



NAPS Branch 61 NEWS

with Branch 31



Volume XV Issue III

“The two most important days in you life are the day you were born and the day you find out why.”
Mark Twain (11/30/1835 - 4/21/1910)

March 2015

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President's Corner

I and five of your Branch 61 members attended the 2015 NAPS Legislative Training Seminar to meet with our Washington state elected Senate and Congress members in Washington DC, March 8 – 11. While DC is an incredible city to enjoy and provides a wealth of opportunities to engage in your surroundings, this was truly a business trip while on vacation. Every one of your participating members uses their Annual Leave to benefit all members and any time to indulge themselves of the surroundings is well deserved. I personally want to thank LaTanya Patterson, James Reedy, Michael Ware, Art Williams and Rich Wilson for giving of themselves and their valuable time to work towards the greater good of NAPS and the Postal Service.

On Monday, we received training on how to lobby our elected officials and were provided a chance to hear a state of the business address from Deputy Postmaster General, Ron Stroman. The Deputy PMG expressed to us he “rejects the idea” the Republican lead Congress will not address Postal reform yet also pointed out there is a possible lack of urgency related to Postal reform. The reason for this lack of urgency, the most recent reports of profitability of the Postal Service if not for the \$5.6 billion Retiree Healthcare prefunding requirement. Deputy PMG Stroman pointed out Congress acts most often on urgent matters and as long as the Postal Service shows it can successfully manage operations the Postal Service becomes less of an urgent issue.

The Deputy PMG reiterated the desire of Postmaster General Megan Brennan to invest in the infrastructure of the Postal Service. The highlights of this investment were new vehicles, new package sorting machines, scanners and training. The vehicle fleet used for the delivery of mail is on average twenty-five years old and the Deputy PMG said to look for some new vehicles as soon as the end of the year. New sorting machines are needed to continue to advance our progress into the parcel delivery part of our operations as our business model changes. Scanners are an investment which is currently being made and can be seen all over the country currently as well as into the future while we provide the real-time data our customer’s desire. Lastly there is the training initiative which has been promised. While I agree training is a key as-



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Each of us possesses a unique background that gives us the ability to harness our potential. It's that – and not luck – that fuels our actions and guides us toward the successes we seek.

While we rely on our experience and talents to reach our goals, we may not possess the vast knowledge needed to achieve perfection in everything we do. Though we may never be able to individually absorb the immense volume of information available in this world, we are not alone in our pursuits.

Collectively, we can achieve monumental feats of success because it's our diversity that makes us stronger. Some individuals may believe that their talents alone can accomplish any objective. While this may or may not be true depending on the situation, when we embrace the differences each of us brings to the table, we assemble a larger pool of resources from which we can tap. The greater the resources we have, the more options we create for the goals we want to achieve.

Don't be too proud to explore all avenues of improvement, even if they don't originate with you. None of us are experts in all things, and no two individuals have identical experiences or talents. Harness the creativity of those around you to make what you do better than what you can accomplish alone.



President's Corner - cont.

pect of an efficient workforce, if we don't have the manpower the investment will be wasted.

On Tuesday, March 10th we headed to Capitol Hill to make the rounds and meet with our elected officials. My team of NAPS members included two Spokane Branch 60 members and one from Seattle Branch 61. We participated in meetings with the offices of five of our Washington State elected officials. One of the other hats I wear in NAPS is State Branch 954, Legislative Chair. I have the responsibility of scheduling meetings with our twelve Washington State elected officials. I am familiar with a lot of the legislative staffers with whom we usually meet. It is quite an eye-opener when you learn the policies and legislation of our country is handled through conduits of twenty something college graduates to our representatives. This statement is not meant as any disrespect to these individuals as they are very knowledgeable and some could provide our talking points before we were even able to communicate them.

The overall feeling I got was some type of Postal reform was necessary yet it was still early under the new majority to know what type of reform there might possibly be. Some of the staffers we spoke with wanted a specific bill or legislation to refer to but our offerings were somewhat sparse. The current bills we were requesting support for were:

H. RES. 54 - This resolution expresses the sense of the House of Representatives that the United States Postal Service should take all appropriate measures to restore the service standards in effect as of July 1, 2012.

