

Branch 9 Election Results

Exec. Vice President

Darrell Maus.....580
Jim Hendrickson.....241

Financial Secretary

Melia Derrick.....436
Samantha Hartwig.....370

Treasurer

Lisa O'Neill.....499
Joe Rian.....317

ARTICLE VI.D
SECTION 9. Election of Shop Stewards shall be held following the election of Branch officers at each associate office, branch, station or section, commencing on December 1st. Each station shall conduct its own election in the following manner: A.) Designation of election committee; B.) Post on Union bulletin board notice of election which shall be five (5) days prior to voting; C.) Nominations shall be made from the floor; D.) Balloting shall begin after the fifth (5th) day and conclude within five (5) days. The new Shop Steward

shall take office at the Steward's Board Meeting in January and shall be installed along with the Officers prior to or during the January General Membership Meeting. Ballots shall be kept for thirty (30) days. Election results shall be posted on the Union bulletin board. If there is no officer or member who will run for election, the President may appoint someone. In the event of a vacancy of a Shop Steward position an election will be held, unless such election would have to take place less than ninety days before the regular election for Stewards in the station. In this instance, a Steward may be appointed by the Branch President to serve out the time remaining on the resigned or vacant Stewards term.

Top Ten Excuses for failing to follow Vehicle Safety Rules By Melia Derrick (Brooklyn Park)

1. You rushed me, so I didn't have time to stop at the stop sign.
2. I wasn't wearing the safety belt because it has been broken for months.
3. I had to pee (REALLY BAD) so I was speeding.
4. The window was only open 3 inches when I went into the business.
5. I didn't have to lock the vehicle; I could see it from my table in McDonald's.
6. It was really hot, so yes I had my door open when I drove through the intersection.

Article continued on page 4

Penalty Overtime Exclusion

As referenced in Article 8, Sections 4 and 5, of the USPS/NALC National Agreement, the December exclusionary period (during which penalty overtime regulations are not applicable) consists of 4 consecutive service weeks. This year, the exclusionary period begins Pay Period 26-12, Week 1 (December 1, 2012), and ends Pay Period 01-13, Week 2 (December 28, 2012).



Vigilance

The elections are over, and a new Congress will be sworn in in January. Between now and then, shenanigans on the part of outgoing legislators in a lame duck Congress could be in the works. Radical attempts to sneak through legislation that could be detrimental to the Postal Service and/or the collective bargaining process.

Fortunately our Postmaster General lately has refrained from, publicly at least, crippling us further with his short-sighted remarks. We must remain vigilant and not become complacent. Sign up for *E-Activist* and get any NALC alert should potential problem crop up

NALC Mutual Benefit Association

Planning for retirement in the next ten, twenty, thirty years? Have you looked into getting some Life Insurance? Yes the USPS has some insurance on its employees however it's very expensive if you take it into retirement with you. (Go to OPM.gov and you can find a calculator to tell you how expensive.) I think the greatest gift the NALC has given its members is opportunities – opportunities to invest in our future or our family members futures thru the MBA.

The United States Letter Carriers Mutual Benefit Association (MBA), founded in 1891, was created for

the benefit of NALC members and their families. The MBA is the life insurance division of the National Association of Letter Carriers. Only NALC members are eligible to purchase MBA insurance products. An applicant for admission to membership in the MBA must be a letter carrier or other non-supervisory employee of the Postal Career Service who is a member in good standing of the NALC, or the spouse, child, grandchild or great grandchild of a member of the NALC. Employees of the NALC and its subsidiaries, their spouse and children are also eligible applicants for membership in the MBA.

THE DIFFERENT PLANS WE OFFER ARE:

- Paid Up at Age 90 MBA Whole Life Insurance
- Paid Up at Age 65 MBA Whole Life Insurance
- Paid Up in 20 Years MBA Whole Life Insurance
- 10-Year Renewable and Convertible MBA Term----Life Insurance
- MBA Universal Life Insurance
- Independence – Single Payment
- Hospital Plus
- Maturity Income

For more information go to NALC.org, look under Departments, under MBA and you can get all of the information necessary to get started.

P.S. The MBA has a \$5,000 Accidental Life Insurance Policy on all NALC members in good standing.

In Memoriam
LaRoland Tabor
Ralph Oslund
Richard Burgin
Russell Swanson

Branch Nine, NALC
2408 Central Ave. NE
Minneapolis, MN 55418

Voice: (612) 781-9858

Fax: (612) 781-9849

E-Mail Addresses:

Website: branch9nalc.com

Editor:

branch9news@branch9nalc.com

Branch Nine Officers

President

Mike Zagaros

Exec. Vice President

Darrell Maus

Recording Secretary

Jeremy Rothstein

Treasurer

Lisa O'Neill

Financial Secretary

Melia Derrick

Editor

Chuck Glover

Sergeant at Arms

Jim Nelson

Trustee

Barb Watzcak

Trustee

Mike Smith

Trustee

Samantha Hartwig

Director of Retirees

Rodney Anderson

NALC Health Benefits Rep.

