



— SINCE 1937 —

National Association of Retired & Veteran Railway Employees, Inc.

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NARVRE NEWSLETTER

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FROM THE NATIONAL PRESIDENT —

As 2019 passes on into history what does 2020 have in store for the nation's railroads and its employees? How is technology in railroading affecting the bottom line? There are moves afoot to reduce crews to a one-man operation. A lawsuit was filed a while back by the carriers attempting to force the operating unions into bargaining on crew size. We as retirees have a vested interest into what happens in negotiations. Only time will tell.

We are approximately six months from our NARVRE National Convention in Oakland, CA. I encourage you to send a delegate as this will be an important event in our history of what is the long-range future of NARVRE and also a "changing of the guard." Area Directors in 1-3-5-7 are up this year as well as the national officers. Reports by the national officers as well as the main banquet speaker Mr. John Bragg, Labor member of the Railroad Retirement Board. Mr. Will Moody and the Moody Law Firm will be at the Convention as our Hosts and will be the Host of the "Get Acquainted Party" on Sunday evening May 17th.

We will hear from the Railroad Retirement Board, Railroad Medicare, United Health Care and from Consolidated Association of Railroad Employees (CARE). There will also be a few workshops on social media as well the financial situation of the organization.

After the last convention in 2018 we heard from Units that did not attend wanting to know about the dues increase and why. Over seventy five percent of the delegates approved the increase. So, it is important to be there and enjoy California in May.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to you all.

— *Tom Dwyer,*
National President



National 801 calling team telephoned over 1,200 801 members-at-large. An estimated 2,000 calls, including call backs were made. Consequently, enabling us to significantly reduce the 801 delinquencies. Many thanks to Shirley Scott, Nadine Brower, Unit 18 Memphis President Donny Harrison who organized the group, Mary Rye, and Debra Wilson.

FROM THE NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR —

Americans must feel like the unending amount of ubiquitous robocalls are growing, and that is correct, according to the data from the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) and the anti-spam app, Robokiller. That compiled information indicates that 5.5 billion robocalls were placed to Americans in October 2019, which is a 12 percent spike from September. Also, 5.6 billion calls were made in November, which is the equivalent to nearly 22 spam robocalls for every person. The increase in health-insurance -related robocalls also coincides with the annual fall period when consumers are busy choosing their coverage, and that highlights the complexities involved in trying to stop these criminal scams. To help, telecom giants such as AT&T and Verizon this year have started implementing anti-robocall technology that can help people spot fake numbers in real time. Lawmakers have also joined efforts with AARP and Consumers Reports, in this coalition to fight these criminals. New legislation recently passed by both chambers of Congress promises to empower

law enforcement with new tools to combat the illegal robocall epidemic. But chasing these criminals over complex telephone networks-and across country borders- is never easy. The new bill (S.151) has changed outdated language in order to now allow the government to levy fines and untie their hands under the existing anti-robocall law, known as the Telephone Consumer Protection Act. Authors of earlier legislation, Rep. Pallone (D-NJ), Rep. Walden (R-OR) and Sen. Markey (D-Mass) and Sen. Thune (R-S.D.) all agree that this improved bill is an important step to stop robocalls by ending "spoofed" calls in which fraudsters conceal their true identity. The new improvements are vital to enforcement, as robocallers have become more sophisticated, and pervasive, even in the face of newly developed tools used by the government and industry. Americans have been complaining, and Congress has been working on serious legislation since 2015 to deter these criminal robocall violations. Earlier legislation has now been reconciled

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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.

