



VOLUME 69 No 10

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December 2017

## BRANCH 9'S HOLIDAY PARTY

The Branch 9 Holiday party on Sunday, November 19, 2017 was a great success! Our party was held once again at the New Hope Cinema Grill at 2749 Winnetka Avenue North in New Hope from Noon until 4pm. We had over 115 people in attendance which was a significant increase over last year's numbers.

During this special time of year our focus was on the children and grandchildren of the families of Branch 9 members. A very special guest showed up this year - Santa! He took the time out of his busy schedule to make a special appearance and was

able to stay for the entire event. He listened to all the children's requests for toys, games, etc., and asked each of them if they had been naughty or nice this past year. Of course, every one of them said they had been nice, which Santa already knew. He then handed out candy canes to each of them and they received a holiday themed coloring books. On the big theater screen, we played two holiday themed movies "Santa Claus is Comin' To Town" and "Mr. Magoo's Christmas Carol" and had a wonderful buffet with pizza, chicken wings, meatballs, tator tots and chips and salsa. Everyone seemed to really love the food.

When the event was over all the kids received a bag of candy. Wow, all this for the cost of \$5.00 per person. Betcha didn't think such a fun event could cost so little. Hopefully we'll see more Branch 9 members at next years' holiday party.

I would like to say thank you to Stacy Ellingson, Jim Nelson and Samantha Hartwig for all their help and hard work setting up this event.

Ken Jambois  
Entertainment Chair



Br. 9 Party continued on pg. 6

# RETIREMENTS



*Phil Sheridan and David Wroz (Lake Street) enjoy their last day as carriers with Stewards George Kell and Bruce Okeson. Happy Retirement Phil and David!*



*John Schichel (T Burnett) takes his last punch with Steward David Flynn looking on. Congratulations of your Retirement John!*



*Bob Jensen (Main Office) takes his last punch with Steward Jenna Thro. Enjoy your Retirement Bob!*



*Tim Kleiter (Univeristy) takes his last punch with Steward Tony Winkles. Happy Retirement Tim!*



First and foremost, thank you, members of Branch Nine! My name is Peyton Good, and I am a student who has graduated from

Totino-Grace. In my free time, I like to explore. I appreciate hunting, hiking, and gaining. Two are easily accomplished; when I go hunting, I am able to observe the great outdoors and trudge through muddy swamps. Although gaming is done on its own, it is a great way to pass the time. Now I can hike in Saint Joseph because I will attend Saint John's University in the fall where I plan to major in Computer Science.

**Peyton Good, son of Robert Good (Blaine), is the winner of the 2017 Walter E. Couillard/ Eugene P. McNulty Scholarship of \$2,000**

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The Branch Nine News is a monthly publication of NALC Branch 9, and is published in the interest of and for the members of NALC Branch 9.

The opinions expressed by the writers are not necessarily those of the OFFICERS, or of NALC Branch 9.

Articles MUST be submitted to the editor by the 1st of the month, and must be signed. The Editorial Staff reserves the right to edit or refuse to print articles which are derogatory in nature.

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## Exec Vice President's Report

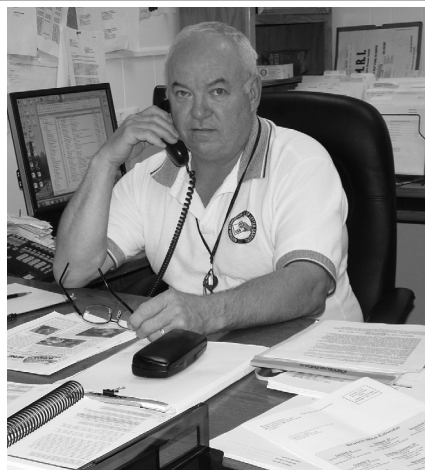
### PIVOTS, OVERTIME & CUSTOMER CONNECT

Mail volume is down, revenue is down, overtime is increasing, management is requiring carriers to pivot more, vehicle issues, management wants to adjust routes and management doesn't care about our concerns or personal lives. I wanted to make sure that you were informed about all the buzz that is going around the post office these days. Just in case, you hadn't heard these things before. Most of the presentations by management usually have at least one of the above components in them. As much as the parties have been looking for new approaches, to address these serious issues, we sometimes need to go back to the constants in our lives. At home, that constant is our families and friends. At work, we have our jobs. Letter Carriers are still delivering the mail on the route that they are assigned on in the method prescribed by ... the National Agreement.

