



The Twig of the Branch



Branch 1477 West Coast Florida Letter Carriers
Serving:

St. Petersburg — Largo — Dunedin — Pinellas Park — Indian Rocks Beach
Punta Gorda — Englewood — Bradenton Beach — Palmetto — Ellenton

VOLUME 341

VOICE OF BRANCH 1477

December , 2005

NOTICE OF ELECTIONS

The election of the nominated delegates to the 2006 NALC Convention in Las Vegas Nevada will take place on December 8, 2005 at the Letter Carrier's Hall - 5369 Park Blvd., Pinellas Park, Florida by secret ballot. NOTE: Article 4. Section 3. (F) of the By-Laws provide that the President & Executive Vice President, by virtue of their office, shall be paid delegates.

**VOTING POLLS WILL BE OPEN THURSDAY, DECEMBER 8, 2005
FROM 4:00 p.m. TO 7:00 p.m.**



Seasons Greetings
From
Branch 1477
O.D., Les, T.C.
Officers
and Shop Stewards

**NEXT BRANCH MEETING Thursday, December 8, 2003 at 7:00 PM at the Letter Carrier
Hall Branch 1477, N.A.L.C. (727) 531-1477**

PRESIDENT'S REPORT:

By, O.D. Elliott

DELEGATE ELECTIONS - On December 8, 2005, you will elect Paid Delegates to attend the 2006 NALC Convention to be held in Las Vegas, Nevada during the week of August 14 - 19, 2006. When you vote, I ask that you consider your choices carefully. Consider the nominees attendance and participation in, not only Branch meetings, but other Branch functions as well. Consider their efforts on behalf of and contributions to the betterment of Branch 1477. Its' always important to elect delegates who will best represent the members of Branch 1477. However, this year it is of particular importance, since this Convention will be held in August, just prior to the beginning of Contract Negotiations in November for a new National Agreement. Some of the actions taken by the delegates at the 2006 NALC Convention will be used as a guide by our National Officers in the upcoming negotiations and some of the actions may well direct our National Officers to take certain positions.

So again, I ask that you consider your choices very carefully. The delegates of the 2006 NALC Convention may have an impact on Letter Carriers (active and retired) and their families for years to come.

HOLIDAY GREETINGS - With the Holiday Season upon us, the Letter Carriers will, once again, have the opportunity to prove that they are among the finest and hardest working people in the nation. As they are each year at this time, they will be faced with a tremendous increase in mail volume, including advertisements, packages, and greeting cards. Yet, as always, the Letter Carriers will rise to the occasion and provide cheerful, efficient, and timely delivery that the American people have come to expect and deserve. Thanks to you and our Sister and Brother Letter Carriers across our great nation, America has the finest Postal Service in the world.

To all the Brothers and Sisters of Branch 1477, and to your families, personally, and on behalf of the Officers and Stewards of Branch 1477, I wish you peace and happiness during the Holiday Season, and a safe, healthy, happy, and God Blessed New Year.

LES TALK

Executive Vice President

Les Stroup

lstroup@tampabay.rr.com

The Shop Stewards of this Union are the eyes, ears, and the voice on the workroom floor. The following Shop Stewards and Alternates were hard at work at our monthly (November) Shop Steward Meeting: **Chris Hubble, Rudy Betancourt, Dennis Jones, Tanya Gillespie, Robert Brown, Glenn Fagan, Lloyd Cole, Steve Warshawer, Doug Eggers, Larry Gaskin, Keith Northup, Fred Assidy, Rick Hadden, Miguel Sanchez, Bonnie Baldwin, Lori Bell, Tom Phillips, Patricia Meeks, Bob Meeks and Joe Rudolph.**

IF YOUR SHOP STEWARD IS NOT LISTED, ASK THEM WHY?

Shop Stewards and Alternates attended the (November) South Meeting. **Lori Bell, Jamie White, Maurine Bibens, Barb Brooks.** The following carriers also attended: **Bill Bonass, Bill Murray.**

Without someone to represent all Union Letter Carriers, Management would steamroll craft employees at every turn to get the results that they desire. If you think that you have problems now, take a second to contemplate what it would be like if Management had no opposition. Not a pretty sight is it? Support your Shop Steward and show Management that we are united. The Steward is the key to a strong Union.

Article 15 of the National Agreement mandates meetings at different steps of the grievance procedure. Additionally, Article 17 and the law, give Letter Carriers rights to Union representation during certain types of meeting with Management representatives. These meetings are important and Stewards should not permit Supervisors to short-change them. They provide an opportunity for the parties to fulfill mutual obligation to attempt to resolve grievances at the lowest possible step. They also present opportunities for the Steward to step outside the normal superior-subordinate relationship with Supervisors and meet them on a level playing field. In these meetings, the Steward is the Supervisor's equal in authority. Such opportunities should not be minimized. Stewards and other Union grievance representatives should know and exercise their rights in meetings with management. The most frequent types of meetings are Informal and Formal Step A meetings and *Weingarten* situations or interrogations by Postal Inspectors.

