

849 EXPRESS

National Association of Letter Carriers Branch 849 ♦ Fort Collins, Colorado ♦ Volume 13, Issue 2 ♦ June 2017

Local talks next once contract is ratified

Who would have thought, 9 o'clock starts — because management can't schedule clerks or get the mail to us on time. How much more frustrating can it get? If only we could file grievances on poor management. The only recourse we have is when they also violate another part of the contract as a result of the late mail. But ultimately, management has the

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Danielle Fake-Moorman



right to mismanage within the scope of Article 3. Which is very limited. We can, however, file grievances on the change in start times. This has been an uphill battle in the past, so please help us with the grievance process and provide a statement to either Stephanie or myself, ASAP.

The Colorado State Convention was held May 19-20 in Montrose. Thank you again for voting me in as a Delegate to our State Convention. National Director of Retirees Ron Watson was in attendance. It was an election year for the state officers. I was elected as the Vice President of the State Association, and Stephanie Lafave-Kiel was elected as an executive board member to the state association. The new positions will increase the knowledge we have and allow us to help other offices and branches.

Business was conducted, and there were some changes to the state by-laws regarding the Scholarship Fund. Our State Auxiliary used to manage the Scholarship Fund, but it has disbanded and now is managed by the state association.

We had a great training update given by our national business agent, Roger Bledsoe, regarding upcoming LMOU negotiations. Article 30 of the National Agreement allows for local implementation of 22 specific items listed in the agreement. We have a few choices: choose to leave our local as it is; management requests to open our local for negotiations; or our local branch requests to open negotiations. If either party requests to open negotiations, it must be done and in good faith. Again, our goal is to be prepared. Once we have a new National Agreement, we will have only 30 days to

Carriers Stamp Out Hunger in record totals



Jose Ibarra unloads donations May 13 from the Letter Carriers' Food Drive. Fort Collins and Loveland offices combined for over 73,000 pounds of donations. More photos on Pages 4-5

sign off on our LMOU and have it negotiated. In our last newsletter we included surveys on what you would like to see changed or made better in our LMOU. We only received a only handful of responses. Ideas were provided on how to better include CCAs into our local agreement, as now it may be required per the new tentative national agreement. Our local management has always fought us on this.

If you have no idea what our LMOU is, please go on our website and review it. We plan on opening our local for negotiations to at the very least make Annual Leave Bidding smoother with regard to CCAs being included. We will make every possible ef-

fort to get this negotiated. While we would like to get everything we ask for, remember it is a negotiation. Times have changed, and our jobs have become more challenging. We are all aware of how management changes, so we need an LMOU that has the carriers' best interests in mind, no matter who the managers are.

With our new Tentative National Agreement, we have a lot of questions. The new agreement looks like a great compromise. As always, a negotiated agreement is going to be far better than

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Last punch

David Ham, far left, and Diane Adams made their final clock rings earlier this year. Ham retired after 32½ years of service, while Adams had about 23 years.

Active Union Members

Thanks for being part of the NALC, we truly need to say united!

