LOCOMOTIVE ENGINEERS & TRAINMEN OLL OCCUPANTION OF THE STREET OF TRAINMEN VOLUME 114 | No. 1 | Spring 2011 WWW.BLE-T.ORG

Milestone Achievement

Vicki Trepicione is No. 1 in seniority at Long Island Rail Road



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Bill Kearsing, Div. 46, goes above and beyond the call of duty

NEW CONGRESS, SAME GOAL

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UNION SOLIDARITY

Guest column by BMWED President Freddie Simpson



Stop the war on workers

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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

Turning Back the Clock

ow many times have you heard someone talking about the "good old days?" Typically we hear that phrase from a co-worker referring to a time when railroad work was more enjoyable or less stressful, or a long-time friend remembering a less complicated existence. Looking backward has always seemed to trigger good memories ... but not these days.

Nearly two and a half years after the worst economic downturn since the Great Depression the national unemployment rate continues to exceed 9% and Main Street continues to suffer. Yet, on Wall Street there is great celebration as the stock market has bounced back strong. And the railroad industry?

Net profits for the Big Four Class I carriers continue at a record pace. For CSX, NS and UP last year they totaled nearly \$5.9 billion dollars. BNSF, which no longer is public traded, averaged almost \$1.9 billion in net profits annually from 2007 through 2009. But at the bargaining table the carriers are demanding givebacks while freely admitting that "ability to pay" is not an issue.

So why are the bosses doing so well and the workers so poorly? One reason is that big business in America has gotten better and better at subversively persuading many citizens to vote against their economic interest.

Since last year's Supreme Court decision allowing busi-



From left: From left: BLET VP & NLR John Tolman, FVP Lee Pruitt, former Ohio Governor Ted Strickland, President Dennis Pierce, and Division 526 Legislative Rep Jim Blum at a rally for workers' rights in Columbus, Ohio, on February 22.

nesses to spend freely in political campaigns, Wall Street and the Chamber of Commerce have poured hundreds of millions of dollars into advertisements by groups with innocent sounding names that were designed to turn non-union worker against union worker and private sector worker against public sector ... and they worked. Under a cloud of economic uncertainty, the voters last November elected public officials at all levels who have workers squarely in their sights.

For example, the federal budget bill just introduced by the Republican House leadership would eliminate all future funding for the FRA's Railroad Safety Technology Program, which was established to save BLET members' lives. It also would rescind whatever portion of the \$50 million appropriated for this year that has not been committed to projects. Apparently it is OK to walk away from a safe workplace for BLET members in an effort to balance the budget.

The excuse offered for these draconian cuts is that the federal budget deficit must be reduced. But, as George Orwell once observed, some animals are more equal than others. For example, the FRA's Rail Line Relocation and Improvement Program, which is little more than a piggybank for capital projects by the Class I railroads, among others, is not being wiped out; it's being funded at \$15 million.

Social Security is coming into focus later this year, even though the trust fund takes in more than it pays. Big business and their allies want to destroy the system so that profits can become even larger. And you can bet that the carriers will be on their heels, trying to do the same to Railroad Retirement.

This is not just a federal phenomenon. As this is being written, state workers in Wisconsin and their supporters are taking to the streets to fight an effort by the new Republican governor to take away their rights to collectively bargain anything but pay

scales and to have non-members pay for services rendered by the union on their behalf, which are buried in legislation that would cut their wages by 9% or more. Similar efforts are underway in Ohio, Indiana and Tennessee.

The goal of these forces is far more than balancing a budget; they intend to drive workers' wages, benefits and power back to a level comparable to the late 19th Century. That was a period when Erie Railroad Robber Baron Jay Gould infamously boasted that he could hire one half of the American working class to kill the other half. Except today Wall Street, big business, and their agents in federal and state legislatures are trying to do the same by using slick propaganda and preying on petty jealousies.

In response to Gould and his ilk, noted labor organizer Mother Jones was quoted as saying her business was to comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable. That attitude is what helped the massive growth of the labor movement that led to the creation of the middle.

We need to readopt that philosophy — and practice it every day — if we are to succeed in defending our hard won gains. It's a job for every man and woman who belongs to the BLET. It's time to turn back the clock to the days when every member of our Brotherhood joined in the fight for our rights and the rights of all working men and women.

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up front



Introducing the 2011 BLET Advisory Board



FIRST MEETING

Members of the newly-installed BLET Advisory Board held their first meeting with all members present in Florida in Early February.

Seated, from left: Mike Twombly, Vice President; Cole Davis, Vice President; Mike Priester, Vice President; John Tolman, Vice President and National Legislative Representative; and Steve Bruno, Vice President. Standing, from left: Gil Gore, Vice President; Willard Knight, Vice President; Lee Pruitt, First Vice President & Alternate President; Dennis Pierce, National President; Bill Walpert, National Secretary-Treasurer; and Marcus Ruef, Vice President & Arbitration Director.

n January 1, 2011, a new Advisory Board began its fouryear term of office for the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen. National Division President Dennis Pierce installed the new Advisory Board.

The installation of the new Advisory Board was an historic moment for the organization as it completed the BLET's first ever rank and file election of National Division Officers.

Members of the full Board held their first meeting in Florida on February 7, 2011, where they discussed numerous issues of importance to the members. National bargaining, health and welfare negotiations, and rail safety legislation were among the key topics of discussion.

President Pierce now holds the distinction of being the first National President to be elected by the rank and file membership in the 147-year history. Also elected by the membership were National Secretary-Treasurer Bill Walpert and Vice President & Arbitration Director Marcus Ruef.

Incumbent officers who were reelected by acclamation are: First Vice President E. "Lee" Pruitt; Vice President & National Legislative Representative John Tolman; Vice President Mike Twombly; Vice President Willard Knight; and Vice

President Gil Gore.

First-time Advisory Board members who were elected by acclamation include; Vice President Steve Bruno; Vice President Cole Davis; and Vice President Mike Priester.

The Advisory Board is composed of the 11 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 Conference Bylaws, or the BLET Bylaws.

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Planting a seed

Division 42 inspired to organize massive food drive

n September 2010, Margo Storsteen planted a seed when she addressed BLET members attending the 75th Southwestern Convention Meeting (SWCM) in San Antonio, Texas.

Sister Storsteen, a member of BLET Division 57, is the BLET National Division Representative for the Teamsters Human Rights Commission.

She inspired members of BLET Division 42 (St. Louis, Mo.) to give back to the communities that they work and live in.

"We wanted to share with all our Brothers and Sisters the chance to bring a little joy and happiness to those less fortunate, so we decided a food drive was a great way for everyone in the St. Louis hub to participate," Local Chairman Dave Grimes said. "One of our members challenged everyone in our Division to donate at least one case of canned goods."

Members of Division 42 organized the food drive and asked all employees to participate. Collection boxes were made and placed around Union Pacific Railroad's St. Louis hub at each on-duty location for donations.

The donations were collected and then brought to a central location for distribution. The food collected was given to the



Officers of Division 42 (from left): Vice Local Chairman Jason Schroeder, Division 42 President Brian Wheeler, Division 42 Vice President Scott McKinley, Vice Local Chairman Mike Gurley, Division 42 Human Rights Representative Ulysses Evans and Division 42 Local Chairman Dave Grimes.

New Life Evangelistic Center in St. Louis, the United Gospel Rescue Mission in Poplar Bluff and several other food banks in Southern Illinois.

While the outpouring of goodwill helped those in need, it was also a source of pride and a great boost to the morale of BLET Division 42 members.

"It was met with a great response and has been a source of pride seeing employees, managers and even van drivers working together towards the common goal of helping those less fortunate in our communities," Brother Grimes said.

He thanked Sister Storsteen for the inspiration, and said now that the seed has been planted, it will surely lead to more goodwill in 2011.

"This was four first annual food drive," Brother Grimes said. "The participation was very encouraging and we will for sure do this again in the future. Thanks to everyone who donated food and helped with collections."

People helping people

Division 57 makes donation on behalf of Teamsters Human Rights Commission

LET Division 57 in Boston holds a fundraiser and raffle each year to help a worthy cause. This year, in conjunction with Teamster Human Rights Commission Representative Margo Storsteen (also a member of BLET Division 57), the members of Division 57 donated \$1,000 to the Franciscan Hospital for Children.

Division 57 also secured a matching contribution from Massachusetts Bay

Commuter Railroad (MBCR), bringing the grand total to \$2,000.

BLET representatives Gary Hobson (Local Chairman, Division 57), Dan Lauzon (Massachusetts State Legislative Board Chairman) and Paul Chaput (President and Legislative Representative, Division 57) presented a check to Steven Snyder, Chief Development Officer at Franciscan Hospital for Children, on behalf of the Teamsters Human Rights Commission.

The BLET Brothers and Sisters thanked new MBCR General Manager Hugh Kiley Jr. for his support in this charitable endeavor.



BLET representatives Gary Hobson, Dan Lauzon and Paul Chaput presented a donation to Steven Snyder, Chief Development Officer at Franciscan Hospital for Children, on behalf of the Teamsters Human Rights Commission.

