

JEROME J. KEATING BRANCH



BRANCH NINE NEWS

"AN INJURY TO ONE IS AN INJURY TO ALL"

1964

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CAN YOU HEAR US NOW?

On September 27th, postal employees, retirees, their families and supporters took to the streets to garner public support for H.R.1351. Rallies were held at all of the Congressional District offices to demonstrate to our elected officials that we will not be silent.



Burnsville rally participants gathered for a group photo. This is what Congressman John Kline would have seen.

From the Editor's Desk



August and September have been very busy months for Branch 9. The Minnesota State Fair was very successful again this year, with the theme being "To Tell The Truth." Fairgoers from all over the nation signed postcards asking their U.S. House Representatives to support H.R.1351. Visitors to our kiosk were educated as to what the truth was concerning the Post Office's finances.

Branch 9 President, Mike Zagaros went to the Committee of Presidents (COP) meeting.

The Minnesota State Convention was held at Rutgers Lodge. Photos and article will appear next month.

The Retiree Christmas Party is coming up in early December. The registration sheet is on page 11. Also, I will be bringing copies of photos from the Red & Gold Banquet. These will be available on a first come first served basis.

Julie Waldemar will be doing an article on the NALC Health Benefit-Plan in the November Branch Nine News, after the National Rap Session in Las Vegas.

In Memoriam

Alex Stodola (Active)
Jerry Tripp

Rally's were held at Congressional offices around the nation, asking for their support of H.R.1351. Congressional District Liasons will have reports next month from their respective districts.



One final thing, Al Gulden (retiree) showed me a retirement logo done by a Branch 9 member years ago. In that paper was a short article by the then editor wanting to hear from retirees about various subjects. What a great idea. I will be contacting retirees at the Christmas party and next year's Red & Gold Banquet and ask them throughout the year their opinions on current postal ideas and retirement subjects.

On Sunday evening, September 4th, JoAnn Gilbaugh and myself had the honor of presenting a check for \$22,000 to MDA. TV Channel 45 hosted the six- hour MDA Telethon at Treasure Island Resort and Casino. I have to admit being surprised at the number of volunteers and support staff needed to produce this show. JoAnn did a superb job of conveying how we raised the money, and future fund raisers, all in 20 seconds and at 10:40PM.



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The Branch Nine News is a monthly publication of NALC Branch 9, and is published in the interest of and for the members of NALC Branch 9. The opinions expressed by the writers are not necessarily those of the OFFICERS, or of NALC Branch 9. Articles MUST be submitted to the editor by the 2nd Friday of the month, and must be signed. The Editorial Staff reserves the right to edit or refuse to print articles which are derogatory in nature. Any official NALC organization may reproduce our articles provided appropriate credit is given.

President's Report

The Large and Small of it

There are catch phrases like “Keep your eye on the big picture” and “pay attention to the details” that remind us that we need to look at life through a telescope and a microscope. Often we have to do both at the same time. This is nothing new in the life of a letter carrier or in the day to day operations of the NALC.

Looking at the big picture there are issues that are beyond the control of or outside the realm of the Postal Service and the NALC such as: whether or not there will be mail delivery six days a week or; convincing congress to return the overpayments to the pension funds or; change the pre-funding requirements for future retiree health benefits or; keeping congress out of our collective bargaining process or; who will support our issues in 2012? Any one of these can have a devastating impact on the lives of all of us and our families not to mention on the country as a whole. It is for these reasons that we keep beating the drum for COLCPE and 9 PAL and why we keep asking everyone to stay involved and connected to these issues.

That is why I want to take a moment to thank all of you who participated in the “Save America's Postal Service” Rally on September 27th. Branch 9 members along with over 500 city carriers, clerks, mail handlers, rural carriers and friends turned out at the 2nd, 3rd, 5th and 6th Congressional District offices and presented thousands of signatures asking the Representatives to support H.R. 1351 and to thank

those Representatives like Keith Ellison, Betty McCollum, Collin Peterson and Tim Walz who have already co-sponsored the legislation. This same scene was reproduced in every congressional district office across the country. I know that many of you were unable to attend the individual rallies because you were working overtime. There will be other opportunities as this rally was just the first step in getting the truth out to the public unfiltered by various pundits and our opponents.

