



B·Mike



Vol 83
Issue 1
Jan '23

"An Injury to One is an Injury to All"



The Official Publication of Branch 82 *Portland, OR*

Beaverton·Canby·Clackamas·Forest Grove·Gladstone·Happy Valley·Gresham·Hillsboro·Lake Oswego·McMinville·Newberg·Oregon City·Portland·St. Helens·Troutdale·West Linn



Left to right, back row: Branch 82 Safety Officer Don Cadwell, Director of Retirees Sam Smith, MDA Coordinator Abe RedCloud, CCA Academy Instructor Randall Hoxie, President David Norton, Secretary-Treasurer Matt Pierce
Left to right, front row: Vice-President Betty Nash, Food Drive Coordinator Janelle Lee, B-Mike Editor Suzanne Miller, Chief Steward & Recording Secretary Jon Cabral

Happy New Year!

From your Branch 82 Executive Board



Happy New Year, You Should Take a Break

- David Norton, President

Happy New Year and welcome to 2023. This is the time of the year when we look back at the year that has passed and commit to trying to be better. Many people do this through New Year's resolutions. I have certainly had my share of resolutions for the New Year, usually with mixed results. For a lot of folks, it regards their health, like eating better, losing weight, or quitting smoking. Sometimes it is financial, like putting away more for retirement, paying off credit card debt, or saving for something special like a vacation or even your child's college. Maybe you just resolve to have more fun or not let things bother you as much. I have had all of these at one point or another. This year, in 2023, I think everyone should try and have a different resolution regarding their work as letter carriers. I think everyone should resolve to take their breaks, specifically their morning office break.

Every letter carrier, including CCAs, in every station where Branch 82 represents has one 10-minute morning break and one 10-minute afternoon break (except for East Portland Station which has 2 street breaks) if they work an eight-hour day.

Handbook M-39, Management of Delivery Services, Section 242.341 states:

The carriers at the delivery unit will receive two 10-minute break periods. The local union may annually opt to have either (a) both breaks on the street or (b) one of the 10-minute breaks in the office and one break on the street. If two 10-minute breaks are taken on the street, they will be separate from each other. Breaks must be separate from the lunch period.

We have always had a morning break. This is how it is in most offices where letter carriers work across the country, although every place is a little different. Some offices have multiple times where carriers can choose when to take a break and there are other places when a carrier blows a whistle or rings a bell and everyone stops what they are doing and goes to break. Either way, carriers are supposed to have a morning break. It cannot be denied by management. JCAM article 41 states:

Rest Breaks. National Arbitrator Britton ruled that the Postal Service must ensure that all employees stop working during an office break. Contractual breaks must be observed and cannot be waived by employees (H4N-3D-C 9419, December 22, 1988, C-08555).

I know that many people have opinions on the morning office break. There have been a few carriers who have expressed to me that they would rather have two street breaks instead of an office break and a street break. To them I say, try and get to know your co-workers.

The morning break period is a great time to spend with your co-workers and maybe get to know them better. It's a good way to meet new people if you are new, and maybe get some helpful tips for your route or just being a letter carrier altogether. Talk about struggles on the workroom floor or union and contract campaigns. You can discuss important issues that concern your job as a letter carrier.

I have learned a lot from my co-workers over the years. Do you need to build a deck in your backyard? I bet one of your co-workers has some building experience. Do you have a strange problem with your car? I bet you have a co-worker with a mechanical background. Favorite movies, good books, investment advice (be careful of that), workout tips, and parenting advice can all be learned from the people around us. Do you need help moving? I bet your co-workers will help out.

We work in a beautifully diverse organization with people of different cultures, beliefs, customs, and backgrounds. Learning from them can open your eyes to new thoughts, ideas, and cuisine.

I have built some lifelong friendships in the Postal Service. These relationships have enriched my life and made me a fuller person. I would not be the person I am today without knowing the co-workers I have had over the years. Not just as letter carriers or clerks, but as fellow humans who are also working in this crazy organization. None of this would have been possible if I didn't sit down and take a break with them.

During COVID, it was reasonable to move your morning break to either the street or outside of the breakroom. We certainly didn't want carriers huddled up together in a confined space while the pandemic was raging. We had several postal employees who did contract COVID due to being in close proximity to each other on break (they were actually sharing food, so...). Now, the mask mandate has been lifted, many carriers are no longer wearing them to work, most people have been vaccinated (the people that were going to do it in the first place), and most people are feeling safe enough to get together again in groups. It is time for carriers to start taking their morning break again.

For a long time now, management has been trying to get carriers to take their breaks solely on the street. Why is that, you may ask? The reason is that they are trying to lessen Office Time, and getting rid of the break will only help. I have written recently about management insisting that carriers only take 60 minutes in the office. As I have previously stated, this is not a rule that is either contractual, realistic or, in most

