



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 353

VOICE OF BRANCH 1477

February, 2007



PRESIDENT'S REPORT:
By, O.D. Elliott

Following the resignation of Keith Northup as one of our Trustees, with the unanimous approval of the Executive Board, I have appointed Ralph Brown to fulfill the remainder of Keith's term. Ralph has served as a Shop Steward for the past several years and recently has served as the Union's Representative in an Intervention Process. In addition to his experience as a Union Activist, his experience as a former Treasurer in his Church has well prepared him for the fiduciary duties of a Trustee. Welcome aboard Ralph!

While I am happy for the opportunity to bring Ralph on board, I am at the same time, saddened at Keith's departure. Keith is retiring from the Postal Service this month and felt it important to step aside and give an opportunity to someone who still has quite a few years before retirement. At our Branch meeting on Thursday, January 11, 2007, we presented Keith with a plaque and I prepared and read a letter of appreciation: That letter is reprinted here:

January 11, 2007

Dear Keith:

Personally and on behalf of the members of Branch 1477, I wish to thank you for over 18 years of selfless dedication to this Branch and its members. During these years you have served as Alternate Steward, Steward, and Chief Steward of the Semi-

nole Office. You have also served at various times as Treasurer, Secretary, First Vice President, and Trustee, and as a Delegate to many State and National Conventions. Additionally, you served successfully as an Arbitration Advocate, an EEO Representative, as the Union's observer for Mail Count and Route Inspections, and, at my personal request, as the Union's Representative in a successful Intervention Process at Gulfwinds Station, St. Petersburg.

In each position and endeavor, you served with skill, dedication to the members of Branch 1477, and always with the very highest degree of integrity.

There were times when you served as Treasurer that (to say the least) we didn't always see eye to eye. However, at the end of the day, I always knew your positions were based on sound financial principles and your dedication to serve the members and this Branch to the best of your ability. To this day, I am appreciative of the fact that you weren't afraid to sometimes be a thorn in the side. Today, Branch 1477 is financially healthy, due, in no small part, to your dogged determination and dedicated service.

Again, personally and on behalf of all the members of Branch 1477, I thank you and salute you for your many years of faithful service and hard work on behalf of Branch 1477 of the National Association of Letter Carriers.

Fraternally,

Your Friend,

O.D. Elliott
President
Branch 1477, NALC, AFL/CIO

**NEXT BRANCH MEETING Thursday, February 8, 2007 at 7:00 PM at the Letter Carrier Hall Branch 1477,
N.A.L.C. (727) 531-1477**



LesTalk
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. 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.

The position of Shop Steward is the most important of all Union positions.

The following Shop Stewards and Alternates were hard at work at our monthly (January) Shop Steward Meeting: **Chris Hubble, Rudy Betancourt, Chris Hampton, Greg Chewning, Ralph Brown, Willie Cochran, Tom White, A.J. Pollard, Bob Brown, Terry Helton, Glenn Fagan, Ed Weaver, Steve Warshawer, Ken Grasso, Brenda Mavretic, Ray Handville, Frank Pattie, Larry Gaskin, Jan Lund, Fred Assidy, Bob Meeks, Sheldon Jones, Bonnie Baldwin, Claudia Harvey, Tom Phillips, Patricia Meeks, Alan Hutchinson, Dennis Jones, Chuck Cavicchio**

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

Contract Delivery Services:

President Young has vowed to fight against the outsourcing of Letter Carrier job by the Postal Service. Many carriers feel that this is just an idle threat from the Postal Service brought up at contract time to use as a bargaining chip. But, the Postal Service has a plan and that plan is called Contract Delivery Services. Formerly called Highway Contract Routes (HCR), the Postal Service has changed the name but not the intent. The stated purpose is "To control costs by documenting guideline, procedures and policies for the purchase and installation (USPS or customer) of centralized delivery equipment for new growth in single family residential areas, residential building/apartments, condominiums, manufactured homes/RV parks, and business delivery.

The Postal Service's plan is that they may want to contract out any new delivery that consists of four hours of work. They feel that they can do this in the middle of city delivery and even in

downtown areas. These contract carriers will be called "suppliers" and will not really be postal employees. They will not wear our uniforms, but are required to wear blue shirts with the logo "US Mail Supplier." Navy blue outerwear and dark colored pants and shoes are preferred.

Article 32 of our National Agreement is titled "Subcontracting" and provides some very sketchy guidelines for contracting out. The Union must be notified and there are some requirements to provide information, but there's not much to this article of our contract.

The reason the Postal Service is trying to increase these Contract Delivery Services is cost. It costs the Postal Service over \$200 per delivery per year for a City Letter Carrier to deliver the mail. It costs them approximately \$158 per delivery per year for a Rural Letter Carrier to deliver the mail. It only costs approximately \$100 per delivery per year to have a contract supplier deliver the mail.

Who would these suppliers be? Working for probably not much more than minimum wage, with no union protection. Would you trust these non-postal employees with your mail? I certainly wouldn't want one delivering my mail.

