

VOLUME 75 No 9

Official Publication of Branch Nine, NALC

November 2023

Critical Incident Response EAP4YOU.com

At times in life a crisis may occur and the USPS EAP will be there to help employees through it. It may be the death of a coworker or loved one, a natural disaster or any trauma that may affect the person deeply. When it affects the person's ability to cope effectively, the EAP will be there to help guide the person back to a "new normal."

> A critical incident can be any abnormal or traumatic event. Events may range in severity but each often has the potential to impact the workplace and stress employees beyond their normal coping levels. Examples of critical incidents include natural disasters such as hurricanes, tornadoes

and fires - and other events

such as suicides, robberies,

organizational restructuring.

assaults, accidents or

The caring response can come in several forms: Individual consultations and counseling, Group meetings, Presentations on how to recover from trauma or tragedy, Referrals to the EAP counselors and consultants, Psychological First Aid

Without delay your new EAP will be there for you and your coworkérs 24 hours a day, 7 days per weék, 365 days per year. If a tragedy or trauma strikes, the USPS EAP is just a phone call away to help support, listen, guide and begin the healing and recovery process.

While it is necessary to quickly deal with the physical consequences of the event, it's also important to address the emotional impacts.

A CIR response offered by the EAP includes a variety of services aimed at reducing the traumatic effects of an incident to help restore a sense of normalcy to employees and the workplace. Group interventions provided by an EAP professional can help employees process the event and their reactions as well as identify those who may need more individualized assistance.

While it is necessary to quickly deal with the physical consequences of the event, it is also important to recognize and address the emotional impacts. If left unresolved, some individuals may not only struggle personally but their work performance, productivity and attendance may suffer as well.

By contacting the EAP after a critical incident, you are able to actively assist your employees in beginning the process of recovery. As a manager who may also experience impact from the event, remember that EAP resources are available to you.

In the event of an incident reach out to the EAP for assistance. We are here for you around the clock.



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

RETIREMENTS



Joel Smith (r) (*Coon Rapids*), Last Punch with Steward Andy Graham Happy Retirement!



Randy Sainio (r) (*Golden Valley*), Last Punch with Steward Dave Mash *Congratulations!*



Pat Martin (r) (Brooklyn Park), Last Punch with Steward Jeremy Larson Best Wishes!



Carolyn Osbourne (r) (Osseo), Last Punch with Steward Adam Minnick Happy Retirement!

NEW MEMBERS

Madison Allen John Barton Erica Foote Jonathan Garcia **Blake Huffman Ryan Holman** Emiliano Izquierdo Fernando Javana-Saldivar Sara Johnson Teresa Nelson Stephanie Robinson Mary Sandbo Michelle Schlie Wyatt Scott **Roberto Sicairos Erik Spafford** Julia Tibbetts Jason Vecchiarelli **Ella Whiting Timothy Whittaker** Marley Wolfe



Wendy O'Brien (r) (*Normandale*). receives 35 year NALC member pin with Br. 9 Pres. Scott Bultena



Dave Lalonde (I) (*Lowry*), receives 25 year NALC member pin with Br. 9 Pres. Scott Bultena

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

Voice: (612) 781-9858 Fax: (612) 781-9849 Website: <u>branch9nalc.com</u>

Branch 9 Officers

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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

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Director of Retirees Melia Derrick

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

Thank you, Veterans!

November is a time when we celebrate Veteran's Day. My grandfather Vern served our country in Normandy, Northern France, Rhineland, and Central Europe. He was awarded the European-African-Middle Eastern Theater Ribbon, four battle stars and the good conduct medal. My father-in-law, Leon, served in Vietnam. He does not talk much about his service, which is ok, I respect that. I am sure he went through a lot that he would like to forget. I am very proud and have a deep respect for my Grandpa and for my Father-in-Law. I also am thankful for every Letter Carrier active, retired and those who have passed who serve and have served this great country of ours. Thank you for your service!! Without your sacrifice we would not have the freedoms that we enjoy today. It is hard to express in words how much this means to me. I found this poem online at poemsource.com. This poem is a great expression of the gratitude all service members are owed.

