

# THE CAPSULE

March 2023



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**UPCOMING DATES**

**April 2023**

**15 Report of Chapter Officers and  
Chair Committee Deadline—National  
Secretary Dana Robles**

**May 2023**

**18 Pre-tour San Diego**

**19-20 Convention - San Diego**

**June 2023**

**30 Capsule Deadline—National  
Chairman Nancy Von Dolteren**

The calendar says we should be enjoying spring like weather but in Houston we are experiencing unseasonable cool weather. However I am pleased to announce it is that time of the year again. The 79<sup>th</sup> National Convention is right around the corner, and it will be held in sunny San Diego, California, I am ecstatic to preside over my first convention and look forward to enjoying well-established friendships as well as making new ones! The Southern California Chapter is our newest chapter and they have worked tirelessly to ensure this convention is a memorable and exciting one. I hope to meet you all there!

Since our last convention, we have experienced many changes in the way we connect and continue in our efforts for success. One such way is using Zoom. Zoom meetings are a new platform for conducting business and staying connected. As such, The National Board held our Winter Board Meeting via Zoom. We were able to handle our business effectively and efficiently to accomplish all NARBW business.

Chapter Presidents should have received the proposed General Budget for discussion with their chapter members before the convention, along with the resumes of our candidates to fill the three vacancies which are; National Second Vice President, National Third Vice President and National Secretary. Melanie McKim, National Nominating Chairman worked diligently and has a full slate of officers. I am pleased with the candidates who have stepped forward to serve. I urge each of you to review all information with your chapter members to enable your delegates to vote in an informed manner on the business for the 79<sup>th</sup> Convention in San Diego, California May 19-20, 2023.

I am happy to report that we have commitments to host upcoming conventions as follows: 2024 Omaha, Nebraska, 2025 Houston, Texas, and 2026 Roanoke, Virginia. Hats off to these chapters for their dedication and love of NARBW.

I hope you take advantage of our website and social media pages. We share information and are excited to add presentations as we receive them. If you have not done so, please check them out at NARBW.org and sign up for the Members Log-in (top right). We hope to expand our communications and make this a great way to stay in contact with our members.

I want to close this quarter's message by saying it has been a tremendous year for me. I have learned a lot. I have an awesome team of ladies on the board along with the wonderful Emeritus Council members that are there for me, day or night. We have seen many changes in our lives, workforce, and NARBW. Our National Board will continue to work diligently in keeping our membership involved and explore opportunities in spaces uncharted.

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to serve this great organization as your National President.

*Ida Carmouche*

# NATIONAL BOARD CORNER



## National Association of Railway Business Women

### RESUME OF WINTER BOARD MEETING – February 18, 2023

The meeting was held on February 18, 2023, via a ZOOM call. Members of the National Board were present with the exception of National Scholarship Chairwoman, Peggy Simon Cuellar. The meeting began at 9:01 AM and ended at 3:38 PM.

Treasurer Reports were presented and included year to date reports for 2022, ending December 31, 2022. Due to extensive discussions, a review of revised reports and further discussion was scheduled for February 28, 2023. Reports were reviewed and approved by the board in their entirety in a Zoom National Board call on March 9, 2023.

Finance Reports: the 2023-2024 Proposed Operating Budget was reviewed, and after discussion the budget was amended (reduced) and approved and will be sent to Chapter Presidents for review. The budget will be voted on at the 2023 Convention in San Diego in May.

Board Members: Officer and Chairman Reports and related forms pursuant to the upcoming convention were reviewed and discussed. All board members were reminded to schedule and complete conference calls for their respective committees and local chairs if they have not yet held their call.

National Convention Chairwoman Trischelle Baysden presented an update on the 79th NARBW Annual Convention being held May 19-20, 2023, at the Best Western Plus Island Palms Hotel and Marina. The pre-convention tour is planned for Thursday, May 18, 2023. The theme for Fun Night is “Beach Party”. The Banquet Theme is “Old Hollywood”. A schedule and budget have been prepared by the Southern California Chapter’s convention committee and will continue to be reviewed and updated as necessary. Board members will attend the Pre-Convention and Post-Convention board meetings.

Action items identified at the Summer Board Meeting were reviewed. Research and actions will be taken regarding our technology, especially the website and updating email addresses and multiple email addresses for members to improve electronic communications. Fund raising through possible online auctioning of items, a reverse raffle, and partnering with a business affiliate to pay for advertising, were discussed and will be explored further.

#### New Business:

Discussion was held on the hosts of upcoming conventions: 2024 hosted by Omaha, NE; 2025 hosted by Houston, TX; and 2026 hosted by Roanoke, VA.

The board will continue to publish a monthly calendar of social events and educational presentations; all will be available at NARBW.org.