H.R. 784, Protect Overnight Delivery Act - The legislation reinstates the overnight delivery standards for market-dominant products in effect on December 31, 2011.

H.R. 1198, Postal Employee Appeal Rights Amendments Act, S. 606, Postal Employee Appeal Rights Amendments Act - These companion bills confer to approximately 7,500 non-supervisory managerial postal employees the right to appeal significant personnel actions to the Merit Systems Protection Board (MSPB). Nonsupervisory postal personnel currently may only appeal such actions through an internal USPS process (ELM 650) that lacks impartial third-party review. Postal supervisory personnel and nearly all federal civil service employees already enjoy MSPB appeal rights.

I found our first success, directly related to our meetings when I received

The Next Branch Meeting

will be held on *Tuesday*,
March 31, 2015
at *Round Table Pizza*
15730 1st Ave S
Burien WA at 7:00 p.m.

an email from Congressman Larsen's stating he was going to co-sponsor H. RES. 54. With my seven years of participation in LTS, this was the first time I was able to see an action directly impacted by our meetings. Legislation in a lot of cases can often take years of hard work and effort to achieve and this was a glimmer of hope in this long and arduous process.

Keep an eye open for any possible Postal Reform that might be proposed this year and make your voice heard whether for or against it. Utilize the www.naps.org website to keep informed and take action when necessary. As NAPS members you have a wealth of information and the ability to connect you're your elected officials under the "Legislative Center" section of the NAPS website.

Remember to take care of yourself so you can take care of others. I look forward to seeing you at our next Branch 61 meeting on March 31st.

February 2015 Branch 61 Meeting Minutes? - by Rich Wilson, Branch 61 Editor

19:15 - Meeting call to order by President Bjoern Gruetzmacher

- Pledge of Allegiance was recited
- January 2015 meeting minutes read by Bjoern. James Reedy offered a correction. Motion to approve as amended by Art Williams, seconded by James Reedy. Motion passed.
- Janet Doyle gave the financial report. Motion to approve as read by Art Williams, seconded by Zak Jennings. Motion passed.
- Michael Ware gave the Legislative Report. Congressional will not be in session during LTS. Bjoern commented on his January newsletter article. Bjoern reviewed the issues we'll take to Capitol Hill during LTS. Motion to accept by Rich Wilson, seconded by Chuck Roberts. Motion passed.
- Bjoern had each attendee introduce him/herself. We welcomed George Hernandez and Wendell March from Phoenix who are both on detail here.
- Bjoern mentioned Anne Kush's situation. He mentioned the possibility of sending Anne a gift card in the amount of \$100.00. Rich motioned and Zak seconded to send Anne a \$100.00 gift card in appreciation of her long and dedicated service. Motion passed.

New Business

- Bjoern reminded all LTS attendees of the dress code for LTS when going to Capitol Hill. He also reminded each attendee of their mandatory obligation to provide an article (250 - 300 words) for the March newsletter.
 - We discussed to pending disciplinary cases against two supervisors.
 - We are planning a brunch for Sunday, May 17th, place TBD. The committee consists of Mary Mitchell, LaTanya Patterson, Rich Wilson & Zak Jennings. A possible venue mention was McCormick and Schmicks, but other venues were discussed.
 - Western Region Training is scheduled for 8/22/2015 at the Bellevue Hilton.
 - Next meeting will be Tuesday, March 31st at Round Table Pizza in Burien.
 - Newsletter articles are due March 13th.
 - \$25.00 door prize was won by Bjoern
- 20:25 Art Williams motioned to adjourn, Zak seconded. Motion passed



My 2015 LTS Experience - by Rich Wilson, Branch 61 Editor

I have been attending the NAPS LTS for about 19 years. Each year is unique in the people who attend, the congressional staffs with whom we meet (sometimes the actual legislator), and lastly the issues we discuss. It seems over time the Democrats seem to be more in tune with and supportive of the issues we bring to Capitol Hill. The Republicans seem to be supportive of some of our issues, but more often than not they take a wait and see attitude. They wait to see what tact their leadership is taking or will do and then they tend to follow their leadership's actions.

