauntleroy*. He only received \$22 million with yearly rebate of a shabby \$1,006,352. Bill O'Reilly made a minute \$20 million and received \$914,352 additionally in

I'm not against individuals or corporations making money, but how much is too much?

savings. Sarah I called the President at 3 AM and he didn't answer the phone Palin got \$14 million, but only received \$638,352. While Newt Contract with America Gingrich made a paltry \$5.5 million and received \$247,352 in tax cuts!

The Republicans continue to state that the left has hijacked the United States and they want to take America back. To what point or period of time is questionable. This is in reference to the elimination of every program or legislation that is and was beneficial to the middle class and the poor! The Republicans state that the tax system unfairly attacks the wealthy while it panders to the middle class and the poor. I guess the de-regulation of corporations isn't pandering? Under

George W. Bush, a Republican, in 2005 the highest tax on earned income was set at 35% for the wealthy and they believed this to be too high. However, the tax code in 1953 during the administration of Republican Dwight D. Eisenhower was set at 92% for the wealthy. Under President John Kennedy the tax system was reduced to 70%. During Ronald Reagan's Presidency the tax for the highest rate of income, individuals had their taxes lowered from 50% to 28% and those paying taxes at the bottom rate were raised from 11% to 15%. I think this was known as the *tinkle down theory*? I believe President Clinton raised this to 34.6% and George W. Bush lowered them to 29.7%. Had the Congress and President Obama eliminated the supposed Bush tax cuts it would have allowed the creation of thirty million American jobs! The starting yearly income for these employed individuals would be \$30,000 a year. This would only be a dent in the list of the unemployed but wouldn't this help stimulate a stagnant

and sagging economy?

How many of you have noticed the constant rise and fall of the price of a gallon of gasoline? The price decreases by a few cents then goes up by 5 to 10 cents a gallon. Yet this daily fluctuation of prices supposedly does not affect our cost of living increases! I believe this does because the increase in the price at the pumps has a domino effect on everything we consume, such as food, clothing, electricity, etc. Everything in our society has or will be affected by such increases. To prove a point about increases, while on the way to the Union Hall on Wednesday, February 2, when I drove by a Race Track gas station at 8:45 AM, the price of 87 octane was \$2.999 a gallon. When I returned by this same station at 5:15 PM that same day, the price had increased to \$3.099 a gallon. This was an increase of 10¢ a gallon in just 8½ hours. Wouldn't you appreciate 10¢ an hour pay raise or a COLA increase of 1.04% every eight hours? Then I read where Exxon had a modest quarterly profit of \$63 billion. What is wrong with this? Nothing I guess if you are a major stockholder in that company. What kind of tax breaks does this company receive or what I call *corporate welfare*? How much do they pay in taxes? Is it comparable dollar for dollar to what we pay on our incomes? What kind of write-offs are they allowed? We, the American public, are not allowed these same types of write-offs because during the presidency of Reagan, the great communicator eliminated most of the middle class' deductions when filing individual tax forms. I'm not against individuals or corporations making money, but how much is too much?

If you tell the truth you don't have to remember anything. Mark Twain



Ray Garcia
Treasurer
Branch 599

And the Beat Goes On

Ray Wallace
TLC Board
Branch 599

Well hello to all of you! It's been a while since I've written to you. I wanted to write earlier but was told by the past Branch 599 President that he did not like what I was writing, so I stopped, even though the paper was *The opinions are those of the writer and not the opinions of Branch 599*. Well any way that's all over with; thanks to the vote in the last election we now have an all new slate of officers in Branch 599. How many times have you ever seen every one of the officers replaced in any branch election? I don't think too many times and I think it shows that something wasn't right. Well *thank the good Lord*. I've been around quite awhile and have had the opportunity to write this article for a number of Branch 599 presidents from the mid 1970s when I, as President of Brandon merged with Branch 599 Tampa and the President then was John Bailey and Vice President Barney Weatherford, both now deceased.

We now have Alan Peacock, whom I've known for a lot of years as well, as he was once the Vice President. In January, all the writers were saying *Thank-you* for voting for them. I was

going to run for the position of Trustee and was nominated for it by Don Thomas, but in thinking it over, with my wife just getting over cancer and still having a lot of medical problems, I thought better of it. If I can't give 100% to any job, then why do it? So, I got out of it. But I did run once again for the board of Tampa Letter Carriers [TLC]. The new chair, Don Thomas, has gotten us off to a good start with nine different committees and each of the board members on one or two of them. The number one item is to try to make money for TLC and the Branch and save it for repairs, etc.

They hope to have some functions on Saturday nights where everyone is invited to have a good time and possibly win something, but at the same time donate a few bucks for your union. So we do hope all of you will come out.

Branch 599 has lost a lot of members to cancer and one was José Hernandez, retired from Brandon and 20 years in the US Air Force; an Ybor native and so very proud of his

Spanish heritage. When he left the Post Office I missed hearing him talk, as he never shut up, but he didn't miss a beat on putting the mail in the case. Through the internet we got even closer and were at every wake when a Brandon Post Office employee died. One time I said to José, *one day one of us will be looking down at the other*. José fought the battle with cancer and was winning more times than most, but

the end came in December. It was extremely rough for me to look down at my friend José (tears). José and his wife never missed a Brandon retiree

luncheon. Jim Fowke went out of his way to put together our luncheon in January and quite a few showed up, carriers and clerks; we also welcome active carriers to stop by if you're off or even if you're not off.

In the February Postal Record, I counted 60 carriers from Branch 599 that give to COLCPE, a lot of them retirees; this is a disgrace for a Branch of our size!!!

It's been a while since I've written to you...

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