

# *Journal*

LOCOMOTIVE ENGINEERS & TRAINMEN

VOLUME 123 | No. 2 | SUMMER/FALL 2019

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## A Lasting Tribute

BLET & BLET Auxiliary  
honor a fallen Brother

**Major Milestone**  
Division 96 marks 150 years

**BLET Lobby Day**  
Locomotive Engineers  
descend on Capitol Hill

**Also inside:**

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



Published by the BLET, a division of the Rail Conference, International Brotherhood of Teamsters





## BLET President's Message

BY DENNIS R. PIERCE, BLET NATIONAL PRESIDENT

# Rail Labor solidarity is the key

### BLET Editor's Note:

*The following is a transcript of the speech delivered by BLET National President Dennis R. Pierce at the National Convention of the American Train Dispatchers Association on October 14, 2019.*

As President McCann said, my name is Dennis Pierce and I am proud to serve as President of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen, as well as President of the larger Teamsters Rail Conference. I would like to start by thanking Brother Leo for the invitation to address you today. At the core of our strength is our solidarity as Union Brothers and Sisters. It is meetings like this one that foster the fellowship needed to strengthen our solidarity; my hope is that our Unions continue to work together, and that we all leave here more united and determined than ever.

In the time that I have today, I would like to talk to you about where we find ourselves at this point in time as Union members and as working class Americans. Before I begin, I must qualify that it is very difficult to address the big issues that we face without getting into the politics of our Nation. I would ask that you each work to keep your mind open to what you hear today, and what you hear this week from your Union's Officers. Regardless of the political affiliations that you may have, we as Union leaders have much



Dennis Pierce addresses members during a September 2019 General Chairmen class at the BLET National Division headquarters.

more in common than we do dividing us. If we are to succeed, we must not allow the non-economic issues of the day to divide us, especially when our unity as working class union members is so important.

What we all have in common are our workplace issues. A fair day's pay for a fair day's work; good benefits; and job and retirement security to name a few. In order to preserve and enhance what our Union contracts provide us, we must unite with one voice to defend our right to be Union members; but more importantly, we must defend the very Union movement. At this point in our history, the Union movement is under an attack that hasn't been seen in nearly a century. This attack is led by the wealthiest and most powerful forces in this country; the 1% as they are called, and

by their wealthy corporations. Their goal is to de-unionize the American workforce — private and public — for their own financial benefit, and statistics show that their plan is working. The ratio of CEO to worker compensation when I went to work for the railroad in 1977 was 33 to 1. Today it is over 300 to 1, reflecting a corresponding decline in Union membership over that same period. This is not by accident, it is by design.

The sad part is that the wealthy have enlisted one political party to lead their assault on Unions, and this is where tactics like Right to Work come from. Don't be fooled by the slogan. Right to Work gives you no rights, except the right to work for less, have inferior health care, and a less safe work place. Strong Unions are what give working class Americans the best chance at

fair wages, good health care, and a voice in workplace safety. Right to Work is nothing more than an attempt to eradicate Unions from the American landscape and, as I said, it is the Republican Party leading that charge for Corporate America. If you chose to vote for that party, you are within your rights to demand that your representatives explain why they have turned on the nation's Unions. It was the Union movement that created the American middle class, and it was a strong middle class with real wages that built this country in the post WW II years. Unions are not the problem, and you should not accept it when anyone suggests that they are.

As I have shared with some of you, I know first-hand the difference between a Union job and non-Union job. I did not grow up in a Union household, and my first job after leaving college in the 1970s was in a non-Union factory in the Midwest. The boss's friends and families had the best jobs, and made the most money; I was neither of those.

That changed for me when I hired out on the old Burlington Northern Railroad; I got a Union job. My wages doubled on day one and, for the first time, I had health insurance. As I said, I know the difference between having a Union contract and not having one. Believe me when I say that you do not want to work in the railroad industry without a

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# Journal

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a division of the Rail Conference,  
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## BLET Advisory Board holds first meeting



**The BLET Advisory Board at their meeting in San Antonio, Texas, in late February 2019. Seated, from left:** Vice President Marcus J. Ruef; First Vice President and Alternate President E. Lee Pruitt; National President Dennis R. Pierce; National Secretary-Treasurer Stephen J. Bruno; and Vice President & National Legislative Representative John P. Tolman. **Standing, from left:** National Division Trustee Richard E. Crow; Vice President Michael D. Priestster; Vice President James P. Louis; Vice President J. Alan Holdcraft; Vice President Rick Gibbons; Vice President Michael D. Twombly; Vice President Mark L. Wallace; National Division Trustee David P. Estes; and National Division Trustee William P. Lyons.

**O**n January 1, 2019, a new Advisory Board began its four-year term of office for the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen (BLET). Via conference call, National President Dennis R. Pierce convened the Advisory Board on January 1 while retired National Vice President Gil Gore administered the International Brotherhood of Teamsters Oath of Office to all newly elected Officers.

"The Oath is an integral part of any new officer assuming his or her new responsibilities," President Pierce said. "The Oath serves as a reminder to all who hold office in our great union that we are but caretakers when it states that it is 'the members who put me here and

it is the members whom I will serve.'"


The new Board held their first face-to-face meeting in San Antonio, Texas, in late February 2019.

"These fine Brothers are all part of a strong and united Advisory Board," Pierce said, "and I am confident that they will represent our membership to the best of their ability."

The Advisory Board is composed of the 14 highest-ranking elected officers in the Organization, and is the chief policy making body of the BLET between conventions. The Board has the authority to make decisions and perform acts and duties on behalf of the National Division that are not in conflict with or otherwise provided for in the IBT Constitution, the Rail Confer-

ence Bylaws, or the BLET Bylaws.

In addition to President Pierce, the BLET Advisory Board members include: First Vice President and Alternate President E. Lee Pruitt; National Secretary-Treasurer Stephen J. Bruno; Vice President & National Legislative Representative John P. Tolman; Vice President Marcus J. Ruef; Vice President Michael D. Twombly; Vice President Michael D. Priestster; Vice President Rick Gibbons; Vice President James P. Louis; Vice President Mark Wallace; Vice President Alan Holdcraft; National Division Trustee David P. Estes; National Division Trustee William P. Lyons; and Trustee Dick Crow.

The BLET National Division term of office began on January 1, 2019, and runs through December 31, 2022. 

# BLET presents brass bell to Jim Kabell

**T**he BLET presented International Brotherhood of Teamsters Trustee Jim Kabell with a brass bell at the BLET's regional meeting in St. Louis on June 25, 2019.

A Teamster member since 1972, Brother Kabell is the Principal Officer and Secretary-Treasurer of Local 245 and is the former President of the Missouri-Kansas-Nebraska Conference of

Teamsters. With assistance from BLET Missouri State Legislative Board Chairman Calvin Groose and retired Missouri State Legislative Board Chairman Brian Kelly, BLET National President Dennis R. Pierce presented Brother Kabell with a handsomely engraved brass bell in recognition of his distinguished career and pending retirement.

In August 2018, Brother Kabell

helped lead Missouri voters to an overwhelming and historic repeal of a so-called "right-to-work" law that the state legislature passed and the governor signed. Not only was the law overturned by a 2-to-1 margin, the total vote on the issue exceeded the number of statewide ballots cast on behalf of all candidates in both party primaries that same day by more than a 100,000 votes. 📞



**From left:** Current BLET Missouri State Legislative Board Chairman Calvin Groose; International Brotherhood of Teamsters Trustee Jim Kabell; and retired BLET Missouri State Legislative Board Chairman Brian Kelly.



A closeup of the engraved brass bell



President Pierce with Brother Kabell

## Division 42 restores and shares historic charter

**D**uring the BLET's regional meeting in St. Louis, Missouri, a delegation of members from BLET Division 42 (St. Louis, Mo.) presented their Division's original charter to President Pierce on June 25, 2019. The historic charter is on loan to the National Division for display at its headquarters building in Independence, Ohio. The charter is dated January 1, 1865, and represents an important piece of the Brotherhood's rich history. Members of the Division recently spent a considerable sum of money to restore and preserve the historic charter, but they do not have a permanent meeting location to display it. Division 42's members will maintain ownership of the charter, which is now on display at the BLET National Division's history museum. Thank you to the members of Division 42!



**From left:** Mike McGill, Division 42 Legislative Representative; Eric Reihm, Division 42 1st Vice Local Chairman; Mike Gurley, Division 42 Local Chairman; David Grimes, retired Division 42 member and former Local Chairman; President Pierce; Robert Druessel, Division 42 President; and Jason Schroeder, Division 42 Secretary-Treasurer.



# Division 96 in Chicago celebrates 150th anniversary

**A**t their January 2019 meeting, members of BLET Division 96 celebrated the 150th anniversary of their charter. Located in Chicago, Division 96 was originally chartered on January 16, 1869, to represent locomotive engineers on the Chicago & NorthWestern Railroad.



Sanborn

Historically, the Division was founded about four months prior to completion of the Transcontinental Railroad (May 10, 1869). Brother C.S. Binkley served as Chief Engineer of the Division in 1869, while Brother G.J. Benjamin served as First Assistant Engineer. The original charter was issued to Brother Benjamin. Early members held Division meetings on a weekly basis, meeting every Thursday evening at 7:30 p.m.

Of note is that one of the Division's founding members, John H. Sanborn, was the first man to operate a locomotive within sight of the Mississippi River. He would later serve as Chief Engineer of Division 96. In 1854, Brother Sanborn was promoted to locomotive engineer by the Galena & Chicago Railroad. He was in charge of operating a locomotive for a construction train as




Members and guests of Division 96 at their 150th anniversary celebration.

the road was built from Sterling to Fulton, Ill. As those tracks were laid, Brother Sanborn earned the distinction of being the first man to operate a locomotive while viewing the Mississippi River (according to the 1906 issue of the *Locomotive Engineers Journal*).

In attendance for the Division's 150th anniversary celebration was General Chairman Richard Crow, Union Pacific-Northern Region GCA; 1st Vice General Chairman Joe Cummins, UP-NR GCA; Illinois State Legislative Chairman Paul Piekarski; former Division 96 Local Chairmen Doug Davidson and Ed Yost; Division 405 Local Chairman Chris Wagner; as well as recent retirees Ric Garcia, Tom Tojza and John Heer, a former Division 96 President. There was also a very good turnout from the membership.

After the business portion of the meeting, the Division members and guests celebrated with a lunch and cake while a historical presentation served to feed the conversations. Brother Dan Lucansky, Local Chairman of Division 96, worked with the BLET National Division and others to help prepare the historical presentation.

Illinois State Legislative Board Chairman Piekarski and Division 96 Legislative Representative Brandon Stewart presented signed proclamations and resolutions recognizing the event from Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel, Illinois Governor Bruce Rauner, and both the Illinois House and Senate. Mayor Emanuel declared January 16, 2019 to be "Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen Division 96 Day in Chicago." 