As a carrier, managers, supervisors, may come and go. Rules and practices are added to or deleted from; but everything starts with the National Agreement. In the current environment of declining mail volumes, some things are beyond the control of the rank and file letter carrier other than to use mail as much as we can in our daily lives. However, Article 34 of the National Agreement recognizes a fair day's work for a fair day's pay. Management does have the right to have carriers pivot when mail is light. Pivoting is defined in the Postal Operations Manual as a method of utilizing the undertime of one or several carriers to perform duties on a temporary vacant route or to cover absences. Article 41.1.C.A provides that full-time carriers are to work

their duty assignment as posted. If management, asks you to do more than you believe you can in 8 hours, request a PS Form 3996 and let them know the reason you are requesting auxiliary assistance or overtime. If your request is denied, ask for instructions about when you can't get the work done in 8 hours. Make sure that you request a copy of your PS Form 3996. If management's instructions are unclear, request to speak with your steward.

The rules regarding overtime are still found in the National Agreement. There has not been a substantive change regarding overtime since 1984. Even in today's environment, Article 8 Section 5 of the National Agreement still controls who works overtime and when. If a regular carrier wants to work overtime, they have the ability to declare this two weeks prior to the beginning of each quarter by signing either the overtime desired list or the work assignment list. If a carrier does not wish to work overtime, protections are in place to prevent them from having to in the National Agreement. There is no language in the Contract that states an 8-hour carrier cannot work overtime, only language that states before they are required management is to follow the provisions of Article 8.5. The contract did not change when unit managers were required to seek authorization before bringing an OTDL carrier on their non-scheduled day. If you are not on the overtime desired list or work assignment list and are required to work overtime talk to your steward to ensure that the overtime provisions of the National Agreement were handled properly. The purpose of the overtime desired/work



**Darrell Maus**

assignment list is to protect those non-overtime carriers from having to work overtime when others are available.

The National Agreement does not have a provision that deals with the revenue of the Postal Service or the declining mail volume or the growth in the parcel deliveries. Revenue is an area the individual carriers can have an impact through Customer Connect. Carriers are encouraged to be alert to our delivery customers and look for openings (leads) that could result in increased revenues to the Postal Service. If you observe a potential lead, follow the program process and submit a lead. It is not a requirement for carriers to know the rates for mailers or the process totally, it is merely passing a name of a business or customer and contact information through the lead process and let the professionals that work this department take over. It is the goal of the program that we have a 100% participation by carriers/stations and submit at least one lead per year. While it is much easier for carriers on certain routes with businesses we never know what exists as far as possible revenue till we get the contact information entered for any address. Participate and make a difference.

**WISHING YOU ALL A SAFE AND  
HAPPY HOLIDAY SEASON!**

## North Suburban Retiree Breakfast

Denny's in Otsego is the place to be on the first Friday of the month at 8:30 am. The Retirees gather in the front room to share their stories. This December, the tables were filled, and two hours of conversations merely filled everyone with anticipation of attending next month's breakfast.

Who would be there? There are regulars and there are always a few new faces. People you haven't seen in such a long time, that you have to think a while about what their name is. Once you hear their voice, oh yeah, it all comes back quickly. What will they talk about or will there be a little gossip to spark the conversation? Trips, families, politics (lots to talk about these days, wink, wink), new jobs, how great the NALC Health Plan

works, the weather (ever heard of a letter carrier that didn't discuss the weather, even into retirement) and everyone has a scoop on a different old work mate.

The waitress keeps the cups brimming with fresh hot coffee and the food is yummy. Conversations are upbeat and not like the old work days of complaints. Thanks to the Union our retirement benefits are contributing to a great life after 30 plus years of hard work.

Jon Frick is the go to person of the group. He claims to have 400 contacts in his directory. Come join us – See you soon!

Carol Garnto  
Retired Carrier



**Back Row Left to Right: Duane Guse, baby is Kathy's granddaughter Ella Inman, Carlos Garcia, Herm Weidner, Jon Frick, Carol Garnto, Theresa Oelrich, Kathy Swanson, David Burandt**

**Front Row Left to Right: John McPartlan, John Meyer, Diane Hall, John Rooney, LeRoy Pohl**

## Satchel Stories

I was walking through a long hallway on my way to the apartment mailboxes when a resident came out of his door and saw me walking towards him. "Oh, are you the mailman?" Looking down at my full uniform, mailbag and arms full of mail I replied, "What gave me away?"



