



Retirees Honored at Red and Gold Banquet

The Gateway Hotel in Minneapolis was the setting for the Red and Gold Retiree Banquet. This annual event on Sunday, May 3rd was held to honor retired letter carrier's whose dedication and commitments to duty were the building blocks of Branch Nine.

prohibited from doing because of the Hatch Act. Many of the benefits enjoyed by today's letter carriers are the direct result of the work done by the members of the NALC Auxiliary's "legislative" activity

This year, Branch 9 recognized and celebrated 7 of our own who have been members of the NALC for 60 years . This year we welcomed 16 new life members of the NALC by presenting them with their 50 year membership pin and their gold cards.



60 year members Wallace Eckdahl (center) and Paul Nielsen (r) receive their 60 pin from National Director of Health Benefits Tim O'Malley and Pam.

Also honored were the 50 and 60 year members of Auxiliary 67. The members of the auxiliary provide enormous support to our members and did the legislative work that letter carriers were

National Director of Health Benefits, Timothy O'Malley was the keynote speaker. Tim, along with Branch Nine President, Pam Donato presented awards to 50 year Gold Card "Life" Members

Continued on pages 11 -13

WOW ! 743,720 lbs

2009 was a record setting year for the Branch 9 Food Drive. This year nearly 750,000 pounds of food was collected by Branch 9 letter carriers, volunteers and our partners: Second Harvest Heartland, Cub Foods, the Minnesota Transport Services Association, WCCO Radio, the Minneapolis Labor Federation, the Minneapolis Post Office, the National Association of Rural Letter Carriers and TCF Banks. This was TCF Banks first year as a partner in the Branch 9 Food Drive. Thank you to all of our partners.

A lot planning and hard work went into this year's drive led by Food Drive Chair Samantha Hartwig from Eastside Station. Samantha enthusiastically stepped up and managed all facets of this year's drive. The results this year would not have been as successful without the volunteers promoting the drive at the May Day parade in the Powderhorn Park neighborhood and at the Minnesota Twins game. Special
Continued on pages 9 & 10

RANK AND FILE EDITION

From the cluttered desk of the editor

Burnsville/Savage City and Rural Carriers collected over 33,000 pounds of food for the local food shelf. A good share being collected by rural carriers. What made this especially gratifying was the fact that they delivered the cards and bags and picked up the food donations without being paid any comp time. To all Rural Carriers who helped collect food; on behalf of all City Letter Carriers, THANK YOU!



Rural Carrier Michelle Taft and NRLCA Steward, Tina Meiklejohn



Lake Street Steward Aaron Kriz speaking on COLCPE

At the June General Membership Meeting, Aaron Kriz, from Lake Street explained how he valued his contribution to COLCPE. Attending the RAP session in Las Vegas, Aaron was impressed with NALC President Young's speech on how money and politics are tied together, and how big business and special interest groups are funneling huge amounts to legislators who are unfriendly towards labor. Aaron described how much he hated politics, yet understood the need to be involved. The easiest way was to contribute to COLCPE. Not being satisfied with just his contribution, Aaron got involved by signing up over twenty of his fellow carriers at Lake Street. Congratulations to Aaron Kriz, his co-steward Amanda Greer and to all the letter carriers who joined the *Gimme 5 for COLCPE*.

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VGSS OTYNCLKP BZP FEL JGNPJ

MBY RBT LJ JCP LTATKJ AFF.

(Answer in the August Branch Nine News)

President's Report

What a Spring Branch 9 has had! Always known for its cluster of large Branch events, this year's Spring season lived up to its billing, and then some.

CRI
MDA
Route Adjustments (MIARAP)
Rap Session
Carrier Alert Program
Retiree Banquet
Food Drive
Community Volunteering

It would be impossible to do each of those events justice in one article, so I won't even try. Plus, this is Branch 9's "Rank and File" issue, and others have articulated better than I ever could their frustration and concern over the current state of affairs in the USPS or advice on how to put it in perspective. Thank you to each of the carriers that stepped up to write!

I do want to briefly cover the following

Food Drive...Supreme KNOCK OUT! Samantha Hartwig, Bob Baird and Lynette Gurneau did an outstanding job in organizing our many food drive events. And THANK YOU to every carrier (city and rural), clerk and supervisor/manager who helped collect nearly 750,000 pounds of food May 9th!

Retiree Banquet...1st Class event for 1st class retired members! Congratulations to both the Retired Letter carriers and our Auxiliary 67 members honored this year.

MIARAP (Route Adjustments)... Inspection schedules and the decision to either use COR or not changes daily... Still, six Branch 9 carriers are representing carriers at the District level in MIARAP to ensure route data used is reliable and that carrier input in the consultation process is properly taken into consideration. Most routes are found to be short of 8 hours as the mail volume decline takes its toll. Mike and I are approaching each station individually, doing stand up talks and providing information as route reductions cause assignment loss and/or excessing from that



Pam Donato, Branch President

station. Times are more than tough and the most important thing you can do is to stay informed, attend a GMM meeting and STICK TOGETHER! This is YOUR job and YOUR union!

