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Swingroom Gazette

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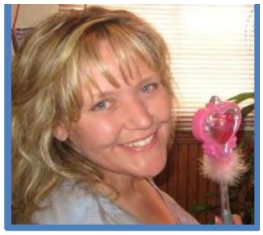

President's Report

Sharee Eschenbacher

I'm always excited for a new year to start. The possibility of fresh starts and do-overs fill the air and give me an extra boost of creativity to plan what I want the next twelve months to look like. Like everyone, I drag baggage with me from one year to the other, but on January 1st, the load doesn't seem as heavy. For our Branch, your Executive Council has come up with some great ideas that I would like to make happen this year. We have seen a low participation level at our general meetings and think it's due to post-work fatigue and exhaustion. Home is our recovery space and after-hours commitments are not that enticing. So, we are looking into ways that can keep the work/life balance in check while encouraging participation in our meetings. We all know about Zoom and other choices. These alternatives to in-person attendance are on our radar. We are also taking a hard look at the advantages and disadvantages of having a printed newsletter. As it is, our Gazette comes out six times a year. That's not a great way to disseminate information. We have a Facebook group and that's an easy way to put up notices of upcoming events, but…it's Facebook and Facebook can be messy. We have contracted with our printer to design a branch website. We're designing it so there is a homepage that anyone can see and a members-only section that branch members can log into for real-time updates on grievance activity and any other news the world doesn't need to see.

We recently had steward elections and I'm looking forward to training our newest superheroes. I feel it's never said enough how important the steward role is. Stewards are regular people who take on the extra burden of protecting their co-workers on the workroom floor. Our union would not function without the dedication of our shop stewards. Stewards are the ones who step forward when it's uncomfortable, who speak up when it would be easier to stay silent, and who stand beside coworkers when it matters most. They enforce the contract not for recognition, but because fairness matters. They take the calls, ask the hard questions, sit in meetings, file grievances, and protect due process—while juggling their own workload and personal responsibilities. It takes courage, persistence, and a strong sense of solidarity. To our current and past stewards: **Thank You** for your time and your backbone. Your work strengthens our union every day, whether it's seen or not. We are better, stronger, and more protected because of you.

Welcome to the new year. Take the time to unpack that baggage as soon as you can and start working on your plans for 2026 and…take care of each other!

With Union Strength,
Sharee E.

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Colville, Fairchild, Ritzville, Coulee Dam and Colfax: Call Sharee Eschenbacher 509-953-3027

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

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Vice President

The tracking dot on the Dispatch screen stopped blinking at 2:14 PM. Management thought it was an unauthorized break. It was actually a heart stopping in the middle of Oak Creek Drive.

His name was Arthur. Everyone called him "Old Artie."

I was the one sent to replace him. I'm twenty-four, fit, and efficient. I don't limp. I wear noise-canceling earbuds to drown out the barking dogs and the distant highway hum. I treat the route like a video game: scan, drop, photo, run. My numbers are perfect. My "Time Per Stop" is thirty seconds faster than Artie's ever was. According to the corporate algorithm, I am a superior employee. But three days into the route, I realized the neighborhood was broken.

Oak Creek Drive is one of those streets that looks nice from a drone but feels like a cold war on the ground. You know the type. House 402 has a yard full of political signs in bold red. House 404, right next door, has signs in deep blue. They have fences that seem a little too high. They have doorbell cameras that swivel to watch you as you walk by.

Nobody is outside. The porches are empty. The only sound is the whir of air conditioners and the robotic voice of a GPS saying, "You have arrived." On my fourth day, I found a notebook.

It was shoved in the back of the glove compartment of the delivery truck, wedged behind a stack of tire pressure logs. It was a cheap, spiral-bound thing, stained with coffee rings and smelled faintly of peppermint and old paper. I thought it was a list of gate codes. It wasn't.

It was a manual on how to be human. Artie hadn't just been delivering utility bills and catalogs. He had been conducting a silent diplomacy mission in a war zone. I opened the page marked Oak Creek Drive.

House 402 (Mr. Miller): Bark is worse than his bite. He yells about "the government" because his wife died last year and the silence in the house scares him. Do not just drop the mail. Compliment his restored Chevelle in the driveway. It's the only thing he's proud of.

