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2024

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NALC

Branch 442

Swingroom Gazette

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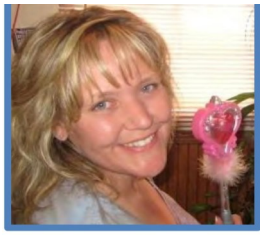

President's Report

Sharee Eschenbacher

Let's talk about route inspections. Since the TIAREAP memo was not renewed, management is planning on conducting 6-day mail counts and route inspections. For many years, we have had joint route adjustment processes in place where carrier representatives and management would jointly talk to carriers, look at some data and come up with a plan to adjust workload fairly within the station. Management has the responsibility to adjust everyone's route to as close to 8-hours as possible. I don't care what anyone tells you, management's main goal here is to reduce the number of routes at your station. It is imperative that you educate yourself prior to an inspection. I will give you basic advice in this article, but there is no way I can explain everything written in the M-39 and M-41 regarding your rights and management's responsibilities during an inspection. Go online to the NALC website and click on Resources, then City Delivery, then on Route inspections. There, you will find the NALC Route Protection Program. You should also read chapter 9 of the M-41 and chapter 2 of the M-39. When I started my career, we had full 6-day counts and inspections. At first, I didn't differentiate between "6-day count" and "inspections", so let me do that for you, so you know. "6-day count" means that you count every piece of mail that goes to your route for 6 days. "Inspection" means that on, at least one day, management goes to the street with you to inspect your route from beginning to end. PRIOR TO ROUTE COUNT AND INSPECTION: Management must post a schedule of the count week and the day of inspection for your route five working days before the count. If management changes the day of inspection, you must be given one days' notice. Management must complete an annual route and unit review. This identifies problems with your labels, equipment, edit book, Form 1564A, etc. The results must be shared with you prior to the count and inspection. Because piece counting the mail and filling out the 1838-C is time-consuming, management may schedule the station to start early. If so, that should be posted the Wednesday prior to the count. Management must also teach you how to fill out the 1838-C. This is called the "dry-run" and you will learn about line items. PLEASE read the NALC Route Protection Program to get the best understanding of these. After you complete your practice forms during the dry-run, management must review your forms and identify any mistakes and go over them with you. DURING THE COUNT: On the day of inspection, you will have a supervisor counting your mail and filling out the 1838-C. You have the right to verify the count, and I strongly urge you to do so. This includes DPS, S999 and any machine counted mail. There will be no operational changes in distribution or clerk scheduling right before or during the count. All mail distributed to your route must be delivered. No curtailment of mail on the last day. The only carriers getting auxiliary assistance will be medically restricted carriers. If you do get assistance, be sure to get a copy of the 3996 to add to all the forms you will keep for the steward to review. Do a complete vehicle inspection. To receive full credit for the "18 and 8" standard, you need to know what a "letter" and a "flat" is. A flat is referred to as "other size mail". A letter is defined as mail that can be cased into the normal evenly spaced 6-shelf letter separation without bending or folding. Everything else is other size mail. Other items like TV Guides, Reader's Digest, newspapers, magazines, booklets containing 24 or more pages and small parcels are "other size" mail. A "parcel" is defined as a package over 2 pounds in weight and/or larger than a shoebox. Two breaks are mandatory. You automatically get 5 minutes of personal needs time. This is for getting your hat or jacket or lunch from your locker. If you do not use this time and your evaluation shows you under standard, it will be taken away.

(continued page 3)

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The **Swingroom 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 to 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 WA 99202. (Conference room on the 2nd floor) Note: when a holiday falls on Monday the general meeting will convene on Wednesday at 7pm. The January installation of officers ceremony also counts as the general meeting and is held every two years at a location and 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 Ave, Spokane WA 99202.** Office phone: 509-534-9144, Office Fax 509-534-1610. All articles for review and publication on are sent to: spokanegazette442@gmail.com as a Word or text attachment. "This is a war, we are soldiers" -Anonymous