In Solidarity
 Pam

Last Punch Bunch



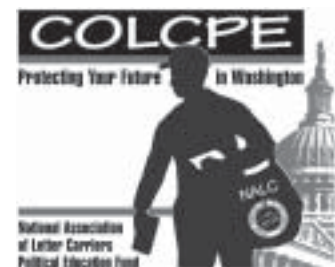
Roy Stai, Plymouth



Steve Bruce, Cathy Fealy (Steward), William Nelson, Carrie Martin (Steward), Pat Wagner Bloomington Branch



Mark Hendrickson, Plymouth



EARN MONEY FROM HOME!

How would you like to make hundreds of dollars from the comfort of home?

Do you ever hear the commercials on TV or read advertisements in the want ads that promise easy money working at home. Well most of us know these claims are not as good as advertised, but I want to let letter carriers in Minneapolis know that you can make hundreds of dollars from home. I will personally guarantee that if you follow my three step program, the Postal Service will pay you hundreds of dollars a day just to stay at home.

Here are the three easy steps:

- 1) At the beginning of the next quarter sign the overtime desired list.
- 2) Wait for the first non-scheduled day when management forces non-overtime desired list carriers to work OT off their assignment before they ask you to come in on your non-scheduled day.
- 3) Notify your union steward of any OT violations.

This is all you have to do to make money at home. Everything after the third step will be handled by your NALC union steward and officers. Now this is the point where many of you may be saying this is too good to be true, but just listen to these testimonials from three carriers at the Lake Street station who recently found out how easy this program is.

Carrier #1: "I could not believe how easy it was to make money working for the Postal Service from home. I just followed the three easy steps and a short while later there was an

additional \$316.32 on my pay check. Normally I would have to work eight hours delivering mail on my non-schedule day to make that kind of money."

Carrier #2: "At first my co-workers did not believe that I could make over \$300 a day working from home for the Postal Service, but then I showed them my check and now they all want to know the secret to making money from home."

Carrier #3: "The best part about making \$300 a day working at home for the Postal Service is that I do not have to do any work. While making \$300 to stay at home I was able to spend time in my garden, walk the dog, and I had a chance to spend time with my family. I can not believe the Postal Service pays me for this; it is almost like getting free money."

The sad thing about the above scenario is that every aspect other than the personal guarantee is true. While I have made light of the fact that carriers can and have made money sitting at home, this is a serious problem that negatively affects the carriers that are forced to work OT that they do not want, while the carriers that do want the OT are sitting at home. It would be easy for a non-list carrier to place blame on the OT carrier making "free money" however we must remember this problem is the direct result of the Postal Services edicts to not bring in OTDL carriers on their day off. The Postal Service has continued these types of violations despite the fact that we have given them ample warning of the repercussions. The disappointing thing is that even though the Dispute Resolution Team ruled in our favor in three cases from



Jason Karnopp

Lake Street, management continues to violate the contract at numerous locations.

Two months ago I reported that in three months Branch 9 had filed 122 grievances in three months. In the last three months the branch has file an additional 110 grievances for a total of 232. As noted in the April Branch 9 News the Postal Service in three months paid out over \$17,000 in grievance settlements. Back in April I predicted that we will tally up to 500 grievances by the end of the year, so far I think I am right on. I also predicted that the service would pay out \$70,000 in grievance settlements; so far this prediction is an under estimate. So far this year the Postal Service has paid out over \$46,921.16 in grievance settlements. The reason I say this is under estimated is that there are still 40-50 OT grievances that are still waiting to be heard at either Formal Step A or at Step B.

It is my belief that the Postal Service will continue to go down the path of blatantly violating our contract for the rest of the year. As long as the Postal service continues with this type of mental-

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Executive Vice President's Report

What Happens When You Assume

As I do certain things, if I do them often enough, I tend to make "assumptions" about how things will turn out. The more often I do this, the stronger that "assumption" becomes. Webster's dictionary has many definitions for assumptions (some I didn't know), one of them is "a fact or statement, etc. taken for granted or taken to be true" That is fine except when the truth of the "assumption" is wrong. Case in point, the May issue of the Branch Nine News and the front-page article about the most recent rap session, attributed to Samantha Hartwig. The problem was that article was not written by her, but by our own editor Chuck Glover prior to receiving Samantha's article. In addition, the space Chuck had allocated for the rap session article was for Samantha's article so the result was extra white space in the paper. One of my duties is to be the Associate Editor of the Branch Nine News. I am the one who reviews the proof of each issue that comes from the printer. Usually by the time the proof has come back from the printer, I have looked at the paper so many times, that I don't review the text of each article, I review the overall look of the paper and concentrate on the photos. It was my "assumption" that the text I had sent would be the text in the proof I got back. There is an anonymous quote about "assumptions" that is very

appropriate for this situation: "Assumption is the mother of all screwups." This was my screwup and I wish to apologize to both Samatha and Chuck. Samantha's article entitled "The Real Rap Session" is printed in this issue of the Branch Nine News on page 14 and that is not an assumption.

