



## Remembering Walter E. Couillard 1924 - 2009

Before writing this, a recurring question ran through my mind. How do you memorialize a man that was not only a legend but a hero as well? Mere words could never describe all that this man did for his country, family and the NALC.

After fighting with the Marine Corps in WW II, Walter went to work for the Post Office in 1947. Because he remained in the Marine Reserves, he was activated and sent off to war again, this time in Korea. While there, he fought in a battle at the Chosin Reservoir. Some have described that fight as the worst battle ever endured by man in recorded history. 15,000 allied troops were surrounded by more than 120,000 Chinese and North Korean soldiers. The enemy attacked at night when the temperature dropped to 40 degrees below zero. Walt and his fellow Marines fought their way (nearly 80 miles) to the sea to be evacuated and fight another day. They carried the dead and wounded out with them. In the process, 6,000 of his comrades were killed and another 6,000 were wounded or severely



frost bitten. It was so cold that soldiers on both sides of the conflict literally froze within minutes of being wounded or killed.

Upon his return from that war, Walt went back to work for the Post Office and the NALC. He started out as the Branch 9 Sub Representative. He later served as Entertainment Chair, Legislative Chair, Secretary, Vice President and President of Branch 9 and the MSALC, National Field Director, National Business Agent and National Director of Retired Members, and finally President of PAL9. Now you know where the nick name "Mister Everything" came from. He not only served in all of those positions, he served way beyond the call of duty.

Ask any soldier or letter carrier that ever knew him and they will tell you the same. His advice and counsel to me over the years was priceless.

Throughout all that his life encompassed, Walt was a devout family man. He and Edie raised seven children. Two of his sons are letter carriers and a daughter that as a lawyer, has represented our Branch in a number of legal matters. I think it is amazing that with all Walt had on his plate that he was also a wonderful father and husband. We all owe his family a debt of gratitude for sharing so much of him with so many of us.

As stated earlier simple words could never do justice in describing the life of this courageous and generous man. I think the actions of nine of the survivors of that epic battle of the Chosin Reservoir (The Chosen Few) at Walt's internment did it best. They marched to the head of his coffin in pairs, stood at attention, saluted and quietly said "Semper Fi brother." They then returned to formation and silently marched away.

## From the desk of the Editor

As some of you have seen, the October issue of the Branch 9 News had pages out of order. Human error at the printing company caused this error. The Branch Officers are in contact with the printer to be compensated for this error (see page 10). This issue was discussed at the October GMM. This is a good

segue into attendance at Branch meetings. Kathy Carlson from Jordan brought her son and helped him with his homework before the last GMM. If she can drive at least 30 miles to attend Branch meetings, why can't carriers who live less than 10 miles away take some time to become informed on their postal future?



Kathy Carlson with her son Ben at a GMM

## Richfield Awards



Pictured left to right, 25 year member Stephen Robinson, President Pam Donato, 30 year member Tom Quale, and Steward Joe Rian

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Recording Secretary	Melia Derrick
Treasurer	Darrell Maus
Financial Secretary	Rick Onslow
Editor	Chuck Glover
Sergeant at Arms	Jim Nelson
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Trustee	Barb Watzcak
Trustee	Jeremy Rothstein
Director of Retirees	Cheryl Stately

NALC Health Benefits Rep Julie Waldemar  
612-823-7488  
Office Hours:  
1st & 3rd Tues. 1-5 PM.

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 3rd 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.

## Walter E. Couillard

Sub Representative: 1948-1950  
Entertainment Chair  
Legislative Chair  
Secretary Branch 9: 1957-1961  
Vice President: 1962  
Vice President MSALC: 1963-1964  
President MSALC: 1964-1966  
President Branch 9: 1965-1968  
Nat'l Field Director: 1968-1972  
Nat'l Business Agent: 1972-1978  
Nat'l Dir. of Retirees: 1987-2000  
Inducted into Branch 9 Hall of Fame: May, 2000



Why would someone give so much of himself to better the lives of his fellow letter carriers?