All the talk seems to be about reducing... reducing the number of Post Offices, reducing processing centers, changing the delivery standards thereby reducing the level of service provided to the public and making things more difficult for some to have access. The US Constitution established the Post Office with the founding of this nation. Congress acted on behalf of the public to “promote the public convenience” when they established free city delivery in 1863. For nearly 150 years there has been free city delivery in Minneapolis by letter carriers, six and sometimes seven days a week. We need to be ever vigilant to continue to provide the same service to “promote the public convenience.”

Remembering at the same time to “pay attention to the details” everyone is probably aware that there is a renewed focus by management relative to scanning. Letter carriers around the city are being brought into the office and asked to offer an explanation for a missing scan. First and foremost scanning is important. Letter carriers are expected to make



Mike Zagaros

their scans be they MSP (Managed Service Points) or those on packages and letters (i.e. delivery confirmation, accountable mail) or those related to coverages (i.e. Red Plums). Failure to do so can lead to disciplinary action. However, the parties at the National Level have agreed that MSP data may not constitute the sole basis for disciplinary action. If you are asked about your scans, make sure your steward is present.

There is also increased attention to what time carriers are hitting the street (leaving time). Management has the ability to determine how much mail will be worked on a given day. They also have the ability to tell you what time to leave for the street. Hopefully these two instructions will not be in conflict with each other, but if they are you should notify your supervisor and seek additional instructions. You have an obligation to notify management when you believe you have more work than you can do in the time frame given. This is based on your estimate not a DOIS projection. The National Parties have agreed that DOIS does not determine workload, leaving or return times and DOIS projections can not be the sole basis

President's article continued on page 7

Why should I be a Union member?

Samantha Hartwig
Eastside station

As we letter carriers move into the fall of the year, and watch the leaves begin to change I cannot help but wonder why some letter carriers think the Union has done nothing for them, and want to leave the Union. Right now the United States Postal Service, our employer, is struggling financially, and the Postmaster General and some members of Congress think the best option is to attack us. They think we are overpaid, and we have too many benefits, in fact they want to remove all federal benefits letter carriers have earned. They want to remove the No-Layoff clause in our contract that the NALC has fought to get for US. They want to take away 6 day a week mail delivery, which would hit the letter carrier craft hard, 1 in 6 letter carriers could be without a job.

I clearly see the hill we have to climb. WE have to work together now more than ever, and when these carriers tell me the Union has done nothing for them I bring up the nice 3 weeks of vacation that we can bid at one time, by the way no other local in the NALC has the right to bid 3 weeks of annual in one round. I bring up the nice paychecks we get, but they don't seem concerned. They tell me they are "independent", well that just tells me their only concern is for themselves. They tell me that labor costs are hurting the Postal Service that tells me they choose to not listen to the whole story. Yet these people want all the benefits we have, and they think they should get them for free. This I have a problem with.

We need to talk to the carriers who

believe the Union has done nothing for them. Every time a letter carrier drops out of the Union it weakens our voice, and only hurts the rest of us. These carriers don't seem to understand that if we sit back and do nothing all the hard work by the Union to get the benefits, and paychecks we enjoy can be taken away with the stroke of a pen by Congress. The NALC has gotten us those nice fat paychecks, the nice vacation time, the sick leave time, the federal benefits, and so many other things. I don't want to see us go backwards. The more carriers that feel the Union has done nothing for them, and drop out, the worse it is for the rest of us.

I offer a challenge to these members to actually attend a General Membership Meeting. I want to hear what they have to say, I want to know why they think this Union is not important. I never see these people at meetings, but they are the first to complain about the Union. This is a Union in which all voices can have a chance to be heard. Diversity can only make this Union stronger, more opinions, more ideas; this would be a good thing. This is not the first Union I have been a part of, but it is by far the best Union I have been privileged to be a member of.

