Railroad carriers’ toxic brew

Hijacking, chemical explosions, reveal gaps in carriers’ rail security plans

Numerous security and safety breaches on the nation’s railroads in October, including a man who allegedly hijacked a train with a bow and arrow, reinforce the findings of the Teamsters Rail Conference report, “High Alert: Workers Warn of Security Gaps on Nation’s Railroads.”

The report documents a startling lack of safety and security measures in this post-September 11th era. Employees of Union Pacific, CSX, Burlington Northern Santa Fe, Norfolk Southern and others participated in the report by detailing many examples of carriers’ operational security and safety gaps that put the public at risk.

“When a man can take over a train with a bow and arrow, and when an exploding tanker car kills citizens, destroys homes, totals cars in a quarter-mile area and forces the evacuation of hundreds of people, it’s time to pull heads out of the sand,” said John Murphy, International Vice President and Director of the Teamsters Rail Conference. “The rail carriers’ security systems are woefully inadequate. We need to look no further than Madrid and London for the catastrophic consequences of inaction.”

Recent security and safety incidents include:

- October 15: Seven empty train cars and a tanker containing a flammable gas derailed in a switchyard, exploding in a ball of fire that killed one person, forced the evacuation of hundreds of homes and left a plume of smoke over the south end of Texarkana, Ark. At least two homes were destroyed and several vehicles were totaled in the quarter-mile area surrounding the accident.

“While we applaud the FRA for taking action, this Emergency Order should none-the-less serve as a long overdue wake-up call to the rail carriers, who have for too long been left to their own devices,” Murphy said. “The rail carriers’ safety and security systems are woefully inadequate and the consequences can be devastating. In the hands of the wrong people at the wrong place at the wrong time, it could be catastrophic.”

In a bold step, the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) has set a November 22nd deadline for an emergency order mandating that Union Pacific, Burlington Northern Santa Fe, Norfolk Southern, CSX and all other railroads take specific and immediate steps to fix a growing safety problem which has led to an increasing number of train accidents, resulting in nine serious train crashes, ten fatalities and injuries to more than 600 people since January of 2005.

Under the Emergency Order, any railroad company, supervisor or employee who violates the procedures mandated in the order may be liable for a civil penalty up to $27,000.

While the Teamsters believe this is a sign that the FRA is finally addressing some of the rail safety issues brought to light in the Rail Conference’s recent report “High Alert,” this Emergency Order fails to address the root causes of these preventable accidents.

1. The Emergency Order fails to address the root cause of these preventable accidents: the inherent deficiencies of dark territory operations and non-monitored switches;
2. The Emergency Order fails to address the rail carriers’ work rules, which create an overworked and fatigued workforce, becoming a contributing factor in the occurrence of these types of accidents because redundant safety systems are not in place; and
3. The Emergency Order fails to address the rail carriers’ lack of thorough and comprehensive worker training to deal with hazardous chemical emergencys, and the carriers’ failure to provide the appropriate training and equipment with which workers can protect themselves and the community in the event of accidents and toxic chemical releases.

“While we applaud the FRA for taking action, this is but a baby step in the right direction,” said John Murphy, Director of the Teamsters Rail Conference. “This is a stop-gap measure at best that fails to address the root cause of these preventable accidents. Until the FRA affirmatively addresses the inherent deficiencies of dark territory and non-monitored switches, they will not have addressed the problem. Until the FRA affirmatively addresses the issues of crew fatigue, work/rest schedules, manpower shortages, and operating rule deficiencies, the problem will not be solved. The rail carriers all too often hide behind an excuse of ‘worker error’ in these tragic accidents, yet it is the carriers’ own operating rules and work rules that are the root cause of many of these accidents in dark territory.”