His dedication towards his NALC family, probably was forged by his love of the Marine Corps.

Walt has one assignment left. He is on permanent duty guarding the streets of heaven as per the last stanza of the Marine Corps Hymn. **“If the Army and the Navy ever look on Heavens scene, they will find the streets are guarded by United States Marines.”**

*Semper Fidelis, Walt.*

# President's Report

## REMEMBERING

### **“MR. EVERYTHING”**

### **WALT COUILLARD'S** **62 YEARS OF SERVICE**

Lenny Larson and Chuck Glover have helped to memorialize our very own Walt Couillard in this issue. We could write a thick book to honor Walt and still have more to say in his memory. Even if all you ever knew about Walt was in this Branch 9 News issue, I am sure you get the picture that he was what they call “larger than life”. You’d be absolutely right. What you need to also know is that he was a gentleman and a diplomat as well as a fierce advocate for letter carriers for 62 years. Before Walt, there was no Branch building, there was no overtime pay, and there was no contract that addressed our pay and benefits. No, Walt is not individually responsible for obtaining all of these things. However he led the efforts to obtain these things, and so much more. He personified what is referred to as the “Greatest Generation”, having embodied all of those qualities of courage, strength, humility and self sacrifice. An original inductee into the Branch 9 Hall of Fame, he remains the standard by which all others have and will be measured for that honor. He will never be forgotten. Thank you to his wife Edie and all of their family who unselfishly shared Walt with us all these years.

### **IT'S ALL ABOUT YOUR MONEY**

It's the time of the year when the Executive Board of the Branch prepares a budget for the coming year. Our current Executive Board,

along with a few “rank and file” members, meet to prepare a thoughtful fiscal plan for the coming year. We review last year's income and expense records, and then discuss ideas on allocating our expected income into proposed budgeted areas, such as training, member activities and payroll.

The largest source of income for the Branch is the union dues from its members. Obviously, more members results in more money, less members, unfortunately less money. As the route inspections have reduced route structure, we have fewer routes. This in turn leaves fewer carriers, as management has not hired any career carriers for nearly 3 years. We do have approximately 54 Transitional Employees (TE's), who pay full union dues, and that helps. But the reality here and around the country is a declining membership as route structures change.

The Branch is pursuing all avenues of increasing new members. We should start in our own back yard, as we have approximately 40 letter carriers in the area Branch 9 represents who ARE NOT union members. We will continue to reach out to them to join and pay their fair share, and we could use your help. They're free loading from the Branch...and that means *from you!* We will also look to possible merger opportunities with other nearby NALC branches which will, I believe, benefit both membership groups involved. We closely monitor



our investments and expenditures, making adjustments when necessary.

Branch 9 members have a long history of being both visionary and fiscally disciplined. Despite the many twists and turns in our postal world and our union work, we are financially in very good shape. At the same time we are confronting both changing economic conditions and big challenges to our work and future. This will require us to make important decisions at the December General Membership meeting where the members in attendance will approve our 2010 year budget. Please take the time to attend at 7 pm on December 15<sup>th</sup> at the Ballentine VFW.

### **INSTALLATION OF NEW OFFICERS JANUARY 19<sup>TH</sup>**

All officers and stewards elected to serve the 2010 – 2013 term of office will be installed at the January 19<sup>th</sup> General Membership Meeting (GMM). Thank you to ALL who stepped forward and sought election to any of these positions. By doing so, you have demonstrated a willingness to serve the rank and file members in a leadership role, and we need each

**President's Rep. cont. on page 12**

## ABOVE and BEYOND



PTF carrier Jericho Tabor was delivering mail along his route when he happened upon a 70 year old patron whose dog escaped out the front door. When the patron tried to grab her dog, a Chow, it turned on her, knocked her down, and started to bite her. Jericho helped her up, but the woman did not want any aid. Jericho noticed her shirt sleeve turning red and blood dripping down so he called 911. The Richfield carrier provided care to the woman until the paramedics arrived. After explaining the situation, Jericho finished his park and loop. Before finishing his route he went back to check on the welfare of the elderly woman. Jericho finished his route and didn't mention it to anyone. The elderly customer contacted the Post Office and relayed the events that took place, and wanted to thank her carrier for his kindness and help. Jericho's award will be on permanent display at Branch 9. Congratulations!