## BLET LABOR DAY PRIDE

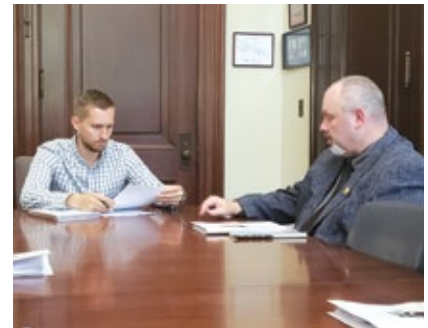
BLET members were proud to represent their union in the Toledo Labor Day Parade on September 2. Pictured here, from left: **Mike Friedman**, retired UTU and Democratic Party Advocate; **Jim Blum**, BLET Division 526; **Nancy Larson**, Democratic Candidate OH House District 47; **John Esterly**, BLET Division 34; **Kirk Knopp**, BLET Division 937; and **Tom Galloway**, retired BLET and Ohio State Legislative Board Political Advisor.

# BLET members lobby on Capitol Hill

**M**embers of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen came to Capitol Hill on June 6 to lobby members of Congress about the need for two-person train crews and other issues of importance to BLET members. They also informed the legislators about numerous safety and security concerns regarding Kansas City Southern's decision to allow rail crews from Mexico to run trains into the United States — breaking with a precedent since 1920 that crews on the international rail bridge in Laredo, Texas did not operate beyond the international border.

These Brothers were in Washington, D.C., as part of their participation in the BLET Education and Training Department's training class for Legislative Representatives. Upon completion of the classroom portion of the training, these Brothers combined to make more than 150 meetings with members of Congress.

Thank you to these members for their hard work on behalf of our Brotherhood!



## BLET Legislative Representatives complete training

**A**bout two dozen BLET Legislative Representatives successfully completed an intensive training class conducted by the BLET's Education and Training Department. The training was held June 3-5 at the International Brotherhood of Teamsters headquarters building in Washington, D.C. Following completion of the classroom portion of the workshop, the Legislative Representatives put their newly honed skills to work on June 6 with a full day of lobbying for rail worker safety on Capitol Hill. Congratulations and thank you to these dedicated members for serving our Brotherhood!





## letters to the editor

**Don't dismiss your union**

Editor:

As a railroad wife who worked in corporate America for 25 years — in executive and front line positions in a non-union world — it frustrates me to hear members dismiss their unions. I've managed over 500 employees throughout my career and saw corporations abuse them beyond my control, even as a boss.

Your unions are far from perfect... but as workers some of you have no idea what your world would be like without them. Your pay increases are negotiated for you and never based on merit. They just show up in your check as scheduled and you can count on it. Your medical benefits are incredible in comparison to most and your premiums are far lower than the average worker. Do you realize how many people are full time employees, getting paid a 40-hour salary with the demand of a non-negotiable 60-hour work week? If they don't work the demanded hours, they are fired. The end! Have you ever had to pay \$800-\$1,500 a month for high deductible medical insurance? Have you ever been told by your boss that a raise isn't possible because it's not in the budget... four years in a row? Have you ever been forced to work an 18-hour day, then be forced to return just three hours later and not be paid for your extra time? No one cares if you are rested in between. That's the reality of what it's like when you have no representation.

There is a lot of room for improvement and they are not perfect, but without unions, you would not be paid at the level you are. Have you ever been fired for running a signal or failing a drug test and not had a union representative to go

to bat to get your job back? I know plenty of guys who've gotten their job back, even after causing bodily injury, because the union had their back. That just doesn't happen in the average workplace. The union fights for the job of people who sometimes don't even deserve it but membership offers them protection. You would not have two-tiered Railroad Retirement plans and your spouse and children may not even be eligible for coverage on your medical and dental plans. Our family appreciates every benefit the union negotiates on our behalf. Period.

As a Brotherhood, you have the option to attend meetings, raise concerns, and if you really want to make change, run for office to represent your fellow brothers. Gripping and complaining about what you don't get and voting against your interests in politics is career suicide. Are you showing up and trying to make a difference, or just complaining about what you don't like?

There is truth in the saying, "You don't know what you've got until it's gone." Appreciate your union. Educate yourself on the benefits and failures. Then, get involved to make changes when something isn't working. They can't work for you if you don't participate. Ask not what your union can do for you, but what you can do for your union.

Sincerely,  
Kelly Maxwell Pettus  
Via Facebook

**Thank you, BLET!**

Dear President Pierce:

Now that my 60th birthday and my work anniversary, 41st year, have both passed, I simply wanted to write and say, thank

you. After receiving my engineer's promotion 39 years ago, my Local Chairman made a simple promise to me, that should I choose to join the BLE, this organization would stand behind me throughout my career, fighting for my rights regarding wages, benefits, safety, labor conditions, etc.

Little did I realize at the time, just how much of an impact that this decision would have on the rest of my life. Whenever I needed a week of vacation to marry my wife of 30 years, I was guaranteed that week that I earned because of the contract that had been negotiated on our behalf, and it also allowed us to take many family vacations throughout the years. These contracts have seen my daily rate climb from around \$50 for a basic day, to now just short of \$300 a day. My local chairman's promise was there for the birth of both of our daughters, which basically came home from the hospital with me just having to cover the \$15 co-pay. When they both were injured playing sports in high school, those same contracts provided the best surgeons and hospitals for their care. This incredible organization even went as far as to provide scholarship opportunities as they followed their dreams of attending college.

Whenever I do choose to retire, the benefits that my wife and I will receive for the rest of my life are second to none. This decision isn't as easy as some might imagine, simply because while I have always been proud to be a locomotive engineer and represent this wonderful organization not only as Local Division President and Legislative Representative, my most satisfying position was that of a BLET Safety Coordinator. This position was also

negotiated on our railroad to provide a means to a safer and better career for all of us. This position allowed me to develop personal relationships that will forever mean the world to me. The knowledge and guidance that I received from my current and previous Local Chairmen and General Chairmen have not only made me a better leader, but simply put, a better man. For this, I will forever be in their debt.

In closing, my only regret through my career has been the constant effort by others to disgrace the efforts and foundation of our fine organization and similar others. I want nothing but for this organization to continue on for many, many years to come. With issues such as one-person train crews, double coal trains, right to work etc., it's more imperative than ever that we stand together, never divided. The same promise that was originally made to me must be carried on to generations ahead.

Forever your brother,  
Mark Morton  
President/  
Legislative Representative  
BLET Division 500  
Cleburne, Texas

**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



## BROTHERHOOD BOOKSHELF

## New book features late steam and early diesel eras

*Wallace W. Abbey: A Life in Railroad Photography*

By Kevin P. Keefe and Scott Lothes

Publisher: Indiana University Press

ISBN: 978-0-253-03224-9

From the late 1940s on, Wallace W. Abbey masterfully combined journalistic and artistic vision to transform everyday moments in transportation into magical photographs. Abbey, a photographer, journalist, historian, and railroad industry executive, helped people from many different backgrounds understand and appreciate what was often taken for granted: a world of locomotives, passenger trains, big-city terminals, small-town depots, and railroaders. Through his work, he was also able to show the human side of railroading.



Keefe

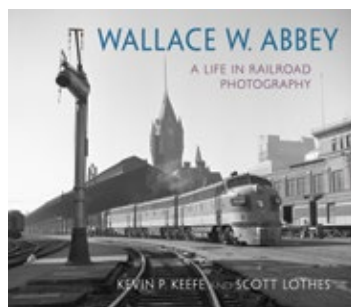


Lothes

“Wally’s images display a healthy respect and admiration for railroad workers, and that comes out of his own life experiences,” co-author Kevin P. Keefe said. “As a young man, he worked in locomotive shops, company offices, and interlocking towers and got to know first-hand what it meant to be a railroader. It’s something he carried with him his entire life as a photographer.”

Co-author Scott Lothes is President and Executive Director of the Center for Railroad Photography & Art and a freelance author whose work appears frequently in *Trains* and other publications. Co-author Keefe is a Milwaukee-based journalist and a member of the board of directors of the Center for Railroad Photography & Art. The Center for Railroad Photography & Art ([www.railphoto-art.org](http://www.railphoto-art.org)) is a nonprofit arts and education organization whose mission is to preserve and present significant images of railroading.

During his lifetime, Abbey witnessed and photographed sweeping changes in the railroading industry from the steam era to the era of diesel locomotives and electronic communication. *Wallace W. Abbey: A Life in Railroad Photography* profiles the life and work of this legendary photographer and showcases the transformation of transportation and photography after World War II. Featuring more than 175 photographs in an oversized format, *Wallace W. Abbey* is an outstanding tribute to a gifted artist and the railroads he loved.



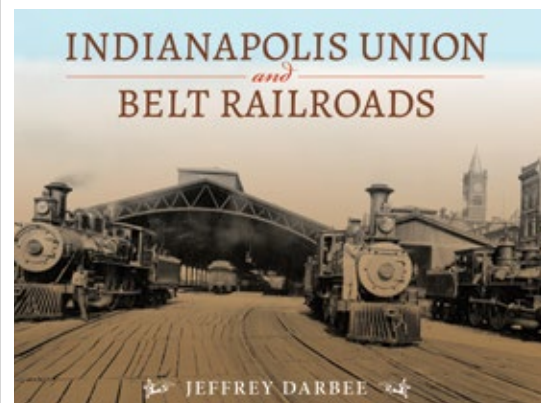
## Early railroading in Indianapolis

*Indianapolis Union and Belt Railroads*

By Jeffrey Darbee

Publisher: Indiana University Press

ISBN: 978-0-253-02522-7



In an era dominated by huge railroad corporations, Indianapolis Union and Belt Railroads reveals the important role two small railroad companies had on development and progress in the Hoosier State. After Indianapolis was founded in 1821, early settlers struggled to move people and goods to and from the city, with no water transport nearby and inadequate road systems around the state. But in 1847, the Madison & Indianapolis Railroad connected the new capital city to the Ohio River and kicked off a railroad and transportation boom. Over the next seven decades, the Indiana railroad map expanded in all directions, and Indianapolis became a rail transport hub, dubbing itself the “Railroad City.” Though the Pennsylvania and the New York Central Railroads traditionally dominated the Midwest and Northeast and operated the majority of rail routes radiating from Indianapolis, these companies could not have succeeded without the two small railroads that connected them.

In the downtown area, the Indianapolis Union Railway was less than 2 miles long, and out at the edge of town the Belt Railroad was only a little over 14 miles. Though small in size, the Union and the Belt had an outsized impact, both on the city’s rail network and on the city itself. It played an important role both in maximizing the efficiency and value of the city’s railroad freight and passenger services and in helping to shape the urban form of Indianapolis in ways that remain visible today.