The hand-operated track switches that the FRA refers to in its Emergency Order are those in “dark territory.” These switches exist in areas of track that are not tied into an electronic signaling system that can monitor and report switch positions. While earning record profits, the rail corporations have failed to invest in readily available safety systems that can provide train crews and train dispatchers with advance notice of switch positioning. Such technology has been around for decades, but rail carriers such as Union Pacific, Burlington Northern Santa Fe, Norfolk Southern, and CSX, while enjoying record profits, have not made the investment to improve the safety of dark territory operations, thereby endangering rail workers and the communities they serve.

The Teamsters’ Rail Conference will be monitoring and lobbying the FRA and the DOT to address these missing critical elements, which go to the heart of accidents in dark territory.

“Their is but a first step, FRA’s Emergency Order should none-the-less serve as a long overdue wake-up call to the rail carriers, who have for too long been left to their own devices,” Murphy said. “The rail carriers’ safety and security systems are woefully inadequate and the consequences can be devastating. In the hands of the wrong people at the wrong place at the wrong time, it could be catastrophic.”
Part II: The ‘pretzel logic’ of remote control carriers

AAR, UTU employ twisted logic to justify introduction, continued use of RCL

(Continued)

Carriers, AAR, UTU employ twisted logic to justify introduction, continued use of RCL (This is the second in a three-part series of articles in which the BLET takes a look at recent actions of the Federal Railroad Administration, the Association of American Railroads, and the United Transportation Union relative to the use of remote control locomotives to main track territory. Part I was published in the October issue of the Local

Locomotive Engineers & Trainmen News, while Part II will appear in the December issue.)

In Part II of the series, we examine AAR’s and UTU’s position for two reasons.

First, the tables are based on misleading calculations that actually camouflaged the ratio of 0.865 of safety as a result of RCL implementation. The table identified in the Interim Report as “Enclosure No. 1,” covering Part 225 reportable incidents (the period May 1, 2003, through November 30, 2003), indicates that there were 21.00 RCL accidents per million yard switching miles and 24.24 conventional accidents per million yard switching miles, which represents a ratio of approximately 0.865 RCL accidents per conventional accident. Extrapolating the data for Class I railroads, only, produces RCL and conventional accident rates of 21.24 and 24.67, respectively, for a ratio of 0.865 RCL accidents per million yard switching miles, which was credited with an identical number of accident rates per million yard switching miles (6 x 8 hours per shift = 48 yard switching miles per period) for the period covered by the data, even though typical RCL crews are comprised of two members, while conventional crews usually are comprised of three.

Second, and even if the flaw with the reported data did not exist, AAR cannot draw conclusions from yard switching data that bear any relation to the potential level of RCL safety in main track operations. Ignoring both the Gaens/Gavalla Report and FRA’s own warnings, UTU has chosen to play Godonna which continues to expand the use of RCL.

Given that AAR, first, withheld from FRA its intention to deploy RCO in main track operations and, second, provided data that FRA had previously stated would not afford a valid basis for comparison, it is small wonder that AAR is confident in its ability to “resolve” FRA’s concerns. The fact remains, however, that a shell game, no matter how many times it is played.

UTU Treachery

This brings us to UTU. The banner headline screamed, “First, the tables are based on misleading calculations that actually camouflaged the ratio of 0.865 of safety as a result of RCL implementation.” UTU’s conduct over the past five years tells a far different story.

It is true that, when FRA held its July 19, 2000 technical conference on RCL, UTU joined BLET in urging a careful, reasoned approach to implementation of the technology. However, UTU abandoned that position shortly thereafter, and — when we filed a Petition for Rulemaking governing RCL in November of 2000, which FRA simply ignored — UTU sat mutely, as it did when FRA published its recommended “guidelines” that followed February.

Then, in September of the following year, in the middle of our Seventh Quinquennial Convention, UTU signed an agreement with the National Carriers’ Conference Committee (“NCCC”) claiming the right to the work. In legal action and arbitration that followed, UTU conceded that the NCCC’s “guidelines” failed to satisfy a catastrophic accident — just for the sake of another job grab. As The Who sang, “Hail to the new boss, same as the old boss.”