Robert Abbott, Brian Abell, John Adams, Jim Allen, John Altizer, Aaron Arns, Steven Artlip, Kory Atkinson, Joshua Barlass, Natasha Barlass, Betsiann Beutler, William Bond, Lauren Bowyer, Sean Bowyer, Pamela Budkovich, Lois Buffington, Brian Buster, Chris Cabral, Marcus Calico, Kent Chao, Nicholas Christiansen, Travis Cobb, Christopher Collins, Charles Corbett, Gina Cordova, Paul Couperus, Karen Czarnecki-Kelly, Dariush Davarpanah, Rochelle Deckard, Claude Decrescenzo, Martin De Los Santos, Candace Dolph-Garcia, Paul Eaton, Jenilee Elsbernd, Gordon Emslie, Scotty Faggans, Danielle Fake-Moorman, Gary Fink, Amanda Friar, Jason Garcia, Janae Gaudot, James Geary, Duane Gentz, Danielle Gigliotti, Clay Gomez, Gabriel Gonzales, Virginia Greene, Kayte Hay, Matthew Hefferon, Cristen (Mae) Helms, Lynda Hickey, Kathryn Hicklin, Karin Higgins, Gerald Hoffman, Mark Hoffman, Jose Ibarra, Lili Jacobs, Kristin Joachim, Mike Jones, Christopher Keller, Dennis Ketterling, James Kunze, Stephanie Lafave, Eric Ligothe, David Livingston, Paul Markley, Clint Massey, Michael Mattson, Kevin McDaniel, Damian McEntee, Alex McEwan, Bryan McIntyre, Fred Mendez Jr., Stephen Meyers, Tara Millward, Joe Nagel, Aaron Nation, Nancy Nolte, Barbara Olarnik, Rex Paul, Robert Pierdzioch, Todd Perkuhn, Nicholas Petenes, Boo Pinson, Patricia Porter, Nicholas Pratt, Buzz Puschnig, Jacqueline Raynes, Rik Raynes, Dennis Reffner, Donald Reinholz, Omar Rivera, Jeff Rokosz, James Sambrano, Jim Sanchez, Joseph Shroba, Kent Simpson, Zach Smith, Drew Stivers, Scott Summerhays, Elyse Toole, Charles Trainer, Karen Ullvang, Chris Vandewalle, Lauren Vandewalle, Rico Vasquez, Suzanne Wadsworth, Amanda Weirich, Jerry Wetzler, Melissa Whitehouse, Jason Williams, Frederick Yates, Brian Zentmire.

Retired Union Members

GOLD CARD/LIFETIME MEMBERS: Paul Kipping (62 years), Roger Cogburn (56 years), Ray Neel (53 years), Wally Liggett (51 years).

Rick Atkinson, Michael Bezenar, Don Brown, Mike Casey, Dennis Custer, Rita DeWitt, John Edwards, John Franz, John Gallegos, Steve Graham, Melvin Hartung, William Hergenreter, Grover Hill, Stephen Hill, Thomas Hunsader, Cynthia Kestrel, Bobby Kimberling, Bob Lauer, William Mares, Tom Meek, Laurie Meek, Ceci Morgan, Michelle Nickolson, Jerome Nycz, Nancy Olsen, Mark Orłowski, John Rinne, Tommy Robinson, Paul Roggy, Leonard Russ, William Russell, Don Schelly, Michael Scobey, Anita Smith, Jack Spies, Ron Sundsted, Judy Sweek, Bob Vise, Gary Winkler.

RETIREE BREAKFAST: 8 a.m. 2nd Monday of the month, The Breakfast Club, 121 W. Monroe Drive, Fort Collins.

Non-Members sign up a non-member, be eligible to win a \$40 Gift Card

Michael Abeyta, Dean Biggs, David Breault, Lyn Brown, Wayne Brown, Caren Campbell, Nancy Fitzgerald, Jerry Gaudot, Michael Kelly, Dusty Koenig, Dan Manson, Ronda McCall, Josh Mayes, Anna Null, Bill Offerman, Scott Roth, Patricia Schneidmiller, Brian Smith, Richard Spring, Garrett Stone, Donna Wagner, Jeff Wallace

In memoriam

Louis Gage Shiers, 52, a letter carrier at both Main and Old Town stations in Fort Collins, passed away February 19. He was born May 31, 1964 in Scottsbluff, Neb., to Garold and Loretta Shiers. He graduated from Scottsbluff High School in 1982, attended Idaho State University, and received his electrical degree from ITT Technical College. Louis served in the US Navy in from 1986 to 1991, where he earned the Sea Service Deployment Ribbon (2), Coast Guard Special Operations Service Ribbon, National Defense Service Medal, and Southwest Asia Service Medal w/Bronze Star, along with many others. He started his career with the United States Postal Service August 6, 1994. Louis enjoyed hunting, fishing, snowboarding and most of all family and friends. He is survived by his wife, Jimmi Lynn Shiers, Dustin (wife Kay), Adam (wife Amanda), Corey (wife Blanca), Trevor and Ethan Shiers; parents, Garold and Loretta Shiers; brother, Daniel Shiers; sister, Tina Anderson; and grandchildren, Ed Louis Shiers and Novah Shiers.



911 call saves fellow carrier's life

Paul Couperus felt awful.

About halfway through his route March 31, he was feeling very tired, and he was aching. His arms began to hurt. He felt bad enough that he decided to return to the post office and then drive himself to Urgent Care.