### **Memo from Cheryl Stately, Director of Retirees:**

Here it is, Christmas time again. Don't forget to get your check in for the Retiree Christmas Party, which will be held on December 2nd at the Fred Babcock VFW. Because of the party, there won't be a Southside Breakfast on December 8th, but there will be a Nokomis Breakfast on that day instead of December 22nd. Hope you all have a great holiday and we'll see you next year.

In solidarity,  
Cheryl

## FERS Sick Leave Credit

The Senate approved legislation on October 22 that gives federal and postal workers under the Federal Employees Retirement System credit toward their retirement benefits for unused sick leave. The provision, a legislative priority for the NALC, was included in a compromise version of the 2010 Defense Authorization bill. The House approved the bill October 7 and it was sent to President Obama for his signature. Under the new law, FERS employees get half credit for unused sick leave through 2013; full credit takes effect on 2014. The bill also includes a provision to gradually move federal employees who live and work outside the continental United States away from territorial COLA's based on price differences and into a locality pay system based on wage differences.

## Branch 9 Official Election Results

### Financial Secretary

**Rick Onslow \* 502**

**Joe Rian 339**

### Editor

**Chuck Glover \* 505**

**Ned McCraine 339**

\* Elected

### Sergeant At Arms

**Jim Nelson \* 532**

**Mike Trudeau 294**

### Trustees

**Jim Hendrickson 406**

**Jeremy Rothstein \* 545**

**Mike Smith \* 584**

**Barb Watzak \* 659**

# Executive Vice President's Report



## “But It’s Dark Out There”

Due to a variety of reasons carriers are once again dealing with delivering mail after dark. But is it safe? That is the million dollar question. It’s been said darkness by itself does not determine whether or not its safe to deliver the mail. So what should you do do? This informaiton has been sent to the stations before, but it is again being offered as a reminder to us all.

There is no set policy that defines when you should or shouldn’t deliver after Dark. because it depends. It depends on whether or not a par-ticular 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, many steps, animals and hills, etc.) and their experiences in attempting to make after dark deliveries.

There are some deliveries that carriers may be able to make safely, even 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 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, themselves, 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 out on the street 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 should 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 no blanket policy or approach. It simply is the responsibility of each carrier to measure their safety and ensure that they are working safely. PERIOD.

# 1st Annual National MDA Bowl-a-Thon

Park Tavern was the setting for the NALC Bowl-a-Thon. November 1st is the date now set aside for the national bowl-a-thon to raise money for Muscular Dystrophy. Letter Carriers and their families and friends bowled as many games as they wanted for a set fee. Donated prizes were awarded throughout the event, and pizza's were provided. This event raised \$4,640.



## FEHB Open Season is NOW!

If you want to compare health plans you can go to [opm.gov](http://opm.gov), click the link to health insurance, click the link to compare plans. Active carriers would click US Postal; Retired carriers (annuitants etc) would click non-postal and continue on from there.

**Don't think that your FEHB Plan hasn't changed – they all have – be smart and see if you are still in the best plan for you.**

If you want to know the details of the NALC Plan go to [www.NALC.org](http://www.NALC.org), click on departments, click on Health Benefit Plan... There is a video and many links available so you can be totally informed on the plan.

On pages 13 – 15 in the NALC Plan brochure it shows what has changed for 2010. If you don't have access to a computer, you want to compare plans and you don't have all the booklets there are two HBR Health Fairs that you could attend.

November 20th, 7am -10am – USPS Minneapolis Main Post Office, 100 S First Street, 3<sup>rd</sup> floor hallway

December 1st, 3pm – 5pm USPS Twin Cities Metro Hub, 3501 Broadway St NE, break area by carriers

**RETIREES:** When Medicare Part A, Part B or both are your primary payer, the NALC Plan will continue to pay in full the balance after Medicare for any expense that Medicare covers. For Medicare you need to go to a doctor that accepts Medicare (in the NALC Plan those doctors are covered because we are the secondary payer).



