



VOLUME 63 No 2

Official Publication of Branch Nine, NALC

March 2011

Branch 9 MDA Bowl-a-Thon

Saturday, April 16th
Park Tavern
3401 Louisiana Ave. S.
St. Louis Park, MN 55426
Time: 7pm - 9:30pm
Details on page 14

Saturday, May 14, 2011 NALC FOOD DRIVE



FAREWELL TO THE PLYMOUTH POST OFFICE

by: Emy Peasha
(Plymouth)



The Plymouth Post Office was built and opened in the early months of 1980. Letter carriers there were told that as a result of projected growth in the city of Plymouth the building would eventually become overcrowded, but a new site would be built. 50 carriers originally moved into the structure. They were a mixture of Wayzata and Golden Valley routes with all being mounted delivery. Later, after opening, 25 routes were shifted to the new Lost Lake Station. Fast forward to 2011; the workroom floor is comfortable and spacious, but the Postal Service has sold the building which made it necessary to move the remaining 25 letter carriers to the Golden Valley Post Office.

Under the normal bidding structure bodies come and go but we have a few "old timers" that have been at the station since it was opened. Joe Steckler and Dave Cornelius are the two most senior carriers. Both had been at the Wayzata Post Office for several years prior to the move to the Plymouth site. As an added anomaly, they still deliver mail on the same routes they bid prior to

the move. With the frequent route adjustments, their territories have changed a bit, but mostly their routes have stayed the same over the years. Joe commented that when he bid on his route the roads were all dirt and/or gravel in an area referred to as "pigtail alley" because it was nothing more than farmland with many small



"Out with the old, in with the Bhanu." Joe Steckler, Bhanu Chemmangattumana (Steward), and Dave Cornelius.

continued on page 6



Loring Station's steward, Karen Pederson, is all smiles on Bruce Ropke's last day on January 31st.



Dave Stenglein (Osseo) uses the transactor card for the last time as Roger Maas (steward) looks on.

High Three Earnings

Computing an employees "high-3" average salary.

The "high-3" average salary is the highest salary obtainable by averaging the rates of *base* pay in effect during any three consecutive years of service. (Not calendar years, but work years).

From the Editor, Branch Nine News.

In the last issue of the BNN, I inadvertently resized the COLCPE logo, covering up the last station at Branch 9. I apologize, for this error, to all the carriers and two stewards at West Edina.

West Edina
7360 Busch Lake Rd
Edina, MN 55439

MDA REPORT

By MDA Coordinator:
JoAnn Gilbaugh.

Branch 9 is kicking off the MDA Fundraising year with our annual Bowl-a-Thon. This year our event will be held on Saturday, April 16, from 7PM-9:30PM at **Park Tavern in St. Louis Park.**

The new venue and the return to Saturday promises a night full of fun and festivities. Each station is requested to bring a gift basket for the silent auction. The station with the basket that raises the most money, wins a station breakfast.

We are also continuing the tradition of a high series, and a high game competition. Current bragging rights belong to Lake Street Station. Bowling teams can be 4-6 people, with a minimum pledge of \$50 per bowler. The bowler with the highest pledges will receive special recognition.

Deadline for team registration is Wednesday, April 6th. Space is limited; first come, first served.

Find out about your Social Security.

Request you Social Security statement for:

- Estimates of benefits at different retirement ages.
- Different wage estimates.

go to:

www.socialsecurity.gov

Michael Smith
Barb Lutz

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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 2nd Friday 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

FSS

Flat Sequence Sorting (FSS) is scheduled to begin in April and May. The USPS has selected stations that will receive FSS mail and they are Blaine, Coon Rapids, Golden Valley, Lost Lake, Thomas Burnett, West Edina, Anoka, Burnsville and Chanhassen. While management has made changes to the list of FSS stations over the past year, with the effective date drawing near, this list is likely the final. FSS has been implemented in several different areas of the country, with the roll out and "standard operating procedures" as different as the cities themselves. In Minneapolis, the plan currently shared with the NALC is that only bulk rate mail will be run on the FSS machines, while in other parts of the country, all rates of flat mail are run. Again, all of these variables are up to management. The flats will come to the stations on specialized racks in specialized bucket type trays (shorter and taller than the current gray trays).

National Business Agent Chris Wittenberg and I have both suggested and offered to have representative letter carriers help in all phases of FSS implementation. From discussing transportation and logistics, to helping to address work methods ahead of time, to adjusting routes affected, we expressed our desire to work together to have the best possible transition to this new technology. Let the record reflect that the UNION offered to help, accepting the technology and wanting to ensure that it worked in the best possible way. And so now we wait, with much anticipation and interest.

Mike and I have been attending USPS required stand up talks for the letter carriers working at the FSS sites. Currently, they seem to be more to let carriers know FSS is coming,

but no real specifics. Carriers are asking great questions and answers (if they have them) are being posted on the LiteBlue page. There will be a fairly large impact on these units. They will have an additional bundle (source) of mail to go through each day, seeing this mail for the first time while delivering it on the street. There will be a reduction in office time, and as a result, additional street time to go through that mail. There will be evaluations of the FSS routes and likely a reduction of route structure. USPS managements estimate is 41 full time routes will be lost ("impacted") due to FSS in Minneapolis. The USPS estimated impact has been substantially higher than the actual impact in those cities that already have FSS implemented. In the end, it is what it is, and evaluations will be whatever they are. It's whatever a letter carrier does day in and day out that determines their paycheck, not what someone else estimates. I realize for most carriers, it's all the confrontation in between that is most dreaded. All of us need to attempt to let go of the idea that another person's estimate, or any number calculation they may come up with, in any way defines our work ethic or the value of our work. Certainly this past winter has highlighted the absolute truth that the USPS thrives in service and work productivity because we are working our ***** off!

