

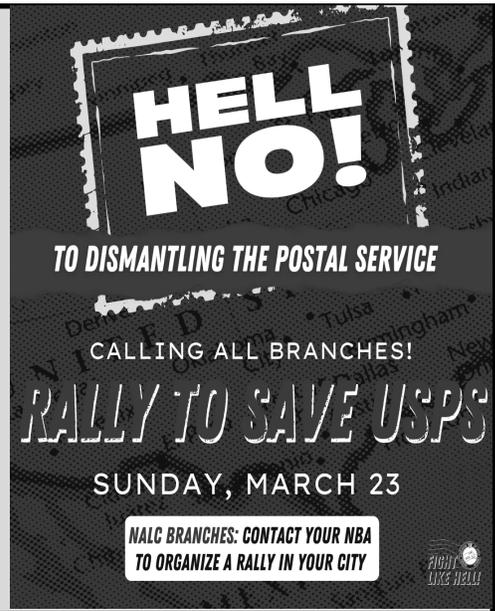


VOLUME 77 No 7

Official Publication of Branch Nine, NALC

August 2025

USPS Celebrates 250th Anniversary: How do we make it another 250?



July 25, 2025 marked the 250th anniversary of the founding of the United States Post Office. This event occurred at a momentous time in US history, a year before the Declaration of Independence, and the founding of the US as an independent republic, and the first country to throw off the shackles of colonial rule by Great Britain.

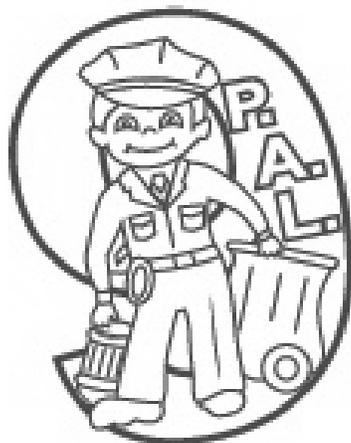
To celebrate, letter carriers across the country were given a 250th anniversary pin from management. Many carriers have displayed the pin on their uniform, proud to be part of a long history of service to the American public. Many other carriers have asked the question on the workroom floor, and online, "What is there to be proud about working at USPS?" Rightfully angry about being overworked, underpaid, and pushed around by management.

With threats of privatization coming from the White House (PMG David Steiner recently came out opposed to privatization, but hinted at potential attempts at "speed-ups", or more work put on fewer and fewer workers,

(Continued on page 7)

In This Issue:

- P. 9 Tribute to Steven Townsend
- P. 10 Convention Delegate Notice
- P. 11 Scholarship Winners
- And more!



PAL 9

Contributors

**Very Concerned
(\$50 or more)**

James Fodstad

Concerned

(\$25 donated)

Steve Bjoraker

Bill Whritenour

IN MEMORIAM

Marvin Mattila
David Swatosh
John G. Bailey
Charles Friend

NEW MEMBERS

Alex Appel
Alex Bakke
Dominick Barsness
Farhan Dahir
Au'Tiana Ellis
David Ford
Douglas Hero
David Lissauer
Matthew Osika
Milo Parker
Zachary Taylor
Alonzo Traylor
Mekiyale Walker
Brian Walsh
Scott Bushey
Sean Donohue
Whitnee Kenney
Jason Lin
Kyle McGuin
Brian Olson
Emmily Schroeder
Jeffrey Senn
Marshall White

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

Voice: (612) 781-9858
Fax: (612) 781-9849
Website: branch9nalc.com

Branch 9 Officers

President

Joe Rian

Exec. Vice President

Chris Pennock

Recording Secretary

Andrew Hagan

Treasurer

Barb Watczak

Financial Secretary

Stacey Ellingson

Editor

Tyler Vasseur
branch9news@branch9nalc.com

Sergeant at Arms

Jorge Quintero

Trustees

Cheryl Dombrock
Zoe Bunzli
Tim Bash

Director of Retirees

Joe Tanner

NALC Health Benefits Rep.

