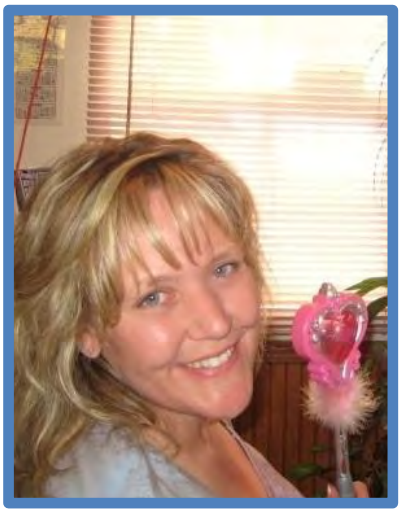
MARCH/APRIL 2024
CIRCULATION 500
NALC
BRANCH 442
SWINGROOM GAZETTE
SERVING SPOKANE, SPOKANE VALLEY, CHENEY, COLVILLE, FAIRCHILD AIR FORCE BASE, RITZVILLE, COULEE DAM AND COLFAX



President's Report
Sharee Eschenbacher

When you've been around the Post Office a few years, you notice distinct cycles of contractual non-compliance. A new manager or postmaster shows up with all these great ideas to change how we do things to make us more efficient, productive, and happy. Without fail, each time this happens, the stewards and Branch leadership look at each other, roll our eyes and say, "Here we go again". Over and over again, we fight the same battles. Management tries to guilt us into "working together for common goals" while doing everything they can to keep us out of the loop. The only common thing we have between us is our Contract. If all would "work together" to follow the Contract, what a wonderful world this would be. I could fill the pages of this issue with "new" policies being implemented…one's that we have fought and won through the years. Management is not willing to believe what is written in the decisions we have from the B Team and above. Be assured, your stewards are on top of these issues. In the meantime, follow instructions and ALWAYS ask for time with your steward if something doesn't seem right. I need to briefly touch on a few items that are contentious right now:

Signing non-postal forms is not required. The only training record you sign is a PS Form 2548. You are not required to sign the current front page of your "Welcome Back" packet.

In most situations, granting LWOP is management's discretion. If you get back early, management can fill your remaining time, up to 8.0 hours.

If you have something to do after work, I suggest letting management know in the morning. Your supervisor can input a specific payroll code that is less likely to get them in trouble. 05900 is just run-of-the-mill LWOP and this is what uppers are looking for. However, if your supervisor puts in 05902-Proffered or 05903-Personal Reasons, this will probably go unnoticed.

There is no magic number of unscheduled absences that should put you on a "bad carrier" list. Our current Postmaster says there IS a magic number and that number is 4. There are reasons why we earn 13 days of sick leave each year. Our jobs are outdoors and, in some cases, in extreme weather. Often, we are required to work beyond a normal work week. We work with the general public and are exposed to all types of viruses. Yes, it's great if we can bank our sick leave for an emergency, but it's there for when we need it and we should not be shamed for using it.

I was not at our Bowlathon this year because I was attending a Committee of Presidents meeting. I was looking forward to updates on contract negotiations but the only topic addressed on that was the appointment of a neutral Chair to the Interest Arbitration panel. I know it's frustrating to not know all that's being discussed between the parties, but the NALC has a long history of being tight-lipped during negotiations. So far, that's worked out pretty good for us. A long negotiation period can be a good thing. It generally means we are agreeing, or close to agreement, on some things. This will put less in front of the Panel to decide.

I know this will be a full Gazette, so I will end with this: Take care of each other, follow your line of travel, set up a profile on eComp before you need it, ask to join our FB page if you haven't, get ready for the Food Drive and look for training the Branch is offering (like Edit Book training).

With Union Strength,
Sharee



Vice President's Report
Steve Thrift

At our February Shop Steward meeting we did a test run of what I hope will become the new standard for training in our branch. Finally putting to use the videos and power points that we have archived, and having one of our stewards teach the other stewards a class. Conner McKinnon was my guinea pig (sorry Conner) teaching a class on E-Comp/OWCP basics. Having a person teach a class to others helps in several ways. It reinforces the knowledge in their own brain, it makes them dig deep when people ask questions, and it helps develop public speaking skills. It is my goal to develop stewards who are not only knowledgeable, but able to pass that knowledge forward to others. There were some glitches, as the video component was not satisfactory in my opinion. We used my old projector to put the video up on the dry erase board, and it wasn't quite up to the task. It's just not powerful enough put a large image out there in anything less than complete darkness, which isn't a very good classroom environment, and I didn't have an auxiliary speaker because I thought that the computer speakers would be loud enough for everyone to hear. So, we will address these shortcomings going forward and the training will continue to improve. We will have stewards pick (or be assigned) a topic, provide them with materials, allow them some time to prepare the class, we'll critique and advise, and then they'll present it to the other stewards at our Shop Steward meeting each month. Conner did a great job in case you're interested, especially given that he was expecting more video content, and wound up mostly just speaking and teaching on the fly. Way to Go Conner!

Speaking of training we have several people attending Regional Trainings in March; I'd like to thank them each for stepping up and volunteering their annual leave time and personal life to learn more about how to better represent their coworkers. Thank you from us all!

Intermediate Shop Steward College: Everitt Hooper, Simona Farnsworth, Josh Nix, Conner McKinnon

Regional Step A to B Training: Tracy Pardick Advanced OWCP Training: Conner Mckinnon

On the Legislative Front there are several Bills moving through the Halls of Congress that directly affect active or retired Letter Carriers (and those who hope to one day retire)

Ask your legislators to support the Federal Retirement Fairness Act (H.R. 5995)
This bipartisan bill would provide greater retirement security for federal employees, including Postal Service employees, who begin their federal/postal service in non-career positions. It would:

- Modify what is considered creditable federal civilian service under the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS)
- Allow letter carriers, and other affected federal employees, the opportunity to purchase retirement credit for time spent in non-career positions, such as casuals, transitional employees (TEs) or city carrier assistants (CCAs)

Urge your member to support the Social Security Fairness Act (H.R. 82/S. 597)
Urge your elected officials to support the Social Security Fairness Act which would:

- Repeal the Government Pension Offset (GPO)
- Repeal the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) titles of the Social Security Act. These provisions unfairly reduce or sometimes eliminate Social Security benefits for millions of federal workers, including letter carriers.

