

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

VOLUME 120 | No. 1 | WINTER 2016

WWW.BLE-T.ORG

Chuck Akers steps down  
from the cab, reluctantly

## **The unseen victim**

### **Education & Training**

An investment in our  
union leaders of tomorrow PG 12

### **The Real American Dream**

BLET member Ray Vigil  
is proud to be American,  
proud to be Union PG 18

### **Also inside:**

**Last Runs  
Brotherhood  
Obituaries  
BLET Auxiliary  
Scholarships**





## *BLET President's Message*

BY DENNIS R. PIERCE, BLET NATIONAL PRESIDENT

# Join us in the fight to defend your hard earned benefits

One of any Union's primary responsibilities is to negotiate for and defend the benefits that make union jobs the best jobs in our proud country. It is no secret — as all members should be well aware — that the railroads are attempting in our national contract negotiations to diminish the quality of our health care benefits. In fact, the primary reason for our national freight contract not being settled is due to your employers' demands that you pick up significantly more of the cost of your health care. You have had no contract to vote on because I have heard loud and clear how you view such a contract; you would never ratify it.

Instead, we have entered into mediation under the provisions of the Railway Labor Act (RLA). Although our primary goal is to reach a voluntary settlement that our members would ratify, it is also becoming painfully clear that we may have to exhaust the terms and conditions of the RLA, including the point where we reach the right to strike, in order to defend our current benefits.

While our ongoing contract negotiations are getting the bulk of our attention, it is critical that we not let our guard down on the many other benefits that all members count on. As I have explained in the past, the benefits that we count on,



and in some cases take for granted, are a combination of collectively bargained benefits, legislated benefits and regulatory benefits that often generate from legislation.

The election cycle of 2016 is over, and I have heard from many members who want our Union to get past the election and concentrate on the future, not the past. I wholeheartedly agree with those sentiments, but with a new government now in control in Washington, we must all keep a watchful eye on how they approach governance. Many members have been clear that they want labor to give the new administration a chance, but I don't think they expect their Union to let its guard down when it comes to corporate America's efforts to strip you of benefits that you earned and paid for with your labor.

My efforts in the coming months will be to do just that. We cannot allow corporate power and wealth to strip working class Americans of protections and benefits that they have earned. One such

benefit is our Railroad Retirement program. You will recall that House Speaker Ryan previously suggested that our retirement benefits be reduced, and we asked you then to show our collective strength in telling him to leave our benefits alone.

We must continue to be vigilant as efforts to reduce Social Security benefits are already being discussed, and we must be ready to again defend any similar attacks on our Railroad Retirement system. Dismissing these attacks as "fake news" because we don't like them is not going to prevent the attacks from happening. This is real; there are groups out there whose agenda is to strip you of your retirement and related health care benefits, and they are working hard in the new congress to advance that agenda. We are closely monitoring these efforts, and if they gain steam, we will immediately need all working and retired railroad employees to rise up and demand that this new government keep its hands off of our

retirement benefits. We have earned our retirement benefits with our own sweat and tears; it is not some so-called entitlement that the government should trifle with.

The same is true of our Medicare benefits. I entered the work force in 1976, eleven years after the 1965 Medicare Amendment to the Social Security Act legislatively created the Medicare system. As a result, and as with almost all railroad employees actively working today, I have paid into the Medicare system from every paycheck that I have received since I entered the workforce. Like Railroad Retirement, this is no entitlement that the government should trifle with, it is a benefit that I bought and paid for.

Don't fall for the suggestion that you should work longer to get those benefits, or that the Medicare system should be changed to create a voucher system where you are thrown to the open market to buy health insurance in your later years. These are not ideas promoted by, or intended to help working class Americans; they are ideas promoted by corporate lobbyists like the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC) and the anti-worker Koch brothers. Their goal is to relieve your employers of their costs to run these programs, even though that cost has long been figured into your legislatively mandated benefits package. If

CONTINUED ON PAGE 29 ➞



# Contents »

»» ON THE COVER: DIVISION 14 MEMBER CHUCK AKERS.  
READ HIS STORY ON PAGE 14. Cover photo: Heather Rousseau, The Roanoke Times



Brother Ray Vigil (left)  
with Teamsters  
International Vice President  
Sean O'Brien

# Journal

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International Brotherhood of Teamsters  
WWW.BLE-T.ORG

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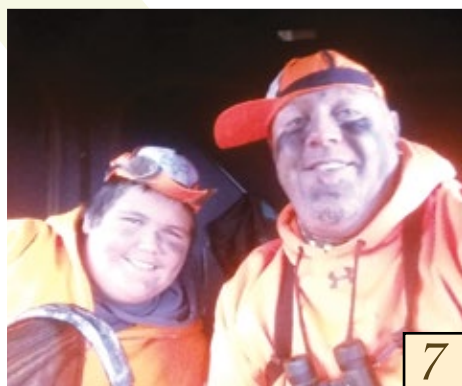
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Independence, Ohio 44131

## Departments

NEWS	4
BROTHERHOOD OBITUARIES	8
COLUMNS BY JAMES P. HOFFA AND JOHN MURPHY, IBT	10
LEGISLATIVE UPDATE	20
LAST RUNS	24
BLET AUXILIARY	30



## Features

### 12 Education & Training

An investment in our union leaders  
of tomorrow.

### 14 The Unseen Victim

Chuck Akers steps down from the cab,  
reluctantly as PTSD had taken its toll.

### 18 The Real American Dream

Brother Ray Vigil, Div. 226, who moved  
to American from Peru when he was 14  
on what it means to be a union member.



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## SAVE THE DATES! 2017 BLET regional meetings

**T**he BLET National Division is pleased to announce the dates and locations of its 2017 regional meetings: June 5-9 in San Antonio, Texas; and August 14-18 in Myrtle Beach, S.C.

The San Antonio regional meeting will be at the Hyatt Regency-San Antonio Riverwalk in Texas and the Myrtle Beach regional meeting will be at the Hilton Myrtle Beach Resort in South Carolina.

As with the 2016 regional meetings, the 2017 meetings will be arranged on a Monday through Friday schedule. Trav-

el to the meeting, registration and a welcome reception for each of the two meetings will be on Monday (June 5 for San Antonio and August 14 for Myrtle Beach). Meetings, training classes and other events will be scheduled throughout the remainder of the week and will include a closing banquet on Thursday night. Travel home is on Friday for each meeting (June 9 for San Antonio and August 18 for Myrtle Beach).

Per the BLET Bylaws, regional meetings are held for the purposes of membership training, education and dis-

cussion of matters of importance to the membership. Additionally, the meetings are structured to include options for fellowship with other members and their families, entertainment, fun and relaxation.

More specific details will be announced at a later date. Registration information will be available online at the BLET National Division's regional meeting website ([www.bletregionals.org](http://www.bletregionals.org)). All members are encouraged to attend one or both of these regional meetings in 2017. 📅

### JUNE 5-9 SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS



Photos: [visitsanantonio.com](http://visitsanantonio.com)

### AUGUST 14-18 MYRTLE BEACH, S.C.



Photos: Visit Myrtle Beach

**FOR MORE INFORMATION, GO TO: [WWW.BLETREGIONALS.ORG](http://WWW.BLETREGIONALS.ORG)**



## BROTHERHOOD BOOKSHELF



## Retired BLET member co-authors book on famous N&W steam locomotive

*Norfolk and Western Six-Eleven; 3 Times A Lady*

By Timothy R. Hensley

and Kenneth L. Miller

Publisher: Pocahontas Productions

ISBN: 978-0-9899837-1-6

**R**etired BLET member Timothy R. Hensley is a man of many hats. Railroad historian. Retired Amtrak Cardinal locomotive engineer. Consultant. Collector of railroad artifacts. Small business owner. And most recently, author.

In 2015, Brother Hensley co-authored *Norfolk and Western Six-Eleven; 3 Times A Lady* with Kenneth L. Miller. The book details the history of Norfolk & Western Class J steam locomotives, particularly engine No. 611. The book is presented in three parts: the first focuses on the locomotive's origins and operations; the second on its "retirement" after the introduction of diesel locomotives; and the third on its return to service and resurrection in 2015. The 96-page hardback book is filled with countless black and white and full color photographs.

Brother Hensley graduated from Marshall University in 1975 with a degree in journalism. He hired out on the railroad and joined the Brotherhood effective December 1, 1979, holding membership in Division 190 in Huntington, W.Va. As a young fireman

in 1979, his train missed a loaded gasoline tanker truck by about 10 feet as he worked behind the throttle of The Hilltopper.

Brother Hensley put his college degree to work for the Brotherhood, serving as a public relations representative and associate editor of *The Locomotive Engineer* from 1984-1986. He served under the direction of then-BLE International President John F. Sytsma and worked from an office in the Engineers Building in downtown Cleveland, Ohio.

Brother Hensley eventually transferred membership to Division 14 (Washington, D.C.). His Last Run came on July 20, 2014, as an Amtrak locomotive engineer, operating train No. 51, The Cardinal, from Huntington, W.Va., to Charlottesville, Va.

In addition to co-authoring books in his retirement, Brother Hensley is the owner and operator of The Trainmaster's House, a bed and breakfast featuring museum-quality railroad artifacts and other antiques in Kenova, W.Va.

Copies of *Norfolk and Western Six-Eleven; 3 Times A Lady* are available to BLET members and retirees for \$30, plus \$6 shipping and handling. Please contact: Pocahontas Productions at Depart F, P.O. Box 384, Kenova, WV 25530; or (304) 633-8512. ☎

## BLET member honored for promoting rail safety



**From left:** Caddo Sheriff's Lt. Richard Corbett; Chris Knox, KCS Railway Terminal Superintendent; Stephen Prator Jr., KCS locomotive engineer and member of BLET Division 599; and Shreveport Police Department Assistant Chief Wayne Smith.

**B**rother Stephen W. Prator Jr. of BLET Division 599 (Shreveport, La.) received the Friends of Safety Town Award from the Sheriff's Office in Caddo Parish, Louisiana, for outstanding service to his community. Brother Prator presented several rail safety education programs at the Sheriff's Safety Town and through the Sheriff's Auxiliary Deputy Program.

A locomotive engineer for the Kansas City Southern, Brother Prator also volunteers for Operation Lifesaver. He was recognized for presenting Operation Lifesaver programs to 13 Sheriff's Auxiliary Deputy classes and also volunteering over 100 hours to maintaining the railroad safety exhibit at Sheriff's Safety Town. The exhibit uses a functioning railroad crossing to teach children the importance of practicing safe habits around railroad tracks.

