



NAPS Branch 61 NEWS



Volume 9 Issue 5 "I hope I shall possess firmness and virtue enough to maintain what I consider the most enviable of all titles --- the character of an honest man." George Washington (1723-1799)

May 2009

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President's Corner



Have you ever had one of those days no matter what you do you just can't seem to get ahead, you don't know if your coming or going and you certainly can't remember what you did the day before? I don't know what it is, but these past few weeks have been really tough. Is it because we are over-burdened, we're worrying about the future of the Postal Service? I know for me right now it's just getting through the day, and the day zooms by. I have been running a zone at least 2 days a week, if one of the supervisors is on vacation I get one zone for the entire week, I have at least 20 e-mails by 8:30 in the morning that I am suppose to answer, 70 carriers to deal with, mail volumes to count, data to input, at least 8 routes to pivot, and don't forget the clerks, who need direction on how to get the job done with the 3 sick calls that came in for the day, and the phone is ringing "how much is a stamp?", the APC isn't working send someone to fix it, retail cash counts to get completed, stamp stock to issue, and don't forget the phone is ringing again, you need to help the customer at the counter, how many 3999's are you doing this week, have you been into MY Post Office, have you submitted CSDRS, how about CSAW, make sure you talk to all of your carriers who aren't making 100% to standard, answer the phone, don't forget to get the collections done for the day, and do you need a stand up today? An audit team just walked in, you need to stop what you're doing and get them what they need, answer the phone, and you have more emails. Does this sound like a typical day to any of you? I'm not sure how it all gets done in an eight hour day. There are those that believe it does, as you and I both know it does not!

We do a tremendous job everyday, I know the Thanks you get are few and far between. I just want to let you all know what a tremendous job you all do everyday. The job we do is taxing there is much to do everyday and you take it in stride. You come in pick up the pieces and keep it flowing, you get the job done and there are not a lot of complaints. I know that many of you are working more than eight hours a day and forty hours a week and getting paid for only for eight. Why? Because you want to see the Postal Service survive, you are committed to your job. Will you be rewarded,

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Ripple Effect - by Sylvester Black, VP, Western Area Operations

In our organization, seemingly inconsequential acts often have great significance. Take for example the single letter deposited in a collection box – a simple action that doesn't seem to make a difference. But replicated hundreds of millions of times a week, that action impacts our nation's commerce – as well as the more than 660,000 employees who work for the Postal Service. Equally so, individual negative actions that seem small and insignificant can actually ripple across our organization. A missed collection box, a misrouted parcel, or a lapse in attention to safety can have consequences far beyond the individual.

Right now, we are undergoing rapid corporate change. But not everyone is adapting to it. If we are stuck and unmoving in our attitude, our *inaction* sets off a chain reaction of events that erodes our efficiency.

On the other hand, *action* is infectious. When you take bold steps, others are motivated and moved. Others will join you and things really can begin to change. So, what are you waiting for?

President's Corner - cont. probably not! You get the satisfaction you were successful another day, the mail was delivered, all of our customers were served and all of your employees made it back safely. I would like to have all of the Postmasters, Managers and Supervisors to thank at least one person for the job they did today, yesterday, the past week month, year pat them on the back. We need to make each other feel appreciated.

I want to thank each and every one of you for doing what you do best with out you there would not be a Postal Service. If any of you have any issues or concerns please email any branch officer or send your email to branch61@comcast.net. In fact, if you'd like to submit an article for publication in your newsletter, just submit it to branch61@comcast.net. For those of you who have received notices that your jobs are going away, we are working to make sure each and every one of you still has a position. All of you, if you haven't already done so, need to go on to E-Careers and get your 991 ready for when the jobs being posted. If you're not ready you are just letting another opportunity pass you by and this one could

The Next Branch Meeting

will be held on Wednesday,
May 27, 2009
at the American Legion Hall,
19213 Bothell Way NE
Bothell, WA at 7:00 p.m.

mean your job, as in your employment with the Postal Service. Please note our next Branch meeting is on Wednesday, May 27th due to the Memorial Day Holiday and will be held in Bothell. Got to go I hear the phone ringing.