During the Informal Step A Discussion the supervisor and the Steward (unless the grievant represents

him/herself) have full authority to resolve the grievance. It should be a meeting between equals. Both parties must use the JCAM as their guide to the contract. A resolution at this informal stage does not establish a precedent. While either representative may consult with higher levels of Management or the Union on an issue in dispute, this section establishes that the parties to the initial discussion of a grievance retain independent authority to settle the dispute. Where it can be demonstrated that Management's representative lacked authority, i.e. someone else made the decision, discipline has sometimes been overturned by Arbitrators. The presence of a grievant at an Informal Step A meeting is a matter for the grievant and the Steward to decide. Management may not prohibit the presence of the grievant at the meeting. The Union should weight any relevant factors and decide on the presence of grievants at grievance meetings.

If a Letter Carrier instead files his or her own grievance, Management must give the Steward or other Union Representative the opportunity to be present during any portion of the discussion which involves adjustment or settlement of the grievance. See JCAM page 15-2 and pre-arbitration settlement M-01065, April 2, 1982. The failure to give the Union this right is properly the subject of a separate grievance.

If Management refuses to hold a timely Informal Step A Meeting or issue a timely decision, the grievance should be appealed to Formal Step A without a meeting or decision unless the parties have agreed to an extension of the time limits. See Article 15.3.C and JCAM page 15-11. It is strongly recommended, but not required that any extension of the time limits be in writing.

I want to extend to all our Brothers and Sisters, and their families, a safe and Happy Holiday Season and a healthy and prosperous New Year.

IN SOLIDARITY

REPORT OF THE FIRST VICE PRESIDENT: By, Joe Henschen

I think we need to ask ourselves some important questions. What Business are we in? As important what are our responsibilities as members of this Union? These basic questions at first glance do not appear to have an insightful response. You can be sure most small and large business owners alike ask these questions frequently. Why do I bring this up? Simply we are busi-

ness owners. Each of us as members has a stake in Branch 1477. It is up to us to be responsible business owners. It means thinking of our organization different. More like a business. In fact that is what we are.

What business are we in? You can define it many different ways. We are a Union. We are a non-profit organization. Our purpose could be to educate and represent. We could say our business' purpose is to protect a way of life. Those could all be a part of how we define our business. Defining the business is the easy part because there are no wrong answers. Every response to that question could have a part in the business. Attendance at branch meetings illustrates this. The officer reports deal with many different topics. The financial, legislative and educational aspects of the business are all covered. There are reports directed at our retired brothers and sisters. You cannot protect a way of life any better than fighting for benefits promised to those individuals. Of course there are reports of representation. This is what we own. This is our business.

What are our responsibilities as owners of this business? There were many investors before us in our business. We as current officers and owners owe something to them. Many of the benefits this business has fought to achieve those previous partners fought for. It should be a responsibility of ours to ensure they maintain what they were promised. It takes a great deal of support and a small measure of financial commitment to protect a way of life. We all support the national, state and local organization through our dues. Sometimes as business owners more capital is required. Our support of the political action fund is one way to infuse some of the capital required to protect the benefits of our partners. I know some owners will balk at this statement. Dues do not support COLCPE. Those monies cannot by law, come from our dues structure. It is our responsibility as a business owner to help that fund remain solvent. When the NALC was founded its business was to lobby congress for our wages and benefits. Our business was designed in part as a lobbying group. As we evolved and gained collective bargaining we diversified as many businesses do. We no longer needed to beg congress for our wages. We grew away from our core purpose. Our business now needs to get back to the basics of our plan. Postal re-organization is needed to protect our way of life. An automatic deduction in any form is necessary to fight that fight and protect our interests. That is what responsible business owners do.

Education is another responsibility of an owner. Training and learning go hand in hand. We all have a vested interest in our business. Companies pay the managers to learn and teach. As owners we should make every

effort to take the opportunity to learn. Branch meetings, newsletters, web pages are all sources for learning. E'Activist participation is another. Every owner should be an E'Activist. When the need arises to fight city hall, successful business owners are prepared. E'Activism helps prepare our business.

