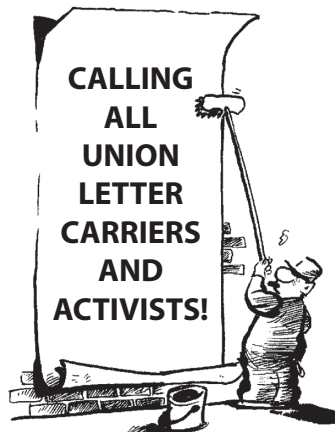




VOLUME 66 No 5

Official Publication of Branch Nine, NALC

June/July 2014



By: Cathy Jones (Lake Street)

We need YOU now, more than ever before. Stand up and take your place. Get involved, attend meetings, volunteer in your community, get engaged. **Unions are under attack and it's not getting any better.** We need all hands on deck! I know sometimes we get discouraged and want to hang it all up, but step back for a moment, take a break and then get back in the game! Quitting is a form of union-busting and is not an option. **The union is us, if you see something you don't like - get involved and change it.**

During the 2012 National Convention here in Minneapolis, President Rolando said, "**Letter Carriers have a secret weapon, we have each other.**"

**Help Us Save America's Postal Service!**

## NALC President Fred Rolando's update on the health of the Postal Service.

from NALC.org

Results reconfirm the steady improvement in USPS' finances.

May 9, 2014—Following today's release of the U.S. Postal Service's financial statement for the second quarter of Fiscal Year 2014, which covers January, February and March, NALC President Fredric Rolando released the following statement:

**The Postal Service today reported a quarterly operating profit of \$261 million, which brings the operating profit for the first half of fiscal 2014 to more than \$1 billion.** Driving the quarterly performance were the 8 percent jump in package revenue and—in a turnaround—the 1.6 percent increase in letter revenue.

These results reconfirm the steady improvement in the finances of the Postal Service, which has been operating at a profit since October 2012. Rising online shopping has sparked a jump in package revenue, while a gradually rebounding economy has stabilized

mail revenue. That's why the USPS forecasts a \$1.1 billion operating profit this year.

Given these positive trends, it would be irresponsible to degrade services to the public, which would drive away mail—and revenue—and stop the postal turnaround in its tracks. Law-makers shouldn't dismantle the postal network that is profitable in meeting the needs of an evolving society.

Instead, legislators should address the factor that is causing 100 percent of the 'losses'—the congressional mandate that the Postal Service, alone among all public agencies and private companies, be required to pre-fund future retiree health benefits.

We will be glad to work with lawmakers and the postmaster general to develop a comprehensive plan that strengthens the existing networks while addressing the unfair pre-funding obligation so the Postal Service, which is based in the Constitution, can continue to provide Americans with the world's most affordable and efficient delivery network without a dime of taxpayer money.



*Flanked by Coon Rapids Steward's, James Spencer and Victor Boehmer Jim Murray (a carrier for the past 42 years) makes his final clock ring.*



*Anoka Steward, Jim Nelson congratulates Larry Elfelt as he closes out his postal career.*



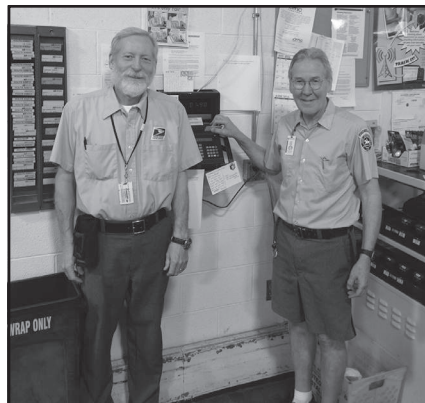
*Terry Hunter (Brooklyn Park) makes his final clock ring as Steward, Jenna Ratzlaff and Branch 9 Exec VP, Darrell Maus witness.*

## From the Editor's Desk



I want to take a moment to thank Carol Garnto (Lost Lake) for taking photos of the honored retirees and their guests during the Retiree Banquet. Turning Carol loose with a camera is a fascinating sight to behold. She is a "natural".

