

Carriers and the mail make news online

Mail-centered stories frequently appear on social media and online news sites. The following are a few that have come to NALC's attention recently. If you find a story you'd like us to consider featuring, send it to postalrecord@nalc.org.

Carrier invited to Thanksgiving after good deed

Jaylen Lockhart, an Aurora, IL, rural carrier, saw Guy Miller, an elderly man on his route, take a tumble. Miller's head was bleeding after he hit his head on the ground. So, Lockhart asked Miller for an address and rushed to his home, which was only about a block away. Miller's wife drove her car and picked him up.

Lockhart was given an award by the city, but that wasn't all the thanks he was given. Miller asked Lockhart if he had any plans for Thanksgiving and he said, "Not really," so Miller invited Lockhart and his family to have Thanksgiving with his family. Since the incident, which occurred in mid-November, the two have become friends.

Lockhart said that the Miller family was an amazing one and he was "glad to sit here at this table and be a part of it," according to a local TV station.

The story became national news, appearing on shows such as ABC's "Good Morning America," along with numerous local news outlets.

Remembering a once-prominent mail-focused industry

According to *Smithsonian* magazine, music became a big industry in the beginning of the 20th century, so people started thinking of creative ways that consumers could become a bigger part of the music industry. "Song-sharking"

was a notable solution to get people involved in the music-making process.

Companies placed ads in newspapers and magazines promising to turn consumers' original lyrics or poems into songs. The ads would list an address for lyrics to be mailed to and would promise to help write a song out of them.

Initially, companies would simply mail the lyrics with sheet music back to the sender as a novelty item, but further on into the 20th century, companies used entire teams of musicians to make the lyrics into a full-production song.

While some enjoyed receiving the completed song for personal use, many companies promised fame and fortune. They enticed lyricists and poets with dreams of record deals and big paydays. Unfortunately for them, these songs almost never had a life outside of the mail and the return address. That's why they were derogatorily called "sharks."

Despite the songs' lack of commercial success, the lost art gained somewhat of a cult following in the 1990s, when song-poems started appearing on anthology CDs, allowing the recordings to have new life decades after their creations. **PR**



Rural carrier Jaylen Lockhart (l) and Guy Miller share Thanksgiving.

A song-sharking ad from 1921