Branch 908

(GPO) / (WEP)

Legislation to entirely repeal both the Social Security Government Pension Offset (GPO) and Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) already introduced in the House now has a Senate companion. Sen. Dianne Feinstein (D-CA) introduced S. 206 on January 9 with three co-sponsors, Sens. Collins (R-ME), Snowe (R-ME) and Lautenberg (D-NJ). On January 4th, Rep. Howard Berman (D-CA) introduced H.R. 82, the House GPO/WEP Repeal bill with 103 original co-sponsors including Rep. Buck McKeon (R-CA) the lead sponsor during the 109th Congress (2005-2006).



IN SOLIDARITY



**REPORT OF THE FIRST
VICE PRESIDENT:
By, Joe Henschen**



**SECRETARY'S REPORT:
By, Harry Strzyzynski**

2008 SUPER BOWL

Last year Branch 1477 raised its number of automatic contributors in COLCPE nearly 10 fold. We increased from nine to over ninety our contributing members. The Gimme 5 campaign kicked off by the NALC legislative department ended with 4% of our members nationwide automatically contributing to the fund. This doubled the number of Letter Carriers previously enrolled. The success of the fund was evident in November when we were able to wake up after the interim elections and find Congressional and Senate seats filled with NALC supported individuals. It was, in no short measure, a contributing factor in gaining Postal Reform.

With a presidential election around the corner and a National Agreement to fight for, there is so much more we can do. It is time to look ahead to what we can accomplish in 2007. In the next several weeks, our local organizing committee will be setting goals for the Branch and launching new campaigns to increase the number of contributors to COLCPE and renewing our efforts in signing up e-activists.

Early next month, the NALC is launching a pair of contests that will give each automatic contributor two chances to win. For each contest, automatic contributors in COLCPE will receive a raffle ticket for every two members they convince to sign up for an automatic deduction. From now until June 30, everyone that convinces a "pair" to contribute by electronic fund transfer, payroll deduction or from their annuity will be entered into a raffle. From now till June 30, everyone with a ticket will get a chance at the grand prize of two round trip airline tickets to any US destination including Hawaii. The winning ticket in a July to November raffle will win an all expense paid trip to Glendale, Arizona and the **2008 Super Bowl**. Of course everyone getting on board also becomes eligible to sign up a "pair" and get an entry into the raffle. Next months Postal Record will highlight the contest and answer many of the questions that will be raised. But there is no reason to wait, contact me with any questions on how to enroll. I will ensure everyone registering will get credit for their efforts. If you do not have access to your Postal Ease pin number apply now. If you're ready to begin contributions now, or have convinced a brother or sister to contribute call me at 727-460-0193, I will assist you in the process.

BRANCH 1477, N.A.L.C.

GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

January 11, 2007

Meeting called to order at 7:00 P.M. by President O.D. Elliott.
Invocation by Greg Welsh
Pledge of Allegiance led by O.D. Elliott
Minutes accepted as printed in Twig for 12/14/06. (Motion by Tom White, second, passed.)

NEW MEMBERS: 3 New Members, Richard Millet, David Johnson, Sean Carter

OFFICER'S REPORTS:

SECRETARY: Harry Strzyzynski – Reading of 1 Official Correspondences.

TREASURER: - Tom Phillips – Financial Report. Motion to accept by Keith Northup, Seconded, passed.

DIRECTOR OF RETIREES: Gene Markey – One new retiree, Deborah Alexander of St. Petersburg.

MBA DIRECTOR: Bob Brown – Discussed the MBA Target 65 Whole Life Insurance Policy – Insurance for your family.

HEALTH BENEFIT DIRECTOR: Ken Grasso – 8 Eye Glass Plans processed this month. Flu Season is upon us so take reasonable care and Get Your Flu Shot.

TRUSTEE REPORT: Larry Gaskin – Due to Holidays, the Trustees were unable to meet in December. They will meet in January and do audits for 2 months.

SECOND VICE PRESIDENT: Greg Welsh – Read your Postal Record. It is full of information. With Contract Arbitration coming up, I have the utmost confidence in our leaders. They will get the job done.

FIRST VICE PRESIDENT: Joe Henschen – Get on the NALC web site to read about Contract Arbitration. Do not forget donations to COLCPE. We cannot lose what we have gained. I recently trained three new employees. We have about 15 more

coming in next pay period.

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT: Les Stroup – Joe read the sad report Les had a sore throat.

