

# *Journal*

LOCOMOTIVE ENGINEERS & TRAINMEN

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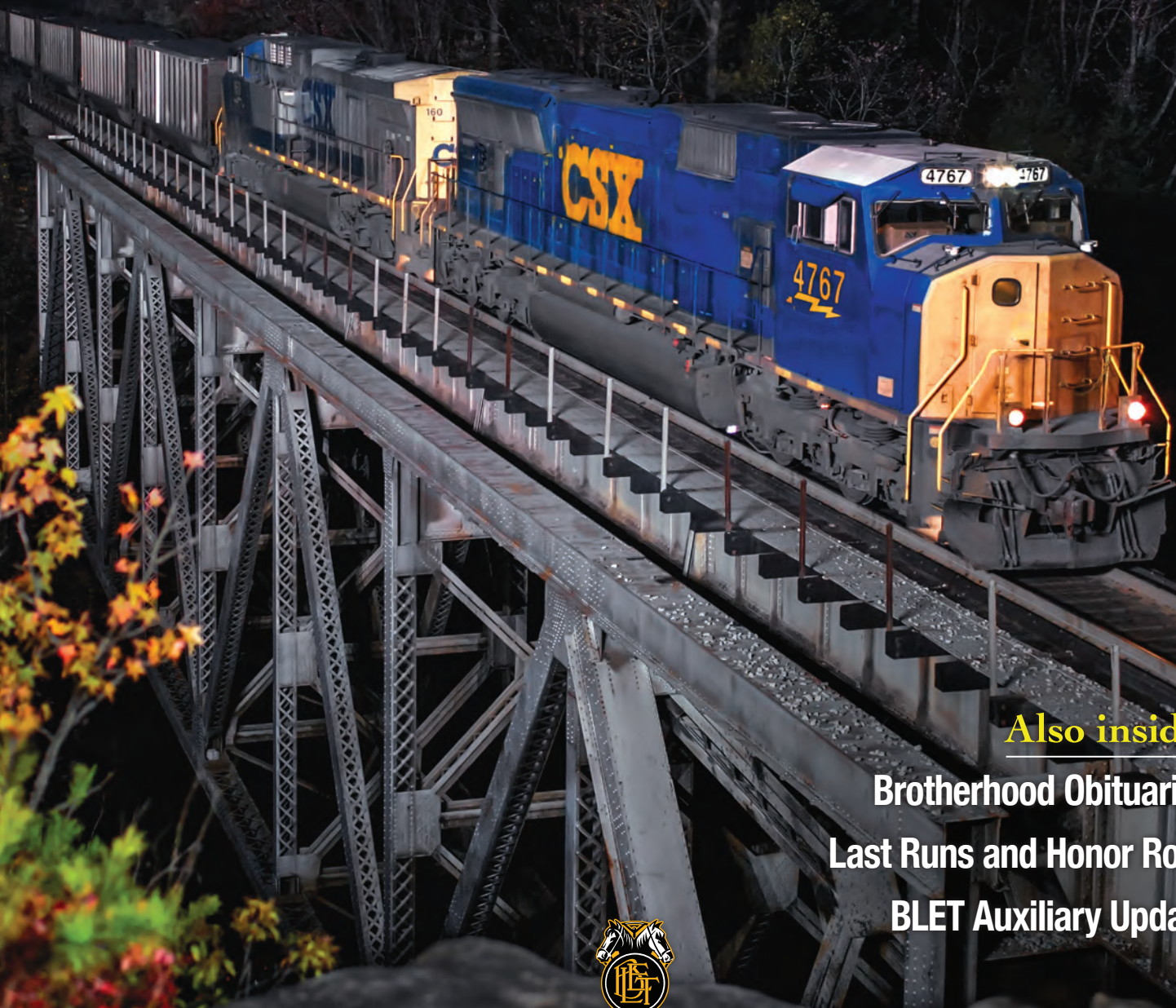
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An  
Education  
& Training  
Milestone

PG 5

## Last Run at Erwin

AN ENGINEER'S FINAL RUN AFTER CSX  
ENDS OPERATIONS ALONG THE CLINCHFIELD



Also inside:

Brotherhood Obituaries  
Last Runs and Honor Rolls  
BLET Auxiliary Update



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

# Voting with your pocketbook

**I**t has been a very busy time since my last message to you in the *Locomotive Engineers & Trainmen Journal*. Since then, the build out our new headquarters building has kicked into high gear, and in 2016 we will move into the new facility. The BLET has contracted with a construction company that will use 100 percent union labor to build out our facility, and that is really how Proud to be American, Proud to be Union becomes more than just a slogan. Our new building will provide our officers and employees with an updated workplace and, like the Standard Building, it will be a facility that all members can be proud of.

I spoke to members attending the various BLET Regional Meeting Associations earlier this year about the country that we live in. I spoke about how America has changed in my lifetime, and how the unions that built America's middle class, and that very middle class, are under attack. Our country was its strongest and most productive when unions were their strongest, yet we live in a land now where anti-union and anti-worker sentiment continues to rise.

That attack is on many fronts, but most disturbing to me is how many Americans have been convinced that if they cannot have a decent wage and decent benefits, then



**From left:** Dennis Pierce, BLET President; Bill John Baker, Principal Chief of the Cherokee Nation; and John Tolman, VP & NLR, at the BLET's 80th annual SWCM in Tulsa, Okla.

no one should. We all know that the union pay scale is what pulls up all pay scales, but Corporate America has flipped that concept upside down and we now live in a land where it is non-union pay scales that threaten to pull down all pay scales.

This is all part of an effort to redistribute America's wealth to just a few, all at the expense of the many working class Americans that are the very backbone of our nation. The good old days that Corporate America has in mind for the working class are not the post World War II boom days that many middle class Americans recall.

Corporate America doesn't fondly look back at the days where working class Americans could expect their children's generation to do better than their own. The good old days that Corporate America longs for are the pre-unionized

days of the industrial revolution where employees made very little, had very little, and had no representation to improve those conditions. Their long-term goal is to bring those of us with good union jobs down to the lowest end of the nation's pay scale. This is not because companies cannot be profitable when they treat their employees well ... it is not to make their companies stronger ... it is to make the rich even richer.

Labor Unions like the Teamsters and the BLET stand in the way of their goals, and that is why unions and our very way of life are under attack.

We see this time and time again, especially during political season. Some politicians like Scott Walker openly boast of their attacks on unions and the working class.

What we must do now is put into context what that

means for us as railroad employees. To put it directly, if today's anti-union, anti-worker Republican party gains control of the House, the Senate, and the White House in 2016, many of the things that you count on are at risk.

The Federal Employers' Liability Act (FELA), the very law designed to protect injured railroad workers will be under further attack. If workers' comp is good enough for the non-union end of the pay scale, they say it's good enough for you.