WE ARE ONE!

The current demonstrations in Madison, Wisconsin are not a phenomenon. They are not a "one and done" event, they are not orchestrated theater, and they are not isolated. Similar demonstrations are being played out every day in Ohio, Indiana, New Jersey and all across our country. This may have started as a "union issue", but its reach and ripple effect have moved and help



Pam Donato
Branch 9 President

to mobilize a much larger (and lately sleeping) giant, the working class. ("Good morning sleepy head, we're so glad you're finally up!")

While the money of wealthy corporations enjoys controlling the anti-labor spin of most stories all across the political field, they cannot twist the ugly truth of what is being done in Wisconsin and all over the country. It's workers rights vs. complete corporate control. Labor unions have been demonized by greedy corporations for years, beginning notably with President Ronald Reagan and his firing of the Air Traffic Controllers in early 80's. And with the increasing disparity between the "haves" and the "have nots", labor union members have become ostracized as "having too much". Other non union workers have decided union workers have too much. Too much pay, healthcare, pension, vacation, holidays, rights, voice...you name it, we've got too much of it.

But in Madison, something extraordinary is happening. Regular folk are starting to see through the extreme fringe elite spin. There are daily pictures of fire fighters, nurses, teachers and police officers...WITH PICKET SIGNS...declaring "Kill the Bill!", "This is what democracy looks like!" and "We Are One!".

President's article continued on page 12

Early Days of Organizing

Almost immediately after the Pendleton Act went into effect in 1883, letter carriers in the New York area banded together to obtain an annual vacation law.

Officially, letter carriers were not allowed vacations. They were supposed to work 365 days per year, including Sundays. The postmaster in New York City, however, permitted his carriers to take ten days of vacation per year, providing their fellow workers agreed to cover the routes of those on vacation. At the same time, federal employees in Washington, DC ... were allowed 30 vacation days per year, a privilege not extended to the employees of the Washington, DC post office. Frustrated with the discrepancy in

treatment... Washington letter carriers petitioned the Department for the same leave privileges as other federal workers in the city. ...The Department's law officer issued a statement declaring that no law existed under which letter carriers could be allowed any vacation days whatsoever. The postmaster at the New York Post Office was soon ordered to cease giving carriers annual leave. The New York City letter carriers... together with letter carriers from several cities, approached Congressman Samuel "Sunset" Cox, and in 1884, after a monumental effort, Cox was able to persuade Congress to pass legislation giving all letter carriers ... a 15 day vacation, with pay, every year. ...It gave letter carriers

first-hand experience in the advantages of organized agitation. Letter carriers throughout the nation were vividly reminded that in unity there is, indeed, strength.

It was Congressman Cox who was responsible for persuading Congress in 1879 to establish a regular pay scale for letter carriers. The 1879 law created two grades of letter carriers in the larger post offices, with salaries fixed at \$800 and \$1000 a year. In the smaller post offices, where letter carriers' jobs were still subject to the spoils system, Congress limited carriers' wages to \$850 per year, regardless of years of service.

Reprinted from: Carriers in a Common Cause; a history of letter carriers and the NALC

How many will sign and turn in?

Non-Union Member Free Rider's Card

Because I am opposed to all unions and all the benefits listed below, I refuse to accept any benefits that have been won and will be won by the NALC.

Therefore, I hereby authorize and direct the USPS to withhold the amount of the union benefits from my paycheck every two weeks and donate it to charity.

Wage Increases

COLA

Seniority rights

Paid Sick Leave

Paid Annual Leave

Grievance-Arbitration Process

Safety Laws

Bidding Rights

Pension Plan

Health Insurance Plans

Job Security

Paid Life Insurance

Worker Compensation Laws

Regulars guaranteed eight hours per day and forty hours per week, time and a half for hours in excess of eight hours per day and forty hours per week,

Double time for work over ten hours per day.

I am opposed to all unions. Therefore, I am opposed to all the benefits that the NALC has won through the years.

Signature _____

Date _____

Executive Vice President's Report

REVISITING ARTICLE 8

There is an old adage about March that says it comes in like a lion and goes out like a lamb. Hopefully, we will see the last remnants of winter come and go this month. March is also a time when letter carriers are reminded of the 1970 Postal Strike. There were a number of changes that came about as a result of that strike. Among them was the right to bargain collectively on work rules, wages and the like. In our contract, we also negotiated the right to grieve and seek a remedy when we believe those work rules, wages and the like are violated.

One of the most often grieved articles of the contract continues to be Article 8

specifically Section 5 that addresses the matter of overtime. Based on the number of grievances one would think that the language about overtime is in a constant state of flux. But, that's not the case. With the exception of language about TEs, the National Parties have not made any major changes to Article 8 and the language about overtime since 1988. Yet for some reason, nationwide the Union files more grievances about Article 8 violations than all the rest of the articles combined. Even with the advent of the Joint Statement on Overtime and the JCAM, for some reason, we still have overtime violations that we have to grieve.

