

What's happening on social media

Various news stories and interesting anecdotes that celebrate letter carriers and the mail have been flying around social media. We plan to collect the best ones in this space. If you come across a story you'd like us to consider featuring, send it to social@nalc.org.

A Virginia neighborhood salutes popular carrier's retirement

"Over the years, the neighborhood really got to know Ray as a friend, someone who was really kind, did a good job, cared about their work," a resident on the route of Tidewater, VA Branch 247 member **Raymond Whiteside** told local NBC affiliate WAVY-TV.

After serving in the Army for 22 years, Whiteside served 23 years with the Postal Service; for the past 16 he has been on the same route in the Historic Little England neighborhood, where his customers wanted to send him off with a little fanfare upon his retirement in May.

As the carrier started his normal rounds on his last day of work, he saw blocks of houses with decorated mailboxes, posters and farewell messages written in chalk to congratulate him.

"I wouldn't trade that neighborhood for anything," Whiteside told WAVY-TV. "I just couldn't say enough about those customers out there. They were always so welcoming, so kind."

Whiteside added that he was overcome with emotion when he realized how many people had put in the time and effort to thank him for his years on the job.

"It just became so emotional that I wanted to take pictures of every house," he added. "But I wouldn't have been able to finish my route that day."

6 decades, 2 million miles—and many more to go

Wichita, KS Branch 201 member **Alan Cunningham** was honored in June for his nearly six decades of service, including more than 2 million miles of accident-free driving.

The octogenarian carrier has been delivering mail for 60 years, and he told local NBC affiliate KSNW-TV that the satisfaction of coming to work is what keeps him going.

"I enjoy it, so I do it," Cunningham said.

"He's a true example of a letter carrier [who] comes in and does his job..." USPS representative Ryon Knopik told the TV station.

At a small ceremony at his distribution facility, Cunningham was presented with a service award and a commemorative coin as a token of his long career. During his service, he has accrued more than 5,000 hours of sick leave along with all those miles of safe driving.

"I have no pointers. I just—thankful I'm still able to do it, that's all I am," Cunningham said.

"He has no plans to retire, you know, he is still going strong and he loves serving his customers each and every day," Knopik said.

Cunningham thinks his experience in the military is what helps him along. "You know the physical part of it," he said.

He has seen many changes in the Postal Service over the years, from adhesive stamps to new delivery trucks. "Getting used to this GPS is the biggest thing that I've come across," Cunningham said.

The carrier added that he hopes to be out in the community delivering mail for many more years.



Alvie Ramos received an unexpected retirement celebration from his Bakersfield, CA, patrons.

California neighborhood celebrates beloved letter carrier's retirement

Residents on the route of Bakersfield, CA Branch 782 member **Alvie Ramos** honored him this spring with a special celebration upon his retirement after 37 years of service.

To show their appreciation, customers set up signs in their front yards. On June 4, patrons told local NBC affiliate KGET-TV that Ramos has become a fixture in their community, knows everybody by name and always lends a helping hand when possible.

"He has been an amazing mailman all these years and has been a part of all our families, so I thought it was kind of nice to honor him," resident Sue Thomas told KGET.

Ramos told the station that he's looking forward to spending time with friends and family, relaxing and enjoying his life.

"Oh gosh, I can't wait till I wake up in the morning—I'm not even sure what time it's going to be, 'cause I'm not setting my alarm clock," he said with a laugh. "It's going to be like I'm on vacation—a never-ending vacation."

New Jersey carrier retires after nearly five decades of service

After 48 years on the job, New Jersey Merged Branch 38 member **Donna Rumelhart** is retiring.

“To put the length of her career in perspective,” a June 2 piece in Tap Into Piscataway included in tribute to the carrier, “through the years, Donna delivered [many] miles of letters and flats ... and over a million parcels. Between the old postal Jeeps and the current box-like Grumman LLVs, Donna drove over 50,000 miles (enough to drive around the earth twice!), and probably walked over 20,000 miles.

“Fascinating numbers, and a shining example of an unwavering commitment to the values of work and service—doing all that with unconditional love for her coworkers and customers alike.”

Birthday celebration brightens the day for Ohio carrier

Residents on Cleveland, OH Branch 40 member **Aaron Johnson's** route celebrated his 60th birthday on March 30 in style, with balloons, signs and banners placed around the neighborhood.

Though he's been with the Postal Service since 1987, the carrier has been delivering on the same 8.3-mile walking route in a largely Orthodox Jewish neighborhood for more than 21 years, so his customers know him well. He told the *Cleveland Jewish News* in June that he was “humbled” by the display of affection from his patrons.

“They really surprised me,” Johnson told the newspaper. “I was like, wow, I didn't picture anything like that ... It just blew my mind.”

Customer Teri German told the

paper that Johnson's “got this infectious smile,” adding, “It brightens your entire day. If you don't see him, you feel like you've missed out.”

She said that when her husband, Dan, told her that Johnson was about to turn 60, she alerted her neighbors and organized a “progressive party” along the route.

“It happened to be during Pesach,” she said, which complicated plans, as many neighbors were out of town. “I called the post office to make sure he would be there.” Still, she wanted to have something for Johnson at each house.

Over the decades on the route, Johnson has been invited to events like weddings, bar and bat mitzvah ceremonies and parties at his patrons' homes. “I consider all of the children in my neighborhood nieces and nephews because everybody is really



Donna Rumelhart was recognized for her career at the time of her retirement.



Aaron Johnson's patrons celebrated the carrier's 60th birthday.

just amazing,” he told the *Cleveland Jewish News*.

“I love this route and the people,” he added. “I flat out refuse to bid anywhere else.”

The Army veteran said he plans to retire at 62, with retirement being the only reason he'd leave his beloved neighborhood behind.

On his 60th birthday, “I received gift cards, and I received some other gifts. They had all kinds of balloons out and banners saying happy birthday. It was something, I will tell you,” Johnson said.

A special retirement sendoff for Washington carrier on last day

In June, on his final day of delivery of his 21-year career as a letter carrier, Port Angeles, WA Branch 1906 member **Darrell Janni** was surprised by his customers on his route, who provided a warm sendoff, complete with cards and decorated mailboxes.

As reported by local Fox affiliate KCPQ-TV, many neighbors showed their appreciation and shared good wishes by attaching brightly colored mylar balloons to their mailboxes.

As Janni drove down the street for the last time to collect each balloon, neighbors showed up to wish him well, delivering cards and baked goods for him.

Janni told KCPQ-TV that now that his work is done, he and his wife plan on traveling, seeing the sights, and perhaps taking a cruise.

“He will surely be missed,” long-time neighbor Karen Sistek told the TV station. **PR**