The Best on Earth: A Veteran's Day Tribute

If someone has done military service, They earn the title "veteran," and more; They earn our deep respect and admiration; That they are special no one can ignore.

They sacrificed the comforts we enjoy; The list is long of all the things they gave. Our veterans are extraordinary people; They're loyal, dedicated, true and brave.

When terror and invasion were real threats, They showed us they could handle any storm. We owe our freedoms and our very lives To our veterans, who served in uniform.

Our veterans should be celebrities; They're exceptional; no other group compares. We're grateful for the many things they've done; They're always in our hearts and in our prayers.

We owe our veterans support and friendship; Let no one ever question what they're worth. These men and women served us and our country, Our veterans--the very best on earth.

By Joanna Fuchs

Thanksgiving

November is also the time that we celebrate Thanksgiving. All of us active carriers are thankful that we get 2 extra days off in November. Thanksgiving is a time we get to spend time with our families and loved ones, eat lots of good food and maybe even watch a football game. :) I want to take this opportunity to say thank you, first and foremost, to God, my family, and friends. I consider all of you reading this article my friends. That may sound sappy, and you may not feel the same way as I do, but nevertheless, that is how I feel about you. I hope you all



Scott Bultena

have a wonderful, safe, and happy Veteran's Day and Thanksgiving Day!

In Solidarity, Scott

VETERAN'S DAY

We honor and thank the members who have served and those members who are currently serving.

"As we express our gratitude, we must never forget that the highest appreciation is not to utter words, but to live by them."

-John Fitzgerald Kennedy

	Carrier Checklist tic Injury (CA-1)			
Name of Carrier			Date of Injury	
Was the Injury caused by a specific ever (If yes complete CA-1 in ECOMP and follow	nt one (1) work shift? v instructions below)	Yes	No	
Report Injury immediately and info Workers' Compensation Claim (OW		want to f	file a	
Injury Reported to:	Name of Supervisor	D	ate Reported	
 Manager or Supervisor Email address <u>Create ECOMP Account then file CA</u> <u>www.ECOMP.DOL.GOV</u> File CA-1 in ECOMP within 30 ca Select Continuation of Pay (COP 3-day waiting period before or A/L the first 3 days of C If you Miss 14 days or more to COP. District: Area: Request the following forms from management of the first of the	-1 in ECOMP. llendar days of injury.) e COP begins to be paid OP. re you can get the first 3 nagement not found ir	days of le	ave changed and take to	
Provider Search online: https://owcpr CA-16 signed by management to be valid. • Authorizes payment of medical				
(CA-16 must be supplied to injured empl hours of verbal approval from managem to see an MD or DO)	loyee within 4 hours of the	traumatic i	niurv or 48	
Must see a qualified physician, which an considered qualified under OWCP unless	MD or a DO. A Physician the medical is counter	n's Assista signed by	nt (PA) is not MD or DO.	
 CA-17 (Duty Status Report must be supplied with left side completed by managen Have your medical provider complete 	nent)	<u> </u>		

Initial medical report must be provided within 10 days to OWCP, or COP will not be paid to injured employee.

- Can be uploaded to your case in ECOMP.
- Your Medical provider MUST be given your OWCP Claim number so they can submit bills to OWCP for payment.

Follow the restrictions of your doctor 24 hours a day/7-days a week

Exec. Vice President's Report

Winter is coming. As we all know, Minnesota's weather can be nice, but can also be harsh. Beyond all the challenges we face as letter carriers, weather can make the biggest difference in our daily routines. As the seasons change, we go from wet leaves and fallen branches, to snowy, icy roads and walkways. We also face daylight savings time which is another big challenge that comes with this season. This challenge means less daylight while delivering routes and more time delivering in the dark. Snow and ice combined with less daylight and the increase in mail/package volume will lead us to working longer days. In a perfect world we would love to see no accidents or injuries while out delivering, but the reality is that there will be accidents and injuries this winter season.

