



NEWS

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A supreme win for Rail Labor

Supreme Court rejects carriers' attempt to reverse favorable FMLA ruling

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 collective bargaining rights by forcing members to exhaust personal leave and vacation days prior to

taking unpaid leave under the Family and Medical Leave Act. This victory was a long time coming, but it shows what Rail Labor can achieve when we work together."

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 entire 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 2" compe-

tion 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



Brother Lehnen and two of his daughters.

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

See Brother Lehnen, Page 7

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 1979.

"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 288,000 passengers per day.

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2008 BLET SCHOLARSHIP DIRECTORY

James R. Hoffa Memorial Scholarship Fund

Teamsters offer 31 awards that total \$10,000 each, plus 69 one-time grants of \$1,000 each

The James R. Hoffa Memorial Scholarship Fund awards scholarships annually to outstanding high school seniors, and 100 scholarships will be awarded during the upcoming 2008-2009 school year.

Applicants compete in one of the five geographic regions where the Teamster parent/grandparent's Local Union is located. The Teamsters will award 31 scholarships that total \$10,000 each (\$2,500 a year over four years) and an additional 69 awards that are one-time grants of \$1,000 each.

For the last few years, the children and grandchildren of BLET members have been eligible to apply for the James R. Hoffa Memorial Scholarship following the merger of the BLET with the International Brotherhood of Teamsters. In fact, several children of BLET members have won the \$10,000 scholarship.

This year's program is open to high school seniors graduating in 2008, who plan to attend a four-year college in the fall of 2008. The applicant should:

- Rank in the top 15 percent of their high school class; and
- Have, or expect to have, excellent SAT or ACT scores.

The applicant must be a son, daughter or grandchild of a Teamster member who has been in good standing during the 12 consecutive months preceding the application deadline of March 30, 2007. Furthermore, the Teamster member must not have been a full-time elected officer during the 12 months preceding the application deadline date of March 30, 2008.

Due to the highly competitive nature of the program and the large number of applicants, students should carefully consider these criteria before submitting an application.

Hoffa Scholarship Information at www.ble-t.org

Members and their children are encouraged to visit the BLET website to print and download necessary paperwork for the Hoffa Scholarship Fund.

Hoffa Memorial Scholarship brochure, for members to display at their places of work:
http://www.ble-t.org/pr/pdf/2008jrhbrochure_eng.pdf

Applicants must fill out the following application and academic record form in order to apply:
http://www.ble-t.org/pr/pdf/2008_JRHapplicationandrecord_eng.pdf

Applications are available from all IBT and GCC Local Unions, the BLET National Division website and BMWED System Federations.

Applications must be received by the Scholarship Fund by March 30, 2008.

For more details, please contact:

James R. Hoffa Memorial Scholarship Fund
IBT Headquarters
25 Louisiana Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20001
(202) 624-8735 •

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 MWRCSF are available to children of railroads 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 37 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 rewarded," 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 tourney is normally held at another location later in the summer. Dates and locations of the 2007 fund raisers will be announced at a later date. Updates will be provided on the MWRCSF website.

Please use the scholarship application on the MWRCSF website. Fill it out electronically, print it, attach the proper signatures and mail it to the address provided. The deadline for receiving applications is normally in June.

To download a copy of the application, and for other information about the MWRCSF, please visit their website: <http://www.mwrscsf.org> . •

BRCF scholarships

BRCF sets March 1 deadline for Luther G. Smith scholarships

The Brotherhood's Relief and Compensation Fund (BR&CF) has announced changes to its annual Luther G. Smith Scholarship Program.

BR&CF President J.M. Robb explained that under the old scholarship rules, previous winners could receive financial assistance through the Program until they achieved the degree level sought at the time of the initial scholarship award, not to exceed four years (providing they met eligibility requirements).

The 2007 winners still fall under those guidelines. Beginning with the 2008 winners, however, each winner will receive a one-time award of \$1,000.

Applications are available to the children, stepchildren and adopted children, age 27 and younger, of active BR&CF members who are "In Good and Regular Standing," as defined by the BR&CF Constitution.

Members with questions should contact Nita Saultz of the BR&CF at (800) 233-7080.

For more details, visit the BR&CF website at www.brcf.org, or write:

Brotherhood's Relief & Compensation Fund
2150 Linglestown Road
Harrisburg, PA 17110

BLET Division scholarships

• **BLET Division 269 (Jamaica, Long Island, N.Y.)** offers two \$500 scholarships to the children of BLET members who are already enrolled in college. Participation is limited to members of Division 269 only.

Winners are picked at random at the division's Christmas party. For details, watch your Division 269 newsletter or contact Division President Scott Decker at (516) 932-7130.

• **Two \$250 scholarships are available to children of BLET Division 57 members (Boston, Mass.)**.

The scholarships are awarded to college-bound high school seniors, and will be awarded based on their score on a labor history exam, administered by the Massachusetts AFL-CIO, said Walter H. Nutter of Division 57.

By taking the exam, students also become eligible for eight more scholarships through the Massachusetts AFL-CIO. While the Division 57 scholarship is limited to children of that division's

members, the general AFL-CIO scholarship competition is open to children of all BLET members living in Massachusetts. This year's test will be given on February 6. Members are advised to make preparations in fall 2008 if they wish to apply for the 2009 scholarship.

