



— SINCE 1937 —

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

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Published ten times a year  
Cost – Membership in a Unit or Membership-at-Large



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NARVRE NEWSLETTER

JULY, 2023

VOL. 37 NO. 6

### FROM THE NATIONAL PRESIDENT —

Greetings ladies and gentlemen of NARVRE, this month my newsletter submission is a recap of activities in June. On June 7 National Vice-President Ron Hylla, National Secretary/Treasurer Phil Steward, Area 3 Director Adrienne Natoli, Area 2 Director Walt Barrows, my wife Lois Boatwright and I planned and executed a meeting in Philadelphia, PA. We were joined by 13 members of Unit088PHILADELPHIA and 13 non-members of NARVRE. The meeting was a “rousing” success as 7 of the attendees joined NARVRE and the existing members of Unit088 renewed friendships as they had not met together in about 7 years. Our goal is to reestablish the Unit with new and determined officers. At least three members have volunteered to “take over the reins” of the Unit and more will be said about that next month. My personal thanks go out to Will Schmitt(Lifetime member), Tom Poserina and Jerry McDermott leaders of the Reading Railroad Veterans Employees Association for their help in reaching potential NARVRE members.

Last week I had the pleasure and honor

of attending Unit 082NAMPA, IDAHO’s regular meeting and birthday party for two members. If this was a blog, it would be entitled “I SHOOK THE HANDS OF BOTH 99 & 100-YEAR-OLD MEMBERS”. After meeting Mr. Don Sullivan(100) and Mr. Bill Stringer(99), former President of Unit082, I was struck by the seeming youth of both men. I can only hope and pray that I might achieve a similar age and still be supporting NARVRE. Also, attending were several other members in their 90’s and in total 1/3 of the membership or 30 people were there to honor Don & Bill. This Unit led by President Ted Zahradnicek, former Secretary/Treasurer Sherry Zahradnicek, Vice-President Susan Liable, newly appointed Secretary Patti Stringham and newly appointed Treasurer Cheryl Lopez have achieved a very low dues delinquency rate of 8%. This Unit has met at an Oriental style buffet restaurant for a long while with between 30 and 40 in attendance each month. Sadly, the Unit lost another 99-year-old last year in August, Mr. Carl P. Tackett.

You have heard the Officers of NARVRE stress the importance of “succession” within

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### FROM THE NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR —

After months of warnings and only four days away from causing a default by reneging on the U.S. Treasury debt, a legislative compromise was passed by Congress which finally raised the nation’s borrowing limit. The House passed the Fiscal Responsibility Act of 2023 on a vote of 314-117, the Senate agreed to it the next evening by a vote of 63-36, and the bill became law with the President’s signature on Saturday, June 3, 2023. The law suspends the debt limit through January of 2025, and implements caps on appropriated funding for 2024 and 2025. It also includes spending caps on other non-essential provisions that could result in a \$1.5 trillion decrease to the deficit over the next decade, according to the Congressional Budget Office (CBO). As the vote indicates, there are those in Congress that were compelled to vote against the compromise agreement, dismissing the threat of a default on the nation’s financial obligations. Also, there are eleven Members of the House Freedom Caucus that have promised to block the regular order of business in the Congress due to their outrage with the Speaker of the House after reaching an agreement with President Biden to avert an assured economic catastrophe. The negotiated deal was eventually reached after both parties compromised on major differences with scant time to waste. The agreement includes cuts to the IRS and caps on discretionary spending, both important to the GOP, and modified work requirements for SNAP food allowances and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), important to the Democrats. While some Republicans praised the work of the new Speaker, others were outspoken and angry that the agreement included a penalty of automatic across-the-board cuts if they don’t finish their annual appropriation bills by the end of the calendar year. We can be thankful that House Speaker Kevin McCarthy worked out

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Ohio State Association in Cleveland OH Area 2 Director Walt Barrows, outgoing Association VP Carl Taddeo, outgoing Association President Ruth Teper, and Cleveland Unit 019 President Ed Donahue organized and hosted a great and memorable Ohio State Association Meeting with the 4 National Officers attending and Railroad Retirement Board Labor Member, John Bragg, along with many other speakers giving presentations. More photos of this event can be viewed on our Facebook Page National NARVRE Forum and can be accessed on NARVRE website [www.narvre.us](http://www.narvre.us)

