

## Letter carriers and the mail on social media

**V**arious 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](mailto:social@nalc.org).

### Carrier thrills young cancer survivor with postal tour, truck

Jacob Hayward, age 7, told his mother that he wants to be a letter carrier when he grows up. The Orange County, CA boy celebrated his seventh birthday on Dec. 14, 2021, with the help of his carrier, Garden Grove, CA Branch 1100 member **Van Singletary**. Jacob's birthday was a special one because he survived cancer after a long period of treatment and isolation.

When his mother asked Singletary for help to celebrate Jacob's birthday, the carrier made it happen despite the huge pre-Christmas workload. He arranged for a post office tour for Jacob. The boy was so thrilled that Singletary and other postal employees wanted to do more, especially after they learned what he had endured.

At age 5, Jacob was diagnosed with kidney and lung cancer. Doctors removed a kidney and part of one lung. Then Jacob went through hours of chemotherapy and radiation, more than 50 transfusions and a bone marrow transplant. Due to his fragile immune system, his treatment period included five weeks in isolation at the Children's Hospital of Orange County. To pass the time in isolation, Jacob communicated with the outside world by writing letters and notes. He had his own personal mailbox next to his hospital room door.

After the Christmas rush, Singletary and his colleagues chipped in and



**Above: Van Singletary with Jacob Hayward**  
**Right: Sue Yeager on her last day on the job**

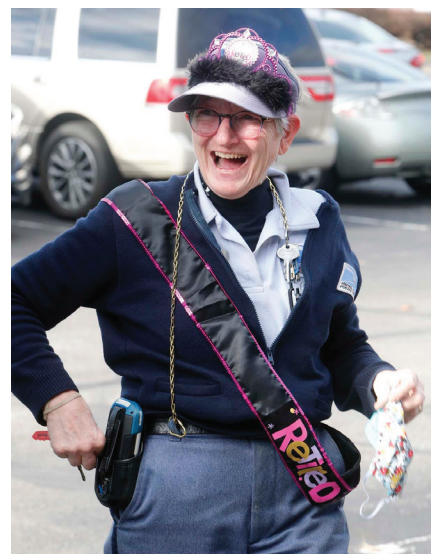
bought Jacob his very own toy postal truck, which Singletary delivered to him. They named him an honorary letter carrier and gave him his own uniform.

"This is so awesome!" was Jacob's response.

"In my whole career, I've never had someone tell me they want to be a mail carrier," Singletary told the *Orange County Register*. "I feel proud. He actually appreciates what we do, and we are, in fact, essential."

### Mayor gives key to the city to retiring carrier

In honor of **Sue Yeager's** retirement, residents on her route organized a special sendoff for her. The celebration was topped off when the mayor presented Sue with a key to the city of Munroe Falls, OH. Yeager, a member of Cuyahoga Falls, OH Branch 1629, retired Dec. 31, 2021, after 33 years, about 30 of them on the same route.



Yeager has been on the job long enough to be recognized twice for her heroics. In 1999, she alerted a neighbor that a 76-year-old customer was not picking up his mail. The customer was found dehydrated and disoriented. The next year, Yeager found a lost 3-year-old wandering in the cold and helped him get back to his family.

## Social media (continued)

“She’s just consciously aware, and everyone knows her name,” Yvonne Cherkala, a long-time customer who organized a surprise for her retirement, told the *Akron Beacon Journal*. “She’s really been devoted to the people on her route. She’s caring and loving and I could not let her retire and just walk off into the sunset. I just couldn’t.”

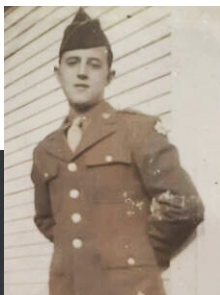
Cherkala arranged for the mayor of Munroe Falls, James Armstrong, and Yeager’s fans to surprise her at the post office with a proclamation recognizing Yeager for her service along with the ceremonial key to the city.

### Carrier graduates from high school at age 97

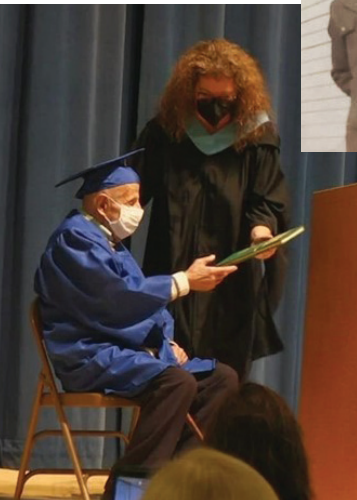
Tacoma, WA Branch 130 member **Ernie Reda** recently received his high school diploma at the age of 97.

In 1943, Ernie left high school to join the Army and serve in World War II. He returned and joined the Postal Service, and never went back to school.

During the war, Reda participated in the invasion of Normandy and fought in the Battle of the Bulge. He returned to Tacoma where he married, had five children and worked as a letter carrier.



**Ernie Reda** (above) joined the Army before he could graduate high school. He recently graduated at the age of 97 (!).



Almost 80 years after leaving school, Reda finally received his high school diploma from his old school, Stadium High School in Tacoma, through Operation Recognition, a Veterans Affairs program that honors veterans who left school to join the military. Reda was awarded his diploma at the school in December with his extended family in attendance.

### Customers praise retiring Ohio carrier

**Randy Ulery**, a member of Toledo, OH Branch 100, recently retired after 38 years, to the dismay of customers grateful for his service.



