

VOLUME 74 No 4

Official Publication of Branch Nine, NALC

May 2022

OPEN HOUSE

Please join your Executive Board to celebrate
Branch 9's new home.

**5831 Cedar Lake Road
St. Louis Park, MN 55416
Sunday, June 5th, 2022
Noon - 4:00PM**

This will be a day of good food, family friendly
activities, door prizes and lots of fun for everyone!

Please RSVP by either phone 612.781.9858 or
e-mail Angie (angie@branch9nalc.com) by
Wednesday, May 25th.

**We are looking forward to showing
Branch 9's new permanent home to you!**

RETIREMENTS



Doug Dickhausen (Main Office) last punch with Steward Paul Kujawa. Best Wishes!

Scholarship Drawings

at the

May 24, 2022 GMM

**please submit your scholarship application to Branch 9 by May 24, 2022 or bring it to that night's GMM*

2022 Proposed By-Law Additions & Changes Results

ARTICLE II SECTION 3
PROPOSAL PASSED AMENDED TO BEGIN 2023, CHANGED TO:

(35%) of one month's dues, per year, per active and associate member shall be placed in the Convention Fund

ARTICLE II SECTION 4
PROPOSAL PASSED AMENDED TO BEGIN 2023, CHANGED TO:

(35%) of one month's dues, per year, per active and associate member shall be placed in a fund to be known as the Jerome J. Keating Branch 9 Building Corporation.

ARTICLE I SECTION 4
Proposal to move the meeting dates, failed.

NEW MEMBERS

- Maxwell Asiedu-Boison
- Christopher Brinkman
- Paul Fritscher
- Lily A Holker
- Madeline Mosel
- Jenneil Roberts
- Cody Stephen
- Colleen Stresemann
- Victoria Sullivan
- Michael Volk

In Memoriam

- Arthur Kujawa
- Andro Hiben
- Thomas Thorsen
- Douglas Buystedt

The following is a list of Paid Members of PAL 9 for April, 2022

Very Concerned Members

- Gerald Broman
- James Hamilton
- David Johnson
- Wesley Thomas

Members

- Bill Hostad
- Robert Masuda

Submitted by
Jim Fodstad
Treasurer PAL 9

Branch 9, NALC
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St. Louis Park, MN 55416

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Branch 9 Officers

President

Samantha Hartwig

Exec. Vice President

JoAnn Gilbaugh

Recording Secretary

Robb Petersburg

Treasurer

Barb Watczak

Financial Secretary

Stacey Ellingson

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Sergeant at Arms

Ronaele Bolden

Trustees

Christa Abraham
Scott Bultena
Joe Tiemann

Director of Retirees

Melia Derrick

NALC Health Benefits Rep.

Ken Jambois
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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 1st 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

In April, the Branch finally moved into our new office located at 5831 Cedar Lake Road in St. Louis Park. Sunday June 5th is the open house and we are looking forward to everyone coming over to check out the new building.

The NALC Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive is still on for the second Saturday in May; however, this year in Minneapolis and Saint



Paul it has become a donor drive. Second Harvest Heartland does not have the staffing to move the sheer volume of food from the physical donations we get from our customers. Please promote going to the NALC website at NALC.ORG, and click Stamp Out Hunger to find the donation page. You can select your donation by state, and the National NALC will match donations to local food banks that receive donations. Our hope is that in 2023 we will be able to return to the traditional Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive.

The maximum annual leave carryover amount for leave year 2023 is 520 hours. This was extended by agreement between the NALC and the USPS. Letter Carriers have the ability to roll over a maximum of 520 hours of annual leave into the next leave year. Before COVID the roll over amount was 440 years.

Now that Postal Reform has been signed into law by President Biden, we can start working on other legislation that will help carriers now and into the future. Bill H.R 4268 the Federal Retirement Fairness Act would allow non-career time to be credited toward retirement. There are several bills that the NALC is working on with our friends in Congress. All these bills require bipartisan support to pass, and we will need to educate our Congressional Representatives. The May Postal Record details the next step in getting letter carrier friendly legislation passed.

