

National Association of Retired & Veteran Railway Employees, Inc



NARVRE National Office
Phone Toll Free: 1-800-551-2588
6819 Crumpler Blvd, Suite 200 • Olive Branch, MS 38654-1940
Email: NARVRE@gmail.com • WEBSITE: www.narvre.us
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NARVRE NEWSLETTER

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Greetings from Shelter-In-Place Oakland, CA! Fellow NARVRE members and delegates, we are on HOLD! Your local Unit #61

has scrambled over the past week to deal with the fallout from the Coronavirus pandemic. With the cooperation of the Waterfront Hotel, we have negotiated a postponement of the 2020 NARVRE Convention.

The new dates for the Convention at the Waterfront will be October 11 - 13, 2020. It will be Fleet Week on SF Bay with festivities and the Blue Angels overhead. All of this, of course, will be contingent on the health crisis subsiding and a return to near normal. Delegates and guests that have pre-registered at the Waterfront will find their registrations cancelled for May and must re-register at the hotel for the October dates. Rates and fees will not change. Unit #61 will hold onto all the convention registrations and fees unless Delegates and guests make specific requests to cancel and return those fees.

Unit #61 will continue our planning and preparation for NARVRE Convention 2020 with the same spirit and an optimistic attitude that all of this will pass. We will update attendees regularly as we monitor and heed the health recommendations of government and health professionals. Please stay safe and virus-free!

FROM THE NATIONAL PRESIDENT —

For the first time in the history of NARVRE our convention has been postponed due to the COVID-19 virus attacking the country. We have a potential date of October 11-13, 2020 if it holds up at the Waterfront Hotel, Jack London Square, 10 Water Street, Oakland, CA. Naturally it all depends on the Virus and the situation that we find ourselves in when we near the convention date.

Nothing needs to change when it comes to delegates as they already have been elected. We will let you know in advance all the particulars as we work with Host Unit 61 and the hotel. We will keep everyone's welfare in mind as to the situation at hand regarding the virus. We are all elderly people and would be more susceptible to this virus than other age categories.

If there are future problems as we near the date you will be notified. Don't make airline reservations or hotel reservations until you get the word from Unit 61 or our national office. Stay out of crowds and best to stay at home. Become a Bear — Hibernate!

— Tom Dwyer, National President

FROM THE NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR —

On Saturday, March 14, the U.S House of Representatives passed H.R. 6201, The Families First Coronavirus Response Act, the second emergency funding bill to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. This legislation, supported by Republicans and Democrats, helps address the increasingly severe economic and health impacts on Americans' personal safety and financial security. The Senate passed this bill by an overwhelming bipartisan vote and the President signed it into law on March 18. The bill provides paid emergency leave, with two weeks of paid sick leave and up to three months of paid family and medical leave. It will provide unemployment benefits to laid

off and furloughed workers. This legislation strengthens nutrition food initiatives, including the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), student meals, meals for seniors and food banks. It also increases funds for Medicaid to support local and state health systems. The legislation eliminates patient cost-sharing for COVID-19 testing and related services, to include Medicare Part B, Medicaid, and most forms of coverage. Cost-sharing is defined as deductibles, co-payments and coinsurance (some states have adopted similar requirements for insurers they regulate, and many private insurance companies will voluntarily expand coverage for testing). The prohibition on cost-sharing in all instances would apply for the duration of the emergency period.

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ATTENDEES AT THE FLORIDA STATE ASSOCIATION IN DAYTONA FL



From the National Vice President —

The National NARVRE Biennial Convention of May 2020 has been postponed. I want to congratulate and thank the Host Committee for the preparation of the convention and at the same time working to protect the delegates in the work for the postponement, going forward.

