

LOCOMOTIVE ENGINEERS & TRAINMEN **Journal**

VOLUME 121 | No. 1 | SPRING 2017

WWW.BLE-T.ORG

Why Unions Matter

**Train Dispatchers President
Leo McCann explains why
organized labor is more
important today than ever**

**HONORING
9/11**

**World Trade Center
train car preserved**

**PROUD VETERAN
AND PROUD
BLET MEMBER**

Also inside:

**Last Runs
BLET Auxiliary News
Legislative &
Regulatory Update**





BLET President's Message

BY DENNIS R. PIERCE, BLET NATIONAL PRESIDENT

Why We Must Value Our Retirees

In April, I attended a meeting of the Arizona State Legislative Board at the invitation of Chairman Nick Johnson. Brother Nick — who also is the Local Chairman of Division 28 in Tucson — also was kind enough to invite me to attend the monthly meeting of the Division, and to participate in the Division's annual retiree luncheon.

I was very impressed with the turnout of both retirees and working BLET members. Many retirees have told me over the years that retirement is the best job a railroader can bid on, and Division 28's retirees echoed that sentiment loud and clear for all those in attendance.

It also was most rewarding to see the genuine love for our Brotherhood these retired Brothers have. Even though this was a social function, many of those in attendance took advantage of the opportunity to explain in detail for their younger Brothers and Sisters how the struggles waged by the BLET — and by the BLE before that — made it possible for them and their families to enjoy the economic stability a good Union job provides, up



President Pierce at the Arizona State Legislative Board meeting in Tucson on April 20, 2017. The next day, he attended the Division's annual "Old Timers" luncheon.

to and including retirement with dignity that they earned and are enjoying today.

Time and again these retired Brothers spoke of the advantages of a Railroad Retirement pension over Social Security. They also spoke of the piece of mind Medicare coverage provides, and how Union-bargained early retirement health benefits made it possible to retire years earlier than they could have under Social Security.

All of us know the physical toll working as a loco-

motive engineer or a trainman takes on the body, between working unhealthy hours, spending hundreds of nights away from loved ones, and the stress involved in moving the nation's freight and passengers. Without exception, the retirees who attended expressed their gratitude for the Union-negotiated benefits that permitted them to end their careers many years earlier than they otherwise would have been able to retire.

I also saw how the work-

ing members of Division 28 in attendance received a better understanding of how our railroad family, active and retired, works for one another, and how their labor today helps to provide stability for those whose careers have ended.

Our current wage and benefit levels are the product of generations of Union activism, Union leadership, and Union struggle. The retirees in attendance — along with many generations of their predecessors — fought to establish the wage and benefit levels today's working members enjoy. Today's work force, in turn, pays the Railroad Retirement and Medicare taxes that provide the stable and generous benefits the retirees have earned.

It is this cycle that has defined our Brotherhood for over 154 years now. And today — as we face an attack on our wages, benefits and working conditions not seen in this industry in more than half a century — it is that Brotherhood ... that unity and solidarity ... that we must call upon once again in order to protect what we have won, and to continue to advance.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 29 ➞

"Our current wage and benefit levels are the product of generations of Union activism, Union leadership, and Union struggle. The retirees in attendance — along with many generations of their predecessors — fought to establish the wage and benefit levels today's working members enjoy."

Contents »

»» ON THE COVER: BNSF 4704 LEADS THE H-VAWBAR ACROSS CASTLE CREEK JUST SOUTH OF DUNSMUIR, CALIF., ON A TRAIN THAT IS BEING DETOURED OVER THE UNION PACIFIC LINE DUE TO MAINTENANCE WORK ON ITS OWN RAIL LINE ON JUNE 20, 2013. CASTLE CRAG ROCK FORMATION IS IN THE BACKGROUND. Photo: Robert Scott.



16

Departments

NEWS	4
BROTHERHOOD OBITUARIES	9
COLUMNS BY JAMES P. HOFFA AND JOHN MURPHY, IBT	12
GUEST COLUMN: LEO McCANN	14
LEGISLATIVE UPDATE	20
LAST RUNS	24
BLET AUXILIARY	30



6

Features

16 Honoring 9/11

Brother Alan I. Zelazo worked to help preserve PATH Car 745 which was one of two cars that survived the destruction of the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001.

18 A proud veteran and a proud BLET Member

Sister Autumn Barrett a big advocate for membership involvement in the BLET



26

Journal

Published by the BLET,
a division of the Rail Conference,
International Brotherhood of Teamsters
WWW.BLE-T.ORG

BLET Advisory Board

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Dennis R. Pierce

NATIONAL PRESIDENT

National Division

E PIERCE@BLE-T.ORG

E. Lee Pruitt

FIRST VP & ALTERNATE PRESIDENT

National Division

E PRUITT@BLE-T.ORG

Stephen J. Bruno

NATIONAL SECRETARY-TREASURER

National Division

E BRUNO@BLE-T.ORG

VICE PRESIDENTS

John P. Tolman

NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE REPRESENTATIVE

25 Louisiana Ave. N.W., 7th Floor

Washington, D.C. 20001

E TOLMAN@BLE-T.ORG

Marcus J. Ruef

123 E. Lake St., Suite 105

Bloomington, IL 60108

E MJRUEF@BLE-T.ORG

Michael D. Twombly

70 High St., Andover, MA 01810

E TWOMBLY@BLE-T.ORG

Gil L. Gore

4016 Paige Janette Dr., Harvey, LA 70058

E GORE@BLE-T.ORG

Michael D. Priestester

247 Opera House St.,

Henderson, NV 89012

E PRIESTER@BLE-T.ORG

Cole W. Davis

20 Holman Rd., Moberly, MO 65270

E DAVIS@BLE-T.ORG

R.C. (Rick) Gibbons

7126 North Norton, Gladstone, MO 64119

E GIBBONS@BLE-T.ORG

James P. Louis

257 Forbes Ave., Tonawanda, NY 14150

E LOUIS@BLE-T.ORG

TRUSTEES

David P. Estes

13120 136th St.

Anderson Island, WA 98303

E ESTES@BLE-T.ORG

Mark L. Wallace

P.O. Box 16039, Asheville, NC 28816

E MLWBLE267@AOL.COM

Matt O. Wilson

8121 Rock Elm Rd., Fort Worth, TX 76131

E WILSON@BLE-T.ORG

John Bentley Jr.

DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC RELATIONS & EDITOR

E BENTLEY@BLE-T.ORG

Bill Joyce

ART DIRECTOR & ASSOCIATE EDITOR

E JOYCE@BLE-T.ORG

National Division

7061 East Pleasant Valley Road

Independence, Ohio 44131

The Locomotive Engineers & Trainmen Journal (ISSN: 1553-5010 USPS: 120) is published quarterly for \$10.00 per year (single copies \$3.00) by the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen, 25 Louisiana Ave. N.W., 7th Floor, Washington, D.C. 20001. Periodicals postage paid at Washington, D.C. POSTMASTER, please send address changes to: Locomotive Engineers & Trainmen Journal, BLET Record Department, 7061 East Pleasant Valley Road, Independence, Ohio 44131. Copyright 2017. All rights reserved. Reproduction in whole or in part without written permission is prohibited. Widows of BLET members will receive free subscriptions upon request to: BLET Record Dept., 7061 East Pleasant Valley Road, Independence, Ohio 44131.



BLET STF participates in high-profile investigations

It has been a busy year for members of the BLET's Safety Task Force (STF), which assisted the National Transportation Safety Board with several high-profile accidents over the past year or so.

The BLET became the first labor union in the railroad industry to establish a formal accident investigation team when it created the Safety Task Force in 1989. The STF assists federal agencies in the investigation of rail accidents, helping to determine probable causes and making recommendations for safety improvements. The STF is typically given Party Status by the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) to assist with accident investigations, depending on the type and severity of the accident. BLET investigators with the STF study accidents from the viewpoint of locomotive engineers and trainmen to help determine how accidents happened and how to prevent similar accidents from happening in the future.

BLET National Secretary-Treasurer Steve Bruno serves as Chairman of the STF. Brother Carl W. Fields, Division 682 (Hammond, Ind.) serves as Coordinator of the STF with Brother Scott G. Palmer (Division 842, Klamath Falls, Ore.) serving as Assistant Coordinator.

Over the past 18 months, the STF has participated in investigations of high-profile accidents, such as the derailment of Amtrak train No. 188 in Philadelphia and the head-on collision of two BNSF freight trains in Panhandle, Texas.

"The Safety Task Force is a critical part of the National Division's efforts to improve safe operating conditions for BLET members," BLET National President Dennis R. Pierce said. "The STF plays a key role for all railroaders by investigating accidents from the human perspective."

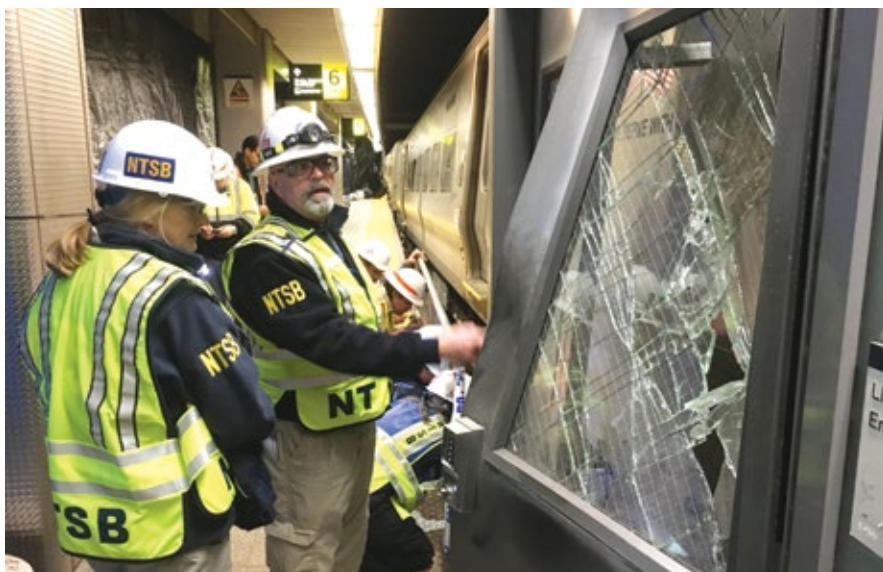


A NJ Transit commuter train collided with a bumping post and platform on September 29, 2016, causing significant structural damage to Hoboken Terminal.



"The Safety Task Force is a critical part of the National Division's efforts to improve safe operating conditions for BLET members. The STF plays a key role for all railroaders by investigating accidents from the human perspective."

— Dennis Pierce, BLET National President



Above: STF investigators on the scene of a Long Island Rail Road collision in Brooklyn, N.Y.



Above & below: The aftermath of a Union Pacific ethanol train derailment and fire in Graettinger, Iowa.



BLET STF Cases Currently Pending

(AS OF MARCH 16, 2017)

LOCATION: Heimdahl, N.D.

DATE: May 6, 2015

STF REPS: Brian Fransen, Party Spokesman, and D.B. Kenner, Assisting

SYNOPSIS: A 109-car BNSF train hauling crude oil from Bakken, N.D., derailed. Four of the six cars that derailed breached and caught fire, causing evacuation of approximately 25 residents.