**VINTAGE FIRE PATROL EQUIPMENT:** Built in 1968 for the Union Pacific Railroad, this vintage Fairmont MT 14 motorcar still roams the rails today. As part of the West Coast Railroaders Group's fleet, it provides track car services to railroads on the West Coast, including fire patrol duties behind the steam trains on the historic Virginia and Truckee Railroad (V&T) during the summer. It is pictured here in Carson City, Nevada on June 14, 2019, after operator Matt Parker (Chairman of the BLET's Nevada State Legislative Board) took it for a re-familiarization run. He later piloted it for a weekend excursion of private track car operators over the V&T, raising money for the Northeastern California and Northern Nevada Chapter of Make-A-Wish. The President of the West Coast Railroaders Group is Brother Ken Marty, Locomotive Engineer for Amtrak and member of Division 144.



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## Guest Columnists

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

# Worker concerns can't be ignored by candidates

The 2020 Democratic Party presidential debates came to Detroit during the summer of 2019, and I was hoping to hear more from the candidates about kitchen table issues that affect hardworking Americans. Frankly, the whole thing was a bit of a disappointment.

Sure, there was plenty of talk about the future of health care in this country, and even the topic of trade made an appearance. Those are important matters. However, when it came to discussing issues that would allow workers keep a foothold in

the middle class — even through their golden years — there was little discussion. At a time when Americans are grappling with how to support themselves and their families now and in the future, this country cannot turn a blind eye towards these matters.

The Teamsters are in the midst of gathering opinions from members, which in turn the union will use in its ongoing conversations with the presidential candidates. Those responses, as well as candidate video interviews and participation in pro-

union activities, will all influence the Teamsters' endorsement decision.

Candidates seeking the blessing and support of the Teamsters must understand the importance unions play in the working lives of the American worker and the economy as a whole. Supporting organizing efforts and standing for fairness and respect in the workplace is essential.

Workers deserve a president who is a partner that realizes that it is not just jobs, but the quality and dependability of those jobs,

that matters. U.S. leadership should realize that those who worked hard and played by the rules should have the ability to provide a comfortable life for their loved ones, and retire with the benefits they were promised.

It's time for all the presidential contenders to stand with hardworking Americans.

Fraternally,

**JAMES P. HOFFA**  
TEAMSTERS GENERAL  
PRESIDENT

# Protecting our pensions is a top priority

After years of hard work and countless visits to the nation's capital by working and retired Teamsters, we have succeeded in getting the House to approve H.R. 397, legislation that will protect the solvency of multi-employer pensions and bring retirement security to some 1.5 million Americans whose nest eggs are currently threatened. The House voted 264-169 in favor of the measure, with all of the Democrats plus 29 Republican lawmakers voting for the legislation.

Congress has a responsibility to stand up for hardwork-

ing Americans who had paid into such plans with the understanding they would receive their pensions in retirement. Unchecked recklessness on Wall Street ignited a financial meltdown that dealt a devastating blow to multiemployer pension plans, while dangerous deregulation and relentless attacks against unions have eaten away at these plans' solvency.

If we do not act, the pensions of many workers and retirees will be cut to the bone, and the futures of their families and communities will be thrown into jeopardy.

The Teamsters were standing up not only for our members but others who could be punished through no fault of their own. As Teamsters General President Jim Hoffa said, "You wonder how anyone could be against what we are for, helping people have a better life. We are on the right side of the angels."

But our job doesn't end here. Now the fight heads to the Senate, where we must convince the Republican-led chamber to take it up. Sen. Sherrod Brown introduced a Senate companion bill, S. 2254, and has 26 co-sponsors so far.

The fight will not be easy.

**We encourage all Teamster BLET members to reach out to your senators and urge them to support S. 2254 and protect our retirees' pensions!**

To listen to a podcast on the pension issue, go to <https://teamster.org/news/2019/08/episode-179-teamsters-power-pension-push-win>.

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.

### Former BLET District Chairman Sonny Kertesz, 1940-2019



Brother Kertesz (top photo, far right) pictured with family and friends throughout the years.

**FORMER BLET DISTRICT CHAIRMAN JOHN W. "SONNY" KERTESZ** passed away on February 18, 2019, after a long and courageous battle with cancer. He was 79 years old.

Brother Sonny started his railroad career with the Central Railroad of New Jersey in 1962, joining BLET Division 157 effective January 1, 1971. He became a Conrail employee in the 1976 merger of 7 North-

eastern railroads, and was elected Local Chairman of Division 157 (Jersey City, N.J.) in 1983. In May of 1986, he was elected Alternate District Chairman of Seniority District "G" of the Conrail General Committee of Adjustment, behind District Chairman Ed Dubroski.

In August of 1986, when Brother Dubroski was elected to the office of BLET International Vice President,

Brother Sonny was elevated to the full-time position of District Chairman. He was re-elected in 1989, a position he held until the Conrail District "F" Chairman and District "G" Chairman positions were combined, at which time he flowed back to exercise his seniority in the craft at New Jersey Transit, where he worked until his retirement in 2002. Brother Kertesz transferred his BLET membership





several times over the years, retiring as a member of Division 171 (Hoboken, N.J.) in 2002. He had over 48 years of BLET membership.

Brother Sonny hosted three Eastern Union Meeting Association (EUMA) conventions in Atlantic City, N.J. He chaired and ran 10 golf tournaments for EUMA, and he was the liaison officer for EUMA from 1995 until 2000. He was elected Vice-Chairman of EUMA in 2000 and served until 2005. Brother Sonny loved to play golf — especially with his pal and son-in-law John — but he loved his family and friends the most.

He is survived by his wife of 57 years Mary Ann; his daughter Debbie Mount (husband John); grandchildren John, Melanie and Mackenzie; his sister Barbara; and several nieces and nephews.

Brother Kertesz will be sadly missed by all who knew and loved him. A memorial service was held in his honor on May 18, 2019, at the Anderson and Campbell Funeral Home in Toms River, N.J. Donations can be made in his memory to the St. Jude Children Research Hospital.

"Brother Sonny epitomized the great spirit of Brotherhood that makes our Organization so special," BLET National President Dennis Pierce said. "He will be truly missed. On behalf of all men and women of the BLET, I extend our most heartfelt condolences to Mary Ann, the Kertesz family and Sonny's Brotherhood family." ☪

## Former BLE First Vice President Jim McCoy, 1937-2019

**FORMER BLE FIRST VICE PRESIDENT AND ALTERNATE INTERNATIONAL PRESIDENT JAMES L. MCCOY** passed away at the age of 81 at his home in Franklin, Tennessee, on June 17, 2019. He served the Brotherhood for many



McCoy

years as General Chairman of the Illinois Central General Committee of Adjustment (GCA), and was an International Vice President of the BLE from 1996 to 1999, serving as First Vice President — the union's second highest office — from 1999 until his retirement in 2001.

Brother McCoy was born on July 1, 1937 in Ripley, Tennessee to Fred W. McCoy and Maugrette M. McCoy. He graduated from Humes High School in 1955, where he played football and baseball. Brother Jim hired out on May 12, 1955 as a fireman with the Illinois Central in Memphis, Tenn., and earned promotion to locomotive engineer on March 16, 1965. He joined the Brotherhood in 1964 as a member of Division 23, transferring to Division 762 (Memphis, Tenn.) in 1971, where he held continuous membership for 48 years.

Brother McCoy served as Local Chairman of Division 762 from 1974 to 1986; Vice General Chairman of the Illinois Central GCA from 1980 to 1986; and General Chairman of the Illinois Central GCA from 1986 to 1996. In 1996, he was elected to the office of BLE International Vice President at the union's Sixth Quinquennial Convention, held in Detroit in July. In August of 1999, he was elected to the office of First Vice President and

Alternate President by the BLE Advisory Board, and served in that role until his retirement in 2001.

As a BLE Vice President, Brother McCoy coordinated activities with the various BLE General Committees on the CP Rail System/U.S.-Soo Line, Houston Belt & Terminal, Illinois Central Railroad, Metra, Kansas City Southern, Southern Pacific/SPCSL, Terminal Railroad Association of St. Louis, and Union Pacific (including the Longview Portland & Northern, Longview Switching, and Tacoma Belt railroads). He also served as BLE Coordinator during the UP-SP merger, where he helped negotiate numerous hub agreements that were ratified by the membership, including the Houston Hub, Denver Hub, Salt Lake City Hub, Salina, Kansas Hub, Longview, Texas Hub, Little Rock Hub, and Roseville, Calif. Hub.

Brother McCoy is survived by his wife of 63 years, Katherine Clay McCoy; brother, David McCoy (Nona); sons, Steve McCoy (Terri) and Mark McCoy (Cathy); and numerous grand children, great grandchildren, and nieces and nephews. He was preceded in death by his parents and sister, Joyce Barnes. Brother McCoy's youngest son Mark is a Union Pacific locomotive engineer and member of Division 197 in San Antonio, Texas.

"Brother Jim McCoy was the epitome of dignity and integrity as he served our Brotherhood for nearly three decades," BLET National President Dennis R. Pierce said. "Thousands of members have benefitted — and continue to benefit — from the contracts he helped to negotiate during his lifetime. On behalf of all men and women of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen, I extend our deepest sympathies to Brother McCoy's family and friends." ☪

## Former General Chairman Bill Hausleiter, 1947-2019

**FORMER BLE GENERAL CHAIRMAN WILLIAM G. ("BILL") HAUSLEITER, JR.** passed away at the age of 72 on April 16. He was the inaugural General Chairman of the Amtrak General Committee of Adjustment when it was first established in the mid 1980s.

A native of Linden, N.J., Brother Hausleiter's railroad career began on January 20, 1968, when he became the last locomotive fireman hired by the Pennsylvania Railroad. Due to a series of mergers and spinoffs, he subsequently also worked for the Penn Central, Conrail and Amtrak.

Brother Bill — known as "The Moose" to his friends — joined BLE

Division 501 in New York City (now Division 11), effective Nov. 1, 1968, and held continuous membership for over 50 years in the Division at the time of his death. Brother Hausleiter was elected as Local Chairman of Division 501 after having served as Vice Local Chairman.

On Jan. 1, 1983 Amtrak began directly employing locomotive engineers in the Northeast Corridor between Boston and Washington, D.C., and between Philadelphia and Harrisburg, Pa. On June 24, 1985, engineers employed by Amtrak voted to form their own GCA. Brother Hausleiter was elected General Chairman on Aug. 22,

and assumed office on Sept. 1, 1985.

Amtrak assumed employment of locomotive engineers operating its trains throughout the rest of the nation beginning in 1986. This led to the expansion of the Amtrak GCA, over which Hausleiter presided, to become the first coast-to-coast GCA in the BLE. He served as General Chairman until 1988.