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In the final part of this series, we pose numerous questions to FRA, AAR, and UTU, that their position on remote control have raised. •
Senate Hearing

Continued from Page 1

dustry. When introducing the bill, Senator Stevens said that transportation security is "a national security function and an economic necessity."

Among other things, S. 1052 directs the Secretary of Homeland Security to establish a task force (including Amtrak, hazardous materials shippers, and other agencies) to complete a vulnerability and risk assessment of freight and passenger rail transportation. It requires the Secretary, based on the assessment, to develop specific prioritized recommendations for improving rail safety. It also authorizes the Secretary of Homeland Security to make grants to Amtrak for certain security upgrades, including fire and life-safety improvements, and grants to states for certain security upgrades to Amtrak tracks on the Northeast Corridor.

The bill also provides for grants to railroads (including Amtrak), hazardous materials shippers, and state and local governments for freight and passenger rail security upgrades to prevent or respond to acts of terrorism or sabotage.

These provisions could address some of the gaps in railroad security that members of the Teamsters Rail Conference have identified in a report titled "High Alert: WorkersWarn of Security Gaps on Nation's Railroads." In it, rail workers reported that America's rail system is no better protected than before terrorist bombings in Madrid and London, despite repeated warnings from the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) that trains are a likely terrorist target.

Employees of Union Pacific, CSX, Burlington Northern and others completed surveys for the report which a copy of the report is available at: http://www.ble1.org.

Eighty-three percent of respondents indicated that they have not received, or only received partial, training on railroad terrorism prevention over the past 12 months, a security oversight that will be addressed by S. 1052.

The legislation contains provisions for a rail worker security training program. The program will be established by Secretary of Homeland Security to provide training for front-line workers for potentially threatening conditions and it also sets forth certain whistleblower protections for rail employees or other persons who have provided information regarding a perceived threat to security to the employer, Federal Government, or Congress, or who have refused to violate or assist in the violation of any regulation related to railroad security. The bill provides for the rail worker security training program to be conducted at the Federal Emergency Management Agency, a Federal Bureau of Investigation field office, or at any other location designated by the Secretary of Homeland Security.

The legislation requires the Secretary, based on the assessment, to report to the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee, the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation, and the Senate Committee on Finance. The report must address the findings of the task force established under the provisions of S. 1052, and it must include a list of the tasks of the task force.

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Thanks to the efforts of the Brothers of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen, three locomotive engineers were reinstalled — with back pay — after being wrongly discharged by Metra following a 2004 accident that claimed the life of a 10-year-old boy at the River Grove Metra Station.

A federal arbitrator ruled that Metra illegally violated the engineers’ due process rights to a fair hearing and prevented the engineers from making a defense.

Metra did not summon a single material witness to the accident and excluded all evidence offered in defense of its members by the BLET, said BLET National Vice-President Rick Radek.

And instead of trying to conduct a fair trial, Metra management attempted to prove the engineers’ guilt through the same mass communication.

“Metra built a hearing record consisting solely of what it wanted in it, and then found the engineers guilty of the safety rule violations it had already pronounced them guilty of in the press release of the very same night of the accident,” Radek said. “It can surprise no one that the arbitration board overturned the result of such bias and manipulations.”

A Metra safety rule was at issue in River Grove case. The rule requires that when trains are “receiving or discharging passengers… a passenger train or engine is seen approaching the station when the approaching express train was seen, which was still some distance away.”

A literal application of the rule did not require the eastbound to remain stationary.

The crew judged that their train would be well east of the station before the express train arrived, and that pedestrians about the station would be able to see and hear the express train approach, allowing them to take precaution to the train’s passing. An eyewitness, which Metra did not summon, said this was exactly what transpired.

Instead, Metra argued that the engineers could have seen the express train sooner, before they had finished loading their passengers, and then the rule would have required that they remain stationary. The engineers testified that an on-coming freight train prevented them from seeing the express train sooner.

