

Proud to Serve

Proud to Serve is a semi-regular compilation of heroic stories about letter carriers in their communities. If you know about a hero in your branch, contact us as soon as possible at 202-662-2851 or at postalrecord@nalc.org. We'll follow up with you to obtain news clippings, photos or other information.

Honoring heroic carriers

Heroism, like the mail, comes in many packages—think of police officers or firefighters. But for some citizens in need of assistance, their heroes come in the form of concerned letter carriers.

Letter carriers are members of nearly every community in this nation and know when something is wrong. Spotting fires and injuries, they often are the first to respond. The following stories document their heroism. For them, delivering for America is all in a day's work.

Perfect timing

Tom Martin was going about his route on March 15, 2012, when he heard what sounded like something burning. "Nobody was out there and I heard the crackling of fire," the Philadelphia Branch 157 member told the *Northeast Times*. "I thought maybe somebody was burning wood, then I thought, 'Nah.' I know what wood burning sounds like. I have a wood stove. I knew it was something else."

He walked into a back yard for a closer look and, to his horror, saw flames beginning to engulf the back of a house. "I knew it wasn't little," he

said. Martin's first instinct was to call 911, but he didn't want to risk waiting a few extra moments.

So he leapt into action.

He climbed a 3- to 4-foot fence and jumped down a 4-foot retaining wall into a yard. He then cut through another neighbor's yard to get to the front door of the burning home. There, he saw a young mother escaping with a baby in her arms.

"She hands the baby to a neighbor and I said, 'Is everybody out?'" Martin told the *Times*. "She said her two little dogs were still inside. I knew we had some time, so I said, 'Let's go get them.'"

But they didn't have as much time as they thought. When Martin and the resident reopened the front door, smoke poured out.

"You couldn't see a foot in front of you and it was [only burning] like three minutes," Martin told the *Times*. "Both of us put a foot in the front door and I said, 'We can't go in there.' They left the door open, hoping the dogs would come running. But they didn't—they were most likely hiding from the flames."

As firefighters arrived, Martin headed back to his route, but later found out that as soon as firefighters put out the flames, the dogs came running down.

The 26-year postal veteran was glad he didn't have to do more in the heat of the moment. "I'm just glad the baby was out, because [the mother] would've gone in and I would've gone in," he told the *Times*. "You're going to do whatever you can to get the baby out of there."

The next day, the woman and her husband went to the post office and told Martin how thankful they were that he called 911, and the woman next door said she had a lot of smoke come through her wall and that if he hadn't called 911 so soon, her house might have burned down.

Martin told the newspaper that he didn't think his actions were that big a deal. "I just figured, I'm there. I've got to do something to help. That's the way I was raised."

"You couldn't see a foot in front of you and it was [only burning] like three minutes."

—Tom Martin of Philadelphia Br. 157

The newspaper story about Tom Martin



MARIA POUCHNIKOVA / TIMES PHOTOS

Mail carrier Tom Martin helped rescue a young mother, her 9-month-old child, and their two dogs from a fire. At left, the front door remains charred.

Call him the hero mailman

► Mail carrier makes a first-class delivery in Somerton.

By William Kenny
Times Staff Writer

There's a lesson to be learned about mail carrier Tom Martin's heroic actions at the scene of a March 15 house fire on his daily route in Somerton.

Martin could've stormed into the

thought, 'Nah.'

"I know what wood burning sounds like. I have a wood stove. I knew it was something else."

He walked into a back yard for a closer look. He saw flames starting to engulf the rear of a house on Hendrix Street.

"I know it wasn't little," he said

little white dogs. I knew we had some time, so I said, 'Let's go get them.'"

They didn't have as much time as he thought. When the duo reopened the front door, smoke came billowing out.

"You couldn't see a foot in front of you and it was [only burning] like three minutes. Both of us put a foot in the front door and I said, 'We can't go in there,'" Martin recalled.

"We looked at each other and both

more in the heat of the moment.

"I'm just glad the baby was out because [the mother] would've gone in and I would've gone in. You're going to do whatever you can to get the baby out of there," he said.

It's like a parental instinct.

"Yeah," he agreed.

As for the dogs ...

