

Letter carriers and the mail on social media

Various news stories and interesting anecdotes that celebrate letter carriers and the mail have been appearing on social media. The following are some that have come to the union's attention. If you come across a story you'd like us to consider featuring, send it to social@nalc.org.

Wisconsin town creates mail delivery spectacle

A long-held Wisconsin tradition involving a small shoreline town, mail delivery and a leap off a mailboat is continuing this summer. Every year, teenagers audition to be mailboat jumpers, who leap from boats to deliver mail to waterfront homes in the southeast town of Lake Geneva. The vessel does not stop at any point throughout the route—the teens must leap from the deck to the pier, drop off letters and collect outgoing mail, and leap back onto the deck, all while the ship is in motion. This year, more than a dozen teens attended tryouts.

National Public Radio (NPR) noted that “mailboat jumpers are idolized,” in part because the job isn't easy. Jumpers begin sorting the mail by 7 a.m.,

and in the past, a few have cracked the ship's windows by getting too fast of a head start, while others have ended up in the water. Jumpers also act as tour guides to boat passengers; because of this, jumpers are selected based on not only on their athletic ability but also their stage presence.

“There's a lot of adrenaline. And, you know, some people chase the runner's high. We chase the jumper's high,” 18-year-old Erin Hensler, who jumped last year and tried out again this year, told NPR.

Lake Geneva has received delivery by boat since the late 1800s, and although nowadays it is reachable by road, almost 80 residents opt for the unique method of boat delivery when it becomes an option in the summertime. For both residents and jumpers, it's a fun way to keep a tradition alive.



Postal Service celebrates waterfalls with new stamps

Waterfalls are known as many things—nature's waterslides, nature's showers, nature's music—and back in June, they earned a new designation as artwork on stamps. The U.S. Postal Service held a ceremony for the first day of issue at the Canyon Visitor Education Center at Yellowstone National Park, celebrating the release of 12 new stamps, each displaying a photograph of a waterfall, its name and the state in which it is located.

They honor waterfalls from all over the country, including the Lower Falls of the Yellowstone River in Wyoming, which at 308 feet has a drop almost twice the height of Niagara Falls; Grotto Falls in Tennessee, which has a hiking trail situated behind it; and Upper Falls in North Carolina, which supports its ecosystem by sending out sprays that water the surrounding plants whenever the waterfall hits the rock face. The stamps are beautiful, displaying water cascading down an array of differently



Ava Ocker of Lake Geneva, WI, tries out for a summer mailboat-jumping job.



Bransfield House, also known as the “Penguin Post Office,” in Antarctica

colored backgrounds—red, yellow, blue, green—and in some, you can even spot a rainbow dancing on the droplets.

Four women finish time at most remote post office

In April 2022, the most remote post office in the world, located in Antarctica, put out a request for applicants to reopen the building for the first time since the pandemic began, and 6,000 people responded. Among those 6,000 were Lucy Bruzzone, Clare Ballantyne, Natalie Corbett and Mairi Hilton, the eventual winners of the applicant pool. In November 2022, they began their long, cold winter, which would last until March 2023, and included forgoing running water and flushable toilets, sharing one bedroom amongst the four of them and showering only every few days when a ship came to the island. They also had to go without cell phone reception and internet access for five months.

The post office is in Port Lockroy and is informally called the “Penguin Post Office” as a nod to the thousands of penguins that sit on the slopes nearby. It welcomes about 18,000 visitors each season, in part because it is an historic site that was used by whaling fleets in the early 1900s. It also was “the first continuously occupied British base to establish year-round British presence in Antarctica,” according to the UK Antarctic Heritage Trust. It houses three buildings: Bransfield House, which includes

a museum, shop and the post office; a boat shed; and staff living quarters.

Each woman had a different job to complete. Corbett’s assignment was running the gift shop of the office’s museum, Ballantyne handled the 80,000 cards sent from the post office each year, Hilton—a conservation biologist—was responsible for counting the gentoo penguins on the island, and Bruzzone—a scientist—was tasked with managing the team and supervising ships’ coming and going. Bruzzone told BBC that the expedition was a “lifelong dream.”

Youngest carrier gets truck

Lucas Hastings, one of the Postal Service’s littler fans, recently wore his letter carrier uniform during a trip to the post office. In the lobby, Station Manager Michael Alston spotted 3-year-old Hastings and let everyone know that help had arrived, and the Washington, DC, office, aptly named Friendship Station, welcomed Hastings with open arms. The customer services supervisor, Myra Hart, told USPS Link, “We were all inspired by Lucas. He looked so adorable and put a smile on all our faces, so we wanted to give one back to him.”

That wasn’t Hastings’s only experience as a miniature letter carrier. Two weeks later, he and his family were

asked to come back to the post office, where he was greeted with a small USPS-licensed ride-on truck. “He jumped for joy,” Hart said. The staff also presented Hastings with letters to carry in his satchel.

An infant during the pandemic, Lucas had become accustomed to receiving lots of packages and interacting with the letter carrier, Branch 142 member **SanQuan Long**, on his route. Last Halloween, Hastings dressed up like a letter carrier, and he even sleeps in the uniform when his parents allow it.

According to his parents, Hastings adores his gifts, especially the vehicle. “He loves it. He drives it around our backyard. It’s his favorite toy,” his father said. “He has truly developed a fascination for the mail. He is a little mailman and mail fan.” **PR**



Lucas Hastings (and his postal truck) and his letter carrier, SanQuan Long