

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. 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.

Town celebrates NALC Hero as he retires

Royal Oak, MI, letter carrier **John Dick** took care of the people on his route, and when he retired, they showed their appreciation.

The carrier, who served the same route for more than 20 years, was nearly brought to tears as he saw all the signs wishing him a happy retirement along his route—more than three dozen by his estimate.

"If you put out a little compassion and energy," Dick told the *Royal Oak Tribune*, "you get twice as much in return."

Dick was always ready to help people on his route. He answered letters to Santa and bought Christmas gifts for needy children. He helped an elderly customer who needed medical attention. And he made sure a dying friend and postal customer got regular visits

in the hospital to get his mail and then a last motorcycle ride—an act that prompted the judges of the 2013 NALC Heroes of the Year awards to name him Humanitarian of the Year.

Dick had bonded with the customer, Gregg Glowacz, over their shared love of Harley Davidson motorcycles. When Glowacz suffered two strokes and became quadriplegic, Dick visited him at the hospital and at home. Dick organized a motorcycle ride, with Glowacz to ride in a sidecar, to raise money for his medical expenses. But when Glowacz became too weak for the full ride, a scaled-down version became Glowacz's last time on a motorcycle. He died a few days later.

The neighbors still remember and appreciate the many ways Dick served them, and they showed their appreciation with the signs.

"I saw the first sign and I was overwhelmed," Dick told the *Tribune*. "As I walked, I saw dozens of signs...for a little bit, I couldn't see the mail" for the tears in his eyes.

"I hang up my satchel today," Dick posted on Facebook on his last day, Oct. 30. "I am happy and sad. Knowing that this day is the last day of my Letter Carrier career is a mix of emotions. My patrons are amazing. Every day they have reminded me of the basic goodness of humanity. And now, in the final hours of my Letter Carrier career, they have reminded me of the spirit of community that we all long for. I am humbled and privileged by the experience of being part of your neighborhoods for the last 21 years."

Carrier makes the rounds one last time after 36 years

Edward Willis has lived his whole life in North Easton, MA, and carried

Edward Willis



the town's mail for 36 years. He retired on Sept. 24 with many memories.

Willis, a member of Southeast MA Branch 18, remembers when customers would actually wait next to their mailbox expecting birthday cards or college acceptance letters. Meanwhile, the number of mail deliveries has gone up since he started the job—he recalls making about 400 deliveries a day when he started the job in 1985; today, he makes 600.

Willis said he's had a front-row view to the changes happening for the Postal Service. He watched as e-commerce transformed the mail by boosting package delivery. "The last few years have been crazy," he told the local newspaper, the *Journal News Independent*. "The mail system is very important. There's no doubt about it."

Living only five minutes from the North Easton Post Office made the job convenient for him, Willis told the newspaper. He likes to walk—taking long walks with his wife each day after putting in eight miles on his route. In retirement, Willis said, he'll travel and spend time with his family, including two grandsons.

"He's one of the best," North Easton Postmaster Kimberly Newcomb told the *Journal News Independent*. "He's never in a bad mood."

As he headed out for his day on his route in a truck decorated by coworkers with balloons and a "Last Day" sign, Willis looked back at his career with fond memories. "It's been a great job," he said. "The people I work with are great."





Kimber Moore shows off her book, "The Route of Love: Our COVID Creations."

Carrier gathers stories of working through pandemic into book

Delivering the mail in the height of the pandemic involved isolation and anxiety, but it also prompted expressions of love and support from postal patrons. Longtime Leominster, MA, carrier **Kimber Moore** compiled images of the positive messages she saw on her route into a book.

Moore's book, "The Route of Love: Our COVID Creations," brings together photos, images and text from people along her route offering their gratitude for letter carriers as essential workers.

"It is about the amazing amount of good and love I experienced and witnessed during the lockdown caused by the COVID-19 pandemic," Moore told the *Sentinel & Enterprise*, a local newspaper. "People left me gifts, cards, drawings, encouraging me, an essential worker, the mail lady, who worked through it all.

"I am so moved by the kindness and the examples of love and creativity the kids and the customers showed to me, to each other, to the neighborhood," Moore, a member of Worcester, MA Branch 12, said. "I wanted to give back."

Included in the pages of the book are children's drawings of her, given as tokens of thanks, as well as photos of gifts her customers offered, including a keychain, disinfecting wipes, masks and puzzles. One young girl on her route wrote a short story that is featured in the book; the youthful author aspires to be a writer when she grows up—and now has a published story, thanks to Moore.

"We all experienced the COVID pandemic," Moore writes in the book's introduction. "This book was our way of documenting our neighborhood experience and our choices in response to COVID-19. Hopefully our book inspires all youth confronting a rough experience to be creative and seek kindness and love."

Moore has carried the mail in Leominster for nearly 15 years. These days, she often carries around a copy of the book to show to those whose artwork, gifts and well wishes appear in the book, especially children.

"They are so excited," she said. "Overwhelming enthusiasm and pride and astonishment."

Moore donated a copy to the local library to help document the town's history. "I wanted the book to be a testament to the kindness and to document the historical experience of the humans in the neighborhood I deliver to," she said. "They can be proud of it now and contemplate it for years in the future, perhaps share it with their children one day."

"I love serving others and being a part of a neighborhood," she said. "I enjoy the exercise and being the eyes of the neighborhood for many years."

The experience of delivering the mail in the pandemic and receiving so many positive messages, she said, made her realize how everyone in the community is connected.