It is already a challenging time when someone gets injured, and I hope these next steps will help with the process. In this article, I am going to cover traumatic injuries (CA-1). All carriers are encouraged to set up an ECOMP account, even if you have not sustained an injury. It is important to be familiar with ECOMP and ready if you do have an on-thejob injury. ECOMP is the best way you can file a claim for OWCP. To register for ECOMP you must go to WWW.ECOMP.DOL.GOV. The interface is very user friendly. Once you have an account with ECOMP, this will be where you make a claim, track the status of your claim, ECOMP will send updates in real time, and track bills. Now that we have covered ECOMP, let go through what to do if you suffer a traumatic injury on the clock.

Stay calm, take a moment to note where you are, what happened, and what time the injury took place. Immediately notify your

supervisor of the accident. Remember who you informed and tell them you want to file a worker's comp claim (OWCP). You will be required to have the email address of the supervisor or station manager you reported the injury to when filing a claim in ECOMP. Management must inform any employee that is injured on the job of their right to file a claim. This is a requirement of management explained in the ELM (Employee Labor Relations Manual) 544.11. A CA-16 (Authorization for Examination and/or treatment) can only be obtained from management and they must sign it. You will also request a CA-17 (Duty Status Report) from your supervisor. Then seek medical treatment. Carriers have the right to choose their own doctor. See and be treated by the doctor of your choice as soon as possible. Bring your CA-16 and CA-17 with you to your doctor. Make sure you see an MD (medical doctor) or a DO (Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine). Write a statement of the events that led up to your injury and what occurred immediately after. It is important to be incredibly detailed about the when, where, and how it happened.

Now it is time to file your claim. Log into your ECOMP account then click on "New Claim." Follow the instructions to file a CA-1 Claim for traumatic injury. To submit a claim, you will need to know your supervisor's email address. Do not let management fill out your CA-1. Request COP (continuation of pay), you will have to use your own leave for the first 3 days of COP. If you miss 14 days or more, you qualify to have the first 3 days changed to COP. COP is not payable if a claim is filed more than 30 days from the date of the injury.



Joseph Tiemann

After you have seen a MD, or a DO and they have either filled out the CA-17 or have written your restrictions, then turn them into your supervisor. You do not need to give local management any other medical documentation. If you have a medical note from a nurse practitioner, make sure it is countersigned by a MD or a DO. Keep copies of all medical documentation for your own records. Once you have your office of workers compensation program (OWCP) file/claim #, then write the number on any or all documents.

The Postal Service is required to make every effort to find you work within your medical restriction. The OWCP process can be confusing at times. The most important thing is to get started in the right direction from the beginning. This will make the entire process easier. If you have any questions, reach out to your union steward, or call the branch office. You can also email our OWCP representative Ben Reed at OWCP@Branch9NALC.com.

> Stay safe. In solidarity, Joseph Tiemann

Letter Carrier Political Fund

Hello Brothers and Sisters, I was hoping to have more of a structured article but I'm waiting to hear back from a couple people. I'll start off with the Founders Day dinner that was on Oct. 14th. First, I would like to thank the PAL 9 committee for sponsoring a table at the dinner. Allowing letter carriers to bring issues to our political leaders is an important part of our union. It was incredible to have the opportunity to talk to a handful of political leaders from our state. I was able to talk to Governor Walz, Senator Amy Klobachar and the head of the state DFL Ken Martin about some of the issues letter carriers endure.

That brings me to another item I'd like to highlight. H.R 4268 (Federal Retirement Fairness Act) was reintroduced into this session for U.S House of Representatives. Thanks to Rep Kilmar out of WA who introduced it originally and the 100 cosponsors that have signed on. We as members of Branch 9 have our work cut out for us. Only one Rep. (Angie Craig)



Founders Day Dinner Pictured from left to right: Joel Carter, Lenny Larson, Susan Becker, Cathy Jones, Connie Beissel, Mike Zagaros, LaTasha McCaleb, Andrew Hagen

> from Minnesota had signed on as of 10/31. We need to be active with this bill so we all can have the opportunity to buy back our time from service as non career carriers. I personally have about 18 months as non career. I've heard stories of 5 or more years of non career service. That's crazy! Let's all do our part and encourage our U.S Reps to sign on to this important bill. You can go to the Take Action page on our NALC website and send an email to the

Representatives.

