The Swing Room Gazette

September/October 2023, Circulation 500

Official Publication of NALC Branch 442

Serving Spokane, Spokane Valley, Cheney, Colville

Fairchild Air Force Base, Ritzville, Coulee Dam, and Colfax



President's Report

Sharee Eschenbacher

I have been president of Branch 442 for eight months. It's different than what I thought it would be. Not better or worse, just different. I talk on the phone a lot, to management and carriers, alike. I have these really big issues that need addressed but every day, little "fires" pop up that draw my attention away and before I know it, the sun has set and the only brightness that remains is the rainbow of sticky-notes on my computer screen. I'm not complaining. Being president has been a goal of mine for many years and I love being able to help people, I just thought there would be more powerful superhero music playing in my head.

"A lack of planning on Managements behalf, does not constitute an emergency, on my behalf." - The Frenchman

Unstoppable, by The Score or This is it, by On The Larceny. Instead, I am mostly humming Bounce Patrol's Let's be Superheroes. It's still a superhero song, so I must be doing okay… right?

The Valley has been my focus, lately. It's been over a year since the process of adjusting the Zone 16 routes started. I'm not going to rehash the mishaps because it makes my stomach hurt. The important thing to know is that those carriers in Zone 16 have a little light at the end of the tunnel. That ray of sunlight is Steve Thrift. He has spent hours talking up the chain of command in this adjustment process and has convinced the "powers that be" that his team be the one to re-evaluate that zone. I am starting there every morning to scrutinize the previous day's data and will be reporting any anomalies to the team. Missed volume, bad rings, outdated Edit books, EAS carrying mail and missing fixed office time all have to be identified and reported. I'm hoping we will have a happily adjusted zone by November.

Hays Park is another station on my radar. Hays is like a middle child, usually a calm rule-follower, but when something disagreeable happens, a meltdown is not uncommon. Something disagreeable has happened there. I have appointed myself, Eric Pardick, Tracy Pardick and Jeff Schriver as temporary stewards there to help Simona restore the calm. Management will follow the rules. I will send a team of stewards to any station whose leadership team thinks differently.

Speaking of that, we have a new acting Postmistress. This is her second run at it here. At this point, I hope she gets the job. I just want someone who will be a leader here for more than 3 months. She came in saying she wanted to stay here and retire here. She has some funny and not-so-funny ideas but I think we can educate her enough to possibly form a relationship that moves our city in a positive direction. Three things, off the top of my head, to watch out for:

She has an aversion to people with medical restrictions. It bugs her if you can't work more than eight hours a day or if you have a reduced schedule. If management approaches you with anything to do with your restrictions, call your steward or call me.

She doesn't believe in no-lunches. This will become a fight that the union has fought and won here many times.

She will push for later start times. Again, we have fought and won this at pretty much every station. If you are waiting on clerks to finish throwing parcels, do route maintenance, update your Redbook, verify your Vacation Hold mail, read the bulletin boards…do all the things you are supposed to be doing anyway. With how we are pushed out the door every day, I know our office duties are being neglected.

Use any down time to maintain your equipment, forms and your case. Please read the M-41 for more tips and tricks to keep you off Waiting Time!!

We have found some common ground when talking about the treatment of CCA's and she's willing to listen to and commit to some of our ideas. Stacie Klopfenstein has agreed to be our CCA liaison. Thank You, Stacie! I also want to thank Eric for all the help he has given me during this transition. I have been inundated with Article 8 issues and he has taken the discipline and other contractual issues. Plus, he tirelessly helps all our brothers and sisters with work injuries. I also want to thank every steward who has hung in there despite the battles we face every day. It's a job no one can truly understand until they have done it. You don't ever clock out from being a steward. Another Thank You goes to Peder Bakken for his phenomenal editorial flair.

Our August Meeting to honor the Retirees was a great success. Thank you to all who helped out. Nick Vafiades, our National Business Agent and Toby Swank, our state vice-President were here to celebrate with us. Mike Poff filled up and hauled around the dunk tank and Nichole Thrift made an awesome salad to compliment the food truck fare.

Have a great Fall, everyone!
(Season-wise…not at work)

With Union Strength,

Sharee



Vice President's Report

Steve Thrift

I'll start by saying how nice it was to see so many of you at our recent Branch picnic/ General Meeting August 15th. Its has been difficult coming up with a good way to have our traditional Picnic these past few years due to Covid Restrictions and then Splashdown closed and there were still restrictions on the use of the County Park. Additionally, with so many more of our coworkers being forced to work on Sundays we tried to come up with a suitable alternative that would be more accessible to our membership. I think we were successful, as the attendance was very good for a smokin' hot Tuesday evening. We had the meal catered by an awesome Taco Truck (it was Tuesday after all) games, prizes, a bouncy house, and a dunk tank. The cornhole tournament never really materialized, but it was very hot, and the side yard was in direct sunlight until pretty late. There were a few hardy souls over there playing anyways. Special thanks to our special guests Region 2 NBA Nick Vafiades and WSALC VP Toby Swank for coming to town and visiting with us.

Toby even took one for the team and jumped up to the Dunk Tank to help us raise money for MDA.

Next, I'd like to address several related issues: "Parameters" from the TIAREAP Process being used as de facto street standards, and performance metrics goals from a recent round of supervisor trainings being used to try to establish new office performance standards, and an increased scrutiny on, and reduction of "Stationery Events". To be 100% crystal clear, these are all BS pure and simple.

As to the Parameters, they only exist in one place: page 11 of M-01983, the Memorandum describing the implementation of the TIAREAP. (Technology Integrated Alternative Route Evaluation Adjustment Process) These parameters are based on national averages, gathered over time during the development of the program. Loading Time 22:00 Unloading Time 7:00 Sig Req Scan 3:00 Relay Time 1:35 Delivered/ Other Scan 1:00 Miscellaneous Other (Stationary) 7:00. It goes on to describe delivery time parameters for the various types of street delivery, typically 30 or 32 seconds per delivery.

The problem with our incompetent management trying to use these parameters as some sort of enforceable performance standard are many: First, the parameters are based on a national average, and as any of us who paid even only a minute or two of attention in a High School basic math class (like me) would know, averages are created by adding all the times collected, then dividing them by the total number of evaluated routes and coming up with a number somewhere in the middle. That means there are a great many routes whose times exceeded the "average". Also, not all delivery is the same; some simply takes longer than others.

