



# NAPS Branch 61



Volume 9 Issue 3      "I contend that for a nation to try to tax itself into prosperity is like a man standing in a bucket and trying to lift himself up by the handle."  
 Sir Winston Churchill (1874 - 1965)      March 2009

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### **President's Corner**



It's almost time for our annual trek to Capitol Hill. On March 28<sup>th</sup> four of your branch members will be meeting with Members of Congress making our case for the passage of H.R. (House Resolution) 22. This bill would allow the Postal Service to pay its share of contributions for retiree health benefits out of the Postal Service Retiree Health Benefits Fund. They will most likely be lobbying our Members of Congress and Senators as well for passage of H.R. 1203 and S. 491, the "Federal and Military Retiree Health Care Equity Act," bipartisan legislation to allow federal civilian annuitants as well as active duty military personnel and retirees to pay their health insurance premiums with pre-tax compensation (also known as "premium conversion").

By using the current Postal Service Retiree Health Benefits Fund it will not require the appropriation or use of any taxpayer monies. It will only involve an intra-governmental transfer of funds. It is critical that the Postal Service be allowed to adjust our payment schedule. Without this offset thousands of jobs not only in the Postal Service but also in the mailing industry will more than likely be lost. I urge all of you to contact your Congressman and request the passage of H.R. 22.

We are all aware of the current economic crisis and the downward spiral in mail volume. It is not just the Postal Service that is in trouble, it is the entire mailing industry. The Postal Service is the anchor for a \$900 billion mailing industry employing over 9 million Americans which affects every community in the nation.

On a brighter note the Moran Bill or H.R. 958 has been introduced. This will amend Title 5, United States Code, to make unused sick leave creditable, for purposes of the Federal Employees' Retirement System (FERS), in the same manner as provided for under the Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS).

Currently those employees covered under FERS tend to use their sick leave more than a CSRS employee prior to retiring. This is "the use it or lose it attitude" of many FERS employees. This legislation is proposed in an effort to discourage the use of sick leave by FERS employees during the period immediately prior to their retirement. The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) esti-

continued top of Pg 2

### **In This Issue**

- President's Corner - (Continued) 2
- Branch Meeting Notice  
New Location 2
- Zumbox - by Ron Hanson, 1st  
Vice President 2
- "Veeps Peeps" - by Ron Han-  
son, 1st Vice President 2
- February General Meeting  
Minutes - by Tena Ivory 3
- February 2009 Financial Report -  
by Anne Kush, Treasurer 4
- Farewell From Muriel -  
by Muriel Dye 4

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

Over my postal career, I have seen a great deal of technology, automation and change. And I'll bet you have, too.

But one thing hasn't changed – the need for efficient and dedicated employees. We need each other, fully engaged and committed to the mission of moving the mail. Technology has sharpened our efficiency, but there are still many areas that call for the human hand.

We haven't figured out how to get mail from the Post Office to the customer without the letter carrier. In the plant, our machines won't feed themselves. At the retail counter, customers can't answer their own questions. And there are 680,000 other jobs that need people, that need you.

The Postal Service is huge by any standard of measurement – employees, revenue, vehicles and in many other ways. But the full impact of our massive size still comes down to you and me and how we perform our jobs each and every day.

As we approach our work today, let's do so with renewed focus and commitment to this American success story called the United States Postal Service – now in its 224th year of service.

**President's Corner** - continued

mated in May of 2006 the loss of productivity caused by the increased use of sick leave by FERS employees eligible or nearly eligible to retire cost the federal government \$68 million annually.

This legislation will provide an incentive for federal postal employees covered under FERS to retain their accrued sick leave rather than use it at the end of their career.

It is important that all of us are making contributions to SPAC (Supervisor Political Action Committee) we need to make our voices heard. I am challenging all of you to sign up for payroll deductions; you can go on PostalEASE and sign up. Remember it's your job and it's your pay. Help your organization make your voice heard on Capitol Hill.

I am looking forward to seeing many of you at our Brunch on March 22<sup>nd</sup> at Salty's on Alki. If you have not done so yet get your R.S.V.P. in. You may email them to [branch61@comcast.net](mailto:branch61@comcast.net), fax them to (253) 210-5608 (no cover sheet required) or mail them using the card you received in the mail. The Brunch will be our also serve as our March General

**The Next Branch Meeting**

**will be held on Sunday,  
March 22, 2009  
at Salty's on Alki  
1936 Harbor Ave SW  
Seattle WA  
After the Brunch**

Membership Meeting. R.S.V.P.'s must be received by Wednesday, March 18<sup>th</sup>. We are going to have a great time. We will have a panel of experts there to speak to the group and answer questions.

