

Proud to Serve

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 202-662-2489 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.

Carrier's instincts save customer from fire

Arizona Merged Branch 1902 member **Jennifer Nava** had finished delivering to a house on her route on Sept. 15, 2020—as she recalled, “I was getting ready to pull out [of the driveway] when I noticed the black smoke.”

The smoke appeared to be coming from behind the home, and given that a major freeway ran behind the residence, “I thought it was a car fire,” the 21-year carrier explained. However, after driving a few feet, she knew she had to go back and check.

When she pulled around to look back at the house, at first, she could still see only the thick smoke. Then, she spotted the source. “I could see the fire coming out of the attic vent,” Nava said.

The carrier parked her vehicle and ran up to the house, where she began banging on the front door. Eventually, the homeowner came to the door. Nava told him, “You have to get out—the house is on fire!”

The homeowner, who had been sleeping and unaware of the fire, swiftly evacuated and called 911. Firefighters arrived a short time later to put out the blaze.

While the house was later deemed

a complete loss, no one was injured in the fire. The carrier, however, shrugged off any claim to heroism, and said she was just thankful that her customers were safe. “I was panicked,” she added, “because I knew it was a family home with small kids.”

Carrier assists contractor after tumble from roof

“I was delivering a parcel to the front door of the house,” Trenton, NJ Branch 380 member **Richard Powelson** recalled about his route on Feb. 8. As he approached the home, he saw a man climbing up a ladder to the roof.

The 26-year carrier had reached the door when he heard a loud crashing noise. “I stopped and listened, so I could see if it was just that the ladder had fallen,” Powelson said. “But then I could hear the guy—he was in quite a bit of pain.”

The carrier rushed to help the man, who was a contractor working on the home. Given the man's distress, Powelson went to call for help, but realized that he had left his phone back in his LLV.

“I knocked on the front door of the house, but nobody answered,” the carrier said, so he ran down the street to his vehicle. Powelson called 911 and waited with the man until the paramedics arrived.

The contractor underwent surgery to repair a shattered elbow.

Powelson said that he was happy to be able to assist the man during the emergency, and added, “I'm glad I happened to be in the right place at the ‘wrong’ time.”

Directing traffic and calling for help

On Sept. 22, 2020, Long Island Merged, NY Branch 6000 member **Daniel Saposnick** was delivering on



Daniel Saposnick

Eye on the elderly

While delivering on his route on Saturday, Feb. 20, Buffalo-Western New York Branch 3 member **Timothy Dunford** knocked on the door of one of his customers. “I talk to her regularly,” the 30-year carrier said. “She gets a lot of mail and small parcels, and we talk current events.” On this day, however, their routine deviated from the normal small talk. When she opened the door, the woman told Dunford, “I had a stroke.” Confused, the carrier asked her if she had had a stroke in the past few days; instead of answering, the woman attempted to open her garage door, but was unable to push the buttons on the remote control. “I knew there was something not right,” Dunford said, so he ran next door and asked the neighbor if she knew whether the woman had had a stroke recently. The neighbor didn’t know, but he called 911 after hearing Dunford’s description of her behavior. The carrier then finished his loop; when he was done with his route, he went back to the woman’s house to speak to the paramedics. At the hospital, it was determined that the woman

had suffered a seizure due to her brain cancer. Dunford deflected any praise for his actions, and said he considers it part of his job to look out for his customers. “I find out as much as I can about everyone,” he added, which allows him to recognize if anything is amiss.

Southeast Pennsylvania Merged Branch 725 member **Bernard Barth Jr.** had been keeping a particular eye on one of his customers—the elderly man had recently lost his wife, and the 25-year carrier noticed that his health appeared to be declining. “He looked like he was losing weight,” the carrier said. In early October of 2020, however, something even more concerning happened: The customer stopped showing up at his door and, eventually, stopped picking up his mail at all. After a few days went by without seeing his customer, Barth reported the situation to a neighbor, who called for a welfare check. When officers arrived at the home, the man declined assistance. But Barth was so concerned about his customer that he

persisted. “I ended up talking to him through the window,” the carrier said. Given the man’s deteriorating condition, Barth called police again, who gained entry into the house and found the home uninhabitable. “They extracted him through the window,” Barth said, and the man was taken to the hospital and treated for dehydration. He has since recovered and moved to a nursing home. The carrier was modest about his role, and said he considers it to be part of the job. “I’m always looking out for my customers, every day,” Barth added.

