

Letter carriers and the mail on social media

Various news stories and interesting anecdotes that celebrate letter carriers and the mail have been appearing on social media. The following are some that have come to the union's attention. If you come across a story you'd like us to consider featuring, send it to social@nalc.org.

USPS honors civil rights giant

On July 21, the Postal Service officially released the John Lewis stamp. A celebration was held at Morehouse College in Atlanta, GA. In doing so, the Postal Service paid tribute to an important figure of the civil rights movement.

Lewis was an original Freedom Rider—civil rights activists who rode integrated buses into segregated areas to challenge the law—and the youngest keynote speaker at the 1963 March on Washington. He also was a leader in the Selma-to-Montgomery march that

helped lead to the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

“John Lewis was a freedom fighter who helped redeem America’s betrayal of its constitutional principles,” Ron Stroman, a member of the USPS Board of Governors, said at the ceremony.

“History honors John Lewis not just for what he did, but also for what his actions achieved. He forced our country to come to grips with its racism in ways that, heretofore, had not happened. We are a more democratic, compassionate and a better nation because of what John Lewis and all who participated in the movement were able to achieve.”

The stamp was designed with a photograph of Lewis taken for *Time* magazine. Lewis has a serious, introspective expression, and is sitting in front of an ombre silver background.

Stroman said of the image: “Look carefully at how the shadow falls on the right side of his face, illuminating the left side, in a way that seems to take the viewer from darkness into the light—a fitting tribute to a man who sought to awaken the conscience of a country.”

Clothing brand releases USPS-themed products

Buffalo, NY-based clothing store Oxford Pennant released a line of Postal Service-themed items on July 6. The company mostly sells custom wool felt



pennants, flags and banners, with the overall aesthetic being vintage.

The Postal Service’s licensing managers told USPS Link, “Oxford Pennant’s latest line is postal employee-focused and pays homage to our hardworking employees. The offerings are a nice way to commemorate service and evoke nostalgia.”

Some of the pennants depict mail, stamps, the Mr. ZIP mascot or a “Proud U.S. Mail Worker” slogan. There also are customizable flags and banners offered as a way to honor various milestones or retirements for employees. The items are a beautiful way to showcase Postal Service pride.

The art of newspaper clippings

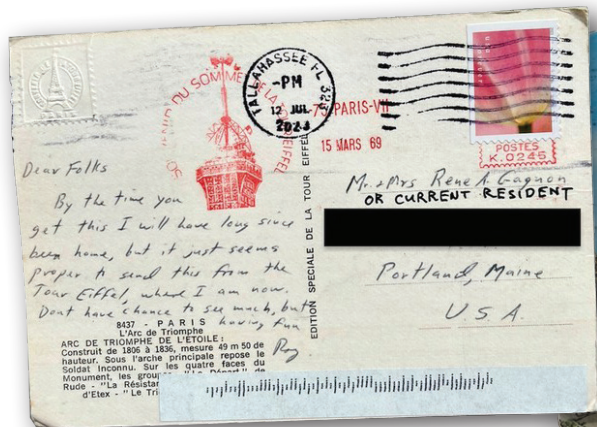
While the majority of communication takes place online nowadays, some people still bask in the simplicity and tangibility of the past. Stephen Butkus is one such person. The 71-year-old resident of Sudbury, MA, keeps a photocopier, envelopes and stamps at his disposal to send newspaper and magazine clippings to his family and friends—an article about three-story triplex homes to his brother,

John Lewis

1940–2020



The 54-year old postcard delivered to Jessica Means



just like the one they grew up in; a cartoon about exercising to his former physical trainer. “We try to inform and amuse,” Butkus told *The Wall Street Journal*.

Mailing newspaper clippings wasn’t an uncommon practice until the transition to email—these types of mail fell off due both to the rise of technology and the decreasing consumption of print newspapers and magazines in the present day.

Others are holding onto the tradition as well. Joe Coscia, a 39-year-old middle school math teacher in Virginia, still receives clippings of his hometown, Niagara Falls, NY, from his mother. Recently, he received an obituary for his former barber, which he found odd, as he and his mother talk on the phone once a week, “but I found out through the mail.”

For a lot of people, sending newspaper clippings is a way to replace certain communications—it can make more mundane conversations fun, or confrontational ones more lighthearted. According to Eric Lehman, an English professor at the University of Bridgeport, it began in the early 1800s, with the start of newspaper mass production in urban areas. City dwellers would cut out stories and mail them to their rural relatives, who often kept them in scrapbooks. Lehman noted, “It was like curating a Facebook page.”

Connecticut mailman surprises 2-year-old Postal Service fan

Two-year-old Colby from Simsbury, CT, has already met his hero: his local letter carrier. Seeing Hartford Branch 86’s **Mike Maliszewski** or “Mailman Mike,” as the residents call him, is the highlight of the toddler’s day. Colby not only adores his mailman, but also the entire USPS. “We look for mail trucks in the wild,” his mom, Jessica Bergman, told the “Today” show.

When Maliszewski discovered that Colby would be turning 2 soon, he and

his co-workers arranged for a parade of mail trucks to drive around the toddler’s block, along with firetrucks, garbage trucks, a police car and even a working dog that Colby got to meet. The postal employees also presented Colby with a gift: a Little Tikes Cozy Coupe car that they had decorated to look like a mail truck, and a certificate dubbing him an “honorary letter carrier.”

Bergman recorded the parade and shared the video on TikTok, where it quickly went viral. The comments gushed over Maliszewski’s kindness toward the boy. “Imagine how much better this world would be if everybody treated each other this way,” one commenter wrote, while another said, “That little fella will remember that for the rest of his life.”



Postcard reaches destination after 54 years

Jessica Means opened her mailbox on July 6 the same way she’d done countless times in the 17 years she lived in Portland, ME. However, this time, among the bills and ads, was some-

thing unusual—a postcard from Paris, France, depicting the Arc de Triomphe.

The postcard was addressed to names that Means didn’t recognize—Mr. and Mrs. Rene A. Gagnon—but the address matched her own. It was dated March 15, 1969. The postcard had finally reached its destination, after 54 years.

The message read: *Dear Folks, by the time you get this I will have long since been home, but it just seems proper to send this from the Tour Eiffel, where I am now. Don't have chance to see much, but having fun.*—Roy

Means contacted WGME-TV, a local CBS affiliate, and posted about the event on Facebook. It was found that Rene Gagnon, an immigrant from Quebec, and his wife, Rose Koski, had lived in Portland until they both died more than 20 years before the postcard finally reached Means’s home. The “Roy” in the postcard was Roy Salzman, husband to the Gagnons’ daughter, Doris. Salzman, who attended the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and served in the Air Force, died in 2006. He and his wife, Doris, had traveled often for his work, staying in Brazil, Mexico and Belgium—and likely living in the latter at the time of the postcard.

Based on the addition of newer stamps and the words “or current resident,” Means thinks that the postcard had successfully been delivered to the Gagnons. “I don’t think it was ever lost. I think it was tucked away and refund, and someone decided to put a stamp on it and send it back to this address,” she told *The Washington Post*. “And I think that’s really cool. And curious.”

Means keeps the postcard tacked on her fridge. She calls it a “little gift from the universe.” With its bright blue background, yellowed Arc and few streaks of dirt, it is a brief look into lives long since passed. **PR**