**"Veeps Peeps"** - by Ron Hansen, 1st Vice President

**Desperate times calls for compassionate measures!** It is my belief that the best managers respond to difficult times by being more compassionate, more respectful, and more dignified than in less challenging times. I believe people for the most part understand how difficult these times are (if they don't they should look at my 401k) and they are aware that the Post Office is chugging towards some stormy uncharted waters with over 600,000 people on board. Don't we want leaders who are willing to keep a watchful eye on the horizon with the goal that we want to get through this stretch of high seas with the ship intact and no casualties?

Through out history the leaders we respect are most often the ones that showed great understanding and compassion for the people they represented. Their leadership, usually in the most adverse times, was hallmarked by their courage to do the right thing; this is the kind of leadership all of us need to aspire to and expect from others. With the challenges of our everyday tasks becoming more intense every day the question we (and those above us and below us) should be asking is "How can I help you through this?" The "me" in these times should be "we" at all times. We should be heading towards proactive process management and away from reactive, vindictive management. We still need open communication, active listening, and compassionate wisdom-of- Solomon thinking no matter which rung of the promotion ladder our feet are on. If we achieve this the numbers and the people whom produce the numbers will gladly follow.

**Zumbox** - provided by Ron Hansen, 1st Vice President

The U.S. Postal Service is about to get some competition in the digital world. Zumbox (<http://beta.zumbox.com>) has launched the public beta test for its all-digital alternative to the paper postal service.

Wait a minute, you're thinking. Isn't that email? Nope! Westlake Village, Calif.-based Zumbox lets you send or receive scanned, physical representations of letters, bills or other things you might normally send via paper mail. You can log into your mailbox at the Zumbox site and then receive digital delivery of your mail.

You don't have to put a stamp on anything. For now, it's free for everyone except advertisers and marketers, who can pay for premium service. Consumers can now view online the mail they wish to receive and the service allows them to access it from anywhere at anytime via the Internet. Glen Ward, president, said Zumbox can deliver mail instantly seven days a week.

Zumbox has created a digital mailbox for every street address in the U.S. So companies can send bills via Zumbox. You open them and they look like scanned versions of the real paper bills. The Zumbox site will let you look at a variety of media in the form of HTML, Flash, audio, and video. Nonprofits, businesses, government entities and consumers can use it for free.

Zumbox mailboxes are secure since the company uses a closed system with security measures that meet the toughest regulations, such as the medical-record HIPAA law. Users get a secure PIN which they receive from Zumbox via paper mail, just to make sure that scammers don't hijack your mail. The benefit of the closed system is there's no junk mail. Consumers can still order and use a variety of electronic payment systems. They can also browse through the catalogs they want to see and order goods.

Zumbox will charge advertisers and marketers because it gives them real-time campaign measurement tools that are unavailable through traditional mail. Marketers and advertisers can also send mail to a single address, a mailing list, or a specific geographic region such as all of the homes in a specific ZIP Code.

The company was founded in 2007. It has 33 employees and has raised \$4 million from private investors. The company's founder, Maury Friedman, is a successful entrepreneur who has sold a number of companies.

Rivals include Earth Class Mail, another provider of alternative mail services. Zumbox currently has only a few thousand users, but the company will now open up the service to all comers.

## February 2009 General Meeting Minutes - by Rich Wilson, Editor

The Branch General Membership Meeting was held at the Bothell American Legion Post.