The scholarship forms and the labor history exam study guide are available on the Division 57 website at: www.ble57.org. For details, email whnutter@yahoo.com, or www.massafleo.org/scholarship-program.

• **BLET Division 11 (New York, N.Y.)** awards a one-time \$500 scholarship annually to a child of any active member of Division 11 who pays local dues each month. Children who win are not eligible again. Deadline is June 1 and the winner will be announced at the June Division meeting. For details, contact Division 11 Sec.-Treas. Lorna K. Stevens at 1970 Veterans Hwy., Apt. C18, Levittown, PA 19056-2523, or email at STble11@comcast.net . •

2008 BLET SCHOLARSHIP DIRECTORY

BLET Auxiliary scholarship deadline is April 1

The BLET Auxiliary offers \$1,000 scholarships annually to help the children of BLET and Auxiliary members realize their goals in life.

There are two very strict guidelines that must be met in order to be eligible. First, the applicant must be a son or daughter of both an Auxiliary and BLET member (living or deceased), with each being a member for two years. Second, the applicant must be 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

Meeting Association (EUMA). This covers Divisions, Auxiliaries and Members-at-Large in the following states: Connecticut, Delaware, Illinois, Indiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Vermont, Washington D.C., and West Virginia. Applicants for the Auxiliary-EUMA scholarship must have a parent participating in the EUMA.

In order to continue to be eligible for the joint Auxiliary-IWC-EUMA scholarship beyond the first quarter and/or semester, the recipient must maintain satisfactory academic status. If the applicant is a graduate student or returning to school as a sophomore, junior or senior, he or she must have a

3.0 grade point average or better to be considered. The applicant must also be accepted to an accredited school. The deadline for these scholarships is April 1, 2008. Late applications will not be considered.

Auxiliary application forms are online at: <http://www.bletauxiliary.net>, or you can link from the BLET Website under "Departments."

In addition to the application, the Auxiliary website provides scholarship applicants with more detailed instructions on the application process.

Mail completed forms to: Anita J. Caruso, National Secretary, 3341 S. 112th Street, Omaha, NE 68144-4709. For details, email Sister Caruso at: Bunziegia@cox.net. •

Annual scholarship for Calif. members available from State Legislative Board

The BLET's California State Legislative Board offers a scholarship each year to a graduating senior who will attend college, trade or vocational school in the coming year.

The applicant's parent or guardian must be a BLET member in good standing and in a Division represented by the California State Legislative Board.

Last year, the Board offered two \$1,000 scholarships. Applications and deadline information are available on the Board's website, <http://www.calslb.com>

All applications should be mailed to the CSLB home office address:

California State Legislative Board, BLET/IBT
610 Auburn Ravine Rd.
Suite C
Auburn, CA 95603

International Western Convention-BLET Auxiliary offer joint scholarships

Because of the tremendous support for its scholarship program at past conventions, and by vote of its delegates, the International Western Convention is offering more \$1,000 scholarships to BLET members in 2008 than ever before. Children of members from Divisions current with their IWC dues from the following areas are eligible: the

states of Ariz., Calif., Colo., Idaho, Minn., Mont., Nev., N.M., Ore., Utah, Wash., Wisc., Wyo.; and from the Provinces of Alberta, British Columbia, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and portions of northern Ontario (such as Thunder Bay and Sioux Lookout).

The deadline for submitting applications is April 1, 2008. Late applica-

tions will not be considered. The BLET Auxiliary administers the IWC scholarship program, so please send completed applications to Anita Caruso (see article above for contact information and application forms).

Eligibility questions should be directed to Jim Lance, IWC Secretary-Treasurer at kickem228@aol.com. •

BNSF, NS offer financial aid to children of employees

The Burlington Northern Santa Fe Foundation Scholarship Program began accepting requests for applications on Jan. 1, 2008, and applications must be post marked by April 1, 2008.

The program will award 35 scholarships, \$2,500 each, for the 2008-2009 academic school year. The program is available to current high school seniors who are the dependent sons, daughters or stepchildren of full-time BNSF employees or retired, disabled or deceased employees of BNSF or its predecessor companies. Full-time employees must have at least two years of service as of Jan. 1, 2007, and must still be employed by BNSF when winners are selected in April.

A direct website link is available again this year so applicants can electronically fill out an application request. As in the past, you may request an application starting Jan. 1, 2007, by

either mailing or faxing in the request. You may also request an application or apply directly online by accessing the following website: <https://www.scholarshipadministrators.net> and follow the instructions. You will be asked to use the access code "BNSF."

Or you can request information and an application by mail:

Scholarship Program Administrators

P.O. Box 23737

Nashville, Tenn., 37202-3737

Phone: (615) 320-3149, ext. 106

Fax: (615) 320-3151

E-mail:

info@scholarshipadministrators.com

• Children of Norfolk Southern employees who are juniors in high school should apply for one of the four-year NS scholarships to be awarded in 2009.

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. Competition for these scholarships is open to children of active, retired or deceased employees of NS and its participating affiliates. Applicants must be in their junior year of high school and plan to enter college in 2009.

To compete for a scholarship, a student must take the Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test on Oct. 17 or Oct. 20, 2007.

