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“At first you do a double-take because you don’t believe what you see.”

—Branch 6000 letter carrier Frank Consiglio on assisting a pedestrian hit by a car

In this modern age, where strife and violence have become regular staples in the news, examples of courage and compassion are needed more than ever.

Across this nation, letter carriers are often the first to discover people in need due to medical emergencies, accidents or fires. The following reports are offered to honor the actions of those carriers whose quick thinking and deft reactions have saved lives.

Accident victim benefits when two carriers coincide

Carrier **Frank Consiglio** had just finished delivering a relay and was walking past a gas station when he heard the screech of tires. Turning around, he saw a man splayed across the windshield of a car. “At first you do a double-take,” he told the *Long Island Dispatch*, “because you don’t believe what you see.” As the man tumbled onto the pavement, Consiglio ran toward him, shouting, “Someone call 911!”

Coincidentally, fellow Long Island Merged, New York Branch 6000 member **Kenneth Knappek** was pulling out of the gas station after filling up when he

heard the accident. Seeing the man in the street, he pulled his LLV across the road, trying to block traffic to protect the victim from being hit again. Knappek then climbed out of the vehicle and began directing traffic away from the scene.

Meanwhile, Consiglio had placed his mail bag under the injured man’s head in an effort to make him more comfortable. He kept talking to him to comfort him, assuring him that traffic had been stopped, and tried to keep the injured man awake and prevent him from going into shock before the ambulance arrived.

The two carriers did not initially notice one another’s efforts and even after they spotted each other they didn’t interact directly throughout the ordeal. Knappek was relieved of traffic duty by another bystander, and Consiglio stepped aside when a woman with some medical expertise came forward.

The NALC members were happy to have helped a man in need, but brushed off additional praise. “It was a random act of kindness,” Knappek told the *Dispatch*. Consiglio agreed, adding, “It’s just circumstances. We didn’t do anything special. We were just there and you try and help in the best way you can.”

CARRIER DONNY KUWAYE NOTICED AN elderly customer's mail piling up, but the TV inside the house was on. The door was slightly open but the screen door was locked. Sensing that something wasn't right, he checked around, finding it unusual that no one had seen the customer in a while. He notified the police, who came to check out the situation. Sadly, the customer had died, but the Honolulu, Hawaii Branch 860 member was credited for his diligence in looking out for his patrons' welfare.

SEEING ABOUT TWO DAYS' ACCUMULATED mail concerned carrier **Don Martindale**. He knew from talking to his elderly customer that her daughter lived in a different part of the subdivision, also on his route. The Houston, Texas Branch 283 member went to ask her if the mother was away, since she hadn't picked up her mail. The woman said no, and immediately went to check on the situation. She found that the patron had fallen, broken her hip and was unable to move. She took her mother to the hospital and thanked Martindale profusely for alerting her.

WHILE MAKING DELIVERIES ON HIS ROUTE, **Kevin Sark** noticed a customer's garage door going up. Thinking he heard a faint cry for help, he went closer and saw the elderly patron lying on the floor, having fallen the day before. Faced with a bevy of challenges—living alone, only able to get around with a walker, neighbors on both sides of her on vacation, and not being able to reach a phone—the woman realized she did have access to the garage door opener. Knowing Sark came around 2:30 every afternoon, she opened it then and hoped he would notice. The Fort Wayne, Indiana Branch 116 member did, and although his customer refused medical attention, he helped her back inside her house and waited while she called for someone to come and

stay with her. Sark checked on her again later on his way home from work.

BAKERSFIELD, CALIFORNIA BRANCH 782 member **Nicole Aranda** was locking up a CBU when she heard a thud. Looking over a brick wall, she saw an 87-year-old customer lying on the ground, bleeding profusely. Finding all the entrances locked, Aranda scaled the brick wall to assist her. She found the woman with her wrist slashed open from her fall from the stairs. The carrier called 911 and went inside to grab a towel to apply pressure to the wound and found keys to open the gates. Aranda then stayed with her patron until help arrived. The customer, who received 14 stitches for her injury, thanked her carrier for being there for her, and said that, since she lives alone, there was no telling how long she might have lain there had Aranda not been on the spot.

ON HIS ROUTE, CARRIER JAMES BROWN came to the porch of Betty and Horace Hill, both in their 80s. Several neighbors were on the porch when Brown arrived, and he could hear Mrs. Hill calling out for help. She was hurt, but the neighbors, who were also elderly, were unable to get into the house. Her husband was at home, but he was a stroke victim and unable to walk. Brown managed to climb into the house

through an unlocked kitchen window—even though the woman had hollered her approval for him to break any window to get in. The 12-year carrier found that Hill had fallen and was not able to get back up. He immediately contacted emergency services and used Hill's cell phone to contact their son. The Virginia Beach, Virginia Branch 2819 member stayed with Mrs. Hill until an ambulance arrived, and found someone to stay with Mr. Hill before leaving to finish his route.