Julie Waldemar

(612) 963-6252

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

Now that the elections are over and the holiday season is upon us, time to focus on – the same things that we have been focusing on, our jobs. This year, the focus has been and continues to be on the way we do our jobs and the future of our jobs. This year there have been changes and things that have impacted the way we do our jobs. From management's hiring practices (or lack thereof) that has resulted in short staffing; to the increasing amount of discipline for that is being issued; to their implementation of an operational window, more letter carriers are working more hours than ever before.

Staffing - At the National Level the parties have agreed to create a third category of TEs. This agreement allows management to hire 3400 more TEs beyond the 3.5% and the 8,000 called for in the National Agreement. We have been told that Minneapolis has been authorized 40 more TEs. The first group will be going through orientation during weeks around Thanksgiving. The next group is being brought on in mid December. While the additional TEs will not totally alleviate the staffing shortages that have been allowed to occur, they are a welcome site. As these new members arrive at your station, please take a moment to see if you can help them get adjusted. This time of year tends to be more challenging for new carriers and I know that the new TEs would appreciate it.

Discipline & Scanning – We are

continuing to see an increase in the amount of discipline being issued to carriers. The primary issues revolved around scanning, and attendance. There are National Level settlements that talks about scanning and the use of scanners. First and foremost scanning is part of a letter carrier's job. Whether it is scanning a barcode on a piece of mail, inside a collection box, at a MSP point or anything else, carriers are supposed to scan them and follow the prompts that accompany the scan as directed. However, we continue to maintain that the data from a scanner or the lack of data may not constitute the sole basis for disciplinary action. This does not mean that the reports of a scanner can't be used at all; it simply means that management must have more than a piece of paper to support disciplinary action as it relates to scanning.

Discipline & Attendance

The ELM states that carriers are required to be regular in attendance. It also states that failure to be regular in attendance may result in disciplinary action, including removal from the Postal Service. What the ELM does not do is define what regular in attendance is. There is no specific number of absences or a certain point that defines when someone is not regular in attendance. It must be based on a case by case basis. As such, there is no bright line at three instances in a quarter or three instances in a rolling quarter that calls for the issuance of discipline. Conversely, there is nothing in the ELM that



Mike Zagaros

says carriers are allowed to take up to three absences in a quarter before management can say or do anything to them. The same is true on the issue of developing a pattern by hooking up with a non-scheduled day. As most of our carriers are on a rotating schedule, the likelihood of sick leave being next to a n/s day is more dependent on your schedule that particular week. If discipline is issued, talk to your steward.

Operational Window Grievances

We have received a favorable award from Arbitrator MacLean on the first grievance that was presented in October. It is still too soon to determine when or if management will change their policies related to this issue. As was written in last month's Branch Nine News, we don't know how many cases we will have to arbitrate but this is a positive first step. Thank you to the stewards for continuing your effort to enforce the agreement and thank you to the members for your continued patience.

Our Future

Everyone has been hoping that

President's article continued on page 4

President's article continued from page 3
 after the elections there will be some clarity as to the future direction of the Postal Service and by extension our jobs as carriers. This year's election results are a bit of a mixed bag. We were extremely successful with labor's agenda on the state level with the State House and Senate with DFL majorities and defeat of the amendments. On the national level, the House remains with a Republican majority and the Senate with the Democratic majority and President Obama in office. Herein lies the problem, Congress is still in session. They call it the lame duck session, that is when some members of congress who won't be back after the first of the year try and pass legislation that could spell trouble for the Postal Service and the NALC. It was during the 2006 lame duck session that the Postal Service ended up with the infamous pre-funding requirement for future retirees. It is important to stay alert and be connected as things can and do happen fast. Contact your representatives and ask them to oppose action on Postal Reform this year and to oppose any backroom deals that would only end up hurting the Postal Service, its employees and the American public. We can't afford another repeat of 2006.

Excuses article continued from front page

- 7. Of course I looked before backing up; I don't know how that tree got there.
- 8. I always start my LLV to do my vehicle inspection while standing on the ground.
- 9. But I was talking to the supervisor on my cell phone when I was driving.
- 10. Someone stole the keys from my truck.

