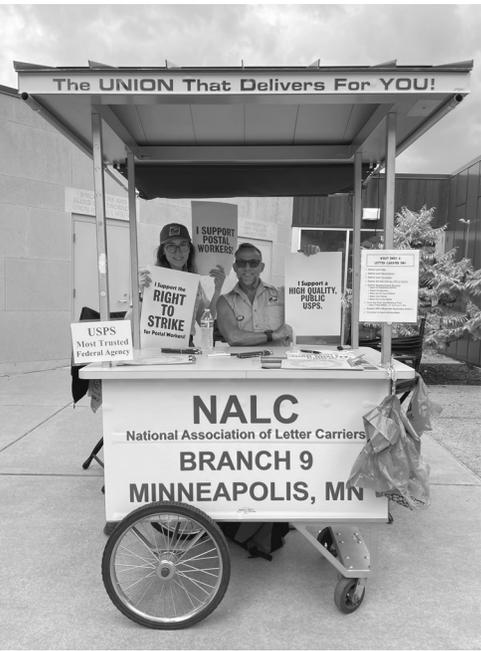




Branch 9 at the Great Minnesota Get Together—State Fair 2025



Branch 9 members volunteered for shifts at our booth at the Labor Pavilion at the Minnesota State Fair August 21-September 1, 2025. Members spoke with the public, politicians, about how the issues facing letter carriers, and how they can support our cause. Members had a sign-up sheet for the public to hear about upcoming events, rallies, and ways to support NALC members, and had signs for people to take pictures with, which included the slogans, “I Support a High Quality, Public USPS”, “I Support Postal Workers”, and “I Support the Right to Strike for Postal Workers”.

The Minnesota State Fair is a time to have fun, eat good food, and get connected with the Minnesota community we deliver to every-day. Thank you to all the volunteers!

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And more!	

RETIREMENTS



Tom Whitehead of Diamond Lake with Exec. Vice President Chris Pennock
Congrats on your retirement, Tom!



John Brownson receiving his retirement and service certificate from fellow Lake Street carrier Pat Rottach
Enjoy your retirement, John!



Laurie Ayres from Loring Station receiving her 25 years of service pin. Congrats!

IN MEMORIAM

Gordon Balfe
John Shull (Active)

NEW MEMBERS

- Jordan Berndt
- Stefan Bethke
- Alexis Bram
- Selig Campbell
- Kenneth Chorost
- Nora Conrad
- Dana Dickerson
- Andrew East
- Anastasia Eichelburger
- Hunter Fisher
- Kyle Gisburne
- Mariah Guzman
- Fletcher Halfaker
- Michael Kearney
- Vithaya Moua
- Anthony Otterson
- Dakota Pruitt
- Coleen Richards
- Timothy Scott
- Khenzer Senat
- Jason Tivy-Debauche

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

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

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Exec. Vice President
Chris Pennock

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Andrew Hagan

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Barb Watczak

Financial Secretary
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branch9news@branch9nalc.com

Sergeant at Arms
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Cheryl Dombrock
Zoe Bunzli
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Director of Retirees
Joe Tanner

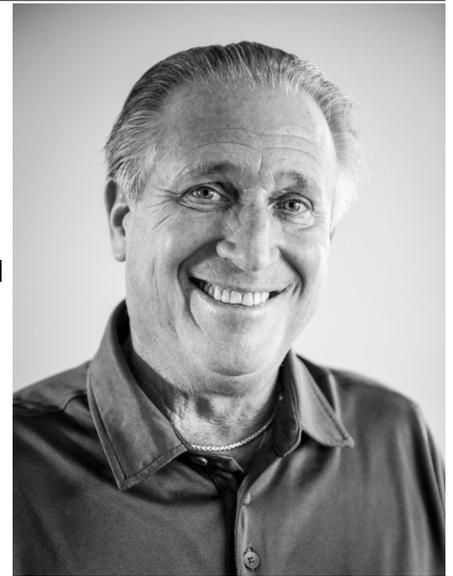
NALC Health Benefits Rep.
Susan Becker

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

There has been a lot happening this fall at Branch 9 and in the stations we serve. Let me update you a little.

