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VOLUME 68 No 9 Official Publication of Branch Nine, NALC November 2016

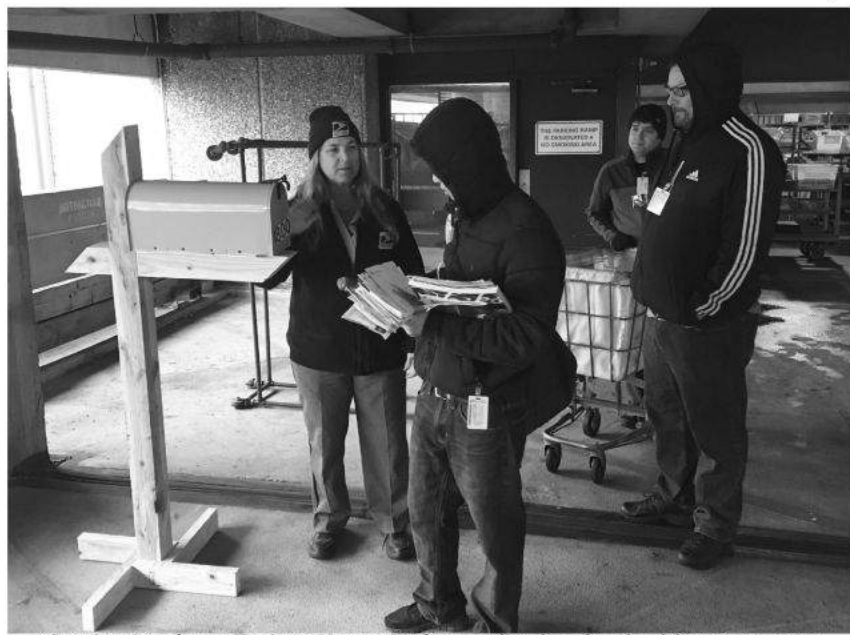
OIG Integrity Tests

In recent Holiday Seasons we have reported that there have been Postal employees disciplined and even removed for using gift cards that they found in collection boxes, on the street, and in some cases given to them by customers saying they found the gift cards in front of the Post Office. In all of these instances, the gift cards were planted by the OIG. Our office has learned that the OIG is again planting gift cards to test letter carriers.

In the recent examples that we have heard of, the OIG is conducting "integrity tests". In these tests, the OIG agents are placing gift cards that have values of \$25 - \$50 in the outgoing mail slots, collections boxes and even in single-family mailboxes. As letter carriers, it is common for our customers to leave gifts in their mailbox even outside of the holidays, and we normally accept those gifts.

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The New Carrier Academy



Carrier Academy Trainer Karen Pederson (Loring Station) instructs new CCAs on delivering Park and Loop with three bundles.

The Standard Training for City Letter Carriers is the result of collaboration between many stakeholders including the National Association of Letter Carriers (NALC), Delivery Operations Support, Safety, Labor Relations, Sales, and Employee Resource Management.

With our last arbitrated contract, in the early part of 2013, the City Carrier Assistant position was created. The Postal Service needed carriers, staffing was low

and carriers were being mandated to carry overtime. There was a need to get carriers hired, trained and provide the needed relief. The 2013 Carrier Academy was revamped/shortened in an effort to provide relief sooner. The program was reduced to two days of PowerPoint classroom training at the academy and the (real) hands-on training was delegated to on-the-job training at the station level. There were concerns right away but this was the

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PRESIDENT'S REPORT

On Tuesday, the saga that is the 2016 election cycle will be over. I want to take a moment to say thank you to the members that took the time out of their busy schedules to engage voters during phone banks, lit drops and door knocks. Your efforts made a difference.

We have just completed delivering all of the political mailings, and now it is time to change our focus once again. As we transition from fall to winter and enter into the holiday season we have the obvious stresses of holiday shopping and getting together with family and friends. But there is also the stress of our jobs. The obvious issues are Daylight Savings Time has ended and you are now faced with fewer hours of daylight to make deliveries, and with the "Tsunami of packages" (from Postmaster Will Jones) that will soon be upon us now is the time to pay closer attention to your personal safety because we need to do better.

In FY 2016 the Minneapolis Installation had more accidents and injuries than we had in all of 2015.

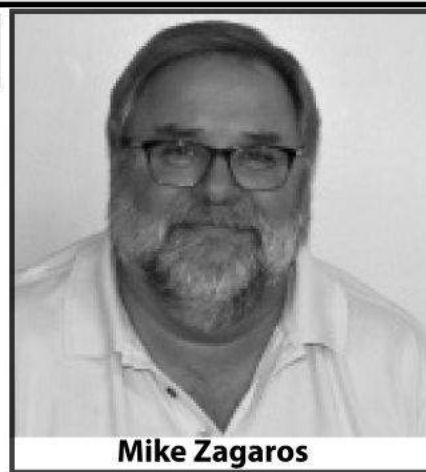
Each week I receive a **Weekly Accident Summary Report**. This report identifies the stations that have had either a Recordable OSHA I/I (injuries and illnesses that are reported to the Occupational Safety and Health Administration and usually involve medical treatment). Motor Vehicle Accidents (these include both at fault and not at fault accidents.) The final category is Reported Accidents (these are the accidents that management reports to the District Safety Office whether an injury occurs or not). I then forward this information to the stewards so they can follow up with the carrier(s) involved and make sure they are alright and understand their OWCP benefits. The safety liaisons will also do a Joint Root Cause investigation to figure out what we can learn from

these accidents. What we do with this information is to try figure out how to prevent these accidents and injuries from being repeated in the future.