Our Railroad Retirement system will be no different; we have already seen attacks on our pension plan like the Ryan Budget. And Paul Ryan is the new Speaker of the House. It will be the same story as workers' comp: if Social Security is good enough for the rest of the nation, it's good enough for you.

And Occupational Disability? There's no such thing under the Social Security system.

Even more concerning is that our next national contract could well be settled by a Presidential Emergency Board appointed by an anti-union anti-worker President, and it is clear that our health & welfare benefits are in the railroads' sights in this bargaining round. Do you really want to help Corporate America elect a President who is out to dismantle the pay and benefits that you hold near and dear?

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Photo: Tishia R. Boggs

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# Journal

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## SAVE THE DATES!

# Chicago and Long Beach will host BLET for 2016 regional meetings

**T**he BLET National Division is hosting two regional meetings in 2016, and they are as follows: Eastern Regional Meeting — July 11-14 at the Hilton Drake Hotel in Chicago, Illinois; and Western Regional Meeting — August 22-25 at the Hyatt Regency in Long Beach, California.

These events are the first meetings under the Brotherhood's new structure for two regional meetings per year, as approved by delegates attending the

BLET's Third National Convention in October of 2014. Travel to the meeting and/or registration for each of the two meetings will be on Monday, with events scheduled through and including a closing banquet on Thursday night. 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 op-

tions for fellowship with other members and their families, entertainment, fun and relaxation.

The Hilton Drake Hotel in Chicago is a beautifully restored 1920s grand hotel. The Hyatt Regency in Long Beach is right in the Long Beach Harbor entertainment area.

More specific details will be announced at a later date. All members are encouraged to attend one or both of these inaugural regional meetings in 2016!

### Chicago, Illinois – Hilton Drake Hotel

**JULY 11<sup>TH</sup> THROUGH JULY 14<sup>TH</sup>**

Beautifully restored 1920's grand hotel



Photo: (copyright) Choose Chicago



Photo: Adam Alexander Photography

### Long Beach, California – Hyatt Regency

**AUGUST 22<sup>ND</sup> THROUGH AUGUST 25<sup>TH</sup>**

Right in the Long Beach Harbor entertainment area



Photo: courtesy of Port of Long Beach



Photo: courtesy of Port of Long Beach

# Major milestone for Education and Training

**T**he BLET Education and Training Department has had a busy summer and fall hosting workshops at the new BLET Training Center at National Division headquarters in Cleveland, and also reached a technological milestone.

Workshops for Local Chairmen and Secretary-Treasurers have taken place at the new state-of-the-art facility.

It was an historic day for our Education and Training Department on August 31, 2015. For the very first time, utilizing state-of-the-art equipment in the new Training Center, classroom instructors were able to conduct a “digital class” for members of the Wisconsin State Legislative Board while, at the same time, presenting the same trustee-based curriculum to students attending an Advanced Local Chairman class in Cleveland.

“On August 31, our Brothers and Sisters in Wisconsin were able to network in with our Brothers and Sisters in Cleveland. Via the Internet and using video and audio equipment, our Wisconsin members were able to participate in real time with the classroom presentation being offered to our members in class at the Cleveland Training Center,” BLET National President Dennis R. Pierce said. “It is a small step, but



Members and officers attending the Education & Training Workshop's Advanced Local Chairman workshop in Cleveland conduct real-time training with members of the Minnesota State Legislative Board on August 31, 2015.

an important one. It helped move us one step closer to realizing the vision established by our 2010 delegates.”

President Pierce said this was the type of forward thinking that delegates had in mind when they approved a dedicated funding stream for the Education and Training Department at the 2010 National Convention. He credited the technological achievement to many years of hard work and preparation and thanked Vice President Jim Louis, Department Head of the Education and Training Department, and Special Representative Jason Wright, Director of the Education and Training Depart-

ment, for helping to make the digital class a success.

The Education and Training Department spent time hosting workshops at the four regional meetings throughout 2015, while also hosting a number of Local Chairman and Secretary-Treasurer classes at the Training Center in Cleveland as well as Legislative Representative classes at Teamsters headquarters in Washington D.C.

The National Division extends a well-deserved thank you to the hard working Brothers and Sisters who completed training at one of these workshops for their dedication to our Brotherhood! 🍷



**Members of the Minnesota State Legislative Board** — in Bloomington, Minn. — during their digital class with the BLET Education & Training Department — in Cleveland, Ohio — on August 31, 2015.



**Secretary-Treasurer Workshop, June 5, 2015:** These officers received training in a number of areas, including how to use the BLET National Division's web-based system for membership reporting, OLMS tax compliance tips, Division Trustee reporting, and computer skills.



# Teamsters take stand against fast track

**T**eamster BLET members joined some 1,200 fellow union members and fair trade advocates at a Capitol Hill rally in mid-April to call on Congress to stop pushing for fast track trade promotion authority that would allow a quick up-or-down vote on bad trade deals like the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP).

Led by National Vice President James P. Louis, the BLET delegation happened to be in Washington, D.C., attending a BLET Education & Training Department workshop for Legislative Representatives. The BLET members joined a bevy of lawmakers who came out to voice their opposition to fast track. They said legislation would be a boon for big business at the expense of American workers. It would allow deals like the 12-nation TPP to ship U.S. job overseas, cut wages at home and allow unsafe food and products into this country.

Sen. Elizabeth Warren (D-Mass) pledged to stand with workers against this corporate-backed trade vehicle that would harm workers across the globe: "We are here to fight. No more secret trade deals. Are you ready to fight? No more special deals for multinational corporations! Are you ready to fight? Are you ready to fight anymore deals that say they will help the rich get richer and leave



Sen. Elizabeth Warren (D-MA)



Sen. Sherrod Brown (D-OH)



Sen. Al Franken (D-MN)



Sen. Bernie Sanders (D-VT)

everyone else behind?"

Sen. Sherrod Brown (D-Ohio) noted big business is pushing hard for fast track and the TPP because it will help their profits soar: "These trade agreements mean everything to Corporate America. They want fast track because it is good for their bottom lines. These guys are worker sellouts!"

Several other speakers stressed the need to hold lawmakers responsible for their votes, and said that those who vote the wrong way will face the wrath of fair trade backers. Leo Gerard, president of the United Steelworkers, called on workers to head to the halls of Congress and let their members know their thoughts on fast track. 🗳️



# A busy year for BLET Safety Task Force

It has been a busy year for members of the BLET's Safety Task Force (STF), which is currently assisting the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) with nine different accident investigations.

The BLET became the first labor union in the railroad industry to establish a formal accident investigation team when it created the Safety Task Force in 1989. The STF assists federal agencies in the investigation of rail accidents, helping to determine probable causes and making safety recommendations. The STF is typically granted Party Status by the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) to assist with accident investigations, depending on the type and severity of the accident. The STF studies accidents from the viewpoint of locomotive

engineers and trainmen to help determine how the accident occurred and how to prevent similar accidents from happening in the future.



