



WAKE UP!

President/ Editor
Daniel P. Wheeler

Publisher

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Acton , Amesbury , Andover , Bedford , Beverly, Billerica , Burlington , Chelmsford , Concord , Danvers, Dracut , Gloucester, Haverhill, Holliston, Ipswich, Lawrence, Lowell, Lynnfield, Manchester, Marblehead, Maynard, Merrimac, Newburyport, North Chelmsford, North Reading , Peabody, Reading, Rockport, Salem , South Hamilton, Sudbury , Tewksbury , Topsfield, Wakefield , Wayland , Wilmington , Winchester



Winchester carriers joined in celebrating fellow carrier Steve Taglieri's retirement on his last day. Best of luck in retirement, Steve!

President's Message

Back in October the branch went through our first old-school non-joint process route inspections since 2019 in the Lawrence Installation. The Woburn Sorting & Delivery Center (S & DC), which includes the offices of Burlington, Lynnfield, North Reading, Reading, Wakefield, Wilmington, and Winchester has been put on the Postal Service's spring schedule. Those inspections will start on March 21 and continue all the way until April 17. By that point in March we should be done with any inclement weather and won't have to fight about that at least.

As we did when Lawrence was inspected, the branch will be holding two nights of route inspection training for the carriers. I encourage all of the carriers in the Woburn S & DC to take advantage of this training. We will go over everything you need to know regarding the inspections and answer any questions that you may have. The classes will be held at the Wilmington Knights of Columbus, the same location where we hold our monthly membership meetings. The dates are February 24 and March 3. We will start at 7 PM each night and the material will be the same for each date. Hopefully, the two dates will give everyone an opportunity to make one of them.

The branch will provide pizza so if you end up coming right from work or don't have time to grab dinner before coming there will be food there. We got a pretty good turn out of carriers up in Lawrence and I'm hoping that we will have a great turn out for Woburn as well. Having the knowledge of what to expect and what to do during the inspections can make a lot of difference. In Lawrence there was a net loss of about 9 hours in a building with about 75 routes. There was some shifting of positions but no jobs were lost.

An issue that has come up in the branch a few times lately is CCA vs. PTF scheduling. This was an issue that we didn't really deal with much until the last year or so. An office either hires CCAs or PTFs depending on their status. However, there are certain circumstances in which CCAs and PTFs work in the same office together. We have had a couple offices that hired straight to PTF but then lost the PTF hiring status per the PTF hiring MOU due to being fully staffed up to their quota of PTFs for four consecutive quarters. In some of our smaller offices we are seeing CCAs converting to PTF after serving their two years as CCAs.

Article 7.1.C.4 states:

“Over the course of a service week, the Employer will make every effort to ensure that qualified and available part-time flexible employees are utilized at the straight-time rate prior to assigning such work to CCAs working

in the same work location and on the same tour, provided that the reporting guarantee for CCA employees is met.”

Management is required to schedule available PTF carriers for straight time before CCAs over the course of the week. PTFs and CCAs may still be scheduled to work concurrently and the CCAs may still end up with more total hours in a week. However, the PTF must get the priority in scheduling up to the 40 hours of straight time. If anyone has any questions regarding more details on this provision please reach out to your steward or the branch office for further discussion.

Anyone who ordered Branch 25 apparel in December should have received it by now. We have a few extra hoodies on hand here at the office or if anyone wishes to purchase a hoodie or 3/4 zip you can use the form below to place an order.

In Solidarity,

Dan Wheeler

**ORDER YOUR BRANCH 25
HOODIE OR ¾ ZIP SWEATER**

\$45

KR



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The hoodies and ¾ zips both come in red or blue. To place an order you can scan the QR code below which will take you to an order form which will allow you to pay through Venmo. If you would like to pay another way, please call the branch office at (978)-658-5820 or email nalcbranch25@gmail.com to order.



**SCAN QR CODE TO PLACE
ORDER OR CONTACT THE
BRANCH**





Executive Vice-President's Message

I want to start by saying I hope everyone had a safe holiday season and continue that way throughout the rest of the winter. We have had a few small snow storms this winter, but the latest storm was the biggest in years, luckily the brunt of it came on a Sunday. Be careful with all the snowbanks and icy sidewalks. If the delivery is not clear, do not take any chances. Your health is more important than the mail.

