

BRANCH NINE NEWS

"AN INJURY TO ONE IS AN INJURY TO ALL"

1964

Volume 78 No 1

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January/February 2026

Carriers Demand ICE Stay Off Postal Property

by Tim Bash

On the brisk morning of Sunday December 14th, Branch 9 members and community members convened in front of the Lake Street Post Office to express their concern about the use of postal property to stage Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) actions. Around 100 postal workers, members from various other unions, and concerned citizens marched down Lake Street from 31st St and 1st Ave to the Powderhorn Post Office. Many of the customers and workers from the businesses along the route stepped out into sub-zero temperatures to show their support, most of them representing the various immigrant groups that call the Lake Street corridor home.

In the preceding week, the Lake Street Station parking lot was visited by ICE and used to plan their actions, putting postal workers in the position of being associated with those actions. There was even an arrest in the parking lot of the Powderhorn Post Office as the carriers were unloading their trucks. The support we receive from the public and the favorable perception we enjoy are put at risk by this association. Whether you personally agree with the actions of ICE or not, we should distinguish ourselves from the controversial nature and



Photo credit: watchmerisempls.com (top and middle)



Stefan Seaberg leads the chants (above) and Joe Rian addresses the crowd (below)



Photo credit: Tim Bash (above)

questionable legal grounds of their actions. We need the trust of our customers to remain safe on our routes.

For this reason, Powderhorn carrier Stefan Seaberg proposed a resolution at the November GMM calling for Branch 9 to declare itself a "Refuge Union." This resolution calls on Branch 9 members to "protect the rights and safety of all of our members, their families, and the communities that we proudly serve, regardless of one's immigration status." The motion passed, resolving that Branch 9 "will not voluntarily cooperate with federal agents in the arrest, prosecution, or attempted deportation of our members, their families, or our community members, to the extent allowed by law," and "calls on our union leadership to collectively bargain new contract language that strengthens workplace protections for immigrant members."

It is important to remember that mail carriers are not required to provide entry to buildings, residency information, or aid to law enforcement agents. All carriers should have received a stand-up talk regarding this issue.

Continued on Page 11

Welcome New Branch Niners

- Shaquaila Brown
- August Cromwell
- Samuel Dorris
- Christina Friendshuh
- Peyton Good
- Randy Grubba
- Abdulahi Ibrahim
- Alicia Kornacker
- George Leivestad
- Carl Loewecke
- Kinsley McDonald
- Adam Meyer
- David Nash II
- Lounes Rahim
- Jimmy Ranogwa
- Eli Regnier
- Brian Scully
- Adam Taylor
- Andrew Thomson

Join the NALC Veteran's Group



ANNOUNCEMENTS!

- **The deadline for submission of "Notice of Intent" forms to be a delegate to the 2026 national and state conventions has been extended to March 6, 2026. Please call the Branch 9 Office to have blank "Notice of Intent" forms mailed or emailed to you if you think you would like to be a delegate.**
- **Any proposed amendments to the Branch 9 By-Laws must be presented in writing to the Recording Secretary no later than the February 24, 2026 General Membership Meeting.**
- **January 2026, union dues have increased from \$34.12 per pay period to \$37.60. Dues have not increased since 2023 because a new National Agreement was not reached until 2025 and the effective date of increases is January 1, 2026. Dues only go up when our pay goes up.**
- **The 47th Annual NALC Region 7 Training Seminar will be held from April 20-23 at the Delta Marriott Hotel 1330 Industrial Boulevard NE. Registration is due at the NBA office by March 21st. Training will be at least partially paid and is open to all active members.**

Branch 9 NALC

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Chris Pennock

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Andrew Hagan

Treasurer

Barb Watzcak

Financial Secretary

Stacey Ellingson

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Tim Bash

Sergeant at Arms

Nate Serie

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Cheryl Dombrock

Jorge Quintero

Zoe Bunzli

Dir of Retirees

Vince Froelich

Health Benefits Rep

Susan Becker

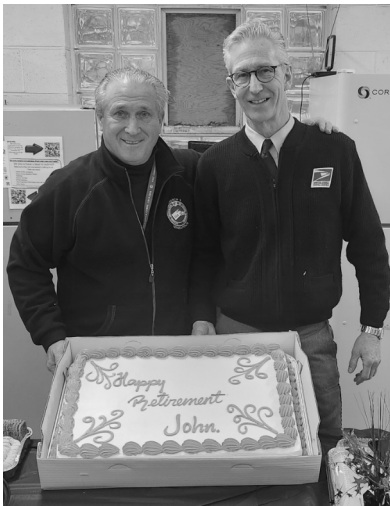
The branch Nine News is a publication of Branch 9 NALC, and is published in the interest of and for members of Branch 9 NALC.

