

# What you do



**Philip  
Dine**

**O**ne of the joys of this job is watching, and marveling at, what the members of this union do.

Whether I'm writing this column, editing this magazine, dealing with the media (hey, someone has to) or more, your good works loom large.

That's a constant, but it's rarely as concentrated as it is right now as I write this.

We are just two days removed from the Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive, and I'm absorbing the realms of positive news coverage of the nation's largest single-day food drive—conceived, executed and expanded by America's letter carriers. You do it in every corner of this vast country;

it's noticed with gratitude by residents and reported with respect by the media. It helps feed millions of families and seniors, children and military veterans and, secondarily, it raises even higher the positive image of letter carriers in the eyes of the public.

We are just four days removed from the Heroes of the Year celebration, which usually is separated from the food drive by about five months. Thanks to the pandemic and other factors, the period between these two events was a single day.

Here too, in different fashion but with similar motivations and results, beyond delivering the mail many of you take time—and risks—to help those on your route and in your community. Here too, you save or improve the lives of residents, even as you boost the recognized value of your craft and your work.

**A couple of hours ago, before resuming work on this column, I took a walk around the Capitol to clear my mind. (There's only so many conversations you can have back-to-back-to-back with the media before you need some fresh air...) On the grounds outside the Senate, I happened to run into Sen. Sherrod Brown of Ohio, accompanied by his communications director, and chatted briefly with the senator.**

Barely a minute in, Senator Brown, among the most ardent labor supporters in Congress, mentioned that several letter carriers had been in Washington the previous week to be honored for their heroism.

"That's right," I replied, "and two were from Cincinnati."

"Yes, and I met with both of them," he responded without missing a beat, his pride evident.

Which makes for a good transition to a third area where your deeds are impressive—and invaluable.

Lawmakers' passage of postal reform is still fresh, and

here too your efforts—while of course markedly different than collecting food to feed the hungry, than rescuing families from house fires or finding a missing child—have an intrinsic value of their own while also inuring to our benefit. By so effectively getting out the message and rebutting the misleading conventional wisdom; by informing the press, public and politicians of the facts about postal finances and the unfair pre-funding mandate; by thereby altering the national conversation about postal issues, you have been instrumental in saving a revered national institution and you have helped the tens of millions of Americans who rely on the industrial world's most efficient and affordable delivery network. By saving the Postal Service from financial ruin, you also, of course, have helped save your jobs and those of future letter carriers.

And by preserving the USPS and its universal network, you have preserved your ability to perform the voluntary actions that have such a positive impact on so many—the providing of food at a time when food pantries are running out of their wintertime donations and school lunch programs are about to end for the summer, or the possibility of a letter carrier to be first on the scene when an elderly resident has fallen or a resident is about to fall victim of a crime.

Taking this a step further, the work you have done for the past dozen years to change public and political views about postal reform would not have been as impactful without your ability to deliver a persuasive message as competently as you deliver your routes—nor it would not have been as well received without the esteem the public has for you. Which, of course, stems not only from your professionalism on the route but also from the good deeds you perform—as in collecting food and rescuing people in emergency situations.

The various things you do reinforce one another and, indeed, help make each possible.

**Closing where I began, one of the benefits of this job is the opportunity to observe how much you care about others and about the greater good, how despite a demanding job you always find ways to put that caring into practice, and how skillfully—and humbly—you do so.**

**EDITORIAL STAFF:**  
Director of Communications and Media Relations Philip Dine  
Managing Editor Mike Shea  
Writer/Editor Rick Hodges  
Writer/Editor Jenessa Wagner

*The Postal Record* (ISSN 0032-5376) is published monthly by the National Association of Letter Carriers. Periodicals postage paid at Washington, DC, and at additional mailing offices.

**POSTMASTER:** Send address changes to Membership Department, NALC, 100 Indiana Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20001-2144.

Subscription included in membership dues. First-class subscription available for \$20 per year (contact Membership Department).

© 2023 by the National Association of Letter Carriers.

Circulation: 287,000. Union-printed using soy-based inks.

**CHANGE OF ADDRESS?** Contact the Membership Department.

Follow us on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube by going to NALC.org.