BLET National Secretary-Treasurer Steve Bruno serves as Chairman of the Safety Task Force. Brother Carl W. Fields, Division 682 (Hammond, Ind.), serves as Coordinator of the STF while Brother Scott

G. Palmer, Division 842, Klamath Falls, Ore.), is the Assistant Coordinator.

"I cannot overstate the importance of our Safety Task Force and our investigations into accidents from the human perspective, and more importantly, from the perspective of the operating employees" President Pierce said. "It is a critical part of the National Division's efforts to look out for the safety of BLET members." ■

## THE FOLLOWING IS A BREAKDOWN OF THE NINE DIFFERENT ACCIDENTS CURRENTLY UNDER INVESTIGATION:

**LOCATION:** Oxnard, Calif.

**DATE:** February 24, 2015

**STF REPS:** Mike Galvani, Party Spokesman

Oscar Burrola, Assisting

**SYNOPSIS:** Collision at highway grade crossing between Metrolink Commuter/ Train No. M102 24 (push / pull operation – cab car leading) and a 2005 Ford F450 pick-up towing a 2000 tandem axle utility trailer.

One fatality: Locomotive Engineer & BLET Member Glenn Steele, who was training a Locomotive Engineer Trainee.

**LOCATION:** Heimdahl, N.D.

**DATE:** May 6, 2015

**STF REPS:** Brian Fransen, Party Spokesman

D.B. Kenner, Assisting

**SYNOPSIS:** A 109-car BNSF train hauling crude oil from Bakken,

N.D., derailed. Four of the six cars that derailed breached and caught fire, causing evacuation of approximately 25 residents.

**LOCATION:** Philadelphia, Pa.

**DATE:** May 12, 2015

**STF REPS:** Donald Hill,

Party Spokesman

Carl Fields, Assisting

**SYNOPSIS:** Amtrak train No. 188 derailed with 238 passengers and 5 crew members on board. There were eight confirmed passenger fatalities and 211 passengers were transported to local hospitals for treatment of injuries.

**LOCATION:** Homewood, Ill.

**DATE:** June 25, 2015

**STF REPS:** Steve Facklam, Party Spokesman

**SYNOPSIS:** Fatality involving

26-year-old trainman at Canadian National's Markham Yard while performing switching duties.

**LOCATION:** Petal, Miss.

**DATE:** August 12, 2015

**STF REPS:** Randy Fannon, Party Spokesman

**SYNOPSIS:** A 20-year-old Norfolk Southern new-hire working as an assistant conductor was killed servicing an industry.

**LOCATION:** Texarkana, Texas

**DATE:** September 8, 2015

**STF REPS:** Russell Elley, Party Spokesman

**SYNOPSIS:** Glancing sideswipe collision of two Union Pacific trains at an interlocking.

**LOCATION:** Yankton, S.D.

**DATE:** September 19, 2015

**STF REP:** Erich Jeske, Party

Spokesman

**SYNOPSIS:** Loaded BNSF ethanol train derailed, causing a breach with ensuing fire.

**LOCATION:** Kansas City, Kan.

**DATE:** September 29, 2015

**STF REP:** Steve Facklam,

Party Spokesman

**SYNOPSIS:** Fatality of a Remote Control Operator at the Union Pacific yard.

**LOCATION:** Northfield, Vt.

**DATE:** October 5, 2015

**STF REP:** Don Hill, Party Spokesman

**SYNOPSIS:** Derailment of Amtrak's Vermonter after striking a rockslide debris field across the tracks as they were rounding a curve. There were seven non-life threatening injuries.

## RETIRED BLET MEMBER WINS \$1 MILLION ON SCRATCH-OFF

A retired locomotive engineer and member of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen won \$1 million on a scratch-off North Carolina Lottery ticket purchased at a convenience store in Marion, N.C.

Brother Jack L. Piercy Jr. said his first thought was, "Let the party begin." He then called his wife and said, "Baby, you're a millionaire!"

Brother Piercy, a member of BLET Division 267 (Asheville, N.C.),

retired in 2010 after more than 30 years with the Norfolk Southern. He first joined the BLET on November 1, 1973.

He chose the lump sum option, which is worth \$415,503 after taxes. A wise man, Brother Piercy said he is going to let his wife decide how to spend the money, North Carolina Lottery officials said. Their initial plans include traveling more and spending more time with their grandchildren. ■







## ***BLET*** ***First Vice President's Message***

BY E. LEE PRUITT, BLET FIRST VICE PRESIDENT

# Union membership helps the next generation

**T**he importance of unions is something that can't be underestimated.

The BLET has noted it many times in our publications, on our website, and in speeches given at various meetings throughout the years. However, a new report goes even further. It shows how union membership could even help your kids' future.

The National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER) recently issued a report that says union members make up a disproportionate amount of the middle class, due largely to the premium pay such workers receive. In addition, the offspring of union parents have higher incomes than the children of otherwise comparable non-union parents. And finally, kids hailing from communities with higher union density have higher average incomes than those from communities with lower union density.

In the BLET, we've known this anecdotally for many years. Railroadng is more than a job — it's a way of life. It's a hard way of life but the rewards can be considerable. Sons (and more recently, daughters) have often followed in the footsteps of their fathers, grandfathers and great-grandfathers because of the railroad's pay and benefits secured by the BLET. We have the leaders who came before us to thank for these benefits, as well as



those of us who are here today still fighting to maintain and improve those rights.

The NBER study is significant because it could have serious implications on the way the public thinks about unions. The study concluded: "A strong union movement is not simply sufficient for high levels of intergenerational mobility and middle-class membership, but it could be necessary. If that is the case, it will be difficult to meaningfully increase intergenerational mobility and rebuild the middle class without also rebuilding unions or some comparable worker-based organizations."


The BLET and the Teamsters have been outspoken advocates for union membership because unions help everyday Americans. It's a fact, as Bureau of Labor Statistics' data shows the median union

worker makes more than \$200 a week than the median non-union worker.

Setting a good example at home can go a long way toward helping your children's future, but in recent years it also has now become necessary to set a good example while at work. The children of BLET members have the benefit of growing up in a union household. Not many high school kids have heard the terms "Local Chairman" or "General Chairman," but the children of BLET members have not only heard them, but know what these hard working men and women do for their fellow Brothers and Sisters.

But we as engineers need to do more. I've been to many regional meetings and Division meetings in recent years and unfortunately, some of our newest and youngest

members did not have the advantage of growing up in a union household. I heard a report of one young man who didn't think the BLET was necessary. He believed the carrier gave him and all other railroaders their pay and benefits out of corporate benevolence. I still have trouble believing that one. But this is an example of where we need to do more educating in the workplace.

