



# NAPS Branch 61



Volume 8 Issue 9 “It’s easier to act your way into a new way of thinking than to think your way into a new way of acting.” – *Millard Fuller* November 2008

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### **President's Corner**



I attended the Northwest Area Branch Presidents’ Meeting in Bend Oregon the weekend of November 1<sup>st</sup>. We discussed

numerous items of interest to us all.

The first would be Supervisor Political Action Committee (SPAC) it is more important than ever that we donate to SPAC. In 2007 Washington State donated \$718.00 to SPAC and in 2008 Washington State donated \$2,290.00 triple the previous year. We need to continue on this trend.

The branch will once again be selling raffle tickets with all proceeds going to SPAC. The prizes are as follows: 1<sup>st</sup> Prize is \$1250.00, 2<sup>nd</sup> Prize is \$500.00 and 3<sup>rd</sup> is Prize \$250.00. The drawing will be held on May 16, 2009 at the Northwest Area Convention in Bend Oregon. The cost of each ticket is \$10.00. Now more than ever we need our voice heard in Washington DC! Donations to SPAC can be made through payroll deduction, with as little as \$5.00 a pay period, if twenty of us did this small amount we would exceed the amount given last year.

I am sure that many of you have heard the Postal Service has requested the management organizations to consider foregoing our expected NPA increases that are due in January. I am proud of our management association who said “Not only no but Hell No!” In fact the 3 management associations have banded together. Collectively we have asked the Postal Service to address several issues. To mention a few are non-essential details, contractors, Mystery Shopper Program, Voice of the Employee, and the back-tracking of mail. All these programs cost the Postal Service millions of dollars each year if we take a look at some of the programs we can cut internally. Working together is what we need to be doing and not the normal Postal Service way of one shoe fits all. We need to get rid of the non-essential programs. The Postal Service would like it if the three management organizations were once again in pay consultation talks. I know that many of you don't like the way NPA has evolved. It began as a participative process and it has become a process where we are given our goals without any discussion. A consultative process these days is even worse! We sit down with the Postal Service and tell them our needs they listen, we sit down again and they listen, then they tell us what we are going to get as our goals.

What’s wrong with this picture? I know that we all work hard continued top of Pg 2

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### **A Word About Checklists-** by Sylvester Black, VP, Western Area Operations

One thing I often hear is that verifying our standardized processes is a less than desirable task. In fact, I’m not sure I’ve met anyone who particularly cares for them. Filling out a checklist and certifying that a function was performed isn’t always the most exciting part of the day. But there are valid reasons behind these verifications.

We have a business need to be consistent in what we do. Reliable and verifiable methods ensure that this huge organization runs without service disruptions. Standardized processes help us take proven methods and implement them in all of our units. They build trust. Our customers count on the same service from coast to coast. Without that trust, how long do you think we would last?

For some, our standardization feels a little like “micromanagement.” I hear you. But it helps expose our weaknesses and flaws. When things are buried in darkness, we never have a chance to fix them. Standardization repairs what is broken. Excuses only perpetuate our problems.

Exceptional service means constant evaluation, eradication of flaws, and a never-ending pursuit of excellence.

**President's Corner - continued** for the Postal Service. It is time for them to respect us for the work that we do. NAPS, NAPUS and the League have joined together to give the Postal Service a fight. The NAPS attorneys have been hired and are working for all EAS employees.

The last issue we discussed was membership our local Seattle Branch currently only has 61% of its EAS employees as Branch 61 members. There are many potential members out there. We all need to ask our fellow EAS co-workers if they are a member and sign them up. Remember to sign up Postmasters also you can have a dual membership in management organizations. Remind your co-workers that NAPS has outstanding benefits including the Disciplinary Defense Fund, competent representatives. For blank NAPS application forms contact [branch61@comcast.net](mailto:branch61@comcast.net). The necessary form will be emailed, faxed or mailed to you.

We are having the meeting in November once again at the Mercer Island Fire Department. Please remember there is no parking in the Rite Aid parking lot. Your vehicle will be ticketed and towed. I hope to see you at the meeting on November 25th.

Until then...

