



# NAPS Branch 61



Volume 9 Issue 4

Character is like a tree and reputation like its shadow. The shadow is what we think of it; the tree is the real thing. ~Abraham Lincoln (1809 - 1865)

April 2009

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### **President's Corner**



Our time on Capitol Hill has come and gone. Since we left Washington DC the House of Representatives has approved by a voice vote HR 1256 which will allow FERS employees to receive credit for there unused sick leave. This was added to Legislation that would provide the FDA authority to regulate tobacco products. Adding the provision of the Federal Retirement Reform Act ensures that the tobacco control bill is fully paid for and does not increase the deficit. When I heard the FERS bill had been added to a Tobacco Regulation Bill I was concerned we will have problems in the Senate getting this bill passed.

We discussed this issue with Norm Dicks' (D-6<sup>th</sup>) representative Jayme Burgess who informed us this was not unusual, and there are tobacco companies that are not opposed to this regulation. As this bill continues its way to the Senate please contact our Senators urging them to pass this bill.

The biggest issue we went to the hill with was our request for the passage of HR 22 which will provide critical financial relief to the Postal Service by allowing us to pay our share of current retiree's health insurance premiums out of the 32 billion we already have pre-funded. By allowing the Postal Service to use this money now instead of waiting until 2016 it will alleviate some of the financial concerns that we currently have. When meeting with our Representatives most would like to see us be able to use this money but for only two years instead of the eight years we are requesting.

The atmosphere on Capitol Hill this year was one of great concern, our representatives were busy running back and forth between there offices and the house and senate to vote and various bills. When meeting with Senator Maria Cantwell you could see the concern in her eyes and what appeared to be sheer exhaustion on her face. I do appreciate the time that each of our representatives were able to spend with us during our time in Washington DC. Unfortunately Representative McDermott's aid did not feel that we had anything to add to what had been presented by NAPUS and the NALC and would not take the time to meet with us. Keep a watch on the Legislative corner of the NAPS web site ([www.naps.org](http://www.naps.org)) to see what is happening with Congress.

Postmaster General Jack Potter also addressed our group with his concerns which are Retiree Health Benefit Payments (HR 22), 5-day delivery, increasing our debt limits, re-opening Union Contracts, a possible bailout ( by congressional appropriation), dramatic cuts to our personnel and services, and creating a new business model. Mr. Potter stated when he was addressing the Congressional Sub-Committee the previous week about 5-day delivery he reminded us he had said this was a last resort and for only a short time during our slowest mailing periods. Will 5-day delivery happen we will have to wait and see! We have already cut hours dramatically and we will continue to reduce them. We are in the middle of a reorganization in which we will most likely experience a Reduction-in-Force (RIF).

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### **The Bottom Line is People** - by Sylvester Black, VP, Western Area Operations

Approximately 70 percent of all postal revenue comes in through the business mail acceptance process, making it one of our most important revenue channels. The Sarbanes-Oxley Act calls for our financial controls to be effective, efficient and accurate - meaning we must be especially vigilant in our mail acceptance process.

In the past few months, we've done well improving the timely entry of postage statements, as well as addressing accounts with negative balances.

However, recent OIG and Financial Control reviews have disclosed a significant weakness in our performance to accurately complete and validate our postage statements. At every level, we need to ensure that proper mail acceptance procedures are being followed. This includes accepting only properly completed statements from our mailers, verifying that our acceptance clerks are finalizing each mailing completely, and managers following up on deficiencies.

As revenue continues to decline, it is more important than ever to pay special attention to our financial reporting responsibilities. We want to make sure that we collect and account for every dollar. It's prudent. It's smart.

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**President's Corner - cont**

This all seems pretty bleak, but what else can we do to keep the Postal Service viable? The average person has 10 items a month that need to be mailed, how many of us use the Internet, phone, or automatic payments. If we all mailed those 10 pieces of mail it would generate \$4.40 a month (new rates) and \$52.80 a year. Just using the current 302 members in Branch 61 has this would be \$15,945.60 a year. Just imagine how much revenue we would generate if all postal employees used the US MAIL.

If any Branch 61 member would like to write an article for our Newsletter please submit it to [branch61@comcast.net](mailto:branch61@comcast.net). We would like to have the input and opinions of our members. If you have any questions you would like answered submit them to the same e-mail.

I encourage you to visit the Northwest Area Web Page at [www.napsnw.org](http://www.napsnw.org). It has a lot of information available. Under the Branch 61 subsection you can review previous newsletters. There's also a list of non-members. Encourage membership! Recruit a new member and receive recognition in the National NAPS Magazine as well as a \$50.00 Series EE Savings Bond.