Rather than calling the crew of the freight train to testify, Metra relied upon conjecture that the freight train’s reported location later indicated it could not have been where the BLET engineers claimed it was at the critical time and accused our engineers of lying about the presence of the freight train. This became known in the Chicago media as the “phantom train.”

Metra announced to the media it justified the permanent firing of the three engineers because of their “lie.”

Vice-President Radek extended sincere sympathy to the family of Michael DeLarco, the 10-year-old boy killed in the accident. “Many of us are parents, too, and we can all appreciate how difficult it is to cope with the loss of a child, regardless of the circumstances.”

As a result of the entire River Grove accident, the BLET began a program to increase public awareness about the need for better safety in and around Metra train stations.

“We detected glaring incoherencies in the level of safety accorded passengers on the various Metra lines,” Radek said. “We have been working with state officials and with officials in the communities Metra serves to enhance the level of protection for pedestrians at train stations. Preventing another accidental death should be Michael DeLarco’s legacy.”

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An amendment giving long term funding to Amtrak passed in the U.S. Senate on November 3. Amendment 2360 to S. 1932, the Deficit Reduction Omnibus Reconciliation Act of 2005, was passed 93-6, 8-192 passed by a vote of 52-47.

The amendment was introduced by Senators Trent Lott (R-MS) and Frank Lautenberg (D-NJ). The amendment is the same as S. 1516, the Passenger Rail Reauthorizations Act of 2005.

However, President Bush has threatened to veto the legislation. The administration objected to a provision that deletes a Medicare fund the White House believes ensures that private health-care plans take part in the federal health care program.

“This is an important step to securing long-term funding for our nation’s passenger rail system,” BLET National President Don M. Hahs said. “I would like to thank the 93 members of the Senate who voted in favor of this important legislation. They have shown that there is widespread bipartisan support for Amtrak, and stood up against the Bush administration.”

In addition, 12 U.S. Senators voted against the amendment: James DeMint (R-SC), John Ensign (R-NV), Judd Gregg (R-NH), Jeff Sessions (R-AL), John Sununu (R-NH), and George Voinovich (R-OH).

The Rail Conference is now working the House side to obtain legislation with similar language.

On the same day that the bill was passed, the General Accounting Office released a report on the state of Amtrak’s finances. According to the report, Amtrak needs to improve the way it monitors performance and oversees its finances to reach solid financial ground.

The GAO recommended that the Transportation Secretary direct the Federal Railroad Administration to require Amtrak to submit a plan laying out specifically how it will improve its financial operations; provide Amtrak with direction on how to do so, and monitor the railroad’s performance and report to Congress on Amtrak’s progress.

Senator passes Amtrak long-term funding provision; Bush threatens veto

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Rail security threats on the rise

U.S. rail system vulnerable to terrorist attack, ‘High Alert’ report says

Toxic Brew

Continued from Page 1

the U.S. rail system is vulnerable to terrorist attack, and rail corporations have not taken the proper steps to protect their employees and the public.

A week after the release of “High Alert,” the Government Accountability Office (GAO) released its own report on rail security, prompting Sen. Olympia Snowe (R-ME) to declare: “We are in a situation where our individual rail services across the country have no clear understanding of what the best means are of securing their rail systems.”

A copy of the report is available online at http://www.teammster.org/divisions/rail/pdf/railsecuritybook.pdf.

In meetings concluded in Las Vegas on October 19, the delegates attending meetings of the Burlington Northern Santa Fe General Committee of Adjustment, (former Santa Fe) have re-elected incumbent General Chairman Pat Williams to serve another three-year term. Mark Benton was re-elected as First Vice-Chairman.

Regional Chairman elected were: Mike Lane, Eastern Lines; Chris Mosser, Western Lines; Alan Holdcraft, Northern & Southern Lines; and Gary Harper, Coast Lines. Current Secretary Treasurer Roland Kleinsorge was re-elected to another term.

Williams commended the work of the delegates during the meetings.

