

JEROME J. KEATING BRANCH



# BRANCH NINE NEWS

"AN INJURY TO ONE IS AN INJURY TO ALL"

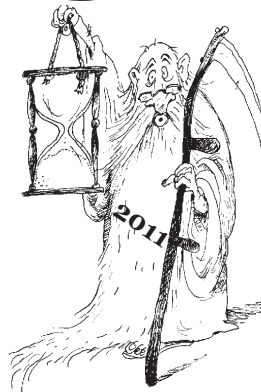
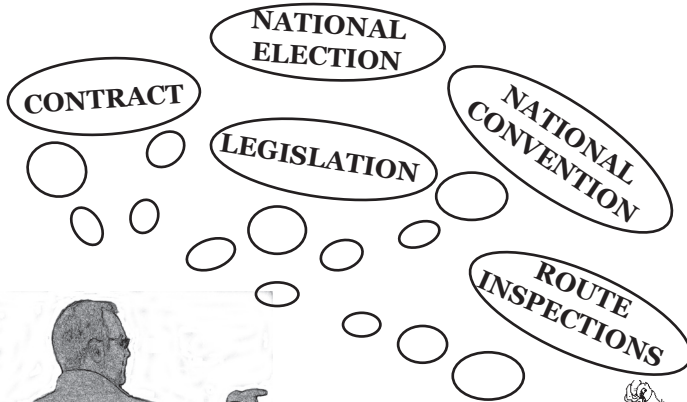
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## A NEW YEAR



**Congress will challenge you again in 2012**

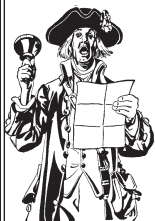
## NEW CHALLENGES

### COLCPE Protects Our Rights Too.

*by: Michael Hotovy (Green Bay Branch 619).* Reprinted from Branch 2; *The Pioneer*, December 2011.

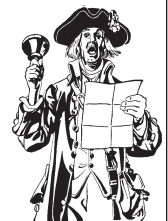
People who know me are quite aware that I am a bit of an anomaly politically. I am a conservative right winger and agree with the Tea Party on a topic or two. Yet, I am an active NALC member, strongly support the concepts of collective bargaining and workers' rights (to choose to collectively bargain is a free market decision too), and am a COLCPE contributor. You may wonder why, so let me give you a peek at how I look at the Postal Service's current problems. As I see it, the two major challenges to letter carriers and the NALC are the size of our national debt and declining mail volume from a private sector mired in a deep recession.

*Continued on page 10*



### NOTICE TO ALL BRANCH 9 MEMBERS

**Any proposed amendments to the Branch 9 Bylaws must be presented in writing to the Recording Secretary no later than the February 28, 2012 General Membership Meeting**





**Retiree, Florence Larson (Normandale) and steward, Brian Ofstad.**



**Retiree, James Wood, Jr. (Anoka) with steward, Jim Nelson.**



**West Bloomington steward, Joe Bedor with retirees, Les Fordahl and Steve Sapp.**



**Golden Valley Stewards Mike Rasmussen (l) and Bhanu Chemmangattumana (r) with retirees, Joe Steckler and Dave Cornelius.**



**Bloomington steward, Nick Pastick and retiree, Charles Broberg.**

## From the Editor's Desk



Happy New Year. 2012 will be a very busy year here at Branch 9. On deck are formal route inspections, contract negotiations, and of course the National Convention.

### Route Inspections:

I can't stress enough the importance of attending route adjustment training by the Branch. These training sessions are for our protection. I have been through several count and inspections over my nearly 30 years, and one thing is crystal clear; management will **never** do a fair adjustment of your route if they are more knowledgeable of office counts than you. Knowledge is Power. Only you can control who has that power.

**In Memoriam**  
Joseph Kozacz  
Curt Mortensen  
Arthur Bolnick  
Raymond J. Midlo

**New Member**  
Merril Wietstock

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Exec. Vice President  
Darrell Maus

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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

## HAPPY NEW YEAR - BUT WILL IT BE ?

The holiday season has come and gone. The ball has dropped in Time Square bringing in the New Year. Baby New Year symbolizes the birth of the New Year and with it all the hopes for a better year than the one going out with Father Time. But what about all the stuff that is on Father Time's "to do" list? You know the stuff that we talked about all last year that didn't get done. Let's take a look at the list.

### On the legislative front

The \$ 1,000,000 question is what will Congress do? According to the Postal Record there are no less than 19 bills that have been introduced supposedly dealing with fixing the problems facing this Postal Service. Unfortunately most of them are not too good for the employees or the American public. Most will do nothing to address the real cause of the problems facing the Postal Service. On January 23rd, Congress will return from their holiday break. Unfortunately both H.R. 2309 and S. 1789 are waiting for them to be brought up on the floor of the House and Senate. If either bill were to become law in their present form the changes in what we do, how we do it and how many of us would be there to do it would be irrevocably changed. That's not rhetoric or fear mongering. It is what it is. The terms of this legislation and what would be its impact has been published in a variety of sources so I won't bore you with another recitation. But there are worse things on the horizon. The only thing worse than a bad bill being passed in this session of Congress would be for

nothing to pass in this session of Congress. With the clock ticking, now it is more important than ever for all of us to be connected to what is happening in Washington. The best way to do this is by signing up to be an e-Activist. Whether you are a Democrat, Republican, Independent, or something else, I can think of no reason not to be an e-Activist. What Congress does or does not do this year will end up impacting our contract, our benefits, and our working conditions. That is why everyone should be aware of the things that are happening in real time. What ever happens will probably happen quickly. To sign up for e-Activist go to the [www.nalc.org](http://www.nalc.org) website or give the Branch Office a call.

