A supreme win for Rail Labor

On January 14, the U.S. Supreme Court announced that it will not consider overruling the favorable decisions obtained by Rail Labor in the ongoing Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) litigation.

By denying the carriers’ petition for a writ of certiorari, the Supreme Court decided not to disturb the lower courts’ decisions that the carriers may not rely on the FMLA statute to override BLET agreements. BLET’s legal position has now been fully vindicated.

While the federal court part of this dispute should be over, more work remains to be done.

Unless the carriers reconsider their position regarding settlement, individual BLET General Committees of Adjustment will now have to arbitrate the various claims that have been filed since the dispute started.

“This is an important victory for BLET members and all of Rail Labor,” said BLET National President Don Hahs. “We knew the carriers were violating our and all of Rail Labor,” said BLET National President Don Hahs. “We knew the carriers were violating our collective bargaining agreements.”

The January 14 announcement from the Supreme Court is the latest victory for Rail Labor in a legal dispute that dates to at least three years ago. In 2005, a coalition of 11 unions challenged a decision made by the major rail carriers to force their employees to exhaust their vacation and personal leave days for FMLA purposes before taking the unpaid leave they are entitled to under federal law. On January 3, 2006, U.S. District Judge Wayne R. Andersen sided with the unions, ruling that the FMLA does not allow carriers to force employees to substitute paid vacation and personal leave for unpaid leave when existing collective bargaining agreements give the employees — not the carriers — the right to decide when to use their paid leave. The court held that “if a CBA gives employees the right to determine when, or in what manner, they take accrued vacation and/or personal leave, an employer cannot force employees covered by that CBA to use such vacation and/or personal leave at a time of the employer’s choosing.”

The carriers appealed the January 3 ruling in District Court, but a three-judge panel of the U.S. Court of Appeals in the Seventh Circuit unanimously upheld the favorable ruling on March 2, 2007. In May 2007, the entirety of the Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals refused a carrier request for a rehearing, after which the carriers took their appeal to the Supreme Court.

Eleven Rail Labor unions are involved in the case. Mike Wolly and Margo Pave of Zwerdling, Paul, Kahn, & Wolly, P.C., are representing the interests of six of the 11 unions — Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen, International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, American Train Dispatchers Association, Brotherhood of Railroad Signalmen, National Conference of Firemen and Oilers, and the Sheet Metal Workers International Association.

President Hahs thanked Wolly and Pave for their leadership in helping Rail Labor achieve this important victory.

Member of BLET Division 333 voted quintessential American worker

When the votes were tallied, the working people of America picked a BLET member, a Harley riding father of three from Minnesota, as the quintessential American Worker for 2008.

Brother Jason Lehnen, a Union Pacific locomotive engineer and member of Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen Division 333 in St. Paul, Minn., was announced the winner of the online contest on January 7. Brother Lehnen, 33, has worked for the UP for the past four years, joining the BLET on March 1, 2005. Prior to that he was a Harley Davidson motorcycle mechanic for four years, and said that he proudly served as a United States Marine for six years.

The “Search for the American Worker” competition was sponsored by The Working Person’s Store of Lakeville, Ind., and Carolina Shoe Company.

Brother Lehnen won a $1,000 gift certificate from The Working Person’s Store and the Carolina Shoe Company, which he will use to purchase new clothes and shoes from their website.

“He’ll be getting a complete head to toe rework of his work wear,” said Eric Deniger, CEO of The Working Person’s Store.

The father of three daughters, he enjoys spending time with his family, riding his Harley Davidson motorcycle and working out. The couple’s youngest daughter was born in October.

Brother Lehnen said his wife, Jenna, entered him into the contest. He was selected as a finalist by a pool of judges from The Working Person’s Store and Carolina Shoe Company. The winner was determined by an online vote at www.workingperson.com, and he needed the help of his railroad co-workers to win the contest.

Lehnen said members of Division 333 set up a website encouraging as many railroaders as possible to vote for him, and he thanked his co-workers for their support.

Passenger Rail News

Division 269 members OK new contract with LIRR

Members of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen Division 269 ratified a new contract agreement with the Long Island Rail Road on January 14.

According to LIRR General Chairman Mickey Quinn, the contract will cover approximately 420 locomotive engineers and was ratified by a 4-to-1 majority.