SPAC (Supervisor Political Action Committee) is an important vehicle used to reward and encourage Members of Congress and Senators who support legislation important to NAPS. The Northwest Area is sponsoring a SPAC Raffle to be held on May 16<sup>th</sup> at the Northwest Area Convention. The 1<sup>st</sup> Prize is \$1,250.00, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Prize

**The Next Branch Meeting**

**will be held on Tuesday,  
April 28, 2009  
at Round Table Pizza  
15730 1st Ave S  
Burien, WA**

is \$500.00, and the 3<sup>rd</sup> Prize is \$250.00. Tickets are \$10.00. See any Branch officer to purchase a chance to win.

I look forward to seeing you at our next General Membership Meeting on Tuesday, April 28th at Round Table Pizza in Burien. We'll have further discussion on our trip to Capitol Hill and discuss their organization as we understand it.

**Postal Facts, By the Numbers** - from USPS Web Page

Here are some great 2009 Postal Facts: 75 billion - Revenue in 2008, in dollars; 203 billion - Total mail volume processed in 2008, in pieces, 667 million - Average amount of mail processed each day; 28 million - Average amount of mail processed each hour; 463,000 - Average amount of mail processed each minute; 7,700 - Average amount of mail processed each second; 46 - Percentage of the world's card and letter mail volume handled by the United States Postal Service; 835 million - Number of pieces of international mail processed; 2.1 billion - Dollar amount paid every two weeks in salaries and benefits; 656,000 - Number of career employees; 221,000 - Number of vehicles in our fleet — the largest civilian fleet in the world; 1.2 billion - Number of miles driven each year by our letter carriers and professional truck drivers; 32,741 - Number of Post Offices™ nationwide; 14 - Percent of the nation's population that moves annually; 46 million - Number of address changes processed every year; 1.2 million - Number of people who visit [usps.com](http://usps.com)® each day; 442 million - Revenue from online stamp and retail sales at [usps.com](http://usps.com); 8.5 million - Number of passport applications accepted in 2008; 597,000 - Average number of Postal Service Money Orders issued daily; 510 Million - Revenue from nearly 92 million transactions on 2,500 Automated Postal Centers® in 2008; 56,659 - Number of stores and banks that sell postage stamps; 1.2 million - Number of new delivery points added to the network in 2008; and 0 - Tax dollars received for operating the Postal Service.

**Second Time on "The Hill"** - by Yolanda Grayson, Trustee

First let me begin by saying the Legislative Training Seminar (LTS) proved to be, once again, an enlightening experience, as well as a vital need for our survival in the Postal Service. My first trip to LTS last year was confusing and yet exciting. I gained lots of knowledge, I know how to ride blue, yellow and orange trains (Washington DC's Metro System) but there was something about the green train that would have added a new adventure that I did not need. I also figured out I am in the wrong Washington. All kidding aside, I could feel the sense of frustration, confusion and concerns over the plight of the Postal Service and our jobs. I will admit even though we had those uneasy feelings we did not lose focus on why we were there.

Our training and debriefing from NAPS Legislative Counsel Bruce Moyer and NAPS Resident Officers, was excellent. We hit the Hill with knowledge and confidence on the following issues: H.R. 22 Postal Service Retiree Health Benefits fund; H.R. 1604, Expand the use of Voting by Mail; H.R. 958, allowing FERS employees credit for unused sick leave just like CSRS employees; H.R. 958 was rolled into H.R. 1256, the Tobacco Regulation Bill (note: This bill was passed by the House of Representatives during the week following our visit to Washington DC); and H.R. 235/S. 484, Restore Social Security Fairness. Visit the NAPS Web Site at [www.naps.org](http://www.naps.org) for more details. I want to encourage all of you to keep in contact with our Members of Congress and Senators on the issues listed above affecting the Postal Service. Your voice counts!

## **Five Rs of Dealing with Change-Related Stress** - Provided by David Picard, PhD

Although it might not seem so at the time, every change represents an opportunity for growth. The very nature of change makes us look at — and sometimes reconsider — who we are and the direction we are going. The following "Five Rs" can help you move forward confidently and comfortably through the change process while allowing you the time to assess your options as well as your opportunities.

### **Relax**

Find ways to relax. It might be through deep breathing, meditation, or visualization exercises. Try to temporarily "park" your problems. Don't think about them constantly. Take time out for a pleasant diversion. Exercise and commit to a healthy lifestyle that includes plenty of rest. And always try to maintain a sense of humor.

### **Reflect**

Reflect on your feelings about what is happening. Don't try to hide or discount your feelings, especially the negative ones. But do understand the effect that negative behavior can have. Negative thoughts and behavior can spread to the people around you. Seek support from peers and family, and never be critical of how someone else is dealing with change. Use any available resources to help you sort out what you're going through. It is smart to ask for help.

### **Reassess**

Assess your feelings and find someone you can talk to about them. Separate what you know from what you don't know. In other words, dispel rumors. They will only increase your stress. Let go of guilty feelings about what could have been done. Develop a new vision of yourself and accentuate the positives.

