

National Association of Retired & Veteran Railway Employees, Inc.



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NARVRE NEWSLETTER

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FROM THE NATIONAL PRESIDENT —

We are four months from election day November 6th. What are your concerns and your issues? In our case as seniors Medicare, Medicaid, Social Security and Railroad Retirement top our list. There will be all 435 members of the House of Representatives, 34 Senators total, 24 Democrats, 8 Republicans and 2 Independents on the ballot. Several governor offices are up as well.

For those who are not aware NARVRE has a Political Action Committee (PAC) called NARVREPAC. We are registered with the Federal Election Commission which has jurisdiction over candidates and donations to their campaigns. All NARVRE members can legally make a contribution to NARVREPAC of any amount providing it is voluntary. You cannot “pass the hat” nor use Unit

Treasury monies to support campaigns. Monies from NARVREPAC are used for candidates who support our issues no matter the party. Our money is used wisely in these efforts. Incumbents on the House Transportation & Infrastructure Committee and the Senate Commerce Committee are priorities because they have jurisdiction over railroads as well as transportation in general. The Ways and Means Committee in the House and the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee has responsibility for Railroad Retirement.

Please consider making a “voluntary contribution” for any amount. All checks should be addressed to NARVREPAC and mailed to National Secretary Treasurer Phil Steward at 6819 Crumpler Blvd, Ste 200, Olive Branch, MS 38654--1940. Thank you for your consideration.

— Tom Dwyer, National President

FROM THE NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR —

Amrtrak is still under the threat of proposals from CEO Richard Anderson and his administration. Earlier this month, your legislative office sent out an alert urging NARVRE members to join with American mayors, community leaders, Amtrak employees and an increasing number of rail passenger supporters, all objecting to recent proposals to disrupt Amtrak’s national network, by substituting bus service in lieu of the established Southwest Chief’s train service through Kansas, Colorado, and New Mexico. The alert from NARVRE (Sign Southwest Chief Petition) joined with the Rail Passengers Association which has an email set-up to contact members of the House & Senate. Mr. Anderson proposes to run train routes through corridors, but he has avoided any detailed plans when questioned in Congressional hearings and during meetings with a group of U.S. Senators. He has been questioned on why his proposals continue to ignore Amtrak’s Congressional mandate to serve a national passenger rail network. His answers to questions show his inexperience and a lack of understanding to law(s) that created Amtrak and impact this national train network. He has been reminded that the Senate Committee on Appropriations has approved a \$71.4 funding bill for FY 2019 by a bipartisan vote of 33-0, which includes \$1.9 billion for Amtrak to cover

both the Northeast Corridor and the National Network. Anderson’s latest plans are to transfer Amtrak passengers over to a bus system which circumvents his responsibilities to the Southwest Chief and its passengers. Amtrak passengers are safer on trains, as compared to cars or buses, as stated in federal statistics (BTS, FRA). He also has ordered the elimination of station ticket agents which makes zero sense. Further, Mr. Anderson is a proponent of the elimination of food & beverage (F&B) service, even though facts and statistics point to this food service (like hot meals) as an important draw for passengers, especially customers on overnight travel. NARVRE has helped defeat similar efforts in the past, and we stand ready to join in this current fight with this latest anti-Amtrak action. Thus, we need to contact our Representatives in Congress and urge them to object and oppose the proposals of the Amtrak leadership and their new CEO, Richard Anderson. We need to tell our officials in D.C. that Amtrak needs to implement new improvements with funds and grants already approved. Anderson and company also need to recognize that while station and ticket agents are valuable to Amtrak, they are also critical and beneficial to America’s smaller cities and rural areas where train service is often the only public transportation option available. Station ticket

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From the National Vice President —

On July 11, 2018 President R.C. Smith of the Decatur, IL Unit 77 invited me to be his guest speaker at the Annual Picnic and unit meeting to promote, present, update and motivate new and old members of the Unit.