My message to the membership was to Promote, Protect and Preserve our RRB Pension Annuity due to the formation and creation of the Railroad Retirement and Survivors' Improvement Act of 2001, signed into law December 21, 2001. The legislation liberalized early retirement benefits to retire at 60 years of age with 30-year service for employees and their spouses, eliminated a cap on monthly retirement and disability benefits, lowered the minimum service requirement from 10 years to 5 years of service if performed after 1995, and provided increased benefits for some widow (er)s' annuities. Most important Rail Labor and Rail management created the National Railroad Retirement Investment Trust (NRRIT) a fund better known as the 'TRUST' allowing Rail Management and Rail Labor to oversee and manage the investments of the funds. Currently the Trust Fund has a balance of \$27.9 Billion in investments and assets that would fund the RRB Retirement benefits for the next 45 and up to 75 years in the future. This is provided that there are no Government infringements to our Fund by executive order or otherwise by the Congress.

— **Anthony (Tony) Padilla**
NARVRE National Vice President

Thank you!

We would like to thank all who made donations, both large and small. Your contributions are important to advancing the organizational goals of NARVRE.

Jon Hurst • Randy Hill • Freda Coleman • Unit 69 Unit Closing • Unit 30 In Memory of Eunice Grunberg • Victor Sundquist • James & Linda McNeese • Memorial for Jerry Windels • Randy & Rita Farrow • Ruby & Dennis Glotzbach • John & Terry Christy • Richard & Jeanette Volk • Myrtle Bryant in Memory of Thomas Bryant • Dianne Manzi • Myron Nilsen • David Corless April 2020 • David Corless March 2020

Memorials

Frank E O'Connor • Kenneth Paul Bickner • Richard J Bendorf Sr • Howard E Lepley • William G Strub • Arlene Nelda Olson • Robert "Doug" McCrea Jr. • Douglas Barton • Donald Arthur Friauf • George L Folt • LeRoy O Halvorsen • Robert Lofald • Edward J Briant

(National Legislative Director from page 1)

Congress had earlier passed the first emergency bill for \$8.3 billion to be immediately available to fight the coronavirus disease. That bill designates \$3.1 billion for direct research and development of vaccines, tests, and other treatments, and for medical supplies to cover surge capacity. Another \$2.2 b goes to federal, state and local health agencies. There will be a 3rd piece of legislation (CARES ACT, HR 748) coming in the days ahead, as the Senate works to pass this stimulus bill. This will be well over a \$1 trillion aid package intended to help weather the COVID-19 economic disaster. Economic reports claim it will likely deliver an average \$3000 payment for a family of four within a three-week period following the POTUS signing it into law. The rough framework further contemplates a second round of checks in a similar amount would be issued six weeks later. Republican and Democrats are still in negotiations for this economic package, as of today, March 23. The two parties have major differences over an anticipated amount of \$58 billion going to the airline industry. Democrats are demanding that any form of a bailout must begin with "workers first", and therefore, they want employees protected by prohibiting corporations from buying back stock, in order to reward executives and/or laying off workers. The airlines are being asked to take stimulus funds in guaranteed loans, and members of both parties are asking for certain restrictions because they are fearful any bailout funding might be used for executive compensations. Earlier in the week, the former U.N. Ambassador Nikki Haley (R-SC) quit her position on Boeing's Executive Board over the company's request for a government

bailout. The latest draft reports indicate that Amtrak will receive \$1 billion for the Amtrak Nat'l Network, and rail transit will get \$20 billion for urbanized transit systems and rural area formula grants. Due to the effects of this crisis, Amtrak and rail transit have every right to receive stimulus funding as new data shows that daily ridership is down more than 60 percent, with future bookings down 80 percent year-over-year and cancellations are up more than 400 percent. However, the Trump White House has a history of ignoring the needs of the Amtrak network, and has put forth budget proposals that would mean the demise of Amtrak and the loss of thousands of American rail jobs, all paying into railroad retirement. NARVRE earlier requested that our members contact both the House & Senate to insist that Amtrak be a part of any stimulus funding packages during this coronavirus crisis. We are working again with Railroad Passenger Association, rail labor, and other rail passenger supporters in our efforts to get Amtrak and rail transit included in this current legislative package in the Senate. Effective today, March 24, the Rail Passenger Assoc. announced that the Senate released details of a \$2 trillion stimulus package, which confirms those train service figures, as well as employee protections for rail workers that might be furloughed. Thanks to all NARVRE members for taking part in this campaign. We worked hard to include passenger trains as part of the financial aid package in response to the coronavirus. If Amtrak and transit agencies didn't receive federal assistance in the face of collapsing ridership and tax revenue, some of these services would disappear and not come back. More later...be careful and take care of your families and fellow retirees!

