

First Class Leader

**NAPS Branch 66
Portland OR**

www.napsnw.org

June 2009

QUARTERLY STATE NAPS NEWSLETTER

From the President's Desk

By Dee Ann DeSimini

President, Branch 66

In my capacity as Retail Manager, I have visited quite a few offices to train managers and clerks on the dreaded Mystery Shop process. All of us that deal with a retail site have our own opinions of this process and I fear it's mostly negative. If you break down the questions to what the clerks are responsible for there are only six, count them six, sentences the clerks have to memorize and say. It is not hard, and I am getting frustrated because we, as managers, are not holding them accountable. I bring this up because I have also witnessed how overwhelmed and stressed out managers and supervisors are. Adding to the stress is the fact that there are not as many supervisors as there used to be and managers are constantly being asked to do more with less. The uncertainty of the business weighs on all of us. I normally get my pay stub on Mondays or in the case of a holiday week, Tuesday, and when I didn't get it until Thursday it crossed my mind that maybe we couldn't make payroll this week.

That is a scary thought but the good news is we all still have jobs. The Postal Ser-

vice has not laid off a single employee, unlike other businesses you have heard about recently.

A while back I was concerned because so many jobs were left vacant. Now I feel we are fortunate to have places for displaced supervisors to land. Some of us won't be doing the work we've done in the past but at least we will still have a job.

To ensure that we remain a viable company, we all need to do our jobs to the best of our ability. If you can't possibly do all that is heaped on your plate, then ask your boss, in writing, to prioritize the work to be accomplished. And by no means should you compromise your integrity and go against what you know inside is wrong. I haven't seen anyone lose their job over a mistake but I have seen employees fired for lying about mail counts, financial issues, and timekeeping falsification. Just don't do it.

We will be having a golf tournament sometime in July so keep your eye out for the upcoming notice, and have a great summer. I hope all of you can get away at some point this summer and have a chance to slow down and smell the roses. ☺

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Upcoming Events:

Tuesday, June 9, 2009

6:30 p.m.
Membership Meeting
Portland GMF, 4th Floor
Cafeteria Conference Room

July and August 2009

No Membership Meetings

August 21-22, 2009

Western Region Training
Chandler, AZ

Tuesday, September 8, 2009

6:30 p.m.
Membership Meeting
Location to be announced



Nancy McVicker tees off at the NAPS NW Area Golf Tournament held at the River's Edge Golf Course in Bend, Oregon on Thursday, May 14th. Twenty six competitors were divided into seven teams on an absolutely beautiful, but breezy, spring day in Central Oregon. After a perfect day of golf, the Eugene and Salem branches hosted a BBQ and awarded prizes to the golfers in several categories.



Greetings From Your State President

By Kathi Clapp

President, OR State Branch 940

We continue to go down the road of downsizing the Postal Service. We have now completed Phase I job postings in the limited area of consideration, and selections will be made and announced by the end of May. Phase 2 job postings will be announced and available for application on June 16, 2009. Only impacted employees will be able to apply for these vacancies. Unlike Phase I postings, these postings will include all authorized vacancies in the Portland District. There are still questions about the definition of minimally qualified. As more clarification becomes available, we will share it with our members.

Our NAPS NW Area Vice President and the state presidents of NAPS, The League of Postmasters and NAPUS meet with Kim Anderson, District Manager, and Corinne Loprinzi, District Human Resource Manager, once per month. The agenda varies as our concerns vary. Each state president brings concerns to the table to discuss and attempt to resolve them. The most recent focus has been on the RIF avoidance and how it impacts our members. Kim, Corinne, and Lisa Shear, Senior Plant Manager, recently participated in telecons with state NAPS members to provide information and answer questions about the RIF avoidance process. I really appreciate the time they spent with our members and the time they took away from their

family and personal lives to do so. We are fortunate to have the working relationship we have. As we continue to manage our future, it is essential that we work together to make the right decisions for the Postal Service, our employees and our customers.

