

LOCOMOTIVE ENGINEERS & TRAINMEN *Journal*

VOLUME 117 | NO. 1 | SPRING 2014

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The
Romance
*of being a
locomotive
engineer*

A
hero
among us

**BLET member
honored for
bravery**

Also inside

Town Hall Meetings

Legislative Update

BLET Auxiliary News





BLET President's Message

BY DENNIS R. PIERCE, BLET NATIONAL PRESIDENT

Protect what's ours in this fall's elections

It was about this time in 2012 that Congressman Paul Ryan (R-WI) introduced his 2013 budget proposal. As you will recall, it would have had dire consequences for Railroad Retirement and the tens of thousands of railroaders who rely on the program. Well, Ryan is at it again. His latest budget proposal once more targets the railroad industry and seeks to eliminate funding for Amtrak.

Enactment of the last "Ryan Budget" would have eliminated the Railroad Retirement Occupational Disability program, as well as the "60/30" provision that allows early retirement for railroad workers at age 60 if they have 30 years of service. Under that proposal, the early retirement age would have jumped to 62. The Ryan Budget also would have negatively affected the annuities of almost 120,000 non-disabled employees, almost 90,000 spouses and over 62,000 occupationally disabled employees.

It's like — as Yogi Berra once said — *déjà vu* all over again. In his FY 2013 budget, Ryan proposed slashing Railroad Retirement. In his FY 2014 budget, he left our retirement alone, but proposed the elimination of all funding for Amtrak and high-speed rail. And in late March Ryan introduced his party's 2015 budget proposal. It directs Congress



At BLET Division 42's Town Hall Meeting in St. Louis on April 16, from left: Dave Grimes, Division 42 Local Chairman; Mike McGill, Division 42 Legislative Representative; President Pierce; and Jason Schroeder, Division 42 Secretary-Treasurer.

to zero out Amtrak's operating subsidy, which would cripple the nation's passenger railroad system. The Ryan plan has been widely condemned throughout the rail industry and by labor. In fact, the Midwest High Speed Rail Association has gone so far as to call it Ryan's plan to "murder" Amtrak.

The plan to eliminate Amtrak flies in the face of logic and economic reality. A recent report titled "The Northeast Corridor and the American Economy" shows just how important Amtrak is to America's economy. The Northeast Corridor (NEC) transports 750,000 passengers each day, and "is a critical national asset, an economic engine for the U.S., and contributes about \$50 billion a year

to the national economy." The report also indicates that the loss of NEC services for one day would cost the nation's economy nearly \$100 million in transportation-related and productivity losses.

With that in mind, the National Association of Railroad Passengers points out that Amtrak's total federal grant accounts for just 0.037 percent of the budget. Clearly, Ryan's budget is in no way a serious deficit reduction measure, so why the attack on Amtrak?

House Republicans usually adopt a budget plan each year as more of a political and policy statement than a realistic attempt to cut the deficit. While there is virtually no chance of Ryan's 2015 budget ever becoming the law of the land — so long as the

Democrats' have a majority in the Senate — it shows us the true colors of those Republicans supporting the Ryan budget. While these actions might please their corporate benefactors, they harm rather than benefit railroad workers, and the cry, "Remember in November" is once again front and center this year.

As I have said repeatedly during past election cycles, union members and working class Americans need to vote for politicians who actually support working class Americans rather than the millionaires who routinely attempt to buy favor through their campaign finance activities. Rather than focusing on so-called "social" issues used by self-serving political

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Journal

LOCOMOTIVE ENGINEERS & TRAINMEN
PUBLISHED BY THE BLET,
A DIVISION OF THE RAIL CONFERENCE,
INTERNATIONAL BROTHERHOOD
OF TEAMSTERS

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The Locomotive Engineers & Trainmen Journal (ISSN: 1553-5010 USPS: 120) is published quarterly for \$10.00 per year (single copies \$3.00) by the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen, 25 Louisiana Ave. N.W., 7th Floor, Washington, D.C. 20001. Periodicals postage paid at Washington, D.C. POSTMASTER, please send address changes to: Locomotive Engineers & Trainmen Journal, BLET Record Department, 1370 Ontario St., Cleveland, OH 44113-1702. Copyright 2014. All rights reserved. Reproduction in whole or in part without written permission is prohibited. Widows of BLET members will receive free subscriptions upon request to: BLET Record Dept., 1370 Ontario St., Cleveland, OH 44113-1702.



San Bernardino's Division 398 marks 125th anniversary



Members and guests attending Division 398's 125th anniversary celebration. Seated, from left: C.A. Mosser, Secretary-Treasurer, BNSF (ATSF) General Committee of Adjustment; M.R. Cunningham, 1st Vice Chairman, BNSF (ATSF) GCA; E.L. Pruitt, BLET First Vice President; Michael Priester, National Vice President; Alan Holdcraft, General Chairman, BNSF (ATSF) GCA; and J.B. Mobley, President, Division 398. Active and retired members of Division 398, **standing, from left:** D.D. Bryant; D.S. Guillen Jr.; B.A. Walker; R.V. Olivas; T.A. Fogle; F. Smith; A.L. Woolsey; J.R. Franklin; C.A. Moll; J.D. Toumanian; D.C. Allen; P.E. Anderson; N.F. Robel; R.P. Kleinsorge; M.A. Triner; P.W. Botten; B.J. Wyman; W.T. Leukhardt; S.O. Sauer; R.W. Erickson; and B.T. Shadoan.

BLET Division 398 in San Bernardino, Calif., achieved a significant milestone in 2013. On November 24, the members, officers and guests celebrated the Division's 125th anniversary.

A celebration was held on November 9 at the Ontario Airport Hotel & Conference Center. Many proud members of Division 398 — both active and retired — attended the gala event along with their spouses and families. Special guests included: E. Lee Pruitt, First Vice President; Michael D. Priester, National Vice President; J. Alan Holdcraft, General Chairman, BNSF (former ATSF) General Committee of Adjustment; M.R. (Robby) Cunningham, 1st Vice Chairman, BNSF (former ATSF) GCA; and Chris A. Mosser, Secretary-Treasurer, BNSF (former ATSF) GCA.

On display throughout the celebration

was a scaled-down model of a 4-8-4 Northern Santa Fe class 2900 steam locomotive. Its owner is Rich Casford, father of Greg Casford, an Amtrak locomotive engineer and member of BLET Division 20 (Los Angeles). The operational weight of the engine is about 3,000 pounds.

BLET Division 398 was founded on November 24, 1888, and was chartered in National City, Calif., by Horace M. Gillis and members who worked for the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway (ATSF). The Division moved to Los Angeles in 1890 and moved again in 1898 to its current home San Bernardino.

Long-time Division 398 member Pete W. Botten received a 40-year BLET membership pin and certificate from First Vice President Pruitt and Vice President Priester. Brother Botten first joined the Brotherhood on July 1, 1972, and has over 42 years of continuous membership. 🍷



From left: Brother P.W. Botten receives a commemorative plaque and lapel pin from First Vice President Pruitt in recognition of more than 40 years of Brotherhood membership.

BROTHER W.P. WOLFE, DIVISION 106, A PROUD FIFTH-GENERATION RAILROADER

Brother William P. Wolfe IV, Division 106 (Muncie, Ind.), is a fifth generation railroader who is proud of his family history.

His great-great grandfather, Wesley M. Wolfe, was killed in a steam locomotive boiler explosion on May 16, 1906. "This was two years before the Federal Employers Liability Act, so I imagine they didn't get much money," Brother Wolfe said.

Brother Wolfe always thought he was a fourth generation railroader until, in 2013, his grandfather took him to the grave of his great-great grandfather. Brother Wolfe was surprised to see the old BLE logo on his tombstone.

His Great-Grandfather, William P. Wolfe Sr., was a locomotive engineer with the Wabash Railroad who passed away in 1985. His Grandfather, William P. Wolfe Jr., was a train dispatcher for the Wabash who served in the American Train Dispatchers Association as a General Chairman. His father, William P. Wolfe III, was a locomotive engineer for the Wabash/N&W and Norfolk Southern before he passed away in 2010. Brother William P. Wolfe IV — representing his family's fifth generation — is currently a Norfolk Southern locomotive engineer and Legislative Representative of BLET Division 106 in Muncie, Ind.



Grave marker of Wesley M. Wolfe, great-great grandfather of BLET member William P. Wolfe IV, a fifth-generation railroader.

Brother Wolfe today still enjoys a close relationship with his grandfather, who is nearing his 86th birthday.

"My grandfather is an amazing man and was more like a father than a grandfather," Brother Wolfe said. "He had the seniority to hold scheduled jobs where he could be around, in my younger years, when my dad could not."

Brother Wolfe and his wife, Christine, have been married for 22 years. They have three children. He also has a brother, Noah, who works for Union Pacific out of Kansas City. Noah also has three children. "If none of my kids make generation number six with the railroad, then his just might," Brother Wolfe said. 📷



Brother Wolfe as a young boy with his father, grandfather and great-grandfather... all railroad men.



A union activist much like his grandfather, Brother Wolfe (right) meets with United States Senator Joe Donnelly (D-IN) in his role as Legislative Representative of BLET Division 106.

LAST STEAM ENGINE OUT OF PERU, IND.

Dated October 4, 1949, this picture shows the last steam engine run on the Chesapeake & Ohio Railway (Chicago Division) out of Peru, Ind. The man standing second from left is George Rhineberger, who was the locomotive engineer of the train. Brother Rhineberger was an engineer for almost 50 years and a proud member of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers. His grandson, Jan Alan Adkins, submitted this photograph. Brother Adkins followed in his grandfather's footsteps as a BLET member and locomotive engineer. Brother Adkins is a retired member of BLET Division 153 (Peru, Ind.). He first joined the Brotherhood in July of 1967. 📷



Coats for Kids in Cleveland

The active and retired members of BLET Division 3 (Cleveland, Ohio) once again helped give the gift of warmth to needy children in Northeastern Ohio through the Coats for Kids program.

The Brothers and Sisters of Division 3 first volunteered to help with the program in 2012. In 2013, they once again volunteered to distribute donated items such as coats, toys, stocking caps and gloves to help hundreds of needy youth prepare for the frigid winter weather. The BLET volunteers helped register those in need and processed them through lines.

The Coats for Kids program has been held jointly with the Salvation Army each year in the Cleveland area for the past 32 years. Jerry Lambert, a retired UTU member, advised that approximately 47 active and retired railroaders in Northeastern Ohio volunteered their time for the Coats for Kids program from October 23-25, 2013. 📷



Some of the retired members from BLET Division 3 (Cleveland, Ohio) who volunteered to help Coats for Kids in 2013 (from left): Joseph Dipuccio, Ken A. Melaragno, Kenny Rodebaugh, Darryl T. Albert, John Lenart, and Ronnie R. Golden. (Not all volunteers are pictured.)

BLET presents President Hoffa with model locomotives

The Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen presented model locomotives to Teamsters General President James P. Hoffa to display in his office at Teamster headquarters in Washington, D.C.

The models symbolize the hard working men and women of the BLET who operate locomotives 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year to keep the nation's economy strong and vibrant. National President Dennis R. Pierce, along with Vice President & National Legislative Representative John P. Tolman and Director of Bylaws Administration John F. Fink, presented the locomotives to President Hoffa on November 20, 2013.