The NALC can only be a strong and powerful voice with all letter carriers being a part of it. The more voices the NALC has the more voices Congress will hear. We need to make it to the top of the hill, and only with all letter carriers climbing together can we reach the top. The members who want to get out of the Union ask me why they should stay in. I have to ask why they want to leave an

Continued on page 7

We are Letter Carriers by Chuck Glover (Burnsville)

Six days a week we deliver through rain, snow, and sometimes gloom of night, faithfully taking care of our customers. Yes Mr. Donahue, our customers. You and the rest of your non-productive upper echelons claim that these are Post Office routes. True.

You can "COR", add to our deliveries, tell us that DOIS will set our leave time, and return time. Your underlings can '99 us to death, and we will comply to the best of our ability. So, Mr. Donahue, they may be Post Office routes, but they are OUR customers. We're looking out for grandma and grandpa. We chat with them and sometimes kid them a little, but behind it all, we are making sure they are ok each day. We are watching out for kids as they walk home from school, occasionally asking how their day was, but always observant that no strange vehicles are following them. We know most of the pets on our routes. Parents and kids may stop us during the day to ask us to keep an eye out for their lost dog. We keep a watchful eye on our customer's homes while they're gone on vacation.

We deliver the lay-off notice, and the return to work notice. We deliver the advertising, bills, packages, and medication to their mailbox. Our customers know us and trust us to deliver sympathy cards, wedding invitations, thank you cards, birthday cards, and the occasional cash in an envelope.

Mr. Donahue, to you, they are just numbers and columns on some flip-chart, but to me and thousands of my fellow letter carriers, they are our customers. We are Union Proud. We are Letter Carriers.

Executive Vice President's Report

FSS Environment

In the stations where FSS has been implemented there have been several issues that have arisen on a daily basis that the carriers are being confronted with. Whether it is an improperly adjusted route, a route not sequenced properly, or the most common issue of management harassing carriers to work faster and to make the numbers they have projected for the routes. The questions soon arise of what is the Union doing for me and why is the Union not doing enough to resolve these problems? Article 3 of the National Agreement gives management the right to manage and with that they also have the right to mis-manage.

When I first became a steward and was in a conversation with a manager and a carrier about some floor issues, the manager said that I was anti-management, of which I replied that no I was anti-mis-management. The Union is not against automation, FSS or the use of CORE for adjustments but rather the misuse of them. OPS Support has an agenda of how they are going to implement and adjust routes in these FSS stations without any input from the Union. FSS is totally at the hands of management. We have no input on how new office times are established, we cannot contest the fixed office time or have a say in our casing equipment or the labels that we are to use. Management has decided to just cram everything into the case and the carriers are to perform (not at the level they always have in the past) but rather you should now be even faster.

This job has been nothing more than organizing your mail in the office and then delivering it on the street. All of the automation that has been implemented to save time in the office has taken this organizing way. The problem is that with mail now being unorganized for street delivery as far as the numbers of bundles you work from, management still believes that it should not require any more time on the street.

This brings us to the issue of the street time used by our carriers. Every one in these sites has had a 3999 done at least once and some as many as 5 times. There are sometimes things that occur on the street that should not be allowed in your route value such as backtracking for a certain package that was missed, and the Union and carriers understand that. But the idea that time should be taken away for things that are done every day on the route is absurd. Comfort stops, relay time to replenish trays, putting your vehicle in park or neutral, being asked questions by our customers about their mail delivery, the list go on and on. To arbitrarily just take this time away only generates a street time that a carrier will never be able to accomplish even on their best days. Management has turned a deaf ear on all these issues that carriers and the Union have brought forth. But more important is the issue that management is certain that the carriers are at fault with the street delivery hours worked at these stations.



Darrell Maus

I thought of a similar scenario the other day that this would compare with; a livestock farmer's manure spreader wore out and he was in the need of a new one. His banker said no you don't need a new one, just live without it. The farmer then asks the banker out to his farm for a visit and takes him through the piling up manure in the barn and the banker has to walk through the same crap as the farmer and gets his shoes full. This by no means is a solution to the problem these adjustments have caused but, management has to walk through these adjustments with us and that is not comfortable for them.