David Corless \$100.00 memorial to father, Warren Corless, passed away recently age 93. • Unit 30 \$25 in memory of Bernice Behm • Unit 95 in memory of former Unit President Joyce Manning • Judith Andreason in Memory of Dean Andreason • Avis Lee in Memory of John Lee • Melinda Edwards in Memory of Paul & Clara Molyneaux • Unit 30 in memory of Eileen Taylor • Deborah Woodford in Memory of Robert "Woody" Woodford • Mark Hanson • Timothy Baker • Paul Bond • John Benner • Cora Hunter • Dale Lamphear • Charles Bates • James Rasmussen • Andrew Merrick • James Potyraj • Daniel Rinaldi • Michael Iannone • Bernard Ohlman • John Casner • Barbara Wells • Betty Cothran • John Nugent • Beverly Baughman • Bonnie Hanson • Leota Brown • Susan Krist • William Hoenig • John Frasier • Charles Melzer • M.E. Michael • Concepcion Rangel • Mandy Sebok • Deborah Woodford • James Forrer • Carol Kelch • Jeremy Ferguson • Donald Beeler • Jean Wetzel • Marilyn Sheuerman • William Dunlop • Henry Gerth • David Crocker • Mary Jo Windels • Frank Quinn • Jay Smith • Joan Janof • Richard Horner • James Baugher • Michael Nutter • Rod Ewert • William Howell • John Hilferty • Francis Molinary • George Lamberti • Janice Kommer • Kenneth Klomp • Ronald Jardine • Richard Johnson • James Bosley • David Blutt • Gregory D'Antonio • Charles Deal • Everett Eivins • Richard Marzullo • Mary Helfrich • James Ellis • Michael Omara • Carol Rogers • Carroll Fulmer • William Holmes • Paul Biegel • Russell Bennett • John Karst • Robert McInnis • Donald Henley • Glenn Malloy • James Kostibosd • Patrick Quick • Rita Farrow • Paul Brown • Lloyd McDowell • Catherine Quinlan • Lucette Wolfe • John Heskin • L.M. Hartman • Thomas Lynch • Lonnie Jarrell • L.C. Engel • Mary Acosta • Margaret Motta • Leland Trivets • Mary Oakes • Ronald Siminitis • Vincent Sforza • Stanley Woytowicz • Mike Mathews • John Fleming • Albert Eelman • Maryann Foote • Richard Hughes • Kyle Tilson • William Hacket • Darlene Thomas • Devere Davis • Thomas Higgins • Clifford Griesbach • Alfred Flores • James Neeld • Thomas Bulger • D.C. Dishon • Jean Hogan • Stewart Linden • Edward Nugent • Dora Taylor • John Sullivan • Michael Resch • Robert Tapscott • Anita McDonald • Richard Watts • Clifford Hix • Charles Stanley • Michael Creeks • Jeffrey Kiener • Frank Viola • Lloyd De Mille • Michael Kocon • Richard Carroll • William Roelle • Victor Sundquist • Carole Klees • Carole Klees • William Crummie • Virginia Webb • In Memory of Vendita Bridges • Darwyn Meyers • Donald Riehm • John Payne • Vesta Johnson • Richard L Johnson • Louis Adler

From the National Vice President —

As we welcome a fresh start of a New Year 2020, we begin to set a new outlook for a most prosperous and healthy future for all of our NARVRE family, friends and relatives as we seek to accomplish, in collaboration with of our Railroad Unions to reach the goal, to safeguard our very sole purpose to Promote, Preserve and Protect our Railroad Retirement Board Pension Annuity, our RRB "Trust Fund," and our RRB Medicare.

Last November 2019, we held elections and re-elections for officers in all the NARVRE Units and including the elections for the Delegates to attend the NARVRE National Convention. We hope to see improvements soon as we get closer to next year's 42nd NARVRE National Biennial Convention on May 17-19, 2020 to be held at the Waterfront Hotel, 10 Washington Street, Oakland, CA. It is critical that all Delegates be prepared to make the right choices for the new officers to lead us competently to preserve our Railroad Retirement Pension Annuity, "Trust Fund" and Railroad Medicare.

Know that experience is fully considered for those taking the task to represent our NARVRE organization. We need more accountability. I will be tracking our membership in preparation for the future for growth as all membership dues are up for renewal.

I encourage all our Area Directors and all officers of all NARVRE Units to begin the New Year 2020 by resolving to set up membership drives and by instituting committees to make calls in their respective Units to ask members to renew Membership dues for 2020 and try to recruit new members as our survival depends on bringing back all old members we lost and who are still delinquent in their dues for 2018 and 2019 and I hope that we can persuade some of them to renew their

dues without penalty and say to them you are welcome back to NARVRE.

Inevitably, Unit closures are completely understood as railroads facilities are no longer in the area of the Unit, members get old and are unable to serve in the Units and we lost many members to sickness and death. One thing for sure, our NARVRE members have a history of being our ammunition to fight against intrusions affecting the Railroad Retirement Pension Annuity and we are prepared to mobilize for action if and when it is necessary.