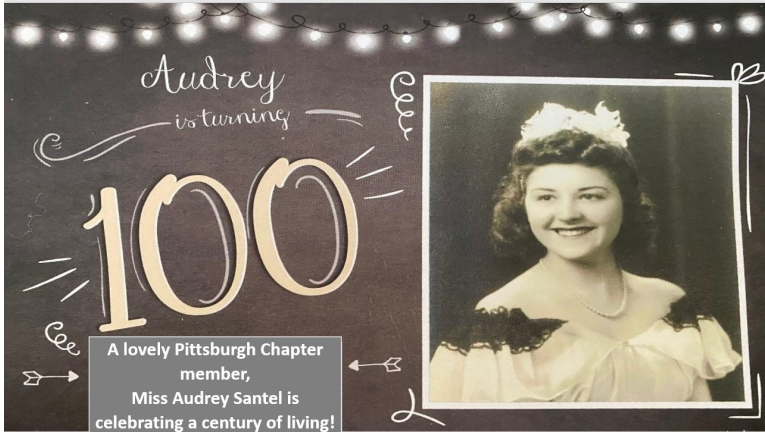
Consolidating National Board positions is being researched with the possibility of chair positions being added to current vice president roles. This will be an action item for the Summer Board Meeting.

Ida Carmouche  
President

Rae Huebner  
National 2nd Vice President

# MOMENTS AND MEMORIES

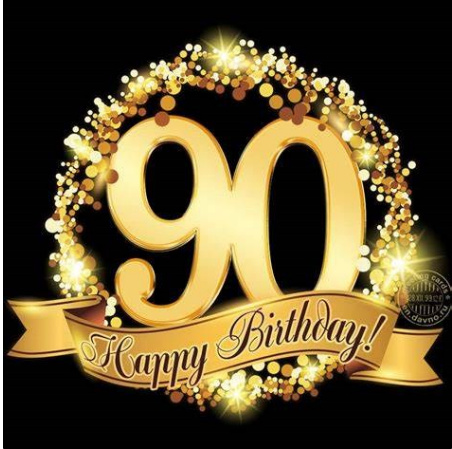
## MILESTONE BIRTHDAYS



Happy Birthday  
Audrey Santel from  
all your NARBW  
sisters.



Happy Birthday Marge  
Carson from all your  
NARBW sisters.



# MOMENTS AND MEMORIES

“Be the things you loved most about the people who are gone” – Unknown

We are sad to announce that on August 28, 2022, Myrna Loreli Miller of Lindstrom, Minnesota (and the Twin Cities Chapter) passed away at 83.



Loreli worked for the railroad for over 40 years. Her career was in various departments within accounting. Not sure when she joined NARBW Well over fifty years ago. She worked on a committee when Twin Cities chapter hosted the 1966 convention. Throughout the years she has worked on lots of fundraising events and attended our social events. She was our last president of the Twin Cities chapter. She did not want the chapter to dissolve. However, reality sets in.

Loreli went back to school and earned two college degrees. When she retired, she did volunteer work for ‘We are Able’. They work with the handicapped people of all ages. She arranges programs, rides and was always in the lookout for a bargain for them to wear or items for them to make. She truly had the welfare of others in her heart. She did these accomplishments while almost completely deaf from radiation treatments.

Sue Clancy

Note from the Editor

The Twin Cities chapter (Chapter #1) turned in their charter in 2018 after 92 years. Carole Dahlquist, Sue Clancy, Joyce Gutz, Patty Helling, Mary Lou Holt, Mary Ann Ronkainen and Doris Stromberg have stayed in NARBW since the chapter closed.

## CHAPTER NEWS - ALBANY

Lynne Sisto checked in with the ladies in Albany—no news items this quarter. .

## CHAPTER NEWS - ATLANTA

No news to report at this time

## CHAPTER NEWS - INDY CIRCLE CITY

No news to report at this time

## CHAPTER NEWS - KANSAS CITY

We are excited about gaining a new member to our chapter, Kim Isabell, Front Office Manager at Signal Training Solutions. We are happy to have her and look forwarding to sharing a pic and info later.

Our sister chapter, Philadelphia, and our KC chapter had a wager going on for the Super Bowl this last month. Kansas City ladies won the wager but have yet to decide on the charity since we did not hold a meeting in March.

Our February meeting was held at Mildreds Coffee Shop in downtown KC. We took time to talk about Mental Health and we each discussed, in general, what we do in order to improve our own. A few of the things were reading, watching movies and listening to music, focusing on self-care (face masks) as well as spending time on Sundays to prep for the entire week and also focusing on various workouts such as yoga and meditations. We are curious if any other chapter is doing to cope with mental health!

We will have two ladies attend the convention this year and are looking forward to seeing everyone!

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## CHAPTER NEWS - PITTSBURGH

Pittsburgh chapter celebrated Audrey Santel's 100th birthday. See Moments and Memories on page 3.

The Chapter is sad to report the passing of chapter member Loretta Kocaya who had just celebrated her 92nd birthday.

Loretta grew up in Carnegie PA (just outside of Pittsburgh PA) and resided in her family home until a few months before her death. Ed White her nephew was her devoted caregiver in her later years and brought Loretta to the monthly NARBW luncheon meetings. Loretta worked for the railroad for 43 years in various clerical positions. While working for the railroad Loretta completed her master's degree in theology graduating with Honors from Duquesne University in Pittsburgh. After retiring from Conrail she used her degree securing a position at Marian Manor Nursing Home where she provided comfort to many residents for over a decade.