First, our back pay for the new contract has arrived and the 5th COLA effective September 6th has been made part of our new pay scale in the Postal Record and is on our checks. Come November 15th, 2025, career carriers will receive a 1.15 % general wage increase on their checks, while CCAs will have a 2.5% general wage increase on theirs. And 2026 Retiree COLAs Projection: CSRS is 2.8% and FERS is 2.0% as of September 2025.

AND WE NEED IT!

According to CBS News, the median annual Minneapolis income is \$80,269. Higher wages definitely have to be part of the new contract negotiations that will start in March 2026. Please, speak out for higher wages when you can.

The Great Minnesota Get Together has also come and gone. We had an awesome group of volunteers who staffed our kiosk at the AFL-CIO Labor Pavilion. A special thank you to Connie Biessel who worked a lot of shifts but also seems to attract a great many political admirers. Check out the Branch 9 Facebook page to see who stopped and got their picture with Connie. It was a super time and I hope that next year even more of our members will come on down to spread Branch 9 cheer to the people of Minnesota.

Tragedy struck the Diamond Lake Zone in South Minneapolis when a crazed killer wielding several guns opened fire on young children attending morning mass at Annunciation Church. Just a few blocks down the street gunfire could be heard by letter carriers as they loaded their trucks at 8:30 AM. The gunfire was quickly followed by public televised reports of children being shot and the shooter still at large. Emergency response personnel flooded the neighborhood with helicopters and dozens of squad cars speeding up and down Diamond Lake Road/54 th Street. Very traumatic for everyone at the station not just from a personal safety stand point but also very emotional as

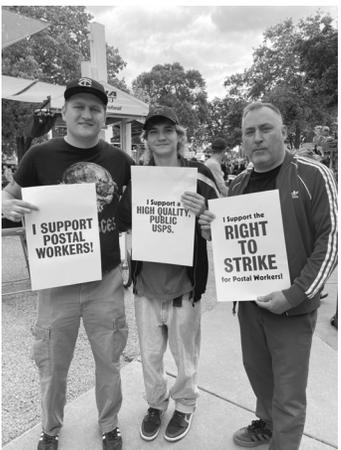
many carriers had children in the zone who were friends with children at the school.

I am extremely grateful to NBA Patrick Johnson for requesting, and our National Director of Safety and Health Manny Peralta, Assistant Secretary Mack Julian and the Headquarters ERT team leadership including Eddie Morgan, for deploying, an NALC Emergency Response Team (ERT) to Diamond Lake Station after the attack. The NALC needed to be there for our brothers and sisters as they faced the aftermath of this critical neighborhood incident. That's why the NALC created the Emergency Response Team. And the 3 ERT members who came from Iowa, St. Paul and Rochester not only talked the talk, but they also really walked the walk for our Branch 9 carriers. It was very special to have them come to Minneapolis to help and my great thanks go out to all who took the time and energy to make it happen.

We still have 4 associate offices; Anoka, Elk River, Osseo and Shakopee, whose LMOU's are at an impasse. The major stumbling block for all is management's desire to eliminate all bid annual for December. Of course, Branch 9 is opposed to eliminating bid annual in December and have passed arguments up to the NBA 's office where we hope a favorable pre-arbitration decision will keep in place the annual leave provisions we had negotiated for in the past. Come next time around we will be more aggressive asking for changes Branch 9 carriers want to make so start making a list now of the changes you want to see after the next National Agreement.

Thanks for your hard work as letter carriers and continued support of the NALC. You're the greatest!

Community Support at the State Fair



Exec. Vice President's Report

What do you do if you can't continue to deliver the mail in the middle of the day?