"I said, 'Oh man, here comes the flu.' I swear it was the flu. I pulled in, and I'm getting worse and worse."

It wasn't the flu. Couperus was having a heart attack.

When Dennis Ketterling returned from his route, he noticed Couperus standing alongside his vehicle, holding onto either side of the driver's door and staring down at his seat. Ketterling cracked a comment, and Couperus shot back, "I'm not feeling good!"

"He was looking distressed," Ketterling said. "What got my attention was he kept walking to the sidewalk and back to his LLV, pacing back and forth. I think he knew something was wrong. He said both of his arms hurt and his chest hurt."

At that point, Ketterling made the decision to call 911. And then they argued. "He grabbed my wrist and said, 'You're not calling 911.' He probably told me that six or seven times."

"We had words," Couperus said. "I'm not gonna repeat what was said."

As it turned out, that call may well have saved Couperus' life. "They wheeled me out of the ambulance straight to the operating room, and I said 'Whoa, I'm in trouble. It's not the flu'. First, they had to unclog an artery right away. It was serious, but I didn't die.



Paul Couperus, left, and Dennis Ketterling

There was not a lot of heart damage. They got it right in time."

Couperus returned to work just five weeks later, with a few lifestyle changes. Pizza and burgers have been replaced with salads, yogurt and carrots. The three dozen donuts he brought in every Friday for fellow carriers have ceased.

He had extra motivation for returning so soon. His daughter, Kaitlyn, was due to graduate April 29 from the University of Cincinnati, and he wasn't about to miss it. "I had a graduation to go to," he said, "and I made it. I was worried I wasn't gonna make it."

Ketterling's actions that day have been called heroic, but he'll have none of that. "I think that's ridiculous. It's not like I gave him mouth-to-mouth or anything. I dialed 911, that's all I did."

But ask Couperus if Ketterling is a hero, and without hesitation he replies, "Yes."

Joe Shroba, 849 Express Editor

Convention shows members' commitment and involvement

Attending the 2017 State Convention for the NALC was a great experience. We heard quite a bit about the new tentative national agreement. It contains a lot of improvements for our CCAs. Better pay, improvements for scheduling annual leave and conversion language are the highlights. More information can be found on the NALC website or app.

The contract still needs to be ratified by a vote of all carriers, and that process should begin soon. Our national, state and local leaders recommend we approve this contract.

It was interesting to see the number of retired letter carriers that were in attendance at the state convention and are still actively involved with their state and local branches. What this indicates to me is that we need more involvement from newer members of our union. Our newer members are the future leaders of the union, and with their involvement the NALC will remain strong. Whether you are a CCA or a regular carrier, you can help by getting involved. If you are interested, just talk to an officer or steward, or attend a meeting and let us know.

Jim Kunze, Trustee

CCAs: Think twice before using personal vehicle

As you all know, we have had a new wave of CCAs join us. In fact, we currently have a staggering 43 CCAs.

Many CCAs have come asking about using their own vehicles. I always tell them the same thing: Be very careful about doing this. It is not a good idea to use your own vehicle at work for many reasons. Check with your private insurance company, as you might not be covered using your vehicle for work. If you break down or get into an accident, you are liable for everything. Don't expect help from your supervisors. Their concern is for the mail, not your car – which is, in many cases, your livelihood.

Once management knows you have a vehicle you are willing to use, they will not be all right with you discontinuing this practice. Several CCAs who have been using their own vehicles are upset as they look around and see brand new people driving postal vehicles while they continue to use their own. Many new CCAs were told

that if they want hours, they will have to use their own vehicles. You are not required to do so; however, management does have the right to schedule CCAs however they see fit.

It is important to do whatever you can to get past your 90 working days or 120 calendar days. Once this time is done, you should have been here long enough to be comfortable with mail delivery basics and be past your probation. By this point, you should have received your uniform allowance letter. If you do not, let the stewards know. The steward at the Old Town office is Branch 849 President Danielle Fake-Moorman, and the steward at the Main Post Office is Stephanie LaFave-Kiel. You have a right to your stewards. Remember, if you ever are in a situation where you are feeling bullied by your supervisors, please let us know. If you are given an investigative interview, ask for a steward.