Quinn said the contract was negotiated as part of a coalition of 10 different unions representing each craft at LIRR. As a result, the new deal only addresses pay, health and welfare, and pensions. Following ratification, each union will commence one-on-one negotiations with LIRR regarding craft-specific work rules.

Term of the contract is three years, five months and two weeks. It expires on June 15, 2010, and provides wage increases of 10.5 percent over the life of the agreement. The wage increases are as follows: a 4 percent increase on Jan. 1, 2007; a 3.5 percent increase on Jan. 1, 2008; and a 3 percent increase on Jan. 1, 2009.

“The new contract is a just reward for the hard working and professional LIRR engineers,” General Chairman Quinn said.

He noted that on January 7, the LIRR reported that its on-time performance was 94.07 percent, which is the highest the railroad has ever achieved since modern record keeping started in 1978.

“There is no doubt that the excellent on-time performance was achieved in part due to the work of highly trained and skilled BLET members,” he said.

LIRR trains operated by BLET members transport approximately 258,000 passengers per day.

See LIRR, Page 7
Midwest Rail Craft Scholarship provided 37 awards in ‘07

Program aids children of rail workers from all union affiliations and all craft lines

Thanks to the generosity and hard work of many people, including its Board of Directors, the Midwest Rail Craft Scholarship Foundation (MWRCSF) is able to help several children of railroaders each year with their educational expenses. Scholarships from the Midwest Rail Craft Scholarship Fund (MWRCSF) are awarded to children of railroaders from all crafts and union affiliations.

The Foundation, founded in 2004, is led by a diverse Board of Directors representing several different railroads and labor unions. The Foundation’s mission “is to collectively use the generous resources of many to ensure the further education of those blessed with knowledge, but burdened with need. In addition, we strive to unite all railroads/railroad crafts throughout the Midwest in a valiant effort to give of their time and resources so the future of our children will be bright and productive.”

In 2007, the MWRCSF awarded scholarships in amounts ranging from $500 and $1,000 to 27 students connected to the various railroad crafts and locations throughout the Midwest. “We felt that the support we had seen, especially in the Midwest, prompted us to ensure that the children of all railroad crafts and backgrounds be regarded,” said Greg Shy, President of MWRCSF. “We have become incorporated in Minnesota, Iowa, Nebraska, Illinois, Missouri, Oklahoma, Texas and Arkansas. Our objective is to concentrate the scholarship applicants geographically in correspondence to the enormous support we have had from railroad workers in these states.”

“We also have enlisted the aid of rail management and all labor from Midwest railroads to ensure that all crafts are represented. This is a great opportunity for those railroad families in need of financial support for the higher education of their children.”

The vast majority of the monies acquired for these scholarships comes from annual golf tournaments, contributions and sponsorships. The Foundation sponsors an annual Kansas City Golf Tourney, which will be held this summer. In addition, a second tournament normally held at another location in the summer. Dates and locations of the 2007 fund raises will be announced at a later date. Updates will be provided on the MWRCSF website.

For more details, please contact James R. Hoffa Memorial Scholarship Fund

I.B.T. Headquarters
25 Louisiana Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20001
(202) 624-8735 •
The BLET Auxiliary offers $1,000 scholarships annually to help the children of active or retired BLET Auxiliary members realize their goals in life. There are two very strict guidelines that must be met in order to be eligible. First, the child must be a child or daughter of both an Auxiliary and BLET member (living or deceased), with each being a member for two years, or be a child or daughter of a member employed or enrolled or accepted for enrollment in an accredited university, college or school of higher learning. The Auxiliary also administers a joint scholarship, the John Thomas Collins & Mary M. Collins Memorial Scholarship, for children of members participating in the Eastern Union

International Western Convention-BLET Auxiliary offer joint scholarships

Eligibility questions should be directed to Jim Lance, IWC Secretary-Treasurer at kiekem22@osd.com. •

The Southwestern Convention Meeting (SWM) awards approximately two dozen scholarships annually based on academic achievement and financial need. Applicants must be the child of an active, retired or deceased BLET member whose division participates in the SWCM. Please check with your division secretary-treasurer to ensure that your division participates. In general, the SMA includes divisions located in states east of the Mississippi River, and south of the Ohio River and the Mason-Dixon Line. Also, divisions must be current with their SMA dues in order for the applicant to be eligible.