Brother Prator serves the BLET as Legislative Representative of Division 599 and is also Secretary-Treasurer of the Louisiana State Legislative Board.

The award was presented at KCS' Shreveport Yard in late 2015. ☎

## letters to the editor

(BLET EDITOR'S NOTE: THE FOLLOWING LETTER FROM BLET MISSOURI STATE LEGISLATIVE BOARD CHAIRMAN BRIAN P. KELLEY WAS SUBMITTED TO THE LIBERTY TRIBUNE NEWSPAPER IN LIBERTY, MO.)

Dear Liberty Tribune Editor:

The organization that I am proudly a member of and serve as an officer for is the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen (BLET). We celebrated our 153rd anniversary in May of 2016 and we have the honor of being the oldest labor union in North America. I have some words of caution and wisdom to share as a 40-year railroad veteran and 20-year plus union leader.

If you are an employee or genuinely care about them, then please always be suspicious of groups who give themselves patriotic sounding names and purport to represent the best interests of the workers. Too many times these organizations are simply front groups for the wealthy and business interests and are promoting their agenda — an agenda that is designed to fracture the unity of employees and to do whatever they can to reduce our wages, benefits, and rights. United We Stand — Divided We Fall!

Be leery of buzz words they commonly use like “union bosses,” because they are a tip off that these people are not sincere in their efforts. That term is degrading and disrespectful to not only the union leaders like myself, who are elected by our peers, but also to those who we serve. I am not their boss — I am their servant and I am honored for that privilege. Union members are proud men and women who

deserve and demand respect.

I will close by saying that the BLET did not make it over a century and a half as an organization by treating our members inappropriately. We have made it that long by treating them like our brothers and sisters!

Sincerely,  
Brian P. Kelley  
Chairman, Missouri State  
Legislative Board  
Member, BLET Division 502  
(Kansas City, Mo.)

(BLET EDITOR'S NOTE: THE FOLLOWING LETTER TO THE EDITOR BY BRIAN J. FARKAS, CHAIRMAN OF THE BLET'S INDIANA STATE LEGISLATIVE BOARD, APPEARED IN THE LAFAYETTE JOURNAL & COURIER ON MARCH 7, 2016.)

Dear Editor:

Consider me idealistic (or perhaps naive), but I believe that our legislative process should be an open exercise that allows for examination and debate over various ideals. Unfortunately, this does not always happen in government, particularly in the Indiana General Assembly.

During a final hearing of the Senate Homeland Security and Transportation Committee, an amendment to House Bill 1087 was introduced by Sen. Carlin Yoder that decreases the sight distances at public railroad crossings from 1,500 feet down to as little as 350 feet, depending on the maximum authorized speed of the railroad tracks. This was done without any public input and solely based on the desire of the railroad lobbyists.

Indiana is tied for eighth in the nation for rail-crossing fatalities, and fourth in the nation for rail-crossing collisions. Since

it appears that this reduced-visibility suggestion will likely become law, we can likely expect our shameful ranking to worsen. While the railroad lobby may applaud this amendment as a way to reduce maintenance costs and liability, the public will be exposed to much more dangerous conditions in the future.

I call on Rep. Ed Soliday and Sen. Yoder to reconsider this provision in HB 1087 and strike it from the Bureau of Motor Vehicles omnibus bill. Allow these changes to be debated with public input, instead of under the cover of a committee hearing dedicated to license branch issues. I also encourage all Hoosiers to contact their state representatives and state senators to voice their opposition to this dangerous change.

Brian J. Farkas  
BLET Division 121  
Indianapolis, Ind.

Brother Pierce:

I just wanted to thank you and the Brotherhood for all the support I received as a member and a Local Chairman. Most members don't get to see behind the curtain of the Brotherhood. I wish there was a way that every member could see the day-to-day workings of the Brotherhood. I consider myself lucky to have worked for the railroad and the Brotherhood. The union benefits and wages allowed me to pay for three college educations, own a home, and have a retirement. Without the union we wouldn't even come close to having our current contracts. One only has to look at what the non-union railroads wages and working conditions are. The union officers I've called my Brothers for

the past 40 years are some of the hardest working and most dedicated individuals you'll ever meet. Please know that I owe the Brotherhood a great deal of the credit for what turned out to be a successful career.

I'm also thankful for President Roosevelt and his wisdom to form a joint Committee between management and labor establishing the railroad retirement system. The Organizations must make every effort to continue to protect our retirement system from those who would like to take it away for political reasons or greed. Without President Roosevelt and the 1937 Railroad Retirement Act none of us would be able to retire.

I'm sure the carriers will make this round of bargaining especially difficult. Hopefully you'll be able to keep things reasonable now that we are negotiating jointly with some of the other rail unions. Good luck and if there is anything that I can do to help please let me know.

Fraternally,  
William G. Stanich  
Retired  
BLET Division 504

## WE WELCOME YOUR LETTERS

The Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen Journal welcomes Letters to the Editor. Please include your name, address, BLET Division number, email address, and/or phone number on any submission. We reserve the right to edit your submission for grammar, punctuation, content and space considerations.

**Address letters to:**  
Editor, Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen Journal,  
7061 East Pleasant Valley Road,  
Independence, Ohio 44131.  
**Or email:** [Bentley@ble-t.org](mailto:Bentley@ble-t.org)



# Aird helps make young hunter's dream come true

**H**elping to make wishes become reality for disabled youth, Brother Paul Aird has volunteered as a youth mentor for Dream Hunt programs during the fall of 2015 and 2016.

A Special Representative with the BLET National Division and a member of Division 173 (Fond du Lac, Wisconsin), Brother Aird is also an avid outdoorsman and a Marine Corps veteran. Brother Aird's involvement is through the group Hard Horn Adventures, an affiliate of United Special Sportsman Alliance (USSA) in Wisconsin. In addition to assisting critically-ill and disabled youth, the United Special Sportsman Alliance (USSA) also helps disabled military veterans enjoy outdoor adventures such as hunting and fishing.

In response to his friend and fellow Marine Corps Veteran Chris Dekker's request



**From left:** Dream Hunt Volunteer Mason Aird, Dream Hunt Youth Hunter Anthony, Dream Hunt Mentor and BLET Special Representative Paul Aird, and Dream Hunt Volunteer Will Aird.

for help in 2015, Brother Aird volunteered to serve as a mentor to disabled youth as part of the USSA Dream Hunt.

"If you have a disability, then getting into the field and hunting is not an easy task without a lot of assistance,"

Brother Aird said. "That's why groups like USSA are so important. It takes families away from the world of hospitals and the worry of medical bills and puts them in a relaxed, outdoor setting where they can enjoy nature."

Over the last two years, Brother Aird, along with his sons William and Mason, have volunteered a weekend of their time to mentor teenagers with various disabilities. After a meet-and-greet dinner with the kids and their families, and also time on the rifle range, Brother Aird got the young hunters into the field for real life experience in the woods.

"Although the Dream Hunt has had success in harvesting animals," Brother Aird said, "I've come to realize that the true success for a hunter is being able to share the love of the outdoors with those who can't easily enjoy it on their own."

USSA is a wish-granting charity that takes seriously ill or disabled youths and their families on a "Dream Hunt" into the great outdoors to enjoy the beauty and splendor of nature. For more information about USSA, please visit: [www.childswish.org](http://www.childswish.org).



Dream Hunt volunteers pose for a group photo with the 2016 youth hunters and their family members.

## Former BLET General Chairman Bill Overton, 1942-2016

**W.M. (BILL) OVERTON JR., 73**, passed peacefully on April 30, 2016, with his family by his side. He was born August 18, 1942 to William and Lois Overton in Knoxville, Tenn., the oldest of six children. He was a Norfolk Southern locomotive engineer and served the BLET as General Chairman of the Norfolk Southern-Southern Lines General Committee of Adjustment from 2009-2012. He held continuous membership in Division 239 (Knoxville, Tenn.) since joining the Brotherhood on August 1, 1974. In 2003, he served as Arrangements Chairman of the BLET's 76th annual Southeastern

Meeting Association (SMA) in Pigeon Forge, Tenn.

Brother Overton is survived by his wife, Reda. He is also survived by his daughter, Regina and son William (Monty); his wife's son Shawn; grandchildren, Joshua, Noah, Gabby, Grayce, Gabe and Gavin.

"Brother Bill Overton was a loyal member of our Brotherhood for 42 years," BLET National President Dennis R. Pierce said. "He held numerous elected offices, including General Chairman, and was dedicated to serving our members and protecting their rights on the job. He will be truly missed."



Brother Bill Overton, right, with former Vice General Chairman Bill Thompson

## BLET extends condolences on passing of Elaine L. Ross

**THE BROTHERHOOD OF LOCOMOTIVE ENGINEERS AND TRAINMEN (BLET)** extends deepest sympathies to Honorary Member Harold A. Ross and staff employee Gregory E. Ross upon the passing of wife and mother Elaine L. Ross.

Mrs. Ross passed away on April 30, 2016. She is survived by: husband Harold; daughter Leslie Choma and son-in-law George; son Gregory and daughter-in-law Paula; son Jonathan; grandson Benjamin Choma; sisters Barbara Maschue, Marilyn McGrath and Margaret Ferrara; and brother E. Lawrence Hunt. She is preceded in death by brother John Terrence Hunt.

Greg has been a Brotherhood employee for more than 20 years and currently serves as Director of Communications, Director of Legal Affairs and Assistant to the Office Administrator. Brother Harold served as BLET General Counsel for nearly four decades. He began serving as



Greg Ross, Leslie Choma, Elaine Ross and Harold Ross

BLE General Counsel on September 1, 1967. Brother Harold retired in 2004, at which time he was named an Honorary Member of the Brotherhood, a rare and distinguished honor that has been bestowed on fewer than 20 people in nearly 154 years.

"Harold and Greg have served the Brotherhood with distinction for many years and we are deeply saddened by their loss," BLET National President Dennis R. Pierce said. "Our hearts and prayers go out to them and to the Ross family during this difficult time."