We are still dealing with carriers who get converted to career, and do not receive their uniform allotment. If you do not get your USPS credit card by the time your uniform anniversary date arrives you need to let your manager and your steward know about it. Too many carriers are telling us about not getting their uninform allotments, sometimes two years after they should have received it. When you get the USPS credit card in the mail for your uniforms it will come in a plain white unmarked envelope. Make sure to open all your mail, many carriers have unknowingly thrown the credit card into the garbage thinking it was a solicitation of some sort.

With the chilly Spring coming to an end, hopefully soon, it is time to start thinking about severe weather and working in the heat of the day. It is vital that when severe weather happens that you know in advance of a couple locations that you can use for shelter along your routes. Take the time to identify where to can go if you need to seek cover from severe weather. Every year there seems to be at least one



Samantha Hartwig

carrier who suffers from heat related illnesses. Please bring plenty of water with everyday and stay hydrated, especially when temperatures begin to rise. Listen to your body, if you feel sick, disoriented, stop sweating, that is time to stop delivering the mail, and notify your supervisor. Go into an air-conditioned building, or even return to the Post Office to cool down. The NIOSH Heat index app for smartphones, is a free app that can be utilized. The app gives you all the warning signs for heat exhaustion, and heatstroke. It also gives you warnings when the temperature outside is dangerous, and when to seek medical attention.

NALC National Vice President has stepped down from his position as of April 30th. Fred Rolando has appointed Region 1 RAA James Henry to fill the vacancy. We look forward to working with James.

In Solidarity,

Samantha



Rebuilding a Fighting Labor Movement Organize & Fight Back!

For decades working class peoples' living standards have been under attack, wages and benefits have been cut, and the cost of living has increased. Today, the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic are provoking a reckoning, with many workers viewing work as the struggle between our lives and safety or profits to big businesses. The Great Resignation is a clear expression of this frustration, but at the same time thousands of workers are taking inspiring steps to demand their rights.

This is why I brought forward motions in solidarity with Starbucks workers' organizing efforts at the January General Membership Meeting (GMM), and another resolution in support of the Minneapolis Federation of Teachers' (MFT) strike at the February GMM. Both resolutions passed with over 95% support.

The MFT struck for three weeks to fight for teachers' raises, and a starting pay of \$35k/year for Education Support Professionals (support staff), bold demands which garnered a 97% strike authorization. Over the past few decades teachers' pay has so lagged behind it's amounted to a pay cut. The strike ended after three weeks, and while MFT did not win every demand, there is incredible community support for workers going on strike for living wages, and their actions have set the stage in the fight to defend public education.

Solidarity is more than a slogan. It's crucial that the existing labor movement throw its efforts behind

unapologetic organizing in new industries. This can reinforce existing unions by expressing our weight in society, and encourage current union members to see the union as a fighting vehicle. Starbucks and Amazon are massive corporations that have successfully union-busted any attempt by workers to organize -- until now.

Unionization has its highest



support in decades and this is translating into an inspiring upsurge in the labor movement. Last Fall workers at two Starbucks stores in Buffalo, New York, voted to form unions, as Starbucks Workers United. This effort spread across the country, where now several more stores have won union elections despite a robust union-busting campaign by the multi-billion dollar corporation, and hundreds of more have filed for elections, including two in the Twin Cities.

As of this writing, Amazon workers won the first union election in

US history at the Staten Island Amazon distribution center in New York, an important step toward organizing the entire company, and fighting to unionize the entire delivery and logistics industry. At the same time the Teamsters union are preparing for possible strike action at UPS if they can't come to an agreement on a contract by September 2023. Unionizing Amazon, one of the

biggest corporations in the world, and winning a strong contract through a well-organized, nationwide strike at UPS will be monumental battles, and can test the way forward in rebuilding a fighting labor movement.

Members of NALC have a crucial role to play in this historic moment. We can pass resolutions in our branches and nationally to give support by showing up to actions, donating to strike and organizing funds, and offering our experiences as union

members to these workers. Victories and gains made in such struggles, by new and existing unions, can help us to fight for better wages, benefits, and conditions in our workplaces. Throughout history the strength of the labor movement was built by workers across different industries who stood together and fought to lift wages and conditions universally. This is the type of solidarity needed today.