Veeps Peeps - by Ron Hanson, 1st Vice President

Sometimes writing an article for this newsletter metaphorically feels like laying and hatching an egg; lots of mental squawking, lots of contemplative nesting and lots of uncertainty surrounding what the ugly little bugger will look like upon hatching. So "squawk, squawk" here goes.

Revenue tip of the month: when you get a call from a charity soliciting donations tell them that you only respond to solicitations through the mails.

Quote of the month: *You do not lead by hitting people over the head. That's assault, not leadership.* ~Dwight D. Eisenhower

In these very difficult times we need to be motivated by positive leadership that inspires, not by leadership that de-motivates through veiled threats or demeaning communication.

If a leader's primary goals are self aggrandizing competitive one-upmanship and self promotion it defeats the unified effort that is necessary for all of us to be successful in this challenging environment. We are not involved in a turf war between stations, areas, or cities.

We should be all involved in a unified pro-active (as opposed to reactive) effort to get the Post Office back on its feet. Having said that, here is the thought-egg that actually hatched and it does not have anything to do with the Post Office.

My wife and I adopted two Romanian sons and here is a story of when we picked up the first one in Romania. Part 1.

It was extremely early on a cold February morning in Bucharest when Vladimir Petrouska knocked on the door of apartment where we were staying. My wife Jayn and I trundled off to join him in a very utilitarian small sedan, a Dacia, whose only air bag was me. Jayn made the smart decision by getting in the back seat. Vladimir was our agencies very passionate representative in our endeavor to get our first adopted son, Ionica.

Ionica had spent most of his young life in a Romanian orphanage in Beclean, a small town in north central Romania. As a note, considering everything, I would say that he was relatively well taken care of in this institution. When he turned eight he was sent to an older boy orphanage near Satu Mare, a border town in the Northwest corner just east across the Somes River from Hungary and just south of the Romanian border with the Ukraine.

A judge in Satu Mare had requested that we appear before him so he could judge whether we were up to his standards and worthy of being the boy's parents. I am sure that one thing that anyone who has ever been involved in an adoption could identify with is that once you see a picture of your prospective child and get involved the kid is yours and you would go through hell or Satu Mare to get him home.

Hence we put our lives in the hands of the intrepid poet, mountaineer, and social worker named Vladimir who would have fit in quite nicely as a hobbit in the Lord of the Rings. His disheveled hair, a peculiar large lump on top of his head and a wild-eyed exuberance made me a little nervous as I got into the front seat for the long trip ahead.

Getting out of Bucharest should have been an omen. Vehicles hurdling at each other with no apparent sense of direction or logic except maybe "Drive till you die". Chaos is not a descriptive enough word for what transpired before me. Many of the vehicles that were converging on each other would have looked right at home in the Mel Gibson Road Warrior movies. Vladimir was up to the challenge. He had the determined and steel-eyed look that he would prevail, even if it killed us all. As an anonymous sage once said "I'm not scared of dying, I just don't want to!" sort of covered how I was feeling at that moment.

Bucharest was at one time called the Paris of the East and had a significant amount of beautiful old buildings festooning the long treed boulevards but also had it's share of particularly unpleasant Soviet Bloc urban blight. However design was the last thing on my mind as we lurched out of the Metropolitan area towards the highways leading North and West through the Carpathian Mountains and Transylvania, weaving and bobbing like a featherweight boxer deftly avoiding impact.

During the next ten hours the only time my hands were not glued to something or my jaw bones were not clutched together was the short distance between Bucharest and Pitesti, where we enjoyed a relatively open road and not much traffic. Vladimir was just warming up.

