

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.

World War II letters delivered after eight decades

More than 80 years after they were sent, a family received the letters that their father sent to his parents between May and June of 1944 when he was stationed in England during World War II during his service in the Army.

They were taken out of circulation after most likely being lost in the mail. Erik Martin, a stamp collector in Massachusetts, discovered them when he ordered a batch of WWII envelopes online. Martin said he thought some of them were strange because “three of them were

still sealed, so I've never seen that before.” The letters had been sent by Jimmy Morris and addressed to Morris's mother, Mrs. Francis Morris, in Drexel Hill, PA.

Searching for the recipient or her descendants, Martin posted on a Drexel Hill Facebook page. The Facebook post helped connect Martin with the

sender's living children, John Morris and Kathleen Morris Rosati, to whom Martin forwarded the letters.

It turns out, after the war, Jimmy Morris spent most of his career as a mail carrier in Delaware County.

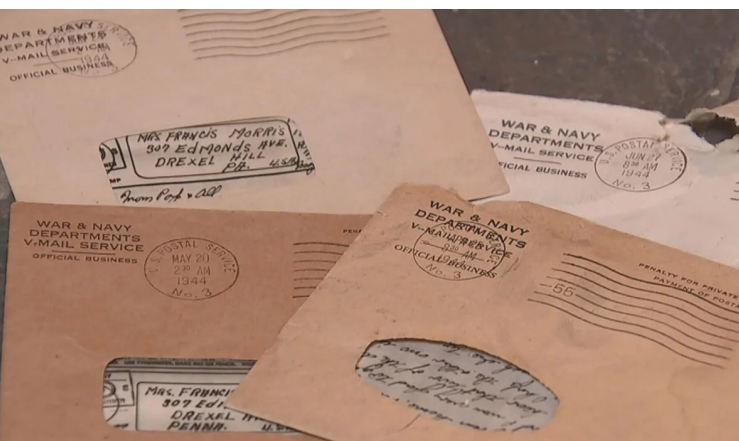
The family appreciated getting the letters back and Rosati told *Delco Today*, “Oh my gosh, it's just incredible. ... I feel like my dad's right here with me.”

Dads spread love and advice to strangers through the mail

Ever since sleepaway camp, Rosie Paulik's dad—Buz Ecker—wrote her letters. That continued in her adulthood, receiving what she estimates to be about 3,500 letters from her father over the years. Sometimes he would write to her daily, covering a range of topics from classes he was taking to how proud he was of her to his favorite sandwich. Now that Paulik has a son, he receives letters from grandpa, although he is only 2. Paulik keeps each one. His letters also include dad jokes, which Paulik said on The Dad Letter Project's website are, “so bad you have no choice but to laugh.”

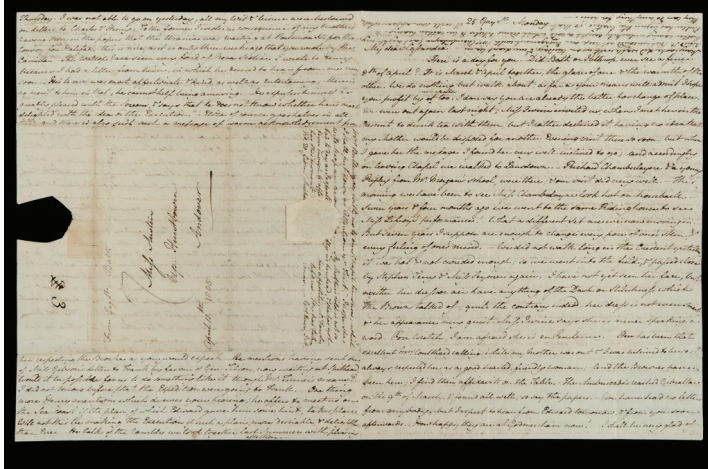
“The letters are seriously wonderful, charming, funny,” Paulik said in a TikTok video.

Her dad was feeling down and knowing his love for letter writing, Paulik posted on TikTok in July looking for people who would want a letter from her father. To her surprise, the request reached more than a thousand people around the world. Some of them had lost their dad, some never had the presence of a father, and some were just in need of advice. So, Paulik created the Dad Letter Project, which brings dads and those in need of a father figure together as pen pals via its website, dadletterproject.com, which Paulik created. Since its start, the project has gained 15 dads.



Top: Morris's letters

Above: A family photo of Morris



Jane Austen's letter to her sister

Paulik said in one TikTok video, “I think a lot of people need a dad. ... He is more than happy to be your dad if you need him.”

Jane Austen's letter to be auctioned

The importance of sisterhood can be seen in Jane Austen's work, with many of her novels featuring sisters as influences on the stories' heroines. In her personal life, the impact of her older sister Cassandra was demonstrated in a letter that Jane wrote to her, which is now on auction and expected to sell for up to \$400,000.