Students also must complete and submit the 2009 Norfolk Southern Scholarship Program Entry Form by Feb. 28, 2008. The application process utilizes a web-based brochure and entry form created by NMSC. Go to <https://programentry.nationalmerit.org/>

JRNHLKKH to begin the registration and application process.

As the Norfolk Southern program runs on an earlier schedule than most scholarship programs, it is advised that current high school sophomores begin making preparations now to apply for 2010 NS scholarships.

Questions can be addressed to Norfolk Southern Corp., Scholarship Program Coordinator, Three Commercial Place, Norfolk, Va., 23510, or to the Human Resources Help Desk at (800) 267-3313, or send an e-mail to nseducation@nscorp.com.

The amount of each NS scholarship is determined individually and can range from \$1,000 to a maximum of \$4,000 a year for up to four years of college study, or until baccalaureate degree requirements are completed, whichever comes first. The amount is determined by NMSC. •

SMA Scholarships

The Southeastern Meeting Association (SMA) Scholarship Committee awards the Geiger-Brendle Scholarships each year to the children of active or retired BLET members whose divisions participate in the SMA.

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 selected and announced at the SMA's 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.

SWCM Scholarships

The Southwestern Convention Meeting (SWCM) 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 belongs to the Southwestern Convention Meeting. Applicants must be accepted for admission to an accredited college, university or institution of higher learning. Only divisions belonging to the SWCM are eligible.

SWCM application forms can be filled out on your computer screen with the interactive PDF form available on the BLET website. Deadline is August 1, 2008. Divisions must have paid their annual SWCM convention dues for applicants from their Division to be eligible.

Instructions:

<http://www.ble-t.org/pr/swcmsch.asp>

Interactive PDF application form:

<http://www.ble-t.org/pdf/swcmapp.pdf>

EUMA Scholarships

The Eastern Union Meeting Association awards one \$2,000 Robert Pentland Memorial Scholarship and several other \$1,000 scholarships each year based on academic excellence and financial need. Only children of BLET members (living or deceased) belonging to divisions participating in the EUMA are eligible to apply. Division must be square on the books for the child to qualify. States represented in EUMA are Connecticut, Delaware, Illinois, Indiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Vermont, Washington D.C., and West Virginia.

The 2008 EUMA deadline is June 15, 2008. Send completed applications to:

Jim Louis, EUMA Sec.-Treas.

257 Forbes Ave.

Tonawanda, NY 14150

Applications are on the BLET website at: <http://www.ble-t.org/pr/pdf/eumasch.pdf>

DESIGNATED LEGAL 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.

ARKANSAS

Kujawski & Nowak, P.C.
201 W. Broadway, Suite E
N. Little Rock, AR 72114
(501) 372-8047 or (800) 624-4571
Fax: (501) 372-4379
Website: <www.kujawski-nowak.com>
John P. Kujawski

CALIFORNIA

The Crow Law Firm
700 "E" Street
Sacramento, CA 95814-1230
(916) 441-2980 or (800) 795-6555
Fax: (916) 441-3846
Email: <Dfrias@crowlaw.com>
Joseph J. Weninger

Pfiester Law Corporation
2000 Riverside Drive
Los Angeles, CA 90039
(323) 662-6400 or (800) 344-3352
Fax: (323) 669-8549
Website: <www.pfiesterlaw.com>
R. Edward Pfiester Jr.

COLORADO

Rossi, Cox, Vucinovich P.C.
3801 East Florida Ave., Suite 905
Denver, CO 80210-2500
(303) 759-3500 or (800) 325-4014
Fax: (303) 759-3180
Website: www.rcvpc.com
Email: jcox@rcvpc.com
James L. Cox Jr.

FLORIDA

Moody, Strople, Kloeppe, Basilone & Higginbotham, Inc.
1400 Baymeadows Way, Suite 105
Jacksonville, FL 32256
(904) 256-0018 or (800) 813-8608
Fax: (904) 256-0019
Website: <www.moodyrllaw.com>
Willard J. Moody Jr.

Sams & Hollon, P.A.
Baywood Center
9424 Baymeadows Road, Suite 160
Jacksonville, FL 32256
(904) 737-1995 or (800) 327-4552
Fax: (904) 737-3838
Alva Hollon Jr.

GEORGIA

Matthews & Steel
15 Piedmont Center, Suite 1560
3575 Piedmont Rd. NE
Atlanta, GA 30305
(404) 264-1292 or (800) 776-0098
Fax: (404) 264-0161
John D. Steel

Jones & Granger
1201 Peachtree Street, NE
400 Colony Square, Suite 1900
Atlanta, GA 30361
(404) 522-4414 or (800) 628-6470
Fax: (404) 872-9430
Email: <btra@jonesgranger.com>
Robert M. Tramuto

Harp & Callier, L.L.P.
P.O. Box 2645, The Corporate Center
Suite 900, 233 12th St.
Columbus, GA 31902-2645
(706) 323-7711 or (800) 422-3352
Fax: (706) 323-7544
Email: <HarpRailLaw@aol.com>
Email: <aharp@harp.callier.com>
Website: <www.harpcallier.com>
J. Anderson "Andy" Harp

ILLINOIS

Blunt & Associates, Ltd.
60 Edwardsville Professional Park,
P.O. Box 373
Edwardsville, IL 62025