“The meeting was very productive, we accomplished our meeting goals, and I can truthfully say the money was well spent in bringing the GCoA together,” Williams said.

Delegates concluded their final meeting on October 19 after considering several resolutions, con-ducting several elections, reviewing the financial records of the GCoA, and hearing numerous reports, including those from officers of the BLET National Division, including BLET National President Don Hahs, First Vice-President-Ed Rodziewicz, and National Secretary-Treasurer-Tim Walpert.

Neutral arbitrator finds BLET members were wrongfully dismissed by carrier without a fair trial

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Moates elected new CSXT-Western Lines General Chairman

Don Moates was elected General Chairman of the CSX Transportation-Western Lines General Committee of Adjustment at meetings in Jacksonville, Fla., on August 1. He is a member of Division 782 (Elowah, Tenn.).

David A. Bowen of Division 332 (Montgomery, Ala.) was elected Senior Vice-General Chairman and Bill Hardbarger is the new Junior Vice-Chairman and Secretary-Treasurer. He is a member of Division 38 (Clifton Forge, Va.).

The Committee represents 30 divisions, including two shortlines (Indiana Railroad and the Alabama State Docks). In addition to electing new officers, the delegates addressed a number of important business issues. Attending from the National Division were Vice-Presidents Paul Sorrow and Dale McPherson.

Finame elected new CSXT-North Lines General Chairman

R. A. “Rick” Finame of BLET Division 757 (New Castle, Pa.) was elected General Chairman of the CSX Transportation-Northern Lines General Committee of Adjustment at meetings held in Jacksonville, Fla., from September 26-28.

The 41 delegates in attendance also re-elected three incumbent General Committee Officers: First Vice-Chairman W. P. “Bill” Laulias, a member of Division 251 in Philadelphia; Second Vice-Chairman D.M. “Danny” Knowell of Division 857 in Toledo, Ohio; and Secretary-Treasurer R.D. “David” Welter of Division 132 in St. Thomas, Ontario, Canada. The GC&OX's newly-elected Third Vice-Chairman is Russ Holden of Division 757 in New Castle, Pa.

“BLET National Vice-President Paul Sorrow attended the meeting and was a great help as always to the committee in the handling of the business over the three days,” General Chairman Finame said.

The delegates also handled a number of business and contract related issues during the three days of meetings.

He noted that the offices of the Committee will remain in Ponte Vedra Beach, Fla.

The officers began serving their four-year terms immediately.

Davis elected new General Chairman of NS-Northern Lines GCA

Clockwise, from bottom left: Don Cook III, Alt. S-T; Carlos Lizarraga, 4th VGC; Rodney Cutlip, 2nd VGC; David Fernald, 3rd VGC; Bob Linsley, 1st Vice Chairman; Cole Davis, General Chairman; and Jerry Elmore, S-T.

Brother Cole W. Davis, a member of BLET Division 86 in Moberly, Mo., was elected the new General Chairman of the Norfolk Southern-Northern Lines General Committee of Adjustment at meetings held in Cleveland, Ohio, from September 12-14.

Other officers elected during the meetings include: Robert Linsey, 1st Vice General Chairman (Division 850, Buffalo, N.Y.); Rodney Cutlip, 2nd VGC; Carlos Lizarraga, 3rd VGC; Bob Linsley, 1st Vice Chairman; Cole Davis, General Chairman; and Jerry Elmore, S-T.

Jerry Elmore, a member of Division 129 (Kansas City, Mo.) was elected Secretary-Treasurer and Dan Cook III of Division 1 (Detroit, Mich.) was elected Alternate Secretary-Treasurer.

General Chairman Davis noted that long-time Secretary-Treasurer Steve Jackson has retired, and thanked him for his years of service to the Brotherhood.

BLET National Division President Don Hahs attended the meetings and gave a presentation on numerous topics, including an update on current wage/rule negotiations and health and welfare. First Vice-President Ed Rodzwicz and National Secretary-Treasurer Bill Walpert also attended the meeting and gave presentations.