The SMA scholarship application deadline varies from year to year, and winners are usually notified and awarded at the SMA annual business meeting held during the convention. This year’s SMA will be June 15-19 in Montgomery, Ala. Please see your division officers for an application or for more details.

The BLET Auxiliary Scholarship deadline is April 1, 2008. As in the past, you may request applications on Jan. 1, 2008, and must still be employed employees of BNSF or its predecessor employees or retired, disabled or deceased or stepchildren of full-time BNSF employees as of Jan. 1, 2007, and must still be employed.

The Auxiliary also administers a joint scholarship, the John Thomas Collins & Mary M. Collins Memorial Scholarship, for children of members participating in the Eastern Union

National Merit Scholarship Corporation, an independent, nonprofit organization, administers the scholarship program. For detailed descriptions of these scholarships, go to the NMSC Web site at www.nationalmerit.org. For each of these scholarships, go to the NMSC Web site at www.nationalmerit.org.

The deadline for submitting applications is April 1, 2008. Late applications will not be considered. The BLET Auxiliary administers the IWC scholarship program, so please send completed applications to Anita J. Caruso, National Secretary. 3341 S. 112th Street, Omaha, NE 68144-4709. For details, email Sister Caruso at: Bunziegl@enr.net. •

Eligibility questions should be directed to Jim Lance, IWC Secretary-Treasurer at kiekem22@osd.com. •

The Auxiliary’s California State Legislative Board, BLET/IBT 610 Auburn Ravine Rd. SACramento, CA 95603

The BLET’s California State Legislative Board, BLET/IBT offers a scholarship each year to a graduating senior who will attend college, trade or vocational school in the California State. Last year, the Board offered two $1,000 scholarships. Application and deadline information are available on the Board’s website, http://calshs.com

All applications must be submitted to the CSLIE home office address: California State Legislative Board, BLET/IBT 610 Auburn Ravine Rd. SACramento, CA 95603

The BLET’s California State Legislative Board, BLET/IBT offers a scholarship each year to a graduating senior who will attend college, trade or vocational school in the California State. Last year, the Board offered two $1,000 scholarships. Application and deadline information are available on the Board’s website, http://calshs.com

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DESIGNATED COUNSEL

Our 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.

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James L. Cox Jr.

Send address changes to: John Bartels, 8147 Public Relations
1370 Ontario St., Mezzanine
Cleveland, OH 44113-1702
Bartels@ble-t.org · As of Nov. 11, 2007
The BLET’s Education and Training Department will conduct two Secretary-Treasurer Compliance Workshops in early 2008. Both of these have been scheduled prior to the March 31 deadline for filing Department of Labor reports.

The workshops will take place in Dallas, Texas from February 24-27, and Jacksonville, Fla. from March 2-5.

As most S-Ts already know, many changes have been implemented regarding the filing of LM reports this year. The changes to the LM Report along with the new 900-N and EPTPS will be explained in class.

Secretary-Treasurers will be shown how to use the BLET National Division’s web-based reporting system. S-Ts use the online system for membership reporting and tax compliance.

During the four-day session, members will learn proper record keeping techniques, computer applications, and minute-taking. They will also learn methods for filing various Department of Labor, and Railroad Retirement reports, as well as Internal Revenue Service Federal tax returns. A representative from the Department of Labor will be on hand to answer Secretary-Treasurer questions and provide tips regarding the preparation of LM reports.

Attendees are asked to bring their lap top computer if they have one and also a hand held calculator.

Presenters will include Bill Walpert, BLET National Secretary-Treasurer; Ken Kroeger, BLET Special Rep & Coordinator of the Education and Training Department; Bob Broka, Director of Records; Dr. Elaine Reese, Director of Compliance; and Walt Schmidt, BLET Webmaster.

The BLET National Division pays the costs of books and equipment, while Secretary-Treasurers who attend are responsible for their transportation costs as well as their room and board.

Upon successful completion of the course, attendees will qualify for a $100 per day stipend from the North American Railway Foundation. The stipends will be paid directly to the Division.

