

# *LOCOMOTIVE ENGINEERS & TRAINMEN* **Journal**

VOLUME 117 | No. 2 | SUMMER 2014

WWW.BLE-T.ORG

## Honorary Engineer

**BLET Division 144 and  
Make-A-Wish Foundation  
help make an 8-year-old's  
dream come true.**

### **STEAM DAYS**

**Locomotive Engineers  
in the steam era**



*Also inside*

**Legislative Update**

**BLET PAC Supporters**

**BLET Auxiliary Update**



## *BLET President's Message*

BY DENNIS R. PIERCE, BLET NATIONAL PRESIDENT

# Strength. Solidarity. Action.

## **BLET MEMBERS MOVING ORGANIZATION FORWARD**

**A**s this issue of the *Locomotive Engineers & Trainmen Journal* goes to press, many of the officers and staff of the BLET National Division are traveling to Las Vegas to prepare for our Third National Convention. As our proud Brotherhood again prepares to assemble its governing body, I'd like to take this opportunity to reflect on just a few of the things that have been accomplished since our Delegates last met in 2010, and to also look at the challenges that we face as an Organization going into the next four years.

When I became President on July 1, 2010, the BLET had been through trying times, and my first goal was to restore the membership's confidence in their Union. At our Convention a little over 90 days later, I explained to the Delegates the steps that the National Division had taken, and would continue to take, to accomplish that. Additional levels of internal audits were added, and checks and balances were put into place to make sure that all of the financial dealings of the Union were as they should be. As we worked through that process after the Convention, we also found many process-related savings along the way that allow us to conduct the members' business in a much more cost effective manner today.



President Pierce, Vice President Bruno and Vice President Twombly with a contingent of BLET Division 6 members (and a future member) at the 2014 SWCM in St. Louis.

At our Convention this year, I hope that the Delegates will help me to further that progress as they set our course for the future by adopting the resolutions that I have submitted that better define our internal governance rules. Just one of those steps is to add Trustees to the National Division and every other BLET subordinate body that does not already have them. As I have told our Division Officers attending Local Chairmen, Legislative Representatives and Secretary-Treasurer training, Division Trustees performing monthly audits of their division's finances is just one of the checks and balances that ensure that the members' dues money is being protected and spent in accordance with our Bylaws. Adding Trustees to our General Committees and the Na-

tional Division will provide that same level of protection and transparency at both levels, and will also bring the BLET up to the standards expected of all IBT affiliates.

Equally important four years ago was our effort to get the membership more interested and more involved in their Union. To that end, when I became National President, I committed to the membership that I would be out in the field, meeting with them face to face not only to better understand the issues on their particular railroad, but also to let them know that their voice is being heard within their Union. Since then, I have attended Division Meetings, Town Hall meetings, General Committee meetings, State Legislative Board meetings, regional meetings, as well as the majority of our Education and Training classes. While I

can certainly say that I have not always been greeted with good news at these meetings, I truly appreciate it when members take the time to attend these meetings. Our Brotherhood is only as strong as its membership, and a well-educated, informed and mobilized membership is the strongest membership.

One of the unexpected, but most enjoyable, benefits that I have found attending these meetings has been the opportunity to attend member retirement dinners. I am convinced that the goal of every BLET member is to have a safe and productive railroad career that allows them to ultimately enjoy the fruits of that labor when they retire. As I say often, I am told that retirement is the best job any BLET member can bid on, and my hat is off to all of the BLET

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»» ON THE COVER: ON MARCH 11, 2014, A UNION PACIFIC SD70M CHARGES INTO THE SUNRISE EAST OF THE DALLES, ORE., WITH THE TOWERING MT. HOOD IN THE BACKGROUND. (Photo: Robert Scott)



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# LOCOMOTIVE ENGINEERS & TRAINMEN Journal

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OF TEAMSTERS

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## BMWED concludes Third Regular Convention

**Pierce a keynote speaker; BMWED delegates elect first woman to Executive Board**

**M**ore than 400 delegates representing the members of the Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees Division of the Teamsters Rail Conference began their third Regular Convention in Las Vegas on June 23. The delegates and guests heard keynote speeches by Teamsters General President James Hoffa, Teamsters Rail Conference Director John Murphy and Teamsters Rail Conference President Dennis Pierce.

"It's been 10 years since the merger and it has made us both stronger", Hoffa said. "My father, James R. Hoffa, had a vision that the Teamsters would be the largest transportation union in the United States. And, when you joined as part of the Rail Conference, we accomplished that goal."

The Director of the Rail Conference, John Murphy, told the delegates of the many accomplishments the Rail Conference has made: fighting national contracts, publication of the High Alert rail safety reports and funding in Congress for high speed rail. "The California High Speed Rail project will, once funded, provided 20,000 full-time jobs during construction and 450,000 jobs when the project is up and running."

BLET and Rail Conference President Pierce spoke



BMWED President Freddie N. Simpson, far right, is first in line of BMWED officers during a swearing-in ceremony following the BMWED's Third Regular Convention.



BLET National President Dennis R. Pierce addresses BMWED delegates.

about the current War on Workers and the negative impact it is having on America's Middle Class.

"As railroad workers we live in very challenging times," Pierce said. "The carriers confront us at every turn, seeking to change our workplace not for our betterment, but instead

for their own profit. But what we face is just one example of what is happening throughout our great nation today. There is an attack on working class Americas the likes of which haven't been seen in several generations."

During the convention, Freddie N. Simpson was re-elected to another four year term as President of the BMWED. The delegates also voted to elect five vice presidents and six members of the Executive Board to four-year terms: Perry Geller, Secretary-Treasurer; David Joynt, Vice President At-Large; Roger Sanchez, Vice President South; Bruce Glover, Vice President Northwest; David Scoville, Vice President West;

Sean Gerie, Vice President Northeast; Jack David, Executive Board At-Large; Staci Moody-Gilbert, Executive Board At-Large; Roy Miller, Executive Board Northwest; Gary Marquardt, Executive Board West; Dennis Albers, Executive Board South, and Jedd Dodd, Executive Board East.

It was an historic election for the BMWED as Staci Moody-Gilbert was elected the first female member of that union's Executive Board, the first time in the union's 127-year history that a woman has been elected to the board. 🗳️



Moody-Gilbert



# BLET celebrates Earth Day

## Green locomotive helps protect health of railroad workers, general public

**T**he BLET's District of Columbia State Legislative Board (DC SLB) celebrated Earth

Day on April 22 by unveiling a more efficient diesel locomotive engine for Amtrak that will also have cleaner emissions. The DC SLB developed the project in collaboration with Amtrak, the Environmental Protection Agency and the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (MWCOG). The unveiling ceremony took place at Union Station in Washington, D.C.

In 2011, the project was funded by a \$1.9 million EPA - Diesel Emissions Reduction Act (DERA) grant under the National Clean Diesel Funding Assistance program. Amtrak contributed an additional 25% (\$600,000) matching grant to the project.

The grant was utilized to replace diesel engines in two older switcher locomotives with new, computer controlled GenSet engines. The first revamped locomotive, named "Ella," was unveiled on April 22, and a second locomotive (named "Luke") will be retrofitted under the grant this summer.

The DC SLB initiated the project in 2009. The DERA - Clean Diesel grant to the District of Columbia is believed to be the first ever awarded in the United States to a collaborative effort from labor, a railroad, and a regional government.



**From left:** Washington D.C. City Councilman Phil Mendelson; BLET District of Columbia Legislative Board Chairman Herbert Harris Jr.; Washington D.C. Mayor Vincent C. Gray; Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes-Norton (D-D.C.); and Chairman of the Washington Metropolitan Council of Governments David F. Snyder.



"Long term exposure to diesel emissions has proven health consequences for railroad workers," said Herbert Harris Jr., Chairman of the DC SLB. "Mitigating the long term health impacts of diesel emissions on our members and railroad workers is at the core of this project. This ceremony is the culmination of five years of dedication to the health of future generations of railroad workers and children throughout the region."

The new GenSet locomotives meet EPA - Tier IV engines standards a year in

advance of their 2015 implementation. The GenSet locomotives will provide fuel and operation cost savings and produce significantly reductions in particulate matter (PM) and nitrogen oxide (NOx) emissions.

"We have sought to include the health needs of railroad workers with those of the whole community, in creating an increasingly cleaner and healthier Washington Metropolitan area," said Karl F. Edler, Local Chairman of Division 482.

Speakers at the April 22

unveiling ceremony included: Washington D.C. Mayor Vincent C. Gray, City Council Chairman Phil Mendelsohn, Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes-Norton, and Rose-Eve Jasper, President, NOMA BID.

The DC SLB represents approximately 215 active BLE&T members in seven states throughout the Mid-Atlantic region. The DC SLB is the only BLET state legislative board comprised entirely of passenger and commuter locomotive engineers. 🌱

## FACEBOOK UPDATE

Please enjoy this sampling of news briefs and photos collected from the BLET National Division's Facebook. We encourage you to log on and Like our page, where you can find stories such as this and more. Please join us at Facebook.com/BLETnational.



### BLET PRIDE AT THE MAGIC KINGDOM

Brother G.S. (Scott) Brown, Local Chairman of BLET Division 259 (Easton, Pa.), shared this photo with the BLET National Division's Facebook page in March. He proudly showed his BLET colors during his family's vacation to Disney's Magic Kingdom. Brother Brown is a Norfolk Southern locomotive engineer and has been a BLET member since November 1, 1998. Thanks for sharing, Brother Brown!

## A RAIL SAFETY LESSON

Can you spot what's wrong with the picture below?



### FUTURE DIVISION 779 MEMBER

Brother Benjamin Lester, a member of BLET Division 779 in Manchester, Ga., is a proud new papa. He shared this photo with the BLET on Facebook following the birth of his son, Perry Keith Lester, on Mother's Day — May 11, 2014. Congratulations, Brother Lester!



### THE GRADUATE

The BLET National Division congratulates Brother Ken Kroeger (center), BLET Division 28 (Tucson, Ariz.) following his graduation from the National Labor College in April, 2014. At the time of his retirement in 2013, Kroeger served the National Division as Special Representative and Coordinator of the Education and Training Department. During the graduation ceremony, it was announced that Brother Kroeger had earned a Distinguished Paper Award, one of the highest awards from the National Labor College. He is shown here with BLET National Secretary-Treasurer Bill Walpert (left) and Special Representative Matt Kronyak (right).



