

# Journal

LOCOMOTIVE ENGINEERS & TRAINMEN

VOLUME 113 | No. 2 | WINTER 2010

WWW.BLE-T.ORG

## Special Convention Issue

Highlights from BLET's  
2nd National Convention

### COVERAGE INCLUDES:

- Complete speaker recaps
- Retiring Vice Presidents
- Officer Elections
- Delegates
- Photo galleries

The Future  
of  
high-speed rail  
GUEST COLUMN  
BY AMTRAK CEO  
JOE BOARDMAN  
pg 8





## *BLET President's Message*

BY DENNIS R. PIERCE, BLET NATIONAL PRESIDENT

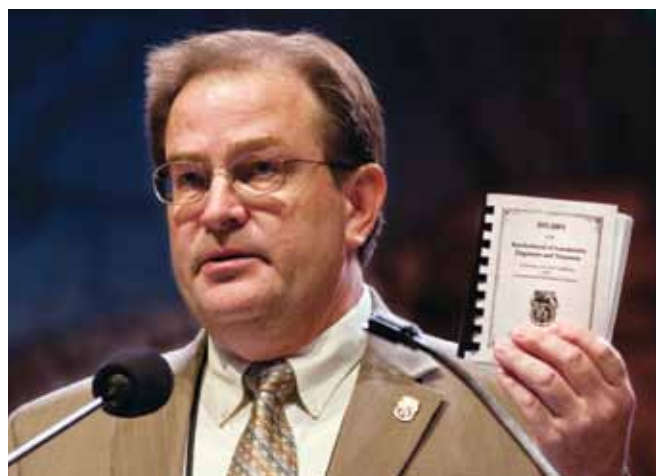
# Poised for tomorrow

**T**he BLET Convention this year set a pair of milestones. Number one, this was our Second National Convention as part of the Teamsters Rail Conference. Our affiliation with the IBT has proven to be a great move for our membership. With each passing day, the BLET becomes a stronger link in the IBT's armor, which now protects working men and women in the air, on the highways and on the rails.

Second, our Convention was our first bylaws and nominating convention. Candidates were nominated for all National Division offices, but the primary job of the delegates was to insure that the rules that govern our organization — our Bylaws — are relevant and truly address the needs of the membership. This aspect of the convention positions us for the coming four years.

The process used to update our internal law is simple and democratic. Members who wish to change our Bylaws take their proposed changes to their Division meeting in the months leading up to the convention. If the membership of the division votes in favor of that change, it is submitted to the National Division as a resolution. The National President also can submit Bylaws resolutions.

The President appoints a Bylaws Committee, comprised of duly elected delegates from across the country, to review all resolutions and to make recommendations



to the delegates in session. The delegates then debate the resolutions, having the right to accept, amend or reject the recommendations and the resolutions before them. After the convention, the Bylaws Committee codifies the changes adopted by the delegates, which are then submitted to the IBT General President for approval prior to implementation.

Having served as a delegate to two conventions, I was honored to play a role from the convention floor in representing my division's membership during these deliberations. It was an even greater honor for me to chair this year's Convention. Our delegates worked very diligently to get through all of the resolutions that were presented, and they conducted themselves in a brotherly and professional matter.

The delegates adopted numerous new laws or amended existing bylaws to strengthen our internal governance. For every level of our Brotherhood — the National Division, general committees,

state legislative boards, and local divisions — the changes are intended to make internal governance more transparent and more effective.

We live in a time when there is rampant distrust of institutions. That distrust is well-earned, because many Americans have been let down by the institutions they rely upon, from banks, to corporations, to employers, to political parties, to government, and even to some churches. Sadly, our own beloved Brotherhood has not escaped the pervasive negativity that surrounds us.

That's why it was so important for our delegates to do serious business ... and they did. Whether you realize it or not, the BLET is the most important institution to the economic security of you and your family. And in order for us to be in a position to succeed, the BLET as an institution must have 21st Century processes; your delegates help ensure that we do.

The economic policies of the past 30 years have concentrated wealth to a degree

not seen in nearly a century. Our current national politics very much resembles what our forefathers faced before the New Deal and dating back to the 1870s: the forces of wealth and power amassed against working people who live from paycheck to paycheck.

If you listen to the debate going on in Washington these days, you know that a struggle is under way. I believe it will be a struggle unlike any in our lifetimes ... a battle of a magnitude that we've only read about in history books. Everything we have come to believe is a "given" — health care, retirement, basic job security — is in the cross-hairs of the wealthy and powerful business interests.

Just as this Brotherhood was the engine to create the wages, benefits, and working conditions that have become the industry standard, so too will this Brotherhood have to mount a fierce defense of what we have and a mighty fight to move us forward. But, in order to succeed this Brotherhood must be far more than a couple of hundred officers ... it must again become the mass movement of yesteryear.

We can do that only when the BLET, as an institution, has the members' trust and confidence. That's why our delegates' work this year was so important ... because it restores that trust and confidence. I thank them for that, and you should thank them, too.

**DENNIS R. PIERCE**

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A DIVISION OF THE RAIL CONFERENCE,  
INTERNATIONAL BROTHERHOOD  
OF TEAMSTERS

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»» ON THE COVER: PHOTOGRAPHER STEVE CARTER HAD TO WEAR HIS SNOWSHOES TO CAPTURE THIS SCENE IN MERRITT, WASH., ON JANUARY 29, 2010. (© 2010 STEVE CARTER)



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## Convention Wrap Up

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## Plan ahead for 2011 BLET regional meetings!

BLET members making vacation plans for next year are encouraged to consider attending one of the BLET's regional meetings in 2011.

**T**hese multi-day meetings combine the best of the Brotherhood — networking, education and training, and family fun — all in one place. The meetings provide an excellent opportunity for members to meet their elected leaders and to engage in face-to-face question and answer sessions. It also allows them to exchange ideas and information with their fellow BLET Brothers and Sisters. 🍷



**2011 IWC:** Breathtaking views of the Pacific Ocean from Hearst Castle.

### Asheville, N.C.

JUNE 12-17, 2011

#### 84th annual Southeastern Meeting Association

DoubleTree Biltmore Hotel  
Contact host chairman  
Dewey Brown by phone or  
email: (828) 683-9371 or  
drbrown.blet267@yahoo.com.



**Photos:** (top) Biltmore Estate;  
(bottom) Asheville CVB

### Long Island, N.Y.

AUGUST 2-7, 2011

#### 73rd annual Eastern Union Meeting Association

Hyatt Regency Long Island,  
Hauppauge, N.Y.  
Contact host chairman  
Jim Brown by phone or email:  
(631) 331-5833 or  
loco542@optonline.net.



**Photos:** (top) Jim Brown, BLET  
(bottom) Long Island CVB

### San Luis Obispo, Calif.

AUGUST 21-27, 2011

#### 71st annual International Western Convention

Embassy Suites Hotel  
-San Luis Obispo  
Contact host chairman  
Mike Galvani by phone  
or email: (805) 927-2967 or  
SLOBLE664@wildblue.net.



**Photo:** San Luis Obispo County  
Visitors & Conference Bureau

### El Paso, Texas

SEPTEMBER 18-22, 2011

#### 76th annual Southwestern Convention Meeting

Camino Real Hotel  
Contact host chairman  
Larry Schneider by phone  
or email: (915) 581-1373 or  
lschneider7@earthlink.net.



**Photos:** El Paso CVB

# Remembering the fallen

Three BLET members killed in the line of duty in 2010

**T**he Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen lost three members to on-the-job accidents during 2010.

“It breaks the heart of everyone in the BLET family when tragedy strikes and we lose one of our own,” BLET National President Dennis Pierce said. “Brothers Andrew Monheim, Gregory Kastner and Darrell Amerson went to work just like any other day but never returned home.”

## ANDREW MONHEIM

Brother Andrew Monheim was killed in the line of duty on March 16, following the collision of two Union Railroad freight trains near Pittsburgh, Pa. Monheim, 54, was a member of BLET Division 700 located in Braddock, Pa. He is survived by his wife and 12 year-old-son. Brother Monheim, 54, was a member of the Brotherhood for 31 years, having joined on August 1, 1978. He worked for the Union Railroad for 35 years.

## GREGORY G. KASTNER

Brother Gregory G. Kastner, a veteran NJ Transit hostler, was killed at NJ Transit's Meadows Maintenance Complex in Kearny, N.J., on May 31. Tragically, Brother Kastner, 63, was just 20 days from retirement when the fatality occurred. According to his friend and BLET Brother Fred Mattison of Division 373, Brother Kastner chose not to retire as soon as he was eligible. Instead, the devoted father and husband decided to



**Members of the BLET Advisory Board** hold a memorial wreath during the 2010 EUMA in Pittsburgh, which honored all BLET members killed in the line of duty. **From left:** Vice President Mike Twombly; Vice President Willard Knight; National Secretary-Treasurer Bill Walpert; National President Dennis Pierce; First Vice President Lee Pruitt; Vice President Steve Speagle; Vice President Marcus Ruef; Vice President Gil Gore; and Vice President & National Legislative Representative John Tolman.

continue working a few extra years to provide for his family. He and his wife, Grace, were looking forward to retirement and had just purchased a retirement home in Florida. Brother Kastner was a member of BLET Division 272 in Dover, N.J., and he joined the Brotherhood on April 2, 2004.

## DARRELL AMERSON

Brother Darrell Amerson, a member of BLET Division 230, died following injuries sustained in an accident at the Norfolk Southern yard in Meridian, Miss., on July 2, 2010. Brother Amerson, 42, joined the BLET on June 1, 2008. Brother Amerson had worked

for Norfolk Southern for three and a half year. He is survived by his wife, Angela.

President Pierce extended deepest condolences to the families of the fallen members. He asked all BLET members to keep them in their thoughts and prayers during the holiday season. ☪

# National bargaining update

**President Pierce: 'We're gearing up for a fight this industry hasn't seen in decades'**

The nation's rail carriers announced record profits for the third quarter of 2010, but you'd never know about their financial success at the bargaining table.

That's because the carriers are trying to use the nation's economic woes to fill their already bulging pockets, BLET National President Dennis Pierce said.

- **CSX** announced third quarter earnings of \$414 million, a 48 percent increase over the same quarter of 2009.

- **Union Pacific** reported third quarter net income of \$778 million, compared to \$514 million in the 2009 third quarter.