# CHAPTER NEWS - CENTRAL FLORIDA

Before our meeting on March 25<sup>th</sup>, 2023 we toured Journey's End Animal Sanctuary in DeLand FL, a no kill animal rescue shelter. Pictured below at right: Dave their facility maintenance director and our tour guide, Dien and Ramona Sanmoogan and Caspian Ramona's grandson.



Below: left to right: Dien, Caspian and Ramona Sanmoogan, Melanie McKim, Florence Thuot founder and owner, Madonna Neal and Gail Hendrix



At right above Caspian and Ramona with some of the many cats.

GOOD NEWS !!!!!

We are happy to report that some of our chapter members who have been facing some challenging health issues are on the mend:

Ellie Scanlon,  
Madonna Neal  
and Nancy Harmon!

Andrea Barr who had a hip replacement in December is back to bowling with her group again!

## CHAPTER NEWS - CHICAGO



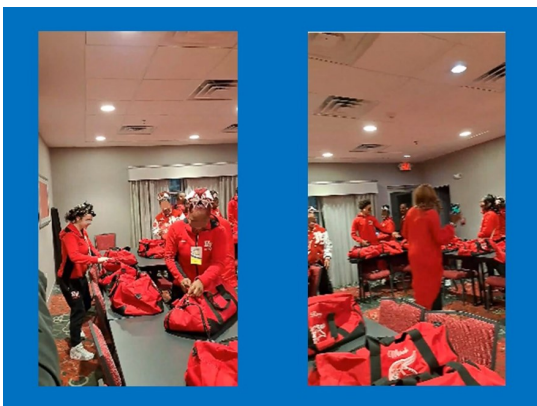
Amtrak coordinated an Incident Response Training (IRT) in Dallas. The training was very intense, and I can't imagine having to be deployed to assist with an incident, but if I am, I will be prepared as much as I can possibly be. The Amtrak Emergency Preparedness Team did a wonderful job coordinating a very detailed three-day training. We even reenacted an incident as if it were in real time. I am very proud to be part of the IRT Team!  
Yolanda Barbosa

Bhakti Choksi joined the railroad industry in June 2016 when she joined TTX as an IT Project Manager in the Planning & Digital Transformation group. She successfully led various key projects such as implementation of a new Transportation Management System, Reload Fleet Size Methodology, and Security & Authorization Management for Applications. During this time, she formed key business relationships with various areas of the company and developed a deeper interest in the rail industry. She then transitioned over to the Business Relationship Management group supporting the Fleet Management department with new IT projects and assisting with enterprise systems.

She has now moved into a Senior BA role in the Business Process Management team & contributes to be a lead BA on projects that aim to improve organizational process by aligning them with the company strategy. When her company launched an internal ERG (Employee Resource Group), she expressed interest in joining a sub-committee of the group which was aimed at connecting TTX employees with outside organizations. This gave her various opportunities to network with others & has given her a better sense of community within the industry as a whole.



Meet our Incoming Scholarship Chair  
Bhakti Choksi



Madison Manley, daughter of Jasmine Manley, is in her senior year at Homewood Flossmoor High School in Flossmoor, Illinois. She is Captain of the Varsity Cheerleading Team. February 2-4, the team participated in the Illinois High School Associate Competitive Cheerleading competition. NARBW sisters helped purchase Duffel Bags & PJs for the team so that they could travel looking like a team. This helped parents out a lot as the team had traveled to Springfield, IL January 20-21, which was out-of-pocket for the parents. Congrats to this team who represented as 1 of 2 African American Teams to compete and came in 1<sup>st</sup> place in the 1<sup>st</sup> round and 8<sup>th</sup> place in the 2<sup>nd</sup> round of 200+IL High Schools in IHSA.

# CHAPTER NEWS - CHICAGO



NARBW Chicago sisters were *Ready for Football* with the Super Bowl Squares fundraiser!  
**We raised \$1,075 for our Chicago Chapter Scholarship Program!!!**  
CONGRATULATIONS TO THE KANSAS CITY CHIEFS  
&  
NARBW CHICAGO SUPERBOWL SQUARE WINNERS



Thank you to the NARBW Chicago volunteers who showed up in service at Ronald McDonald House to prepare the brunch and dinner menus on Saturday, February 25, 2023. Thank you, Paula Taylor, for the work you put in to set up this service project for the Chapter! Special shout out to Jackie Watkins for handling the grocery shopping and delivery!

**Morning crew:** Yolanda Barbosa, Bhakti Choksi, Sonia Rodriguez, Judy Tovar, and Joey (grandson of Yolanda)

**Dinner Crew:** Ruby Brownlee, Gina Drinkwater, Jasmine Manley, Paula Taylor, and Kirsten (daughter of Jasmine)




On March 2, 2023, NARBW Chicago sisters, Jacqueline Watkins, Yolanda Barbosa, Kimia Khatami and Jasmine Manley, attended the League of Railway Women - Embracing Equity Symposium on the 34<sup>th</sup> Floor of Willis Tower in Chicago, Illinois.