The opinions expressed by the writers are not necessarily those of the OFFICERS or of NALC Branch 9.

Retirements



Karma Khampa retired from Lake Street Station with 25 years of service.



John West retired from Richfield Station with 20 years of service



Rob Einarson retired from Elmwood Station with 30 years of service



PAL 9 Contributors

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

**James Spencer
Gay Woodgate**

Concerned Members

Michael Adams

**Congrats to all of
our recent retirees**

**Dan Festler
Brooklyn Park - 22 years**

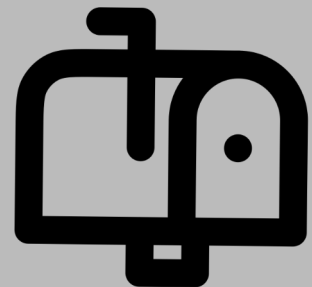
**Dave Lalonde
Lowry - 27 years**

**Dan Gray
Thomas Burnett - 11 years**

**John Hansen
Thomas Burnett - 27yrs**

IN MEMORIAM

Walter Gegner



MOVING?

Please notify the branch directly when you move, we are not notified otherwise!

Mail us notification of your new address to:

**5831 Cedar Lake Road South
St. Louis Park, MN 55416**

**or call
(612) 781-9858**



Joe Rian

Here we are, almost one year since I took office as your Branch President. It's been quite a journey. I didn't really have an idea what was coming my way on most days, but I've loved every minute of it. I am eternally grateful for the opportunity to work for you and hope that I have earned your respect.

I have to say the most fun I've had was visiting stations and talking with members. You all impress me so much with your high energy and confidence in your ability to get the job done, even when it seems to me like you're forced to roller skate in a buffalo herd of postal supervisors and managers every day. It's awesome to see you do the job so well day in and day out. Branch 9 really has the greatest letter carriers in America.

We have some challenges ahead of your reform slate in 2026:

Contract Enforcement

Stewards can't do it alone. We need everyone to help keep management in line. How might you ask?

First, learn your rights and responsibilities under the contract.

Knowledge is power. Use it to protect yourself and your coworkers.

Second, stick together and bear witness to abuse of the contract on the workroom floor. Make a little note and pass it on to the steward. Document, document, document. This information gives your formal step A representatives the evidence they need to show who is being hurt and how. It is a contemporaneous record of what happened, and that's almost as good as a photo.

Third, ask your stewards to file grievances. We may not win them all, but grievances will always document what happened, who it happened to, and when it happened. Filing grievances lets management know we are watching what they are doing and that following the contract makes good financial sense for Branch 9 carriers and the USPS.

Contract Negotiations

Our National Agreement expires in May of 2026, just five months away. I am trying to be optimistic about the national parties reaching an agreement at that time. Hopefully, a contract can be

sent out to all the active carriers to vote on before the National Convention in August. This might be looking at life through rose colored glasses, but I'm keeping my fingers crossed.

In anticipation of an agreement, I would ask everyone to put some ideas down for negotiations about our Local Memorandums of Understandings (LMOUs), which are open for negotiations after the National Contract is settled. Some ideas might include an installation wide start time that can't be changed on a whim, additional weeks of annual leave on the vacation board, or extra paid breaks for carriers being forced into overtime. The sky is the limit, and Branch 9 negotiators will do what we can to insert proposed changes into upcoming LMOUs. Send me your ideas so we can make sure they get a fair hearing when the time comes. The current LMOUs can be found on the branch website.

By-Law Changes

The issue of outdated and vague language in our Branch 9 By Laws will be addressed. It has been difficult for me to read what the

bylaws require us to do and to discover that this isn't always what the Branch has been doing. All requests to change the bylaws must be in writing and submitted to the Branch no later than the February GMM each year and are voted on at the April GMM. Again, your ideas are welcome, so don't be shy about writing up your thoughts and coming to the February GMM to submit them for a vote.