Tyler Vasseur
Zone 4/54

(Photo: Tyler Vasseur)

Exec. Vice President's Report

For years I wrote articles as the Branch 9 scribe. It was a fun job, and I enjoyed sharing my viewpoint on many topics. In going through my articles, I came across this one, and thought it was worth a reprint. Two and a half years later, these words still apply. I've changed a few things, but it is mostly intact. Circumstances as they are with staffing issues, unbearable hours and forced work on our NS days, makes it easy to focus only on ourselves. I firmly believe that with concerted effort we can join together as a branch and practice supporting and holding each other up. So, without further ado, here's the article.

"There is no I in team". This statement is often followed by lament that today's world is all about "me". The sentiment is that people only care about themselves. When you peel back the layers and think about it, people have always been concerned about themselves. It's human nature. What has changed is the way many go about looking out for themselves. We've become a society of isolationists, hypersensitive about our belief

systems, disparaging anyone who dare believe something different from "me".

This mindset has trickled down to workplace attitudes. The focus has turned from doing our best day's work to concentrating on how others don't live up to our personal standards. Individuals feel empowered to judge who works harder, has better attendance or buddies up to management. They are vocal in their opinion about carriers who are runners, those who follow the contract and individuals who are viewed as lazy. Self-righteousness runs rampant. It's all about someone who isn't like "me". What's lost is the wisdom that everyone has a life-story that has formed who they are. Criticism and condemnation can't and won't change it. We don't know what is going on in our co-workers lives or what challenges they are facing that affect the way they react to our work environment. Isolation and resentment are not the answer. We must find common ground for our "me's". The ability to find tolerance and compromise for the betterment of everyone is the foundation of every union. We can't



JoAnn Gilbaugh

allow this basic principle to be undermined. We can co-exist without compromising personal beliefs. With determination we can find that commonality. It will take effort, and a conscious choice to change and to move beyond worrying only about "me".

We can't continue tearing each other down. Our mindset must return to the realization that we can look out for ourselves without disparaging others. We are all in this together. When the collective "me" works to look out for others, it becomes the collective "we". United we stand, divided we fall. Just as there is no I in team, there is no I in we.

In Solidarity,
Jo



Solidarity - Move in day with the Executive board (not all pictured) Nick Tiemann, Joe Tiemann, Ken Jambois, Barb Watzak, Joann Gilbaugh, Scott Bultena, Ronaele Bolden and the moving company.

Combined Federal Campaign Special Solicitation period

On Monday, April 18, 2022, the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) announced a special solicitation period as part of the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC). The CFC Special Solicitation opened on April 18 and will run through June 30.

This special solicitation is being conducted to give federal employees, including Postal Service employees, the opportunity to support charities serving the humanitarian and refugee crisis caused by the war in Ukraine. During the CFC Special Solicitation, employees may donate using the CFC Giving Mobile App or through the CFC Online Giving System. Pledges may be made through payroll deduction, a bank account, or via credit card. Employees who previously donated to a charity during the regular CFC campaign using payroll deduction may not increase the deduction during the special solicitation, so a new deduction would need to be set up. Employees should keep in mind the current number of payroll deductions is limited to three. Those who have reached this limit may want to consider using one of the other methods to make a donation. Employees may also volunteer their time in lieu of a cash donation. More information regarding the CFC and the special solicitation is available online at cfcgiving.opm.gov/welcome.

April 2022 cost-of-living adjustment memo

Contract COLA: Accumulated COLA is \$1,061 through April 2022

The projected accumulation toward the sixth regular COLA under the 2019-2023 National Agreement stood at \$1,061 annually in April following the release of the March 2022 Consumer Price Index.

On April 12, 2022, the Bureau of Labor Statistics announced that the CPI for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers (CPI-W, 1967=100) stood at 843.495 in March, 98.119 points above the base level of 745.376 in July 2019. The accumulated COLA through April stood at 51 cents per hour or \$1,061 annually.