Celebration of Life for

Jeff Monroe

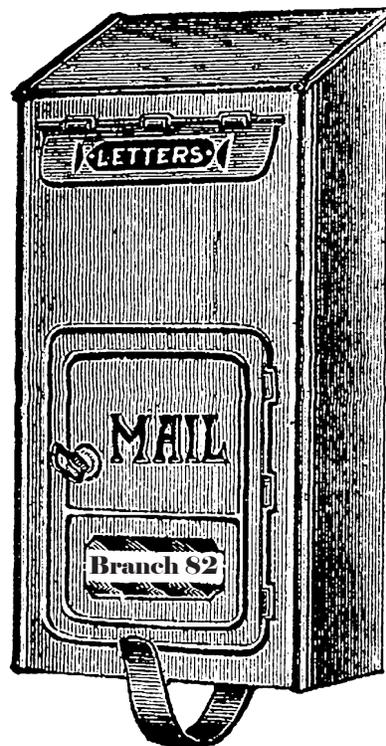
Sam Cox Building Great Room
@ Glenn Otto Community Park
1102 E Historic Columbia River Hwy
Troutdale, OR 97060

Sunday, January 22
1:30-5pm



cases, practical. Several offices have tried to eliminate a morning office break to accommodate postal management's edict to have 60-minute office times. To that I say, I don't care. Office times are based on route evaluations and governing handbooks and manuals, not management's desires. While we have all seen people skip their office breaks before, the vast majority of carriers who skip their breaks mainly do so on the street. Moving all breaks to the street is only going to increase the pressure for carriers to give up this negotiated right. I say no more.

Breaks are important for more reasons than just resting from work. Everyone stepping out of their cases together at a given time in the morning and sitting down together says something. It says it to management, and it says it to your fellow carriers. No matter how small you think 10 minutes is in the scheme of things, it says that we are all in this together, exercising our contractual rights as one. Solidarity for letter carriers comes in many ways, but at its core it starts with communing with each other. Whether it is in the breakroom, on the dock, with a small group of people or in mass, I encourage everyone this New Year to take your morning office break.



Change of address?

Make sure you update with Branch 82, Lite-Blue, and the NALC Webpage.

Trouble getting your B-Mike?

Call the hall!



B-Mike

We Are Here For You

- Betty Nash, Vice President

Why are we here?

Why does Branch 82 have full time officers working Monday through Friday and Saturdays from 8-11?

It's because we are here for you. We are currently processing over 3,000 grievances that have been initiated by your stewards. Some grievances are settled, some are settled but not yet paid, some get appealed to Formal A, some are appealed to the Dispute Resolution Team, and a few go to Arbitration. There is a procedure that must be followed for each type of grievance and a database that is updated for each grievance. The grievance procedure enforces the contract, and the stewards file those grievances to help represent you.

Your officers meet with supervisors, station managers and postmasters for Formal A grievances, attend station meetings and help to address other office specific issues with each station. The officers attend retirements, safety meetings, prepare budgets, host branch meetings, develop steward trainings, plan social activities for the branch, write articles for the B-Mike, maintain a uniform closet for new CCAs, make presentations at new employee orientation and Carrier Academy. We help carriers with on-the-job injuries, FMLA applications, and retirement counseling. Officers are here to answer questions regarding seniority, transfers, Annual Leave signup... etc. etc. etc. We are here for you.

Honestly the list goes on and on. However, I feel that the most important duty that your officers perform is backing you up. What does that mean? What does back you up mean? It is different for each union member that calls, comes in, or emails the office. If a member calls in regarding an injury, then we have resources. We have Mike O'Connor who specializes in this area and is ready to help with any questions that carriers may have. Brad is our office manager, and he does his best to keep track of where everyone is each day. He is usually the first person people meet when they come in the door. We all know that Matt is the person that keeps our finances in order and makes sure that we have a proper budget to work with. This is an ever-changing job, since we can't say for sure how many members we will have each month because CCAs may not make it, people retire, prices for goods and services fluctuate. Jon is our Chief Steward and he is always in and out of the office, meeting on those grievances that management is being difficult about or preparing a grievance to go to the Dispute Resolution Team. David is of course our President, and he helps with all areas. He meets on Formal A grievances for Associate Offices, meets with upper management on safety and contractual issues, makes decisions on the direction of the branch. All of your officers are working every day for you.

We are here to help the stewards by giving them grievance numbers, contractual advice, scouring the data base for similar issues that will help their case, looking up current grievances to determine where in the process they are, sending information on arbitrations, anything we can do to help veteran and new stewards to perform their duties. We are here for you, and you are not alone.

We get phone calls from carriers that actually apologize for calling and taking up our time. I have to remind them that we are here to help you, that is our main job. Please don't ever feel that you are bothering us. It doesn't matter how busy we are, our first priority is to help the membership. No other issue is as important as yours. If that means that you need to talk to someone because you are stressed out because management decided to change your start time by an hour and a half, without notice, or maybe you are having personal issues that you need to talk over with someone, or believe it or not, you are just pissed about how callously management is treating you, perhaps this holiday season was just too much to handle, please call, we are here for you.

We may not be able to solve every problem but we can try, and if we can't then we can listen. We can let you know that you are not alone. Everyone that works at the branch has carried mail and is a letter carrier. We understand the struggles and frustration. Some of the carriers that I have personally spoken to just needed someone to listen to them so that they could vent. I have had conversations of over 45 minutes, and during that time I mostly listened and let the carrier know that their feelings are valid. I remind them that they are not just a number to us.