Susan Becker

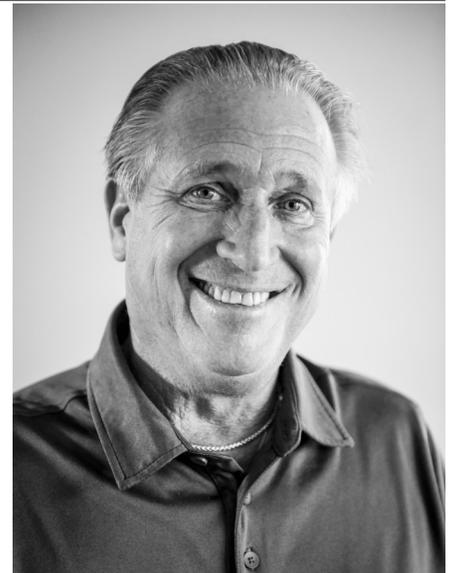
The Branch Nine News is a monthly publication of NALC Branch 9, and is published in the interest of and for the members of NALC Branch 9.

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



Joe Rian

The other day retiree Jim Couillard stopped by the office and dropped some union papers of his late father Walt Couillard. (Thanks Jim) I saw that Walt wrote his last article for the Postal Record in December 1994 retiring from as the NALC National Director of Retirees at that time. It caught my attention because this was just two months after I started as a casual carrier for the Christmas season at the Richfield Post Office.

I'm reprinting a paragraph that caught my eye. Walt wrote,

"I think of the changes that have taken place in the last 48 years for letter carriers. When I began my career in the post office in 1946, the hourly wage was 84 cents. Of course, there was *no* overtime, *no* vacation, *no* sick leave, *no* hospitalization, *no* uniform allowance and *no* life insurance."

His words keep things in perspective for me. I came to this letter carrier job with all the benefits the carriers who came before me didn't have. The battle was fought and won for vacation, insurance sick leave, uniform allotments by the union brothers and sisters like Walt before I was hired. I will be forever grateful for the sacrifices made by 20th Century letter carriers so 21st Century letter carriers like me could have a better life.

I have to say though the battle to keep our benefits, and especially a living wage, must be re-joined by all members of Branch 9. I have been visiting a lot of stations and in doing so, I have been reminded repeatedly of how many of our newest brothers and sisters across the branch are really struggling to keep things going financially. The wages we work for are just not keeping up with the economy and working more

overtime steals precious time from our families, young and old. It's not supposed to be this way in a union job. 40 hours a week should mean a living wage to raise a family.

And the increased stress on some letter carriers on the workroom floor to "make the numbers" is very real. It's too often a heated one-on-one confrontation at the case that shouldn't be happening. The route adjustments in the Minneapolis Installation and beyond have made workable routes into computer generated monster 12 hour plus routes that station management has been told by district and headquarters personnel to squeeze into 8 hours "because that's what the computer programs say".

Please remember, numbers don't deliver mail, people do. Stand your ground in the morning, request a 3996 if you're going to go long. Watch out for the well-being of your union siblings around you. Unions don't leave people behind or let them suffer abuse by management alone.

And don't forget, better wages are not won by one-person. It takes collective bargaining. It takes every one of us in the NALC, both national and local, to stand together as one and to push and pressure to get a living wage. It worked for Walt Couillard. Why shouldn't it work for us now.

Color Coded Calendar Order Form

It's time to order your 2026 color coded calendar

Calendars \$4.95/each

(check only and made out to Richdon)

Mail your checks with the order form below to:

NALC Branch 9

Attention: Chris Hough

5831 Cedar Lake Road South

St. Louis Park, MN 55416

If you have any questions please, contact:

Chris Hough (Brooklyn Center) 612-644-5903

Last day to purchase a calendar will be at the September 23 GMM

COLOR CODED CALENDAR ORDER FORM

Contact Name: _____

Station: _____ # of Calendars _____

Phone #: _____ Check \$ Amount: _____

(Checks made out to Richdon)

Exec. Vice President's Report

The Telecon Heard Round The World

We recently got a peek behind the curtain to see what upper Management really thinks of us and our rights when a teleconference between District Manager (DM) Angela Bye and several station managers in our region was leaked on a podcast.

The leaked telecon was aired on the July 28th episode of the podcast From A to Arbitration. It can be found on most podcasting apps. The telecon is well worth listening to if you can stomach an hour of the DM yelling at her subordinates about "the numbers".

This leak is significant because it exposes the utter contempt that upper Management has for our rights and our contract. The unrelenting theme of the telecon was that "the numbers" are all important and that they need to go after carriers who don't make them. She told them to "set expectations" and to "use the tools" (more on that below) to hold carriers accountable. The DM is encouraging abuse for failing to "make the numbers".

She also told station Management that they didn't have to work injured carriers if they couldn't deliver their routes in 8 hours. This is completely wrong and if you find yourself in this situation talk to your steward so we can address the situation.