### Contract Negotiations

After agreeing to extend negotiations for a new collective bargaining agreement on more than one occasion, the Postal Service ended negotiations which began last August. This does not mean a negotiated settlement is not possible as the parties still have the mediation process but the hope of a negotiated settlement has dimmed. What does this mean to us as carriers? The terms of the 2006-2011 National Agreement continues to be in force as do the LMUs. While it is still too early to see what interim agreements may be reached about bids or new route adjustment processes like JARAP, we must be ready for what ever happens. This brings us back to the 800 pound gorilla that is still in the room, Congress. As has often been said, what the parties negotiate Congress can take away (see above).



*Mike Zagaros*


### Route Adjustments

Under the JARAP agreement there were only a few units that sought review using Fall data. Those reviews are nearly finished. The larger issue has to do with the FSS units. After management's unilateral adjustments we continue to work to get the routes properly adjusted. For the last few months there have been meetings trying to mutually agree on the values of the routes; however no agreement could be reached save one unit (Lost Lake). The remaining units will be inspected beginning in February. There is no other option save the inspection process. During these inspections there will be an NALC Representative involved throughout the inspection and adjustment process. While it has been over 15 years since count and inspections were used on a wide scale basis, whatever needs to be done will be done to ensure as fair an outcome as possible will result.

### Contract Compliance


**Overtime** - "It happens every January" was recently heard by a steward. "After only 4 weeks, it's like they forgot how to manage overtime." The rules haven't changed but for some reason, after the exclusionary period, we see an

***President's article continued  
on page 14***



**americanCRYSTALSsugar**  
**LOCKOUT**

At the November General Membership Meeting, two members of the BCTGM (The Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers International Union) spoke to letter carriers on the on-going lockout of union workers because they would not give back over 45 pages of concessions.



**Jessica Hayssen (Field Director of the MN AFL-CIO)**

**Kevin Solum and Becki Jacobson from BTGM**

**Locked Out Crystal Sugar Fargo, ND.** Locked out members of the Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers, and Grain Millers International Union (BCTGM) gathered at the Holiday Inn in South Fargo where American Crystal Sugar Company (ACSC) was holding its Joint Annual Meeting today to question the company's motivation in locking them out four months ago.

Workers Offer Real Story of Corporate Greed at ACSC Joint Annual Meeting December 1, 2011, "Four months ago today, workers arrived at Crystal Sugar factories up and down the Red River Valley to find the doors locked. Crystal Sugar management hired replacement workers and security guards to protect the factories from their own workers," said John Risky, President of BCTGM Local 167G. "We're here today to ask why? Was it to reduce productivity? Was it to starve your neighbors? Was it to hit local businesses in a down economy? Was it to divide our communities? Because that's what's happening." Union members questioned the company's contention that it cannot afford the union contract, pointing out that the last three years have been profitable for ACSC, and directors have rewarded top executives handsomely. The company reported last week that its net revenues grew by over 28% from fiscal year 2009 to fiscal year 2011 to \$1.54 billion. President and CEO Dave Berg's total annual compensation package grew to \$2.44 million in 2011.

"We worked hard to produce a quality product until they locked us out four months ago, and it shows in the company's recent results," said Kari Sorenson who worked at the ACSC Moorhead factory. "I am angry that the board has rewarded CEO Dave Berg with a \$2.4 million compensation package this year. And yet management are committed to taking away from the workers who've helped make this company such a success, no matter the cost to our communities."

Credits: Article from BCTGM.org website

## Support the Locked-Out Crystal Sugar Co. Workers

*Don't buy Crystal Sugar or Our Family brand sugars*

The following is a list of the products TO buy in order to support the locked-out Crystal Sugar workers:

<b>C&amp;H Pure Cane Sugar</b>	<b>Heinz products</b>	<b>Golden Grain Co.</b>
<b>Post Cereal</b>	<b>Ken's Salad Dressing</b>	<b>Hunts</b>
<b>Little Debbie</b>	<b>Little Crow Foods</b>	<b>Swiss Miss</b>
<b>Pepsi Products</b>	<b>Oscar Mayer Products</b>	<b>Duncan Hines</b>
<b>Frito-Lay Products</b>	<b>Breyers Ice Cream</b>	<b>Hodgson Mill</b>

# Executive Vice President's Report

## Parcel Delivery

With the upcoming inspection process looming and the 3999's that are being done in our stations we must brush up on the proper procedures for the handling of parcels. In the M-41 (322.31) it states **“For any parcel that does not fit into the customer’s mailbox or parcel locker (when available), an attempt to deliver must be made at the customer’s door. If no one is available to receive the parcel, follow the procedures in 322.11 and 322.312.”** This requires the carrier to attempt the package at the door even with prior approval from customers of where to leave them if they are not home. Carriers are not to merely drop and leave the parcels whether there is an agreed upon location or not.