Every route is different, every carrier is different, there is every sort of variable that we encounter on any given day on the street. Most importantly, the memo itself later specifically states “The above listed parameters are not delivery standards, and are used for the purpose of assisting the evaluation team in identifying potential anomalies.” Shocker: they can’t read either…

Now, to the “Metrics”… Recently supervisors were challenged to show improvement in three areas. One of these was getting carriers out of the office in 60 minutes or less, and another was a 50% reduction in stationary times. Where do I even start with this? First, there is NO 60 minute office standard. Read that again. Now memorize it. Say it out loud. Tell your friends. Weirdly, their own article describes “timely movement of carriers to the street within 60 minutes” but then states “90 minutes for walking routes”… I bet you’ve never heard about that from your supervisor in the morning have you?

The fact is that nothing has changed in our handbooks and manuals regarding office times or our duties and responsibilities for giving management our estimates for what our day is looking like. The fact that management has a goal is wonderful. But 60 minutes office time is made up out of thin air… if they want it to be a new standard, they’ll have to negotiate those changes in the handbooks and manuals to be incorporated into the next national agreement. (Spoiler alert we will never agree to that) Until that time, we work under the existing rules spelled out in our handbook M-41 sec.131.4 and Management’s handbook M-39 sec. 122. In a nutshell that means this: the letter carriers office time starts at 33 minutes. (43 minutes where carriers take an in-office break). That means you would have 17 minutes to case your mail and pull down your route. Management has said right to my face “carriers don’t do that work anymore, why would we give them that time?” well the short answer is that YOUR own handbook says that you must… but also why aren’t carriers doing that work anymore? Why isn’t management ensuring that carriers are doing an important part of our job? Because it takes time to do the job the right way and they hate that. We should be doing our whole job every damn day.

As to the Stationary events, well there are so many reasons that a carriers MDD scanner might appear “stationary” the only way for management to prove that you were doing anything other than doing your job delivering the mail is for them to come out of their air-conditioned offices and physically observe you doing something else. If they ask in an Investigative Interview “what were you doing here?” tell them the truth… I was delivering the mail. If you were getting gas, tell them that. I was waiting for traffic light. I was updating name tags in the apt boxes. I was drinking water in the shade because it was 109 degrees. Whatever… I was doing my job. In order to issue discipline for some “Violation “alleged due to a stationary event observed on their RIMS report, they have to have more than just the electronic surveillance to rely on. Our shop stewards are very well versed in defeating this BS if they try to issue discipline.

If you have any questions about what your office or street duties are, please sit down with the M-41(and the M-39 for that matter) and educate yourselves. They are both available on our website NALC.org and also, I posted a copy of the relevant page on our branch Facebook page not long ago, as well as an article from the postal record regarding management’s made up, unrealistic expectations.

OK. I know this has been long. If you’ve read this far, Thank You. This is important stuff.

So…. What have we learned here? I'll recap.

Things that DO NOT EXIST:

60-minute Office standard. 90 minute to break Geo Fence standard (I forgot to talk about that one)

22-minute load standard or 7-minute unload standard. Or 5 or 10-minute pm office time standards for that matter but I'm getting off topic.

Unilateral limit on the number of stationary events allowed per day. Or any other performance standards outside of the M-41 or M-39 Handbooks.

Fairies, Sprites, Unicorns, Sasquatch, the Loch Ness Monster, competent managers that give a single shit about the health and welfare of their employees, Trolls, Dwarves, Leprechauns, and Dragons.

Please, Please, Please EDUCATE YOURSELVES. Or ask questions we will be happy to point you in the right direction. NALC.org or the NALC Member App on your smart device are excellent resources. There is a podcast called "From A to Arbitration" by Corey Walton. Start from the beginning. Come to the Union Hall for some training. There is Sooooo much knowledge available to you.

KNOWLEDGE IS POWER.

I WANT YOU TO BE POWERFUL.

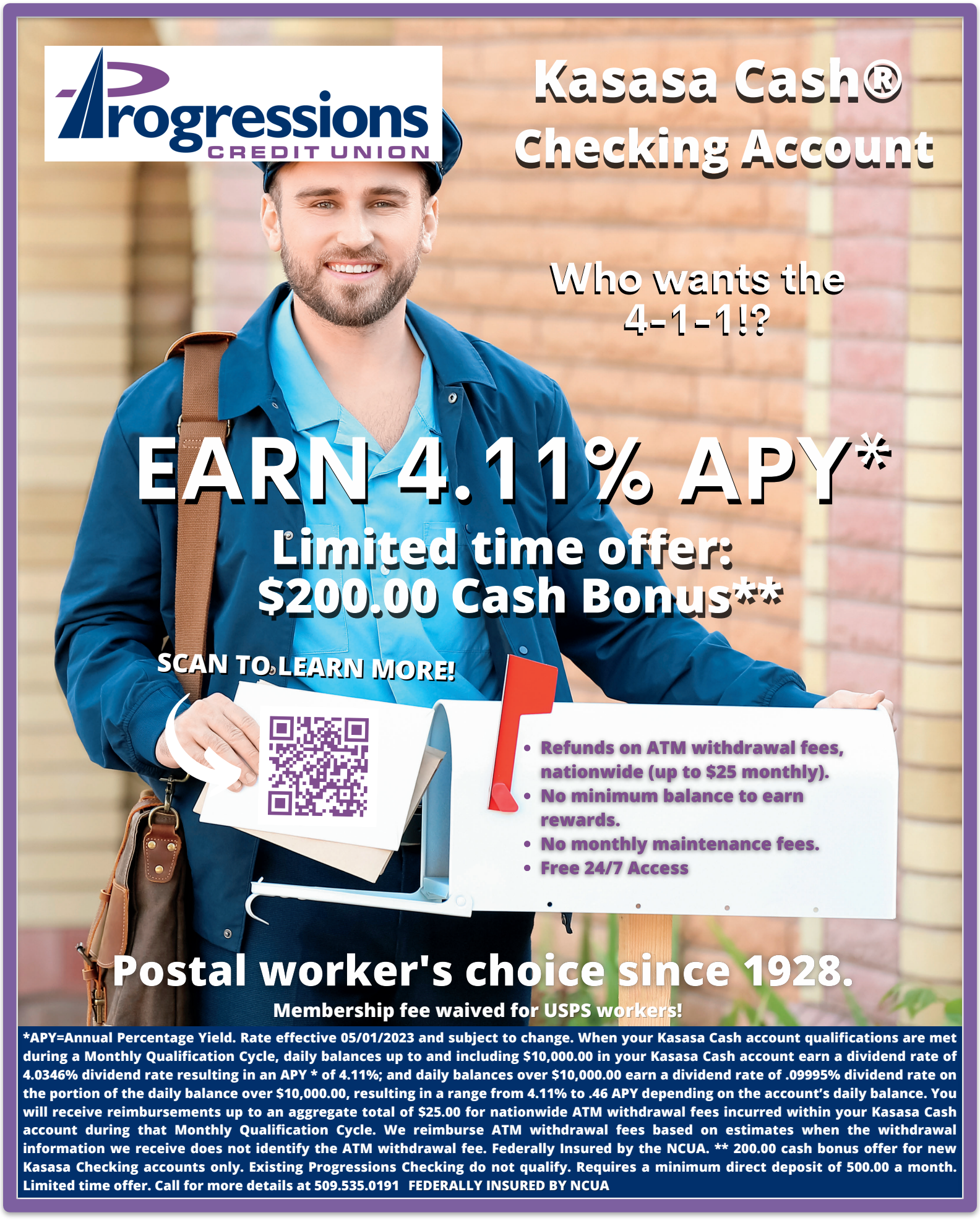
In Union Solidarity, Steve Thrift











*APY=Annual Percentage Yield. Rate effective 05/01/2023 and subject to change. When your Kasasa Cash account qualifications are met during a Monthly Qualification Cycle, daily balances up to and including $10,000.00 in your Kasasa Cash account earn a dividend rate of 4.0346% dividend rate resulting in an APY * of 4.11%; and daily balances over $10,000.00 earn a dividend rate of .09995% dividend rate on the portion of the daily balance over $10,000.00, resulting in a range from 4.11% to .46 APY depending on the account's daily balance. You will receive reimbursements up to an aggregate total of $25.00 for nationwide ATM withdrawal fees incurred within your Kasasa Cash account during that Monthly Qualification Cycle. We reimburse ATM withdrawal fees based on estimates when the withdrawal information we receive does not identify the ATM withdrawal fee. Federally Insured by the NCUA. ** 200.00 cash bonus offer for new Kasasa Checking accounts only. Existing Progressions Checking do not qualify. Requires a minimum direct deposit of 500.00 a month. Limited time offer. Call for more details at 509.535.0191 FEDERALLY INSURED BY NCUA

Executive Board Meeting

July 6th, 2023

Present: Sharee, Mike, Conner, Angie, Miranda, and Bill.

Excused: Steve

Sharee: The by-laws that were passed at the general meeting have came back from national approved. Rap, Bill will figure out how much we can have to spend. Heat Illness Training needs to be filed at induvial stations. August Meeting still trying to figure out the food but leaning towards a taco truck. New COA process is to eliminate fraud. The committee in regard to the charges that were read at the last general meeting is Steve S, Orville A, and Mike R. IMIP stands for Initial Management Inquiry Process. Downstairs needs cleaned up. Devries shredding cost $75 per blue bin. Have the new seniority roster for the city of Spokane carriers only. New authorization pages will be used for credit cards and receipted expenses. Clean up the outside of the building before the August meeting. National is putting on Advanced Formal A Training. Received a letter from President Renfroe dated June 26th stating that he is back to work. I think that the branch should buy some mini jcams and if stewards would like to have one, they could pay the branch $20, the branch will purchase 20 of them. There is a survey that is being given to people coming out of the academy it does not need to be filled out. I will be filing a grievance to get the results of the hostile work environment that a team was here in for, can't get the results any other way.

Conner: I am going to be on the by-law committee. Is the anything that states who are allowed for shadow day union vs nonunion?

Angie: OJI list I want to do it, management would also like for me to do it but apparently, I am not allowed. Trustees want to do the books.

Mike: Are the certificates for the Bowl-a-thon done yet? No Sharee is still working on them. Food Drive will be doing cards and bags next year, still waiting for 2nd Harvest to have their internal meeting to see if they are going to continue to be part of the food drive or not.

Bill: I would like actual numbers for the general meeting so that we can have a firm number to give to the food truck. Books should be caught up next Tuesday. I will go talk to the phone company about the office phones and getting rid of the fax line.

Meeting Drawings: Jeremy Kelly not present, and Melissa Franklin.

Adjournment: Motion made by Conner, 2nd by Rick to adjourn the meeting at 820pm and approved by the body.

Branch 442

General Meeting

July 18, 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: 12 present, 6 excused, and 2 absent.

Reading of Previous Minutes:

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

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

Secretary/Treasurer's Report: Rick made a motion to accept the report, 2nd by Orville and approved by the body.

Reading of Communications: None

Applications for New Membership: Clayton Miether, Lindsey St. Laurent, Elizabeth Denton, Matthew Avilla, Ryan Johnson, Michael Bajorek, Sanjay Sunuvoar, Logan Bursch.

Initiation of New Members: DeeDee Stockman

Reading of Report:

Director of Insurance: Plan do to all the people who convert at NP to make sure no one is missed.

Director of Safety: None

Retirees: Plan to put out information for all retirees.

Trustees: Books in order thru May.

Spokane Labor Council: AMR has reached a tentative agreement.

Swingroom Gazette: Gazette should be at the printer soon. Articles are due at the general meeting in August.

Committee Reports:

Legislation: Social Security Fairness Act HR82 has 288 co-sponsors and Cathy McMorris-Rodgers has signed on to it. The same version in the Senate has 44. HR3721 United States Postal Service shipping equity act has 16 co-sponsors.

Resolutions: None

By-Laws: The by-laws have come back from national approved waiting for Chris to get back to print new books.

Entertainment: August 15, 2023, will be Family fun at night at the union hall, there will be games, food, a dunk tank and a 50/50 raffle for MDA.

Athletics: None

Employees Services: Supervisors and managers can get stuff from eBay that we used to get with the money from the vending machines i.e., coffee pots microwave.

Hospital and Health: Erika Von Scheele-Inm, Hank and Haley Nelson(baby), Jason Vandenbos, John Chau, Brandy Harris(bother-in-law) and Pete Michalowicz.

Condolences: Clinton Dewy-wife passed, Mariah Johnson-father, and Dennis Nay retiree but was not a member.

Labor/Management Agenda Items: Special Delivery Instructions ignored, the hour in the office in the am being pushed, opts.

Unfinished Business: The committee that investigated the charges of the against members of the branch recommend that the charges be dismissed, the body approved this recommendation.

New Business: New zip code book.

Good of the Association: Postmaster position in Spokane will go up for bid in January of 2024.

Improvement of the Service: Falsify training records the important part of these grievances are that we get the training.

Meeting Drawings: Pete Michalowicz and Terry Larsen neither were present.

Adjournment: Rick made the motion to adjourn at 810pm, 2nd by Peder and approved by the body.

Executive Board Meeting

August 1st, 2023

Present: Sharee, Mike Angie, Conner, Miranda, Steve, Bill

Sharee: I had an extra set of mailing labels for retirees Steve S. and Sam Cannata came down today and put labels on postcards for the retirees. August general meeting we will have tacos. There will be door prizes. The gazette will have to be in the mail by September 5th. Rap will be figured out next week.