House 404 (Ms. Hayes): She works from home. Anxious. If you knock too loudly, she won't answer. Wave at the camera. Leave the package behind the planter so the porch pirates don't see it. She's raising two kids alone.

House 410: The dog's name is Buster. He looks mean, but he just wants a biscuit. If you feed him, the owner will finally trust you enough to say hello.

I sat in the idling truck, sweat sticking my uniform to the seat. I looked at my scanner. It was screaming at me to move. Behind Schedule, it blinked. I looked at House 402. Mr. Miller was standing on his porch, glaring at me with his arms crossed. A "No Trespassing" sign was nailed to the pillar next to his head. My earbuds were playing a podcast about productivity hacks. I took them out. I walked up the driveway. I didn't run. "Afternoon," I said.

Mr. Miller grunted. "You're late. The old guy was never late. Where is he?"

He didn't know. Nobody knew. In our system, when a worker drops, they are just replaced by a new ID number. "Artie passed away last Tuesday, sir," I said softly. Mr. Miller's face changed. The anger, which was really just a shield, crumbled. He looked suddenly small. He looked at the empty space where Artie's truck used to park. "Oh," he whispered. "He... he promised to bring me a catalog for car parts today." "I don't have the catalog," I said, remembering the notebook. "But that Chevelle in the garage? It's a '67, right? It's a beauty."

Mr. Miller blinked. He stepped off the porch. For the first time, he didn't look at me like an intruder. He looked at me like a person. "It's a '68," he corrected, a faint smile touching his lips. "Artie liked the chrome trim. He always asked about the transmission." As we stood there talking, the front door of House 404 opened. Ms. Hayes stepped out. She usually waited until the truck was gone to retrieve her mail. But she had heard us. She was holding a small, foil-wrapped plate. "Did I hear..." she hesitated, standing safely on her side of the property line. "Did you say Artie died?" Mr. Miller looked at her. Usually, they only communicated through aggressive lawn maintenance and noise complaints. "Heart attack," Mr. Miller said, his

(continued from page 3)
voice raspy. Ms. Hayes looked down at the foil plate. "I made cookies," she said quietly. "It's his birthday tomorrow. He told me last week he didn't have any family left to celebrate with."
There was a silence on the street. It wasn't the empty, digital silence of the suburbs. It was a heavy, human silence. "I didn't know that," Mr. Miller said. He looked at the woman he had spent five years hating because of the color of a yard sign. "I didn't know he was alone."
"He wasn't alone," I said, holding up the battered notebook. "He had you guys. He worried about your transmission, sir. And ma'am, he made sure your packages were hidden because he knew you couldn't afford to replace them."
I saw the realization hit them. For years, Artie had been the invisible thread stitching this neighborhood together. He absorbed their stress, listened to their rants, and carried their secrets. He crossed the lines that they refused to cross.
Ms. Hayes stepped over the property line. She walked onto Mr. Miller's driveway.
"I'm Sarah," she said, extending the plate of cookies. "I think... I think we should eat these. For Artie."
Mr. Miller hesitated. He looked at his "No Trespassing" sign, then at the woman offering him kindness. He took the plate. "I'm Bill," he said. "I have some coffee inside. If you want."
I finished my route that day an hour late. The corporate dashboard flagged me for "Inefficiency." My supervisor sent a text asking why I was stationary for so long. I didn't reply.
I drove past House 402 one last time. The red signs and the blue signs were still there, sticking out of the grass. But on the porch, two people were sitting in rocking chairs, drinking coffee out of mismatched mugs. They were talking. Artie died on the pavement, but he didn't leave a void. He left a bridge.
We live in a world that is obsessed with speed. We want same-day delivery, instant downloads, and 15-second videos. We judge our neighbors by their profile pictures and their politics. We think we are connected because we have Wi-Fi, but we are starving for contact.
Artie wasn't "inefficient." He was doing the work that machines couldn't do. He was slowing down enough to see the people standing right in front of him.
Don't wait for the funeral to learn your neighbor's name.
The algorithm doesn't care if your customers are happy. It only cares if you're fast. But life isn't about how fast you run the route. It's about who you stop for along the way.
Slow down. Look up. Say hello.

