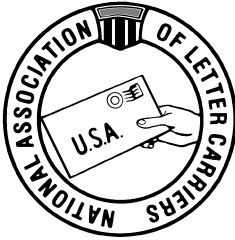


The Monthly Report

118 Years of Representing Letter Carriers



Snohomish County Branch 791
National Association of Letter Carriers
2812 Lombard Ave
Suite 209
Everett, WA 98201-5821
(425) 252-0184
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February 2020 92% Organized



Vol. 119 Issue 2

Chartered April 6, 1901

Calendar of Events

Next Branch Meeting

Thurs Feb 6th @ 7:00pm
Labor Hall
2812 Lombard AVE
Everett WA

Basic Shop Steward College

March 1st thru the 5th

Washington State Convention

May 15th thru 17th
Bellingham, WA

Br. 791 Annual Summer Picnic

Sunday July 26th 2020

National Convention

August 17th thru 21st
Honolulu, HI

Regional Shop Steward College

Sept 13th thru 17th

State Wide Training

March 20th thru 22nd
Anchorage

Look for other Branch Events

on our website:

www.nalcbranch791.com



President's Page

President
Michelle Decker

It's that time of year again for the WSALC Memorial Scholarship Program. You can find the application in the December 2019 WSALC news letter or on their website WSALC.ORG. This application needs to be postmarked no later than April 1st. It requires the Branch President or Secretary's signature. As I have previously served on this committee, I know how very important it is that all the requirements are met, and all the information requested accompanies the application. If there is information missing or is incomplete, the applications could be denied. If you have a family member that will be applying and need help with the application or need a signature from me or Tina, please contact me and we can make arrangements.

Some CCA's in offices have seen missing hours on their pay checks. Please keep track to get all that is coming to you. The new virtual time card on liteblue found on the quick links section, carriers, especially CCA's have been finding this tool extremely useful. It shows your hours every day-work hours, overtime and leave usage and also shows weekly totals. This has been helpful to the Union as the Carriers do not have to wait until payday or the day you receive your paystub to inform the Steward of some issues. One common issue is management will input the wrong leave-annual leave instead of sick leave- it's worth a look. BUT...This is what pops up in order to use this program:

continued on page 7

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January Meeting Minutes

January meeting called to order 7:02 PM.
Flag salute was done. 17 members present

Roll Call, all officers were present

Guest-none

New members-none

Committee Reports:

Legislative – Bob James reports-S2965,
2co sponsors-no Cantwell or Murray.
House/Senate approved 2020 spending
bill; Repeal high cost on health plan; Lan-
guage to reserve 6 day delivery.

Health Benefits - Frank Costa – NALC
health care plan please join

Financial Report – Annette Buechler- To-
tal deposits- 12,424.27 Total withdrawals
-12,088.04 Balance-12,447.22 Building
fund- 472,003.73

Food Drive - registered-sent email for
meetings dates

District Safety Task Force-Dee Ann
Johnstone-none

2021 State Convention committee-Bob
next meeting 1/17/20

MDA-Bowling in March

Correspondence in-

Christmas card from National

Christmas card from Snohomish labor
council

Labor History calendar-free to anyone
who would like it

Letter from Prime Missionaries for the
donation in Jim Boyce's moms name

WSLC legislative/lobbying conference
Feb 6th Red Lion Olympia

Received the updated Washington state
By-Laws

continued on page 4



Franklin1st
De Franklin
Vice President
Shop Steward Lynnwood

CCA Sick Leave + LWOP = Annual

CCA's don't earn sick leave (SL), and they only earn 4 hours of annual leave (AL) per pay period. 104 hours in a year, 13 days total during for a 312 day work year because most CCA's work 6 days a week. That's not a lot of AL days compared to how often the CCA work without SDO's, (especially in Lynnwood). So when a CCA calls in sick, they can usually afford to take LWOP in lieu of pay. Lynnwood management has recently started burning the CCA's annual leave *as punishment* for the CCA calling in sick. I find that cold and disheartening, as well as a big SLAP in the face to the employees that have put their lives on hold, ignored health issues, put their marriages at risk, (*probably*) neglected their kids, missed countless engagements and never the less sometimes working more than 60 hours+ in a week. And what does management do when they (the CCA) need a mental health day and call in sick? Management denies the LWOP that was requested and pays/burns as much annual as possible. Understand that although CCA's work a tremendous amount of hours, they still can only earn 4hrs a pay period, the amount of earned leave doesn't increase.

How is that right? How can anyone back management's play on this? I call **FOUL**, I'd like to call it something else, but that would be inappropriate.