This year we brought two issues to "The Hill". The first was regarding the additional closures of 82 additional mail processing centers throughout the country, three of which are here in Washington State. They are the Tacoma P&DC, the East DDC and the Wenatchee MPC. When completed there will be just two mail processing facilities in the state, those are Seattle P&DC and Spokane P&DC. Overnight delivery (OND) as we know it today will be gone. I surmise the OND area for Seattle will be Seattle 981 only and for Spokane will be Spokane 992 only. H.R. 784, Protect Overnight Delivery Act is pending legislation. If you agree the reduction in mail processing is not in our best interests as employees and service levels should be returned to the level in place on December 31, 2011, you should be contacting your legislator to express your concern (See page 6 for contact info).

The second issue was to allow some 7,500 EAS employees who, at this time, do not qualify under current law for access to the Merit System Protection Board (MSPB) for discipline issued to them. Discipline is defined as, a reduction in pay or grade, a suspension exceeding 14 days, or removal. A bill was introduced in the 113th Congress (H.R. 1431, S. 686), but it died without being passed with the conclusion of the 113th Congress. A bill has yet to be introduced in the 114th Congress. NAPS supports legislation amending Title 39 U.S.C. 1005 to extend MSPB appeal rights over adverse actions to any employee covered by the Executive and Administrative Schedule (EAS) of the U.S. Postal Service.

The 2015 LTS was both educational and interesting. Every year I've attended I am able to learn more about how the Congress works or doesn't work, work with NAPS National, Regional, and Area Leadership and staff, and have held onto and re-established relationships with friends and former co-workers.

If you'd like to join us next year, you can qualify to attend the 2016 Legislative Training Seminar by attending at least six general membership meetings by February 2016.

What an Experience!!! - by LaTanya Patterson, Branch 61 Secretary

What an experience!!!!!! This was my very first trip to Washington DC, not to visit but to work on your behalf.

I was part of the team who got a chance to go to DC to lobby for our Postal Service causes. What are our causes? The same thing we all complain about daily, lack of staffing, plant closures, (7) day work schedules, prefunded health care and ways we can help secure the future of the Postal Service.

As a first-timer, I attended the first-timers' orientation and was put at ease by this one statement (The people we would be meeting with such as Senator Cantwell and others are people like us, they put their clothes on the same way as you and I do).

I was a part of Team #3. It was the best team and of course that is my opinion. Team #3 consisted of Michael Ware, Art Williams, Rich Wilson and me.

We met with the congressional aides for Congressmen Denny Heck (D, 10), Dave Reichert (R, 8), and Jim McDermott (D, 7). For the grand finale, all three teams came together to meet with Senator Maria Cantwell. Senator Cantwell as well as everyone else we met with was very supportive of our causes and agreed to help.

The one thing I got from everyone we met with was, they are all very aware the Postal Service is in trouble, but no one seems to have a solution. It appears if we do nothing we will continue on this path of destruction of the Postal Service or we can all continue to put pressure on all of our elected officials to help secure the future of the Postal Service.

Another way you can help is by contributing to SPAC (Supervisor Political Action Committee). This can be done through Postal Ease for as little as \$5.00 per pay period. This money allows us to fight here in Washington DC for our Postal Service.

Greetings from Washington DC - by James Reedy, Branch 61 Trustee

This year the climate was much different on Capitol Hill. We had a newly controlled Congress and a new Postmaster General.

The thing that stuck out the most to me this year was influence. When you are on the Hill, what you really notice is how many other associations are there also for the same type of reason. So how does NAPS get appointments with their legislators when everyone else is attempting the same thing? In a word, SPAC (Supervisor Political Action Committee). SPAC donations pave the way for NAPS to be able to get appointments and at least the listening ear of our legislators. While we can argue about this type of political system, the fact remains, this is the current system in Washington DC. At NAPS, we are very lucky to have Bruce Moyer and Elliot Friedman running our program. They both did an amazing job this week preparing the way for our meetings on the Hill.