Sad Report:

Kathy McGuinness – retiree Largo – Father passed away
Susan Chavez – Englewood – Mother passed away
Maurine Bibens – Englewood – Step Mother seriously ill
Linda Deppert – Central – Brother passed away
Anthony Maldonado – Seminole – vehicle accident out 2 months
Jim Atkinson, Jr. – Crossroads – Passed away
Rick Hadden – Pinellas Park – Mother hospitalized
Eileen Cooper – Gateway – Father passed away
Bill Bonass – Retiree Punta Gorda – Mother passed away
Glenn Fagan – Crossroads – Nephew passed away
Lori Bell – Punta Gorda – Shoulder surgery

POLITICAL LIASON: Leo Murray – The President has signed Postal Reform. NALC President Bill Young attended the Ceremony. Leo and Lori Bell attended an AFL/CIO meeting.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

Proposed By-Law Change – John Bourlon spoke at length in favor of the proposed by-law change to Article 2 Section 1. The proposed changed passed by a margin of 51 yes to 2 no's.

NEW BUSINESS: Keith Northup has resigned his position. O.D. has appointed Ralph Brown to serve the remainder of Keith's appointment.

GOOD OF THE SERVICE: by President Elliott

25-Year Pin for Leo Murray.

Keith Northup was presented with a Service Plaque.

Hiring Freeze has been lifted. 34 new Carriers will be coming in.

The Shop Stewards and other active Carriers should go up to the new Carriers in their zones and introduce themselves.

C.O.P. Meeting in Puerto Rico. Les Stroup Executive Vice President will attend in O.D.'s place in March.

Stewards Elections will be held in the last week of January. Notices will be posted on all Union Bulletin Boards. Any run offs will be held under the auspices of O.D. or Les.

National Day of Observance causing problems. O.D. will look into it and file a grievance if necessary.

Still having problems with Ed White Hospital.

State Convention June 7 to June 10. Crown Plaza Jacksonville. No Registration Forms received from the State yet.

Contracting out a major issue in Contract Arbitrations.

WINNERS OF DRAWINGS:

50/50 – \$41.00 won by Glenn Fagan

Lotto – Chris Hampton

Arsylan Uniforms Christy Carr donated a gift certificate for Apple Bees won by Leo Murray.

Auxiliary Drawings:

1. Joe Rudolph
2. Joe Henschen
3. Rick Renshaw
4. Chris Hampton
Steve Wojchowski

Motion to adjourn



**REPORT OF THE
EDITOR:
By, John Bourlon**

UNION BENEFITS:

It is not with good feeling to learn that our members are not taking full advantage of the benefits fought for in early years. The "eye glass plan" is one of many. For example. Ken Grasso, Health Benefits Director for the Branch reported at the last meeting that there were only 8 applications for reimbursement for the previous month, that is 8 out of nearly 1,500 members. That does not include the dependents, which would raise the number considerably. That tells me the members are healthy or wealthy. To remind you, the Branch will reimburse the member up to \$45.00 and the dependents up to \$35.00 for each examination annually. Come on you guys. The Branch has the funds, but you need to make application. For more information on this matter please call Ken Grasso, who specializes in this matter.

Brother Bob Brown, MBA Director briefly informed those at the last meeting about a new program being offered by the NALC Headquarters, "TARGET 65". This is an "Insurance Plan" for the members. I encourage you, each of you to contact

Bob Brown at (727) 517-3635, for further information on this matter.

Find out what your benefits are. Take advantage of them, all of them. Remember. Make today a good day. Yesterday has already gone by and tomorrow may not come. Enjoy.



**HEALTH BENEFIT REPRESENTATIVE:
By, Ken Grasso**

The flu is caused by the influenza virus. Doctors classify the virus as influenza Type A and Type B, each of which includes several subtypes or strains. These strains are different from the original virus but retain some of its characteristics. Type A is usually responsible for the annual outbreaks that typically occur in the late fall and early winter.

The influenza virus changes often, so having flu caused by one strain does not give you full immunity to other strains.

- Widespread outbreaks of the flu usually follow significant changes (called antigenic shifts) in the virus and occur about every 10 years. People who get the flu tend to become much sicker when a shift in the flu virus occurs.
- Minor changes in the virus (called antigenic drifts) occur nearly every year.

The virus is spread from person to person through:

- Direct contact, such as shaking hands.
- Small droplets that form when a person sneezes or coughs.
- Contact with objects such as handkerchiefs that have been in contact with fluids from an infected person's nose or throat.

People who have the flu are most likely to pass it to someone else from 1 day before to 5 days after symptoms develop. Children may be infectious for up to 6 days before symptoms develop.

Symptoms usually develop 1 to 4 days after you are infected. Because symptoms may not develop for a couple of days, you may pass the flu to someone before you know you have it.

The symptoms of influenza (flu) appear suddenly and often include:

- Fever of 100°F (37.8°C) to 104°F (40°C), which can reach 106°F (41°C) when symptoms first develop. Fever is usually continuous, but it may come and go. Fever may be lower in older adults than in children and younger adults. When fever is high, other symptoms usually are more severe.
- Body aches and muscle pain (often severe), commonly in the back, arms, or legs.
- Headache.
- Pain when you move your eyes.
- Fatigue, a general feeling of sickness (malaise), and loss of appetite.
- A dry cough, runny nose, and dry or sore throat. You may not notice these during the first few days of the illness when other symptoms are more severe. As your fever goes away, these symptoms may become more evident.