### 322.11 When a carrier is authorized to leave ordinary parcels

*a. Parcels must not be left in an unprotected location such as a porch unless the mailer participates in the carrier release program by endorsing the package “Carrier-Leave if No Response” or the addressee has given written directions for an alternate delivery location. Examples of protected locations are a locked vestibule, locked hallway, or with a doorman of an apartment building, inside a storm door of a residence, etc. Form 3849, Delivery Notice/Reminder/Receipt, with the “It is located \_\_\_\_\_” block completed must be left in the mail receptacle location. Parcels must not be left where adverse weather can affect them.*

*b. By following the mailer’s or addressee’s instructions, the Postal Service provides*

*customers with a more convenient way to receive parcels. Carriers are not liable for loss or theft where these instructions and postal regulations are followed.*

*c. Mailers who participate in the carrier release program understand that there are areas where the Postal Service will not leave parcels for security reasons. Mailers also understand that carriers do not leave packages without protection from inclement weather. If there is not a suitable location to leave a carrier release parcel, a Form 3849 must be left.*

### 322.312 When the Carrier is Not Authorized to Leave Ordinary Parcels.

*a. When someone is usually available to receive parcels. When an ordinary or unnumbered insured parcel is not delivered on the first attempt and the carrier knows that someone at the address is usually available to receive parcels, do not leave Form 3849, Delivery Notice/Reminder/Receipt. Write the date and the carrier’s initials and route number near the address and return the parcel to the office. Place the parcel in the gurney at the carrier’s case. Attempt a second delivery on the next delivery day. If the parcel is not delivered after the second attempt, complete and leave Form 3849. Legibly endorse the form with the following information; Article number, date, Sender’s name, Type of mail, Article requiring signature at time of delivery, Addressee’s name and address, amount due, and Date and time customer can pick up at the office.*

*b. When someone is not usually available to receive parcels. If no one is available to receive the parcel and the carrier knows that someone at the address is not usually available to receive parcels, complete and leave Form 3849 after the first attempt.*



**Darrell Maus**

*Endorse the parcel near the address, showing the reason for nondelivery, e.g. N L (notice left), date attempted, and the carrier’s initials and route number. Upon returning to the office, deposit the parcel in the designated place for undelivered parcels.*

As we are partners in the Customer Connect Program and with the increased revenue and packages that we help generate it is equally important for us to follow these provisions of the M-41.

## Retiring?

There have been many articles written to explain what to do to get ready for retirement and how long before the actual day you should have these certain things done. This article is to inform the “Retirees” what they have to do the days after the “last punch” day.

Article II, Section 1 of the Branch 9 By-laws state, “It is necessary to have filled out an 1187 to join the Branch. A form 1189 (Dues Check Off Provision) must be signed by all retiring members within Branch 9 who wish to retain their membership in said organization and health benefits program.” So every member signed an 1187 to join the Union, but when they retire they must complete an 1189 to continue

**VP article continued on page 8**

Dear Supporter,

In the August issue of The Postal Record, I announced that every NALC member who was signed up in the e-Activist Network with a valid e-mail address would be entered in a raffle for ten \$100 American Express gift cards.

Over the past four months, thousands of new e-Activists have joined the network, bringing the national total to nearly 43,000—a great accomplishment toward my goal of 100-percent member participation.

Congratulations to the 10 raffle winners:

- Richard Crocker Sr., Birmingham, Alabama Branch 530
- William Cunningham Jr., San Jose, California Branch 193
- Jorge Palacio, South Florida Branch 1071
- Mark Gonzales, Northeast Florida Branch 53
- Jeffery Harris, Marietta, Georgia Branch 1119
- Mark Reynolds, Owensboro, Kentucky Branch 234
- **Robert Dahl, Minneapolis, Minnesota Branch 9**
- Vu Tran, Atlantic City, New Jersey Branch 370
- Gang Lam, New York City, New York Branch 38
- Bruce Evans, Wichita Falls, Texas Branch 1227

Please continue to sign up more NALC members in the e-Activist Network. By educating ourselves and our brothers and sisters, we will continue to strengthen our union. Becoming an e-Activist is a good first step.

In solidarity,

Fredric V. Rolando, President  
National Association of Letter Carriers

## The Following is a list of Paid Members of PAL 9 for January 2012.

### Very Concerned Members

Marvin L Sorem	Chithrabhanu Chem-	Catherine Burton	Mary E Hargreaves	Roger D Tanghe
Joseph J Kinney	mangattumana	Harold H Delaria	Deborah A Grunnes	Arnold W Vanden-
Frederick M Johnston	Alf V Mork	Lenny A Larson	Constance W Beissel	heuvel
Virginia A Hasser	Thomas J Radtke	Raymond D Cassidy	Laurie Lee Harry	Stephen L Boughton
James Fodstad	Douglas B Lemke	Daniel V Magnuson	Richard T Sheehan	William A Mechels
John P McPartlan	Russell N Cordahl	Lawrence S Dahlberg	Ronald W Kelly	Duane Foyt
Joel F Carter	Sonia Stark	Kenneth A Jambois	Jonathan E Peterson	Darrell G Maus
Steven D Petersen	James H Foster	Charles M Glover	Troy D Fredenburg	Charles E Rivers
William Babb	Kelly M Lundgren	James Fallon	Marlys Ann Fox	Gordon N Doll
James A Cassell	Jon P Horsford	Herman A Metzler	Jerry A Sandmann	Timothy J Bedor
Russell Sondrol	David J Wallentiny	Carl F Palm	Linda L Olson	Lawrence J Gildner
Sharon L Spooner	Dwayne H Olson	Howard G Lamson	Roger E Johnson	Michelle M Benson
William J Stegora	Jack A Soderlind	Harold P Peterson	Aaron J Kriz	Thomas B Flavin
Emelyn A Peasha	Timothy J Highland	Theresa M Homstad	James R Sharp	Ron Lawrence
Charlie R Peasha	Ronald C Moore	Karen J Schneider	Leigh A Farrell	Larry F Chlebeck
James P Couillard	Harry Stanko	Gerald T Mattox	Shawn K Obrien	Wesley E Thomas
Timothy D Frankland	Jeffrey Stanko	Earl D Anderson	Gary W Kvistberg	Rober J Miller
Leonard H Rardin	Donald B LeMay	Robert Baird	Richard A Anderson	Julianne K Waldemar
Richard A Onslow	J.W. Bill Stambaugh	Jon D Thompson	Barry J Weiner	Loren J McNellis
Dwane L Thompson	Eugene P McNulty	Robert E Zimdars	Gregory S Piela	

