

*The Washington State*

# LETTER CARRIER



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Washington State Association of Letter Carriers*



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## THE FORCE IS STRONG WITH THIS ONE

*Vice President Toby Swank*

**H**ey Everyone! My first year as a state officer has actually been pretty awesome. Some of it all seems like it started before being elected when I think back to the evolution of how I got here.... my call to Eric, his insistence that I come to the State Convention, arguing with elected officials (Go Bernie!!), making friends with many of you, being recruited for my trip to DC, convincing Cathy McMorris Rogers to sign on to legislation, Ray convincing me to run for VP, running and winning VP, office visits, state meetings, more meetings, more meetings with elected officials.... it's been a whirl wind of things that I never thought I'd be called to do and quite honestly I've enjoyed every minute of it. I feel like I've just tapped into the beginning of something pretty amazing that I was built to do. Only time



Photo: Left to Right  
VP Toby Swank

RAA Michael C. Keels

Spokane BR 442 President Eric Pardick

National Legislative & Political Organizer John Beaumont  
President Brian Wiggins

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## TRAINING SCHEDULE FOR 2020

*Director of Education Bob James*



**R**egion 2 of the NALC has always produced great leaders and knowledgeable Union representatives. My belief is that a good training program gives those Letter Carriers a basis to be not only successful grievance handlers, but allows and encourages people that when a vacancy arises, are able to assume the mantle of leadership roles and do well. I believe that our role as current leaders; National Business Agents (NBA), WSALC Officers should provide a program that looks upon the work room floor as a field of quality potential leaders that we must nurture and grow. So with that, I have not reinvented the training program, but my plan is to facilitate a program that the branches want to support.

Basic Shop Steward College (BSSC) NBA Nick V's office will be conducting this training. Our dates are March 1<sup>st</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup>, 2020. We have contracts with the Huston Center in Gold Bar. Basic is a course that will help the steward or potential steward learn about the National Agreement. They will also learn about the Joint Contract Administration Manual (JCAM) that is designed for the parties at the local level to settle disputes. The course is designed to help the steward identify a violation, identify the part of the JCAM that is violated, illustrate the data that demonstrates the violation and present a well-rationalized remedy for the violation. The goal of this course is for the union representative to be able to file an Informal A level grievance and process the grievance in accordance with Article 15.

My understanding is that the NBA office will be sending out the shop steward college details to the Branches.

Intermediate Shop Steward College (ISSC) September 13<sup>th</sup> to

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**Articles Contributions & Submissions**  
**Next Letter Carrier Deadline:**  
**January 10, 2020**

**WSALC INFORMATION:**  
**[www.wsalc.org](http://www.wsalc.org)**

*Swank from Page 1*

will tell if that is true but I feel myself growing and getting stronger and better. I feel like Luke on Degobah with Yoda... struggling to free the ship from the swamp and excited about every new thing I do learn. I'm hopeful and look forward to the future and all of the opportunities that I will get to represent each of you in Washington State. I want to thank each of you again for putting me in a position to make a difference. Since my last article I've done a lot of things...I was able to attend the Spokane Branch picnic this last summer (see picture). I want to thank Eric Pardick and all of Spokane Branch for being such amazing hosts to my son and I. Immediately after that I made a trip with Michael Poff to Cathy McMorris Rogers' office and we made some additional inroads with her. I'm very happy with the progress we've made with her the past year and I look forward to building on that to help us at the Federal level. I've had an opportunity to visit each of my offices twice, with exception of Vancouver, which I will be going to visit this week for the first time. I attended a meeting in Pasco recently with John Beaumont, Nick Vafiades, James Maskell, Mele Ball and carriers from the Tri-Cities where we were able to get some new people signed up for the Letter Carrier Political Fund. In addition to these we've been working hard at the state level to insure that we are in the very best standing possible. As many of you are aware there were a few things at the State level that needed to be addressed and I'm extremely proud of the work that Brian Wiggins, Holly Curatolo and everyone else serving the WSALC has been able to accomplish since this new group took over. I look forward to sharing our progress and the conclusions of a lot of hard work this year at our next state convention. I assure you that things will get done and that you will get the results that are needed to insure our organization is running at the level that you all deserve. Till then feel free to contact us with any questions or concerns. In the meantime... in an airport hotel conference room in a galaxy far, far away, we officers at the WSALC will follow Yoda's simple rule... "Do or do not. There is no try." On a side note if you can make it to Walla Walla on December 20th...call me and I'll take you to the opening of the new Star Wars movie with my son (we're Star Wars dorks as you can tell, LOL)... my treat. Cheers!