The DM pretended like she'd never heard of the many Step 4 decisions that establish that we don't have to kill ourselves to make their numbers, but that we just have to give them a fair day's work for a fair day's pay. Step 4 Decisions are national grievance settlements that apply to all of us and which we can use to defend our rights.

- M-00326 states that carriers were within their rights to continue delivery of their routes when they informed Management of their inability to complete their routes in 8 hours and Management ordered them to continue. I'd also recommend bringing the mail back if they order you to be off the clock in 8 hours. Fill out a 1571 curtailment slip to protect yourself in this situation.

- M-00360 says that in keeping with the principle of a fair day's work for a fair day's pay, it is understood that there is no set pace at which a carrier must walk and no street standards for walking.



Chris Pennock

- In M-00829 the parties agreed that a one day count (a 3999 or 99) may not be used as the sole basis to establish a street standard for disciplinary purposes. It further states that any discipline must be for just cause under Article 16.
- M-01664 states that DOIS is a Management tool for estimating a carrier's daily workload. Such projections are not the sole determinant of your leave or return time, or daily workload. These projections cannot be the sole basis for discipline. M-01769 expands on 1664 by providing similar protections that now apply to any time projection tool.

These resources and more can be found on the Branch 9 website at branch9nalc.com under "No Street Standards".

This telecon also serves as a reminder that Management and the bosses never stop organizing to exploit us and our labor. We should be vigilant in organizing ourselves. I invite you to join us in building a stronger Branch 9, NALC, and labor movement.

Spencer article

I know what I am about to explain is hard to do. I would never give advice that I wouldn't do or haven't already done. In my last article someone mentioned to me that it was advice told in a different way. That is my goal, to try and give advice without the contractual language and hopefully I can make it easier to understand.

All management has is fear. The more you fear them the more power they have. I know there's a phrase that goes "obey now and grieve later". I feel management has taken advantage of this and we need to start using the power of "just cause". There are certain questions management needs to ask before they are successful at disciplining a carrier. Management will bring you in the office and question you, possibly in a day in court. Then maybe issue you some sort of discipline. This does not mean you are in trouble. It is what management wants you to think though. If you are past your 90 days probation period and you didn't steal or mess with the mail somehow, then I can almost guarantee you will not lose your job. In my 19 years there has never been one carrier who has been disciplined for the speed in how they deliver. If you are moving you are working. If you are being questioned about stationary time, your answer will always be "I was working". It is management's job to prove you did something wrong. The union will always have a say in your discipline when it is being grieved. So please don't let discipline scare you.

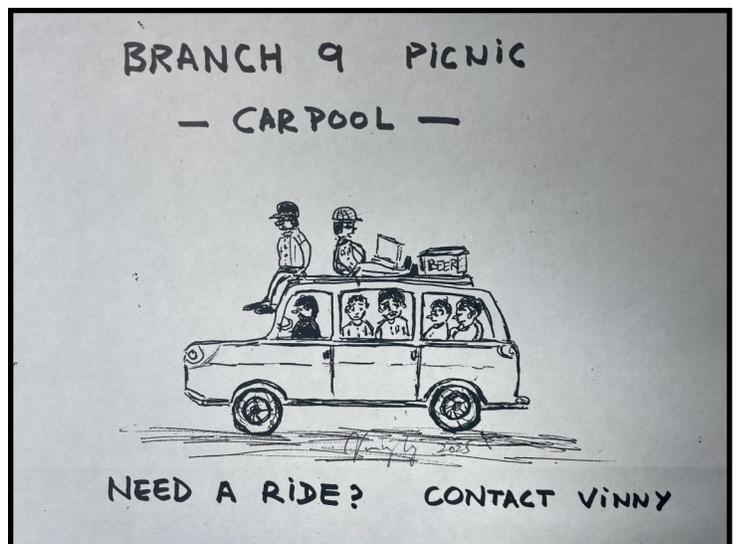
I also would talk about power. Something that we have given management way too much of. As a union we hold all the power and there are way too many letter carriers who don't understand this. The only power management has is what you give them. When you know your rights there is nothing management can do to you. Never forget that management needs us to work for them. The way management is getting carriers to work

is through fear. Never be afraid or feel bad for enforcing your rights, or telling management no. It is time to take the power back!!!!

The union is only as strong as the people who run it. So if you feel that nothing is being done or nothing will change, then step up. The language has always been there for us to use. One big reason why I got back involved is because I know what this union is capable of and am definitely doing what I can to help get this union back on track. I feel our current branch is filled with people who want to help and make this union better. So if you want to help make a difference there are many of us who will support you. This is the greatest job on the planet. I love my job and if you don't feel that way then you might be doing this job the wrong way or you don't fully comprehend your rights. Knowledge is power!!!