Ask your member to support door delivery (H. Res. 376)

- More than 35 million U.S. businesses and households receive mail at their doors six—and sometimes seven—days a week. Receiving mail, including bills, paychecks, medications, ballots and packages at the door is preferred by the public.
- Continuing this essential service is critical to the economic success of the Postal Service.

Contact your member to support the USPS Shipping Equity Act (H.R. 3721)

This bipartisan bill would allow the Postal Service to ship beer, wine and other alcoholic beverages directly from licensed producers and retailers to legal customers. The bill would:

- generate an estimated $190 million annually in new revenue for the Postal Service
- expand USPS's service options, especially for rural customers.
- allow wineries, breweries, and other producers to have goods delivered through USPS, instead of only private shippers.

If you would like to know more about these bills simply go to NALC.org "Government Affairs" and then "Fact Sheets". That is also the place to go and keep up to date on any other future legislation that could affect us and our jobs. You will find the contact info for our elected representatives for our District printed elsewhere in this fine publication.

Until next time my friends; keep your heads up, stick together, support your Stewards, watch out for and mentor our newer coworkers, and remember that Knowledge is Power. Be Powerful! -Steve Thrift Vice President-

Regional COP 2024

I attended the Regional Committee of Presidents March 2-3 in Vancouver WA. There we discussed many topics that will affect our branches and our Region in the coming year. As to a Contract Update, the news was that the third arbitrator had been selected and all that is left is to find a date when they are all available to begin the Arbitration process. We compiled a list of recommended class topics that we'd like to see taught at future training sessions. There is talk of starting our shop steward colleges on Sunday; that would help students save a day of A/L when attending. The Uniform Program is broken… we talked about our potential move to a quartermaster style program like the military where you receive an initial issue when you join the service, then a yearly maintenance issue instead of the current system, it would be much easier to control the spiraling costs that always seem to outpace our allowance each year. One of the biggest topics was about additional preparation for Step B cases being sent up. Facts, cites, and precedent setting documents be included in the case files. Article 17/31 violations are on the rise (as you Shop Stewards know too well) local Mgmt. seems to think they get to decide what documentation we are entitled to review when determining the existence of, or in the processing of, a grievance. We will dissuade them of this idea through the grievance process. The contract is quite clear on this subject. Other topics covered were the importance of the Letter Carrier Political Fund, our organizing efforts throughout the Region, Non-Compliance and Failure to Meet grievances, the upcoming Food Drive in May, and ways of monitoring the HIPP training process.

I would like to thank you all for the opportunity to represent our Branch at this meeting.

-Steve Thrift



Director of Retirees
Steve Schultz

Greetings Brothers and Sisters of Branch #442. Sorry I missed the deadline for the last issue of the Gazette. With Christmas upon us, I like many others, focused my attention on that and the deadline had completely slipped my mind.

I would like to take a moment to write about something that is not entirely focused on the union, and that is the current political division in this country. In my 70 years, I have never seen our country so politically polarized as it is right now, and I grew up in the 50's and 60's. I lived through the 50's, a time of peace and prosperity in the United States. World War II had only been a decade before and our country was on the rebound. While we were dealing with the start of the Cold War beginning in Korea, everyone was working together for the good of the country as a whole. I lived through the 60's, when JFK uttered those classic words "Ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country", as he challenged everyone to contribute in some way to the public good. It was a time of "flower power and free love", and we had great music. It was also a time of turmoil with radical issues such as the Vietnam war, and racism that were tearing our country apart.

But I have never seen our country so politically polarized as it is right now. Neither party in Congress is willing to work with the other for the good of the country. Their only focus is on driving more division between the parties. I wonder to myself how are we ever going to get a Social Security Fairness bill passed when no one wants to give one inch. The time of both parties working together, as had been done in the past, seems to have gone its course. Back in the day, representatives from both sides of the aisle tackled the issue jointly. I think of people like Representative John McHugh (R) of New York and Senator Ted Stevens (R) of Alaska working with Democrats to get Postal Reform bills done many years ago.

So, what do we do now in this current political climate to get bills passed that affect letter carriers and federal employees? We keep on trying! In one of my favorite lines from the movie, The Outlaw Josey Wales, Chief Dan George who played the part of Lone Watie, in talking about his trip to Washington, DC said he was told "Endeavor to persevere". And that is what we do. We keep on trying! We keep introducing the bill, we keep contacting our congressional representatives, we keep pushing. "We don't give up we never give up" as Jim Valvano said in his ESPY speech before he passed away from cancer. So, my point of this whole article is this. When you're asked by the union to take a couple of minutes to contact your congressional representative, please do so. Most of the time it's simply an automated system to leave a message at, but they keep track of all the calls received on a particular issue and it will help influence their vote. Give your union a few minutes of your time.

Our quarterly retiree's luncheon at the Golden Corral on North Division is coming up the second Saturday in May, which this year falls on the 11th. I hope many of you will be able to make it and re-kindle old friendships with those you used to work with. Just a quick reminder, these luncheons take place in February, May, August, and November. That's about it for now. Until next time, take care…

REBUTTAL TO WADE OUTCALT'S ARTICLE
Steve Schultz

As the chairman of the committee to investigate the charges brought forward by a member of the branch, I feel compelled to respond to Wade Outcalt's article in the last issue of the Gazette on behalf of the committee. I only wish that you had printed what actually happened, and not your interpretation of what happened. First, you state there is no word of what the charges were, when in fact the charges were read twice. Once when originally brought forward and again a second time when he refiled them. The charges were actually filed against several members of our union, not the union itself.

Second, you state the first charges were dismissed off-hand and that is absolutely not true. As was stated at the branch meeting, the charges were procedurally defective. Article 10 of the Constitution of Subordinate and Federal Branches states specific guidelines and procedures that must be followed when filing charges. Those were not done in this case, and after seeking advice from our Regional office, "the committee" not me, recommended that the charges be dismissed, along with providing the individual with the information of where to find the rules and guidelines. This was approved by the branch membership at the meeting.