(618) 656-7744 or (800) 323-5538
Fax: (618) 656-7849
Email: <michaelb@bluntlaw.com>
David L. Blunt

Daniel J. Downes, P.C.
111 W. Washington St., Suite 1100
Chicago, IL 60601
(312) 781-1852 or (800) 624-2121
Fax: (312) 781-1854
Email: <dan@dandownes.com>
Website: <www.feladownes.com>
Daniel J. Downes

Kujawski & Nowak, P.C.
1331 Park Plaza Drive, Suite 2
O'Fallon, IL 62269-1764
(618) 622-3600 or (800) 624-4571
Fax: (618) 622-3700
Website: <kujawski-nowak.com>
John P. Kujawski

Sands & Associates
33 North Dearborn St., Suite 1630
Chicago, IL 60602
(312) 236-4980 or (800) 832-1999
Fax: (312) 236-1711
Email: <scsands@ameritech.net>
Scott C. Sands

Schlichter, Bogard & Denton
2661 North Illinois, Suite 187
Swansea, IL 62226
(800) 873-5297
Fax: (314) 621-7151
Email: <jschlichter@uselaws.com>
Jerome J. Schlichter

Hoey & Farina
542 South Dearborn, Suite 200
Chicago, IL 60605
(312) 939-1212 or (888) 425-1212
Email: Info@hoeyfarina.com
www.hoeyfarina.com
James L. Farina

LOUISIANA

Davis • Saunders Law Firm
500 Mariners Plaza Drive
Suite 504
Mandeville, LA 70448
(985) 612-3070 or (800) 321-7815
Fax: (985) 612-3072
Website: <www.davissaunders.com>
Email: <Benbsaunders@aol.com>
Ben B. Saunders

MASSACHUSETTS

Thornton & Naumes LLP
100 Summert St., 30th Floort
Boston, MA 02110
(617) 720-1333 or (800) 431-4600
Fax: (617) 720-2445
Website: <www.tenlaw.com>
Email: rnaumes@tenlaw.com
Robert T. Naumes

MICHIGAN

E.J. Leizerman & Associates
24750 Lasher Road
Southfield, MI 48034
(313) 962-3666 or (800) 628-4500
Fax: (419) 243-8200
Website: www.thefela.com
Email: ej@leizerman.com
E.J. Leizerman

MINNESOTA

Hunegs, LeNeave & Kvas, P.A.
900 Second Ave. South, Suite 1650
Minneapolis, MN 55402
(612) 339-4511 or (800) 328-4340
Fax: (612) 339-5150
Website: <www.hunegslaw.com>
Email: <RleNeave@Hunegslaw.com>
Randal W. LeNeave

Ingebritson & Associates, P.A.
Medical Arts Building, Suite 1025
825 Nicollet Mall
Minneapolis, MN 55402
(612) 340-8290 or (800) 282-6393
Fax: (612) 342-2990
Website: <www.ingebritson.com>
Russell A. Ingebritson

Yaeger, Jungbauer & Barczak, PLC
745 Kasota Ave. SE
Minneapolis, MN 55414
(612) 333-6371 or (800) 435-7888
Fax: (612) 333-3619
Website: <www.yjblaw.com>
Email: <wjungbauer@yjblaw.com>
William G. Jungbauer

MISSOURI

Hubbell, Peak, O'Neal, Napier & Leach
30 West Pershing Road, Suite 350
Kansas City, MO 64108-2463
(816) 221-5666 or (800) 821-5257
Fax: (816) 221-5259
Gene Napier

Bauer & Baebler, P.C.
1716 S. Broadway
St. Louis, MO 63104
(314) 241-7700 or (800) 682-4529
Fax: (314) 241-0003
Website: <www.RailLaw.com>
Joseph L. Bauer, Esq.

Schlichter, Bogard & Denton
100 S. 4th St., Suite 900
St. Louis, MO 63102
(314) 621-6115 or (800) 873-5297
Fax: (314) 621-7151
Email: <jschlichter@uselaws.com>
Jerome J. Schlichter

Rathmann & O'Brien, L.L.C.
1031 Lami Street
St. Louis, MO 63104
(314) 773-3456 or (800) 238-4122
Fax: (314) 773-7238
Dennis T. Rathmann

Yaeger, Jungbauer & Barczak, PLC
1010 Market St., Suite 1440
St. Louis, Missouri 63101
(314) 621-1775 or (800) 878-4074
Fax: (314) 621-4688
Website: <www.yjblaw.com>
Email: <wjungbauer@yjblaw.com>
William G. Jungbauer

NEW YORK

Collins & Collins
267 North St.
Buffalo, NY 14201
(716) 885-9700 or (800) 933-8195
Fax: (716) 885-9770
John F. Collins

OHIO

E.J. Leizerman & Associates, LLC
717 Madison Ave.
Toledo, OH 43624
(419) 243-1010 or (800) 843-3352
Fax: (419) 243-8200
Website: www.thefela.com
Email: ej@leizerman.com
E.J. Leizerman

OREGON

Rose, Senders & Bovarnick, LLP
1205 N.W. 25th Ave.
Portland, OR 97210
(503) 227-2486 or (800) 998-9776
Fax: (503) 226-3131
Paul S. Bovarnick

