

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



— SINCE 1937 —

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NARVRE NEWSLETTER

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## FROM THE NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR —

After congressional hearings in committees on Capitol Hill, as well as the Surface Transportation Board (STB), the White House has decided to act on the stalled contract negotiations between the rail industry and rail labor. On July 16th, President Joe Biden signed an executive order to establish a Presidential Emergency Board (PEB), forcing a 60-day pause in accordance with the Railway Labor Act (RLA). Had the President not created the PEB, the railroads and unions could have opted for operational shutdowns or strikes, respectively. The PEB allows a neutral 3-member panel 30 days to investigate the differences between the parties and report their recommendations for settling the dispute to the President. The RLA then provides for another 30-day cooling-off period for the parties to consider the recommendations and reach a settlement. Both the National Carriers Conference Committee (railroads), and the Coordinated Bargaining Coalition (unions) welcomed President Biden's order, which became effective on Monday, July 18th. The Association of American Railroads (AAR) kept their remarks tied to the employee's high wage level and "remain committed to reaching an agreement that provides their employees well-deserved compensation increases". While the unions state that they've gone for years without a wage increase, their main grievances point to poor working conditions, such as attendance policies that force employees to choose between medical care or family emergencies and work. Both parties acknowledge the inherent problems caused by staffing shortages, but the STB, which is the independent federal agency that regulates the industry, has made on-the-record statements that the railroads have cut 45,000 jobs, almost 30 percent of their workforce,

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## FROM THE NATIONAL PRESIDENT —

Greetings to all the members of NARVRE who have paid your 2022 dues. I say this because unfortunately those who have not paid 2022 dues will not receive this August newsletter, nor will they receive any legislative updates from our Legislative Director. Just saying our main objective is to Protect, Preserve and Promote OUR railroad retirement annuities does not relieve US of the responsibility of keeping contact with OUR members whether they attend local meetings or not. Local officers and members must be diligent in phoning, emailing, and visiting those who do not or cannot attend meetings.

The rosters supplied to each UNIT by the National Secretary/Treasurer must be reviewed on a continuing basis and attempts made to contact delinquent members. Each year dues are considered delinquent after February 28 and the Executive Board and

Governing Board ask for each of YOU to aid in making this a priority within YOUR local UNIT. We need YOUR help!

Traditionally, September is the start of a campaign to collect dues for the coming year and this year OUR dues will increase by \$5.50 across the board, so S&T's please be cognizant of the increase when statements are sent out from YOUR UNIT.

Now I'll "step off my step box" and give you the GOOD NEWS: The Executive Board has met numerous times since May by ZOOM calls and EXCITING things are planned and being implemented to help our Area Directors and through them our local officers to achieve the goals of increasing and retaining membership. Soon training classes for Area Directors will begin and after completion they will be better prepared and motivated to help each UNIT prosper and grow.

We are reviving an "old" practice of attending union regional and national meetings to

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David Schauer, Lake Superior Ports & Shipping. John J. Boland arrived Duluth last evening with stone for Graymont in Superior. The laker shifted to Midwest Energy this morning to load petroleum coke. 7/22/2022

## From the National Vice President —

**G**reetings from the office of NARVRE National Vice President. As noted previously, one of the major duties of the National Vice President is to recruit new members and



Incoming Vice President  
Ron Hylla

to establish new NARVRE units across the United States. With over 400,000 full retirement beneficiaries, as reported by the Railroad Retirement Board, NARVRE must reach out to them to join us in protecting and preserving our retirement benefits. We all know at least one railroad retiree who does not belong to NARVRE. Bring them to a NARVRE meeting or a NARVRE social event. Inform them what NARVRE does in protecting their retirement benefits. And finally, get them to join NARVRE.

In the past few years, NARVRE has been deeply affected by the Covid pandemic much like many units. We have observed many units with delinquent dues paying members. This office has reached out to our Area Directors to review those delinquent members with units in their respective areas. Units should be contacting those members to reel them back into

NARVRE. The Executive Board has recently approved any member who is delinquent on their dues, can pay the current dues and be covered through 2023. Current dues for units are \$29.00 for singles and \$36.00 for couples. Any local unit fees would be in addition to the reference dues. Current dues for Unit 801 members are \$31.00 for singles and \$38.00 for couples.

I had the honor of attending a meeting with Unit 109 in Minneapolis/St. Paul, the largest NARVRE unit. I met a new member of Unit 109, Mr. Jeff Doerr. Jeff is the former President of Transportation Division of the International Association of Machinist and Aerospace Workers (IAM). Jeff is currently a representative for the Jones/Granger Law firm and is dedicated to assisting NARVRE in recruiting new members. I am looking forward to working with Jeff and the Jones/

Granger Law firm in the future.

