

JEROME J. KEATING BRANCH

BRANCH NINE NEWS

"AN INJURY TO ONE IS AN INJURY TO ALL"

1964

Volume 78 No 7

Official Publication of Branch Nine, NALC

September 2026

Delegates Drive Change at 74th NALC National Convention

The 74th bi-annual NALC National Convention took place in Los Angeles, California on August 3 - 7 with over 5,000 delegates coming from all 50 states and territories. Delegates attended workshops, considered resolutions, heard appeals, and made nominations for national officer positions. They also heard from several speakers including Senator Gary Peters (D-MI), Association of Flight Attendants (AFA-CWA) Leader Sarah Nelson, AFL-CIO President Liz Shuler, recently elected APWU President Jonathan Smith, and House Minority Leader Hakeem Jefferies (D-NY).



*See the
Convention
Through
Ken's Lens*

Democracy was on full-display and as the second day's Convention Chronicle stated, "democracy ain't fast." Hours had to be extended, and some workshops had to be cancelled to accommodate all the business the delegation had to finish. In the end, there were over 30 resolutions that were not heard and must be considered at the 2028 National Convention in Minneapolis. Unfortunately, there was no time to address topics like the proposed 4-day workweek or the use of artificial intelligence in the workplace.

If you were hoping for a contract update, you aren't alone, but the details were sparse as ever. President Renfro stated that an agreement "isn't likely" and that the next steps are to select an arbitrator and schedule the interest arbitration sessions.

Reform Movement Progress

Reform in the NALC is coming, whether we all want it or not. Changes at the top are going to happen when elections occur this fall, whether it's a shuffling of the establishment or an overhaul of the executive board. But there's more to reform than elections. The delegates debated and voted on 124 resolutions and 41 proposed amendments to the NALC Constitution. These proposals

came from rank-and-filers, branch presidents, state associations, and everyone in-between. Not since the conventions directly following the Great Postal Strike of 1970 have so many members gone to the convention with fresh ideas about the direction of the union, or in some cases new opinions about old ideas.

One such case is that of Locality Pay, which had been voted down by the delegates at multiple conventions over the decades, but was re-submitted by the Washington State Association and passed. Federal employees of many types receive a bump in their pay based on the cost-of-living in their area, meaning a letter carrier in New York City might not have to work a minimum of 56 hours a week just to make ends meet. In fact, Employee Relations Manual (ELM) section 439 outlines the Territorial Cost-of-Living Allowance (TCOLA) for postal workers outside of the continental US. An extension of this benefit could see mail carriers in New York City getting a 37.95% adjustment in pay. While the resolution merely calls on the Letter Carrier Political Fund (LCPF) to lobby for this benefit, the overturning of the Executive Council's recommendation of disapproval and the overturning of years of precedent mark big

(Continued on Page 11)

★ ★ National election ballots will be mailed on 9/28 and must be returned by 10/19. ★ ★

Welcome New Branch Niners

Benjamin Donovan

Jarrell Knox

Alexander Nelson

Dylan Shepard

Zang Thao

Join the NALC Veteran's Group



Branch 28 Retiree Cribbage Tournament

When: Thursday Nov 5th

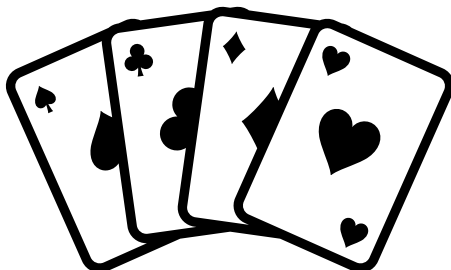
@ 10:30 AM

Where: Branch 28 Union Hall

1715 Van Dyke St.

Maplewood, MN 55109

All Members Welcome



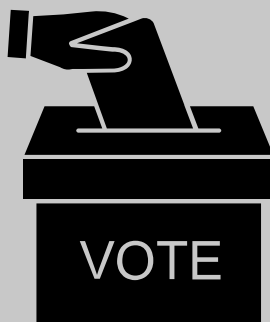
Announcements

National NALC election ballots will be mailed on 9/28 and must be returned by 10/19.

If you have not received a ballot by 10/5, request a replacement ballot no later than 10/9. Reach out to the NALC Membership Department at:

202-393-4695

Open season for health benefits will be from November 10th to December 8th for the 2027 plan year.



Articles **MUST** be submitted to the editor by the night of the monthly GMM, 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.

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.