PENNSYLVANIA

Coffey, Kaye, Myers & Olley
Suite 718, Two Bala Plaza
Bala Cynwyd, PA 19004

(610) 668-9800 or (800) 334-2500
Fax: (610) 667-3352
Website: http://www.ckmolaw.com
Email: <mikeolley@comcast.net>
Michael J. Olley

Keller & Goggin, P.C.
1528 Walnut Street, Suite 1900
Philadelphia, PA 19102
(215) 735-8780 or (800) 666-FELA
Fax: (215) 735-5126
Website: www.keller-goggin.com
William L. Keller

TEXAS

Jones & Granger
10000 Memorial Drive, Suite 888
Houston, TX 77210
(713) 668-0230 or (800) 231-3359
Fax: (713) 956-7139
Email: btra@jonesgranger.com
Robert M. Tramuto

The Cartall Law Firm
7551 Callaghan Road, Suite 350
San Antonio, TX 78229
(210) 344-1111
Fax: (210) 344-5844
Bryan P. Cartall, Esq.

McKinney & McKinney
550 Wescott, Suite 590
Houston, TX 77007
(713) 869-1500 or (800) 709-9093
Fax: (713) 880-4638
Website: www.piattorney.com
R.L. Pete McKinney

Tavormina & Young, LLP
1300 Post Oak Blvd., Suite 1750
Houston, TX 77056
(713) 333-3070 or (888) 565-7245
Fax: (713) 333-3075
Website: www.TavorminaYoung.com
Email: syoung@tavorminayoung.com
Steve Young

UTAH

Hatch, James & Dodge
10 West Broadway, Suite 400
Salt Lake City, UT 84101
(801) 363-6363 or (800) 574-6310
Fax: (801) 363-6666
Email: <bhatch@hjdllaw.com>
Brent O. Hatch

VIRGINIA

Moody, Strople, Kloeppe, Basilone & Higginbotham, Inc.
500 Crawford St., Suite 300
P.O. Box 1138
Portsmouth, VA 23705
(757) 393-4093 or (800) 368-1033
Fax: (757) 397-7257
Website: <www.moodyrllaw.com>
Willard J. Moody Jr.

Rutter Mills
160 West Brambleton Ave.
Norfolk, VA 23510
(757) 622-5000 or (800) 933-5879
Fax: (757) 623-9189
C. Arthur Rutter, III

Hajek, Shapiro, Cooper, Lewis & Appleton, P.C.
1294 Diamond Springs Road
Virginia Beach, VA 23455
(757) 460-7776 or (800) 752-0042
Fax: (757) 460-3428
Website: <www.hsinjurylaw.com>
Richard N. Shapiro

Hunegs, LeNeave & Kvas, P.A.
1000 Second Avenue, Suite 3310
Seattle, WA 98104-1046
(206) 621-0600 or (800) 525-3352
Fax: (206) 621-6443
Website: <www.hunegslaw.com>
Email: <RleNeave@Hunegslaw.com>
Randal W. LeNeave

WASHINGTON

Rossi, Cox, Vucinovich P.C.
10900 N.E. 8th St., Suite 1122
Bellevue, WA 98004
(425) 646-8003 or (866) 357-7245
Website: www.rcvpc.com
Email: jcox@rcvpc.com
James L. Cox Jr.

• • •

Send address changes to:
John Bentley, BLET Public Relations
1370 Ontario St., Mezzanine
Cleveland, OH 44113-1702
Bentley@ble-t.org · As of Nov. 11, 2007

BLET plans two S-T workshops for early 2008

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 990-N and EFTPS 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 & 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 \$109 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 (BR&CF) 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 BR&CF, 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.ble-t.org/st>.

Members are responsible for making their reservations at the workshops. They will be given hotel contact information and special room rate information when they receive their confirmation after registering online at: <http://www.ble-t.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 details, please contact Ken Kroeger of the Education & Training Dept. at (216) 272-0986 or kroeger@ble-t.org. •

Second notice: Dependent eligibility audit for insurance continues

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

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 definition of "dependent" 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 pre-

miums from unnecessarily raising.

Two of the largest areas of concern are divorces 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 Aetna National Dental Plan are involved in the audit and should have received a notice of participation that provided an audit helpline telephone number (1-866-682-5619). 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 terminated from all plans if no response is provided. The BLET National Division is receiving feedback from some 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. •

NEWS BRIEFS

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.

According to the Federal mandate, a minimum of 25 percent of rail workers will be subject to random drug testing. In addition, a minimum of 10 percent will be subject to random alcohol testing.

The Federal Railroad Administration sets the number each year based on test results of the previous 12 months. The more positive tests the FRA finds, the higher the percentage of workers tested. The reverse is also true — the percentage of workers tested decreases when fewer positives tests are found.

The 2008 rates for drug and alcohol testing are the same as 2007.

Members who have issues can seek help through Employee Assistance Programs and Operation Redblock. The 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 Chairmen (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 issues);
- 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 \$109 per day (\$436 total) from the North American Railway Foundation (NARF). The stipends will be paid directly to the State Legislative Board or Division Sec-

retary-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 future workshop at the BLET website, <http://www.ble-t.org/lr>.

