

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.



65-year letter carrier honored by Iowa representative

Cedar Rapids, IA Branch 373 member **Ernie Topness**, 91, was the second-longest-serving letter carrier in the country before his retirement in late November. He was a letter carrier for 65 years and during that time he drove more than 3 million miles.

Before his postal career began in 1959, he served in the Army from 1953 to 1955.

"It's been a pleasure delivering mail to all these people. They're all so friendly," Topness told the local ABC TV affiliate.

Topness was recognized by Rep. Ashley Hinson (R-IA), who stood up on the House floor to say a few words about him.

"I rise today to recognize Mr. Earnest Topness for his distinguished and impactful career serving both our nation and the people of Cedar Rapids, IA. Ernie's dedication is unmatched. When others would sit out a snow day or call

in sick, he was always known to show up," Hinson said, according to the local CBS TV affiliate. "Mr. Topness, your legacy is one of unwavering dedication and inspiring service. We wish you all the best in your well-deserved retirement."

Even when a hurricane hit Cedar Rapids, Topness was out delivering mail. His truck ended up getting pinned down by a tree, and community members helped him and his truck get out.

"And then he finished his route," his son, Tim Rion-Topness, told *The Gazette*. "Now, how many people would do that?"

Rion-Topness said his father personified the Postal Service's unofficial motto, "Neither snow nor rain nor heat nor gloom of night stays these couriers from the swift completion of their appointed rounds."

Pennsylvania carrier creates Eagles shrine

Walter Shaw is a Philadelphia, PA Branch 157 letter carrier who indubitably loves football, specifically the Philadelphia Eagles.

He has been decorating his window with jerseys during the NFL season for the past decade to show his love and support for his home team.

Shaw told Metro Philadelphia, "No matter what, if we're a lousy team or not, I'm going to do it."

He has been collecting jerseys for the past 10 years, a hobby he began after his divorce. In addition to the Eagles jerseys, Shaw adds one jersey from the opposing team. He nor-

Walter Shaw (r) displays Eagles jerseys in his front window.



Photos by Jack Tomczuk/Metro Philadelphia

Online news (continued)

mally only has football jerseys, skipping out on jerseys from other sports. However, he occasionally makes exceptions, like honoring basketball and baseball players who have died by displaying their jersey.

When he is not arranging his jerseys for display, Shaw thrifts bar stools and tables and decorates them to rep the teams his friends and family support.

Customer cries after receiving a card from her letter carrier

Madison Vaughan lived in the same house for 22 years and saw her letter carrier, Tim, frequently. She recently moved out of her mother's home and into a new apartment, which was not part of Tim's route. So, Vaughan wrote her mailman a thank-you note before she moved. To her surprise, the carrier reciprocated with his own handwritten card. Filming her response on TikTok, Vaughan had a tear-filled response to the carrier's words.

"He wrote such a thoughtful thing," she said: "It has been a pleasure being your mailman."

Vaughan told *People* that Tim was there to deliver important mail to her throughout the years. In the video she talks about how Tim watched her grow

Madison Vaughan reads the card from her mailman on her TikTok video.



up and she watched him grow up, too. He has gotten gray hair and developed a bad knee over the years. He delivered her school schedules and college acceptance letters. Although she said she wasn't particularly close with Tim, he was a consistent "background character" in her life.

In the video, she says that Tim wrote that he will be retiring in a few months after 27 years of service, so Vaughan wouldn't have had him as her letter carrier for much longer anyway.

Community celebrates 35-year Massachusetts carrier

Massachusetts Northeast Merged Branch 25 letter carrier **Alan Robidoux** is retiring after 35 years. The entirety of those 35 years has been spent on the same route in Leominster, MA.

"The customers mean a lot to me," Robidoux told *The Concord Bridge*. "They are almost like family. I've known a lot of them for many years."

About a month before his retirement in December, four of his customers organized a goodbye potluck. Around 50 of his customers and friends from his route attended.

His route spanned 30 miles and 345 customers. But the people on his route aren't the only ones who will miss him. He kept a box of dog treats in his trucks to give to dogs in his neighborhoods and would keep an eye out for lost dogs on his route.

He has been there for so long, he has seen kids grow up and have their own kids and has been there to keep an eye



Alan Robidoux

on the elderly. On one occasion he even helped an elderly customer who had fallen, broken her knee and was yelling for help when Robidoux came to the door.

“Every dog loves him, and every family loves him,” one of Robidoux’s customers, Molly Delehey, told the newspaper. “He’s an integral part of our lives.”



Florida carrier and 11-year-old boy forge a friendship

Clearwater, FL Branch 2008 letter carrier **Jamesha Keaton** formed an unlikely friendship with 11-year-old customer Jayden Langworthy, who lives on her route. Every day when Keaton arrives, he is waiting to ask if she has any packages for him.

Keaton began filming these interactions and posting them on her TikTok page, @meshababieeee. In one of her viral videos, Langworthy asks if she has his bike. Using her social media platform, she was able to raise money to get Langworthy his bike.

Langworthy told the local NBC TV affiliate that he loves the bike but that his friendship with Keaton is more important. Langworthy said, “I feel about her that she’s nice.”

“As long as he’s happy, I’m happy, and that’s what makes my day,” Keaton said.

Dog owned by celebrity couple tries his hand at letter carrying

A married celebrity couple, John Legend and Chrissy Teigen, dressed up their dog, Petey the poodle, as a letter carrier and showed him off in a Jan. 30 Instagram post.

The couple launched Kismet, a dog food brand, in May.

In the post, Petey delivers boxes from Chewy, an online pet store. Petey stands at the door in a USPS hat, shirt and pants holding a package labeled “Chewy,” along with several other packages. Teigen skips to open the door then discovers Petey and says, “Stop, oh my God! Who’s the most handsome mailman?”

Legend told People that dogs have been a part of their relationship for almost its entirety, with him gifting Teigen an English bulldog named Puddy shortly after they started dating in 2008.



Petey the poodle

Connecticut community organizes special sendoff for 40-year carrier

Charlie Seefeldt, a Branch 60 letter carrier, has been delivering mail since 1985, and the past decade has been spent on one route in Stamford, CT.

“I’m an outdoor person,” Seefeldt told News12 Connecticut. “I like being out in the weather, [whether] it’s a sunny day or it’s a spring day, but I even like it when it’s bad weather.”

In December, the community got together for a party, which celebrated his retirement and honored his service.

“The love was there,” Seefeldt said. “What they meant to me [and] what I meant to them is special.” **PR**

Residents thank Charlie Seefeldt.



DERBY MAILMAN SERVING STAMFORD COMMUNITY RETIRES AFTER 40 YEARS