Misguided new hires and trainees need to be taken under the wing of veteran members. We need to do our part to teach these newer individuals about the importance of unions in general and of the BLET in particular. They need to know about the history of our Brotherhood. They need to know how those who came before us were blacklisted or killed in the struggle to secure the rights and benefits that we enjoy today. Educating these new members about solidarity and unionism will go a long way toward securing the future of our Brotherhood and well-being of the next generation. If you want to provide a secure future for your children, then do what you can to strengthen your union today. Get involved. Be active. Attend your Division meetings. Vote in elections and vote on your contracts. It has been said before but I will say it again: Union membership is not a spectator sport. 





## *BLET National Secretary-Treasurer's Message*

BY STEPHEN J. BRUNO, BLET NATIONAL SECRETARY-TREASURER

# Your duty to participate and vote

**T**his is the time of year I watch a lot of sports teams culminate their season long work as they approach their respective championships. I have come to realize that the most successful teams are those that work together and consistently execute. To me that means each player performing his or her role. I never see successful teams where there is a debate over the play the quarterback calls in the huddle or where one of the linemen decides he isn't going to block because he doesn't like the play call. The coach calls the play and if all the players execute their role, then the team has maximized its ability to be successful. Ultimately, I have watched successful teams maintain their long-term success by recruiting and developing quality personnel through training, experience and an understanding of the value of teamwork.

It may be a cliché but teamwork really does affect our Union's ability to best represent our members as well. Our organization is similar in many respects and every three years our members have the opportunity to select their team to represent them at the Division level (and every four years at the National level). Carrying out our individual duties is vital to our collective success. The duty of the member is to vote — whether it be in the union's Triennial election process, on contracts, or



at the ballot box in local, state and national elections. Members should also participate in the decision making that occurs on a monthly basis by attending Division meetings.

Indiana's statewide elections on November 3 illustrate the importance of voter participation. Indiana State Legislative Board Chairman Brian Farkas reported that one BLET-supported candidate for Peru City Council lost by a mere 12 votes. While a recount may determine the outcome of that election, low voter turnout sealed the fate of other candidates. Brother Farkas reported that two BLET-backed candidates lost close races where voter turnout was just 20 percent. If voter participation had been higher, the results likely would have been better for these labor-friendly candidates.

Votes were being tabulated in the BLET's 2015 Triennial elections as this issue of the

*Journal* goes to press, and results will be known soon. Those elected must learn their job, listen to the membership and work as a team to improve the lives of the members who have elected them. The support of the local members is essential to their credibility, not only in Triennial Division election cycle, but in the months and years to come.

As you know the local officers who are elected are simultaneously employees of the railroad. Local railroad management can be dismissive, viewing our Union officers only as employees. Our elected officers have to find time to perform their full time jobs as locomotive engineers or trainmen, manage the day-to-day issues that we all encounter with our families and communities, and complete the tasks associated with their elected position. It has been described as a thankless job, but most of us know the sac-

rifice the local officers make in performing their duties. We owe it to them — at the very least — to participate in Division meetings and during the election process. Participation sends a message to the local railroad management that these elected Brothers and Sisters have our support.

The credibility of our officers created by our local election process is therefore important to the success of our organization, our financial stability, and quality of life we advance and protect for our members and their families. The election itself establishes credibility for the officers who will represent the interest of our members — the greater the participation, the greater the credibility. Through the local leadership our union presents itself to our communities as credible and informed, which instills respect from those with whom we conduct our business. That is why transparency and compliance with our by-laws governing elections are essential.

As with any other set of rules you may encounter, our nomination and election procedures have been developed over years of experience. They are revisited, and if necessary, adjusted periodically to be responsive to changes required internally by our delegates or the Federal government. It should be noted that — for the first time — local Division Trustees were nominated for office in this Triennial election

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## Guest Columnists

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

# Investment in infrastructure will lift up workers, businesses

**W**ork is the bedrock of American society. For much of this nation's history, there has been an understanding that those willing to toil at their job day after day would be rewarded with wages high enough to provide food on the table and a roof over their heads.

Unfortunately, that compact is being broken. Bum trade deals like NAFTA killed upwards of 1 million U.S. jobs, many of which were shipped overseas. And it's still a problem, as the looming 12-nation Trans-Pacific Partnership shows. These big business handouts hollow out the

manufacturing base of communities and destroy middle-class jobs.

As a result, America doesn't make much anymore. Public investment is down, and so are salaries. More and more workers are being forced into the service sector that is riddled with low-paying jobs. It is a race to the bottom that many hardworking Americans are losing. And it's got to stop.

The Teamsters have had enough of workers becoming an afterthought in Capitol Hill policy decisions. There needs to be a way to bring a bipartisan collection of lawmakers together for the good of regu-

lar working men and women who are just trying to support their families. And there is one — infrastructure investment.

A better transportation network would help workers get to their jobs more quickly. And increasing the flow of energy like oil and natural gas would lower prices for consumers and businesses. Plus construction work would create good-paying jobs.

Rebuilding America is the key to the nation's future. Whether it's building new roads or fixing old bridges, the idea is a winner — not only for workers — but the business community as well. It's rare

when Congress can help two constituencies with one plan. This is it.

Now is the time to think big. To ignore the need for such a massive program will result in catastrophe for the health, safety and welfare of Americans and the U.S. economy. Let's get America working and revive our nation to the shining city on the hill it once was again.

Fraternally,

**JAMES P. HOFFA**  
TEAMSTERS GENERAL  
PRESIDENT

# Rail carriers spend big to delay Positive Train Control

**I**n 2008, after a horrific accident between UP and Metrolink in Chatsworth, Calif., Congress passed The Rail Safety Act of 2008, which among other things, mandated implementation of a Positive Train Control (PTC) system on all carriers by the end of 2015. PTC is a set of highly advanced technologies designed to automatically stop a train before certain types of accidents occur. PTC is not a new technology, having been in operation in Europe and Japan for over half a century.

The deadly derailment of an Amtrak train in Philadelphia on May 15, 2015, brought a renewed sense of urgency to the federal law requiring PTC.

Despite that, Congress tragically approved a three-year delay for the implementation of PTC in late October. The bill also allows railroads to seek a waiver to delay the deadline up to another two years, establishing a deadline of December 31, 2020. For seven years, industry and lawmakers sparred over costs, deadlines while the life-saving technology

lagged. The process of installing the safeguard fell disastrously behind schedule.

Rail carriers, while complaining loudly about the costs of implementing PTC by the December 2015 deadline, spent a fortune to hire an army of lobbyists to press furiously to delay the mandate.

The PTC deadline extension was tucked into a must-pass highway funding bill, which was signed into law on October 29, 2015.

Brothers and Sisters, PTC will save the lives of our co-workers, those in the commu-

nities we serve, and may well save your life. It was shameful to see Congress cowering to the rail carriers.

