

Journal

LOCOMOTIVE ENGINEERS & TRAINMEN

VOLUME 116 | No. 1 | SPRING 2013

150 years!

**Time to celebrate as BLET
marks historic anniversary
on May 8th in Detroit**

Photo Album

**Highlights from
150th Anniversary
Celebration**

**Greetings from
the White House**

Also inside

**2013 REGIONAL
MEETINGS**
Registration
now underway
PG. 4





BLET President's Message

BY DENNIS R. PIERCE, BLET NATIONAL PRESIDENT

Lessons from our 150th

This edition of the *Journal* goes to press on the heels of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen's 150th Anniversary. All members, active and retired, should be proud of this milestone, as the BLET is the oldest labor organization in North America. Milestones like this one don't happen by accident, they happen because dedicated members take the time to get involved in their union, and by doing so, they become the fabric that holds our union together and makes it strong for generation after generation.

In the beginning, it was 12 men who stood up against all odds and formed the Brotherhood at a time when unions were not even legally recognized. As you follow the history of our Brotherhood, the efforts of those 12 men, and those that have followed them, have time and time again bettered the working conditions, wages and benefits of all locomotive engineers and trainmen. That does not mean that our work is finished, or that the members of our proud union are treated as well as they should be. Even so, I think that this anniversary year gives all members a chance to look back at what has been accomplished, and to be proud that they have been a part of it.

That was our goal when we set out to celebrate our anniversary; to have an industry wide celebration that recog-



"Our goal in doing so was to create one day in 150 years, where all in the industry recognized the contribution that BLET's membership makes to the industry."

nized not just the contributions of the union, but more importantly the contributions of the proud members, active and retired, who are the backbone of the union. To that end, we invited speakers and guests from across the industry, including other union Presidents and Officers, Carrier Officers, and representatives from the branches of government and regulatory bodies that are also a key part of the industry that locomotive engineers and trainmen make successful. Our goal in doing so was to create one day in 150 years, where all in the industry recognized the contribution that BLET's membership makes to the industry, the nation's commerce, and to building a strong middle class America. From Teamster General President Hoffa's opening remarks, to each and every speaker, we

heard personal stories about the ways in which the BLET and its membership had made a difference, and are still making a difference. That to me was especially rewarding, as there is no union without the membership, and all too often the 24 hours a day, 7 days a week contribution that the membership of this great union makes is overlooked. That was not the case on May 8th in Detroit.

I think that it was also an important milestone for rail labor in general, and the presence of International Presidents, speakers and guests from 10 other rail unions spoke volumes about union solidarity. In the time that I have been National President, we have worked hard to build coalitions with all rail unions that will work with us, and to concentrate and direct our energy to our com-

mon goals. The outpouring of support that we received from rail labor during our celebration made me proud to be part of the network of rail unions that fight day in and day out for their membership. I would like to offer my personal thanks to all of the other Union Presidents and Officers who took the time from their busy schedules to join us; your presence and remarks made the day special in more ways than you will ever know.

Finally, I must offer my thanks to the many officers, members and staff members who worked so hard to make our celebration one that was worthy of the blood, sweat and tears of those who came before us. As many at the National Division will tell you, I am a hands-on President. I wear that description with pride, as I think that all members past and present have every right to expect that the officers who lead our union put their heart and souls into the work of the Brotherhood. The down side is that there were many sleepless nights as we prepared for the celebration, not just by me, but also on the part of those who shared my high expectations for May 8th. The Executive Committee, where I am joined by my friends and Brothers First Vice President Pruitt and National Secretary Treasurer Walpert, caught the brunt of the stress that came with planning such an event,
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A DIVISION OF THE RAIL CONFERENCE,
INTERNATIONAL BROTHERHOOD
OF TEAMSTERS

WWW.BLE-T.ORG

»»» ON THE COVER: AN UNIDENTIFIED PENNSYLVANIA RAILROAD ENGINEER AND BLET MEMBER CHECKS HIS POCKET WATCH IN 1963. THIS IS ONE OF SEVERAL PROMOTIONAL PHOTOS USED BY THE BLE TO CELEBRATE ITS 100TH ANNIVERSARY 50 YEARS AGO. (Photo: BLET Archives)



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Mark your calendars for 2013 BLET regional meetings

BLET members looking to combine educational opportunities with family fun should consider attending one of the Organization's four regional meetings in 2013.

These multi-day meetings combine the best of the Brotherhood — education and training, networking, and family fun — all in one place. The meetings provide an excellent

opportunity for members to meet face-to-face with their elected Brotherhood officers. Members will be able to reminisce with old acquaintances, make new friends, and brush up on their union representation skills.

Please monitor the BLET website for the latest information. Dates and locations for the 2013 regional meetings are listed below. 📍



IWC 2013: The Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco

Photo: David Weintraub, SFCVB

JUNE 23-28, 2013 **86th annual SMA** Richmond, Va.

Arrangements Chairman Troy Bryant, Local Chairman of Division 532, and Co-Chairman Dave Powers, Secretary-Treasurer of Division 532, welcome all BLET members to historic Richmond/Short Pump, Va., for the 2013 SMA. For details, visit www.sma2013.net or www.ble-t.org/sma.



Photos: Copyright Richmond Metropolitan CVB

JULY 14-JULY 18, 2013 **73rd annual IWC** San Francisco, Calif.

Hosted by Co-chairmen Luis Chavez Jr., Local Chairman of Division 283 (Oakland, Calif.) and Oscar Burrola, Local Chairman of Division 839 (Richmond, Calif.), at the Hilton San Francisco Financial District Hotel for the 2013 IWC. For details, visit: www.iwc2013.org.



Photos: San Francisco CVB

JULY 28-AUGUST 1, 2013 **75th annual EUMA** Baltimore, Md.

Arrangements Chairman Fred Cox, Local Chairman of BLET Division 52, welcomes all BLET members to Baltimore's Inner Harbor District for the 2013 EUMA. For details, visit: www.ble-t.org/euma.



Photos: Visit Baltimore

AUGUST 25-29, 2013 **78th annual SWCM** New Orleans, La.

Arrangements Chairman Arlin Todd, Chairman of the Louisiana State Legislative Board, welcomes all BLET members to the Loews New Orleans Hotel for the 2013 SWCM. For details, visit: www.bletsbcm.org or www.ble-t.org/swcm.



Photos: New Orleans CVB

BLET Division 3 helps the needy with Coats for Kids

Active and retired members of BLET Division 3 (Cleveland, Ohio) volunteered to help the needy as part of Northeastern Ohio's Coats for Kids program.

Everyone deserves to be warm in winter, especially a cold Cleveland winter. The Brothers and Sisters of Division 3 volunteered to distribute donated coats to the needy on December 19 and 20, 2012. They volunteered to register those in need, processed them through lines, and gave them donated items that included coats, toys, stocking caps and gloves.

The Coats for Kids program is held jointly with the Salvation Army and has been held each year in the Cleveland area for 31 consecutive years. Since 1981, Coats for Kids has raised more than \$3.25 million and donated more than 500,000 new or like-new coats to children throughout northeast Ohio. 📍



Coats for Kids volunteers: From left: Efen Feliciano, Division 3; Lawson Whitfield, Division 3; Ronnie Golden, Division 3; John Leonard, Division 260 (Ashtabula, Ohio); Frank Poremba, Division 3; and Kenny Rodebaugh, Division 3. (Present but not pictured: Erin Schmelzer, Division 3.) **Photo:** courtesy Jerry Lambert

Division 569's annual holiday party



BLET Tradition: The Christmas party for BLET Division 569 (Heavener, Okla.) has become an annual tradition for members and their families.

The members of BLET Division 569 (Heavener, Okla.) held their annual Christmas party on December 12, 2012. The traditional event was well attended by the spouses and

children of BLET members, who hosted the party following their regular division meeting. As in years past, Division 569 President Terry W. Lynch emceed with assistance from Local Chairman David

M. Grubbs Jr. Special guests included BLET National Vice President Cole Davis and Kansas City Southern General Chairman Sam Parker.

"This is the second year that I have been invited and

had the privilege of attending their Christmas celebration," Brother Davis said. "This is a very close knit Division and it is always a pleasure to visit with the members and their families." 📍

letters to the editor

(EDITOR'S NOTE: THE FOLLOWING LETTER TO THE EDITOR ORIGINALLY APPEARED IN THE EL PASO TIMES NEWSPAPER ON DECEMBER 28, 2012. IT WAS ALSO SUBMITTED TO THE BLET FOR PUBLICATION IN OUR MAGAZINE.)

Dear Editor:

This is in response to a letter to the editor by Charlie Hooten published in the *El Paso Times*. Mr. Hooten wrote that he disliked a "right to work" editorial cartoon. In response, I would suggest further investigation of some of his statements and what "right to work" really means. For accuracy and clarity, it should really read "right to work for less."