General Chairman Davis noted that Special Representatives Gene Imler and Tom Miller attended, as did John Tolman, BLET Chief of Staff and Political Legislative Director.

Larry Sykes, retired NS General Chairman, and Frank Lacy, retired Local Chairman of Division 260 (Ashatabula, Ohio), attended the meeting.

DICK MYERS of the Brotherhood’s Relief & Compensation Fund and Richard Edmonds of the Locomotive Engineers & Conductors Mutual Protective Association also attended the meetings, as did representatives of BLET designated law firms.
November election results represent win for working families

(Assia Burger, chair of Change to Win, issued the following statement on November 9.)

The election results in California, New Jersey and Virginia are a win for working families. In California, voters have soundly defeated the anti-worker policies of Governor Schwarzenegger and his big business backers, rejecting their attempt to silence workers’ voices. In New Jersey and Virginia, voters have chosen as their next Governors leaders who are committed to standing up for the right of workers to join a union.

In this election, workers turned out as never before to make a real difference for all of us, and the Change to Win unions were an integral part of that effort. In California, we had thousands of volunteers working for months around the state to communicate with our members and the public the disastrous effects the corporate and corporate-backed initiatives of the Governor would have on working families. This culminated in several thousand Change to Win volunteers who worked statewide on Election Day.

In New Jersey, our unions engaged in a get-out-the-vote program that turned out our members in record numbers to vote for candidates who support working families. Through our member-to-member activities and face-to-face briefings, we talked to workers in their workplaces, with hundreds of volunteers canvassing neighborhoods and making calls to turn out the vote, including more than a thousand volunteers on Election Day in Virginia, in spite of the smaller presence of the Change to Win unions, we made more than 250,000 phone calls and recruited hundreds of volunteers to help in the days and weeks before the election.

As the November 8 results have shown, in spite of the money and resources poured into the election by large corporations, when workers unite they can change lives.

Voters have shown today that they are tired of policies that put corporate profits ahead of the well-being of working families. We urge elected officials in Washington to listen to the will of the American people and act to address the pressing needs of the millions of working Americans who are struggling to pay bills, pay rent and put food on the table. We urge elected officials to support measures to ensure that the wealthy pay their fair share through a balanced budget plan that reduces the budget deficit through tax cuts for the wealthy by drastic cuts in funding for health care and other services that working Americans depend on. Americans have sent a message. It’s time for Congress and the administration to listen.

LM-30 advisory: ‘De minimis’ exemption increased from $25 to $250

(The U.S. Department of Labor issued the following news release on November 7.)

The Department of Labor, Office of Labor-Management Standards (OLMS), issued an advisory regarding Form LM-30 on November 7. An interim rule has been established by the DOL that increases the amount of the “de minimis exemption” from $25 to $250. In other words, gifts of $250 or less are considered “insubstantial” by the DOL and will not need to be reported on Form LM-30.

Guidance previously issued by OLMS on “de minimis” situations included examples of an employer picking up a lunch tab or an employer giving a union officer a Christmas gift of nominal value. A car was given as an example of a gift that would require a report. In March 2005, in order to provide more guidance on this issue, OLMS revised its LMRDA Interpretive Manual to quantifiably as “de minimis” an item with a value of $25 or less. For example, a union officer or employee who receives coffee, provided by an employer, at bi-weekly meetings over the course of a year would not be required to report this gratuity on a Form LM-30.

In a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, published in the Federal Register on August 29, 2005, concerning the Form LM-30, the Department has sought comment on this standard and the dollar threshold. (70 Fed. Reg. 51166, 51175.) The comment period has been extended to January 26, 2006. (70 Fed. Reg. 61,400.) The Department encourages comments from all members of the public on all aspects of this rulemaking.

For general guidance on Form LM-30, see Current Form LM-30 Information on the DOL website at: http://www.dol.gov/esd/reg/compliance/olms/lm30_information.htm •
By Pat Murphy
Grand International Auxiliary and Assistant Legislative Representative (U.S.)