Branch 9 NALC

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

Voice: (612) 781-9858

Fax: (612) 781-9849

President

Joe Rian

joerian@branch9nalc.com

612-860-4440

Exec Vice President

Chris Pennock

chrisp@branch9nalc.com

612-913-0252

Recording Secretary

Andrew Hagan

andrewh@branch9nalc.com

Treasurer

Barb Watzak

barbw@branch9nalc.com

Financial Secretary

Stacey Ellingson

stacy@branch9nalc.com

Editor

Tim Bash

branch9news@branch9nalc.com

Sergeant at Arms

Nate Serie

Trustees

Jorge Quintero

Zoe Bunzli

zueb@branch9nalc.com

Alex Pouliot

alexep@branch9nalc.com

Dir of Retirees

Vince Froehlich

vincef@branch9nalc.com

Health Benefits Rep

Susan Becker

susanb@branch9nalc.com

763-329-8675

Did you know?

The NALC National Convention has been held in the Twin Cities 5 times, and the 2028 convention will be the sixth. The 1909 and 1986 conventions were hosted in St Paul. The 1929, 1956, and 2012 conventions were hosted in Minneapolis. In order to host the convention, a city must have a unionized convention center with the ability to hold 5,000-8,000 guests.

EAP Monthly Focus

Suicide Prevention

One conversation can make a difference. September is Suicide Awareness and Prevention Month. While suicide can be a difficult topic to discuss, open and compassionate conversations can help save lives. You don't need to have the perfect words to show someone you care. Listening, checking in, and encouraging support can help someone feel less alone.



EAP

800-327-4968 (800-EAP-4YOU) | TTY: 711

Retirements



Laurie Ayers retires from Loring Station with 25 years of service



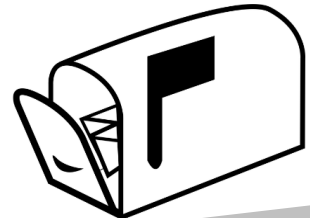
John Burshek retires from West Edina Station with 40 years of service



Connie Beissel delivering school supplies to Black Hawk Middle School, putting the donations of Branch 9 and other unions to work. Thanks Connie!

IN MEMORIAM

Daniel Norling



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

The Enduring Trust in Letter Carriers

The U.S. Postal Service remains a vital link in our national communication network. For more than 250 years, Americans have entrusted letter carriers with checks, securities, and other valuables worth thousands of dollars.

Like the royal messengers of earlier times, letter carriers have earned a reputation as some of the nation's most trusted public servants. In my view, Branch 9 letter carriers stand out even more: they are good-looking, intelligent, highly capable, and exceptionally quick on their feet.

We are also among the most dedicated public servants, known around the world as Americans who deeply respect the responsibility of carrying and delivering not only our customers' cherished goods, but also their most private thoughts. After all, a letter remains the only form of communication that is completely private. When someone writes their most personal thoughts in a letter, seals the envelope and places it in a mailbox, they know no one else will read it before it reaches its intended recipient.

Knowing this, we cannot let any USPS management team reduce us to mere time and number equations in the morning go around. Remember, people deliver mail, not numbers. And last I checked, letter carriers are still some of the best people you will ever meet.

You have likely heard supervisors repeat these demeaning remarks in the office, morning and night: "Stop talking," "Get back to your case," "You should be out of here by now," "You should be back by now," and "Your scanner shows you weren't moving." This treatment is maliciously excessive, and letter carriers deserve better. I have even been told supervisors are instructed to threaten police involvement when carriers have not pulled down and left the station by a set morning cutoff time or are not able to leave quickly enough in the evening.

Where does this attitude come from? Based on the Postmaster General's tone and testimony during his most recent appearance before Congress, it clearly starts at the top. The fact that letter carriers are widely recognized as severely underpaid does not excuse management from treating

us without the dignity and respect we deserve. We perform essential work for the American people seven days a week, carry a serious responsibility, and deliver countless valuable pieces of mail every day. We are seriously hard workers. We should be treated accordingly and, with pay that reflects the difficulty of our work. Do not accept management's definition of who we are, write your own definition.

A form 3996 in the morning is written evidence of your request for assistance. If your supervisor does not approve the overtime, don't argue. Go to the street and use the scanner later in the day to text back, telling management how much mail you're bringing back. Then bring the mail back and drop it on their desk. Unless you have an approved 3996 before delivering the mail past your normal ET, you will be rightly charged with taking unauthorized overtime. Do not get into the habit of self-managing these things. Let management manage.

Fight back by documenting any verbal abuse you witness in your station. Written statements from letter carriers help establish what happened and what led to any

escalation during the morning go-around. Write it down, date it, give it to your steward, and support one another.