Just a reminder, the Minnesota State Fair is coming up fast Aug 21 - Sept 1 (Labor Day). We have 2 shifts available morning (9AM - 1PM) and afternoon (1 - 5PM). Sign up sheets will be available at the next GMM. You can also call Angie at the Branch office to volunteer for a shift. Come and join us, we always have a great time!



*St. Louis Park Steward, Mark Olufson (l) watches as Steve Chaplin, who is all smiles, makes that last punch.*

## In Memoriam

Edwin Acker  
Paul Felegy  
Allen Smith  
John Sporrang

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### Branch Nine Officers

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Jeremy Rothstein

**Treasurer**  
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**Trustee**  
Cathy Jones

**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 "The Brain Drain"

*Mike Zagaros President Branch 9*

With the changes in the Postmaster's office for the Minneapolis Installation one would then expect to see changes at the stations and branches. And there have been quite a few changes. Downtown (as they are referred to at the stations and branches) has completely changed from 7 months ago, with the addition of new Postmaster Doug Stephens new Area Managers David James (North), Lonnie Lincoln (Central) and Steve Records (South). Additionally, there has been a dramatic shift in experience at the stations and branches as the majority of them now have new managers and supervisors. That leaves all of us with the additional job of explaining and educating them about the things that are unique to Minneapolis and the proper responses to various situations that come up such as payroll and leave issues; on the job injuries and the appropriate compensation, the National Agreement and other local agreements. This type of experience loss or "brain drain" as it is often called, will be continuing as more and more people in both the union and management retire. It is not just here that this is happening. ***The latest information is that within the next 5 years the majority of employees in the Northland District will be eligible to retire. So what do we do?***

First of all we need to ensure that the proper things are happening as it regards to how carriers are treated on the workroom floor, distribution of work hours, leave, safety, worker's compensation and the 800 pound gorilla in the room, what Congress and the

Postmaster General have in store for the Postal Service. This is more than can be handled by just a few people (stewards and officers). It will take all of us to get involved, to educate ourselves and management on the proper way of doing things. Postmaster Stephens often says that "we are broken... our processes are broken from a management perspective due to our inexperience..." We need to look at the issues that are impacting letter carriers and understand what should or should not be happening and work to correct the situation so it doesn't happen again.

**Inappropriate Treatment on the Work Room Floor** – While this is primarily an issue of carriers being treated improperly by management (managers, supervisors, 204Bs) we cannot turn a blind eye when the offender is one of our own. The rules apply to everyone. Often there is a dispute as to what happened and it is up to the individual or the steward to provide enough evidence to demonstrate what happened. Too often we jump ahead and argue that the Joint Statement was violated, or that a carrier is being harassed or bullied and forget to explain what happened with objective facts (statements as to what was said by whom? Were there witnesses? Do we have their version of the events?) The most important part of trying to correct these situations is to tell someone, starting with your steward and write it down. This may appear to be overly simplistic or a patronizing solution. It's because it is. It's not a solution because it doesn't resolve anything.

But it is necessary as a place to start from, to make our case to get the behavior stopped.

## **Overtime and Work Hours -**

After two years of constantly having carriers being forced in on their days off in violation of the National Agreement, the 12/60 hour violations, and carriers working too much overtime, there appears to be a change at several stations. Now there is not enough overtime for those who want it and the wrong people working it. I encourage everyone to take a moment to read some of the materials that have been put out by the Branch on overtime and who gets it first, etc. We are entering the last quarter of the National Article 8 test. There were only a few differences between what we have been doing and the rules that are called for in the test. There is only the 12 hour Overtime Desired List (OTDL - the big list) or the Assignment Only overtime list that career carriers can sign up for. Keep track of your hours and double check what is being recorded on the weekly Overtime Opportunities and Hours list. If there is a discrepancy see your steward right away.