If you have been reading the articles that have preceded this one in the GIA Dialogue series, then you already have a good sense of what the GIA is all about. I would like to share a personal experience with you and explain why I joined the GIA. Perhaps you will see the value of membership for yourself and your family, as I did.

I came to understand and appreciate the importance of belonging to a union after comparing my position with my husband’s BLE membership. After working many years in the financial industry, I had no job security. My wages and benefits were not equal to those of my male counterparts, and most troublesome of all, I worked knowing that I was on my own.

In contrast, my husband’s union, the BLE, provides job security. The BLE provides protection for members along and has negotiated good wages and benefits. He is part of a larger organization that provides a united front to stand up for workers in the face of a hostile management.

In one notable instance, a group of tellers banded together and insisted they be given a raise. They did so after executives received increases because the company’s profit margins were high. In the face of this inequity, the president agreed to grant their request. However, he then instructed the payroll clerk to withhold the cost of the raise from the tellers and the rest of us got the message. Outside of the BLE itself, the GIA is one of the only organizations that could understand my railroaders’ household of unpredictable work schedules and canceled commitments.

I decided to join the GIA even though I had many other duties and obligations. There were long stretches of time when the only thing I could do as a member was to send in my dues and call my Representative or write him a letter when asked to do so. My GIA sisters more than understood my situation; they appreciated my efforts no matter how small they seemed to me. So being a member of the GIA is not only easy to understand but makes sense. What continues to amaze me is how much I get out of the meetings that I do attend.

So at this time of year when the holiday season approaches, I add the BLE and the GIA to the list of things for which I am grateful. Combined, they are the force that keeps my husband’s job security alive and protects a standard of living worth protecting.

If this makes sense to you, then I invite you to join us now. This application will get you started. When we receive it, one of our officers will call to welcome you and to answer the questions you might have.

OFFICIAL APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

Grand International Auxiliary
to the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen

To the Officers and Members of the GIA to the BLE: I, the undersigned, hereby present myself as a candidate for admission into your Organization. If accepted, I promise to abide by all the laws, rules, and regulations of the Order that are now in force, or may hereafter be enacted.

Applicant’s Signature ____________________________ Date of Birth ____________________________

Please Print Name ____________________________

Home Address (include city, state and zip code) ____________________________

Home Phone ____________________________ Cell Phone (optional) ____________________________ E-mail (optional) ____________________________

Have you ever applied for membership in the past? If yes, give Auxiliary No. ____________________________

Have you ever been a member of the GIA? If yes, give Auxiliary No. ____________________________

Your sponsor must be a BLE member. Please print the following information:

Sponsor’s Name ____________________________ Relationship (husband, wife, child, etc.) ____________________________

Sponsor’s Address (include city, state and zip code) ____________________________

Sponsor is a member of BLE Division No. ____________________________ City & State of Division ____________________________ Railroad ____________________________

Enclose your check for $25.00 payable to “G.I.A.” to cover a one-time application fee of $5.00 and your first Annual Dues of $20.00. Mail check and form to:

Onita Wayland · 1301 McLennan St. · Mart, TX 76664 · (254) 876-2509

Do you have a special talent or hobby? Tell us about it!

The Rail Conference has begun publishing a new quarterly magazine exclusively for Teamster rail members called Rail Teamster. Each issue will include a feature story about a BLE or ISHVED member that focuses on his or her away from work hobbies and/or activities. Maybe you are a musician, writer, inventor, builder, craftsman, record holder or a stand-up comic. Maybe you’re a scout leader, a coach, a mentor or a leader within your community or club. We know you are out there and we would love to hear from you.