*James Spencer
Steward, Blaine Station*



Cartoon by Vinh Ly (Richfield Station)

EDITOR'S REPORT

(Continued from page 1)

in order to “remain competitive” with the private sector), and NALC members may be asking themselves if we can make it another 250, or even another few years as a high quality, functioning public service for workers and the American public.

USPS provides an important service to the public, and is a key part of the logistics and delivery industry. It is in the public's interest to have a high quality, affordable, public option for letter, and package delivery. Amazon, FedEx, and UPS would all undoubtedly have higher delivery prices if they were not forced to compete with USPS, which acts as a cheaper, public option to those services. These companies have in the past, and many still do, rely on USPS for “last mile” deliveries. Without USPS, Amazon would not have been able to grow and expand its network into becoming the logistics industry giant it is today. While it's true that letters do not play the same key role in the economy and communications network that they did decades ago, package delivery is and will continue to be an important part of the US economy. For these reasons and more, it is in the interest of postal workers, small business owners who rely on package delivery, and the American public, to keep USPS as a high quality, public option in the delivery industry.

Unfortunately, the moral argument of the importance of the postal service will not be enough to save the service from attacks alone. We can look at the history of our own union, and postal workers across all crafts, who stood up in 1970 and initiated the biggest wildcat strike (not officially sanctioned by union leadership) in US history. Postal workers were dealing with similar issues we are facing today, including stagnant wages in the face of inflation, a feeling that their issues were not being heard by national union leadership, and an administration that felt hostile to their interests. It may sound contradictory, that strike action, or shutting down the functions of the service, are just the kinds of actions necessary to save the service, but history has

shown that this is exactly what can be needed.

Of course, it is illegal for postal and all federal workers to strike, but this is why NALC members across the country are getting organized to fight for the Right to Strike. To take the “no strike” clause out of our contract, and to pressure Congress to repeal the ban on federal workers from striking. Strike action is a basic democratic right that we are currently denied. We are denied this right because of how effective it is. Postal workers make the service function, and if postal management and the White House cannot fix the issues they created in the first place, then that responsibility may fall on postal workers ourselves.

We should get together with the other postal unions, federal and public sector workers and build a public campaign to fight for the Right to Strike for all workers. If you're interested, we urge all NALC members to get active in the union, start these conversations and discussions among coworkers, and get active in the campaign to fight for the Right to Strike as we look toward the August 2026 NALC National Convention.

The US Post Office has survived 250 years, which included the American Revolution, the Civil War, World War II, the Civil Rights and liberation struggles of the 60s and 70s, and so many more historical events that brought into question the future of the country itself. It's in the interests of postal workers, and the American public, for the postal service to survive 250 more, or at the very least the next three.



Tyler Vasseur

Become a contributor to the Branch Nine News!

Email the Branch Nine News Editor, Tyler at branch9news@branch9nalc.com

- Articles due by the first of the month to make it into that month's issue of the paper
- Articles about specific issues at your station, ideas for the union, cartoons, or even suggestions on layout and design are all welcome
- If you have an idea, but don't know where to begin, the Editor can work with you to help form your idea into an article
- Proposed articles are published at the discretion of the President, Executive Vice President, and Editor

Tribute to Rep. Melissa Hortman

By Lenny Larson

Retired, Branch 9 President Emeritus

Melissa Hortman is remembered as a Tireless Advocate for Working Families. Branch 9 of the National Association of Letter Carriers Pays Tribute to Fallen Public Servant

In the wake of a tragic and senseless act of violence that took the lives of Democratic politician Melissa Hortman and her husband Mark, members of Branch 9 of the National Association of Letter Carriers are joining in mourning and honoring a woman remembered for her courage, compassion, and unwavering commitment to working people.

Melissa Hortman was more than an elected official—she was a champion of labor, a devoted advocate for social justice, and a respected ally of postal workers and the broader union community. Her voice was one of strength and clarity in support of fair wages, worker protections, and community-based leadership.

"Melissa stood with letter carriers and all working people, not just in words but in action," said representatives of Branch 9. "She understood that strong communities are built on fairness, dignity, and opportunity—and she fought for those values with every fiber of her being."

The attack that claimed Melissa's life also wounded Democratic Senator John Hoffman and his wife Yvette. As they recover from their injuries, we express deep concern and solidarity with the couple.