Let's look at the three most common accidents and injuries in the Minneapolis Installation: At Fault Motor Vehicle Accidents; Slips, Trips and Falls; and Dog Bites.

In the previous 12 months, there were 94 slips, trips and falls and 72 at fault motor vehicle accidents. (These numbers were compiled from those weekly Accident Summary Reports that I spoke of earlier.) These two categories have a seasonal component. Of the 94 slips, trips and falls, 59 occurred between Nov. and March (42 occurred in Jan. and Feb.). There were 36 at fault motor vehicle accidents between Nov. and March. (This does not include those accidents where our drivers were not at fault.) It would be easy to dismiss these accidents as something that comes with the territory or that it is just a part of the job when delivering mail during winter in Minnesota; but the problem is that these two categories account for most of the on the job injuries suffered by our members. (If you fit in this category and don't know what to do, read Samantha Hartwig's article on page 6 "Injured on the Job.") **So, what can you do to prevent these types of accidents from happening?**

Slips, trips and falls: 1. Focus on where you're walking. Concentrate on getting from point A to point B safely. Letter carriers face walking on uneven ground year round, but the next five months, are when most of the hazards may not be visible because of leaves on the ground and/or snow and ice. 2. Remember to use handrails where possible and don't rush, **safety first**. 3. Wear appropriate footwear. Ask your supervisor about ice grippers and hand warmers. Last year we were very fortunate to not have any cases of frostbite. Can we make it two years



Mike Zagaros

in a row? 4. Remember to step down rather than out when getting out of vehicles or stepping off steps and curbs.

Motor Vehicles Accidents:

Remember, with winter driving make allowances for increased stopping distance and slow down. By now all of you have heard the "leave yourself an out" talk. So be aware of your surroundings. Watch out for narrower streets (snow banks) and watch out for other drivers.

Dog Bites:

There have been 46 dog bites in the past 12 months. What used to be a problem primarily in the summer (from Memorial Day to Labor Day) is now happening every month of the year except January (perhaps the temperature has something to do with that). **There is no such thing as a dog that won't bite.** If there is a dog out, even if its on a leash with the owner present, do not deliver the mail until the dog has been secured. If you are delivering a parcel to the door, remember to use your foot as a backstop. If there is a dog in the house this step will help keep the door closed so it can't come flying out at you.

Can we prevent all accidents and injuries? NO.

But that doesn't mean we shouldn't try. There is a phrase that is allegedly attributed to Theodore Vail (a former Postal Clerk who became the President of AT&T) "**No job is so important and no service so urgent that we cannot take the time to perform our work safely.**"

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Samantha Hartwig

OWCP Report

injury situation management, must do an accident report on the computer. While management is completing the accident report several forms needed to file a claim for a traumatic injury will become available to print out.

The first form is the CA-1, this form is a notice of traumatic injury that carrier must use to elect Continuation of Pay (COP), this allows for continuation of regular pay for up to 45 days.

The next form is a CA-17. This form will be notice to management if the injured carrier will have any medical restrictions, and the duration of those restrictions. Management is required to complete that left-hand side of the form that details what the physical nature of the carriers' job is at the time of injury.

The final form, and hardest to get from management, is the CA-16. The CA-16 must be signed by the supervisor to be valid. It must be given within 4 hours of the traumatic injury, or within 48 hours of verbal approval to seek medical attention. This form guarantees payment of all medical expenses for the first 60 days. If any carrier suffering a traumatic injury does not get all 3 of these forms a grievance needs to be filed. Too often OWCP claims do not get filed on time, and that is very important when filing an OWCP claim.

Most Thursdays I am available to assist with OWCP claims at the branch office in addition to the President, and Vice President. Any questions please call the Branch office at 612.781.9858 for assistance as soon as possible.

"Integrity" continued from pg. 1

Where a letter carrier may get into trouble is when they accept cash in any amount or gifts (including gift cards) valued above \$20. This is where the OIG agents are testing our integrity. Although one wonders how these OIG agents would score on any test of integrity. That said, the rules are the rules and below is language from the Code of Federal Regulations 2635.204(a), which should be considered the next time one of your patrons, gives you a gift.

Gifts of \$20 or less. *An employee may accept unsolicited gifts having an aggregate market value of \$20 or less per source per occasion, provided that the aggregate market value of individual gifts received from any one person under the authority of this paragraph shall not exceed \$50 in a calendar year. This exception does not apply to gifts of cash or of investment interests such as stock, bonds, or certificates of deposit. Where the market value of a gift or the aggregate market value of gifts offered on any single occasion exceeds \$20, the employee may not pay the excess value over \$20 in order to accept that portion of the gift or those gifts worth \$20. Where the aggregate value of tangible items offered on a single occasion exceeds \$20, the employee may decline any distinct and separate item in order to accept those items aggregating \$20 or less.*

If you have any questions, regarding gifts from your customers contact your supervisor to get verification that it is acceptable to accept the gift in question. If you disagree with the supervisor's opinion based on the language above, contact your steward for clarification.