"It made me realize how comforting the neighborhood regular carrier is to everyone," Moore said. "My slogan is, 'We deliver to every neighborhood, every day,' and I then thought about how we could be involved with the police in a positive way, perhaps have our scanners have a direct button for the police and ambulances. I realize how essential we are to people."



Newspaper shows appreciation for retiring Milwaukee carrier

Milwaukee, WI Branch 2 member **Neomi Curry** carried letters, cards and packages to the Halyard Park neighborhood in Milwaukee for 27 years through snow, sleet, rain and even a pandemic.

On the eve of her retirement on Sept. 30, the community, led by the *Milwaukee Times*, an African-American weekly, honored Curry's dedication.

"Neomi Curry has walked hundreds of miles," *Milwaukee Times* Marketing Director Carmen Murguia said. "We have to do something special to recognize her dedication to the businesses of Dr. Martin Luther King [Drive] and to the residents of Halyard Park."

On her last day at her station, Curry was greeted with a big surprise: a dozen roses, balloons, a fruit basket, a cake, a serenade of gospel songs, a proclamation presented by State Rep. Kalan Haywood, and a large crowd of well-wishers and co-workers.

Curry was pleasantly surprised at the showing of support. "I thought I was getting something," Curry told WTMJ-TV, an NBC affiliate, "but nothing to this magnitude at all."

Curry was known for stopping at every door along her route to greet her patrons and check in on them. They appreciated her dedication to her job, but even more, her positive spirit.

Curry said she would miss her customers, but most of all, her fellow postal employees.

"Keep on pushing, you'll get there," Curry told her colleagues at the celebration. "And I'm going to miss you—all of you guys."

There is one thing she won't miss: "Walking in that snow and people not shoveling," Curry said with a laugh.

Dean Krug



Social media (continued)

Fairhaven, MA neighbors celebrate retiring carrier

The many postal customers in Fairhaven, MA who loved their letter carrier, **Rachelle Deneault**, wouldn't let her retire without a proper sendoff.



When they learned that Deneault, a member of Southeast MA Branch 18, was retiring, the patrons on her route gave her cards, well wishes and a homemade sign, decorated with mail trucks, that wished her a happy retirement. She carried the mail in Fairhaven for 35 years, the last 16 on the route that included the home of Diane and Jeff Foster, some of the many neighbors she formed lasting friendships with while doing her job.

Often, when he saw Deneault approaching with her satchel, "I would race out there to meet her because we always gave each other a hard time and got lots of laughs out of it," Jeff Foster told local radio station WBSM. He had made a habit of going down the steep path to his house to save her the trip.

Many of his neighbors also showed their appreciation for Deneault. "Everybody loved her as much as we did," he said.

"These last two years have been brutal for her," Jeff Foster said. "She's Amazon, FedEx and UPS, all in one."

The couple made the retirement sign to show their appreciation.

"I was very excited and very surprised," Deneault told WBSM about the gesture. "I was on that route for a long time, and the people are wonderful. I got to see families grow over the years."

Deneault's official last day was Oct. 30. She said she plans to enjoy traveling in her retirement.

"I'm going to miss them all; my customers were wonderful," she said.

Retiring carrier remembers friends in his station and on his route

When **Dean Krug** started carrying the mail in Litchfield, MA, 40 years ago, the "old-timers" helped him, as a "young whippersnapper," learn the job, he recently told the *Litchfield Independent Review*. And as the new guy, he told the newspaper, he had the distinction of handling the important duty of going to a nearby bakery for break-time snacks.

"They would shag me over there with their little money fund," he said, "and I had to have a certain order of donuts for their break in the morning."

A member of St. Cloud, MN Branch 388, Krug, 63, retired Oct. 1. With health troubles causing him to take time off, Krug decided it was time to hang up the satchel.

"You know, you've watched children grow up," Krug said. "You watched trees grow big when they plant them. You've seen people come and go, and people have been so kind to me over the years."

In four decades, Krug made many a friend on his route.

"People leave the water in the summertime, they send you a card at Christmas, and it's nice of them to

check up on me and for me to check up on them," he said, "because you gain a little bit of friendship coming by every day."

In fact, he had so many appreciative friends on his route that he was named grand marshal of Litchfield's annual parade in July.

Much has changed in the Post Office since Krug's first day. Back then, most carriers walked from the time they left the post office in the morning until they returned with empty satchels, picking up mail at relay boxes. Today, like most carriers, Krug drives his truck between loops.

Krug didn't care for driving a truck at first, but he sees the necessity now. "I was used to walking, and driving a truck around just seemed like it was a waste of time," he said. "We used to have, like, five 'outsides'—packages I couldn't carry—so I'd give them to a driver. Now, with my truck, we maybe have 30, 40, 50 a day like that."

Krug said he would spend his retirement working on his stamp collection, building birdhouses and benches and in the kitchen cooking and baking.

Though he loved working outside, it came with challenges. "You hoped your day off is during the snowstorm, maybe," Krug said. "And you hope you get your day off on a rainy day. But you don't all the time, of course, so everyone's pretty thick-skinned about putting up with the weather."

"But it's been very fulfilling; it's been very good," he added. "I have no complaints about anything at all. It's been cool, being outside every day," whether in rain, shine, snow or sleet. "I've covered them all," he said. "It's not something a lot of people get to go through, and I tell you what, I wouldn't trade it for the world." **PR**