# Extreme Flight to Find a Cure

## Brother Tim Cloyd completes second annual flight for charity

**B**LET member Tim Cloyd, Division 778 (Des Moines, Iowa), completed his 2nd Annual “Extreme Flight to Find a Cure” on February 22, 2014. Brother Cloyd, a Union Pacific locomotive engineer, is passionate about his hobby as a commercial hot air balloon pilot. He is also passionate about using his hobby for good.

He dedicates one flight each winter to raising money for the American Cancer Society. Dubbed the “Extreme Flight to Find a Cure,” these flights are dangerous high-altitude, long-distance flights. Brother Cloyd was at such high altitudes that he required oxygen tanks to breathe, and endured extremely cold temperatures. He accepts sponsorship pledges for these charity flights and donates 100 percent of the money raised to fighting cancer.

“To the best of my knowledge, no other pilot has flown a high altitude long distance balloon flight for a charity,” said Brother Cloyd, who has been a BLET member since December 1, 2003.

His Second Annual “Extreme Flight to Find a Cure” took place on February 22, 2014. He launch from the airport in Chillicothe, Mo., and landed near Mt. Sterling, Ill. The flight was six hours in duration and 167 miles in length, reaching a top altitude of 11,146 feet and a top speed



Brother Tim Cloyd of BLET Division 778 (Des Moines, Iowa) who uses his talent as a commercial hot air balloon pilot to raise money each year to help fight cancer.

of 59 miles per hour.

A unique twist to these charity flights is that sponsors are able to following along in real time. The GPS follows his flight path so sponsors, friends and family members can track him throughout the entire trip.

Brother Cloyd raised more than \$6,500 during his second annual flight earlier this year, and is expected to begin accepting donations soon for his third annual flight coming up in 2015.

He and his wife, Elsie, operate a 501(c)3 non-profit organization called Tecvisions ([www.tecvisions.org](http://www.tecvisions.org)). Brother Cloyd explained the special

meaning of the Tecvisions name: “‘T’ is for Tim, ‘E’ is for Elsie and ‘C’ is for Cloyd,’ and ‘Visions’ represents where God leads us to do His work,” he said.

Cloyd hired out with the Union Pacific at Des Moines, Iowa, in 1995. He earned promotion to locomotive engineer in 2003. He began ballooning in 2006 with his son, Pat, who earned his piloting license at age 17. The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) governs licensing for hot air balloon pilots. Brother Cloyd said he is subject to licensing renewal testing every two years — very similar to periodic testing required

to maintain his locomotive engineer’s certification. He has spent time in road service, but currently works a yard job in Des Moines because he enjoys having regularly scheduled days off.

He and Elsie have two adult children, Pat and Meredith, and one grandson, Myles, who turned 2 in February of 2014.

For more information, visit Brother Cloyd’s website, [www.tecvisions.org](http://www.tecvisions.org), and click on the Charity Flight page.

“We all have been affected by cancer in one way or another,” he said. “So please help me raise money so we can find a cure.”

## BLET member publishes and co-authors book on D&TSL

### THE DETROIT & TOLEDO SHORE LINE RAILROAD – EXPRESSWAY FOR INDUSTRY

By Charles H. Geletzke Jr. and Wilbur E. Hague

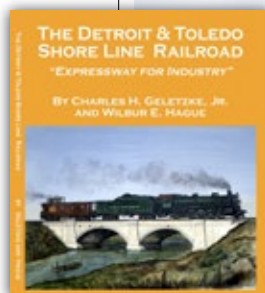
Publisher: Charles H. Geletzke Jr.  
ISBN-10: 0976283166

**B**LET member Charles H. Geletzke Jr. spent his career as a locomotive engineer for Grand Trunk Western/CN, and has poured his experience and extensive research into a book titled “The Detroit & Toledo Shore Line Railroad – Expressway for Industry.”

Self-published and co-authored with Wilbur E. Hague, the 264-page book is a high quality throughout. It contains 271 black and white and

color photos along with maps, drawings, statistics, train dispatcher sheets, and other graphic elements. These items are helpful to the reader as well as model railroaders. The book is highly detailed and is obviously a labor of love for the now-retired GTW engineer. The book is filled with colorful stories and anecdotes that help tell the complete history of the D&TSL from 1897 through inclusion with Grand Trunk Corporation in 1981. One additional chapter brings reader up to 2011, the year the book was published and also the year Brother Geletzke retired.

Brother Geletzke joined the Brotherhood in 1974 as



a member of Division 812 (Detroit, Mich.), transferring membership to Division 122 (Port Huron, Mich.) following his retirement. He served Division 812 as Local Chairman for several years. He hired out in 1967 but was furloughed for a while beginning in 1975, during which time he joined Teamsters Local 299 and worked as a truck

driver for a local Detroit area cartage company.

The book is currently selling for \$44.95 plus \$8 for shipping and handling. BLET members may also purchase the book directly from Brother Geletzke by writing: Charles H. Geletzke, Jr. P. O. Box 542 Temperance, MI 48182-0542

## letters to the editor

Dear Editor:

When my Spring 2014 BLET Journal arrived in the mail, my wife got to it first. She called my attention to Steven Halbrook's Guest Column and said, “This sounds just like you.” I quite enjoyed sitting down to read his article titled “The romance of the railroad from the eyes of a locomotive engineer.” Brother Halbrook has described our profession quite well and I couldn't have said it better.

Over the years, I've had a few opportunities to speak and describe the job of Locomotive Engineer and I have found the enthusiasm to always be right up there with the fighter pilots he references as well. People are curious about so many

facets of our job that it is likely anyone who gets the chance to talk publicly will immediately understand the love we get from “foamers.” Like Brother Halbrook, I too never passed a chance to deliver a “toot toot” to a child who might be standing in his yard, or riding with his arm pumping in an automobile. A grin, high five or thumbs up was always delivered in thanks for the gesture.

We — those of us fortunate enough to have worked in the profession of Locomotive Engineer — have lived through calling cycles that no man could ever get totally comfortable adhering to. We have worked holidays and weekends far too many times, and

missed events that we'd rather have attended in an effort to “get 'er done” for the company in a timely manner. But when the dust settles and I had time to think “What would I have liked to do instead?” I never did come up with a suitable replacement.

I started my career for Chessie System in 1978 as an assistant signalman, then transferred to the Transportation Department in March of 1979, one of very few who hired into train service running locomotives, my title being Locomotive Engineer Trainee. I earned promotion to Locomotive Engineer in August of 1980, initially at Stevens Yard at Silver Grove, Ky. During the follow-

ing years until my retirement in 2012, I worked the Cincinnati Division Road, between Cincinnati, Ohio and Russell, Ky, Queensgate Yard in Cincinnati, Russell Yard, at Russell, Ky., and the Northern Subdivision between Russell and Columbus, Ohio. I saw some of the most picturesque countryside, streams, rivers, homes and farmland in my part of the world. I wouldn't trade my job for any other and am proud to call myself a Locomotive Engineer still today.

Ken L. Chamblin  
Retired  
Division 271  
Russell, Ky.





## *BLET* First Vice President's Message

BY E. LEE PRUITT, BLET FIRST VICE PRESIDENT

# Boots on the ground

## ELECTING LAWMAKERS WHO UNDERSTAND ECONOMIC FAIRNESS

**C**urrent figures from the Federal government indicate that the unemployment rate may be down, but the income inequality rate keeps going up. It's impossible not to notice it.

A Federal Reserve report released in early September noted that while income grew between 2010 and 2013 for the top fifth of income earners (those making more than \$122,000 a year), real incomes have fallen for everyone else. Only those who were doing well in the U.S. to begin with are making out in today's economy.

It's not a pretty picture for middle-income families, even those towards the top of the income scale. As the document states, "Families in the middle and upper middle parts of the income distribution range (between 40th and 90th percentiles) saw little change in average real incomes between 2010 and 2013 and thus have failed to recover the losses experienced between 2007 and 2010." In other words, these grim numbers tell of the ongoing erosion of the Middle Class.

The divide between the haves and have-nots continues to grow despite our supposed economic rebound.

So who's to blame for this? Well, the government and the private sector have both played a role. Some suggest that the Federal Reserve's policies have created an at-



**"And if big spenders like the ultra-conservative Koch Brothers get their way, then we'll eventually have only two classes left in America — the handful of haves and the masses of have nots."**

mosphere that has resulted in the top three percent claiming 30.5 percent of all income last year. But Congress — led by its most conservative elements — has certainly failed by creating more and more corporate tax breaks while refusing to raise the minimum wage.

Of course, big business could take its own steps to try and rectify the problem. However, except for a few companies like Costco, they haven't. And if big spenders like the ultra-conservative Koch Brothers get their way, then we'll eventually have only two classes left in America — the handful of haves and the masses of have nots.

Every day, it seems, there is more and more news about

how hardworking Americans are falling further and further behind. The evidence is overwhelming. And yet there is nothing being done by Congress to change it. Well, workers can do something about it — we can vote to change Congress on Nov. 4.


I'm not going to ask you to vote for a Democrat or a Republican. However, I will ask that you vote for candidates who care about working Americans and their families. Please do your homework and only vote for those who understand our issues and support our cause.

As Senator Elizabeth Warren said in her address to the AFL-CIO National Convention last year, "Throughout our history,

powerful interests have tried to capture Washington and rig the system in their favor. But we didn't roll over. At every turn, in every time of challenge, organized labor has been there, fighting on behalf of the American people ... Labor was on the front lines to take children out of factories and put them in schools. Labor was there to give meaning to the words 'consumer protection' by making our food and medicine safe. Labor was there to fight for minimum wages in states across this country. Powerful interests did everything they could to block reform. But our agenda was America's agenda, and we prevailed."

Today, the War on Workers is in full swing as corporate apologists like the Koch Brothers do everything in their power to eliminate organized labor through such deplorable laws as "Paycheck Deception" and "Right To Work."

Make no mistake, Brothers and Sisters: This is going to be an uphill battle and one single election won't turn the tide. It's going to take boots on the ground and union voters at the ballot box for numerous election cycles to put the right people in office — people who will help labor.

It's about simple economic fairness and protecting the Middle Class. It's about time we elect lawmakers who get the message. 



## *BLET National Secretary-Treasurer's Message*

BY WILLIAM C. WALPERT, BLET NATIONAL SECRETARY-TREASURER

# "A great place to learn"

### **BLET OPENS NEW EDUCATION & TRAINING CENTER**

**E**arly Monday morning on July 21, 2014 several new General Chairmen and Vice General Chairmen congregated in the doorway of the brand new, bright and gleaming, state-of-the-art Education & Training Center at the BLET National Division headquarters in Cleveland, Ohio. These were the students in the first class held in the Center, a General Chairmen's Workshop, and everyone was greatly impressed.