All carriers have people that love them, that want to know that they are taking their lunches, breaks, that they remember to take care of themselves. Being a city letter carrier is a good job with good benefits, but your safety and your health are more important than any job. Remember every day that you have people that care about you. Let's not forget how much a simple "how are you doing today" or "I have an extra pair of gloves if you need them," or "how is your son doing" can be impactful to someone's day. We need to take care of each other. If you feel alone, tired, frustrated, or pissed more than usual, please remember that we are here for you. As Vice President, for me the first thing that I ask carriers is what can I do for you? All of us here at the branch work for you, whatever you need, we will do our best to help. Please don't ever feel that you can't reach out to us.

To city letter carriers, the most important people in the post office, we are here for you.





Last Punch Bunch

Billy Brink- Rose City Park

Jeri Craeton- McMinnville

Pamela Durley- Creston

Scott Stephen- Lake Oswego



Rose City reunion: former Branch 82 President James Cook, former Branch 82 President Jim Falvey, fresh retiree Billy Brink, and current President David Norton all gathered at Rose City Park Station to celebrate Brink's 42-year postal career, 46 years including his time in the service. Congratulations, Billy!



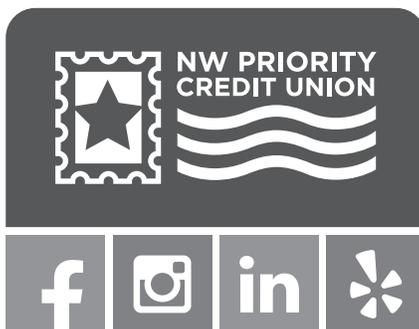


Purchase a vehicle through Auto Solution, finance with NW Priority, and we will gift a bike to a child in need at Christmas!

HERE'S HOW IT WORKS

1. Get pre-approved with us.
2. Contact **Steve Sharer, with Auto Solution (503-970-9273)**, and tell him the type of new ride you want. He will do his best to find your dream vehicle.
3. Then, you can come into the credit union to pick up your vehicle, or Auto Solution will deliver it to you!
4. And, we add one more bike under the NW Priority Christmas Tree!

If you are not in the market for a new vehicle but would like to participate in gifting a bike, NWPCU will match every bike brought in by a member. Let's fill our lobbies with all sizes of bikes for these deserving children.



OUR #1 PRIORITY IS YOU!

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503-760-5304 | 800-331-0968
www.nwprioritycu.org

All credit subject to approval. Promotion effective October 1 through December 12, 2022.



The COVID-19 Winds Are Changing, Don't Get Left Behind

- Mike O'Connor, OWCP Representative

Hello everyone! In January of 2020, the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) was signed into law. One of the provisions of the Act was to streamline the process in which federal employees diagnosed with COVID-19 established coverage under the Federal Employees Compensation Act. (FECA) The provisions of the ARPA are effective until January 27th, 2023. That means there will be changes as to how COVID-19 claims will be handled beginning with cases diagnosed on and after January 28th, 2023.

The major changes are as follows:

1. A home test will no longer be acceptable, even with a doctor's diagnosis to support an OWCP claim. Only a PCR or Antigen by itself will be acceptable proof of COVID-19. A positive antibody test along with contemporaneous medical evidence that the claimant had documented symptoms of or was treated by a physician would also be acceptable. A home test, even with a diagnosis from a doctor will not be acceptable. A notice to quarantine will not be sufficient either.

2. Claims will be filed via a CA-2 rather than a CA-1 unless the claimant can pinpoint a single incident or incidents over a single day or work shift in which they were exposed while in the performance of their duties.

3. Claims will need to be filed electronically via ecomp.dol.gov.

4. Continuation of Pay will no longer be paid unless the employee can pinpoint the exposure within a single shift as described in #2 above. If the exposure can be pinpointed and evidence of that is provided then the claim would be filed via CA-1, and if approved, COP will be paid.

The best advice I can give at this point is that if you begin having symptoms of COVID-19 go to your doctor, if you can get in, or to any urgent care that can provide a PCR test, an Antigen test, or an antibody test along with contemporaneous medical evidence that you had documented symptoms, were treated by a physician, or a physician signs off on the diagnosis of a Nurse Practitioner or Physician's Assistant. Every OWCP decision will be based on the usual OWCP criteria.

You must be a federal employee. You provide evidence of: 1. a diagnosis of COVID-19 and establish you actually experienced the event(s) or employment factor(s) alleged to have occurred, the alleged event(s) occurred within the performance of your duties and finally, the COVID-19 is found by a physician to be causally related to the established event(s) or employment factor(s) within the employee's federal employ-

ment. Neither the fact that the condition manifests itself during a period of federal employment, nor the belief of the claimant that factors of employment caused or aggravated the condition, is sufficient in itself to establish causal relationship.

In conclusion, while you will still be able to file a COVID-19 claim after January 27th, 2023, it will be more difficult to get it approved. I will continue to be at the union hall on Wednesdays and Thursdays to help you maneuver through workman's comp claims. Please call me there at (503) 493-5903 or send me an email at branch82owcp@gmail.com anytime and I will respond as soon as I am able.

Mike O'Connor

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Health Benefits	Eric Matras	503.493.5903
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Veterans Rep	Bruce Hall	503.285.8468
MDA Rep	Abe RedCloud	503.493.5903

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Randall Hoxie	503.493.5903
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Casey English	503.493.5903
Dave Esch	503.493.5903
Ted Lulich	503.493.5903
George Wallenstein	503.493.5903



B·Mike

If I Could Offer You Only One Tip for the Future, Sunscreen Would Be It

- Matt Pierce, Secretary-Treasurer

Hello again from the office of your Secretary-Treasurer. I hope this finds you all happy, healthy and a little grateful to be delivering mail or living in western Oregon this winter instead of the rest of the country. I think if word gets out, every carrier on the East coast may put in to E-Reassign to Branch 82.