General President Hoffa, center, admires the model locomotives presented by National President Pierce (left) and Vice President Tolman.

President Hoffa has a large desk at IBT headquarters where he displays model airplanes and model trucks representing all the various car-

riers where the Teamsters represent drivers and pilots. President Hoffa expressed great appreciation for the gift and pride in knowing that

Teamster locomotive engineers and trainmen are the ones running the real-life locomotives symbolized by the models.

The model locomotives presented to President Hoffa were of the following railroads: Amtrak, Canadian National, Canadian Pacific, BNSF Railway, CSX, Norfolk Southern, and Union Pacific. Brother Fink spent time researching the locomotive models to make sure they represented the most modern locomotives and each carrier's latest paint scheme. The display cases were custom made by Tom Grdina, manager of the BLET's Standard Building, and his son James, a Standard Building employee. 📷

letters to the editor

(EDITOR'S NOTE: ON MARCH 19, 2013, THE BLET ANNOUNCED ITS SUPPORT OF A JOB-CREATING COAL EXPORT FACILITY — THE MILLENNIUM BULK TERMINAL IN LONGVIEW, WASH. THE PROJECT WOULD CREATE MORE THAN 1,000 JOBS DURING ITS CONSTRUCTION AND MORE THAN 100 PERMANENT JOBS AFTER ITS COMPLETION. EIGHT TRAINS PER DAY WOULD DELIVER COAL TO THE TERMINAL FROM THE POWDER RIVER BASIN IN MONTANA AND WYOMING.)

Dear Editor:

My pride in the BLET has grown ten-fold. I am the General Chairman of the Longview Switching Co., Division 236-1. When I read about the BLET support of the Millennium Bulk Facility, I was amazed. The Longview Switching Co. is the company that delivers and pulls all railroad traffic from the Millennium Bulk Facility. I will be posting this in our yard office, with pride. Please pass along my thanks to President Pierce, and my thanks to you for sending this out to all our Brothers and Sisters.

Phil A. Bailey
General Chairman
Longview Switching Co.
BLET Division 236-1
Longview, Wash.

Dear President Dennis:

Thank you for taking the time out of your busy schedule to have your supply room staff dig up a 35-year BLE pin and mail it to me with an accompanying letter that truly warmed my heart and made me feel prouder than ever to be a part of this great organization. I most certainly will wear this pin with great pride.

Thanks again, and I am
Fraternally yours,
Charlie E. Sheets



Local Chairman
BLET Division 13
La Crosse, Wisc.

(BLET EDITOR'S NOTE: ON NOVEMBER 8, 2013, BLET NATIONAL PRESIDENT DENNIS R. PIERCE ISSUED A STATEMENT ON THE NATIONAL DIVISION WEBSITE IN RECOGNITION OF THE VETERAN'S DAY HOLIDAY.)

Dear President Pierce:

I just wanted you to know that I think your letter to our organization was spot on, and very well written. I had never thought before that some of our members actually fought in Civil War battles! It makes you truly understand how special the BLE is.

Have a wonderful Veterans Day.

Fraternally Yours,
David A. Kent
BLET Division 26
Richmond, Va.

Dear Editor:

Having read the recent stance from the BLET about inward facing cameras, I could not agree more. All they are going to do is

set our employer up for stronger scrutiny and liability by a good attorney who is trying to win a big settlement on behalf of a victim or the family of a victim who may be involved in a railroad grade crossing accident or a trespasser-related collision. A good attorney will subpoena the video. They may see segments where engineers have rubbed their eyes, nodded for a second, or left their seat to go to the toilet. They will then use that video footage to raise questions about whether this person was attentive throughout the entire trip. I challenge anyone to get in their car and make a 12-hour trip with no stops for rest and not come close to having a critical incident.

I am a 33-year railroad employee with 32 years of service as a locomotive engineer. Prior to this, I worked in a mental health setting with a Masters degree in clinical psychology. I speak from experience and training and feel I am credible in stating a person does not tire from fatigue on purpose. I have had rest periods where I slept 10 hours or more and came promptly to work on call, but was still tired within the first few hours

of a trip. The human body is not conditioned to function optimally with the calling schedule that road engineers experience.

Previous sleep studies are a farce. Live the life of an engineer and then make objective conclusions. It cannot be done because no researcher is willing to live with me for six months and be subjected to my schedule. Do not draw conclusions based on accident statistics, sleep studies with questionnaires and electrodes attached to heads. Do not draw conclusions from techno geeks from tech companies talking to techno geeks at the railroads, attempting to sell their technology.

Unfortunately, accidents happen. Inward facing cameras are going to be a slippery slope for railroad companies as it may come back to bite them, not because of our negligence, but because of the diligence of a bulldog attorney seeking to obtain video to win his case. Don't give plaintiff lawyers more ammunition for their attacks with unnecessary video footage that they will twist to meet their needs.

Respectfully submitted,
David M. Hillman
Division 781
Erwin, Tenn.

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:

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Or email: Bentley@ble-t.org



BLET First Vice President's Message

BY E. LEE PRUITT, BLET FIRST VICE PRESIDENT

Commuter rail keeps growing

LATEST NUMBERS SHOW MORE INVESTMENT IS WARRANTED

The Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen is a union comprised of a diverse group of members who are fiercely proud of their craft. Highly trained professionals, BLET members are the ones who keep America's economy — and people — moving along the nation's railroads.

Our Brothers and Sisters who work for commuter railroads are in a unique position because the agencies that they work for rely heavily upon public investment for funding. Whether it be Amtrak, NJ Transit, Metra, SEPTA, PATH or the Long Island Rail Road, these BLET members — and the traveling public — rely on public investment to keep the commuter trains running.

While some may question whether this type of system really works, a recent report from the American Public Transportation Association (APTA) shows that tax dollars spent on public transit are being put to good use.

According to APTA, Americans took 10.7 billion trips using mass transit in 2013, the highest level in 57 years. It was the eighth year in a row that at least 10 billion rides were taken using public transit in the United States. Public transit has been on the upswing for some time. Since 1995, ridership for rail and buses is up 37.2 percent, out pacing



First Vice President Pruitt at the podium during Division 42's April Town Hall Meeting in St. Louis.

not only population growth, but vehicle miles traveled as well. The number of users was up 1.1 percent in 2013.


As head of the Brotherhood's Passenger Department, I find these numbers encouraging. They show how dollars spent on public transportation have paid off for America. And it's proof why additional transportation investment would be wise. In February, President Obama called on Congress to approve a four-year, \$302 billion plan that would improve the nation's transportation

needs by funding much-needed repairs to rails, bridges, tunnels and highways.

President Pierce touches upon the importance of mass transit in his article on page 2 of this issue. Amtrak's proposed grant for 2014 accounts for just 0.037 percent of the entire federal budget. Yet the Northeast Corridor transports 750,000 passengers each day and contributes \$50 billion a year to the national economy, according to recent reports. That's tax money well spent. The loss of NEC services for just one

day would cost the economy nearly \$100 million in transportation-related delays and productivity losses.

Thousands of BLET members work in commuter rail service throughout the country. Further public investment in mass transit agencies would be good news for them and would be a boon for every worker who travels back and forth to their jobs. It would free up additional capacity on existing roadways, which in turn would assist the movement of commerce nationwide.

America needs a vision for the future. Increased investment in commuter rail and mass transit is a win-win for workers, commuters and also for the environment. 

“Further public investment in mass transit agencies would be good news for them and would be a boon for every worker who travels back and forth to their jobs.”



BLET National Secretary-Treasurer's Message

BY WILLIAM C. WALPERT, BLET NATIONAL SECRETARY-TREASURER

INVESTING IN YOUR FUTURE: National Railroad Investment Trust marks 10 years of growth

February 1, 2002, is a date that few railroaders would recognize as historic or important in their daily lives — but it's one that should be remembered. In fact, a book was just published last year marking the 10th anniversary of that important date.

The Railroad Retirement and Survivor's Improvement Act of 2001, which was signed into law on December 21, 2001, is the law that provides railroaders with an early retirement at age 60, provided that they have 30 years of service. Funding for that early retirement is provided in part by the National Railroad Investment Trust (NRRIT), which came into being on February 1, 2002. So it's an important date we should all remember when it comes time to pull the pin.

John J. Salmon's book, *The Creation of the National Railroad Retirement Investment Trust*, was published in 2013. It chronicles the early history of the Railroad Retirement Act beginning in 1935 through establishment of the NRRIT in 2002. A desire to improve Railroad Retirement funding options began to surface in the late 1980s, and the development of actual reforms began in the mid 1990s. Rail Labor began a dialogue with rail management on the issue in 1996.

For Rail Labor, the goal was

“As of February 28, 2014, the trust's value was \$27.9 billion, up \$822 million from the end of January 2014. Since inception, \$11.9 billion in NRRIT earnings have been used to pay retirement benefits.”

to provide better benefits for rail workers under the Railroad Retirement Plan. It was a bold move to cut the retirement age to 60 at a time when Americans covered by Social Security were being asked to work to age 67 or beyond. Thus, it became necessary to put Railroad Retirement funds to better use after taxes were collected from management and labor.

Prior to passage of the 2001 Act, the Railroad Retirement Board was limited to investing in government securities only. But if those funds could be invested in other ways, such as the stock market, then it would be possible to help offset the cost of early retirement.

So in addition to the 60/30 retirement provision and other important benefit improvements made for widows, the new legislation also called for establishment of a National Railroad Investment Trust to oversee investment of RRB funds to secure a greater return. Rail Labor also fought for and won provisions to automatically lower employee tax rates if the NRRIT could secure a high enough return on investment.

A Board of seven trustees has oversight of the NRRIT — three from labor, three from management, and one neutral. It's been my pleasure to serve as one of the three labor trustees since February 1, 2012.

During the first six years of NRRIT's operations, Railroad Retirement system assets experienced substantial growth, resulting in automatic tax cuts for both employees (from 4.9 to 3.9 percent) and employers (from 13.1 to 12.1 percent), as well as a build-up of a significant financial cushion. But like the assets of most pension funds, NRRIT assets declined as a result of the general economic downturn beginning in 2008 and have fluctuated over the last few years due to market volatility. However, the cushion built up over the previous years mitigated the impact on the system. As of February 28, 2014, the trust's value was \$27.9 billion, up \$822 million from the end of January 2014. Since inception, \$11.9 billion in NRRIT earnings have been used to pay retirement benefits.

With that in mind, I think we can all agree that the Railroad Retirement and Survi-

vor's Improvement Act of 2001 was a great success. And I think February 1, 2002 should receive a little more notoriety among railroaders and their families who benefit from the establishment of the NRRIT.

In conclusion, I'd like to leave you with a quote from John J. Salmon's book, *The Creation of the national Railroad Retirement Investment Trust*:

“In the end, Railroad Retirement reform achieved the three primary goals of its proponents: It created a stronger and more cost-effective system for workers and retirees, it strengthened key benefits for retirees, and it reduced the financial cost of funding the system for the industry — primarily management, but also labor.

