



National Association of Retired & Veteran Railway Employees, Inc.

NARVRE National Office

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NARVRE NEWSLETTER

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FROM THE NATIONAL PRESIDENT —

We have inquiries occasionally do we just involve ourselves in railroad issues such as Amtrak, Social Security and Railroad Retirement. The answer is no. As a senior organization and a lobbying group we have concerns over other issues that directly affect older Americans. Medicare, Medicaid, health Insurance all come to mind.

Currently, you have read in the news and on television the issue of the Trans Pacific Trade Agreement (TPP) and Trans Pacific Authority (TPA). Our concern is this. In the Senate bill, there is language dealing with Medicare. In trade agreements there

are always concerns to loss of jobs for American workers. It happened with NAFTA in 1993 and labor organizations and other groups have the same concern this time around. The Senate bill has language that in order to provide trade adjustment assistance for workers there would be cuts to Medicare providers. Once again the

bogeyman is Medicare. Fast track proponents now are in a quandary as to how to pay for the loss of jobs

and are seeking to provide funding through another stand alone bill. Opponents of Fast track want assurances that Medicare will not be part of the equation and will not support the bill which has an estimate of \$900 million dollars being taken from Medicare.

“Never believe a politician when he/she tells you that they will provide funding from another source.”

You can ask yourself why was this provision included in the Senate bill. Conservatives and their allies have never liked Medicare since its adoption in 1965. This is a way to downsize Medicare by starving it to death. Never believe a politician when he/she tells you that they will provide funding from another source. When you are in the majority you can include these little “fixes” to legislation you support but paying for it by taking from your adversaries programs. That was what was done in the Senate.

By the time you read this column the Fast Track bill will be voted on in the House. If any amendments are allowed to be adopted the bill than will have to be returned to the Senate for agreement.

NARVRE does not support the TPP as now written with Medicare as the funding mechanism for workers’ loss of jobs.

— **Tom Dwyer,**
National President

From the National Legislative Director —

Congress has just finished voting on a number of harmful amendments that would have adversely affected Amtrak. This office asked NARVRE members to stay active on specific amendments and over the last seven days, we have done well, defeating amendments that were designed to cut out specific train routes or deny funding meant to eventually kill the entire train system. While this is a reoccurring scene, this round of proposed cuts come in the aftermath of the deadly Amtrak derailment of Train #188 on May 12, 2015. Both parties are guilty of uttering careless statements regarding possible cause to this tragedy, but a 40 year history clearly indicates that Amtrak has been woefully underfunded while being expected to continually upgrade their operations, and somehow maintain an infrastructure that is clearly in a state of disrepair. In

the face of an unrealistic budget, the constant cry and demand from Republicans is that Amtrak must somehow run a passenger train service on inadequate funding, keep maintenance demands up to date, and still turn a profit for each passenger. Of course, this demand is for Amtrak train service alone, and not for airlines and highways. In the past seven years, Congress has provided almost as much federal funding for highways as Amtrak has received in 45 years of operations. Still, the tenacious Pete Sessions (R-TX) introduced amendments that would eliminate certain routes based on loss of profits. His amendments were narrowly defeated. Rep. Mo Brooks (R-AL) and his misrepresented proposals to gut the system were defeated easily in recorded votes. Efforts to privatize Amtrak’s Northeast Corridor (NEC) did not have enough support to get an amendment passed, because of the bipartisan understandings in the rail reform legislation (HR 749) which was passed in

March of this year. The anti-Amtrak die-hards see privatization as a panacea to turn the NEC over to investors with plans to cherry-pick certain sections of the NEC and starve the other routes until they wither and die. This office likes to remind Congress of T&I hearings in past years when former Chrm. John Mica unsuccessfully tried to privatize the NEC. When Mica brought in a group of investors to provide testimony that financial resources and the will to prosper are only available from the private market, they were compelled to honestly testify that their privately held group would indeed plan on receiving federal government subsidies if they were to take over the NEC. That part of the scheme was not in their written testimony.