All members should attempt to attend their NAPS meetings. You will get current information and have an opportunity to network. If you are unable to attend, ask one of your local officers what happened and how you can get the information. The NW NAPS area has a great web site, napsnw.org, which you can visit to look at local and national information. Get involved, get informed, and get ready.



State Legislative Update

By Joe Lahmann

VP Legislative Affairs, OR State Branch 940

Another month has gone by and much has happened. The NW Area convention was a great success and SPAC contributions were better than expected. Portland Branch 66 has pledged to increase donations and their interest was greatly appreciated.

On the legislative front there are issues arising daily. It appears that five day delivery is on the agenda again. As we have seen throughout the last year, information changes on a daily basis and when something goes through Congress, it is not a quick process. DO NOT be one of the folks that spreads rumors on issues. When asked, answer simply and truthfully that you do not know. None of us know for certain what is in our future. The following is the latest news from the hill and Bruce Moyer.

Congressional Interest in Five-Day Delivery Begins to Grow

Reluctant support among pivotal House lawmakers for a cutback in mail delivery to five days a week appears to

be growing, a hearing by the House postal oversight panel revealed yesterday. But Congress is unlikely to embrace the five-day move until it has a clearer understanding of how much the move would actually save.


Postmaster General Jack Potter in January first proposed a seasonal transition to five-day delivery, suggesting that a reduced delivery schedule made sense during the lower-volume summer months. Since then, and in light of its deteriorating financial condition, the Postal Service has sought a more permanent move to five-day delivery operations, contending it could generate as much as \$3.5 billion in annual savings. The Postal Regulatory Commission in a December 2008 report estimated savings of only about half as much, predicting that it would yield \$1.9 billion and cause mail volume to decline.

"The only way we'll embrace it is if we have no other choice, and we're getting to that point," said Rep. Stephen F. Lynch (D-MA), chairman of the House postal oversight committee, said at yesterday's hearing.

Del. Eleanor Holmes Norton (D-

D.C.) asked for an independent assessment of the savings, saying "I would seriously consider it if we had an independent study showing that it would make a structural difference." Rep. Gerry Connolly (D-VA) acknowledged that the post office that our grandparents knew may not be the post office that is needed by their grandchildren.

William Galligan, USPS Senior Vice President of Operations, told the subcommittee that the Postal Service is facing the most significant challenge of its history and said that even a move to five-day delivery would not be enough to bridge the financial gap between revenues and expenses, requiring structural solutions, including the closing and consolidation of mail processing and other facilities.

Phillip Herr, Director of Physical Infrastructure Issues at the Government Accountability Office, said that USPS can streamline its retail network by closing unnecessary post offices and promoting lower-cost alternatives. He also said that GAO may have to consider adding the Postal Service to its High Risk list. 



Who is Deciding Your Future?

By Bill Wittenburg

Secretary, Branch 66

Like everything else in life (taxes, insurance, gasoline) are your monthly NAPS dues going up?

Set the "Way-Back" machine to October 1986. Along with about 20 other Finance folks, I am sitting in the basement of the Southern Region Management Academy, perched on the banks of the Mississippi River, just outside of downtown Memphis, TN. It's late in the afternoon, it's hot, there is no air conditioning, and all we can think about is escaping to the closest air-conditioned drinking establishment. Instead, our instructor decided we were going to complete one more "break-out" group exercise. Each team was tasked with answering the following question: "List three single words

adjectives that best defines what is wrong with our society". One of the brainier members of my group (not me) came up with the word "apathy". After discussing this amongst ourselves, and ultimately with the rest of the class, we all came to the conclusion that this was by far the best single word definition. Webster's defines apathy as "... lack of interest or concern".

Branch 66 is in the process of making changes to our Constitution and By-Laws. Several changes have already been proposed and more are forthcoming. Some will impact the way our local branch collects and disburses funds. Other changes will redefine quorums, responsibilities of branch officers, etc. Our current By-Laws require all proposed changes to be published in the newsletter and voted

on at the next general membership meeting. Look for these proposed constitutional changes in future newsletters.