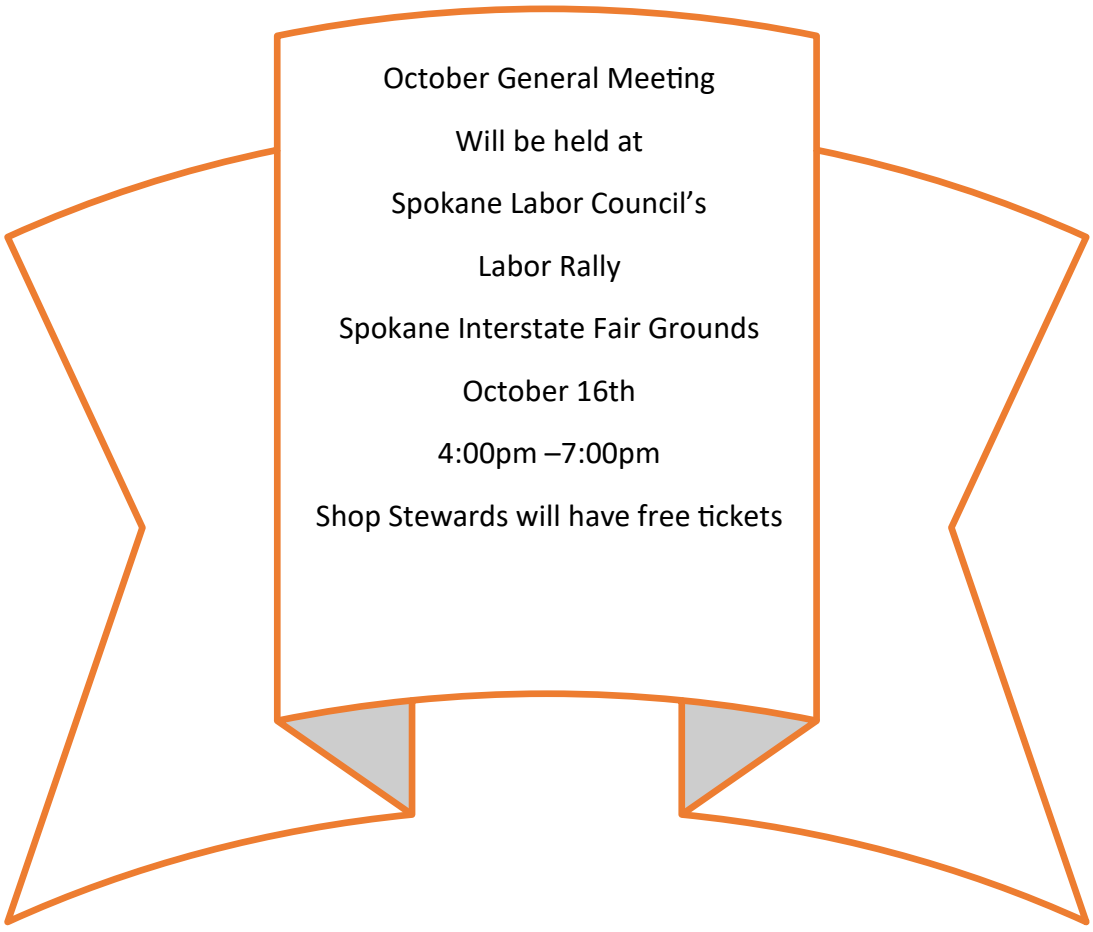
Notice

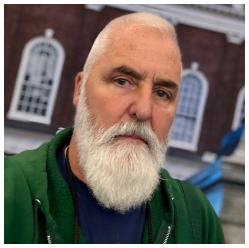
By making a contribution to the Letter Carrier Political Fund, you are doing so voluntarily with the understanding that your contribution is not a condition of membership in the National Association of Letter Carriers or of employment by the Postal Service, nor is it part of union dues. You have a right 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.

If you use more than 5 minutes, list that time as a Line 21 item. For accountables, use Line 14 to fill out the name or address on residential accountables and case the 3849. For businesses, you may fill out the entire form. You are required to replenish the various forms at your case a couple times per week. You are required to verify "hold mail" once per week. You are required to check the PS Form 3982 (pink cards) after your day off to see if anything was added. NEVER sort mail into tubs. If a separation gets full, pull and rubber band it and collate it when pulling down. DURING YOUR ROUTE INSPECTION: Your examiner has specific rules governing their conduct. There are no street standards for your pace. He/she may not set a pace. They should be behind you, not in front of you. They cannot forbid any rest or comfort stops. They cannot discuss mail volume or any evaluations of your route. You are not allowed to finger mail when walking up or down steps or curbs. Never hold mail in your hand while the vehicle is in motion. Take your full 30-minute lunch. Do not cross a lawn with safety hazards or ones that you normally do not cross. Plant both feet before putting mail in a box. You may take reasonably necessary comfort stops. RETURN TO THE OFFICE: Return your equipment, dispatch your mail, and clock in. Process undelivered mail and complete Form 1571 and get a copy to add to the forms a steward will look at. Add count of undelivered mail to the 1838-C. Visit the restroom, wash up and return items to your locker before clocking out. This has been an abbreviated lesson on route counts, but I wanted to give you a decent base. If you have any questions, please call me. Other news…the no lunch in overtime grievance is on its way to Step B. Our October meeting schedule has a change. Our general meeting falls on the same date as the Spokane Labor Council's labor rally at the fairgrounds. This is a Wednesday, but because of the holiday, our meeting is on Wednesday. The Executive Board has voted to make the labor rally count as our general meeting. The branch has purchased tickets and your steward will have a supply. It starts at 4:00 pm and goes to 7:00 pm. It is a great chance to meet local/state candidates. Take care of each other

With Union Strength,

Sharee





Vice President's Report
Steve Thrift

There's a lot of frustration out there right now. I know that. I can feel it on the work room floor. I could feel it in the air at the recent National Convention in Boston. I can feel it in my heart as I try to write this article. Tensions are high, and for good reason. Lots of things are jacked up right now. I'll start with the most obvious frustration for most of us… the fact that we've been working under the terms of an expired contract for over a year now. A contract that (let's be honest) the terms of which our management usually ignores or knowingly violates for the sake of "meeting their numbers" or avoiding a butt chewing on the daily teleconferences with the Postmaster. Then our only recourse we have is to file the same grievances month after month and year after year. Nothing really seems to change because there is no accountability for Management for the amount of money they are wasting on all the grievance settlements. Sure, they'll get in trouble if they actually settle a grievance for an amount higher than they are authorized for their pay level. Not for violating the contract mind you, but for settling the grievance on that violation.

Anyways I'll get back to the no new contract part… trust me when I say that I share your frustration on this topic. I had (still have) high hopes for this contract as I'm sure you all do. I am thankful that our negotiating team did not fold and accept the Post Offices initial offers back in the early stages. We could have quickly settled for a crappy contract but the rank and file would not have ratified it and they'd be back to square one. By the way if you ask me "how do you know what the initial offers were? Theres no transparency in our bargaining" I'll say this. Because that's how negotiations work.

We come in high, and they counter with a joke, we go back and forth. We agree on a few things, they flex a little, we push hard for the key things we know we can't bend on, and they ask what we're willing to give up getting them. Our key bargaining points have been developed by resolutions passed at National Conventions over the years preceding the negotiations. We want more teeth in enforcing the terms of the contract. They don't. We want more money. A lot more. They cry that they're broke, all the while spending zillions of dollars on those new S & DCs, new telemetry sensors on vehicles that were built back in the 1990s, and new supervisors. And paying out all those grievance settlements that they generate. And in the end, it always comes down to the fact that they simply don't want to pay us what were worth.

I've seen a lot of talk about the fact that we should be able to strike and look at what UAW and the UPS teamsters were able to achieve with open bargaining in the press. I have to say that the big difference is that both Ford and UPS have made record profits over the preceding years. The only thing that USPS sets records in is Billions of dollars lost per year. That's not our fault, its management's fault, but that doesn't change that fact. How about this headline in every newspaper, website, podcast, and talk show… "Post Office continues to hemorrhage Billions of dollars per year, but Letter Carriers still demand unprecedented pay and benefit increases". I know the Post Office and the mailers would love to have that everywhere.

As far as striking goes, it's not only a violation of the contract, but it is a violation of Federal Law. 5 U.S.C. s7311 specifies that federal employees may not participate in a strike, assert the right to strike, or even belong to a union that "asserts the right to strike against the government of the United States". 18 U.S.C. s1918 makes it a Felony to strike or belong to a union that asserts the right to strike against the United States, and the OPM can declare such an individual ineligible for Federal employment forever.

The MSPB has ruled that it's not even a matter of walking a picket line, but "the voluntary withholding of services in concert with others' that constitutes the violation. So even a Blue Flu kind of thing is a felony if they can show that it was an organized action.

The last federal employees that attempted to strike were about 13,000 PATCO Air Traffic Controllers back in 1981. President Reagan fired them. One of my math teachers in High school was a recently fired Air Traffic Controller, and we had some long talks. He wasn't very ok about it. The successful Postal Strike of 1970 was a unicorn. It worked once, but the business climate has changed, and we no longer hold the position of importance to commerce that we once did. We paralyzed financial markets and wall street in 1970. They wouldn't even blink today. Customers would just be pissed off that they couldn't get their packages in two days for a while, but the shippers would figure something out. I don't think that would work out to our benefit like it did in 1970.