## Former BLET General Chairman Bruce MacArthur, 1946-2016

**FORMER BLET GENERAL CHAIRMAN BRUCE D. MACARTHUR, AGE 69**, passed away on June 15, 2016, at CHI Mercy Hospital.

Brother MacArthur was born in Mason City, Iowa, on November 27, 1946, to the late Jack and Bernida (Steinbeck) MacArthur. Bruce lived and worked in Clinton, Iowa, for many years. He retired from the Union Pacific Railroad after more than 40 years of service. Since 1992, he had served as General Chairman of the BLET's Union Pacific-Northern Region General Committee of Adjustment. He served seven terms of office as General Chairman prior to his retirement in 2012. A member of BLET Division 125 in Clinton, Iowa,




Brother MacArthur, left, with long-serving Vice General Chairman Mike Elsberry

Brother MacArthur first joined the BLET on January 11, 1973.

Brother MacArthur is survived by his wife, Phyllis (Lemons) MacArthur's best buddy, Mac (Boo)'s daughters,

Andrea Erickson (Mark), Whitney MacArthur (Troy Hopkins)'s stepson, Stephen Lemonds's stepdaughter, Jennifer Powell (Ryan)'s sister, Sherry Black (Bill)'s 4 grandchildren, Dakota, Vivian, Ava and Lulu's 2 stepgrandchildren, Nina and Henry and a host of other family and friends.

"Brother Bruce MacArthur will be remembered for his tireless devotion to the BLET and its members," BLET National President Dennis R. Pierce said.

"I extend deepest sympathies to Brother MacArthur's family on behalf of the 56,000 men and women of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen." 

## BLET OBITUARIES:

THIS INFORMATION IS BASED UPON REPORTS

FILED BY THE SECRETARY-TREASURERS OF THE VARIOUS BLET DIVISIONS

### AS OF FEBRUARY 28, 2016

1 — L. T. Dewey  
24 — G. E. Lingle  
57 — D. W. Huggan  
126 — L. Ursua  
180 — W. M. Peterson  
195 — P. Boschee  
195 — D. W. Kukowski  
197 — S. A. Brown  
219 — E. B. Stone  
265 — B. W. Gregg  
269 — T. V. Mezzapella  
348 — C. S. Lowe III  
401 — E. R. Blevins  
401 — E. H. Rose  
409 — C. L. Rentz  
527 — A. J. Bates  
607 — R. E. Weisenberger  
757 — R. Z. Marks  
790 — G. R. MacOmber

### AS OF MARCH 31, 2016

4 — T. R. Dubois  
50 — J. F. Cheek  
130 — L. O. Thurston

265 — J. W. Ford  
335 — F. J. Tokar  
815 — R. C. Kenady  
882 — J. A. Harsh

### AS OF APRIL 30, 2016

7 — Michael R. Wright  
84 — Billy G. Burdette  
231 — Anthony Coleman  
239 — William M. Overton Jr.  
269 — G. J. Hoffmann  
304 — A. G. Dargie  
325 — Alfred R. Lapsley  
391 — Randall L. Alley  
482 — David B. Byrnes  
758 — J. D. Nelson  
782 — R. T. Jackson  
791 — F. A. Aragon

### AS OF MAY 31, 2016

35 — J. L. Alvarez  
75 — Eugene Woodfin Jr.  
115 — Kim E. Hall  
117 — Timothy J. Dunkelberger  
325 — Thomas Caruso  
392 — Joseph P. Stiffarm

415 — T. M. Taylor  
547 — Roy S. King  
683 — George A. Lewkuc

### AS OF JUNE 30, 2016

125 — Bruce D. MacArthur  
179 — B. M. Wade  
197 — James H. Farris  
206 — Robert C. Stephens  
448 — C. W. Havens  
742 — L. D. Barker  
815 — R. R. Barcus

### AS OF JULY 31, 2016

84 — Daniel H. Snyder  
112 — Ronald F. Lassonde  
207 — Donald J. Evans Jr.  
269 — S. J. Altman  
391 — Steven A. Lester  
481 — L. F. Romanek  
542 — M. D. Geczi  
598 — David G. Plyler

### AS OF AUGUST 31, 2016

27 — John R. Strube  
48 — B. H. Dempsey

48 — M. E. Lauderdale  
71 — Rosevelt C. Moore  
190 — B. D. Hendricks  
195 — Corry M. Taylor  
236 — P. J. Steigleder  
253 — J. G. Moore  
262 — Jason M. Johns  
267 — Jack H. Coley  
269 — T. G. Cavanagh  
269 — R. F. Starck  
350 — J. G. Canon  
357 — A. A. Gelhar  
423 — R. G. Malone  
601 — Ronald L. Martz  
683 — Mark C. Debauche  
683 — Theodore C. Dinwiddie Jr.  
698 — Robert E. Boyles  
894 — Sherman C. White

### AS OF SEPTEMBER 30, 2016

335 — Robert T. Novak  
601 — Gerald E. Mickus  
699 — J. P. Wilen  
858 — Larry R. Morrison



## Guest Columnists

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

# Lost Corporate Taxes Could Fund Needed Infrastructure

**E**lected officials, both Democrats and Republicans, increasingly view infrastructure investment as an essential step to creating jobs and bolstering the U.S. economy. That's a good thing.

Yes, the plans may differ in size and scope, but the realization that money needs to be spent on roads, rail, mass transit, energy networks and water systems is one that will hopefully now move beyond campaign promises. The Teamsters

have been pushing such a message for more than a year. It needs to become a reality if this nation is to become the absolute best it can be.

To do that, however, will cost money. So how does the country come up with the funds? Easy, make corporations who have been stashing their profits offshore pay their fair share.

Currently, it is estimated that U.S. corporations have effectively shielded some \$2.4 trillion in profits overseas. That means they are cheat-

ing America out of about \$126 billion a year in tax revenue. There is nothing just about companies engaging in such activity.

A recent report by the Economic Policy Institute and Americans for Tax Fairness found that about 55 percent of American corporate offshore profits are held in tax-haven countries. As a result, corporations only contribute \$1 out of every \$9 in federal revenue, down from \$1 out of every \$3 at its peak.

It is time for corporate

America and Congress to do the right thing. Politicians and big business shouldn't drape themselves in the flag while doing nothing to end this fleecing of the nation. Corporate fat cats making record profits don't need these dollars — the U.S. does.

Fraternally,

**JAMES P. HOFFA**  
TEAMSTERS GENERAL  
PRESIDENT

## Helping our Brothers and Sisters in need

**T**he Teamsters not only represents members in seeking better wages, working conditions and benefits, we also offer assistance to members in times of need. The Teamsters Disaster Relief Fund assists Teamster members who have suffered a loss from a natural disaster. The fund receives donations from local unions, their affiliates and individual members like you.

The Teamsters have a long tradition of serving on the frontline in times of crisis and helping members affected by natural disasters. In 2016 alone the Teamsters Disaster Relief Fund offered assistance to members living in:

» **Louisiana** after severe storms and flooding on August 11, 2016.

» **South Carolina** after Hurricane Matthew beginning on October 4, 2016.

» **North Carolina** after Hurricane Matthew beginning on October 4, 2016.

» **Florida** after Hurricane Hermine from August 31 to September 11, 2016.

» **Louisiana** after severe storms and flooding on August 11, 2016.

» **West Virginia** after severe storms, flooding, landslides and mudslides on June 22, 2016.

» **Texas** after severe storms and flooding on May 26, 2016.

» **Texas** after severe storms and flooding from April 17-24, 2016.

» **Louisiana, Mississippi and Texas** after severe storms from March 7-9, 2016.

» **Arkansas** after severe storms, tornadoes, straight-line winds and flooding from December 26, 2015, through January 22, 2016.

» **Missouri** after severe storms, tornadoes, straight-line winds and flooding from December 23, 2015 through January 9, 2016.

» **Mississippi** after severe storms, tornadoes, straight-line winds and flooding from December 23-28, 2015.

In crisis after crisis, the Teamsters Disaster Relief

Fund coordinated its relief effort alongside FEMA, the Army, the Red Cross and other agencies. The Teamsters Disaster Relief Fund is the union's presence on the ground when disasters strike, and with each new disaster, we help lead the way to recovery for members in need. Please consider being a part of that effort. To donate to the fund, please visit [www.teamster.org](http://www.teamster.org).

Fraternally,

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

### About the Authors:



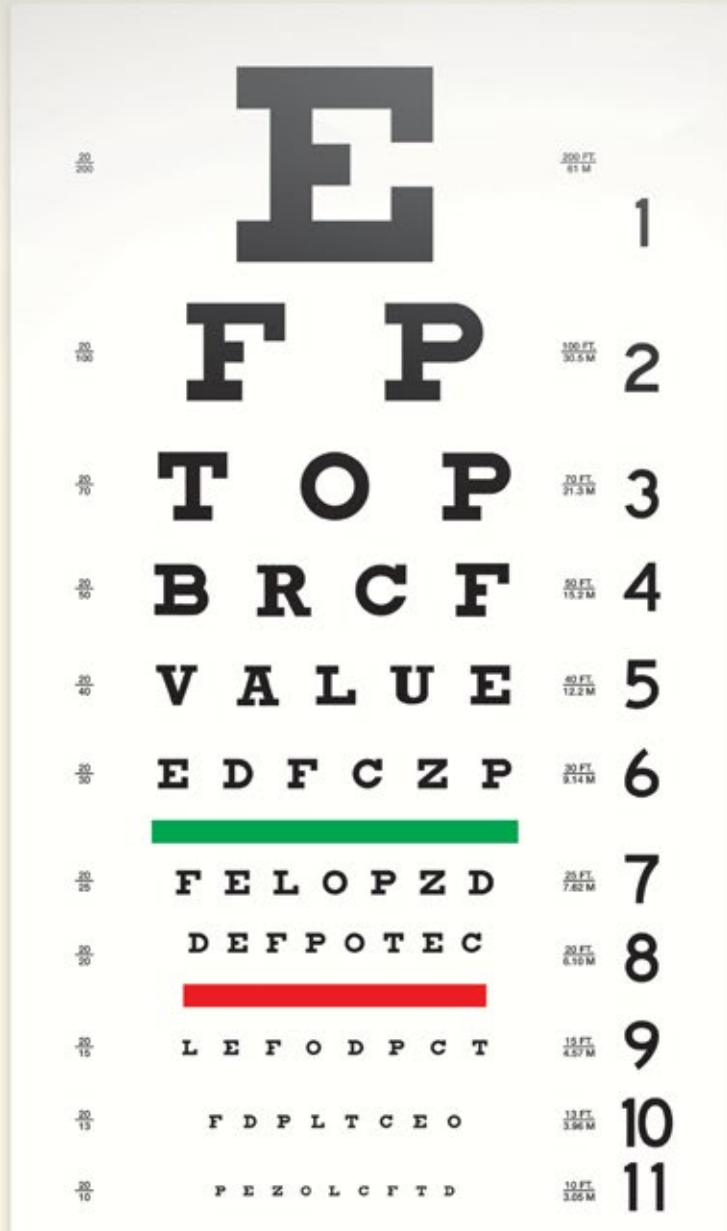
**James P. Hoffa** grew up on picket lines and in union meetings. He is the only son of James R. Hoffa, former General President of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters. On his 18th birthday, Hoffa received his own union card and was sworn in by his father.



