



## Buffalo to Brainerd

**I** just rode back in from a fast extended weekend, and yes, my horse is down in the NALC parking garage right now. My trip started off in Buffalo, NY, at the NALC Region 11 training session. National Business Agent Dan Toth, with some great help from Buffalo-Western New York Branch 3, rolled out the red carpet for our attending members. My hat is off to Brother Toth for the great training classes and to my good friend Bob McLennan, president of Branch 3, for being a super host.

Flying nowadays with all these new restrictions isn't easy. The FAA just will not let you bring a horse. I wasn't sure how I was going to get from the airport to the train-

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ing session until I got a hit on my Facebook account the night before. There it was, a note pasted on Facebook for all the world to see. The note was from a letter carrier saying they were going to have to clean out a vehicle so they could pick up the NALC executive vice president.

Just in case you don't use the Internet much, when you post a note on the website called Facebook, it goes out to all of your Facebook friends. My dear friend Susan Lewis had forgotten that I have a Facebook account. Within one minute, I posted back that they should just clear out enough space to get my hat in. Thanks, Susan, for giving me a ride and for the pictures—you're the best!

Region 11 had letter carriers from all over the area in attendance. The bad news that has been exploding out of Washington was of major concern, and the members at the training classes knew it was time to roll up their sleeves and get down to business. You could tell the students were ready to get back to their offices and fire up

the membership. Thanks, Region 11, for making this a better union!

**Looking back at the heading of this article, my guess is you got Buffalo right away, but did you figure out where Brainerd is?** The Brainerd area in the great state of Minnesota is where the letter carriers hold their state conventions. If you ever want to just get away and kick your boots off, this is the place. Not to be outdone by Buffalo, the Minnesota State Association sent brother John Weinhandle to greet me in a red Super Sport Chevy four-door, four-wheel-drive pickup truck. It was just like being out at the ranch. Thanks again, John!

I sure am glad I had a chance to do some prep work in Buffalo, because I needed it to hold my own at the Minnesota state convention. Minnesota, given its relatively small population, doesn't have the number of letter carriers some states have, but what they lack in numbers they make up for in heart. At the MDA

fundraiser alone, I would guess the average gift was close to \$80 per delegate. State Chair Mark Gortze and all of the officers of the Minnesota State Association can be very proud of the work they do.

Each day of the convention was filled with contract training and legislative updates from National Business Agent Chris Wittenburg. You can tell that Brother Chris is doing a fine job for Region 7. The letter carriers from Minnesota appreciate it, and so do we!

**We're in some hard times right now. I don't recall when the Postal Service and our union have gone through such troubling times. It all comes down to this: We can't keep giving away \$5.5 billion and stay in business. Congress, did you hear that?**

By the way, I did find some of my Post Office shirts to use when I go back to my route. Anyone remember what the expiration date is on the shirts with a mailman riding a horse, backward? ☒