## The Following is a list of Paid Members of PAL 9 for January 2012.

### Regular Members

Gerald R Hansen	Philip O Johnson	Thomas M Costello	Barry J Berkovitz	John R Sporrong
Robert V Andersen	Ken O Hokanen	Raymond O Tranby	Roger E Ritter	Steven R Grivicich
Arthur H Kujawa	Timothy W Bearth	Jack J Bartlett	Michael Smith	Marvin Gragert
William Carey	Kenneth C Nelson	Margaret A Savaloja	Robert C Czanst-	Allen M Smith
Michael Kahleck	Raymond C Williams	Harold R Anderson	kowski	Lori Ann Randolph
Joseph F Pasiowitz	Karma Khampa	Luverne Schwarz	Lloyd Toll	Scott A Randolph
Kathleen K Demoret	Anthony J Kruse	Richard C Raum	Norman J Cavalier	Robert R Harris
Donald V Holthus Jr	George A Wisuri	Roxane I Kuehn	Harley Ring Jr	Richard W Hobot
Clarence C Gervais Jr	Michael E Laughlin	Jeffrey D Sherman	Theresa A Oelrich	Leonard L Hrnrcir
Allan J Gulden	Thomas G Holten	Steven M Bostrom	Ronald P Sumstad	Charles E Foreman
Wallace M Sjoquist	Virgil R Magnuson	James C Nelson	Jeanne C Louis	Dan L Olson
Paul R Tanick	Wayne J Kelash	Walter C Czerepak	John L Hilden	Gerald J Stauner
Kenneth G Platt	Shane M Lundgren	Kenneth W Johnson	Gerald J Eliason	Anthony Thompson
Geno Taddei Sr	Charles L Friend	Lawrence M Schuster	J.M. Spratt	Mary K Fick
Curtis F Britz	Earl O Mealman	Ted M Parker	Jon E Frick	Dominick J Prest
Joe L Williams	Robert W Masuda	Stephen J Wallerius	Barbara L Gelschus	RaNae Kleist
Wendy K Noren	Vernon C Wehage	Paul H Hultgren	Gary Hughes	Dennis J Wadnizak
Edwin G Pohlmann	Theodore F Hoven	Donald A Granger	Raymond J Spernic	Gordy Pulley
Jeffrey J McHugh	Gregg W Holmes	Melia Derrick	Donald M Carlson	James Hiben
Daryl E Blatzheim	Aloysius W Ruzicka	Steven R Bjoraker	Patrick A Rottach	Gary S Mierek
Adrian C Anderson	Alexis F Wheeler	Nancy T Hall	Lavern E Dornbusch	Stacey A Ellingson
Hugh Byrne	Gordon V Clemens	James F Hill	Charles L Lenzen	Margaret R Burgard
Debbie A Frank	Russell O Swanson	Pauline P Pepper	Norma J Peterson	Ronald D Levinson
Wallace Eckdahl	Clark H Kick	John M Keeley	Douglas T Waldhoff	Gerald L Arnold
Mark E Olufson	Ralph F Oslund	Mary E Skerbinc	John D Brandt	Herman M Weidner
Steven R Oehlerich	Lindahl B Gleason	George Skrbich	Robert Hollis	James Hamilton
Thomas F Dvorak	Gary A Kroeten	Everett A Schraan	Michael J Mrosla	Kimberly Kay Kline
Walter Stanek	Adrian R Hames	Richard Rimer Jr	Jerry D McGlade	Jeremy Baumgartner
Stanley B Mackcow	Dallas V Holm	Barb Watzcak	Mary Jo Koch	Daniel J Loppnow
Richard C Graves	Vernon J Zierman	Gerald P Starr	Robert J Hooper	John G Burmis
Michael A Hess	Walter W Reed	Jeffrey W Smeets	Rosemary Wallace	
Richard L Wells	Rodney Bursch	Marvin Mattila	David A Olson	<b>Ron Lawrence</b>
Curtis M Blackwell	Bruce A Howe	Robert E Barsness	Thomas J Ryan	<b>Treasurer PAL 9</b>
Linda Stipe	William H Halos	William C Tuffs	Nyelodean K Natto	
Donald O'Connor	Kathy J Fitzhenry	Delmont R Stokke	Carl H Walsten	
David L Peterson	Lawrence R Molstad	Thomas R Tadlock	James W Allen	
Gary Weihn	Steven M Blonigan	Thomas M Woller	Lowell H Berget	
Lawrence W Elfelt	Paul P Felegy	Kathy Carlson	Elmer J Hill	
Steven T Bruce	Katherine C Bolton	Janice E Wild	James R Stanley	
James P Falbo	Dale J Carhill	David T Wrzos	Mary Ann Knoss	
Dennis W Jaeger	David W Scheil	Gordon M Balfe	Jonathan G Trudell	
Dwayne W Nienaber	Arthur A Heikkila Sr	Lyle J Hermann	Clarence R Labeau	
Glenn W Ingersoll	George G Muzetras	Ron K Anderson	Dale R Carney	
LeRoy I Sheller	Rodney E Anderson	Pamela Thompson	Gary Svidron	
Edward Issenhuth	Darwin J Peter	Sandra A Raley	Jeremy J Rothstein	
Theresa M Ronning	Thomas E Buchner	Johnea S Rystedt	Johannes S Magdal	



**VP article continued from page 5**

to be a member of Branch 9. In the days after your "last punch", you will receive from the National Headquarters Office of the Secretary Treasurer of the NALC a letter and within it will be a form 1189 to fill out and return. In addition, you will also receive a similar letter from the Director of Retirees of Branch 9 with the same 1189 form included. Only one form must be signed and returned to continue to retain your NALC membership.