Perhaps one of the reasons that we continue to have these grievances is that we have forgotten why some of the language of Article 8 exists in the first place. In January 1985 a new payroll classification was created in Article 8 Penalty Overtime

(sometimes referred to as V-Time) This language was created to "be paid for all work in contravention of the restrictions identified in Article 8 Section 5.F ... Violations of any of the above requires the payment of Penalty Overtime Pay." It was created to be a penalty and used if and when management violated the contract. The parties at that time agreed that, "it is the intent of the parties in adopting changes to Article 8 to limit overtime, to avoid excessive mandatory overtime, and to protect the interests of employees

"...nationwide, the Union file more grievances about Article 8 violations than all of the rest of the Articles combined."

who do not wish to work overtime." Somehow, we went from this language and its principles to a situation where carriers not on the

Overtime-Desired List have been routinely required/forced to carry overtime on the normal workday and their nonscheduled day as well. It is interesting to read that the JCAM says "the penalty overtime provisions of Article 8.4 are not intended to encourage or result in the use of any overtime in excess of the restrictions contained in Article 8.5.F." Yet based on our current staffing situation, this is exactly what has happened.

Usually there are two primary camps surrounding the issue of overtime. First there are those that want to work overtime (OTDL and Assignment Only). Then there also those that do not want to work overtime. Each camp believes that Article 8 Section 5 is intended to protect their interests. If the parties follow the terms of the National Agreement then both are correct. The problem lies when the terms of the contract are not complied



Mike Zagaros, Branch 9 Exec. Vice President

with. Enforcing the terms of the contract cannot just be the job of the steward. That is why it is important for everyone to learn and understand the rules as they apply to overtime assignments. The language of Article 8 Section 5 applies to full-time regulars only. But, enforcing it applies to everyone.

The first priority in determining who should work overtime, is to remember that those full-time carriers who are not on any list should not be required (forced) to work overtime until several steps are taken:

- **PTFs/ TEs working up to 10 hours**
- **Use all OTDL carriers up to regular OT rate**
- **Use Assignment Only carriers up to 10 on their own assignment**

At this point, a non-OTDL carrier can be forced to work up to 10 hours on his or her own route on a regularly scheduled day.

If Management is having a non-OTDL carrier work off their

VP Continued on page 7

Plymouth cont. from page 1

lakes and wetlands woven around each other.

Joe Steckler began his postal career at the Wayzata Post Office making \$3.06 an hour. After the 70 Strike his work life, like all letter carriers, took a turn for the better with a strong National Agreement. As a result he was able to see an immediate 50¢ increase per hour and a significant increase in benefits. This was a considerable amount of money after having suffered the many years of gratuitous crumbs thrown to letter carriers by a federal government which showed an indignant under appreciation of the workforce.

Mr. Steckler reminisced on the many changes in the Postal Service and looked back in wonderment on a few

practices which seem inconceivable today, like the common practice of smoking at your case while preparing the mail for delivery, and how redundant the task of sorting the flats were in those days. Today we have vertical flat dividers for each address, but prior to that a carriers had a flat case with sector segment compartments containing many addresses. Once the flats were all sorted they were then collated and telescoped in numerical order of delivery which resulted in double handling.

Joe also recalled the differences in comfort levels of previous vehicles vs. today's. The Jeep heaters were awful and barely produced enough heat to melt the snow on ones footwear, let alone help with body

comfort. It was a necessary practice to keep the window pushed up between each delivery in an attempt to maintain any degree of warmth. He reflected that on one winter day when the temperature had fallen to 70° below zero wind-chill and he was in one of those old Jeeps. As he approached a mail receptacle he would quickly pull the window down, throw the mail in the box and with very cold hands, push it back up. Every day presented a continuous challenge for self-preservation.

Another long timer, Julie Waldemar, remembers when she arrived at the station back in 1984. Although she only had five years of seniority she was able to bid on and win a RR (Roving Regular) assignment. Since her assignment included a couple routes being transferred from Golden Valley Station to Plymouth she moved along with them! Because the Plymouth Post Office is an all mounted delivery station it is also a high seniority office.

Plymouth Station has always been fortunate to have someone step-up into the role of union steward with the complete confidence and support of the workroom floor. Joe Steckler assumed the role for nearly 10 years. Since then there has been a line of very dedicated and competent representatives. Tom White, now deceased, was very knowledgeable and active when such action was called for. Julie Waldemar, always active in NALC activities, has held many elected positions within Branch 9. Gary Hughes, always a strong supporter of worker's rights and never afraid to share his opinions and advice with management. Ela Brodziak, a union activist in Poland, where she was born and raised, received political asylum and was



1st row: Emy Peasha, Nate Pelto, Steve Schwede, Bhanu Chemmangattumana (steward).

2nd row: Julie Waldemar (Branch Health Benefits Rep), Lonnie Lincoln, Diane Klevann, Joe Steckler, Al Champion, Leonard Weingartz.

3rd row: Gary Hughes, Lorna Lyrek, LeAnn Olander.

4th row: Dan Lyrek, Dave Cornelius, John McGlocklin, Ray Peterson, Greg Christianson.