One thing that I try to impress on carriers is the need to keep copies of all documents necessary for their jobs. This means copies of all 3971s filled out for leave requests, any communication from your local office, and any medical documents needed to supply the Postal Service. Many times, carriers will dispose of documents that they need later. You may need to show that you have approved AL or SL, that management has not recorded. It happens. Of course, anything that is used for a Workers Comp case should be kept and any discipline issued to you should be kept.

Speaking of discipline, if you work in the Woburn installation and have been issued discipline, do not assume that the Union has been provided with a copy of it, or made aware of it. Management in that installation has taken the position that they are not required to provide a copy to the Union unless we request it. The only problem there is we can't request a copy of something we aren't aware of. It is my belief that management is hoping the discipline does not get grieved in a timely manner. Luckily, it is the only installation in the branch that operates in this manner. We like to settle grievances at the lowest level possible, but the lack of transparency sometimes makes it difficult. Every other installation simply notifies the Union steward and hands them a copy.

Management in Woburn also likes to mail the discipline to the employee's address of record instead of handing it to them. If someone is out of work for an extended time, this may be proper, but sometimes they will mail it even if the employee is at work. If you receive a letter of discipline in the Woburn installation either at home or in person, please request time to speak with a steward immediately, and request that a steward gets a copy of the discipline. Put all your requests in writing. This goes for every other installation, but the problem is not widespread.

The branch plans to have route inspection training for 2 nights in late February or early March for anyone interested. We only have the Woburn installation scheduled to be inspected this Spring, but that could change. A lot of carriers haven't been through a formal inspection, so this is just a chance to find out what to expect during the week of inspection. See page 8 for more information on this.

The Union will be entering into negotiations at the end of February as the National Agreement expires in May. There will be updates through the NALC website. Hope to see more members at the February meeting on February 10th.

Keep your head up!

Paul Desmond

Calendar of Events

February 2	Groundhog Day
February 8	Super Bowl LX
February 10	Regular Branch Meeting K of C Wilmington 8:00PM Food served at 7:15 PM
February 14	Valentine's Day
February 17	Lunar New Year

Branch 25 Directory of Officers

Welcome New Members

Daniel P. Wheeler	President
Paul G. Desmond	Executive V.P.
Gilbert Paredes	Vice President
Joe Stearns	Secretary
James Metilinos	Treasurer
Wes Tugman	Health Benefits Rep.
Justine Masters	Sergeant At Arms
Dan Raske	Chairman of Trustees
Bruce Johnson	Trustee
Tony Porciello	Trustee
Bob Cronin	Trustee
Sandi Mannas	Trustee
Mike Pinto	Assistant Secretary
Jeremy Boucher	Assistant Safety Officer

Jittom Kumar	Amesbury
CJ Humphrey	Andover
Charles Simonelli	Andover
Kayla Gabriel	Andover
Dorina Naci	Andover
Chelsey Surprenant	Andover
Lanh Tran	Beverly
Henri Boulanger	Billerica
Mark Armstrong	Concord
Stephen Quatralo	Concord
Timothy Richer	Concord
Ross Blacker	Haverhill
Michael Desantis	Haverhill
Keith DesRosiers	Haverhill
Pamela Mastrangelo	Haverhill
Mason Wood	Haverhill
Eileen Marble	Ipswich
Rosa Genao De Checo	Lawrence
Juan Jimenez-Hutino	Lawrence
Liam Murphy	Lawrence
Fabian Tineo	Lawrence
Spencer Kilcoyne	Lawrence
Leokqdia Czerwonka	Lowell
Arthur Hayden	Manchester
Aaron Carroll	Manchester
Matthew Cashman	Marblehead
Santiago Grajales	Marblehead
Maya Vural	Marblehead
Christopher Buchholz	Maynard
Peter LeVasseur	Peabody
Michael Thomas	Peabody
Stephan Franklin	Salem
Jake DeFranzo	Salem
Isaah Perez	Salem
Michael Pyles	Salem
Michael Sheridan	Salem
Derek Clark	Topsfield
Evan Migneault	Topsfield

Your "Wake-Up!" is produced in-house at the Branch 25 Union office each and every month.