BLET's "Golf for Christmas" helps children in need



Proud members of BLET Division 37 (Carbo/Norton, Va.) enjoyed golfing to raise money for troubled children.

n September 6, 2010, 18 teams of golfers played a full day of golf at Lonesome Pine Country Club in Big Stone Gap, Va. Division 37 arranged the round of golf, which hosted area business leaders, law enforcement officials, railroaders and families. The goal was to raise funds for the Harvest Free Will Baptist Child Care Ministries in Duffield, Va.

"Each golfer enjoyed the day knowing that at Christmas, the funds raised will go to a child that may not have a Christmas," said L.R. "Randy" Fannon Jr., Local Chairman of Division 37.

The Harvest Free Will Baptist Child Care Ministries is a non-profit agency



that provides a loving home-like atmosphere for abused, neglected, abandoned, or troubled children. The home officially opened the facility in August 1993 and has since served nearly 1,300 children. Today, children between the ages of 5-18 are served in the Lee County home.

While the golfers were finishing lunch,

Advancement Director Martha Stone spoke about the success of the Harvest Programs and gave a special thanks to all the golfers who were a part of the outing.

On December 15, BLET Division 37 members delivered funds in time for Christmas to the Home and to Director Stone.

"Our intent was to provide a Christmas to some of the children who may not have had a Christmas," Brother Fannon said.

He also said Division 37 plans to make the Golf for Christmas an annual event.

"With the success of the 2010 outing and sponsors signing up again for 2011, plans are being made for another successful event," Brother Fannon said.

Fast Facts

2010 Full Year Net Income

BNSF

Operating income: \$3.2 billion Operating revenues: \$14 billion Operating ratio: 76.0 percent

CN

Net income: \$2.1 billion (Canadian dollars)

Operating revenues: \$8.297 billion
Operating ratio: 63.6 percent

Canadian Pacific

Net income: \$5 billion Operating revenues: \$1.1 billion Operating ratio: 77.6 percent

CSX

Net income: \$1.5 billion Operating revenues: \$10.6 billion Operating ratio: 71.1 percent

Norfolk Southern

Net income: \$1.5 billion Operating revenues: \$9.5 billion Operating ratio: 71.9 percent

Union Pacific

Net income: \$2.8 billion Operating revenues: \$17 billion Operating ratio: 70.6 percent

Kansas City Southern

Net income: \$180 million Operating revenues: \$1.82 billion Operating ratio: 73.2 percent

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Giving the gift of life

BLET's Herb Harris donates bone marrow

n early January, BLET member Herbert Harris Jr. underwent a medical procedure to donate bone marrow at the Lombardi Cancer Center at Georgetown Hospital in Washington, D.C.

An Amtrak locomotive engineer, Brother Harris is Chairman of the BLET's District of Columbia Legislative Board and Legislative Representative of BLET Division 482.

"I never expected the call I received in December when I registered with the National Bone Marrow program six years ago," he said. "I learned during the conversation I was a match for a 14-year-old girl suffering from an aggressive form of sickle cell anemia.

"After a short pause to catch my breath... I could not imagine not helping this young lady live a full and successful life. So I agreed to be her donor. I have never met her and don't know her name. It is totally anonymous."

The procedure was a success, but left him feeling sore.

"It feels like I have been kicked by a mule," he said. "Bone marrow is harvest-



Under the knife: A nurse helps Brother Harris prepare for his bone marrow donation.

ed from your hips."

Brother Harris said it was an overwhelming experience, and he encourages others to become bone marrow donors.

"This has been an unbelievable experience and one of the most fulfilling in my life. I lived a big full life but this is

humbling," he said.

"However, I was troubled to learn how few people choose to give the gift of life through bone marrow or organ donation. Unfortunately, far too many people die everyday because of a lack of donors. I hope this year you will strongly consider being a bone marrow or organ donor."

letters to the editor

Dear Editor:

I am becoming very irritated at members of the media who seem to think that the conductor operates the train. I don't know what they think the engineer does.

Whenever an incident occurs, the report often refers to the conductor sounding the whistle and/or applying the brakes. I once corrected a local reporter, but I believe the problem is nationwide, so I'm asking the BLET to educate the national media as to who operates the train.

I'm sure the BLET media relations department has plenty to do, but I hope you can add this to your list. I believe engineers should be given credit for the job

they do. Thank you for your help.

Fraternally, Michael W. Gondron Retired BLET Division 65 San Jose, Calif.

Dear Editor:

I would like to inform you that the article titled "Labor Day 2010" by National President Dennis Pierce hit the mark dead center.

Without question it is one of the best articles ever written. I hope other respond the same as I.

I remember well my grandfather's stories of bat in one hand and picket sign in the other. And when my father — with a family of five — was on strike for nine months.

It has not been a cakewalk like so many seem to believe.

I fear apathy and lost history are very destructive to all unions.

Thank you so much for setting things right on what Labor Day is about.

You covered the history. I wish we could fix the apathy.

Sincerely, Jerry Freadman Division 236 Portland, Ore.

(BLET Editor's Note: Brother Freadman's letter was written in response to President Pierce's Labor Day message, posted to the BLET website on September 3, 2010.)

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, 1370 Ontario St., Mezzanine, Cleveland, OH 44113-1702.

Or email: Bentley@ble-t.org



Guest Columnist

BY Freddie N. Simpson National President, BMWED

Working Together



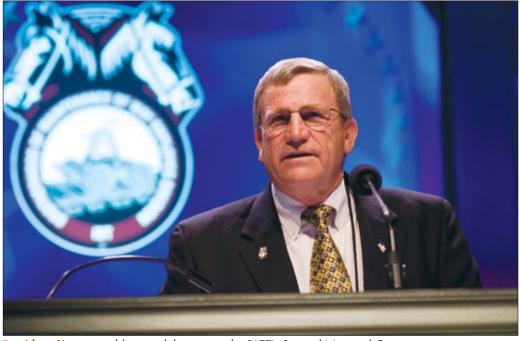
About the Author:
Freddie N. Simpson began his
railroad career as a track
repairman on the Louisville
& Nashville Railroad and became
a member of the Brotherhood of
Maintenance of Way Employes
in 1974. He also holds seniority
in every classification in the
Track Department, and has
traveled and worked on traveling
rail and surfacing gangs,
as well as section gangs.

President Simpson has held numerous other elected positions, beginning as Local Chairman for BMWED Lodge 671, as a Joint Protective Board Member, Vice General Chairman, Secretary-Treasurer and General Chairman of the former BMWE Dixie Federation.

While serving as General
Chairman of the BMWED's Allied
Eastern Federation, he was
elected BMWE Secretary—
Treasurer in July of 2002.
He then became President of
the BMWE in 2003 and led his
organization into the Teamsters
Rail Conference in 2004.

In 2006, he was elected to the General Executive Board of the IBT as a Vice President At-Large, and he was reelected by acclamation as BMWED President in June of 2010.

> BLET members can learn more information about the BMWED online at: http://www.bmwed.org.



President Simpson addresses delegates at the BLET's Second National Convention.

irst, I would like to congratulate President Pierce and each of the BLET officers on the recent historic elections. I look forward to continuing to work with President Pierce and all of the BLET officers. Also, I want to thank President Pierce for allowing me the opportunity to share this message with the BLET membership. I look forward to our members having the same opportunity to hear from President Pierce in our own publication, the BMWED Journal.

It is no secret that the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen, and the Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employes Division share a common cause and paralleling rich histories. Like most of our members in the Maintenance of Way, as a Trackman working on the former L&N Railroad, my first impression of the Engineers and Trainmen was no different from most other Trackmen — where do I sign up for that job? My impression was that working on and around the trains had to beat track work. Later of course, I understood the erratic nature of the work, the long hours with little rest and the other issues that affect trainmen. I came to realize that their problems were not that much different from those of the men and women who work on the tracks and bridges. We all want the same things: fair pay, decent benefits and a safe place to work. But, achieving those things depends on our strength as a union. I am convinced that our common goals and the needs of our respective memberships can best be served by coordinating our efforts.

The BLET began the groundwork for those efforts in 2004 when it merged with the International Brotherhood of Teamsters. The BM-WED came to the conclusion that our members would also be better served under the

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Guest Columnist



Teamster umbrella, and the BMWED merged with the Teamsters the following year. We have never regretted that decision and have never looked back.

Working together through the Teamster Rail Conference under the leadership of Conference President Pierce has lent us each a special opportunity to work together on common issues that affect our members and their families. Drawing on each other's specific expertise and utilizing the unique opportunities we have will only improve conditions for our respective memberships. Both unions have a whole host of representational tools that we can utilize to share ideas: good training and educational programs, strong communication with our memberships through publications and websites, Organizing, Research and Planning departments, and we already work closely within the Teamster DRIVE program.

As partners in the Rail Labor Bargaining Coalition (RLBC) we have already seen that working together trumps going it alone. The last round of bargaining produced a good contract and I expect the same result this time. While the BLET has been successful securing a number of contracts in local bargaining with the Class I railroads, we continue to work together nationally with our other partners on healthcare issues.

There are boundless other ways we can work together, and there are a number of issues waiting to be addressed. Unions are under attack, and

If true strength is in numbers, then partnering together can only build strength.

if all Rail Labor, indeed, all labor organizations, do not come together to address these issues, we may all sink together. We can foolishly look at many of these issues and believe they can't affect Rail Labor but eventually the chickens come home to roost.