## The Next Branch Meeting

will be held on Tuesday,  
**November 25, 2008,**  
at the Mercer Island  
Fire Department  
3030 78th Ave SE  
Mercer Island WA 7:00 p.m.  
*DO NOT park in Rite-Aid parking lot!*

\*\*\*\*\* **Open Season Dates** \*\*\*\*\*

### Flexible Spending Accounts

11/8/08 to 12/28/08 - 5:00 p.m. Central

### Annual Leave Exchange

11/15/08 to 12/15/08 - 11:59 p.m. Central

### Federal Employee Health Benefits

11/10/08 to 12/9/08 - 5:00 p.m. Central

### Federal Employee Dental and Vision Ins.

11/10/08 to 12/8/08 - 11:59 p.m. Eastern

## Workplace Improvement In Focus™ - by David C. Picard, PhD, Workplace Improvement Analyst



### TRUST: WHO NEEDS IT? (Final)

We've been discussing "trust" and the importance of it in our lives as well as in our work. I realize that for many, the idea that such trust could exist within our organization may seem unrealistic and "pie-in-the-sky". Maybe you're right. We're such a large organization that changing such a fundamental attribute may not be possible. However, I would argue that at a local level, it actually can be accomplished. We have 17 facilities in our district that have 62% or more (up to 90% [Silverdale]) of their employees who indicate that trust and openness is present in their units. These facilities demonstrate that it's not that we "can't". In the words of Henry Ford, "Whether you think you can, or think you can't; you're right."

As the final installment on this topic, we're going to look at behaviors that reflect a combination of "Character" & "Competence".

### CHARACTER and COMPETENCE BEHAVIORS

Listen First *Listen before you speak. Understand. Diagnose. Listen with your ears...and your eyes and heart. Find out what the most important behaviors are to the people you are working with. Don't assume you know what matters most to others. Don't presume you have all the answers-or all the questions.*

"Nothing beats personal, two way communications for fostering cooperation and teamwork and for building an attitude of trust and understanding among employees." -- Bill Packard, Co-Founder, Hewlett-Packard

"We've all heard the criticism, 'He talks too much.' When was the last time you heard someone criticized for listening too much?" -- Norm Augustine, Former CEO, Lockheed Martin

Keep Commitments *Say what you're going to do. Then do what you say you're going to do. Make commitments carefully and keep them at all costs. Make keeping commitments the symbol of your honor. Don't break confidences. Don't attempt to "PR" your way out of a commitment that you've broken.*

"Trust is established through action and over time, and it is a leader's responsibility to demonstrate what it means to keep your word and earn a reputation for trustworthiness." Hank Paulson, CEO, Goldman Sachs (Current Secretary of the Treasury)

"Trust doesn't mean they tell you everything. It doesn't mean they don't posture. But it means that if they say, 'We will do this,' they will do it. It is credibility. It is integrity." -- Scott Smith, Publisher, Chicago Tribune

Extend Trust *Demonstrate a propensity to trust. Extend trust abundantly to those who have earned your trust. Extend trust conditionally to those who are earning your trust. Learn how to appropriately extend trust to others based on the situation, risk, and character/competence of the people involved. But have a propensity to trust. Don't withhold trust because there is risk involved.*

"People ask me how I've had the interest and zeal to hang in there and do what I've done. I say, 'Because my father treated me with very stern discipline: he trusted me.' I'm stuck...I've got to see it through. He trusted me. I trust other people. And they did the job. -- Robert Galvin, Jr., Former CEO, Motorola

"The chief lesson I have learned in a long life is that the only way to make a man (person) trustworthy is to trust him."

-- Henry Stimson, U.S. Statesman

"I have found that by trusting people until they prove themselves unworthy of that trust, a lot more happens."

-- Jim Burke, former CEO, Johnson & Johnson

So.....What separates the great leaders from the good ones? What makes a manager a manager of choice by her/his reports, peers and boss? What makes an individual/employee credible with customers, co-workers and their supervisor? One common thread: Being an individual who can be trusted.

Who do you trust? Who trusts you? Be part of the solution to our organization's major trust problem. It starts with you!