# CHAPTER NEWS - CHICAGO

Congratulations to NARBW Chicago sister Sonya Smith (pictured below) who was promoted in March at Metra!




Metra  
Mar 18 · 5

Captain Sonya E. Smith is the most elevated woman in the history of the Metra Police Department. She has been working for Metra for 18 years and was elevated to Captain in March 2022. After her historic promotion, Ms. Smith earned two certificates at Governors State University, one for career coaching and one for life coaching, which she says she pursued intentionally to be a more supportive and effective leader for other officers. Ms. Smith started her career in law enforcement in 1990 and looks forward to her continued personal and professional growth in addition to elevating others within the department. Below is an excerpt of our conversation:

"I worked a small stint of two years with CTA. And during that time, I was seeing these magazines on the street that you find in the news racks all over the city. Well, Indigo Magazine had on the front cover the first black female Chicago Police Captains. And I still have that picture today. I ran into one of the captains of the districts for the city and sat down with her and we talked and discussed. And I said, 'One day, I will be a Captain.' From that day, what was in maybe 2003, I have made that happen.

"I hope to achieve excellence in leadership. I want to be able to break the glass ceiling on how leadership affects our police department. The overall objective is to have officers that work at Metra be the best that they can be and to project that leadership quality. I want to be that person that goes out, sees people, and introduces them to a whole Metra life. I want to be able to coach them and influence them. Whichever professional route way they go, I just want to help them take their job to new heights. The ladder is long but with time, patience, persistence, and drive, great things can happen.

"When challenges arise, don't run from them. Lean into them. Within the challenge comes change. If you want to come into an industry where there may be challenges for women, like how railroading is male-dominant and policing is male-dominant, I challenge you to not allow that open-spoken thing about where we are to subdue us. Instead, learn in. Learn from it and change the world."




NARBW Chicago President, CleLeatha Shaw, was honored for being one of the Railway Age Women in Rail 2022 recipients on March 14, 2023. She was celebrated by attendees Greg Godfrey (Metra, Director - CCF), Kevin Rainey (Metra, Assistant DED - Operations), Jacqueline Watkins, Sharon Slaton, Michelle Williams, Jasmine Manley, Sonia Rodriguez, Melissa Mrozowski, Kimia Khatami and Merritt Canfield

NARBW Chicago President, CleLeatha Shaw, Secretary and Membership Committee Chair, Jacqueline Watkins, and Treasurer, Gina Drinkwater were honored as three of Metra's first Women's Hall of Fame inductees.

Congratulations, Ladies! Well deserved!

**METRA 2023 WOMEN'S HALL OF FAME**

<p><b>1st African-American Woman to Lead Metra's Board of Directors</b> 12 Years of Service -Romayne C. Brown, Chair</p>	<p><b>1st Woman to be Shop Superintendent and Foreman</b> 20 Years of Service -Gina Drinkwater</p>
<p><b>1st Woman to Graduate from Leadership APFA</b> 23 Years of Service -Lorelly Cusack</p>	<p><b>1st Woman to be Deputy Executive Director</b> 12 Years of Service -Janice R. Thomas</p>
<p><b>1st Woman to be "Women in Rail 2022"</b> 23 Years of Service -Jacqueline Watkins</p>	<p><b>1st Woman to be "Women in Rail 2022"</b> 20 Years of Service -Cleleatha (Cici) Shaw</p>
<p><b>Women with the Most Years of Service</b> 55 Years of Service -Lola E. Gaskin</p>	<p><b>1st Woman to be Shop Superintendent and Foreman</b> 20 Years of Service -Gina Drinkwater</p>

## CHAPTER NEWS –CHICAGO



**CleLeatha Shaw has been voted the Chicago Chapter's Woman of the Year!** Cle was nominated by two NARBW Chicago sisters, Sharon Slaton and Jacqueline Watkins.

Honorable mentions from their nominations include:

"... dedicated NARBW member for six years. ...has served on the NARBW Chicago board for five years, holding positions as Vice President and Publications Chair."

"Cle was also instrumental in the success of the 2022 NARBW National convention in Chicago ...created and moderated the "Breaking the Glass Ceiling" panel discussion, coordinated the logistics for the pre-convention tour and bus transportation and secured Metra's Train and Crew Dispatch Operations Center Director Greg Godfrey to be a guest speaker at the Membership Luncheon."

"...has also graciously served as the chapter "mixologist" entertaining guests by giving live demonstrations on making various drinks..."

"...selected as a Railway Age Women in Rail 2022 Award recipient. This award recognizes leaders for driving their business forward while making a difference in a historically male dominated industry."

"...began her Metra career in 2002 and is currently the Manager of Crew Management, where she manages 14 employees, leading a department that staffs over 1800 trains daily with engineers, conductors, and assistant conductors and works closely with the Director of Operations at the Consolidated Control Facility..."