“The road to Railroad Retirement reform had been a long and difficult one with many turns and unexpected challenges along the route. But the journey taken together by rail labor and management was ultimately a successful one, marked by creative solutions to complex policy and legal challenges, unprecedented labor/ management cooperation in the partnership forged by their leaders, and the persistence demonstrated by many throughout an almost two-decade journey from negotiation to legislation and ultimately implementation.”



Guest Columnists

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

Income disparity hurts working families

The growing disparity in incomes between the “haves” and the “have nots” is a real problem for America, and one that is being felt in many corners of this country. And it is an issue policymakers are going to have to get a handle on if they want to ensure the U.S. retains the values that have made this nation great.

It may not surprise some people to discover that thriving cities such as New York, San Francisco, Boston, Washington and Seattle are experi-

“Lawmakers can’t continue to turn their back on hard-working Americans while embracing the most fortunate. It’s not good policy and is not the principles on which this country was built.”

encing a growing divide when it comes to income as home prices and rents soar there. But reports also show it is a problem in less obvious places and has been for decades. In fact, in four states — Alaska, Michigan, Nevada and Wyoming — all of the income gains between 1979 and 2007 went to those in the

top one percent, while the rest saw incomes drop.

A new report by taxpayer watchdog Good Jobs First shows three quarters of all economic development dollars awarded went to 965 large companies.

Some cities seem to be realizing the error of their ways and are now reaching out to

regular people. It’s a small step, but meaningful just the same.

Still, there is more to be done. Lawmakers can’t continue to turn their back on hard-working Americans while embracing the most fortunate. It’s not good policy and is not the principles on which this country was built.

Fraternally,

JAMES P. HOFFA
TEAMSTERS GENERAL
PRESIDENT

Support our two-person crew legislation

The BLET is currently pushing a two-person train crew bill in Congress, known as the Safe Freight Act (H.R. 3040). It would require two workers in the cab of all freight trains in the U.S. — one certified locomotive engineer and one certified conductor.

You can help us pass this critical piece of legislation by calling the Capitol Switchboard at (202) 224-3121 and asking for your Congress member’s office. Let their office know you want them to support H.R. 3040.

This bill is an outgrowth of the horrific accident on July 6, 2013, at Lac-Mégantic, Quebec, in which 47 people lost their lives. A train carrying Bakken formation crude oil ran away and derailed, resulting in the explosion of multiple tank cars. More than 30 buildings in the town’s center were destroyed — roughly half of the downtown area. That accident happened in part because a single crew member was working alone.

Two-person crews are the norm in the U.S. and Canada. H.R. 3040 will prevent a

handful of rogue operators from endangering their employees and the general public by requiring two-person crews on all U.S. freight trains. Please call your Congress member’s office and ask that they support H.R. 3040.

Also, I want you to know about our work with America Public Transportation Association (APTA) to amend its Principles for the reauthorization of Passenger Rail Improvement and Investment Act (PRIIA). We successfully removed language offensive to rail labor, and the title of the

principle was changed by unanimous vote. No small feat given that rail labor is only two of APTA’s 1,500 members. APTA’s PRIIA Principles call for stand-alone legislation, which should authorize no less than \$50 billion during the next six years to facilitate the development of high-speed and intercity passenger rail.

Fraternally,

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.



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Guest Columnist

BY STEVE HALBROOK
LOCAL CHAIRMAN, DIVISION 94, GILLETTE, WYO.

The romance of the railroad from the eyes of a locomotive engineer



Steven V. Halbroom hired out in Gillette, Wyo., in 1994 and earned promotion to Locomotive Engineer in 1995. He joined BLET Division 94 (Gillette, Wyo.), on May 1, 1997. He has served his Division as President and is currently Local Chairman of Division 94. In June of 2013, he was elected 2nd Alternate Vice General Chairman at the BNSF-MRL General Committee of Adjustment's triennial meeting.

Photo: courtesy of Steve Halbroom

“We as members of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen take pride in what we do and constantly strive to be the best.”

Not long ago I was involved in an interview for a newspaper article on various aspects of the rail industry. The main topic was the impact of transporting coal to the Northwest for exporting and the effect it would have on the environment and the communities in which the trains would traverse. It was an interesting event and some serious issues were discussed. Then the newspaper columnist surprised me with a question that I really wasn't prepared for. He began his questioning with a statement, “Do you know that you, as a Locomotive Engineer, you are living many young children's and many adult's dreams. You are a Locomotive Engineer.” With that I started thinking a little about what he said and began realizing that maybe, in a way, that statement is true. Then he asked, “Could you tell me, from a Locomotive Engineer's view, what is the romance of the railroad?” To tell you the truth I had to pause. I kind of struggled with my answer, but I got through it. But since then I have been thinking of the question: “What is the romance of the railroad from the eyes of a Locomotive Engineer?”

The more I thought of it, the more things came to mind. There are, of course, the many



The morning sun illuminates the nose of an eastbound BNSF stack train at Belen, N.M.

beautiful sunsets and sunrises that we see — probably more than almost anyone — and also the clouds against beautiful blue skies or even the beauty of storms building in the distance. There is the breathtaking scenery of mountains, plains, rivers and canyons. There is even manmade infrastructure such as historic trestles and bridges, and the sight of bright green signals lighting up the night sky. There's also the welcome sight of pulling into a well-lit yard at the end of your tour of duty.

But then I realized that there was more to it than just the visual aspects. There is the sense of self-confidence of knowing that you are a skilled Locomotive Engineer, knowledgeable of all of the required

rules, and committed to knowing how to comply with all requirements in the Code of Federal Regulations. All the while, being a Locomotive Engineer who is able to achieve the technical proficiency required to pass the yearly required testing and certification processes.

Then there is the knowledge that railroading is a piece of Americana, and that we are an essential part of an industry that was vital in expanding the United States of America from East Coast to West Coast. There is pride in knowing that our industry not only helped to spur the nation's growth, but also played major roles throughout history in transporting military equipment and soldiers during times such as the Civil War, World War I and World War



II. The one constant behind the scenes of these events was the Locomotive Engineer. Behind the throttle 24 hours a day, seven days a week, through rain or shine, through the heat of the South and the freezing temperatures of the North. It was the hard working Locomotive Engineer who made sure that the trains and their cargo made it safely to their final destination.

But once again there is even more that contributes to the romance of the rail and the Locomotive Engineer. Locomotive Engineers belong to the oldest fraternal order in North America. The Brotherhood of the Footboard was established on May 8, 1863; and then it became the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers in 1864. Currently, we are the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen. This in and of itself instills pride in today's Locomotive Engineer.

There is no denying the grim knowledge that the struggles of our forefathers — and in too many instances their bloodshed — helped to secure the respectable wages, safe working conditions and benefits of our craft today. There is a certain pride that comes from that. They were leaders in setting the American standard for labor laws and hours worked — not just for Locomotive Engineers — but for countless others. We have them to thank for the 8-hour work day. As you know, these things did not come easy, and many, many hours were spent negotiating agreements and benefits. The formulation of the Railroad Retirement system, to ensure that Locomotive Engineers



Under threatening skies, a BNSF stack train glides along the high desert of New Mexico at dusk.

and all railroaders could have a comfortable retirement, is a hard-fought reward for all the long and demanding hours and the toll that it takes on our bodies. To this day, our Railroad Retirement system remains strong and stands solvent, ensuring the benefits that are deserved.

We work with no set schedules and often long shifts in an industry that is not only demanding physically but also one that is very unforgiving in its nature. We as Locomotive Engineers form a bond with fellow workers in our industry like few others. Knowing one mistake can have serious consequences — not just an individual, but also on our friends, families and co-workers... knowing one mistake can have devastating consequences... knowing we transport hazardous chemicals and heavy tonnage of every kind of imaginable. We hold this knowledge and this responsibility in high regard. We as members of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen take

pride in what we do and constantly strive to be the best.

So is there a romantic side of being a Locomotive Engineer? Maybe so. Maybe one that as a Locomotive Engineer we don't even think about on a day-to-day basis. I have told a story of a golf trip I had one time. I had an opportunity to play a round of golf in Las Vegas and was paired up with two other men. Once we were into the round a few holes I asked the two what they did for a living. They were both Air Force fighter pilots. I was totally in awe. This was during the time of Operation Desert Storm and I responded, "Wow, Air Force fighter pilots." They seemed to take it in stride, they then returned the question to me, "What do you do for a living." Still in awe I meekly responded, "I'm a Locomotive Engineer." To my surprise they both responded in the same manner that I had. They looked at me and replied, "Wow, you are a Locomotive Engineer? You run the trains?" Their ques-

tions just kept coming. All the time that I was answering their questions I was thinking to myself, "Come on guys, you're fighter pilots. That is so cool." Then I realized these highly trained pilots view me as much of a professional as I view them. Many times I believe that we as Locomotive Engineers do not see ourselves as such — but rest assured we are.

So it brings me back to the original question "What is the romance of the rail through the eyes of a Locomotive Engineer?" Afraid of sounding like a "foamer" I guess there is one after all, and I hope this article explains a little of what it's like.

So now when I see a couple of small children standing on a hill, or a parent holding a young child and they are pulling down their fist above their head, I feel a little pride and also their enthusiasm. When I give them a little toot of the horn and a wave of the hand, I know that I am a living a part of someone's dream. 🚂

Photos: Chase Gunnoe

**BLET member Fred Jarrell
honored for saving 7-year-old boy**

hero among us

ON FEBRUARY 21, 2014, BLET LOCOMOTIVE FREDERICK JARRELL RECEIVED A MEDAL OF VALOR FROM THE POLICE CHIEF OF ST. PAUL, MINN., FOR HIS BRAVERY IN RESCUING A 7-YEAR-OLD AUTISTIC BOY WHO WAS TRAPPED ON A STEEP MISSISSIPPI RIVER BLUFF.



Frederick Jarrell, a member of BLET Division 494, holding the Chief's Award of Valor he received on February 21 from the City of St. Paul Police Department. In 2013, Brother Jarrell helped rescue a 7-year-old autistic boy who wandered away from home and became stranded on steep Mississippi River bluffs overlooking train tracks.

Brother Jarrell, who joined BLET Division 494 (Minneapolis, Minn.) on January 1, 2005, normally works as a CP Rail locomotive engineer between St. Paul and Glenwood, Minn. On May 11, 2013, he was nearing his off-duty point on an eastbound train into St. Paul. He got word from the yard to prepare for a crew change so he brought his train to a stop about a quarter of a mile from the yard.

It was a familiar spot for Brother Jarrell, 42, who exited his locomotive to stretch his legs. He had stopped trains there many times before, and the area is next to steep Mississippi River bluffs.

Locomotive engineers are known for having eagle eyes and for paying close attention to details. A few weeks prior, Brother Jarrell spotted a bicycle that someone had tossed off of the bluffs, which was stuck in trees and overgrowth near the top of the bluffs.

DANGER SIGN

For weeks, he would look up and see the bicycle. Jarrell said it had become a part of his routine to look for it and to see if it had fallen from the trees.

But on this day, Brother Jarrell did not see the bicycle. His attention immediately became focused on a little boy who was sitting on the dangerously steep bluff.