Please reach out to your Congress member and Senators and demand they enforce the 2018 implementation of PTC without another delay. Your life may depend upon it.

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.





## You don't need the wisdom of Confucius to know that **Brotherhood's Relief and Compensation Fund** members have the best job income protection.

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- The highest available daily benefits per day
- All members are encouraged to introduce and refer coworkers to this Brotherhood
- Referral program participants earn \$125 when introducing new, approved members
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- An accidental death and dismemberment benefit while on duty that pays up to \$50,000
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DAILY BENEFIT	\$80	\$100/\$102	\$150	\$200/\$201	\$220	\$250
BR&CF monthly dues	\$30.40	\$38.00	\$57.00	\$76.00	\$83.60	\$95.00
LE&CMPA #7 Sch. 2 monthly premium	Not listed	\$59.50	\$87.50	\$117.25	<b>Why pay a fortune elsewhere?</b> BR&CF members pay less per month for more in daily benefits.	
SMART - UTU monthly assessment	\$56.80	\$71.00	\$106.50	\$142.00		



## Guest Columnist

BY JOE BARR, DIVISION 781 MEMBER

# We are the Clinchfield

BLET member recounts his Last Run on the former Clinchfield after CSX ends operations at Erwin Terminal

### About the Author:

CSX announced on October 15 that it was eliminating most of its train operations at Erwin, Tennessee. The move included closing a locomotive service center, project shop and car shop, and eliminating switching operations at the Erwin yard. Approximately 300 CSX union and management employees who work at the facilities and in support roles will be affected, including approximately 55 BLET locomotive engineers.

One of those engineers is Brother Joe Barr, the author of this article. Brother Barr, 43, is married with two daughters. He hired out with CSX in 1994 and earned promotion to locomotive engineer in the summer of 1997, at which time he joined BLET Division 781. Brother Barr has lived in Erwin his entire life, and has been a member of Division 781 (Erwin, Tenn.) since June 1, 1997.

"I ask you to please keep us all in your thoughts," he wrote.

"This has turned the world upside down for over 280 families. People who have lived in this community all their life are now facing relocation. This is incredibly hard for such a small community. Thank you."

Last night (October 16) and into this early morning (October 17) has been bittersweet. I want to keep this moment, this memory, for as long as I can, so I have chosen to document it. It's 4 a.m. and I have just completed my last run out of Erwin, Tenn., on APBR A202 pool turn on CSX's former Clinchfield Route.

When all this came about with the closure of Erwin Yard, I was heading into my off days Wednesday and Thursday (October 14 and 15). The last trains out of Erwin had pretty much come and gone by the time I marked back up Friday at 00:01 (October 16). It seemed my run was over on my beloved southend pool turn. I even noted on another post that, "If only I had known my last trip was my last trip, I would have savored it a bit more." I called the Yard Office to see if there was anything else to go, maybe I could get just one more. The Yardmaster told me, "I'm sorry Joe, but there is not." So that's it. I am first out, and it's over. I picked up my daughters from school, headed home and resorted back to staring into the void — my natural state for the last few days.

Then the phone rang at



In the obscure wilderness of western North Carolina, a northbound freight train waits in the siding at Poplar, N.C. on CSX's Blue Ridge Subdivision. The Erwin-bound freight train is waiting for a southbound coal drag to pass. Meets along the former Clinchfield mainline were once common, but with coal traffic and other run-through trains now using other routes, scenes like this are few and far between. September 2011.

Photo: Chase Gunnoe

15:30. It was the crew caller calling me for a relief job to relieve Q69615 at 17:30. I was to taxi to Marion and take the train to Bostic. This was it — this is my last run. I got it! A short run, but a good one. Thank God. I show up at the yard office where there were a few guys coming in from their last run, others just came in to see who was there. The general conversation was asking

what the others were thinking about doing next. "Where you going, Nashville? Birmingham? Etowah? Tampa?" Followed by the, "It's been good working with you," and then the handshakes, the hugs, the misty eyes, the turns and walks away. Same as it has been down here for the last few days.

My Conductor and I finally loaded up our taxi with our grips and orders and headed





**CSX freight train Q692 rolls through Spruce Pine, N.C.**

on the railroad's ex-Clinchfield Railroad mainline in western North Carolina. The near 150-car freight is on the heels of another general manifest as the two trains head for Erwin, Tenn., intercepting southbound loaded coal trains en route. Rail traffic on the Clinchfield mainline was once busy, but now, due to cutbacks to the Erwin terminal, most run through trains are using other routes and scenes like this are much less common. September 2011. **Photo:** Chase Gunnoe





to Marion. My Conductor is a fine man, a guy I went to school with. He is also an Engineer that has been cut back to Conductor in recent months. He jumped in the front seat, and I got in the back. That's the way it is. I am sure there is a story as to why, but if I have been told the story, I have since forgotten it. The Conductor sits in the front seat, the Engineer in the back — always — that's just the way it is. There was some small talk, about where he might go, the kids, where would be the best place for the kids, and schools. But we were mostly quiet. A bit somber.

We arrived at Marion where we relieved a seasoned crew. Both were Engineers, one a few spots behind me in seniority the other cut back to Conductor. There was the typical chit chat you get when you relieve a crew, but this time it lingered a little more with finally, handshakes and firm hugs. "Keep in touch," and "It will be alright."

My Conductor and I loaded up, contacted the Dispatcher and started on our way. It was extremely sentimental to me. Not knowing what the future holds, this is my chance to savor the run. I ignored the Automatic mode (Trip Optimizer) and chose to run this train Manual, like I was trained to do years ago by men who were considered giants of the Clinchfield. We tore out of Marion with four locomotives (two of them dead in tow) and 7,400 tons of mixed time freight. I pulled them through "Jacktown" then I started to throttle off and set up the dynamics to hold us back down the hill to Prison Curve. Come back on the throttle a couple of notches, then back off to dynamic to get us through the dip at Muddy Creek, where you come off of them again and get back in the throttle. All while maintaining 45 mph. This is where he shared with me, "The fastest I have ever been on a train was right here". He told me what the speed was — it was pretty impressive — but he was a bit reluctant to tell me who the Engineer was. We laughed and he said, "I thought we were



**Ghost Town:** CSX's Erwin Car Shop became virtually deserted in the days after the railroad closed operations in Erwin. Inset: "People Make The Difference" slogan rings hollow following CSX's abandonment of operations in Erwin.

going to send it all out in to the cornfield when we hit the curve!" That's how most good stories go out here. They are always the kind of stories that in the moment it's pure terror, "we could die here," kind of stories. But after some time has passed, you can share them with that nervous laugh that comes out when you reflect on the fear, but cover it with the laugh.