For more information, please call the BLET National Legislative Office at (202) 624-8776. •

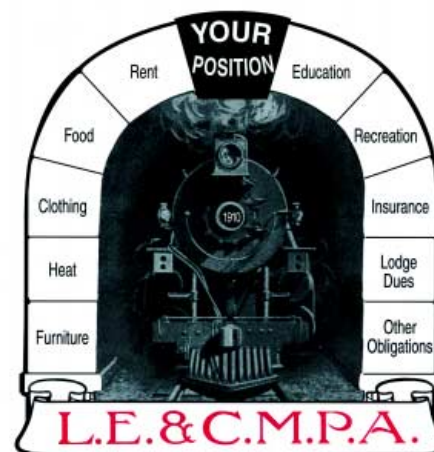
Locomotive Engineers & Conductors Mutual Protective Association

535 Griswold • Suite 1210 • Detroit, MI 48226-3689

(800) 514-0010 • (313) 962-1512

FAX: (877) 633-1910 • E-MAIL: lecmpa1910@lecmpa.org •

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BLET AUXILIARY UPDATE

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 long-time 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 suffering a broken wrist, Mabel feels she can no longer perform the duties of Auxiliary National Vice President up to her standards. As you will see below, her 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.

Mabel joined the Grand International Auxiliary to the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers (GIA) in March of 1987. She is a charter member of 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, politely of course, when their understanding of an issue was wrong. With previous lobbying experience under her belt, she hit the ground running, raising the bar incredibly high for future National Legislative Representatives.

Sister Grotzinger gained a great deal of lobbying experience in her home 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 for critical incident stress provisions in the collective bargaining agreement. Mabel displayed abilities and natural talent to grasp BLE issues and so she was called up 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 a learning experience. Cold calls to legislators were 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 quick study and ready to hit the ground at a moment's notice."

Chairman Kertesz goes on to say, "In 1998, 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 Monin. 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 BLET 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 BLET salutes Sister Grotzinger and wishes her nothing but the very best in her endeavors and good health for many 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.

In October of 2000, due to the resignation of the International GIA Vice President, Mabel reluctantly assumed the office of 1st Vice President. Her passion was in the legislative arena, but she made the move for the good of the Order. As 1st Vice President, she became a member of the Executive Council, the governing body that oversees Auxiliary business between Conventions. Then-GIA President Ruth Windham appointed me to fill out her term as 2nd Vice President, and all I can say is that Mabel left some pretty big shoes to fill; however, she did provide the patience and mentoring I needed in order to continue her work.

Together in 2001, we continued efforts to pass the re-filed Railroad Retirement Reform Act, and because of a change in Senate leadership late that year, success was finally realized. While I may have held the official title of NLR, Mabel's close proximity to Washington allowed her to be there on short notice to represent the Auxiliary, and her close relationship with the late Betty Child, Office Administrator for the BLE D.C. office, gave her an inside advantage. At one point, because the D.C. office was short staffed, she became the office's unofficial Amtrak representative sent to monitor and report on the numerous hearings on Amtrak reform.

When Mabel moved into the 1st Vice President's position, she was no stranger to the Executive Council. Because of Court rulings prohibiting the BLE from striking over safety issues, then-BLE President Monin saw a new way in which the Auxiliary could aide the BLE in addressing those issues. He approached GIA President Windham, and together they came up with a strategy for mobilizing our members. Sister Windham put Mabel in charge of coordinating our mobilization team and ensured that they were well trained. Conference calls were then held by the Executive Council on a quarterly basis, and Mabel reported her progress, as



Mabel Grotzinger reflects on a hard day of lobbying in front of the State House in Harrisburg, Pa. In inscription on the bench reads, "There is a time to pray and a time to fight." (Photo courtesy Carrie Cornman)

well as keeping the Council abreast on current legislative issues, which were many.

When asked what Sister Windham valued most from Mabel's contributions, she said, "during my tenure as International President beginning in 1996, our motto was to 'Grow, Inform, and Achieve.' Mabel's friendly, motivated, and hardworking attitude helped in that respect. No job was too large or too small for Sister Grotzinger. For me, she was a good source for 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."

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 proactive 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, by her side during some of the more trying times, it would have been harder to overcome the adversities the Auxiliary experienced."

Also in 2001, the 7th Quadrennial Convention created the office of Auxiliary State Legislative Representatives to work in concert with the various State Legislative Board Chairmen. Since Sister Grotzinger had already been doing the job, she was officially appointed the Pennsylvania State Legislative Representative by International President Onita Wayland.

I remember our first Council meeting in Waco, Texas, at which we shared a room. We had become close, realizing that we had so much in common even though we were born on opposite sides of the Mason-Dixon line. We were almost like sisters. She didn't know me from Adam when Sister Windham appointed me, but it only took one phone call to realize that our passions and ideas for ways the Auxiliary could help the BLE were very similar. As we dressed for our first meeting, to our surprise, we were dressed almost identically. Apparently, not only did we share the same fire and passion, we had

the same taste in clothes, and frequented the same stores. From then on we coordinated who would wear what so it would not appear like a legislative uniform.

During President Wayland's term, Mabel's husband Michael was diagnosed with cancer, and Mabel's world was turned upside down. She continued to do the best she could to fulfill her duties as Vice President, in part because Mike wouldn't let her stop. As she knows, he was one of the Auxiliary's staunchest supporters, who offered advice and help whenever and wherever he could. Even when she would want to stay home to help take care of him, he would send her off to meetings. I personally miss discussions Mike and I had, which more often than not resulted in a difference of opinion, but I respected his openness and genuine concern for us, the Auxiliary, and the BLE.