**Worker's Comp** – Lately there has been a rash of problems with carriers who have a traumatic injury (something that happened on one day) not getting paid Continuation of Pay (COP) for their lost time. Unfortunately this is often only discovered after finding out how management is recording your absence. If it is not COP contact your steward or the Branch Office

*President's Report cont'd on page 10*

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## Executive Vice President's Report

### OUR COMMUNITY CARRIERS

The past several months have been an extraordinarily busy time for Branch 9 for many reasons. Carriers have been dealing with pressure from management to be on the street earlier and back by a certain time with their route completed. This compounded by staffing issues, contract violations, and the ongoing talk about going to 5 day delivery, it would be easy to say "just let me do my route so I can go home." Through all of these issues we, as carriers, still continue to serve our communities and the people in them. Without a thought to all the stressful issues that are happening in our stations, letter carriers during the months of April and May repeatedly stepped up and gave their time and money to the community in a variety of ways.

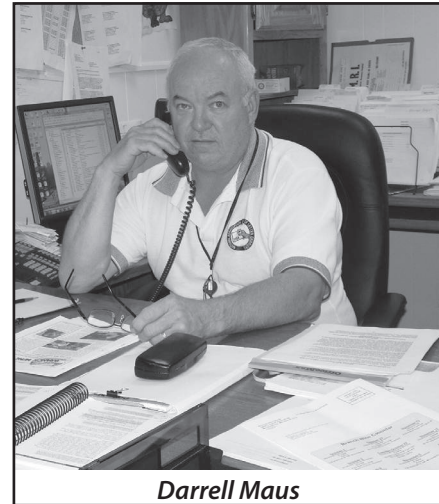
On April 24th Branch 9 members came together for the Ronald St. Clair Bowl-A-Thon and Silent Auction to raise funds for MDA (Muscular Dystrophy Association). This year we raised nearly \$8,200.00. This money will be used to help purchase medical equipment and to send kids to Camp Courage (a summer camp for kids afflicted with neuromuscular diseases). Everyone had a great time, but more importantly we were making a difference in people's lives. I also want to send a huge Thank You to all of the businesses that sponsored a lane. Their donations helped us be even more successful!

On May 4th we honored our retired members with the annual

"Branch 9 Retiree Banquet." This year our honored guests were Robert Zimdars, a 60 year member who received his Ruby 60 year membership pin and four 50 year members, August Graziano, Robert LaMere, Jerry McGlade and Wesley Meade, they each received a 50 year pin and their NALC lifetime membership gold cards. Everyone in attendance enjoyed a wonderful buffet lunch and the program was informative with our guest speaker being Manuel (Manny) Peralta, Jr., the National Director of Safety and Health. Once again all of the members that volunteered made this event the success that it is. A special thank you goes out to our Director of Retirees, Rodney Anderson.

Lastly, on May 10th we had our annual "Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive." Each year our members go above and beyond to support our communities in their time of need by collecting non-perishable food items to help restock the food shelves. Carriers also volunteered at a Twins game by handing out postcards to help promote the drive, they also volunteered their time by sorting the blue bags and postcards that go to the individual stations to be delivered to our customers and after all of this, carriers picked up the donations on their routes, not because they had to, but because it is so important. This year's food drive total was 604,840 pounds.

What is really amazing is that all of these events were accomplished in 15 days (3 consecutive weekends). Amazing!