Miranda: Nothing

Angie: Would like to see a training for cca's that they can use as a reference after they are done with OJI training.

Conner: Nothing

Mike: What about the food drive if 2nd harvest doesn't want to do it? Sharee will send an email to Shannon.

Steve: CCA liaison will be Stacie Klopfenstein

Bill: Retiree pins. I received my 45-year pin.

Branch 442

General Meeting

August 15, 2023

Call to Order: Sharee called the meeting to order at 615pm.

Pledge of Allegiance: All stood and recited the pledge of allegiance.

Roll Call of Officers: 16 present, 2 excused, and 7 absent.

Reading of Previous Minutes:

General Meeting: Bill made a motion to approve the minutes, 2nd by Mike Rapp and approved by the body.

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

Secretary/Treasurer's Report: None given by the Sec/Treasurer.

Reading of Communications: 10th Annual District 751 Machinists Union Clay Shoot August 26th. Registration due by August 18th. $120 Per Shooter.

Applications for New Membership: None

Initiation of New Members: Lucas

Reading of Report:

Director of Insurance:

Director of Safety:

Retirees:

Trustees:

Spokane Labor Council:

Swingroom Gazette:

Committee Reports:

Legislation:

Resolutions:

By-Laws:

Entertainment:

Athletics:

Employees Services:

Hospital and Health:

Condolences:

Labor/Management Agenda Items:

Unfinished Business:

New Business:

Good of the Association: The Branch received the $8000 grievance settlement. Rick made a motion to send up to 12 people to RAP, 2nd by Bill and approved by the body. Nick spoke to the members, then presented the members who received pins.

Improvement of the Service:

Meeting Drawings: Melissa Hickman and Freddie Hollowwa

Adjournment: Eric made a motion to adjourn the meeting, 2nd Conner and approved by the body at 630pm.



Director of Retirees

Steve Schultz

Greetings Brothers and Sisters of Branch #442. I apologize for not getting an article in the last issue of the Gazette. I was out of town selling uniforms during the general meeting and without that little reminder of the deadline it had completely slipped my mind.

I would like to touch on couple of items. First, Sam Cannata and I had been talking about ways to drum up some interest in the Quarterly Retiree Luncheons held at the Golden Corral. We considered doing a mailing to the retired members, and after approaching the branch leadership, we received authorization to do so. We decided to "kill two birds with one stone" and in addition to the quarterly luncheons we had included information regarding the Retiree's Appreciation meal that took place at the August General meeting as well. After getting the postcards, mailing labels, etc., Sam and I met at the union office to put it all together. While we were there, we enlisted the help of former branch President Eric Pardick who was at the office and we were able to get everything done in a timely manner.

The first luncheon I had attended back in May, there were 3 of us in attendance. After the mailing, we had 10 at the August meeting, so I guess you can say we had tripled our attendance in the event. Given the number of retirees in the branch, this is still a small percentage of members. In addition to myself and Sam, Gary Warner, Doug McCoy, Paul Carroll, Robin Hendrickson, Mike Rapp, Ivan Roberts, Roger and Karen DeShaw were in attendance. It was good to catch up with some of the brothers and sisters that I have not seen in quite some time. Ivan Roberts is 90 years old now and still made to the luncheon. They made him a rehab clerk some years ago but he still maintained his membership in the NALC all this time. The luncheon is great way to share stories and catch up with old friends. I would encourage you to attend our next one in November. If you have any questions about it give me a call.

The Retiree's Appreciation meal that was held at the August meeting was well received with quite a few of the retirees in attendance. It was an extremely hot evening and I think those who benefited the most were the ones who chose to be targets in the dunk tank that had been provided to raise money for MDA. We had a number of guests in attendance to include our NBA Nick Vafiades, and our State Association VP Toby Swank. It was a Taco Tuesday theme with chips and salsa, a taco truck with meals, dessert, as well as the beverage of your choice.

During the brief meeting, a number of the members were provided with their 25, 30, 35, and 40, year membership pins. I think a good time was had by all who attended. We need to get a good mix of older and newer members attending branch meetings and functions if we are going to remain a viable organization. The older ones can share their wisdom and experience while the younger ones can open our eyes to new ideas.

There is one other thing I would like to touch on briefly. For those of you who are affected by the Windfall Elimination Provision that was passed in the 1980's under President Reagan which reduces your social security benefits if you get a government pension, there is currently a resolution submitted in the House, HR-82 Social Security Fairness Act which will modify or eliminate this unfair reduction of your benefits. There are currently 289 co-sponsors which includes our 5th District Representative Cathy McMorris Rogers who signed on June 21st. The Senate has a mirrored bill submitted, S-597, in which Patty Murray co-sponsored March 7th. As of this writing, Maria Cantwell has still not signed on to the bill. I would encourage you to call her office and ask her to get on board. It is as simple as leaving her a message and asking her to co-sponsor S-597 which will repeal this unfair reduction in our social security benefits.

Until next time, stay safe…

State Convention Article

This year's convention was held at Suncadia and was hosted by the State Association. This was only the second time in my career that the State Association had to host the convention with the last time happening in 1994 in Leavenworth. The convention began for me on Thursday when I participated in the J.O. Shelton Memorial Golf Tournament. It was a very windy day and our team didn't do very well, but it's all for fun and to raise money for a good cause, MDA.

The convention itself got underway on Friday morning and after going over the standing rules, we addressed the first reading of the by/law changes, as well as the reading of commendations and resolutions. We had the opening of nominations for officers, before breaking for lunch. After lunch there were a number of training classes that you could participate in. Friday evening, we held our fun night at Nelson Farm with a BBQ and axe throwing competition. The westside alleges they won, but I don't believe there is any video proof.

Saturday morning, we returned to the business session addressing such things as the budget, by/laws, etc. We also had a presentation by Dan Toth the National Director of Retirees on the "state of the union". After lunch, we had a presentation by John Beaumont on political organizing and the LCPF (Letter Carrier Political Fund) which has replaced COLCPE. I would encourage everyone to participate in donating to the fund through payroll deduction. It is painless and you won't even miss the $5 or so that you donate each payday, but it will go a long way in helping us get elected officials that support our cause. Saturday evening was the banquet and the presentation of the OSA (Outstanding Service Award) award. This year's recipient was James Watkins of Br #130 Tacoma.

Sunday morning began with committee reports, and disposition of the remaining business such as resolutions. This was followed by the election committee with their results. The host cities for the next four conventions gave their reports, followed by the installation of officers. The convention then adjourned until next year.