Jericho Tabor  
Golden Valley Carrier

**THANK YOU** FOR THE  
TURKEYS, TURKEYS, TURKEYS,  
TURKEYS, TURKEYS, TURKEYS,  
TURKEYS, TURKEYS, TURKEYS!



The Branch 9 Turkey give away (we raffled off 50 turkeys) at the November GMM was a success because of the help we received from West Edina Steward Jeff Reed and Darren from Cub Foods. Thanks again for all your help!



## Director of Retirees Report

Get Ready ... Get Set ....

Happiest of holiday greetings to all our retired sisters and brothers — and to those of you who are joining or soon to join our ranks.

In the event you've been living in a cave (or delivering parcels 12 hours per day), here are our figures for 2018. They are relatively happy ones, for a change. All our FERS and CSRS retirees can expect a 2.0% COLA, our largest cost-of-living increase in six years. Further, the cost of Part B Medicare will remain the same for most of us in the coming year, at \$134 per month. At least those figures are far better than last year. Still, as one foundation calculated, seniors generally have lost about 1/3 of our purchasing power since 2000. This is due to various factors, such as the way our COLA is calculated, Congressional indifference, and so forth.

So many pieces of news are still not settled. As I write this, the budgetary and tax bills are still in flux before Congress. Even after they pass (or fail), many issues of vital interest to us are yet to be determined in 2018. Stay vigilant, stay interested, stay involved.

Yes, I mean in politics. I know, that's a dirty word to some of you. But I just attended (December 2) a Teamster rally, where 500 people showed up who are in danger of losing their pensions or having them cut in half. That MIGHT BE US in the not-so-distant future. 2018 will be a make-or-break year for the nation. Educate yourselves on issues, and vote next November for YOUR INTERESTS. To paraphrase a meme, I recently saw on Facebook:

- You're "just not that into politics"?***
- Your boss is.**
- Your landlord is.**
- Your insurance company is.**



**Rodney Anderson**

**And every day they use their political power to keep your pay low, raise your rent, and deny you coverage.**

**It's time to get into politics.**

Have a terrific holiday season!

Rotten Rodney Anderson  
Director of Retirees

### Welcome New Members

Kyle Johnson  
Ben Manthe  
Benjamin Murray  
Ariel Riley  
Daniel Schnabel  
Karen Stennes  
Lucas Thompson  
Kathleen Vasquez  
Emily Wild  
Jon Wurm

### In Memoriam

Greg Greenwell  
Earl Weisel

## 2018 National Convention Delegates

- Christa Abraham
- Rodney Anderson
- Bob Baird
- Connie Beissel
- Angelina Brown
- Martin R. Cornell
- Melia Derrick
- Pamela K. Donato
- Stacey Ellingson
- David L. Flynn
- Troy Fredenburg
- Vince Froehlich
- JoAnn Gilbaugh
- Samantha Hartwig
- James Hendrickson
- Renee Hickerson
- Caitlin Hill
- Ken Jambois
- Jeffrey Johnson
- Catherine M. Jones
- Jason Karnopp
- Pat Keeler
- Bradley J. Knutson
- Cheryl LaCroix
- Lenny Larson
- Crystal Lerma
- Johnna Lush
- Darrell Maus
- Ned McCraine
- Mike Meier
- James Moreside
- Jim Nelson
- Andy Olufson
- Mark Olufson
- Lisa O'Neill
- Patrick Paplow
- Robb Petersburg
- Jeff Reed
- Darwin "Joe" Rian
- Joseph Tiemann
- Joel Turrentine
- Barry Weiner
- Paul Woida
- Mike Zagaros

# BRANCH 9'S HOLIDAY PARTY











Br. 9 Retired Letter Carrier  
 Kerry Herdine  
 Home: 952.854.2655  
 Cell: 612.805.8407

# AME'S UNIFORMS

## OUR BUSINESS IS MAKING YOU LOOK GOOD!

We offer "Life of the Garment" guarantee.  
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 Take waist in/out and change hem length

**Ame's Uniforms are a UNION PREFERRED vendor**



## OIG Integrity Tests

By Chris Wittenburg (NBA)

In recent Holiday Seasons we have reported that there have been Postal employees disciplined and even removed for using gift cards that they found in collection boxes, on the street, and in some cases given to them by customers saying they found the gift cards in front of the Post Office. In all of these instances, the gift cards were planted by the OIG. Our office has learned that the OIG is again planting gift cards to test Letter Carriers.

