



# NAPS Branch 61 NEWS



It behooves every man to remember that the work of the critic is of altogether secondary importance, and that in the end, progress is accomplished by the man who does things.  
Theodore Roosevelt (1858 - 1919)

February 2008

## Executive Board

*President*

**Cindy McCracken**

*1st Vice President*

**James H Poole Jr.**

*2nd Vice President*

**Gene Williams**

*Recording Secretary*

**Tena Ivory**

*Corresponding Secretary*

**Arthur Williams**

*Treasurer*

**Anne Kush**

*Sergeant-at-Arms*

**Bridgette Hammond-Ray**

*Legislative Chairperson*

**Bjoern Gruetzmacher**

*Editor*

**Rich Wilson**

*Trustees*

**Nick Chicka**

**Janet Doyle**

**Yolanda Grayson**

**Alisa Masunaga**

**Mary Mitchell**

## President's Corner



Thank you to everyone who attended our last meeting. I am sure that all of you have reviewed your ratings from the Pay For Performance (PFP) program, I have had numerous complaints concerning the changing of ratings. If you are unsure you need to access PES and review your rating from last year. If anyone has had their rating changed unjustly you need to go into the PES sight and contest it, we only have until March 10, 2008 to get this completed. You will need to make sure that you have the documentation that shows you made your goals. There are horror stories out there of ratings being changed from Exceptional to Contributor because a higher level official decided that your goal was not good enough. What gives them the right? Our goals were set last year. We had one on ones with our Postmaster or Manager. They are the ones who set our goals with our input. They were our goals! If we achieved what was set then that was the rating we earned and should have been given. Nobody should be allowed to arbitrarily change your rating. I would also like for anyone who is contesting their rating to please send me the documentation as soon as possible. I will be leaving March 29, 2008, to go the Legislative Training Seminar (LTS) held in Washington DC. I will be bringing all of this information to our National Officers, so they can review these injustices and abuses of the Pay For Performance program.

Branch 61 is selling tickets for Supervisors Political Action Committee (SPAC). The cost is 20.00 each. We will be holding the drawing at LTS first prize is \$750.00. Why are we doing this? Our goal is to bring the Northwest Area to the forefront of our organization our donations to SPAC are smaller than those in other parts in the country. All branches in the Northwest area are selling these tickets. If you are interested in purchasing one ticket or ten tickets contact any branch officer.

Our next meeting will be at Azteca Mexican Restaurant in Bellevue (150 112th Ave NE) on Tuesday, February 26. We will have a guest speaker. She is Eugenia Vasquez from the Seattle District Employee Assistance Program (EAP). Ms. Vasquez will be talking to us about stress and how to deal with it in our work lives. She has also provided an article for this month's newsletter. I hope to see you at the meeting. Lastly, please note our new mailing address: PO Box 19185, Seattle WA 98109-1185

## **In This Issue**

Sick Leave - Bank It! By Sylvester Black	1
Next Meeting Notice	2
Legislative & Regulatory Update - By Bruce Moyer	2
January 2008 Meeting Minutes By Tena Ivory	3
ASP Program - by Eric Colon and Carol Peoples-Proctor	3
Branch 61 Financial Statement - by Anne Kush	4
ASP Program (continued)	4

## **Sick Leave - Bank it!** - by Sylvester Black, VP, Western Area Operations

One of the most understated benefits we enjoy as postal employees is our sick leave. Many businesses allow their employees "personal days," which can be used like sick leave, but don't carry over to the next year. USPS is different, because we allow an unlimited bank to be built. Sick leave is something you can carry in your hip pocket - a type of insurance against long-term health problems. You never know when you might miss work for an extended period because of a curve ball that life might throw you. It's comforting to know that you don't have to strike out on this pitch. Many of you have thousands of hours on the books. That's commendable. It's a testament to good health, smart living, and wise choices. With proper conservation, you can increase your level of security. The sick leave benefit is one of the best things you can take home for both you and your family. Protect it. Guard it. It's an investment in your future.