It's certainly been my experience that as Baz Luhrmann said, "The real troubles in your life, Are apt to be things that never crossed your worried mind, The kind that blindsides you at 4 p.m. on some idle Tuesday." As some of you already know, I suffered a severely broken leg while hiking in the coast range in November of 2014. I also suffered a broken leg while on vacation in the summer of 2008. So I've already had two off-the-job broken legs in a job that requires lots of walking. Hopefully at this point I'm done. The reason I mention it is not to elicit sympathy or say woe is me. I mention it to reinforce the point, because both times I wasn't doing anything exciting or in any way dangerous. I was just walking on relatively flat ground and something bad happened.

The first time I was just walking on a tropical beach in the dark, unaware that there was a huge hole in the sand which I stepped off into. The second time I was walking through the woods like I've walked 10,000 times before, and I slipped with both feet on the ground at the edge of a clear cut. I even had my high leather Danner boots laced up. But my foot caught and the rest of my body twisted as I fell, so something had to give. It was just a freak accident. I discussed it with my orthopedic surgeon and he said basically the human body is not designed to have all terrain traction on our feet. There's no free lunch in nature, and this is the cost of wearing shoes that aren't slick like the natural bottoms of our feet.

I learned a lot of things on that day and since. I learned that there's still a lot of places in our rugged and mostly empty state where cell phones don't work. Therefore, you have to have a plan for what to do when something goes wrong.

I learned a great deal about gratitude. I suppose part of being prepared for life's eventualities is to have people in your life you can count on when you need them. You really do learn about what in life and other people really matters when you can't, through no fault of your own, do anything for yourself. My family and friends and in no small part many of my union brothers and sisters showed patience and kindness beyond measure. All of them have my thanks and unending gratitude.

But the thing I learned that I wish I could convince all letter carriers of is to be prepared for life's sudden pitfalls. Being unpreventably blindsided out of a clear blue sky by horrible events

is unfortunately sometimes a fact of life. The sobering fact according to the social security administration is that a 20-year-old starting their career today has a more than 1-in-4 odds of becoming disabled before reaching retirement age. On top of this a recent study found that 56% of people who have steady employment when they're 50 years old were forced to leave their jobs for one reason or another before they planned to retire, the number one reason being chronic health problems.

I'm as guilty as anyone of the natural denial in human nature. It's very hard not to worry about other more imminent concerns or needs. But unfortunately, just like good things, bad things do consistently happen to someone and sometimes that someone is you. Not admitting that in time is something we constantly have to help people come to terms and deal with in this office.

There's no need to be alarmed or forlorn. The NALC and Branch 82 can do a lot to help all of us through these eventualities. I can attest to the value of union healthcare and a generous sick leave policy. Branch 82 can help get a carrier advanced sick leave or light duty or help get their worker's comp approved or fight their removal etc.... but there are some things we simply can't do for you, and I ask all of you to spend a little time to think about how prepared you are. In-case at some point that unfortunate person is you.

Ask yourself: is there anything I can or should do to be more prepared in-case it happens to me.

*If I suffer from a severe health problem completely protected by FMLA but I'm expected to take six months off to recover, would I be okay? What would I do if I ran out of leave?

*Would I be okay if I had to live on base pay without any overtime?

*What if I get put off work on emergency suspension or removal without pay and it takes time for the union to get me back in a pay status?

*What if I develop a health problem and can't work as long or as many years as I'm planning to?

Other than the obvious- start saving for retirement as early and as much as possible and saving your sick leave, something that would certainly help is the federal government finally passing a short-term disability insurance program which federal employees don't currently have. Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton (D-DC) has for several congressional sessions introduced her Federal Employee Short-Term Disability Insurance Act,

which would allow federal employees to purchase short-term disability insurance at group rates to replace a portion of their income lost due to a short-term injury or disability, pregnancy or pregnancy-related illness. Pay attention to notices from the NALC app for when you may need to get your congressperson to support it.

Something else you should be aware of when it comes to long-term health planning is that the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) has suspended enrollment in the Federal Long Term Care Insurance Program (FLTCIP) for federal employees. Long term care helps those who can no longer perform everyday tasks by themselves due to chronic illness, injury, disability, or aging.

OPM recently announced that effective Dec. 19, 2022, they are suspending applications for coverage under the FLTCIP. Effective Dec. 19, individuals not currently enrolled may not apply for coverage, and current enrollees may not apply to increase coverage. Eligible employees and annuitants that submit an application for coverage prior to the start of the suspension period will have their application considered. This suspension will remain in effect for 24 months, unless OPM decides to end or extend the suspension period.

In Memoriam
RAYMOND LONG
JEFF MONROE

Current enrollees' coverage status will not change as long as they continue to pay premiums. There is no change to coverage or the claims reimbursement process for those in a claim status, as long as benefits have not been exhausted. If this is something you or your family may be interested in, please pay attention to when it may open up again

I wish for none of these things to befall any of you, but unfortunately, all of them have happened to one of our brothers and sisters in the recent past. Those that were prepared were so much better off than those that weren't. One of our union's great strengths is we can all learn from the successes and losses of each other and hopefully all be better off for it.

