

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.

New York carrier makes a special delivery to Sesame Street

Elmo, the inquisitive Muppet on the children's television show "Sesame Street," learned all about how mail is delivered with the help of New York Branch 36 member **Angela Hampton**.

In a Nov. 18 episode on HBO Max, Elmo sends a letter to his puppy, Tango. Hampton shows him what happens to it next, moving and sorting the mail through the system. Then she takes Elmo to deliver mail to other residents of Sesame Street, including Elmo's letter and a package of cookies for Cookie Monster—who, of course, immediately devours the entire package without even opening it.

The episode was one of Sesame Street's segments focusing on "everyday heroes," the show's executive producer Ben Lehmann told *The Washington Post*. The message to Elmo was not only about appreciating the letter carriers who deliver the mail, even during the pandemic, but also showing that mail brings joy. Children learned that "if you want to get a meaningful piece of mail, you have to also send mail to others," Lehmann said.

Hampton has worked at the Manhattanville, NY Post Office in Harlem for all of her 21 years with the Postal Service. She doesn't know why she was chosen for the role, but she guesses that "it's because I'm passionate about what I do," she told USPS Link. "I'm a

good carrier, and I treat people the way I want to be treated."

Working on the Sesame Street production as an actor was hard work. "It's grueling," she said, laughing. "Let's just say I have a new respect for the craft."

On the other hand, she was pampered a little. "They sent a car!" she told USPS Link. "I had my own trailer." Hampton recalled mentioning offhand that she could use a Red Bull and a staff member surprised her by bringing one. "I was treated like I was somebody special," she said.

One of the best perks, though, was when the Sesame Street Muppet Rosita made a video just for Hampton's daughter, who has cerebral palsy.

"That was the highlight of the whole thing," Hampton said.

The episode, "Elmo Mails a Letter," is the second of the 52nd season of "Sesame Street." It was also the first shot on location since the pandemic began.

"For children, the magic of how something goes from one place to another is a fascinating journey," USPS spokeswoman Sara Martin told the *Post*. "Seeing how letters travel through the processing equipment will amaze them, too."

Retiree shares his stories

Retired letter carrier **Bill Crabtree** is 93, so his stories take him back a long way.



Angela Hampton with the "Sesame Street" Muppets

The Columbia, MO Branch 763 member started carrying the mail in 1945 in Granite City, IL, as he told the *Fulton Sun*, a central Missouri newspaper, which did a feature story in November about his career. At the time, he was only 16, and quit school to help his father support him, his brother and two sisters. His mother had died 10 years earlier. He walked to the local post office to answer a job ad and was offered the job the next day in person because he had no phone. He rode a bus to the post office each day—the ride was free for mail carriers.

Crabtree worked long hours delivering two routes a day, usually clocking in at 4:45 a.m. and out at about 7 p.m. "There was only one truck," he told the *Sun*. "In the mornings, we would tie up our mail, magazines and letters in a sack, and then label them where they went and the truck would drop them off."

Someone on his route owned a horse, and Crabtree made friends with it. "I would always bring an apple, and that horse was waiting for me every day," he said. "I'd feed him that apple, and he'd run along with me. But I'd only feed him that one apple."



Bill Crabtree

Left:
Gerald
Woods
Right:
Roger
Mangio



Social media (continued)

Having a dentist on his route worked out well when he had tooth problems.

“One day I had a terrible toothache,” Crabtree said. “I was driving the truck, and I was double parked delivering packages downtown. I had a package for the dentist upstairs, so I got in there, and he didn’t have anybody. So I said, ‘Boy, I’ve had a toothache for two or three days. Can you pull my tooth?’ He said yeah, so I sat down, he pulled it out and gave me a round pot to spit in the rest of the day.”

Crabtree was able to save some money and he bought a small house for his family. The quarters were modest—no hot water, no inside toilet and no heat—but it was a step up for the family. Later, he started his own family with his wife, Helen. The couple have been together for 70 years and have two sons and two daughters.

Crabtree worked in Granite City for 21 years before transferring to Fulton, MO, where he worked 18 years before retiring with 39 total years of service. After spending some retirement years in Florida, the couple moved back to Missouri to be close to their family. He has been retired for 37 years—almost as long as he delivered the mail.

His son Billy followed in his footsteps. He started as a janitor at the Post Office, then moved to a clerk job and eventually became a postmaster.

‘We’re fans forever’ – Customers show love for retiring carrier

Dozens of signs, balloons and customers offering well wishes greeted Baton Rouge, LA Branch 129 member **Gerald Woods** as he carried his satchel for the last time after 29 years.

“We’ve always been a bit of a fan club of Gerald because he’s just so fantastic,” postal customer Thomas

Anderson told CBS affiliate TV station WAFB in Baton Rouge. Woods delivered on his last route for 13 years before retiring in November.

Dozens of neighbors gathered to congratulate Woods and take photos with him. “We Love You Mr. Gerald,” read a large sign. “Happy Retirement!” One neighbor held a “Gerald Fan Club” sign with a “Forever” stamp image on it—“we’re fans forever,” the man said. “Mr. Gerald, trustworthy friend; forever in our hearts,” read another sign.