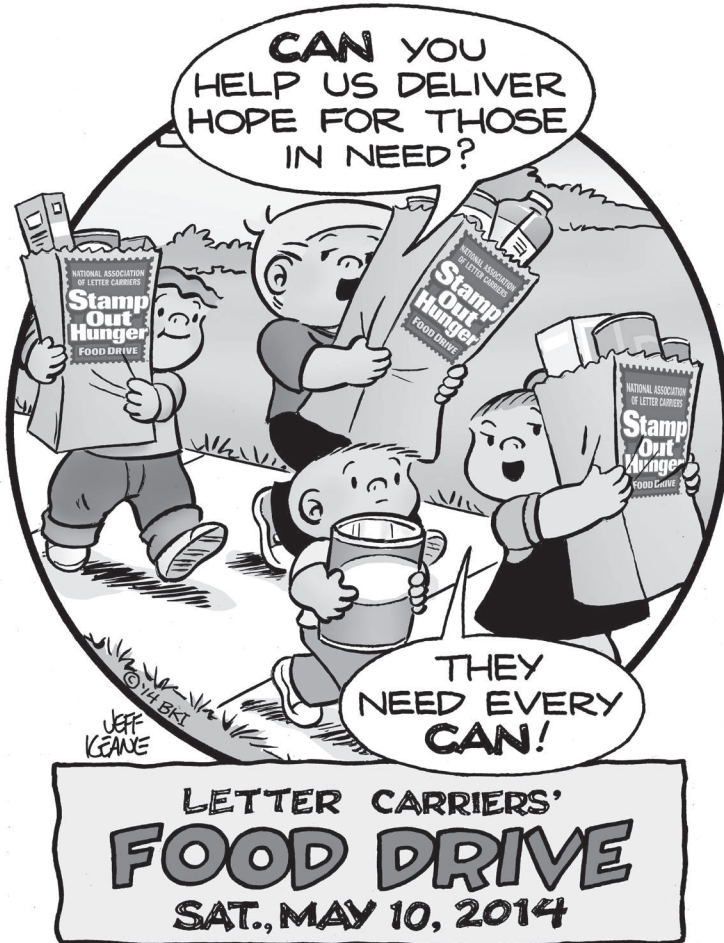


*Darrell Maus*

The local parties are also currently working to revive the Carrier Alert Program. It is a cooperative program between the USPS and the United Way to monitor the well being of our elderly and disabled customers. This is so important because sometimes we are the only human contact these homebound people receive in a day. The way this program works is when a carrier notices something out of the ordinary concerning a customer registered with Carrier Alert (such as mail that has not been picked up) they will report it to their supervisor. The supervisor will then contact the United Way. The United Way will then check on the person and if something's wrong, contact family, the police or emergency services. Everyone that has signed up with Carrier Alert will have a United Way decal on the inside of their mailbox identifying them as a registered participant.

We all work for the United States Postal Service. But it is the letter carrier out delivering the mail 6 days a week that provides the service to the American public. It is the volunteers who provides the extra services that can make all the

*Exec VP Report cont'd on page 10*



*Veronica Feneis (Coon Rapids) is all smiles as she picks up food drive donations on her route.*



*Paul Woida (Powderhorn) is all smiles during the food drive.*



*(Left) John O Laughlin (retired) Kieran Hughes (Minnehaha), and Paul Taggart at the Food Drive Fishing Opener.*

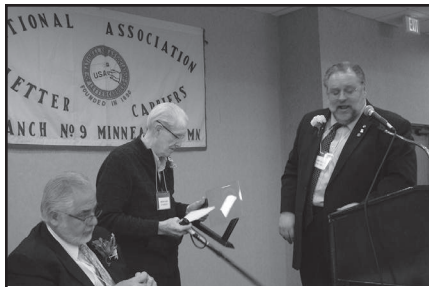
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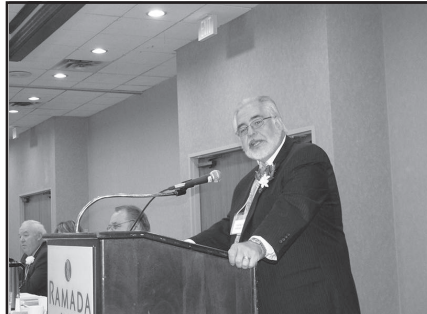
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**Branch President, Mike Zagaros presents a plaque to Howard Lamson, our 2014 Retiree of the Year.**



**Keynote speaker, Manuel (Manny) Peralta, (National Director of Safety and Health).**



**Executive Vice President, Darrell Maus, National Director of Safety and Health, Manuel Peralta, and Branch President, Mike Zagaros.**



**Manuel Peralta presents Robert Zimdars with his 60 Year Ruby Pin.**



**Manuel Peralta presents Wesley Meade with his 50 year Gold Card and Membership Pin.**



**More Retiree Banquet photos on next page**







# How to Retire (Part 5)



**Rodney Anderson**  
(Branch 9 Director of Retirees)

This is the penultimate article in a series on retirement.

Very shortly after you retire, you will receive a "CSA number" from OPM. It will be on all your future correspondence with OPM, so keep it handy. In fact, they send you one wallet-sized card to keep in your billfold. If you call or write them, this is the first piece of information they will want.

