JEROME J. KEATING BRANCH

BRANCH NINE NEWS

"AN INJURY TO ONE IS AN INJURY TO ALL"

Volume 78 No 9 | Offical Publication of Branch Nine, NALC | November 2026

Reform in the NALC Has Arrived

Official results of the 2026 NALC elections were announced on Oct 23, with the Concerned Letter Carriers (CLC) slate taking 6 out of 10 full-time resident officer positions, making James Henry (Branch 1100 Garden Grove, CA) National President and Corey Walton (Branch 4 Nashville, TN) the new Executive Vice President. Region 7 National Business Agent (NBA) Patrick Johnson (Branch 2 Milwaukee, WI) retains his position, narrowly fending off challenger Elliott Simmons (Branch 957 Bismark, ND) by a vote of 1537-1352, while the CLC won 6 of the 12 contested NBA positions nationwide. The turnout was the highest since 2014 at 61,119 votes, though only about 20% of the membership participated.

When our new national officers are sworn in on Dec 12th, the NALC will have its first African American president in James Henry. We'll also have our first Table 2 national officer (hired after the Das arbitration award in 2012 created a second pay tier) in Director of Safety and Health, Rob Kozier (Branch 2 Milwaukee, WI).

Echoes of the Past

In a post-election appearance on the *From A to Arbitration* podcast, President Elect James Henry stated, "There are those that would say that this union is divided-- this union is not divided, the only thing divided is the vote. It is time that we move forward and unify, and continue to have at hand what is most important, and that is the interest of the letter carriers… We're ready to go on day one to secure a contract that's gonna be worthy of the letter carriers. That is our goal, it will not be due to lack of trying, you can bet your bottom dollar the fact that we will fight for you."

"We literally made history…" says President Elect Henry, and history sometimes has a funny way of repeating itself. The 2026 elections were the most contentious since those of 1978, which occurred not long after a bad tentative agreement with the Post Office was voted down by the members, and which resulted in a reform movement victory. Vince Sombrotto's rise started in the years leading up to the 1970 strike, and after failed presidential runs in '74 and '76, culminated in the election of Sombrotto to National President. *Carriers in a Common Cause*, which all letter carriers received in our welcome packets during orientation, serves as the official history of the NALC and offers some relevant context:



President Elect James Henry

"[in 1978] The union… suffered from internal divisions. The recent election had swept from office a number of longtime national officers, and their supporters were, at the very least, dubious that the new president could administer the union as effectively as he had criticized those who had previously held national office. Adding to the potential for continued divisiveness was the fact that the new administration included officers who had supported first James H. Rademacher and then J. Joseph Vacca during the 1970s."

(Continued on Page 11)

The December GMM will be the 2027 Budget Meeting

Welcome New Branch Niners

Mark Ambroe

Sakeena Danner

Jacob Goffard

Nathaniel Guthrie

Kenya Hayes

Joshua Hovis

Ryan Japs

Sierra Kadlec

Zachary Kamnitzer

Eric Laliberte

Dunt Matheson

Matt Myers

Benjamin Osborn

Shakirat O Oyebo

Pedro Vieira De Lima

Join the NALC Veteran's Group

Announcements

Open season for health benefits will be from November 9th to December 14th for the 2027 plan year.

At the December GMM we will be discussing and voting on the 2027 budget for the branch.

The penalty overtime exclusionary period for 2026 will be from Nov 28th to Dec 25th (PP 26 - 27).

Apologies to all who tried to attend the October GMM via Zoom. There were techincal difficulties that could not be resolved in time.

A Duluth carrier started an LGBTQIA+ discord server with members accross the country, if you're interested in joining, follow the link below:

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

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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.