“My first thought was that kids will play anywhere these days,” Jarrell said. “At first I thought he must be playing with his friends, but he was by himself. And he was in his pajamas. He was barefoot and he was just sitting up there by himself.”

The quick-thinking engineer then knew the boy was in trouble. He advised his conductor Ben Goar to notify the railroad to stop all trains in the area because they had an emergency on the tracks. Brother Jarrell then used his two-way radio to contact the



William Simonbet, 7, is photographed Monday, June 10, 2013 with his mother, Becky Simonbet, top, and the CP Rail employees who rescued him last year: engineer Frederick Jarrell, center, and conductor Ben Goar, right.

yard to advise them of the situation and to request assistance from police and emergency personnel.

The boy, 7-year-old William Simonbet, had wandered away from his home and onto the river bluffs. A search for William had already been underway for five hours, but Brother Jarrell didn't know that when he sprang into action.

THE RESCUE

The hillside was so steep Brother Jarrell fell backward

on his first attempt to rescue the boy. On his second attempt, he did not fail. "I dug in and climbed up," he said, holding onto scrub trees and other vegetation on his way up the hillside. Jarrell advised Conductor Goar to shout and distract the boy as he climbed up.

"William was at a spot where if he moved a few feet to the left or right, he would have fallen straight down," Jarrell said. "I didn't want to spook him or startle him because he might have start-

ed to slip."

Eventually, Jarrell was able to scrape his way up the steep slope where he grabbed William and held him close to his chest. But the rescue wasn't over.

"We both started slipping," Jarrell said. "He was struggling against me and crying, but I pushed with my feet back up the bluff."

It was a slow, steady, grueling process. Once he got near the top, Brother Jarrell saw emergency personnel on the scene, but he was still

quite a distance from the top. He knew the fire department ladders wouldn't reach. So he held onto some scrub, turned over, put the boy onto his back, and clawed his way up to the top.

"It was about two and a half or three stories, but it felt like 100," Jarrell said.

Finally at the top and near the point of physical exhaustion, a female police officer spotted Jarrell with William and exclaimed, "I found him." She lifted the boy from Jarrell's arms.



William Simonbet, 7, slaps hands with Frederick Jarrell, an engineer with the CP Rail and member of the BLET, who, along with conductor Ben Goar, center, rescued William in May 2013 when the boy, who has autism, became trapped on the Mississippi River bluffs near Mounds Park in St. Paul. St. Paul Fire Chief Tim Butler recognized Jarrell and Goar for their heroics in a ceremony on June 10, 2013, at fire station No. 8 in St. Paul, Minn.

THE AFTERMATH

Somehow he finished the climb to safety. “I collapsed from exhaustion,” he said. “I don’t know how I made it.”

Jarrell rested and gathered himself while EMS attended to William. A police officer offered Jarrell a ride to the rail yard in the front seat of the police cruiser.

“I salute the St. Paul fire rescue team, the police department, state troopers, paramedics and all the emergency responders who were there,” Brother Jarrell said. “Also, the St. Paul residents in the area. They didn’t care about themselves. They cared about the boy. They were looking for him for five hours but I didn’t know that. It was truly special to see the way the all came together and were all smiles when William was safe.”



Jarrell with Tom Smith (right), St. Paul’s Chief of Police.

In June of 2013, Brother Jarrell and Conductor Goar were honored with letters of commendation from the Fire Department in St. Paul for their heroics. On February 21, 2014, the St. Paul’s Police Chief presented Brother Jarrell with a Medal of Valor

for his heroics. Jarrell’s fiancé, Sherille Jordan, attended the ceremony.

He has also received, cards, letters, candy and other thanks from young William’s family. Brother Jarrell spoke to William’s mother at the February 21 ceremony. She told him May



The February 21 presentation ceremony.

8 is William’s birthday, May 10 is his father’s birthday, May 11 was the day of the rescue, and May 12 was Mother’s Day in 2013.

“I want to publicly acknowledge that God was the one who made this happen,” Brother Jarrell said. “I didn’t do any of this for hero status. Anyone would have done it had they been there. My faith is that I believe in God and I believe this was an ordained moment.”

BNSF, UP members host Town Hall meetings in Kansas City

Kansas City was the host city for two major BLET Town Hall meetings in December, 2013. On December 10, the Brotherhood's BNSF Divisions hosted a Town Hall meeting, and on December 11, the BLET's Union Pacific Divisions representing the Kansas City Hub hosted a Town Hall meeting/retirement luncheon.

BLET National President Dennis R. Pierce was the keynote speaker at both meetings. Walter A. Barrows, Labor Member of the U.S. Railroad Retirement Board, was in attendance to speak to members regarding the importance

of Railroad Retirement, as was Michael J. Collins, Legislative Assistant to the Labor Member. Also on hand were: General Chairman Ronnie E. Rhodes, Union Pacific-Central Region GCA; and Missouri State Legislative Board Chairman Brian P. Kelley.

President Pierce presented commemorative plaques to many retiring BLET Brothers on December 11 (see pages 24-25 for photos and related story). On December 10, he presented specially-engraved BLET watches to two members for increasing their contributions to the BLET PAC Fund to \$50 per month: Brother C.C. Fuller,

Secretary-Treasurer of Division 75; and Brother Ted W. Stauffer Legislative Representative of BLET Division 75 and 1st Vice-Chairman of the Missouri State Legislative Board.

"It was an honor and a privilege to have been invited to these Town Hall meetings," President Pierce said. "I cannot thank these Brothers and Sisters enough for their hospitality. We had two days of informational meetings and helped renew our bonds of solidarity with our Brothers and Sisters in the Kansas City area. It was a wonderful way to close out the year 2013."



On December 10 in Kansas City, National President Dennis R. Pierce presented two members with specially-engraved BLET wristwatches as thanks for increasing their BLET PAC Fund contributions to \$50 per month. They are: Brother Ted W. Stauffer, Legislative Representative of Division 75 and 1st Vice-Chairman of the Missouri State Legislative Board; and Brother C.C. Fuller, Secretary-Treasurer of Division 75.



Stauffer



Fuller

Defeating voter apathy

Make sure your voice is heard in 2014 mid-term elections



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

The 2014 mid-term elections are approaching, with a few states having already held primaries, and while sometimes I feel like a broken record saying this: the results of these elections could change the course of our country and it is vitally important that we not let down our guard.

It seems that each election going forward, will be a fight for the future of our country, the labor movement and America's middle class. We will need to continually stand up for what we believe in, what we need as workers, and what we deserve as citizens of the greatest and the richest country in the world.

We have seen over the past several years the importance of each election, and we cannot become complacent. I know it may seem like the period of time between "important" elections becomes shorter and shorter, but that's because the stakes of each election simply become higher and higher.

As we have seen in the past several years, not having the 60 votes to bring legislation to the floor of the Senate — or cloture — can cause gridlock and prevent legislation that is supported by a majority of Senators from being passed. The 60-vote threshold now seems to be a necessity in Washington. Senators can place anonymous holds

"Since the Republicans took control of the House in 2010 and began to be ruled by a small faction of self-proclaimed "Tea Party" members, we have been relying on the Senate to stop or at least fix some of the most egregious anti-worker legislation we have ever seen coming from the House."

on legislation or make getting 60 votes impossible in order to prevent passage. In this way democracy is thwarted for the benefit of the few.

This is why we need to ensure that the control of the Senate remain in the hands of people who are willing to fight for the interests of middle class and working class Americans. Among the important Senate races that we will focus on over the coming year are those in Arkansas, Alaska, Georgia, Iowa, Kentucky, Louisiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Montana, North Carolina and West Virginia. In many of these races, the candidate running on the Republican side is even more pro-business than the mainstream of that party, which would create further havoc within the Congress.

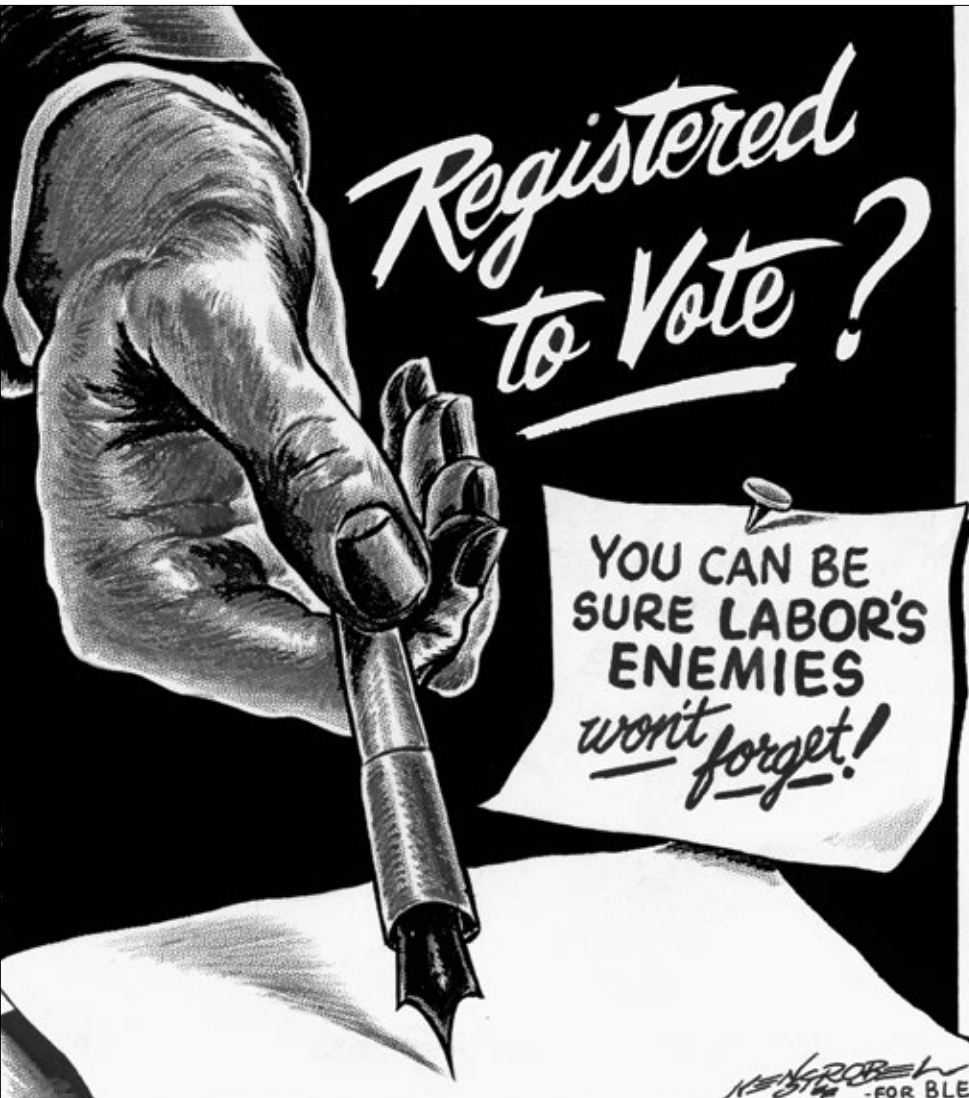
The current Senate line-up is 53

Democrats, 45 Republicans, and two independents, who caucus with Democrats. There are 36 Senate races on the ballot in 2014. Democrats have 21 of these seats up for reelection this cycle, and Republicans have 15 seats up for reelection.