- 7:07 p.m.- The meeting was called to order by President Cindy McCracken.
- Art Williams led Pledge of Allegiance.
- Bjoern Gruetzmacher motioned to waive the reading of the January General Meeting Minutes. Bev Bowe seconded the motion and all were in favor.
- Anne Kush read the Treasurer Report. Bjoern Gruetzmacher motioned to accept to the report as read. Rich Wilson seconded the motion, all in favor.
- The Legislative Report was given by Legislative Chair Gene Williams. H.R. 22 will amend chapter 89 of title 5, United States Code, to allow the United States Postal Service to pay its share of contributions for annuitants' health benefits out of the Postal Service Retiree Health Benefits Fund. Gene added this legislation needs to pass in order for the USPS to remain viable.
- Ron Hanson says the Moran Bill (H.R. 958) has been introduced. This bill will amend Title 5, United States Code, to make unused sick leave creditable, for purposes of the Federal Employees' Retirement System, in the same manner as provided for under the Civil Service Retirement System.
- Yolanda Grayson, Tena Ivory, Cindy McCracken and Rich Wilson will be attending the Legislative Training Seminar (LTS) in Washington DC on March 28th to lobby on Capitol Hill on legislation important to NAPS members. They will be meeting with our Members of Congress and Senators. Who goes to LTS was decided by the Executive Board (EB). The EB made one additional requirement to qualify for attendance to LTS. The requirement was in addition to attending the required number of meetings. Candidates also had to have submitted an article for the Branch newsletter.
- Cindy McCracken read a letter from a Postmaster sharing the frustration many Postmasters, Managers, and Supervisors have because of trying to meet unrealistic expectations.
- AMC Manager Bill Rupert and AMC MDO John Hansen discussed the situation at the AMC. Mr. Rupert stated Article 12 will be followed for the closing of the AMC. The closing date for the AMC is still unknown.
- Cindy opened up the floor for discussion and questions. There are many rumors about pay vouchers instead of pay checks, RIFs (Reduction in Force), and shortened work weeks because of the elimination of the 6th delivery day proposal recently in the media. They are all simply rumors. Nothing has been officially released about any of these issues. Currently the only thing known with any degree of certainty is the AMC closure and then no actual date has been set.
- Washington State Branch 954 State President Lou Kush met with District Manager Katherine Nash to talk about supervisor overtime and managers working on Saturdays. We don't have any additional information on this discussion.
- Bjoern Gruetzmacher has SPAC (Supervisor Political Action Committee) raffle tickets for sale. The raffle is being sponsored by Oregon State Branch 940. The 1<sup>st</sup> Prize is \$1,250, 2<sup>nd</sup> Prize is \$500 and 3<sup>rd</sup> Prize is \$250. The drawing will be held on May 16, 2009 at the Northwest Area Convention in Bend Oregon.
- A suggestion was made that if P&DCs are losing so much volume perhaps the possibility exists for them to takeover the bypass mail?
- The Branch 61 Brunch will be held Sunday, March 22<sup>nd</sup> at Noon at Salty's on Alki. NAPS National Secretary/Treasurer Jay Killackey will be the featured guest and will speak. Northwest Area VP Ben Clapp will also speak. Oregon State Branch 940 President Kathy Clapp will also attend. The Executive Board will meet after this meeting to decide if the brunch will also serve as the March general membership meeting.
- 8:11 p.m. - Ron Hanson motioned to adjourn the meeting, James Poole seconded the motion. A majority was in favor.
- Bev Bowe won the \$25.00 door prize.

*Return Service Requested*

***FIRST-CLASS MAIL***

<p><b>NAPS Seattle Branch 61 Financial Statement February 2009</b></p>	<p><b>Farewell from Muriel</b> By Muriel Dye, Manager Customer Services</p>
<p><b>Opening Balance</b> \$ 32,740.99</p> <p><b>Income</b></p> <p>Member Dues \$ 3,728.50</p> <p>Interest 6.74</p> <p><b>Total Income</b> \$ 3,735.24</p> <p><b>Expenses</b></p> <p>Newsletter \$ 520.80</p> <p>Postage 36.04</p> <p>General Meeting Room Rental 50.00</p> <p>Leg. Training Sem. Registration 760.00</p> <p>PO Box Rental 86.00</p> <p>Brunch 635.30</p> <p><b>Total Expenses</b> \$ 2,088.14</p> <p><b>Income over (Expenses)</b> <b>1,647.10</b></p> <p><b>Ending Balance</b> \$ 34,388.09</p>	<p>1979 --I can still remember the excitement I felt my first day at the US Postal Service. I never dreamed so much went into getting mail delivered. I made a promise to myself that day that I would learn every step the mail went through--from the time a customer put a stamp on it--until it was delivered. Every night when I went home I would teach my family all I had learned. I was young, eager, and so proud to be a postal employee.</p> <p><u>Fast forward 30 years--</u></p> <p>2009--I couldn't wait until I was eligible to retire, so I opted for the early out. Effective March 31, 2009, I will bid farewell to the Postal Service and start a new life. I plan on volunteering for the Veteran's Administration Hospital on Beacon Hill and I have also signed up to be a Big Sister. I will plant a garden for the first time and of course travel.</p> <p>As I write this article I wonder what happened to that young eager girl? The Postal Service has changed--some good and some things were not good. Gone are the days when management actually solicited your input and gave you the authority to change things to improve your work environment. I am one of the last people who remember what it was like before DOIS, POS ONE, ACE, MSP,ERMS and all this scanning! It will take me months to get bar codes out of my head.</p> <p>The one thing that has not changed is the people. No matter how many computers you put in the post office, people still have to move the mail. Employees are the most important asset we have and we have to treat them better in order to succeed. Over the years I have had some impossible days--splitting routes--trying to make 5:00 p.m. --no penalty overtime, but you know what--if you treat your employees right they will make it for you. They will make the impossible possible.</p> <p>So what I leave you with is this: treat people the way you want to be treated., find humor and laugh each day and always remember: the doors open in the morning and close at night.</p>
<p>Respectfully submitted by: Anne Kush Branch 61 Treasurer</p>	