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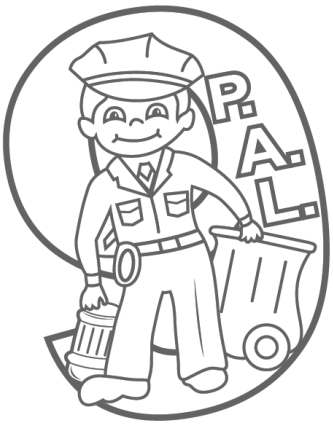
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Thank You PAL 9 Contributors

Very Concerned Members

Vince Froehlich

Concerned Members

Bill Whritenour

EAP Monthly Focus

Holiday Wellness

You don't have to do everything perfectly to have a meaningful holiday season. By focusing on what matters most, managing expectations, and taking care of your financial, emotional, and physical well-being, you can create a healthier and more enjoyable experience for yourself and those around you. The EAP is here to help. Employees and household members can access confidential support and resources to navigate life's challenges, strengthen relationships, manage stress, and support overall well-being throughout the holiday season and beyond.

EAP

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

Retirements



Teresa Ness retires from St Louis Park Station with 28 years of service



Chris Bleth retires from Chanhassen Station with nearly 36 years of service

Operation Santa

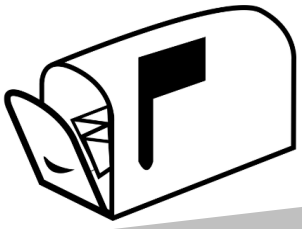
Help make holiday wishes come true by adopting a letter and finding the ideal gift to send through our convenient online catalog or on your own.



Santa is now accepting letters! Send them in before adoption begins on 11/16!

Did you know?

James Henry will serve as only the 20th National President of the NALC since its founding in 1889, and he will be the 5th President to be elected since 1978. NALC presidents currently serve 4 year terms, though this has not always been the case.



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

PRESIDENT'S REPORT



Joe Rian

Planning for Tomorrow

I thought this would be a good time for an update about some of the things we have been working on, besides grievances, at the Branch over the summer.

For the building, the air conditioners and heaters needed replacement. We took bids and secured a contractor to install them. During installation, the person installing them was injured (torn meniscus). Hopefully the work will be completed when you read this. Our old AC and heating equipment was described by the contractors as “antique”.

Money. We had timed CD’s expiring for the Building Corp. We rolled part of these funds into T-Bills at a modest rate of return of about 3% with Cetera Investment. The rest we have put in a Money Market Account that will earn 1% short term. In the meantime, we are working with a financial advisor on developing a long term Branch and Building Corp Investment Policy/Strategy and will have a recommendation before the end of the year to buy more T-Bills, stay in the money market or move into a more aggressive strategy with a mutual funds. These are interesting discussions that represent, and will in the end define, the breadth of our membership dreams for the future. A new building or capital preservation? Members with 20 years to go have quite a different perspective than retirees. I trust we can all strive to find common ground and be good stewards for the financial future of the branch.

Our yearly inventory is complete, and the trustees continue to conduct monthly audits and report quarterly at the general membership meetings. The 2027 budget has not been completed but discussions have begun. Costs for everything, from insurance to gas and electric are going up. Cuts may have to be made.

All but one of our bylaw changes were approved. The one that was not approved involved the Eboard moving up to $5000 from one budget line item to another without the GMM approval if the need arose. NALCHQ takes the position that this would not comply with regulations requiring the membership to approve all expenditures. Since the budget was already approved by the membership in December, changing things from one line item to another would constitute the Eboard approving new expenditures without the approval of the membership. It was suggested that we should incorporate language about emergency expenses into the 2027 bylaws, if the members want it.

Lastly, Branch 9 had a small contingent of delegates attend the Minnesota State Association of Letter Carriers 2026 convention at Sugar Lake Lodge near Cohasset. It’s a beautiful time of year to travel to northern Minnesota and I hope more people can go next year. Remember if you attend 9 out of 12 GMMs in the year proceeding the convention, Branch 9 will provide funds to help defray the cost of attending. NALC Director of Life insurance Jim Yates was the National Officer who attended. Some other special guests included Congresswoman Betty McCullum, CD 4 Representative, Bernie Burnham, President of the Minnesota AFL-CIO and the State Chairman of the Minnesota Democratic Party

Richard Carlbom. They all signed a pumpkin that was raffled off and raised $3500 for the Muscular Dystrophy Association (MDA) and presented to Jim Yates to bring back to Washing ton, DC. The delegates were very generous.

The most special part of the convention to me is always the candlelight Memorial Service for all the NALC members in Minnesota who passed away this past year. The room is darkened, and soft music is played as presidents from each branch walk to the front of the meeting hall with lit candles as the names of their members who passed away are called out for one last time. It's just beautiful.