Third, you state the second charges were dismissed, basically off-hand again. Nothing could be farther from the truth. As was stated at the branch meeting, the committee met with the individual filing the charges for almost 3 hours and identified 10 witnesses to interview. Over the next month and a half, we interviewed all those witnesses, in addition to 2 others we had determined from the interviews that we felt should be questioned. The committee spent roughly 40 hours, much of it in the evening, interviewing the witnesses, reviewing the Constitution, reviewing the interviews, seeking advice from the Regional office, and after all that, "the committee" not me, recommended that the charges were without merit and that they should be dismissed. This was approved by the branch membership at the meeting. A six-page typewritten summary of our investigation is sealed and locked in the safe at the branch office. That in fact, is the truth of what happened in regard to the charges, not an off-hand dismissal, but a full and complete investigation by the committee.

As long as I'm on my soapbox, there are a couple other issues with your article that I would like to address. First, is the leaking of President Renfro's comments at the RAP session. It is not in an attempt to hide anything from the Rank and File membership, but there is a reason for not leaking that information. The reason they don't like that information leaked is because it gives away our position to management in the negotiation process. It is no different than you or I going to buy a car. You don't go and tell the dealer that you are approved for $25,000, you tell them that you are approved for $20,000 in hopes to get them to drop the price. If you tell them you are approved for $25,000, they will try and sell you a car for $30,000. The same is true in our national negotiation process. You don't want to show your cards so to speak.

Second, regarding your comments about the tiebreaker election process for delegates to the State and National conventions. That procedure is spelled out in Article 5, Section 4.e.2 of the Branch By/Laws, and is the same process that we have been using for over 40 years that I have been a member of this branch. Your vote does count, and that is why we went to a mail ballot system over 35 years ago, to give everyone an opportunity to vote in branch elections. Prior to that, unless you requested a ballot, you didn't vote. It is expensive to do a mail ballot system, but when we instituted the mail system, we felt it was well worth the cost to give each member of our branch an opportunity to vote. It is why I have always encouraged people to take advantage of our mail balloting process and vote. It doesn't cost them a dime other that about two or three minutes of their time.

Finally, you do have a valid point in regards to those delegates attending RAP sessions, Conventions, etc. writing articles about what took place at the event. Writing an article to share information of the training was always one of the requirements of attendance, and to the best of my knowledge, still is. Nobody is trying to hide anything. I feel that as a society we have gotten lazy and don't want to do any more than the minimum that is required of us. I hope that in the future, the branch leadership will strongly encourage articles to be written by the officers and stewards of each station and by the delegates attending any training or conventions so that we can have an informed membership. Wade, I appreciate you coming to the branch meetings. I see from the seniority roster that you have been a carrier since 2006 and have just recently started to attend meetings. If you had attended previous meetings over the years, you would have been more educated about some of these issues you addressed. But you have to start somewhere, and I'm glad to see you attending. I just wish we could get more members to attend and become involved. It is the best way to share information and provide your feedback to the branch leadership. You know, we used to have 50-60 members attend the meeting each month. For many years we had to rent the West Central Community Center to hold our meetings. Now we are lucky to get 20-30 in attendance and, it's mainly officers and stewards. It's your union. Be involved. Attend the monthly branch meeting!

Branch 442
General Meeting
November 21st, 2023

Call to Order: Sharee called the meeting to order at 7pm.
Pledge of Allegiance: All stood and recited the pledge of allegiance.
Roll Call of Officers: 16 present, 4 excused, and 3 absent.
Reading of Previous Minutes:

General Meeting: Rick made a motion to accept the September General minutes, 2nd by Conner and approved by the body. Rick made a motion to accept the October minutes, 2nd by Tracy and approved by the body.

Executive Meeting: Rick made a motion to accept the minutes, 2nd by Conner and accepted by the body.

Secretary/Treasurer's Report: Motion made by Conner to accept the report, 2nd by Rick and approved by the body.
Reading of Communications: Robert Jenkins transferred to the clerk craft. This upcoming National convention is the 73rd. The branch is allotted 26 delegates.
Applications for New Membership: Patrick Breeding, Stephanie Luther, Serena Jakeman, Zackery Gilman, and Eric Pardick.
Initiation of New Members: None
Reading of Report:

Director of Insurance: We are in open season if you don't have the NALC Health plan, please take a look at it.

Director of Safety: None

Retirees: Luncheon on November 11th we had 15 people show up.

Trustees: No report there will be a report next month.

Spokane Labor Council: Oppose the merger of grocery stores. To many speakers at the labor rally. Could not talk with the speakers because of the noise, bad too loud. Not as well attended as in the past.

Swingroom Gazette: Articles are due at the General meeting in December.

Committee Reports:

Legislation: HR82 Social Security Act has 296 co-sponsors the same bill in the senate has 44 but don't except a vote on it in the current legislative session.

Resolutions: None

By-Laws: None

Entertainment: None

Athletics: None

Employees Services: None

Hospital and Health: Sharee, Avendo Chavez, Sandy Glenn, Dee Dee grandbaby, Dean Robinson, and April Sooy.

Condolences: Chuck Brittan passed

Labor/Management Agenda Items: Getting ¾ of a tray of mail that doesn't belong on that route, 733 time, CCA's going on travel time and staying on it the whole time, CCA's don't know who to call when injured, 22-minute load time, no lunch, no one answer the phone when you call in with an emergency, bogus job offers.
Unfinished Business: Committee on charges finds no merit and recommends the charges be dismissed. Rick made a motion to accept the committee report, 2nd by Conner and approved by the body.
New Business: Motion made by Rick to accept the budget, 2nd by Conner and approved by the body. Chris made a motion to table the runoff vote until the December meeting, 2nd by Bill and approved by the body.
Good of the Association: Let us know when someone goes into management, and we will remove them from the branch facebook page. Food drive bags have been ordered. Sandwich trays will need to be picked up on December 20th.
Improvement of the Service: None
Meeting Drawings: Avelino Zazuetta and Casey Taylor
Adjournment: Conner made a motion to adjourn at 835pm, 2nd by Rick and approved by the body.