"This is amazing," exclaimed Chip Cole, General Chairman on the Indiana and Ohio Railroad and one of the students in the first class. "This is really a great place to learn."

The equipment and construction of the Training Center was mostly funded by a grant from the Teamsters Rail Conference. One of the most significant points associated with the ultramodern technology used in the Training Center is that it offers the capability to expand training platforms. The delegates at the 2010 National Convention, who approved a resolution to fund the BLET Education & Training Department with an additional \$1 per month per member, made a wise decision that will be a lasting heritage.

As National President Pierce said, "The actions of the delegates will help train and educate current and future generations of BLET officers and members, securing



**"The delegates at the 2010 National Convention, who approved a resolution to fund the BLET Education & Training Department with an additional \$1 per month per member, made a wise decision that will be a lasting heritage."**

the strength and success of our Brotherhood for decades to come."

The new classroom environment is fully interactive, allowing for the inclusion of offsite instructors and officers using video and online computer technologies. A Local Chairmen's class was held in the new Center the week of August 18. The class featured the new video equipment that allowed the students to view themselves when snippets of the mock investigation were replayed for them. It is a fantastic learning tool, which lets the Local Chairmen see what they did right — and what

they did wrong — during the course of the investigation.

I am in total agreement with President Pierce when he said, "This is so much more than a brick and mortar training center. We have established one of the most modern classroom environments available." Having served as Director of the BLET Education & Training Department for more than 20 years, I wholeheartedly believe that the new Education & Training Center will offer our members the most comprehensive level of education available in all of organized labor. I am confident that our officers — and

members — will be the most informed, best prepared and best trained in our Brotherhood's history.

Jason Wright, Coordinator of the BLET Education & Training Department, is spearheading an effort to expand its curriculum to include online training. One of the first online training productions will be aimed at Division Trustees and Secretary-Treasurers. It is our goal to provide online modules that will allow officers and members to work at their own pace and when they have time between their duties on the railroads.

I believe that that we have the finest Education & Training curricula of any rail union in the country. The problem has been reaching all of our officers and members who have been constrained by their work schedules and opportunities to travel to the locations where classes have been offered. With the new Center and its technology, we will be able to reach the entire membership.

For the remainder of the year, the E&T Department will be offering classes at the new Center for Secretary-Treasurers from October 13-17, an Advanced Local Chairmen's class November 3-7, and another Secretary-Treasurers' class December 15-18. Check the BLET website, Facebook page and Newsletters for more information on how to register for these classes. ☺





## Guest Columnists

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

# Time to start the War For Workers at the ballot box

A new election season is approaching and the Teamsters, like Americans as a whole, have much to ponder. While there has been some economic improvement since 2012, workers trying to cover their families' day-to-day expenses are still facing an uphill climb.

This November, the public again will have a chance to weigh in on the direction of the country. Voters should use this time to get to know how their elected representatives as well as those challenging them would craft policy

to benefit workers. What they may realize is there is nothing wrong with their lawmakers. Rather, the problem lies with the certain anti-worker forces in control of Congress.

Americans are noticeably frustrated with inaction in the nation's capital, and for good reason. Jobs that could support a middle-class family have increasingly been replaced with low-wage work that requires the employed to seek out public assistance to help make ends meet. Job-loss numbers are falling, but those statistics have done lit-

tle to help regular people.

Why haven't things gotten better? Because instead of helping their constituents, too many on Capitol Hill have turned their back on them. Anti-worker lawmakers refused, for example, to extend long-term unemployment benefits to millions of Americans.

What working people can't afford is to make bad choices at the ballot box. Americans can't just throw up their hands and give up. Corporate America isn't, and they will continue to donate mountains of money to lawmakers and can-

didates alike trying to influence them.

Working people may not be able to compete with corporate wallets, but they can with their voices. They can educate themselves, volunteer and talk to their family and friends. That's what it will take to beat the billionaire brigade and ensure a future fit for us all.

Fraternally,

**JAMES P. HOFFA**  
TEAMSTERS GENERAL  
PRESIDENT

## Good news for California high-speed rail project

There has been a stream of good decisions for California's High Speed Rail (HSR) project.

First, the California Legislature approved the 2015 state budget which allocates \$250 million to the HSR project in the coming year, and allocates 25 percent of cap-and-trade revenue in the following years. It is estimated the program will generate revenue of up to \$8 billion a year once it is fully implemented. This will provide up to \$2 billion a year for the HSR program. That will be nearly

\$30 billion over the 15 years of construction for the first phase of the project — L.A. to San Francisco. This steady stream of funding is critical. It allows the state to leverage those funds to seek Railroad Rehabilitation & Improvement Financing loans and will be an enticement for private investment in the project.

Second, the Third District Court of Appeal in Sacramento overturned a lower court decision that invalidated the sale of voter-approved bonds to finance the construction of the project. This frees the state

to move forward with the sale of \$8.4 billion in bonds, which will be coupled with \$3.4 billion in Federal funds.

Third, the Surface Transportation Board has granted California the exemption that Authority requested for the Fresno to Bakersfield segment. Your Rail Conference successfully pressed for the confirmation of the third STB member, Deb Miller. Ms. Miller provided the majority vote granting the exemption.

Finally, the advocacy campaign the Rail Conference initiated has begun in Cali-

fornia's Central Valley with our first billboards. The campaign message focuses on the 20,000 good union jobs the construction will create every year it is being built, the 450,000 permanent jobs that will create once it's finished, and the economic engine the project will be for the Central Valley and the state.

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.

# Honorary Engineer

**BLET Division 144 helps make an 8-year-old's dream come true**

**E**ight-year-old Jonathan Dockins had a wish to ride over Donner Pass on Amtrak's California Zephyr in the cab of a locomotive. With the coordination of the Make-A-Wish Foundation, Amtrak, Union Pacific, and Division 144 of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen, his wish was fulfilled and became a reality.

Jon-Jon, as he prefers to be called, was born with a congenital heart defect called Double Outlet Right Ventricle (DORV) with pulmonary valve stenosis. It's a congenital disease and he has had 10 heart surgeries and will continue to need more as his body and heart continue to grow.

In March, Brother Ken Marty of BLET Division 144 (Oakland, Calif.) was contacted by the Make A Wish chapter out of Sacramento, Calif. They asked Brother Marty for the Brotherhood's help in making Jon-Jon's wish come true.

Besides being an Amtrak engineer, Brother Marty is



Jon-Jon with Division 144 Local Chairman Jason K. Loger and Division 144 member Kevin D. Gniadek.



Division 144's Ken Marty presents Jon-Jon with a customized reverser.

President of the West Coast Railroaders Group, a non-profit organization that works with the Virginia & Truckee railroad in Virginia City, Nevada.

Marty worked with Jason Loger, Local Chairman of Division 144, to obtain Amtrak's buy-in on the program. After meeting initial resistance from local management, Brother Loger suggested that Brother Marty send a letter to Amtrak Chairman & CEO Joe Boardman.

"After writing and sending Mr. Boardman a letter via

email, I had a response in less than two hours saying 'We will get this done,'" Brother Marty said.

With Amtrak signing off on the ride, Marty and Loger began working with Make A Wish and Amtrak on the planning stages of Jon-Jon's trip, which would include riding Amtrak #6 over Donner Pass. They had help throughout the process from many members of Division 144, including Robert P. Ward and Matthew W. Phalen. Also helping with other details were Division 144 members

Kevin D. Gniadek and Phillip D. Gosney.

The trip began on June 20 in Sacramento, where Marty and Loger met Jon-Jon, his father Jamey and mother Dee Dee. A rousing send off was held at Sacramento with many well wishers and supporters in attendance for Division 144's Honorary Engineer. Jon-Jon was presented with many gifts, including a locomotive engineer's certificate from Amtrak. Another big hit with Jonathan was a custom-engraved reverser, which Brother Marty had made for him.



Jon-Jon and  
engineer  
Matt Klink,  
Division 144.



All photos by Division 144 member Phil Gosney





Jon-Jon with an engineer's hat and a model train, which was a gift from Division 144. His parents Jamey and Dee Dee are pleased as well.

The reverser was used to operate Amtrak #6 from Sacramento to Reno.

Division 144 presented Jon-Jon with a BLET hat and jacket, as well as a Lionel train set. The model train was Jon-Jon's No. 2 wish, after riding in the locomotive cab.

Division 144 members Matthew T. Klink and Justin D. Davis comprised the actual engine crew who worked in the cab of the California Zephyr with Jon-Jon from Sacramento to Reno.

Upon arriving at Reno, Jonathan and his family got a limo ride to Virginia City, Nevada. Brother Marty and Brother Loger drove to Reno to help host the Dockins family throughout the remainder of the weekend. Jon-Jon then spent the time riding the steam trains and vintage track cars providing fire patrol over the railroad. Sun-



Brother Loger presents a special plaque to Division 144's Honorary Engineer.

day night Jon-Jon and his parents were treated to a dinner party at the Nugget Casino in Reno.

On June 23, Brother Matt Parker, Chairman of the BLET's Nevada State Legislative Board presented Jon-Jon

with a proclamation signed by the governor of Nevada, proclaiming June 20, 2014 as "Jonathan Dockins Day." Brother Parker also took Jon-Jon and his parents to the Western Pacific Railroad Museum in Portola, Calif. The

Dockins family then flew home that night.

