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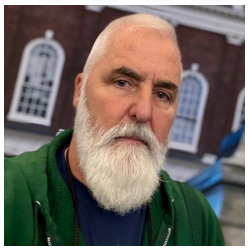
***NALC***

# Branch 442

# *Swingroom Gazette*

Serving: Spokane, Spokane Valley, Cheney, Colville, Fairchild AFB, Ritzville, Coulee Dam and Colfax



## Vice President's Report

## Steve Thrift

No doubt you've seen a lot of new faces around your offices lately. They've been hiring new CCAs at a pace I haven't seen in, well, since I was hired over 30 years ago. That's the life cycle of most careers, and they're getting ready (nationwide) for a lot of retirements coming very soon. Jeremie Simpson and I have been getting almost all our new employees to join us in this Union, whether at the W2USPS day or me during Orientation at the Carrier Academy. Now that I am teaching at the Carrier Academy, Jeremie is beginning to take over that action as well, and he has been doing a great job. 14 students through the last 2 classes and everyone decides to join.

Ok, so now we have management on a hiring spree, and they're joining the NALC, but what about how we are going to keep them around? We know the attrition rate has been ridiculous over the last 5 years or so. That's where NEERMP (M-02010) comes into play. This is a new set of rules addressing the hours and scheduling of new employees for the first 8 weeks and created a new mentorship process for the first 4 months on the job. Where we will run into problems is a shortage of qualified trained mentors for all these new employees. They must volunteer, and then mutually agreed upon by mgmt. and the union and then trained. Not all of us are wired to be a mentor or a trainer or an OJI, but we can sure use some help with all those positions, so if you're feeling so inclined please let me or Sharee know.

Also, I'd like all of us to take a step back to when we were brand new at this job. There was always someone you could ask questions, or complain to, or ask advice from. If you had a person like that, try to be that for our new people. If you didn't, try to be the type of person you would have liked to seek knowledge from. It doesn't always need to be a big formal program, just a concerned family of co workers trying to help each other out. Pipe Dream? Maybe, but I hope not.

I have provided all new students a copy of the Memorandum, and we discuss its requirements in class. Also, I have started to keep a text thread with each class as they move on from Academy, so I will be available to talk to and hopefully point them in the right direction if there are questions or concerns or at least get them in contact with the person who can best assist them.

Additionally, I hope to be available on non-academy days to go out and help those who are having trouble with some aspects of the new job work their way through it and be successful. Additional help/training/attention is also a provision of NEERMP, but our OJI and mentor pool is already stretched pretty thin, so I can be of use there as well.

To all our newest Union Siblings I say welcome to the club. We will do our best to insure that you are given the opportunity to grow and excel in your new career. Please reach out to me if you are having difficulties, we can work on it together. (509)263-3341

~Steve Thrift~

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## Notice

By making a contribution to the Letter Carrier Political Fund, you are doing so voluntarily with the understanding that your contribution is not a condition of membership in the National Association of Letter Carriers or of employment by the Postal Service, nor is it part of union dues. You have a right to refuse to contribute without any reprisal. The Letter Carrier Political Fund will use the money it receives to contribute to candidates for federal office and undertake other political spendings permitted by law. Your selection shall remain in full force and effect until canceled. Contributions to the Letter Carrier Political Fund are not deductible for federal income tax purposes. Federal law prohibits the Letter Carrier Political fund from soliciting contributions from individuals who are not NALC members, executive and administrative staff or their families. Any contributions received from such an individual will be refunded to that contributor. Federal law requires us to use or best efforts to collect and report the name, mailing address, occupation, and name of employer of individuals whose contributions exceed $200 per calendar year. Any guideline amount is merely a suggestion, and an individual is free to contribute more or less than then the guidelines suggest and the Union will not favor or disadvantage anyone by reason of the amount of their contribution or their decision not to contribute.