## October General Meeting Minutes - by Rich Wilson, Editor

- 7:10 p.m. Meeting called to order by President Cindy McCracken.
- Pledge of Allegiance was led by Rich Wilson.
- Motion made by Gene Williams with a second from Bjoern Gruetzmacher to waive the reading of the pervious meeting's minutes. No discussion. The motion passed unanimously.
- Motion made by Gene Williams with a second from Art Williams to waive the reading of the finance report.
- Bjoern Gruetzmacher said there was nothing to report on legislative activity (7:13 p.m.).
- Anne Kush reported the largest mailing house in Greensboro NC with \$74 million in USPS revenue close last night. There was USPS equipment and a Detached Mail Unit on site. 320 employees at eh site are now out of work.
- Gene Williams reported 80% of DHL management in the Seattle area have been laid off. All employees with less than 15 years are subject to layoffs. Work lost will be picked up my United Parcel Service and Federal Express.
- Cindy reported National Performance Assessment (NPA) may be delayed six months in an effort by the USPS to get the three management organizations back to the bargaining table to make concessions.
- Rich Wilson read a letter from National Secretary/Treasurer Jay Killackey asking for the home email addresses of all Branch 61 members. Rich will fulfill the request.
- Gene Williams mentioned there would be minor route adjustments coming, with news on them coming tomorrow, 10/29/2008. The NALC is in prima facia agreement until at least when the news comes out tomorrow.
- Designation of Representative form content was mentioned by Rich Wilson. He talked about the importance of Advocates having the form signed and understood before representing anyone. He mentioned an issue where the form wasn't signed and now the advocate was facing litigation. He agreed to get copies of the form to Branch 61 advocates who were at the meeting.
- Cindy asked for members at the meeting to be looking for new meeting places. This meeting is being held at the Mercer Island Fire Dept.
- There was a discussion on money being in the budget for a member appreciation function. A committee needs to be formed and a location determined. We will look at the April to May 2009 timeframe.
- Rich announced the ballot committee will meeting and count ballots prior to the November 25 meeting. The results of the election will be announced at the meeting.
- Skyway Library will be considered for the November meeting.
- Mary Mitchell mentioned there are many new Associate Supervisor Program (ASP) graduates who are not members. She said one of the ASP graduates said no one from NAPS came to the ASP class to talk about the benefits of NAPS membership. Cindy said no one had been invited to the last ASP class. Rich said he would check with Jay Bonner to try and get a list of the ASP graduates and where they are working.
- 8:15 p.m. Rich motioned and Nick Chicka seconded to adjourn the meeting. No discussion. The motion passed unanimously.

## Legislative Update - by Bruce Moyer, NAPS Legislative Counsel

We have witnessed history. A Democratic electoral headwind swept Sen. Barack Obama into the White House and significantly widened that party's majorities in both chambers of Congress. As we look toward Inauguration Day and the start-up of the 111th Congress, here's what an Obama White House and a larger Democratic majority in Congress could mean for the Postal Service, its workforce and retirees.

**The Economy and Postal Service Finances** - Congress and the White House will devote their foremost attention over the coming months to curing a sick economy and restoring jobs. For the Postal Service, the sooner the economy returns to normal, the sooner the Postal Service's finances will become more stable. Postal volume has been in near freefall over the past year as the recession has worsened, falling by 9 billion pieces to 1977 levels. It is likely to decline even more in coming months. Credit card companies are expected to send a billion fewer unsolicited offers to consumers by the end of the year, dropping from 5.2 billion offers last year, according to the [Washington Post](#). The Postal Service will continue to spill red ink in 2009, on top of the \$3 billion loss in 2008. These financial pressures, until the economy returns to health, will continue to prompt greater USPS cost-cutting and job-shedding. The return of the financial health of the Postal Service indeed depends in large part upon the success of the nation's economic recovery.

**Postal Service Retiree Health Benefits Fund Payments** - As a result of financial pressures, the Postal Service is expected to seek early next year to gain Congressional approval of a change in the payment schedule, imposed by the [2006 Postal Act](#), that requires the Postal Service to pay \$5.4 billion annually into a fund for the future retiree health benefits of today's workers. These payments are in addition to the \$2.3 billion that the Postal Service annually pays as its employer share for current retiree health benefits. The thinking is that if the Postal Service's payment schedule for future retiree health benefits were revisited and spread out over a longer term, lowering annual USPS costs, that its financial health would be strengthened, without harming retiree health benefits.