I know that none of us is happy with our pay. For new employees to have the same buying power as we did back in 1994 when I started, starting pay would have to be about $28 per hour. And I agree that it should take significantly less time to reach top step P. maybe 8- 10 years instead of the almost 15 years (with CCA time) that it takes now. Of course, I think we could use more at the top as well, but I have no idea how we expect to attract and keep good employees without SIGNIFICANTLY raising the starting wage and getting rid of the legalized hazing period of CCAs and hiring direct to career status.

In Solidarity,

Steve Thrift



Welcome

Brian Elliot and Tyler Sutherland to

Branch

442



Director of Retirees Report

Steve Schultz

Director of Retirees
Steve Schultz

I hope everyone has made it through the summer season okay. This has been one of the warmest that I can recall since I moved here in 1975. I hope everyone has stayed hydrated and safe in this heat. Hydration is very important, even in the winter. Many people suffer from chapped lips and dry skin in the winter, and it has been found that much of this is due to lack of water. We have a tendency to not drink as much water during the winter, as our body doesn't respond the same way it does during the hot summer months when we feel the need to drink it. The Mayo Clinic recommends that a male should drink about 15 cups a day, and a female should drink about 11 cups a day. Your children and teens should drink 6-8 cups per day. The average water bottle contains about 16 ounces or 2 cups. So, remember to stay hydrated, even during the winter when you don't feel the need to drink water as much. Your body will appreciate it.

I would like to take a moment to write about our recent retiree luncheons. In May we only had three people attend, and in August there were only six in attendance. What we would like is some feedback from you as to whether we should continue to have them. What are your reasons for not attending? Is it location? Would you like to see it rotated around the city to different venues. Is it the frequency? Would you like to see it done less often, such as semi-annually. Is it the day? Would you like to see it on a different day of the week or at a different time of the month. We understand that many people travel during the summer, and there are other family events with the grandchildren, etc. Let us know what we can do to invigorate some life back into these retiree luncheons, or if you feel that we should just cancel them altogether. This is a great opportunity to get together with old friends and co-workers, and share memories and stories. You can call me at 509-863-4873, or Sam Cannata at 509-481-0553. If we are unable to pick up the phone, please leave a message with your feedback. We will then make a determination at the November luncheon whether to continue them next year.

QUARTERLY RETIREE LUNCHEON

THE QUARTERLY RETIREE LUNCHEON TAKES PLACE THE 2ND TUESDAY OF THE FOLLOWING MONTHS: FEBRUARY, MAY, AUGUST, NOVEMBER AT THE GOLDEN CORRAL, 7117 N DIVISION AT 11:00AM. COME AND ENJOY SOME FELLOWSHIP WITH OLD FRIENDS AND POSSIBLY MAKE SOME NEW ONES. HOPE TO SEE YOU THERE.

THE DATES FOR THE REST OF THIS YEAR ARE:

NOVEMBER 9TH

Finally, I would like to write about the upcoming Branch election. Nominations for officers and delegates will take place at the September General meeting. Ballots will then be mailed to every member in October, and must be returned prior to the November General meeting at which time the results will be announced. The branch spends both money and time to ensure that every member gets the opportunity to have their voice heard through the election process. The return envelopes are pre-stamped, so it doesn't cost you a dime to mail it back. It only takes a few minutes to fill the ballot out. If you don't know who the candidates are, talk to your steward, or an officer in the branch if one is at your station, to get some information about them. But please, please take the time to vote. Until next time, take care…

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If I've had your attention before and didn't talk to you about opening an account at Progressions Credit Union, let me do it here, in their advertisement, in our Swingroom Gazette. I will get to the benefits of banking with Progressions in a minute, but I first want to tell you how special this Credit Union is to our Branch. Though their name has changed from Spokane Postal Credit Union, it's still the same banking institution founded in 1928 BY postal employees FOR postal employees. They have always been interested in supporting our growth and development through managing our money and by standing beside us during most of our yearly events. The staff at Progressions solicit donations and package up the baskets for our Bowlathon. They purchase the bags for our Food Drive and then they volunteer to pick up food. They attend and help with our Installation banquets. Any type of event our Branch hosts, Progressions Credit Union is right there beside us...supporting us. This is why I feel so strongly about encouraging everyone to bank with them. It's what we can do to show our appreciation.

I have trusted them with my money for 33 years. My husband started his account when he was 11, and that was 51 years ago. They have kept up with and embraced technology so it's easy to use their mobile banking capabilities. With our jobs, we seldom have the opportunity to bank within "banking hours" so mobile deposits are awesome. Usually, Credit Unions have a membership fee but this is waived for postal employees. They have Bill-Pay, loans of every type and just opened up a second location on Nevada. They also participate in shared banking. Loyalty is a big deal to me. Progressions has shown it and I profess it to them. Everyone in this Branch should do the same.

Sharee Eschenbacher
Branch 442 President

JOIN NOW

Progressions CREDIT UNION

Progressionscu.org / 509.535.0191

2919 E Mission Ave., Spokane, WA 99202 (Next door to the NALC!)

New branch at 9233 N Nevada St., Spokane, WA, 99218

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Nick Vafiades NBA Region 2



Retirees honored at August Meeting

NALC BRANCH 442
2903 E MISSION



Branch Picnic

Letter Carriers and the Hatch Act

(Reprinted from NALC.org)

NALC encourages all members to be engaged in a wide range of political activities to advance the letter carrier agenda.

But…it is crucial to remember that all active letter carriers, career and non-career alike, are federal employees, and your political activities are governed by the Hatch Act—including online activities that involve social media (for example, Facebook and Twitter) as well as e-mail.

In general: Be off the clock, out of uniform (and government vehicles) and away from the workplace whenever you engage in any partisan political activity, and make sure that the activity is in a permissible category.

If you have questions or concerns that are not covered here, do not hesitate to first contact the Office of Special Counsel by e-mail at hatchact@osc.gov or by phone at 800-85-HATCH.

What is the Hatch Act? Some background.

Until 1993, active letter carriers were barred from taking any significant volunteer role for any political campaigns. The primary sentiment behind the law was to protect federal employees from being strong-armed and intimidated into helping their bosses run for re-election. But as times and campaigns changed, many recognized that federal employees were being wrongfully left out of the political process.