- **Norfolk Southern** reported earnings of \$445 million, a 47 percent increase over the 2009 third quarter.

- **Kansas City Southern's** third quarter income rose 85 percent to \$52.8 million.

- **BNSF's** third quarter net income rose nearly 45 percent to \$706 million.


"Those profits come in large measure from the productivity of BLET members and our Brother and Sister railroad workers," President Pierce said. "They also are calculated after our wage and benefit costs have been paid."

Net profits for the Big Four totaled nearly \$5¼ billion in 2009, a figure that was surpassed in less than nine months this year. Profits for the two-year period are all but certain to top the \$13 billion mark.

"Let me say this loud enough for the railroads to hear, BLET WILL NOT ACCEPT A CONCESSIONARY AGREEMENT IN THIS BARGAINING ROUND! The membership of our great union has given enough, it's past time for us to receive wages and benefits commensurate

with the contribution we make to the Carrier's profits," President Pierce said.

Pierce said the main focus of the carriers' attack is Rail Labor's health and welfare benefits. He said they are not arguing that they can't afford to improve or maintain the current plan, but they are saying that what BLET members receive is out of line with the rest of the country. He said they are demanding large scale rollbacks in benefits with huge hikes in what members pay, including higher monthly premium contributions and higher co-pays.

"The BLET, as part of the Rail Labor Bargaining Coalition, is putting together an ironclad case to defend our wages, rules, and all of our benefits," he said. "We're gearing up for a fight this industry hasn't seen in decades." 

## » FOLLOWING UP

Taking a look back at some of our feature stories from the Fall 2010 Journal

**Brother Fred Gamst (Guest Columnist, Pages 8-9)**, drafted the following response to the highly positive email comments he received regarding his column in the Fall 2010 Journal:



Brothers and Sisters:

Many of today's union members forget and omit the beneficent, cooperative, sheltering purpose of the union movement and its unions. Instead, we sometimes find a selfish, shortsighted, What's in it for me, from those in the same generation.

Pioneering trade unionists in America (and elsewhere) suffered social discrimination, political persecution, and brutal violence. Examples are legion.

In Oakland during the labor actions of June-July 1894, while the Southern Pacific armed 300 deputies with lever action carbines that it empowered, the unintimidated wives and mothers of railroaders rolled bandages.

We readily forget the arduous genesis of the union movement. Working Americans should never forget what a supporter they have in their unions. Propaganda from conservative anti-labor circles brainwashes workers against unions and conjured union bosses. Just think of an individual employee non-collectively bargaining with a multibillion-dollar corporation.

**FREDERIC C. GAMST**  
BLET DIVISION 660

**Brother Bill Morris (Division 193) and Dave Honold (Division 914)**, whose work with the Louisiana Steam Train Association played a major part in the major



motion picture *Jonah Hex*, report that the movie is now available on DVD. Brother Morris says the studio filmed two versions of the engineer's fate for the film, using the one where Brother David Honold jumped from the cab (from the fireman's side but made to look like the engineer's side) and one where they shot him in the cab. He is hoping the alternate version of this scene will be among the DVD's special features.

**Brother Tom Galloway (Division 4)**, who devotes many hours of his free time to helping those less fortunate in Haiti, received words of

support and congratulations from many active and retired BLET members, including National President Dennis Pierce, who was in Toledo for a meeting of all BLET Divisions there in late October.

Brother Galloway and his fellow volunteers from Missions International of America (MIA) were on their way back to Haiti as this issue of the Journal headed to press. They were slated to depart on November 11 to conduct a medical and optical clinic, returning on November 19. MIA volunteers were also expected to install a solar powered pump into the well, which will pump 30,000 gallons of fresh water per day for the community. The water will be used in part to develop a drip irrigation farming system for the residents.

Those wishing to support Brother Galloway and MIA in these endeavors can make a donation online at: [www.missionsinternationalofamerica.com](http://www.missionsinternationalofamerica.com). 

# NMB levels the playing field

**B**LET National President Dennis R. Pierce praised the National Mediation Board (NMB) for changing how it conducts representation elections, saying the new procedure provides greater fairness to unorganized workers.

The Board changed its rules effective July 1, 2010, so that a simple majority of voters will determine the outcome of elections; whereas in the past, workers who did not participate in the election, or “nonvotes,” were counted as “no” votes.


Railroad and airline management opposed the rule change, and an airline trade organization challenged it in Federal court. On June 25, Judge Paul L. Friedman, a U.S. District Court judge for the District of Columbia, rejected the airline industry’s lawsuit and upheld the NMB’s proposed rule change.

President Pierce hailed the change as a major step in the right direction and believes it will make it easier for non-union workers to join the House of Labor.

The proposed rule change received

widespread support. According to published reports, the NMB received letters supporting the change from 39 Senators, 179 Democratic House Members and 13 Republican House Members.

Thus far, the rule has helped flight attendants and mechanical workers at various airlines obtain union representation. BLET First Vice President Lee Pruitt, who heads the BLET’s Shortline Organizing Department, said the new rule will also help the Brotherhood ramp-up its organizing initiatives in the new year.

**THE RULE READS AS FOLLOWS:** In conducting such investigation, the Board is authorized to take a secret ballot of the employees involved, or to utilize any other appropriate method of ascertaining the names of their duly designated and authorized representatives in such manner as shall insure the choice of representatives by the employees without interference, influence, or coercion exercised by the carrier. Except in unusual or extraordinary circumstances, in a secret ballot the Board shall determine the choice of representative based on the majority of valid ballots cast. 

## BLET calls for cab security improvements

**B**LET National President Dennis Pierce is calling upon the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) to act to improve the safety and security of locomotive cabs to help protect operating crews.

While in-cab security has been on the BLET’s agenda for quite some time, the recent call comes after the tragic murder of CSX Conductor Fred Gibbs, who was shot to death in the cab of his train’s lead locomotive near New Orleans on June 20. The engineer, a BLET member, was wounded during the apparent robbery attempt. An intruder invaded the cab of the controlling locomotive of their train, which was being held in a siding.

“I have always believed that we will never have secure rails until we have a secure cab,” President Pierce said. “In the wake of 9/11, the airlines beefed up their cockpit doors to provide a secure workplace and environment for pilots and the traveling public. It’s way past time for locking locomotive cab doors on all locomotives.”

In a September 22 letter to FRA Administrator Joseph Szabo, President Pierce



**FRA Administrator Joe Szabo** talks rail security at the BLET Second National Convention in Reno, Nevada, on October 4, 2010.

highlighted data from the two Teamsters Rail Conference High Alert surveys, showing that most BLET members are unable to secure their cabs from attack, and that little has changed over the past five years.

The High Alert 2 report revealed that 51 percent of train crews surveyed had no way to lock or secure the cab of


their locomotive against unauthorized access while occupied. Additionally, 73 percent had no way to lock the cab while it was unoccupied.

During his speech to BLET delegates



at the Second National Convention in Reno on October 4, Administrator Szabo commended BLET members for participating in the two “High Alert” rail security reports. He acknowledged the letter BLET President Pierce calling for improved locomotive cab security.

He said the FRA has scheduled meetings with the BLET to discuss requirements regarding locking cab doors, window glazing standards, and cab climate control regulations, which would allow cab windows to remain closed and secured.

“I commit to an ongoing, strong working relationship with rail labor to improve cab security,” said Administrator Szabo, who is a fifth generation railroader. “You have a pledge from somebody who has walked in your shoes.” 



## Guest Columnist

BY JOSEPH BOARDMAN  
AMTRAK PRESIDENT AND CEO

# Amtrak looks to the future of passenger rail



### About the Author:

Joseph H. Boardman was appointed Amtrak President and Chief Executive Officer in November 2008. Prior to his appointment, Mr. Boardman was a member of the Amtrak board of directors, had served as the U.S. Federal Railroad Administrator and is a former Commissioner of the New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT).

Moving past an economy based on cheap oil is a very great challenge, perhaps the greatest of our time, and if there is one thing that I find at all reassuring, it is the knowledge that America will look to the men and women of the railroad industry for a solution.

See pages 29-31 for more on high speed rail.

Amtrak is about to celebrate its 40th anniversary in May 2011. We're going to spend the anniversary year celebrating where we've been and talk about where we're going largely because of the front-line people in engine service and elsewhere who are aboard the trains every day. The train doesn't move safely over the road without an engineer and we want to honor those in train and engine service during the celebration.

While we are all looking at the rail industry and studying the prospects for generational transition, I think we're lucky that there are still people around who remember the "public bargain" — which is how the Interstate Commerce Commission characterized it-between the railroads and the Federal Government that was embodied in the Rail Passenger Service Act (RPSA).

The railroads were allowed to drop intercity passenger trains that threatened to bankrupt the industry; the public was able to retain those services, and the responsibility for paying for these public services was likewise transferred to the public — largely the Federal treasury.

The RPSA envisioned faster and high speed passenger service — but because the money was never there to pay for it, the question of how this would work on shared infrastructure was largely moot —



The Obama Administration announced \$10.5 billion in high-speed rail investments in 2010

save in the Northeast, where Amtrak and other passenger providers came to own the infrastructure.

But now there is a lot of money on the table to pay for improvements. The U.S. DOT has announced \$10.5 billion in high speed and intercity passenger rail grant funding this year. Some of these federal grants given to states will improve current Amtrak services, while others will introduce new conventional or high-speed routes. In all cases, Amtrak stands ready to offer our expertise to our state partners to help implement these important projects to improve our national intercity passenger rail network.

And with the availability of funding, the "great debate" has begun. This is partly a discussion about the practical issues that surround implementation, but it is part of a greater dialogue about the nature of our obligations, both private and public.

There are a lot of reasons why we need faster passenger trains. The most obvious of them stem from the fact that the country's population is simultaneously growing, aging, and concentrating in urban areas, which lack the infrastructure to accommodate these changes, resulting in highway and airport congestion.

We need to begin looking for a modern solution, one that doesn't just add another lane or another runway. In many cases it's impossible to take more land, and it's not affordable — after all, we just saw a pair of back-to-back highway trust fund bailouts that cost the general fund almost as much as forty years of Amtrak.

Rail is a solution to these problems. The federal government classifies domestic long distance travel as "750 miles or more." That category goes all the way up to 2,000-plus miles — but about 80% of those trips are journeys of less than 500 miles, and the vast





Amtrak's Acela hums along the Northcoast Corridor

majority of those are by auto. At those distances, we can make the rail system into an attractive, competitive alternative, and we've done it in the Northeast.

