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January/February 2024

The rally was organized by the NALC headquarters, Mpls. Branch 9, MSALC, St. Paul Branch and the Hopkins Branch. The NALC has mobilized postal workers in big cities across the U.S. since August to fight against a rise in attacks against mail carriers. This comes after two letter carriers in Edina and Brooklyn Center were held at gunpoint for postal equipment in November.

Many carriers and postal workers were there and several Union leaders attended, from our National Pres. Brian Renfroe (*pic. top right*), our EVP Joe Tiemann (*pic. bottom right*), NBA Patrick Johnson, MN Afl-CIO State Pres. Bernie Burnham, MLRF Pres. Chelsie Glaubitz, St.Paul LRF Pres. Kera Peterson, and a representative of US House Rep. Angie Craig read a statement on her behalf.

Since 2020, there have been over 2,000 attacks against carriers across the country and a majority of them involved a gun or weapon. (*More pics on page 4.*)

## Enough is Enough! Rally January 7, 2023



## 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.



Kevin Rood (Edina) Last Punch Enjoy Retirement!



Cynthia Elftmann (Columbia Heights) Last Punch with Steward Nate Serie *Congratulations!* 



Myron Kile (Richfield) Last Punch with Steward Joe Rian Happy Retirement!



Scott Mclaughlin (Loring) Last Punch with Steward Andrew Hagen Enjoy Retirement!



Richard Langsdorf (Richfield) Last Punch with Steward Joe Rian Happy Retirement!

### **NEW MEMBERS**

Daniel Anderson Zachary Anderson Shahriar Arnob **Kyle Bennett** Andrew Black Elizabeth Brennan **Belinda Burrell** Kamari Cobbins Jonguil Collins Joseph Coluccy Alesia D'Aagostino Elizabeth Demyanov Violet Englebert Rashid Farah Charles Fish Valiscia Hall Daniel Hastert Justin Hauser Seth Holine Timothy Kallevig Jeffery Kurtz Jon Karner Kristina LaFrenier Samantha Lindgren Elsa Mendez Ouintero Ian Miller Sakeenah Morris Adam Mwangala Alex O'Donnell John Parker **Milo Rochester** Dylan Rupprecht Matthew Sage Juan Carlos Sanchez-Lopez Stephanie Schneider Michael Seyoum Steve Slingerland Sydni Thomas Connor Wadman **Thomas Whitney** Mecca Young

<u>In Memoriam</u>

John Hanna

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

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### **Branch 9 Officers**

President Scott Bultena

Exec. Vice President Joseph Tiemann

Recording Secretary Robb Petersburg

> <u>Treasurer</u> Christa Abraham

Financial Secretary Stacey Ellingson

Editor Jeremy Rothstein branch9news@branch9nalc.com

> Sergeant at Arms Will Mathes

<u>Trustees</u> Nicole Goodin Latasha McCaleb Nick Tiemann

Director of Retirees Darrell Maus

NALC Health Benefits Rep. Ken Jambois HBR: (763) 370-1392

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**

Happy new year! 2023 has come and gone. The saying is true, each year seems to go faster than the year before! We have accomplished much in 2023 that we should all be proud of. Last year we had a three hundred case backlog of grievances at Formal A. With hard work and dedication, we have caught up on grievances and are turning them around in the contractual seven days at Formal A. We currently have around 30 open cases. This was a goal that I had from the time that I took over as President and I am happy that we have accomplished this. It is vitally important to me because it is important to the members. When a member is wronged, they need to be made whole as quickly as contractually possible.

We now have four stations that have received pre-arb and arbitration decisions giving letter carriers the right to refuse working over contractual work hour limits. Management has seen the writing on the wall and at most stations now they are abiding by the workhour limits that are spelled out in the National Agreement. Also, the postal service has seen an increase in the number of new employees. This is a good thing for all of us that routes are being filled and the demand on carriers at most stations has decreased.

There are many letter carriers on the rolls right now that have five years or less seniority. We are going to have a new employee meeting at the branch office on Thursday, March 14th at 7pm. In that meeting we will discuss letter carrier's rights, the grievance procedure, work related injuries, vacation bidding and other topics. The goal is to connect with our newer members, listen to their concerns, and provide them with the support and information that they need to navigate though their career as a letter carrier.

There is important legislation that affects the lives of letter carriers. Please contact your senator and house representative to ask them to support the legislation that affects the lives of our retirees and active carriers. For more detailed information check out the nalc. org website and click on the government affairs tab at the top of the page.