Executive Board Meeting
December 5th, 2023

Present: Sharee, Mike, Miranda, and Steve
Excused: Bill and Conner
Absent: Angie
Sharee: Carrier Academy supplies have arrived. The veteran's card is trying to get everyone that is a vet to sign up. We have a couple of membership awards to hand out. I am still shopping for a new computer for the office. I will go over to Lawton next week for the banner.
Sharee for Conner: I am in full swing with OWCP. Are the books ready yet?
Miranda: I actually like my route.
Mike: Bowlathon will be held on March 2nd from 4-7pm at Lilac Lanes. Registration is $100 per team, $25 per person. All team names and the names of the bowlers on each team will need to be given to Mike Poff by February 16th and the registration fee will need to be paid to Mike Poff no later than February 21st, you can call 5092091820 or text the same number. Will be having a committee meeting on December 6th at 5pm at the union hall. The next meeting after that will be December 20th if you want to help plan show up at the union hall at 5pm.
Steve Nothing.

Branch 442
General Meeting
December 19th, 2023

Call to Order: Sharee called the meeting to order at 7pm.
Pledge of Allegiance: All stood and recited the pledge of allegiance.
Roll Call of Officers: 14 present, 3 excused, and 5 absent.
Reading of Previous Minutes:
General Meeting: Motion made by Jessica to accept the minutes, 2nd my Chris and approved by the body.
Executive Meeting: Chris made a motion to accept the minutes, 2nd by Jessica and approved by the body.
Secretary/Treasurer's Report: Chris made a motion to accept the report, 2nd by Steve S. and approved by the body.
Reading of Communications: National sent a Christmas card. Cop meeting in Jacksonville FL.
Applications for New Membership: Billings Sunnymae, Joshua Towels, and Joshua Greenfall.
Initiation of New Members: None
Reading of Report:
Director of Insurance: Open season is closed.
Director of Safety: None
Retirees: None
Trustees: Books are good through October.
Spokane Labor Council: WSLC convention is on the west side.
Swingroom Gazette: Articles due no later than December 24th.
Committee Reports:
Legislation: Lawmakers again try to standardize cost of living raises for retirees.
Resolutions: None
By-Laws: None
Entertainment: Bowlathon March 2nd at Lilac Lanes from 4-7pm 4 person teams $25 per bowler.
Athletics: None
Hospital and Health: Rachael Poff surgery on Thursday, Tom Neese, Matt Larson, and Avelino Zazuetta.
Condolences: John Highit
Labor/Management Agenda Items: No lunch in overtime, EAS not in office all day, 733 time, and EAS doing craft work.
Unfinished Business: Bill made a motion to destroy last year's ballots, 2nd by Chris and approved by the body.
New Business: Chris made a motion to send Sharee to the COP, 2nd by Steve S. and approved by the body.
Good of the Association: Sandwich tray tomorrow, discussed sharing of the information from the RAP, EAP, and Tired of the National leadership lack of following the contract.
Improvement of the Service: None
Meeting Drawings: Derrick Healey and Jessica Hodgson.
Adjournment: Chris made a motion to adjourn at 815, 2nd by Jessica and approved by the body.

Executive Board Meeting
January 3rd, 2024

Present: Sharee, Steve, Conner, Mike, Angie, and Miranda
Excused: Bill
Sharee: Progressions is giving us chairs from the conference room. Branch picnic is July 21st have reserved the spot for the entire day. Problem with homeless people hanging out at the union looking at putting a fence around the property. ODL tracking. Produce a training plan for the stewards. Labor/Management meeting on 1/4/24.
Steve: Checking with different fence companies for prices. Will be using videos for the training. Memo for the current route adjustment has been extended until May31st, 271g's are still priority.
Mike: Bowlathon is March 2nd at Lilac Lanes 4-7pm. The wife's surgery went well.
Miranda: Learning to do payroll.
Angie: Thank Miranda for helping Bill.
Conner: Would like to help train stewards. Would like to get training on how to be a better steward.

Executive Board Meeting
February 6th, 2024

Present: Sharee, Steve, Conner, Mike, Bill, Angie, and Miranda
Sharee: National COP is March 2-3 all set up. Regional COP is also the same dates as National Steve will be attending it. Gazette was pathetic. Articles due on February 25th. Will look at other gazettes to see if there is anything that we can add to ours. April 21st is the union hall workday. I will meet with Lawton printing on Thursday about the banner. Trying to fix the bathroom window and the front door. RAP session looking into lodging. February 25-29th is basic shop steward college we are sending 4. Tracy will be attending the regional formal A to B. Advanced OWCP Conner will be attending. eOPF will not be useable until the end of May.
Angie: People complaining about the bowlathon being on a Saturday.
Mike: Bowlathon was moved to Saturday to try and accommodate more people being able to be involved.
Steve: Need to do training on how to do edit books. Working on setting up a branch power knowledge night which will be open to everyone possibly the 2nd Thursday. Currently working on cataloging all the training from over the years.
Miranda: Bill and I got the W2's done and sent out. I will be updating the I9's and the W4's for the officers and stewards.
Conner: We need to push hard on selling tickets for the raffle. Need to watch what we put in the gazette to not offend anyone.
Bill: Branch is the 3rd Sunday of July, will possibly have splash down tickets. I will reserve NQ for the installation dinner. Looking at sending 5 maybe 6 to National Convention. Will send 8 to State convention.