All entries will be acknowledged and mutually convenient interviews will be arranged as publication schedules permit. Please send your name, address, phone number, and a brief description of your special talent or hobby to:

John Bentley
BLET Public Relations Dept.
1370 Ontario St., Mezzanine
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Organizing our priorities

Hurricanes Katrina, Rita, and Wilma not only ravaged our country, they also exposed the scoundrel of our nation’s poorness. The tragedy in New Orleans was shameful: Needy Americans without adequate food or medicine. Unsanitary living conditions. Unprivileged citizens unable to access medical care. A federal government that was unresponsive to the plight of our nation’s poor. And that was before the storm hit.

Ever since Ronald Reagan, so-called “big government” has been denounced.

Tax cuts for the wealthy and a free ride for corporations are religion in Washington. Workers dealing with disappearing jobs, declining wages, no health insurance and a paycheck-to-paycheck existence get pushed aside because they don’t contribute big money to political campaigns.

In the wake of the disaster in our nation’s history, some questions need to be asked and answered.

Do we want a political system that rewards only the wealthy and neglects the working poor?

Is it good for America to have the divide between the upper and lower classes grow greater every year?

Why is national health care treated as a budget issue instead of a matter of human dignity?

Standing Together

Teamsters across the country are operating trains, driving trucks and delivering supplies as part of the hurricane relief effort. Others are donating food, clothing and volunteering their time. America is at its best when its citizens pull together during times of crisis and despair. And Teamsters have always answered the call when their nation needed them most.

The desire for respect and dignity never changes. As long as working people are underpaid, overworked or otherwise mistreated, there will be a need for a union. I believe the dignity of American workers cannot be exported, privatized or downsized.

— General President Jim Hoffa

NOVEMBER 2005
CALENDAR & EVENTS

DECEMBER 4-7, 2005... Secretary-Treasurer Compliance Workshop, Cleveland, Ohio
This is the final 3-4 day workshop of 2005. It begins on Sunday, December 4 at 7 p.m. and concludes at noon on Wednesday, December 7. Workshop will include an online demonstration of the BLET National Division’s new internet-based dues reporting and collection system, that was implemented earlier this year. Register online at: http://www.blet.org. For other details and registration information, please contact Ken Kroeger of the BLET Education & Training Department. (216) 861-0932 or ken@blet.org.

JUNE 4-9, 2006... 79th Annual BLET-GIA Southeastern Meeting Association (SMA)
Hosted by SMA Chairman T.L. Reed and the members of BLET Division 205, the 79th annual SMA will be held at the Trump Plaza Hotel in Atlantic City, N.J. More details to come.

JUNE 12-16, 2006... 68th Annual BLET-GIA Eastern Union Convention Association (EUMA)
Hosted by EUMA Committees Chairman R.J. Chapter and the members of BLET Division 137, the 68th annual BLET-GIA will be held at the Tropicana Casino & Resort on the Boardwalk in Atlantic City, N.J. More details to come.

JUNE 19-22, 2006... BLET National Division Convention, Las Vegas, Nevada
The First Quadrangular Convention of the BLET National Division will be held at Bally’s in Las Vegas. More details to come when available.

JULY 18-20, 2006... 66th Annual BLET-GIA International Western Convention (NCW)
Hosted by S.V. Barabash and the members of BLET Division 94, the 66th annual NCW will be held at the Holiday Inn Rapid City—Rushmore Plaza in Rapid City, S.D. More details to come when available.

AUGUST 20-24, 2006... 71st Annual BLET-GIA Southwestern Convention Meeting (SWCM)
Hosted by A.I. Williams and the members of BLET Division 182, the 71st annual SWCM will be held at The Prospector Little Rock in Little Rock, Ark. More details to come.

Advisory Board September Activity

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

National President Don M. Hahn — National Division Office. General supervision of BLET activities. General office duties, JOC Eastern Region beginning, Metra, City of Ill., N.Y.; Metra Rail Craft Scholarship event, Savanna, Ill., N.Y.; Metra Southern Illinois Lines (GALX) dedicated crew, Cleveland, O.., CJBZ progression rate negotiations, Madison, Ill, N.Y., RSLX, SJLX, SJLX Illinois Western Lines.


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