Certain sections of train routes are waiting for the next accident to happen, because the system is old and has been neglected for to many years. The news story of the

continued on page 5 ►►

From the National Vice President —

Congratulations to all Area Directors, Unit Officers and members who have been so active these past few months recruiting members at our NARVRE informational meetings, Railroad Retirement informational meetings and Labor Union Conference meetings targeting new and prospective retirees.

I believe we can begin to say that new railroad retirees will know that there is a NARVRE organization that they can join to **promote, protect and preserve for years to come the viability of our Railroad Retirement Pensions for us and for the future generations of railroad workers.** They can proudly be a part of an organization that stands up against Congress when they try to weaken our very survival of our lives and can stand and work to protect all senior benefits provided under Social Security, Medicare and an Affordable Healthcare. The Railroad Retirement Pension is a two tier tax system that we earned and paid for while we worked in the rail industry. Tier I is the equivalent to Social Security and Tier II is that of Railroad Retirement. Any changes to Social Security affect our railroad retirement and if the Congress makes changes to either of those benefits, could result in substantial cuts to our RRB Pension. If congress had prevailed in the past to put Railroad Retirement under Social Security as recently proposed in the FY2013 Congressional Budget under continuing resolutions to this date, our pension could be reduced as much as \$700 per month. That is why we need to increase our membership. When we lobby, we speak in terms of numbers. That is what Congress looks at in the lobbying process. Please continue to recruit and organize new Units. Speak up with a loud voice to preserve your Railroad Retirement Pension Annuity. **This Congress is already passed a Budget to make changes to Medicare and has proposed a Social Security Commission to make reforms (privatize).** Stay alert and be vigilant to protecting our Railroad Retirement and Health Care benefits. Early this year the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that the industry does not have honor pension and healthcare benefits. Now that is scary. **We are fortunate that both Rail Labor and Rail Management work together for our Retirement and Healthcare Benefits.**

I wanted to feature some of the Area Directors, officers and members working in their Areas. To Start, I want to congratulate Assistant Area 1 Director Philip Steward for organizing an informational meeting in Memphis, TN on April 8. Fifty-eight retirees attended and of those, thirty-eight joined the Unit 18 the next day on April 9 at the regular meeting in Southaven MS. All was done with the assistance of Area 1 Director and our sponsor and past President of NARVRE Whitey Westphal attending with National VP Tony Padilla. At this meeting we honored our past Area 1 Director A. L. AND DELORES HICKEY: **Pictured, left to right is Past National President Whitey Westphal, National VP Tony Padilla, Unit 18 President Donald Harrison, Former Area 1 Assistant Director A. L. Hickey and Area 1 Director Jim Johnson.**



A. L. AND DELORES HICKEY-Southaven residents A L began 41 year career in 1959 with IC as agent operator and later became train dispatcher in Chicago retiring in 2000 with the CNRR. A cancer survivor A.L.'s goal is to live to be 100 years old. He enjoys watching the St Louis Cardinals Baseball Team, MS State football and basketball and he is a coin collector. He and Delores love spending time with 2 children, 3 grandchildren and 5 great grandchildren. A.L. Hickey was appointed in 2006 as Assistant Area 1 Director for NARVRE and remained on assignment until 2015. NARVRE appreciates his dedication of service to our members. We do hope he lives a long live with his wife Dolores and family.

"Thank you gentlemen for the kind words. We are certainly pleased with attendance of the meetings and everyone certainly appreciated the information that was presented. Our goals were accomplished as membership was significantly increased and we were able to enhance contacts and relationships with the BNSF and CN railroads, but were able to establish inroads to the UP and NS railroads. I am looking at our scheduling informational meetings at Jasper and Birmingham Alabama. Plus I have been invited in October by the manager of my former territory (Amory Ms.) to a Family Day Picnic which current employees and huge number of retirees customarily attend. Needless to say this should bring dividends. I shall keep all abreast of these activities as they developed," said Assistant Area 1 Director Philip Steward.