NARVRE is a nonpartisan organization. We will continue to report the facts about who attempts to weaken our RRB Pension and Healthcare issues. We cannot pass any Legislation in Congress without the support of both Republicans and Democrats. Our 60/30 and Trust-Fund bills were finally signed by President George W. Bush. Together and united, we will make a difference. I want to thank all those that made voluntary contributions above your membership dues to NARVRE in past years to augment our treasury.

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



RRB Claims Representative Bryan Wideberg and RRB Boston District Office Manager Sarah Balboni. NARVRE Unit 32, Providence, RI, hosted these two representatives from the RRB office in Boston MA.

Memorials

Unit 107 Vice President Mark Skare • Gordon Heath • Richard Johnson - Topeka KS • Charles Voorhees • Frederick J. Manning • George Merkuloff • Jim Empting • Henry Huelsman • Lloyd Nelson • Fred Nylander • Keith Furgason • Marylin Permetter spouse of Unit 93 John Permetter • Mary Wasson • James Townsend • O Bill Hampton • Robert E Nordquist • Philip G Brunell • Marjean I Jaeb • William J Rains • Frederic Shaw

Convention Corner Unit 61's Convention Committee congratulates all those who registered by 12/31 and are now eligible for the new iPhone. For those who missed that deadline, you still have an opportunity to qualify for a second set of early-bird rewards including a free night at the Waterfront Hotel, convention shirts, hats, and other collectibles. All registrations postmarked by February 15 will be included in a second drawing. In making your reservations with the Waterfront Hotel, if you have any problem with getting the NARVRE Convention rate on dates between May 16 thru 20, 2020, please call Brian at 510-710-2101. Note: There will be NO 'destination charge' associated with our group. Look forward to seeing you in Oakland!



(National Legislative Director from page 1)

and updated to provide new strong enforcement tools for regulators to aggressively attack this ongoing problem. The bill has been delivered to the White House and we all should urge the President to sign S.151, the TRACED Act, into law in a timely manner.

The Senate passed their first version of S.151, the Telephone Robocall Abuse & Criminal Enforcement and Deterrence (TRACED)

Act by a bipartisan vote of 97-1. The following month in June, the House of Representatives passed the "Stopping Bad Robocalls Act (HR 946) by a bipartisan vote of 429-3. In November, due to substantial differences in the two bills, the House & Senate agreed in principle on the groundwork to allow for a final product that merged the crucial content of both bills. On December 4, 2019, the House passed the improved TRACED Act (S.151) by a bipartisan vote of 417-3. The Senate then passed the same bill on Dec. 19, 2019. That

bill was then sent over to the President for his signature. This legislation calls for all phone companies to use new technology to ensure that incoming calls are from a verified caller before the call can be put through to homes and cellphones. The FCC had earlier passed rules to crack down on "spoofing", which lets criminals appear on caller ID or in text messages as somebody they're not. As example, they pose as relatives, legitimate businesses, or even a US government agency to get us to answer the call or respond in order to perpetuate their scams. While more than 40 state attorneys general supported that legislation, they have warned that spoofing fraud is by no means limited to traditional phone calls made within the U.S. So, the new bill and rules will now extend to texts and calls originating outside the U.S. to people in this country, and to more types of voice calls, such as one-way calls made over the internet instead of regular phone calls. S.151 is a better bill with improved language that will give consumers more tools and free protections to use in this agonizing battle (more to come on that). So, join the fight, and **ask the White House to sign S.151, the TRACED Act**, so that all protections can be fully implemented...(and for everyone's sanity and well-being).

Toll-free numbers to White House **1-202-456-1111 (comments) and **1-202-456-1414 (customer service switchboard)****

— Gary Faley,

National Legislative Director

From the National Secretary-Treasurer —

Happy New Year! We certainly appreciate the great number of well wishes, compliments, and donations sent by members from all around the country. We are definitely thankful for your flattering remarks and support of our great organization.

In April 2019, we sent out new rosters to all units and the response has been tremendous. At that point in time the average rate of membership delinquency nationally was 32%. From a monetary standpoint, that calculates to nearly \$86,000 assuming all the members renewed. If we could get at least half of those members to renew, these funds alone could be used to pay for outreach programs to build membership, allow more officers to travel for unit visitations, purchase recruitment materials, address convention expenses, and pay for advertising.

Just a reminder to our unit officers, mem-

bers marked A/L - late status on your rosters reports are unfortunately not receiving their newsletter and resumption will not occur until dues are made current. As a matter of policy, the National Office will not remove a member from active status until we receive information from the Unit Officers or directly from members wishing to be withdrawn.