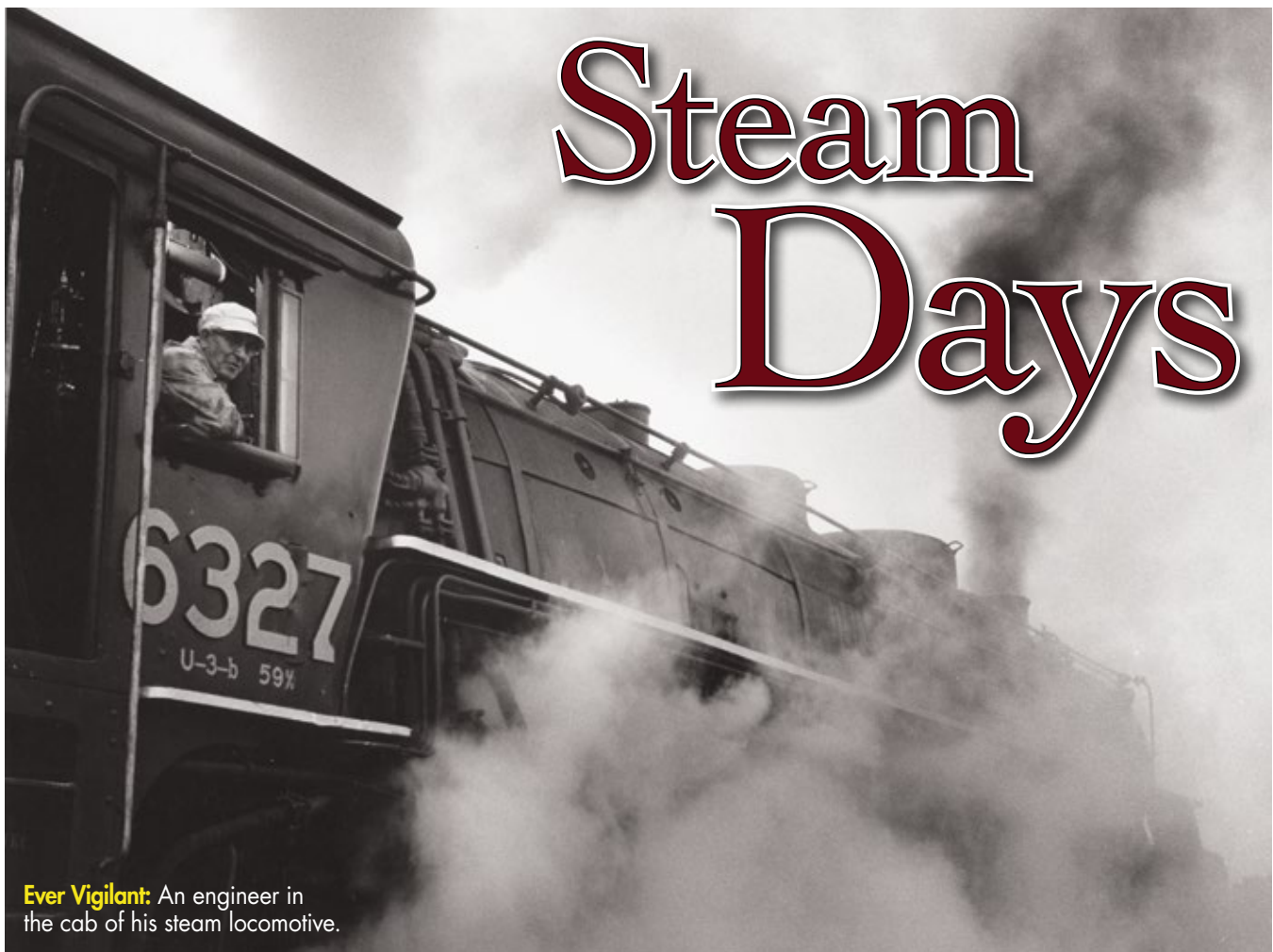
"So many people played a role in making Jonathan's wish come true," Brother Marty said. "It was evident from the beginning that Jonathan's story and love of trains inspired all of us to go the extra mile to make this as special as possible. I know we exceeded Jonathan's expectations, and made life long friendships as well."

Brother Marty thanked Tom Gray of the Virginia & Truckee Railroad. "Without his support, the whole event would not have been possible," he said.

BLET Division 144, known as the Spearhead Division, represents Amtrak engineers working out of Oakland, Sacramento and Merced, Calif., on "Capitol Corridor," "Coast Starlight," "San Joaquin" and "California Zephyr" trains. ☪



# Steam Days



**Ever Vigilant:** An engineer in the cab of his steam locomotive.

## DUTIES OF A LOCOMOTIVE ENGINEER DURING THE STEAM ERA

**BY BILL MULLINS**  
Retired, BLET Division 182  
North Little Rock, Ark.

**M**y earlier article, published in the Fall 2013 issue of the *Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen Journal*, concerned the duties of a fireman in steam engine days, which for me was in the late 1940s and most of the 1950s. This article will address the duties of an engineer in steam engine days.

First, we are not engineers, we are ENGINEERS! Second, an engineer's duties were less stressful and challenging if he had a good fireman!

In the days of steam engines, an engineer who was called for duty was given the following information: time to go on duty, engine number, train designation, and name of the fireman. He reported for duty to the "ready track," where he checked his watch by the standard clock, read General Orders and General Notices, then signed the register indicating that he had received and had read all that information.

At the ready track, he located his engine. Upon entering the cab, he picked up the long-spout oil can and started his "oil around," squirting oil on crossheads and crosshead

guides, and other parts requiring oil. He cranked both lubricators (one on each side), making sure oil was coming out. He also dropped some oil on valve gear and piston rods. If the specified engine was a coal burner, he checked that there was a "pan" under the firebox, which had a hoe for shoving ash down into the pan; he then had the fireman turn on the "flooders" to check that they were working properly. "Flooders" were pipes on each side of the pan, letting water into the pan to put out fire in the ash. He received duplicate train orders, giving one copy to his fireman so they could review the orders together, al-

ways checking train order number with the order number on clearance, plus the date.

In addition, the engineer also checked that the engine bell would ring, the whistle would blow, and that safety blow pipes were open in the cab. After completing these duties, he and his fireman were ready to hostle their engine to the train.

In the '50s and '60s, our freight crews consisted of engineer, fireman, three brakemen and conductor. One brakeman was the "head" brakeman, next one was the "swing" brakeman, and the third was the "rear" brakeman who rode the caboose. We had

The famed Missouri Pacific "Sunflower" passenger train pulls into the St. Louis Union Terminal from Memphis, Tenn., and other points south in 1949. (BLET Archives)



no radios at that time, so it took the entire crew to do station work. Station work consisted of setting out and/or picking up cars, mostly in "blocks" — few trains were classed as "hot" trains, even so, they frequently did station work also.

Most all members of the crew wore overalls; in winter, they wore a jumper as a coat. Present-day jumpers are now called "barn coats," and today's retail clerks do not have a clue as to what a "jumper" is. A bandana was worn around, and pinned, at the neck, and the other end pinned to his shirt, to keep some of the cinders from going down his neck. Cinders and smoke were always a problem on steam engines!

It was difficult to hear on a steam engine, so the crews

passed hand signals to one another. We learned to read and count by hand signals, and to read lantern signals at night; we counted each move of the lantern to determine car lengths. Our early days working as hostlers taught us to read both hand and lantern signals with ease.

In my early years on the railroad, freight train speed limit was 50 miles-per-hour on the main track, while passenger train speed was 70 mph. There were speed restrictions in effect on some sub-divisions, which were specified in the time table. Speeds were soon raised to 60 mph and 75 mph, respectively. Should a passenger train leave the depot late, the crew was expected to make up running time in order to meet the stated arrival time,

if at all possible. If the scheduled time was not maintained, then the crew was questioned as to why not.

Passenger trains were designated "First Class," freight trains "Second Class," and locals "Third Class." Most of the time, all trains other than First Class were annulled, and run as "extra." Eventually, the railroads removed all trains except First Class trains from the time tables. Class Lights were no longer used on trains after CTC was installed.

When I hired out, my railroad was Missouri Pacific; it was later purchased by and became Union Pacific. My last 10 years of service was as a locomotive engineer in through freight, running from North Little Rock, Ark., to Poplar Bluff, Mo., and return. 🎧

## AUTHOR'S BIO

**W.W. (Bill) Mullins, who will celebrate his 87th birthday on October 12, served as Chaplain**



**at BLET National Conventions in 1991, 2001 and 2006. He has been a member of BLET Division 182 (North Little Rock, Ark.)**

**since January 1, 1973.**

**Mullins first hired out on the Missouri Pacific's Central Division (North Little Rock to Van Buren, Ark.) in November of 1947, but work was slim at that time. In August of 1950, he hired on MoPac's Arkansas Division when steam engines were still in use. He worked fireman's extra board for several years, finally working up to a regular freight run. As a fireman, he protected boards in North Little Rock, Gurdon, Paragould, Texarkana, El Dorado, Paragould and Memphis, Tenn.**

**Brother Mullins earned promotion to locomotive engineer in December of 1965, and was again assigned to the extra board. As an engineer, Mullins worked jobs from boards in North Little Rock, Gurdon, Paragould and Memphis, Tenn. His last 10 years of service was on through freight from North Little Rock to Poplar Bluff, Mo.**

**In November of 1953, Brother Mullins had a leave-of-absence from the railroad to work for the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen & Enginemen in Cleveland under Ed Gilbert. He was Assistant Research and Education Director when he resigned in July of 1960. He returned to North Little Rock to resume his seniority on the railroad, which is where he worked until applying for retirement in 1989.**

**Mullins served three terms as Secretary-Treasurer of Division 182, and served as Legislative Representative one term prior to his retirement.**





# THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING THE BLET PAC!

## **BRADY TUBBS, DIV. 888**

Vice President John P. Tolman presents a BLET PAC watch to Legislative Representative Brady Tubbs, Division 888 (Helper, Utah). Brother Tubbs is a Union Pacific locomotive engineer who just recently increased his BLET PAC contribution to \$50 per month. VP Tolman presented the watch during the quadrennial meeting of the Utah State Legislative Board on May 28, 2014, in Salt Lake City.



## **ULISES FLOTTE, DIV. 20 AND SIDNEY WILLIAMS, DIV. 660**

In May, two BLET members received BLET PAC watches from Vice President and National Legislative Representative John P. Tolman and National President Dennis R. Pierce at the California State Legislative Board meeting. Both Brothers upped their contributions to \$50 per month. Thank you, Brothers, for helping to keep our Brotherhood strong!



**From left:** VP Tolman; Ulises Flotte, an Amtrak locomotive engineer and Legislative Representative of BLET Division 20 (Los Angeles, Calif.); and President Pierce



**From left:** VP Tolman; Sidney Williams, a Union Pacific locomotive engineer and Legislative Representative of BLET Division 660 (Los Angeles, Calif.); and President Pierce.

In Memorium

# James Oberstar

A dear Congressman and friend of labor passes on



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

A dear friend of mine and of all labor, former Representative James Oberstar, passed away on May 3. His death at age 79 was sudden, and he will be deeply missed by many because he was a man of great honesty and integrity, who spent most of his life in public service. His passing was a surprise because he was in great shape and a passionate cyclist.

Jim Oberstar was a friend of labor. From an early age, he learned an appreciation for organized labor from his Dad, who worked in the open pit iron ore mines in Minnesota. As a young man, Oberstar worked in the open pit mines himself to pay for his college education. He would always share the story of his Dad holding union meetings at the kitchen table. Jim went on to graduate Summa Cum Laude from the College of St. Thomas in St. Paul, Minnesota, with a double major in French and Political Science. He continued his education by winning a scholarship to the College of Europe in Belgium.