The North American Railway Foundation (NARF) is a non-profit operating foundation formed by the Brotherhood’s Relief and Compensation Fund (B&RFC) to support rail history, education, safety and technology in the United States and Canada. With initial funding and continued Board of Directors’ stewardship coming from the B&RFC, NARF has supported many varied non-political projects throughout the United States and Canada over the past ten years. The primary focus of these efforts has been in support of organized rail labor... giving back to all of the men and women of the railroad community across North America.

S-Ts must register for the workshop online through the BLET website at: http://www.blet.org/st.

Members are responsible for making their reservations at the workshop. They will be given hotel contact information and special room rate information when they receive their confirmation after registering online at: http://www.blet.org/st.

The workshops will start at 7 p.m. on the first day and conclude at noon on the last day.

Registration for the workshops is on a first-come, first-served basis, with class size limited to the first 24 who register through the BLET website. For more information, please contact Ken Kroeger of the Education & Training Dept. at (218) 272-0986 or koeger@blet.org.

Second notice: Dependent eligibility audit for insurance continues

This is a follow-up reminder to all members regarding the dependent eligibility audit currently under way, in accordance with BLET Insurance Plan documents. The BLET first informed its members of the audit in September 2007.

This audit is a fiduciary responsibility of the BLET Insurance Plan and is meant to make sure only eligible dependents are covered under the changes made to the dependent eligibility definition in the last national agreement. Eligibility audits, such as the one currently being performed, are done to curb misuse and abuse of a plan in order to help insurance plans maintain a more streamlined form and to keep premiums from unnecessarily raising.

Two of the largest areas of concern are divorcees and children who are of college age. As part of the audit, members may be asked to provide a copy of a marriage certificate, children’s birth certificates, or proof of enrollment for dependents attending college.

All members who are covered by the Acta National Dental Plan are involved in the audit and should have received a notice of participation that provided an audit hotline telephone number (1-866-662-5619). It is important to make sure that you participate in this audit to assure no disruption in your dependant’s insurance coverage. The response rate has not been overly successful and non-responded dependents account for approximately 38% of the total survey at this time.

Participation in this project is extremely important because dependent eligibility will be determined from all plans if no response is provided. The BLET National Division is receiving feedback from several members who don’t understand what has been sent, and from others who simply tossed the information as they felt it to be irrelevant. Without proper response, your dependants will be removed from coverage in early March, creating undo headaches for you and your family.

DOT announces random drug test rates for 2008

The U.S. Department of Transportation has announced random rail worker drug and alcohol testing rates for calendar year 2008. BLET also advises its members that many railroads have a zero tolerance policy when it comes to reporting to work under the influence of drugs or alcohol. In many cases, a positive test result will result in being placed out of service.

BLET Legislative Rep training set for March 9-14 in D.C.

The BLET Education & Training Department, in conjunction with the National Legislative Office and the National Association of State Legislative Board Chairman (NASLBC), will conduct a workshop for BLET Division Legislative Representatives in Washington, D.C., from March 9-14, 2008.

The BLET is conducting this workshop as part of our ongoing program to have the most highly educated and well-trained membership in the House of Labor,” said National Secretary-Treasurer Bill Walpert, Director of the BLET Education & Training Department.

The workshop will take place at Teamster headquarters in Washington, D.C., with classroom training beginning the evening of Sunday, March 9. All-day classroom training will follow on March 10, 11 and 12. The workshop will cover the following topics:

• Computer skills (principles of letter writing and database management);
• Regulatory affairs (reporting and documenting important information);
• Political affairs (the anatomy of elections, how a bill becomes a law, communications skills, and writing to politicians);
• Robert’s Rules of Order (conducting meetings); and
• Understanding individual State Legislative Board bylaws.

After completion of the classroom training, attendees will participate in a full day of lobbying on March 13 and a half-day on March 14. The afternoon of March 14 is scheduled for travel home.

Those who successfully complete the classroom portion of the workshop will be eligible for a stipend of $100 per day ($436 total) from the North American Railway Foundation (NARF). The stipends will be paid directly to the State Legislative Board or Division Secretary-Treasurer.