## From the National Vice President —

Time is just flying by for 2023 with over half of the year gone. Your NARVRE National Officer have been very busy seeking out new members. To date in 2023, informational conferences have been held in Atlanta GA, Philadelphia PA, Omaha NE, Sparks NV, Alliance NE, and Portland OR. In addition, we have met with several units across the country such as Nampa ID, Cedar Rapids IA, Clinton IA, Fort Madison IA, Council Bluffs IA, Kansas City MO, Chattanooga TN, Chicago IL, Knoxville, TN and more. I do wish to thank our Area Directors and Assistant Area Directors for all the assistance they have given your National Officers with these conferences and meetings.

I recently had a telephone conversation with a NARVRE member in Portland, OR who is 101 years young. This gracious lady was so appreciative for NARVRE and what we are doing to Protect, Preserve and Promote her railroad retirement benefits. It was so



Ora Mae Bryant 100th birthday Celebration at Unit 095, Kansas City, May Meeting.

## 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.

Barbara Sundquist • Victor Sundquist • David Corless

## Memorials

Lee D Mills – Age 100 • Anthony Nadolski • Stanley Thomas Hencinski • Daryl L Neitzel • Thomas J Downing Jr • Joe Birdwell • Ted Bell • Ragland L Cooper Jr • Roland C Dixon

gratifying to hear her comments as she spoke so highly of NARVRE. I am certain there are many more NARVRE members just like her.

We hope your unit continues to review your roster and report any adjustments to the National Secretary-Treasurer's office. This updated information is vital in order to provide an accurate accounting of the number of members NARVRE has. Please take a moment to update your roster.

I would like to thank all our members who

## (National Legislative Director from page 1)

an agreement with the Biden Administration to avoid the inevitable downfall of the stock market, which could have led to a recession and the loss of millions of American jobs. Instead, Social Security and Railroad Retirement checks will continue to be processed on time. The government will continue to sell U.S. Treasury bonds which help the government pay its bills. And our military will also be paid because Congress finally acted before we all faced the consequences of a national default. This bipartisan action allows NARVRE members, and the National Railroad Retirement Investment Trust (NRRIT), along with stock market investors everywhere, to relax. Yet, all of that seems to be lost on the hard-liners in the Freedom Caucus, who now scoff at the importance of this timely agreement. Those voices continually ignored the Secretary of the Treasury, Janet Yellen, who warned that “a default on our debt would produce an economic and financial catastrophe, and it is unlikely that the federal government would be able to issue payments to millions of Americans, including our military families and seniors who rely on Social Security”.

Committees in the new Congress are now led by a Republican majority and the new Chairman of the House Sub-Committee on Railroads has not been shy with his negative comments regarding Amtrak and federal funding. During a committee hearing in early June, Chrm. Troy Nehls (Tx) disagreed with Amtrak CEO Stephen Gardner that funding for new purchases of rolling stock could come from the “Investment in Infrastructure and Jobs Act” (IIJA), referred to as the “Bipartisan Infrastructure Law” (BIL), a bill designed to lead and fund Amtrak into the future. Gardner had explained that grant funding (CRISI) is available for advancing the state of passenger rail in the U.S. Unimpressed, Chrm, Nehls stated that “Amtrak should not be allowed to participate in the CRISI grant program”. Since February, Chrm. Nehls has made several

have made contributions to NARVRE above and beyond their normal dues. These donations are a tribute to the legacy of NARVRE and to memorialize our fallen brothers and sisters. The donations by these members are also a testament to NARVRE and what we stand for in Protecting, Preserving and Promoting your retirement and senior benefits. Please remember to make your contribution today.

