

Journal

LOCOMOTIVE ENGINEERS & TRAINMEN

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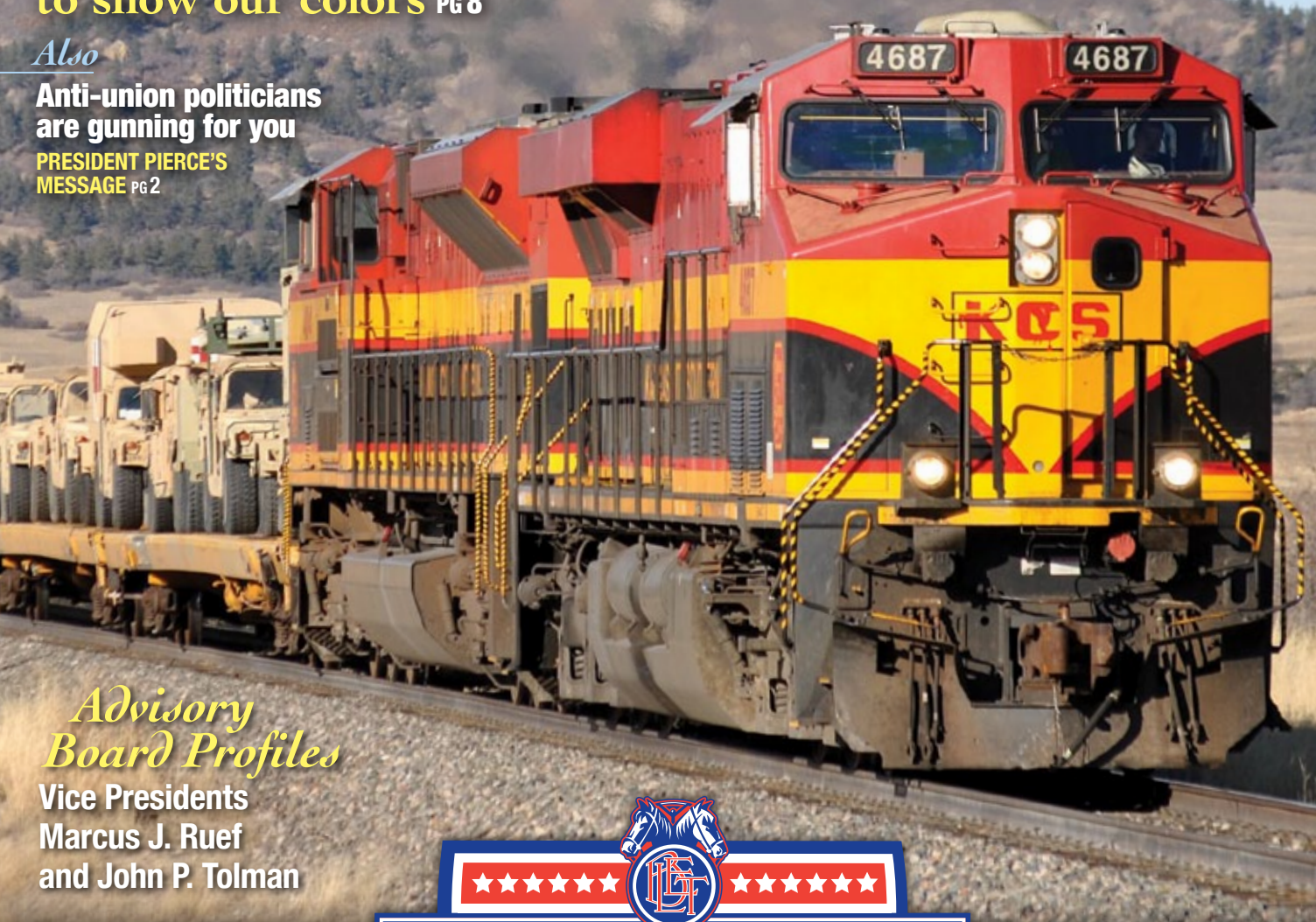
Union Pride

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Vice Presidents

Marcus J. Ruef

and John P. Tolman



**PROUD TO BE AMERICAN
PROUD TO BE UNION**

Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers & Trainmen • Teamsters Rail Conference

Check out new
BLET logo gear

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Display your
union pride

DECALS INSIDE



BLET President's Message

BY DENNIS R. PIERCE, BLET NATIONAL PRESIDENT

Beware the political wolf in sheep's clothing

In the February issue of the Locomotive Engineers & Trainmen News, I spoke about my concern that many politicians in this country have an anti-worker/anti-union agenda, yet they cloak their true intentions by centering all attention on divisive buzzwords with negative connotations and controversial social issues. These anti-worker “wolves in sheep's clothing” also routinely and deliberately mischaracterize issues in an attempt to hoodwink America as to whom they really are targeting. The most prevalent misrepresentation today is the anti-worker push to end so called “entitlements.” Much like their attack on the union movement itself, these anti-worker politicians are attempting to tarnish all programs that provide benefits to the American working class, even though those eligible to collect these benefits have paid for them throughout their working careers, on the promise that the benefits will be there when they retire or become disabled.

One of the programs most commonly attacked in this effort is Social Security. Politicians routinely suggest that Social Security should just go away, even though those who draw Social Security benefits paid into that program all through their working years. After creating staggering bud-



On Legislative Alert: President Pierce speaks to BLET State Legislative Board Chairmen at the National Association of State Legislative Board Chairmen's annual meeting in New Orleans.

get deficits and federal debt created by an endless push for tax breaks for the wealthy and the corporations, these footmen for Corporate America then blame the problem on “entitlements” that are too generous, and complain that the government can no longer afford to provide Social Security benefits to those who paid to receive them, many of whom would be living on the street without them. This is more than just breaking a promise to the retired working class, it is a personal attack on the survival of generations of senior citizens who toiled for their entire working careers paying into Social Security, with the promise that it would be there for them.

That is why anti-worker politicians negatively call

programs like Social Security “entitlement programs,” but they don't tell you that it is the program that your parents or grandparents rely on. They don't tell you that if they have their way in dismantling all government-managed worker benefits, your brothers, sisters, parents or grandparents could lose the only pension-like benefit that they have. It is America's workers and their families who will pay the ultimate price in this attempt to avoid requiring the wealthy and the corporations in this country to pay their fair share.

Medicare benefits for this same cross section of the American working class are also under attack. These benefits are also paid for year after year by hard-working Americans, yet right wing

anti-worker politicians routinely attack this program. They would have you believe that Medicare recipients are somehow taking advantage of the system, even though those drawing benefits paid for these benefits throughout their working years. Adding insult to injury is the fact that insurance companies have little if any obligation to provide any form of affordable insurance coverage to this section of our society. Medicare is the only coverage available to millions of retired workers; it is the only means that they have to receive medical treatment. Yet that, too, is negatively characterized as an entitlement program.

For BLET members, our Railroad Retirement benefits — retirement, occupational

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PUBLISHED BY THE BLET,
A DIVISION OF THE RAIL CONFERENCE,
INTERNATIONAL BROTHERHOOD
OF TEAMSTERS

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»» ON THE COVER: **MILITARY PRIDE:** A PAIR OF KANSAS CITY SOUTHERN "BELLES" LEAD A MILITARY UNIT TRAIN SOUTHBOUND THROUGH GREENLAND, COLO. NOVEMBER 29, 2011. (Photo: courtesy Joe Blackwell)



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A helping hand

Division 42 again organizes food drive for the needy



Dave Grimes and Brian Wheeler

The members of BLET Division 42 (St. Louis, Mo.) once again exemplified the spirit of Brotherhood and generosity by organizing the 2nd annual Union Pacific St. Louis Hub Food and Toy Drive.

BLET membership response was so overwhelming during the 2010 food drive that their momentum carried over to 2011, said Local Chairman David W. Grimes. The 2nd annual Food Drive in 2011 was a huge success, with members making and collecting donations that included canned vegetables, stuffing, cake mixes, corn muffin mixes, rice, beans, canned meat, toys and other non-perishable items.

After collecting the donations, everything was distributed to needy families through rescue missions in St. Louis, Salem and Poplar Bluff. “We got a very heartfelt thank you from each donation,” Brother Grimes said.

Sadly, each donation center also reported that the need for help had increased over 2010 due to so many people struggling in these tough economic times.

One rescue mission, the St. Vincent de Paul Society, sent a letter of thanks to BLET Division 42 members. The BLET donations helped support 456 families and a total of 1,234 people (389 children and 223 senior citizens).

“Due to your assistance dur-



From left: Brian Wheeler, Ulysses Evans and Dave Grimes

ing the holiday season, we will be able to keep our clients’ grocery sacks full of nutritious foods,” wrote Robert Smith, President of the St. Vincent de Paul Society. “We want you to know how deeply grateful we are for your thoughtfulness to us and your compassion for the impoverished.”

On behalf of Division 42, Brother Grimes said: “We want to thank all of the employees that participated by making donations and helping collect and distribute the food and toys collected. This is a very worthwhile and rewarding project that we hope to continue to do every year.”

Advisory Board gathers for winter meetings

In early February, members of the BLET Advisory Board held meetings in Florida. The meetings were to bring all Board members up to speed on numerous issues of importance on the national level at to strategize regarding issues on the horizon.

In recent years, the Board has scheduled in Florida during February to coincide with other meetings in the Sunshine State, particularly meetings of the Cooperating Rail Labor Organizations (CRLO), which is the collective bargaining agent regarding the health and welfare plans for all of Rail Labor.

BLET National President Dennis Pierce provided the Board with in depth analysis of what transpired during the most recent round of national contract negotiations. The Board will use the information from the recently ratified agreement to help formulate a bargaining strategy for the next round of negotiations. The current contract runs through January of 2015 and the earliest the BLET can serve Section 6 notices on the carriers is



Photo: Gina Fontana


Seated, from left: Steve Bruno, Vice President; Mike Priester, Vice President; Willard Knight, Vice President; and Mike Twombly, Vice President. **Standing, from left:** John Tolman, Vice President and National Legislative Representative; Marcus Ruef, Vice President; Lee Pruitt, First Vice President; Dennis Pierce, National President; Bill Walpert, National Secretary-Treasurer; Cole Davis, Vice President; and Gil Gore, Vice President.

in November of 2014.

Additionally, the Board discussed the upcoming November elections, Union Pacific on-property negotiations, the War on Workers, and the sale of the BLET's Standard Building headquar-


ters in Cleveland.

The Advisory Board is comprised of the 11 highest-ranking elected officials in the Organization, and is the chief policy making body of the BLET between conventions. The Board has the au-

thority to make decisions and perform acts and duties on behalf of the National Division that are not in conflict with or otherwise provided for in the IBT Constitution, the Rail Conference Bylaws, or the BLET Bylaws. 