Michael left us in February of 2006, our convention year, and in part because of the drastic change in Mabel's life, she decided not to run for President. It was something Mike wanted her to do - to be the first President in many years who was married to an active BLE member. However, she did not feel she was in a position to give it her all, and she knew she would need to return to work because she was still too young to draw retirement benefits.

At our convention in June, a special dispensation was made to allow Mabel to run for Vice President a second time, waiving the term limits, and she was re-elected by acclamation. In spite of her desire to move on, between the need to work full time and the unfortunate accident that shattered her wrist, it became clear that she needed some time to take care of herself, so with reluctance she tendered her resignation.

We have grown accustomed to seeing Mabel at Executive Council meetings and conventions and will miss her, but I'm pretty sure we have not seen the last of her. Perhaps when she has had some time to heal her heart and body, she will be back with the tenacity and passion that has been her mantra.

This is so long and good luck, but not good bye, our Friend and Sister. •

BLET NEWS

A message from Teamsters General President Jim Hoffa

Agenda for the next President

A January 7 *Detroit News* online column by Amber Arellano told about a Michigan man who had worked as a skilled tradesman for more than 20 years. But as American companies began shifting jobs to foreign countries in search of cheaper labor, the man was hard-pressed to find work or a decent wage. He finally was forced to take a low-skilled, low-wage position. The column described the man as being depressed over losing the work he so loved to do.

The article hit a nerve with me because this man could be any of America's great working men and women. All the candidates keep talking about change, and how they will be the president to bring about a new way of governing to rebuild America.

From talking to the proud men and women who are Teamsters, I know a thing or two about what needs to be done to rebuild America.

Agenda for Next President

The outsourcing of jobs must come to an end. Every worker must be guaranteed a secure retirement future. Any talk of change must include a way to keep American jobs safe while keeping the United States a vital player in the global economy. There must be room at the table for workers' rights.

The Teamsters worked hard this past year to reinvigorate the American labor movement, and we hope the next president will join us in our battle to rebuild America.

- We are fighting to end policies that benefit big businesses but punish its workers. Policies like the Bush administration's plan to sidestep safety rules in their effort to open U.S. highways to Mexican trucks.

- 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 overtake "Made in China" labels.

- We want a president who believes in strong workers' rights, where everyone is treated with the 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 after a majority of workers sign cards for union representation, and it would require companies to remain publicly neutral.

These are the changes I 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

to the Membership via our Regional and Division Local Chairmen through normal communication channels," he said.

As this issue goes to press, it is expected the tentative agreement will be mailed to Amtrak members of the eight unions in late January. Each union will then go through its own constitutionally-mandated ratification processes, and it is expected that results will be made available to the public in late February or early March. •

Amtrak PEB

Continued from Page 7

agreements reached are made publicly available, we will be comprehensively reviewing those terms so as to fully anticipate and respond to whatever Amtrak's position at the bargaining table may be. The General Committee fully recognizes that the last eight years of this bargaining stalemate has been a very long and difficult struggle for all 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 delivering our Membership a contract that will meet with their approval for ratification, and we ask their continued patience and support as that process continues to unfold. As information relevant to the bargaining process is developed, it will be timely passed along

JANUARY 2008 CALENDAR & EVENTS

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.

MARCH 2-5... Education & Training Dept. Secretary-Treasurer Workshop, Jacksonville, Fla.
The BLET Education and Training Department will conduct a workshop for Secretary-Treasurers at the Crown Plaza Jacksonville Riverfront in Jacksonville, Fla. See Page 5 of this issue for details.

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 Teamster 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 Popwell 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 Union Meeting Association, Huron, Ohio
Arrangements Chairman Rodney Cutlip is planning the 2008 EUMA at Sawmill Creek Resort, which is a 45-minute drive east of BLET National Division headquarters in Cleveland, Ohio. Details to come!

AUGUST 17-20... 68th International Western Convention, San Luis Obispo, Calif.
Chairman Mike Galvani hosts the 2008 IWC at the Embassy Suites Hotel-San Luis Obispo. Details on More 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 SWCM at the St. Louis Hilton at the Ballpark (One South Broadway, St. Louis, Mo.). More details to come!

Advisory Board November Activity

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

National President Don M. Hahs—National Division office: General supervision of BLET activities; General office duties; Mtg. w/ Comm. Hagen and VP Tolman, Cleveland; 40th annual Long Island Rail Road dinner dance (retirement dinner); Bear Stearns Regulatory, Infrastructure & Labor conference, Washington, D.C.

First Vice-President & Alternate President Edward W. Rodziewicz— Assisted President in general operation of National Division Office; Various correspondence & phone calls; U.S.-Mexico cross border committee; Long Island Rail Road retirement dinner; South Buffalo RR investigations.

National Secretary-Treasurer William C. Walpert—General supervision of BLET financial, record depts.; ND office; BLET Education & Training Dept.; Internal Organizing, Mobilizing & Strategic Planning Dept.; Safety Task Force; Meetings with vendors and financial institutions; Standard Building operations oversight; Mtg. w/ Robert Hagen, Ohio State Representative, and Tim Hagen, Cuyahoga County Commissioner, re: Standard Building; Advanced Local Chairman's Workshop, National Labor College, Silver Spring, Md.