There's another important reason why we need improved passenger service, one that I have been thinking about for a long time — and that's the oil issue.

As developing countries take off, their energy needs will grow, and the Energy Department forecasts an 84% growth in the energy needs of developing countries by 2035.

If 2008 taught us anything, it's that the economic consequences of even small price changes are traumatic for the consumer. We had to live with just a month of \$4/gallon gas prices in 2008 — and what a wailing and gnashing of teeth there was!

Now, I don't think oil will vanish — but we need to be

working now to put the solutions in place that we'll need in an oil-scarce future. We are always going to need oil — for instance, for national defense. But electrified passenger rail can offer the nation a travel choice that's potentially oil-independent, but that reduces the demand for oil used in other modes of travel.

The reasons are obvious — rail is naturally efficient, and we can realize tremendous economies of scale. We can electrify, and if we invest in the right infrastructure investments and technological solutions, we can operate without fossil fuels and without emissions; nuclear and hydroelectric power ought to be options.

The railroad industry has a role to play and so does the government. I'm convinced we need a strong partnership that involves Amtrak — one that provides for the growth

needs of both freight and passenger traffic — because they're both going to grow; we've had too much ridership growth in recent years on Amtrak for that not to be the case.

The market is starting to acknowledge the changing nature of the public demand, and it has generated a corresponding need for rail service, including passenger rail service.

Our freight partners recognize aspects of this national need, and I'm pleased to see the successful partnerships they have established with the Federal and state governments to advance freight-related projects such as Norfolk Southern's Heartland Corridor.

They understand that Federal funding is sometimes a necessity for capital-intensive projects that convey long-term benefits.

There's a real opportunity to build something here that will be a long-term ben-


efit to the nation, and we all need to recognize not only that we have an obligation, but an interest.

The obligation of what have come to be called freight railroads is stated clearly in the law, and it is to host passenger trains on the existing lines — and the law does not distinguish by speed. The process of getting there will require negotiations, for each of us has specific interests that we must protect. The Nation, too, has an interest and that is ensuring the American people retain the mobility that helps to make them the most competitive workforce in the world in the decades to come.

The crisis is coming — and one after another, like mileposts on the railroad, we can see the events and changes that warn us of its approach: the decline in domestic oil production, the rise of demand in the developing world, our growing dependence on foreign suppliers.

None of these would be good by itself — together, they point toward a time not far in the future when our world will be a very different place.

We must be working now to prepare for that time. We must work together, and we must be conscious of the gravity of the situation, because it will not always be apparent.

Moving past an economy based on cheap oil is a very great challenge, perhaps the greatest of our time, and if there is one thing that I find at all reassuring, it is the knowledge that America will look to the men and women of the railroad industry for a solution. 

# BROTHERHOOD'S RELIEF & COMPENSATION FUND



## *Announces Lower Monthly Membership Dues*

Effective January 1, 2011

MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS PER DAY	OLD DUES RATE 1 Month	NEW DUES RATE 1 Month	NEW DUES RATE 6 MONTHS	NEW DUES RATE 12 MONTHS
\$ 80	\$36.00	\$30.40	\$182.40	\$364.80
\$100	\$45.00	\$38.00	\$228.00	\$456.00
\$120	\$54.00	\$45.60	\$273.60	\$547.20
\$150	\$67.50	\$57.00	\$342.00	\$684.00
\$180	\$81.00	\$68.40	\$410.40	\$820.80
\$200	\$90.00	\$76.00	\$456.00	\$912.00

We are committed to keeping your membership dues rate affordable with the *lowest monthly dues rate in the industry*. The Fund is healthy, strong and successful. You will share in our success. It is another reason why the BR&CF is the very best job income protection!

Are you interested in joining us? Talk to local BR&CF members or contact us toll free at **800 233-7080**, Monday through Friday, 8 A.M. to 4:15 P.M., Eastern time, or visit our web site at **[www.brcf.org](http://www.brcf.org)** for more information.



## Guest Columnist

BY JAMES P. HOFFA,  
TEAMSTERS GENERAL PRESIDENT

### Visit the Teamsters online

Member benefits & discounts  
Disaster relief assistance  
James R. Hoffa  
Scholarship Fund  
[www.teamster.org](http://www.teamster.org)



#### 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. Prior to becoming Administrative Assistant to Michigan Joint Council 43, Hoffa was a labor lawyer in Detroit for 25 years.

**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. Murphy has also been the Secretary-Treasurer of Local 122 in Boston since 1980.

## The BLET and the IBT – Stronger Together

**I**t was an honor for me to address the delegates at your convention in Reno. The spirit of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen shines through in a venue such as your convention. With the current economic climate affecting so many families and the corporations grasping for even more control, its important to come together so that we can prepare, debate and plan for the years ahead.

As I said in my address at the convention, you are the men and women who keep America together and moving. Along with your brothers



and sisters in the Teamsters Union, we are the foundation of America and we should never forget that.

When you merged with us in 2004, followed closely by the merger of the Brotherhood of

Maintenance of Way Employees, we truly became the largest transportation union in the U.S. We had a vision of a comprehensive transportation union, and due to your voting to merge with us, we can now claim to cover the highways, the skies and the rails. We are both stronger together.

Let's keep fighting for safer and more secure railways.

Fraternally,

**JAMES P. HOFFA**  
TEAMSTERS GENERAL  
PRESIDENT

## Safety and Security: The Priority on the Rails

**D**uring your convention in Reno I had the privilege of addressing your delegates. The main portion of my address focused on the impact that the High Alert reports has had on the public, the U.S. Transportation Department and the Federal Railroad Administration. Since the Rail Conference published High Alert 2 earlier this year we have met with representatives of the Department of Homeland Security, the Federal Railroad Administration and others. And, rail workers themselves have reported that due to the publication they have been made more aware of safety and security problems and what to do about them.



What the IBT has learned in the last six years is that the rail carriers have never been really as serious as they claimed about safety and security on their property. Every day locomotive engineers and trainmen move millions of tons of freight, hazardous materials and dangerous chemi-

cals across this land through dark territory, cities and near schools and the homes of millions of Americans. The carriers attitude seemed to be, this is a job, do it and keep quiet. Well this arrogance ended when the BLET joined the Teamsters. The Teamsters Rail Conference has ramped up the nation's attention to the flaws in the security measures of rail infrastructure. The carriers' now know that we can move issues.

Fraternally,

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

# A BLET “Miracle Train” for children in Northeast Ohio

In cooperation with Norfolk Southern, the Children’s Miracle Network and Bowling Green State University, members of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen organized and operated a special train between Cleveland and Toledo, Ohio, for more than 30 families with seriously ill or special needs children.

BLET Division 607 engineer C.R. “Bud” Ramkey credits a BLET Brother in Arizona for giving him the inspiration to organize the special train, which ran on October 16.

“I have wanted to do this for many years, and the story of Brother Ken Kyer’s activities in Arizona rekindled my desire,” Brother Ramkey said.

In December of 2008, the BLET National Division published a News Flash regarding the efforts of Brother K.C. “Ken” Kyer. Every year for more than 10 years now, Brother Kyer has organized and operated a special passenger train ride for seriously ill and/or needy children in the Phoenix area. He approached BNSF management with the idea in 2000 when his five-year-old son Scott was diagnosed with the first of two brain tumors.

BNSF management embraced the idea, which is now a cooperative effort with BNSF and the Make A Wish Foundation.

“It is gratifying to know that what we have been doing on BNSF has gotten the attention of the Norfolk Southern to the point that they, too, see the value in this type of community service that we do with our train here in Phoenix,” Brother Kyer said.

Brother Ramkey said the October 16 train in Cleveland was several years in the making.

“I had the help of the collective union Brothers and Sisters from the Cleveland



**Top:** Vintage NS rail cars in Cleveland. **Middle, from left:** Passengers boarding the Miracle Train; Members of the Miracle Band with BGSU mascot Freddie Falcon; and two children enjoying their special day. **Bottom right:** Event organizer Bud Ramkey, BLET Division 607.




terminal to make it a success,” he said. “It was all about the kids, and the employees of the NS Cleveland terminal making it happen.”

Entertainment on board included a magician, college mascot, and members of three local bands that teamed up to become the Miracle Band (including photographer Brent Lane). The train consisted of four vintage locomotives and seven historic passenger coaches manufactured between 1911 and the 1950s, and more than 200 people were on board.

“These kids and their families are facing huge challenges, so to give them a memorable day on the railroad in which

they were together in happy circumstances was deeply rewarding for us,” Ramkey said. “All of the organizations and volunteers that participated, especially the Children’s Miracle Network and Bowling Green State University, deserve a tremendous amount of credit for making this day extraordinary. Most importantly we need to thank the children and families who were with us. They are truly inspirational.”

Brother Ramkey thanked all those involved with the project, and said he and the Cleveland BLET members hope to make this a yearly event. 

**Vintage 1950s** diesel locomotive  
used to pull the Miracle Train

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# 2nd National Convention

OCTOBER 4-7, 2010 | RENO, NEVADA



MORE THAN 500 DELEGATES FROM ACROSS AMERICA GATHERED IN RENO TO HELP PLOT THE DIRECTION OF THE BLET FOR THE NEXT FOUR YEARS. CONVENTION COVERAGE: PAGES 14-27





# Second National Convention wrap-up

**M**ore than 500 delegates from throughout the United States convened for the BLET's Second National Convention in Reno, Nevada, from October 4-7, 2010.

The convention was a bylaws and nominating convention, and the delegates busied themselves by considering numerous proposed changes to the BLET Bylaws, while also nominating officers for National Division office. Several guest speakers also provided food for thought and inspirational messages for the delegates.

National President Dennis Pierce chaired the Convention and stayed with the delegates on the convention floor until their deliberations were concluded.

President Pierce submitted many resolutions to reform the BLET's internal governance and to help the union get on the right track. These resolutions were readily adopted by a majority of the delegates. These changes to the bylaws provide stronger rules for financial accountability within the Brotherhood.

Per BLET and IBT Bylaws, the office of General President James P. Hoffa must review the proposed changes to the Bylaws to make sure they conform with the Teamster constitution before they can go into effect.