New membership cards have been mailed

All active BLET members should have received their new membership cards in the mail. Our retired members, who led the way for us for decades, should also have received their new retired member cards in appreciation for their service. Both cards reflect length of membership.

The cards are a part of the National Division's campaign this year to reinvigorate our members and strengthen their ties to our union. On the heels of the new membership cards, the National Division is also announcing a new line of BLET logo gear in this edition of the Journal. Our goal is to get as many members as possible to proudly wear their union colors wherever they go. 



Fighting spirit

Generosity of Division 158 saves youth boxing team

The members of BLET Division 158 (Sparks, Nevada) have partnered with the Boys and Girls Club of the Greater Truckee Meadows to support a team of young boxers known as the Reno Jets.

The good Brothers and Sisters of Division 158 began supporting the Reno Jets in 2008 when they sought a positive way to donate proceeds from their annual Division picnic. Without the Brotherhood's generosity, the program would likely be cancelled.

John Eutsler, Local Chairman of Division 158, said the Division members selected a boxing team because they believe the sport of boxing is analogous to the way union representatives continually fight for what is right.

Brother Eutsler said the boxing team is "a great bunch of respectful young men who are working hard each day in their scholastics and working hard to learn the sport of boxing."

Last year, the Division raised \$1,700 to help fund the Jets. Due to the declining economy, the Boys and Girls Club would likely have to cancel the boxing program if not for BLET's support.

"We are stepping up our efforts to keep this program from being shut down due to high costs associated with a program of this nature," Eutsler said.

He said their goal for 2012 is to exceed the \$1,700 donation made last year, and they are looking for help from all BLET Brothers and Sisters across Northern Nevada.

Lending a helping hand to the community has been a source of great pride for the members of Division 158.

"We met with the team and the boxers were very excited to see us and thank us for our continued support," Eutsler said. "The boys hung our Teamsters logo on the wall above their boxing ring to remember our support. I was very proud to see these youths in new uniforms and thanking our Division for the financial help."

For those wishing to help, the 2012 picnic will be held on August 24 at Rancho San Rafael Regional Park in Reno, Nevada. Admission is \$5. All proceeds will be donated to the Boys and Girls Club boxing program. For more details, please contact Brother Eutsler via email: 4yoots@sbcglobal.net.



Members of the Reno Jets boxing club and their coach thank members of the BLET for their support. From left: Luis E. Gonzalez-Aguilar; Mario Hernandez; Leon Morehead, Reno Jets coach; Paul Ansberry, Vice Chairman, BLET Division 158; Forrest King-Shaw, Secretary-Treasurer and Vice Chairman, Division 158; John Eutsler, Local Chairman, Division 158; Victor Carrizales; and Luis Villanueva Ramos. (Members not shown who played an integral role in past fundraising events are: John Passi, Nevada State Legislative Board Chairman and Division 158 President; Jay Pheneger, Vice Chairman, Division 158; and David Lubliner, Division 158.)

letters to the editor

Dear Editor:

Leave it to the Republican radicals to back the loss of jobs and wages for good, honest working men and women in this country. I hope all of the working people in this country realize that these individuals would like nothing better than to wreck the economy, so that they could blame President Obama for the failure in the workplace to procure and maintain jobs.

Richard DiBenedetto
Retired
Division 683
Chicago, Ill.

Brothers and Sisters:

Highly recommended reading! If you cannot open the link copied below, go to the BLET National Division website for more information (www.ble-t.org).

It is rare, if not unheard of, for a BLET President to take on a Senator in this fashion. However, I hope you will all agree, this letter clearly needed to be written. WWW.BLE-T.ORG/PR/PDF/GRAHAM_UNION_Pride.PDF

Fraternally,
David Estes
Local Chairman
Division 60
Seattle, Wash.

Dear Brother Pierce:

I would like to compliment you on your message in the Winter 2011 issue of the Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen Journal. It includes a letter to Senator Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.) where you explain to him, at length, the importance of unions in the United States and the value that unions and union members bring to the building, protecting and improving this country.

While I doubt that Senator Graham has any interest in learning the facts about the great Middle Class of laborers that you de-

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letters to the editor

CONTINUED
FROM PAGE 6

scribed, I believe that it is vital to continue to press those issues to counter the falsehoods that Senator Graham and his fellow Senators and Representatives promote.

I find it ironic that legislative members like Senator Graham always find time to denigrate the working class and work to eliminate the ability of blue collar workers to attain the American Dream with hard fought for collective bargaining agreements, while setting themselves up as a ruling class with privileges to which few Americans have access.

Brother Pierce, I have never been more proud of anything in my life than my membership in the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen and the International Brotherhood of Teamsters than when I read your message. Though I am retired now, I still display my BLET Teamsters bumper sticker on my truck.

Keep up the good fight!

Fraternally,
Jim Frier
Retired
Division 629
Hannibal, Mo.

President Pierce:

While growing up, I could never understand "why does the union keep fighting?" I even asked questions like, "why can't they just get along?" Silly, but that was my view while working in high tech.

I started to work for the railroad at the age of 34 and it's been an interesting eight years. I have learned quite a bit. Railroad is railroading, but learning about how unions protect families and jobs is something that no one will ever understand until they not only work for a union job, but have to live off of a company that fights to lessen the pay we receive



to take care of our growing children, wife and ourselves.

I mention that because we fight to be able to maintain our living. Yet, we are getting a raise less than the rate of inflation. Health care costs are skyrocketing. We all know the arguments, but no one outside will ever understand until they work and live off the paychecks from such companies or agencies. I've done it and I see it.

For a person (Lindsey Graham) to attack such union rights, he should change careers into a union job and see if it really makes sense (and I mean live off a job for years to raise a family). I don't think any such politician would, but I would invite anyone.

You and I know the term "I've been railroaded" has been used before. But I always follow up with saying "you really don't know the term until you really work for the railroad."

Fraternally,
Tuka Gafari
Legislative Representative
Division 283
Oakland, Calif.

Dear Editor:

Excellent letter. I am very proud that Dennis took the time to address this issue.

Fraternally yours,
Don L. Moates
Retired BLET National

"Brother Pierce, I have never been more proud of anything in my life than my members in the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen and the International Brotherhood of Teamsters than when I read your message."

— Jim Frier
Retired, Division 629

Vice President
Division 782
Etowah, Tenn.

Mr. President:

Terrific piece! I've always said that the unions needed more articulate rebuttals to the barrage of misinformed commentary (read: trash) that's out there. Thank you!

Fraternally,
R.S. Prone
Retired
Division 57
Boston, Mass.

Dear Editor:

I am a retired member of BLET Division 269, and will always be proud of having been a member. Although I am retired, I am nonetheless appalled at the escalating war on workers, especially those who belong to labor unions. I am particularly incensed at the unbridled anti-union attitude of the government of South Carolina, as articulated by Governor Nikki Haley, who recently said that unions are "not needed, not wanted and not welcome" in her state.

My family and I have been to South Carolina many times; I am particularly fond of Myrtle Beach, with its golf, great beaches, fine restaurants and numerous tourist attractions. We have close friends who own a beach-

front condo at Litchfield, and they invite us to visit each summer. However, since I have become aware of Haley's vitriolic anti-unionism, I have refused to visit South Carolina and will continue to refuse to do so until there is "regime change" in that state. If people like us are not welcome to work there because Haley and her ilk oppose labor's hard-won right to organize and bargain for fair wages and working conditions, why should we spend the fruits of our labor to prop up the economy of South Carolina by vacationing there?

Tourism is South Carolina's largest industry and we can send Haley and her government an important message by hitting them where it hurts the most — in South Carolina's pocketbook.

Please feel free to pass this message on to the membership via any forum you see fit. I want to get the word out while our Brothers and Sisters in organized labor are making their vacation plans for this summer.

Keep the faith and continue to fight the good fight.

Fraternally,
George Maccarone
Retired
Division 269
Long Island, N.Y.

WE WELCOME YOUR LETTERS

The Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen Journal welcomes Letters to the Editor. Please include your name, address, BLET Division number, email address, and/or phone number on any submission. We reserve the right to edit your submission for grammar, punctuation, content and space considerations.

Address letters to:

Editor, Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen Journal,
1370 Ontario St., Mezzanine,
Cleveland, OH 44113-1702.
Or email: Bentley@ble-t.org



BLET *First Vice President's Message*

BY E. LEE PRUITT, BLET FIRST VICE PRESIDENT

Showing our pride

President Pierce often says that union membership is not a spectator sport. It's vital that all members play an active role in the Organization so that we get the most out of our BLET membership.

I recently read an article that emphasized Brother Pierce's point. The article explained that you can't expect to have a strong union by only paying dues, just like you can't expect to build muscle by simply paying for a gym membership. You can't build that strong union and you can't build those strong muscles by sitting on the sidelines. You have to put in time and effort before you see positive results. Sometimes it takes a lot of blood, sweat and tears before we accomplish our goals.

There's a certain pride that comes from working together with our Brothers and Sisters in an Organization like the BLET. There's a tremendous satisfaction that comes from knowing our efforts benefit not just ourselves, but our families, our co-workers, our co-workers' families, and future generations of members.

The BLET National Division is launching a multi-faceted campaign to help members show their pride in the Organization.

New BLET logo gear and clothing options are now available on the BLET's web store (go to <http://teamstersmerchandise.com/CartStew>



“Wearing your colors with pride will help spread the message that American workers and their unions are not the problem. We are the foundation of the solution.”

ard/ and click on “BLET”). For your convenience, you will also find an order form in the center pages of this issue of the Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen Journal (pages 16-17).

We want to provide members with the best quality, union made in the U.S.A. clothing and merchandise available on the market. We can support our fellow Brothers and Sisters in other unions while at the same time showing pride in our own Brotherhood.

The new gear will let you display your pride in belonging to the senior labor organization in the United States. It's our hope that members will wear these items not only on the job, but while off-duty as well. We want to send the message that we are proud Americans who are proud of their jobs and proud of their unions.

Wearing your colors with pride will help spread the message that American workers and their unions are not the problem. We are the

foundation of the solution. Please wear your colors to family functions; your children's little league baseball or soccer games; when you are at the grocery store; or going to the mall.

Earlier this year, we launched our Proud to be American, Proud to be Union campaign. Unions have received a lot of bad press in the media lately, mostly due to a highly coordinated and well-funded smear campaign launched by pro-corporate, anti-worker extremists. We want to educate the public that we are not the danger portrayed by the corporate agenda; we are their neighbors. Union members are not the ones who nearly bankrupted our society and caused the worst economic recession since the Great Depression.