I just want to say thanks to you all, the members of Branch 9, for electing me your President. I am truly honored to represent such great American workers and have tried to do so to the best of my ability. I look forward to working with you on the challenges we will face in 2027. Happy holidays to you and your families this holiday season.

2026 MSALC Convention



Your Branch 9 2026 MSALC Delegates (from left to right): Director of Life Insurance Jim Yates, Andrew Hagan, Joe Rian, Joe Tiemann, Samantha Hartwig, Nick Tiemann, Connie Beissel, Robb Petersburg, Lenny Larson, Darrell Maus, Chris Pennock, Aleesha Berg, Tim Bash, Susan Becker





EXEC VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT



Chris Pennock

A New Chapter for the NALC

The election for NALC national officers is over, and this is one for the history books. The Concerned Letter Carriers won most of the resident officer positions with James Henry in as President, and Corey Walton in as Executive Vice President. All the new officers will be installed on December 12th. I'm very excited for the future of our union and am looking forward to more aggressive enforcement of our contract on a national level.

The first order of business for the new officers will be our collective bargaining agreement. The outgoing administration had said that they would leave the arbitration over our contract to the incoming administration. I believe that the new officers will fiercely advocate for our pay and issues in arbitration.

Although I believe we have much better negotiators this time around, we are going into negotiations with our hands tied behind our backs as we cannot make a credible threat of a strike. The ability to withhold our labor is the real power that we have as workers at the negotiating table. Our labor is the only thing that the bosses value out of us, and being able to threaten to take that away is the most powerful thing that any union can do.

At the recent Minnesota AFL-CIO conference there was a panel of three worker activists speaking on the importance of striking and how it helped them win their first contracts. One challenge of many newly organized workplaces is that it can be relatively easy to form a union, but much more difficult to leverage that into an agreed upon contract. Each of the three workers said that either going on strike or threatening to go on strike was what moved the needle in their negotiations and allowed them to secure a contract win. I was struck by this panel as one of the many reasons that we need to fight for the right to strike.

Winning the right to strike will be a long road, as it's currently both illegal and against our contract to go on strike. We can look at our history for lessons, and I would highly recommend the 2020 book by Philip Rubio Undelivered: From the Great Postal Strike of 1970 to the Manufactured Crisis of the US Postal Service. The strike in 1970 was an illegal wildcat strike, but letter carriers went out anyway, famously saying that there's no jail big enough for all of us. I do want to be clear though that I am not advocating for a strike.

One question we sometimes face from members is why we do solidarity work supporting other workers' struggles and other unions. I believe that the history of the labor movement teaches us that our true allies are other workers and worker organizations. Looking back at the 1970 strike,

Big N.Y. union backs strikers

NEW YORK, March 23 — Within hours after Nixon's announcement of plans to use troops to move the mail, Victor Gotbaum, president of the powerful New York District Council 37 of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, declared his support for the postal strikers. At a press conference, he said the postal unionists were fighting the battle of all municipal workers. He criticized other union leaders for failing to rally behind the strikers and scored Nixon for "wrapping himself in the flag" in attacking the strikers. He announced District 37 was contributing $5,000 to the strike.

the support that we received from other labor organizations was critical to our success (see the insert for one example of this, and there were many more). It was also a major reason that Nixon backed down, he was afraid that other workers would be inspired and would go on strike themselves. Solidarity is the path forward for workers.

Correction – Last month I incorrectly listed which HRSSC to send FMLA to, although the address was correct. NALC.org has incorrect information, which is one of the reasons why we put this information on our Branch 9 website. The correct address is:

HRSSC FMLA 10

PO Box 970910

Greensboro, NC 27497-0910

IT'S Better IN A Union AFL-CIO

Retiree Update



Hello Brothers and Sisters. First off I would like to Thank Pat Paplow for his informative article about TSP. Another note on this, I recently received an email that TSP is moving away from paper checks and is asking ALL participants to have direct deposit set up. Also, I will put in a plug for NARFE (National Active and Retired Federal Emplyees). Their website has numerous webinars on retiring from Federal Service. This info is in addition to info on the NALC YouTube page on postal retirement.