At right is our Area 3 Director Ken Kolberg in Parsippany N.J. - RRB informational Meeting with NARVRE with Bryan Shortino RRB District Manager:



An RRB informational conference was held in Parsippany, NJ on April 17 and Ken Kolberg, our Area 3 Director, attended the meeting to distribute NARVRE flyers, newsletters and general information about our organization. During the 4 1/2 hour meeting Ken received a good response from the approximate 50 attendees and was helpful in addressing concerns of the new and soon to be railroad retirees from Amtrak and New Jersey Transit. Since Ken has had a good working relationship in the past with Bryan Shortino, the District Manager and sponsor of the RRB meeting, he was able to meet and greet many of the attendees on a one-on-one basis and discuss the benefits of our organization. The plan now is to follow up with the attendees and move to sign them up with NARVRE.



Pictured above, left to right is Larry Fent, Delegate at the National meeting in California last year, Bruce Kelly, member of our NARVRE unit and, Margie Ingram, Treasurer Unit 30 Council Bluffs, IA.

They attended the RRB informational Meeting in Omaha, Nebraska May 8, 2015. Margie contacted the RRB area manager Joe Gray from Denver and he invited them to attend and have a table near the registration table for us. The conference was held at Mahoney State Park near Omaha, Nebraska May 8, 2015. Joe Gray from Denver was there to facilitate the meeting and said he is a friend of Tom Dwyer and has been for the past 20 years. We set a table outside the meeting room entrance and greeted most of the attendees as they arrived. There were 95 people in attendance and many of them were spouses.

"We had a sign-up sheet, and about 20 people signed with their phone numbers. We will call each and invite them to a meeting. A number of the people signing our list were from Lincoln, Nebraska and asked about a meeting in Lincoln. We did determine there is an active club in Lincoln so will contact the president of that club and refer the Lincoln individuals to them. It was a productive morning and we appreciated the opportunity to be part of it," said Margie Ingram.

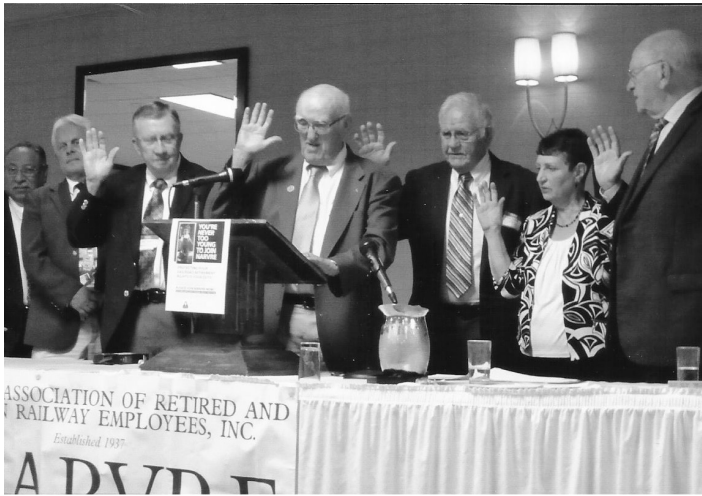
Many more successful meeting took place during the past few months that increase our NARVRE Membership. I am unable to feature all. But, thanks to all for the great work you do for NARVRE. Anthony (Tony) Padilla NARVRE National Vice President.



Congratulations to the New Officers Re-elected by acclamation at the State of Ohio NARVRE Association Biennial Meeting on May 18, 2015 in Strongsville, Ohio.