After the dip at Muddy Creek we started up the hill to "Fero," where you top it, then proceed down Vein Mountain. I set my dynamics up and proceed to bunch the train up against me gently like I have done so many times in the past. Like I was taught, when the slack comes in lightly. "You have to feel it in the seat of your pants" kind of lightly. He said, "this train is all messed up, empties on the headend

and rear, with loads through the middle." I told him that it felt fine. I could feel the loads in the middle of the train slightly come in on us and press us up to 40 mph where I held them with dynamic. Once we got by the 40 mph speed board I put 1st service train brake on and eased up the dynamics. The train responded perfectly, and we cruised down the mountain at 40 and hit the 35 mph speed board at "Sandfill" right on target. Now, this isn't bragging. This is pride. We still have that on the Clinchfield. Some choose to do it, some choose to do it right.

As we glided down Vein Mountain he said, "It's been a honor to work with such a great engineer like you." I buckled. It had been an emotional week, and to get such a compliment at that moment was unexpected. It moved me to tears

Photos: Hunter Richardson





in the darkness of the cab. I didn't say anything for a moment, then I told him he was one of the best out here, I never heard an ill word about him. My compliment was weak compared to his, but it was all I could muster. We went a couple of miles in silence when he asked, "Hey man, if you don't care, can I take 'em a couple of miles?" This broke me down. Knowing that there may never be another chance again for him to run a train down the Clinchfield, I knew this trip was just as important to him as it was to me. I said, "I got what I wanted, I nailed both speed boards, you take 'em down the big rail. (Meaning, run them through Thermal and on to Logan, the 50 mph track.) He got in the seat and said, "I just don't think I'll ever get to do this again." I said, "Take 'em as far as you want."

We sat in silence both of us trying miserably to hold back tears as he ran them at 50 mph through Thermal and on to Tate where you hit a pretty good size dip called "Panic Dip." I finally spoke and said, "When I started running I always feared this spot." With a little bit of a chuckle, he said, "Yea, I think they named it appropriately." I had to lightly give a laugh, too. He ran them like a champ through the dip right on 50, like he has done numerous times in his tenure on the Clinchfield. He finally spoke up once we were by "Dairy Farm" and said, "Thanks man, you can take them back now." I patted him on the back. We both sat down and continued in silence. I couldn't dare look at him. The emotions were just too much.

We got the train to Bostic, switched it for the outbound, and by the time we were done, the outbound crew showed up to take over and on to Hamlet, N.C. We had to hang around there a little while waiting for our final taxi ride home, so we just kind of stood out there and watched our train pull out of the yard. The yard office sits right next to the track so when a train comes in or out, the noise is pretty loud, joints cracking, flanges rubbing the rail. Met-



Photo: Tishia R. Boggs

al on metal noise. But then the rear comes by, the noise fades, and all you see is a blinking red light silently going the distance up the hill, then disappears in the darkness.

After a little while, my Conductor said, "I wish I had taken a picture of that engine. I have a picture of the first engine I ran, I would have liked to have one of this one too." I had thought the same thing earlier, we should have taken a selfie of our last run on the Clinchfield with engine 233 in the background, but I blew it off. I regret that now.

Our taxi finally showed up, and with it was the best driver Bostic has to offer. Just the man we needed for the quiet ride home. A quiet ride where memories play out in your mind knowing this is it, it will all be different now. The ride none of us wanted to take ended two and a half hours later, in the parking lot of the Erwin Yard Office around 3 a.m. Just in time to see the last train of 20 some cars

and eight engines head out of Erwin.

This is it. The yard is empty now, no crews, no engines, only a couple of cars for the industry we have left in Erwin — and lonely switch target lights. It's over.

God has been with me all day, I have felt it. Everything has been placed perfectly for this day. The pride held by every man doing the job today, that they have done for years, has been immeasurable. Faced with what we have been given, every one of them continues to carry the pride and responsibility they have had placed on them by becoming Engineers, Conductors, Carmen, Electricians, Mechanics, Signalmen, Yardmasters, Clerks and so many other titles on the Clinchfield. I pray that where ever they go they have the respect they deserve, because they are simply the greatest people I have ever met. To put it in better words, my Brothers and Sisters of Erwin Terminal, we are the CLINCHFIELD. 🚂



# *Your vote is a powerful right ... and obligation*

Countless Americans have died for your  
right to vote — don't squander the opportunity



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

**L**ike all of us who have worked as a locomotive engineer or trainmen, I have spent plenty of time sitting on an idling train waiting to leave a station, siding or yard. Of course, during those times, only the train is idle. We walk the train, run through our safety procedures, and do what's necessary to satisfy the supervisors who watch our every move.

But when all that's done we do have some time to think. About sports, our families, our jobs, what we're going to do when we get home, what we're going to do on our days off and what we're going to do when we, thankfully, retire. We think about the past, about the future and every once in a while we think about politics, about candidates and issues, and about what's happened to our country and why.

Clearly, given the low turnout in the past few elections, what too many Americans are not thinking about or doing enough of is voting — the very thing that influences nearly every aspect of our lives.

It's time we started thinking about it more.

That's because voting is the engine that drives our democracy. That's why so many people fought so hard and sacrificed so much, including their lives, to win the right to do what we so often don't do.

We all know that the civil rights



movement was focused on voting. Martin Luther King Jr. and A. Philip Randolph, the founder and leader of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, knew that racial discrimination would not end unless and until every American had the power to elect their local, state and federal officials. They and thousands of others endured bombings, beatings, lynchings, shootings and other forms of violence and intimidation just so *every* American could cast a vote.

We sometimes forget that women fought just as hard to gain access to the ballot box. Last August 26 marked the 95th anniversary of the ratification of the 19th Amendment, which gave women the right to vote and granted them all the rights and responsibilities of citizenship. The 42-year-long fight that preceded ratification was marked by

violence against the female "suffragettes" who marched in support of the proposal in every part of the U.S., picketed the White House and the Capitol, and engaged in hunger strikes and other types of civil disobedience.

Corporate America opposed women's suffrage because they were afraid that women would vote for candidates who wanted to end child labor. The publisher of the *New York Times* argued against the Amendment in a 1912 editorial because he feared that women would make impossible demands such as, "serving as soldiers and sailors, police patrolmen or firemen ... and would serve on juries and elect themselves to executive offices and judgeships." The editorial went on to blame a lack of masculinity for the failure of men to fight back, warning women would get the vote "if the men are not firm and wise enough and, it





may as well be said, masculine enough to prevent them.”

It turns out the editorial writer was right about one thing: women have become soldiers, sailors and first responders who protect us at home and abroad. They do serve on juries and they’ve been elected to office at every level of government from city council to the U.S. Senate. Thanks to the 19th Amendment women work in the building trades and on Wall Street, in factories and offices and, yes, they work beside us as proud members of our union.

And our nation and our world are better and stronger as a result. Yet Corporate America’s attack against voting rights has continued and deepened ... from passing legislation requiring photo IDs at polling places and then shutting down state agencies where such IDs can be obtained in poor and minority areas ... to reducing opportunities to vote for working people whose jobs aren’t 9-to-5 Monday to Friday ... to removing registered voters from the rolls for specious reasons and without notice.

