

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.

New York play features the story of lifelong pen pals

"Pen Pals" is a play about two women around the same age, Bernie and Mags, who live in New Jersey and London, respectively, but who formed a friendship via letters. They have been writing letters to each other since they were teenagers and have continued throughout the rest of their lives. According to the play's website, "they've never met, and yet they're best friends."

They share all the details of their lives with each other—fun moments, heartbreak and happiness. Despite being separated by the Atlantic Ocean, the pair are "closer to each other than anyone else in the world."

The play is based on a book, *Pen Pals*, by Michael Griffo, which takes place from 1955 to 2002 and was inspired by his mother who herself

had a British pen pal for more than 60 years.

According to *NJ Arts*, the play was originally performed in fall 2024 at the New Jersey Repertory Company in Long Branch, NJ. The show was extended and moved to the DR2 Theatre in New York City, opening on Aug. 15 and scheduled to run until Feb. 1. There are several pairs of actors portraying Bernie and Mags, so the performances are different every two weeks. Among the actors are Marcia Cross, Sharon Lawrence, Maureen McCormick, Catherine Curtin and Melissa Gilbert.

Former Postal Museum director writes book on USPS history

James H. Burns, director of the National Postal Museum from 1984 to 1997, has written a book, *Delivering for America: How the United States Postal Service Built a Nation*, which explores the integral role of the Post Office across its 250-year history.

As the United States developed and changed over the years, America's postal service grew and changed with it. Mail has had several modes of transport, including horses, rail, airplanes, cars and ships. The book discusses the times in U.S. history when the mail system was most crucial, such as during the Revolutionary War and the Great Depression.

It also talks about the important role of the postal system during periods of expansion in U.S. history, when mail routes took on an even greater role in connecting communities and unifying the country.

Burns includes examples of postal workers operating under difficult conditions—like early airmail pilots navigating dangerous routes or couriers transporting valuable shipments during financial crises.



The book also includes visual materials, such as rare photographs, documents and artifacts that share information on everything postal.

In addition to historical information, the book examines how the Postal Service continues to affect Americans' lives despite technological changes ranging from the rise of automation to digital communications.

Illinois teachers' pen pal program hits 20 and still going

About 20 years ago, two elementary teachers in Illinois—Chad Hamerlinck and Tonya Vincent—were searching for a way to provide authentic writing opportunities and foster connections between students at their two schools in Wethersfield and Cambridge. So, they came up with an idea to have a pen pals program between the two schools.

Students write to each other monthly. Because the two schools are only about 30 minutes from each other, unlike many pen pals, students from the two schools meet in person twice a year. The students from Cambridge visit Wethersfield in the fall and vice versa in the spring. When they meet, they play outside together, tour each other's schools and do "getting to know you" activities.

"After the initial shock and shyness, it doesn't take long for most to warm up and start talking with their pen pal," Hamerlinck told *The Kewanee Voice*. "I even had one of my students get invited to a birthday party of their pen pal. What a cool experience."

Postal Service announces 2026 stamp lineup

The Postal Service has provided a sneak peek at the stamps set to be released throughout this year. Included among the people, places and ideas becoming USPS stamps this

year are Muhammad Ali, Phillis Wheatley, Route 66, Bruce Lee, love, Colorado statehood, Harriet Powers, figures of the American Revolution, international peace as well as several animals, plants and landscapes.

"This early preview of our 2026 stamp program underscores the Postal Service's commitment to celebrating the artistry and storytelling that make stamps so special," Lisa Bobb-Semple, USPS's Stamp Services director, said. "Each stamp is a small work of art—an entryway into a larger story that connects people, places and moments in history. This year, we continue to honor that legacy with a diverse range of subjects and designs, from beloved series and commemorative anniversaries to bold new releases that will inspire and excite collectors and admirers alike."

The stamps will be released throughout 2026 at various locations relevant to each of the stamps around the United States. **PR**

Above I: James H. Burns's history of the USPS

Below: Some of the new stamps being released in 2026