Continued on page 8

VP article continued from page 5

assignment or on their non-scheduled day, they must work **all OTDL carriers up to 12 hours in a day and up to 20 hours of overtime per week.** At this point, a non-OTDL carrier can be forced to work off their route or on their non-scheduled day. Carriers forced based on this criteria are selected based on their seniority of the carriers not on the OTDL by juniority on a rotating basis. This list starts over at the beginning of every quarter. Again carriers not on the OTDL can only be required to work 10 hours per day **on 4 of 5 regularly scheduled days per week. On their N/S day it is 8 hours.** This is the same language that caused the parties to create the penalty overtime provisions.

Does this mean a carrier can refuse to work overtime because management is not following the rules? **No!** Letter carriers are

expected to follow management's instructions even if they are wrong contractually and grieve later. If you believe you were improperly required to work overtime this is when you need to contact your steward. You need to provide them the basic information about what happened. If you are in the other camp and think that, you were denied the opportunity to work overtime, again contact your steward with the basic information about what happened. There is no easy settlement for these issues when the overtime use is as high as it has been lately (over 20% overtime). Last month Pam wrote about the staffing issues and that there is some relief in sight with the hiring of more TEs. While this will help, it is not the solution. Until the parties recognize and agree to abide in the principle that the National Parties stated in the Overtime Memorandum of Understanding to January 1985, that **"the excessive use of overtime is inconsistent**

with the best interests of postal employees and the Postal Service." Then we are bound to repeat the same mistakes of the most recent past and we will continue to see more and more overtime violations. If this continues then it's up to all of us to enforce the same language of the past 20 years and file grievances. It is for that reason that the Branch has initiated the Class Action Grievances. Thank you to Lisa O'Neill, Darrell Maus, Tim Bergstrom, for their help in the Class Action Overtime Grievances. It is nothing more than our rights that are at stake. As we look for the lamb at the end of March, let's remember and say thanks to those who gave us the ability to exercise those rights. The 1970 strikers who put it on the line between the lion and the lamb in March.

What Has The Union Done For Me?

Answer the following by circling the letter "T" for true or the letter "F" for false.

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1. The Union has never done a single thing for me personally | T | F |
| 2. The company voluntarily pays me my current hourly wage | T | F |
| 3. The company voluntarily provides me with health care insurance | T | F |
| 4. The company voluntarily gives me holidays off with pay | T | F |
| 5. The company voluntarily gives me paid vacation time yearly | T | F |
| 6. The company voluntarily provides me with a safe workplace | T | F |
| 7. The company voluntarily honors my seniority rights | T | F |
| 8. The company voluntarily allows me to work at a fair pace | T | F |
| 9. The company voluntarily gives me a break every two hours | T | F |
| 10. The company voluntarily pays me overtime or double-time | T | F |
| 11. The company provides me retirement pension benefits | T | F |
| 12. The company would never keep a rude or abusive supervisor | T | F |

If you answered all of the questions by circling the letter "F", congratulations; you scored a perfect 100 percent! If you answered any of the above questions by circling the letter "T", pinch yourself; you're dreaming!!!

Reprinted from Branch 51's The NALC Courier (Fall River, Mass)

Plymouth cont. from page 6

allowed to come to America in the late 80's. She became a letter carrier and continued her dedication to workers' rights within Branch 9 as a union steward. At present we have Bhanu Chemmangattumana, a young man who came to this country and is now the steward. He's very hard working and eager to learn whatever he can about the job in hopes that he can be a good letter carrier and NALC representative.

This chapter in our postal careers will be done, but the bonds formed will last, as we close the book on Plymouth station.



Julie Waldemar (Br 9 Health Benefits Representative)

Open Season enrollment figures are pouring in and as of January 30, 2011 we have added 5,428 new members to the Plan. If you are a new member – Welcome! If you were in the plan before – Thanks for sticking with us. If you are in another plan, I challenge you to pay attention to what medical you use in 2011 and compare it to the NALC plan. Remember we are a non-profit member owned plan so we don't have those expensive CEO bonus checks to pay for.

Heads up – this year we have a Quit for Life (stop tobacco use) program at no extra charge. More info next month or check it out on the NALC.org website.

Retiree Report



**Cheryl Stately
(Br 9 Director of Retirees)**

Cribbage Tournament Wednesday, April 13 10AM Br 28 Union Hall 1715 Van Dyke St. St. Paul, MN 55119

Big thanks to Ric Coburn for attending the State Cribbage Tournament (MDA Fundraiser) held on February 13th at Branch 28, in St. Paul. Congrats Ric! Ric won 1st Place and was the only Branch 9 member to attend.

There will be a Cribbage Tournament between Branch 9 and Branch 28 on April 13th, at Branch 28. The tournament starts at 10AM, and food and refreshments will be served for a \$3 charge.

Just a reminder, May 1st is the Retiree Banquet. Hopefully there will be a good turnout again this year. It's always nice to see people we have worked with over the years. I'll see you there.

In Solidarity,
Cheryl Stately
763-232-4870



32nd Annual

Regional Training Seminar

NALC Region 7



April 25 - 29, 2011

Holiday Inn Metrodome
Minneapolis, Minnesota

Monday and Tuesday.