LOCATION: Panhandle, Texas

DATE: June 28, 2016

STF REPS: Erich Jeske, Party Spokesman, and Steve Facklam, Assisting

SYNOPSIS: Head-on collision between two BNSF freight trains, resulting in three fatalities and one injury. Technical review of group factual reports occurred on December 8, 2016.

LOCATION: Hoboken, N.J.

DATE: September 29, 2016

STF REPS: Randy Fannon, Party Spokesman

SYNOPSIS: NJ Transit commuter train collided with bumping post and platform, resulting in several injuries and one fatality (a woman waiting on the platform). The involved parties are still in the process of gathering information and conducting interviews. The projected submission date was in April of 2017.

LOCATION: Brooklyn, N.Y.

DATE: January 4, 2017

STF REPS: Don Hill, Party Spokesman

SYNOPSIS: Long Island Rail Road commuter train No. 2817 collided with a bumping post in Brooklyn's Atlantic Terminal. Approximately 108 of the 430 passengers on board were injured. The involved parties are still in the process of gathering information and conducting interviews.

LOCATION: Edgemont, S.D.

DATE: January 17, 2017

STF REPS: D.B. Kenner, Party Spokesman

SYNOPSIS: Two BNSF maintenance of way employees were struck and killed as they were cleaning ice and snow from a switch.

LOCATION: Graettinger, Iowa

DATE: March 10, 2017

STF REPS: Steve Facklam, Party Spokesman

SYNOPSIS: Union Pacific ethanol train derailed with hazardous materials release and subsequent fire.

Scholarship Success Story

NOW A DOCTOR, THE DAUGHTER OF A BLET MEMBER IS GRATEFUL FOR HOFFA SCHOLARSHIP

Dr. Christine Haas — the daughter of BLET Member Fred Haas — is a former James R. Hoffa Memorial Scholarship winner who stands as a shining example of success to other scholarship winners who are following in her footsteps.

As an 18-year-old high school senior, Dr. Haas was the winner of a Hoffa scholarship in 2006. Ten years later, she has achieved her Ph.D. and is a successful, practicing veterinarian. Dr. Haas thanked the Teamsters for their generosity at the IBT's 29th International Convention in 2016, and she described how winning a Teamster scholarship helped her to become a successful veterinarian.

She also described how her father, Brother Fred Haas, was her inspiration to help others. Brother Haas hired out on the railroad at age 19 and retired from the BNSF Railway at the age of 60 in 2014. He joined BLET Division 553 in Calwa City, Calif., on March 1, 1975, and has held continuous membership ever since. Brother Haas served Division 553 as Vice Local Chairman, an action that made a profound and lasting impression on his young daughter.

"He dedicated himself to his job and to supporting those around him," Dr. Haas said. "I can remember many nights as a child in which I helped him create spreadsheets and documented evi-



Dr. Christine Haas, the daughter of BLET member Fred Haas of Division 553 (Calwa City, Calif.)

dence in an ongoing battle to prove that his fellow engineers were unjustly treated, resulting in loss of work as well as loss of jobs. His kindness and devotion to helping others helped shape who I am today."

During her high school years, Dr. Haas was a very successful student. Among her many achievements, she was the winner of the Discovery Channel's Young Scientist Challenge. To cap off her high school years, she was a recipient of one of the \$10,000 James R. Hoffa Memorial Scholarships in 2006.

"Because of it and other scholarships, I became the very first person in my immediate family to go to col-

lege, not to mention also earn a doctorate degree," she said.

She graduated from the University of California Davis with a major in biochemistry and molecular biology, as well as a minor in animal genetics. But the road to becoming a veterinarian was not an easy one. Veterinary school alone cost in excess of \$200,000, which did not include undergraduate school. But thanks in part to the Hoffa scholarship, plus working three jobs while in vet school and receiving financial support from her family, Dr. Haas had a debt burden of \$32,000 upon graduation from the UC Davis' School of Veterinary Medicine.

Dr. Haas received a standing ovation when concluded her speech by thanking the Teamsters and her father for helping and inspiring her to achieve her goals.

"My father showed me that helping others is truly the most rewarding action that we can take in this life," she said. "And thanks to you and the James R. Hoffa Memorial Scholarship, it was made possible with your help, kindness, and support of a young girl's dream. Thank you." 📺

**A VIDEO OF DR. HAAS'S
SPEECH IS ON THE
TEAMSTERS WEBSITE:
<http://bit.ly/2oVkoee>**

New Charger locomotives for Amtrak Cascades trains

The state of Washington has purchased eight new state-of-the-art locomotives, designed and built in the United States, to meet the growing population and associated increased travel on the I-5 corridor. Passenger rail service is an efficient and environmentally sound travel mode and these locomotives will pull Washington-state sponsored Amtrak Cascades trains.

This “next generation” rail equipment will feature improved fuel efficiency and safety upgrades. The new 4,400-horse power Cummins QSK95 engines are 42,000 pounds, stand 8-feet tall and meet new, stringent emission standards.

The new locomotives will serve all the existing scheduled trains and the two additional round trips between Seattle and Portland, which will be added in 2017.

The Washington State Department of Transportation joined other state partners including Illinois, California, Michigan and Missouri, to develop specifications for new rail equipment for its Amtrak Cascades service.

The end result is that these new locomotives will have higher accelerations rates and top speeds, lower emission rates, on-board positive train control, and are expected to be more reliable. 🚂



Washington State DOT's first two new Siemens Charger locomotives left the California plant in early March 2017 and are undergoing testing in Colorado. They're expected in Seattle in April and will be in regular service during the summer of 2017.

BLET MARKS 154TH ANNIVERSARY IN 2017

The Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen (BLET) proudly marks its 154th anniversary in 2017. The union was founded as the Brotherhood of the Footboard on May 8, 1863 in Marshall, Mich. In 1864, the union changed its name to Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers (BLE), the name it retained for 140 years until merging with the International Brotherhood of Teamsters on Jan. 1, 2004, when it became the BLET. The BLET is the oldest labor union in the Western Hemisphere.



Robinson

The organization was formed in the early 1860s when locomotive engineers on the Michigan Central Railroad became discouraged with pay cuts and the dismissal of their firemen. During that time, locomotive engineers at the Michigan Central were paid at the rate of \$60 a month on the condition that they ran at least 2,500 miles each month, regardless of the time consumed. William D. Robinson, credited as the founder of the Brotherhood, was elected to lead the Organization in 1863. The BLET was the first labor organization

to obtain contracts with railroads. Among the earliest was an agreement with the former New York Central in 1875. Today, the BLET has hundreds of contracts with railroads large and small, and represents locomotive engineers on 98 percent of rail trackage in the United States.

The Brotherhood has always been proud to support America's soldiers and their families. Born in the midst of the Civil War, our union's membership has been comprised of veterans of every major military conflict since, up to and including the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Today, the BLET is the founding member of the Teamsters Rail Conference. 🚂

letters to the editor

War on Kentucky Unions is Wrong

(BLET EDITOR'S NOTE: THE FOLLOWING FACEBOOK POST FROM KEVIN NEAL, A JUDGE EXECUTIVE IN MARSHALL COUNTY, KY., IS REPRODUCED HERE AS A LETTER TO THE EDITOR.)

In their desire to become a right-to-work state, Kentucky Republicans have passed Kentucky's first right-to-work legislation. If you're reading this, Governor Bevin likely signed the legislation into law on January 9, 2017.

I want to establish the dishonesty of the bill right up front. Most people don't realize it will force unions to represent those employees that choose not to join and pay dues. This is the clearest sign that this legislation is not about the "freedom" of the worker as proponents contend but more about weakening the unions. It's destructive to our county's many union employees and their families.

Right-to-work proponents contend that this legislation creates a pro-business climate, thereby attracting companies to locate within right-to-work states, creating new jobs and "promoting prosperity." I contend that right-to-work laws weaken unions. In time, they depress wages and benefits, thereby worsening income inequality.

As many of you have heard me say before, nine of my siblings and I were raised on union wages. I benefited from collective bargaining for many years as an officer with the Paducah Police Department. I have many close friends in local chapters who are raising their families on union wages. Unions in Marshall County have a long history of



"I'm glad you guys ran my story. I'm finding that these types of articles ARE helping one member at a time with their emotional well-being. That is what this is all about, helping people. If just one person can benefit from my incident, well, I guess it was worth it." — Chuck Akers

working successfully with many of our businesses and corporations. You only have to look to Calvert City to see these successful relationships. Those chemical plants have been operating profitably and safely with union labor for many, many years.

I will never support right-to-work legislation in the state of Kentucky, and I strongly oppose the current push by Governor Bevin and all in the Kentucky House and Senate to weaken labor in our great state. I believe strong unions and strong relationships between unions and businesses have been vital to American productivity, creativity, growth, and quality of life for generations. Elected officials who truly care about their community do not choose between labor and business, but find ways to support both and improve the lives of every citizen in our community. After all, one hand washes the other.

Sincerely,
Kevin Neal
Judge Executive,
Marshall County, Kentucky

Editor:

My heart reaches out to Engineer Chuck Akers, featured on the cover of *Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen Journal* (Volume 120, No. 1, Winter 2016). Please forward to him my heartfelt condolences. Please let him know that there are engineers and even retired engineers out here that care about him and are here for him.

Thank you.
Rog Gryder
Retired
BLET Division 622
Alliance, Neb.

Dear Editor:

Thank you so very much for publishing the article in the *Journal*. I have to say it came as a complete surprise that you guys thought it warranted the cover. I have received Facebook messages from other members offering their support and a chance to tell their story.

I received a very touching letter from a retired engineer off the BNSF. It was nine pages, handwritten, on small ring binder pa-

per. Like myself, he comes from a long line of rails in his family and he related all of his incidents in some detail. To quote him, "I think people that don't experience this can't possibly understand the feeling you get of fight or flight, as they call it, but sheer terror is a good description." He was very glad the *Journal* had ran the article. As I read his letter, I could tell he needed to communicate with someone who knew first-hand his lifelong experience on the rails. I am more grateful for his letter than he can imagine. His letter, as I said earlier, was very deeply touching and moved me to tears.

I'm glad you guys ran my story. I'm finding that these types of articles ARE helping one member at a time with their emotional well-being. That is what this is all about, helping people. If just one person can benefit from my incident, well, I guess it was worth it. Thank you again for the support and interest in my situation.

Sincerely,
Chuck Akers
Retired
BLET Division 14
Washington, D.C.

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

Former General Chairman Carl L. James Jr., 1941-2015

BROTHER CARL L. JAMES JR., former BLE General Chairman, passed away at his home in Pueblo West, Colo., on April 5, 2015, after a long battle with cancer. He served for 23 years as General Chairman of the former Denver & Rio Grande Western and Utah Railway General Committee of Adjustment (1978-2001).

A second-generation railroader, James hired out as a fireman on the D&RGW on August 27, 1971. He earned promotion to locomotive engineer on January 9, 1973. He held continuous membership in Division 29 (Pueblo, Colo.) for 44 years — 32 as an active member and 12 as a retiree. After serving as Local Chairman of Division 29 from 1973 to 1978, Brother James was elected to serve as General Chairman of the combined D&RGW and Utah Railway General Committee of Adjustment. He held that position from 1978 to 2001, when his GCA was consolidated with the UP-Eastern Lines GCA.

