



VOLUME 75 No 10

Official Publication of Branch Nine, NALC

December 2023

ENOUGH IS ENOUGH!

Join Us!
Mpls. Main Post Office
100 S. 1st. Street
Sunday, Jan. 7
@ 11 a.m.

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Mpls. Main Post Office
100 S. 1st. Street
Sunday, Jan. 7
@ 11 a.m.

SAFE DELIVERY

NOTICE TO ALL BRANCH 9 MEMBERS

Any proposed amendments to the 2024 Branch 9 By-Laws must be presented in writing to the Recording Secretary no later than the February 27, 2024 General Membership Mtg.

RETIREMENTS



Diane Lockwood (Elk River)
Last Punch with EVP Joe Tiemann
Happy Retirement!



Richard Hanley (Diamond Lake)
Last Punch with Steward
Chris Pennock
Congratulations!



Jon Gaffney (Lost Lake)
Last Day with EVP Joe Tiemann
Best Wishes!



Glen Peterson (r)(Brooklyn Park)
Last Punch with Steward
Aaron McPheeters
Happy Retirement!

NEW MEMBERS

Amber Alexander
Adam Christian
Laurel Evans
Donovan Fitzgarald
Jessica Hamilton
Benjamin Palmborg
Austin Pecore
Eric Petty
Allen Price
Mark Senn
Paul Severson

In Memoriam

David Shaw



Al Gulden donated his personal items of Branch 9 history to Branch 9's history room. He donated an original 1970 Carrier Strike sign. Plus, a sign used on his flatbed pickup truck when they drove down to Austin, MN in support of the Meat Packer Strike of '85-'86. Please consider donating items to help rebuild our Branch 9's history room. Thanks Brother Gulden!

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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

On November 18th and 19th two Letter Carriers in the Minneapolis installation were robbed at gun point while working on their routes. The good news is they are both physically unharmed.

In both of these cases this incident needs to be treated as a traumatic injury, they were not harmed physically but it is possible that they will be harmed mentally and emotionally. In situations like this, it is not uncommon for the person affected to have post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

We have reached out to both carriers to offer support and assistance. If this situation occurs to you, please do the following:

1. Take a deep breath and try to stay as calm as possible. Give the person whatever they are asking for, mail, keys, cellphone, purse, wallet, etc. Your safety is more important than anything material.

2. When it is safe to do so, call 911 to report the robbery. Try to remember details like what the person was wearing, their height, weight, etc. the more details you give to the police the better chance they will have to find and arrest the person.

3. Call your supervisor and your Steward and Safety Captain to report the incident. DO NOT FINISH YOUR ROUTE. Seek medical attention immediately.

4. If you have not already done so, register for ecomp at www.ecomp.dol.gov once you are registered, log in and file a CA-1, traumatic Injury.

5. Stewards will need to make sure management completes the accident report, checks the box for continuation of pay and gives the affected carrier a CA-16 which

is an authorization for medical treatment form.

6. Follow your doctor's instructions and do not report back to work until they instruct you to do so.

7. Call the Branch Office to talk to the President or Executive Vice President.

If you have not already done so, please register for ecomp at www.ecomp.dol.gov. You can register for the account prior to filing a claim. Registering is a proactive way of taking care of the necessary steps in case down the road you need to file any type of claim.

Every employer has the obligation to protect its employees on the job. The Postal Service is not protecting us, The Postal Inspection Service is not protecting us, and the U.S. Department of justice is not doing its job prosecuting these crimes. It is time for us to take it to the street and demand safer working conditions. Management claims that safety is the most important thing, but their actions speak louder than their words. Management has cancelled the Minneapolis safety meetings for the month of November and December. This was a clear message that making the numbers is more important than our safety. Please join us on Sunday January 7th at 11am to rally for the Postal Service to take action to stop the assaults on letter carriers. ENOUGH IS ENOUGH!! Please see the flyer in this issue and tell your co-workers, friends, and family to come out in support of letter carriers. I look forward to seeing you there!



Scott Bultena

Year in review

We have accomplished a lot this year. There are now four stations that have the right to refuse exceeding contractual work hour limits. Most stations in the Installation are adhering to the contractual limits now because management sees the writing on the wall that we are winning these grievances.