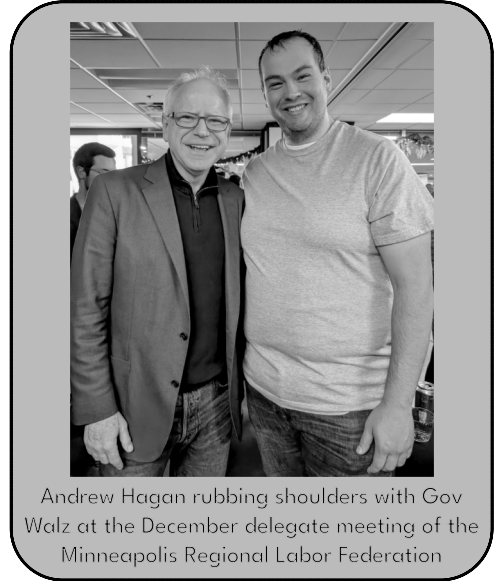
Shut Down Hunger

Branch 9 has approved a donation of \$500 each to 24 food banks that helped us last year with the 2025

NALC Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive. The NALC has made a commitment to match our donation dollar for dollar.

Letter carriers deliver to every neighborhood community in America. We see firsthand when people are struggling. This year we're in a unique position to step up and help provide help to neighborhood food banks who provide food to some of the 47 million Americans, including 7.2 million children, who live in households with food insecurity.

Happy New Year!



Andrew Hagan rubbing shoulders with Gov Walz at the December delegate meeting of the Minneapolis Regional Labor Federation

From the desk of the Health Benefits Representative

by Susan Becker, Health Benefits Rep

As the new year begins many people choose to embark on a weight loss journey. There is no shortage of books, diet plans, gadgets, supplements, or celebrities endorsing their preferred combinations of these things. It's enough to make your head spin!

Fortunately, the NALC Health Benefit Plan can help cut through the razzle-dazzle and support your journey with you in mind.

First, the Real Appeal Program, offered through Optum, our behavioral health partner, will spend a year supporting you with online tools such as personalized coaching, fitness tools, and

education. The Program will send a Success Kit, which includes scales, a portion plate, and access to archived fitness content. Learn more and sign up at nalchbp.re-alappeal.com

Second, the NALC Health Benefit Plan covers prescription weight loss medications, such as the GLP 1 drugs that are commonly in the news, provided you participate in the CVS Weight Management Program.

The CVS Weight Management Program pairs you online with a registered dietician who will assist you with meal planning. The meal planning will help optimize nutrition while also considering religious needs, cultural and personal preferences.

You will have access to a digital app that will provide AI driven support and you may receive connected devices such as a scale and/or glucometer.

The CVS Weight Management Program will also notify your



primary care provider so you can discuss progress at regular visits. You will not be charged to participate in this Program.

If you are currently taking a weight loss drug, the NALC Health Benefit Plan will contact you with instructions on how to enroll in the Program.

The CVS Rx Weight Management Program contact number is 800-207-2208.

The NALC Health Benefit Plan portal (memberportal.nalchbp.org) is also an excellent resource.

Susan Becker





Chris Pennock

Be aware: Wage Theft Is More Common Than You Might Think

We have to talk about wage theft. Management will delete carriers end tour and create a new end tour at an earlier time. This “time disallowance” results in carriers not being paid for our hard work. Unfortunately, we’re seeing this happen more and more.

The circumstances can vary in exactly how this unfolds. Often Management will do this when carriers work over 60 hours a week, sometimes it’s when we work over 12 hours in a day. We’ve also seen Management do this to make it look like the carriers worked 8 hours in a day. Whatever the circumstances, this is completely unacceptable. I don’t know how Management lives with themselves.

This is not only a violation of our contract but a violation of the law. The Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) says that companies must pay their employees who are engaged in work. The Branch is currently investigating instances of wage theft, and we are ramping up our enforcement on this issue.

I want to ask you to monitor your own paycheck and virtual timecard

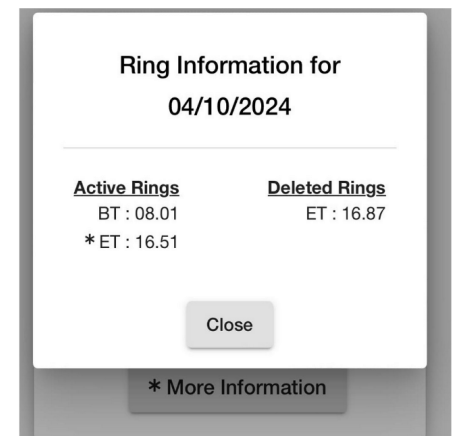
and tell your co-workers to do the same. Every year the branch orders pocket calendars for each member, and we’re currently distributing those to each station. These calendars are perfect for writing down your begin tour and end tour. Then when you get your paycheck, you can make sure that things add up. For most carriers that are working 40 hours per week all you really have to do is add up your overtime and make sure that’s correct.

