



— SINCE 1937 —

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



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NARVRE NEWSLETTER

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## FROM THE NATIONAL PRESIDENT —



**I**t is a sad day for NARVRE with the loss of former Area 8 Director Bob Bloomer from Fresno Unit 60 on April 12, 2017 due to cancer. Our condolences to his wife Carol Bloomer who traveled with him on many of his forays establishing new Units across Area 8 in California, Nevada, Arizona and Utah.

I personally traveled with him on many of these informational meetings we held in

his jurisdictional area establishing new Units. You will see Bob's handiwork in establishing Units in Barstow, Los Angeles Area, Oakland, Stockton and rekindling the Bakersfield Unit all in California. He was also instrumental in forming new Units in Las Vegas and Sun City, Nevada. Nobody worked harder than Bob Bloomer on behalf of NARVRE. His concern for railroad workers, retirees and their spouses was true to heart. He will be greatly missed by all those he touched along the way.

A Prayer For Our Beloved Deceased, "I give them back to you, O Lord, Who first gave them to me, and as You did not lose them in the giving, so I do not lose them in the return.

And while You prepare a place for us as You have promised, prepare me also for that happy place. Where You are, I wish to also be, with those I have lost in life. Amen"

FRANCISCAN FRIARS, T.O.R.

— Tom Dwyer, National President



## FROM THE NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR —

**T**he same petition on MoveOn.Org regarding railroad retirement and attacks by Rep. Paul Ryan will not go away, as it keeps popping up no matter our efforts to close this specific issue. Currently, this outdated petition is being reported regularly and from all areas across the country. A review of past history, and the specific circumstances of 2012 will be helpful in our attempts to remind or educate anyone interested in the petition's message. Any assistance to help put this specific issue to bed will be appreciated by NARVRE, and end the confusion in many Congressional offices, as well. In March of 2012, NARVRE became aware of harmful language in the House Budget Committee Report, which threatened to lower benefits and affectively change the structure of the railroad retirement system. Chaired by Rep. Paul Ryan, this budget proposal falsely reported that by conforming railroad retirement Tier 1 benefits to equal those of Social Security benefits would save taxpayers over \$2 billion over 10 years. The Report, known as the Ryan Budget, ignored the fact that all railroad retirement benefits (Tier I and Tier II) are fully funded by railroad workers and their employers, without a dime of revenue from the general Treasury. Therefore, no budgetary savings would result from the enactment of this legislation. An immediate response from NARVRE, rail labor, the railroad industry, and the Railroad Retirement Board was initiated, advising that the assertions of the Ryan Budget regarding railroad retirement were false and misleading. We also advised this would eliminate occupational disability and our 60/30 early retirement. These facts were ignored and the Congress passed the House Concurrent Resolution 112 on a Republican party-line vote of 228-191, with 10 GOP votes joining with all Democrats voting against the bill. Our collective work was able to secure the assistance of the U.S. Senate to ensure that this legislation would not be brought up for consideration in the Senate, nor would the President sign it... but that was in 2012. Sometime later, this outdated petition in MoveOn.Org began showing up, causing many rail-workers and retirees to get understandably nervous and anxious to sign the petition. But the petition message is wasted, because our work was done in 2012, and the purpose of the legislation had failed. And, while the effort of the petition means well, the bad-timing sends a confusing message to friendly offices on Capitol

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## From the National Vice President —



As time takes us into the month of May, we are still experiencing chaos in Congress with the Presidential Administration and its Cabinet officials facing allegations that most if not all were in collusion with Russia during the Presidential Campaign resulting in keeping the government from moving forward to help the American People. **For our NARVRE membership all is tied down to the protection of our Railroad Retirement, Health and Pension Annuities.** When there is a setback for undermining the American People, you have to be vigilant as you could be the next target. The Majority was defeated within their own party as they tried to repeal the Obama Health Care Act without a replacement. The future for passing a healthcare bill is now indefinite but, the new Majority should have known better since the previous Congress failed to repeal the Obama Health Care bill over 50 times because it would leave millions of Americans without health insurance. Repeal was the main issue but as stated by House Speaker Paul Ryan, "this is the only opportunity we have to repeal the Obama HealthCare." **He did not care about a replacement even though President Trump promised to repeal and replace at the same time.** The Congressional Budget Office rated the Trump AHCA bill inadequate pointing out it would leave 12 million Americans without Healthcare Insurance in 2018 and over 24 million by the end of 2026 while giving tax-breaks to the wealthy and imposing an Age Tax on seniors to finance other Trump priorities, i.e., the building of the wall. Vulnerable Congressional Republican members worried they would lose their seat in the next Congressional elections and be in jeopardy if they voted for a bill that would take away Healthcare Insurance for over 24 million Americans. After withdrawing the AHCA bill for lack of having the votes for passage, now they are trying to move a tax bill which could be even more difficult. Paul Ryan wanted to repeal the Obama Health Care to take \$3 trillion from the Obama Care to fund other projects on the backs of seniors, children and the poor. **The Trump FY2018 Budget also makes significant cuts to all Transportation projects including Amtrak which could lose all the long-distance trains.** The Budget also cuts \$12.6 billion for a number of health services ranging from meals on wheels to projects to assist seniors, children and the poor. The proposal turns Medicare and Medicaid services into block grants and raises the age to qualify for Medicare Coverage from 65 to 67. House Speaker Paul Ryan told Fox News that he would push legislation in early 2017 that would end Medicare's guaranteed health care benefits. For years Ryan has worked to replace Medicare with a voucher or coupon for seniors to use to purchase their health insurance. **This threat to our earned health care benefits became even more serious when President Donald Trump nominated Rep. Tom Price to be the Secretary of Health and Human Services.** Like Ryan, Price has vowed to privatize, cut and change Medicare to a voucher program, and make cuts to Social Security benefits with the introduction of a bill from Texas Congressman Sam Johnson that raises