"To address the daily questions regarding manpower, Cle designed a report that she manages and distributes to all executive officers. Before being promoted to manager, Cle served as a Crew Caller for 15 years..."

"To expand her railroad knowledge and network, Cle is a member of the Chicago Railroad Superintendents Association and currently serves as Vice president and prior to that as Secretary."

"Cle is the icon of a women being empowered. She works hard and plays even harder. Her commitment to family (biological, immediate, work and chosen) is amazing. Cle takes her duties and responsibilities as Chapter President to new levels by asking questions, implementing change and engaging new members."

"She's an outstanding friend, mom, and peer. She has proven to be dedicated and fair. She has taken on many titles, her newest is GRAND MOTHER!! I'm certain she's going to knock that one out the park as well."

**Kimia Khatami** represented Anacostia & NARBW well by being a panelist at the League of Railway Women Embracing Equity Symposium Panelist.

Topic of Discussion:

Employee Resource Groups - The who, what, where and how



# CHAPTER NEWS - HOUSTON

**Cookie Grant** is our Chapter Woman of the Year. A little bit about our Woman of the Year. Cookie demonstrates a keen desire to attend meetings come rain, snow, or any inclement weather. She drives from Corpus Christi once a month, that is true dedication. She is quick to help in any way possible. She is an advocate for the homeless and volunteers her time through various charities in the name of NARBW as well as her church. Cookie has held numerous offices in the chapter as well as committee chairs. She has been a part of all of the Houston chapters charitable work delivering items or gathering items needed to be delivered. Cookie attends the National Convention yearly representing the Houston Chapter in the best way possible.



Lovely Houston ladies at recent meetings.



We are continuing our Secret Sisters for 2023. We had a reveal in January of our 2022 Sisters and were re-assigned new Sisters for 2023. It has been so much fun watching us stay connected throughout the year.



# CHAPTER NEWS - JACKSONVILLE



The Jacksonville chapter's quarterly focus on welfare is *the heart*. Ladies collected donations for the Pet Food Bank and Angel Fund for First Coast No More Homeless Pets ([FCNMHP](#)). Some neighbors can scarcely afford to feed themselves, let alone their beloved pets. Thanks to this volunteer-driven program, FCNMHP makes it easier for people to keep pets in homes and out of shelters. Their Pet Food Bank has distributed over 1.8 million pounds of food since it was started in 2010.



The Jacksonville Chapter regularly supports The Clara White Mission (CWM), a non-profit organization that serves the needs of the less fortunate in our community. We were honored to have Ju'Coby Pittmann, Clara White Mission's CEO and President speak at our Meet and Greet in February and encouraged the ladies to "go out of your comfort zone to make a difference".

**Richalyn Williams is our Woman of the Year.** Richalyn has been employed at CSX for 17 years and is a member of the Crew Management team. She has been a dedicated member of the Jacksonville Chapter since she joined in 2015, holding double duties as a Certified Railroad Operation LifeSaver Chair and Interim Publications Chair. Richalyn is also active in the CSX African American Inclusion Group (AAIG), supporting programs like Black Expo, Edward Waters College Mentorship, and Martin Luther King Service Day. Richalyn is a member of Shiloh Metropolitan Baptist Church and participates in the Women of the Word Bible Class.



**Congratulations** to our newly elected officers who will start their term in June. The current board is excited to see what new ideas and events you have in store for us. Thank you ladies for stepping up!

President – Judy Covington Poole      Vice President - Kathleen Gallavan  
 Treasurer – Laura Gutteridge Años      Secretary—Kim Perry

We are sad to report that our NARBIE Sister, Patrice Andrews, has passed away. Patrice joined the chapter in September 2022 and was a valued member of the Mechanical Department at CSX. She had the brightest smile and personality to match. May she rest in peace.

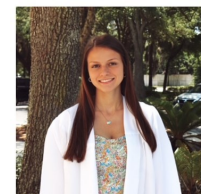


We awarded two \$1400 local scholarships

Ashita Mummareddy is a fourth year student at the Georgia Institute of Technology majoring in Chemistry and Biology. After college she plans to attend medical school.



Teresa Gutteridge is at FSU Florida State University and is pursuing a Biology degree and then a doctoral degree in Physical Therapy.



## CHAPTER NEWS - OMAHA

Omaha NARBW's are eagerly anticipating Spring! Our days swing from high 60's to below freezing. And dressing is certainly all about layers! A few members have vacationed in warmer climates, Jamaica, Mexico, Texas, Bahamas, New Zealand. But spring is coming, and our thoughts are on the 2023 Convention in San Diego. We will have 5 members attending, and all are looking forward to a great time!

We held elections, and the new officers are President - Anne Menichetti, Vice President - Janet Anderson, Secretary - Jay Nelsen and Treasurer - Julie Nelson. We changed our meeting night from the first Thursday of the month to the third Thursday to allow more members to attend and for our treasurer to have time to prepare her reports (can't get statements from the bank by the first of the month).