Federal Retirement Fairness Act (H.R. 5995) Many federal employees, including Postal Service employees, begin their federal/postal service in non-career positions before transitioning to career status. These employees, including letter carriers who were employed as casuals, transitional employees (TEs) or city carrier assistants (CCAs), do not receive retirement credit for their time spent in these positions. Because years employed as a non-career employee are not creditable under the Federal **Employees Retirement System** (FERS), employees who started in non-career positions and transition to career status must work longer to reach the required vears of employment to receive full retirement benefits. The Federal Retirement Fairness Act would modify what is considered creditable federal civilian service under FERS. It would allow these employees to make catch-up retirement contributions for time spent as non-career employees after Dec. 31, 1988, making such time creditable service under the FERS, and for other purposes. This legislation would allow letter carriers and other affected employees the opportunity to purchase retirement credit for the time they spent in these noncareer positions, providing greater retirement security.



Scott Bultena

**Repeal Social Security's WEP** and GPO provisions (H.R. 82/S. 597) Many retired letter carriers worked both for the Postal Service and for private sector employers over their working years, paying into both the federal pension programs (CSRS or FERS for their federal service) and into Social Security (for their private sector employment). FERS retirees receive full benefits from both their federal pension plan and Social Security for their federal service since they paid into both systems while employed by the Postal Service. Although retired CSRS letter carriers naturally don't expect to receive Social Security benefits for their service for the Postal Service (for which they paid no FICA tax), most are shocked to find out that their Social Security benefits for their private sector work—or for the private sector work of their spouses—are usually reduced by provisions in the Social Security law enacted several decades ago. These provisions the Windfall Benefit Reduction (WEP) and the Government Pension Offset (GPO)-were adopted by Congress in the late 1970s and early 1980s to address the false perception that federal retirees were somehow "double dipping." In fact, these provisions are grossly unfair.

Pres. Report cont'd on page 6

January/February 2024



# **Exec. Vice President's Report**

#### Happy new year!

I came into this role as Executive Vice President about 7 months ago and have learned a lot. I am aware that there is a lot more to learn in this role but have enjoyed helping as many people as I can thus far. It has been great to get out to all the stations during visits to meet a lot of members. I look forward to meeting more this year.

#### **Steward Meetings**

The monthly steward board meetings are great opportunities to conduct trainings and discuss workroom floor issues during our station issue section. It seems like USPS makes up "new rules" frequently. The steward board meetings allow us to open the talk up to share and discuss how to approach these "new rules." (Spoiler alert, a lot of the new procedures are not contractual). The stewards have been doing a fantastic job filing grievances and now that the backlog of grievances is caught up, we are getting a lot of Step B decisions back quickly. As a branch we had almost 1500 grievances in 2023. That is a lot, but it just shows how often management is willing to violate the contract. Overall, staffing has improved. Not at the rate we all would hope, but it is improving. After talking to several stewards and members, it is quite a contrast from the peak season in 2022/2023. With the combination of more letter carriers and cooperating weather, it has made the 2023/2024 peak season more bearable for most stations.

#### **NALC Region 7 Training Seminar**

The 45th Annual NALC Region 7 Training Seminar is coming up March 18th - 21st, 2024 in Minneapolis. There are many classes offering a variety of topics. It is a great way to learn more about the union and see what is happening on a regional level. You also have the opportunity to meet many other union activists from around the region. Reach out to the branch for more information to sign up.

#### Enough is Enough

In Minneapolis there were two armed robberies against two of our carriers in the middle of November. To raise awareness and support for this unfortunately growing national issue, we decided to hold an Enough is Enough rally on January 7th. There have been over 2000 attacks on letter carriers nationwide since 2020. This is unacceptable. The rally was held outside the main downtown post office. It was extremely cold out, but we had a great turnout with around 120 letter carriers from our branch 9, branch 28 (St Paul), branch 2942 (Hopkins) as well as other unions to show their support. Thank you to everyone who was able to attend and spread awareness of this unfortunate issue. There was a lot of media in attendance to cover the story. The rally made big news, which is great for exposure and awareness. It was even on the front page of the Star Tribune. It ran on many of the local news stations and local newspapers and I feel like increased awareness was accomplished. The media is still running stories two weeks after the rally, which is great.