The letter recounts Jane's life in Bath, England, shares gossip about friends and family members, talks about their friends, jokes about Cassandra's health and mourns the loss of their social status after the death of their father. In the letter, Jane describes how “reduced she felt” three months after his death.

Only three years apart in age, the pair had a close bond, both intellectually and emotionally. Cassandra said only two days after Jane's death that she “had not a thought concealed from her.”

Cassandra destroyed all but 161 of the total 3,000 letters Jane had written in her life as a way to protect her legacy. It is believed that Jane was not very productive at this time, struggling with her move to Bath and the fact that she might have been depressed during a period of about three to four years before the letter was sent. All the letters sent during that period were destroyed. Cassandra also painted the only surviving portrait of Jane, the sole representation of Jane's appearance remaining in existence.

In addition to the letter, there will be other Austen memorabilia, which all together have an estimated worth of \$1.3 million.

Postcard returned to sender 72 years later

A postcard with a return address in Ottawa, IL, had been lost at the U.N. building in New York City for 72 years.

In 1953 Alan Ball took a train from Ottawa to New York, where he would board a plane to Puerto Rico to spend the summer with his aunt. Before hopping on the plane, he explored the city, visiting the United Nations Secretariat Building, where he used a 2-cent stamp to mail a postcard to his parents telling them that he had made it to New York.

Ball had written just his first name on the postcard, and by the time the letter was found, the recipient had changed addresses, so it was a difficult feat—to put it mildly—to find “Alan.”

Despite this, the Ottawa postmaster, Mark Thompson, was determined to get it back to its original sender. In August, Thompson began asking



The Dad Letter Project website

Alan Ball receives the postcard from his letter carrier.

Photo courtesy of Chloe Cochran



Carriers and the mail online (continued)



Jason Mraz (above), Steve Carrell (l), and Charles Mingus (below)



around, and the story ended up in the local news.

Community volunteers and the LaSalle County Genealogy Guild in Illinois offered to aid in the search. Eventually they found Alan Ball, who now lives in Sandpoint, ID.

"When I first heard about it, I think I just started laughing," Ball said to CNN.

Ball told CNN that when he received the letter, the letter carrier smiled and said, "Sorry it's so late."

Celebrities who were letter carriers, postal workers

Being a letter carrier requires determination, people skills and endurance. So, it should come as no surprise that several letter carriers went on to become famous for their success in acting, politics, athletics, art and music and more.

The Postal Service compiled a list of former postal workers who are now famous, which was updated in mid-September. Included among them are actor, producer and narrator Morgan Freeman, singer-songwriter Jason Mraz, KISS guitarist Ace Frehley, "The Office" actor Steve Carrell, Walt Disney, President Harry S Truman, President Abraham Lincoln, actor and comedian Sherman Hemsley and jazz bassist Charles Mingus.

Steve Carrell said in an interview on the "Late Show" in December 2018 that "it was one of the hardest jobs I ever had." In 1985, Carrell worked as a rural carrier in Littleton, MA. Being a rural carrier in a small post office, Carrell didn't get his own truck; he instead had to use his small Toyota. He sat on the passenger side of the bench seat, steering with one hand and putting the mail in the boxes with the other.

"It would also take me till 9 or 10 at night to deliver the mail 'cause I was

doing this stupid thing," Carrell said on the show.

Another celebrity who worked for the Postal Service is Jason Mraz, a singer-songwriter known for his song "I'm Yours." He worked as a casual clerk in Richmond, VA, around 1995.

Mraz told *Newsweek*, "All of our most precious documents, contracts, presents and checks from Grandma go through their trusted hands. I personally think [letter carriers] ... get overlooked."

Charles Mingus had worked for the Postal Service three separate times at three different offices. He worked as a letter carrier in San Francisco in 1946 and in Los Angeles in 1949, then three years later he became a clerk in New York City.

His sporadic postal career was likely due to the fact that "to be a jazz musician is a meager livelihood for most," USPS historian Steve Kochersperger told *Newsweek*. "He was a brilliant musician, but he depended on the Postal Service when he needed to pay the bills."

Although many left their jobs at the Postal Service to pursue other interests, which led to fame and success, some continued to work for the Service for stability while also pursuing their passions. For example, Kermit Oliver, who worked as an overnight mail sorter for 29 years in Waco, TX, was able to have a career as a successful artist. His paintings sold for up to \$150,000 each and he designed 17 scarves for Hermès. Another example is Lucius Talley, also known as "The Spoonman," who has had a successful career playing the spoons percussion instrument while maintaining a 29-year career as a letter carrier in New York City and Nashville, TN, where he retired from in 1992. **PR**