What happens in the 2 to 4 months (hopefully no longer) between the time you separate yourself from the Postal Service and you start receiving your regular monthly annuities?

**Do you receive any money at all?** Fortunately, yes. OPM will make a rough estimate of what your pension will likely be, and you will receive about 70% of that amount every month. This will continue for the 2 to 4 months until OPM gets your paperwork finalized. However, nothing is deducted from this interim annuity for either taxes or health care, so it's not as big a "hit" as it might be.

I might mention that whatever health care program you have when you retire will be carried forward in full force during this interim period, even though you are not paying for it until your paperwork is finalized. If you have chosen to change it in retirement (as some do), this will take effect once OPM notifies you that your paperwork is completed.

Then when your paperwork is finalized, you will receive a "catch-up" check advising you what your permanent annuity check will be, and also taking out what health care costs have accrued. However, everyone I have heard of is generally pleased with the amount they receive.

You may still have a little work to do. For one thing, you will need to check your tax status. Do you want more or less taken out for federal taxes? How about state taxes, which aren't covered at all?

Here's just a little trick I learned: call OPM. For example, someone had told me to have a certain amount kept out for state taxes. I called OPM and talked to a lady, and asked her how I have an amount withheld for Minnesota state taxes? She said, "You go on the website of the Minnesota Department of Revenue, download the appropriate form, and mail it to us ... or, you could just tell me now, and I'll put it into the computer." I gratefully told her, she put it into her computer, and I never had another worry about it.

If you want to ask me anything, either call or write me at the Branch office, or write me an e-mail at [rodney@branch9nalc.com](mailto:rodney@branch9nalc.com). My phone number is 651-270-7807. I may not know the answer off-hand, but so long as you're an NALC member, I'll find out for you.

## Newly Hired CCA'S

**Introduce yourself, treat them well, and teach them the professional way to deliver mail. Invite them to the next union meeting.**

Muktar J Abasanbi  
Nicholas B Anderson  
Benyam G Bekeie  
Abigail A Belcourt  
Jeffrey L Blumenshine  
Marshall B Borgen  
Riley P Brenner  
Lesley A Cespedes  
Megan E Dahlheimer  
Tenzin W Dhakpo  
Michael S Favretto  
Lynn M Mulkern  
Rachelle L Peterson  
Matthew Fisher  
Antonio M Freeman  
Michael C Fridley, Jr  
David Garang  
Bereket H Geberemedhin

*New CCA's cont'd on page 11*

*Exec VP Report cont'd from page 5*

difference in the world to someone. It has been said many times, letter carriers are the eyes and ears of the community, and we are also the heart. When we give our time and money for all the activities listed above, and others like it, it is much more than a feel good endeavor. It is through our volunteer efforts that we can and do make a difference in the lives of the people in our communities.

I want to take this opportunity to give all the volunteers a big THANK YOU. It is truly appreciated.



**The Following is a list of Paid Members of PAL 9 for May, 2014**

**Very Concerned Member  
Vincent Froelich**

**Ron Lawrence  
Treasurer PAL 9**

## USPS on the Rebound

*Update from NALC President,  
Fred Rolando*

### Results reconfirm the steady improvement in USPS' finances

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We will be glad to work with lawmakers and the postmaster general to develop a comprehensive plan that strengthens the existing networks while addressing the unfair pre-funding obligation so the Postal Service, which is based in the Constitution, can continue to provide Americans with the world's most affordable and efficient delivery network without a dime of taxpayer money.

*President's Report cont'd from page 3*

right away. You are entitled to 45 days of COP for a traumatic injury. If you request COP, management cannot charge your absence to any thing else without your knowledge. If you are injured and not sure what you should do. Please contact your steward or the Branch Office right away.

As we all experience the loss of people with experience to handle certain situations, the "Brain Drain" will continue. We can counter it by letting the new people on both sides (union and management) know that we believe there may be something wrong. If it is wrong, let's get the situation corrected and work to ensure that it is not repeated. We don't have time for others to catch up.