Also, he perpetuates the myth that union dues are used for political purposes. That is against the law and the Department of Labor vigorously monitors union organizations to ensure it does not happen. Unions do have Political Action Committees (PACs) just like corporations and special interest groups, but donations to support any and all candidates are strictly voluntary. Not a penny comes out of dues.

Union dues are paid by employees for representation during contract negotiations (most of which have little to do with wages, and much more to do with benefits and workplace safety), and representation in the grievance process should an employee be wrongfully terminated.

"Right to work" means employees don't have to pay dues, but benefit from those who do. I call that mooching, not "individual freedom."

Rather than slander unions maybe it would be a good idea to seek out the facts and not listen to the propaganda.

Becky Schneider
BLET Auxiliary

Past National President
& Member, Auxiliary #591

Dear President Pierce:

I would like to thank you for taking the time to send me *The History of the BLET* and the BLET 150th anniversary commemorative key chain! I have been retired since 2006 and follow the Brotherhood online and with all the other mail you send me. It is so nice to be a part of such a great organization. I had the pleasure of serving as Secretary-Treasurer, Local Chairman, and President of Rich Mountain Division 569 in Heavener, Okla. I always knew the Brotherhood had our backs. Life is good in retirement because of all the work that the BLET has done over the years for working men and women everywhere.

Fraternally,
Bill W. Pitchford
Retired, Division 569
Heavener, Okla.

Dear President Pierce:

Please accept my sincere thanks again for taking the time to meet our Local Chairmen and address our recent quadrennial meeting in Washington, D.C. I know full well that you had a particularly grueling schedule that week with the 150th Anniversary Celebration in Detroit, and the IBT General Executive Board Meeting in Las Vegas immediately thereafter. You going above and beyond the call of duty to make certain that you attended our meeting, based on a promise to my office, speaks volumes to your personal character, leadership, and commitment to our great Brotherhood, which you so proudly and diligently represent.

Furthermore, I also want to take this opportunity to let you know that our GCA Executive



"Right to work" means employees don't have to pay dues, but benefit from those who do. I call that mooching, not individual freedom. Rather than slander unions maybe it would be a good idea to seek out the facts and not listen to the propaganda."

— Becky Schneider, BLET Auxiliary Past National President

Committee and Local Chairmen commend and congratulate you, the Advisory Board, and the dedicated National Division staff on the time, effort and energy devoted in producing a truly fitting celebration of 150 years of our proud heritage as Locomotive Engineers. Coupled with your vision and initiative of vigorously promoting "Proud to be American... Proud to be Union," we firmly be-

lieve that you have advanced and re-instilled a sense of pride in our craft that for far too long has been missing within the ranks of our membership. And, in times when apathy and self-entitlement more often than not seem to guide attitudes regarding unionism and brotherhood, your leadership at the National Division has, at long last, brought about the advent of a cultural change that we so des-

letters to the editor

"America's railroads and rail labor are the real backbone of our nation's economy. We have earned our way as has been shown many times since 1863. I have been a member of the Brotherhood since 1961."

— Patrick Henry Lynch, Retired, Division 476

perately need to embrace as we continue to fight for and advance the rights and welfare of the working class American's we represent in today's world.

Simply put, I have always been extremely proud of being a Locomotive Engineer, but the efforts of the National Division under your leadership has breathed new life into that existing pride, and for that my Brother you will always have my personal thanks and gratitude.

As always, with warmest personal regards, in solidarity I remain

Fraternally yours,
Mark B. Kenny
General Chairman
Amtrak
Washington, D.C.

Dear President Pierce:

May 8, 2013, was great day for history, for the country, and for the BLET's membership. Over the past 150 years, the BLE has shown the light to all American citizens — not only by our words, but by our actions — that labor must have an organized voice to get what is justly ours.

Many American-citizen

wage earners do not receive just compensation because they have no organized voice. Sometimes this is their own fault because of their closed minds. America's railroads and rail labor are the real backbone of our nation's economy. We have earned our way as has been shown many times since 1863. I have been a member of the Brotherhood since 1961.

Fraternally,
Patrick Henry Lynch,
Retired, Division 476
Eugene, Ore.

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

Ohio Teamsters fight 'right to work'

In January, Teamsters throughout Ohio gathered in Cleveland for a training seminar on right to work legislation. With the anti-union law going into effect in surrounding states (Michigan and Indiana), the Ohio Teamsters took a pro-active approach to preventing similar legislation from becoming law in the Buckeye state.

About 70 Teamsters attended the seminar, put on by staff from the International Brotherhood of Teamsters out of Washington, D.C. The seminar was held at the offices of Joint Council 41 in Cleveland, and about 14 BLET members were in attendance. Members from BLET Division 3 in Cleveland represented the biggest single group from the BLET contingent.

BLET National President



We Are Ohio: A strong showing of BLET members attended a Teamster workshop on fighting 'right to work' laws in Ohio. At center is BLET National President Pierce and Teamsters International Vice President Al Mixon. (Teamsters Photo)

Dennis R. Pierce represented the National Division and met with Teamsters International Vice President Al Mixon (center). Brother Mixon is also Secretary-Treasurer of Teamsters Local 507 and Joint Council 41 in Cleveland.

BLET members who attended included: James Cleary, Division 3 (Cleve-

land); Jim Blum, Division 526 (Willard); Erin Schmelzer, Division 3; Paul Volosyn, Division 3; Dan DeSelms, Division 4 (Toledo); Robert Scholl, Division 894 (Columbus); Dennis Vasko, Division 3; Brian Tobin, Division 3; Kevin McGinty, Division 3; Bill Ellert, Division 3; and John Fink, Division 3 and Director

of Bylaws Administration on the National Division President's Staff.

Their preemptive planning paid dividends later in the year. On May 1, two Ohio House Republicans unveiled legislation to make Ohio a right to work state, but the idea was killed in the Senate within a matter of hours. ☐

Former General Chairman Gene Thompson, 1937-2012

AFTER AN EXTENDED ILLNESS, FORMER BLE GENERAL CHAIRMAN D. E. "Gene" Thompson passed away at his home surrounded by his family on December 7, 2012.

Brother Thompson, 75, was born on August 19, 1937. After graduating from high school in 1955, he served in the U.S. Marine Corps from 1956-1959. He hired out on the Cotton Belt Railroad (St. Louis Southwestern) in 1959 in engine service, joining Division 442 (Dexter City, Mo.) of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers (BLE) on May 1, 1967. He held continuous membership until the time of his passing.

Thompson served as General Chairman for 17 years, 1983-2000, and retired on September 30, 2000. Prior to that, he was elected to serve as Local Chairman of Division 442 from 1974-1983. He was well respected by the membership and his hard work resulted in many important improvements for BLE members throughout his career. Thompson represented Cotton Belt engineers during the Union Pacific/Southern Pacific merger negotiations during the 1990s, which led to ratified agreements to implement the merger.

Thompson handled one of the first



Locomotive Engineer Review Board (LERB) cases for the BLE. He also represented the BLE during one of the early regulatory reviews of the Federal Railroad Administration's engineer certification process, which resulted in reduced penalties for engineers regarding decertifications. He served as Chairman of the Western General Chairman's Association (WGCA) for several years and was Chairman of the Caucus Committee during the BLE's 1991 International Convention.

During his time away from the

railroad, Brother Thompson enjoyed playing golf, hunting, playing cards with friends, and was a diehard St. Louis Cardinals fan. He was also active in his community, serving as a volunteer fireman for the city of Illmo and coaching little league baseball for many years. He also spent two years as Commissioner of the Illmo youth league and served on the Scott City School Board until the time of his passing.

Along with fellow engineer and friend John Counts (also Division 442), Brother Thompson helped establish the first Operation Lifesaver railroad grade crossing safety program for Southeast Missouri and Northeast Arkansas.

Brother Thompson is survived by: wife of 49 years, Faye; son Brad and his wife Lara; daughter Sonya Miller and her husband Tom; and six grandchildren (Heidi Thompson, Kelsey Thomson, Danyelle Pate, Madison Thompson, Ryan Miller, and Myriah Miller.). He is also survived by his five brothers and two sisters. His son Brad is a Union Pacific engineer and former Local Chairman of BLE Division 442.