the age to qualify from 67 to 69. **After withdrawing the AHCA bill for lack of having the votes for passage, now they are trying to move a tax bill which could be even more difficult to pass.** Paul Ryan wanted to repeal the Obama care to raid \$275 Billion from the Obama Care to fund other projects on the backs of seniors and the poor.

**I want to take this opportunity to thank all Area Directors and officers of all the units for the work they are doing in promoting the membership of NARVRE and for continuing the voluntary member monetary contribution program above their annual Membership dues.** It is not an easy task to bring on new members because they are hard to locate. Also, I want to point out that we still have three Area Director Vacancies that need to be filled. See the vignette for these positions and let me know if you are interested to serve as Area Director. I continue to encourage you to contact our Sponsor from the Will Moody Law Firm and Past President Whitey Westphal if you have a prospect for organizing a new NARVRE Unit. Below is my activity report for the month of March as I was invited to attend and speak.

Informational meeting in Georgetown, Texas with 150 seniors some of them who were Railroad Retirees. As Secretary for the Texas Alliance for Retired Americans and NVP of NARVRE, I distributed some information as it relates to saving Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid and the Affordable Care Act and Pensions. This senior group has about 360 members. 150 members showed up to this meeting. We were very much appreciated. Enclosed is a photo of the Georgetown Sun City Seniors. As always we forget to take more photos. Narvre applications were distributed.



**Juan Solis Amtrak Employee, Amtrak Conductor John Quesada and Margaret Quesada, Jim Wyatt NARP Central Division Leader, Chief of Staff Toni, Hernandez, NARVRE Unit 163 S/T Sergio Perez, NARVRE**

### **NVP Tony Padilla and Bruce Ashton NARP Member**

On March 29th we held a meeting with Toni Hernandez, Chief of Staff of Congressman Joaquin Castro of San Antonio, Texas. - Meeting with Joaquin Castro Staff went well. Each member attending as shown on the photo made some remarks. I asked that the congressman not allow the Trump Administration make cuts to Amtrak as there is a danger of losing all the Long Distance Trains affecting San Antonio's Texas Eagle and the Sunset Limited Trains. I also asked the Chief of Staff to thank Congressman Castro for his support on the ACA having seen his statement on the issue.

Meeting with San Antonio NARVRE Unit 163 on Thursday March 22, 2017-Addressed the group with many new members at a new Meeting Location. I gave an update report on our Transportation Budget as it affects Amtrak, railroad workers and the Railroad Retirement Pension Annuity. I also reported on the Affordable Care Act and the political situation in Congress and the Trump Administration.

— Anthony (Tony) Padilla NARVRE National Vice President



## (National Legislative Director from page 1)

Hill, and wastes their valuable time checking this out and making follow-up calls to see if the petition is valid. As mentioned, the outdated petition is again in full circulation, and we believe it is riding a new wave via Facebook. NARVRE is currently discussing plans to incorporate Facebook on our website, but right now, we need your help in spreading the word that this specific petition is not current, and therefore, there is no need to think our retirement is presently under attack. We need to save our reactions and be precise when the real threats actually arrive. So, importantly, we're asking those of you

with Facebook accounts to address this issue when you see it posted. The rest of you that might receive the petition via email can please reply to whomever sent it to you, setting them straight, and asking them to reply to their senders, as well. Hopefully, this will keep working its way back reaching more and more concerned railroaders and even some potential new NARVRE members. This would be the prime time to mention NARVRE, and our website (narvre.info) where readers can join us, get timely information, and get their questions answered relative to their retirement benefits. Or you could mention the number @ NARVRE Headquarters (1-800-551-2588). I would be remiss not to mention that the best way of

avoiding another threat on our retirement system is to make sure that our elected officials in Congress know that the U.S. Treasury does not fund our retirement benefits and that the system is governed by the Railroad Retirement Act. Remember that a message from a constituent is worth much more than any petition. Petitions carry signatures from residents from various areas, and do not carry the weight of specific information from a constituent. A call from a NARVRE member in their own District tells them you're involved, and influence comes from the knowledge that you're a voting constituent. Thanks for the help...