As someone who has seen first-hand how valuable SPAC is to NAPS, I would encourage every member to join the "CCC" (Continuous Contributor's Club) and become a continuous contributing member through payroll deduction. Less than 5% of our members nationwide donate to SPAC and this can have a direct impact on how NAPS can influence the new Congress. We want to make sure each and every legislator is aware on NAPS's position on Postal issues and also that they have a resource to turn to when postal issues arise. Please join me in supporting SPAC and allowing NAPS to continue to educate Congress on our positions and the issues that matter to us the most.



NAPS Branch 31

March 2015

Branch 31 President's Message - by Dexter Baldwin, President, Branch 31

Greetings Branch 31 members. I hope this month's article finds all members in good health. As you know, the Legislative Training Seminar (LTS) was just held in Washington, DC on March 8-11, 2015. Tacoma Branch 31 sent four members (Vice-President Michael Gillett, Secretary Georgia Taylor, Charlie Krogh and me) as part of a 12 member team representing Washington State. All four of us teamed up to visit three of ten Members of Congress and Senators. The team visited Congresswoman Jaime Herrera-Beutler, (R, 3rd), Congressman Dan Newhouse, (R, 4th), Congresswoman Suzan DelBene, (D, 1st), Congressman Derek Kilmer (D, 6th) and Senator Maria Cantwell (D).



Our members took NAPS issues to "The Hill" with hopes of getting our state's lawmakers who are already supporting us to continue to support us and to get the others who do not support our causes to get on board. In a short synopsis, the major issues we spoke about were as follows:

- **Prefunding** - If the Postal Service did not have the Congress mandated \$5.6 billion annual payment to make, the Service would have been profitable last year (\$1.4 billion) and \$1.1 Billion the first quarter this year. This misguided prefunding requirement, established by the Congress in 2006, needs to be eliminated or re-amortized. The Postal Service already has paid in excess of \$50 billion for future retiree health benefits.
- **Change of Overnight Standards** - We believe Congress should pass legislation to restore the service standards required for overnight mail delivery. The slowdown will ultimately contribute to further volume decline and harm the Postal Service's brand.
- **Plant Consolidation** - The mail has slowed down also because of the cost-cutting which will close an additional 82 mail processing facilities on top of the 140 they closed or consolidated already. Of course one of them being the Tacoma Processing and Distribution Center in our area. The other two in Washington are the East DDC and the Wenatchee MPC.
- **H. Res. 54 and H.R. 784** - Both bills are aimed at returning the 2-3 day delivery standard back to the overnight service standard the Postal Service had in 2012.
- **Innovative Mail Services** - We believe the Postal Service could grow new revenue and regain financial stability by offering innovative services and products. Services like getting into small banking transactions, notary public, fishing/hunting licenses and delivering beer and wine, to mention a few.
- **MSPB APPEAL RIGHTS** - Give MSPB rights to all EAS, not just veterans or EAS that supervise more than 2 employees. Currently we have about 7,500 non-supervisory EAS employees who don't currently have MSPB protection. We want them introduce legislation similar to H.R. 1198 or S.606 which were introduced in the 113th Congress.

Overall, our teams' visits to our lawmakers came with positive results as some of them have already signed on to co-sponsor the bills we want and others seemed to be interested into looking into them.

The 2015 LTS was outstanding with many speakers sharing their knowledge with us. Deputy Postmaster General Ron Stroman, Premier Political Action Committee and grassroots advocacy consultant Michael Dunn and the animated Rep. Gerry Connolly (D-VA) were among those who spoke to the over 550 LTS delegates. Be sure to attend next month's meeting to get more details on the congressional visits and our guest speakers' presentations.

Employee Appeal Rights Legislation - from NAPS Web Page

On March 3rd, National Association of Postal Supervisors President Louis M. Atkins applauded Sen. Jon Tester (D-MT) and Rep. Gerry Connolly (D-VA) for their leadership in introducing legislation that helps to assure fairness for all mid-level managers in the United States Postal Service.