So, in 1993, Congress amended the Hatch Act to allow federal employees to take an active part in political campaigns for federal offices. While there are still some restrictions on what federal employees (including you and your fellow active carriers) can do, there is much greater latitude for letter carrier political participation in campaigns for president, the Senate and the House of Representatives, as well as for state and local elected officials.

Remember: Retirees, spouses and family members (including NALC Auxiliary members) are not bound by the Hatch Act.

If you have questions regarding the Hatch Act, contact the Office of Special Counsel by e-mail at hatchact@osc.gov

Do’s and Don’ts of the Hatch Act

Do’s (while off the clock, out of uniform)
Active letter carriers may—on their own time, away from work, out of uniform and without using a postal vehicle:

- Be candidates for public office in non-partisan elections (that is, elections in which none of the candidates are to be nominated or elected are representing a political party).
- Register and vote.
- Sign and circulate candidate nominating petitions and ballot initiative positions.
- Assist in voter-registration drives.
- Speak and write publicly and otherwise express opinions about candidates, ballot measures and issues.
- Attend political rallies, meetings and other events.
- Attend fundraisers and contribute money to political organizations and campaigns.
- Volunteer for political campaigns and encourage others to volunteer.
- Participate in phone-banking and precinct-walking for candidates and ballot measures.
- Display bumper stickers, lawn signs and other campaign paraphernalia.
- Raise money for the Letter Carrier Political Fund from other NALC members. (Note: Letter carriers while detailed to 204b or other higher level assignments should not solicit contributions to the Letter Carrier Political Fund from postal employees who may be viewed as their subordinates.)

Don’ts (while on the clock, at the workplace, in uniform or in a postal vehicle)
Active letter carriers may not—while on the clock, at the workplace, in a postal uniform or in a postal vehicle—engage in any of the otherwise permissible political activities listed in the “Do’s” above. For example, while on the clock, at the workplace, in a postal uniform or in a postal vehicle, you may not:

- Send or forward a partisan political e-mail.
- Wear or display any political or campaign material, even as a computer screen-saver or desktop wallpaper.
- Circulate partisan political materials to co-workers.
- Sign up electronically to contribute to the Letter Carrier Political Fund or solicit other letter carriers to contribute.

Don’ts (ever)
Active letter carriers may not—even on their own time, away from work, out of uniform and without using a postal vehicle:

- Use their official titles or positions when engaging in otherwise permissible activities.
- Raise money for partisan political groups or campaigns (except for the Letter Carrier Political Fund), including phone-banking, letter-writing, selling tickets, hosting a fundraiser, inviting people to attend a fundraiser, or allowing your name to be used in a fundraising appeal.
- Otherwise solicit, receive or handle contributions for a partisan political group or campaign.
- Run for elective office in partisan (party-label) elections (even if you report “No Party Affiliation”).
- Raise money for the Letter Carrier Political Fund from non-NALC members (except from their immediate family members in the same household).



I love National conventions! There is no better way to get re-energized and focused on the issues in front of us than to walk into a room with 7,000 delegates who are ready to get down to the business of making our union even greater than it is. We voted on so many proposed Resolutions and Amendments. Whether I agreed or disagreed with the majority, it was democracy in action, and I can't ask for better than that. General Session was from 10:00 am to 3:00 pm with workshops both before and after sessions. The one question asked of me most is if there were any updates on our negotiations for the new contract. The answer is that there were no significant updates. There were many Resolutions brought before the delegates concerning transparency during negotiations. Overwhelmingly, the delegates voted to continue with private negotiations. Both sides had valid arguments that were well thought out. As I voted, I relied on the personal experiences I have had while negotiating with local management. We are one installation, but we have 11 distinct work areas and sections. Something that is important to carriers at one station may seem ridiculous to carriers at another station. Let's say that a steward at station A tells me management stopped paying for the daily newspaper. The carriers there, read it every day during their break. Knowing that we have a Step B settlement upholding the past practice of providing a newspaper to every station, I tell the steward to grieve it. The steward puts a poll on our Facebook page to see if all stations are getting the paper. Then, carriers at other stations want to know why carriers at station A are so archaic and don't rely on their phones for news. Next, they start discussing it on text threads, then other Facebook groups, then on Reddit. The newspaper is not important to them, so they publicly make fun of the carriers at station A and tell them to get with the times. The next thing you know, I'm sitting across from management, and they throw out screenshots that show 90% of the carriers don't look at the newspaper and we could lose a right we gained through the grievance process. Because of transparency, we lost our strategic advantage. I'm just as frustrated as most that these negotiations are taking so long. Knowing specifics isn't going to speed things up. The NALC has a very successful negotiation history, and I look forward to ratifying this contract. Boston was beautiful, the food was amazing, and I thank the Branch for sending me.