Now importantly, it is OPEN Season for Medicare plans Part D. If you are retiring now, you are required to sign up for Medicare Part B. This must be done 3 months before to 3 months after the month you turn 65. You then have to decide A) do I keep my postal Insurance? B) do I look for a supplemental plan? Now until December 7 is open season for Medicare Part C/D. These supplemental plans are dictated by the county you are in and assigned by zip code. The NALC plan high option premiums went down slightly (just a note).

Please consult a trusted advisor on these health insurance matters. Come January 1st, you are stuck with that plan for the next 12 months.

Time to Review your Health Plan!

Open season is upon us; we have from November 9 to December 14 to make new elections for health (OPM.gov), vision and dental (BENEFEDS.gov) benefits and flex spending accounts (FSAFEDS.gov). The open enrollment for Medicare is October 15 to December 7.

Overall, the average increase for PSHB plans is 11.3%. However, the NALC High Option Plan premiums decreased slightly for self-only and self plus one and increased by about $3 per pay period for self and family. The Consumer Driven Health Plan (CDHP) option increases are in line with the wider average.

The NALC plan benefits are designed with letter carriers in mind, whether it's virtual care for everything from late night fevers to toenail fungus, or to help us reduce aches and pains through a partnership with Hinge Health, or by providing Priority Health Coaching to help you figure out how to navigate the system and make the most of your health care.

The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) (1-888-767-6738) can have frustratingly slow service, especially during the open season. Please call them as soon as possible if you need assistance with passwords, to change your home address, or update your dependents.

I encourage everyone to check the coverage in your current plan and to compare plans using the tool on the OPM website. I am confident that you will find that one of the NALC plans will fit your needs.



Dont Tolerate Harrassment

How many of you know that last November there was a joint training with management and the union for the whole installation of Minneapolis about harassment? Has the harassment stopped at your station? Do you know what to do if you are being harassed?

There is a handbook called *Publication 552* and it explains the steps management needs to take when there is harassment. It explains the different types of harassment and the effects harassment has in the workplace. How many people know that if someone is being harassed that their work performance intentionally decreases? Two thirds of people will even admit to it. I know that is what has happened to me in the past. For example, when the boss talks to me in a disrespectful way and feels like they're harassing me, I have drastically declined my work performance. I don't like it and don't want to but if they are not going to treat me like a human then I have a hard time working for them. This is something management is aware of as it is written in *Publication 552*, so why do they treat us the way they do? We can put a stop to it!!!!

The first step we need to take is make management aware. There are several ways of doing it but there needs to be a record or proof it happened. I have used text messages, though you could also verbally say it. Have a witness and make sure they write a statement , or you could write it down and have management sign it and make a copy. Once management is aware they are obligated to follow through with steps 1 and 2. They are required to investigate and then follow up with you on their findings. This needs to be done promptly, and if it isn't being done you absolutely need to have your steward file a grievance. If the harassment continues, the other option after that would be to file an Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) violation. These are the types of actions we need to take to fight back against management harassment. We don't need to put up with it, and we have tools to make it stop.



Don't forget you have all the power and any power management has is what you give them. If you want things to change, start enforcing your rights. Management is not your friend. They only want you to believe that so you work harder for them. Go ahead and start enforcing some of your rights and see where that friendship goes. Knowledge is power and we can use Publication 552 to help bring a stop to harassment.

Steps for Managers to Address Workplace Harassment

1	2	3	4	5	6
Respond Promptly	Obtain Information	Begin IMIP	Evaluate Information	Plan of Action	Follow Up

Harassment is unwelcome behavior directed at an individual, which the individual finds offensive and harmful, and that a reasonable person would view as unwelcome or offensive.

Workplace harassment includes personal interactions characterized by bullying behaviors, personal attacks, acts of intimidation or threats, and behavior that may humiliate, embarrass, and belittle others. Harassment can take the form of verbal comments, actions, gestures, and displays. Usually the offensive behavior occurs often, over a period of time.