Senator Tester on February 26 and Rep. Connolly on March 2 introduced the "Postal Employee Appeal Rights Amendments Act" (S. 606 and H.R. 1198), legislation that extends to mid-level postal employees the right of appeal of significant personnel actions taken against them to the Merit Systems Protection Board (MSPB). The MSPB is an independent quasi-judicial agency in the Executive branch that hears the personnel appeals of federal employees and guards the federal merit systems.

Despite Congressional action in 1987 that attempted to confer the right of MSPB appeal to all postmasters, supervisors and managers, the Federal Circuit Court of Appeals has narrowly interpreted that appeal right. As a result, challenges of adverse actions by more than 7,500 postal managers have been limited to a hearing only by a higher-level postal official, without recourse to the MSPB as a neutral, third-party adjudicator.

"The legislation introduced by Senator Tester and Congressman Connolly will correct the outcome under the 1987 law and reaffirm Congress' original intent," NAPS President Atkins said. "It will restore to all postal managers the fairness of impartial review by the Merit Systems Protection Board. No longer will the Postal Service be permitted to serve as both judge and jury."

NAPS Branch 31

NAPS LTS - A First-Timer's Experience - by Charlie Krogh, Branch 31

With little idea of what to expect I headed east to the 2015 NAPS Legislative Training Seminar (LTS) in Washington DC. What I came away with was a deeper appreciation for the importance of NAPS. Also an understanding of what SPAC is and the role it plays in working to protect and preserve the Postal Service.

At the local level NAPS is our advocate. If you are called in for any type of investigation NAPS should be your first call. As they say in the movies, "You have the right to remain silent". And you have the right to have an advocate present before speaking at an Investigative Interview.

At the Headquarters level NAPS is our advocate as well. NAPS meets with postal leadership at L'Enfant Plaza to address our concerns about the issues affecting us on a daily basis. In his speech to the LTS Deputy Postmaster Ronald Stroman said, "Power concedes nothing without a demand". NAPS is there to demand concessions on our behalf.

At the congressional level we have the Supervisor Political Action Committee (SPAC). SPAC was formed in 1978 as the legislative fundraising arm of our organization. Since then, SPAC has raised hundreds of thousands of dollars to aid political candidates who support the organization's issues. Speaker Michael Dunn called SPAC "NAPS source of Political Credibility".

During our trip we visited congressional offices to let our representatives know what support we are looking for and to thank those who have shown support in the past. I had the opportunity to meet with aides to five different members of the House of Representatives and Senator Maria Cantwell. The level of knowledge of postal issues varied greatly between offices. With the information and materials provided in the training seminar we were able to give a clear message on the issues about which NAPS is concerned.

What struck me most of all was the realization the future of the Postal Service, the future of my career, is dependent to some degree on the lobbying work of SPAC. At this time only about 4% of NAPS members contribute to SPAC. It is easy to contribute through payroll deduction. If every member of NAPS gave up just one latte a pay period and donated to SPAC we would be able to increase the number and the quality of relationships we build on Capitol Hill. If you are upset that EAS employees did not receive a raise for three years, or about the ongoing consolidations, you need to join the fight. You have taken the first step by becoming a NAPS member. Step up again and contribute to SPAC. The information on how to set up contributions is easily found at www.naps.org.

The legislative training seminar reminds me somewhat of a good old fashion tent meeting. You go in a bit lukewarm about things. The atmosphere is kind of electrifying, the speakers are exciting, and everyone is on the same sheet of music. You are excited to go out and share the message. But then you go home. And it's what you do at home that matters most. Follow up is important.

We will send thank you notes. We have invited representatives to visit our facilities. We can call our representatives and senators and share our thoughts and concerns on postal issues.

The money you send SPAC and the time you spend working with NAPS are investments in your future as a Postal Supervisor.