With Union Strength,

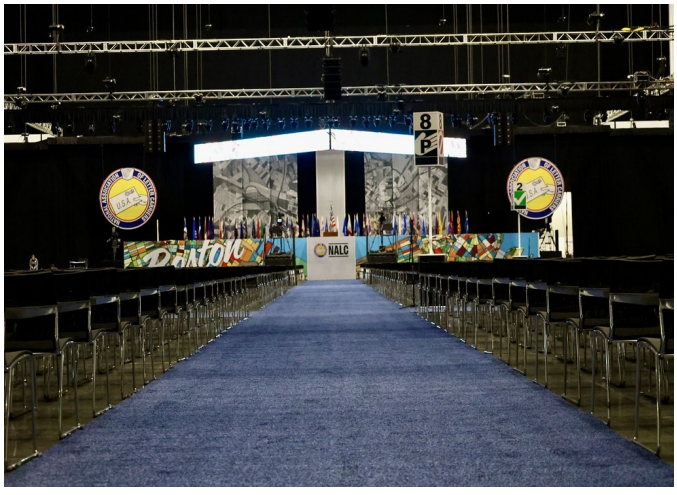
Sharee

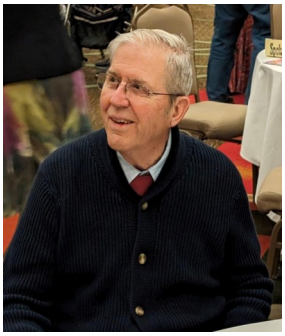
National Convention Boston

I've been to several National Conventions, and I have never felt the kind of tension in the air that there was this year at the convention. Many competing philosophies about the best path forward for our Association were present and itching to rumble. Our National Presidents Article 10 charges and the Executive Council decisions were of major concern for most. The appeals were presented and Pres. Renfroe had time to respond to each one. Then the body in attendance had the chance to uphold or overturn the Ex. Councils decisions on each charge. Ultimately, the Councils decisions were upheld by about a 2/3 majority vote. I know many of you aren't happy about that outcome, but that is the democratic process of this union. Frankly it came down to Pres. Renfroe effectively explained and defended himself to the satisfaction of 2/3 of the members present. I've heard people talk about pressure brought to bear by Regional Business Agents to influence the way that delegates voted, but I did not see it in our Region 2 section. They did speak from the microphones as to why they reached the conclusions that they did in the Ex. Council, but that was it. I will say that by the time the appeals were finished on Thursday, many people were mad and didn't show up and vote on the many resolutions that were presented on Friday. Between that and many others had flights to get on since we ran over on time by about 4 hours, The attendance was almost half by Friday afternoon when some of the most important (and contentious) resolutions regarding transparency and open bargaining were being voted on. In my opinion, more of those resolutions may have passed if more delegates had been there. I did my best to post updates on our Facebook page, I know you all wanted that even if you maybe didn't like the results. All the transcripts and training should now be available in the "Members Only" Portal at NALC.org

In Solidarity,

Steve Thrift





2024 National Convention in Boston

By now most if not all of you are aware of the charges against NALC president Brian Renfro. A considerable amount of the convention was spent deliberating the case.

For the charge alleging "Neglect of Duty," the NALC Executive Council found President Renfroe not guilty.

For the charge alleging "Circulating False or Misleading Statements about a NALC Officer," the NALC Executive Council found President Renfroe not guilty.

For the charge alleging "Conduct. Impaired driving after hours in a NALC owned vehicle," the NALC Executive Council found President Renfroe guilty.

For the charge alleging "Abandoned Position and Dereliction/Neglect of duty," the NALC Executive Council found President Renfroe not guilty.

For the one charge in which the Council voted guilty, the Executive Council voted to revoke, for the period of one year, the driving privileges of President Renfroe in any NALC owned vehicle, in addition to any rental vehicles for conducting union business. President Renfroe will also record a public service announcement, in collaboration with the Director of Safety and Health and Director of Health Benefits about alcoholism and driving under the influence.This decision of the Executive Council is subject to appeal to the National Convention in accordance with Article 10 of the *NALC Constitution.*

Submitted,

Mike Rapp, Delegate



The National was pretty interesting to say the least. There is, in my opinion a great divide within the ranks. They is a group calling themselves the CLC (concerned letter carriers), don't know much about them but any group within another group just brings division within the ranks. This type of division is not good for any union. I know a lot of members where wanting to know about the Renfro drama. We as an overwhelming body upheld the Executive Boards decisions on all charges. I know that it is easy to want him removed with the information provided but after hearing all the information it is easier to understand the executive boards decisions. Again, this in my opinion was another way to divide our union and makes me wonder what the other groups main goal is. When I went through college for HR Management we learned how big organizations place moles within the unions to divide and weaken them. This is what this group seems to be to me. As a steward I took an oath to see no harm done to our members, but here we have national officers doing exactly this. As a steward I defend this exact thing with our carriers and fight discipline and seek help for the member. Why would we not seek the same for our national officers. I know many won't agree but again this is my own opinion. There was little talk on the contract because the majority was taken up by this attack on Renfro. Renfro did say they are very close to an agreed upon contract. I know we have been hearing this for a long time now, those that have been around know this is pretty much how it always goes. I can only have faith in the National to do what is best for us. There were a lot of resolutions that passed and we will be getting the updates soon on all that happened from national. Once that happens, we will update the membership more on it. I know that open bargaining did not pass. I have got to say that this was my third national convention and was definitely one of the more divided. It made for a good learning experience for all that attended. If anyone has any questions, I will try to answer them if you ask.

Tracy Pardick

Meeting Minutes

Branch 442
General Meeting August 20, 2024
Call to Order: 19:01 by Sharee Eschenbacher
Pledge of Allegiance: All stood and recited Pledge of Allegiance led by Sharee Eschenbacher.
Roll Call of Officers: 17 Present, 5 Unexcused, 1 Excused
Reading of Previous Minutes:

General Meeting: M/S/C as printed in the handout for June. No July minutes due to July Picnic.

Executive Meeting: M/S/C as printed in the handout for June and July.
Secretary/Treasurer's Report: M/S/C as printed in the handout for June and July.
Reading of Communications: MK Election Services and Rocky Dean solicitations; Machinists Union Sporting Clay Event.
Applications for New Membership: N/A
Initiation of New Members: Tyler Sutherland and Brian Elliott
Reading of Reports:

Director of Insurance: Open Enrollment is November 11 to December 9, 2024. Medicare Part B sign-up deadline September 30.

Director of Safety: Via Sharee: Seatbelt District policy grievance Page 42 ELM M1298. Via Steve Schultz: take the time to do the 'safety items' necessary.

Retirees: August 10 retiree luncheon trending up. Looking for input from other retirees regarding future luncheons.

Trustees: Books in order through May.

Spokane Labor Council: No July meeting. Labor Rally will be held October 16; 4-7 pm. No uniforms. M/S/C to purchase 50 tickets and donate $150 for the Labor Rally.

Swingroom Gazette: Next issue should arrive in the first week of September. Email: SpokaneGazette442@gmail.com.

Committee Reports:

Legislation: "Enough is Enough"

Resolutions: None

By-Laws: None

Entertainment/Athletics: Any suggestions: contact John Chau

MDA: Branch 442 was recognized for our contributions.

Hospital and Health: Paul Carol: son's health and welcomed granddaughter; DeeDee Stockman: welcomed 11th grandchild; Ron Church welcomed 8th grandchild.

Condolences: Mark Meyers; Steve Thrift: father; Brian & Zach Smith: wife/mother.

Labor/Management Agenda Items: Breaker cards. Job Offers with electronic signatures from Trish and lack of communication with station management regarding offers. Clock ring falsification. Key Sign-outs. No Access scans on Sundays – ask your CCAs.
Unfinished Business: None
New Business: Shadle concerns/issues with not delivering to fenced yards. Carrier Reporting requirements have not changed.
Good of the Association: Joe Day retiring August 30.
Meeting Drawings: 94-David Irvine and 251-Chris Cherry; neither were present.
Improvement of the Service: January 11, 2025 Installation Dinner will be held at Spokane Tribe Casino.
Adjournment: M/S/C at 20:19

**Special Guests: Nick Vafiadis (NALC Business Agent): regarding contract still fighting over pay and hoping to avoid Arbitration. TIAREAP is dead and will only enter another joint adjustment if 11 specific points are met.
Linda Bunch (IEAL President): October 1, 2024 Day of Action at Riverside Station Noon-2 pm Picketing for better service.