A lot of people are making assumptions these days. Whether or not the Postal Service will go to 5 day delivery seems to be ripe for making assumptions. Some people in management are making the assumption that this would be a good thing and necessary for the Postal Service to survive in these tough economic times. Some of our members are making assumptions on what it would be like to have weekends off, now that they are talking about no delivery on Saturday. That this could, in any way be a good thing is an assumption without any truth. There are a variety of reasons why the NALC is opposed to this scheme. Aside from the obvious impact regarding T-6's there is the potential impact on the private express statutes. This protects the postal monopoly on first class mail and specifies the rates that others can charge for mail delivery and is predicated on 6 day delivery. The Private Express Statutes are one of the reasons private delivery companies can not go into large metropolitan areas and try and cherry pick mail delivery in high density areas thereby competing



Mike Zagaros, Exec Vice President

the with Postal Service. If we don't provide the service someone else will. All anyone has to do is look at UPS and FEDEX. These companies were created because they provided a better service than we did. Fortunately for us the people in management people do not have the ability to make such a change on their own. It would require a change in the law. Does this mean that it could never happen? No it doesn't. We must stay involved politically. A couple of the ways that we can do that is by signing up for e-Activist and by participating in the "Gimme 5" campaign for COLCPE

Some people may be making another assumption, that we are doing great in numbers of members who contribute to COLCPE or that we have enough. While it is true that we have more carriers contributing to COLCPE through automatic deduction at the "Gimme 5" level than ever before, less than 10% of our membership contributes to COLCPE. Some members make the assumption that COLCPE only contributes to Democrats. A review to COLCPE contributions will show that funds

Continued on page 13

Still ... I Love My Job

Since the theme of this BNN issue is "rank and file", I decided to write a positive article and specifically address what's good about our job as letter carriers and the Postal Service in general. I LOVE MY JOB but when it came to putting my fingers to the keyboard, I struggled with what I wanted to say. My job allows me to be physically active, work outside, build relationships with my customers, and earn a decent living wage with nice fringe benefits. All good things about my career that I truly appreciate, but every letter carrier reading this already knows and has most or all of the good things I listed. So why do I struggle to write this? It is partly because of the economy and partly because of the uncertainty we as letter carriers face with the evolution of our jobs due to route adjustments now and in the future.

As much as I am a "it will be what it will be" kind of gal, I also feel uneasy about the changes I will be facing. I listen to the talk on the work room floor and understand the anxiety my coworkers feel. Change and uncertainty are never

easy to deal with but are compounded given the struggling economy. Then I realized, perhaps I am not seeing the forest through the trees!

This past week end, I attended the International Labour Conference in Bloomington, MN. Representatives from different Unions affiliated with either the CLC in Canada or AFL-CIO gathered to discuss the issues facing workers today with a focus on coalition building. The training, speakers and panel discussion were all very good and informative. But for me personally, I most appreciated the discussions I had with the other attendees. I quickly came to realize how I had allowed myself to be in a shell, protected by my job security, my good salary and my health insurance benefits. I spoke with representatives from Canada and the U.S. who are dealing with layoffs from industry downsizing, shut downs or closures. (Last I heard, the Postal Service has yet to lay off an employee.) My cocoon of security in the Postal Service made it easier for me to grumble about the coming route changes and how management would accomplish

the task instead of focusing on the big picture of continued employment which pays my bills, puts food on my table and provides quality affordable health care. Many of our neighbors do not have the "riches" that we as letter carriers have!

NOW is a GOOD time to start ensuring that all in our country have the good fortune we have. No matter what your political affiliation, take the time to write your representative. Ask for their support of HR 22 and the Employee Free Choice Act. Ask him or her to support health care for every American with a "public option". NOW is a GOOD time to get involved in our local community whether you help at the local food shelf, assist the elderly with chores or help clean up a park. NOW is a GOOD time to get involved in the NALC by becoming a COLCPE automatic contributor. By doing so, you help the NALC to educate legislators about the issues directly affecting us. NOW is a GOOD time to get involved!

Lisa O'Neill
Blaine Branch

2009 Scholarship Winners

Jerome J. Keating

Austin B. Carlson

Dylan Nagan -winner

Becka Ly - 1st Runner-Up

Brianna Wells - 2nd Runner-Up

Walter E. Couillard

Eugene P. McNulty

Noah Pepper -winner

Sean Darling -1st Runner-Up

Lauren Johnston -2nd Runner -Up

J. Wesley Woods

Cory Hickerson -winner

Robert Nelson II -1st Runner -Up

Mike Werdien -2nc Runner -Up

Leonard A. Larson

Barry J. Weiner

Adult Learner

Dan Holland -winner

Bob Baird -winner

Congratulations to all winners

Did You Know ???