Steward's Training
8AM - 5PM

Wednesday

Group Seminar
8AM - 5PM

Thursday

8:30AM - 5:30PM

Two mandatory classes
(Postal Inspectors/OIG)
(Attendance and Absenteeism)

Four optional classes
(Windows of Operations)
(Article 5; Past Practice)
(Article 41)
(Organizing)

Friday

8:30AM - Noon

MDA/Food Drive/EAP
/Customer Connect

RAP Session and graduation

****All participants must pay a meals and breaks fee, based on the selected attendance option****

All week \$185.50

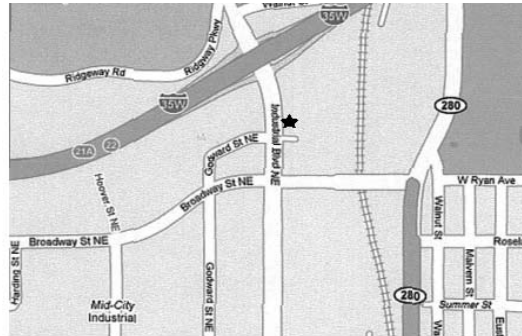
Mon. & Tues. \$69.00

Wed.- Fri. \$116.50

\$9.00 Registration Fee

Registration Forms may be
picked up at Steward or General
Membership Meetings

**Branch 9's Annual
 Red and Gold Retiree Banquet
 Sunday, May 1, 2011
 Ramada Plaza, Minneapolis
 1330 Industrial Boulevard, Minneapolis, MN**



Registration Noon - 1:30

Social Hour 12:30 - 1:30

Lunch 1:30 - 3:30

Reservations must be returned to the Branch Office no later than Monday, April 25.

\$12 registration fee for each retiree and each guest is refundable upon arrival

For more than 50 years Branch 9 has honored its retirees with the Red & Gold Banquet. Please join us for a day of good time and fellowship, as we say thank you to those who have come before us.

Cost for active members is \$18; stewards \$9

Name: _____

Name of your Guest: _____

Retired

I would like a ride to the Banquet

Active

I am willing to give someone a ride
(Call Cheryl Stately 763.232.4870)

*Return by April 25 to:
 Branch 9, NALC
 2408 Central Avenue NE
 Minneapolis 55418*

Adult Learners Scholarship

Leonard A. Larson/ Barry J. Weiner Scholarship

Adult Learners:

Submit scholarship
application to Branch 9
by May 24, 2011

**Leonard A. Larson/
Barry J. Weiner
Adult Learner Scholarship
Application Form**

Name _____

Phone _____

Address _____

Active or Retired _____

Work unit _____

Two (2) \$1,000 scholarships will be awarded.

The following rules apply to the two scholarships:

A. Any member active or retired in good standing of Branch 9 is eligible for one of the two scholarships.

B. The scholarships may be used for any accredited trade school, vocational/technical institute, community college, or university. The Adult Learner Scholarships may also be used for any community, county or state adult educational program.

C. One name will be drawn for each scholarship. The first name picked will be the winner. The winners of any drawing will not be eligible for the other drawings.

D. The application for the drawings will run in the March and April issues of the Branch Nine News. The drawing will be held at the May General Membership meeting. The applications shall contain the following information:

1. The applicant's name, address, and home phone number.
2. Whether active or retired.

E. Payment to the winners will be made after they have enrolled and can show proof of payment towards their tuition.

F. Benefits under the Adult Learner Scholarships expire one year from date of drawing.

Members who plan to attend an accredited education institution should complete the application and return it to the Branch Office by May 24, or bring it to that night's meeting.

The Twin Cities Postal Headquarters

**UNIFORMS
UNLIMITED**

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

USA
Union preferred

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

**J. Wesley Woods - \$1,000
Scholarship Application Form**

Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____

High School _____

Member parent's name _____

Work unit _____

School to attend (if known) _____

**Jerome J. Keating/Austin B. Carlson
\$2,000 Scholarship Application Form**

Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____

High School _____

Member parent's name _____

Work unit _____

School to attend (if known) _____

**Walter E. Couillard/
Eugene P. McNulty
\$2,000 Scholarship Application Form**

Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____

High School _____

Member parent's name _____

Work unit _____

School to attend (if known) _____

**High School Seniors:
Submit scholarship applications to
Branch 9 by May 24, 2010**

Every spring, Branch 9 awards three scholarships to graduating seniors: the J. Wesley Woods Scholarship (\$1,000); the Jerome J. Keating/Austin B. Carlson Scholarship (\$2,000); and the Walter E. Couillard/Eugene P. McNulty Scholarship (\$2,000). The awards have made it easier for many students to begin their post-secondary education while honoring the sacrifices and contribution of important Branch 9 Leaders.

The following rules apply to all three scholarships:

A. Any senior graduating from high school and is a dependent of a Branch 9 member is eligible for these scholarships.

B. The scholarships may be used for any accredited trade school, vocational/technical institute, community college, or university.

C. Three names will be drawn for each scholarship. The first name picked will be the winner, then first and second runner-up respectively. The winners of any drawing will not be eligible for the other drawing.

D. The application for the drawings will run in the March and April issues of the Branch Nine News. The drawing will be held at the May General Membership Meeting. The applications shall contain the following information:

1. The applicant's name, address, and home phone number.
2. The name of the applicant's parent or guardian who is a member of Branch 9.
3. The intended school of choice, if known.

E. Payment to the winners will be made after they have enrolled and can show proof of payment towards their tuition.

Members with dependents who graduate from high school this spring and who plan to attend an accredited education institution next fall, should complete the applications and return them to the Branch Office by May 24 or bring them to that night's meeting. All three forms should be submitted as there are three separate drawings for each scholarship.