Brick Town, NJ Branch 5420 member **Kelleigh Fulton** had a close relationship with an elderly customer on her route. “I’d always check on her,” the three-year carrier said. “She would meet me at the door; if [she didn’t], I would knock and hand her the mail.” As a result, one day in the summer of 2020, when Fulton knocked on her door and the woman didn’t respond, the carrier was immediately concerned. The door was locked, and there was no sound coming from inside the



Kelleigh Fulton

house, all of which was unusual for the customer. Fulton reported the situation to the woman’s next-door neighbor, who she knew had a key to the house. “I told [the neighbor], ‘I’m getting worried,’” the carrier recalled. When they walked back over to the woman’s house, however, they could hear something—it was the customer, faintly calling for help. They entered the house and found the woman lying on the floor; she had fallen early in the morning and been unable to stand up. The neighbor called 911, while Fulton stayed with her customer until paramedics arrived. The woman subsequently went to a rehabilitation center, but has since recovered and returned home. The carrier said that at the time, her focus had been solely on making sure that her customer was safe. “[Your customers] become part of your daily day, and you become pretty close with everyone,” she said. “I was just worried about her.” **PR**

his route when he spotted an elderly woman trying to cross the road. “She was unsteady on her feet, so I asked, ‘Do you need any help?’” the 28-year carrier recalled. She declined, but when he glanced back a few moments later, she was lying facedown in the road.

“She smashed her head, and she was bleeding everywhere,” Saposnick said. He immediately rushed over and dialed 911.

The carrier then stayed by her side while on the phone with the emer-

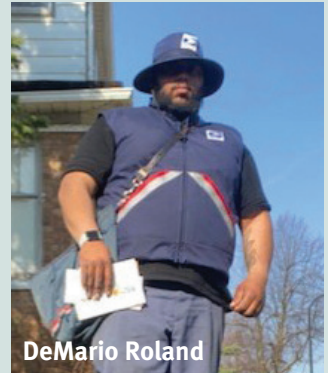
gency operator, all the while directing vehicular traffic to go around her. Given the woman’s serious head injury, he didn’t want to move her without paramedic assistance. “There was blood all over the place, and I’m trying to stabilize her,” the carrier recounted.

As the woman regained consciousness, Saposnick talked to her and kept her calm. He also managed to get in touch with the woman’s son and let him know about his mother’s condition.

Thankfully, an ambulance arrived

quickly. “Within eight minutes, [the paramedics] were at the scene,” said Saposnick. The woman was taken to the hospital, where it was determined that she had collapsed due to a blood clot in her brain.

The woman has since recovered and moved in with her son, but she and the son both contacted Saposnick to thank him for his actions. Despite the chaos, the carrier said, “I would do it all over again.” He added, “I’ll go out of my way to make sure that everyone on my route is all right.” **PR**



DeMario Roland

Neighborhood watch

“I happened to be going to my in-laws” on Feb. 3, said Buffalo-Western New York Branch 3 member **DeMario Roland**, when he witnessed an unoccupied postal vehicle being struck by a hit-and-run driver. “Someone had hit [the LLV] while it was parked, and the mail truck was on the sidewalk,” the two-year carrier recalled. “I know the carrier, so I pulled over.” He told the carrier, who had been delivering mail, everything he remembered about the other vehicle, including the color, type and make. Before driving away, Roland also told the

carrier that he would keep an eye out for the vehicle while driving. As he continued on his way, he happened to see a car that matched the description he had just given—down to the damage he could see on the front of the vehicle. “I got the license plate,” Roland said, which he also passed on to the carrier, who was able to turn all of the information over to police investigators.