**John Murphy** has been an Eastern Region Vice President since 1998. He spearheaded merger negotiations with the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees and now serves as Director of the Rail Conference.



# FOCUS ON VALUE



Daily Benefit Level	\$100 (\$102*)	\$150	\$200 (\$201*)	\$220	\$250
BR&CF	\$38.00	\$57.00	\$76.00	\$83.60	\$95.00
LECMFA (*)	\$59.50	\$87.50	\$117.25	Not available... you will pay less per month with BR&CF for more daily benefits	
SMART - UTU	\$81.00	\$121.50	\$162.00		

The BR&CF is the least expensive protection when disciplined for eligible occurrences. We are affordable. You could save up to \$1,032 each year on a \$200 benefit level. A BR&CF membership offers you the best price, value and service. To apply for membership... act today... ask a BR&CF member where you work for an application or visit our web site at [www.brcf.org](http://www.brcf.org) or call us toll free at 800 233-7080.



# Education & Training

AN INVESTMENT IN OUR UNION LEADERS OF TOMORROW



Attendees, instructors and guests at the Local Chairman class at BLET headquarters on June 10, 2016.

**T**he new Training Center for the BLET Education & Training Department opened for business on April 11, 2016. That's the day approximately two dozen Secretary-Treasurers sat down for the first-ever class at the BLET's new headquarters building in Independence, Ohio.


Delegates at the BLET's Second National Convention in 2010 expressed the desire to expand training to all members and officers and voted for a dedicated revenue source, which has been put to good use. The Training Center features state-of-the art equipment and communications technology in a modern, user-friendly collaborative environment. The training classes have continued since and many BLET members have been able to take advantage of valuable educational opportunities offered by the National Division.

The curriculum focuses on training for the various BLET elected offices,

and the Training Center has hosted classes for: General Chairmen, Local Chairmen, and Secretary-Treasurers. Additionally, the Education & Training Department has taken its Legislative Representative training course on the road and hosted it at Teamsters Headquarters in Washington, D.C., in order to provide Legislative Reps with better access to elected officials in the nation's Capitol.

The training courses will continue at the Training Center at BLET National Division headquarters throughout 2017 and beyond. Starting last year the Education & Training Department offered online training to some of the Divisions and General Committees of Adjustment and plans to expand its curriculum and offer online training courses for all BLET members. The online training will be presented using a product from Adobe and will be divided into a series of tutorial modules that members can view at their

leisure from any computer that allows access to the internet. The next modules to be released will cover Secretary-Treasurer and Trustee responsibilities along with a course on how to utilize BLET's new online trustee reporting system, which will be rolled out shortly. Although this technology allows us to reach a larger number of members faster with more information, it cannot replace some of the experiences gained from being physically present in a classroom setting.

"Our investment in the Education & Training Department is an investment in the future of our membership," BLET National President Dennis R. Pierce said. "The hands-on approach in our training classes builds a stronger union and enables our Brotherhood to provide better representation to our membership. I am excited about the future of our Education & Training Department as we continue to train and prepare the union leaders of tomorrow." 





# Get Trained in 2017

## PLEASE REGISTER FOR AN UPCOMING TRAINING CLASS

**ALL BLET OFFICERS AND MEMBERS** are encouraged to attend one or more BLET Education & Training Department classes during 2017. These classes are designed to help our elected officers develop and hone the skills necessary to provide the best representation possible to our membership.

**The best way to keep track of what courses are being offered is to visit the Education & Training Department area of the National Division website: [www.ble-t.org/departments/et](http://www.ble-t.org/departments/et).**

The training schedule for Spring 2017 is now available, and please check the website frequently for the Fall 2017 schedule, which will be released later this year. The Spring 2017 schedule includes: an LM-2 Secretary-Treasurer Workshop; a Local Chairman class; and two Secretary-Treasurer classes. All Spring 2017 classes will be held in the Training Center at BLET National Division headquarters in Independence, Ohio, with the exception of the LM-2 Workshop, which will be held in San Antonio, Texas.

The Fall 2017 schedule will include: Local Chairman class; Advanced Local Chairman class; General Chairman class; Secretary-Treasurer class; and Legislative Representative class. The Legislative Representative class will be held in Washington, D.C., while all others will be in Independence, Ohio.

Members can register for classes at the Education & Training Department area of the National Division website. Registration is on a first-come, first-served basis. Class size is limited. Even though all alternate officers are eligible to apply for classes, priority will be given to those officers who hold the position the class is designed for.

Those who successfully complete a course will qualify for a \$91 per day stipend from the North American Railway Foundation ([www.narfoundation.org](http://www.narfoundation.org)). 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 non-political projects throughout the United States and Canada. 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.

Again, the National Division will periodically release new class dates so don't forget to check the Education & Training Department website for future classes.

**CHUCK AKERS**, Amtrak Locomotive Engineer and Member of BLET Division 14, stepped down from his cab due to the psychological toll of accidents he could not prevent.







# The unseen victim

## CHUCK AKERS STEPS DOWN FROM THE CAB, RELUCTANTLY

**BLET EDITOR'S NOTE:** CHUCK AKERS IS A MEMBER OF BLET DIVISION 14 IN WASHINGTON, D.C. THE FOLLOWING ARTICLE WAS ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED IN THE ROANOKE TIMES ON JANUARY 23, 2017. IT IS REPUBLISHED HERE WITH PERMISSION.

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**STAFF WRITER:** Jeff Sturgeon • **PHOTOGRAPHER:** Heather Rousseau

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**C**huck Akers of Roanoke didn't retire from being a locomotive engineer because of the man who committed suicide before his eyes and whose remains were washed by firefighters from the front of his train.

It wasn't specifically over the bicyclist he hit or the woman in the older white van he killed, either. Or the person standing beside the track mowed down one day.

Or about the run-ins with a cement truck, dump truck, front-end loader, motorcycles or various passenger vehicles whose drivers failed to yield to the train on the tracks and lived.

It was the shock of all those incidents combined, followed by a bruising derailment, that drove Akers to the sidelines of the profession he loved. To step down from the cab after nearly 40 years was hard but necessary for peace of mind, he said.

"It's the fear of hitting the next big thing that you won't survive through," said Akers, 58. "What do I hit next, a gas truck, wipe me out? I got people to consider."

A million-plus miles traveled, a life-long personal and family connection to railroading, a house full of photographs and memorabilia. Akers had a lot invested in the movement of freight and people. He had been on course to achieve a high point of his career: running the new Amtrak train to Roanoke later this year.

Then a large truck blocked the track ahead of him on March 9, 2015.

It was a routine trip between Raleigh, North Carolina, and Richmond, run at 79 mph. A sign at the crossing that was blocked, in Halifax, North Carolina, read: "DO NOT STOP ON TRACKS."

Emergency brakes on, Akers hit the floor. The Amtrak Carolinian T-boned a 162-foot "superload" carrying a modular building. Sixty-five Amtrak passengers and several crew went to the hospital. All but one person was treated and released. No one died.

Rescuers approached Akers' blue locomotive, lying on its side, and freed him through a broken-out window. "I'm done," he recalled telling himself at the scene.

A psychologist he had seen for several years, a psychopharmacologist to whom he was referred and a railroad retirement board-appointed psychiatrist agreed he needed to retire because of post-traumatic stress disorder.

PTSD occurs when a person exposed to a traumatic event or events continues to feel stress and fear even when they aren't in danger. Before the Halifax crash, with 12 crashes on his record — none involving a violation on his part or a derailment — the anxiety had been real but not overpowering.

"I just kind of sucked it up and went on, but it's that fear of the unknown," Akers said.

At its worst, the condition brought on nightmares and flashbacks. In one incident, he tripped on a rock in his yard and "when I fell down I was back in that locomotive and we were wrecking," he said. "You think about it every day."

John Tolman, vice president of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen, said locomotive engineers experience an average of three



Brother Akers comes from a railroad family and is proud of his memorabilia collection. He and his wife, Lisa Stoneman, in front of an old railroad signal they have on display in their front yard.

fatal crashes every 25 years of service. PTSD from exposure to multiple crashes is a recognized occupational hazard and has cost other train personnel the remainder of their careers, according to Tolman.

Regulators said there were 2,291 highway-rail grade crossing collisions in the United States in 2015.

"I'm sure he's relieved to be away from that pressure," said a friend and former co-worker, David Booth of Roanoke. "What I've seen of him, he appears OK to me. What his battles are inwardly I don't know."

The split with Amtrak didn't involve the usual retirement kudos for veterans, which is a source of angst for Akers, according to his wife, Lisa Stoneman, an assistant professor of education at Roanoke College.

"I hate that for him," she said. "There's no big picture of him in his engine coming in."

Some colleagues wince when they think about it.

"His last act as a locomotive engineer was riding out a locomotive that turned over on its side ... because somebody didn't have common sense," said Chuck Jensen, a lifelong friend and fellow rail-

road worker. In any collision at a public crossing, "the driver decides to pull out in front of the train. The train doesn't decide to pull out in front of the driver," he said.

Regulators at the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration make a similar point in a video depiction of a train hitting a car and pushing it on along the tracks in a shower of sparks. "If you think trains will stop if they see a car on the tracks," the narrator says, "you're right. They will. About a mile after they hit you."

Amtrak said it does not comment on employee matters.

Though he recovered from extensive bruising to his torso, Akers said he abandoned a dream: to bid for the engineer's assignment on Amtrak's soon-to-launch Roanoke passenger service. He said he couldn't say for sure he would have gotten it, but his seniority likely would have been sufficiently high. The idea was to cap a career he had begun at the Norfolk & Western offices, once also located downtown, where he was hired on in 1976, three weeks after high school graduation.

Akers grew up in Elliston 350 feet from tracks owned by Norfolk South-





Some people might assume that if no one dies in a collision, the engineer is spared any trauma. But that's wrong, Akers said.

ern, then Norfolk & Western.