Full disclosure, I found this on the internet... posted anonymously or I would credit the author. And while it's not explicitly about the Post Office, it kind of is, right? We can get caught up in caring only about how fast we're going but not as much about the service we're providing to our customers. As much as the bosses hate to hear it, that's not always only about the mail. Sometimes we are the only human connection that our customers have during the day. As I tell every Academy class that I visit, "we become woven into the fabric of our customers lives", we see the kids born, grow up and get married, sometimes we get to see the grandkids visiting at Christmas or over the Summer. That customer who has Lupus who can barely move but loves to meet you every day with her mail at the door. Those kids in the Cul de sac who cheer when you come back from vacation or hand craft Christmas ornaments for you. The teenager who can't contain themselves when you deliver the acceptance letter to their first choice College. When you hand the diploma to the single mom who has been working for years at night to get her accounting degree online... it goes on and on. If you let it.

~Steve Thrift~



Director of Retirees Report

Steve Schultz

This has been a pretty amazing Winter so far. Temperatures in the 50's in December. That's a rare weather phenomenon around here. I know many of you have been busy with family dinners, get togethers, office parties, etc., in addition to what is typically the busiest time of the year for the Postal Service. Tis the season! I hope all is well with you, and you had a safe and happy holiday season.

Like the novel, things have been "all quiet on the western front". It seems like it is the same routine over and over, kind of like being stuck in trench warfare. I have received only a few requests for retirement information, and a couple regarding the health plan open season for retirees. Remember, if you are looking for any information on retirement, there are several resources out there.

Finally, it is with profound sadness that I report the passing of branch member and former steward, Frank Coe. Frank was my assistant steward at Northpointe. He was a Vietnam veteran and one of the most unselfish and caring persons I know. In addition to raising his children, he saw to it to help raise his grandchildren, and great grandchildren.

I would like to take a moment to reflect on a few things he did for me during the two years that I was off of work with the accident that eventually took my leg. Frank helped spearhead collection drives at the stations and various events to help us out financially, as I had just over a years' worth of sick leave on the books when I had the accident. I was bedridden for roughly the first six months but my wife would say that Frank would show up at our door every now and then with an envelope of cash. Between the generosity of the carriers, not just in Spokane, but throughout the state, the leave sharing program, and advanced sick leave, we were able to weather the storm.

Many of you know, that I was a former Washington State President of the NALC. I had attended every state convention since 1985 and was in danger of missing my first convention in almost 25 years. Frank took it upon himself to drive me to convention, sleep on a rollaway bed in my room, and push me around in a wheelchair for two and a half days as I was hooked up to a wound vacuum device, among other things. I will forever be grateful to him.

I have spoken with his wife Marilyn and she stated that there will not be any services until Spring. I will keep you posted when I hear anything. My deepest sympathies go out to Marilyn and the family. May he rest in peace.

Be safe and until next time, take care…

November General Meeting Minutes November 18th, 2025

President: President Sharee Eschenbacher called the meeting to order at 7:00pm.

ROLL CALL: 17 present, 3 unexcused, 2 excused.

Reading of Previous Minutes: General meeting minutes moved seconded and passed.

Executive minutes moved seconded and passed.

Secretary/Treasurer Report: Moved seconded and passed.

Reading of Communications: none

Application of New members: 12

Initiation of New members: Christian Dominic.

Reading of Reports:

Director of Insurance: Rick Enright went to Orlando for training. Orthotics is includer in the NALC health plan. There is no copay for virtual therapy. Counseling is a $10 copay. Amwell is included. The High Option Plan is $350 cheaper than the competitor. Retirees don't op out of Medicare. Steve Schultz added if you don't want to change plans you don't have to do anything. Steve Thrift added you get to speak to a real person.

Director of Safety: No report excused absence. Tonja Salguero is training to follow Mike**.**

Retirees: Sent forms to 7 retirees.

Trustees: Books good thru September.

Spokane Labor Council: The Council fed the TSA agents during the shutdown.

Swing room Gazette: The last issue was the smallest issue. Please get RAP articles in by December 15th.

Committee Reports:

Legislation: none

Resolutions: None

By-Laws: None

Entertainment/Athletics: There have been 13 donations for the bowlathon. Making letters to pass out asking for more donations. Hockey Saturday approximately 25 tickets.