National President Pierce extended deepest condolences to the Thompson family. ☪

This information is based upon reports filed by the Secretary-Treasurers of the various BLET Divisions

AS OF MARCH 31, 2013

171 — W. G. Davidson
190 — J. R. Manis
190 — G. E. Mathews
207 — D. D. Dye
232 — D. D. James
269 — L. P. Crowe
287 — D. W. McArthur
421 — J. Behlmaier
497 — D. J. Amadeo
578 — C. W. Harvey
612 — R. Czuprynski
739 — W. C. Huebner
742 — P. B. Sherrill
781 — L. D. Richardson
830 — D. Eversole

AS OF FEB. 28, 2013

48 — R. S. Ellison
115 — S. A. Garcia
219 — W. E. Christian
332 — C. J. Goodson
383 — P. M. Salse
400 — C. A. DeJean
459 — R. G. Jones
497 — J. C. Hatfield
671 — N. H. Krushe
706 — M. R. Sullivan
758 — T. L. Monear
776 — M. R. Wells
940 — J. B. Whitacre

AS OF JAN. 31, 2013

42 — B. D. Wheeler
75 — K. S. Pore

153 — A. C. Kurtz
198 — B. B. Lehman
256 — W. C. Davis
302 — E. D. Woodard
391 — M. E. Kelley
502 — J. R. Atkin
518 — J. L. Bellessa Sr.
527 — G. L. Fields
548 — S. E. Polk
730 — W. A. Kovensky
752 — J. J. Childrose

AS OF DEC. 31, 2012

11 — E. R. Cheetham
139 — R. C. Stillinger Jr.
193 — M. L. Marchadie
239 — J. R. Fleet
421 — K. W. Wade

442 — D. E. Thompson
456 — R. E. Lassiter Jr.
582 — R. R. Peterson
624 — M. A. Thiel
834 — M. W. Holmes

AS OF NOV. 30, 2012

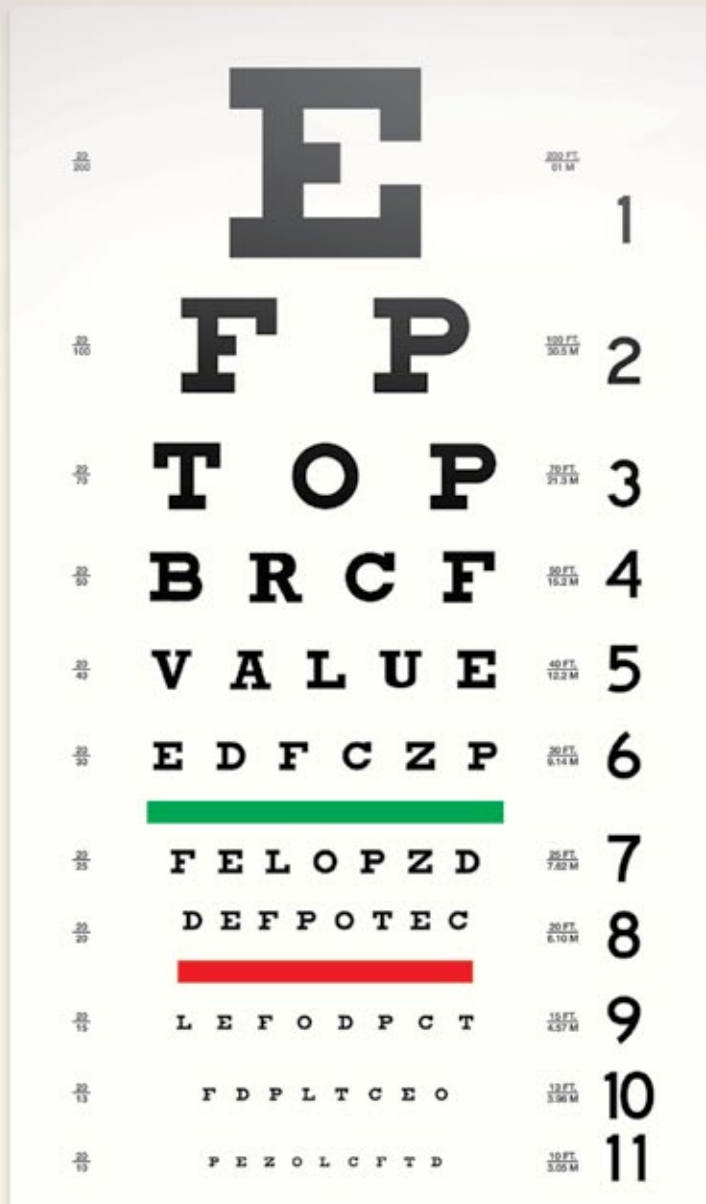
6 — C. W. Marxen
117 — S. P. Thompson
237 — C. T. Reynolds
573 — L. Felton
940 — J. M. Schouweiler

AS OF OCT. 31, 2012

2 — R. P. Cagney
14 — J. M. Smith
28 — J. A. Datri
49 — J. W. Hinely

74 — E. G. Briner
77 — C. E. Burns
110 — P. D. McCarthy
140 — P. E. Stringfellow
153 — L. D. Hoffacker
193 — C. H. Brown Sr.
193 — W. S. Slie
202 — S. J. Kloeckner
202 — G. L. Thompson
250 — R. F. Weidert
269 — R. P. Bizzarro
518 — R. T. Fix
526 — R. J. Beagle
537 — S. W. Bodkin
537 — R. E. Walker
682 — R. E. Bubacz
934 — N. S. Cooper

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BLET *First Vice President's Message*

BY E. LEE PRUITT, BLET FIRST VICE PRESIDENT

A thank you to our founding fathers

150th anniversary celebration a time to be grateful for what we have

When 12 locomotive engineers joined hands and founded the Brotherhood of the Footboard on May 8, 1863, they bound their fates together and changed the course of labor history in America. They established a Brotherhood that has improved the lives of countless engineers for generations. Today, our fates are still bound to those 12 brave men who risked everything to establish the organization now known as the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen.

As we celebrate our 150th Anniversary, it is our goal to recognize these men to whom we are eternally grateful. We are forever indebted to them, because what we have today is due in large part to their bravery, self-sacrifice, and foresight. Led by William D. Robinson, our founding fathers saw the need to come together and bargain collectively for improvements in pay, working conditions, safety, and other benefits. But their fates were not as happy as we might hope. Several of our founding fathers lost their jobs and were blacklisted by spiteful railroad company officials. Today, the pay and working conditions we are blessed with are built upon the sacrifices made by those who founded our Brotherhood in 1863 and those who followed in their footsteps. This an-



niversary is an appropriate time to thank these brave men for laying the cornerstone that locomotive engineers have built their lives upon for 150 years.

As a union officer, it has been my duty — and my honor — to maintain their legacy and to carry on the fight for improvements in pay and safe working conditions. It has also been my duty — and my honor — to play a role in planning our 150th Anniversary celebration.

Our goal was to commemorate our 150th Anniversary in an appropriate and dignified manner. I think we did that with festivities and ceremonies in Detroit — the city of our founding — from May 5-9, 2013. We did it, but it wasn't easy.

Under the leadership of President Pierce, planning for the event began many, many months ago as we commenced laying the groundwork for the celebration. Much time was spent just selecting a site for

the celebration. Even more effort was spent deciding what to do and how to recognize our historic anniversary. As Brother Pierce has said, there's no handbook available to guide you in planning a 150th Anniversary celebration.

We conducted extensive research to update and rewrite our BLET History Book, which was mailed to all active and retired members, and to create a video history of our Brotherhood. We designed a logo to symbolize our 150th Anniversary. We worked with numerous vendors to reproduce that logo on various commemorative items for our members. We worked with hotels and caterers to plan an event that would be accessible to our members. We worked with printing companies to produce our history book, our souvenir program, and even the signs and tickets for the celebration. We even worked with a company that mints coins to produce our commemorative key chains, which

were mailed to all active and retired members. In addition the Historical Committee gathered artifacts, including our original charter, and pictures which received great reviews by all. All this does not even take into account the logistical planning to make sure everything was signed, sealed and delivered by May 8.

The amount of work required to accomplish our goal was impressive. I would like to thank those whose efforts made the 150th Anniversary a success. There are so many individuals who I want to thank but can't because there's not enough room on this page to do so. However, I especially want to thank the Advisory Board who chaired and co-chaired the events, the members of our BLET National Division staff in Cleveland and dozens of officers and members in the field who really stepped up to the plate and delivered a home run.

I'm proud of the work that was accomplished and am proud of everyone who came together as a team to make the 150th Anniversary celebration the successful event that it was. The spirit of Brotherhood and pride was evident throughout the days in Detroit. And as we move beyond our 150th Anniversary celebration, it is my sincere hope that this positive spirit will linger and inspire us each day as we carry on the legacy of William D. Robinson and all the Brotherhood's founders. 🇺🇸



BLET National Secretary-Treasurer's Message

BY WILLIAM C. WALPERT, BLET NATIONAL SECRETARY-TREASURER

150 years of pride

Personal reflections on the BLET's historic anniversary celebration

At the conclusion of our 150th Anniversary Celebration in Detroit during the week of May 8th, 2013, President Pierce asked me how I thought it went. I was at a loss for words to explain how I felt, so I thought I would use this opportunity to put into writing my thoughts, observations and feelings regarding this historic and monumental event.

President Pierce, in my 37 years as an officer of this storied Organization, I have never witnessed anything so remarkable. All of the months of planning and worry and consternation were worth it. At first, I must admit that I was somewhat apprehensive when I saw the lengthy list of speakers that were scheduled throughout the day. I have sat through days of dry and boring speakers in the past and was hoping against hope that that would not be the case on this extraordinary and celebrated day.