*Your content drives this publication. We are always looking for your submissions, photos, and articles.*

*Questions about submitting content can be directed to [erichjb@gmail.com](mailto:erichjb@gmail.com)*

*James from Page 1*

17<sup>th</sup>. One of the curriculums of this course is designed for the student to take a grievance appealed from Informal A through the Formal A level and appeal to Step B, if needed. The NBA is looking to modify the current four-year program, in that Year 3 Teaching Techniques and Year 4 Arbitration Advocacy training may be changed.

State Wide Training (SWT) will be at the Wenatchee Red Lion on March 20<sup>th</sup> to 22<sup>nd</sup>. Training will end on Sunday at 11 AM. This training is designed to be something like a Regional Assembly but at a lower cost. We just got the go ahead on the contracts as I write this in mid-November, 2019 so the curriculum is not set. But, as I write this article we are expecting updates from the Region 2 office, a short, beginning shop steward class and contractual classes.

The NBA will be sending out more specific information on each aspect of the training program. I realize that 2020 is going to be a tough financial year on the branches with National Convention in Hawaii and Regional in Alaska. Our hope is that you will find the impetus to send people to the shop steward colleges and SWT. We are doing our best to ensure that the training program meets the needs of our membership. Any issues or concerns, please feel free to contact me. I am available 7 days a week. You are not a bother, but rather the reason I do this job.

## LOCAL BRANCH MEET-UPS

*Executive Board Member  
James Maskell*

I have enjoyed visiting my offices; it is a large part of why I wanted to become a State Officer. In addition to my visits, I have started working on setting up events that multiple branches can attend. These are to help spread the information from State and address questions and issues from members that do not get a chance to attend conventions.

In early November we had our first event in Pasco. Nick Vafiades, our NBA, gave an update from National and answered questions on a variety of topics. John Beaumont, National Legislative and Political Organizer, gave a presentation on the importance of current legislation and how it relates to letter carriers. This first event went really well and I hope to have more coming up.

If anyone wants to help organize them or would like one in your area please contact me.

# 2020 WSALC MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

## ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA:

Applicant must be a son, daughter, grandchild or dependent of an active, retired or deceased Letter Carrier.

Applicant must be a high school senior or graduate when making application and must submit the form provided in the Washington State Letter Carrier, or at [www.wsalc.org](http://www.wsalc.org) (or photocopy thereof).

## REQUIREMENTS:

Applicants must have maintained a 2.5 grade point average in their last full year of school prior to application, or submit a copy of SAT or ACT scores, which reflect that the applicant meets the national average.

Applications must be postmarked by April 1st, 2020. Applications must be sent by Certified Mail.

Applicants must receive the endorsement of the President or Secretary of the Branch in which they claim eligibility.

## THE FOLLOWING ITEMS MUST ACCOMPANY THE APPLICATION:

- A copy of most recent grade transcript to support a claim of 2.5 grade point average (cumulative), or a copy of SAT or ACT scores which reflect that the applicant meets the National average.
- A separate statement of career goal or intent.
- Two letters of recommendation, which reflect the applicant's involvement in the community. These letters may include, but are not limited to, one from a school official and one from a member of the community in which they reside.
- A brief personal resume.
- A stamped, self-addressed legal-sized envelope must be included.

## REGULATIONS:

**This award is non-renewable. Past recipients are ineligible to apply for future awards.**

There will be two or more scholarships in the amount of \$1500.00 each to be awarded at the 2020 WSALC Convention in Bellingham, Washington.

All funds shall be awarded after acceptance to the school of the applicant's choice in conjunction with the WSALC by-laws. The funds shall be made payable to both the student and the school.

The Memorial Scholarship Committee shall review all applications to assure that all eligibility criteria and requirements have been followed and met. Failure on the part of the applicant to meet the rules shall be subject to disqualification by the Committee. If disqualified, the decision of the Committee shall be final.

The Memorial Scholarship Committee shall award the scholarships by random draw of all eligible applicants. This drawing shall be held during the Convention, at such time as selected by the President.

The WSALC Secretary/Treasurer shall mail appropriate notification to the winners.

**Scholarship applications WILL NOT BE OPENED UNTIL CONVENTION!**

**Scholarship questions can be directed to  
your local Branch President.**

# 2020 WSALC MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION

APPLICATIONS MUST BE MAILED CERTIFIED  
AND POSTMARKED BY APRIL 1, 2020

Fill out application and mail to:

**WSALC SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE**

**c/o NATHAN MARTIN**

**210 Queen Anne Ave N STE 201**

**Seattle WA, 98109**

PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY

Please accept my application for a WSALC Scholarship:

My name: \_\_\_\_\_

My home address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

I am a senior in the school year of 2019-2020, or a high school graduate. Year of graduation: \_\_\_\_\_

(Please circle what applies)