James was born into a railroad family on July 14, 1941. His father Carl L. James Sr. worked as a switchman on the D&RGW from 1941-1979, and his brother David L. James worked as a D&RGW locomotive engineer from 1973-1996, and was also a member of



Division 29. Brother James' son Darren M. James is a third generation railroader, and a member of Division 29, working as a locomotive engineer for the Union Pacific.

During Brother James' tenure as General Chairman, he became known throughout the United States and Canada as an active leader who fought for the rights of all BLE members. He had a unique ability to examine the positive and negative aspects of both sides during negotiations. He was also known and respected by the rail carriers for his negotiating ability and tenacity in protecting

the best interests of the BLE members he represented. In the age before personal computers were in wide use, James quickly produced massive amounts of work and skillfully typed every document by hand. He wrote and typed appeals to the United States Supreme Court as well as the former BLE International Division Board of Appeals.

For many years, Brother James was active in the Western General Chairmen's Association. He also served as Chairman of the Constitution & Bylaws committee at the 1991 BLE International Convention in Cleveland, Ohio. He retired in 2002.

Prior to the start of his railroad career, Brother James served in the U.S. Marine Corps at Camp Smith in Hawaii from 1960-1963. He received a Good Conduct medal. He and his wife Patricia were married on October 6, 1962. Brother James is survived by his wife Patricia, two children (Darren and David), and three grandchildren.

Members of the BLE and all other railroaders who knew him will never forget the contributions made by this great man, who worked tirelessly for 32 years serving the Organization he loved, in addition to being a great family man. ☪

BLET mourns loss of Charlene Payne

CHARLENE PAYNE, A LONG-TIME UNITED HEALTHCARE REPRESENTATIVE FOR THE RAILROAD ACCOUNTS, passed away unexpectedly on December 17, 2016. Charlene was a dear friend to many within the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen (BLET), and her passion and dedication to serving all railroad members was remarkable.

In 1987, Payne joined one of



that time she had continuously served in various roles, most recently as the

United Health-care's legacy companies, The Travelers Insurance Company, as a member services consultant for Railroad Accounts. Since

Manager of Member Relations. In this capacity, her primary responsibility was to work closely with railroad members by attending union meetings and benefit fairs.

She traveled extensively throughout the country meeting with union officers, union members and their dependents. Payne constantly shared her expertise by explaining railroad

CONTINUED ON PAGE 10 ➤

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9

health benefits and eligibility provisions for both actively working employees and retirees. Over the years, Payne developed close relationships with many railroad members by answering their questions and resolving their problems with care and compassion. Payne's dedication to the individuals she served was both

professional and personal, as she truly cared about their well-being.

"Charlene went above and beyond when it came to assisting railroaders and their families," BLET National President Dennis R. Pierce said. "She will be truly missed. On behalf of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen, I extend deepest sympathies to her family."

Everyone who knew Charlene will miss her knowledge and assistance, her friendliness and smile, and her unselfish desire to help.

Donations in Charlene's memory may be made to: Humane Society of Utah (P.O. Box 573659, Murray, UT 84157-3659); or American Red Cross—Donations, 555 East 300 South, Suite 200, Salt Lake City, UT 84102. ☐

Former BLET VP & NLR Ed McCulloch, 1922-2016

FORMER BLET VICE PRESIDENT & NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE REPRESENTATIVE EDWARD L. MCCULLOCH passed away on December 29, 2016. He was 94 years old.

Brother McCulloch was born November 3, 1922 in Alabama to Luther and Hetha McCulloch. He served the Brotherhood for 20 years in Washington, D.C., as Vice President and National Legislative Representative. He began working as Chief Clerk for the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers headquarters office in Cleveland in September of 1962.

He was a member and Deacon of First Baptist Church in Maumelle, Ark. Brother McCulloch served in the U.S. Army during World War II in Germany and France. He was a railroad employee from 1941 to 1986 with the Missouri Pacific Railroad. Brother McCulloch joined BLET Division 182 in North Little Rock, Ark., on October 1, 1955. He held continuous membership for 61 years.

Brother McCulloch Hired out with the MoPac in 1941, earning promotion to locomotive engineer in 1947. He served as Chairman of the Arkansas State Legislative Board for several months in 1962. He also served as an alderman for the city of North Little Rock from 1957-1962. During his time on the railroad, he worked on the extra board and was eligible to be called for any class of service. However, he was usually called for yard switching. His father



With wife Louise in 2008.

worked as a boilermaker in the MoPac shops in North Little Rock for many years, retiring in 1961.

He loved the Lord, his wife, his family, his Brotherhood and friends.

Brother McCulloch is survived by his wife of 20 years, Louise McCulloch; step children, John Wheeler (Judy), Joy Gentry (Rodger), Jackie Wheeler, Jeffrey Wheeler; 15 grandchildren; 13 great-grandchildren; sister, Thelma McCulloch Paul; and many nieces, nephews and his extended railroad family.

He was preceded in death by parents; his wife of 52 years, Edith Wells McCulloch; son, Michael

Edward McCulloch; siblings, Dorothy McCulloch and T.D. McCulloch.

"Brother Ed McCulloch was a hard working locomotive engineer who served our Brotherhood with professionalism and dignity for many years," BLET National President Dennis R. Pierce said. "As a union leader, he spent a large portion of his career lobbying Congress and the White House on behalf of locomotive engineer and trainmen, advocating tirelessly for better and safer working conditions. On behalf of locomotive engineers and trainmen, I extend deepest condolences to Brother McCulloch's family and friends." ☐

GIA President Ruth Windham, 1923-2017

RUTH E. PILLMAN-WINDHAM, FORMER PRESIDENT OF THE GRAND INTERNATIONAL AUXILIARY (GIA) to the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers, passed away on March 26, 2017. She was 93 years old.

Sister Windham served as GIA International President from 1996-2001. She was elected Guide of her Auxiliary No. 37 (Little Rock, Ark.) in the mid-1960s, and she spent the following three decades holding various elected offices at the Auxiliary's Local and International levels.

Sister Windham was first elected to serve the GIA at the International level in 1976, when she was elected to a five-year term of office as Grand Guide. Prior to her election as GIA International President, she was elected to serve the Auxiliary as Second Assistant Grand Vice President (1981-1986), First Assistant Grand Vice President (1986-1991), and Grand Vice President (1991-1996).

Sister Windham was born on September 26, 1923, in Spring Creek, Mo. She and her husband, R.W. "Windy" Windham, were regular



attendees at BLET regional meetings over the years, particularly the Southwestern Convention Meeting (SWCM). Brother Windham served for many years as General Chairman of the Missouri Pacific-Western District General Committee of Adjustment and Local Chairman of Division 182 in North Little Rock, Ark.

The couple met at Fort Leonard Wood, Mo., where Brother Windham was stationed during the early years of World War II. They were married at Camp Plauche Chapel in New Orleans, La., on April 12, 1944. Ruth and Windy started their family upon

his return from Europe. Their only daughter, Sharon Kay Windham Heflin, was born in late 1946.

Brother Windham passed away in 2009 after nearly 65 years of marriage to Sister Windham. She is survived by her daughter, Sharon Kay Windham Heflin; her sister-in-law, Evelyn Windham; her grandchildren, Marc and Billie Heflin and Jay and Andrea Heflin; and her great grandchildren, Grace, Sarah, Ben, and Anna Heflin; several nieces, nephews, and a host of dear friends.

"Sister Ruth Windham was a pioneering leader who helped bring the Grand International Auxiliary into the 21st Century," BLET National President Dennis R. Pierce said. "She was remarkably kind, generous, and forward thinking. Her legacy lives on today through the BLET Auxiliary. On behalf of the entire BLET, I extend our most heartfelt condolences to the family and friends of Sister Ruth Windham."

(BLET Editor's Note: For more information, please see the BLET Auxiliary's tribute to Sister Windham on page 31 of this issue.)

BLET OBITUARIES:

THIS INFORMATION IS BASED UPON REPORTS
FILED BY THE SECRETARY-TREASURERS OF THE VARIOUS BLET DIVISIONS

AS OF OCTOBER 31, 2016

30 — M.E. McKinney
31 — Cynthia M. Clearview
123 — L.H. Keim
158 — Thomas E. Williard
198 — H.L. Cox
201 — F.R. Kimberlin
325 — Joseph R. Reed
520 — D.E. Hillyer
644 — R.W. Wallace
699 — J.P. Wilen
752 — K.M. Abaire
766 — Robert W. Baker
766 — Gary M. Smith
766 — James J. Smith
781 — B.C. Cliett
858 — Larry R. Morrison
919 — T. Gillon

AS OF NOVEMBER 30, 2016

106 — R.E. Haunhorst
153 — G.W. Schultz
242 — A.G. Burris
267 — Shane M. Cook
278 — I.B. Ellington
299 — H.W. Brantley
309 — L.E. Wrede
480 — P.R. Stroud
565 — A.W. Girts
815 — P.J. Scanlon
857 — Larry G. Seagler
910 — R.D. Skinner

AS OF DECEMBER 31, 2016

27 — Brock A. Hanna
57 — C.W. Holm
75 — Sidney A. Haynes

89 — C. Hamilton
239 — William T. McCammon
251 — Robert L. Braaten
269 — Carl F. James
811 — C.J. Reid

AS OF JANUARY 31, 2017

30 — D.F. Burgess
30 — R.S. Burton
48 — K.E. Everson
88 — J.M. Boyle
88 — L.D. Damme
88 — W.R. Keithley
88 — J.L. McChesney
88 — W.O. Nelson
88 — C.A. Tuenge
88 — Mark W. Wilkens
88 — R.E. Williams

157 — W.R. Weil
182 — J.B. Goodman
182 — E.L. McCulloch
190 — William P. Noel
204 — Ryan Withycombe
269 — P.K. Brady
269 — G.M. Olsen
269 — E.H. Stadlander
328 — Audre D. Hunt
333 — Billy P. Pape
387 — W.A. Krause
388 — Brenda L. Leeper
401 — R.B. Basham
443 — Richard L. Johnson
505 — Charles A. Nichols
565 — T.A. Sedlar
599 — Bobby W. McElhannon
861 — R.L. Brown



Guest Columnists

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

Slashing Amtrak funding is shortsighted

Earlier this year, elected officials in Washington D.C. spoke hopefully of focusing on a bipartisan agenda that would prioritize improving the nation's faulty infrastructure though investment. But thus far, that hasn't been the case. Increased spending on the nation's roads, rails and other important networks has taken a back seat to other issues.

Nowhere is that more evident than when it comes to funding for Amtrak. Instead of bolstering the national passenger railroad that plays an

essential role in the U.S. transportation system, proposed budget cuts would reduce service in some 23 states where long distance Amtrak trains currently make stops. The move would eliminate jobs of more than a thousand rail Teamsters aligned with the BLET and the BMWED.

Amtrak workers and the traveling public, instead of benefitting from proposals calling for some \$1 trillion in infrastructure investment, are facing even more strain due to this "skinny budget" blueprint proposal. Rural America

would lose a vital transportation lifeline. And railroad workers' retirement security could be threatened as well.