The sixth COLA will be based on the increase in the CPI-W between the base index month and July 2022, less any previously calculated COLAs, and will be payable the second full pay period following the release of the July 2022 index. The five COLAs that have been calculated under the 2019-2023 National Agreement, totaling 194 cents per hour, are as follows: 1st COLA, 8 cents per hour (\$166 annually), 2nd COLA, 9 cents per hour (\$188 annually), 3rd COLA, 20 cents per hour (\$416 annually), the 4th COLA, 93 cents per hour (\$1,934 annually), and the fifth COLA, 64 cents per hour (\$1,331 annually).

2023 Retiree COLAs Projection: 5.5% as of April 2022

The 2023 COLAs for CSRS and FERS benefits are based on the increase in the average CPI-W between the 3rd quarter of 2021 (268.421) and the 3rd quarter of 2022 (TBA).

Based on the March 2022 CPI-W (1982-84) of 283.176 the 2023 CSRS and FERS COLAs are currently projected to be 5.5%. The 2023 retiree COLA calculation will be finalized in October 2022 with the release of the CPI-W for September 2022.

CSRS annuities receive full COLAs; COLAs for FERS annuities are payable for retirees 62 and older and may be reduced by up to one percentage point from the increase in the CPI.

2023 FECA COLA Projection: 3.4% as of April 2022

Based on the release of the March 2022 CPI-W (1982-84=100), the 2022 FECA COLA projection is 3.4%. The March 2022 CPI-W of 283.176 was 3.4% above the December 2021 base index (273.925). The 2023 FECA COLA calculation will be finalized when the December 2022 CPI-W is published during the month of January 2023.

FECA COLAs are applicable only in cases where death or disability occurred more than one year prior to the adjustment's effective date.

Customer Signature Capture Process

Many measures were taken to reduce health risks during the COVID-19 pandemic. One significant measure implemented was a temporary modification to mail handling procedures for mail requiring customer signatures. The change in our customer signature capture procedures due to the COVID-19 pandemic was implemented on March 19, 2020.

This talk supersedes the March 19, 2020, modification to the customer signature capture process. Effective immediately, all delivery personnel must capture customers' signatures for special services mail requiring a signature. Other residents and agents for businesses can sign unless delivery is restricted to the named recipient. Customers must sign and accept all special services mail if a signature is required. Employees can no longer perform the customer signature capture function for the recipient.

As a reference, Handbook M-41, section 122.22 states: "Deliver and obtain date, time of event, and signature receipts for registered, certified, Priority Mail Express, insured, and other special services mail. Use scanning device where appropriate."

Special Services requiring a signature are:

- Express Mail Service
- Signature Confirmation service
 - Certified Mail service
 - Registered Mail service
- Collect on Delivery (COD) mail
 - Inbound International Mail
 - Insured Mail > \$200
- Return Receipt for Merchandise
- Firm Sheets (containing any of these services)

Employees can only sign when a waiver of signature is clearly checked off by the sender for Express Mail and Return Receipt for Merchandise.

To capture signature on scanner:

- Select Scan Barcode from the "On Street menu"
- Scan signature confirmation barcode and select "Delivered"
- Enter First Initial & Last Name of Customer then press <Enter>
 - Have customer sign for the package
 - Remember BOTH the signature and address are required
- Ensure customer signs Return Receipts and other hard copy items

HQ Delivery Strategy and Policy April 2022

If no recipient is available, scan "Attempted" at delivery point and leave completed PS Form 3849. Endorse the mail piece and return it to the office.

How to request overtime or auxiliary assistance and complete a PS Form 3996, Carrier-Auxiliary Control

The morning routine of estimating your workload for the day is often difficult to do, even for experienced letter carriers. Whether you are just starting your career or are a more seasoned carrier, the rules remain the same when you believe that the route you are assigned to carry has more work than you can complete within eight hours, or you believe that you cannot complete all the work assigned to you for the day within your scheduled time. Below are the steps to take to notify management if this happens.

1. Verbally inform your manager if you don't think you can complete your assignment in eight hours.

Sections 131.41 and 131.42 of Handbook M-41, City Delivery Carriers Duties and Responsibilities, the USPS handbook that outlines the duties of a city letter carrier, require you to tell the manager when you cannot carry all the mail distributed to your route in eight hours or within your normal schedule. Once you have verbally informed management, the manager is required to tell you what he or she wants you to do. Follow the manager's instructions. If you still believe that you will not be able to finish your route in eight hours, proceed to Step 2.