President Hoffa was the keynote speaker on October 4, followed by FRA



**Executive Committee:** First Vice President Lee Pruitt, National President Dennis Pierce, and National Secretary-Treasurer Bill Walpert.

Administrator Joe Szabo. John Murphy, Director of the Teamsters Rail Conference and International Vice President, Cecil Roberts, President of the United Mine Workers of America, and Dan

Shewchuck, National President of Teamsters Canada Rail Conference, spoke on October 5.

The BLET is planning its Third National Convention for Las Vegas in 2014. ☪

## CONVENTION VIDEO HIGHLIGHTS

Due to overwhelming requests from delegates, five videos from the Second National Convention in Reno are available on YouTube. [www.youtube.com/user/BLETUnion](http://www.youtube.com/user/BLETUnion)



**JAMES P. HOFFA**  
TEAMSTERS GENERAL PRESIDENT



**DENNIS R. PIERCE**  
BLET NATIONAL PRESIDENT



**WILLIAM C. WALPERT**  
BLET NATIONAL SECRETARY-TREASURER



**JOHN MURPHY**  
TEAMSTERS EASTERN REGION VICE PRESIDENT



**CECIL ROBERTS**  
PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED MINE WORKERS OF AMERICA



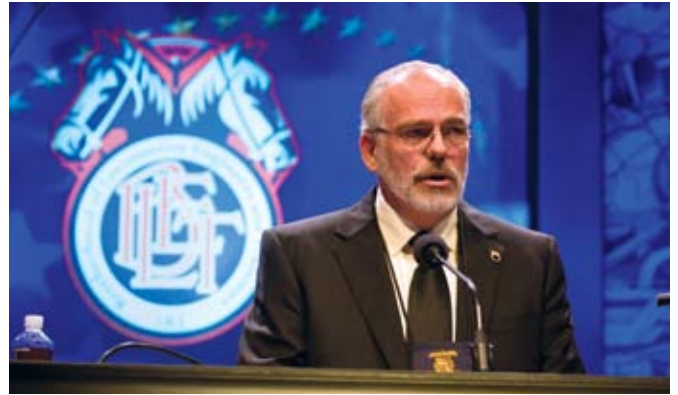


## Five national officers elected to four-year terms

**F**ive incumbent BLET National Vice Presidents were reelected by acclamation during the Second National Convention in Reno.

Although the convention was a nominating and bylaws convention, these five Brothers ran unopposed and each was reelected to serve another four-year term of office.

**They are:** LEE PRUITT, First Vice President and Alternate President; JOHN TOLMAN, Vice President & National Legislative Representative; MIKE TWOMBLY, Vice President; WILLARD KNIGHT, Vice President; and GIL GORE, Vice President. 🗳️



**LEE PRUITT, First Vice President and Alternate National President**  
“When you go home, it’s going to be very important that you energize your members to become actively involved in their union. And the one way that they can show — without exception — that they have an active interest in their union and that they are committed to the union is to cast their vote.”



**JOHN TOLMAN, Vice President & NLR**  
“This is your union; you are the leaders,” Tolman said. He ended his acceptance speech with a quote from the late Senator Ted Kennedy, a long time colleague and dear friend: “The work goes on, the cause endures, the hope still lives, and the dreams will never die.”



**MIKE TWOMBLY, Vice President No. 5**  
“Much work needs to be done and much work remains. I’m ready to continue working hard. I won’t let up, and I’m going to work with our members and our General Chairmen to get good contracts wherever we can, whenever we can; and we’ll do what it takes to get them done.”



**WILLARD KNIGHT, Vice President No. 6**  
“I proudly accept the nomination. You just don’t know how humble I am to stand before you here today. And it’s been great; I enjoyed it. But I’m proud to stand here, and I will do my best to serve 100 percent to the best of my ability.”



**GIL GORE, Vice President No. 7**  
“I accept this nomination not in honor of anything that I have ever accomplished by myself, but in honor of everything that you and the membership of the BLET have inspired me to do. You keep inspiring and I promise I’m going to keep working.”



# DAY 1 SPEAKERS

October 4, 2010



**JEFFREY VALENTINE, National Guide, Division 158**

Brother Valentine welcomed delegates to Reno as a member of host Division 158, and assisted guest speakers throughout the convention.



**BILL MULLINS, Chaplain, Division 182**

Brother Mullins gave the opening and closing invocation each day throughout the convention, and has already been invited to the 2014 convention.



**JAMES P. HOFFA, Teamsters General President**

“I look out on you and see the face of the Teamsters. I see the face of the BLET. But, most importantly, I see the face of America. You are America.”



**JOSEPH C. SZABO, Administrator, Federal Railroad Administration**

“High-speed rail operators are deemed rail carriers. That’s significant, because they fall under Railroad Retirement and the Railway Labor Act.”



**CHUCK ANDERSON, Convention Coordinator National Division**

Brother Anderson is Director of Communications for the National Division and has organized conventions since 1986.



**BECKY SCHNEIDER, National President BLET Auxiliary**

“In the last 15 years or so, we have changed the way the Auxiliary does business. We’ve come a long way, baby, and our future is looking brighter than ever.”



**DENNIS R. PIERCE, National President**

“As far as I’m concerned, the words ‘can’t afford’ have no place in the carriers’ vocabulary.”



**WILLIAM C. WALPERT, National Secretary-Treasurer**

“The BLET may be the oldest existing labor union in the movement, but we have also been one of the most progressive in educating our members.”



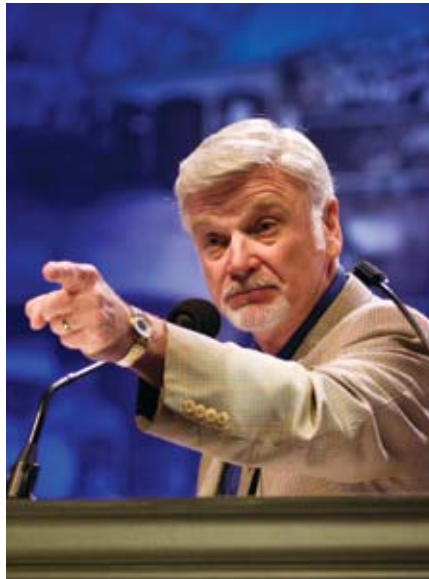
## DAY 2 SPEAKERS

October 5, 2010



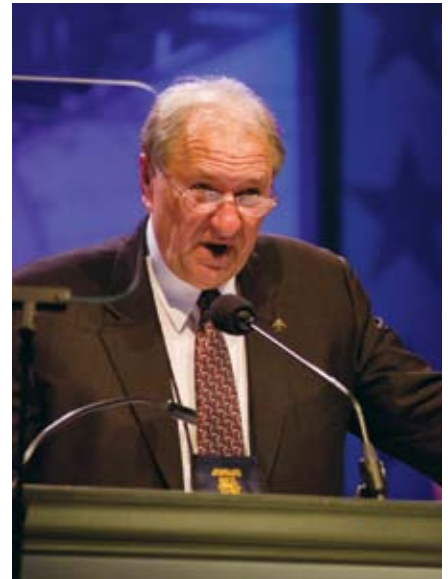
**JOHN MURPHY,**  
Teamsters Vice President  
& Rail Conference Director

“This spring the Teamsters Rail Conference published “High Alert 2,” and the rail companies are taking the report very seriously.”



**CECIL E. ROBERTS,**  
President  
United Mine Workers of America

“There’s nothing wrong with marching. I submit to you that Gandhi marched. Jesus marched. Moses marched. Moses never sent Pharaoh an e-mail.”



**DAN SHEWCHUK,**  
National President  
Teamsters Canada Rail Conference

“Over the past four years, we have increased our membership from approximately 4,500 to 10,000. We are now the largest rail union in Canada.”

## DAY 3 SPEAKERS

October 6, 2010



**ANTONIO CHRISTIAN,**  
Director  
IBT Human Rights Commission

“By helping those in need, we can also help ourselves. That’s what the HRC is all about.”



**JAMES C. BOEHNER,**  
Assistant to the Labor Member  
Railroad Retirement Board

“You should take great pride in the fact that Railroad Retirement is probably one of the most secure retirement systems that the country has ever seen or will ever see.”



**MICHAEL J. COLLINS,**  
Assistant to the Labor Member  
Railroad Retirement Board

“The average employee who retires under Railroad Retirement receives over \$3,200 a month. The average worker who retires under Social Security receives about \$1,600 a month.”



# Merle W. Geiger Jr.



Geiger followed in the footsteps of his great grandfather, who hired out on the SP&S Railroad in 1921.

**M**erle W. Geiger Jr. is the most senior of the three BLET Vice Presidents who are retiring at the end of 2010.

His career spans more than 44 years in the industry, including 39 years as a member of the BLE and BLET, with 27 of those years serving as a union officer.

Brother Geiger said he has seen many changes over his 44 years — crew size, work rules, hours of service and new technology. But two things haven't changed — the dangerous work environment and the hostility of railroad management.

“Our jobs are still very, very dangerous. We have lost 70 members in the line of duty since May of 1989. That's just members of our organiza-

tion, not counting those who work in other crafts.

“Another thing that has not changed is the carriers' constant poor-mouthing. In the second quarter of 2010, BNSF and UP each posted revenues in excess of \$4 billion. Yet when sitting across the table from these carriers, one would think by their statements and actions that they're on the verge of bankruptcy.”

Brother Geiger remains upbeat about the future of the BLET.

“Our organization is blessed with a fantastic group of hard-working, dedicated Local and National officers and staffs. You are the heart and soul of this organization. Without you and your considerable efforts, our organization would not be what it is today.”



**During his retirement speech, Brother Geiger said:** “I'd like to thank my lovely wife of 43 years, Linda, for her love, support and sacrifice throughout the years. Without it, my union career would have been a short one.”

## MERLE GEIGER BLET BIO

**Years on Advisory Board:** September 2001-December 2010 **Railroad:** Spokane, Portland & Seattle (now part of BNSF) **Hired out:** 1966 **Belongs to:** BLET Division 758 (Vancouver, Wash.) **Joined BLET:** February 1, 1970 **Quote:** “I've always been proud to be a locomotive engineer. I'm extremely proud to be a National Vice President of the BLET. I'm proud to be a Teamster. But most of all, it has been my honor and blessing to have been given the opportunity to represent locomotive engineers and trainmen for the last 27 years in my railroad career.”