I would like to thank the branch membership for electing me as a delegate to represent Br #442 at this convention.

Steve Schultz

Branch Officer/Steward List NALC Branch 442

President	Sharee Eschenbacher	509-953-3027
Vice President	Steve Thrift	509-263-3341
Secretary/Treasurer	Bill Bauder	509-990-5245
Recording Secretary	Mike Poff	509-209-1820
Sargent at Arms	Tracy Pardick	208-651-3505
Trustee	Conner McKinnon	509-844-4269
Trustee	Angie Severin	425-478-3602
Trustee	Miranda Riley	509-991-4822
Director of Insurance	Rick Enright	509-599-5470
Director of Retirees	Steve Schultz	509-863-4873
Spokane Labor Council	Melissa Franklin	509-209-3941
	Curt Rein	509-991-7914
	Cara Harrington	509-251-5185
Gazette Editor	Peder Bakken	509-590-6279
Director of Safety	Mike Meredith	509-747-4447

Hays Park	509-252-2373
Main: Simona Farnsworth	509-496-4811
Alt:	
Hillyard	509-252-2327
Main: Jeff Schriver	509-953-3730
Alt:	
Collections	509-363-6080
Main: Cara Harrington	509-251-5185
Shadle	509-327-9023
Main: Leslie Phelps	208-755-0046
Manito	509-252-2335
Main: Kevin Bond	509-828-5317
Metro	509-252-2323
Main: Jeremie Simpson	509-768-6344
Northpointe	509-465-0325
Main: Rick Enright	509-599-5470
Alt: Scott Thorland	509-934-9263
Regal	509-462-0555
Main: Tracy Pardick	208-651-3505
Riverside	509-252-2337
Main: Rhonda Mason	509-671-5501

Spokane Valley	509-252-2325
Main: Tracy Pardick	208-651-3505
Main: Angie Severin	425-478-3602
Alt: Bill Bauder	509-990-5245
Sunset	509-252-5101
Main: Connie Guerrero	916-236-7526
Alt: Miranda Riley	509-991-4822
Cheney	509-235-1590
Main: Mike Poff	509-209-1820
Colville	509-684-2241
Main: Les Stewart	509-680-3197
Ritzville	509-659-0550
Grand Coulee	509-633-0781
Fairchild AFB	509-244-6398
Colfax	509-397-2981

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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.

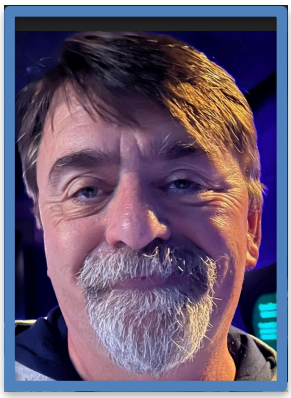
If you believe you will not be able to complete your assignment within eight hours you should do the following:

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



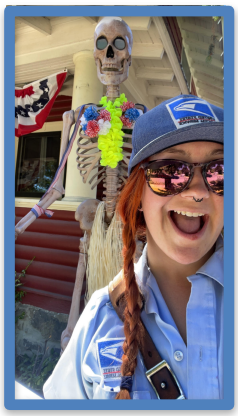
Northpointe

Scott Thorland

It's a bit of a challenge to write these articles because of the time it takes to get them published and distributed. It's late August as I write this but by the time you see it we will be well into September and heading towards the holiday season. Yesterday, I caught wind of management's intention to start harassing carriers with medical restrictions once again. (Hopefully, it doesn't happen but…). This made me think- What has management done in the last year to make this holiday season better than the nightmare we experienced last year? I couldn't come up with anything. Staffing is still the biggest problem, we lose CCA's almost as fast as we hire them. This is the part where I was going to write something positive about how those of us who have been doing this a while, need to really step up and look out for the new employees, make sure that they have whatever support that we can provide them, take a second to talk to that bewildered looking new employee who is probably seriously questioning what they just walked into, do everything that we can to make new CCA's feel welcomed and appreciated, and we should. When I ask management why the latest CCA quit, it is almost always that they are being worked too many hours. When I ask, are they being worked more than 12 hours a day, the answer is: yes. Our CCA's at Northpointe are frequently covering rural routes in addition to city routes. We all know that this shouldn't be happening, yet it has been going on for more than 2 years now, with management being more than willing to pay enhanced penalties for violating the contract, when it should be management that is out carrying rural routes, the rural carriers contract allows it! Nothing changes. So, the question becomes: what can we do about it? **Follow the contract**: With the exception of the ODL and Work Assignment in **December**, you are not allowed to work more than 12 hours a day. For the ODL, they can work 12 ½ hours including lunch. **Everyone else** is limited to 11 ½ hours plus a lunch for a total of 12 hours. **Full time regulars** are limited to 60 hours a week, the only exception is the **ODL and Work Assignment in December.** I know that we all want to do everything that we can to get the mail delivered to the customers, but by "helping management out" and working beyond theses limits we are not forcing management to do their jobs, and showing new employees that it is OK to break these rules. Many other cities throughout the country that have had staffing issues have been authorized to hire PTFs instead of CCAs. The starting wage for PTFs is nearly $4.00 higher than CCAs and they are career employees from the start (they still have a probationary period). This has made the USPS a more attractive place (at least financially) to work. So, why haven't we been able to do that here? Management has not been reporting delayed mail is a big part of it, they do everything they can to hide the truth of what gets delivered on time and what doesn't. That's why they are so concerned with anything that has a barcode on it and could care less if the hotcase mail doesn't get worked for a week, or first-class flats sit in the corner undistributed. I can go much deeper into that subject, but I'll get to the point. The most effective tool we have to change what management is doing, is to stop helping them hide the truth. Do not work longer than you are required to, make them answer to routes not getting delivered, because we simply do not have enough people to do the job and can't keep new ones with the work hours they are forced to work. Put it back on management to find a different solution!

Scott Thorland

Northpointe



Shadle

Leslie Phelps

This will be my ninth month as the main steward at Shadle/Garland and my second article I have written. I am still learning a lot as a steward and trying my best to defend the contract when management violates it. Right now I am noticing that there are a lot of local intervention agreement violations going on. I am doing my best to try and find the time to do all my stewardship duties without falling too far behind. I am sure over time I will be able to find the balance that works for me. I hope to soon find an alternate steward to help me as I have over 30 carriers to watch out for and it is hard to do all alone with me being so new to this steward thing. Please do not give up on me as it is a learning process for us all.



Metro

Miranda Riley

What is PS Form 1571? Form 1571 is the form used to report undelivered mail. As peak season approaches, we should know where the forms are located and how to complete them. Whether management instructs a carrier to roll flats or bring back a portion of a route, a 1571 should be completed to report and track the undelivered mail. Management should allow the carrier time to properly complete Form 1571.