"Every time I heard a train coming, if I was in the house, I'd come running out the back door to watch it go by," he said. "I come from a long history of railroad people. It's all I ever wanted to do. It was either that or construction, but the railroad won out just simply because it was right out the back door."

He shares a middle name with his late father, Gordon Lacy Akers, a railroad fireman and sheet metal worker, and his late great-uncle, James Lacy Akers, the Norfolk & Western station agent who appears in "The Pelican At Rural Retreat, 1957," a photograph by O. Winston Link. Akers' late grandfather, Charles Emory Akers, was a conductor for 50 years.

Akers spent nearly 21 years in freight railroading and the rest at Amtrak. As the miles added up, so did the collisions. He said people might assume that if no one dies in a collision, the engineer is spared any trauma, but that's incorrect.

"When you're up there running and see a vehicle you're about ready to make

into scrap metal, you don't know if there's a 2-year-old in there or a 90-year-old in there," he said.

He's had rescuers come up to him and say, "It's OK, they lived" or "There was nobody in it." I say, it didn't make any difference to me. ... I still had the experience of somebody maybe dying three foot from me."

A metal cowling wrapping around the front console of the train is about all that separates the locomotive engineer's seat from impacted objects, he said.

The Halifax crash caused an estimated \$2 million in damage to the locomotive and other Amtrak equipment. Lawsuits were filed and confidential settlements were signed.

Akers said the oversized load's route, which had been approved by North Carolina officials, was supposed to have been tested in advance, but nobody mentioned the shipment to him even though Amtrak ran a train through the area daily.

Federal regulators said eyewitness-

es told them that the truck driver blocked the crossing while making three tries to complete a left turn at a nearby intersection. None of his three escorts, which included a North Carolina state trooper, dialed CSX at an 800 number posted on a blue sign at the crossing to report problems, according to a report issued by the Federal Railroad Administration on Jan. 6. Witness estimates for how long the crossing was blocked ranged from four minutes to 20 minutes.

When Akers rounded a curve in the northbound track, the crossing could have been visible about 1,000 feet away, according to the report. To have been able to stop the train before the crash, Akers said, he would have needed at least half a mile, or 2,600 feet, or about 30 seconds' warning that the crossing was blocked.

Investigators credited Akers with slowing the train from 70 mph to 32 mph before the impact at 12:19 p.m. Akers said he had been going 79, cut his speed to 68 in the curve and was going 40 on impact. The speed limit for the crossing was 70 mph.

In naming a cause for the crash, the Federal Railroad Administration faulted the truck driver for "highway user misjudgment." In assessing Akers' conduct, the report found "no train handling issues or exceptions." In addition, the train — whose brakes passed inspection that morning — and the crossing equipment were working normally, the report said.

Akers posted a photo of his crashed locomotive on his Facebook page the day after the investigative report was made public.

Akers isn't quoted in the official report but said he was interviewed at length. All he saw, he told interviewers, was a blue rectangular object — the payload on the flatbed truck — across the track ahead, he said.

About five seconds elapsed before impact.

"It was total, sheer terror," he said. "You can do nothing to me the rest of my life, nothing, that will give me that much terror as I had that day." 🗣️

# The Real American Dream

## **BROTHER RAY VIGIL OF BLET DIVISION 226 (NEWARK, N.J.) IS LIVING HIS AMERICAN DREAM.**

Originally from Peru, Brother Vigil has found a new home in the United States with his American family — his co-workers at Norfolk Southern and especially his fellow Brothers and Sisters within the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen.

When he was 14 years old, Brother Vigil moved to the United States with his mother and sister. After graduation from high school, one of his first occupations was as a non-union manual laborer. One day while toiling away, he saw someone walk past his work site while wearing a BLET shirt bearing the phrase, “Proud to be American, Proud to be Union.”

“He was walking by very proud with his head held high,” Brother Vigil said. “It then became my goal to become a union member. Today, I am very proud and I live by those words. As an immigrant, I couldn’t be more proud to say that I am proud to be American and proud to be union. To me, that is the real American Dream.”



Brother Vigil with Teamsters International Vice President Sean O'Brien

Brother Vigil said his family came to America for economic reasons, and that the quality of life and benefits provided by BLET-negotiated contracts have helped make the American Dream a reality for him.

“I love my railroad job, but what I love most is my Brotherhood,” he said. “When I became a union member, everyone welcomed me with open arms like a big, strong family.”

In April of 2016, Brother Vigil was a part of the very first training class held at the BLET’s new headquarters building in Independence, Ohio. He attended the training session in his role as

Secretary-Treasurer of Division 226.

“The class was an awesome experience that I will carry with me the rest of my life,” he said. “It was a lot of work but very rewarding. Being a union officer is not about having time, but about making time. I want to do my part for my American family. I’m a union member and this is my Brotherhood. There’s a joy in my heart and it is very rewarding to make my union stronger.”

By making the union strong, Brother Vigil said, he can go to work with greater confidence.

“I’m always happy and smiling when I come to work because I know that the union is there for me,” he said.

After hiring out with Norfolk Southern and earning promotion to locomotive engineer, Brother Vigil joined Division 226 effective April 1, 2011.

“My five years as a union member have been the best time of my life,” he said. “I graduated from college, bought my first house, and became an engineer. Being in the BLET is like a family that you can’t find anywhere else. I mean it when I say it: This is the real American Dream.”



Brother Ray Vigil (far right) participated in the very first training class at the BLET’s new National Division headquarters building in April of 2016.





**“ I love my railroad job, but what I love most is my Brotherhood. When I became a union member, everyone welcomed me with open arms like a big, strong family. ”**  
— RAY VIGIL, DIV. 226



# Meeting the Challenges Ahead



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

**F**ollowing any election, our job as union members is to keep the nation's elected officials in Washington on track when they're headed in the right direction, and to try to alter their course or derail them when they're not. In order to get that job done we have to remain active. This is a process that never ends — but we are facing a decidedly different cast of characters as a result of the November 2016 national elections.

As Americans and as rail union members, we must make every attempt to educate the new Administration and Congress about the unique nature of railroad work, and how critical safety is in our industry. At every opportunity we will seek to persuade the White House and Congress to abandon any policy that threatens our safety or our jobs.

One of our top priorities is to defend the Railroad Retirement Act. This could be a major fight and we will certainly need all hands on deck to make sure the system that we have worked for — and generations of our forefathers struggled for — is protected for all. Any attempt to alter the Railroad Retirement system that does not have the support of both labor and management would be harmful and disruptive to the industry. All of Rail Labor is watching, and I know that our retirees and spouses are watching as well.

There are several major rail industry-specific issues that we are monitoring to ensure that rail safety remains a top priority. We will need all BLET members, active and retired, to take action in the event that we ask you to contact



**“There are several major rail industry-specific issues that we are monitoring to ensure that rail safety remains a top priority. We will need all BLET members, active and retired, to take action in the event that we ask you to contact Congress or the White House.”**

Congress or the White House. These are issues that will impact our safety, as well as our hard-earned benefits, and we are more effective when we work together in solidarity.

During the campaign and since taking office, President Trump has vowed to spend hundreds of billions of dollars repairing, replacing and expanding our nation's infrastructure. We've been advocating for a program of this type for years, but some members of Congress have stood in the way. Perhaps our new President can sweep that opposition aside. We'd be willing to help, especially because much-needed and long overdue rail projects are among his top priorities.

More specifically, the President's in-

frastructure plan is comprised of 300 projects, and calls for funding critical rail-related projects. We will be working with the administration and Congress to secure passage of a robust infrastructure program. We will need brotherhood and sisterhood to support our efforts, and we will be asking you to join in the effort by contacting the White House and members of Congress to register your support. This is one part of President Trump's agenda that we absolutely want to keep on the fast track, if it is properly structured.

To that end, we need to make sure that this infrastructure program is advanced for the public benefit, and not simply to generate greater wealth for the 1% at the expense of the nation.





**From left:** Herb Harris, District of Columbia; B.J. Trumble, Michigan; Dave Brown, Minnesota; VP & NLR Tolman; Tim Craver, Virginia; Brian Farkas, Indiana; and D.B. Kenner, Montana.

Infrastructure projects of the types mentioned above normally are funded by government subsidies and/or the sale of government bonds, and “we the people” are the owners of the infrastructure improvements that are for the benefit of us all.

We will fight to make sure that the vast majority of the funding does not instead come from giving rich developers and Wall Street investors tax credits. We are opposed to the possibility that public roads and bridges may be turned over to private, for-profit corporations, who will then be able to charge expensive tolls to generate big profits for Wall Street. That type of program also skews investment from projects that address the greatest public need — like crumbling water pipes, the electrical grid and water treatment facilities — to those that can generate the greatest private profits. This type of infrastructure program is not in the nation’s interest, and we will lobby Congress and the Administration not to pursue it.

One dark cloud on the horizon is a

drive to make “right-to-work” the law of the land, which was initiated by Reps. Joe Wilson (R-SC) and Steve King (R-Iowa) during early February 2017. This proposal would allow workers to enjoy the benefits of collective bargaining by unions without having to pay for them. Even worse, the unions would also have to represent those not paying their fair share in their claims, grievances and discipline cases at no cost.

These laws have been passed in state houses across the country, and in every case workers in those states make significantly lower wages than in states where there is no such law. West Virginia and Kentucky have recently adopted anti-union statutes, and Missouri joined them in early February 2017. The collective bargaining rights of workers were under serious attack in Iowa as this issue of the Journal went to press.

Elections have consequences and we will have to deal with them. Now is not the time to remain silent but to be active to preserve and protect what generations of workers have struggled for,

and to educate those who don’t know the facts. History has proven time and time again that a rising tide lifts all boats. We will need to work with those who believe in our causes and to educate those who need to be educated.

Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen are professionals who have tremendous responsibilities, but who also work under tremendous pressure. If President Trump follows through on his promise to rebuild the nation by traditional means — including the railroads that drive economic growth and prosperity — then we may be on track to a brighter future. At the same time, however, we cannot mortgage that future by allowing railroad safety to be scaled back, nor can we succumb to policies that make it harder for working families to enjoy the piece of the American Dream their labor has earned them.

We’ll be watching. We’ll be engaged. And we’ll need your help and support because what the future holds is up to each of us working together. Let’s make the best of 2017! 🇺🇸




# *BLET Legislative Representatives meet in Washington*

**L**egislative Representatives of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen (BLET) met at Teamsters headquarters in Washington during the last week of September 2016 for training classes and to lobby House and Senate representatives about the need for two-person crews and other safety measures. The BLET Education & Training Department conducted the training classes.