As far as answering the question about what the Union is doing for you, the disputes are being filed, overtime violations are being grieved and awards paid. When these issues of delivery times or harassment about numbers are brought to the Branch's attention they are immediately addressed with management. They know where we stand on these issues and we will continue to inform them of the problems and take any necessary action warranted.

Vice President's article continued on page 7

Branch 9 Turtle Lake Casino Run
Turtle Lake, WI

WHEN: Sunday, November 20, 2011

WHAT: Each ticket purchased is good for one (1) round trip transportation to the casino, \$5.00 on players card, AND free lunch buffet at the casino.

COST: Price per ticket \$10.00/Each. No refunds will be given.

DEPART: Southdale Mall parking lot (NE corner, near York Ave and 66th Street - JC Penney overflow) in Edina at **10:00AM.**

2nd Pick-up point - Walmart off of 35W & Lexington (across from Wendy's).

-Maximum of 55 people on the bus

-To Reserve, you must mail in the sign-up sheet (below) and money (by November 16) to the Branch 9 office at 2408 Central Avenue NE, Minneapolis, MN 55418.

-Plastic cans and bottles are allowed on the bus.

-Must be 21 or older and have a picture I.D.

-Return roughly at 5:00PM

Branch 9's Turtle Lake Casino Run
Sunday, November 20

Name: _____

Address: _____

<input type="checkbox"/>	# of Tickets	Amount Paid _____
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Date of Birth is required for the players card. _____

President's article continued from page 3

for corrective action. The use of DOIS does not change the letter carrier's reporting requirements from the M-41 to notify management when you believe you have more work ... If after you have given management your estimate and that estimate changes again you should keep management aware of your new estimate. Follow your SOP as far as by what time you should notify management. If you are asked about your leaving time from the previous day, make sure your steward is present.

We know that some of the routes that were adjusted this summer are overburdened. Depending on which system was used to evaluate your route (JARAP or FSS) determines what can be done about it. Under the JARAP process, either the Union or management may seek a review of the routes in a zone within 120 days of the adjustment. The District Lead Team will decide whether a zone will be reevaluated using the September/October period only upon receipt of a request from the Local Office Contacts. If you believe your route is out of adjustment and it was subject to the JARAP process, contact your steward.

If you are an FSS site, your offices are subject to a joint review. At the end of the review either party can call for a route count and inspection. In those locations where count and inspections are to be done, we will be using the co-leader process. NBA Chris Wittenburg has reached an agreement with the District and is finalizing the details as of the writing of this article. One new wrinkle in this version of the co-leader process is that it will not stop when the inspections are

finished but will continue through the adjustment process as well. As always carriers may request a special count and inspection. However, the six week period needed to qualify does not begin until 60 days after implementation of the initial adjustments. Look for more information about upcoming route count and inspection training.

As I am writing this, we are preparing to attend the National Rap Session in Las Vegas. We will be scheduling additional meetings on our return to talk about what we learned by looking through both of National's telescope and microscope. As always we will try to provide the most current information that is available to the membership. But we can't do it alone. We need your help to tell us what you are seeing as well.



Samantha Hartwig article continued from page 4

organization that has done so much for letter carriers over the years. I am asking the rank and file carriers to have conversations with people who are thinking about dropping out of the Union. My biggest fear is that every time we lose a member, we get weaker. If we get too weak letter carriers could lose years of hard earned benefits. Why should I be a Union member? To protect your future.