It was a great honor to have been invited to speak along with President Tom Dwyer, Area 2 Director J. J. Grabner and Past President Whitey Westphal our sponsor and Representative of the Law Firm of Will Moody. President Ruth Teper reported that ninety-one railroaders registered to attend. My message to the group was to impress on them how important it is to continue the **promotion, protection and preservation** of our Railroad Retirement to continue to prevent the Congress from encroaching on our Railroad Retirement Pension Annuity. I spoke on the history of our successes when lobbying congress. I also spoke about when congress actually enacted legislation to cut forty-percent of our pensions. But, because of our NARVRE grass-roots we were able to persuade the White House to Veto the legislation. Our membership in the field made hundreds of thousands of calls to the point that the administration ask NARVRE to call off the dogs because they could do their work. Lobbying efforts from the field paid off. Later in 2013 we fought to keep congress from enacting legislation to put Railroad Retirement under the Social Security Administration. Thanks to our membership we once again prevailed to stop them from hurting our RRB Pension. We did it by speaking in terms of our membership numbers from the grass-roots and we prevail to save your pension. Area 2 Director **J. J. Grabner** spoke about our mission and objective is to increase our membership and establish new Units. We had a very good question and answer sessions. Past President **Whitey Westphal** spoke about the History of NARVRE in terms of legislation leading to the present. He did a great presentation on all the benefits provided to our members from the Will Moody Law firm when our members suffer adverse consequences from the medication that we take and how we can be protected. **President Tom Dwyer** talked about the assistance he has provided to many NARVRE retirees who have been ill advised about their benefits and protections of their RRB Pensions providing relief and appeals to make sure retirees get their benefits. He advised about making sure members report all their earnings, receive all benefits due to them. He advised about overpayments to the retiree

and how to avoid problems that lead to penalties and having to pay back to the RRB thousands of dollars. The overall meeting was a real success thanks to the officers of the Ohio State Association.



Swearing in Ceremony of New Officers Re-elected by Acclamation at the State of Ohio NAVRE Association Biennial Meeting on May 18, 2015. NARVRE National Officers were invited to speak. Pictured from left to right: NAREVRE National Vice President-**Anthony (Tony) Padilla**; NARVRE Area 2 Director-**J. J. Grabner**; State of Ohio NAVRE Association Secretary/Treasurer-**Robert Teper**; NARVRE National President **Thomas Dwyer**; State of Ohio NAVRE Association Vice President-**Carl Taddeo**; State of Ohio NAVRE Association President-**Ruth Taper** and NARVRE Past President **Whitey Westphal**.

Attention Florida Units:

The Florida State Convention will be held on November 7, 2015 at the Homers Buffet, 1000 Sebring Square in Sebring, Florida, 33870. Phone # 863-386-1440. If you need a motel use the Quality Inn and Suites at 6525 US Hwy 27 North, Sebring Florida, 33870, phone 863-385-4500. Reservations must be no later than September 1 2015 per request of motel manager, Mention NARVRE to get the discount rate. Meeting and program start at 10:30 a.m. and adjourns about 5:00 P. M. Lunch will be provided by the Moody Law Firm.

If you have questions please call Jerry or Nancy Tressa Phone # 863-441-4418. NARVRE Unit 011 Sebring, FL; host unit Invites all Florida Units to be represented. Hope to see you there.



The National Association of Retired and Veteran Railways Employees, Inc. (NARVRE) Unit #043 welcomed Attorney's Frederick and Mary Storm, L.P.A. Family Law to our meeting May 11, 2015 at the Conneaut Eagles Club #408, Conneaut, Ohio. They were presented a Certificate of Appreciation From the NARVRE Unit #043. From Left to Right Secretary/Treasurer Ralph Mongenel, Attorney's Mary and Frederick Storm, Communications Officer David M. Harlacher

CONTACT INFORMATION:

Railroad Retirement Board
www.rrb.gov

SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION
www.socialsecurity.gov

DEPT. OF VETERAN AFFAIRS
www.va.gov
877-772-5772 • 880-772-1213 • 800-827-1000

(National Legislative Director from page 1)