It was a great pleasure to see some old friends from the unit and specifically the Illinois State Legislative Representative from the Transportation Communications Union, David Hahn. It was David whom I first met in Washington DC in the late 80's while lobbying for Amtrak and Railroad Retirement. David Hahn continues to keep up with all issues concerning RRB and Amtrak and rail labor issues.

I congratulated President R.C. Smith, officers and members for the work they do. The meeting took place in VFW Hall Post of Decatur IL. While following the agenda, it reminded me of the old union lodge meetings we used to secretly run. Many members do not know the rules for running the union Lodge meeting derived from the old Masonic rules for running a meeting. I enjoyed being there to remind all present about the goal of NARVRE; to continue to protect, preserve

and promote our Railroad Pension Annuity, our Railroad Medicare and Medicaid and Social Security. This is the Tier II part of our RRB Pension Annuity for the benefit of future Retiree members; as those who came before us did for us.

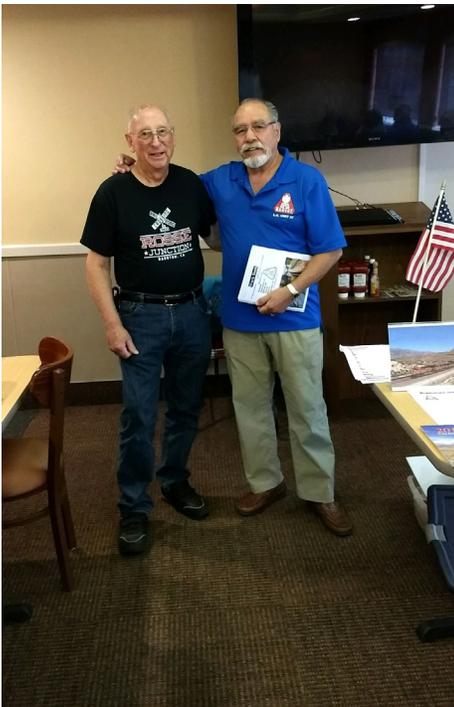
I talked about the FY2019 Budget proposal by the Administration and the House and cited the dismal content of the bill as it pertains to senior benefits.

On July 11, 2018, Area 8 Director Bob Aparicio was invited to be the guest speaker at the Barstow Unit 098. President David Rosse of the Unit was not feeling well when he first invited Bob Aparicio. "By the time of the meeting David was feeling better and had a great meeting as he also had the help from his Secretary Treasurer Constance Wallace and the meeting ran well. I made a report of the convention," said Bob Aparicio.

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



Officers of the Decatur Unit 77 from Top - Left to right: Jack McKinney, President R.C. Smith, Larry Grunert, S/T-Carol Sincebaugh, LR -Dave Hahn, The front row left to right; Ntl.VP-Tony Padilla, Phoebe Lashmet, VP-Rose Mattix, Pam Hahn, Phyllis Grunert.



President of Unit 098 David Rosse and Area Director Bob Aparicio.



John Herrmann Assistant Director Area 8 representing NARVRE at Monterey, Ca. BLET Union Conference signed up 12 new members

**(National Legislative Director
from page 1)**

agents are the face of the company and should be available on site to assist with ticket sales, the handling

of luggage for the elderly and disabled, and to help with the boarding of customers. Congress has recently voted in support of station agents and defeated a similar measure in 2015. Tell our Representatives

