



The Four Winds

National Weather Service Employees Organization

NWSEO MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Meet NWSEO Member Wayne Weeks

(June 2, 2018) NWSEO continues to collect nominations for our “NWSEO Member Spotlight,” showcasing the work, dedication and talent of our members, inspiring others and connecting all of our union members.



Meet **Wayne Weeks**, NWSEO member since 1979. After 21 years working rotating shifts in NWS offices from Alaska, to Maine, New Hampshire, Virginia, Kansas City, and Camp Springs, Wayne landed a day job at the marine branch of NWS headquarters in Silver Spring, MD. He has served as a NWSEO Regional Vice Chair, Steward, and Vice Steward.

Christy: **Why did you join NWSEO?**

Wayne: I came from a Union family, the United Auto Workers (UAW) Local 664, in Tarrytown, NY. Therefore joining NWSEO, the Union, was somewhat of a natural thing. Thinking back, Dad had one brother who was a full time Union Committee Man, nicknamed, "Honest Jim," and another brother who was a foreman, a manager.

Growing up, every few years there was a strike, and Dad would walk the picket lines until the bargaining negotiations were settled. Part of dues was a strike fund so the workers could at least feed the family until the new contract was signed. Once he told me they had to go on strike a long time to get retirement.

Christy: **How have you benefited from your membership?**

Wayne: I/we all have benefited directly and indirectly. In my first job, there was a matter of being selected for a new position, then the selection was cancelled. I was perplexed and angry, as few details were given me to explain the circumstances. The shop steward accompanied me to visit the Regional Director, and spoke more diplomatically than I would have, and we received courtesy, cooperation and a detailed explanation which I would not have received on my own. Was the RD being nice because they were close friends?

No, it was because there was the background strength of a Union which had the power to file grievances, Unfair Labor Practices or lawsuits, all of which would be costly for the RD.

I have worked in offices, as previously mentioned, where the shop steward was a good intermediary with the supervisor. I have been a shop steward, where I represented the concerns of others to the supervisor. Most of the concerns were regarding scheduling. Such as unfair distribution of shift and holiday work. Usually the concerns are minor and can be resolved without formal complaints. Once a colleague was scheduled to work a Sunday though traveling to a training course early Monday. I suggested to the supervisor that he (the supervisor) work the Sunday so the individual would have family time the day before leaving for the trip. The supervisor had not considered that before, and the change was made. (The guy who got the Sunday off was not an NWSEO member.)

It is worth noting that a number of times some anti-union people change their minds when their jobs are threatened. A colleague - from a CWSU in the 90s - who saw no benefit from the NWSEO for years not only joined, became a steward and worked very hard to advocate the value of their jobs and to keep meteorologists at FAA facilities.

Christy: So there is/was a larger cause here than one person's benefit, like keeping NWS people at FAA offices?

Wayne: Definitely. The NWSEO, through its Political Action Committee, can speak to our Congresspersons, to advocate to keep NWS jobs and NWS services. NOAA can order NWS management to close offices or shrink their staff and services. As a counter to the NOAA or Department of Commerce order, NWSEO can go straight to the Congress and inform them of how the services to their states and people would be harmed, and therefore why funding to keep these services should continue to be approved.

We are so grateful for Wayne's time and dedication to the work he and the members and employees of NWS Headquarters do every day and also, for participating in our *NWSEO Member Spotlight*.

We hope this will be a communication tool for NWSEO Members to get to know each other, from across the nation, connect even more and, together, support each other in our work and in building our membership. **Please submit your *Member Spotlight*, suggestions, and comments to Christy Fox at mediarelations@nwseo.org.**

