

## Carriers and the mail make news online

**M**ail-centered stories frequently appear on social media and online news sites. The following are a few that have come to NALC's attention recently. If you find a story you'd like us to consider featuring, send it to [postalrecord@nalc.org](mailto:postalrecord@nalc.org).

### Dogs are man's best friend... well, this mailman's best friend

Every day at approximately 10:30 a.m., **Dan Larsen**, an Oak Brook, IL Branch 825 carrier, pulls up in front of Frannie Joy the chihuahua's house in nearby Barlett. When she sees Larsen out of the glass front door of the house, she barks at her owner, Lisa Laskey, to let her out. As soon as the door swings open, the chihuahua runs down the driveway to the carrier's truck for kisses and belly rubs.



Dan Larsen and Frannie Joy

Larsen said he started visiting Frannie when she was only 8 weeks old, and since, he has visited her every time he delivers his route during the past two years.

Although Larsen doesn't have any social media accounts, he agreed to have Laskey film these interactions and post them on her TikTok account, [@lisaandfrannie](#), and on her Instagram account, [@frannielifedog](#). Frannie Joy's TikTok page has more than 259,600 followers and received 11 million likes, and her Instagram has more than 11,500 followers.



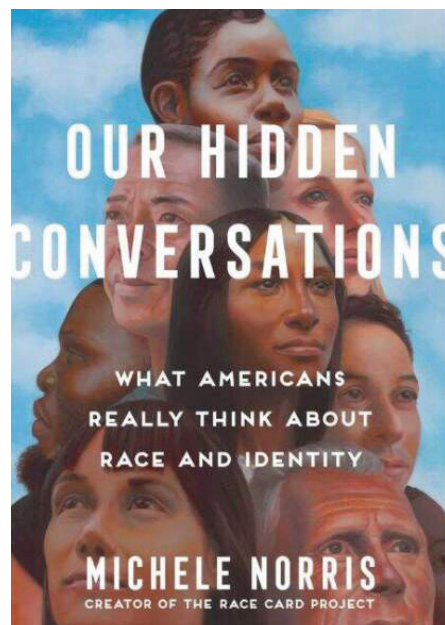
Michele Norris

The letter carrier knows that a lot of people see the videos, but because of his lack of social media accounts, he never really felt the impact. Laskey wanted Larsen to understand that he was making a difference in his viewer's lives, so she asked their followers to send Laskey holiday cards last holiday season.

Larsen said that he received 1,500-plus cards, many of which told stories about how the videos brought them joy. He said that some of his viewers struggled with addiction and some were going through chemotherapy, and that they indicated that seeing those videos every day got them through the day.

"There're really some heartbreaking letters that I got," Larsen said. "They just say that it's helping them get by day-to-day. Somebody who's lost their spouse, they say, 'I've been so depressed, and I watched these videos and I'm telling you, it just makes my day.'"

Larsen said that Laskey has a sign outside her house that says, "change the world," and he says that she is



really trying to make a difference with these videos, so he wants to be a part of that mission.

"I'm just trying to send a message that it's not all doom and gloom," Larsen said.

### Journalist uses postcards as source for book on race

As the daughter of postal employees, Michele Norris wanted to hear about people's experiences with race, and instead of phone calls and emails, the former *Washington Post* opinion columnist and former National Public Radio host printed postcards with the words "Race. Your thoughts. 6 words. Please send."

She left them in places people would pick them up as she went on a 36-city tour for her memoir, *The Grace of Silence*. Norris tucked them in airplane seat pockets and placed them on chairs in bookstores and at Starbucks sugar and milk stations. It didn't take



Steven Vannarath

long for her to receive more than 500,000 messages, which she posted on a website she created, The Race Card Project. Postcard correspondents could then share the story that led them to writing their chosen six words. Using their responses and interviews she conducted, Norris wrote the best-selling book, *Our Hidden Conversations*, which was published in January.

“There’s something so human about looking at someone’s handwriting,” Norris said in an interview with *The New York Times*. “And knowing these little moments of vulnerability were floating through the U.S. Postal Service, unadorned. It’s not in an envelope. It’s just out there for the world to see.”

### Maybe UPS and FedEx couldn’t, but USPS could...dance

In the beginning of February, letter carrier **Steven Vannarath**, a Branch 1784 member in Klamath Falls, OR, dueted a video of Terry Turner, an Amazon delivery person, energetically dancing in front of his Amazon delivery truck on TikTok. Duetting is when a creator posts their video side-by-side with a video from another creator. Vannarath’s video received more than 4.3 million views and almost 500,000 likes. Turner’s original video had the caption, “UPS and FedEx could never.”

Vannarath said that he had received a message from @ThatPostalDad on TikTok issuing him a 24-hour challenge to duet Turner. Vannarath said he was working at the time, so he didn’t have time to learn the choreography to Turner’s dance. However, when he was done with his route, he remembered his break-dancing days from high school and did his “signature move.”

In the video, Vannarath danced while taking off his satchel, coat and hat, and

then he did a one-handed handstand while putting his hat back on.

He was happy when the video went viral, saying, “It made me feel good...like I was representing something positive.”

### First Massachusetts post office named after an AAPI person

Rep. Ayanna Pressley, (D-MA), introduced a bill during Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) Heritage Month in May 2023 to rename a post office in Boston after Caroline Chang. In early February, it finally passed.

Chang, who died in 2018, was born and raised in Boston’s Chinatown and was a highly involved member in her community as well as an activist for Asian American rights in Massachusetts. In the 1970s, she served as the manager of Chinatown’s Little City Hall, where her care and passion for her community flourished as an advocate for its residents.

Chang was an active participant in many organizations in and around Chinatown. She made a lasting impact through her work as a member of the Chinese History Society of New England, the Asian American Civic Association and the Asian Community Development Corporation.

Boston.com quoted Pressley, from a speech on the House floor, as saying, “I was proud to introduce and pass this bill in the House to pay tribute to Caroline’s legacy with the first post office in Massachusetts to be named after an AAPI individual.”

### Lifelong civil rights activist featured on stamp

In February, the New Haven, CT, branch of the NAACP revealed the design for the 47th Black



Rep. Ayanna Pressley (D-MA) with a photo of Caroline Chang

Heritage stamp, which featured Constance Baker Motley.

Baker Motley was born and raised in New Haven before attending Fisk University and Columbia Law School. After graduating, she served as a law clerk for Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall and contributed to landmark cases such as *Brown v. Board of Education*.

Later in her career, in 1964, she became the first Black woman to be elected to the New York State Senate. The following year she was elected Manhattan borough president. In 1966, Baker Motley became a federal judge, the first Black woman to do so.

The unveiling of the stamp was praised by New Haven Mayor Justin Elicker, according to the *Yale Daily News*.

“It’s amazing to kick off Black History Month this way, and to reflect on the past,” he said. “And I think more importantly [to] reflect on the work that we have ahead of us.” **PR**



The unveiling of the Constance Baker Motley stamp