2. Request PS Form 3996

The next step is to request a PS Form 3996 from your manager. Article 41.3.G of the National Agreement and Section 122.33 of Handbook M-39, Management of Delivery Services require the manager to provide you with a PS Form 3996 when you request one. Handbook M-39 is a guide for supervisors detailing their responsibilities when dealing with city letter carriers, but it often provides explanations to help city letter carriers.

No matter what your manager says to you, say the words, "I am requesting a 3996" and explain the reason(s) for your request. If you are denied the form, immediately request to see your shop steward. If your request to see your shop steward is denied, make sure that another carrier hears you say the words. Don't scream the words at the top of your lungs—just make sure someone other than you and your manager hears you.

After you have verbally informed your manager that you don't believe you can finish your route in eight hours, have made them aware that their instruction has not changed your belief, and have requested and been provided a PS Form 3996, proceed to Step 3.

3. Fill out the form completely

It is important that you fill out the form completely. In the "Reason For Use of Auxiliary" box, you must write down why you believe that you cannot complete your assignment in eight hours. If your belief is related to your mail volume or type of mail you have, you should write comments that are specific and not general as to why you are requesting overtime. Your reason also could be related to your street duties. Some examples: known road construction, weather-related issues, excessive accountable mail, etc. Comments like "heavy volume" or "route overburdened" aren't sufficient for this section.

Often, there are other circumstances that might add to (or be) the reason why you will need overtime or auxiliary assistance on a given day. Always list the circumstances that will prevent supervisor such as, "This is your demonstrated performance," and, "You are not making standards," are not legitimate and do not change the situation. Never let these comments get under your skin and stop you from requesting the assistance you

need. Remember, your job is to do the best you can.

Sometimes managers will tell you that you don't need the requested overtime or auxiliary assistance because of what DOIS projects for your route. The national parties have agreed that computer generated time projections are not the sole determinant of your daily workload. Nothing can replace the opinion of the professional letter carrier.

4. Keep your cool

Don't lose your cool. While this process can be frustrating, you will do nothing to help yourself by becoming angry. If your manager denies your request for overtime or assistance, tell them you will do your best. Then politely ask what they want you to do if you are not able to deliver all the mail by the time they want you back. Often, their answer will be something like, "I just told you what I want you to do," or "Deliver all the mail and be back in eight hours." Your manager has just put the ball back in your court and placed you in a situation where you can't honor their instructions.

5. Don't argue

There is no reason to argue with your manager at this point. The only thing you will accomplish by arguing with your manager is to become frustrated and angry. The smartest thing you can do is to just say, "OK, I'll do my best," and ask for a copy of your PS Form 3996. Remember, Article 41.3.G of the National Agreement and Section 122.33 of Handbook M-39 require managers to provide you with a copy if you request it.

Finish your office work and go to the street. Do the best you can. Take your breaks where you are supposed to. Take your lunch when and where you listed it on the PS Form 3996 you filled out.

6. Don't make decisions

Letter carriers get paid to deliver mail. Managers get paid to make decisions. If you realize that you will not be able to deliver all the mail and make it back to the office by the time the manager approved, you should do everything you can to put any further decisions in the manager's hands.

The best way to handle this situation is to call your supervisor, per local instructions. If you have no local instructions, try calling about two hours before the time you are scheduled (the time approved on PS Form 3996) to be back. Let your supervisor know where you are and how long you think it will take you to finish. Ask whether they want you to bring the mail back at the previously approved time or finish the route. Follow whatever instructions your supervisor or manager gives you. If the supervisor or manager refuses to tell you what to do with the rest of the mail, or if you can't finish your assigned duties in the amount of time initially specified by your supervisor, you should return to the office within the allotted time and ask for further instructions.

Note: Don't ever return mail to the office and leave it without getting instructions on what to do with the mail from a manager. Make a note of what instructions you were given and what time it was.

You should also complete a PS Form 3996 to track the amount of time you spend assisting or working on another route. If you are instructed to provide auxiliary assistance to another route, whether on "projected undertime" or for overtime, management should provide you with a PS Form 3996 indicating this additional work. There are times where you may be provided more than one 3996 to assist multiple routes.