PLEASE REACH US AT:

nalcbranch25.com

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Executive VP Paul Desmond **pgdbr25@gmail.com**

Secretary Joe Stearns **jesbr25@gmail.com**

Treasurer James Metilinos **jmetbr25@gmail.com**

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BRANCH 25 RETIREE GRATUITY VOUCHER

Name: _____
(as it will appear on plaque)

P.O. Retiring from: _____

Phone number: _____

Retirement date: _____

Please note: Retiree must be a member in good standing at date of retirement. Retiree has 4 months from retirement date to remit this voucher to the branch office. Please mail to: NALC Branch 25
2500 Main St, Suite 201, Tewksbury Ma, 01876

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When It's Done and Over!!!

Back in November I attended the National RAP session in Cleveland. They had all tables set up for all the NALC has to offer. One was of course for Nalcrest the retirement community in Florida. This past summer I spoke with a retiree from my office, Mike, who has relocated to Nalcrest in the last year. I asked how it was going down there and he said he loves it. I started thinking that this is the time of the year when a lot of carriers are retiring, getting ready to retire or seriously considering it. So, I pulled out the brochure for Nalcrest and thought I would write an article to give information about a great opportunity for letter carriers.

Nalcrest is located in Central Florida about an hour from Tampa and an hour south of Orlando. It has lakes for fishing and boating. It has a town center with many things like a laundromat, library, game room, café, workout room as well as other amenities and of course a post office. There is a spa and heated swimming pool available year-round. They also have many other outdoor activities on the property. I am told there are a few golf courses within a short drive. The town of Lake Wales is a short drive for anything else you might need.

They have 500 apartments in 66 buildings. They consist of 2-bedroom leases beginning at \$570 a month, 1-bedroom leases starting at \$483, and efficiencies starting at \$444 a month. They are open to retired members in good standing and leased unfurnished on a yearly basis. If you want to check it out they have furnished apartments with linens and some kitchen supplies, available to rent starting at \$65 plus tax and then decrease the longer you stay.

If you would like more information or an application to visit or lease just go to NALC.org. Then go to member benefits and scroll down to Nalcrest. There is a lot of information available on the website including applications for leasing or visiting. They also have a number you can call for more information.

Nalcrest is a great opportunity for letter carriers that want to retire at an affordable price. They have some people who lease all year but only stay the winter months due to the great price. This is just another thing the NALC does for its members. So, if you are thinking about retirement, then Nalcrest might be a great option for you.

Also, if you are at that stage in your career then congrats!!!!!! And I'll see you down there in about 9 years.... Ugh!

One last secretary's duty I want to bring up is to please check your name and address on the wake up. If there are any mistakes or spelling issues please contact me and I will fix them. We have a Monday holiday for Presidents Day on the 16th. Of course, Happy Valentines Day this month as well.



As I always end this, if you have moved, please update your address with the branch. You can call, write, or email me at JESBR25@gmail.com. See you at the branch meeting on February 10th.

Snapple Fact # 44 – The Bullfrog is the only animal that never sleeps.

Joe Stearns, Secretary

The opinions expressed in the Wake Up! are those of the authors. They do not reflect the opinions or views of Branch 25 or the National Association of Letter Carriers.

Recognition



Lawrence's Kenny Meuse and Val Gordon recently celebrated their retirements. (top left) Retired Lawrence Carrier Eddy Doucette received his 55-year NALC Membership Pin. Eddy retired in 2003 and served 4 years in the United States Air Force before starting his career as a letter carrier. (above) Lawrence's Kevin Hamel-Porter was recently recognized for generating a Customer Connect lead which brought in \$75,000 for the USPS. Great work, Kevin! (bottom left) Lowell's Obima Amaefule stopped by the Lowell Community Charter School to do some community service with the children there. (below)



Vice President's Report

National Day of Action

Contract negotiations between the Postal Service and our union are scheduled to start on February 25th. NALC President Brian Renfroe is calling all of the branches to organize a National Day of Action calling for a fair contract. That day is Sunday February 22nd, time and place are to be determined. As soon as we have decided the time and place, we will send out the information to the offices, so they are posted on the union board. You will be able to see that information on the Branch 25 Facebook group and the calendar of our website.

Winter Safety

By the time you read this, winter is in full effect. We experienced a storm that left most cities in our branch with at least 20 inches of snow. The storm has been followed by sustained cold temperatures which means the snow will not be going anywhere anytime soon. It is important that as letter carriers we understand that safety is on us.