I would like to thank our rally speakers: Manon Wojack, Patrick Johnson, and Brian Renfroe. Manon, a longtime carrier from Lowry station, spoke about what it is like to deliver mail with the new concern of being a potential target. Our National Business Agent, Patrick Johnson, spoke about how the region is being affected by these targeted attacks. Our National President, Brian Renfroe, came out to show support for our carriers here locally as well as on the national level. He did an excellent job explaining when this trend started, why we are being targeted, and put pressure on the right people for stricter punishments to those who commit these crimes against letter carriers. One big announcement: two days before the rally, the postal inspectors were able to catch who they believe committed



Joseph Tiemann

both robberies here locally. This is great news to know this guy is off the street and, if proven guilty, hopefully will receive the highest punishment to deter any future attacks and put letter carriers back in the off-limits category.

#### 2024

It is important to hear from you. What I mean is if you have questions, ask them. Please reach out to your local shop stewards. If needed, you can always call up the branch or send an email. The more we all know, the better union we will be. Also, be sure to use the resources available. There is a lot of information on our Branch9nalc. com and the national page, NALC. ORG. I hope that in 2024 we continue to see more members getting involved with union activities. Every fourth Tuesday of the month we hold our general membership meeting (GMM) at 7:00 p.m. in the basement of the Crystal VFW. There is a zoom option available so feel free to reach out to the branch if you want to be added to the email list. Our entertainment chair, Ken Jambois, is putting in a lot of hard work seeking out and securing union events. In April, the branch will be having the annual bowla-thon. This is a big fundraiser for our charity Muscular Dystrophy Association (MDA). We hope to see you at an event or a GMM.

In Solidarity, Joseph Tiemann

### Pres. Report cont'd from page 6

Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) The WEP (enacted in 1982) reduces the Social Security benefits of retired public employees (federal, state, and local) who also worked in Social Security-covered private sector employment—if they receive a government annuity for their non-Social Security covered government employment. This provision hits CSRS retirees directly (but not FERS retirees). In all, nearly two million Americans have been adversely affected by the WEP provision— a number that will grow as more CSRS employees retire.

Door delivery (H. Res. 376) More than 35 million American businesses and households receive mail directly to their doors six and increasingly, seven days a week. The ability to receive packages, letters, bills, and medications at your door is a service that is highly preferred by the public and vital to the economic success of not only the U.S. Postal Service (USPS), but also the broader \$1.58 trillion mailing industry that employs more than 7.3 million Americans. Customers prefer door delivery. The alternative to receiving paychecks, bills, medications, and packages regularly and reliably at your door is for them to be delivered to centrally located cluster boxes. But customers clearly prefer door delivery, according to surveys by the USPS Office of Inspector General (OIG) -- over two thirds of respondents said that they would be willing to pay more money to maintain delivery to their doors.

I look forward to working with all of you this year. I know that together we are Union Strong, and we will be able to face all challenges that may come our way in this new year!

In Solidarity, Scott

## **Medicare Special Enrollment Period (SEP)**

Make sure to mark your calendar for a Special Enrollment Period (SEP) that will be offered to most Postal Service annuitants and their eligible family members.

Starting in **April 2024**, individuals who are eligible for Medicare Part A and are not currently participating in Medicare Part B, will have a six month opportunity to select Medicare part B without incurring a late enrollment penalty. As part of the Postal Reform Act the USPS will pay the late enrollment penalty.

Keep in mind, if you were previously eligible for Medicare part B and chose not to enroll, but now have experience some regrets, this one time SEP is significant to your health and finances. For more information go to *www.opm.gov.* If you have questions, please call me.

> Ken Jambois BRANCH 9, NALC Health Benefits rep 763-370-1392

## **TIAREAP extension until May 31**

NALC and Postal Service agree on TIAREAP extension until May 31 Pursuant to the memorandum of understanding MOU Re: Extension of the Technology Integrated Alternate Route Evaluation and Adjustment Process 2022-2023 (M-01998), NALC and the Postal Service have agreed to an extension of the joint route evaluation and adjustment process until May 31, 2024. The Technology Integrated Alternate Route Evaluation and Adjustment Process (TIAREAP), outlined in M-01982, is an agreed upon process by the national parties that utilizes teams of NALC and USPS representatives to evaluate and adjust city delivery routes.

In the extension, the national parties also agreed to add an additional opt in period to include delivery zones for evaluation and adjustment under this process. That opt in period will be conducted from January 8, 2024, through January 12, 2024. Approved requests for special inspections pursuant to Handbook M-39, Chapter 2, Section 271 will continue to be forwarded to the TIAREAP district lead team (DLT) for scheduling of evaluation and adjustment under the joint process.

Both MOUs can be found in NALC's Materials Reference System

### 45th Annual NALC Region 7 Training Seminar

**Brothers and Sisters:** 

The Region 7 office will be conducting its 45th Annual Regional Training Seminar from Monday, March 18th through Thursday, March 21st, 2024.