Eighteen months ago, the Teamsters unveiled its "Let's Get America Working" platform because it wanted to encourage Democrats and Republicans to come together and back policies that would build a better nation for workers. It was meant to set a path forward that would create new jobs and networks that are necessary to compete in this 21st century global environment.

Making cuts to Amtrak

and other important infrastructure runs counter to such thinking. It won't help Americans or the nation's economy. It is just a continuation of short-sighted policy that will unfairly hurt rail workers and stop the country from realizing its full potential in the years to come.

Fraternally,

JAMES P. HOFFA
TEAMSTERS GENERAL
PRESIDENT

Please do your part to protect Amtrak funding and Railroad Retirement

November's election has brought great change and uncertainty in Washington, D.C. Some changes have been welcomed — like withdrawing from the poorly crafted Trans-Pacific Partnership trade agreement. Others we are very concerned about. For example, despite claiming his administration would spend \$1 trillion on infrastructure and touting high-speed trains, Trump's first budget proposal completely eliminates funding for all long-distance Amtrak trains. This will negatively impact rail service in 23 states and along 15 Amtrak

routes, and adversely impact hundreds of thousands of riders yearly.

These cuts not only will reduce our ability to use passenger rail for transportation, they will also eliminate the jobs of hardworking members of the BLET and BMWED, and eliminate other railroad jobs along Amtrak's long distance routes. The loss of so many jobs will seriously impact the Railroad Retirement System. All railroad workers will feel the pain if these cuts to Amtrak are allowed to happen.

We need your help to urge the Trump Administration and Congress to fully fund

Amtrak on long distance trains. Help us compel Trump and Congress to allocate the funding to improve rapid, frequent and dependable rail service, so we can continue the explosive growth in passenger rail that we've seen over the past decade.

We're urging you, your families and friends to contact your member of Congress and your U.S. Senators by calling the U.S. Capitol Switchboard at (202) 224-3121, and ask to speak with your representatives. If you do not talk directly with your member of Congress, then ask to speak to the staff member who han-

dles Labor issues. When speaking to staff, please be respectful just as you would if you were personally speaking with your member of Congress. Also, you can send a customized email to your members of Congress asking them to oppose a Trump budget that does not fully fund Amtrak: <http://tinyurl.com/n6dtco4>.

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.



Can't Undo	Ctrl + Z
Form <u>B</u> - Work Limit	Ctrl + B
<u>R</u> un Through Switch	Ctrl + R
<u>C</u> ollision	Ctrl + C
Blue <u>F</u> lag	Ctrl + F
Improper Train <u>H</u> andling	Ctrl + H
<u>E</u> quipment Damage	Ctrl + E
Fou <u>L</u> Tracks	Ctrl + L
By <u>P</u> assed Drawbar	Ctrl + P
<u>S</u> ideswipe	Ctrl + S
<u>Y</u> ellow Flag	Ctrl + Y
Cross <u>O</u> ver Switch	Ctrl + O
<u>U</u> nauthorized Movement	Ctrl + U

You can't always Undo a mistake...

You can protect your income when "Held Out of Service"
as discipline for eligible occurrences.

BR&CF offers the best protection and value. Compare our
Membership dues rates...the BR&CF is committed to
keeping your dues affordable.



Apply for membership at
www.brcf.org

OR PHONE toll-free
(800) 233-7080





Guest Columnist

BY F.L. (LEO) McCANN, PRESIDENT, ATDA

Why unions matter



About the Author:

F.L. (Leo) McCann is currently serving his fifth term as President of the American Train Dispatchers Association (ATDA). He has over 42 years of experience in the railroad industry. Besides train dispatching, he has worked as a block operator, freight agent, intermodal terminal manager, and Labor Relations officer. His father worked as a locomotive engineer for 42 years and his grandfather and great grandfather performed service as conductors. All four generations have their roots beginning with the Pennsylvania Railroad. Prior to becoming President, Leo also served as ATDA Secretary-Treasurer. While working as a train dispatcher in Pittsburgh, he held the positions of General Chairman, Vice General Chairman and Local Chairman on the former Conrail railroad. He currently resides in Cleveland, Ohio, with his wife, Karen.

On March 23, 2017, the American Train Dispatchers Association

(ATDA) was honored to have BLET National President Dennis R. Pierce address our assembly of newly-elected system committee officers during the celebration of our 100 year anniversary in Las Vegas, Nevada. Brother Pierce passionately described the benefits of being a union member and starkly contrasted it to the life of a worker without union representation. His message resonated throughout the hall and was enthusiastically received by all those in attendance. The close bonds between our two unions have never been stronger than they are today as we negotiate a national agreement together in a coalition known as the Coordinated Bargaining Group (CBG), representing over 85,000 railroad workers.

We also work jointly for health and welfare benefits on a committee named the Co-operating Rail Labor Organizations (CRLO), which represents over 120,000 rail workers. We sit on the FRA Railroad Safety Advisory Committee (RSAC) with the BLET to protect the safety of our members through regulatory actions. In the early 1990's, the ATDA was a department of the BLE with offices in the BLE headquarters in downtown Cleveland. The ATDA and BLET are built on strong principles and share

"In 1917, 14 men came together in Spokane, Washington, and formed the Western Train Dispatchers Association. The minutes of that first meeting simply stated, 'it was decided to form an association of dispatchers of all localities for the purpose of securing reasonable hours, fair wages, proper treatment and one day off in seven.'"

common interests of protecting, preserving and enhancing our members' entitlements through competitive wages, excellent healthcare, safe working conditions and quality of life benefits. The BLET has over a 150 year history of providing these benefits; the ATDA has been serving our membership for 100 years.

In 1917, 14 men came together in Spokane, Washington, and formed the Western Train Dispatchers Association. The minutes of that first meeting simply stated, "it was decided to form an association of dispatchers of all localities for the purpose of securing reasonable hours, fair wages, proper treatment and one day off in seven." In 2017, on our 100 year anniversary, those same principles remain as strong as they did in 1917. Likewise, in 2013, the BLET celebrated its 150 year anniversary when on May 8, 1863, 12 delegates drafted a constitution forming the rail union known as the "Brotherhood of the Footboard," which one year later became the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers.

Through the supreme efforts and sacrifices of those working men and women before us, much has been accomplished. Securing reasonable working hours through the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) Hours of Service law, by regulatory action to promote safer working conditions, and a secure pension have been realized through the efforts of both of our unions and all of rail labor. These benefits are the result of our unions working in unity for the greater good of all rail workers. We must never take for granted the benefits of being a union member. In the words of our former President, Barack Obama, "It was working men and women who made the 20th century the American century. It was the labor movement that helped secure so much of what we take for granted today. The 40-hour work week, the minimum wage, family leave, health insurance, Social Security, Medicare, retirement plans. The cornerstones of the middle-class security all bear the union label."



Many members today question why they have to pay union dues. Some even ask, “are unions relevant today?” Imagine waking up one day to find your Railroad Retirement benefits gone, your wages reduced because the railroad did not meet its profitability numbers, your health and welfare benefits cut or eliminated because the railroad claimed it could no longer afford the high premiums. Safety becomes secondary to getting the job done. The railroad decides to discipline and fire you without a hearing because they don’t like you. Seniority is secondary to favoritism. All the burden shifts on the employee. The working environment is a “sweat shop.” This is the world without unions. This is the “Walmart” world. We would be working under conditions prevalent in the 19th century, not the 21st. In the words of George Santayana, “Those who do not remember the past are condemned to repeat it.”

The world we live in today provides retirees a Railroad Retirement pension with monetary benefits far superior to Social Security, and it’s a benefit that our members enjoy at age 60 with 30 years of service and full health care benefits until Medicare kicks in at age 65. Average railroad retirees receive approximately \$1 million in benefits during their golden years. And if one of our members becomes injured or too ill to work, a good disability annuity is available after 20 years of service. The employee only needs to be disabled in his/her craft; with Social Security, the em-



“Workers Memorial Day is held annually on April 28. Each year, we remember those workers killed on the job and also those members who died in order to give all of us a better life.”

ployee must be totally and permanently disabled. The Federal Employers Liability Act (FELA) permits railroad employees to sue the railroad for personal injuries resulting from the negligence of the railroad; under Social Security this right does not exist. Current union wages are protected by collective bargaining agreements and can only be changed under the Railway Labor Act through the Section 6 process. An employee is afforded due process if charged with a wrongdoing and must be provided a fair and impartial hearing before discipline can be assessed or dismissal imposed. These benefits did not result from the goodness of the Carriers’ hearts, but through the hard work and determination of

the rail unions. The above world is one where the union exists, protecting the rights and integrity of the employee.

Workers Memorial Day is held annually on April 28. Each year, we remember those workers killed on the job and also those members who died in order to give all of us a better life. The early victories of the labor movement were the result of bloody strikes where many trade unionists lost their lives. The first recorded strike was in New York in 1768 where tailors protested a wage reduction that would have made it impossible to support their families. It ended successfully without bloodshed. Unfortunately, the following strikes that improved wages and working conditions and created the middle

class came at the highest cost — the loss of many lives. In 1850, the 300 tailors again went on strike and two were killed in a confrontation with the police. In 1886, a riot occurred near Chicago’s Haymarket Square when someone threw a bomb at police. At least 11 people died and eight labor activists were convicted without evidence of connection to the bombing. Seven were sentenced to death. In 1892, the Homestead, Pa., Steel Strike was an industrial lockout and strike resulting in 12 fatalities. The Pullman Strike in 1894 was a nationwide railroad strike of the American Railway Union against the Pullman Company where 30 people lost their lives. The Ludlow Massacre of 1914 was an attack by the Colorado National Guard on 1,200 Colorado Fuel & Iron Company striking coal miners where two dozen people — including miners’ wives and children — were killed. In 1920, striking miners in West Virginia sought to gain recognition of the United Mine Workers. A gun fight ensued that resulted in the deaths of seven private agents, two miners, and the Mayor of the town. Let us never forget the supreme sacrifices these workers made so that all of us in the labor movement today can enjoy our current standard of living. Granted, we face many struggles in the current environment, just as those before us did, but rarely are they resolved through the violence and massacres found in our labor history. Today, we simply ask our members to use

CONTINUED ON PAGE 29 ➤

Honoring 9/11

PATH train car that survived 9/11 preserved at Shore Line Trolley Museum

On August 6, 2015, the Shore Line Trolley Museum, located in East Haven, Conn., proudly received PATH Car 745 into its collection. PATH Car 745 was one of two cars that survived the destruction of the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001.

"This car was removed intact from under the rubble and debris, still poised on the track as if the attack had never happened, ready for the World Trade Center-to-Hoboken Station run," said Brother Alan I. Zelazo, a now retired PATH engineer and member of BLET Division 497 (Jersey City, N.J.). "She was in the lead position of a seven-car train when service was suspended, just minutes after the attack."

Brother Zelazo was one of the many dedicated individuals who worked to save the iconic rail car and preserve it on static display at the Trolley Museum.

A native New Yorker, Brother Zelazo credits his father with igniting his life-long fascination with subways and railroads. "Growing up in Brooklyn the subway was my first introduction to trains, besides the obligatory Lionel train set," he said. "Almost every Sunday my Dad would take me, and sometimes my friends, for a subway excursion. We'd always pick a different destination to go to."