Section 442 of Handbook M-41 states “Completing PS Form 1571 442.1 After return from trip, obtain PS Form 1571, Undelivered Mail Report, from unit manager. 442.2 Add any mail which was not delivered but was returned to the office. 442.3 Sign the form and give it to a unit manager.” The carrier should retain a copy as well.

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NALC Health Benefit Plan

Customer Service

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For additional information visit our website at:

www.nalc.org/depart/hbp

www.nalchbp.org



Spokane Valley

Angie Severin

This summer, in addition to daily stationwide mandates & non-stop grievances, us carriers (& clerks!) at the Valley have been dealing with NO AIR-CONDITIONING in the building! Our two A/C units on top of the building go out EVERY year, numerous times. The postal contracted tech does a Mickey Mouse fix that doesn't even last a day and we are all back to sweating in the building. Not only have we had no a/c most of the spring and summer, management also has not provided bottled water for us & there's been a sink missing in the men's room for months that they couldn't even be bothered to cap the drain pipe.

After temperatures reached over 90 degrees in the building, I had had enough. I had asked several times about the a/c particularly to no avail. I finally filed a report with OSHA online about these issues. Within two hours, Jon Boone was calling my supervisor asking who filed the complaint. I'm not sure why he didn't know as i did not file my complaint anonymously. (Coincidentally, this same supervisor had been on the phone with Boone a couple hours prior complaining to Boone about how hot it was in the building.) I let my supervisor know it was me and to be sure to let Boone know it was me.

We have several carriers with medical conditions that are aggravated by the heat, myself included. This was a big deal to me. And management tells us to drink water and take cooling breaks. They also tell us to come back to the station to cool down if needed. Ummm… how does that work when it's as hot or hotter in the station than outside???

Amazingly, the fear of an OSHA violation finally got management to do something. Imagine that. Our Mickey Mouse a/c tech came out. This guy had the nerve to say the a/c kept going out because the clerks must be hitting the vents with parcels! Seriously?! Then another a/c company was called.

I also contacted our union President, Sharee, about the issues. She was on the ball! She went to Costco and brought the Valley 7 cases of bottled water. Steve Thrift & Connor McKinnen brought us 2 massive swamp coolers from Hayes that weren't being used to help cool the building down. Thank you very much to the three of them! Of course, management tried to take credit for the swamp coolers and bottled water when they had nothing to do with it.

In the meantime, this new a/c company got the air conditioning working. Alas, it only lasted a few hours and was out again. Those were a great few hours I hear… In the end, the a/c units keep overheating as they are so old. So the post office FINALLY conceded and has ordered two new air conditioning units. Who knows how long before those actually get installed. Or if they'll cancel the order now that OSHA closed the complaint since management addressed the issues to their satisfaction. In the meantime, our building has been averaging a toasty 84 degrees.

Thankfully all of us had all that heat safety training & watched those videos so we know how to avoid heat illness. All on the same day too. Oh, wait! That's just another one of managements falsification of official records.

Please be sure to drink a lot of water throughout the day and take as many breaks as you need to get cooled down. Will your route take longer doing that? Sure. But your personal well being is more important than the mail. Don't let the fear of getting in trouble prevent you from taking care of yourself. Stay safe!



Spokane Valley

Tracy Pardick

Here we are with round two of the route adjustments using the Tiareap system. Got to say not a huge fan of this. It seems that the team has the ability to just take time away from the route for just about anything. You left your scanner in the office while you loaded your vehicle (time taken away), you spent to much time here (time taken away), you back tracked (time taken away), it goes on and on and on. There is no real way to add most office functions like vacation holds and forwards, so this doesn't get added to your office time, just raw mail volume (seems like a system the union has been fighting against for years) but, here we are sucking it in like a calf on their mom. Some routes came up about average and then some routes came up as under after all the deletions. Overall, we will see how the final outcome plays out. Not completely hopeful at this point. The 6 zone should be completely done for implementation on the 9th of September. The 16 zone is being reviewed now, not sure when that will be fixed. Again, not hopeful on the outcome of it. Again, we can just roll with it and try to fix it after the fact.

Current events, Dan Maceachern has retired, and his route will be up for bid in September, Luke Kissinger will be officially retired on August 31st, Craig Haase has put in his retirement to go as soon as possible. We have lost one CCA (didn't make the cut), Leia Johnson made regular and took over a route at Metro, Wes Westmoreland made regular and is on a long term opt at the Valley. Bill Bauder was awarded his lifetime membership and permanent fixture for most years of service in the city with a start date 4/3/82. I didn't in last article that Melissa Franklin bid over to route 629 and Blake Schultz bid onto route 611. That is the major changes with routes and retirements and move ups. We are adding route 650 to the station and also an auxiliary route. Also route 646 was placed on a T6 string and so that will be covered once a person is put on the string.

Things here have been hectic with the constant change of leadership; we now have James Dodd as a full-time station manager. He has been working with the union to try and get things fixed here. So far, no issues. We now have another acting Postmaster for the city. Good riddance to Cedric. He was not a good fit for this city. I know that we have been getting CCAs in and then they are gone. Not sure how we can fix that, other than maybe treat them with a little dignity and respect. If we as seasoned carriers see them doing unsafe things, or just not doing things correctly, help them out. Give them pointers. Don't bash or humiliate them. We were all in their shoes at one point in our carriers. This job isn't for everyone, and I truly believe that if the CCA isn't working out and they have been trained on multiple occasions, then management needs to make that decision. We need employees that are willing to work and do it correctly and safely. We have had some really good CCAs come thru and then some that we know are just not going to work out. Unfortunately, this does affect our staffing and the need for overtime from the full-time carriers. I know at the Valley we are no strangers to the overtime and the total lack of a home life. I keep thinking it will be getting better, or at least hoping. With luck the new routes will alleviate some of the burden, but it will take time.

I know that with all the overtime and lack of a social or family life, tempers have been more on edge. We need to still continue to treat each other with dignity and respect. Every job has that one or two employees that don't do their part, it is just a fact of life. Unfortunately, that leaves the rest to pick up that slack and it can ware on us. Management needs to do their part and address these issues instead of doing our work daily. If they fix the problem on their side, then it will cause a domino effect. Again, it comes down to management doing their jobs not ours.

We are still waiting on some grievances to be settled at the formal A level, the 271g grievances have been settled and paid out, this should have been on this last check. All discipline cases at the Valley have been completed. On this note, if you have a medical condition that falls under FMLA, please apply for FMLA protection. This is your responsibility, if you are not sure if you can be covered under FMLA, ask your steward. Management has started coming done on sick leave usage. Also, please come in on time. There really isn't a good defense to someone that shows up 10 to 15 minutes late daily.

