

Proud to Serve is a semi-regular compilation of heroic stories about letter carriers in their communities. If you know about a hero in your branch, contact us as soon as possible at 202-662-2851 or at postalrecord@nalc.org. We'll follow up with you to obtain news clippings, photos or other information.

Honoring heroic carriers

Heroism, like the mail, comes in many packages—think of police officers or firefighters. But for some citizens in need of assistance, their heroes come in the form of concerned letter carriers.

Letter carriers are members of nearly every community in this nation and know when something is wrong. Spotting fires and injuries, they often are the first to respond. The following stories document their heroism. For them, delivering for America is all in a day's work.

Best fishing day ever

As the sun was setting on April 27, 2013, Chadron, NE Branch 2209 member **Larry Olson** and his girlfriend, Twila Satchell, were finishing a day of fishing walleye from their boat at a local lake after work when they heard children yelling. The two figured the boys were having a fun time.

As darkness set in, the boys started rowing toward the shoreline. When Olson and Satchell made it back to the boat dock, they saw three high school boys waiting for the rest of their group.

People on the boat dock told them, "We think some people might need help," Olson said.

Then they heard screams in the distance. "Something told me we needed to check it out," the carrier said.

"We went flying over there," Olson told the *Rapid City Journal*. The couple assumed they would find a disabled boat in need of towing.

"We were looking for a boat," Satchell told the newspaper. But they didn't see any boat that was immediately visible.

"Then we saw an arm come up," Olson related to the *Journal*.

The weight of the four boys in the second canoe apparently had shifted enough to capsize the boat and dump all of them in the chilly lake. The group had tried re-boarding the canoe, but it was rapidly filling with water. They had decided to start swimming and made

it about 100 to 200 yards—but the dock was still 600 to 800 yards away.

"They thought they could swim to shore, but they started to cramp up," Olson said.

Olson put his motor in neutral and told the boys to step on it to climb into his boat. Three got in immediately. The last one was having trouble, so "I grabbed him by the shorts and flipped him in the boat behind me," Olson said.

"They were scared," Satchell told the paper. All four of the boys, dressed only in T-shirts and shorts, were shivering violently from being in the 55-degree water and were in danger of suffering hypothermia. "They were getting shocky," Satchell told the *Journal*.

Since Satchell had dressed in layers, she began removing her extra coats, sweatshirts and bibs for the boys to huddle in, and also pulled out rain gear that was stored on the boat.

Once on shore, dry clothes were located and the boys piled in to warm vehicles to recover.

Olson said they were fortunate to have found the boys as fast as they did. "We were the only ones out there," he told the newspaper. "We couldn't see them until we got to them."

But the 30-year postal veteran denied any major heroics. "There was no danger to us," he said. "We were just in the right place at the right time."

It turned out to be quite the interesting fishing trip. "The walleye fishing sucked, but we caught four kids," Olson told the *Journal*.

Carrier pulls double duty

New Jersey Merged Branch 38 member **Ed Majowicz** was sound asleep in his home when he was awakened in the early morning on April 24 by a police department scanner: There was a three-alarm fire at his post office.

A volunteer firefighter for 36 years, Majowicz was among those who responded to the alarm. The fire had reached the roof

From top: Chadron, NE Branch 2209 member Larry Olson and New Jersey Merged Branch 38 member Ed Majowicz recently were interviewed by local print and TV media for their heroics.



by that time, but he still was able to help. The carrier was on the second engine to respond. Using his personal knowledge of the building, he told fellow firefighters who had arrived before him that they wouldn't be able to reach the roof through the front door, and he showed them another entrance.

"I asked the chief to get inside," the carrier said. Majowicz was able to go inside with a postal inspector, saving scanners, keys and other equipment, as well as a small amount of mail, which he placed into hampers and rolled outside. Gaining access to vehicle keys, Majowicz helped move postal vehicles away from the building as well.

After the fire was extinguished, Majowicz went home. But without time for much more than a shower, he turned around and reported for work. Postal managers already had shifted operations to a nearby office. Majowicz and other carriers were able to deliver the day's mail to the customers on their routes without missing a beat.

Postal officials honored Majowicz, a 29-year postal veteran, naming him a "Postal Hero."

"You displayed great courage working as a volunteer firefighter," USPS New Jersey District Manager Steven Hernandez was quoted by NJ.com about Majowicz. "You answered the call of duty when you

were notified that the Carlstadt post office was ablaze and you selflessly placed yourself in harm's way. That's what firefighters do. In addition, you demonstrated responsibility and admirable work ethic by reporting to work and delivering your route right after the fire. That's what postal workers do."

The carrier/firefighter said he was embarrassed and overwhelmed by the attention his actions brought. "I don't consider myself a hero," Majowicz said. "Both of these things I love to do—it didn't seem out of the ordinary.

"We're on call 24 hours a day, seven days a week, so whenever a call comes in, we respond," he told NJ.com.

Eye on the elderly



Carrier Tracy Belden recently was recognized for her actions by Region 9 National Business Agent Judy Willoughby.

Greensboro, NC Branch 630 member **Tracy Belden** was delivering mail on Oct. 7, 2013, when she happened upon her 86-year old customer, Catherine Schlosser, lying behind her car in her driveway. As Belden got closer, she realized the woman was bleeding profusely from her head. "She would not stop trying to get up," the carrier said. "She wanted to get up, get inside

her house, call her son and be done with it." Belden went into action swiftly, flagging down a passer-by and asking the driver to call 911. Belden and the driver used a towel to stem the flow of blood and tried to keep Schlosser on the ground to prevent further injury until the ambulance arrived. While the medical professionals tended to the customer, Belden contacted Schlosser's son to let him know what happened. The woman underwent brain surgery, and also had sustained other injuries, but ultimately she returned home for recovery. "I may not have ever seen her if I didn't have to dismount to deliver her mail," the nine-year postal veteran said. "I did what anyone would have done if they had my route that day."

On May 7, Albany, NY Branch 29 member **Joe Girard** was going about his route when he saw that his 85-year-old cus-

tommer, Tom Devane, was sitting beside his driveway. The carrier kept an eye on him as he delivered, and when he came back around, he still saw Devane sitting there. The carrier went over to the man, helped him up, and walked him back inside the home. Girard helped to calm down Devane's wife, Mary Pat, and then she called her daughter, who called 911 as Girard administered basic first aid to the man. The carrier stayed with the couple until an ambulance arrived. "I just made sure they were taken care of," Girard said. Medics said that Devane had suffered a stroke. The 19-year postal veteran said that looking out for elderly customers is part of his job. "I happened to be in the right place at the right time, and I stepped up to bat," he said.

On April 24, Southeast Massachusetts Merged Branch 18 member **Kimberly**

Lynn was performing an off-street delivery when she heard a cry for help as she placed mail into a box. "Can you help me?" the customer asked. The carrier went up to the house and pushed the front door open, finding the elderly customer on the floor of her dining room just inside, unable to move. "She just wanted to get up," Lynn said. After telling the woman to stay where she was and reassuring her that she was going to be OK, Lynn called 911. The woman started crying, and the carrier told her patron that she would stay with her until help arrived. The phone rang while Lynn was inside the house, and it was the woman's daughter. The carrier was able to fill her in on the situation just as paramedics arrived to take the customer to the hospital. Lynn doesn't think she did anything especially heroic. "I just wanted to help her," the six-year postal veteran said. **PR**