

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.

Maryland mailman sews his way into customers' hearts

Apparently, Baltimore, MD, carrier **Thaddeus Winkey** has picked up a side gig as a seamster for two little dogs. On May 21, resident Shayne Brock posted a video on TikTok explaining that she and her girlfriend often sit outside on the stoop with their dogs, and the Branch 176 member usually stops to chat when he drops off their mail. Brock told *Newsweek*, "One day, he asked our dogs' names and then had mentioned that he loves to sew and even has a little shop/working area in his basement. He said he'd love to make something for our dogs sometime, and we were, like, 'Yeah, we'd love that!' " Soon after, the carrier gave the couple a gift: two small bandanas with red-and-blue tartan print and embroidered with the dogs' names.

The video received an outpouring of love from the community, with more

than 142,000 views and hundreds of users praising Winkey's kindness. "This. Just small things like this are what the world needs. Small acts of kindness. More love. Let's make it happen please," one user commented.

Brock posted another video soon after, showing off more gifts from the letter carrier: two more bandanas with Super Mario print and embroidery of the dogs' names, as well as a T-shirt embroidered with the words "Super Dog Mom." "He's out here making people's day," read the caption. Brock mentioned that when she told Winkey he should set up an Etsy store to sell his work, the carrier explained that he already has one, and she was awaiting the shop's information to share with her followers.

"It honestly made our day two days in a row. It's just the type of pure kindness that really melts your heart," Brock said of the surprises.

Postcard collector discovers a desirable COVID-19 keepsake

Clarissa Ferraris has been a collector since she was 13. Her fascination began when she stumbled upon thousands of postcards collected by her late grandfather in Italy. Since then, Clarissa has collected many types of postcards: She collects Girl Scout postcards, because she is a former Girl Scout; she collects cards with images from Switzerland, where she used to live; and she collects cards depicting concrete, because as a physicist, she used

to research concrete at the National Institute of Standards and Technology.

However, her focus for the past three years has been on COVID-19-related postcards. She finds the varying depictions of pandemic life fascinating. Some of her postcards show health care workers at war with the virus; some show emptied streets and cities; some show contraptions intended for social distancing, such as a 6-foot-long hat.

Ferraris's fascination began with a single pandemic-related postcard, an item she obtained because of her generalized interest in current events. However, she quickly zeroed in on the topic, thinking that there had to be more. Perusing sites like Etsy and Zazzle, she found thousands, eventually leading her to create an online database with fellow collector Mark Routh. The database can be found at sites.google.com/view/covidpostcardsdatabase. As this magazine went to press, it catalogs 1,900 postcards from more than 60 countries.

Ferraris does more than collect; she loves to share her joy. During National Postcard Week in May, she commissioned a postcard from Maryland artist Adam Knapton that depicts a cat sleeping on a pile of postcards somewhere in Italy. She mailed out 70 of them.

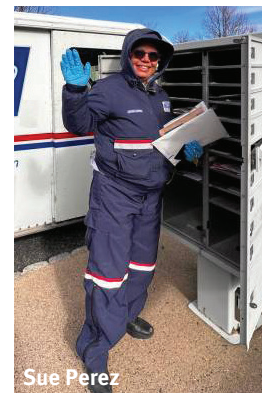
"Postcards have always been a witness of what happened," Ferraris told *The Washington Post*. "So it was logical that there would be COVID postcards."

New Jersey carrier retires after 35 years

In February, New Jersey Merged Branch 38 member **Sue Perez**



The bandanas Thaddeus Winkey made



Sue Perez



Clarissa Ferraris and some of the COVID-19 pandemic postcards she's collected

retired after 35 years with the Postal Service. "You have to love your job to commit to doing it for 35 years," Perez told *The Sparta Independent*. "You can't just go to a job every single day if you hate it. You have to love your job, love what you're doing and love your co-workers. They become your family."

Perez said that her favorite part of her work was interacting with customers, and watching children grow up and families expand. "I've watched children grow up and actually see them from birth until high school, go to college, come back home. Some of them actually buy the house," she reminisced. Her husband, Fred, explained, "Sue has always been a very social person, talking with almost anyone that crosses her path."

The carrier started at age 20 delivering mail in Essex County. She quickly gained the responsibilities of a safety captain, and after 12 years as both a carrier and safety captain, she was chosen to teach new hires as a safety and driver training instructor in Jersey City.

"I felt especially great when I was doing the Instructor Academy because you actually see the new people coming in. We start off young in the post office and many aspire to be more. Some of them are (now) actually management. I love that."

Perez is looking forward to the extra free time but isn't quite sure how she'll adjust. "It has been 35 years, and that's half of my life. It's everything that I've been doing, so I'm just figuring it out."

Illinois carrier warns against beautifying mail

Lots of customers enjoy decorating their mail, but Oak Forest, IL, carrier **Chad Huber** posted a viral TikTok video explaining that it can sometimes backfire. He said that one of the current

trends is to put the return address sticker on the back of the envelope in an effort to seal the envelope, but that this confuses the computer and gives the customer a "50/50 shot at getting this letter back." To avoid this, letter carriers have to "take a sharpie and cross out all the barcodes on here and it's not going to look cute anymore, basically. So just put it in the upper left corner."



Chad Huber

The video has been viewed more than 855,000 times, with commenters overwhelmingly agreeing with the South Suburban Merged, IL Branch 4016 member. One commenter added that pink or red pens are more difficult for the computer to read and should therefore be avoided when addressing mail. Another said that wax sealing envelopes can ruin the scanner.

The USPS official website echoes Huber, advising to "print or type your address in the upper left corner on the front of the envelope." It also emphasizes the accuracy and legibility of addresses in order to speed up delivery.

Gorgeous post offices recognized

In May, *Architectural Digest* published an article of the most beautiful post offices spanning the world. Topping the list was the Algiers Central Post Office, constructed in 1910 with Moorish architecture. In 2015, it was converted into a museum about the history of the postal service in Algeria.

The list also included the Saigon Central Post Office in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, a popular tourist attraction for its vibrant yellow and green paint job; the

Palacio de Correos de México located in Mexico City, which "[appears] more like a royal palace than a post office" with its "eclectic style" and "intricate gilding and moulding"; and the Main Post Office in Bonn, Germany, a bright yellow post building historically used as a city palace and currently home to a statue of former Bonn resident Ludwig van Beethoven.

Digest also praised a few offices found right here in the United States. The list noted an Art Deco-style post office in Los Angeles, CA, along Sunset and Hollywood Boulevards, which also graces the National Register of Historic Places; an adobe-inspired post office in Winslow, AZ, designed by Louis A. Simon, who also worked on the IRS building and the Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library and Museum; and the vast James A. Farley Post Office in New York City with the inscription, "Neither snow nor rain nor heat nor gloom of night stays these couriers from the swift completion of their appointed rounds." The quote is from Herodotus's *Histories* and has become an unofficial motto of the Postal Service. **PR**