Two of the best opportunities that labor-friendly candidates have to pick up additional seats are in Georgia and Kentucky. In Georgia, the daughter of former Senator Sam Nunn, Michelle Nunn, is running for the seat currently occupied by Senator Saxby Chambliss. At press time, the seat was still leaning Republican, but Nunn has a chance to take the race against several potential Republican challengers. In Kentucky, Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell (R) is facing a strong Democratic challenger in Secretary of State Allison Lundergan-Grimes. The race is currently a toss-up between the two.

While getting to 60 votes in the Senate is important, even worse would be losing both Houses of Congress. Since the Republicans took control of the House in 2010 and began to be ruled by a small faction of self-proclaimed "Tea Party" members, we have been relying on the Senate to stop or at least fix some of the most egregious anti-worker legislation we have ever seen coming from the House. If the Democrats lose control of the Senate and cannot take back the House, there is every reason to think that this barrage will only intensify.

It is difficult to say what will happen between now and the election. We have seen several high profile retire-



GET OUT THE VOTE!

Casting your vote at the ballot box is one of the most powerful methods we have for protecting our rights as union members. That message is just as true today as it was 52 years ago when this editorial cartoon was first published in the May 18, 1962 issue of the Locomotive Engineer newspaper.

ments in the months leading up to the current election season, with long standing members of both the House and the Senate choosing to retire rather than run for re-election, such as Representatives John Dingell (D-MI) and George Miller (D-CA) and Senators Tom Harkin (D-IA) and Jay Rockefeller (D-WV). With approval ratings for Congress as a whole at an all-time low, it will be interesting to see if the negative opinions of the current Congress translate into change on Election Day.

Will people be motivated to both

vote and vote for change? In February, a poll by CBS News and the New York Times found that only 33 percent of respondents had a favorable view of the Republican Party, while a stunning 61 percent had an unfavorable view. In contrast, 42 percent of respondents had a favorable view of the Democratic Party, while only 53 percent had an unfavorable view.

The current House breakdown is 232 Republicans, 199 Democrats, and four vacancies (two that are Republican and two that are Democratic). Demo-

crats need a net gain of 17 seats to reach a majority in 2014.

On the state level, there are elections for governor's mansions in 36 states and many states also have elections for their legislatures. Control of both branches has grown more important over the past several years, as we have seen a steady stream of anti-worker legislation coming out of the state legislatures.

The current line-up of the nation's Governors is 29 Republicans and 21 Democrats. Of the 36 races, 22 are seats held by Republicans and 14 by Democrats. Republicans have far more exposure to losses. At this point in the cycle, it appears that Republicans are more likely to lose gubernatorial seats than gain them. Republicans currently control 27 state legislatures, and Democrats control 17, with five states being split (Iowa, Kentucky, New Hampshire, New York and Washington).

Anti-union and anti-worker laws, such as so-called "Right to Work," elimination of public employee bargaining rights and the cynically-named "paycheck deception" laws, have been tried or passed in states such as Wisconsin, Missouri, Ohio, Indiana, and many others. "Right to Work" and "paycheck deception" are designed to weaken workers' rights by depriving their duly chosen representatives of income needed to negotiate and administer contracts by encouraging freeloaders, who obtain all the benefits of collective bargaining without having to provide any financial support for the union's work.

Some of these are states that are fairly evenly divided in their legislatures, so Republican control in one or both Houses plus the governor's mansion can be devastating to workers. Control of one or both Houses of the legislature and/or the Governorship can be significant. For example, in Missouri, we have been able to stop "Right to Work" because the Governor is a Democrat and has vetoed the legislation when it reaches his desk.

We are now seeing similar anti-work-

er legislation in the current sessions and we expect this trend continue. There are some — mostly in the Republican Party — who believe they must attack the workers of this country, and specifically union workers, in order to achieve the goals of Corporate America, who funds their campaigns. This is unfortunate and has led to a series of bills that negatively impact our nation's workers.

As the time between elections seem shorter and shorter, we need to work in order to ensure that apathy does not set in. Elections like this one, when the Presidency is not at stake, generally have lower voter turnout than elections during Presidential years. This trend is in part fostered by the media, who calls them “mid-term” elections, implying that they're less important than elections in which a President is chosen, so each BLET member needs to make sure to register to vote and vote in both the primary and general elections. If you think that you will be working on either of those days, then vote by absentee ballot to make sure that your voice will be heard.

We also need to make sure that contributions to the BLET-PAC continue to increase. I've said time and time again that the BLET-PAC is one of the most important ways to influence the track of Congress, our state legislatures and our industry. Donations to the BLET-PAC will help to ensure that working family friendly candidates of both parties, as well as Independents, are elected to office so that government can function on behalf of workers in this country again.

We are fighting every day to turn the tide in favor of worker rights and workplace safety, and that all of our rights as citizens are maintained. You can fulfill your obligation as a citizen and as a BLET member by voting for the candidates who will fight to protect and preserve our hard fought rights and protect our safety, whether they are Republicans, Democrats or Independents; and by donating to the BLET-PAC because each election is more important than the last. 🗳️

BLET'S FULL SLATE

Key regulatory challenges



BY VINCENT G. VERNA
DIRECTOR OF
REGULATORY AFFAIRS

UP DRUG TESTING WAIVER

The Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen, along with several other rail labor unions, recently scored a big victory when the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) issued a decision letter regarding a waiver petition filed by Union Pacific Railroad (UP) seeking to change its drug testing policies.

In its petition, UP requested FRA's approval “to periodically and intermittently adjust UP's random drug and alcohol testing rates at specific locations based on objective, performance-based criteria or, alternately, approval for a pilot program in which UP can increase random testing of its employees at specific locations based on objective performance based criteria.”

The labor organizations objected to this petition for several reasons, including the possible violations of employees' Fourth Amendment rights, and a lack of justification for changing drug testing metrics. In addition to BLET, additional rail labor participants included the American Train Dispatchers Association, the Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees Division of the Teamsters Rail Conference, the Brotherhood of Railroad Signalmen, the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW), and the Transportation Division of the Sheet Metal, Air, Rail and Transportation Union.

The unions argued that UP was seek-

ing permission “to tweak and re-tweak its program whenever its non-specific mix of craft, seniority districts, departments, geographic territory, working conditions, culture and ‘human factors incidents’ strikes it differently than the day before.” Thus, they concluded, granting the waiver would have given “total discretion to Union Pacific and its junior officers in targeting employees or groups of employees for increased levels of testing that is labeled random, but in practice is subjective. UP touts ‘objective performance driven standards’ without defining those standards. The ambiguity of the term lends the distinct possibility that the ‘standards’ may not relate to the level of positive test results, which is the standard utilized by FRA to set testing rates. ‘Standards’ may be related to production goals, or participation in Carrier sponsored promotions or cooperative efforts, or injury frequencies, or report of other safety/security concerns.”

The unions continued by stating: “The law has sought to strike a balance between safety and privacy rights, not simply subject privacy rights to the whims of a private entity. When the UP or any carrier tests for drugs or alcohol in a random scenario, they do so as agents of a mandate. They are assisting the government in carrying out safety duties deemed important by the public. UP's assertion that the FRA ‘does not allow the railroad to manage its random drug and alcohol testing resources in the same data driven efficient manner,’ is a point well worth noting for its bombast and self-reverence. It defies common sense and logic.”

In siding with rail labor, the FRA supported the unions' position by asserting



that its current testing policies strike a correct balance between privacy and safety through the use of substantially equal statistical chances of being selected for testing. FRA also cited other reasons for denying UP's request, including that the railroad's "loosely defined testing criteria," the "targeting of particular subsets of employees," and target[ing] higher rates of random testing based on vaguely defined criteria or [the Carrier's] own business objectives." FRA also rejected UP's assertion that 49 C.F.R. Sections 219.601(b) (1) and (b)(2) were subject to "interpretation," holding that they must be applied consistent with "the plain meaning and intent of the language." (emphasis in original). FRA's unequivocal rejection of the Carrier's argument represents a significant victory for our membership.

EO 28 WORKING GROUP UPDATE

Work on issues resulting from FRA's Emergency Order 28 has continued in the Rail Safety Advisory Committee process, with working groups established to address Crew Size, Hazardous Materials and Securement. All of the working groups met in late January to further their work on these issues, and both the Hazardous Materials and Crew Size working groups met again in early March.

At the January meetings, BLET, the rail carriers from Class I railroads, the passenger and commuter railroads, and the short line railroads began developing "straw man" language on new rules regarding the tasks accepted by the Working Groups from the full RSAC Committee. With regard to Crew Size, the first meeting saw FRA agreeing with BLET that "Railroad safety is enhanced through the use of multiple person crews and that a second crew member provides safety redundancy and provides a method of checks and balances on train operations."

The BLET has other concerns regarding crew size that will guide our all-important work on this issue. For example, we believe that a two-person crew is safest when they are working together after getting a proper amount of sleep, with more predictable work schedules, and

"In siding with rail labor, the FRA supported the unions' position by asserting that its current testing policies strike a correct balance between privacy and safety through the use of substantially equal statistical chances of being selected for testing."

working on a railroad equipped with PTC. Proper crew size, proper and predictable rest, and PTC technology that helps prevent many types of train collisions are the best combination of safety measures to reduce accidents and help to ensure our members return home from work safely.


The Hazardous Material Working Group is working on crafting regulatory language to address DOT Type 111 Tank Cars. DOT Type 111 tank cars have been targeted as unsafe due to their weak end shields that are easily pierced in derailments. This problem has been exacerbated by the type of crude oil being carried from the oil fields such as Bakken. Shipments of this type of product have increased 9,000% since 2008. As locomotive engineers, we are eager to transport this oil and participate in an American energy boom. We are part of the story of burgeoning American energy independence. But this boom has come at a cost. More trains means more crews working longer hours more frequently. Our members are making extraordinary efforts to combat and cope with the fatigue that is a dangerous part of our profession. The issues being dealt with by the working group are defining the term "residue," as well as reconciling other regulatory definitions from different places in the Code of Federal Regulations. The industry has a definition of residue that includes any amount left in a car up to 7%, but this amount is for commercial purpose and is inconsistent with safety concerns.

The Securement Working Group was tasked to review equipment securement requirements by FRA Emergency Order

28. The original task statement included a recommendation to review operational testing for securement. The BLET and the other rail labor unions that participate at RSAC objected to the often-stated principle from FRA and the carriers that increasing the amount of operational testing on our members can solve securement problems. FRA withdrew this part of the task statement.

There has been general agreement during the Securement Working Group Meetings that for the most part securement is not a problem in the United States. EO 28 grew out of the tragic accident at Lac Megantic in Quebec, Canada. The investigation into the causes of that accident remains unfinished. However, it was clear from the beginning that a single-person operation and securement practices required by single-person operation was a contributing factor. Most trains in the United States, with extraordinarily limited exceptions, are operated by two-person crews and complete their duty tours without incident.