Station Reports



Shadle

Leslie Phelps

Hello brothers and Sisters! Main Steward here from Shadle Garland Post Office. A friendly reminder that Shadle will be having a 6 day route count coming up the second week in September starting on the 7th. Reading up on the M-41, M-39 and the NALC Route Protection Program will help everyone in the process of route evaluations. Knowledge is power when it comes to our rights as carriers. Learning to deliver the mail accurately and safely goes a long way since our career with the post office is usually 20+ years. A problem my alternate steward and I are having is getting management to print us off the employee everything clock rings for tracking the ODL. We need carriers to come to us about any possible grievances so that gives us a reason as to why we would need "that much information". All help is much appreciated as this is a team effort. We are in this together and nothing is more powerful than the knowledge of our contracts that we have with the post office. As summer comes to a near and school starts back up reminder that political season will be upon us shortly. This season is very important since it is a presidential election and the general public is relying on us to get their ballots mailed. It is so important to make sure no ballots are being delayed by not properly sorting through sluff every single day in the afternoon. Please double check handoffs for any mail that you picked up!

Riverside

Rhonda Mason

The current flavor is the PS form 3996. Here at Riverside we are being instructed to fill it out and fill it out completely. These things we should already be doing anyway. This is our protection as it is written proof that we have permission to go into overtime, or instruction on what to do with the overtime. With the increased usage of 1017b this is an important tool for us. So let's all make sure we are filling these forms out, whether you are a regular on your own route or a cca visiting another station.



Hays Park

Simona Farnsworth

About 19 years ago I worked out at the plant as a Christmas casual. I was a mail handler for about three weeks during Christmas. My shift was 4:30pm to 4:30am. That was some hard work. It was interesting to see how everything worked out there. I did several different jobs. There was always a boss walking around yelling at us casuals, giving us different jobs to do. One evening I found myself sitting at a table with two old men that I could clearly tell had worked together for a long time. They had a pile of letters that had been torn/ripped up in the machine. Their job was to do their best at putting this mail back together so the sender or the receiver of the mail would get their mail, even if it was only half of a letter, at least they would know what happened to their mail. I was staring at this pile, and it was overwhelming to me. I made one comment about how much time it's going to take to put this mail back together and what a mess it was. Both of those men stopped working and stared at me very seriously for a moment, then one of them said "What if this was your mail?" I instantly understood. Then I sat there with them quietly for the next two hours helping them put mail back together like working on a puzzle.

I tell this story because I feel like during COVID and Amazon a lot of us have been trained to just go fast. Several carriers have only ever worked since this time. COVID is over and Amazon is gone, it is time to stop running and get back to giving great customer service. Let's pay closer attention to our customers' needs. Get the forwards processed quickly, make sure mailboxes are properly labeled. Let's take the extra 5 seconds and place the parcel behind the flowerpot on the porch. Ring the doorbell for parcels. When we notice a mailbox at an apartment or CBU filling up, empty it and leave a notice in the mailbox. When doing a hand off we should be reading our co-workers alert cards. Think to yourself "What if this was my mail."

Management is constantly pushing for us to go faster to give under time. Our job is way more than just going fast. We need to maintain our routes as well. It seems lately that management only likes to give praise or tell carriers they are doing a good job if they go fast and have under time. Please don't let management bully you into going faster. Our customers are why we do our job. We don't do our job to make management's numbers better. And the faster we go, the more likely we are to make a mistake or have an accident.

Simona Farnsworth



For this article, I want to bring up an observation at my station. I am curious if you are noticing this at your own? I feel like we are slipping away from professionalism and procedure. The United States Postal Service expects its employees to be professionals. I'd like to see consistency with the employees regarding professionalism through the following:

Be on time. This demonstrates that you are dependable and can follow instructions. Respect yourself and your colleagues by showing up to work when you're scheduled.

Communicate. Effective communication is a key part of professionalism. This includes listening to others to understand business goals and offering constructive criticism when appropriate. You should be able to remain calm and respectful when tensions arise. This can help you de-escalate conflict and avoid it in the future.

Create relationships with the residents on your routes. Ring the doorbell to notify the residents that a package has been delivered. Do your best to hide packages instead of tossing them where it lands and walking away. How you do anything is how you do everything…so stop doing things half a$$ed.

Set up boundaries. Clearly defined boundaries can help the station work more efficiently. This also means not letting management take advantage of you. Try to learn the contract if you can. If you have a feeling that management is in violation, talk to your Steward. They are there to help you!

I still see new employees who have passed their probationary period wearing street clothes and not an official USPS uniform. There are resources at several stations in town for used uniforms that are up for grabs. Or…use your clothing allowance! Take pride in yourself and your job. You are the face of The United States Postal Service. Let's make it great again.

Everitt Hopper Shadle

September General Meeting

Nominations for Election Of Branch Officers And Delegates



Tracy Pardick

Valley

SPOKANE VALLEY ARTICLE

Valley Article, Aug 2024

Not much going on, overtime is limited and the fight for that time is on. Trying to keep everyone equitable is a little harder when there are 17 ODLers. The talk of route counts are in the air, some stations have already started them. It is no secret with amazon being gone that the routes are not what they were. As carriers we just need to ensure we are doing what we are required to do, not taking short cuts by skipping normal daily requirements. There is a lot of information that is out there on your rights during a count on the NALC website, I would suggest everyone read up on how to protect your route. For every route we lose, we lose a T6. For those that have yet to be in a station bid down it is not fun and causes a lot of issues.

I have been out for a little while with the National at Boston and now with Covid.