**FEHBP** - Although the timeline may be pushed back, the Obama White House is still expected to try to make good on its promise to install a national health care plan, one that, in [Obama's words](#), is "based on benefits available to members of Congress." That plan to which Obama referred, of course, is the FEHBP, which covers nine million federal and postal employees, retirees and family members, not merely 535 members of Congress. As the Obama Administration and the Congress craft a health care reform plan, the primary challenge for NAPS and the federal and postal employee and retiree community will be to assure that any national health care plan that comes about is one that runs parallel to FEHBP, and does not absorb FEHBP into a na-

**Return Service Requested**

**FIRST-CLASS MAIL**

<p align="center"><b>NAPS Seattle Branch 61 Financial Statement October 2008</b></p>	<p><b>Legislative Update</b> - (continued from Page 61) tional plan, consolidating its participants and risk pool. Otherwise, health care costs for federal and postal employees and retirees would skyrocket upward.</p>																												
<table border="0"> <tr> <td><b>Opening Balance</b></td> <td align="right">\$ 25,993.88</td> </tr> <tr> <td align="center" colspan="2"><b><u>Income</u></b></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Member Dues</td> <td align="right">\$ 3,631.50</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Interest</td> <td align="right">5.43</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Total Income</b></td> <td align="right">\$ 3,636.93</td> </tr> <tr> <td align="center" colspan="2"><b><u>Expenses</u></b></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Advocate Mileage</td> <td align="right">\$ 488.29</td> </tr> <tr> <td>National Convention</td> <td align="right">3,617.08</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Gen Meeting Refreshments</td> <td align="right">272.36</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Door Prize</td> <td align="right">25.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>NW Area Presidents' Meeting</td> <td align="right">300.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Total Expenses</b></td> <td align="right">\$ 4,702.73</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Income over (Expenses)</b></td> <td align="right">(1,065.80)</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Ending Balance</b></td> <td align="right">\$ 24,928.08</td> </tr> </table>	<b>Opening Balance</b>	\$ 25,993.88	<b><u>Income</u></b>		Member Dues	\$ 3,631.50	Interest	5.43	<b>Total Income</b>	\$ 3,636.93	<b><u>Expenses</u></b>		Advocate Mileage	\$ 488.29	National Convention	3,617.08	Gen Meeting Refreshments	272.36	Door Prize	25.00	NW Area Presidents' Meeting	300.00	<b>Total Expenses</b>	\$ 4,702.73	<b>Income over (Expenses)</b>	(1,065.80)	<b>Ending Balance</b>	\$ 24,928.08	<p><b>Medicare Part D</b> - An Obama White House may be more receptive to assuring that the Postal Service receives the rebate for the Medicare Part D prescription coverage that USPS makes available to postal retirees, a reimbursement that could provide several hundred million dollars annually to the Postal Service. The Bush Administration had <u>opposed USPS efforts</u> to permit the USPS to receive the rebate, which is made available to all employers who provide prescription coverage directly to their retirees.</p> <p><b>Voting by Mail</b> - The expansion of voting by mail – which could provide additional volume and income to the Postal Service – is likely to pick up steam in 2009. During the past election, more than 25 million voters cast ballots in states where early voting was allowed, including no-excuse absentee balloting, providing convenience for voters and averting overwhelming turnout at some poll locations. The tidal wave of early voters in the recent election may prompt Congress to mandate voting by mail in future elections, at least in federal races.</p> <p>Twenty-eight states now allow voters to cast absentee, mail-in ballots without providing an excuse. Oregon administers its elections entirely by mail. Some states, like California, permit voters to have their absentee ballots sent to their homes for every election.</p> <p>During the last Congress, legislation (<u>H.R. 281</u>) that would have forced all states to offer no-excuse mail-in balloting stalled. Although the legislation is likely to be reintroduced in the 111th Congress, its major obstacles are Republican fear that absentee voting will provide a partisan advantage to Democrats (a misguided fear) and the control that states have over deciding voting procedures.</p> <p>That's why NAPS will continue its efforts in the 111th Congress, but in addition also pursue voting by mail legislation in a dozen or so states (New Jersey, New Mexico, Ohio, Florida, Montana, Minnesota, Michigan, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, Nevada, Pennsylvania, Idaho, and Utah) in league with other postal employee organizations and the Voting by Mail Project.</p>
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<p>I would like to thank all the members of Branch 61 for the Thank You cards and Get Well wishes during my recovery from surgery. Because of all the Get Well wishes I was able to come back to work fully recovered. I would like to send a message to all of the members who do not attend the monthly meeting to really consider coming to the meeting this month.</p> <p>Our Branch is really a caring Branch and we are concerned about our members. With all the movement and changes going on in the Postal Service there is a lot of information to be gained at the meetings. If you have any concerns and cannot make the meetings contact an Executive Board member, we want to hear from you.</p> <p>My Sincerest Thanks to Branch 61, Tena Ivory</p>																													