"I'm actually a cat lover, but a lot of my friends are dog lovers and I know

The newspaper story about Henry Spenard

Postman delivers a timely warning

By Lou Whitmire
News Journal

MANSFIELD — June Russell said her postal carrier always goes out of his way to help residents on Ohio Street.

Tuesday, while on his route, Henry Spenard alerted her and others to a strong natural gas odor in the neighborhood.

After a call, crews were digging Tuesday and Wednesday.

Russell said she wrote Henry a note on her mailbox Wednesday, to thank him for making her aware of the problem.

Russell said it wasn't much, but she wanted Henry to take a banana for a snack Wednesday when he was delivering mail.



MANSFIELD, OH (The Mansfield News Journal)

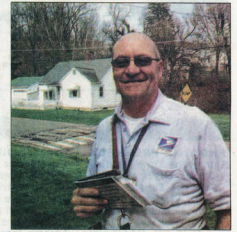
Tuesday. He said one thing God blessed him with was a good sniffer," Russell said.

"He'll give the neighbor's kitten treats. The kitten has a broken leg and it's all bandaged up. He's a real nice guy," she said. "He once told me where to buy corn for the squirrels."

Spenard, a postal carrier for 12

"I want to thank you. You probably saved the neighborhood," she said.

"He told me he smelled gas



Postal carrier Henry Spenard sniffed out a gas leak. LOU WHITMIRE/NEWS JOURNAL

See WARNING, Page 5A

Neighborhood watch

Syracuse, NY Branch 134 member **Art Mullett** was on his route on the morning of Nov. 15, 2012, when he saw an armed robbery in progress. Three suspects had knocked a victim to the ground and were threatening the person with a knife. Mullett went to intervene, and the suspects ran away and left the victim uninjured. Police soon arrived on the scene to investigate.

St. Louis Branch 343 member **De Marko Ward** was walking along a road delivering his rounds on June 20, 2012, when "I heard a woman scream very loudly," he said. "It was a very busy street. It was almost rush hour." When he turned around, he noticed that a small child was standing in the middle of the street, looking like she was about to dart into traffic. "The woman stood there in shock," Ward said. "At that point, I ran out, stopped traffic, grabbed the child, gave her to her mother, and then went back to my route." Ward denied that any major heroics took place. "I'm a father myself," the five-year postal veteran said. "I just did what anybody else would have done in my shoes."

Coreese Wells was crossing a busy highway while delivering her route on Sept. 15, 2012, when she noticed a 4-year-old child wandering along. "She kept stopping and looking back at me," the Blytheville, AR Branch 1922 member said. She saw that the child was by herself and nearing the edge of the roadway as cars swerved to avoid her. Wells stopped the child, and asked, "Where are

you going?" The girl said her friend lived further down the highway. Wells quickly locked up her postal vehicle, then began to walk with the child, asking her where her friend lived, what her name was, and about her mom, though the carrier could get little information out of her. "She was just confused," Wells said. So, Wells tried to ask people along the way if they knew the child—they didn't. Wells called her supervisor, who called police. The child trusted the familiar carrier, and would not leave Wells for the responding officer. "She wanted me to get in the car with her," the 14-year postal veteran said. So, she climbed in the police vehicle with the 4-year-old and they drove around to try to find the girl's house. Finally, a teenager whom the police officer talked to recognized the girl, and they were able to determine where she had come from. In his comments on the police report, the officer stated about Wells, "She was amazing. These days people like Coreese are few and far between." But the carrier didn't think her actions were a big deal. "She was just a little child who needed to get home," she said. "She could have easily gotten hit."

On April 16, **Henry Spenard** smelled natural gas on his route. The Mansfield, OH Branch 118 member jumped into action, alerting the resident, Jane Russell, along with other neighbors nearby. "I want to thank you. You probably saved the neighborhood," Russell told *The Mansfield New Journal*. "He said one thing God blessed him with was a good sniffer." Spenard

brushed off any accolades, telling the paper that he had reported gas leaks five times in his 12-year postal career. "It's fairly common," he said. "Sometimes we're their eyes, ears and nose."