"Bill Hausleiter was larger than life in many ways," said National President Dennis R. Pierce on being informed of Brother Hausleiter's passing. "He always put the membership first, and was willing to work as long and as hard as it took to improve conditions for locomotive engineers." 🇺🇸

## Former BLET General Chairman Danny Knorek, 1947-2019

**DANIEL M. (DANNY) KNOREK**, former General Chairman of the CSX Northern Railroad Lines General Committee of Adjustment, passed away on April 1, 2019 with Cheryl, his wife of 49 years, by his side. He was 71 years old.

Brother Knorek hired out in June of 1966 as a fireman on the Toledo Division of the former Baltimore & Ohio Railroad in Toledo, Ohio. He got involved in the union movement in 1967 as an officer in the old fireman's union, Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen & Enginemen (BLF&E). He joined BLE Division 876 on May 1, 1969, when the BLF&E merged with several other rail Brotherhoods to form the United Transportation Union (UTU). In May of 2018, he celebrated 49 consecutive years of Brotherhood membership. He earned promotion to locomotive engineer in 1970 and worked in road service between Toledo and Cincinnati and Willard, and also in yard service in the former B&O Rossford Yard. He worked much of his operating years in the former



Brother Knorek and his wife, Cheryl, visited Greenfield Village during the BLET's 150th Anniversary Celebration on May 7, 2013.

C&O Walbridge Yard after the 1968 consolidation of the Toledo Terminal and the creation of the Chessie System and then CSX.

Over his long rail career, Brother Knorek was instrumental in helping negotiate some of the many consolidation agreements in the Toledo area and in the states of Ohio, Michigan and Indiana. He served the Brotherhood as Local Chairman for more than 30 years and, over the years, held many

other elected offices on the Division level. He became General Chairman of the B&O Toledo Division General Committee in 1989 and helped merge that small committee with the B&O Proper, and was elected a Vice General Chairman. He helped merge Division 876 into Division 937 shortly before he became the full time Second Vice General Chairman in 2002, working at the GCA offices in Jacksonville, Fla. He was reelected Second Vice General Chairman in 2005 and First Vice General Chairman in 2009. He became General Chairman in July of 2012 following the retirement of then-General Chairman Rick Finamore. After a long career spanning six decades, he retired on May 5, 2013. He celebrated his retirement with many of the Brothers he worked with and served at the BLET 150th Anniversary Celebration in Detroit.

Outside of the railroad, Brother Knorek served his hometown of Rossford, Ohio, as councilman from 1975-1991. He coached many Rossford/CYO sports teams including



All-Star teams for area baseball and girls softball teams. He also established the program and coached the first girl's fast-pitch softball team at Notre Dame Academy. Brother Knorek was active in the Wood County Democratic Party having been elected Wood County Democratic Man of the Year also winning a Democratic Primary for County Commissioner. During

his years in Rossford, he and his family — including his parents, Dan and Mary — were active in business and civic affairs, operating Danny's Cafe for many years.

Brother Knorek is survived by his wife Cheryl, children Amy (Shane Spooner) and Dan (Rebecca) Knorek, grandchildren Danny, Drew and Bryce, and his brother John (Kim) Knorek.

"Brother Knorek served the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen with distinction for many years, and he will be missed by all who knew him and worked with him," BLET National President Dennis R. Pierce said. "On behalf of our Organization, I extend our deepest condolences to Cheryl and all members of the Knorek family." 🕯

## BROTHERHOOD OBITUARIES:

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

### AS OF NOVEMBER 30, 2018

3 — R. D. Sayers  
81 — Scott T. Rose  
107 — C. G. Hanks  
142 — Dale R. Eastland  
153 — E. L. Harvey  
153 — T. R. Murphy  
197 — Glen H. McCrory, Jr.  
228 — Kirk R. Rodriguez  
232 — Chris T. Carlin  
269 — R. E. Palmer  
272 — William Sherrick  
383 — Jerry L. Smotherman  
421 — W. L. Warner  
782 — R. Q. Phelps

### AS OF DECEMBER 31, 2018

2 — D. E. Cox  
14 — Edwin D. Liles  
14 — Franklin W. Marling  
18 — Mervill L. Cheatwood  
28 — Kenneth A. Bird  
84 — Thomas R. Presnell  
191 — W. M. Twombly  
332 — Don L. Dawkins  
383 — P. C. Kauke  
415 — A. D. Byrne  
442 — W. H. Obermann  
511 — W. E. Knight  
636 — Paul A. Richard  
782 — W. R. Deering  
886 — L. A. Shank  
895 — J. M. DeMike

### AS OF JANUARY 31, 2019

3 — Ronald J. Ratkosky  
40 — David D. Morris  
53 — R. E. Kelly  
64 — M. S. Richardson  
88 — S. D. Arnold  
88 — John Jimenez  
88 — T. J. Lindstedt  
88 — A. J. Ponce

88 — L. D. Schaffert  
121 — T. A. McAvoy  
190 — E. A. Browning  
332 — H. W. Holt  
435 — L. T. Lyles  
683 — George A. Lewkuc  
683 — Bernard Patterson  
692 — B. J. Fithian  
742 — Jeff S. Will  
766 — Michael J. Watson  
779 — James Clarence Cooke  
779 — James R. Higgins  
899 — W. P. Ricks

### AS OF FEBRUARY 28, 2019

34 — R. R. Nadalin  
48 — R. L. Losh  
60 — Douglas R. French  
71 — J. Petrillo  
74 — R. C. Krebs  
98 — Jack L. Gannon  
104 — D. C. Davis  
192 — Gary H. Lawrence  
325 — James L. Kindervater  
447 — Paul W. Szucs  
496 — J. C. Cameron  
497 — K. O. Carter  
547 — J. E. Coleman  
553 — Peter J. Page  
602 — H. L. Eastin  
646 — J. M. Taylor  
811 — P. J. Miner

### AS OF MARCH 31, 2019

6 — C. A. Hultine  
13 — Mark D. Terpstra  
33 — Steven A. Putman  
47 — Kevin R. Farlow  
48 — E. H. Huffman  
74 — T. J. Chapman  
95 — Roger D. Haynes  
171 — J. W. Kertesz  
173 — James A. Resop  
182 — Otis G. Bailey

182 — Harold D. Grisham  
190 — R. E. Scott  
426 — A. J. Cage  
447 — K. G. Steffenhagen  
530 — J. J. Hopkins  
547 — R. L. Shugart  
647 — Jeffery A. Straub  
752 — E. F. Lawrence  
769 — J. W. McClanahan

### AS OF APRIL 30, 2019

11 — W. G. Hausleiter  
28 — Les Jones  
52 — John P. Bullock  
64 — J. R. Hudson  
90 — Randy S. Ross  
95 — Douglas J. Cairl  
97 — Y. Muwallif  
176 — J. M. Hansberry  
190 — W. Harshbarger  
209 — William E. Parenteau  
216 — Steve C. Powers  
287 — D. F. Burk  
350 — Rene Ramos  
500 — G. D. Mathis  
500 — George F. Smith  
542 — Daniel E. Osborne  
800 — K. W. Tibbedeaux  
937 — Daniel M. Knorek

### AS OF MAY 31, 2019

39 — Jamie D. Adams  
57 — P. A. Lipp  
60 — Charles F. Beatson  
60 — B. S. Purdom  
206 — Robert A. Cook  
222 — D. L. Banks  
232 — Robert L. Fastenau  
350 — J. C. Bolton  
350 — A. Garcia  
532 — William E. Maines  
595 — P. R. Eastwood  
706 — J. Talton

### AS OF JUNE 30, 2019

30 — C. H. Wright  
31 — William A. Oertwich  
65 — Robert J. Orantes  
74 — C. H. Keel  
103 — L. E. Rottman  
114 — M. R. Johannsen  
174 — Daniel M. Hall  
180 — Norman F. Legato  
182 — Herbert Parham  
206 — Bert L. Dockall  
269 — Robert M. Dowd  
391 — Todd A. Kroner  
463 — Timothy L. Hamblin  
565 — David V. Sayson  
602 — W. W. Mack  
607 — M. Mehall  
622 — Douglas L. Pratt  
622 — Joel D. Schafer  
629 — Jason A. Rice  
684 — C. R. Todd  
695 — D. F. Lilly  
762 — J. L. McCoy  
858 — R. S. Holden

### AS OF JULY 31, 2019

40 — Joseph W. Schindler  
123 — Howard C. Grubb  
125 — Douglas M. Nish  
202 — Joseph A. Varholdt  
216 — H. E. Fornash  
270 — William M. Barnett  
387 — A. J. Mannino  
404 — Ephriam P. Young  
517 — John P. Tobin  
727 — Tim J. Arnoldy  
752 — H. C. Camp  
892 — Kurt D. Gustafson

# Remembering a fallen Brother

Custom-made park bench honors the memory of Tony Znaniecki



From left: Katryna Hughes, Flat Rock #8 President; Corbin Znaniecki, Tony's Son; and Travis Kuenning, BLET Division 388 Local Chairman.



Members of Tony Znaniecki's family.

**O**n May 22, 2019, local members of BLET Auxiliary Flat Rock #8 in North Platte, Neb., along with friends and members of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen, gathered together to commemorate a fellow Union Pacific employee and BLET member who passed away in a tragic motor bike accident.

Brother Tony Znaniecki, 43, died in a dirt bike accident on February 10, 2017. Brother Znaniecki hired out with UP in 1997 as a brakeman. He eventually worked his way up to engineer and joined BLET Division 388 effective September 1, 2005.

"Tony was near and dear to many and touched the lives of so many in our community," said Katryna Hughes, President of Flat Rock Auxiliary #8. "After Tony's



Znaniecki

passing, our Auxiliary decided there was no better way to honor him and his family than with a memorial piece at one of our local parks. Through Lincoln County trash pickups, fundraisers, and generous donations from his BLET friends and Brothers, we were able to put our plans into action." Her husband Corban is a UP engineer and member of BLET Division 388.

Members of Auxiliary #8 purchased a beautiful custom bench and playground equipment, including a spring car and spring motorcycle. They worked together with Travis Kuenning, Local

Chairman of BLET Division 388 (North Platte, Neb.), and the City Parks Office in North Platte. Together, they selected Centennial Park as the location for their donation because it was in need of updated equipment. The installation was completed in early May 2019, just in time for hundreds of children to enjoy the new addition for soccer and baseball season, as well as end of the year school picnics.

Members of BLET Division 388 and Division 88 donated their own personal funds to the memorial bench and playground equipment. They also contributed their time to the park installation project in May.

"This Memorial is a great example of the mission and purpose of our Auxiliary: Providing a support system, education, friendship, and love during





Members of BLET Auxiliary #8 as well as members of BLET Divisions 388 and 88 at the bench dedication ceremony.



A few members of BLET Auxiliary #8 at the Tony Znaniecki bench dedication ceremony.