In the representation of its members, through knowledge comes strength. If we as owners of our business fail to heed the learning opportunities unnecessary discipline will be more frequent. Our organization has clear objectives. It is now up to us to help reach them. We need more participation at Branch meetings. More automatic deductions to COLCPE and every business owner should be an activist. We need to learn through meeting attendance. These things can make our business interests stronger. Who better to take charge than the owners?

SECRETARY'S REPORT:

By, Harold Strzyzynski

BRANCH 1477, N.A.L.C.

GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

November 10, 2005

Meeting called to order at 7:00 P.M. by President O.D. Elliott.

Invocation by John Bourlon

Pledge of Allegiance led by Les Stroup

Minutes accepted as printed in Twig for 10/13/05. (Motion by Gene Carroll, second, passed.)

NEW MEMBERS: No new members

O.D. Elliott unable to talk due to a bad cold and turned chair over to executive Vice President Stroup.

OFFICER'S REPORTS:

SECRETARY: Harry Strzyzynski – Reading of Official Correspondence (2). One was a letter to Bradenton withdrawing from merge considerations.

TREASURER: - Tom Phillips – Financial Report. (Motion to accept by Dana Bigley) It received a second and the motion passed.

DIRECTOR OF RETIREES: Gene Markey – No New Retirees.

MBA DIRECTOR: Bob Brown – This months Postal Record will show the various policies available in the

M.B.A.

HEALTH BENEFIT DIRECTOR: Ken Grasso – November 14 to December 12 is Open Season. Flexible spending accounts are now available.

TRUSTEE REPORT: Keith Northup – All book audited and everything in order.

EDITOR: John Bourlon – No Report.

SECOND VICE PRESIDENT: Greg Welsh – Excused.

FIRST VICE PRESIDENT: Joe Henschen – Excused.

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT: Les Stroup – **Sad Report:**

Scott Cole – Retiree St. Petersburg – Passed away
Buddy Schroeder – Euclid – Father passed away
Joe Henschen – First Vice President – Father seriously ill.

Congratulation:

Dennis Futch – Seminole – Birth of son (Garrett) born 11/8/05 7 lbs, 2 oz, 19 ¾ long
Everett & Margaret Perkins – Retiree St. Petersburg – Granddaughter born 10/26/05 (Angie Sandra) 7 lbs 6 oz.
Dana Bigley – Seminole – Granddaughter born 10/24/05 (Grace Marie)

Our Web Site is up and running Annual Leave Schedules available now.

POLITICAL LIASON: Leo Murray – Senate has crowded calendar Postal Reforms pushed back problem with Postal rates or odd size post cards. Senator Collins will push for vote as soon as this is hashed out.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS: Rereading of Eye Glass Plan amendment which will be voted upon in December.

NEW BUSINESS: Nominations for Delegates to the National Convention 8/14/06 thru 8/19/06. 41 Delegates have been nominated. Absentee Ballots now available, voting on Delegates in December. O.D. attended Health Benefits Seminar.

GOOD OF THE SERVICE: O.D. Elliott –

The Executive Board has chosen the Casaurina Westin

Hotel in Las Vegas as our host hotel.

Penalty Overtime exclusion starts December 3 till December 30.

FSALC held Seminar in Orlando on 10/28/05 thru 10/30/05 our New Stewards attended, everyone said our new Stewards were head and shoulders above the other attendees. We even had one Steward, Lori Bell, from Punta Gorda pay her own way to the Seminar.

No FSALC Seminar will be held in St. Petersburg. Jacksonville Branch 53 will now host it at the Jacksonville, Hilton which is a Union Hotel.

There will be some withholding of Residual Vacancies in our District because of Hurricane Katrina. Bill Young took issue because they would not pay relocation fees to all Carriers, whether they voluntarily or involuntarily relocated. Postal Service and the NALC reached agreement on this issue and will now pay those fees. Suncoast District may be receiving some Carriers from the affected areas in New Orleans and Mississippi., as the USPS has changed their minds, and now will pay those fees.

During Pay Period 12-25 (pay date 12/16), New Pay rates take effect with raises from \$418.00 to \$568.00 depending on grade and Step.

This year alone Letter Carriers have received raises (2 COLAS and Latest Annual raise) ranging from \$1354.00 to \$1504.00 depending on grade and step.

Be sure to vote for the National Convention Delegate of your Choice. This will be the last National Convention before our Contract is up. Your vote is important.