NEARING THE END OF HIS ROUTE IN 100-degree-plus temperatures, carrier **James Sumner** heard what sounded like a small animal's cry for help. He stopped to listen for the sound again and realized it was someone calling for help in a very faint voice. Tracing the cries to the back yard next door, he opened the gate and saw an elderly woman lying on the cement, her head resting against the fence and covered with ants. Sumner took charge, clearing the insects off of her and dialing 911. The customer told the Lubbock, Texas Branch 2589 member that she had been lying there more than two hours and the alert system device she was wearing around her neck didn't work. Sumner waited with the woman until paramedics arrived.

MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA BRANCH 9 member **Carol Gallus** was on her route and acknowledged one of her customers, an active 77-year-old woman who was outside on her driveway, as she passed by. When Gallus came back around on the other side of the street, she saw the woman lying on the ground. Gallus rushed to the woman, who said she couldn't get back up by herself. The carrier went to the house to tell the customer's son, who came and helped her get the woman into the house and call 911. Responding medical authorities said the patron had suffered a stroke. ☒



James Brown, a Virginia Beach, Virginia Branch 2819 member, climbed through a window to help rescue an elderly patron on his route who had collapsed.

HELP on the Way

Marceline, Missouri Branch 2027 member **Susan Meinhardt** was on her regular route delivering mail when she came across a customer who had fainted while working in her yard. Meinhardt immediately went to her aid and provided some necessary assistance. The customer later called the carrier her “guardian angel” in the column she writes for the local newspaper.

While on his route, carrier **Dan Kean** heard a faint cry for help from a house where he had already delivered mail. Retracing his steps, he found a customer who had fallen while retrieving the mail, struck her head and was unable to get up on her own. Kean, a Mountain Home, Idaho Branch 4822 member, asked a neighbor to call for medical assistance and to contact the woman’s immediate family. The carrier stayed with his customer until help arrived.

Flint, Michigan Branch 256 member **Rhonda Hernandez** was delivering her route when she heard someone screaming for help. She immediately went to where she heard the cries and found a customer trapped underneath a lawnmower tractor that had fallen on him and punctured his leg in two places. Hernandez called 911, got assistance from a neighbor, and remained with the customer until help arrived. The patron, who received 18 stitches for his injury, told the carrier he had been lying there yelling for help for some time with no response and was grateful for her alertness.

Sandra **Krueger** was delivering mail inside a grocery store when she heard a mother appealing for someone to help her young daughter. The 2-year-old had choked on something and was not breathing. The carrier went into action, helping to dislodge the obstruction to allow the tot to breathe normally again. The mother sent a letter to the postmaster commending the Hastings, Nebraska Branch 93 member, saying, “Had it not been for her help when our daughter was choking, she may have died. It was an act of kindness I will never forget.”

When carrier **Wayne Doty** noticed mail piling up in a customer’s mailbox, he

began to worry. He investigated and discovered the patron had suffered a fall and wasn’t able to get up. Doty, a Williamsport, Pennsylvania Branch 50 member, sought medical attention for the man.

After parking and preparing to deliver his route, **Audel Garcia** noticed a woman kneeling on the ground, holding a man who had collapsed. As the woman called for help, the carrier rushed to assist. The man was the woman’s husband, and they had just returned from the hospital when he collapsed. When Garcia noticed the man was not breathing, he began to administer CPR. Garcia, a Santa Clara, California Branch 1427 member, kept working on the man until emergency crews arrived. EMTs were able to restore his pulse and transported the man to the hospital.

Carrier **Barbara Parker** saw mail piling up in a patron’s mailbox, as well as newspapers on the porch. She asked around to see if the neighbors knew anything about the woman’s whereabouts. One suggested she might be hospitalized. Over the weekend, Parker thought about it and became increasingly worried. On Monday the carrier notified a police officer on her route about the situation. The officer went to the customer’s house, where Parker’s customer was found conscious but gravely ill and unable to get out of bed or even answer the phone. The woman had been there several days. Paramedics were summoned immediately. Parker, a Flint, Michigan Branch 256 member, was commended for her vigilance and persistence.

Philip **Hoke** had just delivered to the last house on a relay when he heard what sounded like someone splashing in a pool. He heard a woman yelling, followed by the sounds of a man thrashing in the water and gasping for air. Looking through the fence, Hoke could see the man struggling to keep his head above water. The carrier asked the woman if she needed help, and then ran over to the edge of the pool, dropping his bag along the way. The man threw his hands in the air, and the carrier reached out and grabbed one arm, then dragged him to

the shallow end of the pool. When the man’s breathing settled into a normal pattern, Hoke helped him out of the pool and into a chair. Once he was confident the man was OK and his wife had the situation in hand, the Utica, New York Branch 375 member picked up his satchel and left to continue his route.