Before stamps were introduced in the United States in the mid-19th century, letters were taken to a post office, where postage was charged based on the number of sheets of paper and the distance to the letter's destination. The postmaster would mark the amount of postage on the envelope's upper right hand corner. The postage could be paid by the sender, the addressee or a combination of the two...

... Even as first-class mail has dwindled, philatelists, or stamp collectors, have watched their market thrive, thanks, in part, to the Internet and auction sites such as eBay. The stamp-collecting market reached a record \$1.18 billion in sales in 2007.

Can Management Bend The Rules? YOU CAN BANK ON IT!

*By Joe Sadowski,
Diamond Lake*

Several years ago, a carrier at my station was dragged off in handcuffs by the police for a statement he made to the station manager about taking a gun and "shooting everything up." It seemed drastic at the time but I understood. We are all aware that the Post Office has a zero tolerance level for violence in the workplace. The Postmaster General has sent us letters about this policy, letters posted all over our individual stations.

Letters unread, apparently, by the Minneapolis Postmaster who has chosen to embrace the concept of fuzzy math by not recognizing the "zero" in zero tolerance.

By now everyone knows the story of what happened to one of our PTF's at the hands of a loose-cannon station manager with a history of questionable "motivational" tactics. The PTF in question was a young lady who took ill and had to bring back mail. The manager instructed the the

supervisor to call this girl and have her call him (for reasons still unclear.) She did not because she was simply too sick. Upon her return to work, she was called into the office and told that because she failed to *follow instructions* to call the station manager, she now had "a big target" on her back. Not stopping there, the manager felt empowered to continue with "*and when I shoot I don't miss.*"

Think about it. If a carrier or a clerk said this, he or she would be shown the door by a posse of postal officials full of righteous indignation. But when it's one of their own, the dynamic changes. Was this person led away in handcuffs? Threatened with dismissal? Fired as a warning to others managers as to what will happen if they go too far? No, this coward was whisked away to an undisclosed location so management could circle the wagons to protect him with stalling rhetoric and smoke screens. They downplayed the incident, referring to his comment as "an unfortunate choice of words". And they did

their best to hamper every effort of the union to seek justice for the PTF. Furthermore, they chose to ignore the past of their golden boy, insisting that this was an isolated incident. Somehow, I don't think this is what Postmaster Potter had in mind when he sent out his letter asking our help in creating a safe working environment.

So I've sent my own letter to Mr. Potter (registered, if that still matters to these guys.) In it, I've outlined the incident, given him all the names, documented facts and histories, and talked about the arduous grievance process held up and compromised by the Postmaster's team. I've also asked him if this is something he sanctions, and if he has anything to say to the hundreds of carriers outraged by this blatant cover-up to protect a nobody. If he answers, and I fully expect him not to, I will share his response with you in a future newsletter. Until then, be vigilant my brothers and sisters. Incidents like these are on the rise, if the increases in V&B grievances are any indication. I don't know about you, but it seems to me like a target has been placed on all of our backs

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Thanks for helping Stamp Out Hunger!

Thanks to all of your efforts, we were able to collect **1,090,456 pounds of food** for our hungry neighbors this year! That's a 28% increase from 2008.

Within one week of the drive, the food was already being distributed to those in our community who are hungry.

Stamp Out Hunger makes a tremendous impact, and we want to thank you for your hard work and dedication on this important day!



SECOND HARVEST
HEARTLAND

Joining forces to end hunger

Food Drive - from the Beginning ...





Food Drive continued from page 1 thanks go out to Lynette Gurneau from Powderhorn station and all the volunteers for participating in these events. This year's drive went off without a hitch thanks in no small part to the efforts Bob Baird from the Main Office on the logistics end with scheduling and managing the trucks again this year. Minneapolis and St. Paul collected over 1.2 million pounds of this year.



Finally, the success of this year's drive would not be possible but for the efforts of each and every letter who picked up over 371 tons of food. Food that will have already been distributed to people in need by the time you read this. Thank you all for doing your part to Stamp Out Hunger.



....To The Fantastic Finish....

2009 Red & Gold Banquet



A Gathering of Giants - the '70 Strikers at the 2009 Retiree Banquet



50 year honorees (l to r) Harold Tilbury, Donald Paquette, James Johnson, Gordon Clemens & Douglas Buystedt



volunteer's made it a success





Lenny, Mike, Tim O'Malley



National Director of Health Benefits, Tim O'Malley



Pam Donato



National Business Agent Ned Furr and Tim O'Malley



Retiree of the year Tom Woller



Director of Retirees, Cheryl Stately



Auxiliary 67 Honorees: (l to r) Jeane Magnuson, Trinetta Doll, Edith Couillard

Active Members Honoring Retirees



Red and Gold continued from page 1

and also 60 year Pin "Life" Members of Branch 9 and Auxiliary 67.