In the recent examples that we have heard of, the OIG are conducting "integrity tests". In these tests, the OIG agents are placing gift cards that have values of \$25 - \$50 in the outgoing mail slots, collections boxes and even in single-family mailboxes. As Letter Carriers, it is common for our customers to leave gifts in their mailbox even outside of the holidays, and we normally accept those gifts.

Where a Letter Carrier may get into trouble is when they accept cash in any amount or gifts (including gift cards) valued above \$20. This is where the OIG agents are testing our integrity. Although one wonders how these OIG agents would score on any test of integrity. That said, the rules are the rules and below is

language from the Code of Federal Regulations 2635.204(a), which should be considered the next time one of your patrons, gives you a gift.

Gifts of \$20 or less. An employee may accept unsolicited gifts having an aggregate market value of \$20 or less per source per occasion, provided that the aggregate market value of individual gifts received from any one person under the authority of this paragraph shall not exceed \$50 in a calendar year. This exception does not apply to gifts of cash or of investment interests such as stock, bonds, or certificates of deposit. Where the market value of a gift or the aggregate market value of gifts offered on any single occasion exceeds \$20, the employee may not pay the excess value over \$20 in order to accept that portion of the gift or those gifts worth \$20. Where the aggregate value of tangible items offered on a single occasion exceeds \$20, the employee may decline any distinct and separate item in order to accept those items aggregating \$20 or less.

If you have any questions regarding gifts from your customers, contact your supervisor to get verification that it is acceptable to accept the gift in question. If you disagree with the supervisor's opinion based on the language above, contact your steward for clarification.

## Sanctity of the Mail

The Postal Service requires its employees to adhere to very high standards of integrity and fidelity. These standards are set out in the Code of Ethical Conduct, which you can obtain from your supervisor.

Foremost among these standards is the requirement that employees preserve the sanctity of the mail. Mail is private property entrusted to the letter carrier for safe passage and delivery to its intended recipient. Any compromise of the mail or other violations of standards may lead to discipline or removal from the Postal Service. In addition, there are federal statutes pertaining to willful and knowing delay, obstruction or theft of any mail.

New letter carriers often work under great time pressures because of unfamiliarity with some work assignments. As a result, some are tempted to seek shortcuts that are not proper. Do not fall into this trap — you must take extreme care not to be involved in any action or practice involving the mistreatment of the mail. Carelessness can get you into serious trouble. If you need extra time to complete a work assignment, inform your supervisor by submitting PS Form 3996, Control and ask for appropriate instructions.

**UNIFORMS  
UNLIMITED**

Minneapolis  
2220 Lyndale Avenue South  
Minneapolis, MN 55405  
612-377-0011

## The Twin Cities Postal Headquarters

USA  
Union preferred

St. Paul  
935 N. Dale Street  
St. Paul, MN 55103  
651-224-7567

## Delivery After Dark

Daylight Saving Time has ended, and now there is less daylight hours for delivering mail and carriers will again be exposed to the possibility of delivering mail after dark.

**What should you do? Is it safe to be delivering mail after dark?** That depends. There is no uniform policy regarding delivery after dark. That's because we are not dealing with a consistent situation for everyone.

There are some delivery areas that may not be safe and should not be delivered to after dark. That depends on whether or not a carrier can safely make that delivery based on individual circumstances such as is it unfamiliar territory, a high crime area, is there poor visibility or other hazards (i.e. animals, uneven surfaces or other impediments such as fences, toys, etc).

The time to plan for delivering after dark is now before you find yourself literally in the dark. Are there parts of your route that are less hazardous than other to being delivered after dark (apartments with lighted entryways or well lit neighborhoods). Discuss these issues with your supervisor, steward and safety liaison then make a plan and write it down for the CCA's who may be delivering your route for the first time.

If you find yourself in a situation where you believe you'll be out delivering mail after dark, REMEMBER THAT YOU DO HAVE RIGHTS, and follow these instructions:

1. Inform your supervisor in the morning of your need of auxiliary assistance in order to complete your street duties before dark. **THIS MEANS FILL OUT FORM 3996 - HELP SLIP.**
2. Notify your supervisor prior to heading out to the street that you may not be able to complete your duties on the street by dark.
3. When on the street if you realize that you definitely will be out after dark, call your supervisor and make them aware of that reality. Stress your concern for your safety and again request auxiliary assistance.
4. Assuming no help arrives and you are faced with darkening conditions, attempt to continue.
5. **IF** while attempting delivery, you literally experience a safety hazard (i.e. stumbling, tripping, hear dogs barking, but unable to see that threat, not able to see potential dangers using your LLV/van's outside mirrors ...) call your supervisor. Explain your situation and notify them that you cannot safely continue delivery then return to your station.
6. **COMPLETE FORM 1571 - Curtailment form for the undelivered mail.**

Be sure to hand the curtailment slip to the supervisor, and ASK FOR A COPY. The copy is for your protection. You can also request a Form 1767 - Notice of Hazardous Working Condition. This will help you document the safety hazards you encountered while attempting to deliver after dark.