It is very important for new retirees to get this form 1189 filled out and returned immediately to the Branch 9 Office. The Branch 9 President/Vice President's signature must be on the form when we send it to the National office for processing, or it will be returned to us. If after a time period the forms are not received you will be dropped from the Membership Roster and will no longer have membership in the NALC. If you lose your membership you could also lose your health benefits (if you're in the NALC Health Plan). Once your Union Membership and Federal Health Benefits are gone you cannot get them back.

Darrell

**GIMME  
5  
for COLCPE**



## Christmas Party

The holiday decorations set the mood for friendly interaction between active and retired carriers at the Fred Babcock VFW. I would like to give special thanks to Darcy Smith (Br 9 Auxiliary President), and to Angie (Br 9 Secretary) for all their hard work on the ornaments given out at the party. We all had a great time reminiscing the good old days. Lenny Larson (Br 9 President Emeritus) gave an update on legislative issues, and 9PAL. Chuck Glover (Br 9 Editor) talked about getting input from retirees to aid those considering retirement in the near future. Branch 9 Vice President, Darrell Maus gave the invocation before dinner. A cribbage tournament is in the planning stage, and we are considering combining it with a breakfast. We would like some feedback on whether this is a good idea or not.

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



**Barry Weiner (past National Business Agent).**



**Sampling of party-goers who having a good time.**



**Mike Smith (Br 9 Trustee), and his wife, Darcy (Br 9 Auxiliary President).**



**Retiree, Rodney Anderson (Main Office) and his wife, Fran.**



**Retiree, Harley Ring (Minnehaha), and his wife Audrey.**



**Ann Baird and her husband Bob (Main Office).**



## MSALC Cribbage Tournament for MDA

Attention all cribbage players! The MSALC will be holding a cribbage tournament as a fundraiser for MDA.

The NALC has a long and proud tradition of supporting the MDA. As part of that support, the MSALC has sought ways to raise the bar for our fundraising. This event will be held in conjunction with the regular fundraising efforts of the MSALC.

Muscular Dystrophy and the family of diseases covered by the MDA can strike anyone from newborn children to adults. Money raised by the NALC over our 50 plus years of supporting the MDA has gone to help fund vital research, MDA summer camps and other comprehensive services.

The details are as follows:

- ▶ Sunday February 12, 2012      The location will be:
- ▶ 1:00 PM start                      1715 Van Dyke Street
- ▶ \$25.00 entry per person        Maplewood, MN 55109
- ▶ Cash prizes for 1st through 4th place

The MSALC would like to extend our thanks to NALC Branch 28 for offering to host this event at their office.

With your support, we look forward to another record setting year of fundraising for Jerry's Kids by the members of the MSALC.

Warren Wehmas  
MSALC MDA Coordinator

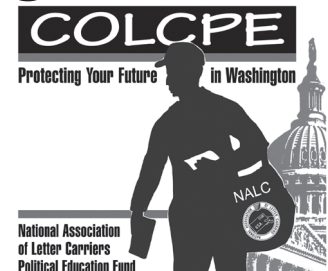
### Stay informed by:

Signing up for E-activist at [NALC.org](http://NALC.org)

[Branch9nalc.com](http://Branch9nalc.com) (website)

Branch 9 facebook page

Follow us on Twitter



### The Twin Cities Postal Headquarters

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UNLIMITED**

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**Article continued from page 1**

Government plays a part, both good and bad, in both these problems. Our national debt now hovers near \$14 trillion. Our annual national budget stands at \$3.7 trillion annually; yet as a nation we collect only \$2 trillion in tax revenues. The remainder of the money is borrowed from foreign investors, or printed—a move that devalues the currency and drives up inflation (just check food, gas and utility prices). A serious discussion is now happening at the national level regarding how much government we can afford and how to fund it.

How does that affect us? Simple. Right now, the government is desperate for money to keep the national ship afloat. When the USPS and NALC go to Capital Hill to ask for financial relief from overpayment into the prefunding of retirees, know that any relief granted is a loss on the federal balance sheet at a time when virtually no losses can be tolerated. The reality is that Congress has needed to tap the finances of the USPS for decades; so, should any relief be offered, expect it to come with a high price tag.

That is why Senator Tom Carper's (D-DE) new version of the Postal Operations Sustainment and Transformation Act mirrors Republican proposals that would fairly resolve the pension and retiree health prefunding burdens that have damaged the USPS's finances in recent years but include the elimination of six-day delivery and the addition of pro-management changes to the law governing collective bargaining disputes. Understandably, those are simply anti-worker provisions the NALC cannot support. But, let's not kid ourselves: it is proposed legislation that has support

from both parties. To pile on to our problems, we also face declining mail volume. While we do acknowledge the impact of new technology on volume, I am of the opinion that much of the financial pressure we are currently enduring will lift when the economy recovers; and it will. For as all conservatives know, there are always people out there who want to make money; and letter carriers still play a major role in our nation's commerce. The fact remains that the USPS is a vital cog in disseminating the business message and fulfillment of sales. In a healthy economy, we will prosper.