Please, before removing a member from the roster, make every effort locally to contact the member via visits, telephone and/or written communication.

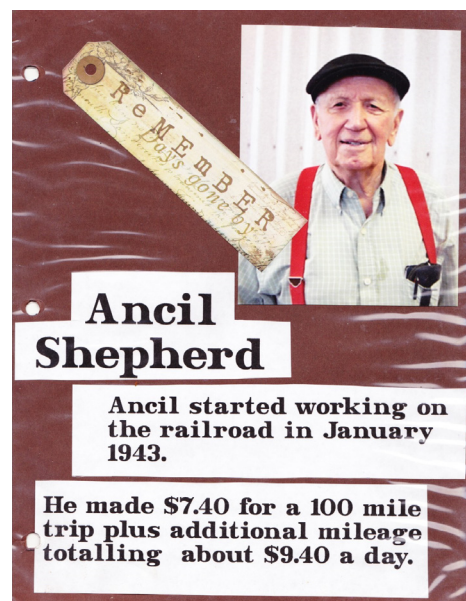
We have 7 units with 100% members signed and 16 units with 90% - 99% renewed.

We do not have space in this month's issue to list these units. Unit Presidents or Secretary/Treasurer please contact us if you have questions concerning this matter. Unit rosters are available upon request.

— James (Phil) Steward,
National Secretary/Treasurer



NARVRE Unit #43, Conneaut, OH, presented the Eagles Club #408 Ladies Auxiliary a check for the Children's Christmas party. Left to right: Sec/Treasurer Ralph Mongenel; President Jon Brady; Outer Guard Judy Westenburg; Trustee Elizabeth Gillette; and Communications Officer David M Harlacher.



Ancil Shepherd, 101 years old, passed away on October 27, 2019. He retired in 1977 and had been president of the 120 NARVRE chapter (Central Kentucky) for over 30 years. He was active in the group until two months before his death.

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JANUARY, 2020

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It's a New Year; Only Your New Medicare Number Can Be Used

Whether you're new to Railroad Medicare or starting a new year with Railroad Medicare, it's important to know about the change to how Medicare identifies you.

In 2020, Medicare providers must use your new Medicare number. The old Social-Security based number can no longer be used for claims filing, no matter what date your provider furnished a service to you. This means if you had a doctor's visit on January 15, 2019, the provider must file the claim before January 15, 2020 and they must use your new Medicare number. If your provider does not have your new number, you need to give that to them. Claims filed without the new number will be rejected by Medicare and cannot be processed for any payment.

If the provider is not able to get with you to get your new number, they can use our Medicare number look up tool on our website. We would hope this would be the exception, not the norm. In order to use the Medicare look up tool, the provider must have your Social Security Number

(SSN). If you do not want to give your SSN to a provider, make sure to show them your Medicare card with your new Medicare Number.

Additionally, you will also need to use your new Medicare number if you call Customer Service at Railroad Medicare or 1-800-MEDICARE. Medicare contractors cannot accept any other form identification over the telephone or in writing.

Here are the details of your new Medicare Number:

- It will have 11 characters
- The numbers will be generated randomly. Medicare considers them 'non-intelligent' numbers that don't have any hidden or special meaning
- It will be unique to each patient
- It will contain capital letters (all letters with the exception of S, L, O, I, B and Z) and numbers (0-9)
- The 2nd, 5th, 8th, and 9th characters will always be a letter, while
- Characters 1, 4, 7, 10, and 11 will always be a number, and
- The 3rd and 6th characters will be a letter or a number

•There will be no dashes in the numbers on the card

As you may have experienced in the past, providers can't always tell the difference between a Social Security Medicare patient and a RRB patient. They may submit your claims to regular Medicare, instead of Railroad Medicare. To help providers know what patient they have, the new cards will have the RRB logo on them when applicable, so your doctor's office will know where to submit claims. Your provider can also use an online portal if they have your Medicare number but don't know if it's a Railroad Medicare number. We educate providers on our portal regularly, but some may not be aware.

If you have a provider who may be confused, have them call our Provider Contact Center at 888-355-9165. Customer Service Representatives are available Monday through Friday, from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. in all time zones with the exception of Pacific Time, which receives service from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. PT.

— *Jennifer Johnson*
Palmetto, GBA