Fight back by letting management's poor and reckless attitude roll off you like rain on a windshield treated with Rain-X. Your silence will not count against you if you document your need for help with any management issue.

Remember:
your best effort
is always good
enough.



NALC 74TH BIENNIAL CONVENTION

AUGUST 3-7, 2026

MDA Contributions Award 2025

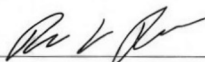
This Award is Presented to

BRANCH 9
MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA

CATEGORY 2
(1,500 - 2,499)

For Raising

\$25,112.62


President, NALC



NALC 74TH BIENNIAL CONVENTION

AUGUST 3-7, 2026

Publications Award

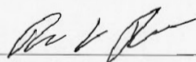
This Award is Presented to

Minneapolis, MN Branch 9

Branch Nine News

"Carriers Demand ICE Stay Off
Postal Property," by Tim Bash

SECOND PLACE
Best Editorial or Column - Promoting Unionism


President, NALC





Chris Pennock

There's Nothing Illegal About Insubordination

As I'm writing this article I've just come back from a grievance meeting on an incident where management called the cops on a steward of ours. The steward came in on her day off last month on the day of extreme air pollution to try to protect her co-workers from management forcing them to go out into the hazardous conditions. Management then called the cops on her for alleged insubordination. I grilled the supervisor for an hour over his role in this and warned him from doing this again. We filed a Joint Statement on Violence and Behavior in the Workplace (JSOV) case against station Management.

People will sometimes say that being a steward is a stressful job, but days like this make all the stress worth it. Sticking up for a co-worker is the greatest feeling in the world. Seeing a supervisor squirm is also its own reward, especially when they have a long history of treating carriers like dirt. You can have fun with this stuff. Keep smiling as Papa Joe says.

As this is a trend of management calling the cops on not just stewards, but rank and file carriers as well, I will be doing training on

this at our next steward meeting. I've just been made aware of a fantastic arbitration out of Chicago that was successful in going after a supervisor with a history of misconduct who called the cops on a carrier after what should have been a little everyday dispute on the workroom floor. One thing the arbitrator said stood out to me:

"To be sure, it is never appropriate to call a police department to deal with matters of insubordination in the workplace."

The arbitrator ended their decision by saying:

"There is a reason the Joint Statement on Violence and Behavior in the Workplace addresses not only full-fledged, physically injurious violence (which was its impetus; it was written, after all, in response to a coworker shooting that had taken

place after an arbitration loss), but also expressly addresses behaviors such as harassment, intimidation, threats, and bullying, and expressly mandates employees to be treated with dignity, respect, and fairness. The interweaving of these ideas is a recognition of the connection that exists between day-to-day poor treatment and more sporadic and horrific acts of violence. Haymer's conduct is an example of the kind of incivility that breeds much deeper and more dangerous hostility, and it must be rooted out."

Let's all hold Management accountable when there's the kind of day-to-day poor treatment that the arbitrator was talking about. There's more to it than just filing grievances, but that is part of it. I would carry around a little notepad in your shirt pocket and then flip it out so that you can be ready to write a statement that on this day, at this time, Management did or said this or that so that we can document their behavior for the grievance. Stick up for your co-workers in the moment so that management gets the message that there aren't any easy pickings at the station. That real-time solidarity is just as, if not more important than grievances because

the grievances can take so long on topics like this because management will never agree to hold their own accountable.

One final thought, I want to recognize all the hard work that Bob Shelstad, Ben Noble, Robb Petersburg, and Jason Karnopp put in on a case that went to

arbitration for Management to provide in-person ASL interpreters at West Edina. These are the Informal, Formal, Step B, and arbitration advocate representatives. This is a big win! We had been fighting with Management on this case for over a year. When we fight, we win!

REGULAR ARBITRATION PANEL

In the Matter of the Arbitration.	(	Grievant: Mike Meier
Between	)	Post Office: Minneapolis, MN
UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE.	(	Case No.: 4J 23N-4J-C 25226561
and	)	Union No.: C-0604-25
National Association of Letter Carriers, AFL-CIO	(	DRT No.: 07-710902

BEFORE: Arbitrator Zachary C. Morris

APPEARANCES:

For the Service: Eileen Smith, Labor Relations Specialist
For the Union: Jason Karnopp, NALC Region 7 Arbitration Advocate
Place of Hearing: 100 South First St., Minneapolis, MN 55401
Date of Hearing: Thursday, July 23, 2026

AWARD:

Relevant Contract Provisions: Articles 2, 15, and 19
Resolution: The grievance is sustained.
Date of Award: Sunday, August 32, 2026

PANEL:

Minnesota - North Dakota

AWARD

For the reasons stated, the grievance is sustained. The Service shall, as soon as is practicable, contract an in-person ASL interpreter to accommodate the grievant during morning standup and safety talks.