## 2014 Scholarship Awards

### JEROME J. KEATING/AUSTIN B CARLSON - \$2,000.00

	<u>School Attending</u>	<u>Parent</u>	<u>Work Location</u>
Winner: Casey Max	Concordia College	Brian Max	Golden Valley
1st Runner-Up: Kylie Goodin	Mankato State	Nicole Goodin	Champlin
2nd Runner-Up: Taylor Feneis	University of Minnesota	Veronica Feneis	Coon Rapids

### WALTER E. COULLARD/EUGENE P. McNULTY - \$2,000.00

	<u>School Attending</u>	<u>Parent</u>	<u>Work Location</u>
Winner: Jason Johnson	N. Hennepin Comm. College	Robert Johnson	Lost Lake
1st Runner-Up: Jake Rehwaldt	Normandale Comm. College	Jonathan Rehwaldt	Shakopee
2nd Runner-Up: Jessica Jacob	SW Minnesota State University	John Jacob	Minnehaha

### J. WESLEY WOODS - \$1,000.00

	<u>School Attending</u>	<u>Parent</u>	<u>Work Location</u>
Winner: Sarah Roppe	Arizona	Jodi Roppe	Elk River
1st Runner-Up: Kelsey Burshek	Mankato State	John Burshek	West Edina
2nd Runner-Up: Sarah Shimota	Winona State University	Joseph Shimota	Chanhassen

### LEONARD A. LARSON/BARRY J. WEINER - ADULT SCHOLARSHIP - \$1,000.00

	<u>Position</u>	<u>Work Location</u>
1st Winner: Aaron Allen	Active Carrier	Anoka
2nd Winner: Lorene Banovetz	Retired	

*New CCA's cont'd from page 9*

Gregory J Gisselquist	Brenda L Sazama
Crystal L Green	Clint L Segarra
Andrea J Halverson	Peter G Sneve
Travis A Hardesty	William D Tajibnapis
Angela D Heyne	Michael A Thompson
James W Ischer	Charles N Ticarro
Chelsey M Johnson	Heather M Tudahl
Daniel G Klaysmat	Michael J Wigfield
Alicia A Lloyd	Vereicha N Winfield
Katina D Markvicka	Oscar Womack, III
Roxanne K Martin	Mary M Wright
Jessica Mcgehee	Tou T Yang
Joseph G Merritt	Wade J Zabel
Jamila C Reid	Daniel B Zempel
Ruba Salah	

### ***Retirement Savings Plan:***

CCAs now have access to a plan designed specifically to help them save money for retirement. Provided for by the 2013 Das interest arbitration award, the retirement savings plan (RSP) for CCAs who are members of the NALC was created by the union's Mutual Benefit Association (MBA) to give CCAs a tax-deferred way to save for retirement. The RSP was organized as a traditional IRA and was specially created for CCAs who are not yet eligible to earn pension benefits under FERS or to participate in the TSP.

Branch Nine News  
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- [Branch9nalc.com](http://Branch9nalc.com) (website)
- “like” our Branch 9 facebook page
- Follow us on Twitter



## Branch 9 Calendar

### July 1

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

### July 22

Nokomis Retiree Breakfast  
9:00AM  
Fred Babcock VFW Post 5555  
6715 Lakeshore Drive  
Richfield

### August 12

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

### July 8

Southside Retiree Breakfast  
9:00AM  
Fred Babcock VFW Post 5555  
6715 Lakeshore Drive  
Richfield

### August 1

N Suburban Retiree's Breakfast  
8:30AM  
Denny's Restaurant  
9020 Quaday Ave NE  
Otsego

### August 21 - Sept 1

MN State Fair volunteers are needed to help inform the public about postal news that could affect mail delivery. Call the Branch office to volunteer for a shift.

### July 8

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

### August 5

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

### August 26

Nokomis Retiree Breakfast  
9:00AM  
Fred Babcock VFW Post 5555  
6715 Lakeshore Drive  
Richfield

### July 20 - 25

NALC National Convention  
Philadelphia, PA

### August 12

Southside Retiree Breakfast  
9:00AM  
Fred Babcock VFW Post 5555  
6715 Lakeshore Drive  
Richfield

### Tuesday, August 26

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