How does all of this tie together? Make plans to attend meetings to support your branch and vote your conscience. Don't let a small group of individuals decide how our branch operations may impact you. By pure virtue of the fact that you are a registered member, you are a 'take action' type of person. Please don't let apathy get in your way. Attend the monthly meetings and be part of the organization whose goal is to support you in your position.

As a side note: No, there are not any plans to raise your dues. And, if you do not know what a "Way-Back" machine is, ask a member who is close to retirement age. ☐

Why Should You Attend the June Meeting?

Participants for the Western Area Training will be selected at the June 9th meeting. The branch budgeted to send nine officers to this training. However, if an officer is unable to attend, there may be an opportunity to backfill the vacancy. If you are interested in being an alternate and you cannot attend the June meeting, you must notify the branch president, in writing, prior to the close of business June 9.

Five State Convention a Success

By Bob Mann

President, Branch 276

On May 15th and 16th, the various NAPS branches that comprise the Northwest Area converged on Bend Oregon for our annual Five State Convention. We had 60 delegates, plus guests and speakers, from Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Montana, and Alaska. The event was held at the Riverhouse in Bend, Oregon where the warm weather, blue skies, and the Deschutes River meandering around the guest rooms and facilities was appreciated by all. After the opening ceremonies on Friday afternoon, Lisa Shear, Senior Plant Manager, and Kim Anderson, Portland District Manager, gave a brief rundown on the state of the district. Then, Steve Juhl, Western Area Fi-

nance Manager, spoke on the financial condition of the Postal Service. Next on the agenda was eCareer Training presented by Shelley Brown, Diversity Coordinator, and then our special guest Louis Atkins, Vice-President, NAPS Headquarters.

We ended the day by adjourning to state breakout meetings and afterwards, found our way to the hospitality room. Luckily, what happened in the hospitality room stayed in the hospitality room.

The next morning we enjoyed a talk from Gary Fish, CEO of Deschutes Brewery, followed by advocacy training that involved all of the delegates working on test cases. The advocacy training was jointly presented by Bob Warden and Gene Bradley. After a box lunch, we received retirement and fi-

nancial advice from our guest speaker, Eric Soles, a financial advisor from Edward Jones. The business day ended with a question and answer period with Louis Atkins and then state breakouts.

The highlight of the Saturday evening festivities was a banquet by the river and an interactive dinner theater performance of "Who Shot the Sheriff" by Buckboard Productions. We had quite a few shifty varmints (delegates) playing along side the actors.

All in all, we received great training and information, and had a good time as well, in beautiful surroundings. Many thanks to Ben Clapp, NW Area Vice President, and the Capital Branch 275 and Southern Oregon Branch 276 volunteers for making the convention a success! ☐



Minutes in a Minute

By Bill Wittenburg

Branch 66 Secretary

January 2009

The January meeting was held at the Gateway Izzy's at 6:30 p.m. on January 13, 2009. There were 16 officers and members in attendance.

Standard business included reading of the treasurer's report and the minutes from the December meeting. The local labor attorneys have been given a letter stating their services will no longer be necessary and the final bill has been paid. New business included possibly attending Town Hall meetings with Senators Merkley and Wyden and giving away a gas card to help promote SPAC raffle ticket sales. The installation dinner agenda and list of speakers was also discussed. A motion was passed to move \$6,000 into a Christmas Fund at the credit union.

February 2009

There was no meeting due to the Installation Dinner

March 2009

The March meeting was held at the Gateway Izzy's at 6:30 p.m. on March 10, 2009. There were 20 officers and members in attendance.

Standard business included reading of the treasurer's report and the minutes from the January meeting. The topics discussed at the meeting included an update on the annual Installation Dinner. There were 87 attendees. There will be changes in the NPA roll-up process and PFP may be on the way out. Kathi Clapp and Jay Killacky met with the District Manager about staffing levels, SL rates and ODL issues. NAPS is fighting unpaid furloughs. NAPS and the OIG are currently investigating statements made by an Area Vice President and District Manager. Dan O'Donnell talked about volunteering for Habitat for Humanity and he also indicated that some Town Hall meetings were scheduled. There was discussion about the number of attendees to send to the NW Area convention. The branch voted to eliminate per diem to allow additional members to attend.