This is a question that most letter carriers will have to face at some point in their careers. Whether it's because you're sick, or injured, or you have a family emergency to take care of. Carriers also face situations where their emotions are running so high that it would not be safe for them to deliver. This could be in response to a family tragedy, such as the loss of a loved one, or as a response to trauma, such as a mass shooting at a neighborhood school.

In these situations, carriers will tell their supervisor that they can't continue to deliver and must go home. Often the supervisor will then try to gaslight the carrier into believing that they don't have a right to put their safety first and will attempt to coerce the carrier into continuing delivery. In these situations, we will advise carriers that they should have the mindset not to ask permission to go home but that they are informing their supervisor that they're going home.

Our rights to use sick leave are not any different when it comes to being sick in the middle of the day versus calling in at the beginning of the day. Article 10 of our contract "defines sick leave as leave which "insures employees against loss of pay if they are incapacitated for the performance of duties because of illness, injury, pregnancy and confinement, and medical (including dental or optical) examination or treatment." This applies whether it is a partial day or a full day, and to scheduled leave and unscheduled leave. If Management tells you that you are required to produce medical documentation, contact your steward or the branch for advice on how to handle that.

Turning to another topic, the U of M Teamsters Local 320 recently went on strike and won! These are maintenance, sanitation, and food service workers. They're some of the lowest paid U of M workers. Some of them make less than what a PTF makes. They went on strike asking for 3.5% raises like other unions at the U had received and for the expiration of their contract to be in the late summer. This was important for them because it would give them leverage in future negotiations as that's right when the students are moving into campus and when the disruption from a strike would be most significant.

The Teamsters got solidarity from all over. They set up picket lines at several locations throughout campus which several Branch 9 members attended. The organizers of the upcoming Farm Aid concert refused to cross the picket lines. This is a star-studded concert featuring Willie Nelson, Bob Dylan, Neil Young and other big names. Then, the last day before the strike was won, the Teamsters organized a large rally on campus. Many hundreds if not a thousand were in attendance, including Scabby the Rat (google if you're not familiar). The rally then broke out into a march across campus. At least eight Branch 9 members attended the rally/march. The next day the University offered them a TA we hear they're pleased with.

I would encourage all Branch 9 members to get involved and lend solidarity whenever there are labor struggles in the Twin Cities. Engaging in struggle with your brothers and sisters in the labor movement is a transformative experience. It is how we work toward building the kind of society we want to live in. I'm so proud of Branch 9 for stepping up! When you fight, you can win!



Chris Pennock



Members' Voices



Vince Froehlich
Director of Retirees

Former Director of Retirees Joe Tanner has had to step back from the position. In his place, President Joe Rian has appointed retiree Vince Froehlich. Please welcome Vince to the position as he learns the role and steps up for our retiree members.

Hello everyone!!

My name is Vince Froehlich. I will be serving as the new Director of Retirees for Branch 9. I served as a letter carrier for 30 years I retired last November 29. I served as a shop steward for 10 years. My mission is to serve the needs of Retirees from branch 9 by providing information on financial, social and legislative issues. Thank you for this opportunity.

At the August general membership meeting, carriers passed a resolution concerning the Right to Strike. This wasn't without a bit of debate and I would like to briefly address some of the opposition to the resolution.

Many of the points raised seemed to actually be arguments against going on strike rather than against whether or not we should have the right to strike so it bears emphasizing that nobody is advocating for a strike at this time. Concerns about the resolution seemed to revolve around lack of discussion about and preparedness for a strike. As things currently stand with the no-strike clause, I would argue that it essentially guarantees that we would remain ill-prepared in the event that a strike became necessary. Having the Right to Strike enables further discussion, planning, and preparedness by allowing carriers to openly consider such things. Possessing the Right to Strike could also produce material benefits without actually going on strike.

When workers at UPS passed their contract in 2023, they used the threat of a strike to get huge gains in wages and work rules before any strike actually took place. If we had been voting on whether or not to go on strike tomorrow, I would have voted it against it because I agree that we aren't prepared for a strike. Looking ahead to the future though in an increasingly uncertain time for labor in the United States, I think that it's crucial that we be able to plan for the eventuality of a strike and to have it as a negotiating tool for future contracts.