Tom Woller was presented a plaque by Pam Donato honoring him as the 2009 Retiree Of The Year. Tom has served the Branch in a number of capacities most recently as the Health Benefits Representative. Tom has always been someone the Branch could count to be there whenever he was needed.

Everyone had a great time, thanks to the volunteers who helped make this year's banquet a success. Hope to see you next year.

2009 Retiree of the Year



TOM WOLLER

Retired in 2008 - 2009

- | | |
|-------------------|-------------------|
| David Anderson | Steve Iverson |
| Robert Anderson | Mark Jariz |
| Timothy Audette | Raymond Krech |
| Anita Bakalar | Cynthia Larson |
| Gerald Baker | Joyce Jogelin |
| Barbara Bebeau | Jeffrey McHugh |
| Michael Berneck | Raymond Midlo |
| Michael Borrell | David Olson |
| Stewart Cameron | David Pierson |
| Dale Carney | Paul Polak |
| Daniel Chalupski | Steven Rauhauser |
| Kari Engquist | Robert Reuss |
| William Erickson | Jerry Sandmann |
| Donald Fellowes | Arthur Schindele |
| Joel Foster | Roy Stai |
| David Gage | Lawrence Schuster |
| John Gulliekson | Sharon Spooner |
| Michael Hanson | Gary Svidron |
| Mark Hendrickson | Joseph Theisen |
| Dale Heskin | Thomas Thorsen |
| Jane Hoffman-Weis | John Weber |
| Jon Horsford | Janice Wild |
| Carl Hultman | Arthur Zimmerman |

60 Year "Life" Members

- Merlin D. Byers
- Donald B. Carlson
- Wallace H. Eckdahl
- Walter E. Gegner
- Johannes S. Magdal
- Paul R. Nielsen
- Marvin L. Sorem

60 Year Auxiliary "Life" Members

- Frances Bryne
- Norma Ottoson
- Ruth Hovey
- Jeane Magnuson

50 Year "Life" Members

- Douglas H. Buystedt
- Gordon V. Clemens
- Clarence C. Gervais
- Marvin E. Gragert
- Richard C. Hedlund
- David L. Hempel
- Donald J. Higgins
- Elmer J. Hill
- James W. Johnson
- James W. Keenan
- Richard A. Kloster
- Clair F. Mattson
- Raymond A. Mika
- Donald T. Paquette
- Harold L. Tilbury
- James G. Zelenak

50 Year Auxiliary "Life" Members

- | | |
|----------------------|------------------|
| Edith Couillard | Trinetta Doll |
| Genevieve Kiedrowski | Louise Rockstroh |

"Assumptions" continued from page 5

are given to candidates who support our issues be they Democrat, Republican or Independent. COLCPE funds also go to pay for the letter carriers who were released to work Labor 2008 and the like. Some of our members think that COLCPE is only important during an election cycle. It's not enough just to get people elected. We have to ensure they the people we supported are working for us on things like 5 day delivery or health care or the Employee Free Choice Act or HR-22. We can't take the chance and make the assumption that everything will turn out right. If you aren't contributing to COLCPE talk to your Steward or call the Branch Office. Imagine what could be accomplished if we had the all of our members contributing to COLCPE.

The Real Rap Session

by Samantha Hartwig

The National Rap Session held in Las Vegas, Nevada during the weekend of April 24th was a great opportunity to hear from the National leaders of our Union about the changes that are coming, and the challenges facing all letter carriers. The biggest change about to hit the Minneapolis Installation will be route adjustments.

This new route adjustment process will use information from a carrier's most current "99", and carrier input in an effort to establish routes that will be as close to 8 hours of work as possible. This joint adjustment effort, while not perfect, will give the carrier an opportunity to solicit information about his/her own route. It is very important that all carriers are reporting their times accurately. Whenever there is pivot time off of another assignment, the carrier needs to fill out the "help slip" for the pivot time every time. By not submitting the "help slip" after pivoting there is no record of the time for that route. Proper time keeping by carriers, not management, will help to create a more accurate picture of carrier routes.

In addition to proper time keeping all carriers need to get involved in the political arena to help support letter carrier priorities in Washington. A great way to get involved is volunteering time to do a phone bank, or walk house to house in support of carrier friendly politicians. If volunteering time is not favorable then carriers may

choose to donate \$5.00 a pay period through payroll deductions to COLCPE. Due to COLCPE donations throughout the NALC membership the National has been able raise Three Million Dollars to support carrier friendly candidates.

By jumping into the political arena we can make our voice heard loud and clear. We can help pass Bill HR22, which would help the USPS financially. We can help stop Postmaster Jack Potter's insanity toward 5 day a week delivery, which would open up a very giant door to competition and hurt the USPS. Not only would the USPS be hurt by competition, but carriers would never get two days off in a row, which is a rarity now. The fact is either Tuesday or Wednesday would be the USPS'S choice of a non-working day. I for one enjoy the occasional weekend, and if the potential to losing any chance of weekends off isn't enough of a reason to get involved in the political show, then please let the Union know what it would take for individuals to get involved.