In 1963, Jim began working for Congressman John Blatnik, and began his long career in transportation as the Clerk of the Subcommittee on Rivers and Harbors, and later, as Administrative Assistant for Blatnik's Congressional office. In 1970, when Blatnik

“The best Congressman is the one who never forgets their roots and most good people never forget their roots.”

became chairman of the Committee on Public Works, Jim became administrator of the committee, which today is known as the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

When Representative Blatnik announced his retirement in 1974, Representative Oberstar won the seat and began serving the first of his 17 terms — 34 years — in Congress. He would eventually become the longest-serving member of Congress in Minnesota history. In 2007, when the Democrats took control of Congress, he became the Chairman of the Transportation & Infrastructure Committee, a position he held until 2010, when the Republicans re-took the House and he lost his reelection in a major surprise.

I could tell many stories about working with him, but one of my most fond memories comes from when we were working on the writing of the Rail Safety Improvement Act. Nearly every day that Congress is in session in D.C., there are breakfast, lunch and dinner fundraisers. One day, when he was the Chairman of the Transportation & Infrastructure Committee, Jim was hosting a breakfast for Representative Nick

Rahall (D-WV), and as usual when the Chairman of a Committee is the host, it was a big draw. It was an 8 a.m. breakfast, and I arrived early, knowing it would be crowded, because I did not want to miss Chairman Oberstar. I needed to discuss the issue of Hours of Service in the draft legislation with him because, as it was written, it was not going to work for our membership.

I caught him as soon as he came in, and started to talk to him immediately about our problems with the draft legislation. I told him that — as written — the legislation does nothing to abate fatigue and that we needed to focus on the Hours of Service to reduce fatigue. I explained the language we were proposing and the reasoning behind it.

Now, these breakfasts generally only last at most an hour to an hour and a half, and I already spent about 30 minutes explaining our issues to him. By this time, I realized that he was the host and I had taken up a lot of his time, so I said to him “Mr. Chairman, you’re the host and several other people want to talk to you and you need to introduce your friend, Congressman Rahall.” He looked at me and said: “John, this is much more important. We need to get this language correct for the safety of the operating employees more than anything else.” We proceeded to talk for several more minutes and then set up a meeting at his office so that we could talk more in order to fix this issue. His sincerity was so wholesome one could never forget.

Working in D.C., it was great to have such a special relationship with a Con-





**BLET members present a commemorative pencil drawing to Congressman Oberstar.** From left: Dave Brown, Minnesota State Legislative Board Chairman; Herbert Harris Jr., District of Columbia Legislative Board Chairman; Cong. Oberstar; Craig Gilchrist, former Montana State Legislative Board Chairman; and John Tolman, BLET Vice President and National Legislative Representative.

gressman who would take so much time to work with you in an attempt to make things right, but he was an exceptional man, and I will personally miss him a great deal.

Chairman Oberstar was, without exception, the most scholarly man I have ever met in my life regarding all transportation issues, and not just one mode. He had an enormous wealth of knowledge on all modes.

In fact, when President Obama was searching for a Secretary of Transportation, after his first election, the BLET recommended that he choose Oberstar because of the complexity of his transportation knowledge. After the departure of Ray LaHood, we tried again. In our letter, BLET National President Dennis Pierce, wrote that Oberstar “was able combine his expertise with the ability to understand the perspective of our nation’s transportation workers because of his experience, and that of

his father, working in the iron ore mines. He understands that every worker, every passenger and every community deserves a safe transportation system, and has spent his career trying to ensure that happens.” President Pierce had only met him a few times but he realized very quickly his wisdom and understanding, and understanding of our toils to operate trains safely.

It is disappointing for us that he was not selected for this position, but he took it in stride and spent the time after he left Congress lecturing on transportation issues, cycling avidly and with his family. He had special pride in his grandchildren.

He always introduced me as a safety expert, even though I was far from his level of expertise, and it made me smile. He was a person who never stopped learning in his life and was curious about everything, but his true measure came in the number of lives he personally

touched. He was one of those people who made others feel special with each encounter, and he surely be missed by the labor movement.

In spite of all the negative publicity Congress receives these days, I write this with the thought and guidance in mind that there are great people who have worked with us in the past. There are many more Congressmen who do work with us at present and we will continue trying to get results that make our industry a little bit safer for us tomorrow. The best Congressman is the one who never forgets their roots and most good people never forget their roots. So it’s not the title you hold or your stature in life, but it is the fact that one should never forget where we came from, and as we move up the hierarchy, we must always reach down and pull the next person up. This is the way that will make us all better for tomorrow. 🇺🇸

# Regulatory Reconnaissance

Recapping the top issues facing the BLET and its members



BY VINCENT G. VERNA  
DIRECTOR OF  
REGULATORY AFFAIRS

## TRANSPORTATION RESEARCH BOARD: C<sup>3</sup>RS AND FRA RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

The BLET has continued its active participation in the Transportation Research Board (TRB) this year. TRB was founded in 1920 as a way for the National Research Council to study our nation's highways. Over the decades that followed, and in partnership with stakeholder groups who make up its membership, it broadened its reach. The Board is now comprised of 7,000 engineers, scientists, and other transportation researchers and practitioners from the public and private sectors and academia.

Each January, more than 10,000 transportation professionals meet in Washington, D.C., to participate in the group's annual meeting, with approximately 3,000 presentations, including more than 1,500 peer-reviewed technical papers given. The group also holds meetings throughout the year for various subgroups covering many specialized topics.

During the annual meeting in Washington, the BLET was invited to present its position on a panel regarding its experiences with Confidential Close Call Reporting Systems (C<sup>3</sup>RS). In 2012, FRA proposed making a change in the Model Memorandum of Understanding ("MMOU") and want-

ed the buy-in of all the stakeholders represented on the committee. To accomplish this, FRA proposed to limit protection to reporters only, instead of entire crews, which is the current practice, to spur greater reporting and better data to provide "late" reporters an opportunity to obtain the immunity after charges are filed. If an individual declined to report, they proposed to bar the railroad from using the close call reporter as a witness.

The BLET specifically opposed a change proposed by FRA regarding the members on the crew who make a report and their receipt of protection under C<sup>3</sup>RS. BLET had internal policies that were based upon the 2005 MMOU and could not be arbitrarily altered on the basis of FRA's desire to do so and without regard to BLET's position on the matter as a stakeholder on the committee. BLET believes that there can be no backsliding on confidentiality as a C<sup>3</sup>RS program potentially gets nationalized. From the start, confidentiality of the carriers and employees has been held as something to be protected with FRA agreeing to stay "at arms length away," and any third party to take measures to protect the confidentiality of the data. The BLET believes that the threat of punishment for reporting a close call has no place in the program.

The BLET was also invited to participate in a TRB evaluation of the Federal Railroad Administration Office of Research & Development, specifically concentrating on the Train Control & Communication Research Divi-

sion. This panel will focus mainly on the FRA's work on the implementation of Positive Train Control, and their collaborations with both suppliers and other stakeholder groups on aspects of PTC such as interoperability. The panel will give an "expert review and evaluation of the Federal Railroad Administration's Office of Research and Development ("R&D") in the Department of Transportation ("DOT")." The review will focus on two main areas. First, it seeks to validate the FRA's process to identify new priorities for addressing emerging safety issues and trends. Second, it will evaluate the feasibility, usefulness, effectiveness and impact of R&D products and services in railroad safety.

It is a good opportunity for BLET to have a place on this committee in order to give feedback to the Transportation Research Board regarding FRA and their effectiveness. This assures that their effectiveness and a critique thereof can be made from the perspective of our membership.

On Thursday, May 29, 2014, we also gave testimony to TRB's Committee for the Study of Freight Rail Transportation and Regulation. As requested by Congress, Committee will conduct a comprehensive study of the nation's railroad transportation, including:

1. The performance of the nation's major railroads regarding service levels, service quality, and rates;
2. The projected demand for freight transportation over the next two decades and the constraints limiting the effectiveness of public policy in bal-





ancing the need for railroads to earn adequate returns; and

3. The future role of the Surface Transportation Board in regulating railroad rates and service.

BLET testified that the pendulum since the implementation of the Staggers Act has perhaps swung too far the other way and that finding regulatory balance is the key. When it comes to safety, we have an old saying that most regulations and rules are written in blood. However, post Staggers Act, the anti-regulatory philosophy has crept into safety regulations where too often the cost and rate of return considerations outweigh benefit considerations.

Rail Labor wants railroads to have healthy profits that we help create and share. We have benefited post Staggers and there was a time that many railroads had gone bankrupt before Staggers and others were close.

However, fear of a re-regulated world that existed before Staggers should not frustrate attempts to pass safety regulations that will save lives. Barriers come from railroads, agencies, and Office of Management and Budget's (OMB) requirement to fulfill their regulatory review responsibility. Whether or not the staff at OMB are capable of making determinations on rule benefits for railroad safety or if they have adequate resources to make all the determinations they are tasked with making is an open question.

Regulations are viewed as suspect from the outset of most stakeholder meetings in the industry. Agencies have preferred to issue safety guidelines that are non-binding and have no enforcement mechanisms other than the threat of regulation later if the guidelines are ignored. We want every agency to know and understand that when it comes to a safe working environment, we want to work using the safest and best practices; be equipped with the best and safest equipment; and use state of the art technology to keep our Brothers and Sisters and the public safe and healthy.

**“We want every agency to know and understand that when it comes to a safe working environment, we want to work using the safest and best practices...”**

#### **DOT SAFETY ADVISORY ON TYPE 111 TANK CARS**

On May 7, 2014, the U.S. Department of Transportation issued an Emergency Order that requires each railroad operating trains that contain more than one million gallons of Bakken crude oil (about 35 cars) in a particular state to provide the State Emergency Response Commission notification regarding the expected movement of such trains through the counties in the state. The full text of the Emergency Order can be obtained at [Regulations.gov](http://Regulations.gov) under the docket number DOT-OST-2014-0067. This order would have required all the trains to comply with it (except one) that have been involved in derailments since the tragic accident in Lac-Mégantic, Quebec in 2013. The train that would not have fallen under the order was a derailment that occurred in Albany, N.Y., that had 31 cars and thus would not have been subject to the order. It remains unclear what effect this order will have on safety. It is hard to see how it will have any effect on derailments, but it may have a positive effect on responses to derailments.