"We stand with John Hoffman and his wife in this time of recovery. Their survival is a blessing, and their continued courage in the face of such violence reminds us of the resilience required in public service today."

Hortman's death is not only a profound personal loss to her family and loved ones, but a heartbreaking blow to the broader movement for equality and justice that she served with such passion.

"To Melissa's family, we extend our deepest condolences and unwavering support," the letter carriers continued. "We grieve alongside you. May her memory be a source of strength and a reminder of the powerful impact one life, lived in service, can have."

The National Association of Letter Carriers joins communities across the country in remembering Melissa Hartman as a dedicated public servant, and vows to continue her fight for justice, dignity, and the rights of all working Americans.

A Tribute to fellow Letter Carrier

Pete Townsend

By Crystal Spiel

Steward, Brooklyn Center Station



Stationary event with a handful of the Brooklyn Center team at our PTF Steven Townsend's celebration of life. Steven died unexpectedly due to breathing complications on May 15, 2025. Steven was a great person, coworker, and friend. Consistently looking out for others, asking questions, getting involved, and speaking up when something wasn't right.

A motion was passed at the May GMM for donations for his family. Despite a low attendance after a rainy day after a Holiday meeting- \$500 was raised and matched by the Branch. The attendance of his coworkers, including Supervisors, made a clear impact to his family and friends. The support of his brothers and sisters, as well as the Postal Service, is absolutely what we would wish for all fallen Carrier's families to witness. The congregation of mail trucks was truly a sight to see.

Convention Delegate

Nominations & Elections Information

Delegate Election Notice for the 2026 MSALC Convention

This is an official notification to the membership of Jerome J. Keating Branch 9 NALC Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Nominations for delegates to the 2026 MSALC State Convention will be held at the September General Membership Meeting on Tuesday, September 23, 2025 at 7:00PM. General Membership Meetings are held at the Crystal VFW, 5222 - 56th Avenue North, Crystal, MN 55429

Candidates must complete the appropriate Letters of Intent and return same to the Recording Secretary at the September General Membership Meeting in which they are nominated or within 10 days thereafter no later than 5:00PM. Should an election of delegates to the MSALC Convention be necessary, it will be held at the October General Membership Meeting on Tuesday, October 28, 2025

Delegate Election Notice for the 2026 National Convention

This is an official notification to the membership of Jerome J. Keating Branch 9 NALC Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Nominations for delegates to the 2026 NALC National Convention in Los Angeles, CA. will be held during the September GMM on Tuesday, September 23, 2025 at 7:00PM. General Membership Meetings are held at the Crystal VFW, 5222 - 56th Avenue North, Crystal, MN 55429

Candidates must complete the appropriate Letters of Intent and return same to the Recording Secretary at the September General Membership Meeting in which they are nominated or within 10 days thereafter by no later than 5:00PM. Should an election of delegates to the 2026 NALC National Convention be necessary, it will be held at the October General Membership Meeting on Tuesday, October 28, 2025

Scholarship Winners



Lucy Lewandowski

Daughter of Joe Lewandowski

(Eastside Station)

I am so happy I won the 2025 Walter E. Couillard/ Eugene P. McNulty Scholarship! My name is Lucy Lewandowski and my dad Joe works out of Eastside Station and has been with the post office for the last twenty-three years. In the fall, I will be attending the University of Minnesota in the College of Science and Engineering. I graduated from Roseville Area High School where I played tennis and sang in the choir. I am proud to be from a union family where my mom is also a union member. I remember walking the picket line in 2022 with my mom when her union was bargaining for a better contract. I am very privileged to have lived a middle class lifestyle because of the hardworking members of unions that have helped make our society great. Thank you to everyone at Branch 9 for your service.

I'm Violet Kriz. I am going to UW Stout university. I will majoring in graphic design or interior design. I am so grateful I had the opportunity for being drawn for \$1000, to put towards my education. What a gift!

Violet Kriz

Daughter of Aaron Kriz

(Fridley Station)



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

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

Branch 9 Calendar

August 12

Steward Meeting
7 PM
Crystal VFW

August 26

General Membership
Meeting
7 PM
Crystal VFW

September 9

Steward Meeting
7 PM
Crystal VFW

September 23

General Membership
Meeting
7 PM
Crystal VFW

September 28-October 1

MN State Convention
Sugar Lake Lodge
Cohasset, MN

October 14

Steward Meeting
7 PM
Crystal VFW

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

Stay informed by:

*Join Veterans Group [https://www.nalc.org/
member-benefits/join-the-nalc-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

