



JEROME J. KEATING BRANCH

VOLUME 72 No 3 Official Publication of Branch Nine, NALC April 2020  
SPECIAL APRIL EDITION

### "FIRE and COVID-19"

On Sunday evening March 22, a fire spread through the offices of Branch 9 NALC. It was a total loss. No one was injured and our tenant's homes are gone, as well. We are helping them with their loss and transition. At this time, this will require all communications to be conducted electronically. We will be asking for your patience and understanding in these difficult times. Members should check our Facebook page, Branch 9 online and the website [www.branch9nalc.com](http://www.branch9nalc.com) for up to date information. Stewards please check your emails daily.



**\*NOTICE\* Branch 9 members will receive convention delegate credit for canceled General Membership Meetings for the months of March and April as result of COVID-19.**

**In Addtion, we are postponing all activities of the Branch until further notice.**

## RETIREMENTS



Last day for Lannie Bahe (Brooklyn Center) with Stewards Ken Jambois and Crystal Wolfe.  
Happy Retirement!



Last Punch for Rocky Kuehn (Golden Valley) with Stewards Joe Tieman and Metuselah Onduto.  
Best Wishes

### The Following is a list of Paid Members of PAL 9 for March,2020.

#### Very Concern Members

<b>Bradley Knutson</b>	<b>Michael Spurbeck</b>
<b>Stacey Ellingson</b>	<b>Colleen Copeland</b>
<b>Cindy Fossum</b>	<b>Theresa Johnson</b>

#### Regular Members

<b>Richard Rimer</b>	<b>Roger Harwarth</b>
<b>Clarence Gervais</b>	<b>Douglas Waldhoff</b>
<b>David Olson</b>	<b>Steve Grivicich</b>
<b>Doris Swanson Gbala</b>	<b>Dan Olson</b>

**Jim Fodstad**  
Treasurer PAL 9

**\*Notice \* Stamp Out Hunger, the NALC Food Drive, has been postponed due to COVID-19.**

However, there is still a need for donations. Please consider donating to Second Harvest Heartland. <https://www.2harvest.org/>



### Branch 9 contact info. You can reach us via:

**Samantha Hartwig at 612-381-7015**  
**(samanthah@branch9nalc.com)**

or

**JoAnn Gilbaugh at 612-274-9414**  
**(joanng@branch9nalc.com).**

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#### Branch 9 Officers

**President**  
Samantha Hartwig

**Exec. Vice President**  
JoAnn Gilbaugh

**Recording Secretary**  
Robb Petersburg

**Treasurer**  
Lisa O'Neill

**Financial Secretary**  
Stacey Ellingson

**Editor**  
Jeremy Rothstein  
[branch9news@branch9nalc.com](mailto:branch9news@branch9nalc.com)

**Sergeant at Arms**  
Jim Nelson

**Trustees**  
Christa Abraham  
Johnna Lush  
Chris Pennock

**Director of Retirees**  
Melia Derrick

**NALC Health Benefits Rep.**  
Ken Jambois  
HBR: (763) 370-1392

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.

Any official NALC organization may reproduce our articles provided appropriate credit is given.

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

IT is with great sadness that I begin my report with the news that on Sunday March 22nd, 2020 the Union Office at 2408 Central Ave NE was burned to the ground. On Monday March 23rd I was officially sworn in as the new President of Branch 9. Since the fire the new Executive Vice President, JoAnn Gilbaugh, and I have been working out of our personal vehicles and our homes to keep the Branch up and running during this time, while also looking for a new location for a temporary office.

Some updates since the fire, Johnna Lush (Robbinsdale) the lead NALC Formal Step A Representative for Branch 9 has been keeping the grievances moving so they don't stop. Dave Allman (Normandale) has been the driving force in keeping carrier safety at the fore front with the local Postal Management. Christa Abraham (Eastside) is assisting with OWCP and her phone number is 612-839-4528 if you can't reach JoAnn or myself for assistance. The entire Executive Board of Branch 9 has stepped up to make sure we keep moving with all things financial. The Branch is in good hands and we haven't missed a beat!

**COVID-19:** The situation with COVID-19 changes every day. The Postal Service is ordering supplies; unfortunately, these supplies have been extremely slow to materialize in the stations. The USPS has authorized carriers to use your VOYAGER Credit Cards to purchase hand sanitizer if you find any when on their routes, make sure that if you do purchase the hand sanitizer that the receipt gets to the hands of your supervisor upon return to the station. We are essential employees; we must go in to work and keep delivering the mail, but if you are ill stay home. There have been numerous agreements that keep appearing almost daily. NALC.ORG is good resource for getting the latest updates on the memorandums of

understanding in addition to your stewards, JoAnn and myself.