United States Postal Service
Carrier - Auxiliary Control

A. Delivery Unit		B. Telephone		C. Date	
D. Carrier's Name and Route No.			E. Lunch Place and Time		
F. Indicate entire or portion of the case shelves covering mail as street auxiliary assistance					
1	2	3	4	5	6
G. Keys Required? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>					
H. Carfare Required? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>					
I. Accountable Mail? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>					
J. Reason For Use of Auxiliary					
K. Estimated Work		L. Management Action. Check and initial all appropriate actions.			
Hours	Minutes	Auxiliary Assistance		Hours	Minutes
		Approved	<input type="checkbox"/>	Approved	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Disapproved	<input type="checkbox"/>	Disapproved	<input type="checkbox"/>
M. Transportation (If drive-out, show parking location(s) on reverse)					
Transportation Mode to and from route:		Postal owned:	<input type="checkbox"/>	Drive-out:	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Contract:	<input type="checkbox"/>	Public:	<input type="checkbox"/>
N. Starts Delivery at:		* Collect mail from all collection boxes on your part of the route, unless instructed otherwise.			
Deliver		Collection boxes locations:			
		1			
		2			
		3			
		4			
		5			
		6			
O. Find Relays At:					
1		4			
2		5			
3		6			
P. Assistance Completed By (Carrier Name and regular route number if assigned):					
Office Time		Street Time			Total Auxiliary Time
Begin Time	Time Used	Begin Travel To	Begin Delivery	Begin Travel From	
				Travel To Delivery	
End Time		End Travel To	End Delivery	End Travel From Travel From Total Street	

PS Form 3996, November 1997

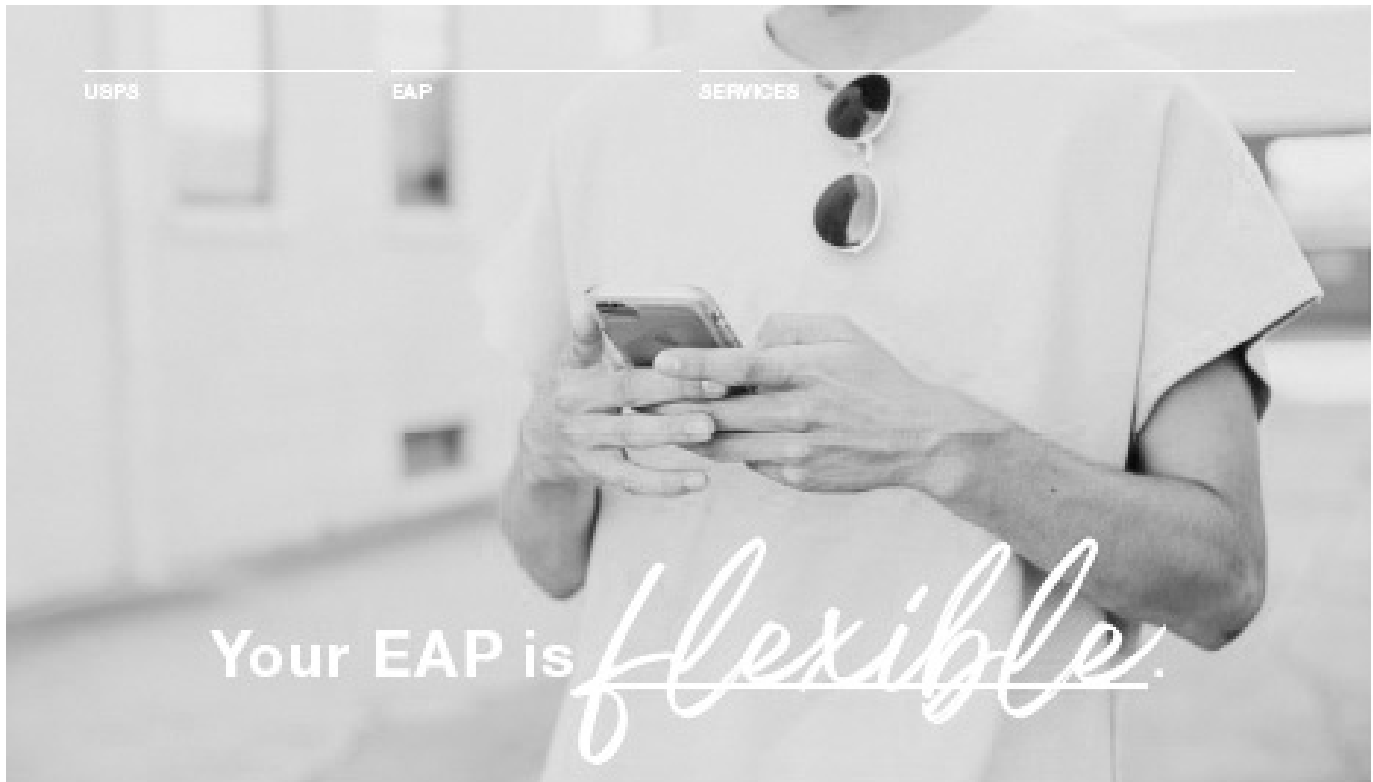
Make sure that you fill out the bottom of each PS Form 3996 showing both your travel and delivery times for whatever assistance you are carrying. This assistance is called many different things around the country. Some common phrases are pivot, split, kickoff, relay, handoff, trip, push, boost or bump. If you don't believe that you can complete the work in the amount of time authorized, you should notify your supervisor as soon as possible.