Recent history tells us we must work together if we are to survive and grow. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, between 1983 and the beginning of 2010 union membership dropped from 20.1 percent of the population to 12.3 percent. To be more specific, according to one study, railroad union membership dropped from 587,000 members in 1973 to 257,000 in 2001. Interestingly, real wages actually declined during that same period according to the same study, indicating what should be an obvious conclusion. We can blame that decline on deregulation and spin-offs or any number of things, but the fact remains, we have not recovered those losses. Current indicators are just as depressing. Obviously, organizing is one of the tools we should all be wielding together. It is time to sink or swim.

Since the mid-term elections, decent health care, pensions, the right to organize, the right to a safe work place, and even our right to bargain freely is even more under attack. Just take a look at what is happening to federal, state and county union

workers. The new Republican governors and even some Democrats are scheming to rob them of pensions they have worked for and deferred wages into in order to have some security in their old age, similar to the sacrifices we make in order to secure our own retirement.

Those same governors and state lawmakers are also trying to spread the right-to-work disease to other states. Twenty-two states already have onerous anti-worker, right-towork laws on their books for no other purpose than to weaken unions and collective bargaining. Since the midterm elections, as many as 12 more states are considering this legislation. With Republicans in control of so many State Houses, right-to-work could become the law of the land, decimating union workers' rights and driving down wages and benefits for all workers. The law is simply designed to weaken unions, lower wages, and put workers' safety and health at risk.

Currently most BMWED and BLET members work under union shop agreements that are not impacted by right-to-work legislation. But, that doesn't mean this is not a very important issue to all Teamsters. This type of legislation not only affects a number of railroaders not covered under union shop, but also thousands of our Teamster Brothers and Sisters.

With the Republicans

holding the majority in the House of Representatives, we can look for a very tough time ahead. Labor's voice in Washington will be ineffective if we don't band together to fight pending legislation aimed at further crippling labor, making the rich even richer, and destroying the middle-class. After having managed to extend tax cuts for the wealthiest 2 percent of Americans at the cost of the middle-class, they are now working to further eliminate anything that might benefit working men and women. They promised job creation and reduction of the federal deficit, but their actions so far have been just the opposite. After spending the last two years just saying no and blocking any sensible legislation, their agenda now seems to be aimed at just gaining more power and silencing the voice of working Americans.

We can work together with our Teamster Brothers and Sisters to try and thwart these onerous tactics. If true strength is in numbers, then partnering together can only build strength. We each decided some years ago to join with our 1.4 million Brothers and Sisters in the International Brotherhood of Teamsters to gain that additional strength. Now it is up to us to work together to utilize that strength on behalf of the members represented under the Teamster Rail Conference.

I look forward to continuing to work together, hand in hand, with the BLET and all of our Brothers and Sisters within the Teamster Rail Conference.

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BLET National Secretary-Treasurer's Message BY WILLIAM C. WALPERT, BLET NATIONAL SECTRETARY-TREASU

Funding the future of Education and Training

artin Luther King, Jr. once said, "All labor that uplifts humanity has dignity and importance and should be undertaken with painstaking excellence."

Such is our task as we enter this New Year, setting the goals and objectives of our great Union. In order to provide the "painstaking excellence" our members want and deserve, we must approach our goal setting with just the right balance of tenacity and foresight. We strive to provide our officers and members with the best tools available but with a watchful eye on our finances.

As many of you know, our Education and Training Department, which in my opinion has become the touchstone of rail labor's training programs, is going to become even bigger and better. At the Second National Convention in October of 2010, the delegates enthusiastically debated and passed a resolution that moves us to another level in our ability to train our officers and members.

In the near future, our Division Secretary-Treasurers will be notified by my office of a \$1.00 per month dues increase for Education and Training. This dedicated funding will allow us to have more workshops for officers



Bill Walpert with Jeff Wood, Secretary-Treasurer of the Virginia State Legislative Board

at all levels of the organization — but there's more. We will be able to address the concerns of many officers and members who have said they would very much like to attend a workshop but can't afford to send someone to be trained because they are a small Division or General Committee or State Legislative Board. With the dedicated funding we will be in a position to offset some of the cost for attending a workshop. Together with the generosity of the North American Railway Foundation (NARF) that graciously provides a per diem to attendees, we will make our workshops and classes a reality for all.

As Keith Stauber, the convention delegate from Division 163, Duluth, Minn. said during the floor discussion



Keith Stauber

of the proposed resolution, "Not one of the members that I have represented since I went to Local Chairmen School has complained about the cost of education when I got them \$1 or \$5 or \$10 worth of pay or ten days' worth of pay. Not one of my dismissed members has complained about the cost of education when I got them their job back. Not one of my members complained about the cost of education when, through the Arbitration Department with the assistance of Brother Marcus

Ruef, we put a million dollars in the pockets of my small division's members."

With the guidance and insight of our Executive Committee and Advisory Board, the Education and Training Department will soar to even greater heights. We are currently exploring ways that we can utilize an available resource — our own 20-floor Standard Building in downtown Cleveland. We are conducting a cost-benefit analysis of using vacant space in the Standard Building to create a state-of-the-art, 21st Century training center with classrooms, a computer lab and conference centers. This would be available to our officers and members for workshops or meetings, and when it is not being utilized, we can rent it to the businesses or organizations which constantly have a need for such space.

But none of this can be accomplished without what Reverend King called "painstaking excellence." We must consider our fiduciary responsibility in walking that fine line of "the best product for the least cost." As we perform our due diligence the task may seem slow and cumbersome, but, in the end, we should have an Education and Training Department that embodies Reverend King's vision of the "dignity and importance" of labor.

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BLET First Vice President's Message

BY E. "LEE" PRUITT, BLET FIRST VICE PRESIDENT

Coalition building

Working together to expand high-speed rail

ne of many assignments I have as your First Vice President is that of Director of the BLET National Division's Passenger Department.

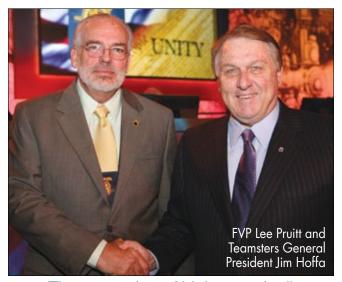
Not only do I work with BLET passenger and commuter officers and members to promote our interests, but also with our Brothers and Sisters in the Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employes Division (BMWED) through the Teamsters Rail Conference.

In 2010, the Rail Conference established the Passenger Rail Advisory Committee, or PRAC. The PRAC will work to coordinate the efforts of the Rail Conference and lead all of Rail Labor in promoting proposed passenger rail projects, lobbying to secure the state and local funding that will be needed to get these projects off the drawing board, and fighting to ensure that these jobs are our jobs.

Over the past few months, there has been a great deal of activity — some good, some bad — regarding President Obama's vision to expand America's high-speed rail passenger network.

Good News

The good news is that during his State of the Union address in late January, President Obama outlined his goal of giving 80 percent of Amer-



The expansion of high-speed rail also means a stronger
Railroad Retirement system for us all now and in the years to come.

icans access to high-speed rail within 25 years. To that end, Vice President Joe Biden announced on February 7 the Administration's plan to invest \$53 billion in high-speed rail over the next six years to continue construction of a national high-speed and intercity passenger rail network.

That translates into more work for our BLET members, who would operate the high-speed trains, and more work for our BMWED brothers and sisters, who would build, maintain and repair the bridges and tracks.

The expansion of highspeed rail also means a stronger Railroad Retirement system for us all — now and in the years to come. That's the good news.

Bad News

The bad news is that new-ly-elected governors in three states have rejected high-speed rail funding from the Federal government. Bowing to pressure from extreme fiscal conservatives, governors in Wisconsin, Ohio and Florida have turned down seed money from the Department of Transportation to get their high-speed rail programs off the ground.

Wisconsin turned down \$800 million while Ohio declined \$400 million. Florida alone turned down \$2.4 billion. The DOT will likely redirect the combined \$3.6 billion.

lion that these state governors rejected to other states that plan to proceed with active high-speed rail projects.

Our Challenge

Members of the PRAC certainly have our work cut out for us, but all hope is not lost in Florida and Ohio.

In Ohio, a bipartisan group of northern Ohio Congress members met with DOT Secretary Ray LaHood in early February to discuss building a high-speed rail line along Lake Erie that would link Cleveland with Chicago, Detroit, Toledo, Buffalo, Youngstown and Pittsburgh.

In Florida, State Senators spoke with Secretary LaHood on February 16 about pursuing a plan that would create another Florida entity that could serve as proxy to accept the federal money, rather than the state. It would likely involve a team of cities such as Orlando, Lakeland and Tampa, and possibly business partners from the private sector.

One of the many goals of the Rail Conference and the PRAC is to build coalitions with pro-rail groups like the ones in Ohio and Florida, joining together to pursue implementation of President Obama's vision for high-speed rail in America, and in turn giving rail labor and the American public a brighter future.

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Guest Columnists

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

Growing stronger

ver the past several years, the strength of the Teamsters Rail Conference has grown exponentially and resulted in good benefits and wages for the engineers, trainmen and maintenance of way workers we represent. Now we have another opportunity to fight for members' with the current negotiations for a national freight rail contract. I know that our Economics and Contracts department has been assisting your negotiators and those of the BMWED in researching the financial status of CSX, UP, NS, BNSF, and KCS. And, we are prepared to give as much assistance as is needed.