By now everyone should have been given a sign for your Postal Vehicle asking our customers to not approach you while you deliver the mail. If you don't have a sign for your truck please let your stewards know, and they can help get you a sign. It is ok to politely ask customers to step away from you to maintain at least 6 feet of distance per CDC recommendations.

We have had some carriers in Minneapolis self-quarantine upon return from vacation, or if they thought they may have been in contact with someone who may have COVID-19, and that is right thing to do, there is no need to take chances with your health, or that of your co-workers. Because of limited testing we don't know who does or does not have COVID-19 and that is why it is so important to take the measures to stay home when your ill, use hand sanitizer when soap and water are not available, and wear a face mask if you need it.

### **Families First Coronavirus Response Act:**

Effective April 1, 2020, the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) provides employees with two additional types of leave. First, employees with a qualifying circumstance as defined by the Act will be eligible for up to 80 hours of paid Emergency Sick Leave, in addition to their sick leave balances. Second, employees who have a minor child whose school or place of care is closed will be eligible for leave under the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA), the majority of which is additional paid leave. These provisions will apply from April 1, 2020, through December 31, 2020, and are in addition to any personal annual and/or sick leave balances that you have.

If you do contract COVID-19 while in the performance of duty it may be an OWCP claim, filed under a



**Samantha Hartwig**

traumatic injury. I hope no one tests positive for COVID-19; but, if it does happen please contact JoAnn, Christa Abraham, or myself for assistance.

As things change, we will get information out to the members as fast as we can. There will be no face to face meeting of any kind in the month of April. We have temporarily rescheduled the Red and Gold Retiree banquet for October 18th.

The Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive is postponed; no new date has been selected yet.

The April 14th, Steward Board meeting will be conducted online, for the Stewards only this time. Stewards will be sent the information to attend this online meeting.

We are working on figuring out how to reach all the members for the April GMM.

Everything is changing daily, for quick information we are using the Branch 9 website, and the Branch 9 online Facebook page for updates.

In the midst of all this there will be more CCA conversions to career status official on April 11th. The USPS is still hiring new employees, and changes have been made to the carrier academy to observe the social distancing guidelines. With many people being laid off from work, this is a great time to increase our ranks! Please get the word out!

M-01911

**MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING  
BETWEEN THE  
UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE  
AND THE  
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF LETTER CARRIERS, AFL-CIO**

**Re: Temporary Additional Paid Leave for CCAs**

For the 60-day duration of this Memorandum of Understanding, City Carrier Assistants (CCAs) will be permitted to use up to 80 hours of paid leave for use in conjunction with the COVID-19 pandemic in the following circumstances:

- The employee has contracted COVID-19 or has been directly exposed to someone with COVID-19;
- The employee has visited any country identified by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) as a level-3 country (currently China, South Korea, Iran, Italy, and most other European countries) within 14 days of the employee returning to work;
- The employee returns from a trip on a cruise ship in which an identified case of COVID-19 was detected on board the ship;
- The employee is experiencing symptoms generally associated with COVID-19; or
- Consistent with the MOU Re: Temporary Expanded Sick Leave for Dependent Care During COVID-19.

Leave used for the above purpose will be coded as TACS Code 086, *Other Paid Leave*.

Except for emergencies, paid leave for the circumstances listed above must be requested on PS Form 3971, *Request for or Notification of Absence*, and approved in advance by the appropriate supervisor. Employees should designate the reason for the absence as "Other" and write "LC19" in the space provided.

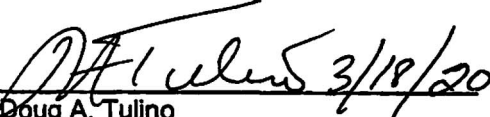
An exception to the advance approval requirement is made for emergencies and unexpected illness; however, in these situations, the CCA must notify the appropriate postal authorities as soon as possible as to the emergency or illness and the expected duration of the absence. As soon as possible after return to duty, CCAs must submit PS Form 3971 and explain the reason for the emergency or illness to their supervisor. Supervisors approve or disapprove the leave request.


The supervisor is responsible for approving or disapproving the application for paid leave by signing PS Form 3971, a copy of which is given to the CCA. If a supervisor does not approve an application for leave, the disapproved block on PS Form 3971 is checked and the reasons must be noted in writing in the space provided.

The total 80-hour allotment will not be increased due to a CCA's break in service during the 60-day period. Any remaining leave balance at the end of the 60-day period is forfeited.

The parties will revisit this issue immediately prior to this MOU's expiration to determine if extension is appropriate.

This MOU will expire May 17, 2020.