Dennis Pierce, National President of the BLET, addressed the group and emphasized the importance of their lobbying elected leaders. "You are the voice of the members when you are on the Hill," he said. President Pierce also gave an update on various rail agreements and the union's fight against Right To Work legislation.

John Tolman, BLET Vice President and National Legislative Representative, discussed the importance of the upcoming elections on November 8 and how the outcome will have an impact on organized labor in general and BLET members specifically. Also on hand for the training class were Vince Verna, BLET Director of Regulatory Affairs, and Bob Hagan, Director of Political and Legislative Affairs.

Also at the week-long meeting was James P. Louis, BLET Vice President and Department Head of Education and Training. Louis gave a presentation about the skills needed to be an effective Legislative Representative such as learning about the process for getting bills made and the importance of working with the staff of elected representatives so that they understand rail workers' concerns. Jason Wright, BLET Special Representative and Director of Education and Training, conducted much of the classroom training.

Staff from the Teamsters Legislative Department outlined the current political priorities facing working families in order to further prepare the Legislative Representatives for their lobbying efforts. 



President Pierce speaks during the training class.







# *BLET supports striking Verizon workers in National Day of Action*

One of the largest worker strikes in modern American history came to a successful conclusion on June 1, and members of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen (BLET) showed support and solidarity with the striking workers throughout the 45-day ordeal.

More than 39,000 members of the Communication Workers of America (CWA) and the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) went on strike against Verizon effective April 13, 2016. The two unions settled with Verizon on June 1, with workers winning a 10.5 percent wage increase over four years, increased contributions to their pensions, protections against outsourcing of call center jobs, and a reversal of the sub-contracting of some pole work.

During the 45-day strike, striking CWA and IBEW members followed managers and scabs around and picketed the poles, manholes, and buildings where they were working. Safety violations were rampant, the unions said — and even put the public at risk. Pictures and videos were widely circulated on Facebook.

May 5 was a National Day of Action for the striking CWA and IBEW workers, and coordinated protests were held at 400 locations nationwide, including an action outside of a Verizon shareholder meeting in Albuquerque, N.M., that ended with 15 arrests.

Marching at a rally in Washington, D.C. were: Vice President and National Legislative Representative John P. Tolman; Minnesota State Legislative Board Chairman David K. Brown; Wyoming State Legislative Board Chairman Cory L. Runion; Directory of Regulatory Affairs Vincent G. Verna; and Director of Political and Legislative Affairs Robert Hagan.

Verizon has made astonishing profits — \$39 billion in the last three years, \$1.5



From left: Cory Runion, Vince Verna, Dave Brown, Bob Hagan and John Tolman



billion a month all through 2015 — but the company was attempting to force drastic cuts on the people who made those profits possible. Verizon pressed severe cutbacks in employee healthcare at a time of record profits, while at the same time offshoring jobs and slashing its workforce by more than 30 percent.

"The victory was a long time coming

for workers," Teamsters General President James P. Hoffa said. "The Teamsters and other unions stood in unity with Verizon employees. They understood that trimming staff, paying more for health care and getting less in retirement benefits wasn't a good deal. This new contract is just the latest example of 'Union Strong, America Stronger!'"

# ‘The E’s, The F’s and I’

Brother Douglas Kydd publishes memoir following 2014 retirement

**B**rother Douglas F. Kydd of BLET Division 312 (Boston, Mass.) safely completed his Last Run for Amtrak on August 29, 2014, concluding a railroad career that spanned 41 years.

Brother Kydd hired out as a towerman for the Penn Central in Davisville, R.I., in 1973. He went firing for the Boston & Maine on January 29, 1979, and earned promotion to locomotive engineer for the B&M on July 25, 1979. He worked for numerous railroads and in different crafts and locations over the decades, including: a leverman for the Chicago & NorthWestern (1974); towerman and train dispatcher for Conrail (1976-77); towerman and train director for the B&M (1977-78); brakeman for the B&M (1978-79); locomotive engineer for the B&M (1979-86); and as a locomotive engineer for Amtrak (1987-2014).

Brother Kydd is the proud owner of a 30-year BLET membership pin. He has held continuous membership in the BLET since July 1, 1979, when he initiated as a member of Division 57 (Boston). He transferred membership to Division 312 effective September 1, 1993, where he served as Chaplain and Guide from January 2013 to August of 2014.

Brother Kydd's Last Run was on August 29, 2014, when he worked as locomotive engineer of Amtrak train 174 between New Haven, Conn., and Boston, Mass.

Following his retirement in 2014, Brother Kydd wrote and published a memoir of his railroad career. Titled “The E’s, The F’s and I — Tales of the Life and Trains of Douglas F. Kydd,” the 111-page book is a detailed account of his railroad career and is filled with many interesting black and white photographs.

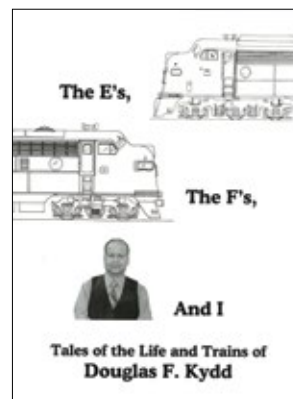
An extensive, worldwide traveler on ocean liners, Brother Kydd also used his book to detail his 29-year, 77,442 nautical-mile love affair with the famous ocean liner Queen Elizabeth 2.



Kydd behind the throttle.



Kydd's with retired engineers John Springer (middle) and Carl Webber (right).



The cover of his memoir

He is a maritime enthusiast and historian who enjoys collecting ships' engine room telegrams, which he says is an expensive hobby.

Brother Kydd is also active in Freemasonry and is the Past Master of Good Samaritan Lodge in Reading, Mass., and past patron of the Order of the Eastern Star. During retirement, he volunteers for many historic railroad preservation activities, continually supporting the preservation of antique and vintage diesel locomotives.

“The first locomotive I operated on a passenger train was eight years older than me,” Brother Kydd said. “In my final week as a locomotive engineer, I

operated a locomotive 60 years younger than me!”

Just after retirement, he spent a few moments giving first-hand instruction to his 4-year-old grandson, Dominick, in the operation of a General Electric U23B diesel.

A re-married widower, Brother Kydd's first wife Lora passed away in January of 2012. He remarried Susanna Kydd on November 25, 2013. He has two step-grandchildren.

“It's been a great ride!” Brother Kydd said. “Railroading was my first and only career choice, but it was time to get out while the getting out was good. Single person train crews are unsafe!” ☺



# Adams “appreciates what the BLET does for its members”



Brother Adams loved working as an engineer.

**B**rother Bruce E. Adams of BLET Division 74 (Harrisburg, Pa.) brought his 49-year railroad career to a safe conclusion when he completed his Last Run on February 27, 2014.

In 1965, Brother Adams hired out as a clerk for the Pennsylvania Railroad in Reading, Pa. He went firing in August of 1966 and earned promotion to locomotive engineer for the

Penn Central in 1971. He joined BLET Division 45 effective May 1, 1977, transferring membership to Division 74 in January of 1994.

Prior to the start of his railroad career, Brother Adams spent three years of active service with the U.S. Army, including 12 months stationed in Korea in 1963.

Brother Adams and his wife Naomi have three sons: Bruce II, Kevin and

Steve. They also have five grandchildren.

During retirement, Brother Adams pursues hobbies such as golfing, hiking, and photography — especially taking photos of locomotives and railroads. He also enjoys traveling throughout the United States and Canada.

“I loved my job as a locomotive engineer,” Brother Adams said. “I also appreciate all that the BLET does for its members.”

## Amtrak Western Region Chairman Dean Hansen retires

**B**rother Dean H. Hansen of BLET Division 51 (Salt Lake City, Utah) retired on October 1, 2015, after a long and distinguished career as a locomotive engineer and BLET member and officer.

Brother Hansen served as Local Chairman of Division 51 for many years. He was also an integral part of the Amtrak General Committee of Adjustment (GCA), having served as its Western Region Chairman for over two decades.

“Your work and expertise in handling claims, grievances, and discipline at the

General Committee of Adjustment level continuously advanced the interests of our membership and you repeatedly proved to be a career-saving lifeline for members embroiled in challenging disciplinary cases resulting in dismissal,” Amtrak General Chairman Mark Kenny said. “As such, your contributions to our Organization have positively impacted the lives of countless BLET members who have relied upon you for that purpose, and you should be very proud of your record and accomplishments in that regard, as we are.”

Brother Hansen first joined the Brotherhood effective September 1, 1979, as a member of Division 186 (Denver, Colo.), transferring to Division 51 in Salt Lake City in early 1993.

“On behalf of our GCA, our Organization in general, and certainly me personally, please accept our gratitude for your dedicated service and heartfelt wishes to you, Sue, the boys and the extended Hansen family for a very long, healthy, enjoyable and well deserved retirement,” General Chairman Kenny said.

# David W. Grimes enjoying retirement

**A**fter 41 years of railroading, Brother David W. Grimes of BLET Division 42 (St. Louis, Mo.) safely completed his Last Run on November 30, 2015.

In 1974, he hired out as a round-house laborer for the Rock Island Railroad out of St. Louis, Mo. Brother Grimes went firing for the Missouri Pacific in August of 1979 and earned promotion to Locomotive Engineer for the MoPac in January of 1982. He joined Division 42 effective October 1, 1979, and now has 37 years of continuous BLET membership.

Since 1985, Brother Grimes has held various elected positions for BLET. He has served Division 42 as Local Chairman, Delegate to National Conventions and Legislative Representative. For the Union Pacific-Central Region General Committee of Adjustment, he has served as the Secretary Treasurer and Vice General Chairman.

Brother Grimes also served several terms as the Vice Chairman of the Southwestern Convention Meeting (SWCM). In 2014, he served as Arrangements Chairman, hosting the 79th annual SWCM in St. Louis.

For his Last Run on November 30, 2015, Brother Grimes worked as a locomotive engineer on the LSI55 that did local service around the Dexter and Poplar Bluff, Mo., areas. His retirement became effective on December 1, 2015.

Brother Grimes is the proud owner of BLET membership pins for 5, 10, 15, 20, 25 and 30 years of service.