While delivering mail on his route on Oct. 26, 2012, Canton, OH Branch 238 member **Anthony Ramos** found an envelope lying on the ground. He noticed that it had a name and writing on it. "It had the student's name on it and 'Deposit for D.C. Trip,'" Ramos' supervisor, Natalie Labs, told the *Akron Beacon-Journal*. "He never opened the envelope, so he never knew how much money was inside. He just knew it was cash." Ramos, an 18-year postal veteran, thought that it might be for a student at the local middle school, so he took it there to ask about it. The mother of the student received a call from the school letting her know what had happened. "Had anyone else found it, they might not have done the right thing," Labs told the newspaper. "The girl's mother, who was so grateful, called to say her family would not have been able to replace the money and the girl would not have been able to go on the trip."

Long Island Merged, NY Branch 6000 member **Mark Stearns** had just left his vehicle on Aug. 18, to deliver when he heard a hissing noise and smelled natural gas. The carrier called his office to notify his supervisor, who also is a volunteer firefighter. The supervisor immediately went to the scene, where he also heard the

sound and smelled the gas. They called 911 and notified emergency services and the local gas company. Within minutes, the fire department arrived on scene, and took over securing the location. Residents in the surrounding houses thanked Stearns for his awareness and promptly taking action.

On Nov. 15, 2012, Boise, ID Branch 331 member **Kevin Thompson** thought he smelled the scent of marijuana in a package that was to be delivered that day. The package had been mailed from Oregon and had passed through quite a number of hands before Thompson even saw the package that morning. Postal inspectors were then alerted to a possible crime, and they hand-delivered the suspected package. The inspectors followed protocol and, sure enough, the package contained illegal pot. The local authorities were called and arrests were made.

Dennis Veazey smelled the unmistakable odor of natural gas while he was on his route one day in May 2012. The Benton, AR Branch 3706 member rushed to the home to notify the owners and urged them to evacuate. The homeowners called emergency services, which responded quickly and cordoned off the city block to attend to the gas leak. The responders told the two women who lived in the house that Veazey most likely saved them from the potential explosion the leak might have caused. "You may have saved our lives," they wrote to Veazey. "We thank you from our hearts." PR

Help is on the way

Stamford, CT Branch 60 member **Bernie Menaghan** was on his route one Saturday January when he noticed mail stacking up at the house of customer Mr. Westerfield. “Monday, the mail was still there,” he said. “Tuesday, I delivered mail and some packages. Wednesday, everything was still there.” Concerned, the carrier inquired with a neighbor. “He was going to go check up on him,” Menaghan said. “After finishing my loop, I decided to go take a look for myself.” He knocked at the front door, then walked around to the back door. “I heard him calling,” the carrier said. “I saw him lying on the floor on top of his walker.” Menaghan entered the house and learned that Westerfield had been on the floor for four days. “I called 911, got him some water and grabbed a blanket from the bed to put on him,” the carrier said.



Bernie Menaghan

EMS units arrived shortly to give the man medical attention. “My brother was near death and would not have survived another day,” the man’s brother, Richard Westerfield, said in a letter to the local postmaster. “I have had the opportunity to personally thank Bernie a couple of times,” Westerfield wrote, “and he has been exceedingly humble in his response, noting repeatedly, ‘It’s what we do.’ He is a credit to the entire USPS.” Menaghan, a 15-year postal veteran, contends that he is not a hero; he was just doing what anyone would have done. “We can be the eyes and ears of the community,” he said. “If we see something that doesn’t look right, we take the time to investigate.”

Minneapolis Branch 9 member **Henry Pham** was delivering to a home on his route on July 7, 2012, when he noticed that the front door was open and the car in the driveway. He called the resident’s name, and heard a noise from the garage, so he called out again and rang the bell. Getting no response, Pham alerted a neighbor, who called 911. She and Pham waited for help to arrive, and police then found the resident lying on his garage floor. He had been there in extreme heat since 8 p.m. the previous day. The heat had taken its toll, but the man responded to medical attention and recovered.

A letter carrier was doing a walking route one day last summer and, during a hot spell, was stricken

with heat exhaustion and, most likely, heat stroke. The carrier called her office, informing them that she was unable to drive and needed medical attention. The supervisor was able to send St. Paul, MN Branch 28 member **Brian Pierce** out to her to carry the mail. Pierce was immediately concerned for her well-being. The ill carrier mistakenly thought the supervisor was still sending help and relayed that to Pierce, who carried the half-hour of mail that was left. When he returned to his co-worker, he found that she was in even worse shape and immediately took her to a medical clinic for treatment, including ice baths and IVs. “He did this on his own discretion and his actions very well may have saved his sister carrier’s life,” Branch 28 scribe Jamie Corke said.