I have to give carriers credit for the variety of answers given during their Day in Court. But these excuses rarely produce the desired results (no discipline). While all discipline should be taken seriously, safety discipline should be of the utmost concern. A safety violation involves your personal well being in addition to that of the general public and the security of the mail. This concerns the life blood of our members as well as the USPS.

We all want to go home each night with all the body parts we came to work with. No one wants to go home with the nightmare of having hit someone or something with their vehicle. This means limiting any backing up of your vehicles, not talking on your cell phones while driving, and closing

your door while in motion.

Management has and will continue to issue discipline for unsecured vehicles. Open windows and unlocked vehicles are easy for management to see and they are rightly concerned about the security of the mail. Carriers are best advised to lock their vehicle whenever in doubt. Never leave your seat if the vehicle is running; not for a dropped letter or during your vehicle inspection. The Branch works hard to remind managers that discipline is to be progressive and the accident reporting process must be followed. There is a tendency for management to issue a punitive level of discipline which stewards need to be aware of and correct.

Last words of advice:

HOW TO AVOID A ROLL AWAY

- 1. Call in Sick
- 2. Bid on a walk out route
- 3. Obey the safety rules - (recommended method)

Play it safe—the career you save may be your own.

Melia

UNIFORMS UNLIMITED

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

The Twin Cities Postal Headquarters



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

Executive Vice President's Report

Weingarten Rights

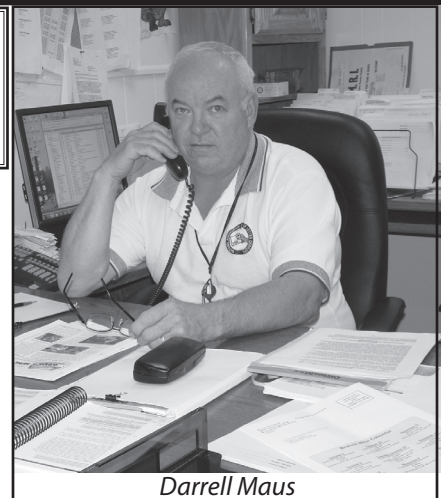
Branch officers and stewards have informed carriers of their rights under Weingarten and it has also appeared in Branch 9 News articles before, but it bears mentioning again. Do not think that any meeting in an office with a supervisor or manager is meaningless and will not lead to something more severe. With the amount of carriers being called into managers offices for discussions I want to make sure that every carrier knows their rights under Weingarten. In the J-CAM it states "Federal labor law, in what is known as the Weingarten Rule, gives each employee the right to representation during any investigatory interview in which he or she reasonably believes may lead to discipline." This rule cannot be exercised by the steward, but rather the employee must request their steward to be present. Also the employee has the right to a pre-interview consultation with a steward before going into the office where information can be discussed privately. The Branch has become aware of instances where the steward was not requested prior to a meeting, and afterwards the carrier informed the Branch that they wish they had requested their steward's representation, especially when it involved the OIG agents or postal inspectors.

In Minneapolis there has been a long time established and recognized agreement that whenever a carrier is called into the office for any type of

discussion the steward is to be present, unless the carrier does not want the steward there. This rule also gives the employee the right to a steward's assistance. The steward is not there only as a silent partner. Management would be in violation of the rule if they were to try to restrict the steward to the role of only a witness or a passive observer. So when your presence is requested in the office by a supervisor or manager know your rights and exercise them. Ask for your steward's representation for your own protection under the contract.

Elections

WHEW! The ads are over and we made it. In the last election cycle, Branch 9 members hit the streets supporting candidates who supported our issues and those of other working men and women. Letter carriers manned phone banks, did door knocks, put up lawn signs and distributed literature. To all those who volunteered **THANK YOU**. The NALC released letter carriers to work directly on campaigns. To those carriers **THANK YOU** for your hard work. We demonstrated that the letter carriers of Branch 9 can and do get involved and must be reckoned with. So to the other members of our Branch if you have not given to COLCPE or PAL 9, do so now. If you have not signed up to be an E-Activist on the nalc.org website, do so now. We will then have a head start for the next political action needed to be taken by the NALC.



Darrell Maus

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 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

Continued on Page 6



Rodney Anderson
(Br 9 Director of Retirees)

Retiree Notes

I hope to write occasionally (not regularly) about notes of interest to Retirees. Open Season through the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) is coming up, November 12 to December 10. This affects not only your health benefits, but such things as vision and dental insurance through Benefeds. Please contact either the Branch, me, or our Branch Health Benefits Representative, Julie Waldemar (who has been immeasurably helpful to me personally) for further information.

All retirees will want to know that our annuities will receive a 1.7% COLA increase effective in January 2013. This is true for both CSRS and FERS.