## Legislative and Regulatory Update - by Bruce Moyer, NAPS Leg. Rep.

## Next Branch Meeting

**The Branch 61 Meeting  
will be held on Tuesday,  
February 29, 2008,  
at Azteca Restaurant  
150 112th Ave NE  
Bellevue WA at 7:00 p.m.**

### **USPS Is Disadvantaged Compared to Its Competitors, the FTC Concludes**

For years, UPS and others have fanned the flames in Congress, claiming that the Postal Service enjoys an unfair advantage over its competitors. The UPS strategy also nudged conservative think tanks to drum up studies, pointing to the USPS letter and mailbox monopolies, avoidance of federal, state and local taxes, federal funding for borrowing, implicit subsidies, immunity from lawsuits, all combining to create an unfair competitive advantage for the Postal Service.

To authoritatively validate those claims, UPS and its allies persuaded Congress in the 2006 postal reform law to instruct the [Federal Trade Commission](#) to determine whether the Postal Service is aided by an unfair competitive advantage.

The FTC issued its [study](#) report in mid-January and its answer? The USPS actually suffers a unique "*net competitive disadvantage versus private carriers*." Sorry "Brown". As the old adage says, be careful what you ask for.

The FTC concluded that although USPS avoids as much as \$117 million in private carrier costs due to its federal status and its borrowing advantage, other federally-imposed constraints on its operations cause the Postal Service to incur as much as \$782 million more than its competitors. Those Congressionally-imposed requirements, including Alaska bypass service, flying mail on American-owned international air carriers, prescription drug plans without federal reimbursement, a 21.2 percent wage premium applied to all bargaining employees, no markup of periodicals, and the obligation to deliver non-profit mail without adequate cost offset -- all represent obligations that private carriers can avoid.

Taking those considerations into account, the FTC recommended that Congress consider remedial action, especially in the management of its labor costs (which comprise nearly 80 percent of USPS expenses) and reduce the statutory and political constraints that limit USPS's flexibility to configure its processing centers and post offices.

The FTC also recommended more far-reaching actions for Congressional consideration, including:

- Relaxing the current mailbox monopoly to allow consumers to choose to have private carriers deliver competitive products to their mailboxes would create net benefits for consumers;
- Narrowing the postal monopoly to allow greater competition while still maintaining universal service; and
- Establishing the USPS' competitive products division as a separate corporate entity -- with either private or governmental ownership.

That last set of ideas represents proposals that Congress is not likely to seriously consider for the time being, meaning at least several years, while implementation of the new reform law sorts itself out.

### **BMC Outsourcing RFP On the Way?**

The Postal Service expects to request proposals next month on how to contract-out some Bulk Mail Center activities, according to the APWU.

APWU has reported on its [website](#) that its national officers learned of the BMC outsourcing plans during a USPS "pre-decisional briefing" on developments associated with the [Request for Information \(RFI\) Concerning a Time-Definite Surface Network](#) issued by USPS last July. That document, according to USPS, sought to "identify interested organizations with the capability to implement a time-definite mail distribution and transportation network."

In the RFI, the Postal Service invited private sector companies to indicate whether they were interested in helping to build and operate a private, sub-contracted national or regional network of facilities to support the distribution and transportation of Standard, Periodical and Package mail. Responses were due by September 24.

It appears now, nearly five months later, that USPS received a sufficient positive response from logistics operators to proceed to the next step: soliciting actual proposals on how to outsource some BMC activities.

The Postal Service's interest in privatizing portions of the mail distribution and transportation network represents one of its major cost-containment strategies, according to its [updated Transformation Plan](#).

Attempting to tamp down job anxiety about the impact of potential BMC outsourcing, APWU President William Burrus [said](#), "While we expect changes to the BMC network and to the employee complement, we do not anticipate that they will result in a significant reduction in the number of USPS employees." Burrus also held open the possibility of "in-sourcing" some functions that are currently performed by non-USPS employees.