NARVRE is seeking members in the Chicago, IL area who are interested in establishing their own unit. Your unit would allow you to hold meetings, social events or other events. Pursuant to the NARVRE By-laws, a unit must have 15 members and require you to fill the positions of President, Vice President, Secretary-Treasurer and Legislative Representative. NARVRE will be available to assist you in your new unit. If any member/s in the Chicago area would be interested in establishing a unit, please contact me.

Finally, NARVRE is still seeking someone interested in becoming an area director for Area 1. If anyone in Area 1 has the desire to become a NARVRE Area Director, please contact President George Boatright or this office.

— **Ron Hylla**

*NARVRE National Vice President*

### (National President from page 1)

spread the word of NARVRE to not only retirees but also current workers. Our partnership with Jones Granger law firm is helping to pay some of these expenses and is greatly appreciated. In addition to financial support for this revived initiative, they will also Promote our organization at every opportunity by handing out newly printed brochures and speaking to railroaders about our organization.

As your National President one of my first duties will be to appoint a member as Area 1 Director for the Southeastern states. I am seeking the advice of each UNIT in Area 1 as to volunteers to be considered. My first

appointment has been made to Dennis Van Dyke as Asst. Area 4 Director from Unit 154 MARCELINE, MO and thank you, Dennis, for your enthusiasm for the job. Thank you to Area 4 Director, Gary Nelson, for the recommendation and the wise council of the other Executive Board members.

I used the “step box” analogy because the carmen used to put one by the engines in Sanford, FL to help me on the engines and I will use it in future articles to stress what I feel needs prompt attention. For now, STAY SAFE AND COOL!

— **George Boatwright,**

*National 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.

Lawrence and Dolores Walczewski • Barbara Sundquist • Victor Sundquist • David Corless • Daniel Domin • Josephine Tretter • Michael De Millio • Marilyn Streuerman • Stevenson Parrish • 115 in Memory of Wanetta George • Marilyn Davis in honor of Tom Dwyer • Marilyn Davis in memory of Wallace Davis

## Memorials

Chadd Christopher Nelson son of Area Director 4 Gary R Nelson • Yosie Taylor • Michael A McMahon • Dean J Johnson • Diane J Frisk • William D Woll • Audrey Nordquist • Frank T “Bud” Stoltman • Joy E Hammer • Alicia Jean Langner • Carol Ann Riste • Lloyd W Anderson • John C Gubasta, Sr • Shirley J Grabowski, • Gerald L DeLaitre • Earl J Currie • Norman Seely • James Langford



The middle Conrail's former Reading anthracite country at West Cressona, PA on May 13, 1988. A MP15 and a SW1500 set in front of the station awaiting their next call to duty, which would happen shortly. The crew then headed off on one of the branches radiating out of the yard. If I recall correctly, four units were assigned to West Cressona, one to Tamaqua, and five to St. Nicholas. In a fascinating move, all ten were gathered up on Saturday and operated light to Enola for servicing. Once rested, the crew returned on Sunday and delivered them to their respective locations. Photo by Stan Short.



## From the National Secretary-Treasurer —

Many circumstances and events have had a significant influence on our financial status. A few of those include inflation, expenses of the 2022 National Convention, and the COVID-19 pandemic which has prevented many units from meeting. Because of this, membership dues cannot be collected from many members across the country. These factors were key in the decision to increase dues.

The Executive Board has approved the motion that any new memberships and/or membership renewals that are collected now until the end of the year will be paid through December 31, 2023. The new dues

rates indicated in the table are now in effect.

<b>Unit Dues</b>	<b>\$29.00</b>	<b>\$36.00</b>
<b>801 Unit Dues</b>	<b>\$31.00</b>	<b>\$38.00</b>

From the National Office, we will be mailing unit presidents and secretaries — treasurers a membership renewal packet containing updated Membership Reporting Forms, Annual Audit Forms, and Officer Election Forms, and Unit Roster.

Our past president Tom Dwyer will continue to write for our organization. His offerings will be published in several of our communication platforms such as our website [www.narvre.us](http://www.narvre.us), Facebook – National NARVRE Forum, from time to time our National Newsletter and email blasts. As

we all know his knowledge and experience with respect to RRB retirement matters are impeccable.