"When I was 12 my parents took me on a trip to the Branford (now Shore Line) Trolley Museum located in East Haven, Connecticut. That was it — I became hooked. I became an active member of the museum when I obtained my drivers license at age 16, where I learned many lessons and made friends that would last a lifetime."

Brother Zelazo eventually hired out on the railroad with Amtrak in 1976,



Workers prepare PATH Car 745 for its move to the Trolley Museum

working in many different crafts prior to earning promotion to locomotive engineer for PATH in 1994. One of the biggest events of his career came on a day that lives in infamy in American history — September 11, 2001.

"I was working the Newark to WTC route on the afternoon of 9/11," Brother Zelazo said. "My conductor Rob Henry and I made the third trip to operate that day at 5:40 p.m. from Newark to 33rd Street. As far as I know PATH was the first rail operation to run after the attack. It would be two years until we got back to the WTC."

PATH Car 745 is a class PA-3 built by Hawker Sidley at Thunder Bay, Ontario, in 1972. She would have been replaced in 2009 by the newer class PA-5 cars. Brother Zelazo said a lot of hard work went into moving Car 745 off its special trailer and moved to a temporary barn location for storage.

"Utilizing Ex-NYCTA R-17 Car 6688, fitted with an adapter coupler, Car 745

was pulled off the flat bed trailer and down onto the street track. Then the rest of the move was completed with our 1928 Ex-Hudson & Manhattan car number 503. PATH car 503 was previously acquired into the collection in July 1979, when her useful days in active service at PATH was completed. It is ironic that Car 745 had replaced antiquated Car 503 so many years ago and now both cars are together at the Shore Line Trolley Museum."

A special parade was held the day Car 745 was moved from temporary storage into her new home at the Trolley Museum.

"What a day that was!" Brother Zelazo said. "Leading the procession down a local street was New York's Fire Department Honor Guard and Bag Pipers in full uniform. Then followed a multitude of the area's finest: police, firemen and first responders. The parade of people and emergency equipment proceeded under an arch formed by the extension of ladders from two fire trucks."



Brother Zelazo after a hard day at work volunteering.



"PATH Car 745 was on its special heavy hauler trailer with myself in the cab and Civil Engineer Peter Rinaldi waving from the window. The procession ended, where street meets rail, in front of The Frank J. Sprague Building.

"The festivities continued with speeches by the museum's General Manager Wayne Sanford, the museum's President, Jeff Hakner, East Haven Mayor Joe Maturo, Town of Branford First Selectman James Cosgrove, State Senator Sean Scanlon, Town of Branford Second Selectman Joe Higgins, U.S.

Senator Richard Blumenthal, as well as myself, Alan Zelazo. Covering and recording this Historic Event were several television and radio stations."

Visitors coming to the museum can enjoy an educational audio-visual memorial display inside PATH Car 745 and ex-Brooklyn Rapid Transit Instruction Car 999. Photos, original rail and signs from the World Trade Center Plaza can also be viewed. All these artifacts were donated by and made possible by the generosity of The Port Authority of New York & New Jersey,

Brother Zelazo said.

"Many thanks to Shore Line Trolley Museum President Emeritus William Wall for making this acquisition possible along with all the good folks at PATH for their continuous support," Brother Zelazo said. "A big thank you to Trolley Museum volunteer Conrad Misek and Museum President Wayne Sanford for the long hours and ingenuity in creating this display."

The Shore Line Trolley Museum is located at 17 River St., East Haven, CT 06512 (www.shorelinetrolley.org). ☎

A proud veteran, a proud BLET member

Sister Autumn Barrett a big advocate
for membership involvement in their union

DUTY. HONOR. VALOR.

These are more than just words to live by for Autumn Barrett. They represent a way of life learned first hand serving America as a soldier in the United States military while stationed in Iraq. They are also traits the CSX locomotive engineer/conductor uses daily as a Local Division officer for the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen.

“Our union is a great union,” she said. “We share knowledge and news, and we try to be proactive with learning and training.”

Sister Barrett now proudly serves as Legislative Representative of BLET Division 231 in Philadelphia. She followed in the military footsteps of her grandfather, who volunteered for the Korean War in the 1950s. Sister Barrett enrolled in the military about a year prior to the attacks of September 11, 2001, in November of 2000.

Sister Barrett completed her basic training in July of 2001 and was deployed to Iraq in 2009. She served as a military police officer at Kirkuk Air Force Base in Iraq. The base was surrounded by oil fields in Northern Iraq, and she helped to secure it from outsiders. It was a dangerous task as the base was assaulted by mortars 2-3 times daily, and she also had to be on guard against suicide bombers, vehicle bombers, and IEDs. Sister Barrett also made sure classified information was not leaving the base.

After her tour of duty, Sister Barrett



Sister Autumn Barrett stands guard
at Kirkuk Air Force Base in Iraq

hired out as a conductor with CSX out of Baltimore in 2010, and earned promotion to locomotive engineer on September 15, 2015. Recently, she has been working as a conductor due to a downturn in rail traffic.

Sister Barrett's military background, particularly her training in handling classified information, has given her the unique ability to serve diligently as an elected union officer. It has helped her to be wary of the “fake news” epidemic in America as she advocates for her fellow BLET Brothers and Sisters to become more involved in the union.

“Getting involved in the union is the first step,” she said. “Knowing the facts



Sister Barrett with BLET National
President Dennis Pierce

is the second step. There are a lot of misleading articles being published these days, and you need to educate yourself with reliable sources. We all have opinions, but you have to stick to the facts.”

She credits Brother Bob Francis, retired Legislative Representative of Division 231, and Marty Crothers, Local Chairman of Division 231, for encouraging her to get involved in the union movement. Also, she comes from a union family as both of her parents were members of the steelworkers union in Reading, Pa.

In 2016, Sister Barrett became one of the first woman engineers to complete the BLET Education and Training



Getting involved in the union is the first step,” she said. “Knowing the facts is the second step. There are a lot of misleading articles being published these days, and you need to educate yourself with reliable sources.

— AUTUMN BARRETT, DIV. 231





Sister Barrett with participants at the BLET Education and Training Department's class for Legislative Representatives at Teamster headquarters in Washington, D.C.



President Hoffa addresses the LR training class



Sister Barrett and VP Tolman lobby members of Congress



On duty in Iraq where Sister Barrett was a Technical Sergeant (A6)

Department's training class for Legislative Representatives.

"The class was absolutely awesome," she said. "The instructors were amazing and I would definitely recommend this class if you want to make your union better."


During the class, she bonded with John Tolman, BLET Vice President and Legislative Representative, and Bob Hagan, BLET Director of Political and Legislative Affairs, and now they have become her mentors.

Sister Barrett talked about the difficulty of getting large numbers of members to attend union meetings on a regular basis, and steps her Division has taken to help combat the issue.

"As a railroader, time flies and the days all run together," she said. "We use email and social media to get the word out about our Division meetings, and the word spreads fast. But schedules are hard. If someone's complaining about the amount of hours they work or their pay, then we tell them to talk to the Lo-

cal Chairman or come to a union meeting. If you can't attend, then send an email and we'll discuss it. We all have a voice, but it is hard to make it some times."

One fact she likes to share — Division 231 is 100 percent compliant with the BLET PAC fund, with all 83 active members making some sort of voluntary financial donation each month.

"It's all about teamwork," she said. "I do nothing by myself. My Brothers and Sisters help all the time." 

The “Skinny” Budget Versus the Congressional Budget



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

We railroaders are accustomed to working in an environment governed by strict rules and schedules. The system is operated in predictable ways because that’s what it takes to make the trains run on time. As a lobbyist *for our members*, our National Legislative Office in Washington, D.C., is working in a world that’s far from predictable and is often downright chaotic — more so today than in all the years I’ve worked here.

Here’s an example: in my last column I reported that the President, as a first step toward making good on his promise to rebuild our nation’s crumbling infrastructure, had just released a list of his top 50 projects, including 10 that called for significant investment in rail. I applauded him for moving swiftly, noted that our union has long supported increased infrastructure spending, and pledged that we would help him with the Congress, who has been blocking progress on infrastructure investment for far too long.

Ironically, just weeks later, the White House released another document that slammed the brakes on our enthusiasm: the outline of a “skinny” federal budget that includes drastic cuts in funding for transportation that make the spending plan, from our perspective, downright anorexic. The plan restructures and reduces funding for Amtrak, completely eliminates support for the national passenger railroad’s long-distance service, and guts two highly effective infrastructure programs: USDOT’s



From left: BLET Director of Regulatory Affairs Vince Verna, BLET Vice President & National Legislative Representative John Tolman, Senator Elizabeth Warren (D-MA), BLET Director of Political and Legislative Affairs Bob Hagan, and SMART-TD Alternate National Legislative Director Gregory Hynes.

Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) grants, which has been granted \$1.2 billion to the railroad industry, or about 20% of the total funds; and Federal Transit Authority’s Capital Investment Grants, which help fund many of the most innovative and successful light and heavy rail projects in the nation.

Here’s some additional irony: hours after the plan was unveiled, advocates such as those of us working in your D.C. Office for the BLET, and transportation advocates in general, began talking to lawmakers about derailing the “skinny” budget and reversing the proposed cuts that would cripple spending for rail. We

knew that we had to step up and let Congress as well as the President know that cuts in rail funding are counterproductive and unacceptable.

I would provide an explanation for the contradictory policy positions, but there isn’t one. And the contradictions aren’t limited to the troubling contrast between an infrastructure plan that calls for spending hundreds of millions on rail at some point in the future, and a budget that will slash many millions from rail within the next year and cost many of our Brothers and Sisters who work for Amtrak their jobs. The contrasts also include the difference between campaign rhetoric that celebrates



From left: VP Tolman, Brother Hynes, SMART-TD, Senator Ed Markey (D-MA), Brother Hagan, and Brother Verna.



From left: VP Tolman and Rep. Seth W. Moulton (MA-6).



From left: Brother Verna, VP Tolman, and Rep. David Albert Scott (GA-13).



From left: Brother Verna, Rep. John R. Lewis (GA-5), and VP Tolman.



From left: Rep. David Albert Scott (GA-13), Rep. Charlie Crist Jr. (FL-13), and VP Tolman.

blue collar families, and pro-business policies that undermine and weaken the unions that represent and protect American working men and women.

How do we deal with the contradictions and conflicts? By never losing sight of our goals or abandoning our principles. By continuing to push for laws like the “Safe Freight Act,” the two-person crew bill that would protect railroaders and the public by promoting safety in the locomotive by requiring two people to constantly monitor the road ahead. By constantly delivering our message to legislators, regulators, and opinion makers. By forming coalitions with other unions and interest groups who understand the vital role rail plays in driving America’s economy and creating good paying jobs. By fighting against budget cuts that hurt rail, and

“Here’s some additional irony: hours after the plan was unveiled, advocates such as those of us working in your D.C. Office for the BLET, and transportation advocates in general, began talking to lawmakers about derailing the “skinny” budget and reversing the proposed cuts that would cripple spending for rail.”

by supporting measures that will provide the millions of dollars needed to upgrade rights of way and expand freight and passenger service.