The 2019 Letter Carrier Resource Guide contains an example of a PS Form 3996 and complete instructions on how to properly fill it out. Section 28 of Handbook M-41 also explains the proper procedures for filling out the PS

Form 3996. You can access the Letter Carrier Resource Guide by visiting nalc.org/resourceguide.

These instructions and the above- listed advice will assist you anytime you need to fill out a PS Form 3996 and submit it to your supervisor. If you need more information regarding requesting overtime or auxiliary assistance, or with the completion of this form, please see a shop steward, NALC branch officer, on-the-job instructor (OJI) or mentor for further guidance.

Taken from the
Postal Record
January 2022



The USPS Employee Assistance Program offers a wide variety of modalities to all Postal employees and family members to provide support anywhere, anytime.

We aim to accommodate the needs of those we serve by offering flexible ways to connect. Licensed professionals are available to support Postal employees and family members in a variety of ways via a computer, tablet or smartphone. By removing location and scheduling barriers, employees have greater flexibility and more options when it comes to seeking assistance. The following services are offered for your convenience:

- **Face-to-face Counseling**
- **Video Counseling**
- **Telephonic Counseling**
- **Web-based Tools** - Our website offers online tools and information to encourage self-help on topics ranging from emotional wellbeing and relationships to resilience and personal growth. Visit EAP4YOU.com to explore resources, find our mobile app or connect with a professional.

Your EAP is here for you around the clock. Reach out to us 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Our website – EAP4YOU.com – offers a wealth of information, tools and resources available any time and professionals are ready to take your call at:

800-327-4968 (800-EAP-4YOU) or TTY: 877-492-7341.



CALL US TODAY: 800-327-4968
800-EAP-4YOU | TTY: 877-492-7341
WWW.EAP4YOU.COM

Director of Retirees Report

Medicare (dis)Advantage plans? Medicare Advantage are health plans provided by private insurance companies, paid for by federal funding, subscriber premiums and co-payments. These for-profit insurers in 2020 received \$12 billion in overpayments from the government. How? By coding enrollees as sicker than they are. Members of Congress have tried to argue that Medicare Advantage plans are a way to provide full Medicare benefits for less money than what it costs the government to provide those benefits through traditional Medicare. However, traditional Medicare remains more cost-effective. Medicare Advantage has failed to achieve savings in any year since its inception.

Despite the March report’s findings of overpayments, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) announced earlier in April that Medicare Advantage (MA) plans will see an 8.5% increase on average in 2023—one of the largest payment increases to MA insurers in the program’s history. This has been characterized as a bonanza of taxpayer cash. Several Congress members wrote a letter urging CMS Administrator Chiquita Brooks-LaSure to “reconsider the decision to finalize policies that will increase payments for insurers in the Medicare Advantage program at

the cost of taxpayers, traditional Medicare beneficiaries, and the Medicare [Hospital Insurance] Trust Fund.”