**Randy Ulery**

“I loved meeting the customers and watching their kids grow up. I took pride in taking care of the elderly, watching out for them in the cold or the heat,” Ulery told the *Sandusky Register*.

Customers pointed to Ulery’s uncommon relationship with dogs—the stereotypical nemesis of letter carriers—as evidence of his likeability.

“They adored him,” said Charla Moscioni, who lives on Ulery’s former route. “All of the dogs on our street, including our golden retriever, Ruby, knew when he was coming and got excited to see him.”

“We really hate to see him go. We truthfully do,” Moscioni added. “We tried to convince him to not go into retirement. We liked him because he would bring packages to the door, and he was always on time. But, most of all, we liked him because he was just a nice guy.”

Ulery plans to enjoy retirement with his wife, Theresa, and focus on his favorite hobbies, bowling and golf.



**Mike Herrington**

### “Mailman Mike” calls it quits after 32 years—22 on the same route

**Mike Herrington**, a member of Pasadena, CA Branch 2200, recently retired after 32 years of service—22 of them on the same route, where everyone knew him as “Mailman Mike.”

“There’s just undeniably a bond between a lot of the families and myself because I do see them daily,” Herrington told the *Santa Clarita Valley Signal*. “There were some customers that really felt like I was one of their neighbors.”

Herrington recalled a boy on his route who looked up to him.

“There was a family on one of my streets where their young son wanted to be Mailman Mike,” Herrington said. “He would be out there every day, and he would emulate the things I was doing, like making mail deliveries.”

Since he announced his retirement, customers have shared their thanks for his service, his wife, Kelley, said: “People adore him... His customers are so sad to see him leave.”

Herrington plans to enjoy his hobbies, music and hiking, during his retirement.

### Nebraska carrier forges friendship with little girl on his route

The highlight of four-year-old DorteHa Haack’s day is when her letter carrier, Lincoln, NE Branch 8 member **Chris Lenoff**, arrives at her home to deliver the mail.

Their friendship started off with waves and smiles through the window during the pandemic. Lenoff’s daily visits brightened DorteHa’s day while she was shuttered inside. Their bond outlasted the isolation of the pandemic—now, DorteHa regularly greets Chris with drawings, stickers and other handmade gifts that he proudly displays in his mail truck.



Chris Lenoff and  
Dorthea Haack



Dorthea, who had always loved mail trucks, started by waving at Lenoff through the window each day. As the pandemic lockdown eased, the two got closer.

"Eventually she wanted to go out and say hello and we left him a few things," Dorthea's mother Emily Haack told CBS affiliate KOLN-TV. "She drew him a picture and some notes and their friendship has really grown from there and it's been such a sweet thing to watch."

"Right around when the pandemic started," Lenoff said, "I noticed her looking out the window a lot, so I would just wave and then [she] was waving back." When Emily Haack saw them waving to each other one day, she told Lenoff about the girl's interest in mail trucks. "And here we are," he said.

### Oregon carrier hangs up his satchel after 57,000 miles

After 23 years as a letter carrier, **Dean Varney** joined the "last punch bunch" in December. Throughout his career, Varney, a member of La Grande, OR Branch 1248, has walked approximately 57,000 miles on his 10-mile route.

"He's a real workhorse," La Grande Postmaster Kelly Carreiro told the *La Grande Observer*. "If his name is on the

schedule, he will be at work."

Working on the same route for many years makes you part of the family. An 18-year-old customer recently told Varney that he was the only regular carrier he remembers.

"I told him, 'I remember when your mom and dad brought you home from the hospital,' " Varney said.

Varney joined the Postal Service after a 12-year career as a helicopter pilot for the Army. In those dozen years, he rescued stranded climbers from 20,000-foot Denali, the tallest mountain in the United States, and served in the first Iraq war.

The Postal Service, Varney said, offered a chance to put down roots after his military career.

"I had 12 addresses in [the space of] nine years while in the military," he said. "This job gives me an opportunity to go back to the same home every night."

Varney said he looked forward to spending more time with his family, including his wife, Michelle, and daughters, Shylinn and Emily, along with his first grandchild.

### Customers show appreciation for retiring Massachusetts carrier

**Steve Loschiavo** was surprised to see signs that read, "Our mailman Steve is the G.O.A.T.," [greatest of all time] on his route. Residents wanted to show their appreciation and celebrate Loschiavo, who retired in January after 33 years, including more than 20 on the same route.

Loschiavo, a member of Boston, MA Branch 34, is a tough bird. Under treatment for cancer, he delivered on one of his last days carrying a chemo treatment pack just so he wouldn't miss work.



To mark his retirement, several dozen customers put up signs proclaiming their appreciation for Loschiavo's service and dedication.

The feeling is mutual, Loschiavo told *The Patriot Ledger* of Quincy, MA. "I've been very fortunate to have these people on my route in my life," he said.

### Atlanta carrier retires with 55 years under his belt

**Thomas Jackson**, a member of Atlanta, GA Branch 73, retired as the most experienced carrier in the Atlanta area—he carried the mail for 55 years.



Jackson has some memories to share.

"Back in the day, I was on a three-wheel scooter delivering mail," Jackson told ABC

affiliate WSB-TV. "One in the front and two wheels in the back." The "Mailster" scooter was introduced in the early 1960s and was used for more than a decade.

Jackson's customers say they will miss his steady presence.

"Just an unbelievable person. Patient. Kind." customer Jenny Krivo said. "And we always get our mail!"

Jackson said he will miss everything: "The people, the kids, even the dogs!" **PR**

Dean Varney with  
one of his patrons