# Steve Speagle

**L**ike several other BLET Vice Presidents who were on the Advisory Board during the past decade, Steve Speagle was involved in the BLE's merger with the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, which became effective January 1, 2004.

Not many members know that initial merger documents called for the word "Brotherhood" to be dropped from the name of the merged organization. Originally, the organization we know today as the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen, or BLET, would have been known as the Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen Department, or LETD.

Brother Speagle, a proud member of the BLE and BLET for more than 35 years now, was one of the driving forces to keep "Brotherhood" a part of the merged organization's name. So members now and in the future can thank Brother Speagle, in part, for saving the Brotherhood name.

During his retirement speech to BLET delegates on October 6 in Reno, Brother Speagle said: "I hope each and every one of you are proud to be a union member, and even more proud to be a BLET member.

"I went into this work because I felt that the engineers that I worked with at the local level needed a voice. And if not me, who? I felt this was a calling and that calling has never left me, for I believe this is some of the most important work I could be doing." 🗣️



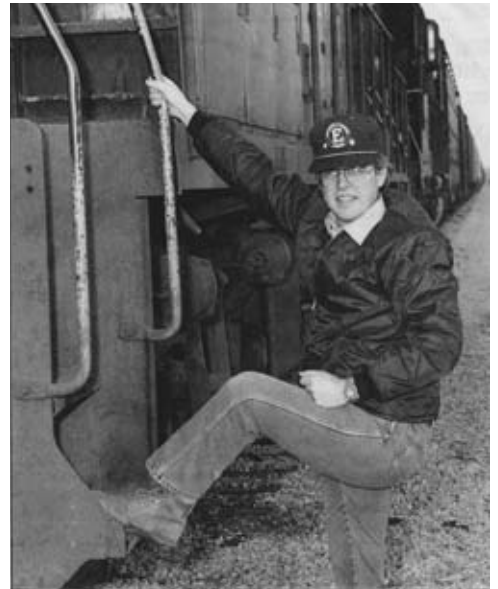
Brother Speagle has been a proud BLET member for nearly 37 years.



2010: Steve and Sue Speagle in Reno, Nevada



1990: Steve and Sue in Norfolk, Va.



1986: Taking a Norfolk Southern train from Decatur, Ill., to St. Louis, Mo.

## STEVE SPEAGLE BLET BIO

**Years on Advisory Board:** September 2001-December 2010 **Railroad:** Norfolk & Western (now part of Norfolk Southern) **Hired out:** 1964 **Belongs to:** BLET Division 155 (Decatur, Ill.) **Joined BLET:** January 1, 1974 **Quote:** "No nation has ever been home to a middle-class majority without a sizeable labor movement. So, when you hear anyone bad-mouthing unions, you just stand tall and be proud of the accomplishments of you and your union Brothers and Sisters."

# Don Moates

Vice President Don Moates has faced many challenges throughout his 39 years of service to the BLET, but none so dangerous as the specter of apathy.

“One of the most destructive elements affecting us as unions today cannot be touched or even held, but it certainly can be felt and it is severely contagious. It is apathy,” he said.

Moates challenged the delegates and officers in attendance at the Second National Convention in Reno to do everything they can to fight against membership apathy.

“I firmly believe that apathy can be overcome by enthusiasm and motivation from our leaders and from each member. I challenge each of you to motivate your members to become involved in everyday union activities.

“Talk to them, give them hope for the future. Let them know they have strong leaders that are dedicated and motivated who will represent them and get the job done. Let them know they must help us in order for us to help them.

“As union leaders, we need to carry these words of encouragement back to our members who could not be with us this week and share in a positive way. It is the positive attitude that’s going to get us there, Brothers and Sisters, not the negative.”



Brother Moates issued a challenge to stamp out apathy.



2010: Lee Ann and Don Moates



1987: Don and Lee Ann



1998: Teaching a group of school children about railroad safety in Etowah, Tenn.

## DON MOATES BLET BIO

**Time on Advisory Board:** July 2010-December 2010 **Railroad:** Louisville & Nashville (now part of CSX) **Hired out:** February 1971

**Belongs to:** BLET Division 782 (Etowah, Tenn.) **Joined BLET:** December 1, 1971 **Quote:** “As union leaders, we work to minimize discord and maximize union beliefs and principles among our fellow men and women. We labor to work and live together as much as possible in peace. We never lack for the opportunity to excel.”



# Alternates stand ready to serve

**T**en alternate National Division officers were elected by acclamation during the Second National Convention in Reno.

These Brothers will serve in Alternate roles over the next four years, and will be called upon to serve the Brotherhood in expanded roles if the need

should arise.

“My hat is off to these Brothers who are willing to step up and serve our proud union,” BLET National President Dennis Pierce said. “They’ve all committed to me and to you that they are ready to serve, if called, to assist the membership in any way.”



**JIM NELSON**  
Alt. National Secretary-Treasurer



**RICK GIBBONS**  
Alt. Vice President No. 1



**TONY SMITH**  
Alt. Vice President No. 2



**JIM LOUIS**  
Alt. Vice President No. 3



**MATT WILSON**  
Alt. Vice President No. 4



**BILL LYONS**  
Alt. Vice President No. 5



**MIKE TANNER**  
Alt. Vice President No. 6



**KEN KROEGER**  
Alt. Vice President No. 7



**RICH DIXON**  
Alt. Vice President No. 8



**MATT THORNTON**  
Alt. Vice President No. 9



# Generosity

**M**ore than 500 delegates convened in Reno and carried on Brotherhood traditions dating back more than 147 years.


When the delegates voted on changes to the bylaws, they were changing portions of a document that was originally written by the Brotherhood's founders in 1863. The Reno delegates are now a part of the proud 147-year history of the BLET.

Additionally, the Reno delegates carried on another tradition — making charitable contributions to those in need.

In 1996, delegates declined to sit for a group photo, opting to march in solidarity with striking Detroit newspaper workers instead. The delegates then donated \$20,000 to the newspaper workers' strike fund.

In 2001, delegates gave \$6,300 to the United Mine Workers of America for the families of miners killed in an explosion just days before the start of the BLE convention in Miami. The Miami delegates donated an additional \$8,700 to the families of victims of the September 11 attacks.

In 2006, delegates gave more than \$30,000 to the family of BLET member Eddie Sanchez. The delegate from Division 134 (Winslow, Ariz.) was killed in an automobile accident while driving to the convention in Las Vegas.

The 2010 delegates carried on this tradition of generosity by donating more than \$14,000 to BLET members and their families in crisis. 







# 2010 delegates to be remembered for generosity

The delegates attending the Second National Convention in Reno will long be remembered for their generosity. The good BLET Brothers and Sisters dug deep into their pockets and graciously donated more than \$8,000 to help fellow members in need.

"I'm moved by the fact that every time I've been to one of these National or International Conventions, the generosity that the members show on the floor of this convention is legendary," BLET National President Dennis Pierce said.

One of the most memorable events during the convention was when delegates donated \$4,200 to Brother Gary Perrien.

Brother Perrien, 1st Vice Chairman on the Union Pacific-Southern Region General Committee of Adjustment, was assigned to the Arrangements Committee at the convention in Reno. However, he fell ill during the performance of his duties and was rushed to a local hospital for treatment. The initial diagnosis is that Brother Perrien suffered from blood clots in his lungs, which made it difficult for him to breath.

The delegates in attendance passed the hat to collect \$4,200 in donations to help Brother Perrien and his family defray expenses related to his stay in the hospital.

From his hospital bed, Brother Perrien sent a video taped message back to the delegates. With his own unique brand of humor and wit, he expressed deepest gratitude for their generosity. Brother Perrien said the costs to treat his condition were exorbitant, but thanked the Brotherhood for negotiating a quality health insurance plan, which kept his out of pocket expenses to a minimum.

He then humbly asked the delegates for their permission to donate the check back to the National Division to establish a benevolent fund to help BLET



Brother Perrien returned to the convention floor just days after being rushed to the emergency room. He is wearing a red vest signed by all members of the BLET Arrangements Committee as he donates a \$4,200 check back to the BLET.



Delegate making a donation to help BLET families in need.



Brother Perrien and his wife Pat

members less fortunate than himself.

"Let your generosity to me spread out and help others," he said.


BLET General Chairman Pat Williams (BNSF-ATSF), who presented the check at the hospital, said Brother Perrien's gesture was the finest example of Brotherhood he has ever witnessed.

Brother Perrien credited the thoughts and prayers of the BLET delegates for helping him get back on his feet. His condition improved so much over a few days that he was able to return to the convention floor on October 7.

In an emotional presentation, he received a standing ovation from the assembled delegates as he returned the

check to National President Pierce.

"Brother Perrien's selfless act and the generosity of our 2010 delegates will go a long way toward helping our BLET families in need," President Pierce said. "This is the Brotherhood at its finest. It's what the Brotherhood is all about."

The \$4,200 donated back by Brother Perrien was combined with donations from other Brothers and Sisters to total more than \$8,100 toward the Gary Perrien Fund. The goal is to distribute all proceeds by year's end to help the BLET Brothers and Sisters whose misfortunes were brought before delegates on the convention floor. 



**2nd National Convention**  
**BLET COUPLES AND FAMILIES**

FOR MORE PHOTOS FROM RENO, VISIT: [WWW.FLICKR.COM/PHOTOS/BLETUNION](http://WWW.FLICKR.COM/PHOTOS/BLETUNION)



**D'Ann and Ben Martin**



**Bobby and T.J. Braden**



**Chuck and Jo Anne Anderson**



**Amanda and D.B. Sattig**



**P.C. and Colleen White**



**Debbie and Jim Keele**



**Pat and Jack Murphy**



**Gil and Denise Gore**



**Jason and Alexis Wise with son Atticus**



**Teresa and Jerry Bullard**



**Rich and Leslie Dixon**



**Sam and F.E. "Bucko" Schulze**



# BLET members boost PAC support in Reno

The BLET National Legislative Office enjoyed a busy but successful week in Reno, signing up almost 100 contributors to the BLET PAC fund.

The number of contributors climbs to 135 in the weeks following the conclusion of the Reno convention.

“The PAC money is used to promote candidates and to elect candidates who are our friends,” BLET Vice President and National Legislative Representative John Tolman told the delegates. “This body has been absolutely unbelievably generous.”