Our Brotherhood's greatest accomplishments were not the result of one or two leaders exerting superhuman strength... they came about because huge numbers of members came off the bench, got into the game, and all worked together. With our Proud to be American, Proud to be Union campaign and our new line of logo gear, it is our hope that members will unite together and help revitalize our union by getting all members off the sidelines and into the game. 🇺🇸

**GET NEW
BLET GEAR**

Go to teamstersmerchandise.com/CartSteward/ and click on “BLET” or go to pages 16 and 17 of this issue for an order form.



BLET National Secretary-Treasurer's Message

BY WILLIAM C. WALPERT, BLET NATIONAL SECRETARY-TREASURER

BLET SAFETY TASK FORCE: Today and the future

In the last issue of the Journal, I shared with you the history behind the first 23 years of the Brotherhood's Safety Task Force. In this issue, I'd like to discuss today's STF and where we are headed in the future.

Education of the membership has been the foundation of our Brotherhood's success throughout the past 149 years. It's the key to every facet of our Organization, including the STF. I believe that by empowering STF members with knowledge, we are helping them become the best team on the field. They deserve the best tools and resources available as they assist in investigations with the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB).


That's why we sent several of our STF members to the NTSB training center academy in Ashburn, Va., on July 20-21, 2011. They attended a class, "RPH-301 Orientation Class

for Rail Professionals," which gave them an overview of what to expect if called on to assist in an investigation. The course also gave our members the chance to meet NTSB personnel prior to an investigation. I am proud to say the BLET had the largest group of rail labor representatives in the class, with nine of our 14 members in attendance.

We held breakout meetings the day before and every day once back at our hotel after class. The intent was to equip our members with a "template" on forms, reports, documents, etc. to use as a guide for future reference. At that time, we also introduced and welcomed the newest members to the STF Primary Team: Bryan Aldridge (Division 78), Carlyle Smith (Division 482), and Thomas Hebert (Division 312).

The Safety Task Force's direction is not to stay stagnant, but to continue moving for-

ward. We will soon update our STF Handbook and STF database. A notice will be forthcoming on when this will occur so that we may have the most current information available for those willing to become a Secondary, and possibly a Primary investigator for the STF.

"But more importantly, I hope to continue to educate our members on the current (and pending) technology in the field, including remote control operations and positive train control (PTC)." Also, we are digging deeper into the field of fatigue and researching its role in our mode of transportation. This is the type of education and training that helped our Safety Task Force become such an important part of our Brotherhood. The goal is to continually grow and expand that training so our STF members can continue to be best team on the field for many years to come. 

PRIMARY STF INVESTIGATORS

- Carl W. Fields**, DIV. 682
COORDINATOR-STF
- Bryan T. Aldridge**, DIV. 78
- Jerry Bullard**, DIV. 212
- Russell R. Elley**, DIV. 197
- Thomas F. Hebert**, DIV. 312
- K. L. Jackson**, DIV. 120
- Dan J. Lauzon**, DIV. 57
- Scott G. Palmer**, DIV. 842
- Carlyle L. Smith**, DIV. 482

NATIONAL STF INVESTIGATORS

- William C. Walpert**, DIV. 604
NATIONAL CHAIRMAN-STF
- Dave Ditzel**, DIV. 232
- Ken N. Kroeger**, DIV. 28
- John P. Tolman**, DIV. 57

The BLET Safety Task Force held Party Status during these major investigations:

June 19, 2009: Canadian National derailment and subsequent fire in Cherry Valley, Ill., Carl Fields, BLET Spokesman. This investigation was closed and heard before the NTSB Board on February 14, 2012.

April 17, 2011: BNSF rear-end collision in Red Oak, Iowa, Carl Fields, BLET Spokesman (Assisted by Dan Lauzon and K.L. Jackson). This investigation was heard before the NTSB Board on April 24, 2012.

September 30, 2010: Head-on collision in Two Harbors, Minn., Dan Lauzon, BLET Spokesman.

March 23, 2011: BNSF

contracted crew-van hauler collision with a train in Longview/Kelso, Wash., Jerry Bullard, BLET Spokesman.

May 24, 2011: CSXT rear-end collision in Mineral Springs, N.C., K.L. Jackson, BLET Spokesman.

June 24, 2011: Amtrak highway-rail grade crossing accident in Merriam, Nevada, Scott Palmer, BLET Spokesman.

July 25, 2011: Belt Railway Company of Chicago (BRC), remote control operator fatality, Carl Fields, BLET Spokesman.

August 15, 2011: BNSF remote control operator fatality, Argentine Yard, Kan., K.L. Jackson, BLET Spokesman.

January 6, 2012: CSXT rear-end collision in Westville, Ind., Bryan Aldridge, BLET Spokesman.



MEMBERS: Please continue to utilize the Safety Task Force Hotline

Call (800) 306-5414 to report major rail incidents involving:

- Passengers
- Major derailment
- Evacuation of an area
- Hazardous materials release
- Major media attention

Remember that factual information is vital!



Guest Columnists

BY JAMES P. HOFFA, TEAMSTERS GENERAL PRESIDENT
& JOHN MURPHY, DIRECTOR, TEAMSTERS RAIL CONFERENCE

No room for ALEC

Working Americans scored a big victory recently when four corporations withdrew their membership from a secretive group called the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC). Coca-Cola, Pepsi, Kraft Foods and Intuit listened to their customers and quit ALEC. I hope their example is followed soon by the rest of ALEC's members — both the corporations that fund it and the state politicians influenced by it.

Only recently has ALEC been exposed publicly. A year ago, the Center for Media and Democracy in Wisconsin began to draw attention to ALEC's extensive reach, its influence and its secrecy.

The Center found that 2,000 state lawmakers throughout the country belong to ALEC. They introduce bills written by and for ALEC's corporate members, including Koch Industries, Walmart and other multinational corporations. The corporate members' goals are corporate profit and corporate power. They want more tax breaks and an end to unions.

ALEC has influenced in many states. In Wisconsin, ALEC-alumni Gov. Scott Walker's bill stripping gov-

ernment workers of their collective bargaining rights mirrors ALEC's anti-union philosophy. In Ohio, ALEC drafted much of an anti-worker bill that was copied as SB5, since overturned by voters.

More than 50 bills written by ALEC have been introduced in Virginia over the past few years. In New Jersey, Gov. Chris Christie's plan to replace public schools with corporate schools was written mostly by ALEC.

In Georgia, four Senators who belong to ALEC co-sponsored a bill to make picketing a crime punishable by a year in prison. The bill was so clearly a violation of First Amendment rights that the tea party, civil rights groups and Teamsters united to defeat it.

I hesitate to even call this group "conservative." There's nothing conservative about restricting the right to free speech and selling off public education to for-profit corporate schools. And there's no room in our democracy for such a predatory organization.

Fraternally,

JAMES P. HOFFA
TEAMSTERS GENERAL
PRESIDENT

Workplace safety

The Railway Safety Improvement Act of 2008 was the first piece of legislation, aimed at improving the nation's rail systems security and safety, passed by Congress in decades. The Teamsters Rail Conference's report, "High Alert: Safe Rails Secure America," the first ever report on rail safety and security based on data from locomotive engineers and maintenance employees, was a primary factor in getting Congress to adopt this legislation. Because of this law, locomotive engine cab doors now will be required to have locks beginning in June of this year. This is an important victory in the Rail Conference's fight to raise safety and security standards throughout America's rail system.

The High Alert report, published in 2005, highlighted numerous security defects and safety hazards that were commonplace on every rail property. The Report sparked investigations many of which became television and web reports.

One central issue of the Report was that more than 50 percent of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen (BLET) members indicated that equipment was not secured.

The Rail Conference's second report, "High Alert 2", of 2009, noted that unsecured equipment was still a major problem.

Unfortunately, the scenario we feared came to pass in June 2010 when CSX conductor Fred Gibbs was murdered in the cab of his train's lead locomotive. Immediately BLET President Dennis Pierce asked the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), to act on this tragic situation and make locks on cabs a requirement. Pierce noted, in his letter to the FRA, that both "High Alert" reports had emphasized the lack of security locomotive crews had to endure due to the absence of cab door locks.

Be assured that the protection of the members of the BLET and the Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees Division (BMWED) are a primary concern to the Rail Conference. I am proud that the BLET, the BMWED and the International Brotherhood of Teamsters were able to bring about this important improvement for workplace security.

JOHN F. MURPHY
DIRECTOR, TEAMSTERS
RAIL CONFERENCE
AND INTERNATIONAL
VICE PRESIDENT

About the Authors:



James P. Hoffa grew up on picket lines and in union meetings. He is the only son of James R. Hoffa, former General President of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters. On his 18th birthday, Hoffa received his own union card and was sworn in by his father.



John Murphy has been an Eastern Region Vice President since 1998. He spearheaded merger negotiations with the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees and now serves as Director of the Rail Conference.

Anyone can suddenly find themselves out of work...



WHY I CHOOSE BR&CF



A Brotherhood's Relief and Compensation Fund membership offers *financial security* when disciplined for eligible occurrences.

The BR&CF is a true not-for-profit, with a proud history of returning excess income to members and the railroad labor community. Members, officers and directors are all railroad people. The BR&CF is a brotherhood that looks after each other.

The low monthly membership dues make the BR&CF the best choice for cost and greatest value. You will find membership dues rates and information, including frequently asked questions, at the web site.

I invite you to apply for membership, simply visit www.brcf.org or telephone 800-233-7080.

Sincerely and fraternally,

J.M. Robb
International President





Marcus J. Ruef
National Vice President



Marcus Ruef

Helping the next generation of BLET members continue our heritage

Marcus J. Ruef took an interest in railroading at an early age. In 1969, at the age of 13, he became a member of the Branford Trolley Museum in East Haven, Conn. It was at the Museum, where many of the volunteers were local railroaders, that Brother Ruef was encouraged to pursue a railroad career. So strong was his desire to become a railroader that he hired out on the Penn Central as a tower operator one day after graduating from high school in June, 1973.

“I still remember my first day on the railroad very vividly. Back then, I never would have believed that my life would take such a fascinating course that allows me to help other railroaders.”

Several years after beginning his career as a tower operator, he was offered the opportunity to transfer to engine service, which he did in 1976, joining the BLE that year. He was promoted to locomotive engineer in 1978. He later transferred to Norfolk Southern, and holds seniority on the Washington District, belonging to Division 143 in Manassas, Va.

“I was very fortunate to have been able to experience ‘old school’ railroading, learn from the World War II generation, and gain a sense of what they and those before them had secured for us. One of the proudest days of my life was when I was promoted to locomotive engineer.”