Patron **Richard Ervin** was crossing the street outside his home when he lost his balance and fell. Hurt, dazed and bleeding, the man looked up to see carrier **George Butz** reaching out to him. Butz was traveling along the street, had seen the customer take a tumble, and stopped his LLV to render aid. The Spokane, Washington Branch 442 member determined medical treatment wasn’t necessary and helped the shaken customer back into his home. Butz followed up by phone later to make sure the man was OK.

Carrier **Michael Semenuik** saw his patron, Mrs. Strand, in distress as she and her husband were walking home from an appointment. The woman was having a problem with low blood sugar, so Semenuik, a Santa Clara, California Branch 1427 member, pulled a soda from his lunch box and brought it to her. Mrs. Strand said that it had the amount of sugar she needed to make it home. The grateful woman later told the post office, “We just wanted you to know how much we appreciated that act of kindness and concern from one of our public servants.”

While preparing mail for delivery, carrier **Paula Johnson** heard a man’s yell for help. Scanning the area for the source of the scream, she spied the man pinned upright between two cars. Johnson ran and moved one car and told him to sit back on the other while she called 911. The Minneapolis, Minnesota Branch 9 member stayed with the man until others he worked with came to his side. The carrier later found out the man broke several fingers and needed surgery on his knee. Johnson was commended for her attentiveness to people in her community. ✉

Carrier points the way to capture of a serial thief

While delivering mail on the commercial section of his route, carrier **Dave Donlon** spotted a man running out of a big chain electronics store. The store security officer, in hot pursuit, emerged, but didn't see which direction the man ran. The security officer asked Donlon if he had seen the man and the carrier pointed the way.

The next stop on his route was a sporting goods store and there—to his surprise—the carrier saw the man who had bolted from the first store.

The Boise, Idaho Branch 331 member went to the manager to inform him of the situation. The manager and security guard watched the suspect on the store security camera and saw the man slip into a restroom. Although he had tried to change his appearance, Donlon recognized the man when he came out and saw him casually leave the store and head to his car parked near the first store. The letter carrier drove to the suspect's car and blocked it as he wrote down the vehicle's license plate number.

At this point, the manager and security guard had discovered the discarded clothing in the restroom and were also in the hunt. The suspect got out of his car to talk to the manager and acted nonchalant as he was told he was suspected of shoplifting. Donlon, believing the manager had a handle on the situation, continued on with his route. The light-fingered thief, however, quickly got into his car and drove off, but because of

the delay caused by Donlon, the police were able to catch the crook. Stolen merchandise from a dozen other stores was found in his vehicle.

High anxiety, quick reaction to fire at day care center



Carrier **Victoria Wells** was delivering her route when she noticed flames shooting out from beneath the eaves of a customer's home. She was more alarmed than one might expect, her anxiety heightened by her knowledge that the home also served as a daycare center. The Seattle, Washington Branch 79 member ran to the

front door and rang the bell as she dialed 911. A woman who was just dropping off her child answered the door. Wells told her what was going on and asked her to notify the owner, then finished her 911 call to report the fire.

Next, the letter carrier ran to the back of the house to help get the youngsters out to safety. There were 10 children total, all of whom had been napping. She grabbed a young boy and had three more older children follow her up the driveway to safety. There they were met by a police officer and neighbor, who helped get the rest of the children to safety. Fire department officials arrived shortly thereafter to put out the blaze. ☒

A resident on **Ken McGraw's** route who participates in a neighborhood watch program had noticed some unusual activity in the area and mentioned it to the carrier. While making deliveries, McGraw took note of the license number of a vehicle as it sped away. As the Great Falls, Montana Branch 650 member was preparing to leave the area, police arrived. Once he gave the license plate number to them, police located the vehicle and arrested the suspects within 10 minutes.

Walking his route, **Ray Harrison** approached a house where he heard a suspicious crackling sound. He investigated further and found an extension cord plugged into decorative lighting that was shorting out following a recent rainfall, and

he saw smoke billowing from the nearby bushes. After knocking on the resident's door and finding no one home, he unplugged the lights and notified the next-door neighbor. The homeowner later called the post office to commend the Green Bay, Wisconsin Branch 619 member's actions.

Aware of a residential burglary a month before, **George Roca** made sure he kept a lookout on the neighborhoods he frequents along his route. Noticing a group of juveniles standing by his LLV and a few more coming from the back yard of a vacant home, the carrier grew suspicious. He notified a resi-

dent, Tom Worley, the victim of the earlier burglary, and told him where the boys were. Roca, Worley and another neighbor went to the empty home and saw some of the items of both monetary and sentimental value that had been stolen from Worley's home. They notified the police, and Worley later sent a letter the postmaster, thanking the Sacramento, California Branch 133 member for his actions and concern. ☒

NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH