



# National Association of Retired & Veteran Railway Employees, Inc.



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NARVRE NEWSLETTER

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## FROM THE NATIONAL PRESIDENT —

It is the time of the year for Unit elections, electing national delegates and renewing our membership for 2020. We need your support in this effort especially reaching members who we have not heard from for a while. October, November and December are the three months when we renew our membership. It takes finances to run any organization and NARVRE is no different. We have a convention this coming year which costs money with court reporters, parliamentarian, printing of convention booklets, travel expenses and other incidentals that pop up all the time.

Your Host Unit 61 of Oakland, CA has already sent out convention material to all the Units and more will be coming. The convention dates are May 17-19, 2020, at the Waterfront Hotel, 10 Washington Street, Oakland, CA. Telephone: (510) 836-3800 and Reservations (888) 842-5333.

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A more recent meeting will take place with the Florida State Association of NARVRE to be held on November 2, 2019 at the Hampton Inn, Daytona Speedway -Airport, 1715 W. International Speedway Blvd, Daytona Beach, FL 32114 from 9:00 AM until 4:00 PM. At the last count there has been 55 attendees confirmed. All you Floridians this is your opportunity to meet your fellow retirees in conference. Unit 70 Daytona Beach is the host Unit. Contact George Boatwright at (386) 589-6777 or email [amboat49@hotmail.com](mailto:amboat49@hotmail.com) for further details.

— Tom Dwyer, National President

August 15 2019 in Duluth, MN: BNSF Employee Picnic and train ride for BNSF employees, retirees and their families. 200 Passengers rode the train. Thanks to BNSF for allowing Gary Nelson Area 4 Director and John Zupansic Treasurer Unit 92, Proctor, to share NARVRE information and applications.



Track 2: Gary Nelson, Area 4 Director, and John Zupansic, Treasurer Unit 92, Proctor.



Employees and retirees attending the picnic in Duluth, MN.



Specially refurbished locomotive GN 400 (Hustle Muscle) powered the train ride.

## FROM THE NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR —

The Senate needs to act this week beginning Sept. 24th to pass a continuing resolution to avoid a government shutdown and keep the federal programs and agencies funded before recessing at the end of the government's fiscal year on 9/30/19.

The House passed their stopgap bill by a vote of 301-123 to keep the government open and funded through Nov. 21st. That bipartisan count is well over the number needed to override the outside chance of a veto. The House & Senate will discuss their 2020 spending

differences in a conference committee and hopefully, come to an agreement before the Thanksgiving recess. Those negotiations will include the bipartisan bill from the recent Senate Appropriations Committee that will

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## From the National Vice President —

The National Officers ask the NARVRE Governing Board and Unit Officers to continue to reach out to approximately 3,839 members who are still late in paying their membership dues for 2019. While some are responding, we are still way behind. In order to make NARVRE strong, we ask all of our Area Directors to continue to talk to their Unit Officers to identify all those who are still overdue paying their membership dues. We are effective only when we work together to promote NARVRE's sole purpose: to promote, preserve, and protect our Railroad Retirement Pension Annuity. The ultimate test is of how you work to prevail in the struggle to make NARVRE strong.

Following are the number of members who are late paying their membership dues for 2019 for Units in their appropriate Area Director's jurisdiction: In Area 1, there 220 members who have not paid; In Area 2, there are 527 members who have not paid; In Area 3, there are 177 members who have not paid; In Area 4, there are 628 members who have not paid. In Area 5, there are 331 members who have not paid. In Area 6, there are 195 who have not paid. In Area 7, there are 58 members who have not paid. In Area 8, there are 488 who have not paid.

Consider that Area 1 is essentially inactive and that the Area 3 Director is vacant. Check your Unit to see if there are improvements we can make.

We are pleading because we need your assistance to be able to finance the NARVRE National Convention May 17-19, 2020. It will be the 42nd NARVRE National Biennial Convention that will be held at the Waterfront Hotel, 10 Washington Street, Oakland, CA.

While there are many areas where railroad retirees once flourished, they are no longer there because of railroad mergers and abandonments. So, we concentrate in states where railroads continue to prosper, making hefty profits and where they continue to hire and are short of workers who will be our future retirees. Some members do bring out the best in you, so it's good to invest in those members for success.

It's really through the Unit officers that we realize the worth of our investment to have those members; as you're always there to help them and vice versa. In many ways, be like our former National VP, George Wisdom in reaching out to the membership.

The current volatile political climate gives me concern for the future safety of our RRB



On Friday August 31, NARVRE National Vice President Tony Padilla and the officers of the San Antonio Unit 163 presented the HERO AWARD to Texas Congressman Joaquin Castro (D-20) in his San Antonio office. The National ARA awards the Senior Hero Award to Congressional members with a 100% voting record on Senior issues. Pictured: S/T of unit 163 Sergio Perez, John J. Quesada (Amtrak on board Supervisor), Johnny Martinez, Unit 163 NARVRE VP Robert Moore, VP President Padilla, Congressman, Joaquin Castro, Charlie Peterson and Member Bruce Ashton who is also the State Representative of Texas Association of Railroad Passengers (TEX-ARP).

Pensions Annuity. While NARVRE does not advocate preference for those running for office, we cannot overlook that we keep an eye on those candidates running for office. Our NARVRE members have an immense potential for what direction one takes with our Vote.

What is important is to go make sure you are registered to vote and then go out to vote to let your voice be heard. Vote absentee if you expect to be out of town. Most of us do not think how your RRB pension can be wiped out with the stroke of a pen by any Administration resulting from an Executive Order. That will affect our Railroad Retirement Pension Annuity and security for our Railroad Retire-

ment-Medicare and Health Care. Your vote is your VOICE. God Bless America.

Employees of the U.S. Postal Service have been concerned that they may lose their earned Government Pensions because of the many threats to privatize the Postal Service. But now, they are really worried because on Thursday April 12, 2018 the current Administration issued an executive order to set up a task force to study the United States Postal Service and recommend reforms in efforts to privatize the Service. We do not want the same to happen to the RRB.

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

## From the National Secretary-Treasurer —

In last month's newsletter our National President Tom Dwyer wrote about NARVRE being asked to partner with the RRB to participate in a survey. This was done in as an effort to provide data for the improvement of RRB's online services provided for Railroad employees, annuitants, and beneficiaries. We are happy to report that 400 responses were needed for a valid sample and 819 NARVRE members participated by taking the RRB Survey! RRB officials were more than pleased with our response! Thank you again for your consideration and interest in this important initiative.

As the annual dues renewal campaign for 2020 is once again upon us, information has been mailed to unit officers. The packet consisted of the three required reporting forms - Membership Reporting Form, Officer Election Report, and Annual Audit Form. All of these forms can be found on our website [www.narvre.us](http://www.narvre.us) for those who choose to utilize this resource. Membership

cards and Unit rosters will be available upon request. 990n returns can be completed by our accountant for those units wishing to take advantage of this valuable service for \$8.00. This service is available to all units, however; it is not mandatory. Units wanting to file with the IRS individually are free to do so.

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Someone dies from heart disease, stroke or another cardiovascular disease every 43 seconds in this country. They miss out on life's precious moments. In the September issue we published the heart attack warning signs. Below are stroke warning signs as published from the American Heart Association.

F.A.S.T. is an easy way to remember the sudden signs of stroke. When you spot the signs, call 9-1-1 for help right away.

**F** Face Drooping Does one side of the face droop or is it numb? Ask the person to smile, Is the person's smile uneven?

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## (National Legislative Director from page 1)

spend \$87 billion in the FY2020 transportation funding bill by a vote of 31-0. This is an increase of \$167 million more than 2019 funding, with \$58 million going to Amtrak. Importantly, our efforts are having its' affects (thank you) as the committee agreed to fully reject the Trump Administration's budget request that called for the elimination of Amtrak's National Network service (which current law mandates).

Colleagues at the Railroad Retirement Board (RRB) are advising that the Senate Labor HHS Approps bill and report has been released, but that measure was passed by a strictly partisan vote, which left the RRB at flat funding for FY 2020, and that means the administrative budget will remain at the same funding levels for the 4th year in a row. Remember the House number was very different so we will wait for the conference report to see the final figures. More later, as we will be advised if and when our services needed.

Last month, we sent out an email reminding

members on NARVRE policy related to candidates and proposals in state and federal elections. This was to address the amount of news that was being circulated within the NARVRE membership relative to a labor organization's endorsement of the Medicare For All (MFA), a proposed universal healthcare plan written by Sen. Bernie Sanders, a candidate for the 2020 Presidential election. Just as NARVRE does not endorse candidates, we also will not endorse the political campaign proposals of any of the candidates participating in elections. In contrast to the MFA plan, Vice-Pres. Joe Biden released a plan which centers around strengthening the Affordable Care Act (ACA), and protecting the programs and preventive care aspects of the existing Medicare system. Other candidates, such as Sen. Harris, have endorsed the MFA, but she says her plan would differ with the Sanders proposal, without detail. Any and all proposals from the many candidates are all complex and to be clear, none of these proposals have been discussed by NARVRE's Governing or Executive Boards. Your Units may have discussions on any or all of this, but

Units cannot speak for our NARVRE association on these political proposals and plans. In effect, all officers in NARVRE (members, as well) should use sound judgment with another organization's political information, as it might be construed as an endorsement of a candidate and/or proposal in a general election. Many of us have received communications from labor groups, as well as the Alliance for Retired Americans (ARA) regarding their active support for the proposed MFA plan. I personally have explained to those colleagues that the political action and support of their organization cannot carry over into NARVRE due to the scope and by-laws of our own association. Everyone associated with NARVRE should understand or be reminded of the political makeup of our own diverse membership. However, the bottom line will reflect that NARVRE has been consistent with our support for the current structure of the existing Railroad Medicare system, and favor the continual efforts to improve upon an already sound healthcare delivery system. We must remain focused and not allow for a return of the pre-existing condition(s), which adversely affected the health and financial well-being of many Americans by the secretive abuse within the private healthcare industry. We should not ignore the fact that the Affordable Care Act is a national healthcare law that mandates for many preventive healthcare provisions that seniors now enjoy. The ACA also improves and strengthens the current Medicare system with specific guidelines and we do not want those benefits to be eliminated nor diminished by any well-intentioned proposal of a political candidate. As seniors and retirees, we should keep our attention on all of these various proposals from the many candidates and consider how they may affect us and our families.

— Gary Faley,

*National Legislative Director*

## (National Secretary-Treasurer from page 2)

**A** Arm Weakness Is one arm weak or numb? Ask the person to raise both arms. Does one drift downward?

**S** Speech Difficulty Is speech slurred? Is the person unable to speak or hard to understand? Ask person to repeat a simple sentence, like "The sky is blue." Is the person able correctly repeat the words?

**T** Time to call 9-1-1 If someone shows any of these symptoms, even if the symptoms go away, call 9-1-1 and say, "I

think this is a stroke" to help get the person to the hospital immediately. Time is important! Don't delay, also note the time when the first symptoms appeared. Emergency responders will want to know. For more information, contact American Heart Association 1-800-242-8721 or visit [www.heart.org/cause](http://www.heart.org/cause)

At the time of this writing total membership 15297 new members 273 deceased members 193 email newsletters 843 paper copies 7066 mailed USPS

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



National Association of Retired and Veteran Railway Employees Unit #43 Conneaut, Oh, had their monthly meeting August 12. From left: Unit #43 President Jon Brady, Communications Officer, David Harlacher, PA. State, District 17 Rep. Parke Wentling, Ohio State Rep. 99 District John Patterson, Conneaut City Manager Jim Hockaday, Unit 43 Sec/Treas Ralph Mongenel. Guest Speakers received Certificate of Appreciation and hats from USCG Cutter Chena Hickman, Ky signed from the crew and donated from Master Chief Robert J. Harlacher, OIC.

## 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.

George Joyce • Victor Sundquist • David Corless • Wayne Haskamp

## Memorials

R C Smith President Unit 77 and multiple year Delegate • Twila Turpen former Unit 138 S/T • Thomas J Bryant • Ken Dinkel • Mary Elizabeth Davis • Harold Buckingham • Olivet L. Fain, Jr • Earl Bachel • George Ametjan • Donald Prewitt

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# Disaster Responses: More than just Hurricanes

When a severe weather event happens (such as a hurricane, typhoon, earthquake or wildfire), the last thing you or your healthcare provider are thinking about is Medicare. Concerns are about staying alive and what kind of home and property damage

you will have. Your situation may be the most stressful event in your life. When a disaster like the California wildfires or Hurricane Dorian hit, your survival is most important.

Medicare understands this.

For some disasters, like a hurricane or wildfires, the Secretary of Health and Human Services may declare a Public Health Emergency (PHE), which provides waivers for 90 days. In our most recent disaster event, Hurricane Dorian, Medicare made accommodations in the states of Florida, Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina, and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico. In those states, providers have an extension on the time allowed to enroll providers or request appeals.

As a patient, you may wonder if Medicare will pay if you see another doctor outside of the disaster area or another state to receive the care you need. Medicare/Railroad Medicare beneficiaries can receive services anywhere in the United States. The services must be medically necessary and a covered Medicare benefit.

Another concern when a disaster hits is what happens if you lose your Medicare card. If you've lost your card (and can't remember

the number) but need to see a doctor or other healthcare provider in an effected area before you receive a replacement card, Medicare advises providers to hold their claims until you receive your new card. It is your responsibility to inform the provider of your new Medicare number. If you need emergency care and do not have your Medicare card or know the number, providers should try to obtain your Medicare number from you or your family. If that fails to be successful, your provider can call Railroad Medicare to request the Medicare number. This should be a rare incidence.

If you have questions or need to obtain a replacement Medicare card, you can call our Beneficiary Customer Service Center at 800-833-4455, Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. until 7 p.m. ET to order a new one. For the hearing impaired, call TTY/TDD at 877-566-3572. You may also call the Railroad Retirement Board at 877-772-5772.

We encourage you to visit our website at [www.PalmettoGBA.com/RR/Me](http://www.PalmettoGBA.com/RR/Me) and visit our Facebook page at [www.Facebook.com/MyRRMedicare](http://www.Facebook.com/MyRRMedicare).

— Jennifer Johnson

## Upcoming Events

Florida State Association, Hosted by Unit 070 Daytona Beach. Saturday, November 2, 2019, at Hampton Inn, Daytona Speedway-Airport, 1715 W. International Speedway Blvd, Daytona Beach, FL 32114. Time: 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. (Lunch will be provided at no charge) R.S.V.P. by September 25, 2019 to George Boatwright, Unit #70 Leg. Representative, at 386-589-6777 or email amboat49@hotmail.com.

Springfield Missouri Informational Meeting, October 24, 2019, 1 pm – 4pm at The Library Center, 4653 Campbell Ave, Springfield MO 65810. Phone: 417--882-0714. For more information call Alfonso Mondragon, Unit 166 President, 417-379-9247 or Steve Counts, NARVRE Speakers Bureau, 417-298-7661.