

## Letter carriers and the mail on social media

**V**arious 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](mailto:social@nalc.org).

### A family affair in Iowa

Delivering mail is a family affair for the Penticos in Perry, IA. Six members of the Pentico family are letter carriers—combined, they have 153 years of service with the Post Office.

"My supervisor and I used to say, 'I really hope there isn't a family emergency.' It would have wiped out our city delivery side," Janelle Hall, former Perry postmaster, told USPS Link.

The tradition started in 1961 with **James Pentico**, who sorted mail in the mornings and delivered his route in the afternoons. He retired in 1992.

James's sons **Randy, Ricky, Ronnie** and **Richard** followed in his footsteps. "Their work ethic was and is unparal-

**The current and former Pentico family letter carriers**



leled," Hall said. "I think I could count on one hand the number of times any of them, combined, have called in sick."

"That's just the way I was raised," Ricky told USPS. "You get up and come to work every day."

Ronnie, Randy and Ricky have since retired, though Ronnie returned to work during the holidays, Hall said.

The three brothers look back on their postal connection fondly.

"It was my livelihood, and a good-paying job," Randy said.

Ronnie added: "It was a lot of hard work, but the benefits were good."

Ricky mentioned enjoying customer interaction. "I was able to meet people on my route and become well known in the community," he said.

The only Pentico brother still on the job is Richard; he and son **Michael**, who has five years of letter carrier experience, are keeping the family tradition alive and well.

USPS "has provided us with a good living," Richard said, adding jokingly, "The only [downside] is we haven't been able to take that family vacation."

### Pennsylvania carrier's kindness caught on camera

After a snowstorm that dropped more than half a foot of snow on Saturday, March 12, **LeRon Britt**, a member of Johnston, PA Branch 451, shoveled a customer's stairs.

Customer Terri Halliday, a disabled military veteran who has had one leg amputated, said she



**LeRon Britt shovels off Terri Halliday's steps.**

was "extremely grateful" for LeRon's help. She heard her home alert system ding around noon that day, denoting outside movement.

"I began watching on my phone, and I saw a mail delivery truck," she told *The Tribune-Democrat*. "The next thing I know, I see him coming up my steps with a snow shovel."

Halliday had left the shovel near her door so that she could easily grab it to clear her deck, although she's unable to shovel the steps. Britt spent about five minutes removing the snow, all caught on security camera footage.

"I was extremely grateful," Halliday said. "He shoveled all the steps and cleared off my front deck. I was shocked but grateful."

The two hadn't interacted much before, aside from saying a quick hello once or twice when the patron was in her driveway in her power chair.

"You hear so many different stories out there that people don't care about other people, and then this happens to you," Halliday told the newspaper.

She soon met and thanked Britt as he replaced the shovel in its spot by her door. She later posted on Facebook a screen shot from video captured by her home security camera of Britt's act

The *New York Daily News* named Claude Boniello as one of the newspaper's 'Hometown Heroes.'

of kindness, which was quickly shared by hundreds of people.

Britt, a six-year carrier, has delivered to that part of Johnstown for several years and has become familiar with many on his route, though Halliday had moved in only recently.

It's not the first time Britt has shoveled walks for customers on his route, either.

"Anytime I can help, I help them," he said. "It's just something I feel is important. I feel I would want somebody to help me if I needed help."

Gutierrez said he loved seeing the same people on his mail route and watching children grow up and have children of their own. He enjoyed just saying "hi" to people or running into a customer at the grocery store or hair salon, he added.

The carrier said he's looking forward to spending more time with his six children and five grandchildren in retirement.

"And I want to fix up my trailer and go camping and go fishing and try and enjoy it as much as I can," he added.

### New York carrier named 'Hometown Hero'

Claude Boniello of Flushing, NY Branch 294 was featured on March 21 as a weekly "Hometown Hero" in the *New York Daily News*, as someone who has "gone above and beyond in service to New York City and our communities."

The 38-year letter carrier delivers on a route in Queens with many older residents and is known for his excellent customer service, his friendly conversation and for being a steady presence for customers throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

"He has shown himself to be an asset to the community," Denise Puleri, a friend and customer on his route, told the *Daily News*. "His patience with seniors is exceptional. They wait for him daily just to catch up with the latest."

DAILY NEWS

## Hometown Heroes: Queens mailman Claude Boniello delivers caring with his post



Claude Boniello on his route in Bayside. (Jeff Bachner/for New York Daily News)

In early 2020, when the coronavirus was still a mystery and lockdowns were the norm in New York City, Boniello kept delivering his rounds. For some on his route, seeing him was the only human interaction they had all day.

