

Carriers and the mail make news online



Barb Crane
Sunflowers Forever stamps



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.

Indiana carrier retires after 46 years

Carmel, IN Branch 888 member **Barb Crane** will be retiring in May after 46 years as a letter carrier, 40 of which were on the same route, and she was recently featured in *Current in Carmel*, a local newspaper. Over the decades, Crane became a familiar and trusted presence in her community, delivering mail to hundreds of homes and forming close relationships with residents.

Crane is widely praised for her reliability, kindness and dedication. Neighbors describe her as someone who went far beyond her job—checking in on people, offering emotional support and celebrating life milestones with families.

“It just made me feel good that I was helping somebody,” she told the *Current Publishing* reporter.

On one occasion when she knew there would be severe winter weather, Crane, who lives more than 30 minutes away from her route, slept in her car to ensure she was able to make her deliveries.

Her supervisor, Courtney Burnett, said, “There aren’t many employees like Barb still at the post office. She’s extremely customer oriented. She goes the extra mile.”

Customer Curtis Williamson shared his thoughts on her. “At a time when so many interactions feel transactional and impersonal, Barb has been a steady reminder of what ‘community’ looks like,” he said. “When our daugh-

ter was born, she gifted our family a small ornament we now place on our Christmas tree every year.”

After retiring, Crane plans to stay busy. “I’m not one to just sit around,” she said. “I’ll volunteer somewhere—maybe a hospital or a school.”

She said she’ll look back on her years with the Postal Service fondly.

“It’s just been a wonderful job,” Crane said. “I really couldn’t have asked for much more.”

USPS releases Sunflowers Forever stamp

USPS issued a new Sunflowers Forever stamp on March 14 in Strongsville, OH. The stamp celebrates the sunflower as a native plant, highlighting its beauty as well as its cultural, ecological and agricultural importance—including its role in supporting pollinators and providing food.

Long associated with happiness and loyalty, sunflowers are admired for turning toward the sun and for their resilience, allowing them to thrive across diverse regions of the United States.

The stamp’s design features four stylized sunflowers, with bright yellow petals, rich brown centers, and green stems set against a pale-yellow background.

NYC tries ferry-to-bike delivery to reduce congestion

The New York City Department of Transportation is testing out a pilot program called Blue Highways where packages will be brought from Brooklyn to Manhattan via boat then cargo bike. The program is starting on a small scale with only about 800 parcels traveling by water each day, according to the *New Yorker*.

The article described the travel route of a Sephora package: At 2 a.m. the



A Dutch X biker backs his pedal-assist e-bike onto a ferry in New York.

package left a distribution center in Aberdeen, MD. At about 3 a.m. it arrived at a Red Hook waterfront terminal in Brooklyn owned by Dutch X, an environmentally cautious company that provides next-day delivery service. Then, a Dutch X employee wheeled the package onto a passenger ferry. When it reached the other side of the river in Manhattan, it was assigned to a Dutch X rider named C. Jay Jaime, who rode a pedal-assist e-bike with an attached trailer for packages to deliver it to the intended address.

Jaime described the efficiency of using a bike rather than a car: “Sometimes it takes longer to drive around the corner than to walk there.”

The program was created to help reduce the tens of thousands of delivery trucks that crowd the streets of New York City. The Department of Transportation estimates that a small number of cargo bikes can replace a single truck, making deliveries faster and more environmentally friendly.

Pen pal project connects deaf and hearing students

Students at the North Carolina School for the Deaf (NCSd) and members of the pen pal club at the North Carolina School of Science and Mathematics (NCSSM) connect through an exchange of letters. The initiative began after an NCSSM senior, Ariel, delivered a presentation on Deaf culture that sparked widespread inter-

est among students. Inspired to learn more, they formed a pen pal club that brings students from the two schools together through written correspondence.

Students exchange letters several times throughout the school year, often sharing details about their daily lives, hobbies and school experiences.

This year is the second year of the club, which is composed of only high school juniors and seniors. It has become popular enough with NCSd students that NCSSM students sometimes have multiple pen pals to correspond with.

Students at NCSd enjoy having connections outside of the deaf and hard-of-hearing community. Miles Castillo, a NCSd middle schooler in his second year of pen pal correspondence, said to *The Paper*, “When we’re writing, you get to know that person, and you get to know different people. What they like, what color they like—just a variety of different things. Every year it’s a new person.”

Ariel, the club leader, told *The Paper*, “Not everybody perceives the world the same way. Even though NCSSM is very good at being inclusive and encompassing all of that, sometimes you can still get caught in your own little bubble and not realize that there are very different perspectives on the world that can be based on just physically not having the same experiences.” **PR**

The correspondence between the North Carolina School for the Deaf and the North Carolina School of Science and Mathematics comes in the form of handwritten journals filled with notes between pen pals at the two schools.



Photo courtesy NCSSM