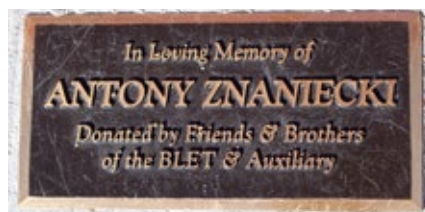
**Seated:** Katryna Hughes, President. **Standing, from left:** Amanda Rivas, Treasurer; Gina Kuenning, Vice President; Molly Morales; Kendra Lampe; and Jennifer Otzel.



A close-up view of the Tony Znaniecki memorial bench.

times of need,” Sister Hughes said. “Standing up and speaking out for our families and communities. Promoting active community involvement, volunteering, and betterment.”

This is not the first time Brother Znaniecki’s railroad Brothers and Sisters honored his memory. At 10 a.m. sharp on February 16, 2017, all engineers and conductors working at Union Pacific’s Bailey Yard in North Platte sounded their horns in his honor. The locomotive horns were sounded to coincide with the start of Brother Znaniecki’s funeral, which provided a way for co-workers who could not attend to keep him in their thoughts and prayers. Brother Znaniecki served in the U.S. Marine Corps from 1993-1997 and was a member of the Nebraska Cornhusker Motocross Association and



Tri-State Dirt Riders. He is survived by: his wife, Chari; sons Markus and Corbin; and many other family members and friends.

Flat Rock BLET Auxiliary #8 is proud to be a local and state advocate for many legislative issues that arise. Its members have played an active role in contacting Nebraska state senators to lobby in support of a 2-person crew bill, which restrict freight train crews to no fewer than two people.

Auxiliary #8 members have completed local trash pickups a few times a year

to support keeping North Platte beautiful. The Auxiliary has also awarded \$250 to \$500 scholarships to local graduating students, and 2019 was no exception. Their 4rd Annual Casino Night fundraiser was held in March. The proceeds benefits their local scholarship fund, helped assist and support Brothers and Sisters in need, and give them the means to address issues that affect local families and the community.

“If it wasn’t for so many wonderful individuals and members choosing to play an active role in our Auxiliary and donate their time and resources, our community contributions could not be possible,” Sister Hughes concluded. “The teamwork and camaraderie is immeasurable here at Flat Rock BLET Auxiliary #8, it is humbling to experience.”

# *A message to our newly-elected officers*

**You're elected to an office of the Brotherhood.  
Congratulations! Now what?**



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

**F**irst off and most importantly, this is OUR union. Yours and mine. We All own it. It's a collective and its vibrancy and strength reflect the heartfelt commitment you've made — a commitment to make the changes we need to stay ahead of the game and keep the gains we've made.

After being elected to a number of legislative positions in our union, I found myself at each juncture overwhelmed by the challenge. I wondered if I would be up to the task of fulfilling my sworn duties. My doubts disappeared when I realized that our Organization has many Education and Training workshops that enabled me to navigate the road ahead. Every year, we put on a Legislative workshop to familiarize our members with the day-to-day working of being on Capitol Hill. In these workshops, I learned how to lobby our elected officials to support our cause, how to encourage them to vote the right way, and to let them know where we stand on the issues that make our jobs safer and our government more attentive to our cause. You, too, will learn from our outstanding mentors who have previously served and succeeded. They are more than pleased to share their wealth of knowledge and experiences with you. Also, our Brotherhood hosts two Regional Meetings each year. The goal is to bring our people together and to learn from each other. These Regional Meetings offer Edu-



**“Union leadership is a combination of trials and tribulations and challenges that extend beyond the yard office and the locomotive. It is a body politic that runs through everything we do and say.”**

cation and Training classes. Regional Meetings help our members understand the importance of being involved in our collective bargaining process, the legislative battles in each of our states, and the value of being in Brotherhood.

The road ahead will not always seem like a super highway. Sometimes it is a rough patch with detours and roadblocks and sometime you may feel overwhelmed like I often did. But I guarantee with the support of and solidarity with your Sisters and Brothers in the union — combined with hard work, grit and determination — you will become an important

cog in moving our union forward.

Union leadership is a combination of trials and tribulations and challenges that extend beyond the yard office and the locomotive. It is a body politic that runs through everything we do and say. As I stated in the beginning of the column, we are elected...while sometimes it is not in a particular office — it is our responsibility as good wardens of each other and to the republic for which it stands. Let's all stand together and do what is right.

I am looking forward to serving with you and each other in this very important year. 🇺🇸





# Market failure and regulatory capture



**BY VINCENT G. VERNA**  
DIRECTOR OF  
REGULATORY AFFAIRS

I consider myself very lucky to work for our great union. Working and living in Washington, D.C. has given me a perspective about our government that I did not have before I began my work in our nation's capital.

Being located in the swamp allows one to see how the agencies of government interact with the branches of government. You can see it up close, warts and all. This has taught me a great deal. I think anytime our members can come to Washington D.C. to see for themselves, they should.

For example, I have learned about two types of failure that I never knew existed until I started working for the BLET on regulatory issues. Market failure and regulatory capture are perhaps the most significant factors that underlie the day-to-day details of regulatory action ... and of regulatory inaction. A typical definition of market failure is an imperfection in the exchange process between buyers and sellers that prevents markets from efficiently allocating scarce resources. Sometime, a market solution works because efforts to improve the bottom line, also have benevolent side effects. Self-interest can be enlightened. It can have benevolent outcomes for market players even if that is not the original intent. One example we have seen over the years occurs in the labor market. When the desires of business are given more weight by the government over the desires of labor organizations, the ability of workers to form unions and bargain collectively, can lead to wages being driven down.



Brother Verna distributing literature during the Legislative Representative training class at the BLET's Clearwater Regional Meeting on July 25, 2019.

This has occurred. According to the Fiscal Times, the average union member earns \$942 per week or \$201 more than the average worker in America. When union jobs disappear, they are typically replaced by jobs with lower wages and little or no benefits. The price of everything in all markets is negotiated. When that process is eliminated in labor markets, a market failure occurs.

The typical cure for market failure is some form of government intervention. This is where a government can take action in a variety of arenas directed by the different branches of the federal government. Congress (through legislation), the courts (through litigation and lawsuits) and the Executive Branch (through federal agencies or via an executive order issued by the President). Many times, all branches of government can be involved

in trying to remedy a market failure at the same time.

Regulatory capture is a failure of government. Regulatory capture occurs when a regulatory agency, charged with protecting the public interest, acts instead to protect the interests — political and economic — of the industry it is charged with regulating. The most obvious sign of regulatory capture is when a CEO or management representative is appointed as the Administrator of the agency that is supposed to provide oversight over the very industry from which the new Administrator was employed.

We've all heard complaints about regulations in various forms of public discourse. Government regulations are "paternalistic," or regulations that turn the government into a "nanny state," where the people's welfare or autonomy



or both are sacrificed to the judgments of an unseen regulator that no one can vote in or out of office. These allegations are false for two reasons. One is that the executives of regulatory agencies are appointed by the President, who is responsible to the voters if those regulators fail to do the right thing.

The other is that our own experience as locomotive engineers and trainmen teaches that there is a pressing need for strict safety regulation of hazardous industries like railroading. If there is any doubt about this fact in your mind, please view the Memorial Page on our website — <https://www.ble-t.org/memorial.asp> — which lists the 86 members of our Brotherhood who have been killed in the line of duty since May 19, 1989.

Economics helps to explain this unrelenting opposition to regulation. Regulations and economics are forced to ride in the same car on any regulation's journey from start to finish. That is, if one accepts there is a finish. The fact of the matter is that long-standing regulations are perennially on the chopping block.

Economics has been called “the dismal science,” because it requires that choices be made since resources are limited. All of us have been led to believe that wholly unregulated economic markets will be the solution to our problems — even in the area of safety.

This argument has been made railroads for generations and we continue to hear it today. Cost is the driving consideration for everything in the industry. The numbers determine the value of — not just outcomes, be they positive or negative — but also whether or not a regulation will even proceed beyond the idea stage.

Doing the ethically right thing for the public good frequently is not the least costly alternative. Economic dogma dictates that the market will do the right thing or correct for wrongs through economic pain. The reality for BLET members, however, is that the National Transportation Safety Board recommended implementation

**“The reality for BLET members, however, is that the National Transportation Safety Board recommended implementation of Positive Train Control nearly 20 years before we began compiling that list of 86 names of members who were killed on the job.”**

of Positive Train Control nearly 20 years before we began compiling that list of 86 names of members who were killed on the job.

Economic doctrine also assumes that the market is populated by rational actors, who act on the basis of their own survival and/or prosperity. This “profit motive” is what is supposed to underlie all economic decisions, and is claimed to produce the correct outcome. But our experience as railroaders shows that a person or firm that acts in an economically rational way may also be acting in an unethical way.

What is the appropriate regulatory response to a problem that involves multiple economically rational actors (railroads, government, labor and the public) acting in their own best interests and those interests compete to such a degree as to create market inefficiency? In a simple example, the manufacturing process for one product creates a byproduct that is toxic to humans. The manufacturer then dumps the byproduct on the factory's private land because it costs no money to dump it on their own land. However, this byproduct then seeps into the water supply of the town and causes a cluster of people in the town to develop cancer.

In this example, the manufacturer is acting within its rational economic interest to dump the byproduct in its own backyard and save money to in-

crease its profits by limiting its costs. Also, just for this example, assume this is in an area with no environmental regulations or laws regarding the dumping of this byproduct on private land. The families of the cancer patients who succumb to the disease sue the manufacturer for damages associated with their family members passing. The affected families are also acting rationally in their economic interests. This market failure will require some form of government intervention.

In response to this market failure, the government passes a regulation that prohibits the dumping of the byproduct on all lands. It does so to correct a market failure where everyone is acting in their own self-interest, but the water supply is being tainted and people are becoming sick and die. Market failures frequently cause the “public good” to be harmed.

Water and Air quality are public goods. But there also are plenty of examples of market failures in the sphere of private goods. For example, Martin Shkreli and his company, Turing Pharmaceuticals, raised the price of the HIV/AIDS drug Daraprim from \$13.50 per pill to \$750 per pill. The price hike happened just after Shkreli's company purchased the rights to Daraprim, a 62-year-old, off patent drug. Another drug company known as Valeant purchased the rights to Doxycycline, a heart drug in 2013 and raised the price from \$20 per bottle to \$1,849 per bottle by 2014.

These outrages resulted from a combination of both factors. Pharmaceutical patents establish monopoly condition for far too long a period of years, allowing speculators like Shkreli to price gouge consumers; monopoly is a classic market failure. He deserves the jail sentence he received, but his actions also represent an example of a government failure. The FDA, perhaps due to public outcry, changed its review process for approving generic drugs.