The workshop is limited to the first 24 who register. As this issue went to press, the workshop reached maximum capacity and a waiting list was established for a future workshop.

The dates and location are yet to be determined, but members may begin to register for the workshop at the BLET website, http://www.blet.org/st.

For more information, please call the BLET National Legislative Office at (202) 624-8770.

 job protection headquarters for transportation employees since 1910 • l.e.c.m.p.a.
Dear Mabel: Thank you, from all of us!

Pioneering leader Mabel Grotzinger retires after a distinguished career with GIA, BLET Auxiliary

By Becky Schneider

President, BLET Auxiliary

In a departure from the usual information provided by the Auxiliary for the BLET News, we would like to dedicate this month’s submission to thank longtime member Mabel Grotzinger for her years of service representing the Auxiliary and the interests of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen, their spouses, and families. For personal reasons, including the illness and passing of her husband and best friend, Michael Grotzinger, and subsequent return to work after her retirement, Mabel feels she can no longer perform the duties of Auxiliary National Vice President up to her standards. As you will recall, for critical incident stress situations, standards have always been high. Effective January 1st, Sister Grotzinger has stepped down from her position; however, she will always be just a phone call away.

Join and Grand Internationa l Auxiliary to the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers (GIA) in March of 1984, Sister Grotzinger joined Susquehanna Auxiliary 11 in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, and currently serves as its Secretary and Legislative Representative. She attended her first Quadrennial Convention as a delegate representing Auxiliary 11 in 1991, and by 1996, she ran for and won election to the position of 2nd Vice President and National Legislative Representative. She is admired by both her colleagues and politicians alike because of her enthusiasm, tenacity, and ability to grasp complex issues involving the safety and quality of life of railroad workers. More than once, she was known to have corrected an elected representative or political advisor on their understanding of an issue was wrong. With previous lobbying experience under her belt, she hit the ground running, easing the bar incredibly high for future National Legislative Representatives.

Sister Grotzinger gained a great deal of respect among the Pennsylvania State House in Pennsylvania. Brother Ken Kertesz, Chairman of the Pennsylvania State Legislative Board, has this to say: “Mabel and Mike were active and involved in safety issues for the BLE for as long as I can remember. I believe they were both instrumental in pushing our legislative agenda and our visions in the collective bargaining agreement. Mabel displayed abilities and natural talent to grasp BLE issues and so she was called upon to lobby many, many times, in both D.C. and Harrisburg. I walked the halls of Congress with her several times and each time was/masterful. To work so well with legislators was far from cold. When she walked into the offices, most everyone knew her and greeted her as though they were old friends. She was a genuine person, and it never failed to impress legislators far from cold. When she walked into the offices, most everyone knew her and greeted her as though they were old friends. She was a genuine person, and it never failed to impress legislators far from cold.

Chairman Kertesz goes on to say, “In 1988, the Pennsylvania State Legislative Board bestowed Mabel with an Honorary Membership on the Board, and was awarded a plaque and recognition by then-BLE International President Clarence Morlin. To my knowledge, Mabel is the only woman to ever receive this distinction and the Pennsylvania Board is proud and privileged to have done so. The BLE membership will miss Sister Mabel now that she has decided to step down, and it is truly a loss for the Brotherhood and Sisterhood. However, at any time she decides to become active, we will welcome her with open arms. The BLE salutes Sister Grotzinger and wishes her nothing but the very best in her endeavors and good health for the decades. She deserves nothing less.”

In July of 2000, the first Railroad Retirement Reform Act was filed and Mabel worked diligently with the BLE in conjunction with other rail labor representatives to push for passage. Because the majority in Congress rested with the Republicans at that time, the bill was prevented from ever reaching a vote on the floor of the Senate, and died with the 106th Congress.

At the convention in 2001, Mabel was elected to the office of Vice President under what would turn out to be our last International President, Onita Wayland. With the transition to a more pro-active role, the Auxiliary experienced some serious growing pains. Sister Wayland said, “if she had not had Mabel, along with the other members of the Executive Council, our Auxiliary could not have continued to grow, inform, and achieve.” Mabel’s friendly, motivated, and hardworking attitude helped us to realize that our passions and not too small for Sister Grotzinger. For me, she was a source of information to keep me abreast of current issues, and she provided excellent ideas to help us continue to grow, inform, and achieve. She is a great officer and a good person.”