Our biannual Pass the Purse welfare project is planned for April. This is the 12th (?) year we have stuffed purses to benefit Catholic Charities domestic violence shelter. The women get to choose a purse when they graduate from the classes available to them. The purses all have a wallet, \$5, manicure set, jewelry, comb, Kleenex, hand sanitizer, hand lotion, a few mints (don't they make your purse smell great) a key chain, and emergency services card, etc. The ladies love to shop the purses when they graduate.

**Anne Menichetti was elected our 2023 Woman of the Year!** She has been our secretary for many years and is stepping up to be President for the next 2 years. If you don't already know Anne, come to convention, she is excited to welcome you!

Members are spring cleaning and setting aside items for our annual garage sale. It seems like we finish one, come home and think "WHY didn't I put this in the sale?" So we schedule another. It has been a successful fundraiser for Omaha. We are also going to dine at Texas RoadHouse on April 20. They will donate 10% of the tab for every table that mentions NARBW. Should be fun and we are spreading the word.

Member news Our sympathy to **Janet Anderson** on the passing of her father-in-law. It has been a rough year for her family.

**Marge Carson** recently celebrated her 90th birthday. It was a standing room only crowd! **Cynthia Chandler's** great-niece Mallory Battista has applied for a NARBW scholarship. We wish her luck! **Kathy DuVall's** bank notified her they paid off her mortgage with her escrow balance. YIPPEE! **Julie Nelson** was in Washington DC recently, helping to educate our congressmen on the issues facing Credit Unions today. Congratulations to **Connie Prokupek**, her son Josh and daughter in law, Britany are expecting and this will be her first grandchild! Josh is a NARBW scholarship winner, and we hope for a happy, healthy baby.

Planning for the 2024 convention in Omaha is right on schedule. Hotel - check, Pre Convention tour - check, Fun night theme - check, Fun night entertainment - in progress, Meeting rooms - check, Hospitality night - in the works. It is coming together, and Convention Chairman **Kadie Leslie** has a million lists in progress.



**Anne Menichetti**

**Omaha Woman of the Year**



Omaha NARBW's in St Patrick's day fiery.

Seated from left Rosie Donahue, Kathy Fenn, Jay Nelsen.

Standing from left: Julie Nelson, Kathy DuVall, Anne Menichetti, Connie Prokupek, Janet Anderson, Kadie Leslie, Diane Ballinger

Happy 90th birthday to Marge Carson. See Moments and Memories page 3.

## CHAPTER NEWS - PHILADELPHIA

The Philadelphia chapter continues to meet in person at the Free Library of Springfield Township in Wyndmoor, PA, or via phone conference call.

Plans are still in the works for group outings to the Media Theater, Longwood Gardens, and the Grounds of Sculpture in Hamilton, NJ.

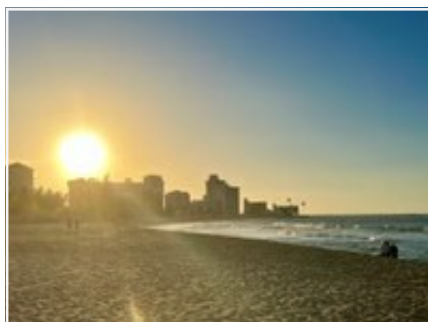
We will continue to support the Eliza Shirley House Mother's Day Drive, St. John's Mission, the Hospice Help Foundation, and Haley's Angels in June.

Congratulations to our newly elected officers: Vice President, Rae Huebner; Secretary, Renee Noble; and Treasurer, Krista Keene. We thank them in advance for their service.

Saturday, April 15, we plan to hold our meeting at the Fainting Goat in Glenolden, PA. Our June meeting will be held at Pica's Restaurant in Upper Darby, PA, where our newly elected officers will be inducted.

Kathy Bevilacqua is going through medical treatment. We ask for prayers for her and all members in all chapters who have issues.

One of our members, Donna Cain, just visited San Juan, Puerto Rico, for 5 days. It was beautiful.



Kay Bolich is our Woman of the Year. We are also spotlighting Kay in our Spring issue of the Railette.

Kay has been a member of our organization for over 37 years, and has served the chapter in every office and chairwoman position (except Press & Publicity, but who's counting?!)

Her sense of commitment and long-standing volunteering to the Philadelphia Chapter is amazing.



## CHAPTER NEWS - ROANOKE

### Woman of the Year

Chapter 19 is honored to announce the 2023 Woman of the Year is Gwen Kropff. Gwen has been a member of the Roanoke Chapter since 2014 and is currently serving as our 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President.

Gwen's husband, Jim, worked for the railroad and she supported and moved with him from city-to-city and state-to-state while working in her nursing career and raising their son. Since joining our Chapter, Gwen has been an active member, heading the scholarship chair position prior to stepping into the 1<sup>st</sup> VP's position this past year. Gwen's attention to detail and her organizational skills are just some of her attributes. Gwen is also very busy in her community and church. At her church, she is President of the Women's Fellowship. She and her husband sing in the choir. She helps with Bible School, is on the Nominating and Personnel Committees and the Beautification Committee. Gwen is a member of the Busy Bees Sewing Group which make quilts and give to the Rescue Mission and also to needy families if they hear of one (like if a home burns, etc.). In addition to her church activities, Gwen is on the Board and is also Recording Secretary to The Giving Back Society which is a local organization that raises money for local non-profits.