Hector Ramirez had his LLV pulled over on the side of the road on June 29, 2012, as he was reloading DPS onto his tray, when he witnessed a serious one-car accident. A car veered off the road at an intersection and flipped. The Nashville, TN Branch 4 member ran to the scene and, seeing an infant inside the vehicle strapped into a car seat, pulled the child from the car. Ramirez found a young man, presumably the driver, underneath the rear of the car. The carrier was unable to pull him free, so he tried rolling the car over. About that time, several others arrived at the scene. They were able to free the man from under the car, but he remained unresponsive.

Ramirez stayed with the victim until police and EMS arrived to take control. Customers who were at the scene of the accident later called the local postmaster to praise Ramirez’s heroic efforts.

On March 5, Woodbridge, VA Branch 5921 member **Bob Johnson** noticed that his customer Jo Ann Harris’ mail had not been taken out of her mailbox for several days. It also appeared that her car had not been moved during the same period. So, he spoke with Harris’ next-door neighbor Ms. Wilson about his concerns. Wilson tried to call Harris’ daughters, but the telephone numbers had been changed and she could not reach them. Along with neighbors Carolyn and Paul Shaffer, the group decided to call police. The police sent a team out to see if they could enter the house or at least view the inside. They finally had to break a window to enter Harris’ home. The woman had fallen in her bathroom and was weak after lying in the bathroom for several days. Officers took Harris to the hospital for treatment. “We believe Mr. Bob Johnson saved her life and was an angel in disguise, who actually came to her aid in this time of trouble,” the Shaffers wrote to the local postmaster. “We need more genuine people like him, which would make this world a much better place. Mr. Bob Johnson should be rewarded for his outstanding level of performance and attention to detail.”

Keeping an eye out

New Hampshire Merged Branch 44 member **Tom Sapienza** saw a home on fire as he delivered his route on Saturday, May 4. He called 911 and, along with a few other bystanders, he ventured into the burning home to make sure no one was still inside.

"We started opening doors as fast as we could," neighbor Danielle Palmer told *The New Hampshire Union Leader*. "My only thought was, just get whoever is in there out. It was spreading real fast out the front window."

"We cleared the house out, and we found a guy downstairs," Sapienza said. The group found the 65-year-old man sleeping inside, and another neighbor, Angela Martin, led him to safety.

"I went upstairs, because they thought the gentleman's sister was there," the carrier said. It turned out that the woman had left to go to the store and hadn't told anyone.

"It's nice to see the neighbors coming together and keeping an eye on each other," Sapienza told local news station WMUR. "That's the important thing."

The fire's cause "was determined to be a cat who knocked over a candle on a hope chest," District Fire Chief Michael Gamache told the *Union Leader*. Gamache said the house sustained \$75,000 in damage and will require extensive repair.

Sapienza downplayed his role: "I was just part of a small group, that's all. I'm just glad everyone was all right."

Instead, the seven-year postal veteran credited the firefighters for their response. "They don't flinch," he told WMUR. "They just do their job, and they're unreal. Those guys are heroes. Every day, they just answer the call."

Sapienza did, however, point out to viewers that he wouldn't have been at the scene at all if not for Saturday mail delivery. "They always say the post office delivers to every address every day in this country, so we're always keeping an eye on people," he told WMUR.

Alert carrier saves the day

Bradley Ward was delivering mail on his route on Oct. 18, 2012. "I came around the corner and saw smoke coming from the back of a house," he said.

At first, the Florissant, MO Branch 4839 member thought the gray smoke was maybe coming from a grill. "All of a sudden, it went black," he said.

He went around to the back door and saw flames shooting out of the back of the house, so he called the fire department. The fire was on the back room addition of the house and looked to be starting to get into the eaves.

Ward took note of the fact that the truck that was usually parked in the driveway wasn't there, but he wanted to make sure no one was home. The 16-year postal veteran went around to the front of the house and started beating on the door, but received no answer.

