

Creativity and commitment on the postal beat



**Philip
Dine**

A movie debut/red carpet date of March 1 has been set for the Nashville-based film about Mike Charest and his late wife, Judy, known locally—and, soon, beyond—as the Christmas Eve miracle baby, after the 3-month-old survived a 90-foot jump from a bridge in her depressed mother’s arms into a frigid river on Christmas Eve of 1956.

Judy rose to become a figure in Nashville’s country music scene, working for legends such as Waylon Jennings. She and Mike met, found they shared a love for Johnny Cash, Mike left his mail route in Nashua, NH, for one in Nashville, TN, and now the movie “Miracle on Shelby Street” will tell their story.

Mike, of Nashville Branch 4, plays himself in his later years, and “he has turned out to be a fairly good actor, he really has,” according to Jack Hager, part-owner of Bright Morning Star Films and a producer of the movie.

Jack says that several things intrigued him about the story’s potential after Mike “asked me to take a listen”—the actual event it’s based on, a miracle that’s in the city’s archives; along with Mike’s determination to honor the legacy of his wife, who had hoped to write a book about her life.

And something else impressed Jack (offered with no prompting on my part): “The fact that he has dedicated his life to the Postal Service, how good it’s been to him, and the fact that he was instrumental in getting the Johnny Cash stamp done.”

Speaking of movies, there’s been a good deal of buzz about Netflix’s new film “The Six Triple Eight”—understandable, given that it’s based on the heroic African American women of the 6888 Postal Battalion who broke a WWII postal backlog in Europe, allowing communication between GIs and their families back home and boosting military morale.

Let’s make one thing clear, though: *The Postal Record* beat Netflix to the punch.

As readers of this magazine know, we’ve written several times in recent years about the military unit and about how some current female letter carriers/military veterans were inspired by those pioneers.

Our coverage was kicked off by Mike Shea’s article recounting the 6888’s history, which won first place for labor history in the International Labor Communications Association’s 2022 contest.

We’re honored to have Netflix follow in NALC’s tracks—and here’s hoping it achieves its own award-winning recognition.

The recent book by Chuck Hester, a 16-year Alabama letter carrier, continues to generate positive news. The initial press

release from the South Carolina-based publisher is set for tomorrow as I write this, but a copy obtained today calls the book “a captivating collection of stories that explores how the author’s dachshund Rusty helped to teach him more about God.”

Chuck and his book, *What Rusty Taught Me about God*, will be the subject of an upcoming local podcast. Meanwhile, readers’ Amazon reviews have an average rating of 5, highest possible, and use terms such as “great book, well written, enjoyable read, adorable, entertaining.”

Longtime Fort Payne, AL Branch 3359 President Dwight Chapman makes clear that this couldn’t happen to a more deserving person.

“Chuck has been a great carrier and role model,” he says. “Everything about Chuck has been fantastic. He’s been a great guy with great character. He does everything he can do to help customers, anybody, everybody. If you don’t like Chuck, you just ain’t gonna like anybody.”

It’s no exaggeration to say that Lloyd N. Pearson Jr. is among the most unique people in NALC and postal annals. And now, his legacy will resonate among future generations, with the Jan. 12 renaming of Branch 53’s building in Jacksonville, FL, as the Lloyd Nash Pearson Jr. Memorial Building.

Lloyd, a 75-year member who passed away about a year ago at age 102, signed on with the Post Office in 1942 as a mail train guard, a few months after Pearl Harbor brought us into WWII. He switched to the letter carrier craft in 1947, championed racial and labor causes as a delegate to 25 NAACP national conventions and 20 NALC ones, and was a Navy reservist. After retiring 48 years ago, he registered 35,000 Florida voters.

Past North Florida Branch 53 President Bob Henning says the branch was “more than proud” to rename its building after “such a remarkable man.”

Notably, seven years ago next month Lloyd spoke at the renaming of Jacksonville’s main post office for his late brother, Rutledge Pearson, in congressional recognition of Rutledge’s civil rights leadership.

So now, the largest city of our third-largest state has two major postal edifices bearing the names of two humble brothers who improved our country for all.

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