Branch 442
General Meeting
February 21st, 2024

Call to Order: Steve called the meeting to order at 7pm.
Pledge of Allegiance: All stood and recited the pledge of allegiance.
Roll Call of Officers: 20 present, 4 excused, and 3 absent.
Reading of Previous Minutes:
General Meeting: Conner made a motion to accept the minutes as printed, 2nd Chris and approved by the body.
Executive Meeting: Conner made a motion to accept the minutes as printed, 2nd by Chris and approved by the body.
Secretary/Treasurer's Report: Conner made a motion to accept the report, 2nd by Chris and approved by the body.
Reading of Communications: None
Applications for New Membership: Theodore Leal, Richard Lindley, Rob McKeen, Moises Ojeda, Anthony Hernnandez, Lawrence Kinney, Marco Renteria, Michael Jose, Christina Torres, Ryan Boyce, Tawny White, Charles Hill, Joshua Backman, Travis Bell, Bryan Painter, Khristian Peacock, David Compton, William Harris, Austin Ethridge, Jason Bias, Amy Nering, Stacie Bushore, Ronald Sharley, and Maxwell Koedding.
Initiation of New Members: None

Reading of Report:

Director of Insurance: CCA's can sign up for any plan.

Director of Safety: Accident Reports, JSA's. Shadow program, OSHA reports, Safety features on the new vans being turned off.

Retirees: A good turn put at the last luncheon; Next luncheon is on May 12th.

Trustees: Books in order through October.

Spokane Labor Council: See Cara's report.

Swingroom Gazette: Articles are the 24th.

Committee Reports:

Legislation: The big push is having our pensions from being stolen. Bingle is running for Cathy McMorris-Rodgers position because she is not seeking re-election.

Resolutions: None

By-Laws: None

Entertainment: Bowlathon is March 2nd at Lilac Lanes from 4-7pm.

Athletics:

Employees Services: EAP program is open to all family as well.

Hospital and Health: Tom Neese, Everitt Hooper, Aveleneo Zazuetta, Yusef Brown had a baby, and Bill Bauder.

Condolences: Craig Haase-mom, Sandy Glen-mom, John Geiertlew-mom, Allen Brown, Irv Bryant, and George Buckley.

Labor/Management Agenda Items: FMLA, Dois times, FWD's not going through, Justification to get clock rings, and copies of the Labor/Management meetings, 733 time.

Unfinished Business: None.

New Business: National Convention August 3-9th, and the State Convention May 17-19th.

Good of the Association: Bill is checking the retiree list.

Improvement of the Service: None

Meeting Drawings: Jon McCormick and Eric Eaglin neither present.

Adjournment: Conner made a motion to adjourn 840pm, 2nd by Chris and approved by the body.



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Hays Park
Simona Farnsworth

Hello from Hays Park. For those of you that do not know me I'd like to introduce myself. My name is Simona Farnsworth and I have been a Letter Carrier for almost 17 years now. All my time since I became a regular has been spent at Hays Park. I have been interested in becoming a steward for quite some time now. My goal is to make sure management follows the contract and to ensure fair, equal and respectful treatment for everyone in our station. We have an amazing team of carriers at our station, and we all deserve to come to work in an environment that is pleasant and free from harassment.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank our President Sharee for an amazing job. She has gone way above and beyond to help teach me about article 8 among other things. There was one evening after I got off work that Sharee stayed at the union office just with me till almost 9pm teaching me how to do article 8 grievances. The contract is very complex, there is so much for me to still learn. Please feel free to ask me any questions. If I do not know the answer I will find it for you. I would also like to encourage everyone to please not be afraid to request steward time. I have heard carriers say they are afraid to request steward time because they feel like they will be treated poorly after making such a request. It is your right as a carrier to have steward time. Anytime you have any questions, problems or concerns please request steward time. If I do not know of the issues you may be dealing with then how can I help to solve them?

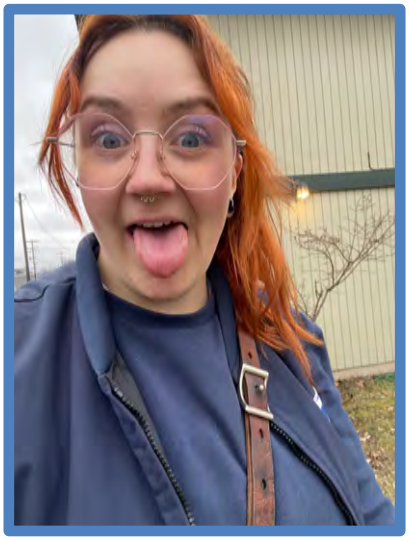
I would like to remind everyone that you can use your scanner to send messages to management. If you do not feel comfortable calling the office for any reason you can simply use your scanner to send a message, that message is automatically saved on the scanner for 5 days. If anyone does not know how to do this, please ask me or another carrier that knows how to send messages through the scanner. I would also like to thank Sharee again and Steve Schultz for resolving the issue regarding our CCAs not being given their uniform allowance. Steve was literally there 2 days after I told Sharee our CCAs were not being allowed to order uniforms. Thank you! Thank you! Thank you!

I am writing this article the day before I go to Steward College with 3 of our colleagues. I am extremely excited to attend, and I am looking forward to learning more about the contract. With that I will wrap up my article. Everyone be safe out there. You are the most important part of the Post Office.

Metro
Charlie Wilder

Good day!
I am Charlie! Just bid to Metro at the end of last year. Joined forces with the incredible Jeremie as a secondary union steward *in training*. Jeremie is a wonderful teacher and he does a lot for the carriers at the station. And he tries to include me in everything union wise, and I truly appreciate him! I look forward to continuing our team and learning all I can! This will be my third February as a carrier, I started in January 2022 as a CCA and converted that Christmas. I have worked at a few stations and each one is unique! I love the route I have although small, it's fun learning bits of nearby routes.

As far as management goes at Metro: Larry is seemingly chill so far, he usually closes. Jon Riffle is quite the wild card, from doing weird stand-ups every day to not answering questions when asked. Between arrogance and stupidity we have some work cut out for us. He sends messages via the scanner with language of "no overtime today". I will say his bullish behavior towards carriers will not be tolerated. I feel the strength of Metro, we have a lot of union knowledgeable carriers here. I hope to encourage everyone to stand up for themselves and their rights towards the repressive and demeaning management mindset. I hope to learn everything I can in my training and I look forward to this year and good things to come! I thank all stewards for what you do! Charlie



Shadle
Leslie Phelps

Hello brothers and sisters, Leslie main steward here from the Shadle Garland Post Office. Thanks for reading my first article of 2024. This means I have now been a steward for Shadle for a little over a year now. I am starting to get more comfortable with this position as time goes on. Shadle would also like to welcome a new alternate steward Everitt Hopper! He just finished his first time at steward college out in Gold Bar, WA so I am excited to have some help in this whole steward thing.