On Nov. 10, 2020, while driving to her route, Fond du Lac, WI Branch 125 member **Mary Greene** was coming up to a stoplight when she

noticed something moving in the middle of the road. “I thought it was a dog at first,” the 20-year carrier said. But as she pulled closer, she recalled thinking, “Oh my god, that’s a child!” Greene quickly stopped her vehicle, got out and picked up the toddler; she then went back to her LLV and placed him on the seat. The carrier called her supervisor, who asked her to contact police. “I was looking around [to see where the child had come from], but I didn’t see any doors open,” Greene said. “So I waited for the cops.” While she waited with the

child, her supervisor arrived and began walking down the street. Down the road, he ran into a woman who was searching the area for her son. The mother explained that the boy had learned to climb over their gate and gotten out of their yard. When they walked back over to Greene, they found that the toddler was indeed her missing son. The carrier said that given the traffic, she was relieved to have been on the scene. “Nobody was stopping [their cars]—two people went around him,” she said. “I’m just glad I was there.” **PR**

Retiree Reports

Hartford, Connecticut

As a retiree, I often get unsolicited claims online and via my cell phone from scam sites, claiming to be from the U.S. Postal Service. They claim I have a cash amount or check from some foreign country that I have *never* lived in or visited. They always ask for my credit card number or Social Security number to claim my prize.

Obviously it is a scam. *Never* give out that info, unless you yourself have gone to an online sales site like Schaeffer Outfitter, My Pillow, Made in USA, etc., to buy some item there.

Friends tell they are having delays in parcels being processed through the USPS parcel post facility in Springfield, MA. I guess the lack of overtime allowed and new hires could be the problem there.

Congratulations to Frank Kish, our longtime letter carrier union steward from Naugatuck, who retired after about 40 years as a letter carrier. He has moved to Florida, and we wish him the best.

He joins George Fonte, Mike Yannelli and Joe Giordano, who have transferred or retired down to Florida from Connecticut. As you get older, the winters in Connecticut get tougher to get through.

Hopefully the new Congress will deal with the medical pre-funding 75 years in advance, which has put our USPS in a financial dilemma. I hope our MDA fundraisers, and food drive if we have it, will be successful.

I cannot wait until we get the new postal vehicles. Our aging LLVs are long overdue for replacement.

Best wishes to all carriers and retiree as the weather warms. Dogs will be out in the nicer weather—bring your dog spray and watch out for them, please.

Ed Mulrenan, Branch 86

New Orleans, Louisiana

“Voting is the cornerstone of democracy.” One of the features that is near and dear to me in this imperfect country is that we are blessed with a document that few countries possess—that being the U.S. Constitution. In this document is the foundation of the organization we either actively work for now, or if you’re fortunate, were able to retire from. Article 1, Section 8 lays the framework of this institution the U.S. Postal Service.

There are elements in this country that seek to restrict voting and or make it difficult to vote. Some have stated that if you don’t agree with our policies, we are going to make that essential right harder to accomplish, and even go so far to not allow you to have water or food while waiting to cast your vote.

In our last presidential election, this country experienced the highest voting turnout in 120 years, the former guy who occupied that office had the highest number of votes for a losing candidate, and in more than 50 lawsuits, there was no voter fraud.

Registering to vote is not the same as voting. Voting matters to our bottom line. When the current PMG is replaced, hopefully we can get “right-sized” and eliminate the pre-funding of retiree health benefits and repeal the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP)/Government Pension Offset (GPO) with passage of the Social Security Fairness Act, H.R. 82. Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS) annuitants don’t receive the same cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) as Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS) annuitants—this can also be rectified by H.R. 304. *Voting matters!*

To be better informed as to how we have

achieved the wages and benefits we have, it’s in your own interest to be informed. *Undelivered* by Philip Rubio is a great starting point.

In memoriam to Wendell Guy and Ronald T. Lee. Rest in power.

Stanley Taylor, Branch 124

Paterson, New Jersey

Some of our members have been reporting that there has been some delay in service regarding letters from our members reaching their final destination. Unfortunately, payments of bills, credit cards, etc., were included in this delay, which was probably due to this pandemic taking place at this time.

Our members were informed to call their payment companies for an attempt to cancel any late fees or interest payments that were associated with the delay in the receiving of mail.

Companies generally go along with the assisting of customers in this manner, providing it is not on a regular and routine basis. Letter carriers should make the time and have the patience in calling these companies in an attempt to waive any late fees and interest charges, but will the average customer do so?

We do know that there are many options of bill pay available to the average customer, which may sway customers to change their way of thinking of how bills are paid. Our union may have to take an active interest in the need to make sure that deliveries are made as quickly as possible in a timely manner so that customers can remain loyal in using the United States Postal Service.

Joseph Murone, Branch 120