That early interest in railroading has grown over the years into a full time position as National Vice President of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen. First elected in 2006, he was reelected to another four-year term of office by a wide margin in the union’s first rank and file election of national officers on December 16, 2010.

During his time in the Northeast, he attended college and ultimately graduated from Cornell University’s ILR School with a BS in Labor Relations. His service at Norfolk Southern included several years in their Labor Relations Department. He spent many years serving Division 143 in Manassas, Va., as their Legislative Representative and as First Vice Chairman and Secretary Treasurer of the Virginia State Legislative Board.

Brother Ruef’s full time career with the Brotherhood

began in January of 1997, when he was hired as Assistant Director of the Arbitration Department.

“I was really excited to be at the BLE International in Cleveland,” he said. “It felt good to put my education and experience to work for our Brothers and Sisters.”

In April, 2009, Brother Ruef was able to build on the 10 years he served as the Assistant Director of Arbitration when he was appointed Director.


“As Director, I am so proud of our staff. Brother Doug Davidson, our second Labor Member of the First Division, is a tireless advocate for our Organization at the NRAB. As our Assistant Director of Arbitration, Brother Doug provides in invaluable service to the officers and members who consult with him about various arbitration and certification related issues. Tonya Sadowsky does a great job maintaining our docket records and files. We all share in the excitement and pride that comes from assisting our officers secure fair and just outcomes.”

Brother Ruef was first appointed to the NRAB as a Labor Member of the First Division in 1997. Several years ago, he was elected by the NRAB to serve as the Vice Chairman of the full board, and was elected Chairman last year.

“As Chairman of the NRAB, I am in regular contact with representatives of all of rail labor. I appreciate the confidence the other 16 labor members have placed in me. It makes me very proud that my chairmanship is an honor for the BLET.”

Brother Ruef also spends considerable time assisting the Education & Training Department with various workshops.

“I have been honored to instruct and coach many, many representatives over the years. One of my goals is to help the next generation of leaders carry on and maintain the BLET’s tradition of excellence in representation.”

Brother Ruef resides in Charles Town, W.Va., with his wife LaJuan, daughters Ondria and India, five dogs, a turtle and a frog. He is still actively involved in historical rail preservation, being a member of both the Illinois Railway Museum and the Branford Electric Railway Association. 

MARCUS J. RUEF BIO

Title: National Vice President & Director of Arbitration

Railroad: Norfolk Southern (hired out on Penn Central)

Member: Division 143 (Manassas, Va.)

Background: Hired out June, 1973; Earned promotion to locomotive engineer in 1976

Assignments: Wisconsin Central; Illinois Central; Elgin, Joliet & Eastern; Belt Railway of Chicago; Indiana Harbor Belt; Labor Member, First Division, National Railroad Adjustment Board (NRAB); Chairman of the full NRAB since October 1, 2011.

Personal: Resides in Charles Town, W.Va., with wife LaJuan and daughters Ondria and India; Actively involved in historical rail preservation.

John P. Tolman
Vice President & National
Legislative Representative





John Tolman

Lobbying for railroad safety in our nation's Capitol

BLET Vice President & National Legislative Representative John P. Tolman hired out in the railroad industry as a hostler in 1971 and earned promotion to the position of locomotive engineer in 1974. He served in several Division offices, and in 1992 helped to create, and was subsequently elected Chairman of the Massachusetts State Legislative Board. He served as Chairman of the Massachusetts State Legislative Board until 1996, when he was hired by the BLE International Division as a Special Representative, and he, his wife, Chris, and their three children, Caroline, Jeff and Johanna, moved from Boston to the Cleveland area.

During his time in the International and National Office, he did many jobs, including: Organizing, Education & Training Coordinator, Coordinator of the Safety Task Force, Chief of Staff and Political Director.

Vice President Tolman has a Masters degree in Business Administration and an undergraduate degree in Marketing. He was elected as an Alderman in the city of Melrose, Mass., and also served as its Democratic City Chairman for many years. He has been involved in every United States Presidential election since the late 1980s. He comes from a prominent family in Massachusetts state government and labor leadership.

Since his election to the position of Vice President & National Legislative Representative in 2006, Vice President Tolman has accomplished much through more than a thousand visits to Congressional offices along with, National Presidents, Vice Presidents, General Chairmen, State Legislative Board Chairmen and members.

“We have a long way to go to make this industry safe and make sure our members come home every day without injuries,” Vice President Tolman said. “Washington, D.C., is a frustrating place because things move at a glacial pace, and we must always remain engaged. And no piece of legislation will ever be perfect, but I feel that, while there have been set-backs — like some aspects of the Hours of Service changes — we have made some positive changes in the industry — whistle-

blower protection, protection from harassment and intimidation and critical incident stress debriefing, increased awareness of rail security issues, improvements in cab environment. At the same time, fatigue,

combined with poor scheduling, is still one of the major safety issues in our industry, and we know the RSIA didn't fix it. To do this, we need to elect worker friendly candidates. I always say, ‘this too shall pass,’ and I will not rest until we can address these challenges.”

Vice President Tolman has been able to work towards these goals and others, such as increasing BLET-PAC contributions, by constantly stressing personal connections and teamwork.

“One person cannot make substantial changes in our industry or our organization,” Vice President Tolman said. “Without a team —

the Advisory Board, the State Chairmen, the General Chairmen, the staff and the members — I couldn't have accomplished half of what I have done. Unity and teamwork, both internally and externally, are what breed success.”

While the team surrounding him is essential to his success, he owes the most to his wife and children.

“We all know we would be lost without a strong, supportive and understanding wife and children,” Vice President Tolman said. “They have given up a lot to help the labor movement, but I know they support me and that has made a huge difference.

“For many years, with my family and the team that I work so well with, I have been able to accomplish some of the goals I have set. But I have many more to go, and know that I will have their help in those efforts, too.”

He also credits the organization and its members for the opportunities he has had in the BLET.

“This Brotherhood has given me a unique opportunity to share and drive my passion and my commitment to help continue to make our organization proud. We are leaders in safety, working to protect the health of our members and the communities our trains travel through,” Vice President Tolman said. ☪

JOHN P. TOLMAN BIO

Title: Vice President & National Legislative Representative

Railroad: Amtrak (hired out on Penn Central)

Member: Division 57 (Boston, Mass.)

Background: Hired out in 1971; Earned promotion to locomotive engineer in 1974

Union history: Has served BLET National Division as Coordinator, Education & Training Dept.; Special Rep; Coordinator, Safety Task Force; Chief of Staff; Political Director; Elected Vice President & NLR in 2006; Re-elected by acclamation in 2010.

Personal: He and his wife Chris have three children, Caroline, Jeff and Johanna.

PROUD TO BE AMERICAN ★ PROUD TO BE UNION



Hooded Sweatshirt

It has never been a better time to show your pride in America and your Union! Shout it out loud while you cozy up in our new 80/20 blend Union made hoodie. It features a full screen print of our new Proud to be American logo and a one color image of the BLET logo.

Available in sizes: medium thru 3X
Med-XL \$27.50, 2X \$29.95, 3X \$30.95



Proud to be American T-shirt (red)

Join in on our new campaign and sport your Union Pride in our newest addition to the BLET gear. 100% cotton Union made t-shirt with a full back screen print of our new Proud to be American logo. The front features a one color image of the BLET logo.

Available in sizes: medium thru 3X
Med-XL \$10.00, 2X \$11.25, 3X \$12.50



Ladies Cut T-Shirt

Union Pride never looked so good! For the ladies, a t-shirt that is flattering and cute. Cut for a woman is this 6.1 Oz 100% cotton tee. It features the full back Proud to be American logo and the one color image of the BLET logo.

Available in red in sizes medium thru 3X
Med-XL \$12.00, 2X \$13.50, 3X \$15.00



Proud to be American T-shirt (athletic gray)

Join in on our new campaign and sport your Union Pride in our newest addition to the BLET gear. 100% cotton Union made t-shirt with a full back screen print of our new Proud to be American logo. The front features a one color image of the BLET logo.

Available in sizes: medium thru 3X
Med-XL \$10.00, 2X \$11.25, 3X \$12.50

BLET embroidered Hoodie – BLT-0116

100% cotton athletic gray hooded sweatshirt featuring an embroidered BLET logo in traditional colors. Union/USA made.

Available in sizes large to 3X:
L-XL \$30.00, 2X \$32.00, 3X \$33.00

BLET Leather Money Clip Wallet – BLT-0115

Handsome topgrain leather wallet that is slim and functional. Features a money clip with a debossed BLET logo on the inside flap as well as an organizer for credit cards. **\$18.00**

BLET Mantle Clock – BLT-0117

This clock features your BLET logo in 18kt gold plating with polished highlights and museum quality rosewood. The movement is made in America. Requires AA battery. Hand crafted and assembled by a union work force, your clock will be a lasting memento for years to come. **\$129.00**

CLOCK ENGRAVING \$10.00

Engrave up to four lines of text on a brass plate for your desk clock (ex: name, retirement date and local number). Note: 20 characters maximum per line.

Color Block Hat – BLET-0114

Brought to your store by popular demand is the newest ball cap addition. Color block front panels and trimmed contrast fabric

create an interesting look along with a full embroidered BLET logo on the front panels and visor edge "pulling for you."

One size fits most: \$20.00

The Weekender Windshirt (burgundy) (navy)



King Louie's newest windshirt is made out of deluxe microfiber and is nylon lined for an easy fit. Side pockets and knit V neck for a comfortable feel.

Available in sizes M thru 3X:
S - XL \$50.00, 2X \$52.00, 3X \$54.00

BLET Belt – BLET-0110

A classic military style belt design that is adjustable to both sides. The belt buckle will show off nicely whether you wear it

with the logo side or reverse it for a solid black look. One size fits most. **\$15.00**

White Men's watch – BLT-0106

The everyday, anytime watch. Your BLET logo is captured on a white dial encased in a gold plated case and the matching gold band is USA made stainless steel by Spiedel. Wear it with pride! **\$86.95**

White Ladies watch – BLT-0107

The everyday, anytime watch for ladies. Your BLET logo is captured on a white dial encased in a gold plated case and the matching gold band is USA made stainless steel by Spiedel. Wear it with pride! **\$86.95**

Men's Retiree Watch

This handsome classic watch is the perfect gift to honor the dedication and service of your retired member. Stylish black dial is surrounded by gold accents with a crisp gold band. Finish it off with a customized engraved back to show your appreciation. **\$86.95**

Ladies Retiree Watch

This handsome classic watch is the perfect gift to honor the dedication and service of your retired member. Stylish black dial is surrounded by gold accents with a crisp gold band. Finish it off with a customized engraved back to show your appreciation. **\$86.95**

WATCH ENGRAVING \$10.00

Engrave up to four lines of text on the back of your watch. Note: 20 characters per line.