I am in the process of getting all contract violations grieved dating back to December of 2023 since management would not give me the time to do so. Now that there is no excuse for giving me time I am finding that they still do not like giving me steward time and I am having to fight them for it. A thing that would help in giving me steward time would be anytime that my carriers think there is a grievance to tell me or my alternate immediately and management is obligated to give me time to investigate.

Each month stewards meet with management and I encourage any carriers to write down their thoughts or concerns so that I can address this with management. I have a good feeling about my time as a steward this year and I can not be a great steward without the help of carriers trusting me to do so.



Shadle Alt.
Everitt Hopper

I grew up in Big Sky Country and Montana will always have my heart. Spokane has some great features too, but there is something different about the air over there. Maybe I miss hunting, fishing, and backpacking across the vast and beautiful landscape of that state. I am the youngest of 3 kids. My favorite genre for music and movies happens to fall in the 80s. I don't fear Government, I fear God. I love talking about history and politics. I enjoy all kinds of food and I can confidently say I love everything except bread and butter pickles. Those can just go straight into the garbage can. I am married to my beautiful wife Stephanie, and we have two Australian Shepherds, Henry and Max.

I wanted to become a Steward because I see a lot of opportunities for the Carriers and Management to work better together. It is unfortunate that we currently have a division between the two parties. The tension continues to escalate with the mistreatment of Carriers and the disregard for our contract. I am happy to point that out by filing grievances in a timely manner and giving Management an opportunity to learn from their mistakes.

Outside of those above-mentioned opportunities, working at the Shadle station has afforded me new friendships and a route with residents that I enjoy seeing and talking to. I plan on retiring from the Post Office and I hope in the 20 working years I have left… We can enact some change to make working there more sustainable, free from drama and stress.

Success in any relationship is communication and transparency. I hope as a Steward I can provide a bridge between the Carriers and Management to broaden this path in a more effective and respectful way.



Regal
Tracy Pardick

Things are changing with grievances at the station. I have noticed that the improper mando's have become less frequent. A lot of the carriers are getting 8-hour days and days off. Over time is becoming less frequent. This should be allowing carriers the time to start cleaning up routes and cases. I noticed today when I got to the station that some carriers are not keeping forwards up to date, they are saying that they are not given the time for them. The forwards are part of your morning mail. We are required to maintain our routes and boxes. We are also required to provide accurate delivery, if we are not updating the forwards in our boxes, then we are not delivering accurately. Take that time, it is part of your fixed office time.

Two of your CCAs have made regular. Steen has taken over the T6 string at regal and Allen has taken over rt 302 at Manito. Congratulations to them. Donuts are due. Not sure what else has been going on in the way of changes. If something is going on let me know so I can add it to my articles. My apologies for not being in the loop.

I would like to cover a little on safety. Dog and alert cards are required to be cased on a daily basis, this is not a card for the regular carrier, it is for the carrier that might take a hand-off from you. These cards are to protect that carrier. Also, anytime there is an encounter with a dog on your route, write it up and put a dog card in for that address. When you are doing your walking sections, make sure you are looking down and up while fingering the mail to ensure you don't step on anything (or in anything) or run into something. Make sure you are using the handrails when you can, don't jump down the stairs either. Ensure the seatbelt is on at all times and the vehicle is secured. Management is out there constantly doing safety checks. Doing the route correctly and safely takes time, don't skip these steps just to make a time. We have the power to contact management and change out estimates when needed. The morning estimate is not a commitment, we are estimating what we think it will take us not what management expects it to take us.

I have also been to the station in reference to management belief that they are entitled to know when you take your restroom break (comfort stop), that is none of their business. They should not be watching you and calculating how many you take. That is just sick and a form of harassment. I will be addressing this immediately.

This also brings me to management questioning a carrier on the route or at the station. If you are being questioned (interrogated) my management, with questions such as why? What? How? Then you should be requesting a steward. If management is asking these questions, they are most likely looking for information to discipline you. Don't give it to them. We should be coming to work and finishing work with a good mood. Management should not be making our job stressful. This is our work, not our life. We come to work to support our families, not to be harassed, intimidated, or threatened. Management should be thanking us for coming to work and giving them the opportunity to work and support their families. But that usually isn't how it works and we as the workers are treated like thieves that are robbing time from the company. I suggest read the M-41 and do the job exactly how it is written in the manual, then they will see how much we, the workers, actually do to make them look good. Do your job the way it should be done, don't allow management to intimidate you to cut corners and diminish our ability to give good customer service. We are what keeps this company going, not management. We work for the public not some bean counter or time nazi. If we work together as a team and build each other up, management will not be able to divide us.

Another issue at the station has been employees/management not knowing how the actual holiday is treated for parcel delivery. This day is treated just like any holiday schedule. Management must ask for volunteers from seniority down, then CCAs. Those volunteers are used first from the senior carrier down, then CCAs if needed. The full time carriers that come in are guaranteed 8 hours of work or pay if not provided the 8 hours of work, the carrier cannot waive that guarantee and management can't deny that time.

As always, you can call me anytime. I always answer or call back. Tracy Pardick 208 651-3505

Riverside

Rhonda Mason

Greetings from Riverside! My name is Rhonda Mason. I have been a regular since 2018 and a carrier technician for most of my career. I began my career in Williston, North Dakota and transferred to Spokane in February 0f 2021. What a change this year compared to the last couple years since I transferred in. We have three ODL carriers and two ccas currently. Vastly different from the last couple of years with one ODL and no ccas. We also have all routes filled!