### Sunshine

Linda Waggoner had hip surgery on February 27<sup>th</sup>. She did rehab at Richfield Roanoke and went home on March 10<sup>th</sup>. I spoke w/Linda and she says she is recovering well doing PT and OT at home. A gift card was sent to Linda. Cards may be sent to Linda at:

Linda Waggoner 534 Stratford Drive Blue Ridge, VA 24064

Pat Broadneaux had major surgery on March 1, 2023. She is now at Friendship doing rehab. A gift card was sent to Pat.

Cards may be sent to her home: Pat Broadneaux 2723 Brooklyn Drive, NW Roanoke, VA 24017

The Chapter received a thank you card from Joanne Perry's family for the donation made to Scholarship in her name.

## CHAPTER NEWS - SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

### President's message

As we enjoy this wonderful season of Spring, the Southern California chapter is delighted to be the host chapter for the 79th annual National Convention taking place in San Diego this May, National's most important event of the year. There will be other chapters joining us from far and wide! Their presence serves as a reminder to us all just how important our work is. We are thrilled at the opportunity to network with our NARBW sisters from chapters across the country.

Rail in Southern California started in 1869 with Southern Pacific. This helped create a once-isolated state to a major economic and political force which helped lead to the state's rapid growth. Now, we are experiencing robust growth in freight, passenger and light rail systems in Los Angeles. As a Metrolink employee, I am proud to be a part of the ongoing expansion of public transit in our region.

Ladies of the Southern California Chapter and abroad, please enjoy the 79th Annual Convention that we planned for you and take some time to do some "California Dreamin" in our Golden State!

Warm regards,

**Laurene Lopez**

*President, SoCal Chapter NARBW*



*Read on for more news from Southern California chapter*

# CHAPTER NEWS - SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

## Women of the Year Nomination – Ilyssa DeCasperis

We are excited to announce that our SoCal Chapter NARBW member, Ilyssa DeCasperis, has been nominated a second year in a row for Woman of the Year.

Ilyssa is the Chief People Officer at Metrolink/SCRRA and has a solid background in Labor and Employee Relations. As CPO, she has signed on as a signatory for Metrolink in APTA's Racial Equity Pilot Program and developed a team of employees to discuss how we can do better for our staff.

Ilyssa is a performance driven professional with a proven record of success in providing excellence in all aspects of Human Resources. She thrives on educating women to take their rightful place at every table and to stand up for their rights.

*"I am mindful to practice in the collaborative. Create trust. Earn respect. Build relationships. Discuss issues. Find solutions. Walk away with a collective understanding of what was accomplished. And move forward in a manner that satisfies both the employees and employer thereby creating a stronger and trusting workforce."*

-Ilyssa DeCasperis

Additionally, Ilyssa has provided an extensive service to NARBW. Some of her contributions include:

- Recommending affiliate links to help our Chapter in passive fundraising

- Assisting in the first issue of our "ROW" newsletter "ROW" as we are moving forward and modernizing our Chapter

- Taken the role of Sergeant at Arms for our Chapter

- Working with Trischelle Baysden in making the National Convention in California 2023 a great event

Ilyssa has also contributed greatly to her community. She is the co-founder of CompelAmerica, a 501(c)(3) dedicated to eradicating bullying, from childhood to adulthood. She also started the "Canyon Lake 9/11 Tribute in Light" in memory and honor of those we lost, those who survived and those who continue to live through illnesses acquired during search, rescue and recovery.





# CHAPTER NEWS - SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

## Women's History Month – Embrace Equity

March was Women's History Month, an annual observance celebrating the contributions and achievements of women throughout American history. This year we focused on Embracing Equity. We are committed not only to empowering women to succeed, but ensuring that women of all cultures and backgrounds are recognized for their amazing strengths and contributions.

We loved that Metrolink profiled a few inspiring women in their organization this month, including Past NARBW Board Secretary Sandra Martinez, who is a Communications Supervisor at Metrolink; and SCNARBW member and past Vice President Shamonda Jones, who is a senior manager in charge of dispatch at Metrolink.

Sandra emphasized the importance of knowing your worth as a woman in transportation and never forgetting your values. She said to make sure to surround yourself with people who will encourage and support you.

Shamonda, who has spent 25 years in railroading, advises any women considering a job in public transportation to not give up. *"Sometimes you will feel intimidated. Sometimes you will get overwhelmed. Do not allow that to turn you away. Keep going."*

### Member Spotlight—Trischelle Baysden, 2023 Convention Chair

SoCal NARBW founding member Trischelle Baysden has been working in Rail for over 30 years. Her background includes conducting, engineering, dispatching, scheduling and federal compliance work at top rail organizations including Metrolink and Omnitrans (where she was director of rail), as well as her current position as a senior project manager and tech expert at RailPros.

