

Letter from the Editor

In November of 2010, I mentioned in the first Letter from the Editor that for our reorganized Communications and Media Relations Department to succeed, “we could benefit from more two-way communication.”

What I hoped was that we would use *The Postal Record*, the *Bulletin* and our other tools to keep NALC members informed about congressional actions, about the financial situation at the Postal Service and about how letters carriers contribute to the communities you serve; while you would let us know of important developments and trends at the local or state levels. This internal process would then boost our external efforts—we would help as you took the initiative to get the message out through letters to the editor, commentary pieces, radio appearances and TV news interviews; you would alert us to opportunities to inform the public, whether by responding to erroneous news reports or misleading editorials, or by encouraging sympathetic journalists to provide their audience with the real story.

Well, I can report to you that the two-way communications so pivotal to our future—and that of the USPS—has never been stronger. And that’s largely your doing, as you step up your efforts on a daily basis.

Exhibit No. 1—A Kansas letter carrier helped us reach thousands of business and political leaders and ordinary folks in Texas. A business columnist’s piece had just been posted on his newspaper’s website when I got an e-mail from Andy Tuttle, president of Branch 104 in Lawrence, KS, stating: “Just read this opinion piece from *The Dallas Morning News* and thought it was one that warrants a response, given the size of the metro area served by the paper.” That prompted us to quickly speak with the columnist and editorial page editors; within a few days, President Rolando reached the 400,000 readers of the largest newspaper in the South and the Southwest with an op-ed piece titled “Congressional politics to blame for Postal Service’s red ink.” (Not Andy’s first heads-up to us.)

Exhibit No. 2—I’d barely begun reading the day’s newspapers when a call from Tom Zygmund of Garden State Merged Branch 444 alerted us that a *Wall Street Journal* sports columnist had erroneously written that taxpayers had partly funded the alleged doping program of Lance Armstrong and others on the United States Postal Service cycling team. That led us to quickly call a sports edi-

tor and the columnist and inform them that the Postal Service funds itself.


Exhibit No. 3—Carriers in the Leadership Academy’s October communications class stood out; particularly impressive was the letter to the editor they wrote in five minutes (and it wasn’t only because of the welcome presence of Kansas State President Rod Holub). I interpreted their work as another sign of the NALC membership’s growing engagement in perhaps the biggest task before us—getting our message out.

As a result of all this, more and more Americans (and their congressional representatives) are hearing that message. Some examples:

Alton, IL Branch 309 President Joe Mercurio’s letter gave readers of *The Telegraph* the facts about USPS financial problems. Salt Lake City Branch 111 activist Chad Mortensen was a guest on Family Radio’s “On The Record” program. Red Wing, MN Branch 401 President Dewey Christianson and members Dennis Bluhm and Bruce Brage had a letter in *The Republican Eagle*. Chattanooga, TN Branch 62 member Rufus Faircloth was featured in a positive article in the *Chattanooga Times Free Press*, as were Naples, FL Branch 4716 letter carriers in the *Fort Myers News-Press*. Region 3 NBA Neal Tisdale discussed postal finances with Working Family Radio Network host Charles Showalter. Idaho State President John Paige had a letter in the *Idaho Statesman*.

President Rolando continued his yeoman’s work, with a letter in *The New York Times* explaining that the Senate’s postal reform measure is flawed and that Saturday delivery is important. He had lengthy letters in the *Kinston (NC) Free Press* and *Register Citizen (CT)*. He also was quoted prominently in stories about the postal “default” by the *Associated Press*, *Reuters*, *Huffington Post*, *Washington Post* and *CNN*.

As usual, our Heroes—honored in Washington in late September—garnered publicity: nationally in *USA Today* and the *Washington Post* and in numerous regional media outlets. Notably, ABC World News Tonight named letter carriers “Persons of the Week” in a segment that focused on the 2012 heroes’ deeds.

Remember to read, watch or listen to these media reports on our website’s Postal Facts—and keep generating more items for us to post! 



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The Postal Record (ISSN 0032-5376) is published monthly by the National Association of Letter Carriers. Periodicals postage paid at Washington, DC, and at additional mailing offices.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Membership Department, NALC, 100 Indiana Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20001-2144.

Subscription included in membership dues. First-class subscription available for \$20 per year (contact Membership Department).

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Circulation: 287,000. Union-printed using soy-based inks.

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