that Americans (even non-riders) continually endorse Amtrak, and they also support the increase of federal funding for faster trains with additional connections and train routes. Our Representatives need to protect existing rail projects and move to encourage the expansion and growth of Amtrak, which will eventually add more American rail jobs. Mr. Anderson has already put a stop on projects that were already funded which obviously is the wrong direction for this company. Congress needs to persuade him to take advantage of the latest notice of funding opportunities (CRISI) which includes more than \$318 million in grants from the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2018. Amtrak's CEO needs to change direction and utilize grants with funds for capital projects aimed at improving the safety of passenger and freight rail transportation and infrastructure, according to the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA). All rail advocates should insist that Congress protect Amtrak and their rail employees from this CEO. Anderson's background includes a record of bankrupting an airline during his career, and his current actions and proposals should be under the watchful eyes of a committee with jurisdiction over the nation's train service which is mandated by law. As constituents and NARVRE retirees, we have a responsibility to contact Congress and request that they protect our systems of government, whether it be Amtrak and the national passenger train service, or the thousands of Amtrak rail employees that pay into our railroad retirement system (RRB). If you haven't already contacted your Senators and Representatives, please join in this effort to save the Southwest Chief and all long-distance trains, as well as station agents. Ultimately, you can find additional info and you can use the format available at the www.rail-passengers.org or use NARVRE's toll-free access in order to give voice to this important action.

Contact Congress @ 877-668-3864 or 877-668-3866

— **Gary Faley,**
National Legislative Director

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.



**Pictured are Arnold Thompson
and Dora Zimmerman.**

Unit 002 Oklahoma City (now closed)
President, Arnold Thompson; Secretary-Treasurer, Dora Zimmerman
\$3057.34

David Taylor
Robert McInnes
Eileen Rock
William Jackson
Susan Krist
Jacqueline Watson
Alfred Flores
David Corless
Victor & Barbara Sunquist

From the National Secretary-Treasurer —

Membership rates have changed as of July 1, 2018! Discounted multiple year memberships and lifetime memberships are no longer available.

Membership national dues are:

- 801 Members at Large (Members that are not a part of a local unit are considered 801 Members at Large.)
- Singles \$26
- Couples \$33
- Unit Members (Members associated with a local unit receive a discounted price. Discounted rate does not include local unit dues that might be included.)

- Singles \$23.50
- Couples \$30.50

New members joining NARVRE for the first time that pay their dues AFTER July 1 are paid through the remaining current year and through the end of the next year. For example, if a member joins on July 1, 2018, they are paid through 2018 as well as 2019. Again this is for new members; ONE TIME ONLY.

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



East Liverpool, OH President Richard Elliott presenting Bible to family of deceased member Bill Pfister. Left to right, Jill Pfister and Penny Pfister, daughters, Louise Pfister his wife, Bonnie Pfister, daughter.

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From Palmetto, GBA

“Patients Over Paperwork:” Medicare is Reviewing Regulations To Reduce Provider Burden

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) is reviewing regulations that mandate how doctors and other practitioners document the services they provide. The focus is on the following:

- Reducing unnecessary burden
- Increasing process efficiencies
- Improving the patient’s experience with their provider

CMS is beginning this process with evaluation and management services (office or outpatient visits). The goal is to increase the time providers spend with their patients and decrease the time spent documenting services. At the same time, CMS consistently seeks to reduce provider errors and unnecessary appeals.

CMS Administrator Seema Verma explained: “...we are moving the agency to focus on patients first. To do this, one of our top priorities is to ease

regulatory burden that is destroying the doctor-patient relationship. We want doctors to be able to deliver the best quality care to their patients.” To see more information about the Patients Over Paperwork initiative, please visit the CMS website at <https://www.cms.gov/About-CMS/story-page/patients-over-paperwork.html>.

If you have questions about your Railroad Medicare coverage, 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 <https://www.facebook.com/myrrmedicare/>

We also welcome you to visit our free online Beneficiary Portal at www.PalmettoGBA.com/MyRRMed.

This tool offers you the ability to access Railroad Medicare Part B claims data, historical Part B Medicare Summary Notices (MSN), and a listing of individuals you have authorized to have access to your personal health information.

— Jennifer Johnson

Memorials

Donald Houston
Shirley Davis
Bill Pfister
James Shadle
Bob Hunt
John Saatzer
Roger P Reiter
Stephanie Segulin
Dorothy E Woll
Robert Edward Griffin
Marven L Thompson
Lionel Blanchard