



— SINCE 1937 —

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

Published ten times a year

Cost — Membership in a Unit or Membership-at-Large



— SINCE 1937 —

NARVRE NEWSLETTER

May-June, 2020

VOL. 34 NO. 5

FROM THE NATIONAL PRESIDENT —

There was a lot of discussion going on recently before our 42nd Convention was canceled due to the Covid 19 virus and other factors. Several members expressed having elections by mail others electronically. There are no provisions in our bylaws to allow a convention to be held without meeting in person. How do you vote for someone who you have never met who may live across the country from you by mail or other means.

I belong to several local groups here in Minnesota and we meet by ZOOM. ZOOM is just fine for local meetings where we all have something to say in regard to an issue affecting our group. Conducting a national convention would be geographically unworkable with all of us sitting at home. Here is a good example the state Republican Party recently was having their state convention on ZOOM and had technical problems and never did get back on ZOOM. They said they were hacked. Holding a convention with 2000 delegates by electronic device can be taxing.

Prior to this year's convention the delegates had the opportunity to submit bylaw changes or resolutions prior to March 3, 2020 and only 3 resolutions were submitted. I am sure in the future there will be modern technology where you could do a lot of different things to make it easier on a lot of issues.

— Tom Dwyer, National President

FROM THE NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR —

The House of Representatives has narrowly passed a fifth coronavirus aid package (H.R.6800) which responds to the COVID-19 outbreak and its impact on the economy, public health, state and local governments, individuals, and businesses. It will provide loans and grants for small businesses through the Payment Protection Program, as well as a myriad of other programs and policies involving medical issues, student loans, prisons, veterans, postal agency and workforce, federal elections, aviation and railroads, etc. HR 6800 (Heroes Act), will now go to a Republican controlled Senate that will not consider this legislation in its current form.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY) has referred to the House package as dead-on-arrival as the Senate will go on recess through the Memorial Day weekend. McConnell has stated that he does not agree on the financial expenditures in the Heroes Act, citing the overall \$3 trillion tied to this emergency relief bill. However, the earlier CARES Act, was passed by a bipartisan vote, and endorsed by McConnell, and that bill proposes similar amounts of funding at \$2.2 trillion.

These relief packages also identify tax credits and deductions as an item that will be addressed and/or modified, but one would expect a related tax item to be fully transparent and relevant to the emergency of the national coronavirus pandemic. However, the CARES bill included earmarked tax loopholes nestled deep in that 800-page bill without transparent discussions or hearings.

These loopholes promise an average of \$1.6 million for most millionaires. These tax loopholes in the CARES bill should have been discovered and discussed, but wasn't. To be sure, it can and does happen that certain items can be overlooked when huge emergency bills are

continued on page 2 ➡



Shawnee, OK Unit 093. (Left to Right) Front row sitting: David Kubiak sr., (Secretary); and Virginia Kubiak (Treasurer). Back row: Leon and Pat Cox, June and behind her, son, Brock and Dad Jim Zimmerman; Noah (SONNY) HINES (phone caller); John Permetter Sr. (President); Jack Kizzia, Gary Guest (1st Vice President/2nd Treasurer) and Wayne Mize.

From the National Vice President —

It saddens me to see our country crippled by the Corona Virus pandemic affecting our populations in this country and around the world. At this time, we do not know when we might be able to adapt and function normally in a COVID-19 world.

Again, I want to thank the officers and Host Committee of Unit 061 in Oakland California and especially our thanks to Chairman Bob Paulson and Brian Patrick Lewis for all the anticipated work and logistics. To the Delegates I am sorry to let you know that unfortunately the officers and governing board of NARVRE had to cancel the Biennial National Convention of May 2020 and move it up to May of 2022 in observance of safety to you and all our members. The governing board adhered to the bylaws of NARVRE and voted to have the convention in the same location in Oakland California hosted by the same Unit 064 and at the same Waterfront Hotel if God permits and if the Corona Virus pandemic is resolved and subdued. Our primary concern of NARVRE is the safety of Railroad Retirees who are most susceptible to the Corona Virus.