### **USPS Makes It Official: Here Comes the IMB**

The Postal Service proposed [rules](#) on January 7 that will require mailers to use the Intelligent Mail Bar Code (IMB), beginning a year from now -- in January, 2009 -- in order to receive postage discounts for automation. The notice in the [Federal Register](#) makes official what the Postal Service has been saying about the advent of IMB, and represents another step in USPS efforts to implement intelligent mail.

The IMB will contain triple the information of previous barcodes, permitting tracking of individual mailpieces at all steps in the process, from creation by the mailer, to its deposit with the Postal Service, through transportation and processing, right up to delivery.

The USPS rules offer two IMB options: *Full Service*, which requires mailers to apply unique IMBs to mailpieces, trays sacks, and pallets and submit electronic mailing documentation; and *Basic*, which requires mailers to apply IMBs to mailpieces only.

## January 2008 - Branch 61 Meeting Minutes - By Tena Ivory, Recording Secretary

- 7:02 p.m. The meeting was called to order by President Cindy McCracken
- The Pledge of Allegiance was lead by Nick Chicka.
- Nick Chicka moved to waive the reading of the minutes and was seconded by Janet Doyle. All were in favor.
- The Treasurer's report was read by Anne Kush. Tena moved and Jackie Spencer-Muck seconded to accept the report as read. It passed.

### Old Business

- Address Management Systems (AMS) positions, NAPS expects to prevail in the legal case currently pending. This will mean the AMS positions will remain an EAS position.
- Corporate goals, Seattle District currently at 7 for MPA. Anyone who has a higher rating that gets lowered by his/her manager must let President Cindy McCracken know as soon as possible.
- NAPUS and The League did not agree with NAPS on how Service Workload Credits (SWCs) are calculated.
- Cindy gave a special Thank You to Mary Mitchell for the Toastmasters article.
- Gene suggested that Jackie Spencer-Muck write an article on How to get VPP Status.
- The next meeting will be at the Azteca Resident in Bellevue on Tuesday, February 26 at 7:00pm. Eugenia Vasquez from EAP will be the guest speaker.
- Bjoern Gruetzmacher, Branch Legislative Chairperson reported that the Agenda items for the LTS have been published (see last month's Branch 61 newsletter).
- Combined Federal Campaign coordinators will have a big celebration at a NOAA Facility on Thursday, February 14. King County made its CFC goal of over \$3.1 million.
- Tena suggested that new members who attend meeting be introduced.
- The NW Area Convention is scheduled for May 1-4 in Boise, Idaho.
- Anne Kush brought to our attention the need for another name on our second credit card because Lou Kush is no longer a member of our branch. Bjoern moved and Janet seconded that we get a new name on the card. Art Williams asked for a discussion on who should be on the card. Gene Williams volunteered to be on the credit card. Art moved and Bjoern seconded that Gene Williams name should be on the credit card.
- Mary Mitchell asked the status of membership and Cindy McCracken replied 3 new members.

### New Business

- Congratulations to Jo Blake on her retirement.
- How are the SPAC raffle tickets selling? Washington State is about 38<sup>th</sup> down the list for total SPAC contributions. The goal is to present \$8,000 to SPAC at the NW Area Convention.
- Do we have a benevolence fund set up for our members? Art Williams moved and Nick Chicka seconded that we set up a benevolence fund for our members. All were in favor. The Corresponding Secretary will be in charge of the Benevolence fund.
- John Aceves is running for National Secretary/Treasurer, The Executive Board will discuss sending contributions to his campaign. There will be an Executive Board meeting following the General Membership meeting to discuss the 2008 budget.
- Yolanda Grayson asked, "How are EAS vacations picked?" Gene Williams responded, it is set by the Postmaster or in most Associate Offices by the Installation Head. What is the policy for submitting 3971's? The policy is the same as the craft employees, with the exception that leave can be canceled for the needs of the Postal Service.
- Has NAPS endorsed a Presidential Candidate? No, Not yet.
- The \$25.00 Door Prize was won by Alisa Masunaga.
- 8:08 p.m. Tena Ivory moved and Nick Chicka seconded adjourning the meeting. All were in favor.