# GENERAL MEETING JANUARY 21ST, 2026

**President:** President Sharee Eschenbacher called the meeting to order at 7:00pm
**Roll Call:** 13 present, 8 excused, 4 absent
**Reading of Previous Minutes:** General meeting minutes moved seconded and passed Executive meeting minutes moved seconded and passed
**Secretary/Treasurer Report:** Moved seconded and passed
**Reading of Communications:** Thank you card from Partners INW for donation program and Hinge Health App, 2 more Christmas cards
**Application of New members:** Robert Pasamonti and Mickey Miller
**Initiation of New members:** none
**Reading of Reports:**

**Director of Insurance:** It's a new year, use your benefits. Discussion about Hello Heart
**Director of Safety:** Building inspections start in February
**Retirees:** none
**Trustees:** Books are up to date, reminder to cash checks in a timely manner
**Spokane Labor Council:** There was no December meeting
**Swing room Gazette:** Articles due February 15th

**Committee Reports:**

**Legislation:** none
**Resolutions:** none
**By-Laws:** Leslie volunteered for committee
**Entertainment/Athletics:** No report. Leslie mentioned pickleball as a possible activity
**MDA:** Bowlathon flyers will be out soon
**Hospital and Health:** Melissa Franklin's Granddaughter had surgery
**Condolences:** none
**Labor Management Agenda Items:** Jeremie talked about needing a resolution with management on how to handle mail that has missed dispatch

**Unfinished Business:** none

**New Business:** Cheney is getting a new postmaster, Nick Cottrell

**Good of the Association:** We are holding a Fight like Hell rally on February 22nd to draw attention to our upcoming contract negotiations. We are currently working on a suitable location. Jeremie Simpson, Dan Shoemaker, Maggie Moran and Leslie Phelps are on the organizing committee.
Jeremie discussed the importance of steward college and how beneficial it was to him.
Sharee had a fact finding meeting with a realtor to discuss possibilities of either upgrading the union hall or moving to a new location.

**Improvement of the Service:** none

**Meeting Drawings:** 159 Richard Balmes 371 Randolph Knowles, neither present

Meeting adjourned at 7:54pm

**Next Meeting:** February 18th 2026

# GENERAL MEETING FEBRUARY 18TH, 2026

**President:** Vice President Steve Thrift called the meeting to order at 7:00pm
**Roll Call:** 16 present, 3 excused, 7 absent
**Reading of Previous Minutes:** General meeting minutes moved seconded and passed
Executive meeting minutes moved seconded and passed
**Secretary/Treasurer Report:** Moved seconded and passed
**Reading of Communications:** None
**Application of New members:** Jerami Frampton, Malachi Eastman, Isiqh Vresti, Zachary Newfeldt, Jody Pogenstein, Jerry Davis, Michelle Johansen, Aaron Kandratowicz, Brennan Priddy
**Initiation of New members:** none
**Reading of Reports:**

**Director of Insurance:** None
**Director of Safety:** None
**Retirees:** none
**Trustees:** Books are in order through January
**Spokane Labor Council:** The Peace and Justice League of Spokane is holding their annual Peace & Justice Conference on Sat March 21st, 9am-5pm, $50 GA $20 students. SLC donatd $2000 to the Minnesota AFL-CIO.
**Swing room Gazette:** Articles due March 1st for March-April issue

**Committee Reports:**

**Legislation:** *Protect Letter Carriers Act*: Enact harsher penalties for assaults on Letter Carriers, update arrow keys to disincentivize theft.
*Federal Retirement Fairness Act*: Allow for time spent as CCA to count toward retirement time for Federal employees, this would affect other federal agencies with similar hiring structures.
*Improving Access to Worker's Comp for Injured Federal Employees:* Allow for the use of PA's and Nurse Practitioners to treat injured federal workers under the Federal Worker's Compensation program.
*Shipping Equity Act:* Allow USPS to ship Alcohol
*Anti-Privatization Resolution:* Resolution to ensure the USPS remains independent and does not privatize
**Resolutions:** none
**By-Laws:** We received a response from national, they sent corrections to updates to current by-laws. Mostly cleaning up language.
**Entertainment/Athletics:** There are numerous Pickleball courts around the city available for use. We are looking into a possible Kickball tournament at the end of July. The start time of the July picnic is currently TBA
**MDA:** Bowlathon is Sunday 4/26 at Northbowl from 2-4pm 14 lanes, teams of 4 $20 per person.
**Hospital and Health:** Dave Villanueva, Sharee Eschenbacher
**Condolences:** none
**Labor Management Agenda Items:** There is a light duty carrier TJ Lafrance that is doing unannounced observations of carriers throughout the city in his POV. There have been numerous complaints of erroneous communication of carrier observations with management. There have been issues with NEERMP, management is not communicating with CCA's about need for improvement, CCA's at Valley are only delivering parcels, not learning how to deliver mail.