YOU CAN ALSO SHOP FOR BLET ITEMS ONLINE:

Go to teamstersmerchandise.com and click on "BLET"

BLE members featured in upcoming photography exhibit

FROM JOHN GRUBER
CENTER FOR RAILROAD
PHOTOGRAPHY & ART
WWW.RAILPHOTO-ART.ORG

At first glance, Jack Delano's informal portrait of an Indiana Harbor Belt switch crew with locomotive 304 in February 1943 seems like many photographs from the steam era: five railroaders talking in front of their locomotive. But like all railroaders, each has a story to tell if only that story can be found. What is unusual is that Delano's notes record the nicknames and some of the stories the crew told about themselves.

About 50 of Delano's portraits of railroaders will appear in an exhibition at the Chicago History Museum in fall 2013. The Center for Railroad Photography & Art, which is doing research on the railroaders for the exhibition, is providing this preview in hopes of finding more relatives of these people.

The engineer, third from left, Floyd K. Gwinner (1890-1981), worked for railroads for 46 years, beginning as yard clerk and call boy for the Big Four (New York Central) in Danville, Ill. He moved to Hammond, Ind., and the Indiana Harbor Belt in 1912, was promoted to engineer in 1915, and was initiated into Division 682, BLE, in 1917. For his last run with a train of perishables from Blue Island Terminal to the Erie Railroad in 1958 he proudly posed with his wife, Muriel, in a suit and top hat for a photograph reproduced in the January 1959 *Locomotive Engineers Journal*.

His locomotive, an 0-8-0 switcher built by Baldwin in 1919, was retired in 1950-51. The crewmembers worked longer, into the diesel era.

Edward V. Kletecka (1904-98), the fireman, second from left, joined the Indiana Harbor Belt in 1929. He was promoted to engineer in 1946, joined the BLE in 1948, and is listed as #185 on a 1959 seniority roster.



Last run: Brother Floyd K. Gwinner wore a top hat and tuxedo on his last run in 1958. Posting with him is wife Muriel.

William J. Cales, an IHB locomotive engineer since 1974 and active member of Division 682, helped by providing seniority rosters that show Gwinner and Kletecka. In most cases, engineers had seniority on the IHB and NYC's Danville Subdivision.

Edward H. Albrecht (1892-1960), a switchman, is fourth from left. He started his railroad career with the Chicago & Eastern Illinois, and then went to work for the IHB and lived to the end of his life in an Albrecht family neighborhood of Hammond, Ind. The Center is looking for more information about another switchman, John McCarthy, right, as well as further information about Kletecka and Albrecht.

The conductor, Daniel Sinise (1900-79), left, often was a topic of good-natured and sometimes not so friendly bantering between the crewmembers. A veteran of World War I, Sinise lived in Blue Island, Ill., with his wife, Vesta, and three sons. He went to work for the Harbor Belt in August 1920, became a conductor in February 1921, and retired March 31, 1965.

On the job, Sinise was crew leader and initially bossed people around until, as Jack Delano wrote, "he was put in his place" by the others. The crew nicknamed him "King," but sometimes called him "Kink" in jest. Two others on the crew were veterans like Sinise. They discussed army service incessantly, according to Delano. "Much of it pokes fun at Sinise, who was with the medical corps and 'did nothin' but ride around in a fancy ambulancy ... Now you take the infantry ..."

Daniel and Vesta's grandson, a son of their son Robert, is the actor Gary Sinise, an Academy Award nominee, a founder of the famed Steppenwolf Theater of Chicago, and a household name for his role on television's *CSI: New York*.

The exhibition, in cooperation with the Chicago History Museum, honors railroaders in the Chicago area, and by extension, railroaders everywhere. It already is breaking new ground in the history of photography and railroad work. 📷



Indiana Harbor Belt train crew in February of 1943, from left: Daniel Sinise, conductor; Edward V. Kletecka, fireman; Floyd K Gwinner, locomotive engineer; Edward H. Albrecht, switchman; and John McCarthy, switchman. Hollywood actor Gary Sinise is the grandson of Daniel Sinise. Gwinner belonged to Division 682 at the time of this photo, and Kletecka earned promotion to engineer and Joined Division 682 in 1948.



An Indiana Harbor Belt freight train in 1943.

Support the BLET-PAC

It's a way you can fight back in the War on Workers



BY JOHN P. TOLMAN
VICE PRESIDENT & U.S.
NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE
REPRESENTATIVE

The War on Workers has continued nearly unabated for more than a year, most recently with an outrageous bill in the state of Georgia prohibiting picketing.

Senate Bill 469 died as Georgia's legislative session ended, but it is worth noting because I believe that we will continue to see legislation like this. The legislation would impede free speech and workers' rights in several ways. First, it would outlaw picketing outside the home of a CEO or other top company officials, such as rallying outside the home of a sweatshop owner. It also would allow businesses to ask a judge to halt the protests outside of a business. If the judge orders a halt and the picketing continues, then the union members or protestors from other groups could each be slapped with a \$1,000 fine. In addition, any union or organization which "continues to sponsor or assist in the prohibited activity" would be subject to \$10,000 fine. Businesses that think they suffered damage from the picketing could ask for a cut of that cash.

This bill was so bad that even the Tea Party opposed it. This is just one more, especially egregious, example of the continuing War on Workers. We have seen plenty of other examples of this. Just recently, I spoke at a rally in Arizona in opposition to several anti-worker, anti-union bills. I told those attending the rally that it was time that we stood up and fought back. If we don't, these attacks are going to continue for

A PROUD HISTORY A BRIGHT FUTURE!
DON'T SIT ON THE SIDING

Run with the BLET-PAC

YOUR ROAD - YOUR TRAIN - YOUR FAMILY - YOUR FUTURE!!!

Join with thousands of other BLET members running with the PAC from coast to coast to secure our future today — *Not tomorrow.*

What are your priorities for the next decade?

- ✔ Healthcare
- ✔ Affordable health care
- ✔ Education
- ✔ Worker's rights
- ✔ Quality retirement

Today's Reality

Nothing can take the place of your vote. The BLET PAC works to help make your voice count and influence even the most powerful Political Action Committee, or PAC, allow us to put our political resources, giving you a strong voice in state and federal governmental affairs.

The BLET-PAC is Working for you

As members of BLET, you have the right to choose that support our position on important legislative, political, and regulatory issues — issues that are vital to your safety, security and well-being. Don't let the additional cost in the price and make BLET-PAC work for you, your family and your future.

See your Division LR for more details!

Participating members will receive special recognition in BLET publications and specially designed lapel pins indicating your commitment to the BLET and our political efforts.

- ✔ \$5 per month: Representative's Club
- ✔ \$10 per month: Senator's Club
- ✔ \$20 per month: Vice President's Club
- ✔ \$30 per month: President's Club
- ✔ \$100 per month: President's Advisory Council

RUNNING WITH YOU FROM COAST TO COAST!

SUPPORT THE BLET-PAC!

The BLET National Division is circulating new PAC registration forms and PAC posters (above) to encourage membership involvement.

Your voluntary donation to the BLET-PAC Fund is used to help the Brotherhood fight on Capitol Hill for issues that impact your job, your retirement, your family and your future.

www.bletdc.org/action/PAC/

the foreseeable future. Why? Because those behind these attacks have the resources — nearly unlimited resources — to continue the war. This is a war that can go on, as it has, for years — until we decide it is time to stand up and I think now is the time that we decide to stand up.

For its entire 149-year history, the BLET, along with all of labor, has been an agent of change in this country. Throughout that history, the BLET has

stood up for its members, their families and their neighbors to ensure a fair and equitable workplace and to ensure our future and our children's future.

Next year, the BLET will celebrate the 150th anniversary of its founding by a group of brave locomotive engineers who decided they needed to stand up for change in the industry even if it meant taking a grave risk to themselves and their livelihoods. These brave men, who would create the legacy of the oldest existing labor union in North America, began a proud tradition of this organization serving as an agent of change, both in the railroad industry and in society at-large.

In honor of these brave men from the Michigan Central Railroad, I believe that we must, in the year leading up to our 150th anniversary, once again, take a proactive role in creating change in this country.

We, like our founders, face foes with far greater resources than we have. However, like those founders, we can face down our opponents by banding together and pooling our resources. One hundred-fifty years ago, they faced railroad owners who were among the country's wealthiest and most elite citizens. They not only owned the railroads, but they also owned the country and its politicians, whom they could bend to their will. Back then, there were no campaign finance laws, there were no controls on money in politics.

Now, we see the same thing happening again. Since the Supreme Court's decision in Citizens United to allow unlimited corporate giving to political campaigns, the clock has been turned back to what we faced 150 years ago. A few wealthy individuals are again bending the country to their will. So again, we must band together



and pool our resources.

To that end, I propose, in the year leading up to our sesquicentennial anniversary, we continue the legacy of our founders and, as part of that, mount an all out campaign to increase the amount of funds in the BLET-PAC. As this year continues, you will frequently hear of this need and I plan to launch — with all the officers of this organization — a campaign to mobilize our members to give to the BLET-PAC. You will see this campaign at your Division meetings, at the four regional meetings and any other place BLET members gather. This is a time of out and out war on our livelihoods, our families and our organization's very existence, and we must battle back.

When the BLET was founded, the idea of a political action committee was unfathomable. All they had at the time was their ability to stand together in

**“We, like our founders,
face foes with far greater
resources than we have.**

**However, like those
founders, we can face
down our opponents
by banding together
and pooling our resources.”**

— JOHN P. TOLMAN

solidarity against the opponents they faced — who were attacking their livelihoods, their families and the organization's very existence. But we now have this tool at our disposal.

Brothers and sisters, I know that — like our founders — we cannot compete with the money that the railroads and our other opponents can spend.

We can never raise the amount of funds that our opponents can raise, but I believe that we can, by increasing the size of our PAC, show both our opponents and politicians that the members of the BLET — in solidarity — are going to fight in this war and fight with every tool at their disposal to win.

Each day, I see the impact that money has in politics and I know that money talks, but I also see that politicians know there is value in receiving a contribution from labor. They know that behind that contribution stands the members of that organization and they know that those members are committed to protecting the interests of themselves and their families. This is the legacy of our founders and one that each and every one of us must continue.

Give to the BLET-PAC! 

2012 NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF STATE LEGISLATIVE BOARD CHAIRMEN

Members, officers and guests attending the 27th annual meeting of the National Association of State Legislative Board Chairmen (NASLBC) in New Orleans, March 18-20, 2012. (See page 23 for additional photos)



Under fire

Railroad safety regulations come under attack

Over the past two years, we have seen the regulatory pendulum swing from a balanced regulatory policy to one where cost of regulations to business is the sole focus. Opponents of regulations have loaded the echo chamber with the perception that there is too much regulation of industry — including the railroad industry — while necessary safety improvements go unresolved.