MDA: None

Hospital and Health: Melissa Franklin has a new grandbaby. Oleg Gordy and Darcy Hardenreichart are out. Eric Pardick had hip surgery. Steve Thrift's mother-in-law broke her hip.

Condolences: Russ Beuler and Tom Shiree passed away.

Labor Management Agenda Items: Is station snow removal being planned for. Postmaster is supposed to notify Sharee of light duty assignments. CFS being ran back with DPS At Cheney UBBM being run back in DPS. New CCA being sent to the Sunday HUB. Contacted Jade McBride with no reply.

Unfinished business: None

New Business: Rick Enright moved that we accept the 2026 budget and it was seconded and passed. The election report was given. 464 ballots were mailed out. 6 not deliverable with a 30% return rate. It was moved and seconded to destroy last years ballots.

Good of the Association: None

Improvement of the Association: none

Meeting Drawings: Number 14 Eric Slider and 183 Richard Gower.

Meeting adjourned at 8:33p.m.

Next Meeting: December 16th, 2025

Respectfully Submitted,

William F. Bauder

General Meeting Minutes December 16th, 2025

President: President Sharee Eschenbacher called the meeting to order at 7:00pm.

ROLL CALL: 16 present, 3 unexcused, 3 excused.

Reading of Previous Minutes: General meeting minutes moved seconded and passed.

Executive minutes moved seconded and passed.

Secretary/Treasurer Report: Moved seconded and passed.

Reading of Communications: Several Christmas cards

Application of New members: 12 – George Ohnemos, Charles Nichols, Dave Lineengood, Michael Boans, Julian Ribiero, Geoffrey White, Jonas Bender, Curtis Hamond, Robert Borden, Robert Condon, Kevin Lindsey, and Joseph Yarnell.

Initiation of New members: none

Reading of Reports:

Director of Insurance: Branch is hopefully 100% members. Use your benefits especially the "preventables".

Director of Safety: Mike was excused but gave Sharee his report. Make sure you're doing your vehicle inspections. Write up every defect. Be careful delivering after dark. Sharee added head lights are unsafe. If involved in an accident don't due a reenactment. Carriers are being reinjured.

Retirees: Things have been quiet. There have been some questions on paperwork

Trustees: Books good thru November.

Spokane Labor Council: The Council fed the TSA agents during the shutdown.

Swing room Gazette: Hardly any RAP articles turned in. Articles were due yesterday.

Committee Reports:

Legislation: none

Resolutions: None

By-Laws: No response from National on our change.

Entertainment/Athletics: There have been 13 donations for the bowlathon. Making letters to pass out asking for more donations. Hockey Saturday approximately 25 tickets.

MDA: None

Hospital and Health:

Condolences: Tracy Pardick's father-in-law, Jeremy Simson's father-in-law and Frank Coe.

Labor Management Agenda Items: Why no breaker cards? 45-minute office time. Pre-Shadow Day.

Unfinished business: A member wanted the Branch to pay to support his daughter's team. It was decided it would set a president and who could you say no to afterwards.

New Business: Rick Enright moved that we donate $250. To the foodbank so that our National would match it.

Good of the Association: There were 5 residual vacancies. PTR positions are being eliminated nationally.

Improvement of the Association: Tracy Pardick is transferring to Coeur D Alene in January.

Meeting Drawings: 17 Art Sauer and 307 Charles Andersen.

Meeting adjourned at 8:20p.m.

Next Meeting: January 20th, 2026

Respectfully Submitted,

William F. Bauder

2025/2026 ELECTION REPORT

COMMITTEE: Jeromy Farnsworth*, Bryan Elyeyit*, Sharee Eschenbacher*, Krystyl Kane*, Simona Farnsworth*, Everitt Hopper, Orville Arnold, Stephanie Hopper , Steve Thrift, Martin Goguen
(* designating participating on both nights)

464 Ballots mailed
6 Ballots returned undeliverable
6 Ballot invalid

138 Ballots counted 30% 2024/2025—36%

Results:

State Delegates 2026 (*Tie breaker vote at Union Meeting on 11/18/2025)