## Branch 9 NALC Part-Time Flexibles, City Carrier Assistants and New Career Employees Meeting

This meeting provides Part-Time Flexibles (PTFs), City Carrier Assistants (CCAs) and New Career Employees a great opportunity to learn more about your rights at work and your future with the Postal Service.

# THURSDAY, March 14<sup>TH</sup>, 2024 7:00PM

## BRANCH 9 OFFICE 5831 Cedar Lake Road South St. Louis Park, MN 55416

- Hold-Downs vs. Bidding

- Conversion to Career
- Using your Annual Leave
- What is happening to the Postal Service?
  - Moving from Station to Station
    - Use of Personal Vehicle

- Other topics will be addressed via a *Question and Answer*" format.

This meeting will be led by President Scott Bultena, Executive VP Joseph Tiemann and the E-Board will also be in attendance.

Remember, if you don't know your rights, you have none!

# 2024 Red and Gold Retiree Banquet

# Sunday, May 5, 2024

Delta Hotels by Marriott Minneapolis Northeast 1330 Industrial Blvd NE, Minneapolis, MN 55413

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Acourt St Iside Cemetery	Mailuris	<u>TIMES:</u> Registration: Noon - 1:00PM Social Hour: 12:30 - 1:15PM Lunch: 1:15 - 3:30PM			
Holiday Stationstores UPS Employee East Parking Lot Broadway St NE The Registration Fee for Retirees is refundable upon arrival.* *Stewards this event will count as your attendance to the May GMM*					
2024 Retiree Banquet Registration Form Name:					
Name (first and last) of Guest (s):					
New 65 Year Honoree	☐ New 60 Year	Honoree 🛛 New 55 Year Honoree			
New 50 Year Honoree	Retired				
Active	Steward	Amount Enclosed:			
I would like a ride. Phone #:		I am willing to be a chauffeur. Please call 612.781.9858 or email angie@branch9nalc.com to volunteer.			

Please return registration form NO LATER than May 1, 2024 to: Branch 9 NALC, 5831 Cedar Lake Road, St. Louis Park, MN 55416.

### 2024 RED AND GOLD BANQUET HONOREES

65 YEAR RETIREES (JOINED IN 1959)

> Clarence C Gervais David L Hempel Clair F Mattson Harold L Tilbury

60 YEAR RETIREE (JOINED IN 1964)

> Robert L LaMere Wesley C Meade Daniel R Vanyo

#### 55 YEAR RETIREES (JOINED IN 1969)

Gary E Baker Carolyn M Bren John G Burmis John S Dombrowski Mary P Johnson James R Kane Cara L Linehan Gerald W Marinelli Roland G Matt Dwayne W Nienaber John R Obrestad Robert H Perschmann, Jr. David L Peterson Roger E Preiss Harley R Ring Robert D Schmitz Victor L Schwich Ronald Sholl Richard L Simonson James R Stanley Raymond O Tranby Bohn L Wanamaker Donna J Wiecks Stephen L Williams

#### **50 YEAR RETIREES (JOINED IN 1974)**

Neal G Bacon Burton M Barber Timothy A Bodin William T Eason Scott M Fischer Peter C Geschwind Allen M Reddy Charles A Stauffer John F Urness Winter Blues? It Could Be SAD If winter gets you down, you may have a form of depression called SAD. That's short for seasonal affective disorder.

SAD brings on mood changes during fall and winter, when there is less sunlight, and symptoms typically ease up in the spring. But the American Psychiatric Association says SAD goes beyond the "winter blues." Its symptoms can range from mild to severe and interfere with every day life.

Those symptoms can include feeling sad or depressed; loss of interest or pleasure in activities you once enjoyed; sleeping much more but not feeling rested; feeling worthless or guilty; and difficulty thinking, concentrating or making decisions. And, familiar to many, SAD can also bring on a craving for carbohydrates and other appetite changes.

The good news is there are several treatments for SAD, including antidepressant medications, talk therapy and light therapy.

For many, increased exposure to sunlight can also help. This might involve spending time outside or arranging your home or office to give you exposure to outside light during the day.

Getting regular exercise, eating a healthy diet, getting enough sleep and staying connected (such as volunteering, participating in group activities and getting together with friends and family) can also help combat SAD.

If you have symptoms of SAD, see a medical professional. If you feel your depression is severe or if you are experiencing suicidal thoughts, immediately contact a doctor, seek help at the closest emergency room, or call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 800-273-8255.