Ben Manthe
Steward, Lost Lake



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

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EDITOR'S REPORT

The Right to Strike resolution was passed at the Branch 9 General Membership Meeting (GMM) on August 26, 2025, and is headed for consideration to the Minnesota State Association of Letter Carriers Convention this September 28-October 1, and the National Convention in August 2026.

I have covered the Right to Strike in previous issues of the Branch Nine News, but I think it is worth going over some basic points here, as well as in future issues as the campaign heats up, and contract negotiations are underway. There are also plans to have a "rap session" or public discussion that all Branch 9 members can attend to hear all sides on the debate, learn more information about the Right to Strike idea, the resolution itself, and the goal of campaigning for this idea within NALC. Copies of the resolution will also be made available online and in-person at upcoming GMMs.

What do letter carriers need? Better wages, better working conditions, an all career workforce, stable employment, a high quality functioning public postal service that will exist for years to come.

Even though the resolution passed overwhelmingly by voice vote at the August GMM, there was some opposition to it. We heard the question, especially from retirees, "What are you willing to give up in order to get the Right to Strike?", and the idea that we have binding arbitration in order to not have the Right to Strike. My question for every active carrier who campaigned for and voted NO on the last con-

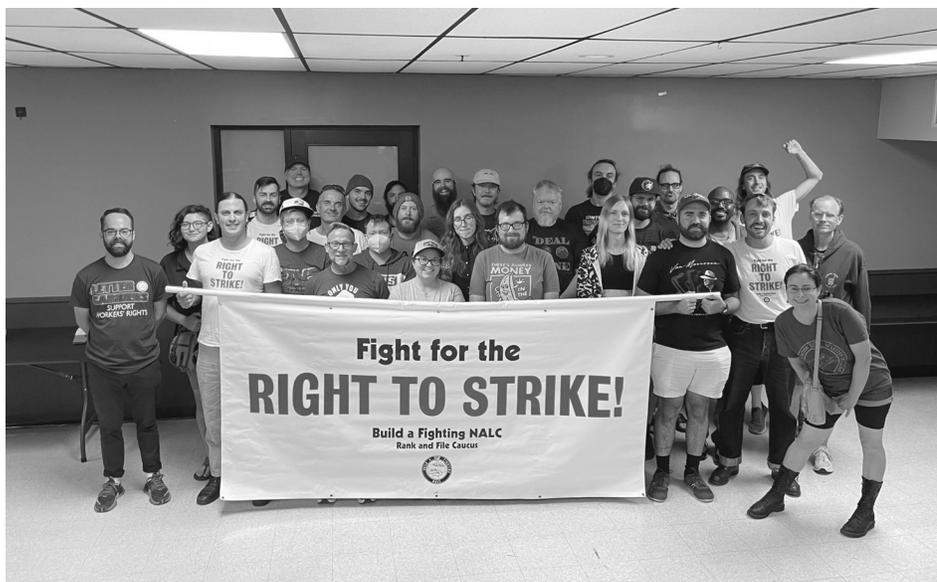
tract is, how did binding arbitration serve you on the last contract? When essentially the same contract we voted down in record numbers (more NALC members voted no on last year's contract than voted in total on the previous contract) was forced through a few months later in binding arbitration. How did binding arbitration serve the letter carrier craft in 2013 when it created the City Carrier Assistant (CCA) category, created the two tier payscale that dramatically underpays new carriers, and created a contract that resulted in many of the major issues we face as a craft today?

Binding arbitration is undemocratic, because it denies NALC members a final vote on the terms and conditions of the contract that dictates our life at work. The union will be better off without binding arbitration, and with the Right to Strike. Having the Right to Strike will give the union leverage it currently does not have. If we make a demand on postal management in negotiations, what do we have to back that up? At the moment, nothing. One of the goals of this resolution is to change this dynamic, and give real power to the union members who work everyday to make this union, and the postal service run.