My hopes came true. IBT General President James P. Hoffa got things off to a rousing start with a speech that got everyone in the crowded room to their feet. Smiles were everywhere and blood was pumping. That set the course for an incredible day of speeches — all of which seemed to come right from the heart.

Although every one of the speeches kept the rapt atten-



tion of the audience and were exceptionally well done, two speeches touched me personally. Walt Barrows, the Labor Member of the Railroad Retirement Board, spoke of a case in the files of the Board.

The widow of a railroader asked a union for help back in the 1940s. Following her husband's passing, the widow received a one time, lump sum payment from the Railroad Retirement Board of less than \$300. She went to the union to see if they could do anything to help her and her family to better make ends meet. The union went to bat for her and successfully convinced the Board to reconsider her case, winning her a monthly stipend of about \$30 per month. It may not seem like much now, but that widow was able to stretch that monthly stipend a lot further than you might think, and

was able to better provide for her family thanks to the union's efforts. By the way, that union was the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers... and that widow was the grandmother of Walt Barrows. I can assure you that the moving and personal words of Brother Barrows touched the hearts of everyone in the room, and it reminded me of why I am proud to be a member of the BLET.

Another speech that struck a chord with me was the extemporaneous words of the president of the American Train Dispatchers Association, Leo McCann. Brother McCann spoke of the close relationship of the two organizations, the ATDA and the BLET, pointing out that that we were at one time merged as a single organization. He went on to recognize my father, Clifford, who was a gen-

eral chairman of the ATDA. I can tell you that there was a lump in my throat when those words were spoken — as there is now as I write these words.

I would be remiss if I did not personally thank everyone on the committees that worked so hard and so diligently to make this 150th Anniversary Celebration the success it was. Although every person should be congratulated, there are two people who worked closely with me and therefore I know firsthand how hard they worked. BLET First Vice President Lee Pruitt and Special Representative and Coordinator of Education and Training Ken Kroeger each performed a yeoman's effort.

From my point of view, the celebration of our heritage could not have been more of a success, President Pierce. Under your leadership, it was a remarkable and noteworthy achievement, from the train ride at Greenfield Village, a day of moving speeches, and culminating in the enjoyable golf outing.

My thoughts turn to those extraordinary 12 Brothers on May 8, 1863, who had the courage and foresight to band together and form what would become one of the greatest labor organizations in history. So, President Pierce, I may have been at a loss for words on the evening of May 8, 2013, but I think you know now how I feel. 🍀



Proud to be American, Proud to be Union

DENNIS R. PIERCE: BLET NATIONAL PRESIDENT

Dennis Pierce is the 23rd President of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen. He also serves as the President of the Teamsters Rail Conference. He is a dedicated union man with a tremendous work ethic, who is fiercely proud to be a locomotive engineer. But with Dennis Pierce, it's his family that gives his work true meaning.

Pierce's family experiences growing up provided the foundation for his work ethic as well as his devotion to the Brotherhood, which he sees as working for a cause greater than himself. "My biological father was killed when I was 2 years old, leaving my mother a widow with 3 children very young in life. When she remarried almost a half a decade later, the man that I have called father since then not only treated me like his own, he, along with my mother, taught me by example the value of hard work and the value of serving others," Pierce said.

Pierce's first President's Message in 2010 told the story of how his father taught him the values of the Greatest Generation. "My father always said that any job worth doing was worth doing

well, and that's a value that still drives me today."

Unfortunately, Pierce doesn't spend as much time with his family as he would like these days. On June 24, 2010, President Pierce was elected by acclamation to serve as President of the Teamsters Rail Conference, and just a few days later — on July 1, 2010 — he became National President of the BLET. A few short months later, on December 16, 2010, he made history as the first BLET President in 148 years to win election by direct vote of the membership. Prior to that, all BLET national officers were elected by delegates in session at convention.

Pierce acknowledged the significance of that historic election, saying "Our true strength as a union flows from our collective efforts. The membership is the backbone of the union and I am honored that the BLET membership placed their confidence in me to lead our proud union. With an active membership, the BLET today speaks with a more powerful voice than ever before."

Pierce's related duties as an officer of the BLET and the Teamsters Rail Conference have him on the road and away from his family on an almost

weekly basis. Shortly after the historic 2010 election, Pierce led the union into action as the Brotherhood and all of organized labor came under attack in what is now known as the War on Workers. Corporate interests and ultra-conservative politicians began an organized campaign to discredit unions and their members. Their plan of attack has been to blame unions for the economic ills of the country.

In response, President Pierce helped launch a counter offensive, a campaign called "Proud to be American, Proud to be Union." Pierce said then, "The middle class in this country was better off when unions were their strongest and it is clear to me that unions are the not the problem behind today's economic problems, they are the solution to those problems. Better working conditions, higher wages and better quality of life have always been the union movement's goals and the strong middle class that comes from those efforts are the true economic engine that will make America the strong and vibrant country that we all work towards."

The campaign has been widely embraced by BLET members and has helped restore pride in the union. In a further effort to restore both par-

DENNIS R. PIERCE BIO **Title:** National President **Railroad:** BNSF **Member:** BLET Division 687 (Sioux City, Iowa). **Background:** Joined the BLET on April 1, 1981. Hired out in Lincoln, Neb., 1977. Earned promotion to engineer, 1981. **Union history:** Started as a union officer at the grassroots level and worked up through all of the levels of the Organization. Served as Local Chairman, Vice General Chairman then General Chairman. Elevated to the Advisory Board in 2008. As General Chairman from 2001-2008, he presided over the BLET's largest General Committee of Adjustment — the BNSF/MRL GCA, which represents approximately 3,500 members. **Personal:** Big fan of college football, especially University of Nebraska.



Dennis R. Pierce
National President

ticipation and pride in the union, shortly after becoming President, Pierce started travelling to meetings of BLET members all across the country as often as his duties permit. “By mid-year, I will have met this year with the membership at six separate BLET Education and Training classes, State Legislative Board meetings in Wyoming, Oklahoma, New Jersey, Arkansas and Nebraska, three General Committee of Adjustment meetings, as well as Division meetings in Ohio and Nebraska, and a Town Hall meeting in Cheyenne, Wyoming. My goal is to meet face to face with the membership and hear about the issues that are important to them.”

Pierce also knows that one union

alone cannot turn the tide in this War on Workers. Under his direction, the BLET has actively worked to strengthen our bonds with other labor unions. “Our outreach efforts have benefitted the Brotherhood and its membership in many ways and our union is better off as a whole thanks to our increased solidarity with the Teamsters, BMWED, and all other labor unions.”

A particular source of pride for the organization and for President Pierce is the BLET’s 150th Anniversary, which was celebrated from May 5-9, 2013, with festivities and meetings in Detroit, Mich.

“I am honored and humbled to serve as BLET’s National President during such an historic and momentous oc-

casional,” he said. “We set out to mark our 150th Anniversary in an appropriate and dignified manner, and I think the Brotherhood’s founding fathers would be proud of the manner in which we commemorated the occasion.”

As a testament to the Brotherhood’s legacy in the House of Labor, IBT General President Hoffa and leaders from nine other rail unions addressed the BLET at the union’s 150th Anniversary celebration in Detroit.

President Pierce began his railroad career as a Burlington Northern Maintenance of Way employee in 1977 in Lincoln, Nebraska. In 1979, he transferred to a clerical position with Burlington Northern. In 1980, he transferred again to the firemen’s craft and earned promotion to locomotive engineer in 1981.

President Pierce started as a union officer at the grassroots level, working his way up through all of the levels of the Organization. He joined BLET Division 98 in Lincoln, Nebraska, on April 1, 1981 and became Local Chairman of Division 98 in 1991. In 1992, Pierce was elected as 2nd Alternate Vice General Chairman of the BN Northlines/MRL General Committee of Adjustment. In 1995, he was elected as a full time 3rd Vice General Chairman for the BN Northlines/MRL GCA and he and his family relocated from Nebraska to the GCA Office in St. Paul, Minnesota. Brother Pierce was elected as 1st Vice General Chairman in 1998 and relocated again to Ft. Worth, Texas, in 1999 when the GCA office was moved there. Pierce became General Chairman in 2001, and held that position until he became a National Division Vice President in 2008. He became First Vice President in December of 2009, elevating to National President in July of 2010. He currently is a member of BLET Division 687 in Sioux City, Iowa.

President Pierce was born on July 23, 1958. He and his wife, Lori, were married on July 13, 1979, and have three children, Travis, Matt and Tessa. In his free time, Brother Pierce enjoys skiing and golf, and — most important for any Nebraska native — college football. 🏈

BROTHERHOOD OF LOCOMOTIVE ENGINEERS AND TRAINMEN



150th Anniversary Special Section

PG 16 Founded in 1863, BLET marked its historic 150th anniversary in Detroit on May 8, 2013.