#### **INWARD AND OUTWARD FACING CAMERA WORKING GROUP**

The first meeting of the Rail Safety Advisory Committee, the Inward and Outward Facing Camera Working Group took place on June 5, 2014, in Washington, D.C. A task statement has been agreed upon as a way to have

a forum where the issue is discussed. At this point with cameras already installed and being installed on some of the Class 1 railroads, BLET has sought to use the RSAC process as a way to try to get some protective measures put in place so that the use of cameras and visual data from the cameras is not misused and used only by NTSB for accident investigations where there is a fatality of crew member(s) or the public or both. This is the only feasible way cameras will contribute to a safer environment overall.

Using cameras to scrutinize a person's every move during the course of a 12 hour or longer duty tour is not reasonable and will simply cause rail employees to resent their employer, fostering a sense that the employer definitely does not trust their workforce. This is particularly offensive given the history of great service that members of the BLET have provided to the rail carriers for over 151 years. With the political backdrop being so contentious in Washington, the RSAC process has become tedious and frustrating.

We do not have high expectations for the Inward Facing Camera Working Group as we have already seen from our discussions with the carriers that there are not a lot of positive developments to report for cameras usage in the cab. We have been making efforts in Washington legislatively to educate members of Congress and U.S. Senators that cameras in the cab will not prevent accidents, they will just film them. Even then, the film may get destroyed as it was in the Goodwell, Oklahoma accident. So we have a situation where the only feasible positive use of cameras is done by NTSB post accident, but that data may or may not survive. There will be much more information on this issue to come, as at press time all parties have more questions than answers. It is hoped that the process will at least answer questions and at best provide protections for our members that do not exist at present. ●

# Former NS General Chairman Bob Linsey retires after 43-year career

**B**rother R.H. (Bob) Linsey, a former BLET General Chairman, brought his 43-year railroad career to an end when he retired at the end of 2013. He has been a member of the BLET for the past 33 years.

Brother Linsey hired out in Cleveland, Ohio, on the former Baltimore & Ohio Railroad in 1970. From 1971-1979, he worked in various non-operating crafts for the Penn Central and then Conrail on the Cleveland and Valley Divisions. On May 15, 1979, he transferred into engine service on the Toledo Division, and after the first of what would be several periods of furlough, bid to Buffalo, N.Y., where he earned promotion to Locomotive Engineer in 1980. He joined BLE Division 781 (White Plains, N.Y.) on July 1, 1981, and has held continuous membership ever since.

Between 1983 and 1990, he worked in road and yard service for Conrail throughout the New York area eventually relocating to Selkirk (Albany, N.Y.). Following the split of Conrail in the mid-1990s, Brother Linsey chose to work for Norfolk Southern over CSX and relocated back to Buffalo, where he worked through freight service to both Corning, N.Y., and Cleveland.

Brother Linsey has always been an active contributor to the Brotherhood, serving in numerous offices on a continual basis beginning in 1984 through his retirement in 2013. His first Brotherhood office was serving on the Local Committee of Adjustment for Division 752 (Albany, N.Y.). It was there that he learned the technical aspects of grievance handling, having been given responsibility to handle written discipline and time claim appeals for the Division.

"I would be remiss if I did not take this opportunity to express my appreciation to Local Chairman Ron Berben, who did so much to mentor me in the fine art of face-to-face negotiation with management," Linsey said.



In one of his last acts as General Chairman, Brother Linsey (left) helped lead a strike against short line railroad operator Wheeling & Lake Erie on September 20, 2013. He is shown here with Division 292 Local Chairman Lonnie Swigert.


In 1987, he was elected Local Chairman of the Conrail engineers in Division 752, an office he continued to hold following the consolidation of Division 752 into Division 867 in 1994.

In 1999, the Conrail acquisition prompted a realignment of Division representation in Buffalo, and all former Conrail BLET members were consolidated into Division 659. Brother Linsey was elected Local Chairman in a special election.

"The assistance of my predecessor, now-General Chairman Jim Louis, was crucial," Linsey said. "I wish to express my gratitude to the General Chairmen I served under, including Steve Speagle and the late Bob Godwin, as well as then-Vice General Chairman Larry Sykes and, earlier, Conrail District Chairmen Gary Paplow and Bill Thompson," Linsey said.

Linsey served as Local Chairman of Division 659 until he was elected as the full-time First Vice Chairman with the Norfolk Southern-Northern Lines/W&LE General Committee of Adjustment in 2001. He was reelected to that position in 2005 and again in 2009. Brother Linsey served as General Chairman of that GCA for a brief time following the retirement of Larry Sykes, and then again for three years after Cole Davis was elected to the office of BLET National Vice President.

Brother Linsey did not seek reelection to the General Chairman's office in late September 2013 due to his pending retirement, which became effective at the end of the year.

"I walk away with nothing but a great deal of gratitude for the priceless friendships and life experiences that have filled my life over these past 29 years of Brotherhood service," Linsey said. 



# ‘Retired life is great,’ says Division 14’s Clinton W. Hues



Brother Hues is greeted by family members after safely completing his Last Run (from left): Granddaughter Chloe and sons Casey and Chris.

**B**rother Clinton W. Hues has always set the bar high, accepting challenges, working to meet them, and along the way, helping others to do the same. When he climbed down from the locomotive cab as engineer of Washington, D.C. to Richmond, Va. Amtrak train No. 85 on the night of March 15, 2014, he completed a 43-year career that began only a few short miles away, on February 11, 1971, as a fireman on a yard engine at Seaboard Coast Line Railroad’s Brown Street Yard. He was promoted to the rank of locomotive engineer in 1972.

Typically however, after being greeted by his wife of 17 years, Judy, being hugged by his two sons and receiving a big kiss from his granddaughter, Brother Hues climbed back up into the cab to turn his engine and eight cars on the wye track at Acca Yard, to insure that it was spotted for a quick overnight cleaning, stocking and inspection in



order to be ready for its 6 a.m. departure for Boston. Even though his labors were now over, his responsibility wasn’t. Clint Hues is just that kind of guy.

You’d not be surprised to find out that Brother Hues is an Eagle Scout, as are both his sons, nor that he served as a Scoutmaster, Roundtable Commissioner, District Chairman and Silver Beaver recipient. And as if his railroad career didn’t consume enough of his life, he was and remains active in the Masonic order, Past Master of Washington and Henry Lodge #344, AF&AM

and current Commander of Richmond Commandery No. 2.

Brother Hues was active in his BLE Division in Richmond, Va., prior to flowing to Amtrak in 1986. He was a charter member of Brooks Woodward Memorial Division 14 in Washington, D.C., and was continuously elected to office from its first meeting until his retirement, serving as Division President, Vice President and Local Chairman, among other posts. His talent as a barbecue cook at Brotherhood functions and company safety events is legend throughout the Amtrak system. A leader and mentor, Brother Hues admits that while the railroad career has been a thrill for him, “*Retired life is great!*”

For Clint and Judy Hues (who retired from the Federal Reserve Bank in Richmond at the same time as her husband,) the future holds the promise of family, travel and discovery. They love to cruise. ☪

# Don Strong honored by Division 236 and Oregon State Legislative Board



**From left:** BLET Vice President & National Legislative Representative John Tolman, Brother Don Strong and Oregon State Legislative Board Chairman Scott Palmer at the 2013 Triennial Convention of the Oregon State Legislative Board.

**B**rother Don Strong, a member of BLET Division 236 (Portland, Ore.) and a founding member of the Oregon State Legislative Board, retired from railroad duties effective November 1, 2013.

He started his railroad career in February 1976, hiring out as a maintenance of way worker at the Portland Terminal Railroad after being discharged from the U.S. Army, where he was a medic.

In January 1977, Don began locomotive engineer training and marked up on March 20 of that year. He has

held continuous membership in the Brotherhood since he first joined Division 856 on April 1, 1977. He transferred to Division 236 in Portland effective March 16, 1989.

Brother Strong was a founding member of the Oregon State Legislative Board, representing Division 236, serving as First-Vice Chairman for many years. He also served as Vice Local Chairman for the Portland Terminal Railroad.

In retirement, Don hopes to play golf with his friends, spend time with his wife, Maradee and their children

Jillian and Geoff, drag race 1/24th scale slot cars, and help a friend with his Ford Mustang Factory Drag Race car. He credits Maradee as being the glue that held their marriage together.

Regarding the Union and the Brothers who taught Don the ropes, he said, "They taught me that if you don't stand for something, you will fall for anything."

"His sage counsel and undying unflagging Union spirit will be sorely missed by all who knew him," said Scott Palmer, Oregon State Legislative Board Chairman. 📍



# Brother Keith Stauber sails into retirement after 43 years

**A**fter 43 years of railroading, Brother Keith J. Stauber retired effective December 24, 2013.

Brother Stauber hired out on the Duluth, Missabe & Iron Range Railroad (DMIR) in 1970 as a machinist helper. He went firing on April 10, 1978, and earned promotion to locomotive engineer in July of that same year.

He joined the BLET effective September 1, 1984, and has held continuous membership in Division 163 (Proctor, Minn.) for the past 30 years.

Throughout his career, Brother Stauber was highly dedicated to representing Brotherhood members, holding numerous elected offices over the years including: General Chairman, Local Chairman, Secretary-Treasurer, Vice President, Legislative Representative, and 1st Vice Chairman of the Minnesota State Legislative Board. At the time of his retirement, he was serving as General Chairman of the DMIR General Committee of Adjustment and Local Chairman of Division 163.

His Last Run came on December 12, 2013, working as a locomotive engineer and performing switching service at Proctor Yard.

“In my 43 year railroad career I have witnessed changes in the industry,” he said. “The most bothersome have been the CN forced mergers among the WC/DWP/DM&IR/EJ&E.”

Stauber and his wife Kinnan were married on January 5, 1990. The couple has three children: Nathaniel, 22; Madeline, 19; and Myra, 15. He comes from a long line of railroaders, including his great-grandfather, who worked in engineering and installed piles under the Duluth ore docks in 1910. His grandfather, father, uncle and several cousins also worked in the industry.

In addition to his union activities, Brother Stauber was also active in his community, having served for nine years on the School Board in Proctor, Minn., and for 12 years on the Duluth



Brother Stauber as a delegate representing Division 163 at the BLET's Second National Convention in 2010.

Civil Service Board. In his free time, he enjoys curling but his true passion is sailing. He is a seven-time North American Sailing Champion, and this summer his boat and crew will race in the Chicago to Mackinac and Bayview to Mackinac races, along with their regular Lake Superior races.

“This summer I will be on the water from June 21 to August 10, either racing or delivering the boats to the next race,” he said.