Arbitrator Zachary C. Morris

Charlottesville, VA

August 23, 2026

ATTENTION ALL BRANCH 9 MEMBERS

Retired or Active. This is election season. This is our time to support candidates that support us. The convention was very clear WE CAN NOT STRIKE LEGALLY WITHOUT A CHANGE TO THE LAW. Striking is not a contract issue.

It's election season in OUR UNION. WE are the Union. There is the possibility that our next National President could be elected with 28% of the vote. Ranked choice voting was voted down. What I am stressing is this: It is important to VOTE. I don't care who you choose. This is secret ballot, BUT VOTE!!!!

America needs to speak. Go to the polls. We have early voting and vote by mail in Minnesota. They are secure. For our Union we need to hear your voice. PLEASE don't toss the ballot when it comes, MAKE a choice. We are given this chance. both as a nation and a union. Please don't pass it by!



Election Day is coming up on November 3rd

Follow the link or visit sos.mn.gov/elections-voting/ to check and/or update your voter registration information! Don't wait!



(Continued From Front Page)

changes in the makeup and attitudes of the membership.

The number of first-time attendees was substantial, evidenced by the show of hands requested by President Renfro in his opening remarks. Delegates voted in block to adopt resolutions to live-stream the convention moving forward, to advocate for the end of mandatory overtime, to affirm trans rights and oppose the cancellation of gender-affirming care benefits, to assert our rights not to cross picket lines, and to add compounding wage increases to our contracts, just to name a few. Attempts to institute ranked-choice voting in national elections failed, as well as amendments requiring the president share their collective bargaining duties with other officers, and significant reductions of pay for national officers tied to the letter carrier pay scale. Much like the Boston convention in 2024, delegates weren't squeamish about speaking against the wishes of the establishment on important topics, a trend that may continue as some of the newcomers refine their parliamentary skills.



The body of delegates remains a mostly establishment friendly group, but the days of steamrolling opposition voices may be over. Some delegates questioned the long-standing practice of voting on the Executive Council's recommendation, rather than voting on the resolutions directly. Some failed to pass their resolutions but likely learned what they need to do to try again in 2028.

September 2026

Elections/Nominations

Never in the post-1970 era of the NALC has there been a more contested election for National President, or more potential for a total overhaul of national leadership. Presidents Sombrotto (1979-2002), Bill Young (2002-2009), and Fred Rolando (2009-2022) enjoyed widespread support and often ran unopposed. The first day of the convention brought big news right off the bat. President Renfro declared his intention to not seek another term as NALC President and stated he would not accept any nominations (to some sarcastic cheers).

Nominations for national officer positions took place on Wednesday of the convention per Article 6 of the NALC Constitution. This year will see a 4-way race between Nicole Rhine (current Secretary Treasurer), James Henry (current Vice President), Mike Caref (current Region 3 National Business Agent), and Lew Drass (former NALC Vice President). Nearly every other race will be contested as well, with 54 candidates running for 25 contested seats on the Executive Council. Delegates elected 7 nominees for the position of Delegate to the AFL-CIO Convention from a field of 30. Nicole Rhine and Lew Drass would be considered the 'establishment' figures, with James Henry and Mike Caref as the reformers. Down ballot races are mostly two-way affairs, with both establishment and Concerned Letter Carriers (CLC) party candidates facing off.

Many are speculating the result will be mixed, with some establishment and some reform candidates coming away with victories. NALC members will have an opportunity to elect the first woman as National President if Nicole Rhine were to win, or they could elect the first African American National President in James Henry. Either way we live in exciting times in the NALC.

Branch 9 Involvement

Branch 9 sent 26 delegates including 5 who attended a convention for the first time. The Branch won an award for their success in raising funds for MDA, and an got second place for "Best Editorial Promoting Unionism." Member Cathy Jones ran for AFL-CIO Delegate with the CLC slate, but came in 8th place, just





missing out on one of the 7 available positions. Jason Karnopp helped teach workshops, while members Andrew Hagan and Connie Beissel worked at the Letter Carrier Political Fund booth signing people up. Sam Hartwig staffed the OWCP booth in the convention showroom, answering questions from members all over the country. Robb Petersburg served on the Credentials Committee, helping members get registered for the convention. Chris Pennock, Emmett Bongaarts, and Tyler Vasseur all spoke in support of their resolutions in front of thousands of people. Between Branch 9 and the Minnesota State Association, the delegation submitted 6 resolutions, with 3 of them passing. The resolutions are summarized below:

Fund Services, Not War -Defeated

Resolves that the NALC call for an end to the war in Iran, call on the AFL-CIO to organize an anti-war movement, and call for the US government to slash military funding and tax the super-rich to fully fund the USPS and other vital services for the American public.