PG 16 Commemorative History Book mailed to all active and retired members.

PG 17 Original charter from Division 1, Brotherhood of the Footboard.

PGS 18-19 Paying tribute to the Organization's founding fathers.

PGS 20-21 Remembering Brotherhood founder William D. Robinson.

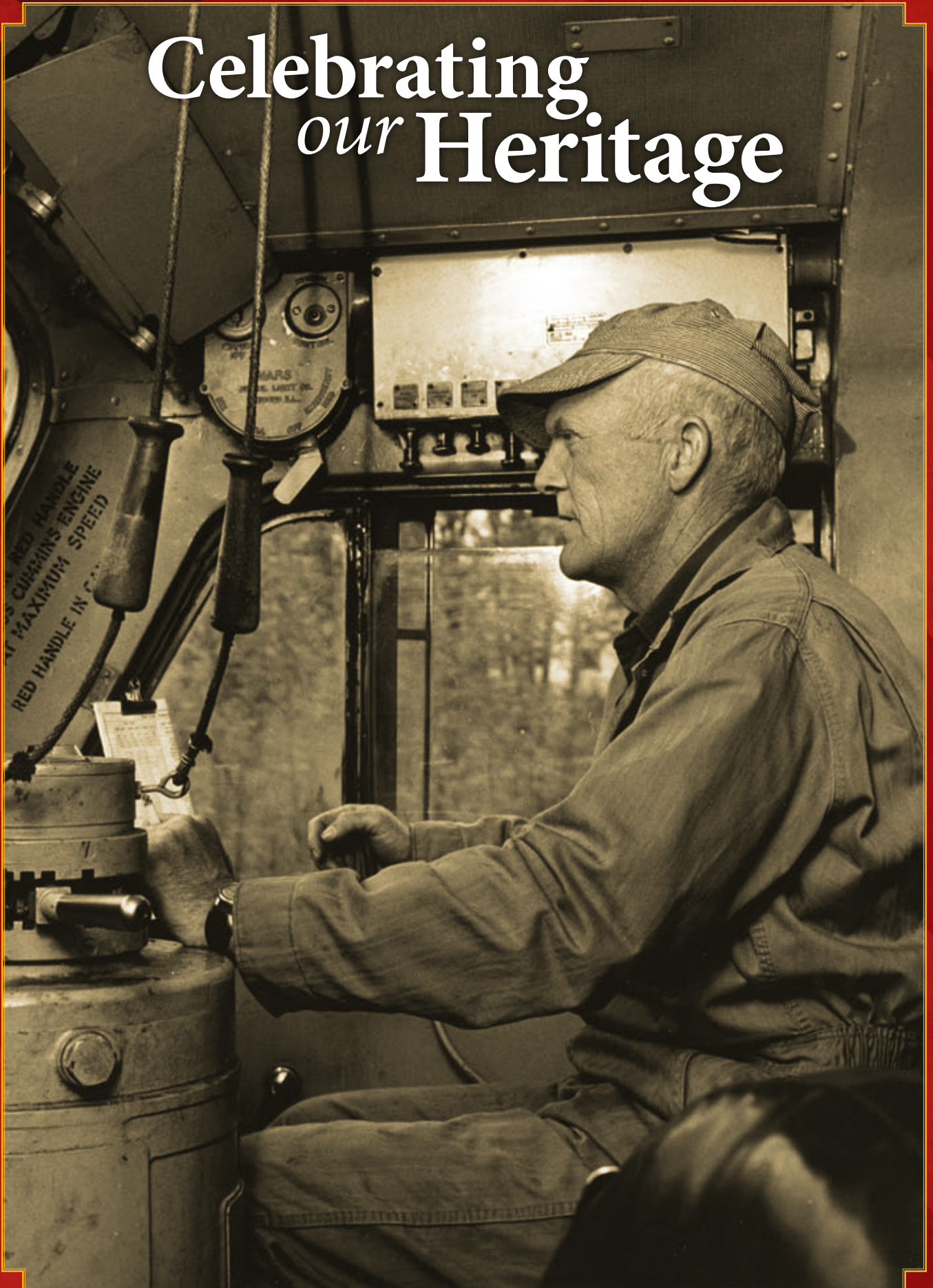
PGS 22-24 BLET Auxiliary also reaches milestone and celebrates 125-year anniversary.

PG 25 Recognizing the 23 men who have led the Brotherhood since 1863.

PGS 26-30 Photo Album: Highlights from the BLET's anniversary celebration.

PG 31 Congratulatory letter from U.S. Vice President Joseph R. Biden Jr.

Celebrating *our* Heritage





Celebrating 150 years

FOUNDED IN 1863, BLET MARKED HISTORIC MILESTONE ON MAY 8 WITH CEREMONIES IN DETROIT

It was a proud day for a proud union on May 8, 2013, as the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen — the oldest labor union in North America — marked its 150th anniversary with ceremonies in the city of Detroit, Mich., where the Organization was founded 150 years ago.

“Our goal was to recognize our 150th anniversary in a dignified and appropriate way,” said BLET National President Dennis R. Pierce. “I think we accomplished that by thanking our members and letting everyone know that we have been proud to be American, proud to be Union for 150 years.”

President Pierce presided over the day long ceremony, which featured a special video presentation commemorating the union’s accomplishments since it was founded in Detroit as the Brotherhood of the Footboard on May 8, 1863. The 30-minute video was presented in three 10-minute segments throughout the day.

Additionally, nearly 400 members, officers and guests in attendance heard from two dozen guest speakers representing fellow rail unions, the railroads, and government officials. President Pierce also delivered his own remarks.

Throughout the day, the guests attending the 150th anniversary celebration heard

from 24 speakers, with Teamsters General President James P. Hoffa serving as the opening speaker. See pages 26-30 for names and photos of all speakers.

In the most general of terms, the speakers acknowledged the significant milestone achieved by the Brotherhood and its members. All were optimistic about the future direction of the industry and the important role that locomotive engineers and trainmen will continue to play to meet the nation’s quickly expanding freight and passenger rail transportation needs.

All speakers received standing ovations following

their presentations. The evening concluded with a banquet and dance.

President Pierce thanked all speakers for their kind words regarding the professionalism of BLET members and the Organization’s milestone anniversary. Also, he thanked all BLET officers and members who took time from their busy schedules to attend and expressed appreciation for those whose many months of hard work resulted in a successful 150th anniversary celebration.

“There’s no reference book on how to hold a 150th anniversary celebration,” he said. “I thank the team who helped us put all of this to-

gether. I also thank our speakers. Their words are a testament to the impact that our members and our Organization has on the entire railroad community.”

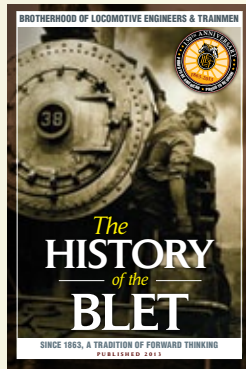
In the days leading up to the event, the Brotherhood also received many letters of commendation from elected leaders of the U.S. Senate, U.S. House of Representatives, and state and local government. On May 8, the BLET also received a letter from United States Vice President Joe Biden (see page 31 for a copy of the letter).

Many members who arrived early in Detroit participated in a trip to historic Greenfield Village on May 7, where they enjoyed a train ride powered by a steam locomotive, a tour of the historic roundhouse that had been moved from Marshall, Michigan, where the Brotherhood’s founders met in secret beginning in 1862, and dinner at a family-style 1850s tavern (see page 26 for photos).

One of the highlights of the celebration was a history exhibit of BLET artifacts and memorabilia. The display included many rare items, including the original handwritten notes of the first meeting of the Brotherhood of the Footboard, dated May 8, 1863, and the original handwritten Constitution and By-laws of the Brotherhood of the Footboard (see pages 26-30 for photos).

THE ENGINEER

THIS ICONIC IMAGE by New York photographer John Fasulo graces the cover of the BLET’s 150th anniversary history book. Taken in western New York, the photo shows Kevin McGarvey, the engineer, climbing down from the front of locomotive #38, a Baldwin 2-8-0. Fasulo’s work has been exhibited at the Deutsch Bahn (DB) Museum in Germany, at Steamtown National Historic Site in Scranton, Pa., and in publications such as *Trains* magazine, *Railroad Illustrated* and *Railfan*. Limited edition copies of *The Engineer* are available for \$175 from Mr. Fasulo, who can be reached online at ship1949@aol.com, www.johnfasulo.photoshelter.com, or by phone: (845) 401-0278. Mr. Fasulo will donate \$25 of every sale to the BLET Auxiliary scholarship fund.



As part of the BLET’s 150th anniversary celebration, all active and retired members received a copy of the history book in the mail along with a high-quality, custom-designed keychain featuring the BLET’s 150th anniversary logo.

THE GRAND NATIONAL DIVISION OF THE

BROTHERHOOD OF THE FOOTBOARD

Of the United States.



