

2007 A Year of Transition – *Some Personal Thoughts*

Submitted by:

Bob Krauth, Union steward – Willow Glen Station

This past fall our membership overwhelmingly passed a 5-year labor contract. As it is implemented, it will impact how we do business as we move forward into the future. Locally, there have been several areas in transition that have directly or indirectly impacted our daily jobs. This article will briefly cover three specific areas – use of TE's, route adjustments, new leadership – and will conclude with a wake-up call.

First, transitional employees (TE's) have replaced casuals as a temporary part-time supplemental work force. The purpose is to utilize these workers during the transitional period when we will be switching to automated flat sequencing – essentially DPS flats. The idea is that using TE's will prevent layoffs of the regular workforce. The value to the TE's is that they are entitled to higher pay and union membership including representation and benefits within certain restrictions. The regular workforce has priority and should be scheduled so that PTF's stationed at offices with TE's work full weeks. Your shop steward should be monitoring hours on a weekly basis. If you have any questions or concerns, ask your union representative.

Secondly, route adjustments, after years (in some cases, decades) of inaction, seem to have taken a mind of its own. Management with its computer in hand seems to think that a calculator can deliver a route better than an experienced professional carrier workforce. It seems to be trying to squeeze blood from a turnip as it constantly tries to turn up the pressure on everyone to do more in less time. Our branch, after a bumpy start, seems to be working with management personnel and the regular letter carriers to make adjustments that everyone can live with. This does not mean that every route is properly adjusted to eight hours, nor does it mean that you have to make management time limits because it tells you what you need to do (according to the computer). The bottom line is that you are responsible for the time that your route takes on a daily basis. If you are skipping your breaks and lunch then you are opening yourself up to a 50-minute addition. Our local agreement on route adjustments does not override the contract's provisions for special inspections for routes that qualify with excessive overtime. If you feel that you've had a raw deal, again ask your union steward if you qualify. I hope that you don't have to tell him/her that you're skipping lunch.

From a leadership perspective the greatest transition has been at the top as President Danny Laffan has firmly taken control of Branch 193 following Tony Cortese's passing early in the year. He has managed the position in a very professional manner and has had to overcome challenges from some management personnel who had grown accustomed over the years to Tony's more informal style. It was particularly difficult during the first couple of months, but with VP Stanley Halfacre's help, the transition has been successfully made. One of the first changes has been essential cosmetic as they, with a few volunteers, rearranged and remodeled our Union office to the delight and general praise of the board members. Danny has made

an effort to expand the leadership in the branch focusing on bringing in new activists for the future. In that regard, the board and membership made a major change in the local bylaws that provided for a second vice president to aid in relieving the workload of grievances as well as other duties. Long time union leader and activist, one of many experienced but still young unionist, Laurie Duarte from St. James Station easily won the recent election over five other candidates. I've have known Laurie for many years, and I've worked with her as part of the joint safety team. I congratulate her and know that she will be an excellent 2nd VP. In addition, Danny has utilized the skills of several of our stewards to handle Formal A grievance settlements (the second stage of the grievance process).

This brings me to the final point. Where do we go from here? Most of the board members have held their positions for years. Retirees hold most of the non-steward positions, and many of the stewards will be retiring in the next few years. We are facing a leadership crisis in our local that, frankly, has many of us concerned. Although a few individuals have stepped forward this past year, the majority of the membership doesn't understand what this means. Brothers and sisters, we are in a fight for our future. I mentioned earlier the daily challenges we face fighting off management and its mindless computer supposedly dictating what we can or cannot do. Certainly, management has a right to management and its' instructions must be followed, but, believe it or not, some supervisors treat our National Agreement like a set of suggestions that are more irritating than anything else, designed only to make their job harder. Some of them are so new, they haven't a clue as to what they can or cannot do. We need to constantly monitor them because they will do whatever they can to make their numbers look good EVERY SINGLE DAY. Some stations are better than others in terms of daily working conditions, but all are at risk.

What can you do? It took me nearly 10 years to realize that I could help my fellow members by becoming active in the union. Why? I was more ignorant than the newest 204B, that's why! I couldn't help myself much less anyone else, but that changed when I attended my first board meeting. You've heard it before this: there is power in knowledge. These monthly meetings are held the last Wednesday of each month at 7:00pm at our union office building on Minnesota Avenue. This is where the action is, where knowledge is obtained, and where local issues are discussed. The biggest secret is that these meetings are open to ALL MEMBERS. Attend a board meeting. Many of you may not be interested in a leadership role in the union, but all of you can benefit from the knowledge that you lack. There are other ways to get involved or to learn more, and that can only benefit you. Ask questions if you are not sure management is treating you correctly. Believe me, management is not your friend. Check out our local website at www.nalcbranch193.com. Sign up for e-activist. Do something for yourself to make a difficult job more bearable as we transition into the future.