Livestream the National Convention - Passed with Amendments

Resolves to livestream the convention moving forward to make it available to members nationwide who are not in attendance.

Support Delta Flight Attendant's Union Drive - Passed

Resolves to officially endorse the Delta flight attendant's effort to

organize with AFA-CWA, encourage members to publicly advocate for the unionization through picketing.

CPR and First Aid Training - Defeated

Motion to implement a nationwide program to train carriers in CPR, First Aid and AEDs.

Right to Strike - Defeated

Resolves to reaffirm support for past resolutions passed at the convention regarding the right to strike, devote resources to winning the right, and calling for the public advocacy of the right by the union and broader labor movement.

Support the Right to not Cross Picket Lines - Passed

Resolves that the NALC pursue both legislative and contractual rights of carriers to refuse to cross picket lines in solidarity with the broader labor movement.

Comprehensive Unemployment Benefit Programs - Defeated

Resolves that the NALC advocate for both state and federal level benefit programs extending to gig workers, striking workers, such as those in NY, NJ and WA.

The 2028 National Convention will be hosted in Minneapolis; time will tell if the elections result in a first election under new leadership, or if the struggle for reform continues.



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

AME'S UNIFORMS

OUR BUSINESS IS MAKING YOU LOOK GOOD!

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



ELECT ROB KOSIER

NALC DIRECTOR OF SAFETY & HEALTH

TABLE 2 CARRIER • UNION REPRESENTATIVE • ARBITRATION ADVOCATE

PROACTIVE. NOT REACTIVE.

I'm running for Director of Safety & Health because I'm tired of seeing safety become a priority only after something goes wrong. We need to identify problems early, educate our members, and hold management accountable before someone gets hurt, or worse. I've never been afraid to stand up to management when our members are being mistreated or put at risk. I will speak up, push back, and take the fight as far as necessary to protect our carriers. Most importantly, I will be a visible presence for the members.

HEAT & STREET SAFETY

NO MAIL IS WORTH A CARRIER'S LIFE.

We cannot allow another carrier to die on the street from the heat. Extreme heat is coming every year, and there is no excuse for waiting until carriers are already getting sick before we act.

HIPP training marked complete when carriers say they never received it must be addressed. Checking a box does not protect anybody.

Carriers should be educated before extreme temperatures arrive, know the signs of heat illness, understand their rights, and be able to report unsafe conditions without being ignored.

Protecting carriers on the street also means unsafe vehicles, dog attacks, threatening customers, dangerous properties, and unsafe delivery locations are taken seriously.

I WANT TO PREVENT INJURIES.

DOGS OF WAR

BUILD THE PACK. SHARE THE KNOWLEDGE.

I want to develop the Dogs of War—a nationwide network of trained members and stewards prepared to take on toxic management, intimidation, harassment, and hostile work environments.

When an installation needs help, we can send experienced representatives to work alongside local leaders, document what's happening, educate members, and give stewards the tools to fight back and get results.

I also want to create a national database of documented management misconduct so branches can share information, identify patterns, and hold repeat offenders accountable.

Management moves people around. Their history shouldn't disappear when they move.

KNOWLEDGE IS POWER.

MENTAL HEALTH

LOOKING OUT FOR OUR OWN.

The pressures of this job are real. Sometimes you just need to talk to another carrier who gets it—someone who understands the stress, the long days, and what we deal with on the workroom floor and on the street.

I want to work with licensed mental-health professionals to develop a peer-support program and properly train dedicated carriers to be an immediate resource when one of our members needs help.

This would not replace EAP or professional mental-health care. It would give our members a faster, more personal first point of contact who can listen without judgment and help connect them with the right resources.

My goal is to reach people earlier. We shouldn't wait until one of our own reaches a breaking point before we try to help. Sometimes having the right person there at the right time can prevent a tragedy.

PREVENT THE NEXT TRAGEDY.