I started becoming politically active about a year ago, and after going the Rap Session and hearing about how much more work we as a Union need to do, I am glad to be taking a step in the right direction to protect my job and your job. My only hope is that more carriers will start to understand how big our Union

Voice is, and how much bigger it can grow. Our voice can only become more vocal if everyone joins in. We all need to do our part to protect our jobs, and to protect the USPS now and in the future.

**Samantha
Eastside Station**

**The Following is a list of
Paid Members of PAL 9 for
April 14 to June 15, 2009**

Very Concerned Members

**William A Mechels
Dale Forde
Karen J Schneider
Marty Cornell
Janice E Wild
Theresa M Homstad**

Regular Members

**Katherine E Duax-Kunkel
Todd A Kunkel
Russell Sondrol
Carolyn (Carrie) M Bren**

**Ron Lawrence
Treasurer PAL 9**

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in the know?
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Sacrifice--Mutual or Selective?

There are hopeful signs that our nation may be turning the proverbial corner in this economic recession. Nevertheless, at this writing, the US Postal Service seems to be mired deeply in the throes of economic malaise.

We are hearing horror stories daily of mail handlers having their work schedules cut back, clerks being excessed, and now of a threatening new route adjustment process that President Pam tells us will not be pretty. Everywhere you turn, you see despair and job losses.

Except in postal management.

Or am I not paying attention? I keep hearing rumors of severe cutbacks in postal management, (for example), fully a third of the fourth floor at the Minneapolis Main Office disappearing. But is anything happening?

Of course, I have no "inside information". All I can go by is what I see. And what I have seen since the first of the year is that our station management wants to revert two routes that have become vacant due to retirement, ending two career carrier assignments. Yet we have gained a supervisor.

Let me hearken back to those thrilling days of yesteryear, of a decade ago at the Main Office. We had a station manager...well, sort of. I think we saw him maybe twice a year. Otherwise he was either next door in the Parcel Post & Collections office drinking coffee and swapping lies with their supervisors or napping down in the Main Office lobby. If he ever did anything, none of us ever

saw it or heard about it.

Our station was run by a half-time supervisor. He would come in at 5 AM and go home at about 9:30 — all the bookwork done, all the routes covered, everything in order. In those frequent events that he was late, our steward (then the immortal Bobby Baird) assigned routes to the RRs and PTFs, and passed out whatever overtime was necessary. And everything ran perfectly.

Now we have a manager and three supervisors tripping over and overlapping each other. One calls the VIM carriers for mail counts, as another frets about his upcoming vacation, while the third goes out to check the newest restaurant in the skyways. Our station manger waits until all the bookwork is done; then comes in, tosses it all out, and re-does it all, normally fouling everything up.

A website in New Jersey three months ago printed up the salaries of all USPS employees, as many of you saw. Just for fun, I totaled up the annual salaries of our four ace managers: **\$283,668**. That's basic salary, minus benefits or bonuses. All for what was done a decade ago by a half-time supervisor.

Sacrifice seems to be the foreboding future for all of us in the Postal Service—at least in the postal crafts. I'm just curious when — or if — postal management plans to join the game?

Rotten Rodney Anderson
Main Office Steward

Get Happy

by Paul Schimke, Diamond
Lake Station

Recently I approached management with what I thought was a reasonable request. Since the PTF's are frozen out from making regular but were hired as career employees, the past culture of how they are treated needs to be re-evaluated. If they are going to be forced to work overtime nearly every day, there needs to be changes made so they can get regular days off. Management's response was that all carriers should be happy to have a job.

Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary's definition of "happy": 1; favored by fortune or luck, 2; notably well-adapted, 3; enjoying well being and contentment, 4; marked by an atmosphere of good fellowship.

In my twenty-four years carrying mail, I've had over 85 supervisors and 18 station managers, or, over five million dollars in salaries. Yet what we do is really quite simple; we sell postage and deliver mail. Now boys and girls, can you tell me exactly how many letters, parcels, reds, etc. those 106 bosses have delivered over the last twenty-four years? Percentage-wise I'd say zero.

So the next time management says you should be happy to have a job you may want to point out that without them the mail still goes out and business goes on. But without us, the place shuts down and they are out of work. So who exactly should be happy to have a job? Hmmm...

Not Raising Taxes, But Still Paying

Reporting

Pat Kessler, WCCO

Minnesota Gov. Tim Pawlenty single-handedly sliced \$300 in state help for cities and counties. He cut more than \$230 million from health and welfare programs, and higher education is taking a \$100 million hit.

All this money trouble isn't unique to Minnesota, but the governor's solution is. Unlike lawmakers in nearly 30 other states, he's not raising taxes.

However, that doesn't mean our families won't be paying more.

Minnesota's got a reputation as a high tax state, but it all depends on which list or combination of taxes you figure; income tax ranks 10th in the nation, but sales tax ranks 35th.