For the 6th year in a row, the Teamsters Union is cosponsoring the Hazardous Materials Training for railroad workers at the National Labor College in Silver Spring, Maryland. We believe that this type of training is essential to keeping you, our brothers and sisters on the railways, as safe

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James R. Hoffa Scholarship Fund
www.teamster.org

as possible when you are hauling hazardous materials. Since most of the time you are the first responders to rail accident scenes you need to be as prepared as possible.

I also wish to congratulate the new officers of the BLET. In particular, your president, Dennis Pierce. We look forward to working with Dennis and his team on contract negotiations and organizing projects in the years ahead.

IOHN F. MURPHY

DIRECTOR, TEAMSTERS RAIL CONFERENCE AND INTERNATIONAL VICE PRESIDENT



High speed rail benefits

want to congratulate all the members of the BLET for electing a fine team of officers last month during your first rank and file election. The importance of direct elections by the membership cannot be understated. Since our convention in 1991 our members have exercised their right to vote and we believe it has empowered each of them to take a proactive role in their union.

This year your union, along with the BMWED, faces the challenge of contract negotiations with the

five largest freight rail corporations. Dennis Pierce, who you re-elected as your National President, is the steady hand that is needed during the current freight rail contract negotiations. Employers are always trying to water-down the rights and benefits of workers, but I am confident that Dennis and his team will hold firm and negotiate the best contract possible.

High speed rail is an exciting development not just for the Rail Conference, but for other departments at the Teamsters as well. For example, the building of California's 800 mile system will require 150,000 workers and Florida's initial 80 mile segment will employ thousands. Members of our Building Material and Construction Trade Division. Industrial Trades Division and our Freight division will benefit along side rail Teamsters.

Fraternally,

James P. Woffa)

JAMES P. HOFFA
TEAMSTERS GENERAL
PRESIDENT

About the Authors:



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 Employes and now serves as Director of the Rail Conference. Murphy has also been the Secretary-Treasurer of Local 122 in Boston since 1980.



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. Prior to becoming Administrative Assistant to Michigan Joint Council 43, Hoffa was a labor lawyer in Detroit for 25 years.

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BROTHERHOOD'S RELIEF & COMPENSATION FUND



Announces Lower Monthly Membership Dues

Effective January 1, 2011

MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS PER DAY	OLD DUES RATE 1 Month	NEW DUES RATE 1 Month	NEW DUES RATE 6 MONTHS	NEW DUES RATE 12 MONTHS
\$ 80	\$36.00	\$30.40	\$182.40	\$364.80
\$100	\$45.00	\$38.00	\$228.00	\$456.00
\$120	\$54.00	\$45.60	\$273.60	\$547.20
\$150	\$67.50	\$57.00	\$342.00	\$684.00
\$180	\$81.00	\$68.40	\$410.40	\$820.80
\$200	\$90.00	\$76.00	\$456.00	\$912.00

We are committed to keeping your membership dues rate affordable with the *lowest monthly dues rate in the industry*. The Fund is healthy, strong and successful. You will share in our success. It is another reason why the BR&CF is the very best job income protection!

Are you interested in joining us? Talk to local BR&CF members or contact us toll free at **800 233-7080**, Monday through Friday, 8 A.M. to 4:15 P.M., Eastern time, or visit our web site at **www.brcf.org** for more information.



Milestone achievement

BLET's Vicki Trepicione No. 1 in seniority at Long Island Rail Road

ictoria A. "Vicki" Trepicione of BLET Division 269 (Long Island, N.Y.) holds a special place in the history of American railroading and the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen.

Sister Trepicione, 51, is the first female locomotive engineer in 177 years to hold the number one position on the Long Island Rail Road's seniority roster of more than 400 engineers.

And while the BLET National Division head-

quarters in Cleveland does not keep such records, she is probably one of the first — if not the first — female engineers to hold the most senior position at a major American railroad in the 147-year history of the BLET.

Sister Trepicione remains humble but proud of her milestone achievement and her unique position in rail labor history.

"I'm very happy, very grateful," said Trepicione, who has 31 years of seniority. "I feel very, very lucky that I made a career out of it."

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Getting Started

She was hired "right off the street" in 1979, she said, after completing LIRR's 18-month apprenticeship training program.

"It was fairly new at the time," she said. "Before that, the railroad hired engineers from the ranks of firemen."

She was one of the first three women to graduate from the program. She credits her sister, Pat Kameika, for urging her to get started in railroading.

"I got the inspiration to apply for the job from my sister, who was a conductor at the time," she said. "She told me what a great job it was, but I didn't know much about railroads. I rarely took the train. But I got a call for an interview and took the job. It was the best decision I ever made."

She was attending Adelphia University when she hired out.

"The training was difficult but being a college student helped because I was used to studying everything," she said. "The training was intense and it felt like quite an accomplishment when I finished. It was a very rewarding feeling after 18 months."

Once on the job, however, the 20-yearold Trepicione faced even more challenges.

"It was all very new," she said. "Railroading has its own jargon and it was a challenge to learn everything from scratch coming right off the street."

Joining the Brotherhood

She earned her qualification as a locomotive engineer in May of 1981, and according to National Division records, joined the Brotherhood on January 1, 1980.

After about three months on the job, however, she was furloughed for a year. Today, several LIRR engineers are in the same position, but she offered them words of encouragement.

"I want to tell the currently furloughed engineers to take heart," she said. "It happened to me and the railroad called me back and I've had a 30 year career."

BLET General Chairman Mickey Quinn said Sister Trepicione has been an exemplary engineer over her career.



Union strong: "It's good to know the union is there for you if you need it," Trepicione said.

"It has taken a lot of hard work, dedication and sacrifice to get to the position she's in now," he said. "She is an extremely professional and safety conscious engineer."

Sister Trepcione has never lost time at work for rule violations, but said "it's good to know the union is there for you if you need it."

Times have changed

While a woman in the rail labor workforce was a rarity when she hired out, Sister Trepicione said that's not the case any longer.

"Times have changed," she said. "There are so many women now in all the departments, which is great. It's not a novelty anymore. And more minorities are working here now, too, which is wonderful to see."

Today, a woman is in charge of the entire railroad. Helena Williams has been president of the LIRR since June of 2007.

Sister Trepicione acknowledges that she may be a role model now for younger female operating employees, and she offers them words of advice.

"It's a great job and you can be independent and take care of your family without depending on anyone else," she said. "It's a job with great security and a strong union to back you. If you want to raise a family, it can be done."

She said she took advantage of flexible scheduling at the LIRR throughout her career. She often worked nights or weekends so that she and her husband. Michael, never needed a baby sitter when her children were growing up.

"Between the two of us we always worked it out," she said.

The road ahead

Sister Trepecione said she will miss her coworkers and friends in the BLET and the LIRR when she retires later this vear, but she won't miss reporting to work in bad weather.

"I will remember the crazy weather, the ice storms and the blizzards," she said. "I won't miss driving to work in blizzards."

She and Michael have two college-age children, Michael and Tina. The couple plans to stay in Long Island for a few more years while their kids are in college, and she looks forward to spending more time with them during retirement.

ore time with them during retirement. "I'm happy in Long Island," she id. said. 📵

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Taking pride in the Brotherhood's rich history

THE BROTHERHOOD OF LOCO-**MOTIVE ENGINEERS** and Trainmen is quickly approaching its 150th anniversary. Our proud organization will mark its 148th birthday on May 8, 2011, with the 150th coming in 2013.

Founded as the Brotherhood of the Footboard in Marshall, Mich., on May 8, 1863, the organization changed its name to Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers in 1864, and then to Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen in 2004.

Over the years, members of our organization have prided themselves in the deep tradition and history of the Brotherhood. Today, many members value the antique membership ribbons and old division charters of years past, displaying these items with pride in their homes and cherishing them as important mementos of the Brotherhood's early days.

One example, right, is an ornate membership ribbon from BLET Division 236 in Portland, Ore. Ribbons such as these date to the late 1800s were worn by members to Division meetings, dinners, parades, and other public events. The ribbons were also reversible, with the back being made of black material with silver letters to be worn at funerals and other times of mourning.

Additionally, while today's members may know that the Brotherhood owned several labor banks in the early 1920s, it is a little known fact that the organization also printed its own monetary script. Featured below are examples of Brotherhood currency, which was circulated as legal tender during the 1920s.

It is our hope that members take pride in the rich history of our Brotherhood, and that readers enjoy this installment of "From the Vault."





BROTHERHOOD CURRENCY:

Our organization owned several banks and issued its own currency prior to the Great Depression in the 1920s.

Upper left is a \$5 bank note issued by the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers Cooperative National Bank of Cleveland, dated October 25, 1920, and signed by Grand Chief Engineer Warren S. Stone and First Assistant GCE William B. Printer. On the front is Benjamin Harrison, the 23rd President of the United States, while the back features an artist's rendering of pilgrims first landing in America at Plymouth Rock.

Lower left is a more traditional \$5 bank note, issued in 1929 by the Engineers National Bank of Cleveland and signed by BLE President Alvanley Johnston.