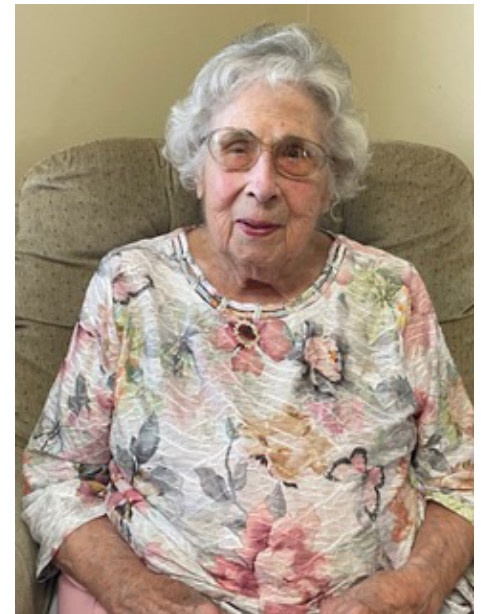
— **Ron Hylla**

*NARVRE National Vice President*

statements suggesting that federal subsidies for highways and airlines are more important than Amtrak and rail passenger train service. The chairman is welcome to his own opinion, but NARVRE will join with the advocacy of many groups, a ridership that continues to grow, and the American public that continually favors more Amtrak trains and rail passenger train service. The Rail Passenger Association's response was “there's some indication that congressional Republicans are already of the mind that since they can't touch Amtrak's new capital funds from the IIJA, they'll just let Amtrak starve on the operating funds side of the ledger”. We remember that was a very old, but failed attempt to destroy Amtrak. NARVRE remains steadfast and committed to protect Amtrak and those American rail jobs that support our railroad retirement system. This year, we will be proud to help persuade Congress to do the same.

— **Gary Faley,**

*National Legislative Director*



Edna Curtiss will be celebrating her 102nd birthday October 17, 2023. She was married to WWII II Veteran Johnnie C. Curtiss for 53 years. Johnnie was a welder at the Santa Fe Railroad Rail Mill in Newton, Kansas for over 30 years.

## From the National Secretary-Treasurer —

The National Officers have been stressing the importance of accuracy with respect to Unit rosters. This month listed below are the Units which so far have no delinquent or non-paying members listed - zero percent delinquencies.

*Unit 003 Chattanooga TN,  
Mary Bowen, Secretary Treasurer*

*Unit 153 Ft. Madison IA, Stan Haessig,  
President and Secretary Treasurer*

*Unit 165 Moberly MO,  
Kristine Campbell, Treasurer*

Next month we will publish units achieving 0-15% delinquency rates. Unit officers please contact me if you need assistance to clean up your unit roster

### What to do during extreme heat conditions

Excerpted from American Red Cross

An extreme heat event is a series of hot days, much hotter than average for a particular time and place. Extreme heat is deadly and kills more people than any other weather event. We can take action to prepare. Prepare now to protect yourself and your loved ones.

### What Should You Do During Extreme Heat?

Stay Hydrated. Drink plenty of fluids. Encourage others to drink plenty of fluids, too. Replace salt and minerals with snacks or a sports drink.

Stay Cool. Stay in an air-conditioned place as much as possible. If your home does not have air conditioning, go to your pre-designated cool location.

Wear lightweight, loose clothing and take cool showers or baths.

Limit your outdoor activity. If you must work outdoors, schedule tasks earlier or later in the day.

### Prevent Heat Illness

Check on your friends, family, and neighbors. Help them prevent heat illness. Act fast if you notice someone with symptoms. Anyone can develop heat illness. People at greater risk are:

Older adults

Infants, children and pregnant women

People with medical conditions

Outdoor workers

People with limited personal resources

People living in places that lack green spaces

### What to Do After Extreme Heat

Take Care of Yourself. It's normal to have a lot of bad feelings, stress or anxiety. Eat healthy food and get enough sleep to help you deal with stress. You can contact the Disaster Distress Helpline for free if you need to talk to someone. Call or text 1-800-985-5990.

### How to Treat Heat-Related Illnesses

During heat waves people are susceptible to three heat-related conditions. Here's how to recognize and respond to them.

**Heat Cramps.** Heat Cramps are muscle spasms caused by a large loss of salt and water in the body.

#### What to look for:

Heavy sweating with muscle pain or spasms

**What to do:** Move to a cool place. Drink water or a sports drink.

Get medical help right away if:

Cramps last longer than 1 hour

Person affected has heart problem

**Heat Exhaustion.** Heat Exhaustion is severe and may require emergency medical treatment.

#### What to look for:

Heavy sweating

Cold, pale and clammy skin

Fast, weak pulse

Nausea or vomiting

Muscle cramps

Tiredness or weakness

Dizziness-Headache-Passing out

#### What to do:

Move to a cool place

Loosen tight clothing

Cool the body using wet cloths, misting, fanning, or a cool bath

Sip water slowly

#### Get medical help right away if:

Vomiting occurs

Symptoms last longer than 1 hour or get worse

Confusion develops

**Heat Stroke.** Heat Stroke is deadly and requires emergency medical treatment.

#### What to look for:

High body temperature (104°F or higher)

Hot, red, dry or damp skin

Fast, strong pulse

Headache-Dizziness

Nausea-Confusion-Passing out

#### What to do:

Call 911 right away, then:

Move to a cool place

Cool the body using wet cloths, misting, fanning, or a cool bath

Do NOT give the person anything to drink

— *James (Phil) Steward,*

*National Secretary/Treasurer*



Members attending Informational Meeting conducted by the NARVRE National Team including Area 3 Director Adrienne Natoli, Area 2 Director Walt Barrows, Area 6 Director Gary Marquart, National President George Boatwright, National VP Ron Hylla, and National Secretary Treasurer Philip Steward and Lois Boatwright. More pictures to view on our Facebook page National Narvre Forum.

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF RETIRED  
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JULY, 2023

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Volume 37 Number 6

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News deadline 10th of each month

## Update on COVID-19 Test Kits

It has come to our attention that some beneficiaries are receiving COVID-19 test kits in error. Additionally, some are receiving a Medicare Summary Notice (MSN) that reflects payment for a test kit, but a kit was not received. Here's what you can do about it:

If you receive a kit or MSN that reflects claim payment, please call the provider's office and tell them that you did not order the kit; you do not want to keep the kit and want to return it. (Only you can do this.) Please write down the date of the call, the phone number, and the name of the person that you speak with. Ask for a cancellation number or a phone tracking number for the call.

If the claim was denied, return the kit.

If you do receive a test kit and want to keep it, that is fine.

When you should call us: the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) guidelines for screening for possible fraud and abuse state that the Medicare paid amount must be \$100.00 or more. This includes the deductible. Or, that there are three (3) or more complaints for the same provider. Regardless of the amount, when you contact us, your concern will be incorporated into the Medicare record and will remain on file while the provider is monitored. We will contact you if there is a change.

Additionally, we are aware that some providers are making unsolicited calls to beneficiaries to obtain verbal consent to send

a COVID-19 test kit, at no cost or charge to you. If you receive a call of this nature, do not discuss your medical history or conditions with the caller. Simply tell the caller that you did not ask for the call, do not want the product, and ask them not to call back.

Another method to return the kit is to send it back as "Return to Sender" at the Post Office. Ask the Post Office for a tracking number/slip. They should be able to provide one. You can send the information along with your Medicare Number and claim number to Railroad Medicare (if you have one). Upon receipt, we will recoup funds that were paid to the provider. You will receive an MSN reflecting claim adjustment.

We thank you in advance for your efforts to safeguard Medicare dollars.

If you want to report receiving a kit without requesting one or seeing a payment made to a provider via your MSN for a kit but one was not received, please 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.

If you would like to see your recent claims online, you can sign up for our free, Internet-based website portal, MyRRMed, which allows you to access the following:

- Claims Status Details
- Historical MSNs

• Information about those you have allowed access to your private health information.

• Update the authorized individuals to have access to your private health information.

You can access MyRRMed at [www.PalmettoGBA.com/MyRRMed](http://www.PalmettoGBA.com/MyRRMed).

— *Jennifer Johnson  
Palmetto, GBA*

### (National President from page 1)

example of what to do within your independent Unit when your officers reach an age that they wish to have someone else "take the reins". As I type this epistle, I am packing for an Informational Meeting in Vancouver, WA/Portland, OR on Wednesday June 21. I am looking forward to a great report from VP Hylla, who is leading this meeting in next month's newsletter.

The month of July will be a rest period for some very tired but relentless Officers of NARVRE who are trying to achieve the goals we set for ourselves in May 2022. OH! by the way it is only 10 months until our 43rd Biennial Convention in Kansas City, MO. Make your plans and elect your delegates no later than November 2023. I hope to see at least 70 of our Units represented next May, which is probably a record turnout, but the meeting is in the "middle" of the United States. STAY SAFE!

— *George Boatwright,  
National President*