

Letter carriers and the mail on social media

Various news stories and interesting anecdotes that celebrate letter carriers and the mail have been appearing on 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.

California carrier retires after 42 years of service

On Nov. 3, Pittsburg, CA, letter carrier **Lawrence Chui** retired after 42 years with the Postal Service.

Chui signed on with the Post Office because he was interested in the process of delivering mail, and because he enjoyed exploring the community. Over the course of his career, the Greater East Bay Branch 1111 member earned the Million Mile Award, marking his achievement in driving a million miles to deliver the mail without an accident.

Chui told the local CBS television affiliate that what he would miss most are the customers on his route. "I've seen them all—I mean, you know,



Lawrence Chui



Johnnie Bell

when they were little kids, and then they grow up and then get married, and then move out. I just kind of feel regret to leave them."

Chui's colleagues said they would miss his positive attitude. "In the mornings, he says, 'Welcome home' when you arrive," co-worker Chabli Robinson said.

However, Chui says that he won't miss the early wake-up or the location monitoring system.

He plans to spend most of his retirement relaxing with his family. "I'll probably get up a little bit late and have a nice breakfast, and start from there," he said.

Oklahoma City letter carrier is longest-serving at 66 years

In August, 90-year-old **Johnnie Bell** of Oklahoma City, OK, Branch 458 celebrated his 66th year with the Post Office, marking him as the current longest-serving letter carrier in the country, according to the Postal Service. His co-workers presented him with a red, white and blue cake and a certificate at the post office before he left to complete his route.

Bell's federal service has lasted an extraordinary 70 years, including four years in the Navy prior to the Postal Service. Since starting as a letter carrier in 1956, Bell has spent his entire

career in Oklahoma City. A USPS spokeswoman described his route as mostly mailrooms and cluster boxes, and noted that Bell walks the whole route.

"It's been a great experience to work with him. Seventy years is a blessing," co-worker Willie Taft told KOCO-TV, the local ABC affiliate. "He knows this job inside out. It's clockwork for him."

"This is just something I do because I enjoy doing it," Bell said.

Letter carriers reminisce about their oddest deliveries

A recent BestLife article compiled reports from letter carriers on their oddest deliveries. One carrier said his winner was a potato—he thought it was a joke, but a clerk told him that it was likely a veiled threat (reflecting a humorous perception about potatoes decades ago).

Several other users claimed to have delivered a coconut, and one spoke of delivering a lone banana, complete with stamps and a delivery address.

Another carrier said that there was a time period when he had constant deliveries of bees—entire colonies. "No one else would handle them but me," he wrote. One carrier claimed to have delivered an axe wrapped in a few grocery bags.

In 2014, Ripley's Believe It or Not! actually had a contest with these limits—attempting to mail the strangest package without wrapping it up in a box. Pat Moser, of King, NC, won—he mailed a tree stump.

Pennsylvania woman creates wall of postcards from late father

Lauren Rosa Miller of Philadelphia, PA, found an interesting way to me-



David Dury on his historic route in East Setauket

New York carrier's route brims with history

David Dury of Long Island, NY, Branch 6000 has a special assignment—a route rich with historical landmarks.

East Setauket, a census-designated place on New York's Long Island Sound, is—to name a few notable designations—the site of a Revolutionary War battle; a center in that war's Culper spy ring; a route served by a post office listed on the National Register of Historic Places; and home to Roe Tavern, where President George Washington stayed on April 22, 1790.

East Setauket was founded in 1655, and Dury feels nothing but gratitude to be delivering on this route, even after two decades. "The whole town makes this a nice place to work. Every day is a good day," he told USPS's Link.

Dury, a 21-year carrier, is a participant in "We Go Everywhere," a USPS communications campaign that sends readers on a journey through some of the most fascinating places where letter carriers deliver mail. About the campaign, Dury says, "It was an honor to be chosen."

Beloved Minnesota carrier retires

St. Paul, MN Branch 28 member Joel Meline became a mailman by chance. He was studying chemical engineering in college, when he ran out of tuition money.

He decided on a whim to take the postal carrier exam, and passed. His plan was to go to night school, but instead, he never left the post office for the next 41 years.

"The best part is the customers," Meline, of White Bear Lake, MN, told the *Pioneer Press*. "That's the whole

morialize her late father, Dave Miller Sr. She created a display out of framed postcards he had sent to her in the mid-'90s during her childhood, along with a framed proclamation recognizing her father, in the living room of her house.

Dave was often traveling, as he owned a consulting firm, and as a result much of his communication was done via the mail.