A CCA recently vented... *when they had asked about their leave being used instead the requested LWOP, they were told in a nutshell* "If you can't handle it, go find another job." I find that even more inappropriate than the cruelty of management burning the leave.

The PS3791 is the controlling document, so fill out your own slip and turn it in. There is nothing written that says you must sign the copy that management has pre generated for you. And it's probably wrong anyways, LOL.

continued on page 6



Retiree's Corner
Jim Reid
Director of Retired Members

I have gone through the NALC retirement manual and written articles on each chapter, but even though I have covered some subjects numerous times, I still get the same questions, so I have come to the conclusion that many carriers who are still years away from retirement probably skip my articles. Since I believe this is the case, and that knowing about retirement is important, I have decided to repeat those articles. This month's article originally appeared in the June 2006 newsletter.

This month's topic is survivor annuity. If you are close to retirement, married and know with 100% certainty that you will outlive your spouse, or single with 100% certainty you will never marry, don't bother with reading this article.

Survivor annuities are so important, if a retiring employee chooses not to elect a survivor annuity they must have the written, witnessed consent of their spouse.

There are three types of survivor annuity elections:

1. Self only annuity. This is what you would elect if single, or if married with your spouse's written, witnessed consent on form SF 2801-2.

2. Partially reduced annuity. This is an annuity which will provide your spouse with less than the maximum survivor benefits, and like the self only, you will need the consent of your spouse.

Maximum survivor benefits. This is what a married retiring employee will get automatically unless consent is given for one of the above options.

If you have survivor benefits and you outlive your spouse, the reduction in your benefits will terminate the first day of the month after your spouse dies. Under certain conditions, former spouses are also eligible for a survivor annuity. All of the above apply to CSRS retirement. Some of the rules for FERS retirement are different.

Under the Partially reduced annuity under CSRS, the amount of reduction to provide the spouse less than the maximum benefit is variable. Under FERS, the only choice is a one-half reduced annuity.

Under CSRS and FERS, there are also death benefits for qualifying children if there is no one to receive survivor benefits.

"minutes" continued from page 2

Correspondence out-

Meeting set with OIC Rob in Lynnwood next Thursday

Letter sent in support of the Providence united coalition

Old Business-

Have not heard back from National on our By-Law change -

New Business-

Announcements-

Update on Contract negotiations-Bulletin-reached agreement on a neutral Arbitrator unfortunately he's not available so they are looking for another both parties can agree on.

National Conventions-2024-Boston; 2026 -LA

Combined Federal Campaign ends 1/12

Donated \$257 to MDA-Thank you Bob for turning that in

January audit by trustees...need to schedule

Branch Picnic -Reserved for July 26th 2020

Letter Carrier Political fund-Go to NALC.org to sign up-

Organizing-

Open Floor-

Round Robin of offices-

Lynnwood -.Deems desirable-CCA's not able to use annual leave when calling out sick.

Snohomish-minor route adjustments meeting-will be meeting again on the 9th-may agree to do an route inspection to resolve the grievance

Edmonds-Sent grievance to Step B for counts being 3 days late, lost 4 routes in route counts going thru expedited bidding.

2020 Training-

Basic-March 1st-5th

Regional Second year steward college-September 13th-17th

SWT-March 20th-22nd - Red Lion 2020- Anchorage Alaska; Oct 4th-9th

2021-Somewhere in Utah

Arbitrations-None

Step B Decisions-19-367-DFC-14 day suspension reduced to an official discussion.

Grievance numbers-emailed new numbers for 2020-

Death and Condolences-

Bill Johnson's wife Jill Passed on December 19th, Pam McLean's mother

NEXT MEETING - Thursday February 6th @ 7 PM

Good of the Order-

Pot Drawing-MDA-half/half\$\$-12 Jenny-donate

Chocolate-Tina

Chocolate-Angelo

Hat-Jenny

Meeting Adjourned 7:41 PM

Union membership continues to Decline

Collective bargaining through our Labor Unions built the American middle class in this country, and the hard-fought gains of those early organizers continue to pay dividends for us all in the form of benefits and higher wages. Union workers earn better salaries and enjoy better conditions than their counterparts doing the same work in a non-union environment. Those gains, however, are at risk of drying up as income inequality expands. In the 1940s and '50s, about 30% of American workers were unionized, but that percentage has been in steady decline with just 11% or 12% of today's workers being union members. This deficiency has resulted in wage stagnation and the huge disparity between the middle class and the top 10%. Please give this careful consideration when casting your votes in the upcoming year – vote "Union Friendly" – the job you save may be your own...or your child's!