It was great to see all the faces that showed up to the retiree appreciation day, hopefully everybody that got to dunk me enjoyed that little bit of entertainment. It was a large turnout. I could go on for awhile but will cut it off here. As always if you need to contact me.

Tracy Pardick

208 651-3505

tracypardick@yahoo.com

Sunset Hill

Connie Guerrero

Hey everybody I hope you guys and gals are doing okay in this heat staying hydrated and keep cool. We haven't had much going on at sunset except the lack of management getting me my clock rings in a decent amount of time and having to bug them daily. They have gotten better but I'm working on it! We had a great meeting/ honoring the retirees it turned out really good and it was nice seeing such a big turnout. Besides that I think that's all for now please stay safe and take care of yourselves!



Collections

Cara Harrington

Jay Myers who made regular while working in Collections will be leaving us for a route at Hays Park. He is looking forward to being a regular on his own route! He was a huge help in Collections. We are sad to see him go but also happy for him!

Our biggest current problem in Collections is Part Time Regulars "PTRs" being mandated to work 6 days a week. Management is mandating PTRs to fill normal staffing needs when they should be mandating for unanticipated occurrences. The PTR job description, the form 50 support, JACAM all support my angle. I have filed a grievance on this and our Union President will be meeting on it soon with the Postmaster.



Regal

Tracy Pardick

I will start this article letting you know that I am pretty much caught up on all grievances at the station, I still have a couple waiting at the formal A side. Those should be settled soon. Majority of the issues at Regal has been improper mandating. I have been trying to ensure I catch all of it. I do need the carriers to ensure that they are clocking to the right routes if they are doing hand offs, this way I can grieve it if it was improper. Most of the pay adjustments have been done already, so if you see an adjustment on your check, it is due to a grievance settlement.

Not sure what all is going on with movement at the station. I know Fischer is no longer there and his route went up for bid. Just looking at the clock rings it seems most routes are pretty manageable. I know a few 271gs have been put in. Hopefully the Tiareap team will be able to add this to the list of stations to adjust.

We settled the radio issue; the radio can be on during the day as long as it is a station that plays a mix of music like Bob FM. Again, I am not stationed there so I do not know what is going on daily. If you believe that there is an issue, then just request a steward or shoot me a text/or call with the issue. I will try to get it fixed by talking with Adam or filing a grievance if that is needed. I also have spoken with Adam on what he deems as stationary events. I don't think that there are many issues with this. If management has an issue, they should go visually check on the carrier. Scanner data can be off. I was talking to one of the carriers up there and I was told that he carries a pee jar. We should never be using a pee cup, take the time to go to the restroom. There is nothing in the manuals that say you don't get comfort stops. Who cares if it will take longer, if that is an issue then the route needs adjusted. I know most of the time we are our own worst enemy.

There isn't much more going on. As always if you need me for anything just call or text me.

Tracy Pardick

208 651-3505

tracypardick@yahoo.com







ELECTION NOTICE

NOMINATIONS

Nominations for the election of Delegates to the 2024 NALC National Convention and the 2024 WSALC State Convention will be held at the regular Branch Meeting on September 19, 2023, at 7:00 pm, at Progressions Credit Union, 2919 E. Mission Ave. Spokane, WA 99202.

Nominees must accept nominations at the time made, or, if absent, in writing within seven (7) days of nomination to the Election Committee, PO Box 9442 Spokane, WA 99209. Nominations may also be made in writing, but must be received by the Branch Secretary-Treasurer no later than September 18, 2023.

The Branch President, Vice-President, and Secretary will be delegates, by virtue of their office.

The Secretary-Treasurer will automatically place into nomination for Delegates those members that have attended four (4) or more General Membership meetings within the past year (October 2022 through September 2023). Other members that wish to have their names nominated will be able to do so at the September 19th, 2023 Meeting. Upon nomination for Delegate, the member must verify that he/she has not served in a supervisory capacity for the twenty-four (24) months prior to the nomination.

ELECTION

The election will be by secret mail ballot. Ballots will be mailed to the last known home address of all eligible members, no later than October 17th, 2023. Ballots must be returned to: Election Committee, PO Box 9442, Spokane, WA 99209 no later than 3:00 pm, November 20th, 2023. At that time the Election Committee will collect and tally the votes. The Election Committee will report the results at the General Meeting on November 21st, 2023.

Riverside

A Letter to the Editor - Carrier Submission



From Riverside Station,

First I went to the new picnic/retiree appreciation event, It was great. We had a far greater turn out than I had anticipated, based on last year. I was present for a union meeting? Where 8000 dollars from somewhere, went into our education fund! Yay right! But then 12000 dollars from the education fund, was tagged to be used for a R.A.P. Session and sending A lot of delegates to it. Like all conventions, and meetings we send people too there is rarely ever any information disseminated to the rank and file… Very much never 12000 dollars worth. I see in a time where 7 day work weeks, and 12 hour days are common we could use that cash better else where. Maybe trying to staff the valley so they aren't mando….. every day…. I don't know just a thought. I have heard less functions, more injunctions uttered before.

I tried to bring up some serious issues, but was answered with well find another job. Kind of, a, well bitch ass answer if you ask me. This job was great 18 years ago, an apathetic union doing everything to please management and nothing for the rank and file had changed that. Well health insurance was brought up, isn't the party that we support trying to pass healthcare for all, making that a moot point? Maybe our national president is spending too much time sipping spirits to care?

At our station overall the past few months we have learned, if you make a mistake and plan things on leave you do not have. That is okay if you're of the chosen few. If however we have an open leave slot and you determine that since you have available leave you would like incidental. You if your not the chosen few will be rejected off hand. Sets an awful and terrible precedent if you ask me. Thank god it was forcibly reversed! But as I have asked myself over the last 8 months should it of had to have been!? Maybe we could do a better job overall protecting out brothers and sisters.

Yours truly,

"Not a steward" Wade W Outcalt

The **Swing Room Gazette** is a **NALC Branch 442** bi-monthly publication.
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"This is a war, we are soldiers" -Anonymous

Know your Rights,
Know your maximum work hours,
END CARRIER ABUSE!