April 2009

The April meeting was held at the Gateway Izzy's at 6:30 p.m. on April 16, 2009. There were 24 officers, members, and guests in attendance.

Standard business included reading of the treasurer's report and the minutes from the March meeting. The topics discussed at the meeting included Kathi Clapp's meetings with the District Manager and District Human Resources Manager using 20 phone lines so those in the field could ask questions. There was discussion about the RIF Process and how USPS Headquarters was not meeting their own deadlines. The importance of SPAC was discussed and contributions can now be made via payroll deductions. During LTS, NAPS had difficulty getting legislators to see the urgency of HR 22. Registration, transportation, and lodging for the area training was discussed.

May 2009

The May meeting was held in the cafeteria conference room at the Portland GMF at 6:30 p.m. on May 12, 2009. There were 22 officers, members and guests in attendance,

Standard business included reading of the treasurer's report and the minutes from the April meeting. Topics discussed at the meeting included the status of ASP classes, updates on the current reorganization, the status of HR 22, SPAC fundraising, securing local legal services, proposed changes to the constitution, and the upcoming NW Area Convention. ☰

Copies of the official meeting minutes are available at the meetings.



Legislative and Regulatory Update 5/21/09

By Bruce Moyer

NAPS Legislative Counsel

The House postal oversight subcommittee yesterday postponed approval action on emergency legislation to provide financial relief to the Postal Service. The delay is due to continued Congressional wrangling by supporters of HR 22 with the Congressional Budget Office over how much the postal legislation will actually cost.

Although the postal relief legislation, HR 22, was scheduled to be marked up yesterday by the House Subcommittee on Federal Workforce, Postal Service and the District of Columbia, those plans were scuttled on Monday and subcommittee chairman Rep. Stephen Lynch (D-MA) announced yesterday the likelihood of a subcommittee markup in early June, shortly after Congress returns from its Memorial Day recess.

Lynch also indicated that modifications to HR 22 were likely at markup, with the addition of requirements conditioning assistance on the

financial condition of the Postal Service, its efforts to cut costs, and the absence of unfunded liabilities -- and the possibility of a shortening of the assistance period to one that's less than eight years, as the bill proposes.

HR 22 would ease the Postal Service's payment schedule for health benefits for its 400,000 retirees, permitting the Service to begin now to tap a trust fund intended for the payment of future retiree health benefits, instead of waiting until 2016, while still requiring the Service to make payments into the fund.

If Congress doesn't pass HR 22 by September 30, the end of the fiscal year, the Postal Service says it will be unable to make its full annual contribution — \$5.4 billion — into the trust fund. "We would run out of cash. ... There becomes a choice when you're at the brink of insolvency: Do you pay employees, do you pay suppliers, or do you not pay this \$5 billion?" William Galligan, USPS Senior Vice President of Operations, told Congressional lawmakers yesterday. "We break the law

by not paying that. Not a place we want to be at."

The wrangling over the costs of HR 22 grows out of the assessment of the Congressional Budget Office that passage of HR 22 would prompt the Postal Service to ease off its vigorous efforts to cut operational costs, thereby creating new USPS shortfalls. CBO's views are opposed by a host of critics, including House lawmakers, postal employee organizations, mailers, and USPS itself, all contending that the Postal Service cannot afford to give up its efforts to continue to find cost-savings. They also point to the fact that the HR 22 fix relies entirely on the use of Postal Service's own funds -- not taxpayer monies -- representing an intra-government payment.

In the meantime, widespread support for HR 22 among Democratic and Republican lawmakers in the House of Representatives continues to swell, with 315 cosponsors of the legislation. ☰

TSP Board Supports Addition of Roth 401(k) Option, Spouse Benefit

By Tim Kaufmann

4/20/09 Article from Federal Times.com

The Thrift Savings Plan governing board today threw its support behind adding a Roth 401(k) option to the retirement fund and allowing employees to transfer their accounts to their spouses when they die. But the board was deadlocked on another proposal to add a mutual fund option to the plan.