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When asked what Sister Windham valued most from Mabel’s contributions, she said, “during my tenure as 1st Vice President, she was my right hand. From 1996, our motto was to ‘Grow, Inform, and Achieve.’ Mabel’s friendly, motivated, and hardworking attitude helped us to realize that our passions and not too small for Sister Grotzinger. For me, she was a source of information to keep me abreast of current issues, and she provided excellent ideas to help us continue to grow, inform, and achieve. She is a great officer and a good person.”

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Amtrak, unions reach tentative settlement

On January 18, a coalition of eight Amtrak non-operating unions signed a tentative contract agreement with Amtrak, which basically adopts the recommendations of Presidential Emergency Board 242.

The BLET is not a party to the agreement or PEB. General Chairman Mark Kenny expressed “sincere congratulations to the unions involved in making such a strong and persuasive case before PEB.”

The White House made public the recommendations of PEB 242 on January 3. The tentative agreement adopts PEB’s recommended wage settlement, which amounts to increases of 35.2% over the period January 1, 2000 through December 31, 2009.

The tentative agreement also includes the Board’s recommendation that employees receive back pay, in the form of retroactive wage payments, to compensate for the eight years they had been without a wage increase. The PEB indicated that payments could vary per employee from a low of $5,139 to a high of $34,433, with the average being $12,900. The agreement provides that retroactive wages be paid out in two installments of 40% and 60% each, one year apart.

General Chairman Kenny said the BLET-Amtrak GCA Executive Committee “is studying the specific recommendations made by the Board, as they will certainly influence and shape where and how the BLET bargaining strategy will proceed in the short term. Furthermore, once the details of the tentative agreement are finalized, the BLET Executive Committee will proceed to the next step in the process,” he said.

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In terms of health and welfare, the BLET was able to maintain a 100 percent carrier-paid medical plan.

“In this day and age of soaring medical costs, it is a tremendous benefit to our members to provide zero-cost medical care,” General Chairman Quinn said.

The BLET also achieved improvements in dental and vision plans. In both cases, the carrier is increasing each benefit by 10 percent.

General Chairman Quinn said the BLET is proud of its membership pension plan at the LIRR. In the current contract, the BLET maintains a provision that allows members to retire at age 55 with 30 years of service with no reduction in their pension. Under the new agreement, there is a provision that provides members the opportunity to retire at age 60 (with less than 30 years of service) with no reduction in their pension.

Members participating in the pre-1988 plan are not affected under the new contract. Those hired after 1988 contribute 3 percent of their pay to the pension fund for 10 years, which is also a holdover from the original agreement. The new contract affects those hired after the new ratification date, who will contribute 4 percent of their pay to the pension fund for 10 years.

With more than 430 members, Division 209 is the single largest division in the BLET. The Long Island Rail Road is the busiest commuter railroad in North America, carrying an average of 288,000 customers each weekday on 728 daily trains. Chartered on April 24, 1834, it is also the oldest railroad still operating under its original name. A subsidiary of New York State’s Metropolitan Transportation Authority, the LIRR marked its 170th Anniversary in 2004.

The railroad community helped Brother Lehnen win the online voting contest and the $1,000 gift certificate." I want to thank my wife and my union Brothers who voted for entering me into the contest and my union Sisters who voted for me,” he said.

A road engineer, Lehnen normally runs trains from St. Paul, Minn., to Virden, Ill., or to St. James, Minn. Each run is approximately 132 miles.

The most rewarding aspect of my job is in knowing that I am a part of the long standing tradition of the Union Pacific Railroad,” Lehnen said. “American jobs for American people.”

He said he was first drawn to The Working Person’s Store website because he wanted to buy American-made clothes for work. While he hasn’t spent the entire $1,000 voucher yet, he said that nearly everything he’s ordered has been made by American companies and that he plans to do that in the U.S.A. He also plans to use part of his winnings to buy something for his wife. “Without her I wouldn’t have been in the contest,” he said.