"As I'm walking from the door, Mr. Bass came to the door in his robe," the carrier said, and he told the man his house was on fire. "When he opened up the door, he looked at me like I had a third eye. I told him, 'You've got to get out of here.'"

Though the man didn't quite believe him, Ward could smell smoke on the man, and they heard sirens start wailing. "The smoke was starting to come into the house," Ward said. "It had gone from the back around the side to the attic."

He made sure the man was outside at a safe distance from the house as they waited for firefighters to work on the blaze. "He was safe, but he was rattled by it all," Ward said of Bass.

The fire turned out to be electrical in nature. "It's amazing how fast it moves," Ward said. "It takes your breath away."

But Ward said his actions are just what letter carriers do. "We have to watch out for each other," he said. "I would hope anybody who had seen what I saw would take a few seconds to do something."



Bradley Ward (above) saved a patron from a house fire (damage can be seen at top).



Tom Sapienza

'It was like a movie'

When Jersey City, NJ Branch 42 President **Stephen Szczesny** collapsed on the floor of the post office with an apparent heart attack on June 18, 2012, fellow Branch 42 members **James Pagnano** and **Awilda Santiago** didn't hesitate to jump into action.

Pagnano had been sitting in his truck before he punched into work, and he saw Szczesny just sitting in his truck, and thought, "He doesn't look right," he said. So, Pagnano made small talk with his co-worker to make sure he was OK, and then headed to the restroom before beginning his route.

"I heard a big thump," Pagnano said.

Meanwhile, Santiago had been on her way out. "I was walking out of the building when I heard my co-worker yell, 'Call 911!'" she said. When she turned around, she saw

Szczesny laying on the floor. "I see my co-worker crying. It was scary," Santiago said.

The rest, she said, "was like a movie. I don't even remember walking over there."

Pagnano said, "I just reacted the way I was trained in the Marine Corps—instinct." Using his CPR experience, he said, "I just ripped his shirt open and pumped him." Santiago told him, "He needs mouth-to-mouth. He's turning blue."

"He started breathing, then stopped," Santiago said. This happened multiple times. She and Pagnano continued CPR and mouth-to-mouth resuscitation for more than 12 minutes until emergency medical services arrived to take control of the situation—and even then, the two carriers were told to continue CPR before EMTs used a defibrillator on Szczesny.

"It was very emotional for me," Santiago said, saying that doing CPR on a live person, especially one you know, is very different from practicing on a mannequin. Pagnano agreed, saying, "Saving a person's life is something that is unbelievable, hard to describe."

Pagnano, a 26-year postal veteran, said it made him feel so good that they were able to save Szczesny, but that CPR "was something I hope I don't have to do again."

"I'm glad he lived," Santiago, a 14-year postal veteran said. "Every time he sees me, he hugs me and calls me his hero."

Pagnano and Santiago were honored by the New Jersey General Assembly by a resolution that states: "Their determination and unwavering willingness to assist another in a dangerous situation resulted in the saving of Stephen Szczesny's life and provides a model of bravery and selflessness worthy of emulation."

Stephen Szczesny (c) thanks James Pagnano (l) and Awilda Santiago for saving his life.



Eye on the elderly

San Francisco Branch 214 member **Tracy Herron** was worried on Monday, Feb. 18, when she saw mail on an elderly customer's porch. "She always picks up her mail," Herron said. "And then on Thursday, I thought, 'Maybe I better start knocking on doors and asking people,' because I



Tracy Herron

was going to be off Friday and Saturday," the carrier told the San Leandro Patch. No one seemed to be home, but she finally reached a house with customers who were there. Herron asked them to check on the woman, and the neighbors also called police. "Luckily the back door was unlocked, and they went in, and she was on the floor," Herron said. The woman had been there for more than three days after suffering a stroke. The carrier was credited with helping to save the woman's life. Herron brushed off any heroics. When she got a gut feeling that something was off, she said, "I've got to do something."