During his speech to the delegates,

Vice President Tolman gave them an idea of what the BLET and the rest of Rail Labor is up against in Washington, D.C.

“In 2008 the carriers spent \$28 million lobbying for their issues on Capitol Hill,” he said. “And they also spent over \$7 million in PAC money, the carriers did. That’s what we’re competing against.”

Additionally, several Brothers were awarded BLET-PAC watches for donating \$50 per month. The following is a list of those who are now giving \$50 per month (includes new PAC contributors and existing contributors who upped their giving to the \$50 level):

COLE DAVIS, Div. 86; DAVID LAV-  
ERY, Div. 216; DON HELANDER, Div.  
499; ROBERT LAW, Div. 491; KIMBLE  
JACKSON, Div. 120; LYNETTE ABELL,  
Div. 404; K.J. CUMMINS, Div. 683;  
RICK GIBBONS, Div. 502; JOHN  
EUTSLER, Div. 158; RICHARD REYES,  
Div. 298; RONNIE RHODES, Div. 915;  
ROBERT LAW, Div. 491; RONALD  
COUCH, Div. 831; TOMMY JOHNSON,  
Div. 871; DAVID COMPSTON, Div. 698;  
RUSSELL PICKETT, Div. 599; PAUL  
PIEKARSKI, Div. 683; D.B. SATTIG  
JR., Div. 457; KEITH STAUBER, Div.  
163; RICHARD HART, Div. 213; and  
HAYDEN PARSONS, Div. 194. 🕒



BLET Vice President and National Legislative Representative John Tolman, right, thanks four BLET members for increasing their monthly donations to the BLET PAC fund. These Brothers are receiving BLET PAC watches for giving \$50 per month. Clockwise, from top left: John Eutsler, Div. 158; Rick Gibbons, Div. 502; D.B. Sattig Jr., Div. 457; and Kimble Jackson, Div. 120.

# Fighting for FMLA improvements

**P**rior to the passage of the Family and Medical Leave Act in 1993, leave for a family or medical reason was left to the discretion of individual employers. Employees making a request for leave could be denied for any reason, and employees could be fired for taking family and medical leave. A portion of railroad operating employees are still being denied their rights under the FMLA, and have been since its passage, due to a gap in the legislation, causing a significant burden on them and their families when the medical circumstances that fit the criteria set forth in the law arise.

As currently written, FMLA does not address the unique working conditions of railroad operating employees, who through no fault of their own may not always meet the minimum of 1,250 hours per year worked criteria set forth in the legislation because hours of service laws limit the number of hours a railroad operating employee may work per day, per week and per month. Many of these workers, the majority of whom work on call 24/7, spend compensated and non-compensated time away from their home terminals, and deadheading between terminals and to and from trains, are considered to be working full-time by the railroad, and yet fail to meet the qualification for hours worked under the law because while their pay check indicates they have worked enough hours, it is only hours that are actually spent at work that count.

“Workers need FMLA when they are at their most vulnerable,” BLET National President Dennis Pierce said. “We have heard from members over and over again who have been denied leave, and the stories they tell are saddening.”

The BLET is working to address this problem through legislation. H.R. 5944, Railroad Hours of Service Employees Technical Corrections Act, was intro-

## FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE ACT (FMLA)

A covered employer must grant an eligible employee up to a total of 12 work weeks of unpaid leave during any 12-month period for one or more of the following reasons:

FOR THE BIRTH AND CARE OF A NEWBORN CHILD OF THE EMPLOYEE;

FOR PLACEMENT WITH THE EMPLOYEE OF A SON OR DAUGHTER FOR ADOPTION OR FOSTER CARE;

TO CARE FOR A SPOUSE, SON, DAUGHTER, OR PARENT WITH A SERIOUS HEALTH CONDITION;

TO TAKE MEDICAL LEAVE WHEN THE EMPLOYEE IS UNABLE TO WORK BECAUSE OF A SERIOUS HEALTH CONDITION; OR

FOR QUALIFYING EXIGENCIES ARISING OUT OF THE FACT THAT THE EMPLOYEE'S SPOUSE, SON, DAUGHTER, OR PARENT IS ON ACTIVE DUTY OR CALL TO ACTIVE DUTY STATUS AS A MEMBER OF THE NATIONAL GUARD OR RESERVES IN SUPPORT OF A CONTINGENCY OPERATION.



duced July 29 by Representatives Tim Bishop (D-NY), Bob Filner (D-CA), Mark Critz (D-PA) and Steven LaTourette (R-OH).

The legislation would amend the iniquity felt by railroad operating employees by providing that a railroad worker who is subject to Title 49, Chapter 211 qualifies for FMLA leave if (1) the employee has worked or been paid for not less than 60 percent of the applicable total wage guarantee, or the equivalent, for the previous 12-month period, and (2) the employee has worked or been paid for not less than 504 hours (not

counting personal commute time or time spent on vacation leave or medical or sick leave) during the previous 12-month period.

“This is truly an issue of compassion for the men and women this problem impacts,” BLET Vice President & National Legislative Representative John Tolman said. “Fixing the problem will cost the railroads nothing, cost the country nothing, and mean everything to the people who need it.”

The BLET is hopeful that the legislation will be passed, if not in this Congress then in the next. 🇺🇸



# *BLET addresses members' concerns in Rail Safety Improvement Act*

Also keeping an eye on rail safety, high speed rail issues

**T**wo current issues of interest to BLET members demonstrate the intersection of the legislative and regulatory processes — rail safety/Hours of Service and high speed rail. Each of these issues began in the legislative process and are now in the regulatory process. All or part of each may continue to be dealt with in the legislative arena, however, as they move forward.

## **Rail Safety Improvement Act**

From January 2007 until the passage of the Rail Safety Improvement Act of 2008, BLET Vice Presidents, General Chairmen, and State Legislative Board Chairmen and many rank-and-file BLET members held well over 200 meetings with members of the House and Senate and their staffs.

The issues they addressed in these meetings were essential to the safety and well-being of BLET members — including fatigue and its impact on safety and personal lives. The BLET worked actively against many of the provisions of the legislation, including the 276-hour monthly cap on Hours of Service, which would not be in the best interests of our members. The BLET was successful in preventing some of Congress's more restrictive ideas from becoming part of the legislation but knew what would truly determine the law's impact on our members would be how it was implemented, and this is where the legislative and regulatory processes intersect.

With the passage of the legislation, sections of the RSIA took the first steps of implementation in the Rail Safety Advisory Committee (RSAC) process. The first of the provisions to be taken up by the RSAC was the Hours of Service Recordkeeping, with the formation



of the working group.

The Hours of Service Recordkeeping working group addressed several issues, including electronic recordkeeping where we participated in the debate over the interpretations FRA eventually published. After the group came to consensus, the FRA published a notice of proposed rulemaking partly based on the input from BLET. FRA included the interpretive guidance with the NPRM. FRA requested comments in two areas. The first area was the interim statement of agency policy and the second was the continuous look-back provisions. The BLET commented on both and was joined by the United Transportation Union. Some of our joint suggestions were accepted by the FRA regarding the

statement of agency policy, but FRA has not responded to our comments regarding continuous look-back.

After the Hours of Service Recordkeeping working group finished its work, the Passenger Hours of Service working group convened. The Section 21102 of the law removed passenger and commuter rail service from the hours of service regime planned for freight rail, and gave the Secretary of Transportation, and by extension the FRA, three years to establish alternative hours of service for commuter and passenger rail.

The working group used medical and scientific research to develop regulations for commuter and passenger rail, which they have put before the full RSAC. An employee survey is still being analyzed

## THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT HAS DESIGNATED 11 HIGH SPEED RAIL CORRIDORS:



- NORTHEAST CORRIDOR (BOSTON TO WASHINGTON, DC)
- CALIFORNIA CORRIDOR (BAY AREA-LA-SAN DIEGO)
- EMPIRE CORRIDOR (NYC-BUFFALO)
- PACIFIC NORTHWEST CORRIDOR (VANCOUVER, BC-EUGENE, OR);
- SOUTH CENTRAL CORRIDOR (SAN ANTONIO-AUSTIN-DALLAS-LITTLE ROCK-OKLAHOMA CITY-TULSA)
- GULF COAST CORRIDOR (HOUSTON-NEW ORLEANS-MOBILE-MERIDIAN-BIRMINGHAM)
- CHICAGO HUB NETWORK (CHICAGO-TWIN CITIES-ST. LOUIS-KANSAS CITY-DETROIT-CLEVELAND-COLUMBUS-CINCINNATI-LOUISVILLE-INDIANAPOLIS)
- FLORIDA CORRIDOR (ORLANDO-TAMPA-MIAMI)
- KEYSTONE CORRIDOR (PHILADELPHIA-HARRISBURG-PITTSBURGH)
- NORTHERN NEW ENGLAND CORRIDOR (PORTLAND-BOSTON-MONTREAL)
- SOUTHEAST CORRIDOR (WASHINGTON-RICHMOND-RALEIGH-CHARLOTTE-ATLANTA-COLUMBIA-MACON-SAVANNA-BIRMINGHAM-JACKSONVILLE)

and publication of those results is imminent. A notice of proposed rulemaking will be issued soon, and the FRA will request comments. After the FRA considers the comments made by interested parties, they will issue a final rule, which will be published in advance of the effective date, which will be no later than October 16, 2011.

Rail labor is currently exploring the possibility of additional legislative remedies to correct the abuses railroads have foisted on our members in retaliation for trying to improve our members quality of work life. The BLET has heard countless stories from its members about the ways the hours of service law has been abused by the railroads, such as manipulating start times and line-ups at the away from home terminals to reset the consecutive day clock denying our members the extended time at home.

We will pursue all available avenues to implement changes to the legislation that will, among other things, provide our members with a 10 hour call for all unassigned duty (extra list and pool assignments), establish HOS rules for all regular assigned jobs as they were handled in the passenger hours of service rule using medical and scientific research, require railroads to notify employees of the type of release they are being provided (full release or interim release) and reduce the undisturbed rest

at the away from the home terminal to eight hours.

In addition to seeking Congressional support for new legislation we have been in contact with the Government Accountability Office (GAO) who is looking into the implementation of these regulations, and has asked the BLET for its insights into the process. The GAO, an independent, non-partisan agency that serves as the watchdog for Congress, can take an objective look at the implementation of the law, make recommendations to Congress regarding changes that need to be made to it, and ask that the law be amended.