EXPERIENCE & UNION LEADERSHIP

2014	Started as a CCA
2015	Shop Steward
2016	Formal A Representative
2016	Executive Board - Mutual Benefits Rep.
2017	NALC Formal A and Beyond Training
2022	NALC Arbitration Advocate
2023	Executive Board Trustee
2024	Vice President
2024-Present	President

RESULTS AS BRANCH PRESIDENT

- Pushed a more aggressive approach on Dignity & Respect and the Joint Statement on Violence and Behavior.
- Secured Step B decisions and Pre-Arbitration settlements that held management accountable - including managers being moved or suspended from certain offices for periods of time.
- Brought the Safety Captain Program back to Milwaukee.
- Went after management for safety infractions and involved OSHA when problems were not being corrected.
- Used OSHA involvement to push fixes involving air conditioning, lighting, and parking lot conditions.
- Forced the Postal Service to install bottle filling stations in Milwaukee

SAFETY MEANS PROTECTING OUR MEMBERS BEFORE SOMETHING GOES WRONG.

VOTE ROB KOSIER

DIRECTOR OF SAFETY & HEALTH

PROTECT OUR MEMBERS • EDUCATE OUR PEOPLE • PREVENT THE NEXT TRAGEDY



NALC 2026 REFORM SLATE

HIGHER WAGES - FULL COLA'S FOR ALL - ALL CAREER WORKFORCE

Is your work life better today than four years ago?
VOTE CLC



James D. Henry
President



Corey Walton
Executive Vice President



Kimetra Simpson-Lewis
Vice President



Raquel "Rocky" Acasio
Secretary-Treasurer



Esteban Ramirez
Assistant Secretary-Treasurer



Christopher Jackson
Director of City Delivery



Rob Kosier
Director of Safety & Health



Anita Guzik
Director of Retirees



Phillip C. Rodriquez
Director of Life Insurance



David Grosskopf Jr.
National Trustee



Howard Komine
National Trustee



John A. Cruz
National Trustee



Elliot Simmons
National Business Agent Region 7
Formal A and Beyond Training All Around the Region!

Spotlight on the Convention

By Tim Bash and CJ Bailey

This month I interviewed CJ Bailey, Alternate Steward at Columbia Heights Station, about his backstory, the LA Convention, and the future he wants for our union. As a relative newcomer to the Post Office and the NALC, he represents what is now the largest demographic of carriers; those with 5 or less years of service.

T: What station do you work at? What's your route like?

CJ: I work at Columbia Heights Station, but I started out at University in January of 2021. My route is mostly park and loop. It's a great mix of businesses at the beginning, a friendly residential neighborhood in the middle, with some apartment buildings at the end. It was a big change going from University Station with all the craziness of Stadium Village and the U of M. I converted in May of 2022 and I've been at Columbia Heights since then.

T: What did you do before you went to the post office?

CJ: I worked in restaurants around the Twin Cities, which felt like the opposite of a union job. I'd been laid off due to covid, so I applied to the Post Office. When I saw the mentality of the union, the members working together, I thought it was incredible.

T: What inspired you to get involved with the Union?

CJ: Well I started out as a CCA during the Covid Pandemic. I didn't know my rights as a letter carrier, and I had even less than PTFs do now. I was going to my union steward quite often to learn what my rights were so I could defend myself against management. It seemed like becoming more involved with the union was the next natural step. So, I started learning about the contract and going to membership meetings. I probably went to my first meeting right after I converted to regular, I didn't have any time to before when I was a CCA. There was another carrier at my



station who was also interested in attending, so we convinced each other to start going.

T: Was this your first convention? How did you become a delegate?

CJ: Yeah, this was my first convention. Fortunately, there was a spot available, and I was eligible to be a delegate and get funding from the branch for airfare and accommodations, since I'd attended most of the meetings over the last 2 years. I'd heard stories about past conventions, and I thought it would be beneficial to have more Table 2 carriers like me there. It was a very inclusive environment I thought, obviously people had differences of opinion in how they voted, but the other delegates encouraged me to speak up, and the discussions about resolutions were great.

T: Did you make any new friends or contacts from other branches?

CJ: It was great meeting other members of Build a Fighting NALC from across the country and collaborating with them on some of the resolutions we wanted to pass.

T: You were ready to get up to a microphone in front of 5000+ people and discuss a ranked choice voting amendment... What in the world possessed you to do that?

CJ: Well, I'll tell you when I was in line, I saw myself on camera and it made me pretty nervous. Especially after seeing how well some of the speakers spoke. I mean, I'd spoken in front of the class back in school, but this isn't the same. With the national elections coming up, I thought it was especially important to pass ranked choice voting. Since we have 4 candidates in

(Continues on Page 14)

WE ARE BETTER TOGETHER

VOTE PATRICK JOHNSON

REGION 7 NATIONAL BUSINESS AGENT

Patrick Johnson has long demonstrated his commitment to the members of Branch 9 and Region 7. His record reflects steady leadership, genuine connection to the membership, and an unwavering dedication to the NALC.