Stephanie LaFave-Kiel
Informal A Steward





Letter Carriers' Food Drive brings in more record numbers



Carriers from the Fort Collins and Loveland Post Offices collected more than 73,000 pounds of food during the annual Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive. The Old Town office brought in more than 17,000 pounds, surpassing the record it set in 2013. Final totals should push the overall mark past 75,000 pounds.



Together, we can influence congressional action

I would like to thank the branch for sending me as a delegate to the 2017 State Convention in Montrose. This was my first state convention, and each time I go to a new event I am truly amazed at how many people are involved to make our union as strong as it can be. I have decided to focus this article on a subject that I really despise — politics. I have a feeling the majority of people share my sentiment about politics but, unfortunately, for our jobs it is a necessary evil.

Everybody has a boss, and that person has a boss and so on. Some businesses have a board of directors who ultimately decide the fate of the company. Our company, the U.S. Postal Service, has a board of directors called the The United States Congress, and as we all know these officials are elected by the people of the United States. Congress has tremendous power and can decide our fate with a single bill. Everything from eliminating Saturday delivery to eliminating door-to-door delivery, Congress can change whatever it wants providing the President will sign the bill. Seeing how one political party controls all government branches, there's a good chance the President will sign bills that end up on his desk.

National Director of Retirees Ron Watson spoke at the state convention. The mood was upbeat for most of his presentation as Ron is a great and lively speaker, but then he started talking about the proposed budget the President has announced. The mood in the room changed very quickly. In that budget, all federal employees are in for a rude awakening. First of all, federal employees will be required to pay more toward their retirement annuities and their employers will pay less. The employee will gradually pay 1% more each year until they are paying 6% into the fund and the Postal Service is paying 6%. Employees hired before 2013 are currently paying .8% and the Postal Service pays 11.2%. After 5 years, each side will be paying 6%. So each pay period we will go from paying \$18 to \$138, which means we will be taking home about \$300 a month less. Keep in mind that employees will not be getting any more paid to them as far as their pension goes, and currently the pension fund has one TRILLION dollars in it. So why are we going to be required to pay more for our retirement? As Ron put it, "Someone has to pay for those tax cuts for the rich."

Secondly, some employees know about the FERS Social Security supplement given to employees who have reached minimum retirement age with enough years of service but aren't able to collect Social Security as they haven't reached age 62. Using myself as an example, I am eligible to retire at age 57 with 30 years of service. I cannot collect Social Security until age 62, but with this supplement I can collect approximately 75% of what my Social Security benefit will be at age 62, and then at age 62 the supplement ends and I would then be able to collect regular Social Security. It's a great perk for federal workers. Well, in a nutshell, under the new administration's proposed budget, this great supplement is gone. If an employee hasn't retired before this new budget would go into effect they will no longer get the supplement. Once again, the trust

fund is doing great and the balance actually increases each month. So why are we are getting another \$600-\$800 monthly benefit taken from us by politicians? "To give a tax cut to the rich."

Retirees, you aren't safe either. Under this plan you will no longer receive raises or COLAs. And finally, employees' retirement benefits are currently calculated based on "high 3", the average of their three highest years of earnings. Now the retirees' benefits will be based on "high 5", the average of their five highest years of earnings, which almost always results in a lower benefit.

I left this presentation the same way other people did, very angry. We all work hard for the money we make. None of us are going to get rich working for the Post Office, but the great benefits we all have make the job appealing to so many people. Hearing that politicians who make \$175K a year with a lifelong pension want to cut into my take home pay and reduce my benefits really insults me, and it should insult you too. So what can we do? The simple thing is to vote! And encourage people who aren't voters to vote as well. Vote for the candidates (regardless of political affiliation) who are not going to look to strip away our pay and benefits. Do research on the people you are voting for, find out their feelings on labor and the Postal Service and go from there. Vote for your own livelihood and for the livelihood of your families. Contact your representatives, voice your opinions and encourage your friends and family to do the same. Congress works for us, and we've seen how they can change their minds and ultimately their vote on a particular subject when they are getting calls and emails about it.