I am the: Son Daughter Grandchild Dependant  
of Letter Carrier \_\_\_\_\_, who is an

Active Retired Deceased

Member of NALC Branch # \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_

This is to certify that all rules and regulations are understood  
and agreed to in the submission of this application.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of WSALC Member (or Spouse if deceased)

This is to certify that the above named WSALC Parent, Grandparent or Guardian  
is/was a Member in good standing in NALC Branch # \_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Branch President or Secretary

I certify that the foregoing information is correct to the best of my knowledge  
and that I have included all required items with this application.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Applicant



# DIVIDED WE FALL

*State Legislative Liaison Ray Johnson*

It amazes me to see the country we have become. I remember a time when we could all have a political discussion and not leave the room angry and yelling at each other. We need to take a break from the rhetoric of the news and once again find common ground. I deleted all of my Social Media accounts because of the friction it was creating within my extended family. Unfortunately, we seem to have created a world where our political beliefs have morphed into our moral and personal beliefs. I think it's time we put some perspective into the reason we really need to stay political, it's our jobs. The question we all need to ask ourselves is this; does it really matter what party is elected if they want to destroy our livelihood?

How many out there know what H. Res 2382 is? How many of our Congressional Representatives have signed onto it? Or for that matter, what a resolution is? How many members are there on the Board of Governors, or for that matter, what is the Board of Governors? I bet most of you could tell me how many points, touchdowns, or runs your favorite sports team scored.

The sad part is that many of us have a false sense of security when it comes to our jobs. I mean the post office has been around longer than our Constitution right? You need to

ask yourself one simple question; what will you do if one day the Postal Service is dissolved and you no longer have a job? Could it happen? I hope it does not, so I am doing my part and trying to keep up with all the legislation that affects my job. You should do the same.

Now back to H.Res 2382, this is the resolution that repeals the law forcing us to pre-pay future retiree's health care. It currently has 276 co-sponsors, and remarkably all but one Representative from Washington State has signed onto it. Those of you living in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Congressional District, which is located in the southwestern part of our state and represented by Jaime Herrera Butler. She is the only Rep from our state not signed onto it. I would suggest that all of you that live in her district call her and ask her to sign on that resolution.

Think about it, we would have all ten of our Representatives signed onto an important piece of legislation that could help us get back on a path to a stable financial future. In other words, Washington State would be united on a piece of legislation to help preserve our future.

Maybe this might be the first step towards the old saying of "united we stand", and the "divided we fall" part will be nothing but a distant memory.

**In other words,  
Washington State would  
be united on a piece of  
legislation to help pre-  
serve our future.**

## WHEW!

*Secretary-Treasurer Holly Curatolo*



You know that feeling you get when you accomplish something? It's that full-body deep sigh of relief. That's how I felt when the State Association finished its LM-3 reports. Yay! One less thing to stress about.

I had an idea of the magnitude of the secretary position, but goodness, was this ever an eye opener. There is so much to do and to keep track of. Kudos to all of my predecessors for holding down the position. Thank you for all that you have done. My goal is to let my fellow brothers and sisters know where we are financially for the state, and what has been accomplished, along with what is coming up.

Our LM-3 report has been filed timely for the year. Brian Wiggins and I have worked diligently with our accountant, Andrea Skinner. She definitely is a lifesaver. She has also helped us to amend our LM-3s that needed to be corrected from the past few years. As of the beginning of November,

this task has been completed. Right now, she is amending our 941 reports. Andrea has also helped to reconcile all of our accounts going back to 2014. This also encompasses the regional account. I will be reconciling the accounts from June 2019 through December 2019. The plan is to go into our next meeting, and to be able to state that all of the books are in order, including having all of our receipts turned in.

I want to thank our trustees for being patient with me as I learn this position and to know what is required of me. I also want to thank Brian Wiggins and Toby Swank for letting me vent, or be a sounding board when I am trying to understand what is being asked. Also, thanks to Mark Myers for being my go-to person when it comes to questions about the secretary position. And lastly, but definitely not least, to my fellow branch members of Branch 1104, thank you for allowing me to take on this role. You all give me the strength to keep pushing forward, even when it feels like I'm beating myself against a brick wall. You guys are the best.

# RETIREES TO GET 1.6% COLA IN 2020

*Director of Retired Members Jo Ann Pyle*



**R**etired Federal employees and entitled surviving family members of deceased Federal employees and retirees will receive a Cost-of-Living Adjustment (COLA) effective December 1, 2019, which will be reflected in their benefit payable January

2, 2020. Under the Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS) the COLA will be 1.6 percent for those who have received benefits for at least one year. The 1.6 percent increase was determined by computing the percentage increase in the Consumer Price Index (CPI) for urban wage earners and clerical workers from the third quarter average of 2018 to the third quarter average 2019, as provided by the U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Under the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS) the COLA will be 1.6 percent for those who have received benefits for at least one year. This amount was derived from the same CPI comparison as CSRS.