To all whom this may come, Greeting:

This is to Certify, That this

CHARTER

Has been duly granted to George A. Adams, Bro. Hartsmith,
E. W. Howell, Albert Keith, and W. W. Cornick,
with power to organize a Subordinate Division, to be known as
Detroit Division No. one of the Town or City of Detroit
County of Wayne State of Michigan; also to frame
By-laws for their own government, so long as they do not conflict
with the Constitution and By-laws of the Grand National Division of the
Brotherhood of the Footboard, of the United States.

In Witness Whereof, We have caused our names to be affixed, with the
Seal of the Grand National Division of the Brotherhood of the Footboard,
of the United States.

W. D. Robinson G. C. C.
O. T. Johnson F. C. J. C.

Our Earliest History: The original Brotherhood of the Footboard charter for Division 1 (Detroit, Michigan) has hung in the National President's office at BLET headquarters for over 100 years.



Recognizing *our* founders

In nearly all accounts of the founding of the Brotherhood of the Footboard, there are references to a group of 12 men who joined hands and pledged to create a protective society for the betterment of locomotive engineers.

Without question, the founder and leader of the Brotherhood is William D. Robinson, a Michigan Central locomotive engineer who was just 37 years old when the Brotherhood of the Footboard was founded on May 8, 1863. Brother Robinson was born on May 22, 1826, and died on November 7, 1890.

But questions arose regarding the other 11 men who founded the Brotherhood. Today's editorial staff at BLET National Division headquarters in Cleveland endeavored to identify those men and to honor them on the 150th anniversary of the organization they established.

We are not the first who tried to do so.

In 1910, delegates attending the BLE's Ninth Biennial Convention in Detroit passed a resolution honoring the founders of the Brotherhood (see pg.19). The resolution recognized Brother Robinson as "the first parent and founder of this Organization." The resolution further called for the names of Brother Robinson and his 11 associates to be placed on a Roll of Honor at what was then called the Grand Division (today known as BLET National Division headquarters).

Unfortunately, the men who submitted this resolution (and the delegates who ratified it) did not identify Brother Robinson's 11 associates.

Further digging by today's research staff in Cleveland revealed a series of articles published in the *Locomotive*

Engineers Journal throughout the year 1892. The series of articles was written by nine men who are believed to be the founders of the Brotherhood.

The first in the series is a firsthand account written by William D. Robinson himself. Indicating that much was left to memory, and that he did not take notes during the secret meeting, Robinson wrote: "The names of the twelve who first took the obligation, I believe no one living can recall."

But among those clearly identified as the original founding members of the Brotherhood of the Footboard include: George Q. Adams; Thomas Faulkner; Henry Hall; Alfred (Sam) Keith; Linus Keith; Thomas Nixon; William D. Robinson; J.C. (Yankee) Thompson; and Thomas Van Wormer.

On May 18, 1864, several locomotive engineers who were deemed "radicals" and "disturbers" were fired by management of the MCR, including two men among the 12 Founding Fathers of the Brotherhood — Linus Keith and Alfred (Sam) Keith. These men were so thoroughly blacklisted throughout the continent by railroad management that none could secure employment for many years.

But the organization they created still stands today. Founded as the Brotherhood of the Footboard on May 8, 1863, the organization changed its name one year later to Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers. On January 1, 2004, the organization became known as Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen.

On the occasion of the 150th anniversary of our organization, we take pride in recognizing these Brothers as the Founding Fathers of our Brotherhood. 🏠



Brotherhood Birthplace: It was in the Firemen's Hall in Detroit, Michigan, where the Brotherhood of the Footboard was founded on May 8, 1863. (BLET Archives)

MEMORIAL TO THE FOUNDERS OF THE BROTHERHOOD

Adopted at the Ninth Biennial Session of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers, Detroit, Michigan, May 23rd, 1910

To the Grand Officers and Members of the G.I.D. in Convention assembled at Pane Pavillion, Detroit, Mich.

Dear Sirs and Brothers:

Whereas, After the lapse of 47 years, years of trials, tribulations, sacrifices, martyrdoms, achievements, progression and triumphs, the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers has returned to the place of its birth to renew the past and legislate for the future.

Memories are awakened of that noble band of pioneers who laid the foundation of the present magnificent organization.

Pioneers they were in fact, for the organization they launched was the first of its kind and had to encounter and overcome all of the obstacles of a new and untried experience.

We of today who are beneficiaries of the work of these pioneers look back and review their early efforts with sentiments of love and gratitude.

They were men inspired by a grand purpose and were loyal to each other. Now that they have nearly all passed on, we can well afford to concentrate our vision only on the good they have done.

Foremost among the names of this pioneer band appears that of Bro. W.D. Robinson, who is the acknowledged organizer and founder, as well as the first G.C.E. of the Order.

It was he who first broached the subject to his fellow workers.

It was he who, under the 'Elms' next to the engine house at Marshall, recommended that a meeting be held to effect some organization.

It was through this and subsequent meetings that it was decided to send out calls to the men on neighboring roads for a meeting to be held in Detroit. At this meeting it was Bro. Robinson who formulated the obligation to which twelve engineers (who had responded to the call), standing, joined hands and obligated themselves to the tenets of their cherished faith.

Detroit was selected as the home of the first division and organized immediately following this meeting.

Bro. Robinson's headquarters were at Marshall. He, assisted by Bro. E. Elwell, C.E. of Div. No. 1, with six other men (who with himself were charter members of Div. No. 2), organized Div. No. 2 a few days later.

In view of the facts herein set forth, be it

Resolved, That as a slight token of appreciation and gratitude of this Brotherhood, which stands as a living monument to his memory, we officially recognize and declare Bro. W.D. Robinson to be the first parent and founder of this Organization. Further be it

Resolved, That the names of Bro. W.D. Robinson and his eleven associates be placed on a special Roll of Honor in the Grand Division, and a copy of these resolutions properly authenticated, be furnished the family or heirs of Bro. W.D. Robinson, and each of the families or heirs of his eleven associates.

The above resolutions are respectfully submitted by the Delegate of Sub-Div. No. 2.

F.M. Dwelley, Delegate, Div. No. 2

T.P. O'Rourke, Delegate, Div. No. 475

Endorsed by the following Michigan Divisions

J.A. Dean, Div. 338

J.J. Roach, Div. 1

C.M. Mellish, Div. 304

F.C. Ives, Div. 503

E.W. Richmond, Div. 286

OUR FOUNDERS



WILLIAM D. ROBINSON



THOMAS FAULKNER



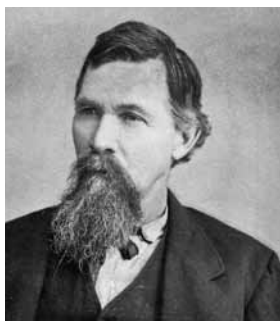
HENRY HALL



ALFRED (SAM) KEITH



LINUS KEITH



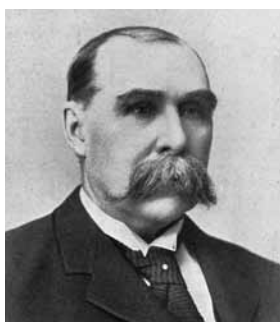
THOMAS NIXON



GEORGE Q. ADAMS



J.C. THOMPSON



THOMAS VAN WORMER



A rough track for *BLET* founder William D. Robinson

Many headlines in the history of our Brotherhood focus on the events of May, 1863, when our organization was founded. Not as rosy, but perhaps just as interesting, are the events relating to Brotherhood founder William D. Robinson, which followed shortly thereafter.

The BLET's predecessor organization, the Brotherhood of the Footboard, was formally established 150 years ago in Detroit, Michigan, on May 8, 1863.

By August 1, 1863, 10 Divisions of the Brotherhood of the Footboard had been organized. The Order's Bylaws provided for the establishment of a Grand International Division when five Divisions were organized. A call was issued for delegates to meet (again in Detroit) to establish a National Division and to elect Grand National Division leaders. On August 18, 1863, William D. Robinson was elected the first Grand Chief Engineer of the Brotherhood of the Footboard.

Less than two months later, in October of 1863, Robinson was discharged from service as a locomotive engineer by management of the Michigan Central Railroad. At this point, he commenced working full time for the Brotherhood,

traveling throughout the Eastern United States and organizing new Divisions.

However, his movements were closely watched by rail managers. Several railroad superintendents issued circulars forbidding engineers or conductors from carrying Robinson on trains with threat of dismissal. Engineers sympathetic to the Organization faced a moral quandary: to assist Brother Robinson with his quest to organize new Divisions and strengthen the Brotherhood, or risk losing employment and the means to support their families.

Most agreed to assist Robinson. On one occasion, Brother Robinson was hidden in a boxcar from New Albany to Michigan City, Indiana — a distance of nearly 300 miles. Determined, Robinson kept on and successfully organized 54 Divisions within the first year.