WINNERS OF DRAWINGS:

50/50 – \$31.00 Maurine Bibens
Lotto – Rosa Morales
Shirt won by Pam Poineau

Auxiliary Drawings

1. O.D. Elliott
2. Claudia Harvey
3. Leo Murray
4. Albert Giusto
5. Paul Rountree
6. Lori Bell won the Turkey

Motion to adjourn, by Mike Miller

REPORT OF THE EDITOR

By, John Bourlon

It doesn't matter where you go nor with whom you talk, there is always conversation about how the Letter Carriers perform their jobs. Really, there is only one way. **BY THE BOOK.** Those who work by the book should never need to fear discipline since the Union will have a strong defense to any discipline that may be issued. For 25 years I always encouraged you to read the M-41 Manual. Know IT'S CONTENTS, ask questions about it and follow it to the "Tee" This is especially true as it relates to Mail Count and Route Inspections. If you perform the same each day, you will have a successful result. I have heard Mr. Elliott echo those words. I have heard Joe Henschen use those words many times in his Class on Route Inspection. A BIG mistake occurs when Letter Carriers begin to interpret the rules. Don't do it. The boss may not always be right but he/she is always going to be boss. If you have questions confront your boss. If you feel you are getting incorrect information you must carry out his/her instructions, the consult your Union Representative. Have a nice HOLIDAY SEASON.

PLEASE VOTE FOR ME!!!!

I have been nominated to be a DELEGATE for the NALC National Convention. If elected this will be an honor. I have been attending these Conventions since 1970, except for the year I was incapacitated and have many years of experience in representation of the Letter Carriers back home. If you elect me as a delegate I give my **PROMISE** that I will do all in my power to insure your interest is protected in the Convention. I will attend all meetings and bring information you need back home. Please cast your vote for me. Thanks

John Bourlon

HEALTH BENEFIT REPRESENTATIVE:

By, Ken Grasso

In 2006 the NALC Plan will again present a health plan packed with service, benefits and value. There will be many diverse offerings in FEHB - traditional plans (like NALC), HMOs, Consumer Driven and the most recent addition of High Deductible Health Plans. But you will

need to look wide and far to find the consistency, outstanding values in coverage, recognized leading service and comprehensive benefits that could even match the NALC Plan. The active letter carrier biweekly premium will rise \$3.32 for self only and \$6.42 for self & family. The annuitant monthly change is \$10.37 for self only and \$20.89 for self and family—while still yielding highly competitive rates.

"NALC will maintain its comprehensive plan benefits and even add a few features. It is important that we stave off rising member costs by holding firm on our program features and minimize out-of-pocket costs for medical deductibles, coinsurances and prescription drug costs." s t a t e d P r e s i d e n t Y o u n g .

Director Young noted that the NALC has accomplished this through the conviction of President Young and is equally as proud to offer good news on a few program advances. "Exciting news is coming for 100% coverage for laboratory expenses. Preventive care is being expanded to add a benefit for abdominal aortic aneurysm screening." added Director Young. "Medicare enrollees that enroll in Medicare Part D prescription drug program will find that the Plan is prepared to coordinate these new benefits with their existing NALC benefits, and in most cases, further reduce their out-of-pocket expenses."

However, by staying with the NALC Plan coverage instead of taking Part D, most members will find that the NALC provides better coverage than the new Part D coverage. The Plan will attest to this fact in its brochure, so that members who do not enroll, and later decide to do so, will not incur the Medicare penalty for failing to enroll in Part D at your first opportunity to do so. Members will find a new 10% coinsurance for inpatient mental health and substance abuse care that will now align with other PPO hospital level benefits.

President Young ask that letter carriers shop carefully during this Open Season. "Ask questions as you review your choices and shop this year. Only then can you make the best decision for you and your family." President Young added, "We hope your answers can be found by enrolling in the NALC Plan and there is no better time to do so. Union run, union sponsored, union owned - Your Union! We are only at our best, when we join together."

VOTE FOR ME

Voting for Delegate to the National Convention is coming up on December 8th. I have attended National Conventions in the past. As your Health Benefits Officer, I will report on events and news of the Convention on my return. I would appreciate your vote.

Thank you

Ken Grasso

THE RETIREMENT CORNER:

By, James E. (Gene) Markey

The **Largo/Seminole Retiree Breakfast Group** met on November 3, 2005 the following attended: **Bill Guenther, Ray Reed, Fred Bindon, Bill Koutney, Bruce Davis, Bob Miller, Bob Crowson, Richard A. Rink, Ellen Foster, Sam Miller, Pat Grant, Eamon Grant, Virginia Hopkins, Ed Joyner, John Hammock, and Rufus King.**

These retirees met at Boris Family Restaurant.

The next **Largo/Seminole Retiree Breakfast Group** will meet on Thursday December 1, 2005 at **Boris Family Restaurant** 11411 Ulmerton Road.