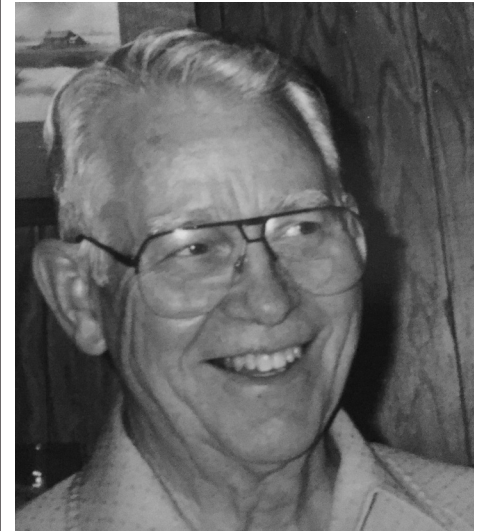
Portal Bridge over the Hackensack River, as example, is a movable swing-bridge, considered to be the busiest train span in the Western Hemisphere, carrying between 150k to 200k daily riders on Amtrak and NJ transit trains on a daily basis. However, this bridge is over 100 years old, and needs to be replaced, as parts of the tracks still have wooden ties. This swing-bridge often gets stuck, and this causes delays that can back up trains from Boston to Pittsburgh, all because infrastructure money was not funded for to many years. Polling suggests that Americans from all across the country like the idea of passenger train service, and they also support increased funding for Amtrak...they need to talk to their member of Congress.

Rail safety issues were addressed in a recent House hearing on Amtrak Train #188, and existing technology referred to as positive train control (PTC) was a main focus of the testimony and questioning. PTC safety systems are mandated by rail legislation passed in 2008 to be installed on major freight lines and passenger train routes by the end of this year. Amtrak President Joe Boardman testified in the T&I hearing that they will beat the deadline and have PTC activated on the NEC lines by December 31st. Where is Amtrak getting the specific money to pay for this safety provision? We know that Amtrak is taking money from

Peter to pay Paul to get this done, because specific funding was requested to pay for the implementation of PTC, and the Republican majority in the Appropriations Committee denied that request. Without sufficient funding, Amtrak cannot be expected to comply with mandated safety regulations. PTC is a communication-based safety system that will prevent derailments and save lives, but Congress needs to fund this innovated safety system. NARVRE has forwarded information on the importance of our government to finally begin to make the serious and overdue investments in our transportation infrastructures, before really bad things start to unravel at a very quick pace. The American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) and other experts have warned the public and Congress over and over...to no avail. The ASCE has estimated that it would cost about \$10 billion over the next 15 years to achieve a state of good repair on the NEC alone. After all of the serious questions and discussion on rail safety, you would think that Congress would be ready to make the federal investments to pay for the safety concerns on the NEC. Yet, a day after the Amtrak #118 derailment, the Republican held House Appropriations Committee voted to give Amtrak \$1.1 billion for the next fiscal year, and that's a \$251 million cut from this year's budget, and \$2 billion less than Amtrak requested. Experts have testified in Congress that Amtrak and passenger rail generally has "an infrastructure deficit almost unparalleled in the world". The

Organization for Economic Development estimates the United States must invest an additional \$230 billion between 2015 and 2030 to restore its rail infrastructure to a level of global competitiveness. Additional information added that rail's share of U.S. federal transportation funding, which was almost 5 percent in the late 1970's, is now down to 1 percent. Importantly, this means "rail gets 1 percent, highways get 80 percent, and aviation gets about 19 percent". All of our Congressional offices need to hear from the public. Some, like those introducing the amendments meant to destroy Amtrak, won't care...but they should understand that their constituents do care!

— Gary M. Faley,
Legislative Director



Obituary —

Elmo Leroy Barton

Mr. Elmo Leroy Barton, long time advocate and friend of Narvre passed away May 18, 2015; he will be sadly missed by all who knew him. Elmo, a retired Santa Fe Locomotive Engineer, a widower celebrated his 90th birthday in January of this year, and is retiring again. Elmo was Secretary/Treasurer of Arkansas City, KS Unit 025 and kept accurate records as Secretary and all the financial records and Treasurer. Initiated fund raising projects encouraged attendance to the NARVRE National Conventions completed all Audits and year end reports. A life of service. Service to mankind well done. NARVRE Unit 025 and this community is losing a valuable asset. Service by Elmo for all these many years has been exceptional. He will be long remembered by his home Unit and all who knew him.