At the First Annual Convention of the Brotherhood of the Footboard on August 17, 1864, the Order changed its name to Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers. Charles H. Wilson was elected Grand Chief Engineer, replacing William D. Robinson. Robinson's ouster was the result of a change to the organization's bylaws. Delegates approved a resolution

making it mandatory that the Grand Chief Engineer be currently employed by a railroad company. Records from this era are sketchy at best, and there's no clear indication why the rules of the Order were changed to the detriment of Brother Robinson.

No account exists of the life and times of William D. Robinson from 1864 until his passing on November 7, 1890. It is known that he was married and had children, and that his son, Byron, was a locomotive engineer and Brotherhood member for many years.

William D. Robinson's obituary in the December 1890 issue of the *Locomotive Engineers Journal* reads in part:

"He foresaw the great necessity for combining the locomotive engineers for mutual welfare and protection. The abilities he displayed were of a high order — nature had been kind in bestowing upon him those qualities of mind and heart which in a marked degree enabled him to rise above his fellows. He had the courage of his convictions, and he went forth fearlessly in carrying out the plan of building one of the best institutions ever conceived of for the locomotive engineers. The name of W.D. Robinson will ever be as-



Robinson Honored:

BLE representatives Larry W. Sykes (Division 1), left, and Edward Dubroski (International Vice President) accept a plaque on behalf of the Organization commemorating the induction of Brotherhood founder William D. Robinson into Labor's International Hall of Fame on October 20, 1990. (BLET Archives)



Robinson Memorial: A commemorative print made available by the BLE Grand International Division in the early 1930s shows a contingent of BLE officials at the dedication ceremony of a lasting memorial to Brotherhood founder William D. Robinson, with a portrait inset of Brother Robinson at lower right. The ceremony was held on May 8, 1931, at Oak Grove Cemetery in Washington, Indiana. Third from right is Grand Chief Engineer Alvanley Johnston. (BLET Archives)

sociated with our history as a man whose self-sacrificing spirit is worthy of emulation. No eulogy of ours could do justice to this character, who played so conspicuous a part in laying the cornerstone of the B. of L.E. We simply offer our tribute of respect to the memory of one whose labors were not in vain, and we trust his reward will be an everlasting inheritance in the great and eternal brotherhood of the everlasting Father in heaven.”

At the BLE convention in 1930, delegates approved arrangements to erect a monument to Brother Robinson at his final resting place at Oak Grove Cemetery in Washington, Indiana. Dedication services

were held there on May 8, 1931 — the 68th anniversary of the founding of our Brotherhood. Grand Chief Engineer Alvanley Johnston and several members of the BLET Advisory Board attended the dedication service. Robinson’s son, Byron, was present at the dedication ceremony, having been a BLE member for 47 years at the time of the ceremony. Also present was a gentleman only identified as “Brother Evans of Division 39,” who acted as Chaplain during Masonic services conducted at the grave when Robinson was laid to rest in 1890.

On October 20, 1990, Brother Robinson was inducted into Labor’s International Hall of Fame.

That organization has enshrined more than 100 people who have made contributions to the advancement of organized labor since it was established in 1973. Appropriately, the group is headquartered in Detroit. A plaque commemorating Brother Robinson’s induction into Labor’s International Hall of Fame hangs at BLET National Division headquarters in Cleveland.

In honoring Brother Robinson, the group wrote: “In one year, under terrible conditions created by the Civil War, Mr. Robinson had succeeded in laying the foundation for the Brotherhood. He and his fellow associates suffered so others might reap the fruits of their labors. His name will forever be associated with our history as a man whose self-sacrificing spirit is worthy of emulation.”

ROBINSON’S MEMORIAL READS:

*In Memory Of William D. Robinson
May 22, 1826 — Nov. 7, 1890
Founder of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers
At Detroit, Michigan, May 8, 1863
And
Its First Grand Chief Engineer
He Loved His Fellowmen
Erected by the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers
May 8, 1931*



Auxiliary celebrates 125-year anniversary

BY ANITA J. CARUSO AND SEREENA HOGAN

On October 16, 2012, the BLET Auxiliary, formerly known as the Grand International Auxiliary to the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers, celebrated its 125-year anniversary. The Auxiliary came into existence in 1887, the year that the BLE Convention was being held in Chicago, Illinois. A number of the wives of the organizers of that convention had volunteered to assist their husbands in the planning and organizing of the event. It was during that same time

period that the idea came about to organize an auxiliary to the BLE.

On October 16, 1887, the first unit, Division One, was organized in Chicago, with 10 charter members. On October 21, the women met again and adopted a temporary constitution and by-laws, and elected their officers, headed by Grand President Letitia B. Murdock. Ms. Murdock, the widow of a North Western Railroad engineer, served as Grand President from 1887 to 1919.

Ms. Murdock and the other organizers recognized the need to formally organize at that time, as many of the wives of BLE members were already meeting in small groups scattered throughout the U.S. and Canada; however, there was no established organization to bring them all together. Following the issuance of that first charter, others were distributed in quick succession, until at one time 600 lodges (now called local auxiliaries) held charters. The original roster of 10

members grew to 26,000.

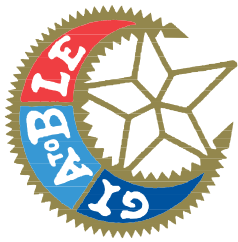
At the second convention, held in Chicago in September 1889, the women adopted permanent by-laws and rituals that included five forms: Opening, Initiation, Balloting, Installation, and Closing. At this second convention, the members strongly desired BLE recognition of their order and sent a letter to the BLE Grand Chief Engineer requesting a public announcement of their group as the Auxiliary to the BLE. At first, the officers and members of the BLE were opposed to the idea, but the strong will and determination of this group of energetic women won out and the Grand Chief gave his promise of earnest support, agreeing that the women might be the means of doing a great deal of good.

In 1896, the crescent and star were adopted as the auxiliary's emblem, and in 1908, the order adopted the name Grand International Auxiliary to the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers (GIA to BLE). That name prevailed until the convention of 2006 when the name was changed to



Auxiliary Founders: Founding members and first officers of the Grand International Auxiliary (GIA), elected at convention in Chicago, pose for this photo in 1888. (BLET Archives)

BLET AUXILIARY PRESIDENTS THROUGH THE YEARS



LETITIA B. MURDOCH
1887-1919



MARY E. CASSELL
1919-1933



ELLA D. TURNER
1933-1947



EMILY DENNY GRAHAM
1947-1962



JESSIE M. MARSH
1962-1966



MINNIE PEARL WELLS
1966-1973



FREDA EISEMAN
1973-1981



LILLIE MAE PARKER
1981-1991



MAUREEN FULKERSON
1991-1996



RUTH PILLMAN WINDHAM
1996-2001



ONITA C. WAYLAND
2001-2006



BECKY B. SCHNEIDER
2006-2010



ANITA J. CARUSO
2010-present

the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen Auxiliary (BLET Auxiliary), the name by which the organization is recognized today. We have kept faith with our philosophy and main beliefs in Fidelity, Love, Charity, Harmony, and Protection, the guiding principles this organization was founded on.

Promoting fraternal love and sociability within the families of BLE members was the main purpose of the GIA. Over the years, these women banded together for their mutual protection and in the interest of their loved ones in the

BLE. Charitable projects, such as the GIA Orphans Pension Fund and other funds to care for aged and indigent members were established.

In 1900, the photo of the GIA Grand President was inserted on the Women's Page of the *Locomotive Engineers Journal* as a permanent feature. This was an important step for the organization as evidenced by the words of then-Grand Vice President Mary Cassell in 1906: "I attribute our growth in no small measure to the influence sent out through the pages of the *Journal*.... As the *Journal*

goes into the home of every BLE man, the attention of the wife is directed to the pages devoted to our interests and, in this way, she learns of the good times we have in a social way and it proves to her that we are bringing the families of BLE men into closer touch with each other." To this day, we are grateful for the opportunity extended to us by the BLET to allow our auxiliary officers and members to submit articles for publication in their monthly *Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen News* and the quarterly *BLET Journal*.

Throughout the years

the Auxiliary National Conventions have been held in tandem with the conventions of the BLE, the timing of which has changed over the years.

At the 1981 Convention in Cleveland, the GIA implemented two new programs — the Legislative Program and the Scholarship Program. In 1991, in an effort to modernize the organization and conduct meetings in more of a business type form, the delegates voted to make the ritual work optional rather than mandatory. At the 1996 Convention in Detroit, Mich., Grand Officers



Today's Auxiliary: Officers, delegates and members attending the BLET Auxiliary's First Quadrennial Convention in Reno, Nevada, in 2010. (BLET Archives)

became known as International Officers, and divisions became known as auxiliaries.