The **St. Petersburg Retiree Breakfast Club** met on November 16, 2005 at Denny's Restaurant (due to a gas leak at Dennys we had to move to the Egg Platter) the following attended: **Everett Perkins, John Layner, Jamie Wilson, Dick Compher, Bob and Dottie Kaufman, and Bob Trimbul.**

The next **St. Petersburg Retiree Breakfast** will be held on December 21th, 2005 at **Denny's Restaurant**, U.S. 19 and 50th Avenue North in St. Petersburg.

These breakfasts are always interesting and the breakfast is "Dutch treat".

Congratulations to Sister **Pam Ratcliffe** of **Dunedin** who retired in November. We wish you a long, happy and healthy retirement. We would like to invite you to attend one of the Retiree Breakfasts held each month.

COLA

Retirees under the Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS) will receive a cost-of-living adjustment of 4.1 percent in 2006 based on the September CPI-W, the final month of the year-long period reflecting the increase in the CPI-W between the third quarter of 2004 and the third quarter of 2005 — the criteria for setting the COLA.

Retirees under the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS) will receive a COLA of 3.1 percent. Under current law, FERS COLA increases are set at 1 percentage point below the CSRS COLA if the CSRS COLA is 3 percent or higher. **I want to take this time to wish everyone Happy and Safe Holidays!!!**

**DELEGATE FOR THE NALC
NATIONAL CONVENTION**

Brothers and Sisters of Branch 1477, if you did not request an absentee ballot, I urge you to please come out to the Union meeting on December 8, 2005 and vote for the delegates you feel will best represent you at the National Convention in August 2006.

I have served Branch 1477 as Sergeant-at-Arms (1 term), Trustee (3 terms) and Director of Retirees for the last 20 years. I would appreciate your vote. But, no matter who you vote for, please vote.

James E. Markey
Director of Retirees
Branch 1477, NALC, AFL/CIO

**PRODUCTS OF THE MBA:
By, Bob Brown**

I've worked with my share of Dysfunctional Supervisors, Control Freaks, Dangerous Personalities and bosses who don't have a clue. Its obvious to see the impact they have on their Carriers. The working environment is tense, hostile and intimidating. Carriers will spend their time complaining about the harassment and looking over their shoulder thinking "What am I doing wrong now", when they could be a positive force on the workroom floor and building a stronger future for the Post Office through Customer Connect. But when your constantly told your not good enough, why bother.

It makes you wonder, why does upper Management

think that people of limited communication skills, no leadership qualities, but a love of DOIS can be the right choice for a Supervisor. Who Knows!!!

The late Peter Drucker, revered as the Father of Modern Management, once said that dedicated employees are key to the success of any corporation, marketing and innovations should come before worries about finances. No matter what, serve your customers with diligence and cheer. Show them that they made the right choice in using our Postal Service.

Just a Thought.

If a chicken crosses the road..... is the poultry in motion?

**TRUSTEE REPORT:
By, Larry Gaskin**

Does history really repeat itself? It's beginning to look that way in the Seminole office. Discipline for petty, ridiculous and even non existent violations is rampant. Obviously, this is Management's way to pull the TEAM together and reduce the number of hours used daily. In Management's zeal to discipline, they seem to have forgotten a violation must exist. But fear not, they found a way around this minor detail. If a violation doesn't exist, just create one.

This is not the first time that our Carriers have endured this type of treatment but we had hoped it would never happen again. We've dealt with it before, and we will deal with it again. What is really annoying about this is having to deal with the same people in Management. Their tactics didn't work in the past so I guess they are just limited in Management abilities. Yet, they still have jobs. Go figure.

Last month, I referred to our Station Manager's "do more with less". I'll give you an idea of how our Management team leads by example. The Largo/Seminole office is allotted one Postmaster, one Station Manager and a bunch of Supervisors and 204-Bs. The staff, for as long as I can remember, consist of one Postmaster, one Station Manager, two acting Station Managers and all the others. Does the word "top-heavy" come to mind? These are the same people who tell the craft employees to "do more with less". With all this massive brain power you would think everything would run smoothly. Well, guess again. At 11 a.m. every day, most of the exit doors are locked, for security reasons. This worked fine when the mail volume was down and

the Carriers were on the street before 11. Now, with the increased volume, Carriers are leaving later, yet the doors are still locked at the same time. Does the term "time wasting practice" come to mind? Once again I forget, that only refers to craft employees.

Now something on safety. Recently, one of our Carriers had an unusual experience with one of his customers. A teenage male exposed himself while the Carrier was nearing his mail box. The Carrier reported this immediately and Postal Inspectors dealt with the situation. Always report inappropriate behavior ASAP. This will protect you and warn others to the problem.