I wish you all the best.
Until next time I remain yours in solidarity,
Matt

Grateful for Everything

- Sam Smith, Director of Retirees

My Grandma used to always tell me to be grateful. She stressed that we should be thankful. I did not understand what she meant until many years later.

What does being grateful mean? Firstly, I learned that it does not mean that you have all that you want or that everything is ok. It does not mean that things are perfect, and you have no complaints.

At my house there is an art piece that says, "There is always, always, always something to be grateful for." Being grateful means we can recognize the good that we have in our lives already. Also, as we enter boldly into 2023, we are not dismissive of the losses suffered in years passed. We are grateful for what remains, grateful for what we did not lose.



Even though I lost my sister in 2022, I am grateful to have had my life enriched by her for 65 years. If you have suffered loss but you still have family, still have friends, still have your health, then you have something to be grateful for.

Be blessed in 2023.

Respectfully,
Sam Smith



A Challenging New Year

- Bruce Hall, Veterans Representative

The beginning of a new year is a time of reflection and also a time of anticipation. Our nation is in a state of flux. Many things have changed, many things are changing, and many things will change. We will face many challenges in this new year. Hopefully, we will overcome these challenges and have a GOOD year.

We saw the start of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, and it continued throughout 2021, and has been an on and off threat throughout 2022. Our lives have been greatly affected by the pandemic. Along with many challenging political events, increased inflation, dissatisfaction in the labor force, resulting in labor disputes and strikes. There is much unrest and disunity in our society. So, we will have many challenges to deal with in 2023. Each of us will face different challenges on an individual basis as well as society-created challenges. I continue to deal with an individual challenge of having a stroke on 11/1/20 and losing sensation in my left fingers. It has been over two years and I still get depressed and frustrated trying to perform simple tasks. I've gained some insight on how people can get depressed.

We just have to think positively and do our best to look to the future and be thankful for our friends and family who are constantly helping and encouraging us, and the good Lord looking over us. Hopefully, I'll be able to meet this challenge in 2023.

As we look back over the past few years, we see a time of war and turmoil. We had the horrific event of 9/11/2001, which started our Global War on Terrorism. We went to war in Afghanistan, followed by war in Iraq 2003-2011, then a renewed conflict in Afghanistan which ended at the end of 2014. Supposedly these wars ended, but we still have troops in Iraq as supporters and trainers to that country's army. They are still in harm's way. We also have Americans and friendlies trapped in Afghanistan after our sudden withdrawal in August 2021. Our troops continue to perform extraordinarily and give much in the fight to provide freedom. Only time will tell how effective their efforts have been. Freedom is not Free!

War has been a part of this world since the beginning of civilization. No one really likes war, but it has been a reality throughout history. We need to look at history and realize that war should be the last resort in our country's foreign relations, and we should seek peace and reconciliation wherever possible. But we need to exercise wisdom and reservations in immediately withdrawing troops and assistance in areas where we have been involved. War is bad but if it wasn't for war, we wouldn't have our freedom. Freedom is not Free! There are still forces in the world that need to be dealt with. We need to keep a military force ready to deal with these forces. I feel that there are resources available to assist veterans. We need to continue to take advantage of these resources.

Over the past several years, the military has experienced several challenges related to war; excessive deployments, separation from family and friends, severe injuries, and many deaths. Then as our involvement in the war was decreased, the military was faced with different challenges such as reduction in forces, which forced many troops out of the service, resulting in unemployment and readjusting to civilian life; having to find housing, medical coverage, schools, jobs, and ways to meet every day needs. This has been tough in our depressed economy. We need to ensure that these veterans receive the support and benefits for their dedication and sacrificial service for freedom!

Of course, benefits and assistance due to veterans is controlled by congress, so we need to continually inform and hopefully influence our political leaders to make the right decisions in regard to veterans. This will take a continuous effort from us, to contact our representatives and senators. If you would like to receive a weekly update of veterans issues and legislative actions, please send your Name, E-mail, and Zip Code to me via Mail: Bruce Hall, 8017 N. Washburne Ave., Portland, OR, 97217, or Email to: vfwbruce@gmail.com. I can get you signed up for the VFW Action Corps Weekly. It is available to anyone who desires it.

Hopefully, we can meet the challenges and support and assist our veterans during this New Year!!

Retiree Luncheon

January 18

IHOP

4931 SE 82nd Avenue

Portland, OR 97266

NOON

(Third Wednesday of each month)



Meet The Steward: Eric Pottenger, Piedmont

I'm not sure if there's such a thing as a "natural" for the steward position—someone born for the role—but if there is, it's probably not me. I'll explain.

Before I joined the ranks in the Postal Service in late-2020, the previous two decades I had been employed in the restaurant world. Anybody that has been around restaurants for any length of time knows that, at its best, it is populated by loose personalities: jokers & performers, perhaps a little on the wild side, many with a bent toward self-destructive behavior, but also with an abundance of intelligence, humanity, creativity, and zest for life. These were my people. It was here, as well, that I met my wife.