The 2016 election is a long time away and there are many candidates running, but there are only a few who represent what the labor movement stands for and are willing to fight to take middle class America and working men and women where they need to go in the next decade if we are to restore the American Dream. This election is more important than any one before because the next president of the United States may have the opportunity to appoint three Supreme Court justices. This could change the Nation as we know it. We all need to get engaged, get involved and elect the right people for our families, our jobs and the country’s future.

So the next time you have a few moments to think while sitting on your idling train, think about those who valued the right to vote so much that they fought and died to obtain it. They understood its value and its power. It’s time we all did the same by committing to honor their sacrifice by getting off the sidelines and getting in the game. 🇺🇸

## *Hagan joins BLET staff in Washington, D.C.*



From left: Bob Hagan and John Tolman

**R**obert F. Hagan of BLET Division 757 is the BLET’s new Director of Political and Legislative Affairs. BLET National President Dennis R. Pierce made the appointment effective July 13, 2015. Among other assignments, Brother Hagan will lobby for legislative issues and handle political education under the direction of National President Pierce and Vice President and National Legislative Representative John P. Tolman.

Most recently a State Representative of Ohio District 58, Brother Hagan has 44 years of railroad experience and has been a member of BLET since 1997. He is a CSX locomotive engineer. In 1986, Hagan was first elected to a seat in the Ohio House of Representatives, representing the 53rd Ohio House district, centered in Youngstown, Ohio. Over the next 28 years, he has served in both the Ohio House of Representatives and the

Ohio State Senate. He was one of 24 guest speakers at the BLET’s 150th anniversary celebration on May 8, 2013, in Detroit — the city where the Brotherhood was founded on May 8, 1863. His wife, Michele Lepore-Hagan, was elected to fill his former seat as Representative of House District 58.

At the time of Brother Hagan’s election in 1986, his father, Robert E. Hagan, was also serving in the House. Between 1986 and 1990, the Hagans were the first father and son to simultaneously hold seats in the Ohio House of Representatives.

“With his wealth of knowledge, Brother Bob Hagan is a valuable addition to our National Legislative Office staff,” President Pierce said. “All BLET members will benefit from his presence on Capitol Hill thanks in large part to his railroad experience of more than 40 years and his 28-plus years in the political arena. 🇺🇸



# Under the radar

While they don't grab media headlines,  
regulatory issues are important to rail workers



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

**T**he regulatory world has been going strong over the summer despite the Congressional recess that would lead us to believe nothing is happening in Washington. Things are happening, but regulatory changes are more subtle and do not garner much coverage by the news media because they do not usually fit into a small sound bite of information.

In July, BLET filed (along with six other rail unions) its opposition to Union Pacific's request for a waiver from compliance with 49 CFR §232.213—Brake System Safety. Specifically, UP was targeting extended haul trains and the 1,500-mile inspection requirement. Used as justification for the request, UP cited wayside track detectors that are in use on their system. This argument is a tired one that failed before with FRA. UP also used this rationale when it made a prior request for using wayside detectors instead of brake inspections.

Union Pacific and the Association of American Railroads (AAR) already attempted to convince the public they were doing the right thing in the public hearing held on July 19, 2013. Here, UP and AAR brought no evidence of new technology, no agreement with any labor organization and no demonstration as to why they would argue yet again that non-regulated wayside detector technology was a replacement

**“BLET is eager to engage in substantive discussions with FRA and the rail carriers within the RSAC process to develop regulatory language that helps our members stay out of harm's way.”**

for the brake inspections required by FRA's regulation. While FRA cited potential for safety of wayside detector technology and citing examples of how it helped detect brake defects, FRA also declared in denying the waiver:

“Additionally, the Board finds that the use of Wayside Detectors (“WTD”) does not replace the inspections at a Class 1A brake test. It is unclear from the petition and supporting documentation how WTD alone would provide an equivalent level of safety to the current Class 1A brake test. The wayside detectors and Class 1A brake tests serve complementary, but different functions.”

For those interested in seeing the transcripts of that hearing, including BLET's comments, see the public docket at FRA-2013-0080.

On August 3, 2015, BLET and six other labor organizations filed comments regarding a request from the manufacturer Siemens Industry, Inc. Siemens submitted a request for a waiver from compliance with 49 CFR §232.409(d)—Inspection and Testing of End-of-Train (EOT) Devices. Siemens manufactures railroad electronics, including EOT devices. In its waiv-

er request, Siemens stated that thousands of its EOT devices are deployed by Class 1 and short line railroads. Siemens requested a waiver from 49 CFR §232.409(d), similar to the waiver granted to Ritron in Docket Number FRA-2009-0015. Siemens asserted that as long as the waiver in FRA-2009-0015 is valid, Siemens EOT devices using the Ritron DTX-445 radios should also be permitted to take advantage of the waiver since there are no components in the EOT device with an annual calibration requirement and there are no adjustable components that can affect radio performance.

BLET argued that the petition must be denied for failure to comply with the requirements of FRA's Rules of Practice. 49 C.F.R. §211.41(a) states that “[e]ach petition for a permanent or temporary waiver of a safety rule, regulation or standard [must be] filed as prescribed in §§211.7 and 211.9.” Among FRA's procedural requirements is the mandate that “[e]ach petition pertaining to safety regulations must also contain relevant safety data” (§211.9(c)). The public docket copy of the petition filed by Siemens included no such relevant safety data; instead, it provided only a chart of the types of reasons it had to calibrate on 33 occasions — with no corroborating evidence whatsoever — and no mention of the size of the sample.

BLET also argued that the request from Siemens should not be granted because it is improper for a vendor to request a waiver for locomotive safety standards that apply to a railroad. This injects the vendor into a railroad's operation and to the tasks of railroad work-





ers. The scope requirements of §232.1 do not place any regulatory burden on a vendor that would require relief from a regulation. The regulation places the requirement, whether burdensome or not, on railroads subject to the scope of the regulation, and not manufacturers. This tactic has been attempted before and BLET opposed it then, too. For those interested in seeing the outcome of this waiver request, please see the public docket at FRA-2014-0010.

On August 27, 2015, BLET testified at a hearing regarding risk reduction. The hearing zeroed-in on problems we had that were outstanding and areas FRA had not adequately addressed in the Railroad Safety Advisory Committee (RSAC) process regarding the Rail Safety Improvement Act of 2008 and its requirements for risk reduction programs. BLET's testimony touched on issues of a safety study performed by the law firm Baker-Botts, which determined limiting discovery in court cases was warranted if the information being shielded from discovery was developed solely for a risk reduction plan. BLET and all the other parties giving testimony objected to FRA's use of Baker-Botts firm to perform the study as the firm has a long history of being fierce advocates and defenders of the rail carriers. BLET also cited unresolved issues of switch point indicators in dark territory, fatigue and FRA's unwillingness to write stringent regulations on these topics. For those interested in the hearing please see FRA-2009-0038.