— **Gary Faley**,
National Legislative Director



Front row: Nancy Tressa, Jerry Tressa, Janine Geary, Dallas Proax, Lois Boatwright. Back row: Philip Steward, Tony Padilla, Tom Dwyer, Gary Faley, Bruce Halstead, George Boatwright, G G Gonzalez, Elma Gonzalez.

ALL DELEGATES — NARVRE 42nd BIENNIAL CONVENTION — I will be a candidate for president at the upcoming NARVRE Convention in Oakland, CA. —Tony Padilla

From the National Secretary-Treasurer —

Last month, we recognized the Units that did an outstanding job in reducing the number of late and delinquent members for 2019.

Many accomplished this by calling or mailing to remind members to renew and pay their dues as well as identifying and removing members who were no longer interested and informing the national office of any deceased or medically limited members.

This is month we are recognizing the “early birds” for 2020 dues collections and have 0% - 15% delinquency rate.

We certainly appreciate your time and interest.

The numbers from March 1, 2020 were 4473 delinquent members resulting in \$84,789 in arrears giving us a 31% delinquency rate nationwide.

As a result of your efforts, there are 4023 delinquent members resulting in a \$77, 083 in arrears giving us a 28% delinquency rate nationwide.

We will be emailing and/or mailing rosters to each of our units to further assist units in lowering the delinquency rate. Unit officers, if you do not receive a roster by April 15, 2020, please do not hesitate to request one.

We have received several inquiries whether benefit checks will be affected by the Covid-19 outbreak. Our sources with the RRB indicate no interruption in payments to annuitants.

We were also briefed by local officials be aware the virus could be spread at gas pumps. Consequently take precautions prior to touching the pumps and the cleansing material does not reenter your vehicle ie. gloves or wipes.

Age seems to be a risk factor for poor outcomes but questions remain about the spread and transmission of COVID-19.

Here are some ideas from the CDC of how to protect you and your family.

- There is currently no vaccine to prevent coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19).

- The best way to prevent illness is to avoid being exposed to this virus.

- The virus is thought to spread mainly from person-to-person.

- Between people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet).

- Through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes.

- These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby or possibly be inhaled into the lungs.

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds especially after you have been in a public place, or after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.

- If soap and water are not readily available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. Cover all surfaces of your hands and rub them together until they feel dry.

- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick

- Put distance between yourself and other people if COVID-19 is spreading in your community.

- This is especially important for people who are at higher risk of getting very sick.

- Stay home if you are sick, except to get medical care. Learn what to do if you are sick.

- If you are sick: You should wear a face mask when you are around other people (e.g., sharing a room or vehicle) and before you enter a healthcare provider’s office. If you are not able to wear a facemask (for example, because it causes trouble breathing), then you should do your best to cover your coughs and sneezes, and people who are caring for you should wear a face mask if they enter your room.

If you are NOT sick: You do not need to

wear a face mask unless you are caring for someone who is sick (and they are not able to wear a face mask). Face masks may be in short supply and they should be saved for caregivers.

- Clean AND disinfect frequently touched surfaces daily. This includes tables, door-knobs, light switches, countertops, handles, desks, phones, keyboards, toilets, faucets, and sinks.