Last but not least. The day of our December meeting is also the day we vote for the delegates to represent us at the National Convention next August. You owe it to yourself to exercise your right to vote. Don't allow everyone else to pick your representative. Vote for the people who will work for you and defend your contractual rights. I have, and will continue to, fight for our members to the best of my abilities. Obviously, I would appreciate your vote. Your vote is a powerful tool, use it.

Stay Safe.

**OWCP INFORMATION:
By Lori Bell**

Three years ago the branch sent me to the Department of Labor in Jacksonville. There I successfully completed FECA's training course for a Compensation Specialist and continue to attend any course offered at our training seminars to keep me current. I am hoping this monthly article will help me stay on top of injury issues and better arm my brothers and sisters with information that will help them with forms and time limits that can look overwhelming.

The key to an employee being approved for a work related injury or occupational injury depends on the proof you provide to the OWCP. The proof is found in correct forms submitted, the detailed and accurate information provided on those forms, and the timely manner they are presented.

The cooperation of your Supervisor is important in getting much of this done. First of all he should readily offer the appropriate form to you on notification of your injury. He should be able to determine which form is needed, CA-1, CA-2 or CA2a. Since knowledge is power the more you know the better you will be in determining if he is giving you the correct forms and in-

formation. This being the inaugural column for this subject we will start with the essential forms that get a claim started

Form CA-1, Federal Employee's Notice of Traumatic Injury, is used to report injuries caused by work factors that occur during the course of one work shift or workday. A Form that should accompany the **CA-1**.

Is a **CA-16, Authorization for Examination and/or Treatment**, this form is used in traumatic injuries to: 1) authorize medical treatment, and 2) provide an initial medical report.

Form CA-2, Federal Employee's Notice of Occupational Disease, is used to report injuries caused by work factors that occur over the course of more than one work shift or workday.

Form CA-2a, Notice of Recurrence, is used to report recurrences of previously accepted injuries. However, the OWCP definition of recurrence is highly technical and commonly misunderstood.

Next month we will break down these forms and talk about time limits and the responsibilities of your supervisor and what you need to watch for. Always ask your steward for help and I am also available at carrier411@hotmail.com. Please take care of your health and be safe, the holidays are here which means more hours and heavy parcels. Happy Holidays!

Please elect me to be your voice at the
2006 National Convention!

This is a contract year with important issues.

Respectfully,

Lori Bell
80/83 Steward Punta Gorda

**"BARB'D WIRE OVER CHARLOTTE"
by, Barb Brooks**

Zone 80/83 wishes to welcome, Rick Brandt as the new T-6 in Punta Gorda/Deep Creek! Despite his "Lance" nickname, he is high - spirited and a great asset to our zones! Mail volume has been dramatically increasing and it seems to be early this year so please

remember to follow safety and pay close attention to your accountables like Express mail as Management has been active in issuing discipline for missing time limits. Document any discrepancies as they are showing no mercy here, Bah Humbug! The early bird may get the worm, but remember it's the second mouse who gets the cheese... be smart!!!

Retirement note: Our Postmaster is getting ancie on his retirement countdown so the new year will have some new impact on our office as we understand the budget is tighter for 2006, something his successor is sure to place on our shoulders, as usual! CYA.

Letter Carriers will be anxious to know that a 1.3 percent salary increase will be effective November 26 under our National Agreements terms. This new wage will bring Grade I Step 0 City Carriers to \$47,950 annually, who are at the top of the scale. The current contract expires in November 2006 and the Union is gearing up for negotiations, another great reason to attend our meetings this year! This is our 5th and final salary increase, not including the cost-of-living increases and one-time lump sum Payments.

Not delivering bulk mail to customers or putting fliers into individual boxes? Here is a "must read" about the battles of our fellow co-workers in St Petersburg who are facing removal charges. See the website at http://www.sptimes.com/2005/11/11/Southpinellas/Mail_carriers_fired_.shtml.

Management states these manual rules: Deliver mail according to the **instructions or known desire of the addressee. Otherwise, deliver as addressed if the addressee has not moved. Make inquiry, if necessary, and return the mail to the post office if still in doubt.** - Section 13135, U.S. Postal Service Manual. I was impressed to see many Letter Carrier websites have articles and forums in support of these Carriers and we in Punta Gorda are proud to say that we sent a card to St Petersburg to try and raise the spirits of them while they are working and grieving these Removal Charges. Our Union in Branch 1477 is fast at work defending them.....

Additional rewards being a Letter Carrier involve phone service for cell-phones! The U.S. Postal Service has a National Agreement with Nextel Wireless to provide discounted wireless phone service, phones and accessories to Postal employees. All Activation fees are also waived!