Brother Grimes and his wife Teresa Gail Hime were married in 1974 and they are enjoying retirement together. They enjoy taking motorcycle trips around the country with a group of very good friends, each trip providing them with a new adventure. The couple has three children: David, Jim and Teresa; and eight grandchildren.

His father was a crossing guard for Missouri Pacific Railroad, and his fa-



ther-in-law was a carman and mechanical officer for the Rock Island. His sons David J. Grimes and James R. Grimes are engineers with the Union Pacific. David works out of Clinton, Iowa, and Jim works out of Kansas City. David has served as a Vice Local Chairman and Trustee for BLET Division 6 (Boone, Iowa), and Jim is currently the Secretary-Treasurer for BLET Division 81 (Kansas City, Kan.).

Brother Grimes enjoys hunting, fishing, and riding motorcycles. During retirement, he and Teresa plan to spend as much time as possible with their children, grandchildren and their families.

"I want to thank the membership that elected me and gave me the opportunity to serve the Brotherhood in the various union positions I held," Brother Grimes said. "My goal was simply to help out where needed and to try to do whatever needed to be done. I was a member of Division 42 for 36 years and an officer of the UPRR Central Region General Committee for a large amount of that time. Those entities and this Brotherhood will al-



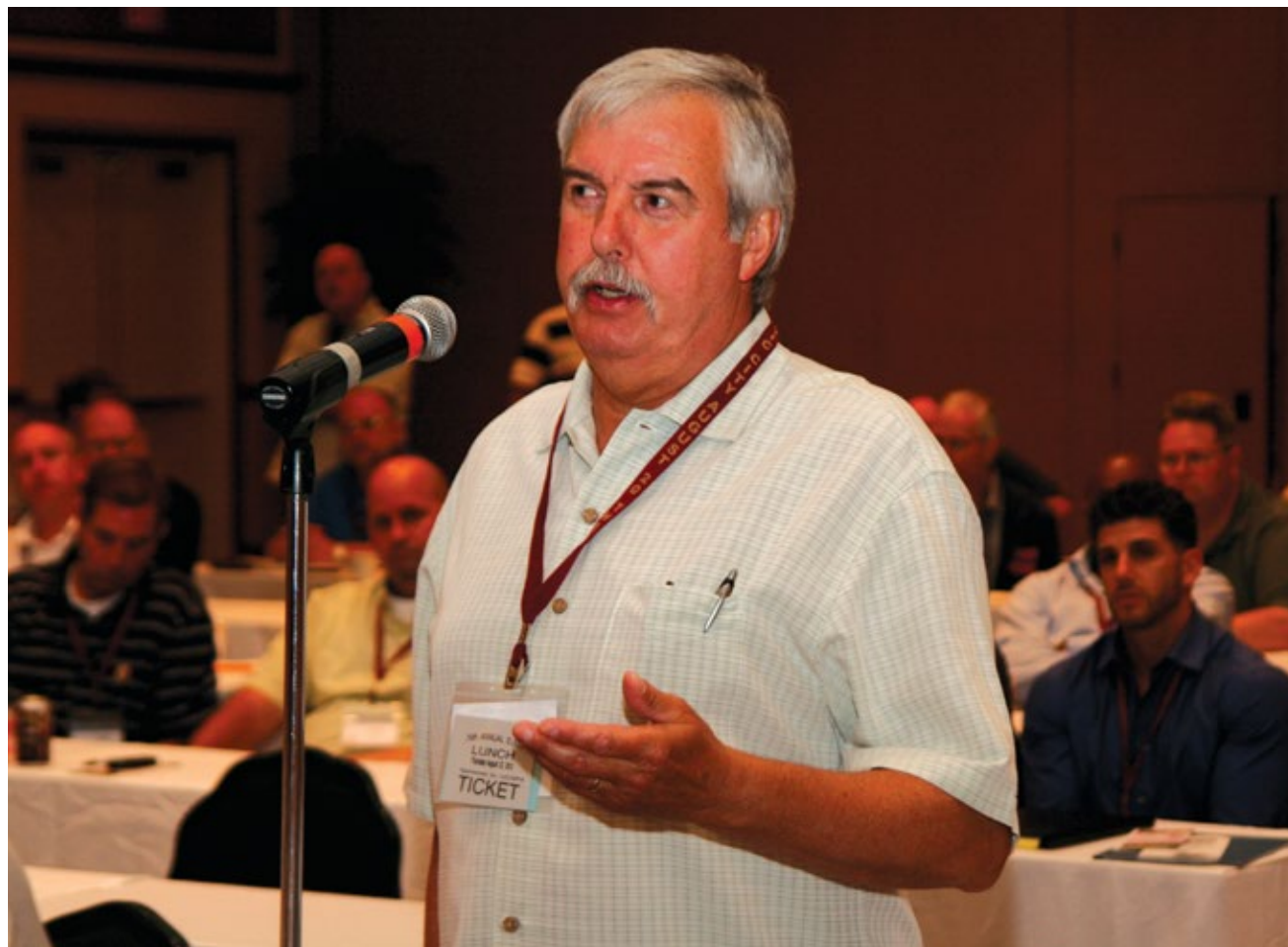
Dave with wife Teresa

ways hold a very special place in my heart and soul. Even after 42 years in the industry I still believe the locomotive engineer position is the best job on the railroad. Those who hold this position are to be treated with respect as they have put in the time and effort to earn it. I feel very fortunate to have made it to retirement as I know of many I hired with who did not. I want to thank all of those who work to make the craft safe and profitable.

"My friend and Brother President Pierce has said many times retirement is the best job the railroad has to offer. I can testify he is correct!" 🍷



# Greg Powell helped establish Michigan State Legislative Board



Brother Powell helped establish the Michigan State Legislative Board and served as its chairman from 2002-2012.

**B**rother Greg D. Powell, the former Chairman of the BLET Michigan State Legislative Board, retired on August 3, 2012, ending a railroad career that spanned 42 years.

Brother Powell hired out with the Grand Trunk Western (GTW) at Pontiac, Mich., on September 11, 1970. He served in the U.S. Army and served one tour of duty in Vietnam. After returning, he came back to the GTW to continue his railroad career.

On May 15, 1978, Brother Powell began his career in engine service, working in yard, freight and passenger service over the next 34 years. He first joined BLET Division 920 (Pontiac, Mich.) in 1978, and spent the next three decades

serving his Division as President, Vice President, and Legislative Representative. He represented Division 920 as Delegate to three BLET National and International Conventions.

Brother Powell was instrumental in creating and founding the Michigan State Legislative Board in 2002. He was elected to serve as its first Chairman that year, a position he held for a decade until his retirement in 2012. "I am very proud of the work the Michigan State Legislative Board performed, such as lobbying for passage of three state laws protecting members as well as stopping legislation that would adversely affect them," he said. "Our members stepped up and helped on many issues when-

ever asked, such as showing up to the state capital or local municipalities."

Brother Powell said he has many great memories and friends from his railroad career. He is married to Kristie and they have a son, Adam. He wants to thank his family for their support and help in all of his union activities. He also thanked all BLET National officers (past and present), with a special thanks to GTW General Chairman John Karakian, for their help and support.

In retirement, Brother Powell and his wife Kristie plan to do as many things as they can and enjoy life as much as possible. He said he thanks God every day that he had a Union. ☪

# LaMore proud of strong Rock Island heritage

**B**rother George W. LaMore of BLET Division 815 (Chicago) safely completed his Last Run for Metra on March 1, 2016, ending a railroad career that began 44 years ago. He is proud to be the last, original Rock Island engineer to work the former Rock Island system, now Metra.

Brother LaMore is also proud to follow in the footsteps of his great grandfather, Isreal (Ike) LaMore, a locomotive engineer with the Rock Island for 55 years (1880-1935).

Brother LaMore's railroad career began in June of 1972, when he hired out as a fireman for the Rock Island Railroad out of Chicago. He earned promotion to locomotive engineer on November 22, 1974. On April 25, 1989, Brother LaMore began working as a Metra engineer, a job he held until he retired. He joined the BLET on September 1, 1989.




Brother LaMore is the last, original Rock Island Engineer.

Brother LaMore's Last Run came on March 1, 2016, working as locomotive engineer of Metra train #413 between Chicago and Joliet, Ill. His retirement became effective the next

day. He is the owner of a 25-year BLET membership pin.

He and his wife, Diane, were married on April 12, 1975. The couple has three children (Carrie Lynn, Shannon Marie and Brandon George) and seven grandchildren. Brandon is a Union Pacific locomotive engineer and member of BLET Division 96 in Chicago.

In addition to his great grandfather Ike LaMore, who worked for the Rock Island for 55 years, Brother LaMore's father-in-law, Robert Pierson, is a retired Rock Island switchman with 39 years of service (1946-1985).

Brother LaMore plays on a travel team for a major softball league for 60+ year olds. He enjoys playing poker, music, camping and fishing. During retirement, he plans to travel more while spending more time with his grandchildren. 

**The BLET publishes Last Runs for members who have retired**, and recognizes members with 40 years or more of membership in Honor Roll articles. If you are planning to retire soon, please let us know! For details, contact: John Bentley, Editor, Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen Journal, Email: Bentley@ble-t.org, 7061 East Pleasant Valley Road, Independence, Ohio 44131

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## PRESIDENT PIERCE MESSAGE

CONTINUED FROM  
PAGE 2 ➡

their effort to strip you of those benefits gains steam, we will again be calling on all active and retired railroad employees to be heard loud and clear: **KEEP YOUR HANDS OFF OF THE BENEFITS THAT I BOUGHT AND PAID FOR WITH MY LABOR.**

I also want to briefly mention the Affordable Care Act (ACA), and its legislative impact to our health and welfare program. This is not fake news either; Congress has already moved to repeal the ACA, but as this Journal is going to print, it has yet to present a cohesive replacement. While many of you have been led to believe that the ACA was a problem, it is important for you to understand how it also helped those of us with health insurance primarily provided by our employers.

One of the core pieces of the ACA is the inclusion of your children as covered dependents from age 19 to 26 without any requirement that those children be in college, and regardless of whether they still live at home and/or remain single. This legislated benefit came at no cost to you because of the ACA, but it is not a free benefit to your employers. From the U.S. Government's data:

*"It's estimated by HHS that 5.7 million young adults (aged 19-25) stayed on a parent's plan until age 26. That is 2.3 million who stayed on their parents plan from 2010 to 2013 with an estimated 3.4 million gaining coverage from 2013 to 2015."*

Within our National Health Care Plan, it is estimated that between 28,000 and 30,000 dependent children of union represented

railroad workers currently receive this coverage at no cost to you, their parents. Instead, the law required your employer to provide these benefits, again, at no cost to you. Data provided in January of 2017 shows those additional costs for your dependent children to have been \$76.6 million in 2016, with projected costs of \$87.4 million in 2017 and \$92.6 million in 2018.