Influenza usually does not cause symptoms in the stomach or intestines, such as vomiting and diarrhea.

Other conditions have symptoms similar to the flu, such as the common cold, bacterial infections, and infectious mononucleosis.

You can help prevent influenza by getting immunized with an influenza vaccine each year, ideally in October or November. The inactivated influenza vaccine

Even if a flu shot does not prevent the flu, the vaccine can reduce the severity of flu symptoms and decrease the risk of complications. Studies have found that the flu shot results in fewer days missed from work and fewer visits to a doctor for respiratory infections, and it reduces the number of people who develop complications from the flu, such as pneumonia.²

In spite of these results, many people choose not to get a flu shot. Some do not get the shot because of myths they believe about the flu or the vaccine. The flu shot may cause side effects in some people, but they are usually minor and do not last long.

An alternative to the flu shot is now available. In 2003, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved a nasal spray flu vaccine impaired immune systems²

You should not use FluMist if you:

- Have heart disease.
- Have lung disease, including asthma.
- Have diabetes or kidney disease.
- Have a disease or take a medicine that causes problems

with your immune system.

- Have had Guillain-Barré syndrome.
- Are pregnant.
- Have ever had an allergic reaction to FluMist or to eggs.
- Are younger than age 20 and you take aspirin or products with aspirin in them.

Because the FluMist nasal vaccine is more expensive than a flu shot, it may not be covered by your health insurance plan. Check with your insurance company.

Increase your chance of staying healthy by:

- Washing your hands often, especially during winter months when the flu is most common.
- Keeping your hands away from your nose, eyes, and mouth. Viruses are most likely to enter your body through these areas.
- Eating a healthy and balanced diet.
- Getting regular exercise.
- Not smoking. Smoking irritates the lining of your nose, sinuses, and lungs, which may make you susceptible to complications of the flu.

For those who don't have a computer and needs a hard copy of the PPO Doctors for your County you can call the Union Hall and ask for one.

inherited the pimple and he hasn't changed one bit. You have to wonder, how can Management allow one individual to continue in a position when he destroys morale and creates a hostile work environment wherever he goes? I've asked the Seminole Acting Station Manager this question and the reply is always the same, "he has good numbers". The fact that the Joint Statement of Violence and Behavior in the Workplace specifically states that "Making the numbers" is not a reason to justify mistreatment of employees does not seem to concern them at all. Wow, another shock, Management is knowingly violating a National level agreement. I've recently had an opportunity to interview 25 Carriers and clerks who work for this (fill in the blank). Ninety two percent feel they work in a hostile work environment. Seventy two percent have personally witnessed demeaning, belittling or harassing behavior from the "204-B". The negative findings go on and on. So the question that begs to be asked is what will upper Management do about this? Who knows? I know that given the chance, the Acting Station Manager will do nothing. He has encouraged these actions by his failure to deal with it. Fortunately, these and other documentation will be offered to someone over his head. If a solution cannot be achieved, it will go to someone over their head and will continue to move up the line until action is taken to stop this disgrace. Other than that, not much is going on in Seminole. After the last intervention, it was agreed that we would have monthly labor/management focus meetings. We haven't had one in over a year. Also, the quarterly safety meetings haven't happened for more than a year. The last Safety Captain resigned because Management would not correct the safety violations and for the last few months, Management would not even furnish the necessary forms. Now they are having difficulty finding someone to volunteer. Duh!! So as you can see, there's not much of anything going on in Seminole.

STAY SAFE



**TRUSTEES REPORT:
By, Larry Gaskin
Shop Steward/Trustee**



**Director of MBA:
By, Bob Brown**

Congratulations to the Largo office. First, they lose a pimple on their butts disguised as a 204-B, then they had to say goodbye to the Acting Station Manager that couldn't act. Much to the surprise of everyone, the morale and working atmosphere has dramatically improved. What a shock!!! It's sad the people that make Management look good had to suffer so long with those two walking disasters.

As usual, bad news follows good news. The Seminole office

Are you giving the Union all that you can?

I want to remind you that it takes more than paying your monthly dues to become a Union member. Just as it takes more to being a father than siring a child. It takes involvement. We need to put away our excuses for not being involved with this Union.

If we have high expectations that this Union will succeed in all of it's endeavors, then we must have those high expectations of ourselves. Up until now our Union is doing great. Nationally,

our officers are preparing for contract arbitration and we pray that they will be successful as they have been in the past. Postal Reform is now complete and was signed into law on December 20th. This shows that together, when we get involved as one, we can make the difference.

Sometimes we need a gentle push to show us the right direction. Whether it was Leo Murray, who told us to vote for the best intentioned politician or Joe Henschen, who coaxed us to give 5 for COLCPE, we did the right thing and our efforts were successful.