Political Memo

by Guillermo Martinez, Political Liason

Three environmental groups, the National Wildlife Federation from Virginia, The National Resources from New York, and the Ecology center in Berkley California have combined efforts to reduce catalog mailings nationwide. The project is called "Catalog choice" and created a website so individuals can remove their name from certain mailing lists. The major mailers involved are: L.L. Bean, Land's

End, Lillian Vernon, Brooke Stone, and Garden Supply Co. The website includes over a thousand other catalogs. Many catalog companies are happy to remove names from their mailing list because many are discarded immediately without being reviewed. Also the environmental impact catalogs have on society. The environmental groups mentioned have sited that it takes 53 million trees and enough energy to power 1.2 million in a year to create 20 billion catalogs. Catalog companies use a large amount of material that has not been recycled. The Direct Marketing Association claims that paper catalogs can be a positive environmentally because of its "recycle please" public education campaign which is posted

on it's website. www.dma.org/recycle.html. The Direct Marketing Association already provides a mail preference service that includes a printable form for requesting name removal from mailing lists. People can send the form to the D.M.A. in the mail, and then it will be forwarded to the catalog companies. Standard mail is the only class of mail that raised in volume the last fiscal year, but at a lesser rate then previous years. Volume in all other mail classes has dropped significantly. The postal community can work with organizations like catalog choice if they would include in their process the ability to request catalogs or place your name on mailing lists.

Back by popular demand!



NALC - 193 Day At The Races

\$27.00 per Adult
\$10.00 per child 17-under
MARCH 30th, 2008

includes:

- General Parking
- Admission and Reserved Tables seating in the Turf Club
- Complimentary Racing Program
- Lunch Buffet with Coffee, Tea & Ice Tea
- Turf Club: 11:30pm
- Buffet Times: 12:30pm to 2:30pm
- First Race: 1:15pm
- Last Race: 5:15pm

See your Shop Steward for Tickets

This is a MDA fundraiser
 Tickets are limited so act fast

Important Dates

Jan 9	Regular Branch Meeting
Jan 30	Executive Board Meeting
Feb 13	Regular Branch Meeting
Feb 27	Executive Board Meeting
Mar 12	Members BBQ
Mar 26	Executive Board Meeting
Mar 30	Day at the Races
Apr 9	Regular Branch Meeting

Branch Meetings begin promptly at 7:30 PM
 Italian American Heritage Foundation
 425 North 4th Street San Jose, CA 95112

Board Meetings begin promptly at 7:00 PM: Union Office
 1060 Minnesota Avenue, Suite 9 San Jose, CA 95125

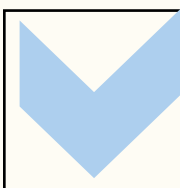
JACKPOT!!

Eduardo Pascasio from Campbell was not at the December Branch Meeting to collect the \$1,000 when their names were called for the jackpot.

DEADLINE!

The Deadline for copy of the March/April 2008 issue of the Branch 193 Bulletin is Friday February 25, 2008. News stories, articles, letters to the editor, drawings, cartoons, business cards, and/or photographs should be submitted to:

Editor
 Branch 193 Bulletin
 P.O. Box 5721 San Jose, CA 95150



Be sure to VOTE
February 5th!

Members BBQ

The Annual Members BBQ will be held on Wednesday, March 12, 2008. A choice of steak or chicken with all the fixings will be available. Tickets are \$3 and will be available from your shop steward in February. Remember this event is for members only. Come join your fellow carriers for an evening of camaraderie.

Safeguard/Smilesavers Dental Plan

The annual premium of \$36 for those enrolled in the Safeguard/Smilesavers Dental Plan is due by March 1, 2008. Please send your payment to the Union Office at P O Box 5721 San Jose, CA 95150. Please make checks out to NALC Branch 193.

Retiree Tax Information

Retirees are reminded to be careful that they record the proper amount of taxable income on their tax forms. A portion of your gross annuity is not taxable since you already paid taxes on it when it was deducted. Check the statement you received from OPM and make sure you claim the proper taxable income.

Welcome New Members

- | | |
|----------------------|---------------------|
| Matthew Aguirre | Sheng Liu |
| Teofilo Alquiza, Jr. | Sujana Maharjan |
| Mihir Amin | Azucena Marrujo |
| Kamalpreet Bhatia | Marcelo Mateo |
| Richard Cazares | Sean McArthur |
| Kim Chau | Kinh Nguyen |
| Julian delos Santos | Nho Nguyen |
| Arthur Denton | Tu Nguyen |
| Kisha Domino | Noli Pascual |
| Martha Esparaza | Jorge Perez |
| Annabelle Espejo | Edwardson Ruiz |
| Raymond Espinoza | Gurpreet Singh |
| Ramon Estonilo | Charline Solis |
| Vicenta Flores | Pepito Tadias |
| Alma Guizar | Henry Thang |
| Qamar Khan | Daniel Tomista, Jr. |
| Jeffrey Koch | Luis Vera |
| Yuri Kuvadin | Darian Wang |
| Yahua Liang | Thor Williams |
| John Lin | |

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR NEW RETIREES

LEO FLORES - STATION D

In Memoriam

Deepest Sympathy to the families & friends of our departed brothers and sisters.

ANTONIO C QUINENE, JR
BELINDA INGRAM