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BLET members join the fight in Wisconsin and Ohio

LET members have been on the front lines of the battle to protect the rights of union workers in Wisconsin, Ohio and other states.

American workers in public sector unions have come under attack in states like Wisconsin and Ohio, led by newlyelected conservative governors.

BLET National President Dennis Pierce said it was clear that the Wisconsin and Ohio governors — who also turned down millions of dollars in high speed rail funding from the Department of Transportation — were attacking unions on behalf of wealthy corporate interests who contributed largely to their election campaigns.

In Wisconsin, Gov. Scott Walker approved over \$100 million in tax breaks for large corporations. Days later, he announced legislation to gut workers' collective bargaining rights because of a "budget deficit" of approximately \$100 million.

In addition to Wisconsin and Ohio, unions have come under attack in Indiana, Tennessee, Illinois, California, Michigan, Alaska, Iowa and New Jersey.

To stem the tide of corporate attacks on unions, a groundswell of protests, sit-ins and rallies has swept throughout the United States. And BLET members have joined the fight to stand up for working Americans. Nationwide, the Teamsters and other large unions have organized more than 100 rallies in 38 states in mid-February.

BLET Gets Involved

In Ohio, National President Pierce, First Vice President Lee Pruitt, and National Legislative Representative John Tolman traveled from National Division headquarters in Cleveland to a massive pro-union rally in Columbus, Ohio, February 22.

They were joined by Ohio State Leg-



Above: February 22 Ohio rally (from left): Ed Evans, Jeff Murray, John Tolman, Jim Blum, Dennis Pierce, J.D. Scott, Lee Pruitt and Tim Hanely.

Right: Wisconsin rally (from left): Justin Johnson, Eric Stratten and Paul Aird.

islative Board Chairman Tim Hanely and other BLET members from Ohio, including: Bob Hagan, Division 757; J.D. Scott, Local Chairman of Division 34; Jeff Murray, President & Legislative Representative of Division 34; Ed Evans, Vice Local Chairman of Division 34; and Jim Blum, Legislative Representative of Division 526 (Willard, Ohio).

"It was a charging event," Brother Scott said. "It brought thousands of like-minded people together at the same event. The solidarity was phenomenal."

BLET members and their fellow prolabor protestors were not deterred by below-freezing temperatures in Columbus. Crowd size was estimated at more than 5,000 people.

"It was freezing but that didn't stop anyone," said Brother Scott. "Strangers were buying hot coffee for strangers."

The rally was to protest Ohio Senate Bill 5, which would make it virtu-



ally impossible for Ohio's public employees to negotiate fair union contracts with their employers. If passed, the bill would outlaw collective bargaining for state employees and higher education employees.

Brother Hagan is a State Senator in Ohio, and was able to arrange a face-to-face meeting between President Pierce, First Vice President Pruitt and VP & NLR Tolman and former Ohio Governor Ted Strickland.

President Pierce returned to Columbus for another rally on March 1 (see page 19 photo).

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Top: BLET members at the March 1 rally in Columbus, from left: Dan Rozick, Division 385 (retired); Tom Galloway, Division 4 (retired); Jeff Murray, Division 34; President Pierce; Tim Hanely, Ohio State Legislative Board Chairman; Jim Blum, Division 526; Tom Davis, Division 511; and Dan Cook, BLET Director of Benefits. Above, left: Adam Makurat, BLET Division 405, with President Hoffa in Madison, Wisc. Above, center: Dave Sattig, Division 457, holds the BLET banner along side President Pierce. Above, right: Various signs from the rally in Columbus, Ohio, protesting Governor Kasich and Ohio Senate Bill 5.

Wisconsin Rallies

Meanwhile, Wisconsin State Legislative Board Chairman Tony Dimond said his Board brought a contingent of BLET members to participate in the Wisconsin rallies, protesting efforts by a Republican-controlled statehouse to gut union worker rights.

"The basis of the rallies in Madison has shifted from wages and benefits to combating the direct assaults by a Republican administration on the basic collective bargaining rights of labor," said Paul Aird, 1st Vice Chairman of the Wisconsin State Legislative Board, who was an active participant in rallies in Madison.

Wisconsin Central General Chairman John Reynolds also reported that dozens of members from his General Committee of Adjustment have participated in the Madison solidarity rallies. Among those in attendance at rallies in Wisconsin were Justin N. Johnson, 2nd Vice-Chairman of the Wisconsin State Legislative Board, and Eric Stratten.

"We all understand that the quote

'divide and conquer' has been used time and time again to separate and weaken us as labor organizations, but I am beginning to feel more and more as I spend time rallying with our fellow union Brothers and Sisters here in Madison that the quote from this time forward we should use is 'Tyranny breeds solidarity,' Brother Aird said.

Get Involved

Brother Blum said that worker solidarity will only grow with the continued planned attacks by the governors.

"I went to Columbus because it was the right thing to do and all of labor is in this together", Brother Blum said. "I do not believe this is really about collective bargaining rights but it is about totalitarian control and to eliminate the middle class. It seems shameful on the govenor's that they are protecting the extreme rich and the workers who are trying to live without assistance are being punished."

After spending time on the front lines in Wisconsin, Brother Aird encourages

other BLET members get involved.

"We cannot stand idly by, or assume that the officers and leaders of our union will do this work for us. The time is now for all members to become active to protect the rights of workers in this country," Brother Aird said. "Labor in Wisconsin has been glaring proof that solidarity is most certainly not dead in our working class."

President Pierce expressed similar sentiments and directed BLET members to the Teamster website for up to the minute news. Of particular interest to BLET members is the Teamsters website "Stop The War on Workers," which has detailed information about the dates, times and location of pro-union rallies throughout the United States.

"I want to thank all BLET members who took time from their busy schedules to stand up for the rights of American workers," President Pierce said. "This is a critical juncture for the labor movement. I encourage all BLET members to continue getting involved and standing up for what is right."

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Helping, America's Veterans

BLET's Kearsing takes 12-month unpaid leave from railroad to assist returning veterans

ill Kearsing of BLET Division 46 in Albany, N.Y., went above and beyond the call of duty when it came to helping military veterans returning home from Iraq and Afghanistan.

From July 2009-July 2010, Brother Kearsing took a year-long — and unpaid — leave of absence from his job as a Conrail/CSX locomotive engineer to volunteer as State Commander of the American Legion in New York.

"I donated my time in the hopes that the next generation of veterans is well taken care of and that our veterans of the past wars are not forgotten," said Brother Kearsing, who joined the BLET on September 27, 1996.

Helping Veterans

The American Legion sponsors many programs designed to help Veterans re-acclimate back to civilian life. And as State Commander, which is an elected position, Brother Kearsing's primary responsibility was to travel the 62 counties within the state and promote those programs. In addition, he helped Veterans by participating in the Legion's National Legislative Conference in Washington, D.C., and in Albany, N.Y.

"I met with our governor and our two U.S. Senators and several Congressmen," he said. "I must have given over 100 speeches throughout the state, chaired numerous meeting and pre-



As state commander of the American Legion in New York, Brother Kearing gave more than 100 speeches in 2009-2010.

sided over our state convention."

As part of the re-acclimation process, the Brother Kearsing and other American Legion volunteers greet soldiers when they return home and volunteer at various airports in hospitality rooms when they are in transit.

More importantly, Brother Kearsing helped promote job fairs for Veterans and the all-important "Heroes to Hometown" program, which is for severely injured soldiers. It offers a welcomehome celebration, temporary financial assistance, pro-bono financial planning, housing assistance, home and vehicle

adaptation, government claims assistance and family support.

Many Veterans can be overwhelmed by the myriad of confusing paperwork they need to fill out when returning to the states. But the American Legion is there to help.

"In New York, every county has an American Legion accredited Service Officer who understands the complicated system of appeals and paperwork processing," Kearsing said. "Even other Veterans Service Organizations use American Legion Certified Service Officers to aid in their assistance to Veterans."

AMERICAN LEGION BACKGROUND

THE AMERICAN LEGION is the oldest and largest veteran service organization in the country. It was founded at the conclusion of World War I in 1919 and its purposes are outlined in the

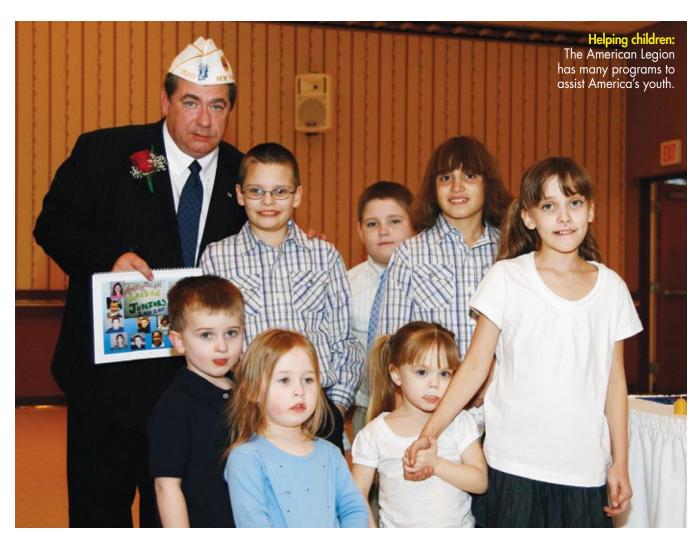
four pillars of service, which are: Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation, Americanism, Children and Youth and National Defense.