NAPS Membership - from NAPS Web Page

Editor's Note: Recruit a new member using the information in this article and receive a \$25.00 check from NAPS. Send a request for an application to branch61@comcast.net.

The National Association of Postal Supervisors is the only management organization that represents supervisors, managers and postmasters. Over 26,000 NAPS members have representation where it counts—at Postal Service headquarters and on Capitol Hill. Whether the issue is pay, benefits or working conditions, you have a qualified group of professional advocates working on your behalf. For approved cases, NAPS' Disciplinary Defense Fund (DDF) provides a trained legal advocate for members facing removal, reduction in grade and postal financial indebtedness (Debt Collection Act).

In addition to providing disciplinary defense services, members also receive information on legislation, postal policy and career advisement. Area training seminars are held on a variety of topics throughout the course of the year. Our annual Legislative Training Seminar in Washington, DC teaches grass roots legislative techniques and provides information on bills of interest to members.

Perhaps most important of all, NAPS members have the opportunity to become better informed and more efficient employees. This will serve to help our efforts to improve the overall atmosphere within the USPS. NAPS exists to raise the standard of efficiency, to widen the field of opportunity and to improve the quality of the work environment for those members who make the Postal Service their career.

Branch 31 Financial Report February 2015		Branch 61 Financial Report - February 2015	
Beginning Balance:	\$ 9,665.10	Beginning Checkbook Bal.	\$ 44,472.11
Income:	3,527.25	Income	
Expenses:	1,811.96	Member Dues	\$ 4,802.00
Ending Balance:	\$ 11,380.39	Associate Member Dues	490.50
Income over Expenses :		Interest	<u>1.70</u>
	\$ 1,715.29	Total Income	\$ 5,294.20
Respectfully Submitted:		Expenses	
Dawn Boivin		Newsletter	367.25
Branch 31 Treasurer		January Meeting fee	50.00
		2015 Legislative Training	6,000.00
		Advocate Mileage	202.21
		VISA Statement	\$ <u>1,015.96</u>
		Total Expenses	\$ 7,635.42
		Income over Expenses	\$ 2,341.22
		Ending Checkbook Balance	\$ 42,130.89
		Respectfully Submitted:	
		Janet M. Doyle	
		Branch 61 Treasurer	

FIRST-CLASS MAIL

Return Service Requested

Editors Request:	
<p>I would like to obtain your current, non-USPS email address. I assure you it will be kept privately by me and inaccessible to anyone. The purpose of my request is that I would like to keep you informed of fast-developing situations relative to your NAPS membership and how NAPS HQ sees things. I will never overwhelm you with emails and I'll send you only USPS or NAPS business related information. I would appreciate you sending your non-postal email address to me at: branch61@comcast.net.</p> <p>Your privacy is respected and assured!</p>	<p>Contacting your Member of Congress or Senator is relatively easy to accomplish. Go to http://www.house.gov/ for Members of Congress and http://www.senate.gov/ for Senators. At each site, you can subscribe to your Member of Congress's or Senator's eNewsletter. It's great way to be in contact with your elected officials. At each site you will be able to express your concerns about any pending legislation.</p> <p>Susan DelBene 1st District - 22121 17th Ave SE Ste 220 Bldg E Bothell WA 98021-7404</p> <p>Rick Larsen; 2nd District 2930 Wetmore Ave Ste 9F Everett WA 98201-4070 425.252.3188 office</p> <p>Jim McDermott, 7th District 1809 7th Ave Ste 1212 Seattle WA 98101-1399 206.553.7170 office</p> <p>Dave Reichert; 8th District 22605 SE 56th St Ste 130 Issaquah WA 98029-5297 425.677.7414 office</p> <p>Adam Smith, 9th District 3600 Port of Tacoma Rd Ste 106 Tacoma WA 98424-1040 253.896.3775 office</p> <p>Senator Maria Cantwell 915 2nd Ave Ste 3206 Seattle WA 98174-1011 206.220.6400 office</p> <p>Senator Patty Murray 915 2nd Ave Ste 2988 Seattle WA 98174-1080 206.553.5545 office</p>