Romania possesses some of the main roadways between Central Asia and Europe. The highways were crowded with lumbering semis loaded with goods heading North and West in the same direction we were. I think Vladimir was a frustrated Blue Angel pilot crossed with a hell-bent Indy driver who saw these semis as minor obstacles for him to slalom through. I would have said something to him if the lump in my throat hadn't choked my airways

Next issue - Part Two: Quote from the Dustin Hoffman movie "Little Big Man" ~ "Today is a good day to die"

Five April 2009 Branch 61 Meeting Minutes - By Tena Ivory, Recording Secretary

NAPS Branch 61 General Membership Meeting Tuesday April 28, 2009 at Round Table Pizza in Burien

- 7:14 p.m. The meeting was called to order by President Cindy McCracken.
- Nick Chicka moved to waive the Pledge of Allegiance, Janet Doyle 2nd the motion. The motion passed.
- Rich Wilson read the Treasurer's report. Tena Ivory motioned to accept the report as read and Yolanda Grayson seconded the motion. The motion passed.
- Bjoern Gruetzmacher commended Mary Mitchell, Ron Hanson, and Alisa Masunaga for staying within the budget for the Brunch at Salty's on Alki and the fantastic turnout. Rich Wilson was thanked for his participation in the excellent turnout.
- Legislative report, Ron Hanson reported on the Moran Bill about FERS sick leave that is attached to the tobacco bill. Phillip Morris supports the bill. It passed in the House and is now going to the Senate.
- Rich Wilson reported that Congressman McDermott did not care to meet with NAPS due to two previous meetings with Postmasters and Rural Carriers.
- Senator Maria Cantwell and some of her staff members met with NAPS and the rest of the meetings with Washington's congressional delegations were with the aides.
- Tena Ivory was impressed with the aides' knowledge and how in touch they are with the issues in Washington State even though they are on the east coast.
- All members need to take 5 SPAC raffle tickets each to sell. The raffle is sponsored by Northwest Area Vice President Ben Clapp.
- The Northwest Area Convention starts on Thursday, May 14th. The golf tournament is on Thursday and the convention starts on Friday. Ron Hanson, Cindy McCracken, Brenda Chambliss, Nick Chicka, Bev Bowe, James Poole, and Bjoern Gruetzmacher have volunteered to attend the convention. They need to confirm with Cindy by Wednesday May 6th. Details are on the NAPS Northwest Area website.
- NAPS, NAPUS League met with Seattle District Manager Katherine Nash about supervisors working more than 40 hours a week and not being paid for work over 8 hours in a day. The Post Office Closure Committee is looking at smaller offices closing. Some of the proposed offices are Ashford and Elbe combining, Kenmore, Mountlake Terrace and Tukwila may be moving or closing. On May 10th, 94 clerks in the Spokane District will receive notification their jobs are abolished.
- Phase I will impact Ron Nilsby and Carol Peoples-Proctor position.
- Phase II posting of everything that has been withheld. All impacted employees will be eligible to apply.
- Phase III: All can apply. A pool consists of at least 5 people. All Spokane District functions are moving to the Seattle District. MPO 5 and 6 will be domiciled in Spokane.
- There was a discussion about PFP Core Requirements being changed at Mid-Year. Cindy said they can be changed at Mid-Year. It is (allegedly) an interactive process. Get the documentation from your Mid-Year.

New Business:

- Next meeting will be Wednesday, May 27th due to the Memorial Day holiday. Ron Hanson suggests meetings go between Bothell at the American Legion and Round Table Pizza in Burien. Rich will contact the Fraternal Order of Eagles, Aerie #1 now located on Lake City Way for availability on May 27th.
- A reminder e-mail will be sent out prior to each meeting. Send your e-mail address to branch61@comcast.net.
- Rich Wilson advised the Branch 61 tab of the NAPS Northwest Web Page is current except for one picture of Yolanda Grayson. See www.napsnw.org. There is even a non-member list posted on the site.
- New members at the meeting introduced themselves.
- The Western Region Training Seminar will be on August 20-22 in Chandler, Arizona at the Wild Horse Pass Resort. The NAPS National website is a good source to find out information about the convention.
- Ron Hanson motioned to adjourn the meeting at 7:59pm, Mary Mitchell seconded the motion. The motion passed.
- Since there were no tickets available for a door prize drawing, 2 door prizes will be drawn at the next meeting.

A Bit About Retirement

- by Nick Chicka, Trustee

Well, can you believe it has been over three years since I retired? Time really does fly IF you are having fun. A lot has changed since February 1st, 2006. I am now the third oldest on my Mom's side of the family. It is just the cousins now. I rarely go back to Pennsylvania. I try to do new places now. And time does seem to go faster.