The board cannot add these features to the plan on its own, but its support is important in persuading Congress to enact the changes.

The addition of a Roth option and mutual fund both are included in a bill that passed the House on April 2. That bill, HR 1804, also would automatically enroll new civilian employees in the plan. The Senate is likely to vote on the bill before the Memorial Day recess, a

board official said. *(Editors Note: As of June 3, the Senate has not voted on this bill.)*

The Federal Retirement Thrift Investment Board's endorsement of the Roth option should ensure that it will be included in the final bill. The Roth 401(k) option would allow participants to put some or all of their after-tax salary into an account that they could then withdraw at retirement without paying additional tax on the earnings. This is contrary to the existing TSP funds, in which participants make pre-tax contributions and then pay taxes on the earnings at retirement. The board has said military service members are most likely to benefit from a Roth option, since their current tax rates are likely to be lower than future tax rates. Civilian employees will usually pay lower taxes in the future, which the board says makes a Roth

option less beneficial for them.

The board was split over the proposed addition of the mutual fund. As proposed by the TSP staff, a so-called mutual fund window would allow participants to select investments from a broad range of mutual funds that would be provided by a brokerage firm hired by the board. Costs associated with these transactions would be passed on to the individual participants. The staff recommendation would not allow for participants to purchase stocks from individual companies.

Staff members, including Executive Director Gregory Long, recommended that the mutual fund be added to discourage attempts by lawmakers or third-party groups to add new funds to the TSP, such as socially responsible investments or real estate trusts. Those narrow funds would be open to

Continued on page 4



TSP board supports addition ... continued

participants through the mutual fund option. Board members generally had mixed feelings about adding mutual funds to the plan. While some agreed it could help guard against future attempts to add plans to the fund, others said the mutual fund could detract from the simplicity of the plan's current options.

The other proposal endorsed by the board would allow spouses of TSP participants to stay in the plan after the participant dies. Current rules require spouses who are beneficiaries of the participant's account to transfer the benefit to an individual retirement account or take the benefit as a cash

withdrawal, which is subject to a 20 percent federal tax withholding.

The proposed change would allow spouses to keep their benefits in the TSP and give them the same withdrawal options as retired participants.

The Employee Thrift Advisory Council, a group of union and management association representatives that advises the thrift board, supports the change. With the thrift board's endorsement, TSP officials will petition lawmakers to add spousal accounts to the bill now being considered in Congress.

SPAC RAFFLE TICKET WINNERS!

Congratulations to the lucky winners of the NW Area SPAC Raffle.

1st Place - \$1250.00
Betha Bowditch

2nd Place - \$500.00
Richard Ainsworth

3rd Place - \$250.00
Ken Christianson

Do you have suggestions for a SPAC fundraiser? Send your ideas to napsnews@comcast.net

www.napsnw.org

GOLF TOURNAMENT

We need your input! Plans are currently under way for the annual NAPS Branch 66 golf tournament tentatively scheduled for Sunday, July 12, 2009. The two golf courses being considered are Eastmoreland Golf Course and Broadmoor Golf Course. Golf prices at Eastmoreland are \$42.00 walking and \$57.00 with a cart for 18 holes. Broadmoor has quoted a price of \$34.00 walking and \$48.00 with a cart for 18 holes.

Are you interesting in participating? If so, which course would you prefer? Do you think a barbeque should be held at the golf course after the tournament? We will be finalizing plans for this event at the June 9th meeting. If you're unable to attend the meeting, send an email to napsnews@comcast.net or contact Nancy McVicker directly with your suggestions before the meeting. Once the plans are finalized, a flyer will be posted on the plant bulletin board and on the napsnw.org website.

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The NAPS Newsletter

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If your address changes, please notify the Newsletter Editor. Address changes and articles may be submitted via regular mail or email to:

napsnews@comcast.net