But now we need to double our efforts for the future. Denny, Les, Joe, Greg, Harry, Keith, Larry and Tom these leaders of our 1477 were like you are right now. They were PTF's who learned from the Carriers who went before them. They went to Union meetings and listened to people like John Bourlon and they were inspired by the mountains he could move. They all said "YES, I want to help. This is my job, my Union and my future".

Some of you might think you're not smart enough to sit up here or to make the proper decisions when the time comes. But I will challenge you in return that it is not the intelligence you lack, just the experience.

So please siphon off some of this experience and use it as the foundation for your future. Remember what we have in common far exceeds our differences.



**THE RETIREMENT
CORNER:
By, Gene Markey**

The Largo Retiree Breakfast Group met on Thursday, January 4, 2007. Attending were: **Bill Guenther, Richard Rink, Gene Wainscott, John Hammock, Patrick F. Grant, Sam Miller, Bob Miller, Bruce Davis, and Ed Joyner.**

These retirees enjoyed breakfast at **Boris Family Restaurant.**

The next breakfast will be on Thursday, **February 1, 2007** at 9:00 a.m. at the **Boris Family Restaurant**, 11311 Ulmerton Road in Largo.

The St. Petersburg Retiree Breakfast Group met on Wednesday, January 17, 2007. Attending were: **Ron Cherry, Ellen Kirschner, Hank Goettelman, Don Markey, John Layner, Jamie Wilson, Don Kosior, Charles Harris, Gil Migliano, Harold Compher, Bettie & Bernard Gumz, Edward Richards, Gene Markey, Bob Kaufman, and Bob Trimble.**

The next St. Petersburg breakfast will be on Wednesday **February 21, 2007** at 9:00 a.m. at **Denny's Restaurant**, U.S. 19 and 50th Avenue North St. Petersburg.

End of the year retirees were: **Stephen Wojchowski, Sr.**, of Madeira Beach, start of the New Year 2007; and **Debora Alexander** of Crossroads 1/05/07.

As an update, my recuperation from knee replacement surgery is going well. I plan on having my other knee replacement surgery on March 19th. Thank you for all your well-wishes during my recovery. I also want to thank all my Brothers and Sisters who voted for me to be a Delegate to the FSALC 69th Biennial Convention being held in Jacksonville June 7—8, 2007.

IMPORTANT - ANNUAL ST. PETERBURG POST OFFICE RETIREE DINNER CHANGE OF DATE

The Annual St. Petersburg Post Office Retiree Dinner, which has been held on Presidents' Day in the past, has been changed to the second Monday in March, which is March 12, 2007. The dinner will be held at Gigi's Italian Restaurant in South Pasadena at 5:00 p.m. Gigi's is located in the Pasadena Shopping Center on Gulfport Boulevard You may bring guests and can order from the menu. Each person will be responsible for his/her own check. For information and reservations, please contact me, Gene Markey, at 727-526-6707. Please call me ASAP as I need to give the restaurant an accurate headcount, which will determine which dining room we will get. If you cannot reach me, please leave your name, number attending, and your phone number on my answering machine.



**NOT-SO-MEEKS(S)
By, Tricia and Bob Meeks**

UNION: Something that is made one; something formed by a combining or coalition of parts or members; a confederation of independent individuals.

She Said: Everyone has things that really put a crawl in their hide. My pet peeve is overtime tracking. Needless to say, I am peeved a lot. I realize that our Supervisor (at least the one we have now) isn't a complete idiot, he is just lazy. If it isn't enough to monitor the Supervisor, there are Carriers to watch as well. **STOP WORKING OFF THE CLOCK!**

Lately I have had Carriers come up and say "Thank You" for

the work we do, and I appreciate the support. What would really make me happy however, is for people to stand up when they are being done wrong. Stand up for yourself. Stand up to your Supervisor. Stand up to your Manager. Stand strong with your Steward. Don't be intimidated or fear the what if....

Know your rights and ask to see your Steward. Never assume your Supervisors know the contract or are willing to abide. If they did, we would not be needed.

He Said: I hear stories of stations where Carriers, Supervisors and Managers all get along and work as a well-oiled machine. Obviously I speak not of my Station. Dysfunctional is not just a word used on families. As of late, we have had Carriers, not on any list, along with the Overtime Desired List Carriers working out past dark. Due to Saturday clean up, and Horrible Management thru the week to prepare for Saturday, we now have **flash-lights** sent to routes with maybe even another Carrier to hold it for you. Another example of them taking advantage of us. We cannot stand for the abuse and we must stand united and let Management know we will not be mistreated. So, if the occasion ever arises again, and you feel where you may be working after dark, you call your Supervisor and tell them you are working in a unsafe environment and you are returning to the office, when you arrive back to the office, fill out a 1571 (curtail slip) and give it to your Supervisor to sign and get a copy for yourself.

We Say: Lets realize the times have changed and now so has the Union. There is new blood running thru these halls. Strong members bring strong leaders. If you feel something needs to be said, it should be said. If you feel something needs to be done, it should be done. Its time to cut the apron strings and not worry if the boat rocks. Were not being brash, were just not going to be meek!