At the beginning of the year, we had over 300 grievances. We are now at around 40. We are settling them quickly and submitting them to Step B quickly when we reach an impasse.

We continue to be good stewards with the Branches money and are projected to be under budget for the year. I hope you all come to the GMM on December 12th when we will propose the 2024 budget for membership approval.

Union dues for 2023 were \$34.02 per pay period. Union dues for 2024 will be \$34.12 per pay period.

I hope all of you have a very wonderful holiday season! I look forward to a happy, healthy, and productive year in 2024!

In Solidarity, Scott

**ENOUGH IS
ENOUGH!**

**SAFE
DELIVERY**

**PROTECT OUR
LETTER CARRIERS
RALLY**

**Main Post Office
100 S. 1st Street
Minneapolis, MN 55401
Sunday, Jan. 7
@ 11 a.m.**

STOP THE ASSAULTS ON LETTER CARRIERS



Exec. Vice President's Report

Hello Branch 9,

Grievance backlog: Over the past few months, we have focused on clearing the Formal A grievance backlog. The Branch had well over 300 cases in May to be met on, settled, or sent to step B. It has been a tedious process, but I am happy to tell you that the backlog has been cleared. This means when the steward files a grievance at Informal A and sends it up to Formal A, it will be settled or sent to Step B within 7 days. I would like to say a special thanks to the Formal A team which includes Ronaele Bolden, Chris Pennock, and Will Mathes. Thank you for all the hard work that you have done for the membership. Also, thank you to all the stewards for your hard work on filing the grievances. This was a major accomplishment for our entire team.

NALC Rap session: The 2023 NALC Rap session was held in New Orleans on November 18th and 19th. There were over one thousand Union members in attendance. On Saturday there were 4 workshops that ranged from Branch administration, safety and health, city delivery, mutual benefit association, retirement, the NALC health plan, politics & legislation, the 10-year delivery for America plan, and staff updates. The workshops were informative and we took a lot away from them.

Renfroe outlined four new initiatives the NALC is working on and I have them highlighted below.

1. An emergency response team of letter carriers to help NALC members when they're dealing with trauma, not to serve as counselors, but rather to offer peer-to-peer support in situations

like suicide awareness, suicide prevention, mental health issues or substance abuse.

2. A standing committee for diversity issues. "Everyone in our union deserves and should have the opportunity to learn and to be involved, no matter who they are, no matter where they're from," he said. "And if we do that, and we make conscious efforts to ensure that as we move forward, we give all those who express interest that opportunity, it will allow us to continue to do something we've done for a long time, but I think even move to the next level, of embracing and utilizing the strength that we have through our diversity."

3. A new online learning program to complement the in-person training that NALC does on a local, regional, and national level.

4. A mentoring program for women in the union. "The idea behind this is to structure a program that for any of our members that face challenges just because of the fact that they are a woman, they have someone they can reach out to help them navigate that challenge," Brian Renfroe, National President.

The Rap session on Sunday opened with our National President Brian Renfroe giving us an update on the contract negotiations. I'm pretty sure everyone in the room was waiting and hoping for the news that they had reached a deal. But unfortunately, this was not the case. He did, however, announce that the NALC is preparing for interest Arbitration. Although they announced they are preparing for arbitration they will still be ready to negotiate along the way while the arbitrators are being selected. Here is a few things of what the



Joseph Tiemann

union is bargaining for: single pay table, higher starting wage, eliminate non career, update to article 8 including new ODL sign ups, work up to 12 hours but have your day off, or work 8 hours per day but able to work your nonscheduled day, a revamping of the uniform program because the prices have gotten out of control, and carrier safety.

The safety portion really hit home. To hear that there have been over 2,000 assaults on letter carriers across the country over the last 3 years was shocking. Then, while the Rap session was going on, two Branch 9 carriers were robbed. This is completely unacceptable. NALC has been holding rallies across the country to raise awareness on this issue as the top priority is to keep our carriers safe. Branch 9 has scheduled an "Enough is Enough" rally on January 7th and we would like to have as much support as possible to shine a light on this issue. I hope to see you all there.

In solidarity,
Joseph Tiemann

OIG Integrity Tests

During the Holiday Season we need to remind you that Postal employees are 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. Each year the OIG is again planting gift cards to test Letter Carriers.