41 Years Ago This Month



In 1970, Postal Workers across the country walked off the job to protest the abysmal working conditions and paltry wages and benefits in the hope of securing a livable income.

Today, more than at anytime in the past 41 years, unions are under attack by those who would take away our right to collective bargaining, and return us to the days of collective begging. Think of what could (and still may) happen if our right to bargain collectively was taken away. In the real world of politics, *Money Talks*, and *B.S. Walks*. Support your rights by signing up for COLCPE, or locally, write out a generous check to PAL9.

Chuck Glover (Burnsville)



2011 Honored Guests Red and Gold Retiree Banquet

70 Year Member

Manley Thiel

60 Year Members

Robert Andersen

Leonard Bergstrom

Robert Nelson

Frank Newman

Robert Solberg

50 Year Members

Richard Anderson

Larry Blesi

Larry Dahlberg

Lindhahl Gleason

Herbert Halverson

Adrain Hames

Lee Holsman

Anthony Kruse

Arthur Kujawa

Robert Logelin

Robert Masuda

Glenn Paulson

Francis Rice

Russell Swanson

David Thompson

President's article continued from page 3

There are thousands and thousands of workers, many organized into labor unions, many others not. There are Veteran's groups, church and members of faith based groups. There are college students, college professors and parents of college wanna be's. Old, young and in between, they come from all walks, but all shouting the same talk. They believe in democracy, in the right to form a union and collectively bargain, they believe the *workers* are NOT the problem, and neither is their union! The right to expect that what you bargain for can only be modified by a meeting and agreement of the parties that bargained to begin with. That your word is your word and a deal is a deal.

This is our fight and our reality Brothers and Sisters! As letter carriers and Federal employees, this is the game plan for how a Government dismantles unions. Scare everyone, cry CRISIS and create infighting by pitting one section of the workers against another. Do this by picking on those who have something most others have already lost, maybe never had to begin with. The conditions are there for this "plan" to go Federal. Education and activism are like kryptonite, and we'll continue to provide enough for everyone! Read reliable information from Branch 9, the NALC website and Postal Record, and get yourself out to a membership meeting the second Tuesday night every month!

Madison is where it's at...today. And we will continue to support and help tell their story, which is **our** story too! The story is of solidarity, and justice, and moral values that honor workers. The age old story of Labor is being retold by diverse and respected masses all over the U.S.

*President's article continued on
page 17*

BRANCH 9 HOCKEY TEAM BRINGS CUP BACK TO THE BIG CITY

DEFEATS BRANCH 28 11-10

The Branch 9 hockey team pulled off a dramatic victory over the Saint Paul Branch 28 team in their second meeting, bringing the Cross River Challenge Cup home with them.

The Branch 9 team suffered an embarrassing loss to Branch 28 in the inaugural game two years ago and we have endured endless trash talk from the other side of the river since. They made no effort to hide their expectation that they would retain the cup by beating us soundly in this second meeting.

But this time around, the Branch 9 team came loaded for bear and determined to compete hard for the cup; and that they did. The 9ers jumped out to an early lead in the first period and out played their opponents throughout. The Branch 28 team started to come on strong in the second period and the lead went back and forth into the third period. Things were starting to look gloomy for Branch 9, when they found themselves facing a two goal deficit with about five minutes remaining in the game. Then, the 9er's showed that on this night, they were the team with the most character and determination by scoring two more goals to tie the game up, and scoring the winning goal with just 34 seconds remaining.

"I am proud of how we played and we are all elated that we represented Branch 9 so well and brought the cup to the side of the river we think it belongs," stated team captain Curt Blackwell.

The old man of the ice, retired National Business Agent Barry Weiner added, "That was a terrific game. The only disappointment is



that in the aftermath of their loss, some Saint Paul players started spreading totally false rumors that we used a ringer. I guess some sore losers just couldn't accept that we were the better team that night".

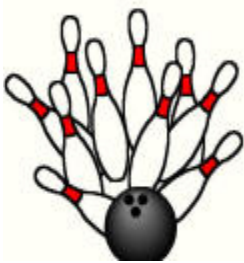
All in all, it was a very well played game with lots of talent on both teams and fun for all. Everyone looks forward to our next match up.

Submitted by: Barry Weiner (retired National Business Agent).

Branch 9

MDA Bowl-a-thon

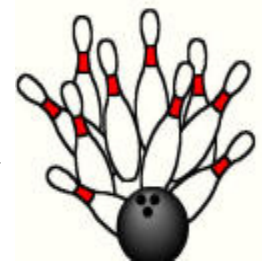
Saturday, April 16, 2011



LOCATION

Park Tavern

3401 Louisiana Avenue South
St. Louis Park, MN 55426



TIME

7:00 - 9:30PM

-
- ◆ 20 lanes of bowling (all teams bowl at same time)
 - ◆ Teams of 4 - 6 - MAIL your **teams with names** to:
Branch 9
2408 Central Avenue NE
Minneapolis, MN 55418
 - ◆ 2 games, shoe rental, pizza and cash bar
 - ◆ \$50 per bowler minimum collected for MDA
 - ◆ Silent and live auctions
 - ◆ Games for the kids
 - ◆ Contest for best gift basket - winning station will receive a free breakfast
 - ◆ Deadline for registration is Wednesday, April 6th

FIRST COME, FIRST SERVED

Northland District Peer Evaluator's Process



Its purpose is to help improve the work climate in stations. It does not replace the grievance or EEO procedures. If you have an issue that you believe detrimentally affects the overall workplace climate at your facility, contact your designated representative via the hotline listed below. That representative will determine whether to present this issue to the Area Peer Committee as a whole or suggest a different avenue of redress. In either instance, your specific issue will be addressed. Ultimately, each work unit is responsible for fixing their own problems. In the Peer Process, the emphasis will be placed on finding facts and determining a proper solution. It is not about assigning blame or defending the position of one person over another.