At the time of this writing we have been informed that Past President Oval McGee has passed after a long battle with illness. Orval served 21 years as President of Unit 030 Council Bluffs IA. and with his leadership played an important role in making our 2018 Convention an outstanding success. I personally along with former and present National Officers certainly wish his precious wife, Judy, and his family our heartfelt condolences in this time of sorrow.

May God Bless his family and our NARVRE organization

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

## (National Legislative Director from page 1)

in the past six years. STB Chair Martin Oberman has said in committee hearings that “they’ve cut below the bone... rail service is unacceptably poor. All stakeholders agree the problem is principally caused by a shortage of labor”.

Shortly after the National Mediation Board (NMB) released the parties and ended the mediation process mandated by the RLA, a coalition of rail shippers contacted President Biden and expressed their collective concern that without a PEB order, the stalemate could result in a work stoppage that would further intensify ongoing supply-chain problems for American businesses and manufacturers in energy and petroleum products. Additionally, the White

House heard from leading experts on the economy, all stating that the country cannot risk a labor dispute which would exacerbate the impact on the nation’s retailers of food and fuel producers, and the shipping of all vital commodities. Many associations had joined in a call for action in the hope that a voluntary agreement can be reached, and the President complied under the rules of the RLA and signed the order. No doubt, the President was compelled to act by the additional weight of ongoing labor talks at our West Coast seaports. Those negotiations cover more than 22,000 workers at 29 U.S. seaports, which include the Ports of Long Beach and Los Angeles where thousands of rail containers continue to pile up. The Port of LA has about 20,000 rail containers that have been waiting nine days or longer, and the Port of Long Beach reports 14,000 in the

same situation. Over 60% of all containers waiting in these ports are landlocked and waiting for rail service. The approximate value of trade inside those containers is estimated at \$1.5 billion dollars. All parties involved should now be focused on resolving these two labor disputes, both of which control the import and export commerce of this nation.

NARVRE will hope for a fair resolve in these fragile negotiations. We want the best for our railroads and expect their employees to be treated with respect. A fair outcome might include an honest re-examination of the Precision Scheduled Railroading policy (PSR), for the sake of all parties, to include their employees and their customers, the shippers.

— **Gary Faley,**  
*National Legislative Director*



109 officers are from left to right. Roger Swanson (Treasurer), Tom Perkovich (President), Ron Hylla (National Vice President), Pam Clemens (Secretary)

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF RETIRED  
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News deadline 10th of each month

# 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline Available Nationwide; Depression Screening Also Available At No Cost

If you take nothing else away from this article, please remember these three numbers in this sequence: 9.8.8.

Those numbers can be your lifeline, or the lifeline for a loved one, who is in a crisis, be it with thoughts of suicide, with mental health or substance abuse or with any other kind of negative emotional state. It's a free and confidential service that anyone can call, text or chat (988lifeline.org) 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

988 is funded by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, or SAMHSA. It was formerly the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, and now no one has to remember complicated 1-800 numbers when in distress. Counselors are "superheroes," according to SAMHSA, and "numerous studies have shown that most callers are significantly more likely to feel less depressed, less suicidal, less overwhelmed, and more hopeful after speaking to a 988 Lifeline crisis counselor." ~ www.samhsa.gov

Depression is not a "young person's" disorder, though it certainly gets a lot of news coverage in that age category. It's not

a disorder of any age, and it is not part of the aging process. Feeling bad isn't something you have to "live with".

The following are a short list of some depression symptoms, with some that you may not have thought of:

- Angry outbursts, irritability or frustration, even over small matters
- Sleep disturbances, including insomnia or sleeping too much
- Slowed thinking, speaking or body movements
- Feelings of worthlessness or guilt, fixating on past failures or self-blame
- Trouble thinking, concentrating, making decisions and remembering things
- Often wanting to stay at home, rather than going out to socialize or doing new things
- Unexplained physical problems, such as back pain or headaches ~ www.Mayoclinic.org

If these symptoms sound like you, you do not need to suffer!! Medicare offers

depression screening and it is free. There is no copayment and the deductible does not apply. You must receive this screening service from a healthcare provider in a primary care setting, such as a in a doctor's office or clinic. This depression screening can help your provider make or coordinate appropriate referrals for mental health treatment.

Call your doctor today to set up an appointment for this free screening service. Or if you are in crisis, please call 988. You are not alone in crisis. Just call or text 988, or chat at 988lifeline.org.

If you have questions about Medicare's coverage of depression screening, please call our Beneficiary Contact Center at 800-833-4455 or TTY, call 877-566-3572 for the hearing impaired. Customer Service Representatives are available Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 7 p.m. ET.

And most importantly, please remember 988.

— Jennifer Johnson,  
Palmetto, GBA