Another option is to review your virtual timecard on LiteBlue. It may show an asterisk on a day where Management edited your clock rings. If you click * More Information (as in the side graphic) it will pop up a graphic with the live or active clock rings and the deleted clock ring. One note of caution with this method is that you can only view your virtual timecard for a limited time, and once it goes to the next pay period, there is no way to look at previous virtual timecards.

If you discover clock ring fraud, notify your steward. We would like to hear about this at the Branch as well. If it’s happening a lot at your

station, I think we should confront Management about this at standups. We need to send a strong message that we will not tolerate wage theft.

One final note, on Sunday February 22nd the branch will be holding a contract campaign rally. We don’t have the details yet, but we’re looking to find a space inside, so we don’t have to be outside in the cold. I invite you all to mark that day on your calendar and come out for a strong contract for letter carriers.



Above is an example of what an altered clock ring looks like in virtual timecard.

A Holiday Gem: The Elves and the Shoemaker Delivers

by Heidi Iverson

The Elves and the Shoemaker play is one of the best kept secrets of the union. I was pleasantly surprised when we arrived. Santa was sitting there, and the hall was decorated with a beautiful tree. My grandchildren got to sit with Santa and tell him what they wanted for Christmas, and Santa even had a real beard!

We went downstairs where there was a beautiful breakfast setup with cheesy potatoes, eggs, waffles, bacon, yogurt, granola, and more. All the food was good and well made. The disappointment for me was that only half of the tables set up were full. We all got to socialize for a while, then the performance was set to start.

My grandkids are pretty easily distracted, but the thing that got me was that I didn't hear a peep out of any of the kids in there. Everything in the play was bright, there was constant movement, and it was super short. The play was only an hour long, and afterwards all the kids got to go home with a stuffed animal.

It was my first time going this year. I had never heard of it before, and I'm always looking for union events to attend. It's really a great deal for what you get. A full meal, a chance for the kids to meet Santa, a show, and a gift at the end for \$20 per person.

For those who missed out, this event is truly worth marking on next year's calendar. It's affordable, family-friendly, and filled with holiday magic. If you have kids, this is an experience you won't want to overlook.

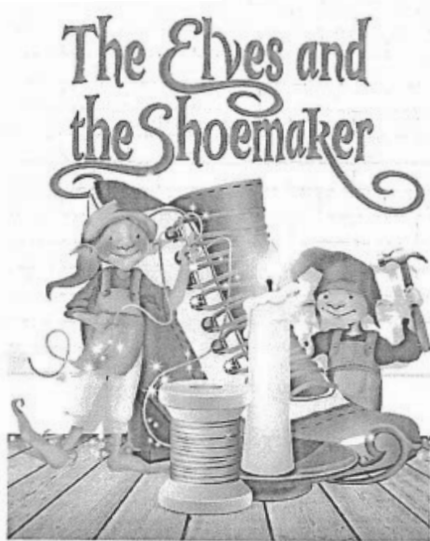


Mike Meier and family



Heidi Iverson

Special thanks to Will Mathes for donating all of the stuffed animals handed out to the children. To Tim Stolz who used to run the Old Log Theater and who gives us great rates on tickets. And also to Stacey Ellingson and Ken Jambois for coordinating the event.



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.
Send articles to:
branch9news@branch9nalc.com
Any official NALC organization may reproduce our articles provided appropriate credit is given.

Bid Schedule 2026

10 Day Bid Period: Starting Wednesday, Ending on Friday

Vacancy Announcement

Vacancy Announcement

OPENING Date

CLOSING Date

1/28/2026

2/6/2026

2/25/2026

3/6/2026

3/25/2026

4/3/2026

4/22/2026

5/1/2026

5/20/2026

5/29/2026

6/17/2026

6/26/2026

7/15/2026

7/24/2026

8/12/2026

8/21/2026

9/9/2026

9/18/2026

10/7/2026

10/16/2026

11/4/2026

11/13/2026

12/2/2026

12/11/2026

12/30/2026

1/8/2027

To place a bid go to LiteBlue > Employee Apps > eJob Bidding
or use the toll free phone bidding line: 1-877-477-3273, Option 2



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

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Branch 9
Ron St. Clair MDA Bowl-a-thon