Additionally , I'm excited to announce that Anthoney Mitchell

who is the Assistant to the President for Legislative and Political Organizing will be joining us for our November GMM. He will help promote the Letter Carrier Political Fund and answer any question about our political agenda for the union. Lastly, there is no open season to donate

to the Letter Carrier Political Fund. I am more than happy to help you sign up anytime of the year. You can do a one time contribution online or

in a check. You can set up an allotment online over the year. If you are writing a check please include your name AND the branch number on the memo line of the check. The important thing is giving something so we can get congress to help us in the capital. I hope everyone has a great Thanksgiving and we'll see you at the next GMM November 28th.

> Andrew Hagan, Letter Carrier Political Fund Coordinator



Above and Beyond Award

Congratulations to Angie Anderson (Anoka) for receiving the Branch 9 Above and Beyond Award. Angie makes egg rolls every month to help raise money for MDA. She's been doing this for many years. I don't think that there's anyone else who shows such dedication to provide an item for the MDA 50/50 drawing every month at our GMM. Plus, we benefit in our office almost every Saturday. She makes and sells egg rolls in our office. Way to go Lil Sis!!

Stacey Ellingson Anoka Station

(L) Pictured is Scott Bultena presenting Angie with the Above and Beyond Award at the recent GMM.

Director of Retirees Report

The chaos in the House of Representatives continues as the new speaker, Mike Johnson, takes over. By now, sitting on the couch eating popcorn to watch this mess has lost its appeal. A last hour continuing resolution saved the day and cost McCarthy his speaker role. Mr. Johnson has forwarded his first bill that would fund Israel's war effort while simultaneously cutting IRS funds. A money losing idea since less funds for them means less tax collections. It costs the IRS 29 cents to collect \$100 which is extremely effective. The nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office projects this would raise the deficit by \$12.5 billion. But wait! There's more chaos.

Speaker Johnson has introduced an old, but evil concept of a closed-door commission to investigate Social Security. He is already on record supporting to cut trillions of dollars from Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid. Past proposals he endorsed have included raising the age to receive Social Security to 69, replacing Medicare with vouchers which the recipient can use to buy private insurance plans. This commission would be labeled as a "debt commission." But remember, Social Security is separately funded and not part of the national debt. Its survival has no business being part of a "debt commission" agenda.

Medicare has worked efficiently with low overhead, meaning more money for actual health care. Vouchers would most likely benefit the CEOs of the private insurance companies.

Social Security Works has condemned this commission idea, and the White House has labeled it a "death panel" for Social Security. If the GOP wants to lower the deficit, rescinding the generous 2017 tax cut to corporations and the wealthy would be a great place to start. That was a \$1.5 trillion give away that had no significant return for the money. If they want to save Social Security, scrapping the cap would do that.



One last Open Season item. Blue Cross Blue Shield sent notice to its FEHB members that they will be enrolled in a Medicare Part D plan (for drug coverage) unless they opt out. Personally, I don't appreciate having to actively do something to



Melia Derrick

not receive a supposed "benefit." The official letter from OPM states "OPM has determined that the prescription drug coverage offered by plans participating in the FEHB are comparable to Medicare Part D prescription drug coverage thus you do not need to enroll in Medicare Part D and pay extra for prescription drug benefits. If you decide to enroll in Medicare Part D later, you will not have to pay a penalty for late enrollment as long as you keep your FEHB coverage." There. Clear as mud? BCBS offers a 10-page brochure titled "Get to know the FEP Medicare Prescription Drug Program" available online. Please, check out the information and make an informed decision.

Stay Tuned In,

Melia Derrick



AME'S UNIFORMS OUR BUSINESS IS MAKING YOU LOOK GOOD!

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



NALC High Option Health Plan-Best Value and Coverage

The NALC Health Benefit Plan is a union plan. It's an extension of our union. All the employees that work at the NALC Health Benefits headquarters are union employees. Located in Ashburn VA. There are over 300 employees at your service when you are enrolled in the health plan.

Some of the new changes for the upcoming year 2024-expanded hearing aid benefit, expanded foot orthotics benefit, annual skin, care screening, annual A1c test, expended, infertility treatment, expended gender, affirmation services and added vaccine availability through our vaccine network.