**Unfinished Business:** none
**New Business:** Motion to reimburse Christian Tangvald for 3 days of union LWOP for $509.04 to attend year 1 steward college at Goldbar. Moved, Seconded, Passed

**Good of the Association:** none

**February General Meeting minutes (continued)**

**Improvement of the Service:** Fight like Hell rally for a better contract 2/22/26 10am-2pm Division st Bridge. Press releases were sent to various media outlets.

**Meeting Drawings:** 440 Stephen Smith, 276 Aaron Schmidt, neither present

Meeting adjourned at 8:27pm

**Next Meeting:** March 17th, 2026

Respectfully Submitted,

Bryan Eleyet







We had a couple handfuls of carriers and their people come to the rally for a fair contract. Shout out to Jeremie and his brood. Disappointed his kids didn't have their voices on the news, but their faces were great. KHQ and KREM (pretty sure) covered the event which was great for maximizing impact. While the event was one action, more important (in my opinion) is our follow up action. That means writing and calling the key leaders we have identified to let them know what we want and that we are watching. I will share a sample letter and script with Scott to be published in the newsletter or elsewhere.

Thanks!

-Maggie Moran








Metro

Hello Brothers and Sisters,

Metro is mostly quiet on all fronts. Decrease in the package volume as a station from Amazon has led to a lull in overtime hours (which makes poor Gilli sad). This has paved the way for opportunity to learn for our very own Shawn Gilliland. He has been diligently learning the ins and outs of contract compliance through the reading and recording of all of our punches. If you have any hour discrepancies please feel confident that you can now take them to Shawn, as well as always myself, to see them corrected and rectified. Be diligent about checking your own hours reported through lite blue as everytime hours fall management likes to do weird things to your leave balances!

Tonja has been training to take over the Spokane safety captain when Mike Meredith hangs it up. She played a vital part in unplugging my printer and for that I may never forgive her.

Our newest steward, Zak Smith, has been tasked with taking over the new employee stuff. A NEERMPY Clause some might say. He recently took a few days off with me to learn what his steward rights are and how to employ them. I look forward to his presence with the NEERMP program at Metro and helping him nurture his growing knowledge base.

I had the opportunity to attend my first RAP to end 2025. I've been tasked with taking any and all branch management classes that are offered at training sessions so that I can strengthen my skills as a branch trustee and to be able to help push the branch moving into the future. I will not bore anyone about those classes. In addition to those classes I was able to attend a retirement planning class with Jim Raymond. His advice was very simple: contribute at least the minimum, be aggressive throughout your career with your TSP and up your contribution percentage as you get step increases. I left the class and doubled my contribution percentage. We took a class on the art of "commitment time." I have been preaching the same thing region taught. Provide the best estimate that you can as to when you will be done, update as needed if your time changes, and remember that we have no street standard. The mail takes what it takes.

By far the best part of RAP was seeing Brian Renfroe take the stage, talk for several hours and through a break. While saying absolutely nothing. The re-election tour was just a solid no for me.

With Solidarity

Jeremie Simpson



Regal

Hello Regal Brothers and Sisters!

I had a NEERMP grievance that I wanted to file at Regal this past month. Sharee assigned me to Regal to look over everything that has been going on in the absence of Tracy. My NEERMP grievance was a successful filing. Before the signatures had dried I was alerted to a discipline that had been issued to one of our brothers. We were able to identify some deficiencies in the discipline with a big fatal flaw. Luckily, we had management at Regal who were willing to participate in the grievance process and see the flaw for what it was. Our brother is back to whole with a clean record. Ive gone over the hours for the quarter and am happy to report that the ODL tracking that Von was doing in the absence of a steward was spot on to the point of when I took over at Regal. Were working out the kinks of email hours to take the process forward.

As your new steward I want everyone to feel confident in reaching out for whatever you need at Regal. My number is posted on the fridge and someone even printed it out and hung it in the Union board. Being remote it is imperative that you reach out when something is going on. My thought is a lot of what is behind this supervisor shake-up is to push carriers to do things that aren't contractual or normal. If Robert or Kyle are doing anything that you believe restricts your rights as a Letter Carrier I need to know asap. Any and all discipline should be sent to me the day it is issued. Stay Alert!