Duluth, MN Branch 114 member **Mike Sylvester** was on his route on Feb. 5 when he saw his customer, Paul Paquette, on his back near the steps of his home, out of view of the street. "It was a cold, wintry day in Duluth," Sylvester said. The temperature that day was barely above zero. "He was lying partially on the snow bank," he said. During the eight years he's been on the route, Sylvester had been used to seeing Paquette walking around the neighborhood. He described his customer as a "tough guy" to the *Duluth News Tribune*. "He said he was

hurt bad," Sylvester told the newspaper. The carrier called 911 and then Paquette's son. The man was taken to the hospital for surgery on a broken hip. Paquette's wife, Florence, was away from home at the time. She told the newspaper, "If it wasn't for Mike, I don't know." Sylvester said, "I happened to pull up and be in the right place at the right time." He had picked up a co-worker's route and was late covering his own. Had he been on time, he might have come and gone before Paquette's fall. "For me, I just consider it part of my job," he said. "We just keep a watchful eye." Sylvester is no stranger to the spotlight for his heroics. The carrier was named 2012 Central Region Hero for his role in helping save a woman from a bad car wreck.

Kankakee, IL Branch 407 member **Dawn Reick** was concerned on July 6, 2012, when she noticed mail in 78-year-old customer Gerald Reagan's mailbox from the day before. "It's just unlike him," she said. The door was open, so the 18-year postal veteran yelled inside—but she received no response, so she went up to the door. "When I got up on the stoop, I could see him lying there," she said. There was no air conditioning running on the 100-degree day, and when she saw the man on the floor, she called 911. Reick tried to talk to Reagan, put his head on a pillow, put a cold compress on his head and waited with him for help to arrive to attend to what was later determined to be heat stroke. "I would say she saved his life," Bradley Fire Department Capt. Kevin Goudreau told the *Daily Journal*. But Reick said she doesn't think of herself as a hero; she was just looking out for her community. "They're almost like family," she said of the people on her route. "I feel it's kind of part of my job."



Barry Troie

On Oct. 17, 2012, Turners Falls, MA Branch 1614 member **Barry Troie** was delivering his route when he saw food and a drink on the porch, but didn't see one of his elderly customers, Walter. "I usually greet him, and he greets me," the carrier said. "You get to know your folks out here on your route." When Troie started to look around for the man, he heard a faint voice coming from the cellar. The carrier went inside and down the stairs, where he found Walter lying on the cold cement floor. "He was on the floor, face up, covered with newspapers," Troie said. "He went to stoke his wood stove and had fallen." Walter had taken the newspapers he was going to light the fire with and wrapped them around himself trying to keep warm. He had been there all night. Troie, who had first-responder training from the Boy Scouts, jumped into action. "I checked him out for injuries first," he said. "Then I sat him up and got him a blanket, then I stood him up." After that, the eight-year postal veteran got Walter some juice and called the man's son and daughter. Troie stayed and comforted his customer until Walter's daughter arrived. The carrier doesn't think he is a hero, though. "I feel like I was just doing another human being a good turn," he said. "I tell my boys, 'When you see something bad, keep on the upside of life. For every bad person, there are 10,000 good people. Be one of those people.'"

On June 7, 2011, Clearwater, FL Branch 2008 member **Donald Nogiewich** was delivering mail when he heard an elderly customer from inside her home. The woman, Isabelle Hill, was knocking on the door with her cane and asked Nogiewich to call 911. "She fell inside the house and couldn't get up," he said. The carrier quickly notified a neighbor



Mike Sylvester

and Nogiewich went to another neighbor's house where Hill's house key was held in case of emergency—but no one answered. When help arrived, they had to remove the door window to unlock the door. They found Hill lying on the floor, where she had been for 20 hours with a broken arm and shoulder, unable to get up. The carrier had a neighbor assist Hill with putting on clothing, since she had been heading to the shower. Hill recovered after her fall, and wrote to the local postmaster. "I wish to honor one of our employees, Don Nogiewich, the mail carrier on my route," she said. "Don is a caring and dedicated mail carrier and saved me from dying there on my hallway floor." But the 20-year postal veteran doesn't think he is a hero. "It's just something I did," he said. "I would expect that anyone would do it."