"He wrote postcards from dinner with Nelson Mandela, from the Million Man March and just to tell me 'I love you,'" Miller told USPS's Link. As she grew, she began sending postcards of her own to her father.

Her father was actually the one to initially gather these postcards

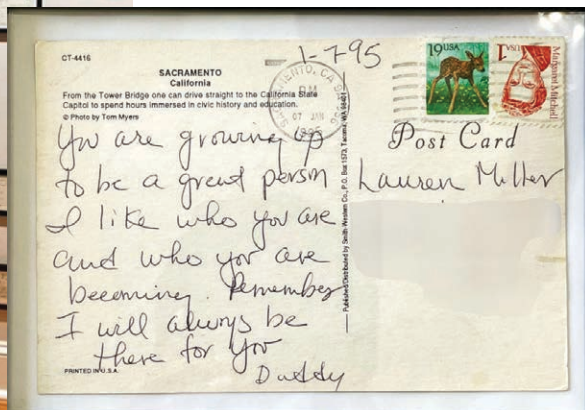
together—before his death in 2018, he gave her a collection of all of their mail.

The pandemic gave Lauren an idea—she figured that if she was going to be spending so much time alone at home, she might as well handle her grief in a positive way.

Throughout the process, she made a video of herself creating the wall and posted it on Instagram, receiving more than 3 million views and coverage on major news outlets, including ABC's "Good Morning America" and NewsNation's "Morning in America."

"I'm very satisfied and happy with the way it looks. Now when I feel like I'm missing him, I walk by and feel his presence and love. I look at them when I'm in need of inspiration," Miller said. "They are a tremendous blessing."

Left: Lauren Rosa Miller and her display of postcards to honor and remember her father
Below: One of the postcards her father mailed to her before he died



Social media (continued)

point—your customers. When you're on a route for a long time, you see kids going from kindergarten to high school and graduating. Customers are the *raison d'être*. They're the reason that we do this."

Meline's customers spent his last week decorating their mailboxes with balloons and giving him notes, treats and goodbyes. His customers recall how Meline always gave the dogs on his route a treat. "He has been the best postal carrier ever," patron Kerri Kolstad said.

"He's very consistent," customer Mike Duesenberg said. "When I hear him, I like to come out and see him and say 'hi.' He's an extra set of eyes in the neighborhood. It's comforting to know that he can look out for us in the event that we are gone. We're going to miss him dearly."

Meline spent many years doing all of the new carrier training in White Bear Lake. "It's not an easy job. It's a



Stanley Covington Jr. (l) moonlights as a fashion designer, with his work (above) being showcased at New York Fashion Week.

he sees my mailman coming down the street he runs to the door to 'play' with the mail," Jaffe said.

Jaffe posted a video of one of the interactions on TikTok recently and received 1.1 million views, with viewers fawning over both the cat and the mailman.

A New York letter carrier's artistic secret

You would never know it by his predictable postal uniform, but letter carrier **Stanley Covington Jr.** is an aspiring fashion designer.

"The clothes that I design are so far away from my job," the Long Island Merged, NY Branch 6000 member told *Newsday*.

On Sept. 10, his work was featured in a showcase for independent designers at New York Fashion Week. The clothes ranged from green sequined shorts to bold painted jackets to frocks with peekaboo cutouts.

His brand is called "IMOYA," meaning "in memory of you always." He dedicates that title to his family, who encouraged him to feed his self-expression, namely his mother and sister. When both of them died in 1997, he soothed his grief by further exploring his art. His main designer inspirations are Marc Jacobs and Balmain.

Covington's major involvement is in the design—after a sketch is finished, he brings it to Moussa Sow, a local tailor in Brooklyn. This arrangement has been ongoing for seven years, and each piece takes about two to three weeks to complete. **PR**



simple job, but there are lots of pieces to it," he said. "Brand-new people would come to tears trying to just do the job."

"It's time to go," he said of his retirement. "The repetitive motion of twisting and turning and lifting, it catches up to you." His wife, Kim, died in May, and Meline plans to spend his retirement finishing his degree.

"Everyone has just been great," Meline said. "I don't feel like I work for the post office as much as I work for my customers. A good mail carrier is a treasure. They're an asset to your neighborhood, and I tried to be that."

Oregon carrier has adorable friendship with cat

Ryan Gray of Portland, OR, has spent the past year befriending a cat on his route, and a lot of people have noticed. Every day, the Branch 82 member plays with the cat, Zeppelin, by sliding the mail back and forth through the slot in the front door while the cat bats at the letters. The feline's owner, Marisa Jaffe, calls this "the best part of our morning."

"Zeppelin has become accustomed to waiting by the window, and when