If surfaces are dirty, clean them: Use detergent or soap and water prior to disinfection. For additional information visit www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019

List of Units and Secretary/Treasurer reporting 0% members delinquent in 2020:

1. 128 Mount Carmel IL - Malcolm Reeves
2. 113 Port Charlotte FL - Mary Parker
3. 184 Marshalltown IA - Gene Jackson
4. 117 Parsons KS - Lois Shrum
5. 057 Eugene OR - Coleen Hisay

List of Units and Secretary/Treasurer and/or Officers reporting 1% - 15% members delinquent in 2020:

1. 048 Sun City AZ - Glen Bay
2. 081 Spokane WA - Claudia Rohlinger/Alice Domrese
3. 080 Pensacola FL – Velma Foster
4. 144 Lorain OH – Keith Castor
5. 041 Louisville KY – Dick Brown, Mel Underhill and Don Stier
6. 017 Navarre OH - Lisa Conley
7. 046 Peru IN - Nickie Starkey
8. 054 Creston IA - Richard Springer/Lila McCann
9. 179 Fort Dodge IA - Betty Kelly
10. 154 Fort Madison IA - Stan Haessig
11. 165 Moberly MO – George & Kristine Wisdom, Rich Duley
12. 166 Springfield MO Susie Taylor, Marsha Ratcliff, Alfonso Mondragon and Steve Counts
13. 107 St Cloud MN – Ron Hylla
14. 093 Shawnee OK - David & Virginia Kubiak
15. 028 Shreveport LA - John & Carolyn Flack
16. 150 Hutcheson KS - Ron Pauls
17. 082 Nampa ID – June Robertson

— James (Phil) Steward,
National Secretary/Treasurer



Frank George, Katherine George, Jacquelyn Wharton, and Charles Wharton.



Left to right, Vice President Unit 063 Mike Bording, Ron Hylla Secretary Treasurer Unit 107, and Dan Hicks President Unit 063

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National President
Thomas Dwyer
11304 Norway St. NW
Coon Rapids MN 55448-3269
763-757-1501 FAX 763-767-5794
tdwyertcu@aol.com

National Vice President
Anthony “Tony” Padilla
303 Black Cap Run
Buda, TX 78610-4978
Home: 512-523-8465
Cell: 512-552-8703
tonypadillatcuam@austin.rr.com

National Secretary-Treasurer
James (Phil) Steward
6819 Crumpler Blvd, Ste 200
Olive Branch, MS 38654-1940
1-800-551-2588
narvre@gmail.com

National Legislative Director
Gary M Faley
6324 Calkins Road
Flint, MI 48532-3207
810-733-7256
faleyg@comcast.net

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF RETIRED
AND VETERAN RAILWAY EMPLOYEES, INC.
6819 Crumpler Blvd, Ste 200
Olive Branch, MS 38654-1940
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Resources Regarding Coronavirus (COVID-19)



Jennifer Johnson

It's wall-to-wall COVID-19 coverage on the TV, radio, the internet, and social media. That makes it easy to get overwhelmed and anxious about the viral disease. Everywhere you turn, someone is talking about it.

What I'd like to do with this article is present you with resources that are available to you regarding COVID-19, such as:

1. Medicare's web page about the virus – use this link <https://www.medicare.gov/medicare-coronavirus>. This is a good site and contains the following information:

- Precautions to take now
- Extra caution with crowds and travel
- Preparing for healthcare needs
- Medicare covers related needs
- Telehealth & related services
- Other ways Medicare is helping

2. Here is a direct link to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) website, which includes the U.S. government's

response to the virus. You can access this by using this web address: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

The CDC website provides extremely useful information to you, to include:

- Steps to take to protect yourself
- What to do if you think you are sick
- Community resources (for schools, travel, etc.)

These two websites combined are great resources for staying in the know.

Please be safe and healthy,

— Jennifer Johnson, Palmetto, GBA



Tony Padilla VP , Michael Condon RRB, Tom Dwyer President, Gary Faley Legislative Director, Phil Steward Secretary Treasurer