Remember, your Stewards work for you. Go to them if you have a problem. That is what you elected them for!



**Barb'D Wire Over Charlotte:
By, Barb Brooks**

We made it through the holidays and Route Inspections in Zone 50 without anything too eventful. Route adjustments are in and all has gone well in that area, so Deep Creek and Charlotte Harbor in the 80/83 Zone is getting a day of count with promises of some in house adjustments which are much needed. Many of our Carriers are anxious and excited about this being

done thoroughly so the results should be seen by the next newsletter. Myself included, the route did not carry any significant mail or packages on my day of count, yet I was an hour over so it is time to get our zone with routes that are better manageable. Stay tuned next month for results!

Our new badges were done and a scan code is embedded so that our new digital scanners will be able to scan us into the route. We will be literally taking snapshots of the whole signatures and slips without the disturbance of sunlight and having to angle our scanners so precisely or repeatedly. It promises to be an easier product but will have GPS capability installed that is upcoming. A Supervisor will be able to text message us also, so that is going to be interesting. It will be essential to have our badges with us to begin work as we will be scanning onto our routes. I anticipate that discipline will be an issue if Carriers forget and leave their badges at home. This is an issue even for myself, so I have had to make a routine spot where I leave it and pick it up each day.

There are many new Supervisor faces in our office as some retire. The Postmaster has decided its time for a changing of the guard, so Pam Long will be at the Annex shortly, while we get another girl, Stacey, at our helm. Pam did a very good job and was good to work for so the Annex should be happy. This will be a welcomed step up for them and yet we are hopeful that its temporary for us!

Chris Sook for Zone 50 went back to her office in Tennessee and now her swing is open and she is missed though we wish her all the luck in the world! It looks as though another PTF will move up when that swing gets covered. It could be my ole buddy, Jason. (see I can get that right!)

Our edit books were a hot topic as the AIMS Audit was looming near and yet we did not make the cut, it landed further south at Bonita so we are safe again. We did well, according to the Postmaster, on our employee surveys and with Sick Leave and Accidents, very well! There is always something that needs improving, isn't there? Office and Street productivity are still in the minds of his bosses and handed to him to loom over. New scan points in boxes, customer connect, count our spurs, hand scan errors, parcel pickup, last mail call... .no, the added responsibilities and duties certainly shouldn't be an area that costs extra time and accounts for this, huh? Perhaps the route inspections are something he can send them as additional info.

Hope to see you round the pizza table....

Happy Valentines Day

THE "SKI" REPORT

By: Brother Steve "Ski" Wojchowski

Brothers and Sisters:

Due to the enormous amount of scanning duties that have been thrust upon letter carriers over the past few years, I have been joking that next they will want us to scan every letter. Well guess what. Be careful what you joke about.

I read an article in a business journal about the Postal Service's plan to extend requested tracking of first class letters and large envelopes through bar code scanning. They expect to have it fully operational by 2009.

It seems like every time I pick up postal related literature I read about some new technology the Postal Service is spending millions of dollars on like flat-sorting machines, optical scanners, DPS, cancellation machines, new BMCs, desktop computers, scanners, electronic scales, etc.

Over the past half-dozen years they have spent billions of dollars on technology and state-of-the-art electronics to make everyone's job a little bit easier. Everyone, that is, except the poor overburdened letter carrier.

Think about it. In the midst of all of this technology and spending, the only thing that the Postal Service has done for carriers is give them a hand-held scanner and a bigger truck with no air conditioning.

We're still casing mall in primitive dust ball laden letter cases that date back to Benny Franklin. I remember when I did the vertical flat case project years ago that I specifically pointed out to the St. Pete safety officer the jagged metal protrusions that were created when the old shelves were ripped out and the need for them to be ground down and sanded smooth. We are still waiting.

Where did all of the spring-loaded hampers go? Replaced by ones that you practically have to climb into to retrieve a heavy or cumbersome parcel from its depths.

Billions of dollars spent in a continuous attempt to get more and more mail onto the backs of carriers more quickly and not a dime spent on improving carrier equipment. Next thing you know, they'll be saying we don't deserve a pay raise. And that's no joke!

Keep your head on straight and maintain a steady pace.

Happy Valentines Day

AUXILIARY TWIG ARTICLE FOR FEBRUARY

By, Marlene Markey

First, my appreciation to Dottie Tutt-Hutchinson for writing the past couple of articles for the *Twig*. They were great articles and enjoyed by all who read them. Dottie isn't feeling well right now and we wish her a speedy recovery. She will be back to writing next month, but for now, it's just "little ol' me".

The Auxiliary members were able to help three families this past Christmas. There were eleven children and five adults in the families and we provided all of them with gifts, food, and Publix gift certificates. We sincerely thank all of you who helped with this project. The families were very happy and very appreciative. We feel that, at least for one day, we brought some sunshine into their troubled lives. They didn't ask for their hardships, but they are coping with them. It really makes me grateful for the many blessings in my life.