I've been to 2 postal employee retirements in the last month, and I guess more will be coming up. I also see route inspections are in progress.

Here are a few hints if you are planning to retire. They involve health, money and time. Take care of yourself, both physically and mentally. I do have a few aches and pains (none mentally). Some are new, some are job related. If you hurt yourself, report it. Make sure it's legitimate, but report it. These are some of the things you'll regret later if you don't take care of them. Also, as you get older lots of new things pop up, high blood pressure, diabetes, heart problems and a few others. I have actually lost 20 pounds since I retired and my regular health is good, but it does take work. I do still have knee problems. Our dog helps with the walks, but so does the gym. You don't want to be retired,

Return Service Requested

FIRST-CLASS MAIL

<p align="center">NAPS Seattle Branch 61 Financial Statement April 2009</p>	<p align="center">A Bit About Retirement (continued from page 3) By Nick Chicka, Trustee</p>																												
<table border="0"> <tr> <td>Opening Balance</td> <td align="right">\$ 30,861.86</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2"><u>Income</u></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Member Dues</td> <td align="right">\$ 3654.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Interest</td> <td align="right">6.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total Income</td> <td align="right">\$ 3,660.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2"><u>Expenses</u></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Spring Brunch</td> <td align="right">135.30</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Legal Retainer</td> <td align="right">297.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Leg. Training Seminar Expense</td> <td align="right">3,830.62</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Postage</td> <td align="right">24.71</td> </tr> <tr> <td>WA State Branch Dues</td> <td align="right">2,464.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total Expenses</td> <td align="right">\$ 6,751.63</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Income over (Expenses)</td> <td align="right">(3,091.63)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Ending Balance</td> <td align="right">\$ 27,770.23</td> </tr> </table>	Opening Balance	\$ 30,861.86	<u>Income</u>		Member Dues	\$ 3654.00	Interest	6.00	Total Income	\$ 3,660.00	<u>Expenses</u>		Spring Brunch	135.30	Legal Retainer	297.00	Leg. Training Seminar Expense	3,830.62	Postage	24.71	WA State Branch Dues	2,464.00	Total Expenses	\$ 6,751.63	Income over (Expenses)	(3,091.63)	Ending Balance	\$ 27,770.23	<p>have money and bad health. The only thing worse than bad health and money is good health and no money. My mother used to joke that I was the only 20 year old she knew that was planning my retirement. Guess what, as prepared as I was, I could have used a few more years just to fine tune everything. Check your income to debt ratio and pay some bills off before leaving. House payments are one thing, but credit cards are usually the problem. If you plan, retirement can be great.</p> <p>I traded my retirement car in for a new one a few months ago. I still eat out and take vacations. I know things are down, but one of my best decisions was to contribute the maximum allowed to the Thrift Savings Plan (TSP). Now is an even better time to invest with the market down. It will all come back; this isn't the first down market. I'm not touching my TSP or Social Security yet, just letting them build up for a few more years.</p> <p>One good thing about retirement is time. It is now yours! You don't have to ask or beg to get some time off. You simply take the time when you want. When I first retired, I took 11 vacations the first year. Now three years later I just take a few a year, but they are usually biggies. I think you need them more when you are working.</p> <p>I do work a bit. I had my Real Estate license since age 22. I kept it inactive while at the Post Office, and renewed it when I retired. It is slow now, but a few sales or listings a year keeps me busy, pays for vacations, and I really like it. It keeps me as busy as I want, for at least a few more years.</p> <p>You can get another job, a part time job, volunteer, travel or just sit at home. If you are prepared, YOU get to make that decision.</p> <p>The hardest part about retiring was getting myself to turn in the paperwork (It was still done at QA) once I did, it was like 50 pounds of minutia was lifted off my shoulders. This isn't a negative, but I really felt good afterward.</p> <p>So, for all of you coming up on retirement, relax and enjoy it. For those of you that still have time, PLAN.</p> <p>There is life after the Post Office, and it's your life to choose. Best Wishes to you all.</p>
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