In 2006, the organization changed its status from an international organization to a national organization, in keeping with the changes that had occurred when the BLE merged with the Teamsters and became the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen (BLET). At that time, those former BLE members residing in Canada became members of the Teamsters Canada Rail Conference (TCRC) and the Canadian auxiliary members set out to establish an auxiliary in Canada to be known as the TCRC Auxiliary. The National Auxiliary in the U.S. assumed the name BLET Auxiliary, and adopted a new logo design bearing that name. A new classification of membership, the Associate Member, was also approved at that convention, which allows for anyone who has an interest in the work we do to join our

organization.

Although the members of today are encouraged to honor and respect the traditions of our founding sisters, the BLET Auxiliary continues in the tradition of charitable projects through its Care and Assistance Program (formerly known as the Age Dependent Sisters and Relief Fund) and the Scholarship Fund.

Care and Assistance Program funds are used to provide a monthly stipend to widowed auxiliary members in good standing, and orphaned children of members, who are deemed to be in a state of financial hardship. The Scholarship Fund provides scholarships to the sons and daughters of auxiliary and BLET members (living or deceased) who have maintained membership for at least two years.

Through the years we have found various ways of communicating with our members, including those who merely wish to learn about our organization. We


have a website that is continually updated with important information as it pertains to our railroad life, educational materials for those who are interested in learning about different aspects of the railroad and union business, monthly legislative updates, fundraisers that are taking place around the country, scholarship opportunities, regional convention information, and much more.

We publish a quarterly newsletter that contains pertinent information for our members. Our newsletter is an invaluable tool for our members as it is filled with reports about the activities of our local auxiliaries around the country, information from our national officers, a legislative update, regional meeting information, articles from our retired sisters and brothers, and so much more.

Our major focus in these times is to provide education and support and to build camaraderie and solidarity

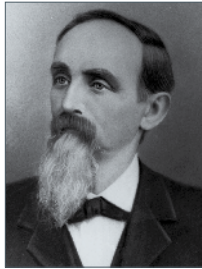
amongst the families of BLET members across the nation. We also strive to provide opportunities for our members to learn about their rights, their benefits, and what to do, or not to do, should a tragic situation involving the railroad arise. We encourage our members to reach out to one another to provide emotional support during stressful times, whether it involves the railroad or some other aspect of daily life.

To find out more about the Auxiliary or to print out an application from our website, please go to www.bletauxiliary.net. We invite you to join us soon. We would like to be around to celebrate our 150th anniversary, so please consider being a part of this wonderful organization!

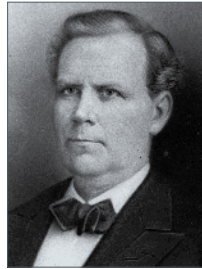
Many thanks to our "unofficial historian," Sister Becky Schneider, for helping us gather material for this article. We appreciate her taking the time to help us with this project. 

BLET LEADERS

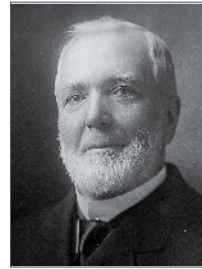
THESE 23 MEN HAVE LED THE BROTHERHOOD FOR 150 YEARS



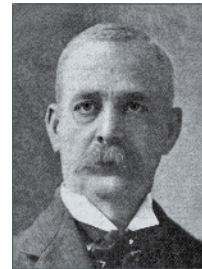
William D. Robinson
1863-1864



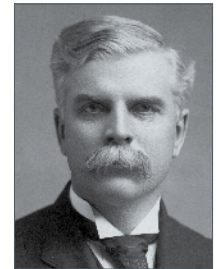
Charles Wilson
1864-1874



P.M. Arthur
1874-1903



A.B. Youngson
1903



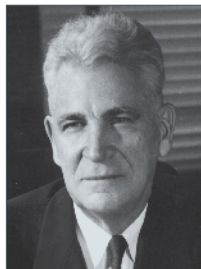
Warren S. Stone
1903-1925



William B. Prenter
1925-1927



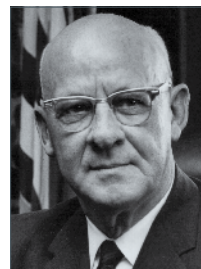
Alvanley Johnston
1927-1950



J.P. Shields
1950-1953



Guy L. Brown
1953-1960



Roy E. Davidson
1960-1964



Perry S. Heath
1964-1969



C.J. Coughlin
1969-1974



Burrell N. Whitmire
1974-1976



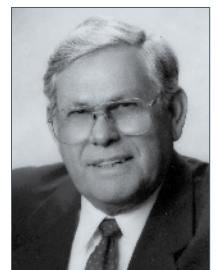
John F. Sytsma
1976-1986



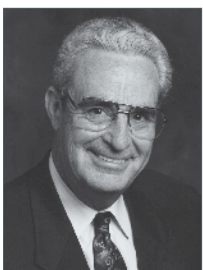
Robert E. Delaney
1986-1987



Larry D. McFather
1987-1991



Ronald P. McLaughlin
1991-1996



Clarence V. Monin
1996-1999



Edward Dubroski
1999-2001



Don M. Hahs
2001-2008



Edward W. Rodzicz
2008-2009



Paul T. Sorrow
2009-2010



Dennis R. Pierce
2010-present



150TH ANNIVERSARY PHOTO ALBUM

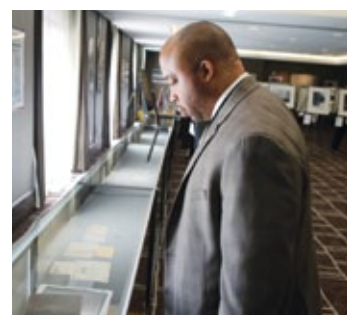
Highlights of the BLET's 150th anniversary (pages 26-30) feature the trip to Greenfield Village (May 7), the BLET history exhibit (May 7-8), ceremony and speakers (May 8), the banquet (May 8), and candid photos of members and guests (May 7-8).












CONTINUED FROM
PAGE 2 ←

and I will forever be thankful to Lee and Bill for their guidance and support as we set out to create a celebration that all members could participate in and be proud of. The Advisory Board officers were also tasked with coordinating specific committees that each

managed individual pieces of the event. Although all of the feedback that I received was that the event flowed with ease, there were many officers, members and staffers fretting behind the scenes to make that happen.

Perhaps most important to the success of the event was the hard work of the mem-

bers, active and retired, who worked tirelessly before and during the event. Their efforts, along with the National Division staff and our production crew — getting up early every morning and going to bed late every night — were the true reason that our celebration was one for the record books. I am confident that the events

of May 8, 2013 would have made our forefathers proud to have been the genesis of such an event. Those heroes founded our great union 150 years ago with only their hope for a better life to guide them and today's BLET membership owes them and all who followed them a debt of gratitude that can never be repaid. 



THE VICE PRESIDENT
WASHINGTON

May 8, 2013

Dear Friends:

Congratulations to all the members and officers of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen (BLET) on celebrating your 150th Anniversary. It is a pleasure to send my best wishes to all of the BLET on this occasion.

Since its inception in 1863 as the Brotherhood of the Footboard, the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen has grown into one of the oldest and most impactful labor unions in the United States. The Brotherhood was founded at a time when locomotive engineers worked for low wages and in unsafe conditions, and for the past 150 years, the BLET has worked to improve the safety and working conditions for its members. BLET members are dedicated to ensuring the dignity, respect, and equality of America's railroad workers, and in turn, have given a voice to all American workers.

The BLET has helped shape the foundations of our Country's labor laws through legislation originally passed to protect BLET members. From the Federal Employers Liability Act to the Adamson Act, the laws the BLET has fought for have paved the way for regulations in industries that stretch far beyond the railway. Thank you for always placing the rights of American workers as your top priority.

Again, congratulations. I wish you continued success in the years ahead.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Joe Biden", written over a large, stylized blue flourish that extends from the word "Sincerely,".

Joseph R. Biden, Jr.

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BALTIMORE HOSTS BLET FOR 75TH ANNUAL EUMA

Members of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen will gather in Baltimore, Md., from July 28-August 1, 2013, for the 75th annual meeting of the BLET's Eastern Union Meeting Association (EUMA). Arrangements Chairman Fred Cox (Local Chairman, Division 52) is planning an event to remember with a

full slate of educational workshops and entertaining venues. Guests will stay at the Hyatt Regency Baltimore on the Inner Harbor and reservations can be made by calling (410) 528-1234 or (888) 591-1234. Scheduled events will include a welcome reception at the B&O Railroad Museum; opening ceremonies; golf tournament;

shopping and Inner Harbor tours; a Major League baseball game between the Orioles and Astros; and the formal banquet. For more details, please contact Brother Cox by email or by phone: fmcox@aol.com or (717) 578-7262. Registration forms and other details are online at: www.ble-t.org/euma.

SEE PAGE 4 OF THIS ISSUE FOR INFORMATION ON OTHER 2013 REGIONAL MEETINGS.