“When you travel, we have his phone number even, so in case we had an emergency we could call him and say, ‘Oh we’re not getting back in time.’ He’s just amazing,” Anderson said.

The neighbors didn’t wait until his retirement to show Woods their appreciation. They took care of him every day he delivered.

“If I needed anything while I was on this route in this subdivision, I could go to anybody’s house and get it,” Woods told WAFB. “They’re like family. I appreciate them, every last person out here, I appreciate them.”

Retiree community welcomes carrier to retirement

As she walked the last day on her route last June after 36 years carrying the mail, New Jersey Merged Branch 38 member **Yvonne Vass** was greeted by a special surprise.

A group of neighbors in the Enclave at Shrewsbury, a community of people aged 55 and older, greeted Vass to wish her well in her retirement.

“They had a lawn sign made for me with cards, gifts, etc.,” Vass said. “I was so touched! It really made me feel special.” The large sign read “We will miss you, Yvonne.”

Vass delivered mail from the Red

Bank, NJ post office beginning in 1985, with the last 10 years on the route in Shrewsbury.

“During the pandemic of 2020, I often bought extra cans of Lysol and antibacterial products for these customers,” Vass said. “They certainly will be missed by me, always friendly and caring towards me and appreciated the dedication I had in my job.”

Retiring carrier ready to pass the torch to his son

Retiring this past October after 31 years as a carrier, **Roger Mangio**, a member of Chicago, IL Branch 11, felt appreciated by his customers.

“He was friendly and knew us by our first names, which was very unusual—it takes a matter of skill,” Francine O’Connor, who lived on Mangio’s route in Forest Glen, a Chicago suburb, told the online newspaper *Block Club Chicago*. “Respect was his middle name.” On his last day, O’Connor honored Mangio with a certificate from the Forest Glen Community Club.

Mangio said he was surprised by the certificate and by the farewells from neighbors who sent letters and photos and posted signs to thank him for his excellent service.

“I felt happy about that because [the neighbors] were all very nice to me and just like family,” Mangio said. “I have been there a long time. Every time I drove around, I waved at them.”

One of Mangio’s sons may take over soon. His youngest son has applied for a letter carrier job, and Mangio gave him his uniform and cart to use if he is hired.

The father of three came from the Philippines in 1982 and took his job with the Postal Service in 1990. Despite knee pain from an injury, Mangio said

Stephanie Maldonado acted in one of the USPS' holiday ads.



he loved his job. He was looking forward to retirement, but not to missing his customers.

"It's hard to leave the community because everyone is so nice," he said. "I [was] lucky to be their mailman."

O'Connor and several other neighbors decorated their windows with signs that read, "Forest Glen Loves Roger," and, "Roger, Farewell." Others affixed notes to their mailboxes.

"He was very kind, and you could tell he had a special inner warmth for other people," O'Connor said. "He would take a minute to say 'Hello' and have a little chat with you, even though he had a big route."

Steve McVeigh, a 40-year resident of Forest Glen, remembered the way Mangio wrapped his mail in a bundle with rubber bands so it would stay together. "It's the little thing, but those little things add up," said McVeigh, who called Mangio a good friend. "It keeps the community intact."

Mangio displayed enthusiasm for serving his customers, especially when faced with long hours and cold Chicago winters, McVeigh said. His window message to Mangio read, "Roger, enjoy your new route."

O'Connor promised to keep spreading the friendliness Mangio brought to her neighborhood.

"It doesn't take much in the world to say 'hello' to somebody," O'Connor said of Mangio. "He epitomizes all the wonderful qualities of a human being."

Behind the scenes with letter carriers in USPS holiday ad

Several letter carriers appeared in a Christmas season

TV ad the Postal Service aired in November and December.

If you've ever wondered what it's like to participate in a TV ad, you can see behind the scenes in a USPS video about making the commercials.

The ad, called "The Helpers," showed packages being sorted and then being delivered by letter carriers, including West Palm Beach Branch 1690 member **Stephanie Maldonado**. Making the commercial was a once-in-a-lifetime experience for Maldonado. "I'm going to hold onto this memory forever," she told USPS Link.

Carmel, IN Branch 888 member **Holli Wood** told USPS Link that she had responded to the Postal Service's casting call for the ad because she thought "it would be a real honor to represent the Post Office [and the]

job that I do, because I love my job so much."

James Keller of Pasadena, CA Branch 2200 appeared in the TV ad and some USPS print ads. He recalled shooting the ads. "I was told to stand very still and smile very big," he said. "I do think a lot of my customers will be very excited to see me on the screen."

See the video at link.usps.com/video/behind-the-scenes-2021-usps-holiday-ad.

White House Christmas decorations honor postal heroes

For the Christmas season, President Joe Biden and First Lady Jill Biden decorated nearly every room of the White House, each with a theme. In the State

Dining Room, they celebrated frontline workers, including postal employees, with a gingerbread replica of the White House accompanied by several other buildings, including a post office, representing those workers.

"This year's gingerbread display is inspired by our gratitude and admiration for our Nation's frontline workers who kept our country running through the global pandemic, often at great risk to themselves and their families," the White House website said.

The White House pastry team used 55 sheets of baked gingerbread, 120 pounds of pastillage icing, 35 pounds of chocolate and 25 pounds of decorative royal icing to create the display. **PR**