First, our customers are responsible for providing us with a safe path to the mailbox and where packages are delivered. We are not required to deliver if it is unsafe for us to do so. Icy steps, icy pathways, snow-packed paths, or icy overhangs create a safety hazard for us letter carriers. It is our responsibility to decide if the path is safe for us to deliver. If the path is not safe to deliver, skip the delivery and bring back the mail. Continue to do so until it is safe for you to deliver to the delivery point.

Second, if your offices did not plow your parking lot and provided a safe path to your trucks, please talk to your steward or contact the branch. Offices are supposed to have contractors that take care of the parking lots and sidewalks so that we can get to our trucks safely.

Third, with how cold it is going to be we have to make sure we are staying warm while we are out delivering. We have to make sure we are wearing proper winter clothing to protect us. Everyone is different, some prefer heavy winter gear while others prefer wearing multiple layers to protect them. Most offices should have provided you with cotton gloves, handwarmers, and toe warmers. Use them to keep yourself warm while delivering. If you are having issues with the heater on your truck, report it to management and fill out repair form ps form 4565. If

the heater is not being repaired, and you have to continue using that truck, make sure you are taking your breaks and lunch in a warm location. Fill out a 3996 if you need extra time to keep yourself warm in the freezing cold.

Act of God Grievance

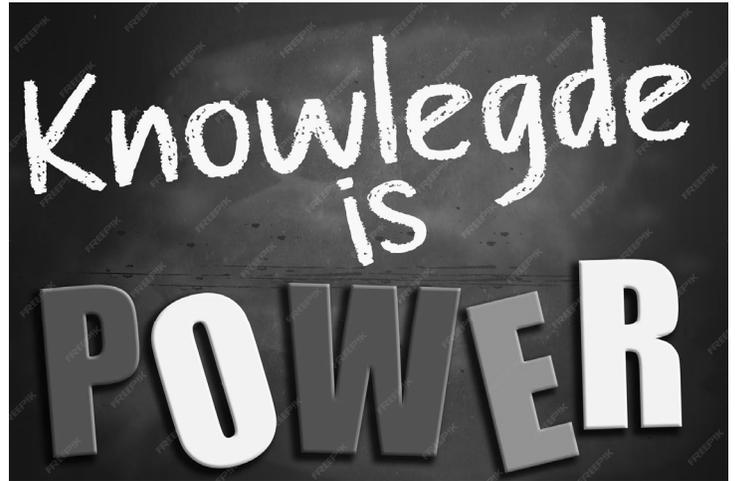
Per ELM 519.213: "Postmasters and other appropriate postal officials determine whether absences from duty allegedly due to 'Acts of God' were, in fact, due to such cause or whether the employee or employees in question could, with reasonable diligence, have reported for duty."

If you are looking to file a grievance for the last storm, our Branch President Dan Wheeler sent an email to the stewards with information on how to do so. If you did not receive the email, please contact the branch so we can get you the information you need to file the grievance.

Let us continue to stay safe and hope for better days ahead,

Gilbert Paredes





ROUTE INSPECTION TRAINING

Branch 25 will hold two route inspection training sessions for the upcoming route inspections in the Woburn Installation (Burlington, Lynnfield, North Reading, Reading, Wakefield, Wilmington, & Winchester) on **February 24** and **March 3**, at **7:00 PM** at the Wilmington Knights of Columbus, 112 Middlesex Ave, Wilmington. Each session will last about 1 ½ hours. Both sessions will cover the same material. We are having two nights so that as many carriers as possible can attend. We hope to get a good turnout. Whether or not you have been through an inspection before, it will be valuable information to help protect your route! All carriers are encouraged to attend.

Treasurer's Report

Many of you will remember on July 04, 2025, President Trump's Big (Obese) Beautiful (Disgusting) Bill was passed into law. This bill brought many changes for the American public; roughly \$3.4T added into our national debt through tax reductions of \$1.1T and revenue reductions of \$4.5T, removal of SNAP benefits for 2.4M people, including 300,000 of our veterans, Medicaid withdrawal for 5.3M Americans due to newly added (and much stricter) work guidelines for qualifications, and a strict cap of \$20,000 year for college loan borrowing, up to \$65,000 total for qualified students. If this seems wholly negative, it's because it is. Qualified Business Income will see massive tax breaks and property expensing to further line the pockets of the one percent as well as reducing business taxes to the tune of \$1.8T annually through 2034. However, many of us were excited for the crumbs of "no tax on overtime". Yet, I've had numerous members come up to me or reach out stating "this can't be correct, I worked much more overtime than this."