Another issue during the securement working group meetings was securing the locomotive when a train is left unattended. There is a tentative agreement on the installation of locks on locomotive doors that will prevent unauthorized access to locomotives left unattended, while providing ingress and egress for train crews in regular and emergency situations.

It is expected that all of the EO28 Working Groups would complete their recommendations to FRA by late Spring of 2014. At that time, FRA will review the recommendations and give the most consideration to those items upon which the RSAC reached consensus. Items that were not agreed upon can still be regulated by FRA and appear in rule text, and items that were agreed upon in the working groups can be altered by FRA as the agency sees fit. Although this can be the cause of much frustration among the RSAC stakeholders, including BLET, it is still a process that we must take part in despite our frustrations and the incremental nature of federal rulemaking. 

Former General Chairman Knorek a BLET member for 45 years

Daniel M. (Danny) Knorek, former General Chairman of the CSX Northern Railroad Lines General Committee of Adjustment, retired on May 5, 2013. After a long career spanning six decades, he celebrated his retirement with many of the Brothers he worked with and served at the BLET 150th Anniversary Celebration in Detroit.

Brother Knorek hired out in June of 1966 as a fireman on the Toledo Division of the former Baltimore & Ohio Railroad in Toledo, Ohio. He got involved in the union movement in 1967 as an officer in the old firemen's union, Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen & Enginemen. He joined BLE Division 876 on May 1, 1969. In May of 2014, he will celebrate 45 consecutive years of Brotherhood membership. He earned promotion to locomotive engineer in 1970 and worked in road service between Toledo and Cincinnati and Willard, Ohio, and also in yard service in



Brother Knorek and his wife, Cheryl, visit Greenfield Village during the BLET's 150th Anniversary Celebration on May 7, 2013.

the former B&O Rossford Yard. He worked much of his operating years in the former C&O Walbridge Yard after the 1968 consolidation of the Toledo Terminal and the creation of the Chessie System and then CSX.

Over his long rail career, Brother Knorek was instrumental in helping negotiate some of the many consolidation agreements in the Toledo area and

in the states of Ohio, Michigan and Indiana. He served as Local Chairman for more than 30 years and held many other elected offices on the Division level. He became General Chairman of the B&O Toledo Division General Committee in 1989 and helped merge that small committee with the B&O Proper, and was elected a Vice General Chairman (VGC). He helped merge Division 876 into Division 937 shortly before he became the full time Second VGC in 2002, working at the GCA offices in Jacksonville, Fla. He was reelected Second VGC in 2005 and First VGC in 2009. He became General Chairman in July of 2012 following the retirement of then-General Chairman Rick Finamore.

Brother Knorek and his wife Cheryl of 44 years live in Ponte Vedra, Fla., and plan to make more frequent and longer vacation trips when visiting their children — daughter Amy in Illinois, and son Dan, his wife Becky and their two grandsons Dan and Drew in Toledo. ☐

A former Marine, Mullery retires from NJ Transit

Brother Harry K. Mullery, BLET Division 373 (Trenton, N.J.), retired from New Jersey Transit on June 4, 2013, after 41 years, 11 months and three days of working for the railroad. Brother Mullery hired out on July 2, 1971, but then served our nation as a proud member of the Marine Corps from September 7, 1971, through September 7, 1973. Following his tour of duty, Brother Mullery returned to his railroad job where he earned promotion to locomotive engineer on September 24, 1974. He joined BLET Division 373 on March 1, 1980. D.C. Decker, BLET General Chairman at New Jersey Transit, praised Brother Mullery for his work ethic and dedication. "Congratulations, Brother Harry, and best wishes for your hard-earned retirement," Brother Decker said. ☐



Harry K. Mullery, Div. 373

Bill Verdeyen spent a career fighting for rail safety improvements

William M. Verdeyen, who served the Brotherhood as Chairman of the Indiana State Legislative Board for 19 years, retired effective October 1, 2013. His retirement brought to an end his distinguished 43-year railroad career that was marked by his unwavering service to the union and its members.

As a high school student, Brother Verdeyen worked in the maintenance of way department for the Milwaukee Road between his sophomore and junior years. He hired out full time as a fireman for the Milwaukee Road on August 15, 1970. He joined BLET Division 754 (Elkhart, Ind.) on June 1, 1974, then earned promotion to Locomotive Engineer in September of 1974. Over the years, the portion of the Milwaukee Road where he hired out became the Soo Line and then eventually CP Rail.

In 1986, he was serving as Legislative Representative of his Division when — at the behest of Local Chairman Mike Priester (now a BLET National Vice President) — Brother Verdeyen ran for a position with the Indiana State Legislative Board. Verdeyen was elected Secretary-Treasurer of the Indiana SLB, a position he held for eight years. In 1994, he was elected Chairman of the Indiana SLB, an office he held for 19 years until his retirement. His Last Run was on September 31, 2013. He is proud of the fact that the number of BLET members represented by the Indiana SLB increased from 450 members when he was first elected to about 1,200 when he retired.

During his tenure as Chairman, the Indiana legislature passed eight BLET-backed bills that were crafted by Brother Verdeyen and the members of the Indiana SLB. These included bills that made work environments safer for all operating crew members and the general public. He was also part of the national team that lobbied Congress for passage of the Railroad Retirement and



Above: Brother Verdeyen gives a thumbs up after safely completing his Last Run.



Left: Brother Verdeyen with long-time friend and BLET Vice President Mike Priester.

Survivors Improvement Act of 2001, which helped reduce the retirement age to 60 with 30 years of service with no reduction in benefits.

Brother Verdeyen is most proud of the work accomplished as a member of the Rail Safety Advisory Committee, or RSAC. He was a member of various working groups and committees, which worked to improve power brakes, locomotive crashworthiness, passenger equipment safety standards, engineering standards for high-speed locomotives, and in-cab sanitation standards. Brother Verdeyen reports that this work is still ongoing, but believes that the stronger corner posts and windows in today's locomotive cabs have helped save the lives of many engineers over the past several years.

He and his wife Susan have been

married for 36 years. They have three sons — Kris, Andy and David — and four grandchildren. He plans to spend a lot more time with his family during retirement while also getting in a few rounds of golf.

Verdeyen's father and both grandfathers worked in the railroad industry.

"Since I hired out 43 years ago, the locomotives have gotten better, the pay has gotten better and the benefits have gotten better," Brother Verdeyen said. "None of this happens without the BLET fighting for every member, every day. Our members may be working for the railroads, but the railroads aren't working for us. They're working for their stock investors. There are a lot of hard working people who do a lot of work for the fine members of this organization. Whether it's the President, Vice President, General Chairman, Legislative Board Chairmen, Local Chairman, or any other elected officer, the BLET represent our members the best way we can." 🕒

John Nutter was President of Division 301 for 18 years

John A. Nutter, President of BLET Division 301 (Roanoke, Va.), retired at the regular division meeting held on June 5, 2013.

Brother John started his railroad career with the Norfolk Southern Railway on July 3, 1987, as a trainman on the Virginia Division. He was promoted to conductor June 13, 1989.



On September 20, 1989, he earned promotion to locomotive engineer on the Radford District. He worked out of Roanoke, Va. to Bristol, Va. and Bluefield, W.Va.

Ten days after being promoted to



Brother Nutter reaches from the locomotive cab as he readies for his Last Run.

locomotive engineer, Brother Nutter joined Division 301. Brother John was elected as Division President in December of 1994. He has officiated as President of BLET Division 301 for 18 years. During his membership with

Division 301, Brother John has served as a Delegate to the National Division convention, attending the First Quadrennial Convention in Las Vegas, Nevada, in 2006. John was also a General Committee of Adjustment delegate to the International Brotherhood of Teamsters national convention in Las Vegas in 2010.

“Brother Nutter has served the BLET with character, distinction, and integrity,” said Gary A. Myers, Secretary-Treasurer and Legislative Representative of Division 301. “He has been a true leader and Brother to our members. Division 301 will truly miss his leadership. We wish him good health and a long, happy retirement.”

President Pierce honors R. L. Law, KC Hub retirees

On December 11, 2013, BLET National President Dennis Pierce attended a Town Hall Meeting/Retirees Luncheon in Kansas City for BLET members who work throughout the Kansas City Hub. As part of the day’s events, President Pierce presented plaques to more than a dozen recent retirees (next page).

President Pierce also presented a commemorative letter to Brother R. L. Law, who retired as Local Chairman of Division 491 (Kansas City, Mo.) in 2013. Brother Law first joined the Brotherhood in 1979 and has held continuous membership in the BLET since May of 1989. That same year, he was one of 17 engine service employees who petitioned to form



President Pierce and R. L. Law, Div. 491.

a new Division at Falls City, Neb. On July 7, 1989, then-President Larry D. McFather chartered Division 61, where Brother Law was elected Local Chairman. He held that

office for a remarkable 23 years, through Division 61’s merger with Division 491 on November 1, 2004, and through December of 2012. Over the years, he was de-

scribed as an indispensable aid to General Chairmen Waldemer, Penning, Rightonwar and now Ronnie Rhodes. Brother Law had valuable input concerning the Kansas City Hub during the Union Pacific-Southern Pacific merger in the mid 1990s. He continues to serve the Union Pacific-Central Region GCA as a Vice General Chairman.

“You have protected and continue to protect the membership above and beyond the call of duty,” President Pierce wrote in his letter to Brother Law. “Your efforts have made your Division and GCA stronger. It is your tireless dedication to the membership which has set an example for me, and for all members to follow.”

KANSAS CITY HUB RETIREES



Tom L. Burris, Div. 336



W. Hal Elkins, Div. 491



Steve A. Small, Div. 491



Chuck T. Haynes, Div. 81



Dennis D. Huff, Div. 609



Rick L. Garcia, Div. 81



Phil P. Denk, Div. 81



Don W. Terry, Div. 81



Larry D. Silliz, Div. 336



Paul T. Jolley, Div. 336



Pete M. Gehrt, Div. 81



Phil C. Lentz, Div. 336



Dennis R. Rowland, Div. 491



R. E. Hovenga, Div. 609



Ralph D. Richardson, Div. 491

Elmore retires after 43 years of service

Brother Jerry S. Elmore, BLET Division 120 (Kansas City, Mo.), retired on December 1, 2013, after a railroad career that spanned 43 years. At the time of his retirement, he was serving as Secretary-Treasurer of the Norfolk Southern-Northern Lines/Wheeling & Lake Erie General Committee of Adjustment.

In 1970, Brother Elmore hired out on the Norfolk & Western as a switchman in Moberly, Mo. He went firing on June 28, 1974, and earned promotion to locomotive engineer for the N&W on December 1, 1976. Brother Elmore has held continuous membership in the Brotherhood since he first joined Division 86 in Moberly on February 1, 1984.

Brother Elmore has faithfully served the Brotherhood in various elected offices, including Vice Local Chairman of Division 86 from 1988-1994, and Local Chairman of Division 120 from 1994-2009. In 2009, he was elected Secretary-Treasurer of the Norfolk Southern-Northern Lines/Wheeling & Lake Erie General Committee of Adjustment, a full-time position.