"A lot of people at the time when it first started, they were in their houses and when they saw the mailman that possibly just sort of put a spark to them," he told the newspaper.

Boniello, who was born in Brooklyn and grew up in Queens, began working in an insurance company after college but soon realized that sitting at a desk was not the life for him.

He knew that he wanted to get a civil service job like his father, who worked for the city Department of Sanitation, to ensure steady employment and a comfortable retirement, he said, adding, "I joined the Postal Service in 1984, and that's where I am today."

He is known by his patrons for helping track down a package, letting them how to fill out a hold card if they're going out of town, or accommodating other small requests such as not putting mail through the door slot.



Amelio Gutierrez

### Family-focused California carrier celebrates his retirement

The last punch bunch has gained a new member.

Santa Barbara, CA Branch 290 member **Amelio Gutierrez** retired in late February after more than 35 years of delivering mail in Carpinteria. The carrier delivered on one route for more than a decade before taking over another route for more than 20 years.

Gutierrez hadn't planned to retire until 2025, when he turns 65, but decided to end his long career early to help take care of his family, including his adult daughter, who was recently diagnosed with ALS, he told *Coastal View News*.

"I wanted to spend more time with her," he told the newspaper.

## Social media (continued)

Because of this dedication, Boniello was nominated for a Hometown Heroes award.

“Every morning getting up, I knew I was going to go and meet these people on a daily basis. They knew who I was, and we became friendly,” he said, adding that they’d tell him he was missed on his days off.

“I enjoy my job,” he said. “A lot of people hate their jobs and they say, ‘How are you still doing it?’ But it keeps me going.”

Puleri told the newspaper that she got to know Boniello gradually when her husband was alive.

“[My husband] was very sick for a long time and he would say, ‘Where’s

exceptional mail delivery but special delivery.”

### Florida community thanks its carrier

In honor of Thank a Mail Carrier Day on Feb. 4, WKMG-TV/ClickOrlando documented a day in the life of **Dennis Winston**, a member of Central Florida Branch 1091, as a news crew tagged along his route.

“I walk 14 miles a day. Over 21,000 steps,” Winston, a 20-year letter carrier and Army veteran, told the CBS affiliate.

He said that he had never envisioned himself being a mailman, but he adds that this was because he didn’t know what the job entailed.

“I didn’t realize I was going to interact with so many people and become friends with people I’ve met,” he said. “It’s fantastic. Now I wouldn’t trade it.”

His customers sing his praises. “He works his fanny off and walks all the time, no matter the weather,” Lisa

Singleton said. “He always has a positive word, always a smile.”

Another patron said she’s gone above and beyond for her.

“He’s tall, so sometimes I’ll ask him to do a couple things for me,” Nina Vu said. “It’s very appreciated. I had Christmas lights that I couldn’t reach and he quickly got them down for me.”

He’s so beloved by residents that the Colonialtown community took to Facebook last year to give Winston a shout-out after customer Sara Jiminez

posted a photo of him on his birthday calling him the “best mailman in the whole world.”

The post soon received dozens of well wishes virtually and on the street as he delivered his route.

“Next thing I know, everybody’s walking down the street, ‘Happy birthday, Dennis.’ Some people driving by that I didn’t even know saying, ‘Hey, Dennis,’” he said. “I was cheeing ear-to-ear like a Cheshire cat. Very humbling.”

Winston told WKMG that it’s his customers who motivate him when the job gets demanding. “Just a kind word is enough for me,” he said.

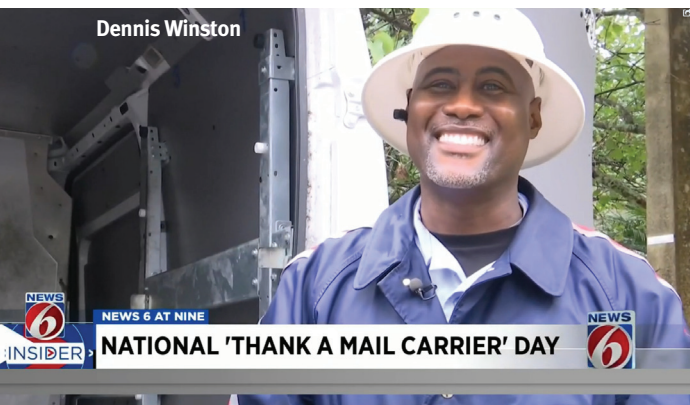
### New York carrier helps patron have a card-filled birthday

In March, Syracuse, NY Branch 134 member **Janet Metcalf** posted in the “Women of the Satchel” Facebook group about her customer, Kyle, who has Down Syndrome, and the carrier had a special request.