And you might be surprised how long it has been since Minnesota actu-

ally raised those 'big' taxes. It was 1991 --- the same year "Terminator 2" topped the box office, starring Arnold Schwarzenegger, now the governor of California, a state that was, at that time, facing the country's biggest deficit.

That's the last time Minnesota's income tax rate went up to 8.5 percent. It's been going down ever since to 7.85 percent.

There's MORE.

You've been paying a 6.5 percent sales tax at every cash register you visit since 1994. Starting July 1, it goes up to 6.875 percent because voters last year passed a constitutional amendment to raise the sales tax for arts and conservation programs.

There have been two big tax hikes in just the last 2 years.

A phased in 10-cent a gallon gas tax

hike went into effect a year ago. That was vetoed by the governor, but the veto was overridden by the legislature.

And a 75-cent cigarette tax hike in 2007 that the governor proposed and signed but which he called a "health impact fee."

However, the biggest tax hike in Minnesota in the last 10 years is the one that hits us where we live. Literally. Local property taxes across the state have gone up more than 60 percent.

That's Reality Check.

To check the resources for this Reality Check click on the links below.
Minnesota Revenue FAQs
Minnesota Tax Rankings
Minnesota Tax Handbook, 2008 Edition
Minnesota Property Tax Revenue, FY 2009
Overview Of Minnesota Property Taxes

www.wcco.com/realitycheck

The Big Picture

We all need to look at the big picture. We have been focusing on the pixels, not the picture itself. ' "A wise and frugal government, which shall leave men free to regulate their own pursuits of industry and improvement, and shall not take from the mouth of labor the bread it has earned- this is the sum of good government" ' Thomas Jefferson. He knew what he was talking about, governments role has gotten way too big and they are enforcing tyranny instead of a free capitalist economy. And our economy and country is feeling it. What can we do? Support candidates that share his vision, whatever the party. Call our representatives and let them

know that this is not the direction that is good for our country. Remind them that they represent us, they are not there for there own political agenda and special interest groups. Tell them to stop focusing on the pixels. Unfortunately, we as a union have not done this. We have supported candidates that are enforcing tyranny. What is good for the union may not be good for the union member. We are looking at small victories without realizing their consequences in the bigger picture of things. Just imagine postal management running every aspect of our lives- without us having union representation. If we do the right thing and support the ideas of our

founding fathers that have made our country great, things will take care of themselves. Less taxes and regulations; business small and large will grow, more jobs created, more money spent on products, advertising, ideas, etc... That is the big picture. " "I predict future happiness for Americans if they can prevent the government from wasting the labors of the people under the pretense of taking care of them." " Thomas Jefferson. We need to do what is right, and we shall be rewarded with freedom to live the American dream.

By Jim Aker - Robbinsdale

A Low-Down Relative Gets The Lowdown

Those who know me well know that I have a cousin named Ralph who lives down south. He is a "Free Rider", (he's a Mail Carrier that does not belong to our Union, but allows Members like us to pay to protect his rights and negotiate wages and benefits for him). In his part of the Country, the wages he earns, (but hasn't ever paid to secure), put him at the very top of the heap in terms of income. He also votes for Politicians that would gladly outlaw Unions, and thus ruin his family's quality of life. He votes for these Politicians because he thinks that they have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, and because the other Party is Communist.

The only reasons he's given for not paying his fair share of Union Dues is, "Because I don't HAVE to." and, "Because Unions support the Democrats and sometimes what's good for the Union may not be good for its members..." I've explained that just because you are not legally required to do the right thing, that doesn't mean you shouldn't do the right thing and pay your fair share for the benefits you enjoy. I've explained that Union dues cannot and are never used to support candidates. The NALC and Branch 9 are able, through the voluntary contributions made by members to COLCPE and PAL9, to support politicians, even Republicans (and does). It doesn't matter what Party someone is from, it depends upon which candidate in the race is best for the bank balance of our families and fights for the Rights of us and our fellow working

Americans. Members who give \$5 a pay period (Gimme 5) to COLCPE, and/or give to PAL9 on top of paying dues, are the true Heroes of Branch 9

After talking to Ralph the other day, I became aware that he is now totally disconnected from reality. He told me that the Country had elected a Socialistic Communist to be President and that the current economic disaster is all his fault and that he "loves his Country, but fears his Government..." I mentioned that the same thing was said about 8 years ago, by people concerned about the previous administration starting when HIS man was in the White House. But he didn't seem to hear me.

He continued to talk about the "tyranny" in Washington, the "free Capitalist economy" that had been destroyed, how "less taxes and regulations would lead to growth" and that "if we free up Business" they will take care of us. *He told me these things as if we haven't just lived through proof positive that their ideas don't work, and are in fact bad for us all and bad for our families.*

I told Ralph that I will not let him tell me that I am supporting tyranny just because the candidate that best represents working families won the election. Especially when his man in office damn near stripped away basic human rights that are guarantee to us in the Constitution. And then I asked

him to remember that the most Special Interest of all is each of our family pocketbooks, and what is good for the Union is what the Union Members SAY is good - we all may not agree on everything, but most can agree that if we have dignified jobs that pay a fair days wage for a fair days work, we can use our left over money to pay to support whatever other causes we believe in.