Vice President's article continued from page 5

Weingarten Rights

With the amount of carriers being called into managers offices for discussions I want to make sure every carrier knows their rights under Weingarten. In the J-Cam it states "Federal labor law, in what is known as the Weingarten Rule, gives each employee the right to representation during any investigatory interview which he or she reasonably believes may lead to discipline." This rule cannot be exercised by the steward but rather the employee must request their steward to be present. Also the employee has the right to a pre-interview consultation with the steward before going into the office where information can be discussed privately. The branch has become aware of instances where the steward was not requested prior and afterwards the carrier has informed the branch they wished they had requested their steward's representation prior to the meeting especially when it involves the OIG agents or postal inspectors. In Minneapolis there has been a long time established and recognized agreement that whenever a carrier is called into the office for any type of discussion the steward is to be present, unless the carrier does not want the steward there. This rule also gives the employee the right for the steward's assistance, the steward is not there only as a silent partner. Management would be in violation of the rule if they were to try to restrict the steward to the role of only a witness or a passive observer. So when your presence is requested in the office by a supervisor or manager know your rights and exercise them. Ask for your steward representation for your own protection under the contract.

Branch 9 Kiosk at the Minnesota State Fair

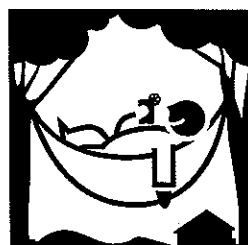
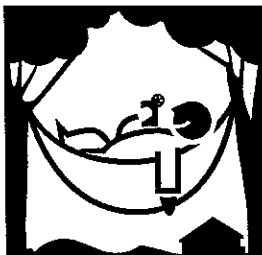
“TO TELL THE TRUTH” was the theme at this year’s letter carrier kiosk. More than a 1,800 fair-goers signed postcards in support of H.R. 1351. Volunteers had fact sheets to help educate the public on the financial crisis facing the Postal Service. Many thanks to the letter carrier volunteers who made this year a success!



BRANCH 9 NALC MDA RAFFLE

1. Raffle tickets are \$5.00/each.
2. ***First Prize*** is \$1,000.00.
3. ***Second Prize*** is a one week (Sat - Sat), 2 person vacation condo in Palm Springs, CA (air fair is NOT included). Valued between \$350 - \$600 depending on availability and time of year. For more information go to www.cappublishing.com.
4. The drawing will be held at the January 24, 2012 Branch 9 General Membership Meeting.
5. The winner need **NOT** be present to win.
6. **Checks are to be made out to Branch 9 MDA Fund and ALL proceeds will go to MDA.**
7. There is **NO limit** to the number of tickets you can buy.

If you have any questions, please contact the Branch 9 office at 612.781.9858



Delivery After Dark

With Day Light Savings Time approaching and the seasonal shorting of daylight hours, letter carriers are once again dealing with delivering mail after dark.

There is no blanket policy regarding Delivery after Dark because the issue to contend with is whether a particular carrier on a particular route can SAFELY deliver the mail. Bottom line, each carrier must weigh their individual circumstances about the type of delivery to be carried (door to door, walking, mounted, apartments, cluster boxes, etc.), their surroundings (unfamiliar, high crime, steps, animals and hills, etc.) and their experiences in attempting to make after dark deliveries.

Some mail delivery may not be able to be made safely after daylight hours. Most apartments have lighted entryways and don't present the safety hazards that walking on uneven terrain, up and down stairs, going door to door and being exposed to the elements would. Because carriers have the most experience and the best knowledge of what is safe or unsafe in the performance of their duties, and because they are often times held responsible for accidents and injuries that might occur while completing those duties, only the carrier, can make the decision on whether Delivering after Dark can be done safely.

So, if presented with a situation where you believe you'll be out delivering mail after dark, REMEMBER THAT YOU DO HAVE RIGHTS, and follow these instructions:

- 1.) Inform your supervisor in the morning of your need of auxiliary assistance in order to complete your street duties before dark. THIS MEANS FILL OUT A FORM 3996-HELP SLIP.
- 2.) Notify your supervisor prior to heading out to the street that you may not be able to complete your duties on the street by dark.
- 3.) When on the street if you realize that you definitely will be out after dark, call your supervisor and make them aware of that reality. Stress your concern for your safety and again request auxiliary assistance.
- 4.) Assuming no help arrives and you are faced with darkening conditions, attempt to continue.
- 5.) IF while attempting delivery, you literally experience a safety hazard (i.e. stumbling, tripping, hear dogs barking but unable to see that threat, not able to see potential dangers using your LLV/van's outside mirrors ...) call your supervisor. Explain your situation and notify them that you cannot safely continue delivery then return to your station.
- 6.) COMPLETE FORM 1571-Curtailment form for the undelivered mail.