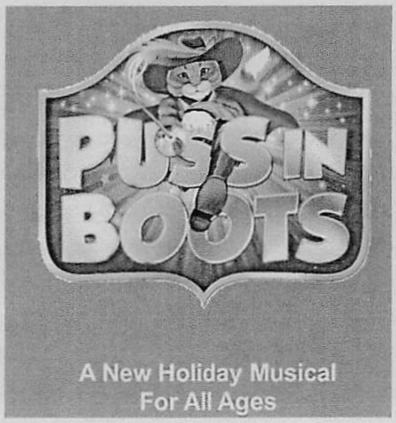


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Gregory M. Watroba
Kenneth M. Wehr
Herman M. Weidner
Ryan Wiebold
Wayne W. Witry
Michael T. Zagaros
Vernon J. Zierman

The list above includes all Branch 9 Members who are members of the NALC Veterans Group, if you would like to be recognized in the future, please sign up for the Veterans Group and/or contact the branch.

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. _____

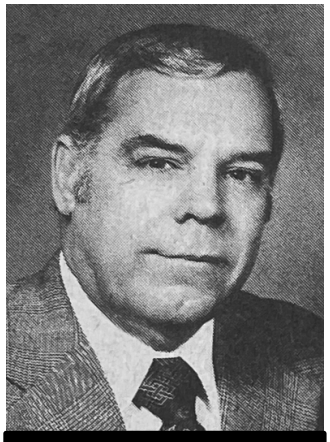
#6. _____ #7. _____

(Continued from Front Page)

Calls for Unity

In the January 1979 *Postal Record*, the newly re-elected Executive Vice President Tony R Huerta wrote some words we should all take to heart:

"Everyone to a man stressed the need for unifying both segments of the NALC if we were to survive.... I expressed my concern for our Union, recognizing that the differences among members on political matters could have a tendency to breed disastrous animosities which could shake the NALC apart.... Friend has turned against friend; brother against brother; and even branch against branch. .. The time is long overdue for the President of the NALC to be the president of ALL the membership—not just that segment of the union that voted for him. No longer can we afford the luxury in the NALC for people to sit on their hands and sulk because the new President is not the man they voted for. We cannot—and must not—ever again permit people to sabotage any elected Administration just to make them look bad. It is everyone's personal responsibility to help the new Administration function properly--for the recipients of any success will be the membership, not the elected officers.



Former NALC EVP Tony R Huerta

Some of our members would deny their officers all the power and tools needed for leadership. They would allow them no discretion to act or not to act... You have elected your leaders... irrespective of whether you voted for them or not—now LET THEM LEAD!"

The truth is that despite the promises made by candidates in this election, it's certainly possible things get worse before they get better. On the bright side, the winner of the 1978 elections, Vince R Sombrotto, served as president of the NALC for 24 years, overseeing the most successful period of NALC history. With the exit of officers Nicole Rhine, Manny Peralta, and so many others, we're losing over 100 years of combined experience working for the NALC in every level from the local to regional and national.

Let us all work together to ride the wave of increased member engagement, renewed hope, and promised militancy, to stamp out the apathy that plagues our union. Let us not mistake debate, contested elections, questioning of past practices, or good faith social media posts for division. In fact, we must recognize that social media does not further discourse, but rather impedes it by design. The future of the Post Office looks bleak, as it did in 1978 to the carriers of that time, but instead of staring into the abyss, let us fight for everything we can get.

Editor's Note: Special thanks to Mike Shea at the Postal Record for sending me some old copies of the Postal Record to dig through.

For a full list of election results follow this link:





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

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

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

Beware of OIG Integrity Tests: This is the season when many of us receive gifts from our customers of various kinds, for information about what you can and cannot accept, check the Branch 9 homepage.



NOV 24 General Membership Meeting — Every 4th Tuesday 7PM — Crystal VFW

NOV 26 Thanksgiving Day

DEC 6 Puss in Boots Holiday Show @ Sidekick Theater — 11411 Masonic Home Dr Bloomington

DEC 8 Steward Board Meeting — Every Second Tuesday 7PM — Crystal VFW

DEC 22 General Membership Meeting — Every 4th Tuesday 7PM — Budget Meeting — Crystal VFW

DEC 25 Christmas Day

JAN 1 New Years Day

JAN 12 Steward Board Meeting — Every Second Tuesday 7PM — Steward Appreciation Night — 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

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nalc.org

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