And, of course, we’ll overcome the

threat to our economic security caused by the shifting tides and conflicts in Washington by involving you, keeping you informed, and encouraging you to contact your legislators by letter, phone or email when they’re in D.C., and to attend town hall meetings when they’re at home. We’re going to ask you to weigh in, and most importantly, we’re going to ask you to vote. In the final analysis, voting for and electing the right people is the most effective way to ensure that our Brotherhood, our industry, and our families can grow and prosper in the years ahead.

You are the BLET. Our forefathers created this Union and it is ours to preserve at all costs with all our hands on the deck. **As Vince Lombardi so accurately said; “The achievements of an organization are the results of the combined effort of each individual.”** 🇺🇸

PART 1 OF A SERIES

Why this regulatory thing is so important



BY VINCENT G. VERNA
DIRECTOR OF
REGULATORY AFFAIRS

(BLET Editor's Note: This is the first in a three-part series to help BLET members become more familiar with the regulatory process and the impact it has on their jobs. Part One will focus on Congress. Part Two will focus on Executive Branch control of agencies (e.g., executive orders); and Part Three will be in regards to "Rulemaking and Taking.")

The purpose of this article is to provide BLET members with background and context regarding rail safety regulations, and why they are the way they are in Washington. It is meant to give you some information as to why Congress wants Executive Branch agencies to handle regulations in the first place; namely, because those agencies are staffed with personnel who have demonstrated expertise in their particular regulatory field.

We begin with a quote from Stephen Bannon, Senior White House Advisor to President Trump, who commented about recent Trump Administration Cabinet selections: "If you look at these Cabinet appointees, they were selected for a reason and that is the deconstruction. The way the progressive left runs, is if they can't get it passed, they're just going to put in some sort of regulation in an agency. That's all going to be deconstructed and I think that that's why this regulatory thing is so important."

Congress has a very low approval rating and now so does the President. Compromise has become a dirty word, even though Americans want legislators from both parties to work together to

find solutions to the problems ordinary citizens face. And those problems include railroad safety.

Over the course of modern history, Congress has never quit striving to be good at self-preservation. Getting elected and reelected is the prerequisite to gaining and holding power. This is no cheap or easy feat in Washington, D.C. It requires large sums of money, without which a politician will have no platform. However, it is critical to note that money alone could get you there, but to stay in power requires more than being well-financed. Sometimes the most successful politicians in Congress are not the ones who have the most money or get the most airtime on television. Your average Members of Congress has a myriad of complex issues that lay before them that they have no detailed understanding about. Take railroad operations, for example. The Congressman or Congresswoman who avoids the many traps of voting concerning these complex railroad issues are often the beneficiaries of playing good defense.

A better example of the defensive crouch can be found in Congress' relationship to regulatory action.

Congress used to be good at knowing when it is in over its collective head in being responsive to the technical nature of public policy. Now many members of Congress are seeking to assert more control over regulations through delay or repeal. It is interesting to note that the first great regulatory agency was the Interstate Commerce Commission (ICC) in 1887, because of the limitations of state regulation over interstate commerce and because of what was known as "market failures" that existed between railroads and shippers. The goal of the ICC was then to create a smoother, safer, and more publicly-responsive transportation system run by expert administrators in

the name of the public interest.

Some members of Congress either do not fully understand or appreciate the fact that every regulation passed by a Federal Agency is already subject to Congressional Review. Several Federal Laws cover agency rulemaking, from the Administrative Procedures Act of 1946 to the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA) of 1972, to the Congressional Review Act of 1996. This is not an exhaustive list but these acts of Congress are good examples of how Congress has spoken about federal regulations and American administrative law in the past. All agency regulations are not the same in scope or breadth. Some industries such as the rail industry, aviation and nuclear power are heavily regulated due to the safety implications of industries where catastrophes are rare, but horrific when they occur. Regardless of whether a regulation is big or small, it is subject to the narrow procedural parameters established by Congress, and its enforcement depends upon a specific Congressional appropriation.

American branches of government were designed by the Founding Fathers to check one another. These acts of Congress discussed above serve as a check on executive authority of the President. The courts are the third branch of government that has needed to address the questions of government overreach when its source is the President. One important landmark case regarding administrative law and agency authority is *Chevron U.S.A., Inc. v. Natural Resources Defense Council, Inc.*

In this case, the United States Supreme Court developed a two-pronged legal test for judging whether a particular regulation is valid or not. The first is whether the regulation is derived from a specific statute (for example, the regulation comes because the Rail Safety Improvement Act



Brother Verna, right, and 1st Vice General Chairman
Brian P. Carr, Union Pacific-Western Lines

of 2008, which directs the Secretary of Transportation — via authority delegated to the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) — to carry out some specific action). The other prong of the test asks whether the interpretation of the statute made by the agency charged with the regulation being challenged is reasonable; if it is, then the courts are required to defer to the agency's interpretation.

This principle has been nicknamed "Chevron deference". There has been further case law that has interpreted Chevron deference with wide latitude given to the Executive Branch. Another challenge and asserting of power has come from Congress in the form of the pending Regulation Accountability Act of 2017 (H.R. 5) sponsored by Bob Goodlatte of Virginia's 6th district. In Section 103 the law states the following purpose:

"This bill revises federal rulemaking procedures under the Administrative Procedure Act (APA) to require a federal agency to make all preliminary and final factual determinations based on evidence and to consider: (1) the legal authority under which a rule may be proposed; (2) the specific nature and significance of the problem the agency may address with a rule; (3) whether existing rules have created or contributed to the problem the agency may

address with a rule and whether such rules may be amended or rescinded; (4) any reasonable alternatives for a new rule; and (5) the potential costs and benefits associated with potential alternative rules, including impacts on low-income populations."


Many of the Congressional actions, Executive Orders and Supreme Court cases have addressed regulations and their applications that help or harm the public interest, including individuals and businesses. The application of a cost-benefit analysis to every rule that goes into effect has had a huge impact on the regulatory process going back to the late 1970s.

Cost-benefit analyses pose the biggest challenge to the BLET in trying to craft regulatory strategy. BLET and other organizations who seek to protect the workers they represent on issues of safety in the workplace run up against cost-benefit analysis objections to rule-making as a matter of routine. Simply put, cost-benefit analysis attaches a mathematical value to everything to make an economic and statistical prediction as to the reasonableness of a potential rule. According to the Department of Transportation (DOT), the value of a statistical life (VSL) is currently \$9.6 million. Everyone of us is worth more than that. In fact, we are priceless. Human life is priceless. DOT

argues that this figure is often misunderstood and that the figure represents a calculation of a benefit for a life saved. However, this figure is used routinely to justify whether safety regulations in various modes of transportation, including railroads, are worth pursuing.

The language used by economists is vexing, indeed, when contrasted with genuine safety problems that exist in our industry. Former President Ronald Reagan said, "An economist is someone who has an unshakable grasp of the obvious." Our task — when running into the cost-benefit analysis wall — is to ensure that our members do not get lost in the mere calculation of an economic statistic. Cost-benefit analysis is not an inherently bad way to approach crafting sensible regulation; however, the public interest does not always center around the price tag. Instead, we sometimes take the skeptical view by being overly obsessed with cost. Oscar Wilde said, "A cynic knows the price of everything and the value of nothing." Cost is sometimes simply used as a pretext for a desire to do nothing or to end debate as to the validity of moving forward.

There is a very real argument among economists and policy makers about whether benefits need to exceed costs to justify a particular regulatory action, or whether benefits need to justify the costs. It is not always an either/or proposition, but in cases where accidents happen infrequently but are catastrophic, it is sometimes impossible to have benefits exceed costs. For example, an economist could make a perfectly reasonable cost-benefit argument that there are not enough fires at a given location to justify the cost of requiring a fire extinguisher. As soon as there is a fire, someone will be looking for a way to extinguish the fire, not a way to make a cost-benefit analysis argument.

(IN OUR NEXT ISSUE.... THE NEXT ARTICLE IN THIS SERIES WILL FOCUS ON SOME OF THE EXECUTIVE ORDERS THAT COME FROM PRESIDENTS (PAST AND PRESENT) THAT ALSO SHAPE THE REGULATORY FRAMEWORK IN WHICH WE OPERATE.) 

PATH engineer Alan Zelazo worked on 9/11

Brother Alan I. Zelazo, also known as Subway Al, safely completed his Last Run for PATH on January 18, 2016, concluding a railroad career that began in 1976.

Brother Zelazo hired out with Amtrak in its car equipment department at Sunnyside Yard in New York on June 6, 1976 — the same year he graduated from college. “Among my duties was ‘dealer prep’ on the then-new Amfleet cars,” he said. “They smelled like a new automobile!”

He had a very diverse railroad career, working as a leverman and block operator for Amtrak (1977-1992), a tower operator for PATH (1992-1993), a PATH conductor (1993-1994), and as a PATH engineer (1994-2016). “I worked the following towers: Portal, Hudson, Dock and Hunter,” Zelazo said. “All but Dock are now just memories.”

Brother Zelazo joined BLET Division 497 on October 31, 1994. He served for several years as a member of the protective committee for BRAC (now TCU). One of the biggest events of his railroad career was working as an engineer on September 11, 2001, operating PATH trains along the route destined for the World Trade Center. “As far as I know PATH was the first rail operation to run after the attack,” he said. “My conductor Rob Henry and I made the third trip to operate that day at 5:40 p.m. from Newark to 33rd Street.”

Brother Zelazo’s Last Run came on June 18, 2016, working as locomotive engineer of PATH train from Newark to World Trade Center. His wife Dolores and children Jonathan and Stephanie organized a party for friends and relatives in honor of Brother Zelazo’s Last Run at Forno’s restaurant in Newark, while his co-workers organized another party in the Newark lunch room at PATH. His train was decorated for his Last Run with signage affixed to the front of



Subway Al behind the throttle on the day of his Last Run.

the first car which was filled with about 45 friends and relatives who helped give him an appropriate send-off. “A real surprise was the special sign made for my retirement run by Nate Gerstein,” he said.

“Al and I have been friends since about 1970,” BLET National Vice President Marcus J. Ruef said. “Al has been a steadfast supporter of the Brotherhood, and I know he took immense pride in operating passenger trains smoothly, professionally and safety, setting a good example internally for newer engineers and externally to the traveling public. I hope Al enjoys a well deserved, long retirement.”

During retirement, Brother Zelazo plans to spend time volunteering at the Trolley Museum where he will continue his restoration work. He also plans to travel more and spend more time with his family. He has plans for another retirement party with friends from the United Kingdom at the end of Summer 2017.

“I enjoyed my railroad career,” Brother Zelazo said. “I have made many friends along the way. I like to keep things lighthearted and would frequently joke with my co-workers



Special sign made for his Last Run by friend Nate Gerstein.

and passengers. One of my favorites was when a passenger, who just missed a train, asked ‘How long is the next train?’, my answer was always, ‘Same size as the one you just missed!’

“I’m frequently asked now what are you going to do? Well for starters I’ll finish restoring an ex-Hudson & Manhattan Tube Car that I’ve brought to the museum and have been working on since 1979, which is almost done. My other love is travel. Like one of my work friends told me, ‘Retirement is like six Saturdays and a Sunday! With all my great friends & loving family I do feel blessed!’”

Bill Stanich was a Local Chairman for 35 years

Brother William G. (Bill) Stanich, long-serving Local Chairman of BLET Division 504 (Great Falls, Montana) concluded a 40-year railroad career when he retired from the BNSF Railway in 2016.