“With Patrick’s exceptional capabilities and vast experience, I can say with no reservations that he is the best choice to lead Region 7 as its current and future NBA.”

Troy Fredenburg
Retired Region 7 NBA



A LEADER WHO SHOWS UP

Patrick has been a consistent presence at Branch 9 Retirees Banquets, honoring those who built the foundation of our union. Patrick makes himself readily available to the current Branch 9 leadership giving guidance and assistance when needed.



FOCUSED ON TRAINING, EDUCATION & GROWTH

Patrick believes strong branches are built through strong leaders. His ongoing focus on training and education ensures that branch officers and members have the tools they need to grow, lead, and succeed.



A FIGHTER FOR MEMBERS

Patrick’s commitment to assisting and advocating for members is well known. He approaches every challenge with determination, care and a deep understanding of the issues facing Branch 9 Letter Carriers today.



DEEP ROOTS IN THE COMMUNITY

As a Milwaukee Branch 2 member currently residing in St. Paul and working in Minneapolis, Patrick is a valued part of the letter carrier community, recognized as one of us.

“Serving as NBA requires a depth of knowledge, experience, heart, and guts to fight for our membership. Patrick has a proven record of all of those qualities.”

Barry Weiner
Retired Region 7 NBA

BRANCH 9 ENDORSEMENTS

“There were many times that I would call Patrick and his office for advice. He always took my calls and gave me the help that I needed to help our members. To me, Patrick was the guy I could count on to help me whenever I needed it.”

Joe Tieman
Former Branch President

Samantha Hartwig ★ **Jason Karnopp** ★ **Darrell Maus** ★ **Mike Zagaros**

STRONG LEADERSHIP ★ **MEMBER FOCUS** ★ **EXPERIENCE**

★ ★ **RE-ELECT PATRICK JOHNSON** ★ ★

(Continued From Page 12)

the race, we're likely to get a winner that gets less than 50% of the vote, and I don't think that's in the best interests of the members. I also realized that a lot of people who spoke against ranked choice voting didn't understand how it worked, and instead of being frustrated by that, I realized I should step forward and try to educate them about the benefits of it. The resolution didn't pass, so we'll see how the elections unfold, and that might change some minds. Even though I didn't have a chance to speak, it was a great learning experience.

T: What from the Convention are you bringing back to Branch 9?

CJ: I would say I'm trying to bring back the union energy and goodwill to my station. I want to share all the information I gathered there, and the things that were discussed. I learned about a new kind of electronic key being developed and the possible new requirement to take pictures of packages with our scanners once we've delivered them. I feel all the resolutions and ideas discussed provide something tangible for carriers to digest.

Also, it's important to get as many Branch 9 members as we can to come out for the next convention since it'll be in Minneapolis. The more delegates we have, the more votes we have. I hope sharing this information gets people excited for it.

T: Did you get a chance to do anything fun outside of the convention in LA?

CJ: I went to In-N-Out Burger for the first time. People were telling me it's not that great, but I disagree. I think it was pretty awesome. And then I went to Santa Monica, and I now understand why everybody wants to live next to the beach.

Your Candidates for National Office

National President

Nicole R. Rhine, Lincoln, NE Br. 8
Lew Drass, Huntsville, AL Br. 462
James Henry, Garden Grove, CA Br. 1100
Michael Caref, Chicago, IL Br. 11

Executive Vice President

Corey Walton, Nashville, TN Br. 4
Manny Peralta Jr, Garden Grove, CA Br. 1100

Vice President

Mark S. Camilli, Northeastern NY Br. 358
Kimetra Simpson-Lewis, Dallas, TX Br. 132

Secretary Treasurer

Rocky Acasio, San Diego, CA Br. 70
Mack I. Julion, Chicago, IL Br. 11

Assistant Secretary Treasurer

Larrissa Parde, Lincoln, NE Br. 8
Esteban Ramirez, San Antonio, TX Br. 421

Director of City Delivery

Christopher Jackson, Garden Grove, CA Br. 1100

David L. Mudd, Louisville, KY Br. 14

Director of Safety and Health

Shawn Boyd, Dallas, TX Br. 132
Rob Kosier, Milwaukee, WI Br. 2

Director of Retired Members

Anita Guzik, Los Angeles, CA Br. 24
Daniel Toth, Lorain, OH Br. 583

Director of Life Insurance

Phillip C. Rodriquez, SLC, UT Br. 111
James W. "Jim" Yates, Long Island Merged, NY Br. 6000