We have to be able to get people elected into office who are friends of the Postal Service and letter carriers. Our union dues cannot be used for political purposes. But we have to have funds to get our NALC representatives in the doors of these politician's offices so they can hear what we have to say. We can help the cause to elect friends of letter carriers to Congress and get incumbents already there to listen to us by donating to the Letter Carrier Political Fund. I hate this subject mainly because of what's happened to our politics as a whole, but I do donate \$5 a pay period to this fund. After the convention, I increased my donation to \$10 per pay period. It's a small price to pay to get people on our side. I encourage all of you to start donating today if you aren't already a contributor. \$5 a per period is a small amount to keep our lifestyles and to keep our rights and benefits from slowly eroding under the arms of politicians who have never had to work for a living. You can donate using Postalease on liteblue.com or nalc.org. If you have questions, you can contact me at Old Town or Gerry Hoffman at the Main office and we can walk you through the sign-up process. I want to make sure this proposed budget never makes it out of its first reading. Congress is our boss. I personally don't like our boss and would like to fire them and get a new boss. My donation and yours will help to make that happen, and after all ... who wouldn't like to fire their boss!

Brian C. Buster, Branch 849 Secretary

LETTER CARRIER POLITICAL FUND

Supporters/Participants: Aaron Arns, Rick Atkinson, Brian Buster, Dennis Custer, Danielle Fake-Moorman, Virginia Greene, Gerry Hoffman, Kristin Joachim, Dennis Ketterling, Fred Mendez, Paul Roggy, Jeff Rokosz, Leonard Russ, Bill Russell, Judy Sweek, Karen Ulvang

Thank you all for your added support in the Fight for all of our Jobs!

Clearing up some misconceptions about new contract

As all of you must have heard by now, the National Association of Letter Carriers and the U.S. Postal Service have completed a new tentative National Agreement. This is great news, because the tentative agreement was negotiated, not arbitrated.

Some highlights of this new contract include a narrowing of the compensation gap between City Carrier Assistants and Career Letter Carriers, regular general wage increases, cost of living increases (COLAs) and, most importantly, protections against outsourcing and layoffs.

Since the news of a new tentative agreement, there have been many questions and some misinterpretations of what this contract means for all of us. Some people have gone on social media to bash this contract without first understanding all that it says.

Please allow me to clarify some of the facts and address some concerns.

Many CCAs have asked if they will be converted to regular after 30 months of employment. What the tentative agreement actually says is that upon ratification there would be a one-time conversion to career status for CCAs with a relative standing date at least 30 months prior to the ratification date. This means it will only happen once and will, in fact, be different when compared to offices of different size. For instance, in a 200 work-year office, eligible CCAs will be converted to Full-Time Regular career

status in their installation. For those in an office of 125 and 100 work years, eligible CCAs will be converted to Part-Time Flexible career status in their installation, rather than waiting to convert to Full-Time Regular status as a CCA.

Another misconception is that this contract is terrible because although we will receive raises, our health insurance premiums are also increasing, making it a wash. This is not accurate. Yes, we are getting raises and cost-of-living increases, and yes, insurance premiums will go up. However, if you do the math rather than jumping to conclusions, you will see that the insurance increase is minimal compared to the wage increases.

For those of you who have never been through a new contract, ratification is a process by which the membership votes on whether to keep this tentative agreement or not. That is why we call it a tentative agreement. The membership is all of you who are NALC members. Your vote is very important, and I urge you to read the tentative agreement very carefully instead of relying on someone else's interpretation before voting. Do your own research, ask questions, and vote. This information can be found on the NALC app under the news tab. Your stewards are available to help as well.

Stephanie LaFave

Informal A Steward, Branch 849 Vice President

President's report

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an arbitrated one. If you have any questions, please let me know ASAP, as I will be attending the National Rap Session June 13-16, which is exclusively to provide information and answer questions regarding the tentative agreement. If you haven't had a chance to review this, please go onto www.NALC.org, or log on to the app on your phone. In the meantime, I will do my best to answer questions you may have.

As branch leaders, stewards and representatives, we have learned from training as well as from previous carriers holding union positions and from our own experiences. Not one of us knows it all, but we do know this: The younger you are in your postal career, the more you have to lose and the more you have to gain. There should not be any excuses for anyone to not be involved. We all have too much to lose. We should be 100% organized, nothing less should be accepted. Help sign up non-members. We need support from everyone who benefits from what the membership provides.