The origin of almost all veterans' benefits is the American Legion. The Legion helped create the old Veterans Bureau, which grew into what we now know as the Veterans Administration.

The Legion drafted the original GI Bill of Rights prior to the end of World War II.

"That is what truly created a middle class in America because it not only helped create industry, but it also educated an entire generation of Veterans," Kearsing said.

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Active Duty Soldiers

Brother Kearsing said one of the American Legion's biggest programs is Operation Comfort Warriors, which is for active duty soldiers.

"We collect funds for wounded service men to purchase comfort items like iPods, sweat suits, games, books and other items that help make their stays at military hospitals more comfortable," he said.

The American Legion also assists Veterans with education, home loans, insurance, and jobs placement assistance when looking for civil service jobs.

Helping the Children

It is not only returning Veterans and active duty soldiers who benefit from the generosity of the American Legion. Brother Kearsing said the American Legion sponsors an extensive children and youth program as well.

Baseball leagues, oratorical contests and Boys State, which is a week-long trip where students build their own governments, are all part of the American



In dress regalia for the Veteran's Day Parade.

Legion youth program.

"These are just a few of the thing the American Legion does for our vets and kids. My job as the State Commander was to promote these and other programs and to try to inspire our members to get more deeply involved," he said.

Dedicated Locomotive Engineer

Brother Kearsing hired out with Conrail in May of 1993. He completed engineer training school in Conway, Pa., in October of 1994, and began working full-time as an engineer on September 2, 1996. He joined the BLET 25 days later.

He typically operates trains from Selkirk, N.Y., to New Jersey on the Riverline, and has spent most of his career on that territory.

Brother Kearsing has been actively involved in the Brotherhood over the past 15 years, having served his Division as Vice Local Chairman and Acting Local Chairman. He is a member of the union's Critical Incident Response team and served on the Arrangements Committee of the 2005 Eastern Union Meeting Association in Saratoga, N.Y.

He has also participated in several Brotherhood rallies and marches, including the 1997 Operation Thanos safety march in Washington, D.C., and a 2003 rally against remote control locomotives in Washington, D.C.

His cousin is David Kearsing, Chairman of the New York State Legislative Board and fellow member of BLET Division 46.

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New year, new Congress, same goal – Protecting BLET members

ITH THE NEW YEAR AND THE BEGINNING OF THE 112TH CONGRESS, THE BLET IS ONCE AGAIN INUING WITH THE TASK OF PROTECTING OUR MEMBERS ON CAPITOL HILL. TO THAT END, THE BLET'S LEGISLATIVE, POLITICAL AND REGULATORY PRIORITIES FOR 2011 ARE AS FOLLOWS:

Legislative

Many of the BLET's legislative goals are carrying over from last year, as they were introduced or discussed but not passed in the 111th Congress.

First among these pieces of legislation was a bill introduced by former Representative James Oberstar (D-MN), who at the time was the Chairman of the House Committee on Transportation & Infrastructure. The bill would have made changes to the Hours of Service regulations proscribed by the Rail Safety Improvement Act of 2008. The legislation contained some, but not all, of the changes the BLET has been requesting from Congress since the passage of the RSIA, and we will push to include more of these in any bill that is introduced in the 112th Congress (see chart, page 23).

Before Representative Oberstar was defeated in the November 2010 elections, the BLET was working with him and his staff on making the necessary changes to the legislation to correct more problems in the bill. The BLET will continue to work with members of the Transportation & Infrastructure Committee to reintroduce the legislation, and to make the desired changes.

"The bill introduced by Representative Oberstar was a good first step towards addressing the consequences of the hours of service regime implemented under the RSIA," said Dennis R. Pierce, BLET National President Dennis. "These consequences stem both directly from the law and indirectly from the railroads' interpretations of how to implement the law. Both of these have cause difficulties for our members and has not addressed the continuing problem of fatigue in the industry and has in some cases made it worse."

The BLET is also working on an amendment to the Family and Medical Leave Act in order to assist BLET members who may not have credited with the actual hours they were available

work and so do not meet the 1,250 hours required by the law to qualify for this compassion leave. H.R. 5944, as introduced in the 111th Congress, would amend the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 in order to clarify eligibility requirements for railroad workers.

Under the proposed changes to the FMLA, the time that railroad operating crews are required to be available for work will be included in the total hours worked per year, thus making them more likely to meet the FMLA eligibility cri-



John Tolman, BLET Vice President & National Legislative Representative, thanks outgoing Congressman Jim Oberstar for his steadfast commitment to rail labor and rail workers during his 18-terms of Congress.

ı**oto:** courtesy AFL-CIO Transportation Trades Dept

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teria. If it is re-introduced and enacted into law, the bill would allow employees to be eligible for FMLA if the employee has worked at least 60 percent of the applicable total guaranteed time for the previous 12-month period; and has worked or been paid for not less than 504 hours (not counting personal commute time or time spent on vacation leave or medical or sick leave) during the previous 12-month period.

The BLET needs to have it reintroduced in the House and introduced in the Senate. The legislation was introduced in the 111th Congress by Tim Bishop (NY), Bob Filner (CA), Mark Critz (PA) and Steven LaTourette (OH).

"The fact that it is a bill that is based largely on compassion and fairness may help its passage," said John P. Tolman, BLET Vice President and National Legislative Representative. "It will not cost the government or the railroads any money if this bill is enacted, but it will deeply impact the lives of the members that it will help. Most members who need this right are in a family crisis situation."

In addition to these vital pieces of legislation which carried over from the last Congress, we also know, based on statements by the new Republican majority in the U.S. House of Representatives, that we will also be fighting for funding for the Federal Railroad Administration, National Transportation Safety Board, National Mediation Board, Amtrak and high speed rail, along with many others not directly affecting our members, but impact working men and women.

Amtrak and high speed rail funding are especially vulnerable in this new political climate.

"Since its founding, Amtrak has always had to fight and scrape for funding," Tolman said. "In the past couple of years, the railroad was finally able to convince Congress to give it the money to move beyond starvation, and now all of that work is vulnerable.

"Some of Amtrak's long distance

The Oberstar legislation would accomplish the following:

Adds to the current law that "railroad employees covered by this chapter shall be provided predictable and defined work and rest periods."

Mandates that an on-duty period cannot be initiated unless an employee has had 10 hours off duty immediately prior to going on duty. Unassigned yard service shall require an eight hour call or calling window.

Allows an employee to initiate an on duty period on a seventh consecutive day if they are at a terminal other than their home terminal

Guarantees an employee 72 consecutive hours off duty at the home terminal during which time the employee is unavailable for any service for any railroad carrier if an employee initiates an on-duty period on a seventh consecutive day.

Directs the Secretary to prescribe regulations to require all deadhead transportation in excess of a specific number of hours to be counted as time on duty and shall reset the calendar day clock.

Notifies employees if they will be receiving interim release before going off duty.

Allows only two hours in deadhead transportation per each tour of duty.

Defines and covers yard masters; and contains changes for signal employees' hours of service.

routes run at a deficit because of the costs of operating such services – this was the reason Amtrak was created 40 years ago. In fact, Amtrak has come a long way towards reducing the costs of the service, and is working on ways to continue to do so."

High speed rail became one of the Obama administration's signature issues over the past two years. The administration recognized that the country needed to re-make its transportation system in order to improve mobility and its competitiveness in the 21st century, and saw high speed rail was a way of doing this. It also recognized that to begin the development of such a system, the federal government would need to appropriate significant funding in order to achieve this long-term goal. Since making this commitment, the political landscape has changed and high speed rail funding has become vulnerable.

Nevertheless, U.S. Vice President Joe Biden on February 8 announced an ambitious \$53 billion program to build new high-speed rail networks and make existing ones faster over the next six years.

Funding for the NMB, NTSB and FRA could fall victim to overall budget cuts, and the BLET is working to ensure they are all fully funded.

The BLET also expects that when discussions are opened on reducing the deficit through the reform of Social Security that the future of Railroad Retirement may also be on the line. The recently passed legislation which extended unemployment benefits and the Bush tax cuts also contained a provision for a decrease in Social Security and Railroad Retirement taxes on employees, with general treasury funds replacing the money in the trusts. This was the first time the funding of both Social Security and Railroad Retirement were linked to the general funds, raising concerns that a proverbial can of worms has been opened to using the surplus, especially the large one in the Railroad Retirement trust, to reduce the deficit. There is also a question of increasing the retirement age under Social Security as a way to reduce the deficit, making Railroad Retirement vulnerable to the same scheme. The BLET will closely monitor these developments.

The key to achieving all our legislative goals will be, as the BLET has always done, working with a bipartisan coali-





NUMEROUS BLET STATE LEGISLATIVE BOARD CHAIRMEN AND DIVISION LEGISLATIVE REPRESENTATIVES HELD MEETINGS IN RENO, NEVADA, WHILE THEY WERE ATTENDING THE BLET'S SECOND NATIONAL CONVENTION IN OCTOBER, 2010. ALL ARE STATE LEGISLATIVE BOARD CHAIRMEN UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED.