  
Doug A. Tulino  
Vice President, Labor Relations  
United States Postal Service

 3-18-20  
Fredric V. Rolando  
President  
National Association of Letter Carriers, AFL-CIO

## Exec. Vice President's Report

### Let me start by congratulating all the

**Branch 9** active carriers for your dedicated work during the COVID 19 outbreak. It is a testament of your commitment and dedication to our customers. Rest assured; the American public recognizes our vital part providing essential services which enable the "stay at home" order. Take pride in a job well done, and your ongoing vigilance to stay safe.

As you can see from the pictures on the cover of this edition, our Branch was completely destroyed by a fire which started in a building next door, on Sunday, March 22, 2020. For those of you who have visited, you know the building was more than an office. It was in many ways a museum of the 130-year history of Branch 9.

In the early 1950's, our rank and file membership voted to set aside a portion of their dues to eventually purchase a building. Around 1992, after years of saving, the membership decided it was time to buy. A committee that included then President Lenny Larson, VP Charlie Peasha, Treasurer Mike Zagaros, Al Gulden and Bobby Baird found Branch 9 a home at 2408 Central Ave. NE. Because of the foresight of our members, it was paid for in cash.

The building had many benefactors. We "inherited" Judy Ahlers, our office cleaner for many years, from the previous owners of the building. Jim Magnuson took up where she left off and included handyman and apartment manager to his duties. A craftsman who was invaluable to us was Al Gulden, who among many things, built our 1890 charter display, our 70's Striker

time capsule and the history boards that lined our walls.

Our Centennial Committee was largely responsible for chronicling our history. Jan Wild, Larry Chlebeck, Marlys Fox, Tom Krawczynski, Dick Silk, Charlie Peasha and Tom Dvorak spent countless hours gathering information and artifacts. The fruits of their labor were our 100-year anniversary book and our permanent history boards.

I would be remiss if I didn't mention the Don Anderson Room of Recognition which was full of trophies, plaques and memorabilia. My personal favorite was the bass drum our Minneapolis Letter Carriers Band marched with in the JFK inaugural parade. Don was our 1st Director of Retirees and was responsible for the inception of our 70's Striker wall, complete with signatures by our strikers.

Forgive me, as I'm certain I have missed names, as much of this was before my time. We've been blessed over the years with so many who deeply care about our branch. I'm compelled to point out that the majority of those mentioned above were carrying mail daily, and all the while contributing. This is a tradition that remains true to this day.

The building is gone, but the heart remains. From the beginning, Branch 9 has been and always will be our rank and file members.

In Solidarity,  
JoAnn



*JoAnn Gilbaugh*



### PLEASE HELP

The renters at the Branch 9 Building in the "Stately Estates" have lost their home and personal belongings due to the building fire.

We are setting up a GoFundMe page on our Facebook page "Branch 9 Online" and a link will be added to the website.

[www.branch9nalc.com](http://www.branch9nalc.com)

# BRANCH 9 BUILDING FIRE



# BRANCH 9 BUILDING FIRE



FMR Branch President Mike Zagaros, RAA Patrick Johnson and Retiree Al Gulden trying to salvage what's left.



Surprisingly there were some files and items not destroyed in the fire. These will be stored until a new location is established.



As you can see in all the photos, the building is a loss. But Branch 9 is more than a building.



We were able to save the building's "year built" brick.

M-01915

**MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING  
BETWEEN THE  
UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE  
AND THE  
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF LETTER CARRIERS, AFL-CIO**

**Re: Temporary Workplace Changes to Promote Social Distancing – COVID-19**

The parties agree that the social distancing recommendations of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) are important measures which should be practiced as much as possible to slow the spread of the coronavirus (COVID-19). Some of those social distancing recommendations for the workplace include increasing physical space between workers, staggering work schedules, limiting large work-related gatherings, and reducing or eliminating travel.

With that in mind, the parties agree that in postal installations with 100 or more workyears of employment, to minimize the possibility of exposure to the coronavirus or the possibility of unknowingly spreading the coronavirus to a larger portion of the workforce by working in multiple facilities, to the extent possible all city letter carriers will work in their employing facility for the duration of this agreement. In addition, to the extent possible the Memorandum of Understanding *Re: City Carrier Assistants – Temporary Assignments to Other Post Offices* will not be in effect for the duration of this agreement.

In postal installations with less than 100 workyears of employment, work in facilities other than the letter carrier's employing facility should be limited to where they routinely worked prior to the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The local parties (i.e. branch presidents and postmasters, or their designees) will immediately discuss potential scheduling and office setup changes which would create a work environment that promotes social distancing. Such changes should include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Staggered letter carrier start times to begin as early as operationally feasible.
2. Scheduling letter carriers to begin their tours in groups of 10 or less to practice social distancing at the timeclock.
3. Where possible, scheduling groups of 10 or less carriers to begin their tours in increments of a minimum of 15 minutes and a maximum of two hours apart.
4. Start times should be staggered between the hours of 5:30 a.m. and 9:30 a.m. for letter routes.
5. Start times for all routes in test sites, for collection routes, and for combination routes may be scheduled prior to 5:30 a.m. and after 9:30 a.m., however they should still be staggered and scheduled in groups of 10 or less carriers to promote social distancing.
6. Conducting stand-up talks in a manner that allows employees to be separated from each other by 6 feet or more, such as using small groups or an intercom system.