553/554 Peer Contact Number 612-781-9858

Carrying mail in the dark

With sincere apologies to Robert Zimmerman and his fans. How many blocks can you walk in the dark without falling flat on your back?

How can you read what you barely can see as you balance on the steps of a house?

And when they preach safety while walking your route- how do you keep a straight face?

The answer is clear- these are of no concern. They're only taking orders from above.

What do you say to your wife and your kids when they dine without dad once again?

And how do dark days in Alaska compare to dark nights in Minneapolis on the near north and south side?

And what will become of our jobs down the road if at night we must deliver to survive?

The answer is clear-these are of no concern. They're only taking orders from above.

Tim, from Minnesota

The Following is a list of Paid Members of PAL 9 for February, 2011.

VERY Concerned Members

- Terry L Hunter
- Kenneth A Freiermuth
- Patrick E Paplow
- Pamela K. Donato
- Michael T Zagaros
- Lawrence J Gildner
- J K Waldemar
- Charles M Glover
- Mary E Neveaux
- Gerald T Mattox
- Kelly Marie Lundgren

Regular Members

- Paul H Hultgren
- Merlin L Rau
- Lloyd Toll
- Paul R Nielsen
- Delmont R Stokke
- Carl H Walsten
- Richard W Hobot
- David A Olson

- Ronald P Sumstad
- Norma H Peterson
- Chris Williams
- Steven Boice
- Lyle J Herrmann
- Dwane L Thompson
- Charles E Foreman
- Shawn K O'Brien
- Michael A Hess
- Ronald E Roelke
- Leonard H Rardin
- Herman M Weidner
- Robert J Hooper
- mark L Larson
- Thomas W Hoban
- Susan Hoban
- Terrence O'Neill
- James M Nelson
- Timothy J Bedor
- Mary Ann Knoss
- Gary S Mierek
- Bob Linz
- Daniel V Magnuson
- Michael R Adams
- Ron Lawrence**
- Treasurer PAL 9**

SUPPORTING COLLECTIVE BARGAINING



Bus riders preparing signs for the union gathering at the state capital.



We arrived and got ready to march to the Capital grounds

Boarding two buses at 6:30AM, on Sunday, March 6th, letter carriers from Branch 9 made the trip to Madison, Wisconsin to support teachers, nurses, and public employees who are fighting to preserve their right to Collective Bargaining and binding arbitration. These union members could have their negotiated wages, health benefit premiums and pension rules unilaterally changed without any negotiation with their union. Letter carrier wages and benefits came as a result of negotiations. If the Wisconsin bill becomes law, and public employees lose the ability to bargain collectively, who will be next?



Marching around the Capital grounds making our presence known to the crowd



Branch 9 joined carriers from Minnesota, Wisconsin, South Dakota, and Illinois showing their support for teachers, public employees and their families. Even the cold weather couldn't stop this little tyke from supporting his mom.



Group photo of rally participants at a rest stop on the way back from Madison, Wisconsin

***President's article continued
from page 12***

and that ideal is resonating with the American people. We are a proud partner in the Labor community and no matter the tea party spin, **we're just getting started!**

IN CLOSING....

After more than 10 years as a full time officer for Branch 9, on May 1st, I will begin a new position with the NALC at our Headquarters in Washington D.C. This will result in several changes, some for Branch 9 and a few personally for me. What will not change is the very long history we have of dedicated, committed, smart tough, honest and fair leadership. Executive Vice President Mike Zagaros will assume the position of Branch President, both an amazing honor and enormous responsibility. Our current Executive Board will provide Mike a solid and experienced foundation that he can rely on as he begins to make his own mark as a

leader. We have a first rate Stewards Board and a smart and involved membership. And what I believe is a priceless security blanket, those I refer to as the "Branch elders". They are not *old*, but rather wise, steady and supportive members who have priceless experience and a deep love for Branch 9. Mike is the luckiest guy alive to have the privilege of leading our entire Branch 9 family. And all of us are pretty lucky too!

My departure is still a ways off, and with March and April being our busiest event months, my entire focus will be on getting our work done here.

Without question, I leave Branch 9 with a very heavy heart. For nearly 25 years, it has been my "special family" and my second home. Our members, their families and all of the wonderful partners that work with us have provided an invaluable education in "human relations" in every way imaginable. From the very first day I put on a letter carrier uniform, through all of the years

representing fellow members, I have sincerely looked forward to work each morning. There is no other reward in ones work life greater than feeling that what you're doing is valued and important and is in the service of others. I also take with me a Masters degree from the school of hard knocks, as not everything turns out the way you'd like. All of my experiences here have created a strong core that will motivate and guide my continuing work for the NALC. I will miss each one of you, though I know our work will always keep us close no matter the literal distance. While it is difficult to call out individuals (because the list is long!), I have profound respect and deep appreciation for Branch 9 President Emeritus Lenny Larson. He mentored me for years, and when he retired over four years ago, he did so in such a gracious and supportive way. Branch 9 will always be my home and I thank each and every member for being a part of my "second family"!