Our NARVRE Units are still working hard for the best interests of their members during this time of instability and insecurity. We should all be proud of the work our local Unit leaders have been doing to continue to protect the health and safety of the workforce and the community.

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.

Patrick Manzi • David Corless • Victor Sundquist • Unit 145 (Closing) • Unit 39, in memory of Tom Eaton • George and Bonnie Joyce • Unit 74, in Memory of Charlie Quimby

Memorials

Marguerite "Maggie" Haverfield, former Area 7 Director, Past President Unit 081 Seattle WA • Wallace "Wally" Davis, President of Unit 17 - Navarre OH • Darryl F. Huebner • Gene Cashman • Vernold Keller • Mark Skare • Virginia Stadther • James Kern • Al Hartman • Donal R. Rutledge • Mary Ann Rood • Dave Roiland • Helen Strate • Bernard E Jacobson • Marlene R Mars • George Somppi • Benjamin Barnes, Sr • Philomena Stephenson • Garnet Hayes • Fredrick Manning • Howard E Lepley • Robert B Wyman • William G Strub • Arlene Nelda Olson • Richard J Bendorf, Sr. • Stephen M Mackner • Kenneth Paul Bickner • Frank E O'Connor • Edward J Briant • Harvey Kalla • James Nelson

Now, when it seems like we are somewhat settling into our new world and limiting the pandemic's reach, the Government is looking to "open for business" and put more frontline workers at risk due to not enough equipment and testing of the population to determine control for a cure. It has been said that this pandemic will linger for eighteen months to two years.

(National Legislative Director from page 1)

ran through the Congress in a pressured and rapid fashion. In this case, after the CARES bill was signed into law, the tax breaks became public knowledge.

Analysis reports from the Congressional nonpartisan Joint Committee on Taxation (JCT) and the Tax Policy Center (TPC) indicates that this tax giveaway is estimated to cost over \$135 billion over the next 10 years. According to JCT, it will cost \$86 billion in 2020 alone, the vast majority of over 80% going to taxpayers making more than \$1 million in income as real estate business developers and hedge fund owners.

The tax break comes with no strings attached and there are no requirements that the beneficiaries of the loopholes use the tax savings to retain their employees or contribute in any other way to the response or recovery efforts for the national pandemic.

Congress is responsible to finalize and agree on specific funds to help mitigate the suffering of Americans and relief dollars should be centered around that immediate relief and stimulus. Therefore, NARVRE supports the recommendations of the JCT (with reports from TPC and Americans for Tax Fairness) and joins with the proposals of other senior/retiree organizations that are calling for the repeal of this \$135 billion tax handout for millionaires. Nearly 225 organizations have denounced the tax break handout in a letter to Congress. A report has just been released stating that a legislative repeal will be added

The commitment we make is to continue the great work the officers and units do to keep NARVRE safe and sound. Our Area Directors are encouraged to continue to communicate with all the Unit officers to do membership drives to bring up to date delinquent union dues from those that are not up to date. Units

continued on page 3 ■■■▶

to the Heroes Act and those repeal provisions are being introduced in the appropriate House and Senate Committees.

Amtrak and transit agencies have made new requests for additional funding in the new round of stimulus proposals, which are needed to cover their operating and capital expenses. Latest reports indicate funding levels in the House Heroes Act (HR 6800) are well short of the \$23.8 billion requested by transit and Amtrak was zeroed out, ignoring that request for an additional supplement of \$1.63 billion. All projections were for Amtrak to break even on its operations for 2020, but the impact of the virus pandemic has caused a 95% drop in ridership leading to a probable loss of \$700 million this year. NARVRE will be working for improved Amtrak funding in the final bill, as negotiations should somehow begin after the Memorial Day Holiday. When speaking to our Members of Congress, we need to point to the aforementioned and egregious example when Congress approves the use of federal funds. Our case is to urge them to appropriate reasonable amounts of funding for Amtrak, as well as the Railroad Retirement Board Agency. It is difficult to see how Congress can justify federal handouts to millionaires while ignoring the needs of Amtrak and the nation's rail passenger train service. Let's continue to tell Congress to protect Amtrak and those employees that pay into railroad retirement, which is entirely funded by rail industry and rail employees, and governed by the Railroad Retirement Act.