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Amtrak PEB

Agreements reached are publicly made available, we will be comprehensively reviewed. As the agreement is being finalized to fully anticipate and respond to whatever Amtrak’s position at the bargaining table may be. The Amtrak Committee carefully recognizes that the last eight years of this bargaining stalemate have been a very long and difficult struggle for all of our Members, and their families, who have worked so hard and sacrificed so much to keep Amtrak afloat during truly uncertain times. Our Members deserve nothing less than to be compensated with a fair and equitable collective bargaining agreement that allows them the means to stay ahead of the ever growing economic difficulties plaguing countless hard working families throughout the United States. Furthermore, we are wholly resolved to deliver our Membership a contract that we anticipate will meet with their approval for ratification. As with any collective bargaining process, we urge our Union’s membership to be patient and support as that process continues to unfold. As information relevant to the bargaining process is developed, it will be timely passed along to the Membership via our Regional and Division Local Chairmen through our Regional and Divisional reports.

Agenda for the next President

• We want a president who will end the so-called “free trade” agreements that do nothing but give big businesses access to cheap foreign labor at the expense of the U.S. worker. In this global economy, we must help other countries push for better working conditions.

• We want a president who wants “Made in the USA” imprints on goods to take back “Made in China” labels.

• We want a president who believes in strong workers’ rights, where everyone is treated with respect and dignity they deserve. We want a president who will not just talk about change, but will come in on day one and focus on workers’ rights, fair trade agreements, and universal health care.

• We need a president who will sign the Employee Free Choice Act (EFCA) into law, which would allow employees, off of company grounds, to form unions and strike for union representation, and it would require companies to remain publicly neutral.

• These are the changes we expect the presidential candidates to talk about in the coming months in great detail. And these are the changes our next president must bring to Washington to rebuild America.

James P. Hoffa
General President

FEBRUARY 24-27... Education & Training Dept. Secretary-Treasurer Workshop, Dallas, TX
The BLET Education and Training Department will conduct a workshop for Secretary-Treasurers at the American Airlines Training and Conference Center in Dallas, Texas. See Page 5 of this issue for details.

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MARCH 9-14... Education & Training Dept. Legislative Rep. Workshop, Washington, D.C.
The BLET Education and Training Department will conduct a workshop for Legislative Representatives at Terminus Headquarters in Washington, D.C. See Page 5 of this issue for details.

JUNE 15-19... 81st Annual Southeastern Meeting Association, Montgomery, Ala.
Chairman Jason Popovt of BLET Division 495 will host the 81st annual SMA at the Embassy Suites in Montgomery, Ala. Details to come soon!

JULY 6-10... 70th Annual Eastern Western Convention Meeting, Horon, Ohio
Arrangements Chairman Rodney Curl is planning the 2006 E&W at Souvlaki Creek Resort, which is a 45-minute drive east of BLET National Division headquarters in Cleveland, Ohio. Details to come soon!

AUGUST 17-20... 48th International Western Convention, San Luis Obispo, Calif.
Chairman Mike Gahan hosts the 2008 IWC at the Embassy Suites Hotel-San Luis Obispo in San Luis Obispo, Calif. Details to come soon!

SEPTEMBER 14-18... 73rd Southwestern Convention Meeting, St. Louis, Mo.
Chairman David Grimes and the members of Division 42 host the 2008 SWC at the St. Louis Hilton at the Ballpark (One South Broadway, St. Louis, Mo.). More details to come soon!

Advisory Board November Activity

In accordance with the BLET Bylaws, summaries of BLET Advisory Board members’ activities are published monthly.

NATIONAL OFFICERS

National President Don M. Hahs

First Vice-President Richard K. Radek

Vice-President Paul T. Sorrow

Senior Vice-President Stephen D. Speagle

National Secretary-Treasurer William C. Waipner

Division Chairmen

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Southeastern Region Chair: Don M. Hahs, National President.

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Western Region Chair: John P. Tolman, Vice-President & U.S. National Legislative Rep.

Texas Region Chair: Richard C. Atwood, Vice-President Southern Region.

Long Island Region Chair: Stephen D. Speagle, Vice-President Northern Region.

New England Region Chair: William C. Waipner, First Vice-President.

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LOCOMOTIVE ENGINEERS AND TRAINMEN NEWS
Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen
A Division of the Rail Conference, International Brotherhood of Teamsters

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