The OIG are 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.

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.

The rules are the rules and below is language from the Code of Federal Regulations 2635.204(a): **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.

What is a Prohibited Gift?

In general, a postal employee is prohibited from directly or indirectly soliciting or accepting a gift from a prohibited source (someone that does business with the USPS or would like to do so) or given because of the employee's official position. But, the Standards of Ethical Conduct do provide various exemptions and exceptions to the gift rule. For instance, modest food refreshments such as coffee and donuts do not qualify as "gifts" and are fine to accept. Also, non-cash items worth \$20 or less can be accepted as long as the annual value of gifts from the same source does not exceed \$50.

What Should I Do If I Receive a Prohibited Gift?

If the item has a market value of more than \$20 or if you have accepted other gifts from the same donor over the last year that in aggregate are worth more than \$50, you can return the item with a note explaining why you cannot accept the gift. This is generally the best option as it should serve as a deterrent for future gifts from the same donor.

Questions? Talk with your Steward or contact the Branch Office

Suicide Awareness

Suicide is a serious public health problem that can have lasting harmful effects on individuals, families, and communities. The EAP is in an ongoing effort to promote awareness, to suggest ways to discuss suicide in a supportive fashion and to provide guidance and resources for those at risk.

Need to talk to someone now?
EAP professionals are available at 800-327-4968 (800-EAP-4YOU)
TTY: 877-492-7341

Or dial 988 to reach the Suicide and Crisis Lifeline

Director of Retirees Report

Home Depot billionaire, Mr. Langmore, recently cried that Social Security is a wasteful program. He bemoans his \$3,500 monthly benefit. "That's outrageous. I shouldn't get a nickel." Someone should tell Mr. Langone that he doesn't have to collect. But he has put his support (and money) with Nikki Haley's idea that perhaps you too should not receive Social Security. Or not until you're at least 69 or 70. And any COLAs should be lowered by calculating increases using the chained CPI which reflects the rise in the cheaper option of similar goods when prices jump (we'll all be shopping at Dollar General). Medicare Advantage expansion?? Sure, fewer choices, less care run by private insurers. What could go wrong?

These ideas are all to save wealthy people from paying their fair share in taxes. In 2017 the richest among us got a sizeable permanent tax cut. Most of us received a temporary tax break which, no surprise, ends in 2025. The result of this tax debacle is a ballooning national debt. The cuts have added \$10 trillion to the national debt since the Bush tax cuts were enacted in 2001 and Trump's in 2017. Of course, some people want to "solve" the problem

by cutting benefits, not restoring taxes on the rich. As Director of Retirees, I have discussed adverse changes to our three-legged retirement stool. Social Security can be sustained by scrapping the cap (the tax ends when your income exceeds \$160,200). Medicare needs to be expanded as it is more efficient, and Medicare Advantage needs to disappear. COLAs for S.S. could be based on a CPI-E which includes drug costs. The recently introduced H.R. 866 would be a welcome addition for retirees. Under the Equal COLA Act, the FERS COLA calculation would be the same as the COLA for Social Security benefits and retirement benefits under the older Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS). Currently, FERS retirees lose 1% on the COLA when inflation exceeds 2%. My point is simple: be careful who gets your vote.

And with that I leave you. Well, kind of. I am stepping down as Director of Retirees as the year ends. The last few years as director have been an honor. This branch has some of the most amazing people I have ever known. I can't and won't just "leave." You guys are just too much fun. I will be moving over to PAL9 as treasurer. This election year will be extremely



Melia Derrick

important. Hopefully, the branch will support candidates who can forward our issues. With that, I can announce that Darrell Maus will take over my job. This position should be a breeze for him. Support Darrell as you supported me, and we will all continue to thrive in this branch.

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

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SAFE DELIVERY

PROTECT OUR LETTER CARRIERS



Detroit, MI Branch 1 members at its rally on Nov. 6

PROTECT YOURSELF

Every day on the job brings new interactions and situations with customers and the public.

The most important delivery of the day is always at the end of your route. Even though you are likely to know your route inside and out, be aware of people and circumstances that could put you at risk.

You are your most important delivery!