—Gary Faley,
National Legislative Director



New President for Unit 098 Barstow, CA. Left to Right: past president, David Rosse; President, Margie Hood; and Bob Aparicio Area 8 Director.

From the National Secretary-Treasurer —

Through all of the chaos created by Covid-19, one key theme has emerged: the importance of contacting and keeping in touch with our members. We suggest organizing call groups to telephone members, sending post cards, and if you have not developed a unit Facebook page to message present members and outreach to new potential members, now is the best time to do so.

A global survey conducted in March 2020 revealed that the coronavirus has had a direct impact on in-home media consumption around the world, with 35 percent of total respondents professing to have read more books or listened to more audiobooks at home and 18 percent having listened to more radio due to the COVID-19 pandemic, while more than 40 percent of consumers spent longer on messaging services and social media. Interestingly, although at least 50 percent of respondents in most countries said that they were watching more news coverage, figures for Australia and the United States were lower, amounting to just 42 and 43 percent respectively.

Not to be redundant, but at this point in time more Americans being at home, we have a unique opportunity to contact more people by using social media content from our national NARVRE Facebook page. Like our page and send the call to action posts to your friends and ask them to share the word with their friends. Additionally join National NARVRE Forum and post activities or events with respect to your local unit.

Across America our unit officers have been very prudent in postponing or canceling local unit meetings amid the COVID-19 outbreak. As the State and local government officials are lifting Stay-At-Home orders, listed below

are suggestions and considerations when deciding to resume meetings. These 11 bullet points were excerpted from www.cdc.gov website. If you desire more information, go to the Center for Disease Control website.

1. Check with your state and local health authorities. Public health officials may recommend community actions designed to limit exposure to COVID-19, depending on the risk of an outbreak or the severity of an outbreak.
2. Promote the daily practice of everyday preventive actions. Use health messages and materials developed by credible public health sources such as CDC or your local public health department to encourage your event staff and participants to practice good personal health habits. Consider displaying signs (physical and/or electronic) throughout the event to provide frequent reminders to participants to engage in everyday preventive actions to help prevent the spread of COVID-19.
3. Know the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and what to do if organization members/staff become symptomatic.
4. Review, update, or develop emergency plans for the organization, especially consideration for individuals at increased risk of severe illness.
5. Encourage staff and members to stay home and notify organization administrators of illness when sick.
6. Encourage personal protective measures among organization/members and staff (e.g., stay home when sick, handwashing, respiratory etiquette).
7. Clean frequently touched surfaces at organization gathering points daily.

8. Ensure hand hygiene supplies are readily available in building.
9. Implement social distancing measures.
10. Handshakes and “high-fives” are often exchanged at meetings and sporting events, and these can be ways in which COVID-19 can be transmitted from person to person. As a way of decreasing the social pressure to engage in these common behaviors, consider displaying signs (physical and/or electronic) that discourage these actions during the gathering.

Note: Use culturally appropriate messages, materials, and resources.

11. Reduce activities (e.g., group congregation, religious services), especially for organizations with individuals at increased risk of severe illness. Consider offering video/audio of events.

— **James (Phil) Steward,**
National Secretary/Treasurer



David Kubiak, Sr, Treasurer and Jimmie Brock (2nd VP) Unit 93, Shawnee OK.



Meeting in Tucson AZ Unit 63 on March 12th. Unit 63 was founded in 1951. Picture was taken while Ron Hylla was vacationing in Arizona and visited the local NARVRE Unit. Left to right: Former President and now Vice President of Unit 063, Mike Bording; Ron Hylla, Secretary Treasurer, Unit 107 St, Cloud MN and Chairman ByLaws Committee; and Dan Hicks President. Unit 063. Editorial Note: The pictures in the April issue (except the one above) were all taken at the Florida State Association held November 2, 2019. We apologize for not putting the photos in the proper context - Striving for perfection!