### High Speed Rail

Just as rail safety and the hours of service have long been a part of the legislative and the regulatory processes, the issue of high speed rail has been a part of both for decades now. Through the various pieces of legislation and the regulatory process which followed their enactment, the legislative and regulatory processes have combined to form the renaissance of passenger and high speed rail in this country.

Since the Federal Railroad Administration was founded in 1967, the safe implementation of high speed rail has been at the top of its wish list. The goal became more imminent during the 1980s and 1990s with the development

of high speed rail in the Northeast Corridor and when the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 was passed, designating additional high speed rail corridors for future development. The 11 corridors outlined in that legislation and subsequent pieces of legislation form the backbone of current high speed rail plans.

When President Obama, Vice President Biden and Secretary of Transportation Ray LaHood, held a press conference on April 16, 2009 to announce the administration's proposal for high speed rail development, the United States took the next steps towards the implementation of high speed rail. During the press conference, all three touted the benefits of high speed rail to our nation's economic future, and noted that the \$8 billion contained in the stimulus legislation was just a "down payment" on a high speed rail system for the U.S.

The President's proposal was authorized by several key pieces of legislation in addition to the stimulus that he characterized as good first steps towards the development of high speed rail, including:

- The FY 2008 Appropriation Act, which established a new State Grant Program.
- The Rail Safety Improvement Act of 2008 (RSIA).
- The Passenger Rail Investment and



Photo: Greg Godfrey



Improvement Act of 2008 (PRIIA).

- The FY 2009 Omnibus Appropriations bill.

The Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act was passed as part of the legislative package that included the Rail Safety Improvement Act. The passage of PRIIA on October 16, 2008 marked the most sweeping Congressional action on intercity passenger rail since the creation of Amtrak and the Northeast Corridor Improvement Project during the 1970s, according to the FRA. In addition to reauthorizing Amtrak, PRIIA built on a small pilot State Grant Program funded in Fiscal Year 2008 by establishing three new competitive grant programs for high-speed and intercity passenger rail capital improvements.

After the passage of PRIIA, the Obama Administration took another step when it expressed its support for passenger, commuter and high speed rail, and Congress noted the administration's priority and responded with record funding for high speed and passenger rail in two additional pieces of legislation which build on PRIIA.

On February 17, 2009, President Obama signed the Recovery Act into law, which included \$8 billion for high-speed and intercity passenger rail. This funding represented the first appropriations under the three new grant programs established in PRIIA.

In addition to the \$8 billion provided in the Recovery Act, the High Speed

Intercity Passenger Rail Program also included approximately \$92 million in FY 2009 and remaining FY 2008 funds appropriated under the existing State Grant Program (formally titled, Capital Assistance to States — Intercity Passenger Rail Service). An additional \$5 billion in funding was contained in the FY 2009 Omnibus bill.

Soon after the passage of these pieces of legislation, the FRA promulgated guidance for the high speed rail grant process, allowing members of the public and other organizations, including the BLET, to comment on the way forward. Based on the result of this guidance, the FRA received 259 grant applications from 37 States and the District of Columbia requesting nearly \$57 billion in funding — far exceeding the initial \$8 billion available under the Recovery Act, and selected 82 projects.

Issues relating to the railroad industry, because it is one of the most highly regulated, often move back and forth between the legislative and regulatory processes. Both hours of service and high speed rail are examples of this and are evolving long after they were first legislated, and as history has shown there will be any number of other issues which will join these two in the future. ☐

## HOLIDAY GREETINGS



BEST WISHES FOR A SAFE, HEALTHY AND HAPPY HOLIDAY SEASON FROM THE BLET NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE OFFICE! JOHN TOLMAN, VICE PRESIDENT & NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE REPRESENTATIVE; GAIL CARSON, OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR; KATHLEEN POLICY, LEGISLATIVE, POLITICAL AND REGULATORY COORDINATOR; AND STEVE BRUNO, DIRECTOR OF REGULATORY AFFAIRS.

# Chip O'Connor known for integrity, dedication to BLET

**U**nion Pacific locomotive engineer R.D. "Chip" O'Connor retired after 37 years of service on August 31, 2010.

"Chip is a true railroader and dedicated union officer," BLET Division 488 member G.A. Sherry said. "Chip was our Local Chairman from 2004 through 2009. Chip worked tirelessly to improve our Division. When he took over we had about 25 members, and because of his integrity and hard work, we had close to 50 members by 2009."

Brother O'Connor, a member of Division 488 (Grand Junction, Colo.), hired out with the DRGW as a clerk in 1973. He went firing on August 1, 1977, and earned his promotion to locomotive engineer on September 16, 1978. He has held continuous members in the BLET since December 1, 1985.

In 1986, the DRGW merged with the Southern Pacific. He worked for Amtrak as a locomotive engineer from August of 1987 to June of 1988 before



**Chip O'Connor:** A devoted union man and a true railroader

heading back to the Southern Pacific. The SP was purchased by the Union Pacific in 1996.


His last run was on August 29, 2010, as an extra board engineer for UP.

He served Division 429 as Guide from 1990-1997. He served as Vice President of Division 488 from 1998-2001, as Local Chairman from 2004-2009, and as 1st Vice Local Chairman from 2009 until his retirement in 2010.

"Chip O'Connor is a devoted union man," Division 488 Local Chairman Dennis F. Owen said. "You can't find another person who is more loyal with more integrity than Chip. As a union man he worked and fought for the rights of his fellow employees. He will be missed as he retires."

He and his wife, Kristine, have two children, Matthew and Cecilia.

His hobbies include golfing, fly fishing, astronomy and working on old Volkswagens. During retirement, he plans to spend more time with his family while cruising in his 1965 Volkswagen bus.

"Thank you to the BLET for helping me provide a good life for my family," he said. "I enjoyed a proud career." 

# Division 11's Gannon mentored countless engineers

**B**LET Division 11 (New York, N.Y.) extended best wishes for a safe and happy retirement to long-serving and dedicated member Michael Gannon.

Brother Gannon retires with 41 years of railroad seniority and will be sorely missed. He is well known throughout the Northeast as an extremely safety-conscious member who mentored countless younger engineers through his role as engineer instructor.

Brother Gannon taught the new hires the finer points of operating a locomotive safely, but more importantly, he instilled the younger generation of engineers with a pride in




**Mike Gannon with Pete Stevens,** Assistant Superintendent of Road Operations

the Brotherhood. He led by example, serving Division 11 as Legislative Representative for 28 years, and many of the younger engineers he mentored

followed in his footsteps by taking active leadership rolls within the organization.

Throughout his long and distinguished career, Brother Gannon represented his Division on the New York State Legislative Board. He also served as President of Division 11 and was a member of the Division 501 Local Committee of Adjustment.

He joined the Brotherhood on May 1, 1970, and has held continuous membership ever since. His retirement became effective on September 8, 2010.

Brother Gannon's last run was on July 2, 2010, operating trains 2107 and 2170 roundtrip between New York's Penn Station and Washington, D.C. 



## Kotarski lived his childhood dream working as an engineer

**B**rother Bob Kotarski, locomotive engineer with former BLET Division 851 in Philadelphia, Pa., retired from Conrail after 31 years of injury-free service on July 10, 2009.

His last assignment, on July 5, 2009, was a Morrisville, Pa. middle trick yard assignment (FP33/YPMO-33) with Conductor J.J. Leone.

Brother Kotarski hired out as a fireman on the old Reading Railroad Division on Conrail on July 5, 1978. He attended Conrail's Engineer Training School in Wilmington, Del., in March of 1979, and earned promotion to locomotive engineer on July 25, 1979. He has been a proud member of the Brotherhood since joining on March 1, 1979.

His first "solo run" was a two-car inbound Septa commuter train from Warminster, Pa., to Reading Terminal



Every day is a holiday now for Brother Kotarski

in Philadelphia on December 26, 1979.

Brother Kotarski worked the extra board from 1979 until the split date of 1999 when Conrail was divided between Norfolk Southern and CSX. Af-

ter that, he worked either the FP33/YPMO-33 at Morrisville, Pa., or the FC41/YPCA-41 in Camden, N.J.

Now that "every day is a holiday," he has been spending time with his wife, Janice, and catching up on the 20 years of time the extra board kept the two of them apart. He also enjoys reading, military history, playing military war games on the computer, and spending time in front of the video poker machines in Atlantic City, N.J., or Bensalem, Pa.

"My dad bought me a set of Lionel trains in 1955, and little did he know that it would change my life forever," he said. "Being an engineer was all I ever wanted to do and I'm glad I was able to live my childhood dream."

Brother Kotarski can be reached at: 9949 Wingtip Rd., Philadelphia, Pa 19115-1708. ☎

## Stockwell retires 35 years accident-free

**B**rother J. Leon Stockwell, a member of BLET Division 561, retired after a 35-year injury-free railroad career on July 1, 2010.

His Last Run came as a CSX locomotive engineer on Job D79301 in Fredericksburg, Va. Fellow BLET member Richard L. Woolridge, Local Chairman of Division 561, worked as Brother Stockwell's conductor on the run.

Brother Stockwell hired out as a carman in October of 1975 on the former Chesapeake & Ohio Railroad in Detroit, Mich. He went firing in June of 1977 and earned promotion to Locomotive Engineer on May 14, 1978.

He joined the Brotherhood on July 1, 1978, and served the Organization in various capacities over the decades. He was Secretary-Treasurer of Division 542 for part of his career before transferring membership to Division 561. He served Division 561 as Secretary-Treasurer for 18 years and as Local



**From left:** Brother Leon Stockwell completes his Last Run in Fredericksburg, Va., with help from Richard Woolridge, Local Chairman of Division 561.

Chairman for nine.

Additionally, Brother Stockwell was actively involved in railroad safety throughout his career, including volunteer work for the SENSE safety program at CSX. He served as Regional Coordinator for several years and also as the Baltimore Division Coordinator

for five years.