As always you can call me at any time. 208 651-3505

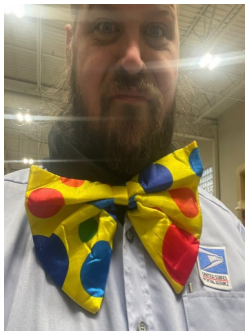
Tracy Pardick
Valley

Regal Article, Aug 2024

I have not heard much about what has been going on at the station, other than counts happening. I know Riffle is back and Adam and Kyle are now at the Valley. I figured everything has been going good until the call come. I was informed that the station has been going mando and CCAs and ODL have not been getting maxed, CCAs on opts not being able to carry it. I will now be reviewing daily rings to ensure compliance of the contract by management. I cannot grieve if I do not know what is going on. My phone is always on me and I always take calls or return them. I have also been told that the estimate process is becoming an issue again since Riffle has returned. If you are being bullied or pressured for undertime and management refuses to take your estimate, request your steward (that's me). I have not problem taking up that battle. Also, a carrier got in an accident, that carrier was put out on a 16.7 (no pay status), this is completely improper and I will be addressing that also. Management wants us to report every accident but then places us in a no pay status is complete bullshit. It is in my opinion a way to tell carriers, don't report your accident, we don't want to deal with it. This is unacceptable and just a down right cowardly. It is clear that the individual is a failure in their role as a leader, they are in a pay status that they are obviously not qualified for. I have no problem with management that is fair and follow the contract, management that doesn't use their position to belittle or intimidate their employees. Unfortunately, it seems this is becoming a rare thing in our leadership today. Most of those have moved. I do not understand why our leadership continues to promote unqualified individuals into these positions. Since we have no control who is put in charge of us, we do have the power to grieve these abuses. Your steward needs to be made aware of all violations, not just ones that effect you, but all that is seen. We are a union; it only works when we all protect each other. This job has progressively gotten worse through the years, we have one of the worst turn-over rates. A lot has to do with pay, but the majority is the abuse that the employee takes from their leadership. You would think a billion-dollar company would have this figured out by now (nope), continue to degrade and belittle and eventually they will stay. Again, this problem comes from leadership. I don't have the answer of how to fix unqualified management, but I do know how to file grievances and push them up the ladder. This seems to be the only thing that might have an effect at this point. I could go on forever about this, the simple point I am making is that we need to mold these supervisors into what they need to be, we have the power if we are united. This all comes from statements from carriers. We can't just sit back and think that someone else will report it or someone else will speak up, it's not affecting me so it's none of my business. There is so much going on throughout the post office in this whole country that is just wrong. Management falsifying clock rings, threating employees, using their position for sexual favors, forcing off the clock work, we are employees not property. We all need to report every incident. If we look past one thing, then it will be the next, then the next, then the next, on and on…. If management retaliates guess what "we grieve that also." If they mess with you when it comes to FMLA, Wounded Warrior, or VA then call a lawyer and sue the supervisor/manager. If you haven't notice I am tired of how this team treats us. Those who don't know my number it is 208 651-3505, call or message anytime.

Tracy Pardick,

Regal Steward



Jeremie Simpson
Metro Steward

February 22nd 2023. This is the day negotiations of our new contract opened for bargaining. 540 days have since passed without a contract. We are already 89 days beyond our longest contract negotiation, which coincidentally was our last negotiation. This is the question that comes up the most often from my brothers and sisters at the Metro station. We are two dollars behind in non awarded COLA's alone. Inflation is at a national average of 20% since the last contract was signed. Spokane rent has increased 25% or more in the same time. The cost of homes has risen about the same and were experiencing higher interest rates to attain a loan to purchase the home.

Meanwhile, our CCA's start their postal employment below $20 an hour. They are subjected to non regular schedules and possible overuse to attain postal goals to reduce the cost of the carrier work force. Residents of the area can apply at the Panda Express on Roger's route and start with a higher wage and immediate contributions to a retirement account. MovHer 2 blocks from the Metro station is hiring people starting at five dollars an hour more than CCA's make to start out, partly because their hours are unpredictable and they want to compensate their workers for not knowing their days off and start times to be regular.

I am coming up on my 9 year hiring anniversary. My pay is slightly above the half way mark for a regular carrier. Pre current era I would be making enough to be buying my house, paying my car and my significant others car, and paying for an out of state family vacation. Throwing my 2.5 kids in the back of the station wagon and driving them to the grand canyon or mount rushmore. The Postal Dream.

This is not our reality. We have fallen off financially. Especially when talking about our new hires or anyone who is on the Table 2 pay scale. We are not middle class. We are the working poor. I am a frugal individual so I am doing very alright for myself. I have children. They have amazing dental and sufficient healthcare. I am not the norm. Nationally we have fallen off on taking care of our workforce the way that was done for the generations before us. Something needs to be done. Someone needs to fight. WE NEED TO FIGHT. We need to stand up for one another like the days of president Sombrotto. This starts with me. This starts with you. This starts with my station. This starts with your station. This starts with Spokane.

I once heard that each person working their job is simply a finger that operates with the other fingers that make up the hand. Each finger can air its grievance's and poke the user. But, when all of the fingers join together they will make a fist to do more than poke when one is aggrieved. We need to unite and tell this union and the postal service that we are no longer properly compensated and we are ready and willing.



Riverside– Wade Outcalt

Anyone seen the holy cow price gouging on our uniforms!? I mean you can buy one set of clothes for cold weather if you are a CCA with the Kicker. Welcome aboard, get used to being treated horribly, I mean you make a fast-food workers wage for the first 6 years aren't you glad you're represented? (whatever) Hay though can't be laid off..... probably because at this juncture that would be a favor to you. Anyways I was going to write a more in-depth article about positive stuff, but hay it's been over 400 days and I have no details....



Sunset Hill Station

Hey everybody, I hope you are all doing good and taking care of yourselves. Over here at Sunset we have been doing ok we have had some disagreements with management and the way they manage who would've guessed, but management will be management and all we can do is grieve the violations and continue to remind management of the rules. I know nobody wants to hear that winter will be approaching but it will be here before we know it so it would be best to get with management and make sure we get everything ordered for us to do our jobs safely (Hand warmers, deicer, window scrapers etc.). That is all I have for you guys and gals this time. Please remember to be safe and take care of yourself because nobody else will take care of you when you start falling apart.

Consuelo Guerrero
Shop Steward



Greetings from Northpointe

Long time no talk. I want to thank Scott Thorland for reporting the happenings up north. Scott is integral to the day-to-day success of the union and the station, so thanks Scott for helping navigate the storms and laughing with me at the absurdity the last couple of years have wrought.

Quite frankly it has been hard to put into to words what the chaos of the last 4 years have been like. We lost a lot of good people on both sides. Managers that had the integrity that mail matters not just the ecommerce. Carriers that left early because the juice was no longer worth the squeeze.

The first act of creation is one of destruction. I hope enough people and stuff have been broken at Northpoint so we can start to build a solid station again.

The parcel load has halved, and we seem to have a management team that is competent. That's this week. Who knows what the future holds. Hopefully, we learn from the destructive forces of the past as we navigate the future.

The Union is there for you. Be there for the Union.

Rick Enright

Director of Insurance

The 2024 plan year is winding down. Make sure you get the most out of your benefits before they slip away.

Open season will soon be upon us as we decided how to participate in the new Postal Service Health benefit program (PSHB)

Important dates to remember.

September 30, 2024, PSHB SEP for Medicare Part B

Open Season to select A PSHB PLAN is Nov.11-Dec.9

Jan. 1, 2025, New PSHB Programs begin.