We are glad to see Pat O'Donnell back on her feet after a long illness. Now we hope she stays that way. Joyce Keller's eye is getting better (or she is adjusting to it). Either way, she is back to her busy self. Her grandson is home from the hospital, but has to go back to the hospital everyday, all day, for therapy. What a walking miracle he is. The power of prayer!!!! Bill Moran continues to improve each day, as does Gene Markey. Gene will have his other knee replaced on March 19th. Here we go again!

The Auxiliary members are planning some fun events for the coming year. We will be having a St Patrick's Day Dinner on March 17, a Mother's/Father's Day Dinner on June, 3, a Breakfast in the Park on August 11th, a Tea on September 9th, and our Christmas Party on December 17th.

We really would like to see more of you enjoying these events with us. Auxiliary membership is open to all relatives of active and retired Letter Carriers. Retired Letter Carriers are also eligible for membership. If you would like to see what we are all about, join us at our monthly meeting. The next meeting will be on Wednesday, February 21st at the home of Alice Wannike. Any questions, just give Joyce Keller a call at 727-541-2194.

Happy Valentines Day

THE FIRST TUESDAY OF THE MONTH BUNCH:

The Retirees of Pinellas Park get together the first Tuesday of the month at 9:00 a.m. at the **DeMills Family Restaurant** at 6501 Park Blvd. We had a great time the following attended. **Bill Butler, Johnny Wagner, Nils Holmquist, Jim Long, Col. Ron Haglund, Wayne "Big O" Marshall, Bob Trimble, Rolin Dunbar, "Hack" Haschald, Willie Santiago, Lester Ray, and Gene Markey.**

The Next meeting is Tuesday February 6, 2007.

Happy Valentines Day

ALL CRAFT RETIREES BREAKFAST

By: Bernie Ososky

Largo's first **ALL CRAFT RETIREES BREAKFAST** of the New Year was held on January the 3rd at Denny's on Missouri. Another great turn-out with eighteen people in attendance. There would have been nineteen except for the fact that I excused myself to spend some quality time with my daughter in Orlando who is expecting twins at the end of March. Those present were; **Rudy Lang, Rose Garnto** and her husband **Mike** (all the way from Wildwood Florida), **Vickie Vigue, Lynette Blair, Bob Tillman, Mary Bintliff, Dana Bigley, Keith Northup, Pat Grant, Mikeee Pizzorusso, Betty Williams, Dorian Sobat, Brad Wells, Don Cox** and his lovely daughter **Nicole**. There was also two new members to join us this year and they were; **Pam Hussinger** and **Carol Swartz**. As the year 2007 rolls on and those of you who are fortunate to retire, our breakfast retirees group welcomes you. Dennys can accommodate as many retirees we can muster up and it will only take about an hour of your busy retirement life a month! Also, I would like to extend an invitation to those retirees from **Dunedin** to come and join us as well. You will have a good time, I promise! As previously mentioned, breakfast dates have been set for this year and for those who would like to join us we meet at **Dennys on Missouri @ 9 a.m. the first Wednesday of every month!** Circle your calendar for **February the 7th.....be there!!** My very best to all retirees for this upcoming year and as a final reminder, be sure to check out the branch website, **branch1477nalc.org**, for the past and current pictures of our retirees.....**does 3.3% sound like music to your ears retirees?.....B**



From Where I Stand:
By, Lori Bell

Short and sweet, I just had surgery and I don't type well with one finger.

OWCP – Please let me know if anyone is experiencing problems with their OWCP case.

I have been in “the battle” for several months now and have gained new knowledge. With 2 grievances and an EEO later I

have come to some conclusions.

Any one else with information or problems will add fuel to the fire I am building. Please email me – carrier411@hotmail.com

MDA - Working on a food contest. This contest will involve all offices in our branch. More information to come later via mail to stewards.

Thanks for the phone calls and good wishes. Third surgery on this shoulder so I am thinking “3rd times charm”. I really missed not being at the last meeting (surgery day). I wanted to thank everyone for the votes for the State Convention. That was awesome.

One last thing, in last months newsletter I listed Tom Phillips name as (Phelps). So sorry Tom. I am blaming this on too many painkillers (if there is such a thing). Actually, Tom has been down to the south cities meetings a couple of times. Anyone is invited, we have pizza to share.

Know your Rights

1. Weingarten Rights - you are entitled to have a steward present if you reasonably believe that you may be subjected to disciplinary and/or legal action and request the presence of a steward.

2. Garrity Rights - are given to you when you are not in custody. You must answer questions relating to official postal activities, but you can remain silent on any questions regarding criminal activities. Remember, carriers are required to cooperate with a postal investigation. And also remember, if they read you your Garrity rights, there is the potential for criminal charges.