Now, it is certainly not my intention in this article to start a political fight and argue the proper size and role of government in the private sector, but I am certainly advocating that we all do our due diligence in researching our political candidates and support those who not only support our positions as union members, but also have the business acumen to return the private sector to health. Face it, even the government doesn't use the Postal Service much anymore (direct deposit, e-filing of taxes, web access to manage nearly all government-related accounts, etc.) Our future survival is tied to the health of the private sector.

In the end, I was inspired to write this column by a question from a fellow conservative, "Why do you give to COLCPE when much of the money you donate often goes to candidates and political parties you don't support?" It's a valid question and one that deserves an answer. I give to COLCPE not because it supports my candidates, but because it supports the issues vital to my job, co-workers, union and employer. In times as serious as these, I am encouraged to see quotes from President Rolando and the NALC

expressing willingness to work with members from both parties, including Senator's Carper and Collins, to resolve our issues.

If these are not reasons enough for you to support COLCPE, remember that, at the very least, our jobs are not only affected by postal management, but by the actions of Congress as well. The NALC will be representing you and your job in our next contract negotiations. I don't know about you, but I want the people negotiating my future paychecks to do so from as strong a position as possible, not only at the table with postal management but in the halls of Congress as well.

**PICK YOUR BOSS**

(in Congress, that is)

On Tuesday, February 7th, you and your neighbors have an opportunity to gather in a nearby school or other public building. You will help choose candidates for national office, such as President, or Congress, state and local office, as well as county commissioner or school board. Typically a caucus begins around 6:30 or 7 pm and goes for an hour or two, but don't feel you need to stay till the very end -- its good to show up early for the more important stuff, then leave when you've heard enough or need to head to bed for that early shift. You can find where and when your local caucus is at [www.caucusfinder.sos.state.mn.us](http://www.caucusfinder.sos.state.mn.us) beginning January 18th. Websites for your state political parties should also have this information.

Don't be surprised to see neighbors or folks you only see at the grocery store. It's your chance to see and participate (to the degree to which you're comfortable) in democracy at the grassroots level, but beware, it's habit forming!

**Joel Carter and Melia Derrick**

# Still Feeling the Holiday Blues ?



### Some Expectations of the Season and New Year

1. This year will be better
2. All families are loving
3. I have a "special someone" in my life
4. I have meaning and purpose

### Effects of this past Holiday Season

**Less:**

- Free time
- Exercise
- Time to be alone
- Relax with family/friends

**More:**

- Sugar & fat consumed
- Alcohol consumed
- Money worries
- Responsibilities

### Psychological Stressors

- Recent losses
- Anniversary of loss
- Misunderstandings
- Conflict arounds plans
- Old history of hurts

### Physical Stressors

- Tense
- Fatigue
- Illness
- Weight gain



### Coping With Stress

- Walks
- Hot baths or showers
- Meditation
- Visiting close friends
- Watching TV/movie
- Exercise
- Massage
- Naps
- Reading for pleasure
- Yoga or other exercise
- Time alone with your partner
- Guided imagery
- Deep breathing
- Use humor
- Prioritize

## The Holiday Blues....Still?

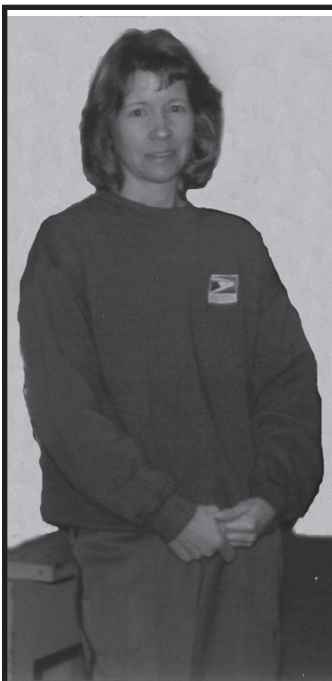
- Acknowledge your feelings**
- Seek support**
- Volunteer**
- Set aside differences**
- Professional help**



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**(1-800-327-4968)**

**TTY: 1-877-492-7341**  
**www.EAP4YOU.com**



**Question: How many years as a PTF?**

- a. 1; b. 10; c. 20; d. 24.**

**If you guessed (d) you're correct.**

**Donna Siegle** (Jordan) became a regular carrier on Saturday, January 14. Donna began her postal career at the Waconia Post Office in 1988, and transferred to Jordan Post Office around 1994 to be closer to home. Because Jordan has only three routes, Donna supplemented her hours by working at post offices in Northfield, Chanhassen, and Shakopee. When the senior carrier at Jordan retired, his route was up for bid due to withholding, so Donna was held in limbo for two years until being notified that she would become a regular carrier in January. Congratulations, Donna, your patience paid off.

## FYI

It is your responsibility to verbally inform management when you are of the opinion that you will be unable to case all mail distributed to the route, perform other required duties, and leave on schedule or when you will be unable to complete delivery of all mail

### M-01444 Pre-arb

No carrier shall be disciplined for failure to meet standards, except in cases of unsatisfactory effort which must be based on documented, unacceptable conduct that led to the carrier's failure to meet office standards.