Over the years, Brother Elmore has had a positive influence upon countless young members of the Brotherhood and has served as a role model for many upcoming Secretary-Treasurers. BLET National President Dennis R. Pierce congratulated Brother Elmore upon his retirement in a letter dated December 12, 2013. President Pierce wrote in part: "You have been an inspiration to those who know you and have worked with you over the last 20 years. For the past several years I have been diligently asking for membership involvement. You are one that stands out in my mind as always being there to lend a helping hand."

Brother Elmore and his wife Machelles have two daughters, Angie and Tricia, and two grandchildren. His




Brother Elmore and his wife Machelles at the Southeastern Meeting Association's 2013 regional meeting in Richmond, Va.



The members and officers of BLET Division 120 present Brother Elmore with a commemorative copy of their new Division charter at their regular Division meeting on February 11, 2014. Front row, from left: Dan J. Frederick, Local Chairman; Kim R. Dunwoody, member; Jerry Elmore, retired; Vice President Rick C. Gibbons; and John L. Rickart, President. Back row, from left: Kimble L. Jackson, Legislative Representative; Kevin E. Gentzler, member; Billy S. McIntosh, 1st Vice President; and Gary R. Miller, Secretary-Treasurer.

hobbies include fishing and wood-working. During retirement, the couple plans to spend more time at their lake house at the Lake of the Ozarks.

"It was an honor to have served

all these years and to have met and work with the greatest group of people," Brother Elmore said. "I have made a lot of friends and will cherish the memories." 

Division 28 honors retirees with commemorative watches

About five years ago, the members of BLET Division 28 (Tucson, Ariz.) began a tradition of providing commemorative BLET watches to retirees. In 2013, the Division honored five such retirees. They were: Ted L. Coil, who joined BLET Division 28 in 1973; Paul T. Currier, who joined Division 28 in 1980; Ken N. Kroeger Jr., who joined the BLET in 1976; Marlin D. Jameson, who joined Divi-

sion 28 in 1986; and James A. Slade, who joined Division 28 in 1974. Each watch was personalized with an engraving on the back. Division 28 President R.F. Kaveloh Jr. presented the watches on behalf of the membership at Division 28's regular monthly meeting in September of 2013. Brother Kaveloh said: "Congratulations to these Brothers and best wishes for a healthy, happy and long retirement!"



BLET Division 28 members at the regular monthly meeting in September of 2013, from left: Ken Kroeger (retired), Bob Kaveloh (President), Ted Coil (retired) and Paul Currier (retired).

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 <->

professionals and their corporate sponsors, you should look at the candidate's words and deeds when it comes to issues that impact you, your job, and your retirement.

We've seen Congressman Ryan's true colors over the past several years. Time and again the Congressman and those whom he leads have proposed serious cuts to your retirement and your jobs. Even if you don't work at Amtrak, the loss of more than 20,000 Amtrak jobs would be devastating for our Railroad Retirement system. There are scores of other anti-worker politicians who are supporting Ryan and his ongoing attacks against railroaders, and all BLET members should keep this in mind when going

"In addition to your monthly Division meetings, there are many other opportunities for you to become more active in your union before this fall's elections."

to the ballot box this fall.

Remaining vigilant and casting your vote in support of your family's economic security and the workplace justice that you deserve is part of being a strong union member. As I've said many times before, union membership is not a spectator sport. It takes a well-educated and active membership to sustain a strong union. That's also why it's so important for you to attend union functions. In addition to your monthly Division meetings, there are many other opportunities for you to become more active in your union before this fall's elections.

Four BLET regional meet-

ings are taking place this year, one in June, one in July, one in August and the final regional meeting in September (see back cover of this issue for details). I urge you to join your Advisory Board members and me at one or more of these regional meetings as they are great for networking with your fellow engineers and trainmen and their families. Attending a regional meeting will also give you the opportunity to hear first-hand from your Advisory Board members about the issues that are important to you as a railroad employee.

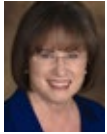
Later this year, the BLET will also hold its Third National Convention. Delegates will consider important

changes to our Bylaws during the convention, and will nominate candidates for National Division Office as part of BLET's unique rank and file election process.

The common thread in all of these activities is involvement. Making your voice heard within our great union is what makes us strong. Working together with your Brothers and Sisters to strengthen our union is what creates our solidarity, and those two combined are what creates the power to make a change when we take action together. If we are to fight off this latest round of attacks on railroad workers, it will take the strength, solidarity and action of all BLET members and all rail union members. Join us in that effort on November 4th when you cast your vote for candidates who truly care about working class Americans.



BLET Auxiliary to convene for 2nd Quadrennial Convention in 2014



BY SEREENA HOGAN
NATIONAL VICE PRESIDENT/
NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE REPRESENTATIVE

The BLET Auxiliary’s 2nd Quadrennial Convention will be held this fall at the same time and place as the BLET 3rd Quadrennial Convention — September 29 through October 2, in Las Vegas, Nevada, at the Rio Hotel and Casino. The proceedings that take place during these conventions are referred to as the “General Session,” where Auxiliary representatives will elect our national officers and make any necessary amendments to our Constitution and Bylaws, and any forms used by the Auxiliary. All of our members-at-large and members of local auxiliaries are encouraged to review the Constitution and Bylaws with the intent of proposing possible changes that they feel would improve our organization or make it run more smoothly. The BLET Auxiliary Constitution and Bylaws can be found on the Auxiliary website at www.bletauxiliary.net.

Each local auxiliary is entitled to send a delegate to the convention so long as their dues are current as of March 31, 2014. In addition, one delegate from each of the four convention regions, as well as all of our national officers will also be in attendance.

The majority of the time spent in General Session involves addressing the resolutions that are submitted prior to the convention, as well as those that are presented during the General Session. Pursuant to current bylaws, resolutions must be received by the National Auxiliary 60 days prior to the opening of the General Session. This year, we are asking auxiliaries and members-at-large to submit their resolutions to our Na-




Officers, delegates and members attending the Auxiliary’s 1st Quadrennial Convention in 2010.

tional Secretary, Lawana Poss, for receipt no later than July 31, 2014. Lawana will organize and distribute the resolutions by mail to all delegates in August. Delegates should review the resolutions with their auxiliary members at their August or September meeting to receive any instructions their auxiliary members may have as to how they wish to have their delegate vote on each resolution.

Auxiliary members and other guests who are in attendance at the convention but are not elected delegates for the convention are welcome to attend the General Session. However, parliamentary procedures mandate that only elected delegates and national officers may participate in floor debates during the General Session. If members wish to express their opinions, then an open forum may be provided during breaks from the official General Session to accommodate them.

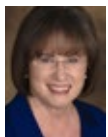
The delegates to the national convention elect the national officers for the next term. These officers serve for the term set forth in our bylaws, currently four years, with the exception of the Sec-

retary and Treasurer who serve eight-year terms that overlap one another in order to ensure that at least one officer who is familiar with Auxiliary finances is in office at all times. At the upcoming convention, the office of National Treasurer will be up for election. Currently, our bylaws state that in order to run for a national office, other than the office of National President, a candidate must be a member of the Auxiliary for no less than two years. In order to run for National President, a candidate must have served at least one four-year term on the Executive Council (Vice President/National Legislative Representative, Secretary, Treasurer, and 1st Vice President/National Outreach Coordinator). For a list of the national officers to be elected at the 2014 Convention, and the duties associated with each position, please go to the 2nd Quadrennial Convention section of the BLET Auxiliary website at www.bletauxiliary.net, scroll down to “Convention Home Page,” then click on “National Officer Positions and Duties.” Additional information about the convention will be posted on the website as it becomes available. 

Enchanted Echoes Auxiliary No. 446 making a difference for BLET families in Belen, New Mexico!



Belen Auxiliary members at organizing meeting on September 16, 2013 (from left): Pat Lynch, Jodi Cramer, BettySue Ralph, Amy Montoya, Michael Jaramillo, Jill Jaramillo, Gina Sproule, and Mike Sproule.



BY SEREENA HOGAN
NATIONAL VICE PRESIDENT/
NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE
REPRESENTATIVE

Thanks to the efforts of BLET Division 446 Secretary-Treasurer Mike Sproule, of Belen, New Mexico, the Enchanted Echoes Auxiliary No. 446 was resurrected last September. This auxiliary had originally been chartered in 2004, but had been inactive for a number of years. Mike reached out in late 2012, asking for help to get an Auxiliary started in the Belen area. Because the charter from 2004 was never officially surrendered, we were able to reorganize an auxiliary there under that same charter. Division 446 donated some funds for seed money to help the Auxiliary get going.

At a luncheon meeting held on September 16, 2013, five new members and



Belen Auxiliary officers at organizing meeting on September 16, 2013 (from left): Amy Montoya, Vice President; Jill Jaramillo, President; and Gina Sproule, Secretary-Treasurer.

three associate members joined Auxiliary 446. Four of these new members took the oath to serve as officers: President Jill Jaramillo, Vice President Amy Montoya, Secretary-Treasurer Gina Sproule, and Legislative Representative Jodi Cramer. The other members who joined that day are: BettySue Ralph;

Pat Lynch, New Mexico State Legislative Board Chairman; Mike Sproule, BLET Division 446 S/T; and Michael Jaramillo, BLET Division 446 Guide. Barbie Lynch, who was one of the original charter members in 2004 and the organizing force behind that effort, was unable to attend the meeting. Barbie has remained an Auxiliary Member-At-Large and has now transferred her membership back to Auxiliary 446.

Enchanted Echoes Auxiliary has continued to attract new members who have learned about the Auxiliary through the efforts of the Auxiliary officers and members, working closely with the BLET Division officers and members. In October, they held a fiesta-themed barbecue at Belen Eagle Park for the members and families of Division 446, at which they provided a racecar jumping castle and potato sack races for the kids, and a salsa contest. Jill Jaramillo had made a fun sombrero for the winner of the salsa

contest, and then, ironically, she and her husband Mike took first place! Attendees really enjoyed sampling the salsa entries to cast their votes. Members from the Belen Railways Credit Union were in attendance and donated prizes for a fundraiser raffle.

Gina Sproule said: "It was a lot of work putting it together, but the support was overwhelming. Once we got there and the barbecue got started, we really enjoyed ourselves. We had one mom say to us: 'I really like the fact that you have so much for the kids to do. It seems like you are really understanding of us moms and know how hard it is to go places when we have small children. I really appreciate that and would like to sign up to join your auxiliary.'" That kind of encouragement is rewarding and makes the efforts worthwhile.

In January, the Auxiliary contributed an article for the Division 446 annual newsletter. This year's issue included useful information about the activities of the Division, as well as a segment from the Safety Coordinator, Johnny Butler, and an article by FELA attorney Chip Rabb about survivor benefits. The article about the auxiliary was concise and to the point, and was intended to inform those not yet familiar with the mission and purpose of the BLET Auxiliary. Many of the members commented that, until reading this article, they were not familiar with the Auxiliary and very much appreciated this information.

At the February meeting of Division 446, the members discussed putting on a two-day barbecue this summer, co-sponsored by the Division and the Auxiliary. They are planning to schedule it at a park where members can camp out and enjoy food, fun, and solidarity with fellow members and their families. Gina stated, "We are looking forward to help-



Auxiliary 446, the Enchanted Echoes provided a bounce house as entertainment for children at the Auxiliary's barbecue in October.