The Federal Aviation Administration (“FAA”) provides another example in that Agency's approval of the fatally-flawed Boeing 737 Max. The job of FAA Administrator went vacant for the 14





## 2019 REGIONAL MEETING PHOTOS



BLET President Pierce, IBT Vice President John Murphy, and BLET VP Tolman



Bob Hagan, Rep. Charlie Crist (D-FL) and Vince Verna



Brother Verna discusses regulatory issues.



Vice President Tolman with Paul Pierce, BLET Colorado State Legislative Board Chairman.



Brother Hagan urges support for the BLET-PAC fund.

months prior to the disastrous crashes on Ethiopia Airlines Flight 302 and on Lion Air Flight 610 and still has only an “Acting Administrator.” Paul Page of the Wall Street Journal reports that “airline enforcement fines have dropped 88% in two years and lengthy tarmac delays have doubled.”

This is a classic case of regulatory capture, because Boeing was permitted to “self-certify” the safety of the aircraft. It also looks like economics was at the root of the problem. The 737 Max is 14% more fuel efficient than its predecessor.

What happens the public good is threatened and the government fails to regulate? What happens when the referee looks the other way, or is pulled from the game altogether? Further what do you do, when not only is the referee absent, but the rules of the game are changed to favor a certain team? When regulators refuse to recognize market

failures and allow for the public good to be threatened or outright harmed, people should be concerned. Public safety is definitely a common good. The safety of our members is tied to public safety as well.

BLET is continually making the effort to warn FRA, the railroads, the public and our members when we identify potential market and government failures. Specifically, those failures that may lead to train accidents that have health consequences for our members and the public. The current challenge is with a government that refuses to intervene with regulations, legislation or judicial action that would correct these market failures.

Since 2016, the FRA has refused to take any regulatory action on train crew size, fatigue, train speed signs, remote control technology, and emergency escape breathing apparatus. The Rail

Safety Advisory Committee (“RSAC”) provided a forum for all industry stakeholders and FRA to discuss regulatory policy. Since 2016 it has met twice, and is scheduled to meet for a third time as this is being written. The BLET had three seats on RSAC, but now has only one as a result of the Trump Administration allowing the Committee’s Charter to expire.

The original Committee was far from perfect and operated on consensus, which is very difficult to achieve. However, it proved to be a good forum for dealing with the complexities of safety regulations in the rail industry. Given the current state of the FRA as a captive agency, we are not particularly optimistic that the new RSAC will work as vigorously as the former RSAC did ... but we will continue to lead the charge for improved workplace safety for all railroad workers. 📢

# Jim Nelson marks retirement and 50 years of BLET membership



Brother Nelson served the BNSF/MRL GCA as S-T for many years.

**B**rother James H. Nelson, BLET Division 644 (Galesburg, Illinois), proudly retired on March 12, 2016, after a railroad career that began over 56 years ago.

Brother Nelson's long and illustrious railroad career began in June of 1963 when he hired out as a fireman on the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy Railroad (CB&Q) at Galesburg, Ill. He was promoted to brakeman a year later, but resigned in order to attend college at Western Illinois University. He would continue to work for the railroad part time during his college breaks over the next few years, gaining experience as a brakeman, switchman and fireman.

In March of 1967, Brother Nelson was laid off from the CB&Q and began serving in the United States Navy, where he was station aboard the USS Klondike at San Diego, Calif. He was released from active duty in October

of 1968, and hired back with the CB&Q in December of 1968. In addition to his approximately 18 months of active duty, Brother Nelson also served 10½ years in reserve duty. In March of 1970, the CB&Q was merged into the Burlington Northern Railroad (BN), and Brother Nelson was called back to a fireman's position. He earned promotion to locomotive engineer in 1973.

Brother Nelson joined Division 644 effective May 1, 1966, and has held continuous BLET membership for more than 50 years. He has been an active and involved union officer for decades. He served Division 644 as Secretary-Treasurer from 1978-1992. He also served on the Local Committee of Adjustment. He served the BNSF/MRL General Committee of Adjustment as Secretary-Treasurer from August of 1992 to March of 2016. Brother Nelson also served at the National Division level, winning election

to the office of Alternate National Secretary-Treasurer in 2006 and 2010.

At the time of his retirement, Brother Nelson was serving as the BLET's Safety Coordinator for the BNSF Railway's Chicago Division. He was named Safety Employee of the Year by BNSF for 2015.

Brother Nelson comes from a railroad family and follows in the footsteps of his father and grandfather. His father Howard C. Nelson was a locomotive engineer for the BN from 1945-1973. His grandfather Charles E. Hunt was a locomotive engineer for the CB&Q who retired in 1955. Also, his father-in-law Frederick T. Reinschmidt was a locomotive engineer for the BN who retired in 1983. His father and father-in-law were both members of Division 644, while his grandfather was a member of the BLF&E. His uncle, D.L. Griffith, was Local Chairman of Division 644 for about 20 years.

He and his wife Betty L. Nelson were married on October 2, 1970. The couple has three children (Beth, Jennifer and Patrick) and six grandchildren. Brother Nelson is very active during retirement. He enjoys traveling, fishing, boating, and serves as Chairman of the Knox County Sheriff's Merit Commission. He is also the Financial Officer of the Galesburg American Legion Post 285.

Brother Nelson lives near the Jet Air Airport in Galesburg, Ill., where he plans to spend more time as a flight instructor during retirement. He has been a certified flight instructor for the past 20 years, and mostly gives flying lessons on single engine Cessnas and Pipers.

As a railroad veteran with more than 50 years of experience in the industry, Brother Nelson chose to share the following advice with today's generation of locomotive engineers: "I would not want to work for any railroad without a union to represent and protect me," he said. 🗣️



# Frankie Milford served CSX-Eastern Lines GCA as Secretary-Treasurer

**B**rother Frankie P. Milford of BLET Division 498 (Abbeville, S.C.) safely completed his Last Run for CSX Transportation on September 25, 2018, concluding a railroad career that began in 1980.

Brother Milford hired out as a trainman for the Seaboard Coastline Railroad at Abbeville, S.C., in 1980. He went firing for CSXT in August 1994 and earned promotion to locomotive engineer in January 1995. He joined the Brotherhood on January 1, 1996 as a member of Division 498.

Brother Milford spent the better part of two decades in service to the BLET and its members. From June 2001 through December 2012, he served the members of Division 498 as Secretary-Treasurer. From September 2013 to October 2018, he served Division 498 as Local Chairman, having served as Vice Local Chairman from January 2006 through September 2013. From September 2015 through October 2018, he served as Secretary-Treasurer of the CSXT-Eastern Lines General Committee of Adjustment.

For his Last Run on September 25, 2018, Brother Milford worked as locomotive engineer of a GP-38 road switcher (mother & slug) between Elberton, Ga., and Greenwood, S.C. His retirement became effective October 1, 2018.

Brother Milford and his wife Donna were married on July 19, 1981. They have one daughter, Melissa Amick, and two grandchildren. During retirement, Brother Milford will enjoy spending time with his family, and "not listening for the phone to ring." His hobbies include DIY projects and yard maintenance.

"The BLET (and I will have to include CSX on this) have provided well for me and my family through the years," Brother Milford said. "Most of all, many thanks to the BLET." 🙏



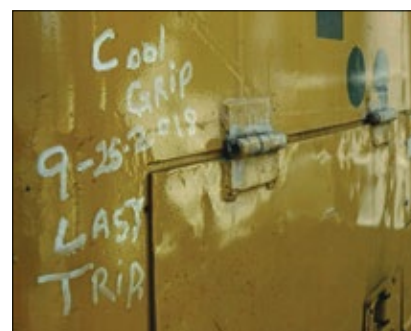
Brother Frankie Milford and his wife, Donna, as he stepped off the locomotive following his Last Run on September 25, 2019.



Proud members of BLET Division 498 at the 2015 Southeastern Meeting Association annual convention, from left: Gary Best, CSXT Eastern Lines General Chairman; Paul Sorrow, retired BLET National President; and Frankie Milford, former Secretary-Treasurer of the CSXT Eastern Lines GCA.



Following his Last Run, Brother Milford (left) makes his way to the depot with conductor W.R. Glace Jr.



Brother Milford's railroad nickname was "Cool Grip."

# Brother Bruce Evans, LC BLET Division 14, Washington, D.C.

When he looked back over Amtrak's *Silver Star* as he guided it between Richmond, Virginia and Raleigh, North Carolina, BLET Division 14 Local Chairman Brother Bruce Evans had an appreciation for the train's patrons and crew that not all engineers can understand. You see, Brother Evans began his railroad career on June 2, 1975, in onboard service. Recounting his 43 continuous years with Amtrak, Brother Evans notes that he worked every position on the train from lead service attendant and dining car steward to onboard chief. In St. Petersburg, Florida, he even supervised Amtrak's commissary while working as a liaison between the passenger carrier and host railroad, Seaboard Coast Line.

Born in New Jersey, raised in Indiana, educated at the University of South Florida. He went to work for Amtrak while attending USF, and graduated in 1977, while employed full time. Prior to being hired by the railroad, Brother Evans toiled as a construction worker, a surveyor, and even taught tennis. Once with Amtrak, home became wherever his system-wide seniority permitted — Miami, Tampa Bay, Jacksonville, Chicago, Harrisburg, New York, Washington and Richmond.

When Amtrak began hiring its own operating crews nationally in the early 1980s, Brother Evans applied to become an assistant passenger conductor, later taking promotion to conductor. He entered engine service in 1989 and soon found himself hostling electric motors at Washington Union Station, and at the controls of Amtrak's mainstay F40PH diesel-electric locomotives, first as a fireman, and subsequently as an engineer. He joined and became an active member of the BLE on May 1, 1990. Because he was not covered by agreements hammered out by the unions that afforded former freight railroad employees prior territorial



Brother Evans climbs aboard for his Last Run on July 9, 2018.  
(Photo by S. I. Cottrell, BLET Division 14)

rights, Brother Evans had national seniority only. As such, this meant continuing the same nomadic existence he'd endured as an onboard service employee. At one point, he was qualified on the operating rules and territories of 14 different railroads.

One of those moves — working out of Chicago — resulted in the good fortune of Brother Evans meeting the love of his life, now his lovely wife, Wendy Wurlitzer, a resident of Milwaukee suburb, White Fish Bay, Wisconsin. Because of the expansion of Amtrak-operated commuter service and the growth of regional trains in the area south of the nation's capital, the couple opted to make their family's home in Richmond, Virginia, which proved to be yet another beneficial move. Brother Evans stood for Am-

trak runs that took him to Newport News, Virginia, Raleigh and Charlotte, North Carolina, Florence, South Carolina, as well as the *Capitol Limited* between Washington and Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. It still meant time away from home, but at least, he had some reasonable assurance where that home would be. Amazingly, in his spare time, Brother Evans even earned his private pilot's license, while he and Wendy were also able to share their passion for European travel.