“He gets so excited when he gets any mail, which

is very infrequently,” she posted. “His birthday is March 17th. Could you please help me make his day extra special with lots of birthday cards?”

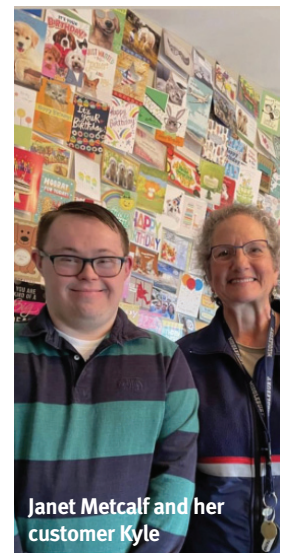
Many members of the group heeded the call and



Claude, he’s late, what happened?” He would look forward to seeing Claude every day and Claude would come in and talk for a little bit,” she said.

Neighbors respect the quiet caring and consistency of what he does, she added.

“It’s not just getting mail,” Boniello said. “It’s about human contact and communication. I know from my own personal experience how patient and caring he can be when I talk too much and he’s trying to keep his schedule. Our community not only gets



shared the post with their own friends, and soon Kyle was spending his birthday combing through well wishes from near and far.

“Thank you, thank you, thank you to all the wonderful carriers who sent cards (and other gifts) or shared Kyle’s story on other card-giving pages,” Metcalf later posted. “His birthday was on St. Patrick’s Day, but as of today, his card count was over

300 (without a single duplicate) from over 35 states, along with two from Canada.

“Kyle ran to the mailbox every day” and went through each birthday card, she said. “He and his family are so appreciative of your efforts. I always knew mail carriers were a special breed, and I’m overwhelmed by your thoughtfulness and generosity.” **PR**

## Deadlines approaching for national convention

**D**elagate eligibility lists for the 72nd biennial national convention in Chicago this summer have been mailed to all branches. The lists must be completed and returned to Secretary-Treasurer Nicole Rhine’s office at NALC Headquarters no later than June 8 for branch representatives to be registered as delegates to the convention. The convention is set for Aug. 8-12.

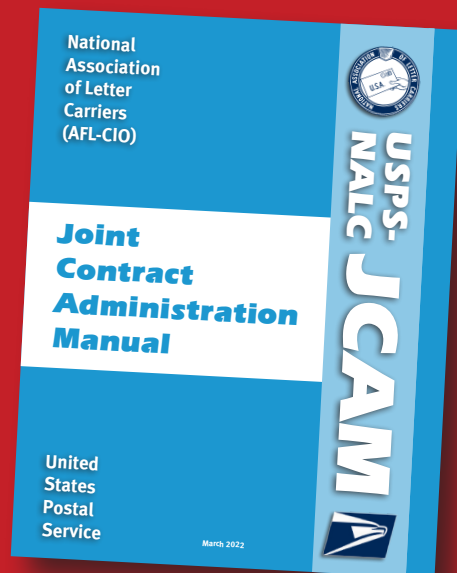
All proposed amendments to the *NALC Constitution* to be submitted for consideration at the convention must be received by Rhine’s office by June 8 as well. That date is 60 days in advance of the convention, as prescribed by the *NALC Constitution*. Proposed amendments will appear in July’s *Postal Record* for the membership to review.

Resolutions to be considered by delegates also must be received by the June 8 deadline to be printed in the *Resolutions and Amendments* book provided to delegates. Resolutions received after June 8 still may be considered at the convention.

Branches wishing to sell items in the designated branch sales area during the convention must contact Rhine’s

office to secure guidelines and forms. The completed forms must be returned to Headquarters by June 8 as well.

Go to [nalc.org](http://nalc.org) for more convention news. **PR**



## March 2022 JCAM is now available

The March 2022 *JCAM* is now available on [nalc.org](http://nalc.org). All previous versions of the *JCAM* should be replaced with the March 2022 version. The *JCAM* is in the printing process. A copy will be sent to each office where city letter carriers are employed. Additional copies will be made available for purchase from the NALC Store after printing is complete. **PR**