These are just a few thoughts, and I look forward to continuing this discussion as the Right to Strike campaign takes off, and our union takes up this important demand and seriously considers how we build union power in the years to come. I encourage those who support and those that are opposed to the Right to Strike to contribute to this discussion and make their opinions known. I also encourage everyone on all sides to take up the arguments for, against, and in the middle, at their face value, and to not create strawman arguments which will only confuse the debate and not clarify for members.



Tyler Vasseur



BRANCH 9 FALL RAFFLE

\$ 25.00 Cub Foods Gift Cards

(50 Gift Cards Available)

**GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING
TUESDAY, OCTOBER 28, 2025
7:00PM**

ZOOM (must be linked in and accounted
for by NO LATER than 7:30PM)

OR

IN PERSON at the Crystal VFW!

**RAFFLE WINNERS WILL BE DRAWN
FROM MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE
(BOTH IN PERSON AND VIA ZOOM)**

Please Join Branch 9 For Breakfast and a showing of *The Elves and the Shoemaker*

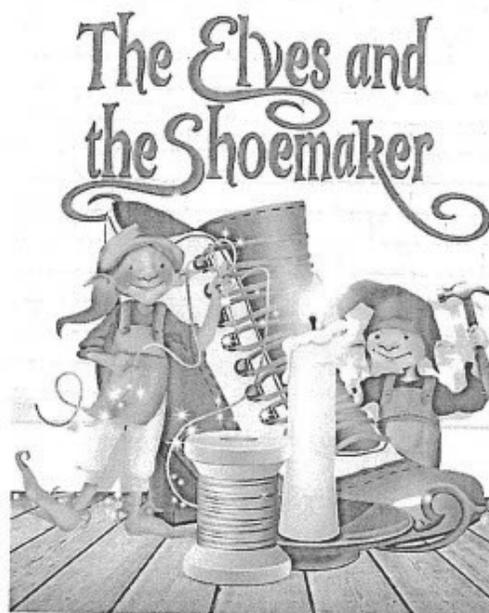
An upbeat, whimsical tale about a troupe of elves who help restore a poor cobbler to prosperity by making a pair of the most fantastic and magical shoes ever seen. This heart-warming adaptation tells of midnight enchantment and of virtue and generosity rewarded. Run time is 65 minutes.

Sunday, December 7, 2025

Santa will be our special guest from 11:00am - 1:00pm (children 5 and under will receive a stuffed animal).

Price is \$20 per person

(Tickets available for pick-up on the day of the show.)



Contact Joe Rian (612.781.9858) with questions.

Sidekick Theatre, Minnesota Masonic Heritage Center
11411 Masonic Home Drive
Bloomington, MN 55437

Breakfast Buffet

(waffle bar, scrambled eggs, cheesy hashbrowns, bacon, fresh fruit, etc) and coffee)

11:30am

Show Start Time

1:00pm

(space available for 200 people - Theater Seating - General Admission)

Return registration form and payment no later than Monday, December 1st, 2025.
(checks made out and mailed to: Branch 9 NALC, 5831 Cedar Lake Rd S, St. Louis Park, MN 55416)

Branch 9 Holiday Party Registration Form

Member's Name: _____ Station: _____

Number of Guests: _____ Amount Paid: _____

Name of Guests (please include ages of children): #1 _____

#2 _____ #3 _____

#4 _____ #5 _____

#6 _____ #7 _____

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MinneapolisTattooShop.com



MN AFL-CIO

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 St. Paul, MN 55103
 651.222.7507
mnaflcio.org



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Branch 9



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

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Branch 9 Calendar

October 14

Steward Meeting
7 PM
Crystal VFW

October 28

General Membership
Meeting
7 PM
Crystal VFW

November 11

Steward Meeting
7 PM
Crystal VFW

November 25

General Membership
Meeting
7 PM
Crystal VFW

December 9

Steward Meeting
7 PM
Crystal VFW

December 23

General Membership
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

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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