Cost has always been used as justification for not regulating safety in the railroad industry. When railroads deem a safety initiative too costly, they lobby hard — often spending millions that could have been put towards paying for the implementation — to keep from having new regulations mandated.

One great example is the knuckle coupler. The knuckle coupler was patented in 1873. Railroads claimed this device would cost them \$40 million and would bankrupt them, and delayed using it for 20 years until forced by Congress. Even though the railroads lobbied Congress for years, safety eventually prevailed and President Benjamin Harrison signed a bill mandating the knuckle coupler in 1893. No one knows how many workers were maimed as a result of that gruesome 20-year delay, but Congress and the Administration finally stood up to the railroads and supported worker safety.

Historically, the BLET has been able to rely on both Democratic and Republican Congresses and Administrations to eventually make the right call for safety in the industry, but, recently, regulations — even vital safety regulations — have come under attack by

“As history has shown, the railroads will not act to improve safety without Congress or the Administration stepping in. We have seen this time and again. We need to counter the critics of regulation in our industry and tell them that while the regulations cost money, not implementing them will cost lives.”

— DENNIS R. PIERCE

advocates of “small government.”

The attacks on regulations started when the 112th Congress was seated in January 2011. Many major Committees held hearings regarding what they considered regulatory over-reach by the Obama Administration. Of particular note to BLET and our members was a hearing in the House Transportation & Infrastructure Committee that was supposed to deal with railroad regulations, but it devolved into an indictment of the Positive Train Control mandate and other regulations that were characterized by the railroads as too costly. PTC was mandated by the Rail Safety Improvement Act of 2008 and signed into law by President George W. Bush. It had been on the National Transportation Safety Board’s Most Wanted list for 20 years, through both Democrat-

ic and Republican administrations and Congresses. Regardless, the hearing was called by Committee Republicans and focused on the Obama administration’s “over-reach” in implementing the regulation (even though the law was signed by President Bush). This hearing and others like it were designed to give the public the mistaken impression that huge industries, like the railroad and banking industry, are over-regulated and those regulations are holding back the economy.

“BLET members know that regulations are necessary in the railroad industry,” BLET National President Dennis R. Pierce said. “As history has shown, the railroads will not act to improve safety without Congress or the Administration stepping in. We have seen this time and again. We need to counter the critics of regulation in our industry and tell them that while the regulations cost money, not implementing them will cost lives. These regulations keep our members safe and alive, and we know that human lives are worth more than any cost-benefit studies. The critics need to know this, and we need to counter this mistaken perception.”

Contrary to these critics, during President Obama’s first two years in office, five percent fewer new rules have been promulgated than in George W. Bush’s first two years in office (613 versus 643, according to Bloomberg News).

The Administration, reacting to an environment in which any new regulation is under attack as over-reach, has chosen to slow down the pace of regulations, in order to counter this perception. This issue has spawned an Executive Order, Number 13563, asking



agencies to review their regulations on a cost-benefit basis, while a more recent directive from the Office of Management and Budget asks agencies to consider the “cumulative effects” of their rules before they issue new ones.

Both of these orders have caused the FRA to take a hard-line stance against any new regulations to counter this perception and abide by the Executive Order. Due to this, FRA is making efforts through several Rail Safety Advisory Committee working groups to issue advisories or guidelines, stopping short of writing regulations. The problem with this way of doing business is that guidelines have absolutely no penalty mechanism or other way of ensuring compliance. FRA has stated it believes that the threat of litigation alone will be enough to make the railroads provide a safe workplace.

“I had a conversation with one of our friends in the House,” BLET Vice President & National Legislative Representative John P. Tolman said. “She told me that Americans thought they were voting in 2010 for less government involvement, but now they are realizing that while they wanted less Government, they still need a friendly government on their side, not the negative, hurtful government, such as the GOP on the House side of government. They are now coming to see that the GOP is really on the side of corporations and this is what we need to change.

“The reality is that regulations are needed to protect people from corporations, and the government has a clear role in doing this. We need to elect people who best represent their constituency base, people who will stand up for working men and women, middle class America. People who will put America ahead of corporations. People need protection.”

2012 NASLBC PHOTO ALBUM



Dennis Pierce, National President



Lee Pruitt, First Vice President



Bill Walpert, National Secretary-Treasurer



John Tolman, Vice President & National Legislative Representative



Tim Smith, NASLBC Chairman & California State Legislative Board Chairman



M.D. Frank, Alabama State Chairman



Arlin Todd, Louisiana State Chairman



Brian Kelley, Missouri State Chairman



Cory Runion, Wyoming State Chairman

Kleinsorge served BNSF members for over 31 years



Last run: Brother Kleinsorge completed his Last Run for BNSF on October 15, 2011.

On October 31, 2011, Brother Roland P. Kleinsorge of BLET Division 398 (San Bernardino, Calif.) retired after 34 years with the Santa Fe and BNSF Railway.

He was an incredibly hard-working and dedicated union Brother during his three decades of active membership. Brother Kleinsorge held elected union office each and every year for more than 31 years.

He hired out as a switchman for the Santa Fe in Los Angeles, Calif., in 1977. He went firing on April 5, 1978 and earned promotion to locomotive engineer on May 20, 1979. He safely completed his Last Run on October 15, 2011, working as a BNSF locomotive engineer between San Bernardino and Needles, Calif.

Brother Kleinsorge held continuous membership for more than 31 years at the time of his retirement. He initiated into Division 662 (Los Angeles) on



Officers and Brothers:

Retired BNSF (former ATSF) General Chairman Pat Williams and Brother Kleinsorge in 2011.

January 1, 1980, and transferred into Division 398 on January 1, 1982.

He actively served the membership in one elected office after another over the next 31 years. From 1982-83, he was elected to serve as Vice President of Division 398; from 1983-2001, he served as Secretary-Treasurer; from 2001-2007 he served as Local Chair-

man; from 2002-2004, he served the BNSF (former ATSF) General Committee of Adjustment as Alternate Secretary-Treasurer from 2002-2004; and from 2004 until his retirement in 2011, he served as the GCA's Secretary-Treasurer.

During retirement, he plans to spend time working in his garage — Brother Kleinsorge's hobbies including old hot rods and race cars. He will also stay involved with the railroad community through his membership in the National Association of Retired and Veteran Railway Employees (NARVRE).

Brother Kleinsorge and his wife, Judy, were married on March 2, 1985. They have one daughter, Linda.

"I enjoyed my work on the railroad and I will always remember and cherish the many friendships that I have made over the years in the BLET," he said. 🇺🇸

Amtrak Vice General Chairman Mac McDowell helped countless BLET members

Long-serving Amtrak Vice General Chairman Craig A. “Mac” McDowell safely completed his Last Run on December 30, 2011, working as the locomotive engineer of Amtrak’s California Zephyr from Grand Junction, Colo., to Denver, Colo.

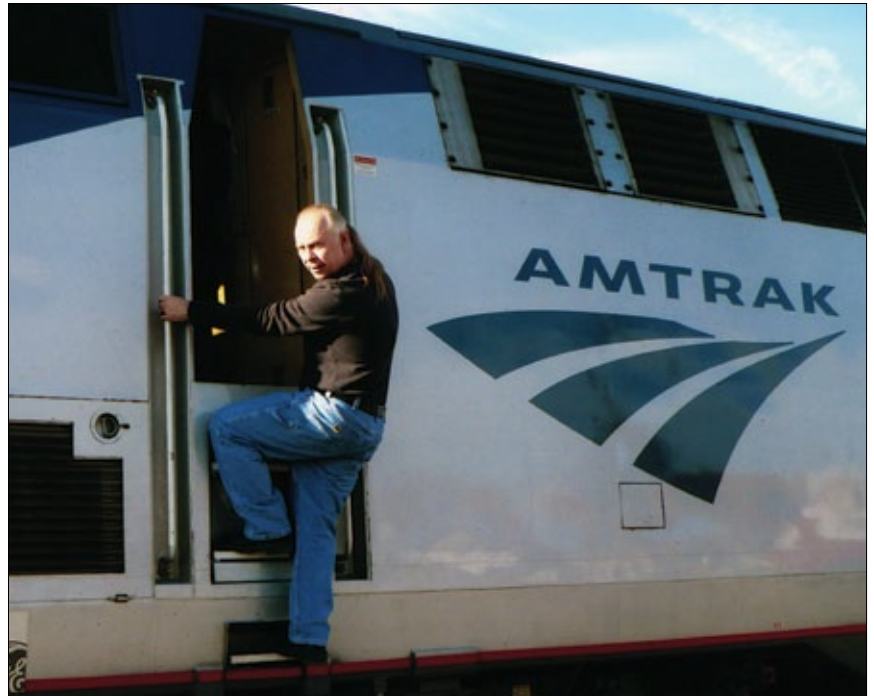
Brother McDowell’s 37-year railroad career began in September of 1974 when he hired out with the Burlington Northern as a track gang welder’s helper in Grand Island, Neb. He was accepted into the engineers’ training program in Lincoln, Neb., in July of 1976 and earned promotion to locomotive engineer in August of 1977.

When Amtrak took over employment of train and engine crews, Brother McDowell was called for an engineer’s job in Zone 11 in Salt Lake City, Utah, in June of 1988. In November of 1988, he transferred to Denver, Colo., where he remained until retirement.

Brother McDowell has been a BLET member for more than 35 consecutive years. He first joined the Brotherhood on July 1, 1977, as a member of Division 98 (Lincoln, Neb.). He transferred to Division 940 (Denver, Colo.) and Division 349 (Salt Lake City, Utah) before settling on Division 47 (Denver, Colo.) in November of 1988.

He was elected Local Chairman of Division 47 in March of 1989, and Western Regional Chairman in January of 1993. Under the wing of the late Ronald Wiggins, former Amtrak General Chairman, Brother McDowell was groomed for the Vice General Chairman’s job. He was elected to that position in May of 1998 at Amtrak’s 5th General Committee of Adjustment meeting in Atlantic City, N.J. Brother McDowell was subsequently reelected by acclamation to the VGC position at the 6th, 7th and 8th conventions.

As part of his duties as VGC, Brother McDowell has written briefs and/



35-year member: Brother Craig McDowell completed his Last Run on December 30, 2011. A member of BLET Division 47 (Denver, Colo.), Brother McDowell served as Vice General Chairman for Amtrak engineers for 13 years.

or been involved in hundreds of cases over the years, fighting to preserve and protect the jobs of countless BLET members.