As a new steward, I attended steward college twice and the rap session in October for the first time. The information gained was invaluable to me. One of the surprising (to me at least) things I learned a great deal about was how important looking at the fine print is. Especially with so many new supervisors in our area this can be a game changer for many grievances. I strive to do the best job I can for my carriers so I cannot thank the branch enough for this opportunity and am determined to continue to grow in knowledge and represent my office to the best of my ability. It is my goal this year to become more knowledgeable in the areas that I feel assist my carriers the most; such as EAP, a rudimentary understanding of OWCP, and of course a deeper understanding of the contract to name a few. This will be a career long goal I'm sure. Rhonda Mason



Riverside Alt.
Wade Outcalt

Well how about that. An article decrying a lack of information comes out in a gazette with two articles from Tracy Pardick, one from Leslie Phelps, and one from Sharee Eschenbacher. Wow, color me amazed people might be confused what's going on. Hey, what are the branch Executives doing? "Checks Gazette" What no minutes!?!? How did the last 2 union meetings go? "Checks Gazette" What no minutes!?!?! It came to my attention at the last union meeting, that pointing out certain opportunities to provide information that were missed, fell on deaf ears and were taken as some sort of misinformation, or something….. People should probably reread that article.

The point is that I find this union largely apathetic, no one wants to fight for better treatment or higher wages. I hear at meetings that things are fine and wonderful, our pay has gone up! I afforded my house when I started at the post office, at beginners wages, I could not afford it today and I'm top of the payscale, telling me our wages are fine is a lie. Plain and simple. Yours Truly, Wade Outcalt

Sunset Hill

Connie Guerrero

Hey everybody I hope you are doing good and being safe, management has been on us about our 60 minute office time and giving estimates in the morning . There is nothing that says we have to be out in a hour it takes you what it takes you also estimates only have to be given if you are going to make your schedule (8hrs) according to

131.41 It is your responsibility to verbally inform management when you are of the opinion that you will be unable to case all mail distributed to the route, perform other required duties, and leave on schedule or when you will be unable to complete delivery of all mail. (Handbook m-41) so don't let management try to intimidate you into making their times always be safe and do the job to the best of your ability. Other than that not much has been going on here besides trying to keep management in line.



Did you know that the Employee Assistance Program is available to Employees and their Family? There are several resources available at **1-800-EAP-4YOU** or

EAP4YOU.com. Just to list a few services offered: counseling, health and wellness, preparing for retirement, elder and/or child care.

Miranda Riley

Valley



Northpointe
Scott Thorland

"I don't care!"- Dustin Lower 2/23/24. This was the Station Manager's response when I confronted him about full DPS trays being stacked 4 trays high on the top shelf of the DPS rack. I suggested that if there is too much DPS to fit on the shelf then you have the clerks bring the overflow to the cases, his response: "Nope!" So, I filed a 1767 (report of hazardous condition). Did I get a timely response? Nope! This shouldn't come as a shock to most of you, but management does not actually care about your safety. Accidents and injuries are an inconvenience to them, it impacts their ability to make their numbers. Dustin simply said out loud what goes through most of their heads when confronted with a hazard. I know a lot of you roll your eyes at safety talks, especially if it's just a supervisor reading from a piece of paper or when Mike Meredith shows up to do a training exercise, but there is a purpose behind it. As ridiculous as some of the safety talks may sound, (don't make U-Turns on one-way streets) there is usually something important buried in them. The reality of this job is that you could be doing it for 30-40 years. Those little aches and pains add up over the years and can and do turn into debilitating injuries and the only ones who it impact are you and your family.

Management does not care. So please look out for yourselves and each other.



Valley
Tracy Pardick

Well things have sure changed around Valley lately the overtime has dried up since the Amazon Gods have stopped using us for daily delivery. Tracking of overtime is now a thing. CCAs and carriers are getting time off to spend with family, and the over all atmosphere has become more pleasant. I am not saying that everything is butterflies and rainbows, but its getting closer. The flip side to this, is that management has more time on their hands and are able to start doing the job they were hired to do, that is harass and push us for undertime. It hasn't been overly bad, but for those of us that have been around for awhile know that the pressure will come, and the union will have to file the hostile environment grievances. I have also noticed that the FMLA system is beyond jacked up. They will approve the claim then deny the claim 2 days later with a request for more information, but nothing will be listed as being needed. Again, we will need to keep a good eye on it and address any issues that come up with management wanting to give discipline for it. Carriers need to ensure that their cases have been approved, if not sure contact the FMLA coordinator to ask what they need to fix it.

A big thank you to Bakken for helping out on route 39, this is a great example of what happens when the route is not kept up with regular maintenance and new construction, it causes a nightmare for a CCA or new bid carrier. This is why we need to keep edit books updated and turned in, if you have any questions on how to do it ask me or Bakken, we can help with it. You need to take the time, not ask.

The majority of changes going on at the station right now: Joey Parker has bid out, which means rt 49 will be coming up for bid, CCA Lohman has made regular and will be leaving us as soon as his opt on rt 35 is over, Yusef Brown made regular and also just recently has had a new baby as of the 23rd of January. Haase has started his retirement and will hopefully be retired by the 31st of March (most likely a pipe dream). Bill Bauder is still out from surgery. Zazuetta has been out on surgery, not sure when he will be back. Still not sure when April Sly will be back to duty. We have had Schultz doing 204b and also Harris doing 204b.

3999s have been getting completed almost on a daily basis. We need to ensure that we are doing our routes the same way each day. Don't feel pressured to move faster, skip required items, skip clean up, or other route maintenance that is needed. These are mainly used to find time wasting practices and management should be going over the 3999s after completion. Management should not be instructing you on how to carry your route during the 3999, they are a casual observer, this allows them to get an accurate account of the route. If you are being instructed during the inspection, request your steward so it can be corrected.

This winter weather will soon to be over and the vacation time will start allowing for more hours for work. Please take your time to recover and enjoy family and friends. I will be taking some time off soon to do union functions. I am looking at possibly starting with Formal A grievances once I get to training, this will take more time away from my route, but it is needed at this time. Bowlathon is coming up, Valley will have a few teams. Other than these things, not much has been going on. If I forgot anything, I am sorry, I am old and forgetful. As always if you have any questions or issues call me.

Some condolences are due: Sandy Glenn's mom passed away. Craig Haases mom passed away, and Jason Ricks mom passed away they are in our thoughts and prayers during their hard times.