Be sure to hand the curtailment slip to the supervisor, and ASK FOR A COPY. The copy is for your protection. You could also request a Form 1767-Notice of Hazardous Working Condition. This will help you document the safety hazards you encountered while attempting delivery after dark.

It is important to note that these instructions are not intended to endorse or encourage the unnecessary curtailment of any mail. It is about each carrier's safety and the protection of the mail in our charge.

This is also not a blanket policy or approach. It very simply is the responsibility of each carrier to measure their safety and ensure that they are working safely. PERIOD.

Retiree Holiday Party Wednesday, December 7th

Retired Carriers will celebrate their Annual Christmas Party. This year's event will once again feature friendly libations, good food, and plenty of time for reminiscing and extending holiday cheer to all our colleagues whom we have worked with and known for so many years. Join us at Fred Babcock VFW Post 5555. The social hour begins at 6:00PM with dinner from 7:00 - 9:00PM

Date: December 7th, 2011
Time: 6:00PM - Cocktails (cash bar)
 7:00 - 9:00PM- Dinner
Place: Fred Babcock VFW Post 5555
 6715 Lakeshore Drive
 Richfield, MN
 612.869.5555

Dinner Menu
 Choice of Prime Rib or
 1/2 Oven-baked
 Chicken or Walleye
 Salad
 Potato
 Vegetable
 Coffee, Tea, Milk

Please complete the reservation form & return to the Branch Office by November 28th

NALC Retiree Holiday Party

Name _____

(Choose One) Chicken Prime Rib Walleye

I will be bringing _____ guest(s) @ \$19.00 each

Name of guest _____ Chicken Prime Rib Walleye

Name of guest _____ Chicken Prime Rib Walleye

Cost: \$19.00 per plate

*All checks must be
made out and mailed to:*

**NALC Branch 9 - Holiday Party
2408 Central Avenue NE
Minneapolis, MN 55418**

Branch Nine News
2408 Central Avenue NE
Minneapolis, MN 55418-3712

Change Service Requested

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

Branch Nine Calendar

October 25

Nokomis Retiree Breakfast
9:00AM
Fred Babcock VFW
6715 Lakeshore Drive
Richfield

Tuesday, October 25

General Membership Meeting
7:00PM
Golden Valley VFW Post 7051
7775 Medicine Lake Rd
Golden Valley

Sunday, October 30

TE Meeting
6:30PM
Golden Valley VFW Post 7051
7775 Medicine Lake Rd
Golden Valley

November 1

Northside Retiree's Breakfast
9:30AM
Elsie's
729 Marshall St. NE
Minneapolis

November 8

Southside Retiree Breakfast
9:00AM
Fred Babcock VFW
6715 Lakeshore Drive
Richfield

Tuesday, November 8

Stewards Meeting
7:00PM
Golden Valley VFW Post 7051
7775 Medicine Lake Rd
Golden Valley

November 20

Turtle Lake Casino Run
Turtle Lake, WI
Information & Registration Form
on page 6

November 22

Nokomis Retiree Breakfast
9:00AM
Fred Babcock VFW
6715 Lakeshore Drive
Richfield

Tuesday, November 22

General Membership Meeting
7:00PM
Golden Valley VFW Post 7051
7775 Medicine Lake Rd
Golden Valley

December 7

Retiree Holiday Party
6PM - 9PM
Fred Babcock VFW
6715 Lakeshore Drive, Richfield
Registration on page 11

December 13

Southside Retiree Breakfast
9:00AM
Fred Babcock VFW
6715 Lakeshore Drive, Richfield

Tuesday, December 13

Stewards Meeting
7:00PM
Golden Valley VFW Post 7051
7775 Medicine Lake Rd
Golden Valley