I was lucky. Every one of the restaurants I worked at were small business operations, never a chain restaurant: places where I rubbed elbows with upper-management and ownership on a regular basis; places where protocols weren't developed in a faraway corporate office somewhere, but instead, right on the workroom floor. The owners I knew were nurtured in the same loose environment that they were now responsible for building and maintaining. They understood the nuances of restaurant culture, how it hung together, what motivated the personalities within it. Perhaps it was no accident then that restaurant management genuinely tried hard to develop a balanced approach to success: not only fulfilling their obligation to a customer base, or widening a profit margin, or perfecting some personal vision or brand vision. Success also meant fostering a *community*, one that respected workplace contributions and allowed employees to feel good about the business success they helped create.

This setup was mostly ideal. When either labor or management would identify an underlying conflict, the individuals involved in the conflict WERE RIGHT THERE, present, face-to-face, in the building, able to talk things through. Assuming ownership didn't want to live and work in an active war zone, filled with hostility, theft, sabotage, and the like, they were smart to respect any lingering disputes and listen closely to the parties involved. They also had tremendous power to make meaningful change. Because, unlike in giant bureaucracies, in a small restaurant there is no "higher power" to consult or please (outside the building), just small business pragmatism and sense to maintain goodwill amongst the staff. It was rare when this didn't happen.

In every one of the restaurants where I spent any length of time, I eventually became a part of the problem-solving brain trust, whatever my formal position. At times I served as a vocal member of the rank-and-file, as a server or bartender. But I also served many years in management. The more years I worked, the more knowledge and experience I acquired, the more roles I filled and skills I learned, the better I understood how all the parts and pieces of the restaurant fit together. I developed a "big picture"

organizational outlook. This increased my (real and imagined) sense of power and influence in the workplace. My ideas were impactful in large part because they began addressing all facets of an issue, not just a blanket advocacy for one side or another.

While I'm aware that not all restaurant environments are like this, my experience proves that there *are* places like this, places where thoughtfulness is valued and has real influence. Like I said, I was lucky.

It was two years ago that I brought that outlook and experience with me to the post office, lured by the promise of a good government career in the post-covid era.

My time as a CCA left a strong impression on me. I started at Parkrose, just before peak. Like most CCAs, I learned to acclimate myself to a kind of occupational abuse, the normal postal kind. I didn't know my rights. I spoke to others, other CCAs, nobody seemed to know their rights. This was back when CCAs weren't given a day off some weeks. Or if you got a day off, they informed you about it the previous afternoon. I worked 13 days straight during one stretch, I'm sure other CCAs worked longer. All this seemed ridiculous, but nobody was certain how to challenge it. Everybody was winging it, especially the CCAs, all of them just hoping to go home at a reasonable hour.

My CCA experience in a big way contributed to my wanting to be a steward. That feeling of powerlessness... I needed to feel something different. And I needed to help others feel that as well; to help provide the kind of hands-on mentorship that I felt my experience lacked. I began reading the contract, learning little useful bits of info and sharing those bits with my friends. My friends began asking random contract questions, and I would relish hunting the information down. I didn't realize it at the time, but that's how a steward's education is furnished: one question at a time, hunting for an answer. It's still that way even now.

I have found the labor-management dynamic "tricky" in the post office, to say the least. Part of that has to do with me, with my style and my attitude toward relationship-building. For instance, I contend that, whatever we might think of our supervisors, we must necessarily work with them and so we should always TRY to make the best of it. It's a fair practice to begin a relationship (of any kind) without prejudice, preferring instead a wait-and-see approach. Some personalities come with pre-existing reputations... some JOB TITLES come with pre-existing reputations... but are these reputations always accurate? I need to see and experience for myself; I need to give people the benefit of the doubt. Some people actually surprise you.

When it comes to supervisors or managers in the post office, one



hears plenty of negativity. And yet each one of us carriers has dealt with all kinds. There is no “one type” or one label that sticks to everyone. I’ve worked with well-meaning “change the post office from the inside” supervisor types. I’ve also worked with empathetic types, genuinely friendly people that seem to care about helping the staff. Some supervisors, I have found, are a little relaxed (maybe bored? maybe lazy?) but can be jolted into action if necessary. They’re not bad people. And although we may not always be thrilled with their performance, they’re not necessarily working AGAINST US or AGAINST LETTER CARRIERS.

Obviously, as a steward, it would be easy for me to only work with this variety of supervisor or manager. When a dispute arises it would be like, hey, this action is a clear violation of the National Agreement, here are the reasons why, page such-and-such of the JCAM, read the language, it’s clear. After which we might briefly hash it out, point and counterpoint, back and forth, settling on a consensus understanding. And hopefully then corrective action would be taken. Or a grievance would be resolved and paid. This is the way it’s supposed to work (or could work): both parties operating in good faith; management respecting the resolution once it’s been reached. Like a real team.

Except that, in the post office, reasonable personalities aren’t the only types occupying important positions in management. Far from it. There are also outright bullies; power-trippers; occupational sadists; sociopaths; people that merely want to advance their careers, no matter the cost; people that ACTIVELY CHOOSE INACTION when carriers have needs, maybe even enjoy doing it, and probably have no trouble sleeping at night.

Is this hyperbole? Over my short postal career, I have witnessed characteristics such as these every single day. I’m sure many of you have seen it, too.