Steward's  
informationSteward's  
informationSteward's  
information

# Investigating a grievance

## Start out on the right foot.

That's good advice for a multitude of situations, from dating to dog training. For NALC stewards, that advice translates into paying keen attention to the first steps they take in investigating a grievance. Stewards must set high standards for the initial steps of grievance processing. The key to success—the heart and soul of all grievance investigation—is getting all the facts. How do stewards know they are getting all the facts? As this article explains, every grievance investigation demands that the steward master a number of skills and techniques, including asking the right questions, interviewing all witnesses as soon as possible, knowing your rights as steward, using time wisely and reviewing all your findings to ensure that you have built the best possible case.

Obviously, thorough grievance investigation is one of the most challenging parts of the steward's job. The above skills and techniques cannot be perfected overnight. Rather, stewards must always keep trying to improve their investigative procedures.

What follows are suggestions for grievance investigations culled from NALC training materials and the advice of experienced stewards. **Ask the right questions.** Every grievance has its basis in something that happened—whether that something is alleged misconduct of a letter carrier or possible violation of contract language by postal management.

The steward's primary job, therefore, is to find out exactly what happened. Obviously you begin with the letter carrier or carriers directly involved in the situation. You also need to talk to supervisors that may have played a role in the events leading to the grievance.

**The steward's primary job is to find out exactly what happened.**

In many cases, you may discover that other people may have useful information—such as other carriers, managers or sometimes postal patrons who may have been witnesses. Before approaching any of these people, you must have a clear understanding of the questions that underpin every grievance investigation.

**Who, What, When, Where, Why and How.**

These questions can be summed up as **Five "w's" plus an "h": Who, What, When, Where, Why and How.**

Here are some sample questions as suggested in the NALC Steward's Guide:

**WHO** is involved? Who is the victim—the letter carrier or group of carriers? Who is the violator—the supervisor or other Postal Service official or officials? Who are wit-

nesses?

You will need to find and question all the people who are involved.

**WHAT** happened? What was management's role—management's action or failure to act? What was the carrier or carriers' role? Did the carrier or carriers act, fail to act, or passively stand by as management violated the contract?

**WHEN** did it happen? If a single incident, get the exact date and time. If a continuing violation, get the time span. Make sure the incident was recent enough to grieve—the time limit is normally 14 days.

**WHERE** did it happen? Was the carrier at the case, on the street, at home sick? Was the manager in the office, on the street, in the parking lot?

**WHY** is it a grievance? Is the incident a violation of the National Agreement and if so, of what specific provision? Or does the incident violate the law or past practice?

Experienced stewards know that not every carrier complaint or unusual situation is a grievance. By asking "why" questions, the steward can usually distinguish gripes from grievances. The five "w's" should provide the facts necessary to build a solid case for the union. At this point, the steward will also want to ask **HOW**—how should the grievance be remedied?

What corrective action should be requested? (See the Spring 1990 NALC Activist story, "A guide to better grievance writing," for examples of appropriate and inappropriate remedies.)

**Conduct interviews as soon as possible.** Bearing all these ques-

tions in mind, stewards should make a timely effort to locate all persons involved in the situation leading to the grievance and get their statements in writing. The sooner you can question witnesses and especially managers who may be involved, the better your case will be. Conduct interviews while everyone's memory

### Obtain written documentation for every fact.

of the incident or incidents is fresh so you can get the fullest possible accounts.

While it is important to question everyone as soon as possible, it's especially critical to get management's version of facts right away. By determining management's story as early as possible, you accomplish an important goal: freezing management's position. By documenting what management has to say, you make it difficult for the Postal Service to change arguments or introduce new facts at later steps of the grievance process.

### Document every fact and argument.

Whenever possible, obtain written documentation for every fact and argument that affects the grievance. Get all witness statements in writing. Check over each statement to determine what if any additional documentation is needed. For example, if the steward finds that overtime provisions of the contract have been violated, the steward will need management's records of the carrier assignments in question. Other kinds of documentation would be required for other kinds of grievances—for example, a grievance of discipline for alleged misuse of sick leave

might require written statements from physicians or other medical personnel.

### Know your rights.

Getting the answers to all your questions obviously takes time. Articles 17 and 31 of the National Agreement give the NALC steward broad powers to conduct a grievance investigation. You have the right to time on the clock to question everyone involved in the incident. You also have the right to interview all possible witnesses, including management and patrons when appropriate. The contract gives you the right to request and review all relevant Postal Service documents, files and records. A story in the Summer 1990 NALC Activist, "Know your rights in grievance investigations," not only reviews contract language on stewards' rights, but also presents a number of Step 4 settlements that have further clarified these rights.

### Use your time wisely.

The contract states that stewards' rights in grievance investigations may not be "unreasonably" denied. Effective stewards know that the best way to ensure they get all the time and access they need is to plan each questioning session in advance. For example, when you begin to question supervisors or other Postal Service officials, don't waste time trying to argue the merits of the grievance. Use this opportunity to uncover facts; you will have a chance to present the union's position at a later date.

It's a practical rule of thumb not to begin any interview with questions that are likely to provoke a hostile response from a witness. Begin with a matter-of-fact attitude and neutral questions, if possible. If witnesses do become hostile, resist the temptation to respond in kind. Continue asking

neutral questions until you have all the facts.

### Review your investigation.

Once you are fairly confident that you have gathered all the facts you need, take some time to look back over all the questions you have asked and the information you have on hand. At this point, you need to assess that information with an eye toward building the best possible arguments for the union. If you uncover any weak points, go back for additional statements or docu-

### Try to figure out management's arguments.

mentation.

One good way to check that you have all the facts is to put yourself in management's shoes. Imagine what a Postal Service representative would say to each of your points. Try to figure out what arguments management is likely to offer. Then go over your own case to find the facts that offer the best possible rebuttals to management's position.