Contract Administration Unit
Paul Barner, Executive Vice President
James D. Henry, Vice President
Christopher Jackson, Director of City Delivery
Manuel L. Peralta Jr., Director of Safety and Health
Dan Toth, Director of Retired Members
Jim Yates, Director of Life Insurance

Violations of the maximum work-hour limits, non-compliance, remedies and grievance starters

Across the country, letter carriers are being forced to work in excess of the work-hour limitations found in the National Agreement as well as in the *Employee and Labor Relations Manual (ELM)*. This month's Contract Talk will explain these provisions and provide advice for branches when filing grievances on repetitive work-hour violations. There are two separate restrictions on the maximum number of hours a letter carrier craft employee may be required to work. These work-hour limits are stated in Article 8 of the National Agreement and the *ELM*.

One provision relating to work-hour limits is found in Section 432.32 of the *ELM*, which provides the following rule that applies to all employees, including city carrier assistants (CCAs):

> Except as designated in labor agreements for bargaining unit employees or in emergency situations as determined by the PMG (or designee), employees may not be required to work more than 12 hours in 1 service day. In addition, the total hours of daily service, including scheduled work hours, overtime, and mealtime, may not be extended over a period longer than 12 consecutive hours.

Because this *ELM* provision limits total daily service hours, including work and mealtime, to 12 hours, an employee is effectively limited to 12 hours of work minus his or her meal period—normally 30 minutes. However, the *ELM* also permits the collective-bargaining agreement to create exceptions to this general rule, which was bargained for overtime desired list (ODL) employees as follows:

> Full-time employees not on the "Overtime Desired list may be required to work overtime only if all available employees on the "Overtime Desired" list have worked up to twelve (12) hours in a day or sixty (60) hours in a service week. Employees on the "Overtime Desired" list:
>
> 1. may be required to work up to twelve (12) hours in a day and sixty (60) hours in a service week (subject to payment of penalty overtime pay set forth in Section 4.D for contravention of Section 5.F); and
>
> 2. excluding December, shall be limited to no more than twelve (12) hours of work in a day and no more than sixty (60) hours of work in a service week.

The exception in Article 8, Section 5.G applies to full-time employees on both the ODL and work assignment list.

Excluding December, the above provision limits those employees to no more than 12 hours of work in a day and no more than 60 hours of work in a service week. However, since the term "work" within the meaning of Article 8.5.G does not include mealtime, the 12 total hours of work in a day for carriers on the ODL may extend over a period of 12½ consecutive hours. Additionally, Article 8.5.G provides that the limits do not apply during December, when full-time employees on the ODL may be required to work more than 12 hours.

These exceptions do not apply to CCAs, part-time employees or full-time employees who are not on the ODL, all of whom are effectively limited to 11½ hours of work per day by *ELM* Section 432.32, even during December.

National Arbitrator Richard Mittenthal ruled in Case No. H4N-NA-C 21 "Fourth Issue" (C-06238) that the 12- and 60-hour limits are absolutes. Excluding December, a full-time employee may neither volunteer nor be required to work beyond those limits. This rule applies to all full-time employees on the ODL or work assignment list except during the penalty overtime exclusion period (December).

In Case No. H4N-NA-C 21 "Third Issue" (C-07323), National Arbitrator Mittenthal ruled that when a full-time employee reaches 60 hours in a service week, management is required to send the employee home—even in the middle of a scheduled day. He further held that in such cases, the employee is entitled to be paid the applicable eight-hour guarantee for the remainder of his or her scheduled day.

On Oct. 19, 1988, the national parties signed a memorandum of understanding (M-00859) to implement the above-mentioned Mittenthal awards. Part of that memorandum states:

> The parties agree that with the exception of December, full-time employees are prohibited from working more than 12 hours in a single work day or 60 hours within a service week.
>
> In those limited instances where this provision is or has been violated and a timely grievance filed, full-time employees will be compensated at an additional premium of 50 percent of the base hourly straight time rate for those hours worked beyond the 12 or 60 hour limitation.
>
> The employment of this remedy shall not be construed as an agreement by the parties that the Employer may exceed the 12 and 60 hour limitation with impunity.
>
> As a means of facilitating the foregoing, the parties agree that excluding December, once a full-time employee reaches 20 hours of overtime within a service week, the employee is no longer available for any additional overtime work. Furthermore, the employee's tour of duty shall be terminated once he or she reaches the 60th hour of work.

(continued on page 40)

Violations of the maximum work hour limits (continued)

(continued from page 39)

In Case No. A90N-4A-C 94042668 (C-18926), National Arbitrator Carlton J. Snow ruled that the language in M-00859 limits the remedy for any violations of the Article 8.5.G maximum hour limits to an additional premium of 50 percent of the base hourly straight time rate. Even though this MOU explicitly states that letter carriers who have reached their 12 and/or 60-hour limit must have their tour terminated, management frequently attempts to shield themselves from liability for the violation based on National Arbitrator Snow's decision. This attempt by management ignores their obligation to instruct letter carriers who have reached the work hour limitations to end their tour. Any grievance filed alleging a violation of M-00859 should address management's failure to live up to this language.

Union representatives should keep in mind that Arbitrator Snow's award only addresses the additional remedies sought by the NALC. His award did not modify the terms of our agreement in M-00859 and the terms remain fully enforceable.

The Contract Administration Unit has created multiple new grievance starters, reflecting each category of employee, to assist branches when filing grievances on repetitive violations of the daily and weekly work hour limits. Additionally, an interview questionnaire has been developed so each affected carrier can provide an individualized impact statement. Shop stewards should include these statements in the grievance file to demonstrate the reasons and the need to request remedies that enforce the right of letter carriers to not work past these work-hour limits.

There have been several regional arbitration awards that addressed the repeat and deliberate violation of work-hour limits and the impact on letter carriers. While the remedies that have been awarded vary, numerous arbitrators agree that management has a contractual obligation to send carriers home once they reach the work-hour limits and/or allow the carrier the right to refuse without fear of discipline.

The awards in favor of the above remedies may be due to the ability of the union to show the negative impact these violations have on the letter carriers through statements and testimony. Local branches should file timely grievances on each circumstance where a carrier is forced to work beyond the hour limits as stated above. Until your office has a precedential award saying otherwise, you should follow whatever instructions your supervisor or manager gives you.

The parties have agreed to mandatory work-hour limits, and the Postal Service must honor them. In the end, time is a precious resource that cannot be recreated, and a remedy must be fashioned to prevent the violation from recurring.

To access the grievance starters, which include the interview questionnaire, from the NALC website, log on to the Members Only portal, and click the "Member documents" button, where you will find the *Shop Steward's Guide* and the grievance starters in a drop-down menu.

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Important Dates:

- **September 12th - Executive Board Meeting - 6:30pm - Union Office**
- **September 19th - Branch Meeting - 6:30pm - Progressions**
- **October 3rd - Stewards Meeting - 6:30pm - Union Office**
- **October 10th - Executive Board Meeting - 6:30pm - Union Office**