National VP from page 2

officers should assign calling committees reach out to and to recruit new members and form new units. We have an opportunity to shape the outlook of NARVRE and implement measures to secure the very essence of NARVRE that is to Promote, Protect and Preserve our Railroad Retirement Pension Annuity.

For our seniors testing of the Corona Virus must be fast, free, and everywhere. To achieve this goal, the federal government must devise and implement a strategic plan to ensure the production of a sufficient number of reliable testing kits, with priority testing for front-line workers, rather than abdicate its responsibility and leave states to fend for themselves.

However, safeguards must be put in place

before any use of antibody testing for purposes of public health benchmarks, and employers must not be allowed to use antibody testing to determine who can work. Antibody testing should be left to the scientists and medical doctors. Thank you for your past and continued voluntary Contributions beyond our membership Dues to augment the finances of our NARVRE Organization. Brothers and Sisters, thanks to the wisdom of our National Secretary Treasurer our finances keep improving and are in check and consequently our national office is in a respectable and influential state to move forward successfully with the support of our Governing Board.

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

NARVRE NEWSLETTER

Volume 34 Number 5

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
MAY-JUNE, 2020

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

NON-PROFIT ORG.
US POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT 2826
KANSAS CITY, MO

Medicare To Cover Limited Acupuncture Service

For the first time, Medicare will cover limited medically reasonable and necessary acupuncture services for chronic lower back pain. Prior to this change, no forms of acupuncture were covered by the Medicare program. Medicare's new acupuncture limited coverage is as follows:

- Up to 12 acupuncture services/visits in 90 days for chronic lower back pain
- An additional eight visits may be approved if the treatment results in improvement.
- Up to 20 acupuncture services can be provided yearly.
- Failure to show improvement for your chronic lower back pain, or if the pain worsens, then no additional services will be covered.
- Medicare defines "chronic lower back pain" as a condition that:
 - Lasts 12 weeks or longer
 - Has pain that is not associated with surgery or pregnancy
 - Has no identifiable systemic cause – such as metastatic, inflammatory or infectious diseases, etc.

According to the Mayo Clinic, acupuncture, also known as "dry needling," involves the "insertion of very thin needles through your skin at strategic points on your body. A key component of traditional Chinese medicine, acupuncture is most commonly used to treat pain." For Medicare, you can receive acupuncture from physician assistants, nurse practitioners/clinical nurse specialists, as well as auxiliary personnel who meet all applicable state requirements and have:

- A masters or doctoral level degree in acupuncture or Oriental Medicine from a school accredited by the Accreditation Commission on Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine (ACAOM); and
- A current, full, active, and unrestricted license to practice acupuncture in a State, Territory, or Commonwealth (i.e. Puerto Rico) of the United States, or District of Columbia, where the service is being performed.

The Mayo Clinic offers guidance on finding an acupuncture professional.

To learn more, please visit their website at <https://www.mayoclinic.org/tests-procedures/acupuncture/about/pac-20392763>.

Medicare's coverage of acupuncture is limited to the treatment of chronic lower back pain. Medicare does not cover any type of acupuncture, including "dry needling", for any other condition including fibromyalgia and osteoarthritis.

If you have questions about how Medicare covers this new service, you may call our Beneficiary Contact Center at 800-833-4455, or for the hearing impaired, call TTY/TDD at 877-566-3572. Customer Service Representatives are available Monday through Friday, from 8:30 a.m. until 7 p.m. ET. We also encourage you to visit our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/MyRRMedicare and our website at www.PalmettoG-BA.com/RR/Me. We will be updating our website on June 1, 2020, and we'll have more news about in future articles.

— *Jennifer Johnson,*
Palmetto, GBA