Brother Stauber is a staunch supporter of the BLET's Education and

Training Department, and he encourages the next generation of engineers and union leaders to take advantage of the program.

“I participated in every BLET educational class I could,” he said. “As a Local or General Chairman, it was and is our responsibility to represent well. BLET has the best education and training program available — use it!

“The BLET has been good to me and I hope I have been an able representative,” he concluded. “Thanks for the ride.”

# Blasyak trained many engineers for Division 660 in Los Angeles

**B**rother Steve J. Blasyak, who served as Local Chairman of BLET Division 660 in Los Angeles for eight years, safely completed his last run on May 29, 2014. His railroad career spanned 38 years.

Brother Blasyak hired out in 1976 as a switchman for the Union Pacific Railroad in Los Angeles. He went firing in January of 1977 and earned promotion to locomotive engineer later that same year. He joined the BLET effective January 1, 1977.

He served the membership of Division 660 as Local Chairman from 1986 to 1994, and was also elected to serve as a Vice General Chairman of the UP-Western Region General Committee of Adjustment (South Central District) from 1989 to 1997.

“Steve was widely recognized as an excellent engineer, training a large number of firemen and engineers, including our current Secretary-Treasurer of Division 660, Alan Newton,” said Division 660 Local Chairman Don Carroll.

He also gave a lot of his personal time to training Brother Carroll, current Local Chairman of Division 660, regarding the process of appealing time claims, due process for discipline, hearings and investigations.

Always active in the Brotherhood, Blasyak served on the first Mobilization Team on the Union Pacific in 1993 and was part of the “Us versus Them Campaign” in 1995.

His Last Run came on May 29, 2014. He worked as a locomotive engineer of train OLBTN-27 (locomotive UP 7867) from Colton to Long Beach, Calif., and returned. For 20 years, Brother Blasyak worked on the Los Angeles to Yermo pool freight before earning enough seniority to work various road switchers in the Los Angeles area. He completed his career working in the L.A. Basin Pool between W. Colton and Long Beach, Calif.



Brother S.J. Blasyak completed his Last Run on May 29, 2014.



Brother Blasyak was the Division 660 delegate to the BLE Quadrennial Convention at Detroit, Mich., in 1996. That was the first Brotherhood convention where 600-plus delegates were in attendance using state-of-the-art tabulation of votes. This type of technology had never been used until the 1996 convention, plus the BLE had not been able to have all delegates from

all Divisions since the time of the first conventions held in the 1800s.

Brother Blasyak and his wife Debbie have three adult children: Jared, 34; Aaron, 33; and Rachel, 24. Debbie works in administration for Local 441 of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers.

His hobbies include golf, surfing, fishing, camping, hiking, music, and playing the piano. He plans to do more of the above during retirement — without worries that the railroad might call — and may do some piano tuning on the side.

“He was a very dedicated member, rarely missing a monthly Division meeting,” Brother Carroll said. “After he decided to step down as Local Chairman, he was my Vice Local Chairman and alternate Delegate from 1995 to 2012 and attended over 90 percent of the monthly meetings. He was a great organizer and instrumental in signing up new members as our Division has tripled in membership since the late 1980s.”



# NJ Transit engineer Terry DeBolt retires

**B**rother Terry E. DeBolt retired effective May 1, 2014 after safely completing his Last Run for New Jersey Transit. A member of BLET Division 53 in Jersey City, N.J., Brother DeBolt has been a proud member of the Brotherhood for more than 34 years.

Brother DeBolt hired out on the Indiana Harbor Belt (IHB) in the car department, eventually working as a foreman of a wreck truck before earning promotion to locomotive engineer. He first joined the Brotherhood on January 1, 1980, as a member of Division 682 in Hammond, Ind.

After nine total years with IHB, Brother DeBolt was laid off. He then hired out with the Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (SEPTA), transferring his BLET mem-

bership to Division 45 and then Division 71 in Philadelphia.

Following 10 years with SEPTA, he worked for Amtrak for about nine months, where he became a member of Division 737 (Trenton, N.J.). Brother DeBolt finally settled with New Jersey Transit and spent the last 17 years of his career as a NJ Transit locomotive engineer and member of BLET Division 53.

His father, Ted DeBolt, and uncles Charlie and George, all worked at the IHB. His uncle George R. DeBolt was elected to serve as a BLE International Vice President for 10 years, 1986-1996.

Brother DeBolt and his wife, Judy, have two children, Bridget and Chad. They also have four grandchildren: Molly, Elijah, Evie and Brady. 📞



DeBolt's Uncle George was a BLE International Vice President from 1986-1996.

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 ←

members who have enjoyed, and are currently enjoying their retirement. You can rest assured that BLET will continue the fight to defend our Railroad Retirement system so that all BLET members, active and retired, can draw from the system that they paid into. Whether by our fight to preserve Amtrak and its employees who pay into the system, or in our ongoing effort to protect two-person crews, BLET will continue its effort to see that the Railroad Retirement system is strong and secure well into the future.

On the heels of our 2010 Convention, BLET also set out to finish the bargaining round that had begun earlier

**“Exercising their democratic rights on contract votes and the election of the Union’s officers are two of the key opportunities for the membership to participate in its own future.”**

that year. Ultimately, it took a strike vote and an ensuing Presidential Emergency Board (PEB) to conclude the round, but several things happened during the process that showed that our efforts to mobilize and involve the membership were working. When the strike ballots were sent out, over 50% of the members took the time to vote, and when they did, their unity was evident as over 97% of them voted to strike. While our goal will continue to be 100% participation, anytime over 50% of the membership participates it is a landmark vote. Once the PEB worked

through its processes and issued its recommendations, the membership was again given the right to decide their own future by voting on the agreement that was modeled on that recommendation. While not as high a turn out — 38% of the membership, still large by most union standards — took the time to vote and by a margin of 2 to 1 voted to ratify the agreement.

Going forward, I must say I am convinced that our democratic principles are truly the cornerstone of our Brotherhood. Only by being involved in their union, can BLET’s membership let their voices be

heard. Exercising their democratic rights on contract votes and the election of the Union’s officers are two of the key opportunities for the membership to participate in its own future. And as the members increase their participation, the BLET’s voice increases in volume and in strength.

We will begin another national bargaining round soon, and BLET will hit the ground running following our Convention in preparation for that bargaining round. There will also be key elections in the Senate and House of Representatives this fall that all members, active and retired should take an interest in. Join me by being involved in and with your Union when you can be, because your participation is what makes us our strongest. 📞



# Into the sunset

## SISTER CARUSO SAYS FAREWELL AND THANK YOU



**BY ANITA J. CARUSO**  
BLET AUXILIARY  
NATIONAL PRESIDENT

Joining the Grand International Auxiliary (GIA) has been one of the most rewarding experiences of my life! I will begin with a little reminiscing, throw in a bit of nostalgia and express some profound gratitude to the people who have helped me along my journey. First, I'll start with a little background. Sam and I were married Sept. 18, 1976, the year of our nation's bicentennial. When we married, Sam worked at Crown Center Hotel in Kansas City, Mo., as a bellman. We had 3 years of great vacation locations to visit all over the country, all for FREE, which was fabulous!

Since childhood, it had always been Sam's dream to be a locomotive engineer. One day he came home from work and asked if I minded if he applied for a job working for the railroad. My response was, sure, just be sure you don't have to travel. Well, we all know how this turned out! He began his new career in February, 1979.

Shortly, thereafter, we had our daughter, Paula Jo. When Sam's terminal was changed, we moved across the river to Kansas. One day, when Paula was about 2 months old, I received a phone call from a member of Helen Gould Division 235 in Osawatomie, Kansas, asking me if I'd like to join their group. Being a newbie to everything railroad, I jumped on the chance to belong to this group. Naturally, I knew nothing about railroading as no one in my family had ever worked this type of job. Believe me, this was one of the smartest moves I've ever made!

These lovely ladies taught me what it was going to be like being married to

a railroader, taught me the special railroad lingo and impressed upon me how I was going to have to be a strong, independent woman while juggling this new work life. Boy, they knew what was coming down the pike! I remained in this Auxiliary from 1980 to 1988, when Sam decided there was a better job waiting for him in Omaha, Neb. By this time, we added another member to the family, our son Sam, who was born in 1983. Boy, this was a hard jolt to my senses. I was not thrilled to move 200 miles from my home, but if that's what would better Sam's railroad career, then it was something I had to do. Now, it was time to leave our family, lifelong friends and my new Auxiliary Sisters.

Sam would periodically push me to begin an Auxiliary in my new hometown of Omaha, but I would continually tell him that I wasn't in the mood to start such an undertaking. Besides, I didn't know anyone here and didn't really know how to get started. Year after year he would politely ask me to get an Auxiliary going and finally in May of 1995, I began the process.

I asked the Local Chairman, who happened to be Sam, for a list of all the BLE members of Division 183 and began mailing letters to every spouse asking if they'd like to join the GIA. I received a good response and after many months of answering questions, fielding phone calls and planning, we had enough spouses interested in getting this done. In September of 1995, International President Maureen Fulkerson came to Omaha to organize our group. We have met once a month for the past 18 years and I can honestly say this is a bright light in my life. This is one time I'm glad I listened to my husband!

One of my first experiences on a national level came in 1996. Since the delegate for Division 183 was one of our

Auxiliary Sister's husband who was already attending the National Convention, we figured it was logical for our Sister Darla Fent to be the delegate for River City Auxiliary 12. Shortly thereafter, I received a phone call from Past International President Maureen Fulkerson asking me to be a proxy for another Auxiliary who was unable to send a delegate to the National Convention. Naturally, not wanting to offend or understanding exactly what I was agreeing to do, I accepted the challenge. Now, this was truly a learning experience! I was asked to run for a position, but I was still trying to get a handle on what was going on around me, so I promised them I would think about running for something down the road.

My career with the BLET Auxiliary on the International level began in 1997, when an International Officer resigned and several officers progressed up the chain of command. I was asked by Past International President Ruth Windham to fill the vacant position of Alternate International Treasurer. With the approval of the Executive Council, I was now a new International Officer in President Windham's administration. I wasn't very active during these years, but did begin my travels by attending several regional conventions during her tenure. She always invited me to speak to the members, but I would politely decline. I was too frightened to go up to the podium nor did I want to take the chance of making a fool of myself. Little did I realize what was coming down the road!

By the time the 2001 National Convention rolled around, I decided to run for the office of International National Secretary. This meant a 10 year commitment to this position, if elected. With the approval of President Windham, I sent out letters to all the delegates and





Anita and Sam Caruso at the 2014 IWC in Minneapolis.