Health Benefit Report/ MBA

Frank Costa

SIX WAYS TO SHOW DIABETES YOU'RE THE BOSS:

1. Bring blood sugar up in the A.M. Overnight blood sugar falls, so having breakfast is critical to bringing it back up.
2. Test the second you feel "off". If you eat something that deviates from usual diet, test your blood sugar instantly.
3. Squeeze in movement. Be active.
4. Carry convenient snacks. Beef jerky, almonds, cashews.
5. Make your weekends count. Prepare foods for several days--like steel cut oatmeal for breakfast or quinoa as a base for weekday salads
6. Get technology in your corner. Myfitnesspal.com, a site where you can log your daily meals. Then use the app on your phone to record meals during the day.

A man came into a forest and asked the Trees to provide him a handle for his axe. The Trees consented and gave him a young ash-tree. No sooner had the man fitted a new handle to his axe from it, than he began to use it and quickly felled with his strokes the noblest giants of the forest. An old oak, lamenting when too late the destruction of his companions, said to a neighboring cedar, "The first step has lost us all. If we had not given up the rights of the ash, we might yet have retained our own privileges and have stood for ages."

Aesop

**"If you always do
what you've always done,
you'll always get
what you've always got."**

Henry Ford



Shop Steward - Marysville

Randall Wirtz

Understanding Your Paystub.

It's the time of year when full time regular carriers are advanced the amount of annual leave they are set to earn for the calendar year based on their accrual rate. This can cause some confusion when carriers see a negative balance, at times, on their paystub. If you are advanced 100 hours of annual leave (for example) and you use 40 hours, but have only earned 20 hours of annual leave to date. This would show up as -20 hours of annual leave balance (20 hours minus the 40 you have used) with the advanced hours of 100 for the entire year though, you would still have a balance of 60 hours. You are basically borrowing those hours from yourself because you will earn them eventually. Annual leave for this year was advanced on January 4th, 2020. CCA's and regular carriers with under 3 years of service will earn 104 hours (13 days) which breaks down to 4 hours a pay period. Full time regular carriers with 3-15 years will earn 160 hours of annual leave (4 weeks aka 20 days) which breaks down to 6 hours a pay period. Regular carriers with 15 or more years of service will earn 208 hours each year of annual leave. This is 8 hours per pay period and equals 26 days or 5 weeks and a day. If you will meet your 3 year or 15th year anniversary date mid-year, the rest of that time will be pro-rated at the higher level.

Another interesting thing that sometimes shows up on paystubs is "crossfoot". This typically takes place when someone, like a CCA for example, has under 40 work hours for the week. Holiday pay doesn't count as a work hour. A long as you meet your office guarantee of hours worked a CCA doesn't have to work 40 hours in a week. If you worked 32 hours in a week, you might see 8 hours of crossfoot time on your paystub. This is just for accounting purposes to make up the difference to 40 hours, since a CCA doesn't have to take annual leave or LWOP to leave early once their work is done. Code 76 for normal crossfoot, code 63 comes into play for crossfoot with Holidays. There won't be a pay balance associated with it. Nothing to worry about, just a book keeping thing.

continued on page 6



Contract Quiz Bomb

True or False Questions to Test Your Contractual Cognition

This month's topic: FMLA

T or F

- 1) When using FMLA for an eligible condition, Mgt must consider the absence as if the employee had not even taken the leave
- 2) If a request for FMLA be deemed as unqualified, an employee cannot be disciplined for having attempted to obtain FMLA coverage for the illness
- 3) Under certain circumstances an Employer can interfere with the employee's attempt to exercise an FMLA right
- 4) Which of the following are examples of prohibited conduct by the employer: refusing to authorize FMLA leave for an eligible employee, discouraging use of FMLA leave, manipulating employee hours to avoid FMLA responsibilities, &/or retaliating against an employee for attempting to use FMLA leave.
- 5) Any violation of the FMLA Dept's regulations constitute interference, restraining &/or denial of the exercise of rights provided by the FMLA
- 6) If you suspect a violation of your FMLA rights, or if you have questions concerning those rights, you should immediately contact your Steward

Answers - see US Dept. of Labor - Wage and Hour Division Fact Sheet #77B

- 1) True - Using qualified FMLA leave prohibits Mgt from any attendance discipline associated with that leave
- 2) True - An employer is prohibited from discriminating or retaliating against an employee for having exercised or **attempted to exercise** any FMLA right.
- 3) False - An employer is prohibited from interfering with, restraining, or denying the exercise of, or the attempt to exercise any FMLA right
- 4) All of the examples given are prohibited conduct and a violation of FMLA rights
- 5) True
- 6) True

"cca sick leave + lwop" from page 3

When you return to work management has left a return to work packet at your work area (or handed it to you) and request that you sign it. Do you sign it? **Absolutely NOT!** *"But it was an instruction"*, yes it was and it was an improper instruction. If management gives you an instruction that you sign over ownership to your car, are you going to do it? Granted that might be a little extreme example, but you get what I'm saying. You have the right to refuse an instruction when it's immoral, illegal or unsafe. And I'm telling you right now, that's its immoral for management to give you an instruction **that they know** is improper, not to mention just down right *wrong!*

Management will take advantage of you when they can and prey on the fact that you don't know something. So if you're uncertain about...whatever, seek out a Steward and get some advice.