In Solidarity,

Jeremie Simpson

**Important Dates**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **April General Meeting** | **April 21st 7:00pm** | **Progressions Credit Union** |
| **MDA Bowl-a-thon** | **April 26th 2:00pm-4:00pm** | **NorthBowl** |
| **May E-Board Meeting** | **May 5th 6:00pm** | **Union Hall** |
| **Food Drive** | **May 9th** | **Everywhere** |
| **Steward Meeting** | **May 12th 6:30pm** | **Union Hall** |
| **General Meeting** | **May 19th 7:00pm** | **Progressions Credit Union** |




Local Mail Carriers Lobby in Washington D.C.

Mail Carriers from each district in Washington met with our Representatives and Senators to discuss bills affecting our work and livelihoods. Overall, the meetings were very positive and productive. It was encouraging to learn that our issues are not partisan; elected officials on both sides of the aisle support our work. The bills we prioritized are:

1.) Protect Our Letter Carriers Act–provides harsher penalties for those assaulting mail carriers and provides funds to fast track the conversion of arrow key locks to a more secure option.
2.) Referral Retirement Fairness Act–allows CCAs to buy back their non-career time.
3.) Improving Access to Worker's Compensation–allows PAs and NPs to sign off on workers compensation paperwork.
4.) Equal COLA Act–eliminates the disparity between FERS and CSRS employees.
5.) Oppose Postal Privatization Resolution– ensures the Postal Service remains an independent establishment, not subject to privatization.
6.) Shipping Equity Act–allows the USPS to ship alcohol.

All of the elected officials were receptive to the bills presented. We encourage all of our members to reach out and also express your support for the bills. Your phone call, email, or letter could make the difference in gaining an elected official's endorsement.

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HAYS PARK

In the Postal Service, there is a common myth that employees in their first 90 days have no Weingarten Rights. This is not true. Derived from the 1975 Supreme Court case NLRB v. Weingarten, Inc., these rights guarantee that any employee, including a probationary CCA, has the right to union representation during an investigatory interview. If you ever find yourself being questioned by a supervisor, please ask for a steward. It is your right as a union member. Do not let management tell you that a steward is not necessary or you do not have a right to union representation, simply because you are under your 90 days. All employees are entitled to union representation even if you are in a probationary period.

We have a lot of new CCAs being trained and learning how to deliver mail. I would like to ask all the carriers to welcome them and offer help. We all know this can be a hard job to learn. I hope the new mentoring program is being followed, although I don't think it is. I asked a new CCA a few days ago who their mentor was and he looked confused. The mentor program is here to help train and encourage new employees, and it is extremely important. I know when I was new to delivering mail feeling "alone" was normal. We are literally alone all day trying to figure this out when we are new and it can be scary. Our job is quite a bit different than most. We don't have a co-worker in the next cubicle or at the next counter to lean on for questions or help. So please offer help, pass your phone number to a new CCA or even go out of your way to just say hello and introduce yourself. A simple smile can go a long way.

Simona Farnsworth




New members Isaiah Yanez Vrezti, Ryan Bareither, Sophia Sibula, Veronica Emerson, Liberty Ward, and David Randall



Hoppy Spring time Brothers and Sisters. Leslie Phelps, main steward at the Shadle Garland Post Office once again writing my steward article for the enjoyment of your reading. This winter at the Post Office has been interesting to say the least. I feel like it has been pretty mild weather wise compared to what we were expecting. I never take times like these for granted because delivering mail outside in extreme weather is the one thing that makes carrying mail the hardest. So please enjoy these nice cool breezy days ahead of us because I feel like summer will be right around the corner and it might be a hot one this year!

I hope everyone's year has been smooth sailing so far. Grievance wise I feel like the article 8's have lessened compared to this time last year which is what we strive for. If I can show management that not violating the contract to get the mail delivered is better for everyone in the long run because then we're not harming our brothers and sisters who don't want the overtime vs the ones who do. I hope that if there are any other contract violations that you let your steward or alternate stewards know of the possible violation and we will look into it. If you see something, say something!

My alternate steward Cyrus Haste will be attending his first year of Steward college to learn the basics of what it means to be a steward. I am excited to help him learn the ways and start taking over some cases in the near future. Being a new Steward for the union can be a little bit intimidating but once things start clicking it's actually a very rewarding job besides just being a letter carrier. I hope that Cyrus and I can help out the fellow carriers at the Shadle Garland Post Office to the best of our abilities. Thank you for taking the time to read my article this time

**Your local Arslan Sales Representative:**

**Steve Schultz**

**Proud Branch 442 Member**

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**Contact Zak Smith with any questions: 509-270-5931**