We have a new CCA at the station Tawny White, make sure you say hi and make her feel comfortable at the station. Also, if we see a CCA doing something wrong, or miss delivery, talk to them and give them pointers on how to fix it.

We should all be watching out for each other and helping each other with issues. I know that not everyone agrees with the way I handle grievances or what I grieve, I do my best to ensure that all carriers at the station are treated the same, regardless of what some folks think. Each and every carrier gets my full time if needed, regardless of how I might feel about that individual or how that individual feels about me. I will continue to fight for each and every one of you each day. Being pressured by management or other employees will not change that. I have also been told multiple carriers are thinking about getting out of the union because they don't feel the union is fighting for them. I fight each day with management about every little thing, I want it fixed before it becomes an issue. It is not the unions place to question other employees medical restrictions, unless management is violating those restrictions, or discriminating against that individual for their condition. It's also not the place of other employees to question what another employees medical condition or medical restrictions are, that is restricted information. If management is giving that information out, then that will be addressed in other ways. I have said this since the first day I was a steward, we have no idea what is going on in our co-workers life, our treatment of them might be what keeps them from taking their life or cause them to take their life, pick up that drink or drugs. We should treat everyone with the same dignity and respect that we want to be treated with. We should come to work, get our job done and not worry if this employee is doing their job or not, that is managements responsibility. This type of action just breaks down the unit and gives management the ability to isolate employees and divide us.

Tracy Pardick 208 651-3505

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NALC's Guide for Managing Your Daily Workload

The NALC and USPS have signed Agreements that clearly state that the Delivery Operation Information System (DOIS) and the Performance Engagement Tool (PET), "…will not be used as the sole determinant for establishing office or street time projections.

If you believe you will not be able to complete your assignment within eight hours you should do the following:

1. Verbally inform your manager that you can't make it in 8 hours.
2. Follow your manager's instructions.
3. If you still can't make it in eight hours, request Form PS 3996 and explain the reason why you need one.
4. Fill out Form 3996 completely and request a copy.
5. Keep your cool. Do not argue with your supervisor.
6. Request that the supervisor make a clear contractually correct decision. That is what they are paid to do.
7. If you receive unclear or contradictory instructions request to see your steward.

The **Swing Room Gazette** is a **NALC Branch 442** bi-monthly publication. All articles contained herein are the opinions of the author and do not necessarily reflect the position of the branch or editorial staff. Permission is hereby granted to reprint any information verbatim with appropriate credit given the author, branch or posting.

Branch meetings are held the third Tuesday of each month at the Progression Credit Union located at 2919 E Mission Ave. Spokane, Washington 99202 [Conference room on the 2nd floor] Note: When a holiday falls on a Monday the general meeting will convene on Wednesday at 7 PM. The January Installation of officers ceremony also counts as the general meeting and is held every two years at a location and a time to be determined by the branch. The July Annual Picnic held at Mission Park counts as the general meeting. The August General meeting with food and beverages is held at the **Union Hall located at 2903 E Mission Avenue, Spokane, WA 99202.**

OfficePhone: 509-534-9144, Office Fax: 509-534-1610. All articles for review and publication on are sent to: spokanegazette@gmail.com as a Word or text attachment. "This is a war, we are soldiers" -Anonymous

Letter to the Editor - Carrier Submission



Spokane Valley

Hello my name is Lindsay and I work at the valley station. I recently converted at the end of December and was able to obtain the vacation regular spot here at the valley station. When a CCA is converting I was noticing that there is not a lot of communication as far as training opportunities presented by USPS. Making it a "figure it out as you go situation". I cannot speak for other stations because I have done most of my time at valley, but as we know, as a CCA we are just thrown in to whatever situation and saying do your best. Thankfully I didn't have too much of a hard time doing that. My personality and work ethic adapted well, but I have seen many other CCA's come along that have struggled and have been reprimanded because of it and I believe that's not fair based on the fact there is never any proper training along the way.

I have experienced with converting to regular that there was not a lot of direction on how to maneuver becoming a regular. There was no training or anyone to tell you how to and what to do as far as benefits, bidding and how it works, and time frames to get certain stuff done. Including not knowing a lot of the lingo that's used being in a regular position. Like, are you going to be 8hr, work assignment, or ODL without telling you all the rules to each! Getting a booklet in the mail, weeks and weeks after you actually convert still with no specific instructions on what's time sensitive and most important. Which had put me in the place of almost not being able to get medical and dental because of it. So in all of this, I just wanted to say to any CCA out there, who is trying their hardest you're doing a great job, and you are your only Representative through any of this. Do not expect any management or rep to willingly come guide you along the way without being asked by You.

You have to be your own voice and you have to stay on it to make things happen and get things done . It's very important to know your dates. Date of conversion, dates of probationary periods (yes you have another 90 day probationary period if you convert before your year is up, so get ready for that) Just ask lots of questions and be persistent until you get an answer. There is no true training. There's a lot of us slipping through the cracks because they don't keep track of that, nor is there a proper training other than you sitting on a computer at the station for three hours rushing through a bunch of slides that you don't understand because you have no information in front of you to to reference and fill out at the time.

There needs to be a proper training course, better communication, and more care from management who wants to see you succeed not wait for you to fail because you didn't know what you should know because of the lack of training and then get reprimanded because of it. The system is broken. It needs to be better and your voice is the only one that can continue to demand for that so don't shy away. Make your voice heard. Congratulations to everyone converting, hopefully something can come into place soon.

Lindsay Beaudoin

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Important Dates:

- **March 5th - Executive Board Meeting - 7:00pm - Union Office**
- **March 12th - Stewards Meeting - 7:00pm - Union Office**
- **March 19th - General Meeting - 7:00pm - Progressions Credit Union**
- **April 2nd - Executive Board Meeting - 7:00pm - Union Office**
- **April 9th - Stewards Meeting - 7:00pm - Union Office**
- **April 16th - General Meeting - 7:00pm - Progressions Credit Union**
- **April 21st - Gazette Article submission deadline (May/June Issue)**