Remember that a winning grievance doesn't just happen. Solid, thorough investigation is essential for the success of every grievance. Nothing takes the place of good, accurate fact finding. So forget your bag of Perry Mason-style legal tricks. For NALC stewards, the best role model may well be that dogged if rumbled TV investigator, Columbo, whose trademark technique was coming back time after time to say, "Oh, just one more question."

*Reprinted from  
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Spring 1997*

***President's article continued from page 3***

influx in 12/60 violations and daily violations. After a joint training session this past summer, the only option left is to grieve those violations.

**Maximization and Staffing—**

After years of waiting, 17 PTFs were converted to regular in time to receive holiday pay with the Martin Luther King holiday. Due to withholding all conversions had been put on hold. A special thanks to NBA Chris Wittenburg's office for continuing to pursue these conversions. We will continue to challenge management's withholding as both unnecessary and improper.

As the station and branches continue to deal with short staffing, we see the shell game of guessing which shell has the TE. We see management robbing Peter to pay Paul by shuttling TEs from workplace to workplace. We continue to hear that more TEs have been requested and yet we continue to try and do more with less. The net result is fewer letter carriers overall. The only option left to us is to hold management accountable when their short staffing results in contract violations.

2012 will be a busy year. It is the year of the 68th Biennial Convention here in Minneapolis (July 23rd through the 27th). As the host branch there is much to do. There will be a need for both volunteers and others to work during the convention. In the coming months committee chairs Bob Baird (transportation); Jim Nelson (sergeant-at-arms) and Barb Waczak (volunteer coordinator) will be reaching out to the membership seeking your participation. If you

can or have questions please contact the Branch Office.

2012 is also an election year. There will be a need for volunteers to work the NALC Political Action Program, this program is being led by Carrier Corp 2012 volunteers. As in previous years we are asking all members to get involved this election cycle. We need to build, by increasing and adding to the number of volunteers from last year as we move forward. In February there are caucuses to attend and redistricting. It doesn't matter whether it is a DFL, Republican or Green Party caucus that you attend. What does matter is that letter carrier issues are put forward. You can get more information about being a Carrier Corps volunteer by visiting the NALC website.

In addition to these two major events, we will still have our regular activities for MDA, the Retiree Banquet, State Fair, State Convention and others. Yes 2012 will be a busy year and hopefully before the ball is dropped on another year, Father Time's "to do" list will more complete.



***Here is the National Convention logo***

The Following is a list of Paid Members of PAL 9 for February, 2012

**Very Concerned Members**

John F Marszalek  
Eugene P McNulty  
Russell Sondrol  
Howard G Lamson  
John P McPartlan  
Carl F Palm  
Michael T Zagaros  
Pamela K Donato  
Eugene R Keyes

**Regular Members**

Williard G Beauchaine  
Thomas Hoban  
Susan Hoban  
Joseph P Bedor  
Robert J Dondelinger  
Francis M Rice  
William Hofstad  
Cyril Toay  
Alice E Nopola  
Terry L Hunter  
Scott R Bussman  
Gerald R Hansen  
Gregory J Bedor  
William Carey  
Kenneth O Honkanen  
Gregory D Klein  
Michael J Mroska  
Wallace M Sjoquist  
Joe L Williams  
Mark G Holland  
Mary C Folke  
Marvin Gragert  
George E Martin  
Harold R Anderson  
Roberta H Stanchfield  
Terrence O'Neill  
Edward Issenhuth  
Alf V Mork  
LeRoy Sheller  
Lindahl B Gleason  
Merlin L Rau

Ron Lawrence  
Treasurer PAL 9

# Branch 9's Annual Ski Party at Trollhaugen in Dresser, WI

**Sunday, February 19, 2012  
2:00 - 9:00PM**



### Ski Rental

\$18.00 for boots & skis.  
To be paid at the chalet

### Free lessons

at 2:00PM for beginner skiers  
and snowboarders  
ages 8 and older

### SNOWBOARD RENTAL

\$18.00 for boots & board  
To be paid at the chalet

**Make checks payable to:  
Branch 9  
2408 Central Avenue NE  
Minneapolis, MN 55418**

### Tubing - 12:00 - 6:00PM

First two (3hour) tubing tickets  
are \$7.00 Additional tubing tick-  
ets are \$12.00 each.

**include a stamped self-  
addressed envelope so your  
order can be quickly re-  
turned**

**Branch 9 will be  
hosting  
a barbeque  
by the chalet  
from 4:00 - 6:00PM**

### Lift tickets

first two lift tickets for Branch  
members are \$11.00 each.  
Additional tickets are \$16.00 each

If you have questions, call Barb  
Watzak in the early evening at  
612.388.8919



**Hotel located near  
Trollhaugen is the  
Dallas House Hotel.  
1-888-725-6913**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Station: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of tickets: Ski \_\_\_\_\_ Snowtubing \_\_\_\_\_

Amount enclosed: \_\_\_\_\_

**Send in your  
Registration Form by  
February 15, 2012 to:  
Branch 9 Ski Trip  
2408 Central Avenue NE  
Minneapolis, MN 55418**

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



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## Branch Nine Calendar

### February 7

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

\*Tuesday February 7\*  
Minnesota Precinct Caucus'

### February 14

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

### February 14

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

### February 19

Branch 9 Ski Trip  
Trollhaugen in Dresser, Wi  
2 - 9PM  
Information on page 15

### February 28

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

### Tuesday, February 28

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

### March 6

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

### March 13

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

### March 13

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

### March 27

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

### Tuesday, March 27

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