<mark>Seated, from left:</mark> Darrell Azarcon, 1st Vice Chairman, California; Bill Verdeyen, Indiana; Tim Smith, California; Dennis Pierce, National President; John Tolman, Vice President & National Legislative Representative; Ken Kertesz, Pennsylvania; Dave Lavery, Florida; and Tim Hanely, Ohio. Middle row, from left: Ryan Snow, Division 126 Legislative Rep; L.F. Kemper, Secretary-Treasurer Wyoming SLB; George Newman, formerly Massachusetts; Terry Briggs, Texas; Matt Kronyak, New Jersey; Jim Wilmesher, Colorado; Craig Gilchrist, Montana; Paul Pierkarski, Illinois; Vince Verna, Arizona; John Passi, Nevada; Jeff Kurtz, Iowa; David Brown, Minnesota; K.J. Stauber, DMIR General Chairman; Herb Harris, District of Columbia; Paul Aird, Division 173 Legislative Rep.; M.J. Corrigan, Division 174 Legislative Rep; and Tony Dimond, Wisconsin. Back row, from left: Jim Keele, Kansas; Bryan Aldridge, Kentucky; Jeff Worthington, Utah; Dave Kearsing, New York; Greg Powell, Michigan; Scott Palmer, Oregon; Billy Evans, Mississippi; Tim Craver, Virginia; and Nick Johnson, Division 28 Legislative Rep.

tion of our supporters in Congress. While the BLET will have a tough fight on its hands in order to accomplish its legislative goals and will continually work on these issues and any others which may arise, the leadership has worked to assure that the organization is well-placed to do so.

Regulatory

The BLET is continuing to work to protect and advance the interests of its members on the regulatory front, with many issues still in process from 2010 and many other issues just in the first stages of the rulemaking process.

Among the issues still outstanding from 2010 are several resulting from the Rail Safety Improvement Act of 2008, including conductor certification regulations and passenger hours of service regulations, which are near the end of the process, and railroad Risk Reduction Plans and dark territory, which are just beginning the process.

At press time, the BLET was submitting comments regarding conductor certification requirements, asking for changes to many of the proposed regulations, but also keeping a wary eye on the need to reconcile these new regulations (49 CFR 242) with the existing locomotive engineer certification requirements (49 CFR 240), as the law demands. The BLET wants to ensure that any reconciliation has a positive impact on its members - both those covered under Part 240 and those covered under Part 242 and those who may be covered by both.

The Passenger Hours of Service regulations will be implemented on July 16, 2011. The BLET has held several meetings with the passenger service General Chairmen whose members will be covered by the new regulations in hopes of effecting a smooth transition to the new regime.

A working group of the Rail Safety Advisory Committee is, at press time, being formed to deal with Risk Reduction Plans. The plans, set forth in § 20156 of the RSIA, must have the consensus and participation of labor by law, and the BLET is working to assure that its members are protected in the promulgation of these regulations.

Two other regulatory issues the BLET is continuing to work on are Medical Standards and Rail Security. Medical Standards has been an on-going issue for the past several years. Regulations are nearly ready and the BLET is concerned that, because they might be "minimal regulations" and the railroads could choose to implement more stringent regulations, our members are vulnerable to exploitation of these rules.

"The FRA frequently implements

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On February 8, Vice President Joe Biden held a press conference in Philadelphia to announce an ambitious \$53 billion program to build new high-speed rail networks throughout the Unite States over the next six years. For more details, visit: www.ble-t.org/ highspeedrail

minimal regulations, and in doing so, allows the railroads to implement stricter regulations on their own," said Steve Bruno, BLET Vice President and Iterim Director of Regulatory Affairs. "Labor is always concerned about the risk this poses - in the past, railroads have found ways to exploit regulations to their benefit and in doing so have created hardship for our members. We are working to ensure that this does not occur."

The BLET is also working to protect its members by attempting to persuade the FRA to address rail security in the regulatory process, specifically through the promulgation of cab temperature and glazing regulations.

In addition to participating in the rulemaking process, the BLET is also constantly monitoring the waiver process with the goal of protecting its members. Some recent waivers included several to move inspections to Mexico and various other waivers which would decrease the safety of our members and possibly impact their livelihoods.

"Our goal, first and foremost, in the regulatory process, as in all other aspects of the BLET, is to protect and advance the interests of our members," President Pierce said. "It is goal number one in everything we do and the regulatory process is no different."

Political

In previous issues of the Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen Journal, the confluence of the three areas covered by the BLET's National Legislative Office — legislative, regulatory and political — was featured, and the growth of the BLET-PAC is the key to all of these, and increasing contributions to the PAC is a major goal in 2011.

"The key to long-term success in both the legislative and regulatory arenas is a strong political presence," Tolman said. "In order to have a strong political presence, the BLET must maintain and grow its political action committee, the BLET-PAC."

The BLET is up against well-funded Railroad PACs (see sidebar), and, with the recent Supreme Court decision allowing corporate donations to political candidates, we need more support than ever to push for the laws and regulations BLET members need.

In order for the BLET to protect its members by passing laws and promulgating regulations which are workerfriendly, the organization must first get candidates who support the issues of concern to BLET members elected to office, and to do this the BLET must have a robust PAC. It does not matter what political party candidates belong to as long as they address our issues.

Roughly one third of BLET membership contributes the BLET PAC. Currently, the average dollar/member is approximately 88 cents. The BLET's long-stated goal is full participation in the PAC, and an average \$2.50 per mem-

What we are **UP AGAINST**

RAILROAD PAC RECEIPTS 2010 ELECTION CYCLE:

AAR \$109,688

Union Pacific \$1,425,713

CSX \$1,239,000

BNSF \$\$1,404,782

NS \$934,058

KCS \$45,648

A TOTAL OF APPROXIMATELY \$7 MILLION.

RAILROAD LOBBYING SPENDING 2009

AAR \$10,653,510

UP \$5,641,223

CSX \$5,175,241

BNSF \$5,840,00

NS \$6,287,183

KCS \$168,000

A TOTAL OF OVER \$28.5 MILLION.

LABOR UNION PAC RECEIPTS 2010 ELECTION CYCLE

DRIVE (TEAMSTERS) \$4,300,000

TTD \$93,400

UNITE HERE \$773,067

UTU \$1,493,143

AFL-CIO \$337,342

ber per month. Full participation in the PAC shows politicians that BLET members are unified and working in solidarity with all of our members.

"Contributions to the PAC go to support livelihood of BLET members," Tolman said. "Simply put, the PAC opens doors for us in all three of these areas. and we need PAC contributions so that our members can open those doors and have a voice in all three processes.

"We need contributions of the PAC to accomplish our goals. It is one of the single-most important things a member can do to our help themselves in our industry — give to the BLET-PAC."

D&H engineer Norman Barrett retires

orman J. Barrett, a member of BLET Division 263 (Wilkes-Barre, Pa.), retired from the Delaware & Hudson Railroad on September 20, 2010, concluding a railroad career that began in 1979.

Brother Barrett hired out as a trainman for the D&H in 1979. He was promoted to conductor on Sept. 23, 1980, and earned promotion to Locomotive Engineer on Sept. 5, 1985.

Brother Barrett joined BLET Division 263 on Dec. 1, 1986, and has served the Brotherhood faithfully for many years as his Division's Local Chairman and Legislative Representative.

He also served as a locomotive

engineer training supervisor, and Road Manager-Technical, throughout his career.

While under Guilford ownership, he was assigned to the Boston & Maine Railroad and worked in commuter service for the MBTA for a short while.

And when he was furloughed due to the D&H bankruptcy, he worked for the New York, Susquehanna & Western Railroad.

Brother Barrett and his wife, Joan, were married on April 12, 1969. They have two children, Scott D. and Heather N., and six grandchildren: Taylor, Dylan, Hope, Scott E., Kayla Brother Barrett, right, is congratulated by Barrett and Elizabeth Newton.



Ken Kertesz, PASLBC.

Garrett 'had a wonderful career' with ATSF, BNSF

ennis D. Garrett, a 32-year member of BLET Division 130 (Kansas City, Kan.), safely completed his Last Run on November 30, 2010. He had nearly 42 years of railroad service with the BNSF at the time of his retirement, which became effective December 3.

Brother Garrett's Last Run was as locomotive engineer on the H-BARKCK with BNSF 4131-5056-5462 from Wellington, Kan., to Kansas City, Kan. He first joined the Brotherhood on April 1, 1979.

His railroad career began in February of 1969 when he hired out as a Freight Carman for the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway in Topeka, Kan. He transferred to the operating department at Emporia, Kan., as a fireman on the old Middle Division. He went firing for the ATSF on Jan. 8, 1979, and earned promotion to locomotive engineer on Dec. 11, 1979.

In September of 1988, the terminal



Brother Garrett's career of nearly 42 years concluded with his Last Run on Nov. 30, 2010.

at Emporia was eliminated, and Brother Garrett relocated to Kansas City, Kan. He worked west in ID pool service to either Newton, Arkansas City, Wellington or Oklahoma City, but stayed in the Wellington Pool most of the time.

He reports that his career highlights include working as a volunteer engineer on the "Topeka Railroad Days" excursion trains during the Labor Day celebrations at Pauline and Topeka, Kan. For 10 years in a row, Brother Garrett and other crew members donated their time to operate the excursion trains.