Discounts:

- **Monthly Service Plans: 18%**

- **Phones/Handsets: 39%**

- **Accessories: 20%**

Call 888-242-4190 or visit Nextel's website at <http://nextel.com/usps>

Hope that the holidays keep you arid your loved ones close...from our office to yours...Happy Holidays!

GREETINGS FROM NORTHSIDE:

By, Rudy Betancourt

Brothers and Sister,

I would like to wish all of you a Happy and Safe Thanksgiving Holiday. I'd like to attend our upcoming Convention and ask that you attend our next meeting and consider me as one of your Delegates, so please include me in your votes.

In Solidarity,

Rudy Betancourt
Zone 16 Steward

ALL CRAFT RETIREES BREAKFAST:

By, Bernie Ososky

Largo's ALL CRAFT RETIREES circled their wagons on November 2nd at Denny's on Missouri for some good grub and hot coffee. With no postal supervisors (Indians) on our trail, the following soldiers were ready to chow down: Kathy McGuiness, Neil Williamson, Mike Pizzorusso, Vickie Vigue, Carl Bakelman and his lovely guest MaryAnn, Lynette Blairwich, Ivan Davidson, Tom Kohl (our credit union el-presidente), Pat Grant, Lynda Bryant, Rose Williams, Don Cox, and a surprise visit from Rose Garnto and her husband all the way from Orlando area, and your wagon master Me! All in all, sixteen postal friends enjoyed some great stories and many laughs - oh, by the way, ALL of us extended our allotted time, half hour, by at least one hour! Oh No! A Letter of Warning - sorry just a horrible flashback of what once was!!! Anyway, our next breakfast will be on December the 7th and I anticipate a larger turn out. The place is the same Denny's along with the time 9 a.m. Hope all of you can be there. It's nice to gather and see old friends so COME ON DOWN! December is bring a friend month so surprise the group!

THE 1st TUESDAY OF THE MONTH BUNCH:

By, Jim Long

The Retirees of Pinellas Park got together the first Tuesday of the month at 9:00 a.m. at the DeMills Family Restaurant @ 6501 Park Blvd we had a great time the following attended: **Nils Holmquist, Joe Tessa, Ron Haglund, Bob Trimble, Bill Butler, O.D Elliott, Jim Long, Max Wannike, Rollin Dunbar, John Wagner, and Tony Klepac.**

The next get together will **December 5, 2005** at 9:00 a.m. at the *DeMills Family Restaurant* 6501 Park Blvd. Hope to see you them.

NALC AUXILIARY #181:

by Marlene Markey

First and foremost, we are so happy to have **Sally Madden** back with us. We are so very proud of the progress she is making. We had a "Welcome Home" dinner for her at Perkins Restaurant and enjoyed seeing the joy on her face when she saw everyone. She walked into the restaurant and everyone was so delighted to see her. Welcome back, Sally and keep up the good work!!!!

We want to thank **John Bourlon** and **Joyce Keller** for all their hard work on the Breakfast in the Park which was held on Saturday, October 29th at Walsingham Park. We had a good turn out, great food, and everyone had a good time eating and socializing.

Thanks also to those of you who have donated to the Auxiliary Holiday Basket fund. This year we are helping a new Letter Carrier family who has five children. Food will be delivered to them on the Monday before Thanksgiving and we hope it will make their day a little brighter to know that we care about them.

The date, time and place of our annual Auxiliary Christmas Party have been changed to Friday, December 9th at 6:00 p.m. at the home of **Joyce and Clarence Keller**. Members are asked to bring a covered dish to share and a \$10.00 gift for the exchange (female bring a gift for female and male bring a gift for male).

We would like to take this time to wish each and every one of you and your families the most joyous, healthy, and blessed Holiday ever!!!!

THE "SKI" REPORT

By, Steve Wojehowski

Sisters and Brothers:

Greetings from the "Mad" Beach. Unless you've been in a coma in recent months, I assume that you are aware of the beating the major unions have been taking in regard to pay, health and retirement reductions and give-backs.

One company actually offered its workers a two-thirds cut in pay on a "take it or leave it" basis. To be more specific, hourly wage earners who were making \$28 an hour were sliced to nine dollars and change. Now that's a pretty horrifying Halloween!

Be aware that our contract expires in November of the coming year and it's right on the heels of Japan announcing that they are entering into a transitional period to privatize their national mail service. I don't want to sound all doom and gloom but this might be the toughest fight we've ever had to negotiate a new fair and decent contract.

In addition, just when we thought it would be safe to go back into the water, our national convention in August has been switched to Las Vegas from its original site in Miami. The feeling on this end was that Miami couldn't have come along at a better time. Conjecture was that the main proponents of the area wage "pain in the butt" would lay low for lack of support in what is probably the strongest anti area wage section of the country. Now that the convention is in Las Vegas, it's a whole new ballgame. They are licking their chops.