Van Nuys, CA Branch 2462 member **Louis Ortega** was delivering his route on Saturday, Sept. 1, 2012, when he noticed that one of his elderly customers had not picked up her mail for a few days. So, Ortega went to a few neighbors to tell them, and the neighbors went back to the house. The group found the woman collapsed on her living room floor in poor condition and called 911. "Without a doubt, Louis saved a life," one of the neighbors, Michelle Lee, wrote to the local postmaster. "Additionally, over the 20 years I have known him, Louis always has a smile to share and a kind word. And it is with a grateful heart that I say we are blessed to have him in our community." Ortega denied any heroics, though. "I just told the neighbors," he said. "They are the real heroes." PR



They call her 'Supergirl'

On Aug. 23, 2012, O'Fallon, IL Branch 155 member **Kathy Stratton** was delivering mail to a home on her route when she noticed some subtle yet disturbing signs. "A customer had left his mail in the box," Stratton told the local Fox TV news affiliate, "which was unusual for him. He lives alone. His vehicle was home, and he wasn't answering his door."

The customer, Glen Brandt, was a retired letter carrier himself, and frequently said hello to Stratton. Other warning signs, like newspapers left on his doorstep, prompted Stratton to call 911. She could also hear his TV on from inside.

"I just knew something was off," she said.

Brandt's landlord, George Portz, said the call happened just in time. "They contacted me. We got the police involved, and we went in and checked, and sure enough he was laying on the floor. He had had a stroke," he told Fox. "I think she saved his life."

Brandt had been there for two days, and his kidneys were failing. After being taken to the hospital, Brandt regained consciousness and was expected to make a full recovery.

Stratton's co-workers have started calling her "Supergirl," and she is getting praise throughout her community. "She could have gone on and not gotten involved, which is what a lot of people do these days," Portz said. "But she didn't. She got involved, and look what happened. A mail carrier saving a mail carrier. You can't get that any better."

Stratton said she simply looks out for those on her route. "I just care about my customers," she said. "I get used to their habits."

This wasn't the first time Stratton has saved a customer in her 24-plus-year career. On her mail route two years ago, Stratton heard smoke alarms from an elderly woman's home and called 911. The customer had been cooking on her stove when she fell and dislocated her hip. The fire department was able to save that woman and her house. **PR**

Help is on the way

Long Island Merged, NY Branch 6000 member **Randy Sorbi** was delivering mail one day in summer 2012 when he saw a young girl passed out on the floor of her house. The front all-window storm door was closed. Sorbi knocked on the door and yelled. He received no response from the girl, so he called his supervisor, who called 911. The girl was taken to get medical treatment. Her mother later called the post office to say how grateful she was for Sorbi's actions.

Wilmington, DE Branch 191 member **Darryl Thomas** was delivering mail on July 10, 2012, when he saw customer Anthony Ozechowski, who suffers from diabetes, on his front steps, unable to move and extremely weak. Thomas picked Ozechowski up and

brought him into his home. The man's family was able to get him medical treatment, and reported later that Ozechowski was doing fine. The family sent a letter to Thomas, saying, "[We] really appreciate your help with Anthony. You came along just in time. God bless you."

Cory Worsham was working his route on July 25, 2012, in sweltering heat when he saw two women, Charinda Knapp and Katlynn Hendricks, appearing very distraught. The Hazelwood, MO Branch 5847 member rushed over to them. The women's two small children had locked themselves in the car along with the vehicle's keys. Seeing that the children were sweating profusely and were crying to be freed, Worsham launched into action. He was able to find the hood

release, disconnect the battery, release the door locks, and free the children before police arrived at the scene.

Washington, DC Branch 142 member **Teddy Settles** was going about his route on the morning of Nov. 7, 2012, when he knocked on an 81-year-old patron's door to deliver her mail. "I noticed she was disturbed," Settles told the local NBC TV news affiliate, "and she reached out to me and said, 'You gotta help me.'" The woman, who is visually impaired and hard of hearing, had been beaten and disoriented. Settles asked her what had happened, and "she said she'd been attacked and robbed," he said. He noticed a big bruise and bump on her forehead. She had been punched in the head and face, and her computer had been stolen. So, the carrier called



the police, who soon arrested an 18-year-old man who confessed. According to police, the suspect entered the home through a broken basement window of the house, and sources say that they believe the 18-year-old suspect had been in the neighborhood looking for potential targets before the break-in. "It's hard. I've never witnessed anything in this community either," Settles told NBC. "It's strange. Unfortunately, it had to happen to someone like her." **PR**