Vice-President Paul T. Sorrow—Assigned to CSX, NS and GTW general committees of adjustment; Assist CSX-Northern Lines at mtg. w/ Division 937 and CSX-Chicago Division officers; Assist Eastern Lines with various issues, including mtg. w/ Labor Relations; Assisted Western Lines with various issues, including but not limited to dispute resolution; Assisted Grand Trunk GCA with issues as called upon by General Chairman; Mtg. w/ President Hahs; General office duties, work on PLB cases, correspondence, telephone calls.

Vice-President Richard K. Radek— ND Office; BLET Decertification Helpline services; Director of Arbitration Dept; National Railroad Adjustment Board (NRAB); Illinois Central; Wisconsin Central; Indiana Harbor Belt; METRA; Belt Rwy. of Chicago; Chicago Central & Pacific; Iowa, Chicago & Eastern; Routine office duties; Arbitration postponed by NMB; National Division reports, Chicago; Advanced Local Chairmen Workshop, National Labor College, Silver Spring, Md.; Mediation-agreement, CN/WC, Homewood, Ill.; National Division Audit Committee & Advisory Board conference call, Cleveland; FRA Part 240.409 dockets this month: EQAL 05-31, 05-44, 05-56, 06-01.

Vice-President Dale McPherson — CP Rail; Port. Term. RR; Longview Portland & Northern; Longview Switching Co.; Indiana RR; W&LE RR; Utah Railroad; UP Eastern Dist.; UP former CNW; DM&IR RR; Portland & Western RR; Great Western RR; Appalachian & Ohio RR; Public Law Boards 5604, 5681, 5721, 6040, 6281, 6449, 6558, 6589; SBA 585; UP work/rest projects; RSAC positive train control cmtc.; National wage/rules; General office duties, correspondence, phone; Mtgs. w/ UP general chairmen, re: Alt. compensation, Bonita Springs, Fla.; Mtgs. w/ CN, re: Contract; CN-DMIR contract issues, Bloomington, Minn.

Vice-President Merle W. Geiger Jr.— Assigned to: BLET Trainmen's Department; Kansas City Southern; Gateway Western; Midsouth Rail; Southrail; Texas-Mexican Rwy.; Springfield Terminal, Delaware & Hudson; Indiana & Ohio RR; Louisville & Indiana RR; St. Lawrence & Atlantic RR; Indiana Southern RR; Montreal, Maine and Atlantic RR; Huron & Eastern RR contract mtgs., Chicago; Mtg. w/ GC Priestler and Division 270 (ISRR), Washington, Ind.; Advisory Board conference call; Bereavement leave; Holidays; Research; correspondence and general office duties.

Vice-President Stephen D. Speagle—Assigned to Burlington Northern Santa Fe, Montana Rail Link, Pacific Harbor Line, Missouri & Northern Arkansas (M&NA), National Wage/Rule Committee; Safety Summit II mtgs., BNSF, Kansas City; Vacation; Claims summit mtg., Fort Worth; Audit Committee, Cleveland.

Vice-President E.L. "Lee" Pruitt — Assisted general chairmen & members of: UP-Western Lines; UP-Western Region; UP-Central Region; UP-Southern Region; UP-Tacoma Belt; Assisting GC Gore, UPSR, Houston; Assisting GC Hannah, UPWL, Reno; Alternative compensation negotiations, all UP GCAs, Ft. Meyers, Fla. and Omaha, Neb.; Assisting GC UPRR & Tacoma Belt & STD; Assisting GC Rightnowar & Gore, UPCR & UPSR, New Orleans; Holiday; Office duties, filing, paperwork, phone calls.

Vice-President & National Legislative Representative John P. Tolman — Assigned to BLET Washington, DC office; BLET Security Officer; General Office Duties, telephone, correspondence; Coordinate content of NLO website; Coordinated PAC contributions; Mtgs. with Senate staff members regarding S. 1889, with General Chairman Dennis Pierce; Fundraisers for various members of Congress and Congressional candidates; Advisory Board Expense Audit Committee; Mtg. w/ BLET members attending hazmat training at George Meany Center/National Labor College.

Vice-President Marcus J. Ruef — Assigned to Amtrak Long Island Railroad; Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority; New Jersey Transit; Port Authority Trans Hudson; Norfolk Southern (Northern Lines/W&LE); Norfolk Southern (Eastern Lines); Norfolk Southern (Southern Lines); Union Railroad (URR); Allegheny Ludlum Steel Co.; and Birmingham Southern; Prepare for PLB 7086, NS-S; Attend Safety Committee site visit w/ SEPTA GC Dixon, Lansdale, Pa.; PLB 7086 arbitration, NS-S, Norfolk, Va.; Contract mediation called by NMB, W&LE, Cleveland, Ohio; Mtgs. to discuss NS tentative contract, NS-S, Div. 375 (Salisbury, N.C.), Div. 165 (Louisville, Ky.), and Div. 343 (Princeton, Ind.); Advisory Board conference call; Paperwork, correspondence, telephone calls, etc..., assisting various GCAs.



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