Common sense would dictate that, with all of the adverse conditions we will be facing during negotiations just to keep what we have already earned, it would be foolhardy to heap more demands onto what will already be a critical situation. Sadly enough, past experience leads me to believe that the people we have successfully defended our position against in the past are fanatical enough to throw caution to the wind and once again try to succeed in bringing this needless baggage to the bargaining table.

In any event, I can assure you one thing. As in the past six conventions, Branch 1477 will be fully prepared to successfully dispute and, once again, defeat such propositions. You have my word on that.

See y'all at the hall.
Keep your head on straight and maintain a steady pace.

P.S. Don't forget to vote for your branch convention delegates on December 8 at the hall.

E-Mail: branch1477@verizon.net
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(727) 531-1477

REQUEST:

I have been nominated as a delegate to the next national convention. I am seeking your vote and your continued faith in me to competently represent you and Branch 1477. My experience includes:

- *Participating delegate in past ten national conventions
- *Delivered key speeches at six former conventions in defeating area wage issues
- *Former Chairman Br. 1477 Board of Trustees
- * Shop steward for many years
- *Attended numerous state training seminars and conventions

Your vote would be greatly appreciated. Thank you.
Steve "Ski" Wojchowski

PLEASE VOTE for THOM HART

My brothers and sisters, I am a candidate for delegate to the 2006 National Letter Carriers Convention and I am asking for your vote.

I have had the honor to serve you in the past as your First Vice President, MBA Director, Chief Steward, Steward, El Facilitator, and as a Delegate both to the State as well as the National Conventions.

Each time that you have placed your trust in me, I have done my best to represent you and carry out those duties, to the best of my abilities.

Please, exercise your right as a member of our great Union and take the time to vote on December 8th, 2005.

I would appreciate your vote for THOM HART.
Thank you !!!

Greetings from Largo/Seminole
By: Keith L. Northup Sr.
Trustee/Chief Steward

Mail movement: It sure seems odd that the delivery of mail was not important until we were backed up to the walls recently. The big thing at the time was reducing work hours, not the movement of mail. This must be an October thing, it happens every year. The taking of leave by clerks really backed up our mail in the Seminole Station; it must be something new (taking leave) as they could not break down any bulk mail. It sat against the wall until they could not put anymore there. Some clerks came back from leave and the carriers were bombed with mail. Then the big push against the carriers to deliver the mail that sat against the wall for a week was on. It had to go now and fast. The carriers responded well as they always do, but they need to be treated in a fair manner while they do the hardest (case and deliver) part of the job. Someday our managers will learn that carriers are human too. I wish to thank the carriers for the wonderful job they do in an ongoing basis under some extremely hard working conditions.

Threshold: This is the latest word from our managers. It does not matter that the craft employees are not told what it means or how it applies to them. Our supervisors are running around saying it, but fail to explain it. I have found out it applies to the amount of mail in the unit after the carriers go to the street. The threshold is the amount of mail left in the unit and should not be over about 6 foot per route. It seems that our supervisors are graded on the amount of mail left in the unit. Now we would hate to be the reason that someone does not get the yearly raise of 8% as some got last year. I always hear how the Postal Service has no money for things we need to do the job, but we do see good raises coming for our supervisors. What is wrong with this picture in your eyes?

Elections 2005: I would like to urge all fellow brothers and sister Carriers to vote for those that will work for you toward the improvement of working conditions and the protection of your jobs. Many things are going to change in the next few years and we must try to hold on to what we have gained. While, trying to improve our position in the postal work force. I ask everyone to think before you cast your ballots and vote for those that work for you.

Think about where we would be if we did not have our UNION. Our working conditions are better, our pay is better, our life as a whole away from work is much better than many other workers in Florida now.. Just look at Wal-Mart for example. Have a nice day, I'll see you at the hall.

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BRANCH MEETING NOTICES

The **REGULAR MEMBERSHIP MEETING** will be held on **Thursday, December 8, 2005** at the Letter Carriers Hall, 5369 Park Boulevard, Pinellas Park, Florida at **7:00P.M.**

The **SHOP STEWARDS MEETING** will be held on **Thursday, December 15, 2005** at the Letter Carriers Hall at **7:00 P.M.**

AH, YES

If you find a mistake, please consider that it was place din this publication for for a purpose.....



We publish something for everyone, and some people are determined to find one!

THE OPINIONS EXPRESSED IN THIS PUBLICATION ARE THOSE OF THE WRITERS, AND DO NOT REFLECT THE OPINIONS OF BRANCH 1477.

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