Many of us wrote about this bill last year, including our Health Benefits Rep Wesley Tugman. This wake up would have gone out around August, and I implore every one of you reading with questions to go back to our archives on our website and read it. I'll give a brief summarization here for anyone unsure and claiming their overtime is incorrect.

First and foremost, for anyone stating their qualified overtime totals are improper, I would encourage you to reach out to HRSSC who will likely refer you to Egan Accounting for further answers. I will not tell you that your qualified overtime is correct without a doubt, but I will tell you that in most cases, it very likely is correct.

Next, I'm going to add in the exact language of Section 70202 (b) B. No Tax On Overtime, which reads in part:

In general.—For purposes of this section, the term 'qualified overtime compensation' means overtime compensation paid to an individual required under section 7 of the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 that is in excess of the regular rate (as used in such section) at which such individual is employed.

If you're unaware of what "qualified overtime

compensation" is per the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), it's overtime that is paid at the rate of one and a half times one's hourly rate. However, only qualified compensation can be deducted. Let's take a further look at how this works based on a max-step letter carrier:

A step P, a letter carrier makes \$39.89/hour. After eight hours, the same carrier will be earning \$59.84/hour. This means you'll earn \$19.95/hour in qualified "non-taxable" overtime. This can be deducted up to a total of \$12,500 on your return. After ten hours, the same letter carrier makes \$79.78/hour. This means you'll earn \$39.89 in overtime, however only \$19.95 of that overtime is qualified. Many of us are unaware that penalty overtime is only partially "non-taxable". If you're feeling cheated, it's because you were. Unless you were a billionaire, this bill did very little for you. Don't get me wrong, at the time of writing this, I'll be able to add nearly \$4,000 of qualified deductions for overtime in my return this year, which will help. But considering inflation remains relatively stagnant in December at around 2.7%, and annually at 2.6%, prices are still increasing, just a tad bit slower, which indicates this deduction is a band-aid for most who are hurting. If you guys have any questions regarding the One Big Beautiful Bill Act (gross) and the qualified overtime compensation, please reach out to me. You guys can get my number from the hall.

We're having another rally on February 22. We're raising awareness and rallying for a fair contract as ours expires in May of this year. Come down, wear your Fight Like Hell shirts, bring your signs and passion, and join us!

Remember, silence is complicity. The senseless murders of American citizens Renee Good and Alex Pretti by ICE and Border Patrol should not be overlooked. Protect your brothers and sisters in the face of adversity and hardship. We're all we have.

James Metilinos

Surviving a Route Inspection Without Losing Time

With route inspections coming up next month in Woburn, I thought it would be a good time to go over some things every carrier needs to know. Route inspections are stressful by design. Management often presents them as a neutral “snapshot” of a route, but carriers know better. Inspections are frequently used to justify route cuts, added deliveries, or unrealistic expectations. Most importantly, route inspections are not the time to start doing things differently. The strongest position a carrier can be in is to perform the route every day the way it is supposed to be done under the M-41 and the National Agreement. If these practices are not already part of your daily routine, now is the time to start. When inspections occur, those habits should be second nature—not something you’re trying to remember under pressure.

The good news is that carriers who understand the process and stick to the rules can protect themselves and avoid losing time. The key to surviving a route inspection isn’t moving faster. It’s working correctly, consistently, and by the book.

Your Time Is Legitimate — Don’t Give It Away

One of management’s biggest goals during an inspection is to get carriers to shave time without realizing it. This usually happens when carriers feel pressure to “look good,” rush office work, or try to beat the clock.

Do not fall into that trap. During a recent inspection it was relayed to me that a supervisor told a carrier that they were going too slow and not up to standard. There is no street standard. If you are told there is, you need to inform your steward. There is also no requirement to move faster during an inspection. You are required to perform your duties safely and exactly as trained.

Any time you voluntarily rush, skip steps, or compress work creates a false picture of the route one that will be used against you later. Much of the time carriers lose during inspections doesn’t happen on the street. It happens on paper.