**It is important to note that these instructions are not intended to endorse or encourage the unnecessary curtailment of any mail. It is about your safety and the protection of the mail in our charge.**

There is not a single answer for every possible situation. It simply is the responsibility of each carrier to measure their safety and ensure that they are working safely. PERIOD.



**Annual Branch 9 NALC  
Ice Fishing Outing on Lake Mille Lacs  
Twin Pines Resort & Motel-Restaurant**

Located just two hours north of the Twin Cities on U.S. Highway 169 (mile marker 232).

For more information contact Ken Jambois at 763.370.1392

**Noon Sunday to Noon Monday  
January 14 & 15  
\$41/Adult  
\$36/Children under 14**



This is a Branch 9 sponsored event for our members.  
The limit for adult non-member guests per member is 2.

\*The Branch will be hosting a chicken and rib buffet dinner at the Twin Pines Resort on Sunday, January 14th from 3:00 - 8:00PM. This dinner is included in the price of the ice house.\*

**Several Types of Houses Available:**

- \*4 Hole Ice House (sleeps 2 - 3)
- \*8 - 12 Hole Ice House (sleeps 5 - 6)
- \*10 - 14 Hole Ice House (sleeps 10)
- \*14 Hole Ice House (sleeps 14)
- \*6 - 10 Hole Ice House (sleeps 4 - 6)
- \*10 - 12 Hole Ice House (sleeps 8)
- \*11 Hole Ice House (sleeps 10)

Each house includes: Propane heat, lights, table/chairs, covered pad for bunks, carpeted floors.  
Cook stoves are available in the larger houses. **Check in time is 12:00PM (Noon).**

**Branch 9 Ice Fishing**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_ Station: \_\_\_\_\_

Type of Ice House: \_\_\_\_\_ Number of Guests: \_\_\_\_\_ Amount Paid: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Guests & Station: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Non-Member Guests (include age of children): \_\_\_\_\_

**Deadline is  
Thursday, January 11th**

**Checks payable to: Branch 9 Ice Fishing  
2408 Central Avenue NE  
Minneapolis, MN 55418**

Branch Nine News  
2408 Central Avenue NE  
Minneapolis, MN 55418-3712


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**Stay informed by:**

- \*Signing up for E-activist at [NALC.org](http://NALC.org)
- \* [Branch9nalc.com](http://Branch9nalc.com) (website)
- \* "like" our [Branch 9 Facebook Page](#)
- \* Follow us on [Twitter](#)

**Contribute to the PAC**  
The Letter Carrier Political Fund is the anchor for NALC's legislative and political activities.



[nalc.org/government-affairs/political-activity](http://nalc.org/government-affairs/political-activity)

## Branch 9 Calendar

**December 25**  
Christmas Day  
Holiday

**December 26**  
Kwanza Begins

**January 1, 2018**  
New Years Day  
Holiday

**January 9**  
Stewards Meeting  
7:00PM  
Crystal VFW, Crystal, MN

**January 14-15 2018**  
ICE FISHING EVENT

**January 15 2018**  
MLK Jr. Day  
Holiday

**February 13**  
Stewards Meeting  
7:00PM  
Crystal VFW, Crystal, MN

**February 23**  
General Membership Meeting  
7:00PM  
Crystal VFW, Crystal, MN

**Northside Retiree Breakfast**  
1st Tuesday of the Month  
9:30AM @ Elsie's  
729 Marshall St. NE, Minneapolis

**N Suburban Retiree Breakfast**  
1st Friday of the Month  
8:30AM @ Denny's Restaurant  
9020 Quaday Avenue NE, Otsego

**Southside Retiree Breakfast**  
2nd Tuesday of the Month  
9:00AM @ Fred Babcock VFW  
6715 Lakeshore Dr, Richfield

**Nokomis Retiree Breakfast**  
4th Tuesday of the Month  
9:00AM @ Fred Babcock VFW  
6715 Lakeshore Dr, Richfield

**POCUM**  
4th Monday of the Month  
6:00PM - Labor Centre -2nd Floor  
312 Central Ave, Minneapolis