Brother Stanich hired out as a track laborer with the Burlington Northern on June 22, 1976. He became a brakeman on December 16, 1977, and went firing on August 27, 1978. Brother Stanich earned promotion to locomotive engineer on February 9, 1979, joining the Brotherhood on May 1, 1981.

It would be an understatement to say that Brother Stanich was a dedicated union officer. Incredibly, he served for nearly 35 consecutive years as Local Chairman of Division 504: from 1981 (the year he first joined the union) to 2016 (the year he retired). He also served as Legislative Representative during that time, and served on his General Committee's Bylaws Committee. In 2010, Brother Stanich served on the Bylaws Committee at the BLET's Second National Convention in Reno, Nevada.

In 1996, Brother Stanich was appointed by International President Clarence V. Monin to serve on the BLE Presidential Task Force on Locomotive Engineer Certification-Decertification. The group identified problems with engineer certification regulations, which were relatively new at the time, having been implemented by the Department of Transportation in 1992. Among other tasks, the group identified problems regarding decertification and devised realistic solutions to iron out injustices in its implementation.

He safely completed his Last Run on March 10, 2016, and his retirement became effective the next day. He worked yard service on a switch engine for his Last Run, servicing the industries around the Great Falls area.

In 1973, Brother Stanich enlisted in the Navy and joined the Navy Hos-



Brother Stanich, **lower left**, served on the Bylaws Committee at the BLET's Second National Convention in Reno, Nevada, in 2010. Fellow Committee members pictured here are: **Seated, from left:** Jim Chappelle, former New Jersey State Legislative Board Chairman; and Kevin Peek, former Norfolk Southern-Eastern Lines General Chairman. **Standing, from left:** Jim Dayton, former Union Pacific-Western Region General Chairman; and Justine Charvat, BLET National Division staff.

pital Corps station with the Marine Corps. He and his wife Mary were married in 1984. They have two children, Bobbie and Tyler, and one grandchild, Donovan.

Brother Stanich's hobbies are golf, fishing, and working in the yard. During retirement, he spends time traveling, fishing, golfing, and performing volunteer work.

In a letter to BLET National President Dennis R. Pierce, written shortly after his retirement, Brother Stanich wrote: "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."

Following Brother Stanich's retirement, President Pierce wrote: "Your long tenure as Local Chairman has meant a great deal to your membership, and your service to the BNSF/MRL General Committee of Adjustment has contributed significantly to its success over the years. The BLET as a whole also benefited from your dedication and leadership, from your service as a Delegate and Standing Committee Member at the national level, to the fight you led many years ago to defeat an unjust application of the Federal Railroad Administration's locomotive engineer certification regulation." 📖

Bill Amos worked for Penn Central, Conrail, Amtrak and MARC

With 42-1/2 years of railroad experience — and 40 continuous years of BLET membership — Brother C.W. (Bill) Amos retired from active duty on May 24, 2016.

Brother Amos hired out as a locomotive fireman on the former Penn Central Railroad in 1974, earning promotion to locomotive engineer in March of 1976. Brother Amos joined BLET Division 52 (Baltimore, Md.) on July 1, 1976, and has held continuous membership ever since. He transferred membership to Division 482 effective November 1, 1987.

His career spanned service with the Penn Central, Conrail, Amtrak, and finally, MARC, the Maryland-area commuter rail service.



Brother Bill Amos (circa 1974) fresh out of high school (left) and behind the throttle prior to his retirement (circa 2016).



To honor Brother Amos and his long railroad career, a retirement party was held at Penn Station in Baltimore on May 24, 2016. His wife Ruth and daughter Heather were in attendance, along

many active and retired co-workers.

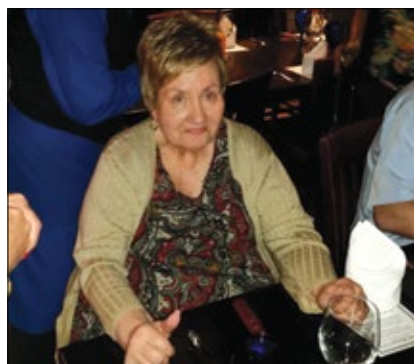
"I am proud of my accomplishments and have been a proud member of the Brotherhood since 1976," Brother Amos said. 🎵

Karen Brasfield served Illinois Central GCA for 30 years

Karen Brasfield, office secretary for the BLET's Canadian National-Illinois Central (CN-IC) General Committee of Adjustment, retired on June 1, 2016, after 30 years of service to the Brotherhood.

"During her years as office secretary, Karen was extremely dedicated to her work, foregoing her vacation year after year. She became much more than a secretary as she studied extensively and became knowledgeable of investigation appeals, submissions and board cases. Everyone from the National Division to members of the CN-IC GCA knew of her dedication to our organization," CN-IC General Chairman Clay Craddock said.

She began working part-time for the Brotherhood in 1986, when then-General Chairman Billy Hayden moved the Illinois Central GCA office from Chicago to Memphis, Tenn. In August of 1986, Brother Hayden was



Karen at her retirement dinner in 2016 elevated to the office of BLE International Vice President, and Jim McCoy took over. Brother McCoy's first official action after being elevated to the General Chairman's office was to hire Karen on a full-time basis.

In her 30-year career, Karen worked for five General Chairmen — Billy Hayden, Jim McCoy, John Koonce, Mark Whitchurch and Clay Craddock.

BLET National President Dennis R.

Pierce said: "Over the years, many National Division officers and staff had had occasion to communicate with Karen on matters of importance to the CN-IC GCA and the members it serves. All of us have found Karen's professionalism and personality a pure joy to work with... and we will all miss her. It is my sincerest wish that Karen have a long and enjoyable retirement as she surely has earned it."

The GCA honored Karen with a retirement dinner at Texas de Brazil Steakhouse in Memphis, Tenn., on June 8, 2016.

"As the current General Chairman of the CN-IC, I want to humbly wish Karen a wonderful retirement as she deserves it. It was an honor to have her working for me as she has taught me how to become a better writer, researcher, and most important, a better person in life," General Chairman Craddock said. 🎵

Rick Skidmore represented Division 782 as Delegate at five national conventions

Brother Walter Richard (Rick) Skidmore retired effective March 15, 2015, concluding a railroad career that spanned 44 years.

Brother Skidmore hired out as a trainman with the Louisville & Nashville Railroad (L&N) at Etowah, Tenn., on July 27, 1971. He entered L&N's apprentice engineer program on January 2, 1973, and earned promotion to L&N locomotive engineer on May 1, 1973. He joined BLET Division 782 on February 1, 1973, and has held continuous membership ever since.

During his railroad career, Brother Skidmore saw the former L&N merge with Seaboard Coast Lines to become known as Family Lines, followed by mergers with the former Chesapeake & Ohio Railway and the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad, and eventual consolidation into CSX Transportation.

Throughout his career, Brother Skidmore has dutifully served the Brotherhood in numerous elected offices. For 15 years, he served as Local Chairman of Division 782 (December 3, 1994 through December 31, 2009). He served the membership as East Region Vice General Chairman of the CSXT Western Lines General Committee of Adjustment from July of 2001 through March 15, 2015. He was also 1st Junior Vice General Chairman of the CSXT Western Lines GCA from August 1, 2005-June 24, 2009. He served the members of Division 782 as Delegate to BLE International/BLET National Division conventions in 1996, 2001, 2006, 2010 and 2014.

Brother Skidmore's Last Run came working as a locomotive engineer for CSXT on March 14, 2015, and his retirement became effective the next day. He was also working as a BLET Division Safety Coordinator at CSXT



Brother Skidmore outside the BLET's CSXT Western Lines General Committee office in Etowah, Tenn.

at the time of his retirement. For his Last Run — just as he had throughout his railroad career — he operated on the territory between Etowah, Tenn., and Corbin, Ky.

A Vietnam veteran, Brother Skidmore proudly served his country in the United States Army after high school and prior to the start of his railroad career. He was enlisted from June 29, 1968 through March 26, 1970. He served in South Vietnam as a member of the 199th Light Infantry Brigade, Bravo Company, 3rd Division, 7th Infantry. He earned a Combat Award, Purple Heart, and an Honorable Discharge.

Brother Skidmore was born on August 28, 1949 in Harlan, Ky., and graduated from James A. Cawood High School on May 29, 1968. He and his wife Freida were married on February 22, 1974. The couple has one son, Chris Skidmore, and two grandsons.

"My son Chris, daughter-in-law Kelly and grandsons Preston and Spencer live in Athens, Tennessee," Brother Skidmore said. "I am truly blessed. I am also blessed to have my father Walter Skidmore, age 91, living in Harlan, Ky."

During retirement, Brother Skidmore enjoys golf and spending time with his family and grandchildren. 🏌️

Four retirees honored at 49th annual Division 269/LIRR Dinner-Dance

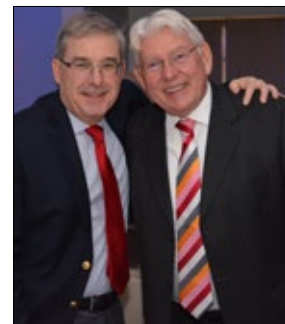
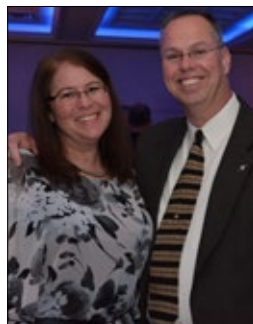
BLET Division 269 and the Long Island Rail Road General Committee of Adjustment honored four retirees at the annual Dinner Dance retirement party on November 12, 2016.

The BLET members who retire from the Long Island Rail Road are the guests of honor each year at the Dinner-Dance, which is a tradition that dates to the late 1960s. The 2016 event was the 49th annual.

Recognized at the 2016 Dinner-Dance were the following retirees: Nancy Bernadin, 17 years of service; Lloyd M. Thompson, 30 years of service; and Richard Martorano, 30 years of service.

Also honored at the Dinner-Dance was Brother Peter Cardone, who was presented with the Division's Engineer of the Year award. Brother Cardone has over 28 years of consecutive membership, having joined BLET Division 269 on March 1, 1989.

Division 269 President John A. Kavanaugh Jr., Division 269 Vice President Karl Bischoff, and LIRR General Chairman Kevin J. Sexton, presented commemorative plaques to each retiree. Brother Bischoff also served as the Entertainment Chairman, who organized the 49th annual Dinner Dance. 🎵



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

PRESIDENT PIERCE MESSAGE

CONTINUED FROM
PAGE 2 ➡

But I think the thing that I was most proud of was the willingness of these retirees to continue to participate in the struggle. Clearly, our retirees have done their time, paid their dues, and have earned the right to enjoy all the leisure time that retirement affords.

However, the retirees who attended remember what it took to provide them with those benefits ... generations of struggle and sacrifice! To a man, they understand the gravity of these times, and they want to participate in the struggle to preserve what so many have fought to achieve.