“Brother McDowell’s knowledge of the union contract, his work on numerous committees, and dedication to the members of Division 47 and to the Amtrak GCA in the position of Vice General Chairman will be greatly missed,” said Kevin A. Utterback, President of Division 47. “All the members of BLET Division 47 wish him the very best during his much deserved retirement.”

Amtrak General Chairman Mark Kenny thanked Brother McDowell for his many years of service. “Despite his retirement, Brother McDowell will always stand as the epitome of a hard working and thoroughly dedicated BLET officer and proud member. We have been together through thick and

thin on countless matters of critical importance coming before the Amtrak GCA for well over two decades. His spirit of Brotherhood and tenacious resolve in terms of advancing the rights and benefits of our members always has been and will continue to remain unparalleled. Mac leaves us with a positive indelible imprint on our GCA that is certain to survive well into the future, and one that will stand as a model for future GCA officers. He will be sorely missed by our Executive Committee, Local Chairmen, and all the Brothers and Sisters whose lives he has touched for the better over the course of his many years of selfless service, myself in particular. Our collective and personal best wishes and love go out to him and his beautiful wife Pam as they settle into their much deserved retirement,” Brother Kenny said. 🕒

Division 803's 'Railroad' Fail had 40-plus years of injury-free service

Brother Ricky R. "Railroad" Fail of BLET Division 803 (Savannah, Ga.) brought his injury-free, 40 year-plus railroad career to a close on August 1, 2011. His Last Run was on CSX yard job Y12501 at Southover Yard in Savannah, Ga. Prior to that he worked F794 (Estill Turn) for five years, which he said was the best job he ever worked.

Brother Fail began his railroad career as a switchman for the Seaboard Coastline Railroad on March 21, 1971. He went firing for the SCL on April 23, 1972 and earned promotion to locomotive engineer in 1973.

He joined BLET Division 803 on November 1,



Injury-free: Brother Ricky R. "Railroad" Fail retired injury-free from CSX on August 1, 2011.

1978, and has held continuous membership ever since. He served his Division as Chaplain.

In his 40-year career,

Brother Fail has worked just about every run out of Savannah, Ga.

Brother Fail is a third generation locomotive engi-

neer. His great uncles Jimmy, Charlie, and Bill Wilson, and uncle Gordon Fail all worked for the Seaboard Air Line. Brother Fail's son also hired out at CSX but was furloughed and now works for the Georgia Central in Savannah. His cousins Bobby and Randy Fail are conductors at CSX Southover Yard.

In his retirement, he plans to hunt, fish and travel with his wife of 36 years, Shirley. The couple has three children and six grandchildren.

"The railroad has made my family a good living," he said. "We have seen many changes over the years. I will enjoy retirement but will miss my fellow coworkers." 📍

Division 602's Danenhower retires after 45-years with IC, CN

Brother Leonard R. Danenhower of BLET Division 602 (Champaign, Ill.) retired on November 5, 2011, after a railroad career that spanned 45 years with the Illinois Central and Canadian National Railways.

Brother Danenhower hired out in 1966 as a clerk for the IC in Champaign, Ill. He transferred to engine service 13 years later and went firing in October of 1979. He earned promotion to locomotive engineer in October of 1980.

He joined BLET Division 602 on October 1, 1986, and served as Division chaplain from 2000-2002.

His Last Run came on November 4, 2011, working as a CN locomotive engineer in turnaround service from Champaign, Ill., to Salem, Ill.

Brother Danenhower is a proud Veteran of the United States Navy. He



45 year career: Danenhower hired out in 1966, retired in 2011.

served on Navy Advisory Team 32 for four years during Viet Nam and was awarded the Combat Action Medal.

He comes from a strong Illinois Central railroad family, following in the footsteps of his father and grandfather.

His maternal grandfather, Marvin Dillingham, was an IC locomotive engineer from 1935-1956. His father, Leonard C. Danenhower, was an IC conductor for 35 years, and his brother, Gary Z. Danenhower, was an IC carman for 10 years.

Brother Danenhower is a member of the Wesley United Methodist Church, where he is actively involved with their food pantry. He also enjoys golf, gardening and travel — all activities he plans to devote more time to during retirement.

He and his wife, Rebecca, were married on December 24, 1977. They have four children (Anne, David, Catharine and Sarah) and one grandchild (Carter Coates).

"As Bob Hope said, "Thanks for the memories!" Danenhower said. 📍

HONOR ROLL

E.L. Bain achieves Honor Roll status

Brother Edward L. Bain achieved Honor Roll status this year with 41 consecutive years of BLET membership. A member of BLET Division 206 in Temple, Texas, Brother Bain joined the Brotherhood on February 5, 1970.

He hired out in 1966 as a Switchman on the former Cotton Belt Railroad in East St. Louis, Ill. At the time, he worked with a clerk named Don

M. Hahs and the two became friends. Brother Hahs served as BLE and BLET President from 2001-2008.

Bain went firing for the Frisco in 1965 and earned promotion to locomotive engineer in February of 1973 for the N&W. Brother Bain retired as a Burlington Northern Santa Fe locomotive engineer on January 1, 2004. His Last Run was as an engineer of a switch engine in the Temple yard.

He joined the BLET in 1970.

A dedicated union member, Brother Bain served Division 206 as President for 30 years (1974-2004). He was also an active member of the Local Committee of Adjustment and served on the Arrangements Committee at one of the union's International conventions.

During retirement, he enjoys spending time with his family, fishing, golfing and woodworking. 🎯

The BLET publishes Last Runs for members who have retired, and recognizes members with 40 years or more of membership in Honor Roll articles. If you are planning to retire soon, please let us know! For details, contact: John Bentley, Editor, Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen Journal, Email: Bentley@ble-t.org, 1370 Ontario St., Mezzanine, Cleveland, OH 44113-1702

PRESIDENT PIERCE MESSAGE

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2 <=>

disability, and sickness and unemployment — are what these same anti-worker politicians also consider an “entitlement program.” Our benefits also come under routine attacks by this same group of corporate-sponsored politicians, most recently in the House Report accompanying the Ryan Budget, which simply ignores the fact that you pay taxes into our completely self-funded and solvent retirement program. If Railroad Retirement is an entitlement, it's because you and generations of your Brother and Sister railroad workers before you bought and paid for the benefit by sacrificing and accepting smaller wage increases in the present for a more economically secure future. That is why you are entitled to it when you are sick or injured, furloughed, or retire. Programs like Social Security and our com-

“It's time that we looked past the cliches and past the false claims made by many anti-worker politicians that they pretend to occupy the moral high ground.”

— Dennis R. Pierce

parable Railroad Retirement should not be represented in such a negative light because our “entitlement” to them is the result of our paying for them. But if the corporate-sponsored attack on working class Americans succeeds, then what we have set aside and continue to set aside will be stolen for the wealthy and for the corporations whose allegiance is to a flag of green and gold.

It is past time that working Americans realized what these wolves in sheep's clothing are actually about. It's time that we looked past the clichés and past the false claims made by many anti-worker politicians who pretend to occupy the moral high ground. Many of these politicians push a conservative “social agenda” and

will try to sway your view by hiding behind their position on some social issue that tugs at our heartstrings. But they hope you don't notice that they keep those social issues unresolved and in play so they can get elected time after time. And they count on you not noticing that they desert their self-proclaimed moral high ground when it comes to putting the retired working class out on the street by taking away their Social Security and Medicare benefits. We are not talking about Americans who are gaming the system, we are talking about our retired parents, grandparents and family members who paid into the system and without any shame or reservations, are truly entitled to draw the benefits.

I have been working tirelessly since I became your President to spread the word that this attack on working Americans is no accident, it is an orchestrated attempt by the 1% to keep themselves in the 1% at the expense of you and your family. In March of this year, surveys were released showing that the 1% received 93% of the financial gains coming from the still struggling economic recovery in this country. That is not a coincidence, it is the wealthy and corporate America reaping the benefits that they taken from the working class whose labor created those gains. Make no mistake, you are part of that working class, and you are part of the cross section of the American society that these anti-worker politicians are gunning for. Don't be swayed by their attempts to be “like you” on social issues, because their anti-worker agenda does not remotely include you in the end. 🎯



Arizona: Latest front in the War on Workers



BY SEREENA HOGAN
BLET AUXILIARY
NATIONAL
VICE PRESIDENT &
NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE
REPRESENTATIVE

As a resident of the state of Arizona for over 40 years, I have seen some crazy stuff happen in the political arena here. But what has transpired in the last few years since Jan Brewer took office has been nothing short of absurd and very disturbing. Brewer took office in 2008 after President Barack Obama appointed our previous governor, Janet Napolitano, as Secretary of Homeland Security.

Gov. Brewer would have you believe that Arizona has become so violent that it is a place of fear, where beheadings happen in the desert. She actually made those false statements during her campaign for reelection in 2010. When her opponent Terry Goddard asked her in a September 2010 debate why she would not recant her statements about beheadings, she responded with an unrelated comment about his endorsement of unions. Following the debate, when asked by reporters why she would not respond to Mr. Goddard's question, she simply stated "Well this was an interesting evening tonight" and walked away. The author of the book *Scorpions for Breakfast: My Fight Against Special Interests, Liberal Media, and Cynical Politicos to Secure America's Border*, Brewer has a history of abusing her power and making false accusations, not to mention making a fool of herself on local and national television.

And now, in these early months of 2012, Brewer and her right-wing Republican cohorts have introduced a suite of anti-union bills that make those pushed by Wisconsin Governor Scott



Walker and Ohio Governor John Kasich look mild in comparison. These bills were crafted last fall with the help of Scott Walker, as well as the conservative think tank called the Goldwater Institute and the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC), a corporatist group that writes bills for conservative state legislators to attack organized labor in general and collective bargaining in particular. ALEC also played a role in crafting the union-busting bills in Wisconsin and Ohio. Just two days after Ohio voters rejected Kasich's anti-labor agenda by 61 percent to 39 percent, Scott Walker flew to Arizona and made a presentation to Arizona conservatives at the annual dinner of the Goldwater Institute on how they could

attack "the big-government union bosses." And then, at the ALEC meeting in December, Brewer began outlining the Arizona plan when she declared her intention to reform the state's personnel system in order to make it easier to hire and fire public employees.

Arizona is already a "right-to-work" state, where workers enjoy fewer legal protections than those in Wisconsin and Ohio, and unions cannot collect a fair share of the direct costs of representation from "free-rider" workers who opt out of joining the union, even though the union is compelled to represent them.