Director of Life Insurance

Stephanie Stewart, Central Iowa Merged Br. 352
Henry Cordero, Beverly Hills, CA Br. 2293

Kevin Sommers, State College, PA Br. 1495

Trustees (3 Positions)

Charlie Heege, New York, NY Br. 36
John A. Cruz, Brooklyn, NY Br. 41
Elise M. Foster, Chicago, IL Br. 11

Jeffrey Wagner, West Palm Beach, FL Br. 1690

William Heller, Knoxville, TN Br. 419

Sandra D. Laemmel, Detroit, MI Br. 1

Howard K. Komine, Honolulu, HI Br. 860

David J. Grosskopf Jr., Buffalo-Western New York Br. 3

Region 7 National Business Agent MN-WI-ND-SD

Patrick Johnson, Milwaukee, WI Br 2

Elliot Simmons, Bismark, ND Br 957

The arrow below is pointing to the location of your Postal Record Number

*****AUTO**5-DIGIT 55401

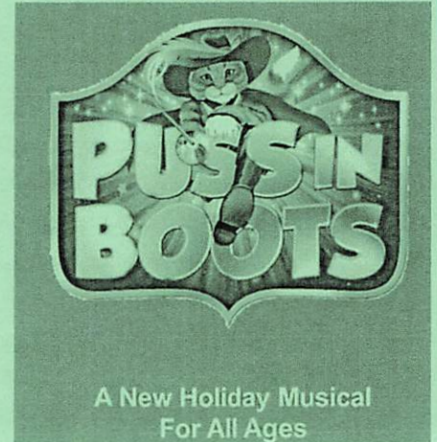
99999999

Vince Sombrotto
1934 Solidarity Dr
Uniontown, MN 55401



Please join Branch 9 for Breakfast and a showing of Puss in Boots

This delightful new musical version of the beloved tale is set in old London during the holidays where Jack Whittington, a penniless orphan whose fortunes seem bleak, crosses paths with a mysterious, talking cat. This is no ordinary alley cat. He's clever, charming and has a flair for fashion, complete with magnificent boots! With cunning, loyalty, and wit, he transforms his new friend's fortunes, securing him wealth, a job and a princess. Packed with music, dance, comedy and audience participation, PUSS IN BOOTS is the "purr-feet" accompaniment to the holidays. Run time is 65 minutes.



Sunday, December 6, 2026

Santa will be our special guest from 11:00am - 1:00pm
(children 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 - included with price of ticket

(waffle bar, scrambled eggs, cheesy hashbrowns, bacon, fresh fruit, oj 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, November 30, 2026.
(checks made out and mailed to: Branch 9, 5831 Cedar Lk 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. _____

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



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



Follow this link to make sure your address is up to date with NALC HQ, you will need your Postal Record # found on the address label of the magazine. For instructions on how to find your Postal Record #, see page 14. You can also call the NALC Membership Department at 202-393-4695 or the office of the Secretary Treasurer at 202-662-2836. For deadlines see page 2.



SEP 22

General Membership Meeting
Every 4th Tuesday 7PM

Crystal VFW

OCT 4-7

MSALC Convention

Sugar Lake Lodge
Cohasset, MN

OCT 12

Indigenous People's Day
Columbus Day

OCT 13

Steward Board Meeting
Every Second Tuesday 7PM

Crystal VFW

OCT 27

General Membership Meeting
Every 4th Tuesday 7PM

Crystal VFW

**Northside Retiree Breakfast
First Tuesdays @ 9:30**

Elsie's
729 Marshall St. NE
Minneapolis

**N Suburban Retiree Breakfast
First Fridays @ 8:30**

Denny's Restaurant
9020 Quaday Ave NE
Otsego

**Fridley Retiree Lunch
Second Tuesdays @ 11:30AM**

Route 47 Pub and Grub
7820 University Ave
Fridley

DEC 6

Puss in Boots Holiday Show
@ Sidekick Theater

11411 Masonic Home Dr
Bloomington



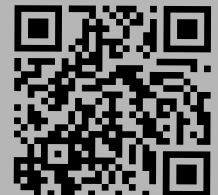
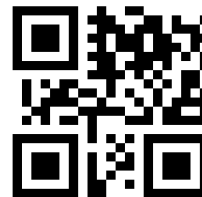
**Visit
Branch 9
Online**

**PTF
Ranking**



**Bid
Sheets**

nalc.org



**Branch 9
Facebook**