— Gary Faley,  
National Legislative Director

## From the National Secretary-Treasurer —

The U.S. Railroad Retirement Board (RRB) is an independent agency in the executive branch of the United States government created in 1935[1] to administer a social insurance program providing retirement benefits to the country's railroad workers.

The RRB serves U.S. railroad workers and their families, and administers retirement, survivor, unemployment, and sickness benefits. Consequently, railroad workers do not participate in the United States Social Security program. The RRB's headquarters are in Chicago, Illinois, with field offices throughout the country.

During fiscal year 2009, retirement survivor benefits of some \$10.5 billion were paid to about 589,000

beneficiaries, while net unemployment-sickness benefits of \$160 million, including over \$10 million in temporary extended unemployment benefits under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, were paid to more than 40,000 claimants.

At the end of fiscal year 2010, the average annuity paid to career rail employees was \$2,760 a month, compared to \$1,170 a month under Social Security.

Railroad retirement benefit payments are financed primarily by payroll taxes paid by railroad employers and their employees. Since 2002, funds not needed immediately for benefit payments or administrative expenses have been invested by an independent National Railroad Re-

tirement Investment Trust, which qualifies as non profit 501(c)(28). As of September 30, 2009, Trust-managed assets and RRB assets held in reserve totaled almost \$25 billion.

**Source: Wikipedia the free encyclopedia**

**Attention All Units:** A significant number have not submitted Officer Election Reports, used to update the NARVRE National Directory. Please complete these forms along with the Annual Audit Forms and send to the National Office at 6819 Crumpler Blvd Suite 200 Olive, Branch, MS 38654

We are looking forward to communicating with everyone in our next issue, July, 2017.

— James (Phil) Steward,  
National Secretary/Treasurer

## A Star is Born - New Unit Start up in Missouri Capital - Jefferson City



Past President Whitey Westphal, Terry Stock, AD4 Gary Nelson, Narvre President Tom Dwyer



Pat Hiatte

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## DONATIONS

**Diamond \$1000:** None at this time

**Platinum \$500:** None at this time

**Gold \$200:** None at this time

**Silver \$100:** Frank Dally in memory of  
father Gerald Dally, Antone Oliveira,  
James and Cheryl Bosley

**Friend \$50:** Charles Voorhees, Harry  
Dailey

**Donations (under \$50):** Warren  
Johnson, James Schimming, Richard  
Marzuloo, James and Kathleen Treston,  
Victor Sunquist, Mary Windels, Watne  
Haskamp, Wanda and Daniel Vincent

## MEMORIALS

Dolores Souba  
James R Lee  
John Martino  
Velva Kesler  
Robert L Lemon  
Earl Roider  
Glenville Keith Rader  
Shirley J Downing  
Richard Roberts  
Ruby J Miller  
Clarence R Emon  
Harold HY Bauermeister  
Phyllis E Lewis  
Maxine Grandon 100 years old

### From Palmetto, GBA

## Medicare Coverage of 'Routine' Foot Care

Generally speaking, Medicare does not pay for routine foot care. However, in certain circumstances, services ordinarily considered to be routine may be covered if:

- The service is performed as a necessary and essential part of otherwise covered services, such as the treatment of ulcers, wounds, or infections, or
- The presence of a 'systemic condition' -- such as metabolic, neurologic, or peripheral vascular disease -- may require foot care by a professional.

In these instances, routine services (e.g., cutting or removing corns and calluses, or trimming, cutting, clipping, or debriding nails) may pose a hazard when performed by a nonprofessional person on patients with these types of symptoms.

Some of the common conditions that might justify routine foot care for a patient are diabetes, peripheral neuropathies, or occlusive peripheral arteriosclerosis. (This is not an all-inclusive list, and having these conditions does not guarantee Medicare payment. Requirements for medical necessity must be met.)

Patients receiving routine foot care due to 'systemic' conditions, as described above, should be followed by a primary care physician for that condition. In determining whether the routine services can be paid, the doctor's records should show proof of specific physical and/or medical findings in keeping with the diagnosis.

Some foot symptoms, such as nail thickening, discoloration, shiny skin texture, absent pulse in certain sections of the leg and foot, temperature changes, such as excessively cold skin, or edema, may be present. (This, too, is not a complete list.)

If you have questions about your Railroad Medicare coverage for foot care services, you may contact 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 website at [www.PalmettoGBA.com/RR/Me](http://www.PalmettoGBA.com/RR/Me), as well as our Facebook page at [www.Facebook.com/MyRRMedicare](http://www.Facebook.com/MyRRMedicare).

— Jennifer Johnson