### **Rehearse**

Review the steps you have decided to take in dealing with change. Prepare in advance for uncomfortable situations. Think about possible questions, how you'd answer them, and what you would like to say about what's going on. Rehearsing helps alleviate stress and anxiety.

### **Ritualize**

Keep your life as normal as possible. Maintain established routines. Continue regular family activities. Rely on and seek comfort in the things that are constant in your life. Seeking out the familiar is an instant stress reliever.

How we prepare ourselves to deal with change determines whether or not we will grow through the change experience. What feels like loss now may lead to unexpected benefits in the long run. By practicing the "Five Rs" you can face change feeling rejuvenated!

## **NAPS Branch 61 Spring Brunch is "Interesting"** - by Tena Ivory, Recording Secretary

"Interesting Times!" This seems to be the message about the current situation of the Postal Service as addressed at the March 22<sup>nd</sup> NAPS General Membership Meeting by Seattle District Manager Katherine Nash after the Spring Brunch. The Spring Brunch at Salty's on Alki was attended by over 118 NAPS members and their guests. Branch 61 President Cindy McCracken opened the meeting by welcoming our members, their guests and our guest speakers, NAPS Secretary/Treasurer Jay Killackey and NAPS Northwest Area Vice President Ben Clapp. The guest speakers were open and honest about the uncertainty facing the US Postal Service and the country in general. Mr. Killackey asked us to go online and tell our Members of Congress and Senators to support Postal Service issues. He mentioned the NAPS web page (<http://www.naps.org>) makes it easy to contact a Member of Congress and Senator. He also encouraged us to be supportive of other postal employees impacted in District closures. Ben Clapp spoke about issues facing the Postal Service and Spokane District as well as the Northwest Area Convention to be held in Bend Oregon on May 14 – 16, 2009. Washington State Branch 954 President Lou Kush talked about his meetings with Seattle District Manager Katherine Nash and they have regular communication. NAPS Branch 61 Executive Board was sworn in by Jay Killackey. All members present enjoyed meeting and greeting one another and dining together. To stay informed on all the issues facing the Postal Service, check out the website both the National NAPS web site (<http://www.naps.org>) and the Northwest Area web site (<http://www.napswa.org>). There are no definite answers about what is going to happen to the US Postal Service. NAPS is our greatest ally in dealing with Postal Service Management. One thing I can say for sure about the brunch at Salty's on Alki, the food is definitely delicious and the view is spectacular! Stay Active in NAPS! I hope to see you at the next Branch 61 meeting on April 28<sup>th</sup> at Round Table Pizza in Burien.

**Return Service Requested**

**FIRST-CLASS MAIL**

<p>NAPS Seattle Branch 61 Financial Statement March 2009</p>	<p><b>NEW TRAVEL RULES COMING SOON</b> From USPS News</p>
<p><b>Opening Balance</b> \$ 34,388.09</p> <p><b>Income</b></p> <p>Member Dues \$ 3680.00</p> <p>Associate Member Dues 248.50</p> <p>Interest 7.52</p> <p><b>Total Income</b> \$ 3,936.02</p> <p><b>Expenses</b></p> <p>Legal Retainer \$ 309.00</p> <p>Newsletter 125.50</p> <p>Door Prize 25.00</p> <p>General Meeting Refreshments 67.77</p> <p>Spring Brunch 5,130.18</p> <p>Leg. Training Seminar Expense 1,800.00</p> <p>Postage 4.80</p> <p><b>Total Expenses</b> \$ 7,462.25</p> <p><b>Income</b> over (Expenses) (3,526.23)</p> <p><b>Ending Balance</b> \$ 30,861.86</p> <p>Respectfully submitted by: Anne Kush Branch 61 Treasurer</p>	<p>Procrastinators beware: The Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative takes effect in only about 100 days.</p> <p>Beginning June 1, 2009 Americans will need to show a valid U.S. passport book, a U.S. passport card or other special travel document approved by the Department of Homeland Security when entering the U.S. by land or sea from Canada, Mexico, the Caribbean, and Bermuda at land border crossings or sea ports-of-entry.</p> <p>June may seem far away, but applicants should begin the process at least two months prior to their planned departure. It generally takes an average of four to six weeks for the State Department to process and review passport applications and mail the passport book back to the applicant.</p> <p>Many postal customers are unaware the deadline is fast approaching - an excellent opportunity to remind them that more than 6,200 Post Offices across the nation accept passport applications.</p> <p>Customers can go to the websites <a href="http://www.travel.state.gov">www.travel.state.gov</a> or <a href="http://usps.com/passport">usps.com/passport</a> to find out more about the passport application process. You can locate a Post Office offering Passport Services by going to the USPS web page <a href="http://www.usps.gov">www.usps.gov</a> to find the closest Post Office to your home or office. Do remember, some offices require an appointment to accept passport applications or take passport photos.</p>