Brother Stockwell is particularly proud of his 35-year injury-free railroad career, but is equally proud — if not more so — of his 40-year marriage to his wife, Marsha. The couple has two adult children, Heather and Jeff, and three grandchildren. ☎

# Trail blazing engineer Vallorie O'Neil was Metra's first female engineer

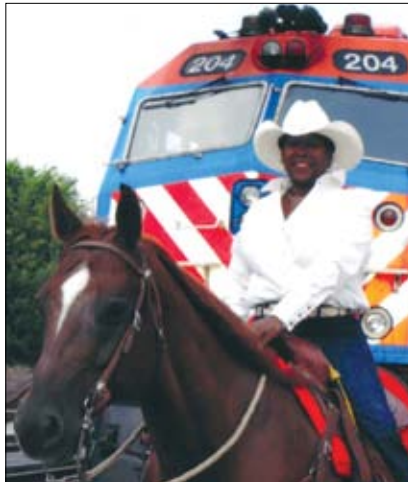
**V**allorie O'Neil, a true pioneer in the railroad industry and proud member of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen, has retired after a 31-year career with Metra in Chicago.

The BLET has had countless members over the past 147 years, and it is rare these days that an individual can be called a pioneer. But Sister O'Neil is an exception to that rule.

She retired on October 15 as the first female locomotive engineer at Metra, and has blazed a trail for other women conductors and engineers across the United States. She hired out at a time when society placed many obstacles in her path not only because of her gender, but also because of her race.

In 1969, she hired out as a clerk with the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy railroad in Chicago, but it was her intention to become a locomotive engineer. When she was hired, however, the railroad told her that women were not hired as operating personnel.

She persevered and rose above the hurdles placed before her. Sister O'Neil



Vallorie O'Neil and her horse, Skipper, in front of a Metra locomotive she operated throughout her distinguished 31-year career as a pioneering locomotive engineer.

eventually went firing for the Burlington Northern on April 29, 1976. She first joined the BLET on April 1, 1978, earning promotion to locomotive engineer on July 19, 1977. She is a member of Division 815 in Chicago.

Sister O'Neil has held various posi-

tions with the CB&Q, BNSF and Metra over her long and distinguished career. After working for Metra as an assistant conductor and locomotive engineer from 1988-1989, she then worked as an assistant road foreman of engines, road foreman of engines, trainmaster, and senior trainmaster from 1991-2001.

"Being an engineer is a career, not a job," she said.

In 2001, she returned to her seat behind the throttle and worked as locomotive engineer until her retirement on October 15, 2010. Her last run was as a Metra locomotive engineer between Chicago and Joliet, Ill. A major daily newspaper in Chicago featured Sister O'Neil in their October 19 edition, publishing many photos and a lengthy article about her last run and railroad career.

Away from the railroad, Sister O'Neil enjoys horses and the rodeo. She owns a horse, Skipper, which she enjoys riding with her four grandchildren. During retirement, she plans to be a mentor and motivational speaker for young women in non-traditional jobs. 🍷

## Division 28's Lewis retires

**B**rother David A. Lewis, a member of BLET Division 28 (Tucson, Ariz.), safely completed his Last Run for the Union Pacific Railroad on August 16, 2008.

Brother Lewis hired out on the former Southern Pacific Railroad as a switchman in 1978. He went firing in February of 1992 and earned promotion to locomotive engineer in August of 1992. He joined BLET Division 28 in September of 1992.

He safely concluded his

30-year railroad career in 2008, completing his Last Run as locomotive engineer of Union Pacific train 4956 between Yuma and Tucson, Ariz.

He and his wife Sally were married on October 29, 1971. They have one daughter, Leslie.

During his retirement, Brother Lewis enjoys traveling, walking, fishing and sports.

"I miss my many railroad friends and my extended families in the BLET," he said. 🍷



Brother Lewis signs his retirement paperwork.

## Eastin a member for 52 consecutive years



Brother H.L. Eastin, with his late wife Jean. He has been a BLET member since 1958.

The Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen is pleased to recognize Brother Harvey L. Eastin for reaching Honor Roll status with 52 years of consecutive membership.

Brother Eastin, 87, has held continuous membership in BLET Division 602 (Champaign, Ill.) since joining the Brotherhood on November 19, 1958.

He worked his entire 41-year career for the Illinois Central Railroad out of Champaign. He went firing for the IC in Champaign on February 2, 1942, and earned promotion to locomotive engineer on August 15, 1950.

At the time of his retirement, effective June 1, 1983, he worked as a locomotive engineer on all Amtrak runs on the IC. His last

run was on May 31, 1983, and he has enjoyed 27 years of retirement benefits thanks to the BLET and the Railroad Retirement system.

He spent three years in the South Pacific as a member of the U.S. Air Force engineers.

“My outstanding incident in my 41-plus years was during the mid-1970s,” he said. “I was called for a coal train at Centralia, Ill. I was given two trains equaling 219 100-ton cars with four six-axle GM diesels. They helped start the train with a switcher on the rear. I made it to Edgewood, Ill., then it came apart in three pieces.”

He says his new favorite song is now “Long Black Train” by Josh Turner.

He and his late wife, Jean, have two daughters and two sons. ☪

## Division 190's Linsky a 40-year member

Brother Tony Lee Linsky has reached Honor Roll status with 40 years of continuous membership in BLET Division 190 (Huntington, W.Va.).

Brother Linsky, 81, joined the Brotherhood on February 1, 1970, as a locomotive engineer for the Chesapeake & Ohio Railroad. In 1945, he hired out with the C&O's track maintenance department in Peytona, W.Va. He went firing on July 22, 1955, and earned promotion to locomotive engineer in 1957.

He has been a dedicated and loyal member, serving the Brotherhood as assistant Local Chairman, Legislative Representative, and in various other capacities over the years.

Brother Linsky is a proud veteran of World War II, having served in the Army's occupational forces in Japan

from 1945-1948. He was awarded various military ribbons and commendations, earning promotion to Corporal prior to his honorable discharge.

He and his wife Costella were married on February 19, 1949. They had three children, Michael (deceased), Pamela and Timothy, along with six grandchildren and eight great-grandchildren.

During his retirement, he has enjoyed gardening, yard work, hunting, and fishing. He is an active member of his church, Masonic Lodge #158, and the Scottish Rite of Charleston, W.Va.

“I enjoyed every minute I worked for the C&O and CSX,” he said. “I saw a great many changes for the betterment of the system, due in part to the BLE's involvement,” he said. ☪



Brother T.L. Linsky retired in 1988 with 44 years and 4 months of seniority

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



# BLET Auxiliary elects new officers

BY ANITA CARUSO  
BLET AUXILIARY NATIONAL PRESIDENT

The BLET Auxiliary held its First National Auxiliary Convention in Reno, Nevada, the week of October 4-6, 2010. There were 22 delegates and eight National Officers in attendance. There were many important resolutions to consider and our delegates made very informed decisions that will guide our organization for the next four years.

The new national officers of the BLET Auxiliary are as follows: Anita J. Caruso, National President; Sereena Hogan, National Vice President/National Legislative Representative; Linda D. Maher, National Secretary; Helen Brand, National Treasurer; Gina Forman, Nation-

al 1st Vice President/National Outreach Coordinator; Kathy Hurst, National 2nd Vice President/National Legislative Representative; Darla Fent, National Chaplain; Lawana W. Poss, National Alternate Secretary; Teri Fleming, National Alternate Treasurer and Becky Schneider, National Past President.

Things have been pretty hectic since returning from Reno, but our continuing focus remains on increasing our membership and building our ranks by organizing new auxiliaries throughout the United States. We can accomplish this goal through the various tools we have at our disposal, i.e. a highly motivated group of officers and members, education and political action. As we embark with a new slate of Nation-

al Officers, we will try to focus on these particular areas for improvement and growth.

We invite everyone who is interested in our mission and cause, to contact us and we'll help you in any way we can. Without interest, increased membership and support, the BLET Auxiliary can't thrive. Please join us in our efforts to help the BLET improve working conditions for all railroad employees and educate all spouses with this most important goal in mind. ☺

FOR INFORMATION ABOUT THE BLET AUXILIARY, OR TO ORGANIZE AN AUXILIARY IN YOUR AREA, PLEASE CONTACT ANITA J. CARUSO BY EMAIL, [BUNZIEGIA@COX.NET](mailto:BUNZIEGIA@COX.NET), OR BY PHONE, (402) 330-6348.



**Installation of Officers:** From left, Anita J. Caruso; Sereena Hogan; Linda D. Maher; Helen Brand; Gina Forman; Becky Schneider; Kathy Hurst; Darla Fent; Lawana Poss; and Teri Fleming.



Anita J. Caruso giving her acceptance speech as new National President of the BLET Auxiliary.



Outgoing Auxiliary President Becky Schneider passes the gavel to newly elected President Anita J. Caruso.

## BLET AUXILIARY NATIONAL OFFICERS



**ANITA J. CARUSO**  
NATIONAL PRESIDENT



**SEREENA HOGAN**  
NATIONAL VICE PRESIDENT/NLR



**LINDA D. MAHER**  
NATIONAL SECRETARY



**HELEN BRAND**  
NATIONAL TREASURER



**GINA FORMAN**  
NATIONAL 1ST VICE PRESIDENT/  
NATIONAL OUTREACH  
COORDINATOR



**KATHY HURST**  
NATIONAL 2ND  
VICE PRESIDENT/NLR



**DARLA FENT**  
NATIONAL CHAPLAIN



**LAWANA W. POSS**  
NATIONAL ALTERNATE  
SECRETARY



**TERI FLEMING**  
NATIONAL ALTERNATE TREASURER



**BECKY SCHNEIDER**  
NATIONAL PAST PRESIDENT

### 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.



# BLET FELA Directory



## AS OF NOVEMBER 19, 2010

**O**ur union has designated attorneys who are qualified to serve as counsel for BLET members in accordance with the Federal Employers Liability Act (FELA)

governing workplace accidents. In the event of an injury or death and before reaching any settlement with a railroad, members or surviving families should contact an attorney listed to get competent advice concerning their legal rights under the FELA. In addition,

if you or any members of your family have questions concerning medical malpractice, product liability or other types of injury cases, please don't hesitate to contact one of these law firms for a consultation concerning your rights and remedies.

### ALABAMA

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**J. Anderson Andy Harp**

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**DASHING THROUGH THE SNOW** A detouring CSX freight passes the dramatic CP Rail depot in Lacolle, Quebec, in near-blizzard conditions on March 16, 2007. Built in 1930 by the Napierville Junction Railway, a subsidiary of the Delaware & Hudson Railway, the picturesque depot is now owned by CP Rail and is a favorite backdrop for railroad photographers. **Photo:** copyright Gary Knapp