Brother Evans recognized however, that without dedicated union leadership, everything for which he'd worked all of those years, could just as easily be lost, which is why he ran for, and was elected to, numerous posts in Washington, D.C.'s BLET Division 14. He served as its Legislative Representative,





Brother Evans was presented with an award of recognition during the banquet at the BLET's 2018 Regional Meeting in Washington, D.C. (from left): Chris Dort, Division 14; Bruce Evans, Division 14; Wendy Evans; Dennis Pierce, BLET National President; and Herb Harris, Chairman of the BLET's Washington D.C. Legislative Board.

which led to his becoming a founding member and First Vice Chairman of the District of Columbia's Legislative Board. After being Vice Local Chairman, he was elected, and served with distinction, as Division 14's Local Chairman. He made the process of

mentoring and encouraging new and younger members a priority.

Still, as any elected union officer will attest, in addition to working your own job to provide for yourself and your family, you're on speed dial for every member with a question or a grievance

at any time of the day or night. Luckily for Division 14's members and their families, Brother Evans ably met the challenge of such leadership with honor and respect from both his employer and our Brotherhood. A very modest individual, he's quick to give credit to the guidance he received over the years from Amtrak General Chairman Mark Kenny, Secretary-Treasurer David Estes and Eastern Regional Chairman J.J. O'Neal, as well as the support of Division 14 officers Chris Dort, Ryan Riddell, and Antonio Robertson.

When asked how it felt to step down from his train for the very last time on July 9, 2018, Brother Evans said, "Walking away after 43-plus years is easier, when you do it with someone you love." He then smiled, grasped his wife's hand, and the two affectionately began the long walk down the platform of the Richmond Amtrak station — marking the end of a career, but happy to have the time to spend with their three daughters, their families, grandchildren and "grand dogs." 🐕

## All in the family

**I**t was a memorable day for Brother J.G. (Glen) Stone of BLET Division 84 (Greenville, S.C.) when he completed his Last Run for the Norfolk Southern. Not only did his Last Run signal the end of his long railroad career and the beginning of a well-deserved retirement, it was made even more special because Brother Stone had the honor of completing the trip with his son in the locomotive cab.

Brother Stone's final trip came on April 14, 2019 and was made on train 214 I.D. Premium Intermodal from Atlanta, Ga., to Linwood, N.C. Also working in the cab for Brother Stone's Last Run was his son N.G. (Nathan) Stone, who served as his conductor. It was a proud moment for both men and one that the family will no doubt celebrate for years to come.

Brother Stone has been a member of the BLET since September 1, 1985, and he has been an engineer with Norfolk Southern for more than 40 years. Congratulations on your retirement! 🎉



# 11 retirees honored at 51st annual Division 269/LIRR Dinner Dance

**B**LET Division 269 and the Long Island Rail Road General Committee of Adjustment honored 11 retirees at the annual Dinner Dance retirement party on November 10, 2018.

The BLET members who retire from the Long Island Rail Road are the guests of honor each year at the Diner Dance, which is a tradition that dates to the late 1960s. The 2018 event was the 51st annual.

The following retirees were recognized at the 2018 Dinner Dance: Michael Gallo; John Hardecker; William King Jr.; Cathie Smith; George Ramos; Andrew Bongiani; Edward Gibson; Kevin Spaeth; Stephan Harold; Jim


Mitchell; and Carlos Romano.

Among the honorees in 2018 was Cathie Smith, who served as the GCA's office manager for more than 30 years. "I have had the extreme pleasure of working for General Chairmen George Clark, George McSherry, James Molloy, Jack Rousseau, Robert Evers, Mickey Quinn and Kevin Sexton," she said. It has truly been a great run!"

General Chairman Sexton congratulated Cathie on her retirement. "Thank you for your 30 years of service to this great Brotherhood," he said. "Your tireless efforts have benefited the lives of many. You will be sorely missed and I wish you many

years of happiness and health!"

Also honored at the Dinner-Dance was Brother Neil Bickar, who was presented with the Division's Engineer of the Year award for 2018. Brother Bickar has over 21 years of consecutive membership, having joined BLET Division 269 on December 1, 1997.

Division 269 President John A. Kavanaugh Jr., Division 269 Vice President Karl Bischoff, LIRR General Chairman Kevin J. Sexton and National President Dennis R. Pierce presented commemorative plaques to each retiree. Brother Bischoff also served as the Entertainment Chairman, who organized the 51st 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](mailto:Bentley@ble-t.org), 7061 East Pleasant Valley Road, Independence, Ohio 44131

## PRESIDENT PIERCE MESSAGE

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Union, and a Union Contract.

But the attack on our Union movement and our Union contracts is far from over. And as I have said, the attack is politically motivated by one party. We all have the right to cast our votes in political elections as we see fit, but I believe that we must then take an in-depth look at how those choices have turned out. That is where keeping an open mind comes into play. Elections have consequences, and in the past two years, we have seen the attack on Unions come to our door. Be it from the Supreme Court with their *Janus* decision, the National Labor Relations Board, the National Mediation Board, or the Federal Railroad Administration.

We know all too well that there are very few workforces subjected to as much oversight and control by the Federal Government as those of us who toil in the nation's rail industry. From the Federal Railroad Administration's oversight of rail regulations, to the Surface Transportation Board's oversight of rail mergers, to the National Mediation Board's oversight of our certifications, grievance and contract mediation and arbitration, as well as organizing new members, we are continually affected by the power of the Executive Branch, and the President, who appoints these government overseers.

During President Obama's administration, we had an FRA Administrator willing to pursue a regulation requiring two crew members on certain trains. In contrast, just recently President Trump's FRA Ad-

Elections have consequences, and in the past two years, we have seen the attack on Unions come to our door. Be it from the Supreme Court with their *Janus* decision, the National Labor Relations Board, the National Mediation Board, or the Federal Railroad Administration.

ministrator withdrew the crew size rulemaking. But he took things a step further, clearly at the request of the railroads.

Seven states have passed State crew size laws over the past few years, laws that we strenuously lobbied for and strongly support. Before I go any further, these laws can also be considered the consequence of State elections. It is a matter of fact that the seven state crew size laws were passed by legislatures under Democratic control, and signed into law by Governors who also were Democrats.

As for our Federal regulatory efforts, President Trump's hand-picked FRA Administrator, who was previously the CEO of Conrail, invoked what is called "negative preemption" when he withdrew the crew size rulemaking. Imagine, he asserts that the lack of a federal law or regulation stops the States from legislating their own safety solutions. I will say it again, elections have consequences, and this turn of events is just that.

It's important for spouses and other family members to understand what is at risk if we are not vigilant in protecting what we have. At the UAW's 1970 Convention, President Walter Reuther said, "There's a direct relationship between the ballot box and the bread box, and what the union fights for and wins at the bargaining table can be taken away in the

legislative halls." Almost 50 years later, these words still ring true.

We are fortunate to work in an industry that is virtually completely organized, and for this reason, our members have benefits that come not only from collectively-bargained contracts, but also from legislation crafted and pushed by your Union, and implemented in the legislative halls over the years. Think for a minute about these combined benefits that come from over 150 years of trade unionism in our industry:

- A Railroad Retirement system that allows you to retire with 30 years of service at age 60, and that pays retirement annuities that are about double those paid under Social Security.

- An Occupational Disability system for railroaders with 20 years of service that pays double the annuity paid to SSI recipients who are totally disabled.

- A Medicare system that provides you with Health Care in your retirement years.

- Health and welfare coverage while working, which pays about 90% of all medical costs, and provides bridge coverage for those who take early retirement and are not old enough to qualify for Medicare.

- The FELA system that protects you in the event that you are injured on the job. We

all know that railroading is a dangerous occupation, and the FELA is there to not only protect you if are injured, but to also protects the families of railroad workers whose lives are lost on the job.

Even more important to you and your family is that if these corporate-backed politicians succeed in eliminating Labor Unions from the American workplace, your Union contracts go away with them. Many of our members do not realize that without a Union and a Union contract, there is no seniority roster or seniority district. Pay rates are decided by the boss, in many cases without regard to anything but personal favoritism and nepotism. There are no work rules that limit what you can be forced to do for a day's pay; insurance is only provided to the extent required by government, and if you complain about any of this, you are terminated without the hearing and arbitration process that your contract currently provides you. All of the items I listed are at risk if there is no Union here to protect them.

But Union Presidents can't do this job alone ... we need your help to spread the word, and the help of every Union member who is willing to pitch in and do their part. To stop the anti-worker movement in the legislative halls across the country, we must seek out and elect politicians who will work for working class Americans. We must support politicians who know that a vibrant middle class is what makes America great. In fact, the brave politicians that passed the seven State crew size laws now under attack have earned our support.

At the Federal level, along



with four other Union Representatives, I was invited by Congress to testify on behalf of our Union earlier this year at a hearing of the House Subcommittee on Railroads, Pipelines, and Hazardous Materials. This was the second time I have testified before a Congressional Committee, and I can tell you that the tone of this hearing — under Democratic control — was much different than the tone of the hearing on the wreck of Amtrak 188, where the Republicans were in control.

If you have not watched the way that the labor friendly Democrats on the Committee took the FRA Administrator to task, you should. It was obvious in his testimony and his defensive answers to the Committee that he has yet to separate his railroad CEO days from his current appointment as FRA Administrator.

In my testimony, I took FRA to task for not regulating fatigue in our industry, a task that Congress mandated they do in 2008. I took FRA to task for not regulating train lengths, even as operating crews have perished when unable to activate braking via rear end two-way telemetry due to excessive train lengths. I took FRA to task for refusing to do its job when it comes to foreign nationals operating our trains inside the borders of our great Nation. I also took FRA to task for refusing to consider the data that is out there showing that two persons on a train are safer than one. And as an update, BLET and SMART TD have filed a joint petition for review of FRA's attempt to negatively preempt State crew size laws in the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 9th Circuit; so have the states of California,

Washington and Nevada.

As I told the Committee, we have reached the point where, if FRA will not regulate, Congress must legislate. To that end, my Union sent 15 State Legislative Board Chairmen to Congress this past summer to lobby on our two-person crew bill, as well as our cross-border dispute with KCS Railway. Those Chairman made over 150 visits to Congressional offices, taking the memberships' issues directly to the Representatives who can legislate solutions to our issues. We will send another 15 BLET Officers to lobby next week; we will not rest until we have reached each and every member of Congress. This is important to you too as train dispatching will certainly be more difficult, and your members will be subject to greater scrutiny if there is only one crew member in the cab.

But labor will need more than just the efforts of Union officers. The time has come for ALL Union members to mobilize on the workplace issues that are important to us. And equally important, next year's Congressional and Presidential elections give us an opportunity to elect more candidates willing to take on the Nation's railroads on the issues that are important to you. The term "getting railroaded" did not come about by accident; we need and deserve a Government that will work for our safety and our jobs.