Another legislated benefit of the ACA was the right to receive Expanded Preventive Care, without cost sharing by you. Those costs were \$12.6 million in 2016, with projected costs of \$12.7 million in 2017 and \$13.5 million on 2018. Together, these two forms of coverage will cost your employers over \$100 million in 2018, unless the ACA is repealed by the new congress and administration, as they have both threatened to do. I don't have to tell you how important this employer-sponsored coverage is to our children as they try to make their way in today's tough jobs market.

Unfortunately, the corporate-led effort to take away this coverage has already gained steam, and if the ACA is fully repealed — as has been promised — the railroads will stop providing those benefits. It is imperative that your voice be heard on this issue. These are not benefits that belong to only Republicans, Democrats or Independents; they are benefits being provided to all working class Americans regardless of political affiliation. They don't cost you money and they don't raise your taxes; they, too, have become a legislated part of your employer-sponsored benefits. Help us in our fight to defend them.


One final comment on the ACA. When the bargaining round began, the chances of

the ACA being repealed were remote. The railroads' efforts to diminish your benefits by pushing additional costs on you made no mention of the above-noted costs that the ACA put on the railroads. That has obviously changed, with the railroads positioned to gain a huge financial windfall at your children's expense if the ACA is repealed without protecting the current provisions for your dependents between 19 and 26 years of age. We have insisted that the railroads maintain that coverage whether the law requires it or not, but the railroads have scoffed at that idea. It has been said that corporations are without a conscience, and nothing could be closer to the truth in this case. Even though the additional ACA costs were built into the health care plan at the beginning of the bargaining round, your employers not only want you to incur additional costs through plan design changes, they are also looking to strip your children of the coverage to reap an additional windfall from your benefit plan.

Finally, I must address recent developments concerning so-called Right to Work (For Less) legislation that has of this printing been introduced in the U.S. House of Representatives. Don't be fooled by the flashy name suggesting that working class Americans are gaining a "right." This legislation is not being pushed by working class Americans, it is being pushed by corporate lobbyists because it creates a world where working class Americans make less money and have fewer benefits. This is not fake news; it's real factual information that is readily available. A Union pay scale raises all pay scales, and once it is gone, it is the

corporations that will benefit, not the working class Americans, whose labor generates the corporate profits.

At its core, Right to Work legislation centers on turning you against your co-workers and your union, solely in an effort to defund your union. Those pushing this legislation don't want a Union in their way when they go to eliminate the protections that I have described above. They don't want a Union fighting for your Railroad Retirement, your Medicare, the ACA, or your Collectively Bargained wages and benefits. They would have you believe that we are all "rugged individualists" that can do better on our own.

Our forefathers who founded our Union knew better than that; they knew that employees joining together to fight for fair pay and fair benefits would benefit them, and the entire working class. The Union movement isn't perfect, and it has over the years had both successes and failures. But in the long run, the real facts show that you make more money and have better benefits in a unionized workplace, and the railroad industry is one workplace where that is crystal clear. Non-union railroad employees, many doing the same work that you do, make up to one-third less with far less in benefits. Don't fall for the fake news that you would be better off on your own. You are the Union, and the Union is stronger when you are an active part of it; everyone gets weaker when you are not. We must be diligent if we are to defend what is ours. As has been said, "It's not paranoia when they are actually shooting at you." Shots have been fired. Join me in our ongoing struggle to defend what is yours. 



# BLET Auxiliary awards 11 scholarships for the 2016-2017 school year



**BY SEREENA HOGAN**  
BLET AUXILIARY NATIONAL  
PRESIDENT

**T**he BLET Auxiliary has awarded 11 \$1,000 scholarships for the 2016-2017 academic school year. Congratulations to all of this year's recipients!

We are very proud to be able to provide this funding to students of BLET and BLET Auxiliary members. Most of the fundraising for the BLET Auxiliary Scholarship Program takes place at the BLET regional conventions each year. We are grateful to the many BLET members, Auxiliary members, and convention guests for supporting our fundraising efforts by purchasing raffle tickets and golf mulligans. We truly appreciate your participation and generosity! We also receive contributions each year from some of our local Auxiliaries, as well as memorial fund contributions from Jim and Janet Louis in memory of Jim's mother, Leona A. Louis, and from John and Brenda Casteel.

New for 2017, the Auxiliary is offering two \$2,500 scholarships annually in collaboration with Locomotive Engineers and Conductors Mutual Protective Association (LECMCA). The two \$2,500 scholarships are fully funded by LECMPA.

To apply for an Auxiliary Scholarship award, the applicant must be a son, daughter, stepson, or stepdaughter of a BLET Auxiliary member and a Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineer and Trainmen member (living or deceased), with each being a member at least one year. To qualify for the LECMPA-funded scholarships, the BLET member in the family must also be a member of LEC-



Sereena (seated) with Auxiliary officers and friends (from left) Lawana Poss, Terri Fleming, Kat Bisbikis and Susie Burrola.

MPA for no less than one year. Children of an unmarried BLET member who has been an Associate Member of the BLET Auxiliary for at least one year are also eligible.

In addition, applicants must be accepted for admission by an accredited university, college, trade school, or institute of higher learning. Recipients are chosen on the basis of academic record, leadership, character, and personal achievement.

Important: For high school seniors entering an institute of higher learning for the first time, a copy of ACT or SAT scores and a current copy of cumulative grade point average (GPA) must accompany the application. For graduate students or students returning to an institute of higher learning, a copy of last term's (or most current) GPA must accompany the application. A cumulative GPA of 3.0 or better is required for eligibility. Applications submitted without

these documents will not be considered.

The LECMPA-funded scholarships will be awarded to the two applicants who score the highest amongst those who qualify (by having one parent who is an Auxiliary member for at least one year, and one parent who is a BLET member and LECMPA member for at least one year). If an applicant meets the eligibility requirements for the LECMPA-funded scholarships but is not selected for one of the two \$2,500 scholarships, he/she will still be eligible for a \$1,000 scholarship.

Completed applications must be received by BLET Auxiliary Secretary Helen Brand (hvbrand51@gmail.com) no later than April 1, 2017. Applications received after that date **will not be considered**.

Applications, instructions for scholarships, and mailing address for submission may be found on the Auxiliary website at [www.bletauxiliary.net](http://www.bletauxiliary.net).

**NOTE: THE INFORMATION CONTAINED IN THIS ARTICLE IS FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES ONLY. THE BLET NATIONAL DIVISION DOES NOT MANAGE THIS SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM AND IS NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR THE AWARDING OF SCHOLARSHIPS.**



# 2015-2016 BLET Auxiliary Scholarship recipients

## RECIPIENT OF THE JOHN O. & BRENDA CASTEEL SCHOLARSHIP AWARD:

### TYLER KUENNING



Will be attending Nebraska Wesleyan University as a senior. His father, Travis Kuenning, is a member of BLET Div. 388. Both his mother, Gina Kuenning, and his father are members of Flat Rock Auxiliary No. 8 in North Platte, Neb.

## RECIPIENT OF THE LEONA A. LOUIS MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP AWARD:

### ALLYSON ROOF



Will be starting her 5th year as a PhD student at the University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus. Her father, James Booth, is a retired member of BLET Div. 28, and her mother, Anne Booth, is a member of Guadalupe Auxiliary No. 28 in Tucson, Ariz.

## ADDITIONAL SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS:

### JENNIFER ANDERSON



Will be attending Brigham Young University as a junior. Her father, Mark Anderson, is a member of BLET Div. 333, and her mother, Nancy Anderson, is an Auxiliary member-at-large.

### MICHAEL CORDES



Will be attending the University of Washington. His father, Scott Cordes, is a member of BLET Div. 758, and his mother, Janet Cordes, is a member of Fort Vancouver Auxiliary No. 72 in Vancouver, Wash.

### JAZMINE HALL



Will be attending Baylor University as a freshman. Her father, Norman Hall, is a member of BLET Div. 18, and her mother, Bianca Hall, is an Auxiliary member-at-large.

### JOCELYN LAVEING



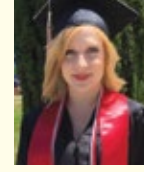
Will be attending Penn State University as a freshman. Her father, Tim Laveing, is a member of BLET Div. 325, and her mother, Jennifer Laveing, is an Auxiliary member-at-large.

### DILLON MARTIN



Will be attending Otero Junior College in La Junta, Colo., as a freshman. His father, Troy Martin, is a member of BLET Div. 430, and his mother, Lisa Martin, is an Auxiliary member-at-large.

### RACHEL McWILLIAMS



Will be attending Fresno State University for her first semester as a graduate student. Her father, Robby McWilliams, is a member of BLET Div. 126, and her mother, Kathy McWilliams, is an Auxiliary member-at-large.

### KARMA JADE UNDERWOOD



Will be attending Boise State University as a junior. Her father, Jim Underwood, is a member of BLET Div. 228, and her mother, Lori Underwood, is an Auxiliary member-at-large.

### CHANDLER WRIGHT



Will be attending Johnson County Community College in Overland Park, Kansas, as a freshman. His father, Jason Wright, is a member of BLET Div. 502, and his mother, Heidi Wright, is a member of KC Shield Auxiliary No. 422 in Kansas City, Mo.

### JACOB WRIGHT



Will be attending Kansas State University as a junior. His father, Jason, is a member of BLET Div. 502. His mother, Heidi, is a member of Auxiliary No. 422.

## ABOUT THE AUXILIARY:

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

## PURPOSE:

The overall purpose of the Auxiliary shall be to provide support and promote issues that effect the health, safety, welfare and quality of life of railroaders and their families, to promote higher education with the families of its full members, to give assistance to widows, widowers, sisters and brothers, when needed, especially during times of duress, and to render assistance whenever and wherever needed to further our mission.

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# *A Brotherhood Tradition*

## 2017 BLET REGIONAL MEETINGS

### *San Antonio*

JUNE 5-9, 2017



### *Myrtle Beach*

AUGUST 14-18, 2017



## Join Us This Summer!

Mark your calendars and plan to attend one or both of the BLET's regional meetings in 2017. See **Page 4** for details!