Again and again retirees have told me that they are a vast, untapped resource for our Brotherhood. That they are willing to help us in the struggles that confront us today and will confront us

**I want to take up the offer our retirees
— in Tucson and across America
— have made. I want to reenlist our retired
members in today's BLET army. They have
much to gain, personally, by being
involved in the fight to preserve
and protect Railroad Retirement, Medicare,
and early retiree medical benefits.**

tomorrow. And they correctly point out that they have plenty of time on their hands to pitch in and help.

One of the major reasons the Brotherhood — and the rest of Rail Labor — was able to obtain the wage and benefit levels we enjoy today was our numbers ... as voices and as voters. Another was the importance to the national economy of the work we do.

Well, technology has made us incredibly more productive than those who came before us, so the number of voices and votes of working railroaders today is much smaller than in the past.

That makes today's struggles much harder to wage, and I think the carriers are counting on that fact as a key element in their attack.

I want to take up the offer our retirees — in Tucson and across America — have made. I want to reenlist our retired members in today's BLET army. They have much to gain, personally, by being involved in the fight to preserve and protect Railroad Retirement, Medicare, and early retiree medical benefits.

And I also believe that many of our retirees want to get involved in the broader fight ... to fund Amtrak, to

improve safety, and to help ensure wage levels that will give you in the future the same level of security that they enjoy today.

The chance to fight to preserve the BLET and our ability to negotiate well-paying, stable jobs, superior benefits, and a dignified retirement is something that should be available to all BLET members, active and retired alike.

To that end, in the coming months we will be working on a program that will expand our current mobilization network of active members to include those retired BLET members who want to join hands with us in this struggle. We will benefit tremendously from their participation, and from the example their activism will set for our working members.

It is my most sincere hope that every BLET member who reads this will be willing to join in this call to action when the time comes. 📞

WHY UNIONS ARE RELEVANT

CONTINUED FROM
PAGE 15 ➡

their might at the ballot box and remember those politicians who want to undo the gains of organized labor.

Our biggest challenge today is reaching a national agreement with the major Carriers. As previously mentioned, the ATDA and BLET are joint partners in a six member coalition which also includes SMART Transportation Division (the former UTU), Brotherhood of Railroad Signalmen (BRS), Boilermakers (IBB), and Firemen and Oilers (NCFO). We are currently in mediation in our third year of bargaining. The issues are just as important as the ones that

brought on the first recorded strike in 1768. We battle over our differences in wages and health and welfare. We value the specialized skills our members provide to the railroads, which translates to increased safety, profits and stockholder satisfaction. We are asking for our rightful piece of the pie and our goal is to bring all our members a fair contract to ratify. We hope to reach a voluntary agreement, but it remains to be seen how the CEOs of the major railroads see the world. The end of the bargaining process could result in a strike or lockout. Another possible conclusion to settling this agreement would be the appointment of a Presidential Emergency Board (PEB). If that happens, even

Las Vegas would be at a loss to place the odds on the outcome.

Our labor history is still unfolding and being rewritten; complacency has no place with our members or labor leaders. We must continue to build from the lessons of the past and realize that embracing change is a part of growing and surviving in these tumultuous times. We are facing strong headwinds of anti-union animus in the political arena and the business community. Be wary of those espousing the principles of equality, but in reality seek to destroy the very core of our existence. We, as union members, have an obligation to become activists in fighting for the just causes of the unionized working class and

we must be vigilant of legislation such as "right to work," which really means "right to eliminate" unions. The railroad industry is still heavily unionized. Our good wages and health care clearly illustrate the importance of union contracts. Our elected union officers are the united voice that represents your interests in the halls of Congress and state governments as well as the CEO boardrooms and negotiating tables of the railroads. Next time you see a union representative at a union meeting or in the workplace, realize the tremendous service this individual provides that goes unnoticed. We call that dedication without recognition, the highest form of service. 📞



BLET Auxiliary: 130 Years Strong



BY SUSIE BURROLA
1ST VICE PRESIDENT,
BLET AUXILIARY

This year the Auxiliary celebrates our 130-year anniversary. We have come a long way from that day in October 1887 when those first 10 charter members organized Auxiliary One in Chicago, Illinois. Much has changed within our organization over the years, but some of what brought us together in the first place remains relevant today. Those who blazed the path before us banded together for the mutual protection of the Order and in the interest of their loved ones, who composed the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers (BLE). Their objectives were to promote fraternal love and sociability between the families of the members of the BLE, to render aid and assistance in times of affliction and trouble, and be ever ready to support the weak and faltering by their counsel and encouragement.

These same objectives remain valuable in our current lives and we realize the importance of banding together to support one another and to support those who our predecessors referred to as "the heroes of the throttle." We are here today to provide opportunities for railroad families to come together to socialize and to build camaraderie and solidarity. With the many challenges we face as railroad families, and in general, it is reassuring to be a part of a "band of brothers and sisters" who understand and support one another.

"As an Auxiliary, we stand together to do what we can to help our railroaders and our families preserve the union that negotiates on their behalf for the benefits and the salaries they deserve for their hard work."

In today's Auxiliary, our objectives also include educating our members and becoming involved in legislative matters that affect unions, the railroad industry, and the citizens of our country.

With the current push to implement right-to-work laws in every state, and now the introduction of national right-to-work legislation, we realize that this movement could ultimately affect the union that represents our loved ones. Right-to-work means less benefits and less compensation for all workers and their families. As an Auxiliary, we stand together to do what we can to help our railroaders and our families preserve the union that negotiates on their behalf for the benefits and the salaries they deserve for their hard work.

We strive to raise awareness of these types of issues of which many do not understand, or are completely unaware. At the most recent meeting of my local Auxiliary in northern California, we discussed the issue of right-to-work. Some members had no idea what the term "right-to-work" meant, and that made me wonder how many others have no idea of the real meaning behind this deceptive term. As an Auxiliary, our

task is to inform families and our communities so that we can fight against it.

Another big issue that we face is the fight to keep a two-person crew on all freight trains. This has been an ongoing battle for the unions that represent our engineers and conductors and, as an Auxiliary, we have been active in making our voices heard. This is a serious issue for both our railroaders and their families. I heard something not too long ago that really stuck with me: "If it makes sense that it's safer for two persons to operate an airplane, then why is it not the same for a locomotive?" No matter all the safety precautions that are implemented for the trains and crossings, and the training that is offered to those who operate the locomotives, nothing can replace the eyes and ears of two trained professionals in the cab of a locomotive, performing the many duties required and watching out for one another. Imagine if just one person had to not only operate the locomotive with all the new technology implemented in recent years, but also communicate with the train dispatcher, signal maintainers, gang foremen, and other train crews. There's only so much sensory overload one person can take for hours at a time. We as an Auxiliary help to support our railroaders in the fight to maintain a two-person crew. There should be no argument about cost-effectiveness when our loved ones' lives are at stake, not to mention the lives of those who live in the communities through which the trains travel each day.

Our country is also in the midst of fighting a gender wage gap. In the year 2017, many women still make less than

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

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.

men for doing the same jobs. Because of strong union representation by the BLET, we are fortunate that our railroaders are paid decent wages and all are equally paid, regardless of gender. That is not the case in many other workplaces across the nation. Women have come a long way in the last century, but to still be considered less than equal to men in the workplace is just mind blowing. We are fortunate that this is not an issue within the railroad, but we still have a duty to raise awareness and fight for our fellow Americans so that this gap diminishes.

When the Auxiliary first formed, its members were all women who were the spouses of railroaders. Now we welcome women and men alike to join the Auxiliary, including those who are not spouses of an engineer or conductor. Many of our members today have joined as associate members. This type of membership is open to those who are not railroad spouses, but are interested in supporting the Auxiliary and participating in the work we do. Many of these members are the railroad employees themselves.

Since being founded 130 years ago, we have grown in numbers and in the scope of our mission. We have become more educated about the work of the union, the benefits that are available to railroad employees and their families, and the legislative issues that affect the industry. We have helped inform others in our circles of family, friends, and acquaintances on the importance of unionism. By being active, remaining strong, and continuing to expand our knowledge, we have helped to make a difference for all railroad families.

"The overall purpose of this organization shall be: to provide support and promote issues that affect the health, safety, welfare, and quality of life of railroaders and their families; to promote higher education within 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." We will continue to live by this purpose in the years to come. 🕒

REMEMBERING RUTH...

"GROW, INFORM AND ACHIEVE," was the motto of Past President Sister Ruth Pillman Windham. Sister Windham passed away on Sunday, March 26, 2017, at the age of 93. She served as Grand International President of the Grand International Auxiliary to the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers (GIA), now known as the BLET Auxiliary, from 1996 to 2001. Sister Windham was one of the innovators in the transformation of the GIA, taking it into the New Millennium.

As Grand Guide at the Third Quinquennial Convention in Cleveland, Ohio, in 1981, she introduced a resolution establishing the Scholarship Program, as well as a resolution establishing the Legislative Program. Prior to her term as Grand International President, Sister Windham served as the Auxiliary's first legislative representative along with her position as 2nd Vice President. In 1997, in partnership with the BLE, she was instrumental in the establishment of the Auxiliary's Mobilization Program. She also helped to lobby Congress for passage of the Railroad Retirement and Survivors Improvement Act of 2001, the national law that provided for the 60/30 retirement for all railroad workers and enhanced benefits for surviving spouses.

Over the span of three decades, Sister Windham held many elected offices, both on a local auxiliary level and at

the international level. During her term as Grand International President, she wrote a regular feature article for the BLE Journal entitled "GIA Dialogue," which helped increase exposure of the Auxiliary to the membership.

Ruth and her husband, Roland Wilson "Windy" Windham, were a dynamic and fun-loving couple and were regular attendees at the BLE regional meetings over the years, particularly the Southwestern Convention Meeting (SWCM) and the Southeastern Meeting Association (SMA). Windy served as General Chairman of the Missouri Pacific General Committee of Adjustment (Western District) for many years, and also held the office of Local Chairman of Division 182 in North Little Rock, Arkansas. He passed away in April 2009 at the age 86. They were married for 65 years.

In her later years, Sister Windham enjoyed spending time with her great grandchildren and helping them learn to do new things, especially hitting golf balls. She remained a member of Generosity Auxiliary No. 37 in Little Rock, Arkansas, until her passing. We are forever grateful to Sister Windham for her many years of service and for taking our Auxiliary to new heights! We offer our sincere condolences to her family, her auxiliary sisters, and her many friends.

See her full obituary in the obituary section of this issue (page 11). 🕒



Sister Ruth Windham with husband R.W. (Windy) Windham in 1972 and again in 1997.

Locomotive Engineers & Trainmen Journal

(ISSN: 1553-5010 USPS: 120)

Published quarterly for \$10 per year by
Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers & Trainmen
25 Louisiana Ave. N.W., 7th Floor, Washington, D.C. 20001
Periodicals Postage paid at Washington, D.C.

POSTMASTER:

Send address changes to:

RECORD DEPARTMENT

Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers & Trainmen
7061 East Pleasant Valley Road, Independence, Ohio 44131

Historic steam

Famed Union Pacific steam locomotive
4-8-4 No. 844 heads home for UP's
steam shops in Cheyenne, Wyoming, as
it leaves Bailey Yard in North Platte,
Nebraska, on the morning of
October 31, 2016. It is the last
steam locomotive built for the
Union Pacific and was delivered
to the company in 1944.

Photo: Chase Gunnoe