From what I can see, there are too many of these types that populate important postal management jobs, and it’s a disgrace. Although we certainly didn’t create these attitudes, as postal employees it is our burden to deal with them; or to endure them. We have no choice. We deal with them as carriers, on the workroom floor. And the stewards among us must deal with them in the shadows, in the offices and in private consultations, squeezing

contract compliance out of unwilling (and oftentimes hostile) participants.

Often these days I fantasize about an idealized image of an old school union steward, a tough-as-nails bare-knuckle brawler type, and wonder if there’s anything from this fantasy I could

borrow. It has only been a year since I became steward; it’s true I have so much to learn, but I’m getting impatient with results because our carriers deserve the very best, and they deserve it now! I’m impressed with the resilience they display daily. Not one ODL carrier in my entire station, and yet Piedmont carriers keep pushing those sections out to their vehicles night after night, rarely even complaining about it. I’m sure this happens everywhere. It should be unthinkable that management would drag their feet (for months sometimes), failing to provide hardworking carriers with even basic requests, but it happens. Uniform allowances; OWCP pay; pay adjustments for mistakes or mishaps; after darks payments; the list goes on. We show up to work; we do our jobs; when are these jerks gonna do theirs!?

Our union is a results-driven enterprise. We can talk about the need or the effectiveness of our union all we want, but ultimately the success of our union boils down to a commitment to our unity; to a shared faith that we are better, stronger, and more effective as a bargaining collective. And this boils down to results. Are stewards doing everything they can to represent ALL carriers? Are they listening to carriers and responding to their needs? And most importantly, are we (as a union) SUCCEEDING in our fight to keep management faithful to their promises, as represented by the language of our contract?

My goal is to be part of the solution, to help achieve the results we deserve. Of course, being a new steward, I have plenty to learn. I’m learning the contract, yes, but I’m also learning how to be a strong advocate in this dysfunctional environment. This will take time, perhaps some personal evolution. But the important thing is, I understand this. I accept the challenge and all that comes with it.

Of course none of this makes me a “natural” for the steward role, sure, but who has got time to wait for a that? I show up. Considering our challenges, for now that’ll have to do.



ACTIVE DUTY

Darren Cruz, son of Gary Cruz (River District)
Army, Ft. Lewis

Noah Duarte, son of Ricardo Duarte (St. Helens)
Army, Ft Hood, Texas

Greg Gerard, son of George Gerard (Beaverton)
Navy, Virginia Beach

Casey James (Waterfront) Army, Jordan

Roberto Jimenez (Creston) Army, Qatar

Samuel Kunz, son of John Kunz (Parkrose), Navy

Christopher Manivanh, son of Simang Manivanh
(Hillsboro), Army, Iraq

Zachary Padaca, son of Eleanor Padaca (River District) Navy

Bill Quigley Jr., grandson of Ken Quigley (Gold Card
Member) Army, Iraq

Connor Sheehan, son of Pat Sheehan (retired)
Army, Ft. Houston

Dean Schuchardt, son of Patricia Schuchardt (Multnomah)
Army

Corey A. Thompson, son of Georgina Thompson
(Rose City Park), Navy, Norfolk, VA

Tom Totten, son in law of Lee Travis (retired)
Army, S. Korea DMZ

Matthew Underwood, son of Rick Underwood
(River District) Marines, Camp Pendleton

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And Employees in

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Branch 82 Monthly Meetings

General Membership 2nd Wednesday, 7:00PM

Retiree Luncheon 3rd Wednesday, noon

Stewards Council 3rd Wednesday, 7PM

Executive Board 4th Wednesday, 6:30PM

All members are welcome, unless otherwise noted.

All meetings are held at the NALC Branch 82 Office,

5265 NE 42nd Avenue.

Retiree Luncheons are held at

IHOP, 4931 SE 82nd Avenue.

The B-Mike is the official publication of Charles N. Coyle Branch 82 National Association of Letter Carriers, affiliated with Oregon AFL-CIO and Northwest Oregon Labor Council (OLC), 5265 NE 42nd Avenue, Portland, Oregon 97218. Phone 503-493-5903. Office hours: M-F 8:00am-5pm, Sat 8:00-11:00am.

The B-Mike is published monthly and mailed to the Branch 82 mailing list. The B-Mike is published to promote the objectives of this Branch and to provide better communication with our members. Individual opinions expressed herein are not necessarily those of the Branch Officers or Branch 82, unless identified as such. The editorial committee reserves the right to edit or refuse publication of any article. Articles for publication must be in Word or PDF form and received by the 15th of the month. E-mail articles to: smiller.eightytwo@gmail.com. If you have questions or to request a deadline extension, call the editor in advance. The advertising deadline is also the 15th of the month. All ads must be in PDF form or have prior approval of the editor. Mail to the B-Mike, c/o Branch 82. For rates and further information, call 503-493-5903.



NALC Branch 82 Membership Meeting, December 14, 2022

Call to Order: 7:07

Pledge of Alliance: Bruce Hall

Deceased Members: Raymond Long, Retiree; Jeffrey Monroe, Active- Parkrose

Moment of Silence

Roll Call of Officers

Officers Absent: Canfield, Wallenstein

First Time Members:

Chris Pinkston-Riggs, Rose City

Visitors: (Guest) John Beaumont – NALC Legislative and Political Organizer

Reading of the Minutes: Casey English made a motion to dispense with the reading of the minutes and accept them as printed in the B-Mike. Seconded, Dave Esch. Carried.