National Officers introducing myself and giving my qualifications for this position. I was fortunate to be elected to fill this position.

Before I knew it, it was time for our 2006 National Convention and because of our bylaws, I would remain in my current position of International Secretary; the only caveat was that we changed from Quinquennial Conventions to Quadrennial Conventions, changing my term to another four years instead of five years. Our delegates also voted to change our name from the Grand International Auxiliary to the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen Auxiliary (BLET Auxiliary) for better name recognition to the BLET.

I believe it was fate, karma or divine intervention, but I was put on the “fast track” by some very special people. There must have been a lot of stars lined up properly to predict what was going to happen in my future. If I wasn’t called to act as a proxy for an Auxiliary with no representation by President Fulkerson enabling me to attend the 1996 Na-

tional Convention, if I wasn’t asked to fill the vacancy of Alternate National Treasurer by President Windham, approved by the Executive Council and became a National Officer, who knows if I would be where I am today? I highly doubt it as I never had any intention of attending a National Convention as a delegate, run for a national office, nor did I ever intend to actually be put in position to become the BLET Auxiliary National President.

At our last National Auxiliary Convention in 2010, I decided to take the position of National President. I knew Past National President Becky Schneider was here to help whenever I needed it. I spoke to Sam about it and he agreed that this was something I could do and I should just “go for it!” I knew it entailed a lot of detailed work, traveling, writing, just to name a few of the duties. But, one of the biggest hurdles I was going to have to conquer was my fear of public speaking. This is not something I was remotely interested in doing, but I knew it went with the job. I will admit that it has gotten easier in

the last four years, but I still find it difficult to do, I just find a way to do it. When I mess up, I’ve learned not to beat myself up anymore and go on. I am happy that this part of the job will soon be over, though!

There are some very special people that helped me along my journey with the BLET Auxiliary. Obviously, President Fulkerson and President Windham saw something in me that I certainly didn’t know existed. Without their insightfulness and guidance, I wouldn’t have been active in the Auxiliary other than attending my monthly meetings. I thank them both for giving me the gentle “nudge” that I needed to get involved and for that I will be forever grateful.

I also thank Past International President Onita Wayland and Past International Treasurer Mary Anna Mullins for being a great source of help to me. Many times I’ve called on these lovely sisters to ask questions and they have always come through for me. Thank you both for always being available to guide, give advice and nurture me through the years!

Past National President Becky Schneider has been the most helpful by staying connected to all our current National Officers. I thank her for taking the reins as our Webmaster Extraordinaire, for always being available to answer any questions I’ve had about a myriad of topics and for being such a good role model. She encouraged me to “bone up” on all things legislative and I hope I’ve made her proud! Thank you Sister Schneider for everything you’ve done and continue to do for me.

I’d like to thank the members of our Executive Council. I’ll start with our Vice President/NLR Sereena Hogan. Back in 2010, when I was pondering if I should or could be the National President, she promised me she would always be there to help me. She has never relinquished on this promise. I have called on her numerous times these past four years and I know that I couldn’t have gotten through without her guidance, advice and unwavering friendship. It has been a pleasure to work with you

the past seven years. Sister Sereena is a worker bee from dawn to dusk. She has made my articles look “pretty” and helped me with interpreting the Constitution & Bylaws whenever asked. Whatever the future holds for you, I wish you the very best and if you ever need me, I will always be there for you! Thank you for being such a good friend, sister and confidant. I’m going to miss seeing you each year.

Since the resignation of our previous national secretary in July, 2013, I have been working closely with our new National Secretary Lawana Poss. She is pure joy! I have enjoyed being around her and helping her in any way I can. She is a remarkable lady and has made this last year and a half of my term go seamlessly. Thank you Sister Poss for stepping up to the plate and doing such a great job!

Our National Treasurer Helen Brand and I go way back. We met each other in Helen Gould Auxiliary 235 in Osawatomie, Kansas. Our friendship and sisterhood dates back to 1980. There are some marriages that don’t last that long! Back in 2006, I am proud to say I asked Sister Helen if she’d be willing to run for the position of National Treasurer. She said she would and the rest is history! We’ve been working together for eight years and they have all been terrific. She has changed the way we do our bookkeeping by bringing us into the 21st century. I have enjoyed attending regionals and working with her on the SWCM Golf Tournament for the past four years. She always has a positive attitude and a very calming influence on me. Many times over the years I’ve called her ranting and raving about one thing or another and she always quietly listened. By the time I finished speaking to her, I always felt better. Thank you Sister Helen, you have been

a Godsend to me and I will cherish our friendship for many years to come!

What a delight it has been to meet and work with our 1st Vice President National Outreach Coordinator Gina Forman! We also have been working together for the past seven years. Sister Gina has been responsible for new member packets, calling to check on new Auxiliaries, sending out “starter packets” to anyone who is interested in starting a new Auxiliary, writing a quarterly column and so much more. She is like a daughter to me! I have enjoyed seeing her daughter Paris grow up to be a young woman. I will miss seeing her but I know we will keep in touch. Thank you for everything you’ve done in your office and for being such a good friend and sister to me!

I would be remiss if I did not thank the Executive Council member’s husbands. My deepest gratitude goes out to Ken Kroeger, Sister Sereena’s husband, Charlie Brand, Sister Helen’s husband, Paul Forman, Gina’s husband and Mike Poss, Sister Lawana’s husband. They have done their share of volunteering for the BLET Auxiliary and I humbly thank you for your years of service!

A big “thank you” goes to BLET National President Dennis R. Pierce and his Advisory Board. I have enjoyed my four years of working with you and your administration. I thank you for your financial assistance to us for recruiting and organizing trips, your continual promotion of our great organization and for always being there when we’ve needed anything — from help with printing to gifts for our golf and raffle tables. It’s been a good run, one I will never forget.

I have met so many wonderful people throughout my journey. I have enjoyed attending the National Associa-

tion of State Legislative Board Chairman meetings. Besides the BLET National Officers, these fine gentlemen have been the biggest advocates of the BLET Auxiliary. I can’t begin to express my gratitude to Brother Tim Smith and Brother Ken Kertesz for always finding a way to promote the Auxiliary. I will never forget your kindness. Thank you from the bottom of my heart.

Now, I feel I’ve saved the best for last, as the biggest thank you goes to my wonderful husband! Without his support, guidance, and help, I would be lost. This man has made numerous trips for the past 13 years to the post office, office supply store, read and proofed more articles than he cares to remember, mailed my packets, bought me postage, came up with ideas for articles, and just been a tremendous rock of strength to me when I was feeling down. Besides Sister Helen, he was the one who really saw me at my worst! Never once did he complain. Never once did he tell me to quit. Never once did he say for me to keep still. He is one in a million and I am so lucky to call him my husband for the past 38 years, my friend and forever my one and only love. Thank you for everything and for encouraging me to do this work!

It has been my privilege and honor to serve as the BLET Auxiliary National President for the past four years. I hope I have served the Auxiliary in an exemplary fashion. I have always tried to conduct myself in a professional manner as my predecessors before me. There are many more people I’d like to thank, but this article will never end. Just know that I will thank you when I see you this year at one of the regionals or in Las Vegas at our National Convention. Thank you for allowing me to serve this great organization that I love so dearly! ☺

**ABOUT THE AUXILIARY:**

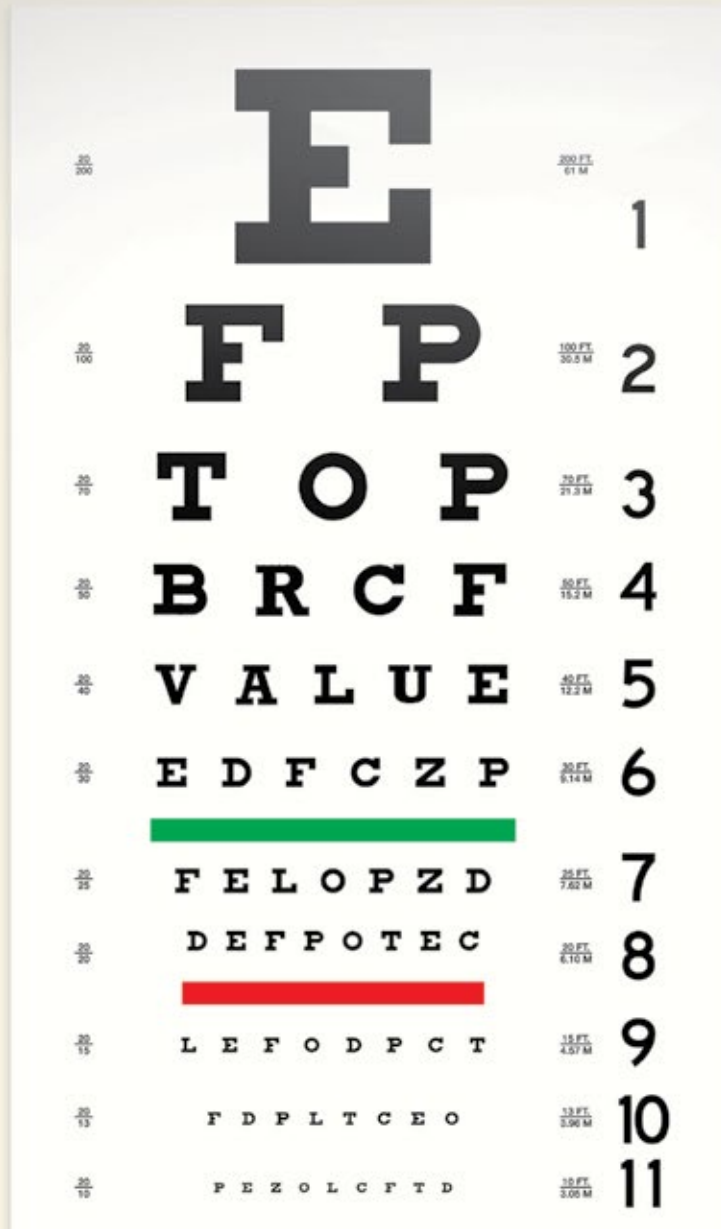
The BLET Auxiliary exists to support the interest and welfare of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen (BLET) Auxiliary and railroad families, especially the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen, and the organizations of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters Rail Conference,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



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As this issue of the Journal goes to press, approximately 500 delegates are convening at the Rio All-Suite Hotel and Casino in Las Vegas for the BLET's Third National Convention. Be on the lookout for a special Convention wrap-up issue of the Journal coming soon!