## Associate Supervisor Program... What Happened to it?

- By Eric Colon, Hispanic Programs Specialist And Carol Peoples-Proctor, Diversity Programs Specialist

Over the last few months I have been asked by numerous managers what has happened to the Associate Supervisor Program, in that the quality of graduates appears to be lacking. I am a certified facilitator, and absolutely not the expert on the Associate Supervisor Program, but I will attempt to answer the question. To begin with the Associate Supervisor Program is a training program designed to take those employees wishing to become first line supervisors, and expose them to the way the United States Postal Service management team needs to function in order to be a successful company. Note that I said expose. Those managers in their roles as Coaches, Trainers, Facilitators and Subject Matter Experts, that have signed on to facilitate ASP, cannot possibly train each individual in all of the daily requirements of the job, nor is the program designed to do so. The program was designed to move each participant into the initial learning stage. The other stages of learning, Awkward Use, Conscious Application, and finally Natural Use, happen as a result of you, the Postmaster, Manager, Customer Services or Manager, Distribution Operations, and only on the job after they graduate. If these new supervisors are not performing up to your expectations, then you as a manager have to ask yourself, have you done all you

Continued on Pg 4

Return Service Requested

**FIRST-CLASS MAIL**

**Note our new Mailing Address**

<b>NAPS Seattle Branch 61 Financial Statement Calendar Year 2007</b>		ASP continued from Page 3
<b><u>Income</u></b>		<p>could do to assure that each supervisor (graduate) has the necessary knowledge, gained in your unit, to be successful? If not, then what have you done to make sure your new supervisor can do the job? Have you constructed a training plan? Have you utilized all of the resources at your disposal, such as Operations Support, Labor Relations, or Training (PEDC)? Have you and your new supervisor come up with a picture of what a fully capable supervisor is, well, capable of? Have you taken the time to mentor your new supervisor or did you throw them into the mix and “let them figure it out” just like the old days? Do you realize how much the old days’ way of doing things is costing us? Before we start to examine the perceived limitations of the program, let’s first take a look at ourselves. Are we so busy that we ignore this valuable asset or assume that the program did a lousy job? Have you talked to your graduate and put them at ease? If we have truly done all we can to assure the success of these individuals and their lack of performance still resonates, it then becomes an individual performance issue, and you can begin to address it as such by using the appropriate performance management tools. But this should not be the first step. This then is our charge. <i>It is our responsibility to mentor and manage our new supervisors.</i> If not you then who? The men and women that have willingly joined our efforts to effectively manage a Postal Service moving into the future deserve your knowledge and wisdom. To do any less reflects poorly on you as a manager and is not in keeping with our duty to manage the future of the United States Postal Service.</p>
Member Dues	\$ 47,807.00	
Interest	49.11	
Associate Member Dues	247.00	
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$ 48,103.11</b>	
<b><u>Expenses</u></b>		
Legal Retainer	\$ 4,051.00	
Newsletter	2,127.61	
NW Area President’s Mtg.	200.80	
NW Area Convention (Portland)	5,523.43	
Mileage	550.24	
PO Box Rent	210.00	
Monthly Meetings	324.16	
Door Prizes	125.00	
State Branch Dues	2,528.00	
Tax Preparation	370.00	
Adverse Action Training	3,695.50	
Legislative Training Seminar	10,587.78	
Brunch	7,382.65	
Postage	26.78	
National Convention 2006	748.13	
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 38,181.08</b>	
<b>Income over Expenses</b>	<b>9,922.03</b>	
Ending Checking Acct Bal	\$ 24,133.67	