*July Waldemar,  
Branch 9 Health Benefits  
Representative*

## Coat Drive Wraps Up

The 7th annual *Warm Hands Warm Hearts* coat drive finished in fine style. We collected over \$ 1200.00 and 105 coats for children of families who are experiencing poverty. Branch 9 members helped fill a need in our local community which provided 1,600 new coats, hats and gloves for children who might otherwise have none. The winter wear you provided helps to prevent parents from choosing between buying winter coats for their kids, or paying rent.

This year the winning station for donations is Richfield. A very special **Thank You** to Jeanne Spratt for being the lead coordinator for her station. Elmwood and Brooklyn Center stations also donated large amounts of

money and coats. Melia Derrick wants to acknowledge the help that Cheryl Stately donated to the coat drive. Because of Melia's official duties during General Membership meeting's, Cheryl and Deb Grunnes from Osseo station stepped up by recording donations and collecting coats from carriers. Finally, a warm thank you to all who gave so generously.



*Loading coats into Melia's vehicle after the meeting.*



*Deb Grunnes recording a cash donation from Virgil Andrada*



*Melia Derrick, Cheryl Stately, and Deb Grunnes starting to inventory the coat donations.*



## District Manager Deceptions and Half-Truths

by **Joe Sadowski**  
**Diamond Lake**

District Manager Tony Williams has a little problem with something called the truth. In the four times I've heard him speak in person, he's made various promises to the workforce, none of which he's kept.

Back when I was a PTF, the latest "flavor of the month" was the Voice Of The Employee survey. Mr. Williams was stressing the importance of all employees taking the time to "let their voices be heard". I asked him if there were any examples of data collected from the VOE actually changing policy. He said he'd have to get back to me on that one. Never happened.

Jump ahead to the off-the-clock meeting last December. A carrier from the North Side asked Mr. Williams to walk with her in an effort to reacquaint himself with the carrier craft and problems we encounter on a daily basis. He agreed, joshing that he would tag along if he didn't have to walk in "December" because of the "cold". One year later and that walk still has not taken place. And we had a pretty nice summer.

At that same meeting he informed us that the Comcast coverage's that were giving carriers headaches were the result of a bad spool of paper at the their plant and that his office was "working" with Comcast to solve the problem. He promised that after that bad ream of paper was used up, the problem could be addressed. One year later, same paper, same problem. That must be one heck of a ream.

Let's talk about his plan to "ergo dynamically" redesign station configurations for efficiency and in preparation for combining units. Most carriers lost wing cases BEFORE the route adjustment process, had their routes added to, and now are fitting 10 pounds of mail into one-pound slots. The stations are indeed more spacious, all that extra space now storing junk that station managers don't want to deal with, while the carriers strive mightily with the frustrations of another failed policy.

And the latest untruth? TWICE Mr. Williams has stated that he has no intention of letting any TE's go at the time of their service breaks. What he MEANT, but didn't say, was that

they would stretch those breaks into two and three week stints until the inevitable CHANGE in policy where TE's would INDEED be let go, a policy to start this January 2010.

Is it any wonder that his underlings have no problem stretching the truth to mask their incompetence? We have station managers hiding mail from counts on days of 3999's, others blatantly breaking the contract by issuing AND concurring letters of discipline, still others ignoring precedent-setting Step B decisions within their own installations as it suits them...all empowered by the policy of lies that leads back to Mr. Williams.

The hard-working carriers and clerks of the Northland and beyond deserve better leadership. This kind of reactionary, butt-saving, say anything "management-speak" has got to stop. I urge Mr. Williams to read "Ten Days That Shook The World" or ANY book about any revolution. You have a crisis in the workforce that is only being fed by your failure to address the issues that affect the men and women who toil tirelessly to provide you with your position and your livelihood. We deserve more than lies.