Don't forget some of our upcoming celebrations during the holiday season. Our Retiree Holiday Party will be at the Fred Babcock VFW in Richfield on Wednesday, December 5, at 6 PM.

For those of you with Main Office connections, our annual Main Office Holiday/Branch 9 Retirement party will be on Thursday, December 13 at Legend's Bar and Grill at 825 East Hennepin Ave. in Minneapolis. We will be honoring our

2012 Main Office Retirees: Michelle Benson, Rick Kelly, Jim Kloster, Tom Nassif, Joe Olson, Bob Paulson, Phil Pearson, Roger Tanghe, and Donovan Taylor. The fun starts at 3 PM.

I've spent the past several weeks attempting to tread in the footsteps of my predecessor, Cheryl Stately, and getting into a variety of misadventures. Connie Beissel got me entangled with the St Paul Regional Labor Federation (since I actually live on the St Paul side). They are a bunch of rowdies, so I felt right at home. Three of them were St Paul letter carriers, who invited me to the next Branch 28 General Membership Meeting.

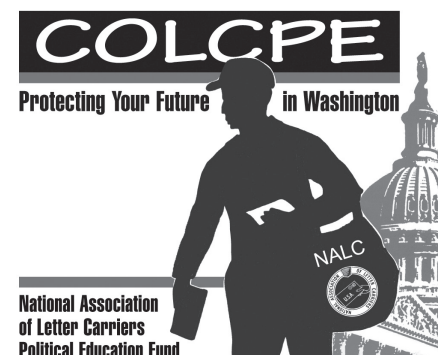
When I showed up, their President, Dan Garhofer, asked me to stand and introduce myself. I stood and said, "Hi. My name is Rodney Anderson, and I'm from Branch 9 in Minneapolis..." "BOOOOOOO", went the crowd. Scared the crap out of me; I nearly fled for the door! But they were just kidding (I think). I managed to calm the tumult by saying, "If you guys know the name of any one Branch 9 carrier, you probably know of Cheryl Stately". Ah, I could feel the warmth come right back. It was very palpable. Six or seven of them came up to me after the meeting to shake my hand and tell me how much they loved and miss her.

The next week I went to the Minnesota State Retiree Council of the AFL-CIO, down by the Capitol. Cheryl was a member of this group too, and her name came up in conversation. Several of those members had been at her Celebration of Life event up in Brooklyn Park, and they all spoke very movingly of her. One of them summarized quite succinctly, "That woman was loved." She was, too.

Exec. VP article continued from Page 5

one form needs to be filled out and returned to branch office. 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 are in the NALC Health Plan). Once your Union Membership and Federal Health Benefits are gone you cannot get them back. 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 or it will be returned to us at the Branch 9 office.

Darrell



Annual Branch 9 NALC

Ice Fishing Outing on Lake Mille Lacs

Twin Pines Resort & Motel-restaurant

Located just two hours north of the Twin Cities on U.S. Highway 169 (mile marker 232).
For More information call 1.800.45.4682 or visit www.twinpinesmillelacs.com



Noon Sunday to Noon Monday

January 20th & 21st

\$41/Adult

\$36/Children under 14



Contact Ken Jambois with questions at 763.370.1392

* The Branch will be hosting a chicken and rib buffet at Twin Pines Resort on Sunday, January 20th from 3:00 - 8:00PM. This dinner is included in the price of the ice house.*

Several Houses Available:

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

Each include: Propane heat, lights, table/chairs, covered pad for bunks, carpeted floors.
Cook stoves are available in the larger houses. Check in time is 1:00PM

Branch 9 Fishing

Name: _____ Station: _____

Type of Ice House: _____ Amount Paid: _____

Name of Guests (if under 14 include age): _____

Deadline is
Tuesday, January 15th

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

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



Change Service Requested

PRSR STD
US POSTAGE
PAID
TWIN CITIES MN
PERMIT NO. 91964

Branch Nine Calendar

December 1 - 28

Penalty Overtime Exclusion
(PP26-12 wk1) - (PP01-13 wk2)

December 4

No Northside Breakfast

December 5

Retiree Holiday Party
6:00 - 9:00PM
Fred Babcock VFW
6715 Lakeshore Drive, Richfield

December 11

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

December 11

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

December 13

Main Office Holiday Party
Begins 3:00 PM
Legends Bar & Grill
825 E. Hennepin Ave
Minneapolis

January 8

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

January 8

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

January 20 & 21

Annual Branch 9 Ice Fishing
Twin Pines Resort & Motel
Lake Mille Lacs

January 22

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

Tuesday, January 22

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

February 5

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