On February 1, four collective bargaining bills were introduced by Brewer's allies in the state Senate: (1) SB 1485,

an absolute ban on state and local governments and school districts from bargaining with organizations that represent public workers; (2) SB 1486, barring cities and counties from paying release time to workers who are doing union business; (3) SB 1484, which requires unions to obtain annual authorization for automatic payroll deductions for union dues; and (4) SB 1487, a more far-reaching version to ban dues deductions entirely.

Governor Walker's law in Wisconsin bans public employees from bargaining over everything but small wage increases; however, Arizona's SB 1485 goes even further by banning collective bargaining outright and refusing to recognize any union as a bargaining unit. If this bill passes, existing union contracts will be honored for now, but will not be renewed. And, unlike Walker's bill, Arizona's bill includes police and firefighters in its ban. Walker's attempt to "divide and conquer" public sector unions by exempting public safety workers in Wisconsin did not work, which is why lawmakers crafting subsequent bills, like the one in Ohio and now the one in Arizona, included police and firefighters. The support of the traditionally conservative police and firefighters' unions of Ohio, however, actually helped to unite the state's voters and Kasich's anti-union bill, Senate Bill 5, known as "Issue 2" on the November 2011 ballot, was voted down. Many of our BLET officers and members participated in rallies and worked hard to oppose that measure.

We have a very dominating Republican majority in the legislature here in Arizona, making it hard to defeat the anti-union measures they are pushing. But we also have something else in common with Wisconsin — provisions that allow for the recall of

the governor and state legislators. And that is just what is happening now. Not long after the widely publicized "finger wagging incident," in which Ms. Brewer waved her finger in the face of President Obama on an airport tarmac near Phoenix on January 25, a recall campaign was launched against her. This is not the first recall campaign against Ms. Brewer. Last year, a member of Brewer's own party led a committee to have her recalled after she announced that she was cutting organ transplant funding for recipients of Arizona's Health Care Cost Containment System (AHCCCS), which is the state's Medicaid plan. Unfortunately, that recall effort failed after it received an estimated 37,500 signatures, far short of the 432,028 signatures required.

The transplant funding was restored, but only after three people on the transplant list lost their lives. Gov. Brewer illegally cut AHCCCS for over 280,000 of Arizona's less fortunate, including children, the handicapped, and the mentally ill. Those cuts were in direct violation of Proposition 204, voted into law by the citizens of Arizona in 2000.

The wording of the first section of the official recall statement filed on February 3, 2012, with the Arizona Secretary of State was taken almost verbatim from a union statement decrying how Governor Brewer and the other minions of the right-wing anti-union movement have waged war on the workers of the state:

"Taking a page out of the playbooks of Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker and Ohio Gov. John Kasich, Gov. Jan Brewer and extreme right-wing Arizona lawmakers are pushing a series of bills attacking firefighters, teachers, nurses and other public service workers who work hard to keep our communities

safe and strong. These bills would take away all collective bargaining rights for public service workers, leading to large class sizes in our schools, more dangerous working conditions for firefighters and police officers, and making our communities less safe. As in Wisconsin and Ohio, these measures are not about balancing Arizona's budget and are not about jobs. They are about destructive political agendas, right wing politicians and their corporate funders pushing across the country to consolidate their power.

And finally but not least, the workers, the poor, the elderly and children of our beautiful state have been attacked enough by this governor with her cut-backs that threaten to turn our beloved state into a place resembling a third world country. In this year, the centennial of Arizona, We will re-take our state for love, compassion, and humanity. May GOD bless the state of Arizona, recall Jan Brewer."

Lack of funds was cited as the reason that the 2011 recall campaign to remove Jan Brewer from office was unsuccessful. However, not all recent recall campaigns have failed in the state. Russell Pearce, the state senator who has been called one of the most powerful and polarizing figures in Arizona politics, and architect of the controversial anti-immigrant law, was voted out of office in a vicious recall election last November. He was defeated by Republican Jerry Lewis who is not a supporter of the immigration crackdown and who vowed to reject gifts from special interest groups and to work to ban gifts for legislators.

Arizonans cited a long list of reasons in last year's recall campaign for ousting Brewer. Adding new fuel to that fire with these most recent attacks on unions might be just what is needed to make this year's campaign successful. 🗳️

ABOUT THE AUXILIARY:

The BLET Auxiliary exists to support the interest and welfare of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen (BLET) Auxiliary and railroad families, especially the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen, and the organizations of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters Rail Conference, our members and their families throughout the United States. Learn more about joining the Auxiliary at: www.bletauxiliary.net

PURPOSE:

The overall purpose of the Auxiliary shall be to provide support and promote issues that effect the health, safety, welfare and quality of life of railroaders and their families, to promote higher education with the families of its full members, to give assistance to widows, widowers, sisters and brothers, when needed, especially during times of duress, and to render assistance whenever and wherever needed to further our mission.

BLET revises FELA counsel program

On February 29, 2012, the BLET Advisory Board adopted revisions to the Union's program that provides assistance to BLET members injured on the job, who may be entitled to damages pursuant to the Federal Employers' Liability Act (FELA).

The Advisory Board decided that the National Division will discontinue formally designating attorneys and instead will refer its members to the directory of the Academy of Rail Labor Attorneys (ARLA), an organization made up exclusively of lawyers who represent injured employees under the FELA.


For nearly 30 years, the BLET had maintained a list of experienced personal injury lawyers so that the Union's members would have available to them competent, principled legal counsel to assist in the handling of their claims for personal injuries incurred during the course of their railroad employment. This list was commonly known as BLET's Designated Legal Counsel (DLC).

By relinquishing the role of designator and referring employees to the ARLA directory, BLET is expanding the number of attorneys available to its members requiring legal representation. ARLA maintains its own Constitution which, along with the rules of conduct and ethics issued by the states in

which ARLA attorneys practice law, assures BLET members, as well as BLET can, that the attorneys they choose to represent them will maintain the standards required by ARLA.

On these pages is a set of inquiries that BLET recom-

mends all injured members should use when deciding which personal injury attorney will best represent their interests. The Union is convinced that with answers to these inquiries in hand, and the confidence that attorneys who belong to ARLA

offer the knowledge of the industry that is essential to effectively presenting injured employees' claims, BLET members will be able to continue to receive the high quality of representation they previously have received under the formal DLC Program. 

FOR MORE INFORMATION, GO TO: WWW.ARLA.ORG



Recommendations for BLET members when selecting a personal injury lawyer

BLET members who are injured on the job possess valuable rights under the Federal Employers' Liability Act (FELA). There are many competent personal injury lawyers who can assist you in protecting those rights and recovering damages from your railroad employer to compensate you for the harm such injuries cause you. The BLET recommends that you contact a lawyer who is a member of the Academy of Rail Labor Attorneys (ARLA), a group of personal injury lawyers who specialize in representing injured railroad workers in FELA cases. Here is a list of questions to assist you in deciding which lawyer can best represent your interests:

» **Does the attorney** have an established record of successful litigation experience?

» **How many FELA cases** has the attorney tried before jury?

» **What is the attorney's** success record at trial?

» **Has the attorney** tried cases involving the same injury you have suffered?

» **Has the attorney** tried cases against the same railroad?

» **Will the attorney** provide you with the names of other railroad employees he/she has represented so that you can ask them about their experiences with the attorney before you decide whom to retain?

» **Does the attorney** maintain current malpractice insurance in the amount of at least \$1 million per occurrence?

» **Does the attorney** maintain membership in good standing in the bar of the state in which he or she practices law?

» **Has the attorney** been suspended or disbarred from the

practice of law in any state?

» **Will the attorney** give injured members free advice in connection with their injury, and render assistance to them in related matters (RUIA, etc.)?

» **Will the attorney** agree not charge to you more than 25% of the gross settlement or award, or 33 1/3% of the net settlement or award?

» **Are the costs** you will be charged reasonable and incurred as a direct result of representing you?

» **Will you have** to pay for those costs during the prosecution of your case or will they be taken out of any settlement or verdict at the end of the case?

» **Will you be given**, in written form, a full accounting and breakdown of all expenses incurred, fees charged, or any other expenditures or deductions from the proceeds of any settlement or verdict?

» **Will you have** to pay anything if you lose?

» **How will the attorney** con-

duct the investigation and prosecution of your case?

» **Will the attorney** personally represent you or will he/she refer your case to another attorney for handling? If the latter, will the attorney you retain keep control of the case and remain fully responsible and accountable to you? Will you have the right to meet with and approve the other attorney?

» **Does the attorney** take an active part in matters of concern to railroad employees and the rail industry, including supporting the legislative programs of the BLET?

You certainly will have other questions that you consider relevant. Do not limit yourself to these. Don't be pressured into making a decision. Only retain an attorney whom you feel fully comfortable is the one who will best represent your interests in a manner which you consider acceptable.



BLET members should be aware that all attorneys are prohibited from engaging, either directly or indirectly, in Union politics at any level of the BLET (the National Division, the General Committees of Adjustment, the Local Divisions, and the National and State Legislative Boards). They may not contribute financially to the campaign of any candidate for union office, promote or otherwise seek support for or against a candidate, nor in any way attempt to influence any Union election or vote on any Union issue.

No BLET officer or employee at any level of the Union is permitted to accept from any attorney any permissible gratuity, payment or gift of any more than \$250 in the aggregate during any calendar year. ("Gratuity, payment or gift" includes both money, tangible items, and services of any kind.) Further, no BLET officer or employee, at any level of the Union, is allowed to accept (a) any gratuity, payment or gift of any amount from any lawyer for the purpose of obtaining representation of an injured member or (b) any portion of any attorney's fee earned in connection with representing any BLET member.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE VISIT: WWW.BLE-T.ORG/FELA

REVISED FELA PROGRAM PDF DOWNLOADS

Recommendations for BLET Members
When Selecting A Personal Injury Lawyer (2 pages)
www.ble-t.org/pr/pdf/BLET_member_recommendations.pdf

Resolution Regarding 2012 Revision to
BLET FELA Counsel Program (2 pages)
www.ble-t.org/pr/pdf/FELA_Counsel_Resolution_2012.pdf

Statement Regarding 2012 Revision to
BLET FELA Counsel Program (1 page)
www.ble-t.org/pr/pdf/FELA_Counsel_Statement_2012.pdf

Code of Compliance for BLET Officers and Employees
Concerning Relationships with Employers and Legal Counsel
Representing or Seeking to Represent Injured
BLET Members, Revised February 29, 2012 (2 pages)
www.ble-t.org/pr/pdf/Code_of_Compliance_Legal_Counsel.pdf

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Photos: courtesy Walt Schmidt

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Arrangements Chairman Craig Gilchrist (right), blecag@nemontel.net and Co-Chair D.B. Kenner (left), kennerdb@yahoo.com.



Photo: Billings Chamber of Commerce/CVB