Membership Report:

Regular: 1166, PTF: 29, CCA: 168, Retiree: 520, Gold Card: 75, Management & Other Crafts: 41, New Members: CCA-47. Total Membership: 2000, Non-Members: 35, Organized: 97.5%

Retired: Michael Choi- Multnomah, Adrian Olmstead- Forest Grove

Canceled: Andrew Anderson- Piedmont, Management. **Separated:** Christian Abbott- Forest Grove, Emily Cobena- Midway, Edward Copeland- Creston, Jacob Corum- St. Johns, Hoang Do- Lents, Benjamin Thompson- Evergreen

John Beaumont gave a presentation about the Letter Carrier Political Fund and signed members up throughout the evening.

Secretary-Treasurer's Report:

Cody Harris made a motion to pay the bills. Seconded, English. Carried. Secretary-Treasurer Matt Pierce went over the 2023 proposed budget line by line. Motion: Eric Matras made a motion to approve the 2023 proposed budget. Seconded: Harris. Carried.

Executive Board Expenditure

Recommendation: President David Norton spoke about how we could not have a food drive this year. In the past, we have donated money to make up for this. Motion: donate \$5,000 to the Oregon Food Bank. Carried.

Labor Management Report: Norton reported there is one removal in the branch working through the grievance procedure. Our number of PTFs are quickly dwindling with only 29 left in the branch. The route adjustment process is ongoing, and they plan on coming to Portland in the Spring. Fildes talked about how there will be a number of stations in the branch that will be adjusted between January and May, with Kenton being the first to happen in the new year. Norton added that management is always going in with their own agenda, and that we are there to fight back and to ensure that routes are adjusted to as close to eight hours as possible. He thanked the Branch 82 members who are on detail to the TIAREAP team.

Norton spoke about how staffing is still not good but they are hiring at a pretty good clip. Also, the USPS is opening up another CCA Academy in Salem. Hopefully this means we can get future carriers who will be working in our branch into our Academy sooner.

Norton discussed the "60 Minute Office Time" mandate from upper management. He talked about how it is just another really stupid idea coming from management at the worst time of the year.

Health and Safety Report:

Cadwell mentioned that we need to make sure our stations are prepped with the equipment needed for the upcoming snow.

Legislation Report: Norton mentioned that Beaumont went over much of the current legislation. Jamie Partridge shared a ruling from the NLRB that says a company that fires an employee for organizing will be held responsible for the employee's financial demise. Norton added that Biden's NLRB is better than ones in recent history.

Judith Hyde Scholarship Report: Lulich spoke about how important it is to have a scholarship and that this will be his last year as the chair of the committee.

MDA Report: Abe RedCloud thanked everyone for helping Branch 82 to make our goal this year. Norton thanked RedCloud for all of his hard work, especially during the pandemic when we couldn't hold our usual fundraising events.

Retirees' Report: Sam Smith reminded the membership that the Retiree Luncheon is happening the third Wednesday of each month at IHOP.

Veterans' Report: Hall reported that he has food boxes available to give to families in need. He shared how he found an interesting article about our own member, Dale Thayer, in the Portland Tribune. Also, he presented awards and checks to scholarship winners at Jefferson High School.

Labor Solidarity Report: Norton reported that the Concordia New Seasons will be voting to unionize next week, and it is very important to support them. They've fought for a long time to get to this point. Partridge gave an update on the Starbucks workers and the upcoming strikes that will happen over the coming weeks. He said they are shutting down 200 stores nationwide, three of which are in Portland.

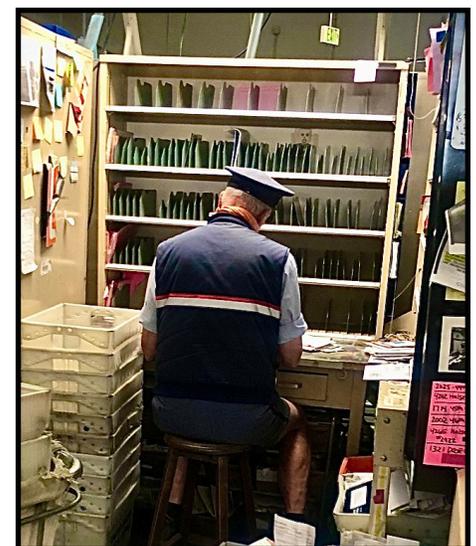
Good of the Association: Norton thanked hospitality for tonight, Anthony Spinatto, for making everyone food.

Kitty Award: Justin Wallace, Aloha, won \$86.

Jackpot: \$595 went unclaimed by Andy Ngu, Parkrose.

Treasure Chest: \$150 went unclaimed by Mitch Jarrell, Multnomah.

Adjourned: 8:48



"You're more important than the paper and the cardboard." Cheers to one of the last of the old guard. B, happy retirement.



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Branch 82
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The next General Membership meetings will be held
Wednesday, January 11 and Wednesday, February 8,
both at 7pm. Dinner will be served prior to the meeting.

Guaranteed to leave a sour taste in your mouth!



Br-02's **PUSHING THE ENVELOPE** by Kari Waite and Teri Knott
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A PUSHING THE ENVELOPE
CLASSIC FROM SEPTEMBER 2007

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