The 1838-C: Where Carriers Lose (or Protect) Time

One of the most important and least understood parts of a route inspection is Form 1838-C. It’s not about saving minutes; it’s about getting your minutes back. On the 1838-C, there are two lines every carrier must pay attention to:

Line 22 – Waiting for mail, office, and other office activities not performed on a continuing basis
Line 23 – Counting mail and completing the 1838 worksheet

Here’s the critical part: any time recorded on Line 22 or Line 23 is excluded from net office time. In plain language, that means you lose it when the route is evaluated. If Line 22 and 23 show a combined 29 minutes, then you start the day 29 minutes behind before you ever leave the office. This is where many carriers get burned.

If you return in exactly 8 hours thinking you “protected yourself,” management will still subtract that 29 minutes. On paper, your route suddenly looks like a 7 hour and 31 minute route, even though you worked a full day. To truly protect the route, that time has to be reflected in the total day. If you lost 29 minutes on Lines 22 and 23, then coming back in 8½ hours is not “going over” it’s accurately showing the route. Know your Line 22 and 23 time before you go to the street. If you don’t get that time back, it will be taken off your route permanently.

Vehicle Checks Are Mandatory — and They Count

Your daily vehicle inspection is not optional, and it is not “extra.” It is a requirement. Handbook EL-801, Section 3-5, states that management must ensure motor vehicle operators follow all safety rules. That includes compliance with Notice 76, the Expanded Vehicle Safety Check, which requires daily vehicle inspections. The M-41, written by management, reinforces this requirement. Section 832.1 directs carriers to inspect vehicles as described in Notice 76, and Exhibit 832.1 lists the specific items that must be checked. That includes tires, lights, mirrors, brakes, horn, windshield, wipers, and safety equipment.

This is not discretionary time. This is mandated work. If something needs attention, it must be reported — and that time belongs to the route. Rushing or skipping a vehicle check doesn’t help you. It creates an inaccurate inspection and puts safety and your route at risk.

Surviving a Route Inspection Without Losing Time (Continued)

Maintain Your Normal Pace

Your pace on inspection day should match every other day: normal walking speed, normal breaks and comfort stops, and normal delivery practices. Inspection day is not the time to “prove” anything. What you show management during the inspection is what they will expect permanently.

Parcel Delivery Is Our Future — Treat It That Way

Parcel delivery is where carriers are most often pressured to lose time during inspections and that’s no accident. As letter mail declines, parcels are where the work and the time now live. When management talks about “saving minutes,” this is where they expect to find them.

That is exactly why parcel delivery must be performed strictly by the M-41, every day, and especially during inspections. The rule is simple: it takes what it takes. Under M-41 Section 63, parcel delivery is clearly defined. Section 631.1 requires carriers to determine whether someone is available by ringing the doorbell or knocking. That determination does not happen instantly you ring or knock, and you wait.

Section 631.2 reinforces this by requiring carriers, *while waiting*, to scan the parcel to verify whether a receipt is required, charges are due, delivery is restricted, a return receipt is requested, or a carrier release applies. That waiting time is required time not optional or wasted and it applies to parcels that do not fit in the mailbox, which now make up a large portion of most routes.

This language directly contradicts management’s common instruction to “drop the parcel, ring the bell, and go.” Such instructions especially during route inspections or sixth-day counts violate Article 19 through the M-41 and should be brought to your steward’s attention. Parcel delivery is not something to rush through to appear efficient. It is the future of our work. Give away time here and it’s gone permanently. Perform every parcel delivery correctly, every day, and let the time reflect the reality of the route.

Consistency Is Your Strongest Protection

The most damaging thing a carrier can do during an inspection is rush office work and race back in 8 hours thinking they’re helping themselves. They aren’t. That behavior creates artificial under-time and gives

management justification to cut the route. If the route normally takes eight hours or more, it needs to show that including vehicle checks, mail counts, paperwork, and proper delivery.

Final Thought

Route inspections are temporary. Route changes are permanent. Every minute you rush in the vehicle check, the mail count, the paperwork, or on the street is a minute taken off your route and handed to management. Work safely. Work accurately. Let the time stand. Protect your route like it’s your livelihood because it is.

Mike Pinto



WAKE UP

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at the next meeting
February 10, 2026
K of C Wilmington
8:00 PM



Branch 25 retirees and former Branch 33 activists Dana Salo, Bob Cronin, Bruce Johnson, Richie Donlon, and Bob Van Etten (left to right) got together recently to catch up.