Saturday, April 25, 2026

LOCATION

NEW HOPE BOWL
7107 - 42nd Avenue North
New Hope, MN 55427



TIME

5:30 – 8:30PM



- ◆ 30 lanes of bowling available
- ◆ Teams consist of 4 – 6 bowlers
- ◆ FAX 612.781.9849 **OR** e-mail joerian@branch9nalc.com your stations team registration (including each player's name)
- ◆ \$50 per bowler – checks made out to Branch 9
- ◆ \$25 per non-bowler – checks made out to Branch 9
- ◆ Bowlers will receive 2 games, shoe rental and pizza
- ◆ Cash bar and restaurant on site
- ◆ Silent auction baskets – created and donated by each station
- ◆ Raffle ticket drawings
- ◆ 50/50 raffle drawings
- ◆ Three (3) stations with the “Best Theme” silent auction baskets will receive donuts at their station
- ◆ Deadline for registration is PRIOR to **Friday, April 24, 2026**
- ◆ **All proceeds will go to the Muscular Dystrophy Association**

If you have any questions, please contact Joe Rian or Chris Pennock at the Branch office 612.781.9858.

MDA is a 501(c) 3 charitable organization

MERRY CHRISTMAS TO DISTRICT MANAGER, ANGELA BYE! (Now, go away.)

In 2022, the Northland District under Anthony Williams was a top-performing district nationally, particularly for package services and marketing mail, achieving consistently over 95% for on-time delivery, exceeding the national average of all USPS Districts.

Current District Manager, Angela Bye, inherited this top-performing District upon the retirement of Anthony Williams in 2023. Since

taking the reins, she has promoted those EAS who are trained by her to only follow her orders, not postal regulations. Customer service has been thrown out the window, and experienced managers who cared about delivery standards either took downgrades, transfers, or just quit the post office rather than deal with her caustic management style. The promotion of bobble head managers has led to district leadership designed to please her

every whim and discipline letter carriers who still believe in great customer service.

Well, congratulations, Ms. Bye. Your superior management style has taken a top-performing district and in just two years, put it in the toilet as the 47th out of 50 worst USPS districts in the USA.

C. Glover, Retired Letter Carrier

Continued from Front Page

If you are asked for information based on confidential or protected knowledge (such as an address or customer), you should refer them to management, or directly to Postal Inspectors. As the December 8th stand-up reads, "The personal information of employees and

ask them to make the call. After all, part of our favorable public image stems from the countless times mail carriers have spotted house fires and notified the residents, answered distress calls from elderly customers, or witnessed car accidents and stopped to check on motorists.

To reach the Postal Inspection Service, dial 1-877-876-2455.



customers is protected from disclosure by the Privacy Act of 1974." If you see a law enforcement action taking place on your route, let management know you are going to divert from this section of your route and return later when it's safe.

This does not mean that we should not cooperate with law enforcement in emergency situations. If you are unsure if something constitutes an emergency, call your supervisor and

As this edition of the Branch 9 News was about to go out for print, the tragic killing of Renee Good occurred. Tensions are running high and a more ICE agents appear to be on their way to the Twin Cities.

At this moment we have members who are afraid to come to work, for fear they could be apprehended on their way home, their family members could be detained while picking their children up from school, or simply for being in the wrong place at the wrong time.

If you are asked about your citizenship status on the job, you are not required to provide identification. However, make a plan to reach out to a steward, supervisor, or co-worker you trust to come verify your employment status.



If you have suggestions on how the Branch can better support our members facing this fear, please reach out.



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



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

JAN 13

Steward Board Meeting
Every Second Tuesday 7PM
Crystal VFW

Northside Retiree Breakfast
First Tuesdays @9:30

Elsie's
729 Marshall St. NE
Minneapolis

JAN 27

General Membership Meeting
Every 4th Tuesday 7PM
Crystal VFW

N Suburban Retiree Breakfast
First Fridays @8:30

Denny's Restaurant
9020 Quadday Ave
Otsego

FEB 10

Steward Board Meeting
Every Second Tuesday 7PM
Crystal VFW

Fridley Retiree Lunch
Second Tuesdays @11:30

Route 47 Pub and
7820 University Ave
Fridley

FEB 24

General Membership Meeting
Every 4th Tuesday 7PM
Crystal VFW

JAN 19 Martin Luther King, Jr Day

MAR 10

Steward Board Meeting
Every Second Tuesday 7PM
Crystal VFW

FEB 16 President's Day

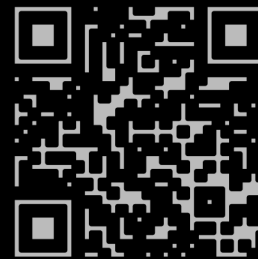
MAR 24

General Membership Meeting
Every 4th Tuesday 7PM
Crystal VFW

MAR 8 Daylight Savings Time



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