Left: Mia Jaramillo, daughter of Jill and Mike Jaramillo, all wrapped up in colorful garland at the Auxiliary's barbecue in October. Right: Children also participated in a sack race.



ing out with this event and lending our 'feminine perspective.'"

In keeping with another aspect of the BLET Auxiliary's mission and purpose, members in Belen have provided support to a number of BLET families during times of tragedy. They have sent flowers and offered services, from dog walking to shopping, for families who have suffered the loss of spouses and parents during recent months. Gina reports that these offerings have been well received and much appreciated.

Enchanted Echoes Auxiliary is a

great example of how a local Auxiliary can provide support, education, and fellowship to the BLET families in their area. Having the support and interaction of the officers and members of the division helps make it possible for them to function in a constructive manner that is effective and valuable to the BLET families in the Belen area. Officers and members of Auxiliary 446, we applaud you and thank you, and wish you much success in your continuing endeavors to carry forth the mission of the BLET Auxiliary. 🌟

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.

Local Chairman Rudy Borrego, 1970-2013

IT IS WITH A HEAVY HEART that we report the passing of Rodolfo A. "Rudy" Borrego II, Local Chairman of BLET Division 662 in Los Angeles.

He was killed on November 9, 2013, in an automobile accident on Highway 138, not far from a memorial to fallen rail workers along the Cajon Pass at an area known as Drawbar Flats. Brother Borrego, who helped to create the memorial, was visiting that day to replace the flags in advance of the Veterans Day holiday.

Brother Borrego, 43, appeared as a guest columnist in the Summer 2013 issue of the Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen Journal, which was circulated in the weeks prior to his tragic death. His column was about the memorial, which he helped establish to honor the memory of two train crew members who were killed in an accident on February 1, 1996.

Brother Borrego had served in the Marine Corps from 1988 to 1993, along with his friend Gil Ortiz. Both men were part of a group of Marine Corp veterans who served during the first Gulf War and then went to work for the BNSF in California after their tour of duty. These two men hired on with Santa Fe in 1993, along with five other fellow Marines, who also became engineers. Brother Borrego was promoted to engineer in 1995, and became a union officer in 1997.

On February 1, 1996, an accident claimed the lives of BNSF crew members Kevin Williams and Gil Ortiz. Williams was a USC football star and Ortiz was a BLET member and one of Brother Borrego's friends from the Marine Corps.

Born in Texas in 1970, Brother Borrego credited his mother and father for teaching him and his two sisters some of the most important values in life — hard work and honesty. Brother Borrego graduated from high school in May of 1988 and joined the U.S. Marine Corps in




Left: Brother Borrego as a delegate to the 2010 National Convention. **Right:** The Borrego family, from left: Daniel, Rudy, Samantha, Sally and Andrew.

December of 1988.

Brother Borrego is survived by his wife of 22 years, Sally. He is also survived the couple's three children: Daniel, 21, who hired out on the BNSF Railway as a conductor in February of 2013; Andrew, 18, who graduated high school in June of 2013; and their youngest child, Samantha, 14.

His funeral was held on November 20, and he was buried at Riverside National Cemetery in Riverside, Calif. BLET National Vice President Michael D. Priester represented the National Division at the service. The BLET's Executive Committee — National President Dennis R. Pierce, First Vice President E. Lee Pruitt, and National

Secretary-Treasurer William C. Walpert — sent a letter expressing their condolences to the Borrego family on November 15, 2013. "Over the nearly two decades since Rudy joined the Brotherhood, each of us has had many opportunities to work with him and watch him in action ... Rudy's article on the 1996 Cajon Pass accident and the memorial to Kevin Williams and Gil Ortiz that Rudy created will always stand as a shining example of dedication and leadership for all BLET members. For whatever solace it may provide, please know there is a void in our hearts — and the BLET's — just as there is in yours and your family." 

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

AS OF OCTOBER 31, 2013

- 53 — G. J. Cook
- 77 — J. J. Connolly
- 125 — T. L. Near
- 153 — E. O. Rhodes
- 177 — D. R. Carter
- 269 — H. J. Connor Jr.
- 269 — H. E. Findel
- 269 — K. A. Kerceilius
- 332 — S. L. Powell
- 335 — J. L. Behrik
- 553 — E. C. Meek
- 717 — W. D. Hensley
- 746 — L. L. Braasch

AS OF NOVEMBER 30, 2013

- 83 — M. E. Walthall
- 425 — E. A. Thunborg
- 475 — C. C. DeLoach
- 497 — F. W. Comes
- 505 — R. L. Walls
- 548 — C. L. Gaunt
- 766 — J. F. Ballard

AS OF DECEMBER 31, 2013

- 59 — R. M. Rowell
- 98 — R. D. Best
- 114 — W. G. Welsh

- 177 — S. A. Haddock
- 177 — J. E. Kelly
- 239 — J. E. Greenlee
- 439 — D. A. Peter

AS OF JANUARY 31, 2014

- 25 — E. L. Bell
- 170 — J. W. Hall
- 228 — G. E. Bartschi
- 435 — A. D. Brooks Jr.
- 521 — W. Quilliam
- 537 — N. Sells
- 621 — E. E. Johnson
- 622 — T. L. Huston
- 642 — E. L. Roberts

Locomotive Engineers & Trainmen Journal

(ISSN: 1553-5010 USPS: 120)

Published quarterly for \$10 per year by
Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers & Trainmen
25 Louisiana Ave. N.W., 7th Floor, Washington, D.C. 20001
Periodicals Postage paid at Washington, D.C.

POSTMASTER:

Send address changes to:

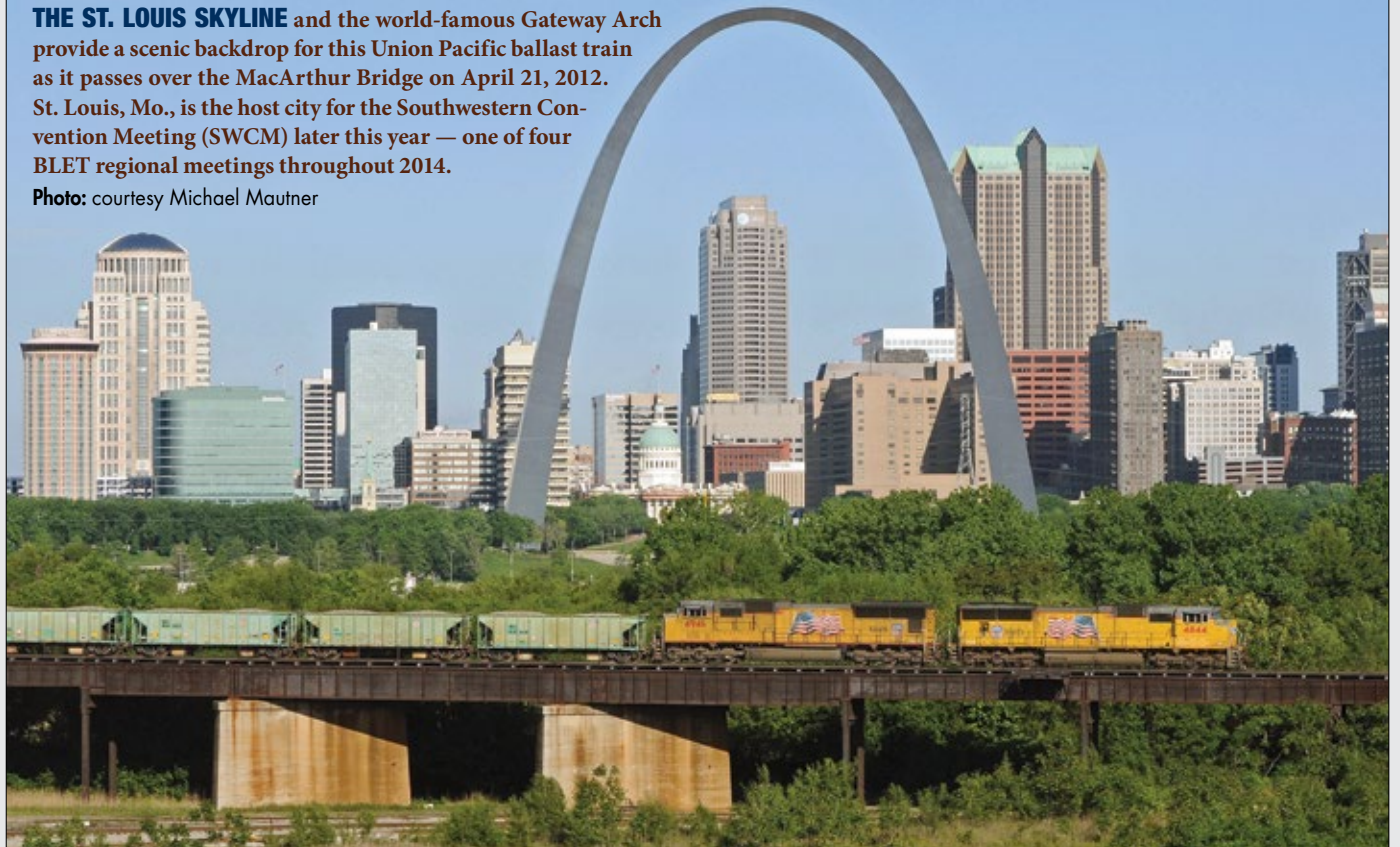
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Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers & Trainmen
1370 Ontario St., Mezzanine, Cleveland, OH 44113-1702

Mark your calendars

THE ST. LOUIS SKYLINE and the world-famous Gateway Arch provide a scenic backdrop for this Union Pacific ballast train as it passes over the MacArthur Bridge on April 21, 2012. St. Louis, Mo., is the host city for the Southwestern Convention Meeting (SWCM) later this year — one of four BLET regional meetings throughout 2014.

Photo: courtesy Michael Mautner



2014 BLET regional meetings

JUNE 15 - 19, 2014

87th Annual Southeastern Meeting Association

SAVANNAH, GA.

Arrangements Chairman
D.C. Dickey, Local Chairman of
Division 646, will host the 2014
SMA at the Westin Savannah
Harbor Golf Resort & Spa in
Savannah, Ga.

JUNE 29 - JULY 3, 2014

74th Annual International Western Convention

MINNEAPOLIS, MINN.

Arrangements Chairman
David K. Brown, Chairman of
the Minnesota State Legislative
Board and Legislative Representa-
tive of BLET Division 517, will host
the 2014 IWC at the Hilton
Minneapolis.

AUGUST 4 - 8, 2014

76th Annual Eastern Union Meeting Association

CLEVELAND, OHIO

Arrangements Chairman Patrick
Redmond, Local Chairman of
Division 607, and Co-Chair James
R. Blum, Legislative Representative
of Division 526, will host the
2014 EUMA at the newly-renovated
Westin Downtown Cleveland.

SEPTEMBER 7 - 11, 2014

79th annual Southwestern Convention Meeting

ST. LOUIS, MO.

Arrangements Chairman Dave W.
Grimes, Local Chairman of
Division 42, will host the 2014
SWCM at the Hilton St. Louis at
the Ballpark Hotel. For more
information, visit the SWCM
website: bletswcm.org.