Discipline: Management is handing out Letters of Warning like candy. Some are for Failure to Follow Instructions, some for Failure to Maintain Regular Attendance, and some for Failure to Work in a Safe Manner. The "Just Cause" Principles of Article 16 govern how and what management must PROVE prior to issuing discipline. 90% of the time, management fails to do its job. The other 10%, we have had carriers fail to do their due diligence. If you have an accident, you must report it. When management asks you a question, please make every effort to answer the question with honesty, but not by putting your foot in your mouth. Remember you are still an employee in an investigative interview. Making comments such as, "Well, it's my sick leave and I'll use it how I want," – this will not reflect favorably in the grievance process. You would simply state, as far as I recall, I was ill, or injured, whichever the case may be.

The problem with management is they go years without issuing any discipline, and then all of a sudden we are aboard the discipline train. You could look the wrong way and they want to dole out letters of warning. Most of the time, at the very least, we can get the discipline reduced to a minimal amount of time on your record, and then it is removed. There are a few instances where we are able to get it removed completely (if what you are accused of didn't happen, for instance, and management can't prove it occurred). Attendance is tricky. Many arbitrators have resolved that unscheduled absences are one of the things management can control. Our biggest argument is the inconsistent enforcement. They seem to only pick on certain carriers, etc.

Management as of late seems to think they can stack unrelated discipline. So if today you get a letter of warning for attendance, they seem to think tomorrow they can issue you a 7 day suspension for failing to report an accident. These are not the same things, and remember one of the Just Cause principles is that discipline must be corrective in nature, not punitive. In short, if you receive ANY discipline, please remember to provide a copy to your steward so we can file a grievance to at the very least reduce the retention of record in your file. Any discipline is automatically on your record for 2 years, unless a grievance is filed within 14 days of you receiving that discipline.

Warm weather is upon us. Remember to keep hydrated, take extra comfort stops as necessary, watch out for kids running in the street and keep an eye out for dogs. There already have been a record number of dog bites this year.

Hope to see you at the next Union meeting, and again at our Annual Branch Picnic August 6 from 2-5 p.m.

In Unity,

Danielle Fake-Moorman

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF LETTER
CARRIERS BRANCH 849

849 EXPRESS
PO BOX 849
FORT COLLINS, CO 80522

Send article submissions to Joe Shroba
Email: jolietjs@gmail.com

Address Service Requested



WE WANT YOUR UNUSED UNIFORMS

Please bring in your older/lightly-used uniforms. We are accepting donations. The uniform closet at Old Town Station is available for donated uniforms to our new members.

We are always looking for ways to raise more money for MDA. If you have any suggestions or would like to set up an event, let Danielle know. For MDA events and information, please contact MDA coordinator Gerry Hoffman. We have had two Texas Hold 'Em Poker Tournament fundraisers this year that raised \$220 for MDA. Danielle Fake-Moorman won the tournament in March, and Greeley Branch President Richard Byrne won in May. All proceeds went to MDA.

Branch 849 Officers

Officers' 2-year terms run through Dec. 31, 2018

- PresidentDanielle Fake-Moorman
- Vice-President (Includes Sergeant at Arms) and Health Benefits Rep Stephanie Lafave-Kiel
- TreasurerVirginia Greene
- SecretaryBrian Buster
- Trustees Paul Couperus, Bill Russell, Jim Kunze

Stewards

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Stephanie Lafave-Kiel
Informal A rep, both offices
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Alternates

Main Post Office: Gerry Hoffman
Old Town Station: Brian Buster, Todd
Perkuhn, Jeff Rokosz, Karen Ulvang,

Stay informed online

In order for you to keep up to date on the latest news concerning our jobs log on to these sites:
www.nalcbranch849.org; Postalreporter.com; NALC.org; UnionPlus.org—Union Members benefits; liteblue.usps.gov
– All of your HR info and discounts for postal employees

Branch Meetings are held at 6 p.m. the 2nd Tuesday of every month, except those Tuesdays following a holiday (it is then moved to the 3rd Tuesday) at 2810 Meadowlark Ave. (basement of church)

On Branch Meeting nights, your dinner is served free of charge and all members present are entered in a drawing for a \$25 gift card!