86	Sharee Eschenbacher	58	Simona Farnsworth*6	51	Shawn Gilliland
81	Steve Schultz	58	Miranda Riley*5	47	Rhonda Mason
77	Tracy Pardick	58	Connor McKinnon*	46	Tonja Salguero
72	Steve Thrift	57	Rick Enright	41	DeeDee Stockman
63	Orville Arnold	55	Leslie Phelps	40	Zak Smith
62	Connie Guerrero	54	Scott Thorland*12	37	Everitt Hopper*
59	Jeremie Simpson	54	Bill Bauder*6	37	Jason Tan* Withdrew
58	Melissa Franklin*7	53	Jeromy Farnsworth	33	Jacob Boileau

National Delegate 2026 (*Tie breaker vote at Union Meeting on 11/18/2025)

86	Sharee Eschenbacher	57	Connie Guerrero*19	45	Jeromy Farnsworth
83	Steve Schultz	57	Connor McKinnon*	41	Rhonda Mason
82	Tracy Pardick	54	Miranda Riley	38	Tonja Salguero
79	Steve Thrift	53	Simona Farnsworth	35	Zak Smith*
63	Orville Arnold	52	Rick Enright	35	DeeDee Stockman*Withdrew
61	Bill Bauder	49	Leslie Phelps	30	Everitt Hopper*
59	Melissa Franklin	48	Scott Thorland*11	30	Jason Tan*Withdrew
58	Jeremie Simpson	48	Shawn Gilliland*8	29	Jacob Boileau

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Hays Park

I had the privilege of attending the 2025 regional assembly this year in Cle Elum. It is always very informative. I took a class on retirement, observations and digital discipline, and the new employee retention program. Of all the classes I took I think the OWCP class was the best. This class taught the basics of the proper steps to take if a carrier gets injured on the job.

If you ever find yourself in this situation, please reach out to your steward immediately. It is very important to get all the correct paperwork filled out and turned in. It is very time sensitive. And a lot of supervisors do not even know how the process works. Two of the forms you will need right away are the CA-1 and CA-16. The CA-1 is for the actual claim. The CA-16 is what covers the medical expenses. The CA-16 must be issued to you in the first 4 hours. The CA-16 also must be filed within 7 days. These are just 2 small things about OWCP that I feel every carrier should know. There is so much more, but these two basic things are good knowledge.

I hope everyone had a wonderful holiday season, and as always work safely and go home safely.

Simona Farnsworth

Director of Insurance

Regional Assembly 2025

Veterans' day week I had the pleasure of attending NALC Region 2's assembly. For those of you who are unfamiliar Region 2 consists of Washington, Idaho, Oregon, Utah, Montana, and Alaska. Union activists from throughout the region gathered in Suncadia, Washington for the assembly.

The first morning of the Assembly had National NALC president Brian Renfroe address the assembly on the state of the Post Office and Legislation.

We spent the remainder of the week focused on training.

I attended classes on NEERMP, Hour office time, dignity and respect, OWCP, Observations and Digital Discipline, Retirement, Breaking down the walls and Finally the Emergency Response team.

I want to thank the branch for the opportunity to attend this training.

Respectfully submitted,

Rick Enright

Editor

I would like to apologize to the membership for not only the lateness of this issue of the Swingroom Gazette, but also note that there are several articles missing that were submitted by the Stewards at the Stations. I wish I knew what happened I had the Gazette completed approximately 3 weeks prior to this date. I had some computer issues that resulted in me purchasing a new computer. The switch-over was completed well before I began assembling the January-February Issue of the Gazette. I not only cannot find the email from me submitting the gazette for publication, which I should have checked to ensure that it was received, but I am missing several articles that were submitted. I do not delete any email submissions from the Gmail account that is set up for the Swingroom Gazette, and cannot explain where these articles went, they are simply gone. So this is an attempt to recreate as much as I could of the original intended content, and publish the Meeting minutes from November and December. If I can recover any of the missing articles they will be included in the March/April Issue.

-Scott Thorland

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Important Dates:

March 3rd	**Executive Board Meeting**	**6:00pm**
March 10th	**Steward Meeting**	**6:30pm**
March 17th	**General Meeting**	**7:00pm**

Bowling Tournament is now Sunday April 26th at Northbowl from 2:00– 4:00pm

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