If you are NALC high option member you can schedule a vaccine for the flu, Covid or RSV at no charge at your local CVS pharmacy. These vaccines are covered under the plan.

There are many wellness plans included in the high option plan. Telehealth (available doctor 24/7 on the app.) Hinge health, heart health, real appeal-weight loss, nicotine, dependency, mental health support, help with your pregnancy. Another good feature of the NALC high option plan is if you have a workers compensation claim and the workers compensation claim is not being paid-the NALC plan will step in and pay your bills for you until your claim has been approved. No other insurance plan out there will do this for you.

So, the rates for the NALC high option plan are biweekly active employees self pays \$109.41, high option self plus one pays \$255.86 biweekly and high option self and family pays \$221.79 biweekly. The retirees pay \$237.05 a month for high option self, high options self plus one \$554. 36 per month and high options self and family pays \$480.54 per month. These premiums are very competitive among all the FEHB (federal employees health benefits) plans.

You must be a NALC union member to sign up for the NALC high option plan. When signing up for the NALC high option plan there are codes to use to sign up. 321 is self only high option plan, 322-self and family high option plan and 323-self +1 high option plan.

To compare health benefit rates, go to opm.gov. There you can compare up to four rates at once and you'll



see that the NALC plan has a very good premium. And many benefits that other plans don't have.

For active carriers to sign up for the NALC high option plan go to http:// www.Liteblue.usps.gov or call shared services-877-477-3273. For retirees go to a OPM site. http://www.retireefehb. opm.gov/annuitant/home/default or call open season express at 888-332-9798. For more information call the retirement center at 888-767-6789(TTY: 800-878-5707)

Remember open season starts on November 13 and closes on December 11,2023.

Don't hesitate sign up early.

Ken Jambois NALC health benefit rep BRANCH 9 763-370-1392

Minneapolis Carriers - 2024 "Once-a-Month Bidding" Calendar

10 Day Bid Period: Starting on Wednesday, Ending on Friday

Vacancy Announcement OPENING Date	Vacancy Announcement CLOSING Date	
Wednesday, December 6, 2023	Friday, December 15, 2023	
Wednesday, January 3, 2024	Friday, January 12, 2024	
Wednesday, January 31, 2024	Friday, February 9, 2024	
Wednesday, February 28, 2024	Friday, March 8, 2024	
Wednesday, March 27, 2024	Friday, April 5, 2024	
Wednesday, April 24, 2024	Friday, May 3, 2024	
Wednesday, May 22, 2024	Friday, May 31, 2024	
Wednesday, June 19, 2024	Friday, June 28, 2024	
Wednesday, July 17, 2024	Friday, July 26, 2024	
Wednesday, August 14, 2024	Friday, August 23, 2024	
Wednesday, September 11, 2024	Friday, September 20, 2024	
Wednesday, October 9, 2024	Friday, October 18, 2024	
Wednesday, November 6, 2024	Friday, November 15, 2024	
Wednesday, December 4, 2024	Friday, December 13, 2024	

To place a bid, use the toll-free phone bidding line:

1-877-477-3273, **O**ption 2

November 2023



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 <u>www.twinpinesmillelacs.com</u>. Also check out their facebook page to see what a good time and how rewarding fishing can be!



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.

		Active 🖵	Retired 🗆
# of Children under 14:	Ages:		
(Checks payable to Branch 9)	Cell #:		
	# of Children under 14:		# print clearly) # of Children under 14: Ages:

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

Branch 9 Calendar

November 23 Thanksgiving Day Holiday

November 26 Happy Holidays Party Noon to 4:00PM Crystal VFW, Crystal, MN

November 28 General Membership Meeting 7:00PM Crystal VFW, Crystal, MN

December 12 Steward Meeting 7:00 PM Crystal VFW, Crystal, MN December 25 Christmas Day Holiday

December 26 General Membership Meeting 7:00PM Crystal VFW, Crystal, MN

> January 1 New Years Day Holiday

January 9 Steward Meeting 7:00 PM Crystal VFW, Crystal, MN

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

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