She began her rail career with BNSF Railway Co., where she worked her way up from brakeman/footboard yardmaster to chief dispatcher. As one of the first women in Rail, she has the distinction of having held many titles no other woman had before her, including a dispatcher.



We caught up with Trischelle just before she boarded a plane for Paris taking a small break from her role as convention chair for the upcoming 79th annual NARBW Convention in San Diego May 17-21.

### What attracted you to rail?

I've held a lot of positions in rail and each one was groundbreaking for women. When I was first starting out, there were very few if any women who worked on the rail. It seemed like every position I had made some people mad because a woman got the job and not their son.

My first job was as a Brakeman for BN, and I would switch box cars and put the train together. I was the only woman in Pensacola, Fla. in BN. It was challenging and it made me very resilient. My dad also worked in rail and had encouraged me to join the industry. A lot of my co-workers were friends with him, but they didn't treat me very well until I beat them in Poker and they had to ask me for their breakfast money back!

I love being a consultant, and ultimately, I'd like to travel to different countries and see the technology they use in public transportation. That would be cool. They're always a little ahead of us on that front.

Continued, next page

# CHAPTER NEWS - SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

## How did you come to be convention chair?

When we went the first year, everything was new to us. I fell in love with the comradery and genuine caring at that convention. National liked my energy so they asked if SCNARBW would be interested in hosting the convention in 2023. We had just started the Southern California chapter. I said, "Sure, we'd be delighted to!" I have been working on it for three years.

## How many times have you been?

This year will be my third time, and this time I'll be running for the National Third Vice President position. I have a few campaign trinkets I'll be handing out and I wrote a small excerpt about why I want the position. I'll be creating and promoting NARBW, and getting new chapters started. At the end of this year's convention, I'll find out if I win. Elections are Saturday, May 20, and then they'll announce the winner.

## What excites you most about the NARBW convention?

The friendships you create! I love getting to meet new people who become lifelong friends. It's amazing to give out hugs and catch up with peoples' lives from the past year. In the railroad business, for certain people, those friendships last forever. We need to stick together, because there are not a lot of us women in rail. Women need to use their networking skills. And the convention is so productive in that way because it doesn't matter if you're a CEO or whatever position, they treat you the same. I'm also excited to give away scholarships!

## What's your favorite thing to do when you're not improving our rail system?

I think I'm pretty blessed, so I like to give back. I'm on the San Bernardino Symphony Board. I took ballet when I was 5-14 years old which really started my appreciation for classical music.

I'm also very involved with REAL Journey Academies (RJA), a non-profit, charter school organization headquartered in the Inland Empire region of Southern California. We recently opened a fifth one!

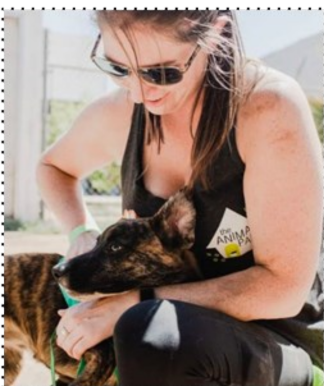
I also work with The Unforgettables, an organization that helps at-risk and grieving families with finances to help them afford a timely and dignified funeral for their child.

We help people who are misfortunate and lose their small child by helping pay for funeral costs like the casket.

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I'm looking to join Habitat for Humanity!

## The Animal Pad is the Convention Welfare Project for 2023



The Animal Pad ([The Animal Pad | Dog Rescue in San Diego and Southern California](#)), an all-breed, non-profit Dog Rescue Organization with a focus on saving dogs from high kill shelters and the streets of Mexico.



# National Association of Railway Business Women

<p><b>National Association of Railway Business Women 50/50 Drawing – May 20, 2023</b></p> <p>Name _____</p> <p>Chapter _____</p> <p>Address _____</p> <p>City _____ State _____ Zip _____</p> <p>Phone: _____</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Donation – One Dollar</b></p>	<p><b>National Association of Railway Business Women 50/50 Drawing – May 20, 2023</b></p> <p>Name _____</p> <p>Chapter _____</p> <p>Address _____</p> <p>City _____ State _____ Zip _____</p> <p>Phone: _____</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Donation – One Dollar</b></p>
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The National 50/50 drawing will be held at the National Convention in San Diego, CA on May 20, 2023. The proceeds from the drawing will be divided in half; half of the proceeds will be donated to the National General Fund and half of the proceeds divided among the winners, based on the number of tickets sold. Please take time to fill out the raffle tickets and mail your check **Payable to NARBW** to our Finance Chairman **OR use ZELLE: [Treasurer@narbw.org](mailto:Treasurer@narbw.org)** and send the tickets noted as paid through ZELLE to Rae. Act now to begin building the fund. The more you enter the more chances to win! Please duplicate the tickets and sell to your friends, co-workers, neighbors, and family.

**Mail to: NARBW National Finance Chairman Rae Huebner, 2232 Hillthorpe Avenue, Abington, PA 19001**



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