I then asked him to become a Member and give 5 extra now so he won't wish he had later. I rather doubt he will, but it's my duty to try to help him. That's how a family works.

**Submitted by Rick Onslow
Powderhorn Station**

"Money" continued from page 4

ity our union will continue to file grievances, and I am confident that we will prevail with increased monetary remedies. This is no consolation for the non OT carriers that are being forced on a regular basis; however filing grievances are one of the tools we have to combat management's unwillingness to comply with our contract. We must also make sure we work safely, professionally and at a consistent pace every day.

Step A Representative
Jason Karnopp

Did You Know???

The Postal Service is an independent federal agency and covers its expenses not with tax money but with the sale of stamps, postage and postal services.

Getting the Word Out

Two informational RAP Session meetings for Branch 9 members were held at the Ballentine VFW, and Crystal Lake VFW. Pam gave an overview about what had been presented at the National Rap Session. Darrell Maus and Julie Waldemar went into specifics on how the MIARAP adjustments process works and

the all important input by carriers throughout the adjustment process. COR (Carrier Optimal Routing process) will be used in some units, and if used as a tool and not the end-all, problems should be kept to a minimum. COR is just a program and with accurate data there will be an accurate adjustment if the process is monitored and checked. While it was obvious that nobody was happy about longer routes, most were in agreement that the MIARAP Agreement was the less painful approach to route adjustments.

Chuck Glover - Editor



Retiree Report



**Director of Retirees
Cheryl Stately**

Once again the retiree Banquet was a great success. Thanks to all who attended. A special thanks to all who volunteered, without you the day would not have gone so well.

Congratulations to Tom Woller, our Retiree of the Year. He most certainly has earned that award for all he has done for Branch 9 over the years.

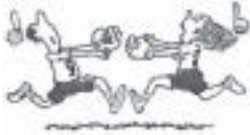
There will be another Cribbage Tournament in the fall. No date has been set yet. Hopefully we can get another good turnout. Thank also to all of you who helped with the food drive, which also was a great success this year.

If you do not contribute to COLCPE, you can do so directly from you annuity by calling the NALC Retirement Office at 202.662.2877; or toll free at 1-800-424-5186. You can also sign up on the internet at WWW.servicesonline.opm.gov. You'll need your CSA Retirement Claim Number and PIN number. If you don't already contribute, please consider doing so, it is only as little as \$5/month

Cheryl

Annual Branch 9 Picnic & Softball Tournament

Sunday, August 9th
11am to 5pm
Aquatore Park
9191 Lincoln Street NE
Blaine, Mn
Near Central Ave and Hwy 10



Softball

Tournament

3 Fields available
Teams now forming

Lawn Games

Bocce Ball
Washers
Bean Bag Toss and
Much More

Cribbage Tournament



Children's Games

Water Balloon Toss
Relay Races
Face Painting and
Much More

Lunch Menu

Pig Roast
Hot dogs & Brats
Potato Salad
Beans
Corn on the Cob and
all the Fixings

**Deadline for Ticket
Requests
August 7, 2009**

Mail your registration form, check payable to Branch 9 and a self addressed stamped envelope to Branch 9 Picnic, 2408 Central Avenue NE, Minneapolis, Mn 55418

Branch 9 Picnic at Aquatore Park Registration Form

Name: _____

Address: _____

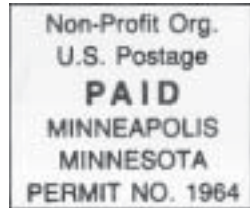
How many Adult Tickets: \$5.00 per ticket

How many Children 3-12: \$3.00 per ticket

How many Children 2 and under: Free

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

Change Service Requested



Branch Nine Calendar

July 24

Payday

July 28

Nokomis Retiree's Breakfast
9am- Fred Babcock VFW
6715 Lakeshore Drive
Richfield

August 2

1st Annual Veterans Picnic
11am till dusk
11300 180th St. North
Marine On the St. Croix, MN

August 4

Northside Retiree's Breakfast
9:30 am- Elsie's
729 Marshall St. NE
Minneapolis

August 4

Steward Meeting
Ballentine VFW - 7pm
2916 Lyndale Ave. So.
Minneapolis

August 7

Payday

August 9

Branch 9 Picnic
& Softball Tourney
11am to 5pm
9191 Lincoln Street NE
Blaine, MN

August 11

Southside Retiree's Breakfast
9am- Fred Babcock VFW
6715 Lakeshore Drive
Richfield

August 18

General Membership
Meeting 7pm
2916 Lyndale Ave S
Minneapolis