Injured on the Job

Every day letter carriers across the country deliver mail, and most of those carriers make it through the day without any problems. Like I said, most of those carriers make it through the day without any problem; but not all carriers do. Workplace injuries in the letter carrier craft do, and will happen. Unfortunately, when a letter carrier does gets injured on the job, his/her boss has no clue what to do after the injury. I will be writing an article for every Branch Nine News on work place injuries to help inform every member of their rights and what to do when injured on the job.

I am going to start with discussing traumatic injuries, for example a broken leg. The most important thing for any injured carrier is to take care of themselves. If needed, and you are able call 911 for any traumatic injury. When you are able inform your immediate supervisor, if you can't reach a supervisor call your steward. **Management has a legal and contractual obligation to help all injured employees with Office of Workers' Compensation (OWCP) Claims. In a traumatic**

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"Academy" continued from pg. 1
 process established. As carriers, we saw the results. The station level offered very little support and knowledge to the trainers and to the incoming carriers. The retention rate around the country was low.

Several pilot training programs began around the country soon after. Over the past year those pilot programs were being presented, reviewed and observed. Oscar Garcia Jr. and Alfredo Villa, two Phoenix, AZ carriers were asked to create a new training program by their District Manager. They agreed and went



Phoenix, AZ Trainer, Oscar Garcia, Jr. helps train the trainers on his nationally adopted program.

and implement the new program for the Northland District. Minneapolis is the only location in Northland District for new Carrier Academy. It was completed

on time, with only a few months to find the space, the needed equipment, and to train the trainers in the new program. This was done with a lot of help with set-up and equipment scavenging from Bloomington Carrier/Trainer Jeff Babey, St. Paul Carrier/Trainer Kevin Anderson, and the Training Department Staff. The second week of October, the program began and the inaugural class completed. The Northland Academy was fortunate to have the program creator Oscar Garcia Jr. spend a day and half with the Carrier Academy

Facilitators and show and explain exactly what and why we are training new carriers this way.

The Standard Training for City Letter Carriers provides basic instructions and incorporates hands-on instruction of casing skills in a simulated environment to newly assigned carriers. Practice segments associated with separately demonstrated job elements provide for coaching by veteran carrier instructors. The instructor-based program provides 32 hours of classroom instruction

Other changes and highlights include a shadow day and mock delivery routes, so that participants are afforded hands-on casing, pulling down, loading the vehicle, and delivery practice. Continuing is the on-the-job instruction which includes orientation to local policies and procedures demonstration directed practice, and coaching.

The academy does not attempt to address every detail of the city carrier craft. What the academy does do is provide the new carrier with the basic skills needed to perform the job in a safe and efficient manner.

The success of our future carriers requires the cooperative efforts of all. The new Academy provides carriers a better beginning.



Carrier Academy Trainer Jenna Ratzlaff (Brooklyn Park) teaches new CCAs dismount delivery.

back to the basics. They provided hands on training in a controlled environment. They spent a year creating and using their training program. Phoenix had a retention rate around 30% prior to the new program. Since they've implemented the new program the retention has increased to 70%. They were the final and last program, of the 7 reviewed. Upon seeing the methods and results of the program, Oscar's and Alfredo's training program was chosen to be implemented Nationwide.

Region 7 Master Trainer Jeremy Rothstein was sent to Phoenix (in the summer) to learn, set-up



Carrier Academy Trainer, Robb Petersburg (Lost Lake) does a teach back on CBUs.

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Branch 9 Holiday Party

Sunday, December 11

1:00 to 4:00PM

New Hope Cinema Grill
2749 Winnetka Avenue North
New Hope, MN 55427

\$5.00/Person

*Available space for 200 people - first come, first served.
Limit of 6 tickets per Branch 9 member (Active, CCA & Retired)
and immediate family only.*



Watch the Christmas
Classic Cartoons
How the Grinch
Stole Christmas
&
Frosty the Snowman
on a movie theater screen.

Buffet Lunch
Zesty Queso Dip with
Fresh Tortilla Chips
BBQ Meatballs
Tator Tots
Pizza with
Assorted Toppings
Boneless Buffalo Wings with
Bleu Cheese Dressing
Soda and a Cash Bar

DEADLINE is:
Friday, December 2, 2016

*A fun day out with family
and friends!*

**Special Guest
SANTA!!**

Branch 9 Holiday Party Registration Form

Name: _____ Station: _____
Number of Guests: _____ Amount Paid: _____
Name of Guests (Must include ages of children): _____

*Return registration form and payment
(checks made out to Branch 9 Christmas Party) to:
Branch 9, 2408 Central Avenue NE, Minneapolis, MN 55418*

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