- 7. Staggered break schedules in the office to allow employees to maintain groups not to exceed 10 people.
- 8. Moving office breaks to the street on an individual voluntary basis.
- 9. Where possible, scheduling letter carriers in a manner which would allow them to stagger their departure from office duties to street duties.
- 10. Volunteers may be utilized for AM parcel runs in order to increase social distancing during casing duties.
- 11. Adjusting any other practice in the office to allow employees to be separated from each other by 6 feet or more

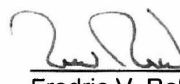
Consideration will be given to the location of letter carrier cases, the location of mail staging areas, the location and number of time clocks, the size and number of break areas, etc. Local parties will discuss temporary changes to the location of any of the above subjects in order to promote at least 6 feet of separation for all employees.

If the local parties require any additional guidance or clarification on implementation of this agreement, they should contact the appropriate Area Manager, Labor Relations and National Business Agent.

The national parties will revisit this issue immediately prior to this MOU's expiration to determine if extension is appropriate.

This MOU will expire May 27, 2020.

  
 Doug A. Tulino  
 Vice President, Labor Relations  
 United States Postal Service

  
 Fredric V. Rolando  
 President  
 National Association of Letter  
 Carriers, AFL-CIO



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# **Mandatory Stand-Up Talk**

**April 2, 2020**

## **Taking leave during COVID-19**

### **Families First Coronavirus Response Act guidance**

Effective April 1, 2020, the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) provides employees with two additional types of leave. These new leave entitlements are in addition to leave you are already entitled to under the Employee and Labor Relations Manual (ELM) and any applicable Memorandum of Understanding (MOUs).

As a postal employee, you have certain rights under the Families First Coronavirus Response Act recently signed into law. These provisions will apply from April 1, 2020, through the end of the year.

#### **Emergency Sick Leave (up to 80 hours)**

Employees are eligible to use up to 80 hours of emergency paid sick leave based on average number of hours worked in a 2-week period. This leave is available to both career and non-career employees regardless of tenure. The reasons for which an employee may use Emergency Sick Leave include:

- To comply with a Federal, State or local quarantine order related to COVID 19, or to care for someone who is;
- To self-quarantine based on a health care provider's advice, or care for someone who has been advised to self-quarantine, related to COVID-19;
- To seek medical care related to symptoms of COVID-19 symptoms and obtain a medical diagnosis;
- To care for his or her child whose school or place of care is closed (or child care provider is unavailable due to COVID-19 related reasons).

There are pay rate limitations associated with this leave type; please go to Blue or Light Blue to get more details.

## Family Medical Leave Act Expansion

Employees may also use Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) to care for children under 18 whose school or place of care is closed due to COVID-19. This entitlement is available to career and non-career employees after 30 days of employment.

- As with other qualifying reasons, an employee who is eligible for this type of leave can take up to 12 weeks of FMLA protected leave in a calendar year. If an employee has already exhausted all 12 weeks for a different qualifying reason, no additional FMLA leave is provided under this Act.
- The first 2 weeks of this leave are unpaid, unless an employee chooses to substitute other types of paid leave.
- The following 10 weeks will be paid leave at 2/3 of an employee's normal pay, but in no event more than \$200 a day, or \$10,000 in the aggregate.

Both leave entitlement types can be used sequentially to avoid 2 weeks of unpaid leave if employees elect to do so.

This legislation is meant to ensure that workers are not forced to choose between their paychecks and the public health measures needed to combat the COVID-19 virus. Your health and well-being are our top priority.

Additional details about the act's provisions and other COVID-19 information can be found on the special **COVID-19** pages of our internal website, Blue, and our employee website, LiteBlue. For additional questions please contact the HR Shared Service Center at 1-877-477-3273 and select Option 5.

Stay safe. Thank you for listening, and thank you for your professionalism, commitment, and for all you do for our customers, your co-workers and the Postal Service.

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

**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

**ALL BRANCH 9 Meetings and events have been postponed or canceled until further notice.**

Please continue to check the website and Facebook page for the latest information.

We will continue to explore alternatives to meetings to get information and training to the stewards and members.

### **ALL CANCELED for April**

#### **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

#### **Fridley Retiree Lunch**

2nd Tuesday of the Month  
11:30 AM  
Route 47 Pub and Grub  
7820 University Ave

#### **POCUM**

4th Monday of the Month  
6:00PM - MFT 59  
67 8th St. NE  
Minneapolis, MN 55412