This will be even more important as the Rail Unions begin national contract negotiations next year. Just two weeks ago, the nation's Rail Carriers fired the first shot in the bargaining process by filing a nationwide lawsuit demanding that SMART Transpor-


tation Division be compelled to bargain on crew size in this round. There is a pattern here Brothers and Sisters. The Carrier's hand-picked, Trump-appointed Administrator of the FRA took executive action to gut our efforts to regulate crew size and to try to prevent state efforts to regulate crew size. Without missing a beat, the Carriers now seek a legal decision in a corporate friendly court in an effort to reduce operating crew size in the absence of a regulation to prevent it. Again, this has ramifications for dispatchers too; we must all stand in support of our SMART TD Brothers and Sisters in this fight.

As with our collective fight to preserve good health care benefits and fair wages, we all have a stake in this crew size fight. Whether it be for the workplace safety of all rail workers, or the long term impact to our Railroad Retirement system, train crew size affects us all. And this is where it all comes back to politics, Brothers and Sisters. There is no doubt that the Carriers decision to pursue a reduction in crew size is happening now. Many of our members do not realize this, but if the Nation's rail carriers and our Unions cannot reach a voluntary agreement, as we did in the last round of bargaining, the Railway Labor Act requires that the parties turn to the Government to settle our bargaining disputes. By "the Government" I mean the President. It will be up to the President, whoever that is at the time, who appoints a Presidential Emergency Board to hear our disputes when the process is at its final stages. He can appoint whomever he wants and his choice is not

subject to review.

The last time that operating crew size was reduced, it came as a result of PEB 219 in 1991, appointed by President Bush Sr. That Republican-appointed PEB recommended that UTU should be compelled to bargain crew size reductions on each property. Congress legislated that recommendation, and that is when the remaining brakeman was eliminated on most through freight assignments, and the nations' Class I railroads went conductor-only in that service.

History has a way of repeating itself, but only when we allow it. In the coming year you will be asked this question: Do you trust President Trump to appoint the Presidential Emergency Board that will hear our bargaining disputes if we are unable to reach and ratify a voluntary agreement? I can tell you now that his actions over his almost three years in office insofar as his treatment of unions and their members are concerned tells me that you should not.

Join me when the call comes to participate in our fight to preserve what our great Unions have accomplished over the years by electing labor-friendly candidates. Be active and engaged in your Union whenever you can be. Do not give up hope ... our Union was formed at a time when train dispatchers — and locomotive engineers and trainmen and railroad workers — willingly joined; they did not need to be compelled to pay dues as they knew what is at stake. We must return to that ideology if our way of life is to be protected. Thank you again for being here and allowing me this opportunity to speak to you. 



# BLET Auxiliary awards 13 scholarships for the 2019-2020 school year

**C**ongratulations to the 13 scholarship recipients for the 2019-2020 academic school year! The Auxiliary is proud to be able to provide this funding to students who are children of BLET and BLET Auxiliary members.

Established in 1991, the BLET Auxiliary Scholarship Program provides \$1,000 scholarships to qualifying students who wish to pursue higher education. The Auxiliary also offers two \$2,500 scholarships annually in collaboration with Locomotive Engineers and Conductors Mutual Protective Association (LECMPA). The two \$2,500 scholarships are fully funded by LECMPA.

To apply for an Auxiliary Scholarship award, the applicant must be a son, daughter, stepson, or stepdaughter of a BLET Auxiliary member and a Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineer and Trainmen member (living or deceased), with each being a member at

least one year. An exception has been made for those children of single-parent BLET members with at least one year of membership in the BLET and at least one year of membership as a BLET Auxiliary Associate Member. To qualify for the LECMPA-funded scholarships, the BLET member in the family must also be a member of LECMPA for no less than one year. Children of an unmarried BLET member who has been an Associate Member of the BLET Auxiliary for at least one year are also eligible.

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

For high school seniors entering an institute of higher learning for the first time, a copy of ACT or SAT scores and a current copy of cumulative grade

point average (GPA) must accompany the application. For graduate students or students returning to an institute of higher learning, a copy of last term's (or most current) GPA must accompany the application. Applications submitted without these documents will not be considered.

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

The application deadline is typically April 1. Applications received after that date will not be considered. 📧

**APPLICATIONS, INSTRUCTIONS FOR SCHOLARSHIPS, AND MAILING ADDRESS FOR SUBMISSION MAY BE FOUND ON THE AUXILIARY WEBSITE AT [WWW.BLETAUXILIARY.NET/SCHOLARSHIPS](http://WWW.BLETAUXILIARY.NET/SCHOLARSHIPS).**

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#### ABOUT THE AUXILIARY:

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

#### PURPOSE:

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



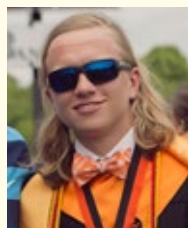
# 2019-2020 BLET AUXILIARY SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

## LEONA A. LOUIS MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP



**JARED BISBIKIS,**  
Will be attending the University of San Francisco as a freshman. His father Jason Bisbikis is a member of Division 839 (Richmond, Calif.). His mother Kathleen is a member of Auxiliary 39 (Stockton Calif.).

## DIVISION 14 \$1,000 SCHOLARSHIP



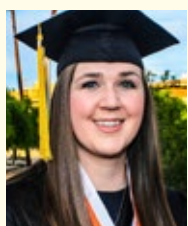
**BRANDON SAMPLE,**  
Will be attending Virginia Tech as a sophomore. His father Joel Sample is a member of Division 37 (Norton, Va.) and also a BLET Auxiliary Member at Large.

## RECIPIENTS OF \$1,000 AUXILIARY AWARDS



**ANNA CORDES,**  
Will be attending Chapman University as a freshman. Her father Scott Cordes is a member of Division 758 (Vancouver, Wash.).

Her mother Janet is a BLET Auxiliary Member at Large.



**DANIELLE FINCHAM,**  
Will be attending the University of Nebraska as a sophomore. Her father Fredrick Fincham is a member of Division 224 (Marysville, Kan.) and her mother Nancy is a BLET Auxiliary Member at Large.



**CALEB SAMPLE,**  
Will be attending the Appalachian College of Pharmacy as a senior. His father Joel Sample is a member of Division 37 (Norton, Va.) and also a BLET Auxiliary Member at Large.



**WILLIAM CHENCHAR,**  
Will be attending the University of Wyoming as a junior. His father Mark Chenchar is a member of Division 115 (Cheyenne, Wyo.) and his mother Marta is a BLET Auxiliary Member at Large.



**KEVIN LOGAN,**  
Will be attending Pennsylvania State University as a junior. His father Clarence Logan is a member of Division 207 (Casper, Wyo.). His mother

Wai is a BLET Auxiliary Member at Large.



**KATHRYN TRUMBLE,**  
Will be attending Western Michigan University as a sophomore. Her father Brant Trumble is a member of Division

33 (Battle Creek, Mich.). Her mother Juliette is a BLET Auxiliary Member at Large.



**JACOB HOLDEN,**  
Will be attending Sacramento State University as a sophomore. His father Michael Bencivengo is a member of Division 839 (Richmond, Calif.). His mother Lori is a member of BLET Auxiliary 39 (Stockton, Calif.).



**MICHAEL CORDES,**  
Will be attending the University of Washington as a senior. His father Scott Cordes is a member of Division 758 (Vancouver, Wash.). His mother Janet is a BLET Auxiliary Member at Large.



**RACHAEL STRUBE,**  
Will be attending Minnesota State University as a junior. She is the daughter of John Strube (BLET Member, deceased). Her mother Rachael is a BLET Auxiliary Member at Large.

## LECMCA \$2,500 SCHOLARSHIPS



**NATALIE KING-SHAW,**  
Will be attending San Diego State University as a freshman. Her father James King-Shaw is a member of Division 158 (Sparks, Nevada) and is an LECMPA Member. Her mother Linda is a BLET Auxiliary Member at Large.



**CAMI PRICE,**  
Will be attending Lake Erie College as a junior. Her father Timothy Price is a member of Division 607 (Cleveland, Ohio) and is an LECMPA Member. Her mother

Tetianna is a BLET Auxiliary Member at Large.

## ABOUT THE AUXILIARY SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

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

Applicants must have one parent who has been a member of the BLET Auxiliary for at least one year, and the other parent must be a member of the BLET for at least one year. Children of unmarried BLET members with at least one year of membership in the BLET and at least one year of membership as an associate member of the BLET Auxiliary are also eligible.

Applicants must be accepted or enrolled in an accredited university, college, or institution of higher learning. Recipients are chosen on the basis of academic record, leadership, character, and personal achievement. If the applicant is a graduate student or returning to college as a sophomore, junior, or senior, he or she must have a 3.0 grade point average or better to be considered.

The deadline for scholarship applications is usually April 1 each year. Application forms with detailed instructions attached are available for download at: [www.bletauxiliary.net](http://www.bletauxiliary.net). Applicants must carefully follow all instructions in order to ensure that the application will qualify for acceptance and consideration by the BLET Auxiliary Scholarship Committee.



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# JOIN US NEXT SUMMER!

## 2020 REGIONAL MEETINGS

**T**he BLET National Division is pleased to announce the dates and locations of its 2020 regional meetings: June 22-26 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin; and August 17-21 in Cincinnati, Ohio.

The Milwaukee regional meeting will be held at the Hilton Milwaukee City Center and the Cincinnati regional will be held at the Hyatt Regency Cincinnati.

As with the 2019 regional meetings, the 2020 meetings will be arranged on a Monday through Friday schedule. Travel

to the meeting, registration and a welcome reception for each of the two meetings will be on Monday (June 22 for Milwaukee and August 17 for Cincinnati). Meetings, training classes and other events will be scheduled throughout the remainder of the week and will include a closing dinner on Thursday night. Travel home is on Friday for each meeting (June 26 for Milwaukee and August 21 for Cincinnati).

Per the BLET Bylaws, regional meetings are held "for the purposes of membership

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

More specific details will be announced at a later date. Registration information will be available online at the BLET National Division's regional meeting website ([bletregionals.org](http://bletregionals.org)). All members are encouraged to attend one or both of these regional meetings in 2020.

Photo: Visit Milwaukee



### MILWAUKEE, WISCONSIN

**JUNE 22-26, 2020**

**HILTON MILWAUKEE CITY CENTER**

Photo: Jeff Swinger/Cincinnati USA



### CINCINNATI, OHIO

**AUGUST 17-21, 2020**

**HYATT REGENCY CINCINNATI**

Mark your calendars and plan to attend one or both of the BLET's 2020 regional meetings! Details coming soon.

**For more information visit us online at: [bletregionals.org](http://bletregionals.org)**