FERS Cost-of-Living Adjustments are not provided un-

til age 62, except for disability, survivor benefits, and other special provision retirements. FERS disability retirees get the adjustment, except when they are receiving a disability annuity based on 60 percent of their high-3 average salary. Also, under FERS, if you have a CSRS component, the component is subject to the CSRS COLA calculation. FERS survivors receive the FERS increase on their entire annuity, even where component service is involved.

To get the full COLA, a retiree or survivor annuity must have begun no later than December 31, 2018. If not, the increase is prorated under both retirement plans. Prorated accounts receive one-twelfth of the increase for each month they received benefits. For example, if the benefit commenced November 30, 2019 the prorated COLA would be one-twelfth of the full COLA.

Under both retirement plans, benefits are paid on the first business day of the month after the month in which they accrue. Benefits which accrue in December 2019 are payable on January 2, 2020.

Math makes my head hurt. I think I'll go shopping!

## *Lester from Page 8*

Here's a pro tip: on your way up to Bellingham, take exit 231 and drive into town via Chuckanut Drive. It only costs a few extra minutes, and you will be treated to one of America's most beautiful scenic byways, with jaw-dropping views of Puget Sound and the San Juan Islands to the west.

Now for the details: The convention hotel is the Four Points by Sheraton, located at 714 Lakeway Drive (360-671-1011). As of now, the convention room block is FULL. We have negotiated a second room block at the nearby Airport Best Western, at 3985 Bennett Drive (360-676-7700). This hotel is close to I-5 and is a hop, skip and a jump to the convention hotel, which is also located just off of I-5. Room rates for this block are at \$96 per night (slightly cheaper than the convention hotel) and, I'm told, include a continental breakfast. The hotel will offer a shuttle service to the convention hotel although the frequency and capacity of the shuttle bus is unknown at this time. Delegates flying into the convention may find this option useful as it is near the airport.

The golf tournament will be held on Thursday at 1:00 pm at Sudden Valley Golf Course, on the shores of beautiful Lake Whatcom. The price is \$85 per player and will include a BBQ lunch prior to teeing off. Stay tuned, for golf tournament registration and convention meal/banquet information. See you soon!

*The Officers of the  
Washington State  
Association of Letter  
Carriers would like  
to wish our members  
and their families  
the happiest of  
holidays and  
continued  
prosperity into the  
New Year!*

*The Washington State* **LETTER CARRIER**  
 21110 46th Ave SE  
 Bothell WA 98021-7930  
**ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED**

**NON-PROFIT ORG.**  
**U.S. POSTAGE**  
**PAID**  
 Seattle, WA  
 Permit No. 1965

# COME ON UP TO BELLINGHAM!

*North Sound Branch 450 President Ron Lester*

**T**o many, the 2020 State Convention happening May 14th-17<sup>th</sup> may feel far in the future. But for the convention committee of North Sound 450 it's approaching fast (maybe a little too fast!). Our committee has been working hard to navigate the ins and outs of hosting our first State Convention in 29 years (29 years!!). We hope the branches of the State Association are planning to send a lot of delegates to visit our beautiful city.

"But National Convention is in Hawaii this year! And Regional RAP is in Alaska!" I know, I know, it's going to be a spendy year for many branches. But what more affordable way is there to be active in your Union than to send your members to State Convention?

If you haven't heard yet, beer tourism is a thing in our city. We offer 13 local breweries, each serving a unique selection of craft beer, in addition to four local cider houses and several taprooms for visitors to explore. And if delicious craft beer isn't your thing- **SEEK PROFESSIONAL HELP IMMEDIATELY!** I'm kidding, Bellingham also offers a plethora of shops, eateries, nooks, and crannies to check out for the teetotalers amongst us. Come early, and stay late!

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## 2020 WSALC State Convention Bellingham May 14-17



For more information visit [WSALC.org](http://WSALC.org)  
 Follow the link for group rate hotel  
 booking and reservations.

## Important NALC Dates

**Basic Steward College, Gold Bar ..... March 1-5, 2020**  
**Statewide Training, Wenatchee..... March 20-22 , 2020**  
**NALC Food Drive ..... May 9, 2020**  
**WA State Convention, Bellingham ..... May 14-17, 2020**  
**NALC National Convention, Honolulu, HI ..... August 17-21, 2020**  
**Intermediate Steward College, Gold Bar..... September 13-17, 2020**

Please check [wsalc.org](http://wsalc.org) for the most current event scheduling information.

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Questions, Corrections or Content  
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