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November 11, 2009

NALC #9  
2408 Central Ave. NE  
Minneapolis, MN 55418  
Attn: Pam

Dear Pam:

We'd like to take this opportunity to offer our sincere apologies for mixing up the pages in your October newsletter. We mistakenly switched the "signatures" (group of 8 pages), which made some of the books collate in the wrong page order. The files sent to us from your editor were correct. The error was entirely ours! We are sincerely sorry for the mix up and resulting problems associated to the page order. Because of this error, we are not charging you for the printing of this newsletter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kay L. Owens".

Kay L. Owens  
President

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# **2nd Annual Branch 9 NALC Ice Fishing Outing on Lake Mille Lacs Appeldoorn's Sunset Bay Resort**

Appeldoorn's Sunset Bay Resort is located 4.5 miles north of Isle, Minnesota  
just off Highway 47 and 455th Street.

## **January 17th & 18th**

### **\$25 per person**

**6-hole houses (sleeps up to 4)  
10x16 (4 single bunks)  
(7 available)**

**8-hole houses (sleeps up to 6)  
10x22 (2 Doubles, 2 singles)  
(5 Available)**

All of our ice fishing house rentals include rattle reels, gas heat, gas cooktop and oven, gas lights, table and chairs, four padded bunks, inside bathroom and are generator ready. In addition, there is a bath house available on shore with showers and a heated floor. Microwaves, TV's, Flashers and underwater camera's are also available for rent. We use the new Garmin H20 GPS that has the Mille Lacs Lake software loaded on it. We place all fish houses on the best structure possible. NO GUESSING!!! We move the houses as needed to give you the best chance possible in catching walleye, northern pike and perch.

To reserve your icehouse send your check payable to Branch 9  
along with the names of those attending to:

**Branch 9 Ice Fishing  
2408 Central Avenue NE  
Minneapolis, MN 55418**

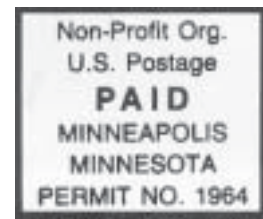
**Registration will be at 11 a.m. at Buzzie's on the Bay Bar and Restaurant  
(at Mac's Twin Bay Resort 43469 Vista Rd, Isle, MN 56342)**

**The Branch will be hosting a cookout on Sunday Evening  
Deadline for Reservations is the Stewards Meeting on January 5th**

For more information call 1-320-676-8834 or visit [www.sunsetbayml.com](http://www.sunsetbayml.com)

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

**Change Service Requested**



**President's Rep cont from pg 3**

and every one of you to continue to stay involved with the NALC. Congratulations to those who have won election. The next three years will be more challenging than any others we have met, yet they will also provide the most reward for our hard work. It will be on our watch that the USPS, and

therefore also the NALC will transform into our Postal Service and Union of the next generation. It is because of the quality of individuals elected here and our history of moving this membership to action that I have every confidence that we will prosper! I appreciate and am humbled by the confidence you have reaffirmed in

our current board of officers by their re-election. I am honored to lead our collective efforts and work shoulder to shoulder with you all! Please join all of us at the installation ceremony at the January 19th GMM at 7pm at the Ballentine VFW (2916 Lyndale Ave. S).

## **Branch Nine Calendar**

**December 11**

Pay Day

**December 15**

General Membership Meeting 7pm  
2916 Lyndale Ave S  
Minneapolis

**December 24**

Pay Day

**January 5**

Steward's Board Meeting 7 pm  
2916 Lyndale Ave S  
Minneapolis

**January 5**

Northside Retirees Breakfast  
9:30 am Elsie's  
729 Marshall Street NE  
Minneapolis

**January 8**

Pay Day

**January 12**

Southside Retiree's Breakfast  
9:00 am Fred Babcock VFW  
6715 Lakeshore Drive  
Minneapolis

**January 17 - 18**

2nd Annual Ice Fishing Outing  
Mille Lacs Lake  
11:00 Registration

**January 19**

General Membership Meeting & Installation of Officers 7:00 pm  
2916 Lyndale Avenue S  
Minneapolis