In Solidarity
Pam

The Fundamental Right To Collective Bargaining Supported By Churches

Please note: The following letter was sent to Governor Walker on February 16, 2011.

Bishop Lee hopes that all United Methodists in Wisconsin will pray about this issue and contact Governor Walker as well as their elected state representatives to let them know their opinions.

February 16, 2011
Office of Governor Scott Walker
115 East Capitol
Madison WI 53702

Dear Governor Walker:

It was my great honor to meet you and participate in your prayer breakfast on the day of your inauguration. Thank you for the invitation. I continue to pray for you and your administration. However, today I have a concern. United Methodists state in our 2008 Book of Discipline the following:

"We support the right of all public and private employees and employers to organize for collective bargaining into unions and other groups of their own choosing. Further, we support the right of both parties to protection in so doing and their responsibility to bargain in good faith within the framework of the public interest. In order that the rights of all members of the society may be maintained and promoted, we support innovative bargaining procedures that include representatives of the public interest in negotiation and settlement of labor-management contracts, including some that may lead to forms of judicial resolution of issues. We reject the use of violence by either party during collective bargaining or any labor/management disagreement. We likewise reject the permanent replacement of a worker who engages in a lawful strike."

I share this with you because I understand the importance of balancing our state budget while continuing to provide the best services possible to our citizens. But because of my belief that far more is accomplished for the best interests of all those we serve when employers and employees work together, I am writing to ask you to reconsider your initiative which I believe would end the possibility for those who are government employees here in Wisconsin to negotiate settlement of labor and management disagreements.

Our scriptures teach us that in Christ there is no north or south, no east or west, no slave or free. Is there not another way to accomplish what is needed? Thank you for your consideration of this matter

In Christ,

Bishop Linda Lee
LL/cjc



WISCONSIN CATHOLIC CONFERENCE

TO: Members, Joint Committee on Finance

FROM: Archbishop Jerome E. Listecki, President

Jerome E. Listecki

DATE: February 16, 2011

RE: Statement Regarding the Rights of Workers and the Value of Unions

The Church is well aware that difficult economic times call for hard choices and financial responsibility to further the common good. Our own dioceses and parishes have not been immune to the effects of the current economic difficulties. But hard times do not nullify the moral obligation each of us has to respect the legitimate rights of workers. As Pope Benedict wrote in his 2009 encyclical, *Caritas in veritate*:

Governments, for reasons of economic utility, often limit the freedom or the negotiating capacity of labor unions. Hence traditional networks of solidarity have more and more obstacles to overcome. The repeated calls issued within the Church's social doctrine, beginning with *Rerum Novarum* [60], for the promotion of workers' associations that can defend their rights must therefore be honored today even more than in the past, as a prompt and far-sighted response to the urgent need for new forms of cooperation at the international level, as well as the local level. [#25]

It does not follow from this that every claim made by workers or their representatives is valid. Every union, like every other economic actor, is called to work for the common good, to make sacrifices when required, and to adjust to new economic realities.

However, it is equally a mistake to marginalize or dismiss unions as impediments to economic growth. As Pope John Paul II wrote in 1981, "[a] union remains a constructive factor of *social order* and *solidarity*, and it is impossible to ignore it." (*Laborem exercens* #20, emphasis in original)

It is especially in times of crisis that "new forms of cooperation" and open communication become essential. We request that lawmakers carefully consider the implications of this proposal and evaluate it in terms of its impact on the common good. We also appeal to everyone – lawmakers, citizens, workers, and labor unions – to move beyond divisive words and actions and work together, so that Wisconsin can recover in a humane way from the current fiscal crisis.

Branch Nine News
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Branch Nine Calendar

March 22

Nokomis Retiree Breakfast
9:00AM
Fred Babcock VFW
6715 Lakeshore Drive, Richfield

March 22

General Membership Meeting
7:00PM
Golden Valley VFW Post 7051
7775 Medicine Lake Rd
Golden Valley

April 5

Northside Retiree's Breakfast
9:30AM Elsie's
729 Marshall St. NE,
Minneapolis

April 12

Southside Retiree Breakfast
9:00AM
Fred Babcock VFW
6715 Lakeshore Drive, Richfield

April 12

Stewards Meeting
7:00PM
Golden Valley VFW Post 7051
7775 Medicine Lake Rd
Golden Valley

April 13

Cribbage Tournament
Br28 vs. Br9
10AM
1715 van Dyke Ave
St Paul, MN 55119

April 16

MDA Bowl-A-Thon
Park Tavern
7PM-9:30PM
3401 Louisiana Ave. S
St Louis Park

April 25-29

NBA Region 7 Training
Holiday Inn Metrodome
1500 Washington Ave. S.
Minneapolis

April 26

Nokomis Retiree Breakfast
9:00AM
Fred Babcock VFW
6715 Lakeshore Drive, Richfield

April 26

General Membership Meeting
7:00PM
Golden Valley VFW Post 7051
7775 Medicine Lake Rd
Golden Valley

May 1

Red and Gold Retiree Banquet
1330 Industrial Blvd, Minneapolis
Registration: noon-1:30pm
Lunch 1:30-3:30