From the National Secretary-Treasurer

Hope all of you are out of the winter mode and into high summer activity; it is really warming up here in Missouri. We have been rather slow here at National Office just taking care of business as it comes in to the office. Our Officers and Directors even members are being invited to RRB regional meeting this spring.

They allow NARVRE to setup a table to present information and hand out applications as your news this month reflects. We still are in need of our Unit S/T's to collect those delinquent dues for 2015. Your National Office has mailed out 360 postcards to 801 members that have not renewed in hopes that we will hear back from them.

The email of our newsletter is going along well, if you happen to change your email address, please call us so that we can

keep our files updated and as well phone or address changes. We are still getting numerous newsletters back and each one costs us another \$.49 each.

We have lost 17 units in the past 18 months, the members are now in Unit 801, please seek out all avenues to enrich NARVRE with new members so that we will be able to continue into the future to follow in the footsteps of the forefathers of NARVRE who so diligently fought to get your Railroad Retirement setup in 1937. If we don't keep up with changes in communication we will fail.

Call your Congressperson when there is an issue that affects your income whether it is Railroad Retirement or Social Security. We are all lobbyist for these issues, it is vital to keep informed through the newsletter and your Legislative Representative for your Unit.

National Sec/Treas. Joyce Burton —
Joyce A. Burton, National Sec/Treas

NARVRE NEWSLETTER
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From Palmetto, GBA

Looking Ahead: Medicare Funding for the Future

Every year, the Office of the Chief Actuary for the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) prepares a report outlining how long the Medicare Trust Fund will last, using a variety of data and forecasted/predicted changes to the program. These projections are not set in stone. CMS tries to estimate changes considering new medical technologies, breakthroughs, and changes to future therapies and services.

Based on their estimates, they predict that hospital insurance (Medicare Part A) should be funded to the year 2030, which is four years later than previous reports. The statisticians came up with this four-year improvement based on lower-than-expected spending in 2013 for most hospital charges.

Part B (which includes Railroad Medicare) is assumed to be funded for the foreseeable future because of how Part B payments to doctors/outpatient expenses/suppliers are based by current law. The current law governs the payment changes (the percent of increases or decreases given to Medicare providers and suppliers), and the payment schedule isn't expected to change anytime soon.

That said, it's important to protect the Trust Fund, including Part B, so that necessary medical services will be available to all Medicare patients in the future. Everyone has a role to play in protecting the Trust Fund. CMS and Railroad Medicare take aggressive actions to identify current and prevent future fraud and abuse, which bilk the Trust Fund and jeopardize Medicare's future. Here is what you can do to assist us:

1. Read your Medicare Summary Notices (MSNs) to see:
 - a. Is your name, address, and Health Insurance Claim Number (Medicare Number) correct?
 - b. The date of service on the statement: Is it the date you visited your doctor?
 - c. The description of the services your doctor billed to Medicare: were they the services you received during your visit?
2. Protect your Medicare number – share it only when necessary, keeping in mind that your doctor's office may need to verify you are still covered under Railroad Medicare and need to validate that at each visit.
3. Report any provider or supplier that says services are not covered by Medicare, but they know how to bill Medicare to receive payment.
4. Visit this website to learn more: <http://www.stopmedicarefraud.gov/>

If you need help reading your MSN or you find something on it that appears to be wrong, please call our toll-free Beneficiary Customer Service Center at 800-833-4455, Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. until 7 p.m. ET. For the hearing impaired, call TTY/TDD at 877-566-3572. We also encourage you to sign up for our e-mail updates from our 'Stay Connected' section on the website. We also would love for you to visit our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/myrmedicare.

— Jennifer Johnson