You need to chose something this open season so consider the insurance plan built for and run by a letter carrier this open season, join the NALC health benefit plan.

Rick Enright



I am hesitant to write what I am about to write and I am going to be somewhat cryptic about it. We at Northpointe have experienced a change in the atmosphere within the station. Everyone who works at the station understands of what I am speaking, and for the most part, so far, it seems to be positive. I am hesitant to speak of this, because for the 30+ years I have worked for this organization I have witnessed very few times in which a work atmosphere of this type has been put into place, and it has always been short-lived. Hopefully, nope not even going to say it! August saw the return of Steve Thrift from his nearly 2 year detail for Tiareap. As of this writing I don't think he has worked a Saturday yet! Well maybe one. Congratulations to Rachel Adams and Lindsey St Laurent on making regular! Not much else going on, for once!

Scott Thorland





Safety

Mike Meredith

Robberies and Assault

Currently in Washington, 86% of all Carrier robberies occur when the carrier is away. Either in an apartment, business, or most commonly during park & loop delivery. And what the assailants are looking to steal is mail and to have as little interaction with you as possible. That's why NEVER:
Place your personal items in the cab, where they can be seen.
Leave your windows down far enough for someone to reach in and unlock the door.
Leave the vehicle unlocked when out of sight of the vehicle. Even if you're scooting a business.
Additionally, don't carry much cash. Just what you need for the day.

Be observant, especially in bad areas on your route. When it comes to your route, you all know where those areas are. If you notice an odd fellow or who you perceive as a danger to yourself waiting for you in a bad area, move to your next park point and call the station. If you notice a strange person stalking you, get out of the area first and then call the station.

If you are robbed, follow these steps:
Most important: Take no action that would jeopardize your personal safety.
If the robber displays a firearm, consider it loaded and assume the robber will use it.
Don't panic! Be calm and do exactly what the robber tells you to do.
Without being obvious, get a picture in your mind of what the robber looks like — facial features, voice (and accent), clothes, and direction of escape.
If the robber has a vehicle, try to note the make, model, and, if possible, the license plate number.
Immediately notify police, Postal Inspectors, and your supervisor

Richard Martindale

Retiree

In the most recent edition of the Gazette, carriers are reminded to 1. Turn off the engine: and 2. Close (and lock) the door, when exiting the vehicle. I had an experience that well illustrates the importance of those precautions. I am Richard Martindale, retired (from Colville) in 2002-- and loving it. I began my career with a nearly three-years-long stint as a Clerk-Carrier PTF at Walla Walla, 1974. I look back with fondness on those years, and those two cities especially.

Early one morning I checked out a delivery vehicle, and began my almost daily assignment of delivering Specials around the city. The rig was an American Motors so-called "Jeep." Ours were old, and were in questionable mechanical condition. My first stop was at the Marcus Whitman Hotel, just a stone's throw from the P.O. I stopped at the rear of the building, shifted to Park and pulled the floor-mounted brake lever back. Left the engine running and the door open, for I knew I would be gone only a minute or two.

Signature obtained from the desk clerk, I exited the building and looked at the space where I had parked my vehicle just moments ago. But the rig was gone, gone, gone. Up 'til that instant, I hadn't realized the overwhelming, panicky feeling that envelopes one's entire body, when facing such a scene. The old vehicle's transmission (automatic) was sloppy, and the brake lever couldn't be adjusted any tighter than what I had tried, repeatedly over the months that I drove that rig. The engine (four-banger) was poorly tuned, popping and gurgling and jumping around, and that had caused the transmission to slip out of Park, and into, of course, reverse. Hand brake almost useless, the vehicle had backed itself 100 feet across the parking lot. And there it sat, rear bumper tight up against the Cyclone fence that surrounded the hotel's outdoor swim pool, still trying mightily to overcome those final few feet and into the deep end. I jumped in and drove away, shaking no less vigorously than the four-banger itself, thankful that not a soul had witnessed the almost certainly career-ending event.



ELECTION NOTICE

NOMINATIONS

Nominations for the election of Branch Officers and Delegates to the 2025 WSALC State Convention will be held at the regular Branch Meeting on September 17, 2024, at 7:00 pm, at Progressions Credit Union, 2919 E. Mission Ave, Spokane WA 99202.

Nominations for the following Branch Officer Positions will be accepted; President, Vice-President, Secretary-Treasurer, Recording Secretary, Sergeant-at-Arms, Director of Retirees, Director of Insurance, Delegates to the Spokane Labor Council three (3) members, Swingroom Gazette Editor, Director of Safety and Board of Trustees composed of three (3) members. These positions will be for a 2-year term, commencing in January, 2025.

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 17, 2024.

The Branch President, Vice-President, and Secretary-Treasurer 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 2023 through September 2024). Other members that wish to have their names nominated will be able to do so at the September 17th 2024 Meeting. Upon nomination for Branch Officer or Delegate, the member must verify that he/she has not served in a supervisory capacity in 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, 2024. Ballots must be returned to: Election Committee, PO Box 9442, Spokane Wa 99209, no later than 3:00 pm, November 18th, 2024. 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 19th, 2024.

THE
SWINGROOM GAZETTE
Official Publication
Of
BRANCH 442
National Association of Letter Carriers
2903 E. Mission Avenue
Spokane, Washington 99202-2364

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Labor Rally



At the Fairgrounds

OCTOBER 16 4:00 PM TO 7:00 PM

YOUR STEWARD WILL HAVE TICKETS

BRING FOOD DONATION FOR AUTOMATIC ENTRY

FOOD, BEVERAGES,

DOOR PRIZES

FAMILY ENTERTAINMENT

OCTOBER 16 LABOR RALLY/GENERAL MEETING THE 2024 LABOR RALLY WILL BE CONSIDERED OUR OCTOBER GENERAL MEETING.

WEDNESDAY OCTOBER 16TH FROM 4:00 PM TO 7:00 PM.

SPOKANE INTERSTATE FAIRGROUNDS 404 N HAVANA STREET, SPOKANE VALLEY

SPONSORED BY SPOKANE REGIONAL LABOR COUNCIL AND AFFILIATES

MEET AND GREET LAROR-ENDORSED CANDIDATES

NALC BRANCH 442
2903 E MISSION

Important Dates:

September 10th Steward Meeting 6:30pm

September 17Th General Meeting 7:00pm Nominations for Branch Election

October 8th Steward Meeting 6:30pm

October 16th General Meeting @ Labor Rally at Fairgrounds 4:00pm– 7:00pm