“The record profit margins of health insurers participating in the Medicare Advantage program in 2021 indicate that insurance companies are generating significant revenue from excess Medicare Advantage payments. In 2021, Anthem reported profits of \$6.1 billion—more than double its profits from a decade ago,” the lawmakers wrote. “Anthem’s explosive profit growth was driven by taxpayer dollars, which accounted for 61% of Anthem’s \$137 billion in revenues.” “Instead of failing to curb overpayments to Medicare Advantage plans for 2023,” they continued, “we encourage CMS to recoup these overpayments and reduce them over time to extend the life of the HI Trust Fund, ensure parity in payment between Medicare Advantage and fee-for-service Medicare, and improve and equalize benefits for all Medicare beneficiaries.”

As it is now, 17% of the Medicare Advantage taxpayer funded income is used to pay the CEOs, buy TV advertising (Joe Namath needs the income), have stock buy backs and marketing expense of putting their name on stadiums. Traditional Medicare uses 1.1% of



Melia Derrick

its funds towards administrative uses. Private insurers are in the game to make a profit, not provide you with medical care. Ousting the for-profit model would save over \$200 billion annually. Enough money to expand dental and eye care into the Medicare program. Want better healthcare at a lower price? Medicare for All.

Stay Tuned In

Melia Derrick



Br. 9 Retired Letter Carrier
 Kerry Herdine
 Home: 952.854.2655
 Cell: 612.805.8407

AME’S UNIFORMS

OUR BUSINESS IS MAKING YOU LOOK GOOD!

We offer “Life of the Garment” guarantee.
 If fixable we will repair your uniform at no cost to you.
 Take waist in/out and change hem length

Ame’s Uniforms are a UNION PREFERRED vendor

Branch Nine News
5831 Cedar Lake Road South
St. Louis Park, MN 55416

Change Service Requested

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

Stay informed by:

- *Join Veterans Group <https://www.nalc.org/member-benefits/join-the-nalc-veterans-group>
- * Branch9nalc.com (website)
- * "like" our Branch 9 Facebook Page

Contribute to the PAC
The Letter Carrier Political Fund is the anchor for NALC's legislative and political activities.



nalc.org/government-affairs/political-activity

Branch 9 Calendar

May 14
FOOD DRIVE

May 24
General Membership Meeting
7:00PM
In person and ZOOM
Crystal VFW, Crystal, MN

May 30
MEMORIAL DAY
HOLIDAY

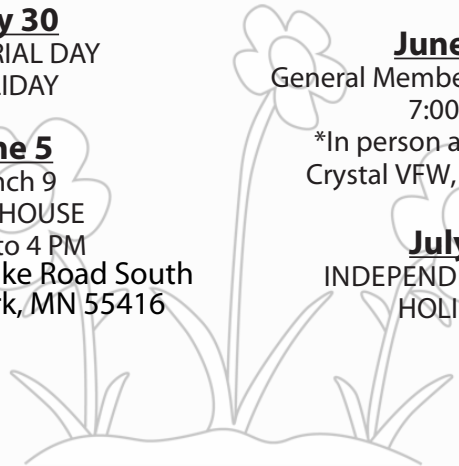
June 5
Branch 9
OPEN HOUSE
Noon to 4 PM
5831 Cedar Lake Road South
St. Louis Park, MN 55416

June 14
Steward Meeting
7:00PM
In person and ZOOM
Crystal VFW, Crystal, MN

June 19
JUNETEENTH
HOLIDAY

June 28
General Membership Meeting
7:00PM
In person and ZOOM
Crystal VFW, Crystal, MN

July 4
INDEPENDENCE DAY
HOLIDAY



Northside Retiree Breakfast
1st Tuesday of the Month
9:30AM
Elsie's
729 Marshall St. NE, Minneapolis

N Suburban Retiree Breakfast
1st Friday of the Month
8:30AM
Denny's Restaurant
9020 Quaday Avenue NE, Otsego

Fridley Retiree Lunch
2nd Tuesday of the Month
11:30 AM
Route 47 Pub and Grub
7820 University Ave