Or come to a Union meeting and we can discuss it there. Meetings are held every first Thursday of the month, with the exception of No July or August meeting.

Let's talk about it
De'Antha

"understanding your paystub" from page 5

If you are a Veteran with 30% or more disability (approved by the VA) you might see a category for wounded warrior leave (104 hours).

"Wounded Warriors Leave is an authorized absence from the Postal Service to undergo medical treatment for a service-connected disability rated at 30 percent or more. It is a separate leave category, distinct from sick leave"

This is a balance that you can use for medical appointments pertaining to those injuries that have caused the disability rating.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding your paystub or need clarification, find your office steward for assistance.

Rise with Us!

**"ALL THAT HARMS LABOR
IS TREASON TO AMERICA."**

Abraham Lincoln

"president's page" from page 1

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(Title 18 U.S.C. § 1030)

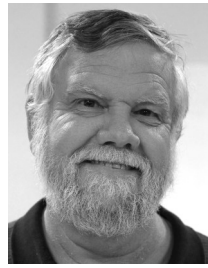
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This is what you have to agree to when you look up the virtual time card and use the eRMS Leave Request System when requesting sick leave through liteblue instead of calling in using the 877 number. A lot of times we don't read the fine print when clicking AGREE to enter a program. This basically says they have the ability to know where you are when you use this program. Whether they have this ability or not, we should assume they do.

I would like to thank Everett Main Carrier Randy Wise for doing such a good job as the Safety Captain. Every work day, Randy talks in a Safety huddle and requests for any additional feedback to improve the safety of all employees in the office. He gives feedback to questions asked and does research to get the answers to questions not readily known. This is a volunteer position that he is very passionate about and does a great job helping all of us stay safe. So thank you Randy from all the Carriers at the Everett main office!

Who Came Up With the 40-Hour Week?

The 40-hour workweek results from simple math: Eight-hour days at five days a week have long been the American standard. Of course, that figure didn't appear out of thin air. We owe the notion to Welsh industrialist and labor rights activist Robert Owen (1771 - 1858), who famously split the day into "eight hours labor, eight hours recreation, and eight hours rest." Owen's idea didn't catch on in his native Europe but was adopted as a slogan in the post-Civil War United States.



Legislative Info

Bob James

Branch Legislative Director
Second District L C,

As I Have been reporting for some time now, H R 2382, USPS Fairness Act is progressing in the U S House of Representatives. As I write this article, there are 301 cosponsors. Washington State is still at 9 out of our 10 Representatives. Even with all the other stuff going on in Washington DC these days, I think you can expect a vote soon.

The U S Senate has its companion bill, S 2965. As I write this article, neither of our Senators is on the bill. Please call Senator Murray and Cantwell and ask them to cosponsor this legislation.

On 12-19-2019 The U S House and Senate passed a spending package. For Letter Carriers, I think the two main items were that six-day delivery was preserved and a permanent repeal of taxes on high cost health plans was included in it.

**THINK MGT IS VIOLATING YOUR RIGHTS ?
IGNORING OUR NATIONAL AGREEMENT?
BULLYING YOUR FELLOW CARRIERS?**



**Tell a Steward
Join us at our monthly
Branch meetings and
learn to defend yourself
Visit our website - NALC.org
seek the truth**

PLEASE ACTIVATE YOURSELF

Photos this issue courtesy of Jim Reid

**The Monthly Report
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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Attention Retirees

**Don't forget the
retirees' breakfast
Thursdays
10:00 AM at
Evergreen Lanes
in Everett.**

The Monthly Report is published monthly by National Association of Letter Carriers, Branch 791. Letters or articles published are not necessarily the views of Branch 791 or its officers and must be signed by the writer. Co-written letters or articles must be signed by all writers. Deadline for the next issue is the tenth of the month or receipt by the Editor on that date. Editor's address: 2812 Lombard Ave Suite 209, Everett, Wa. 98201-5821

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Valentine's
Day!*

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