Some of the trips included working as an engineer pilot on steam locomotives, Frisco 1522, ATSF 3751 and Milwaukee 261.

He and his wife, Susan, were married on July 11, 1970. They couple has four children (Jason, Janna and Eric) and four grandchildren.

During his free time, he enjoys traveling, collecting antiques, riding his Harley Davidson heritage classic, and flying his 2-seat powered parachute. Now that he is retired, Brother Garrett is looking forward to helping out with a family-owned business, traveling, and spending time with his grandchildren.

"I didn't have to look back to realize I'd had a wonderful career — I knew it all along," Brother Garrett said. "I belonged to a good union with a good local chairman, and that was worth a lot."

Division 215's long-time Local Chairman Lew Fraser retires

ewis H. Fraser, a dedicated Local Chairman of BLET Division 215 (Grand Junction, Colo.) for many years, completed his Last Run on January 29, 2010.

His Last Run was between Grand Junction, Colo., and Provo, Utah, for the BNSF Railway.

His railroad career began in 1979 when he hired out as a fireman/hostler for the Denver, Rio Grande & Western Railroad in Grand Junction, Colo. He went firing in May of 1979 and earned promotion to Locomotive Engineer for the DRG&W in August of 1981.

Throughout his career he spent time working as an engineer for the Southern Pacific and also Union Pacific railroads. He also held membership in

BLET Divisions 429, 713 and 488 before finally transferring to Division 215 in 1999.

He spent countless hours serving the Brotherhood in various offices, including Local Chairman (1988-2010), Legislative Representative (1988-2010), and 2nd Vice Chairman of the Colorado State Legislative Board (2001-2009). He also represented his Division as a delegate to National Conventions in 1991, 1996, 2001, and 2006.

He was a member of various safety committees throughout his career, and earned several safety awards from the DRG&W.

Prior to the start of his railroad career, Brother Fraser served in the U.S. Army's 3rd Special Forces. From

1962-1965, he spent time overseas and at Fort Bragg, N.C.

He and his wife, Carole, were married in 1967. The couple has four children (Lana, Kip, Angela and Jared) and seven grandchildren. His son Kip is a Union Pacific locomotive engineer and member of BLET Division 488 (Grand Junction, Colo.).

He belongs to the Fraternal Order of Police and the Airplane Owners & Pilots Association (AOPA).

During retirement, he plans to continue with his hobby of rebuilding old cars. He also plans to "visit warm places," while finding time to go fishing at his cabin and flying more often.

"It's been quite a ride," he said. "I am thankful for the opportunity."

Division 11's Raia retires after 36 years

B LET Division 11 in New York, N.Y., bid farewell to veteran Amtrak locomotive engineer J.J. Raia, who retired on August 2, 2010, after 36 years of service.

Brother Raia joined the Brotherhood on Oct. 1, 1976. He served Division 11 as Secretary-Treasurer for 16 years, and is a former President and former Acting Local Chairman. He was originally a member of Division 501, then transferred membership to Division 53 prior to finally transferring to Division 11 in 1987.

His Last Run was on yard assignment EYNR #701 at New York's Penn Station.

Brother Raia was well known throughout Amtrak's Northeast Corridor for his dedication to safety, and spent countless hours training younger engineers as an Engineer Instructor.

"Congratulations on your safe Last Run and we hope you have a great retirement," said Michael Lyons of Division 11, who helped arrange a send-off ceremony on behalf of the Division for Brother Raia's Last Run. "We wish you nothing but the best."



J.J. Raia with Sal Guida, Assistant Superintendent of Terminal Operations.

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, 1370 Ontario St., Mezzanine, Cleveland, OH 44113-1702

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Welcome to our newest Auxiliary in California!





The ladies of Central California Auxiliary No. 865 Front row, from left: Debi Bensen, Kris Renick, Roya Eubanks, Michele Bryant and Tracy Baca. Back row, from left: Claudia Grisedale, Karen Brewer, Tracey Eldridge, Leah Baldwin and Debbie Hosken.



BY ANITA CARUSONATIONAL PRESIDENT, BLET AUXILIARY

e are very proud to have a new auxiliary in the great state of California! On December 15, 2010, Vice President Sereena Hogan and I traveled to Bakersfield, Calif., to organize Central California Auxiliary 865, which was spearheaded by Tracey Eldridge.

Things are really jumping in California and we are very happy to have this new auxiliary working with us to help

enrich the lives of their members and do what they can to educate railroad spouses and their families about issues of great importance to them.

We administered the installation oath to 10 charter members. They are: Tracey Eldridge, Karen Brewer, Debi Benson, Roya Eubanks, Tracy Baca, Debbie Hosken, Michele Bryant, Kris Renick, Claudia Grisedale, and Leah Baldwin.

The new members were very informed about what the Auxiliary does, what we stand for and what we can do for them. They had many excellent questions for us. We directed them on the election procedures for auxiliary officers, how to set up a bank account, suggestions on the process for holding monthly meetings, fundraising ideas, how to attract new members to their auxiliary and answered general questions of interest to them.

I shared information with them on the way my auxiliary has held our meetings for the past 15 years and how meetings were held in the auxiliary I previously belonged to in Osawatomie, Kan. We both stressed the importance of monthly meetings and for everyone to come with ideas that pertain to whatever particular issues that may be of importance in their specific area.

I hope the ladies in Bakersfield inspire other railroad spouses to come "into the fold" and join the BLET Auxiliary!

Our organization also offers another type of membership called Associate Membership for those who don't qualify as a spouse or child of a BLET member. Even BLET members can join the Auxiliary as an Associate Member.

If you would like information on the process of how to start an auxil-

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"Join the BLET Auxiliary. You'll be glad you did!"

iary, we have packets specifically designed to walk you through the process. We have "Start up packets" with various topics of interest that you will find useful and handy. These packets include the names, email and phone numbers of our National Officers, Designated Legal Counsel information, applications for membership and much more. We would be very happy to hear from you and answer any of your questions and send you some materials. Please check out our website at www.bleauxiliry.net to get an application for membership, read our very informative collection of newsletters and obtain legislative information that is updated monthly.

Please don't be shy! Give us a call or send me or any of our National Officers an email and we'll be happy to answer your inquiries about joining our group. We truly believe that every railroad spouse needs to belong to our organization. It's somewhat of a slow process and people still call and say "I didn't know that you even existed" even though we've been around over 120 years!

Come on, join the BLET Auxiliary! You'll be glad you did!

FOR INFORMATION ABOUT THE BLET AUXILIARY,

OR TO ORGANIZE AN AUXILIARY IN YOUR AREA, PLEASE CONTACT ANITA J. CARUSO BY EMAIL, BUNZIEGIA@COX.NET, OR BY PHONE, (402) 330-6348.

Solidarity is a must now more than ever!



BY TERRI FLEMING
NATIONAL ALTERNATE TREASURER,
BLET AUXILIARY

ome are offended by the term "redneck" while others use the phrase for jokes. For me, I'm proud to be a redneck. Allow me to explain.

The term redneck, according to wikipedia.org, was adapted by active union coal miners in the early 1900s in Appalachia, Kentucky, and western Pennsylvania. Men in the coal mines proudly wore red handkerchiefs to show themselves to be a union man or a striking union man. They also wore the red handkerchiefs to build multiracial unions of white, black, and immigrant miners. The red handkerchief was a sign of solidarity. After discovering this fact about the meaning of redneck, my definition and idea of that phrase has changed.

Solidarity in a union is a must. At the National Convention in Reno, I observed many men and women proudly wearing their BLET and Auxiliary badges, and I felt that it was a great way to show union teamwork and solidarity today.

Being a local chairman's wife for many

"The only way that a union can survive against the carriers today is by total unification."

years, I have observed and discovered that the only way that a union can survive against the carriers today is by total unification. Every union member today must be an active participant in order to receive fair wages, fair work practices, and fair legislation.

When we, as Auxiliary members, are called upon to contact our legislative representatives, or any other action, we all need to participate for the good of the union to show our solidarity. In doing so, we set an example of support for our spouses in their work lives. Sometimes I feel that the Union vs. the Carrier is a losing battle, yet if the union members stand strong together, who is to say what the union could accomplish.

Maybe we should adopt the idea of our fellow union brothers of old. Would you be willing to stand proud against the carriers and push for what we believe in? It may be a different century from the original rednecks, but the principles are and will always be the same. Thankfully, we do have a union to back us and allow us a means to fight, yet it is up to us to pick up the red handkerchief and stand strong for our beliefs. Do you think you could be a proud redneck?

ABOUT THE AUXILIARY:

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

PURPOSE:

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

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BLET FELA Directory



As of March 9, 2011

ur union has designated attorneys who are qualified to serve as counsel for BLET members in accordance with the Federal Employers Liability Act (FELA)

governing workplace accidents. In the event of an injury or death and before reaching any settlement with a railroad, members or surviving families should contact an attorney listed to get competent advice concerning their legal rights under the FELA. In addition, if you or any members of your family have questions concerning medical malpractice, product liability or other types of injury cases, please don't hesitate to contact one of these law firms for a consultation concerning your rights and remedies.

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