3. Kalkines Rights - again, these are given when you are not in custody. Once again, you must answer questions regarding your official duties, but once given the, Kalkines warning “ensures that any answers given by an employee, or any other evidence discovered as a result of the employees answers, cannot be used against him or her in a subsequent criminal prosecution”. (Postal Record 5/05) If you do admit a criminal violation, the OIG officer may at that time read you your Garrity Rights, and start afresh.

4. Miranda Rights - anybody who's watched a cop show knows this one. You are in custody, and you don't have to incriminate yourself. Get a lawyer.

Next month will be more informative or opinionated ya never know!

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Webb: branch1477nalc.org
(727) 531-1477

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Trustee:	Mike Miller	527-3520
Trustee:	Larry Gaskin	544-7651

BRANCH 1477 SHOP STEWARDS

St. Petersburg

Chris Hubble	Steward	Zone 1	643-8087
Tony Mellis	Alternate	Zone 1	864-9697
Chris Hampton	Steward	Zone 2	394-8578
Claudia Harvey	Alternate	Zone 2	545-7883
John Wenk	Steward	Zone 3	522-5213
Tom Phillips	Alternate	Zone 3	579-1981
Greg Chewning	Steward	Zone 4	864-6817
Jerry Vann	Alternate	Zone 4	584-0081
Ralph Brown	Steward	Zone 5/15	866-8366
Willie Cochran	Steward	Zone 12	865-1760
Ray McC Carson	Alternate	Zone 12	813-685-6384
Rich Underwood	Steward	Zone 6	381-9789
Tanya Gillespie	Alternate	Zone 6	343-7146
Tom White	Steward	Zone 7	522-9601
Patricia Meeks	Alternate	Zone 7	560-8405
Greg Welsh	Steward	Zone 8	596-6239
Randy Keys	Alternate	Zone 8	399-2052
Terry Helton	Alternate	Zone 9	866-3692
Glenn Fagan	Steward	Zone 10N	741-2006
Ron Wahlers	Alternate	Zone 10N	397-8516
Ed Weaver	Steward	Zone 10S	726-3399
Alan Hutchinson	Alternate	Zone 10S	347-0371
A.J. Pollard	Steward	Zone 11	667-4254
Steve Warshawer	Steward	Zone 13	599-4658
Ken Grasso	Steward	Zone 14	397-9737
Rudy Betancourt	Steward	Zone 16	813-231-6874
Dennis Jones	Alternate	Zone 16	563-9007

Dunedin

Doug Eggers	Steward	736-7475
Chuck Cavicchio	Alternate	320-9553

Indian Rocks Beach

Brenda Mavretic	Steward	641-8467
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Largo/Seminole

Ray Handville	Steward	Unit 73/71/78	804-6500
Chuck Dooty	Steward	Unit 70	319-9982
Larry Gaskin	Steward	Unit 76/77	544-7651
Frank Pattie	Steward	Unit 74/72	397-3952

Pinellas Park

Fred Assidy	Steward	Unit 81	585-0115
Ed Bartholomew	Alternate	Unit 81	384-1152
Bob Meeks	Steward	Unit 82	560-8583

South Cities

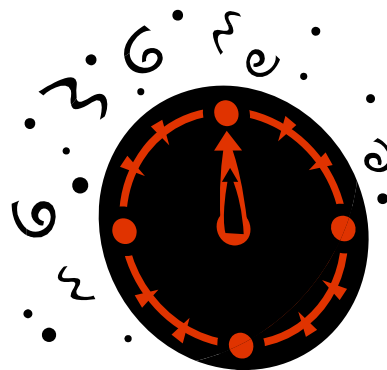
Sheldon Jones	Steward	Bradenton Bch	941-580-1058
Bonnie Baldwin	Steward	Ellenton	941-722-0632
Eric Bonds	Steward	Palmetto	941-722-0739
Tony Maxey	Alternate	Palmetto	813-988-6179
Lori Bell	Alternate	P.G. 80/83	941-815-6042
Barbara Brooks	Steward	P.G. 80/83	941-624-0043
Jamie White	Steward	P.G. 50	941-764-6238
Robin Gillett	Alternate	P.G. 50	941-613-6885
Bob Truenski	Steward	Annex	941-426-6571
Pam Poineau	Steward	Englewood	941-661-6071
Maurine Bibens	Alternate	Englewood	941-475-2905

Legislative Liaison Leo Murray 527-0366

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CONGRADULATION TO OUR MOST RECENT RETIREES



Charles Jay - Punta Gorda
 Keith Northup - Seminole
 Debbie Alexander - St. Petersburg

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BRANCH MEETING NOTICES

The **REGULAR MEMBERSHIP MEETING** will be held on **Thursday, February 8, 2007** at the Letter Carriers Hall, 5369 Park Boulevard, Pinellas Park, Florida at **7:00P.M.**

The **SHOP STEWARDS MEETING** will be held on **Thursday, February 15, 2007** at the Letter Carriers Hall at **7:00 P.M.**

The **BRANCH 1477 SOUTH MEETING** will be held on **Thursday, February 22, 2007** at 2050 Forrest Nelson Blvd. 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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