LEARN THE FACTS

- Non-employees are responsible for the vast majority of workplace homicides.
- Most workplace homicides occur during a robbery.
- Treat suspicious people seriously.
- Try to remain within sight of as many people as possible and avoid secluded spots.
- Once an attack or robbery begins, the criminal crosses a psychological threshold.
- A criminal may resort to violence or even deadly force to demonstrate important

If you notice a suspicious person, treat it seriously, even if you don't see a weapon or feel like you're in immediate danger.

YOU ARE YOUR MOST IMPORTANT DELIVERY



Dressing for Cold Weather – Think Warm

With cold temperatures and snow arriving throughout many parts of the country, dressing properly is an important solution to keeping our Postal employees safe this winter. Dressing for cold weather is not difficult, but careful planning helps.

Some important things to consider:

LAYERING

Choose your clothing carefully. Layering is the best way to keep warm. Add a first layer consisting of a light fabric that will wick sweat away from your body. Avoid pure cotton, linen, or other similar materials, because these fabrics retain moisture and can cause you to become colder. In addition, layer a knit sweater or sweatshirt over the top of the first layer. Finally, add your coat or jacket as the top layer. Not only will the multiple layers keep you warm, but if temperatures increase, you can easily remove a layer to remain comfortable.

PROTECT FACE AND EXTREMITIES

Your face and extremities, such as your hands and feet are the most vulnerable when exposed to cold and windy temperatures. It is important to protect your face and extremities from the cold and wind. Wrap a scarf around your neck and pull it over your mouth and nose to guard against the cold air. Additionally, wearing a winter hat can protect your ears and head before going outside, and lastly, keep your hands warm with gloves or mittens.

STAY DRY

When planning how to dress for cold weather, staying dry should be a top priority. It is usually a good idea to get a coat that has a waterproof or water-resistant outside layer, especially if you will be exposed to rain, sleet, hail or snow. Additionally, waterproof or water-resistant shoes or boots will help keep your feet dry on wet days. If your clothes get wet, it is important that you remove and replace them to avoid frostbite.

So remember...Dress appropriately for the weather, and as always, if you feel that you are experiencing weather-related issues, notify your supervisor immediately



Branch 9's Annual

**ICE FISHING ON LAKE MILLE LACS
TWIN PINES RESORT & RESTAURANT**

Located 2 hours north of the Twin Cities on U.S. HWY 169

For information call 320-692-4413 or visit www.twinpinesmillelacs.com. Also check out their facebook page to see what a good time and how rewarding fishing can be!



NOON SUNDAY TO NOON MONDAY

JANUARY 14 AND 15

\$60 / ADULT

\$55 / CHILDREN UNDER 14



This is a Branch 9 sponsored event for our members.

The limit for adult non-member guests per member is 2.

please call Ken Jambois at 763-370-1392 if you have any questions.

The Branch will be hosting a chicken and rib buffet dinner at the Twin Pines Resort on Sunday, January 14th from 3:00 - 8:00PM. This dinner is included in the price of the icehouse.

Several Types of Houses Available:

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

Each house includes propane heat, lights, table/chairs, covered pad for bunks, carpeted floors. Cook stoves are available in the larger houses. **Check in time is 12:00PM (Noon).**

The below registration form must be returned to the Branch no later than January 11, 2024.

Name: _____ Station: _____ Active Retired
(Please print clearly)

Type of Icehouse: _____

of Guests: _____ # of Children under 14: _____ Ages: _____

TOTAL\$: _____ (Checks payable to Branch 9) Cell #: _____
(Required)

Branch 9, NALC
5831 Cedar Lake Road South
St. Louis Park, MN 55416

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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

December 12

Combined Meeting
Steward Meeting
6:00 PM
General Membership Meeting
7:00PM
Crystal VFW, Crystal, MN

December 25

Christmas Day
Holiday

January 1

New Years Day
Holiday

January 7

Carrier Safety Rally
Mpls. Main Post Office
100 S. 1st. Street
@ 11 a.m.

January 9

Steward Meeting
7:00 PM
Crystal VFW, Crystal, MN

January 14-15

Ice Fishing
Twin Pines Resort
Lake Mille Lacs
(see flyer)

January 15

Martin Luther King Jr. Day
Holiday

January 23

General Membership Meeting
7:00PM
Crystal VFW, Crystal, MN

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