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Jerome J. Keating Local Branch 9, National Association of Letter Carriers

## PAL 9 (Political Action League)

	Joel Carter President	Melia Derrick Treasurer	Rodney Anderson Secretary
E L		BOARD MEMBERS	
	Bob Baird Lenny Larson Mike Zagaros	Connie Beissel Joe Tiemann	Scott Bultena Barry Weiner

January 2024

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

*"It's that time of year again!"* **Time to ask for your financial support to Branch 9's Political Action Fund (PAL 9)**. Our ability to participate fully in political campaigns helps ensure that letter carrier issues and concerns are heard when Congress decides the future of the Postal Service. Active carriers, it's time to take a bigger stand to protect the future of your job. Supporting PAL is a step in the right direction.

2024 will be a busy and impactful year in politics. Each of Minnesota's eight US House districts will be in play, as well as US Senator Amy Klobuchar. Your financial gifts will help us continue supporting candidates that are worker-friendly and vote to maintain and strengthen the US Postal Service.

2023 was a year of change for PAL 9. Treasurer Jim Fodstad retired at year's end. We thank him for his service with integrity. Melia Derrick moved from our advisory board to take over as Treasurer. Long-time former Treasurer and mainspring of PAL 9, Ron Lawrence, passed away early in 2023. We will miss his presence and wise council.

Bills of special interest to carriers before the US House are: <u>H.R. 82</u>, to eliminate the Windfall Elimination Provision/Government Pension Offset. The <u>WEP/GPO</u> penalizes employees that have faithfully paid into more than one government pension program. <u>H.R. 5995</u>, The Retirement Fairness Act. This bill would allow employees who have non-career government service (think CCA or TE) to "buy back" service time to increase their Postal Pension. H.R. 866, the Equal COLA Act, which would increase the FERS pension COLA to the Civil Service level. You can learn more about these bills at **nalc.com**, under the "*Government Affairs*" menu.

Joe Carter m	Ilia Derrick	Hodrey Diderson
Joel Carter	Melia Derrick	Rodney Anderson
President, PAL 9	Treasurer, PAL 9	Secretary, PAL 9
Name:		
Address:		
	(Street and Apartment Number	r)
Address 2:		
	(City, State and Zip)	
\$25.00 (Annual Dues)		<u>Clip &amp; Mail To:</u>
		Melia Derrick
Very Concerned Membership (\$50.00 or More)		3723 Brookdale Circle North
		Brooklyn Park, MN 55443-2868
Active Carrier (Station	)	Retired Carrier
	® GCC/IBT-152-C	

# The following is a list of Paid Members for PAL 9 For January 2024

### **Very Concerned Members**

Rodney Anderson, Robert Baird, James Johnson, Jeff Sherman, Ronald Davis, Scott Bultena, Sonia Stark, William Halos, Robert Hoffman, Russell Flaten, Frederick Johnston, James Fodstad, Joe Tiemann, Mary Hargreaves, Roger Johnson, Donald Holthus, Kieran Hughes, David Wallentiny, Terrence O'Neill, Daniel Loppnow, Joel Carter, Ronald Moore, Gregory Bedor, Daniel Molitor, Steven Petersen, Jeffery Stanko.

### <u>Members</u>

Ray Tranby, John Burmis, Greg Wallin, Deb Frank, Kathleen Johnson, Katherine Bolton, Gregg Holmes, Jon Frick, Stanley Mackcow, Arnold Johnson, Dale Schmitz, Pauline Pepper, Richard Rimer Jr., David Wyzos, Thomas Holten, Charles Friend, Donald Carlson, Alexis Wheeler, Dennis Johnston, Robert Dondelinger, Wayne Kelash, David Peterson, Michael Gravenish, Larry Chlebeck, Robert Logelin, Gerald Schraber, James Hill, Ronald Sumstad, Curtis Britz, Gary Svidron, Doug O'Driscoll, Carl Walsten, Joe Pasiowitz, Teri Koch, Linda Stipe.



Branch Nine News 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**

February 13 Steward Meeting 7:00 PM Crystal VFW, Crystal, MN

### February 19

President's Day Holiday

**February 27** General Membership Meeting 7:00PM Crystal VFW, Crystal, MN

March 12 Steward Meeting 7:00 PM Crystal VFW, Crystal, MN March 1 PTF, CCA, New Career Emp. Mtg. 7:00 PM Branch 9 Office 5831 Cedar Lake Road South St. Louis Park, MN 55416

> March 20 Cribbage Tournament 10:00 AM St. Paul Branch Office (see flyer)

March 18 -21 The 45th Annual NALC Region 7 Training Seminar

<u>March 26</u> 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