The last week of September 2015 brought meetings that reconvene the RSAC Risk Reduction Working Group and the first meeting of the Remote Control Working Group, which tackled long overdue safety guidelines regarding remotely controlled locomotives. Despite many recent frustrations with federal regulations and with the railroads, BLET is eager to engage in substantive discussions with FRA and the rail carriers within the RSAC process to develop regulatory language that helps our members stay out of harm's way. 📺

## THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING THE BLET PAC!

The BLET Political Action Committee (BLET PAC) allows us to pool our political resources, giving BLET members a stronger voice in state and federal government affairs. This summer, several BLET members were recognized at regional meetings for upping their BLET PAC contributions to \$50 per month. Thank you to these Brothers for supporting the BLET PAC!



Matt Hafner, BLET Division 130, and VP Tolman.



VP Tolman and Robert Druessel Jr., Division 42.



From left: Chris Hubbard, BLET Division 343, James Conner, Local Chairman of Division 409 (Columbus, Ga.), and Dwayne Massengale, Georgia State Legislative Board Chairman.



VP Tolman and Shane Hubbard, Division 343.



VP Tolman and Chris Hubbard, BLET Division 343.

# Former General Chairman Steve Bratka, 1949-2014

**FORMER GENERAL CHAIRMAN STEVEN J. BRATKA, 65**, passed away on December 7, 2014, following a battle with cancer. He was a member of the BLET for more than 40 years.

Brother Bratka was born in Burwell, Neb., on August 13, 1949. His railroad career began in 1970 when he hired out as a clerk with the Burlington Northern predecessor Chicago, Burlington and Quincy. He transferred to the trainman's craft in 1973 and in 1974, he entered into engine service when he became a locomotive fireman. He joined the BLE that same year, promoting as a locomotive engineer in 1975.

In 1979, Brother Bratka began serving the Brotherhood as Local Chairman of Division 98 in Lincoln, Neb. He was reelected to that office numerous times over the years and represented Division 98 as a delegate to BLE International Conventions in 1986 and 1991.

Brother Bratka was elected First Alternate Vice Chairman of the BN/MRL General Committee of Adjustment in 1989, ascending to full time office as Third Vice General Chairman in St. Paul, Minn. in 1991. He served the GCA as General Chairman in 1998, then as a Vice General Chairman from 1998 until he retired in 2011. Brother Bratka was a full time officer of the BN/MRL GCA when its offices were relocated to Ft. Worth, TX where he resided until his passing.

Brother Bratka also represented the BLET on the Railroad Safety Advisory Committee (RSAC) from 2005 until his retirement in 2011, participating in various Working Groups including Railroad Operating Rules, Human Factors and Medical Standards.

Most recently and while fighting cancer, Brother Bratka served on the BLET National Division's arrangements committee for the union's 150th




anniversary celebration in May of 2013.

"Brother Bratka was a young Local Chairman when he signed me up to join the BLE shortly after I promoted as a locomotive engineer in Lincoln in 1981," said National President Dennis Pierce. "He was my first BLE Local Chairman, and I later served in that same office when I first became an officer of our proud Brotherhood. I then worked side by side with Brother Steve at the General Committee Offices for almost 13 years. In his time as a General Committee Officer, Steve mentored dozens of young Local Chairmen, helping them become the seasoned and qualified representatives that they are today, and he will be sorely missed.

"Brother Bratka was also very civically involved in Fort Worth, holding leadership roles in his

community and in the local Democratic Party. Brother Steve was the one who convinced me to run for Chairman of my Democratic Party Precinct in 2008, and that led to me serving as a delegate to the 2008 Texas Democratic Party Convention, as well as serving as an Election Judge on Election Day in 2008.

"My heart goes out to Brother Steve's family and friends, I can only imagine the loss that they have experienced," President Pierce said. "Steve Bratka left an indelible mark on not only his family and the community that he lived in, but also on our Organization. He championed the causes of those who had no voice, and as one of the many officers of our Union that he mentored, I can say that our Organization lost one of its true heroes with his passing." 



## Doug Horstman, former Oregon State Legislative Board Chairman, 1954-2014

**DOUGLAS S. HORSTMAN, FORMER CHAIRMAN OF THE BLET'S OREGON STATE LEGISLATIVE BOARD**, passed away after an extended illness on April 6, 2015. Brother Horstman, 60, was a Union Pacific locomotive engineer who joined BLET Division 362 (La Grande, Ore.) on May 1, 1977. He held continuous membership in the BLET until the time of his passing.

For many years, Brother Horstman served the Brotherhood in various elected offices. He served Division 362 as Legislative Representative, and then represented all BLET members in Oregon on legislative and political matters as State Legislative Board Chairman. He was also active in the BLET's National Association of State Legislative Board Chairmen.

Several times Brother Horstman was called upon to serve the BLET in Washington D.C. An effective lobbyist, Brother Horstman traveled to Capitol Hill to lobby members of Congress on



railroad safety and other issues of importance to railroad workers. He also represented the BLET on various Working Groups within the Rail Safety Advisory Committee, a joint labor-management-government committee that examines rail safety issues and makes rail safety regulatory recommendations.

Brother Horstman is survived by his wife, Gerry.

"Brother Doug Horstman was a true gentleman who eloquently and professionally represented the craft of locomotive engineer whenever called

upon to advocate on behalf of our membership," said Dennis R. Pierce, National President of the BLET. "Brother Doug was a dedicated union member and officer who fervently believed in the cause of the BLET and actively participated in our efforts to improve the lives of working men and women. He was a proud locomotive engineer who will be truly missed by all those who knew him. On behalf of all men and women of the BLET, I extend my most heartfelt condolences to Brother Horstman's wife Gerry and his family and friends."

Brother Horstman was an avid outdoorsman who enjoyed golf, mountain biking, and spending time with nature. Donations in memory of Doug Horstman can be made to Blue Mountain Wildlife in Pendleton, Ore. The group rescues, rehabs, and educates about all birds especially hawks, eagles, and owls. Donations can be made online, [www.bluemountain-wildlife.org/donate.html](http://www.bluemountain-wildlife.org/donate.html). ☪

## Retired BLET member and legal investigator Dick Scott, 1940-2015

**DICK L. SCOTT, A RETIRED MEMBER OF THE BLET** who became a successful legal investigator, passed away on July 23, 2015 at St. Mary's Hospital in Rochester, Minn.

Brother Scott, 74, first joined the BLET on August 1, 1970. He served Division 643 as Local Chairman for many years, eventually transferring membership to Division 644 (Galesburg, Ill.) in 1990. He was a BNSF locomotive engineer before becoming involved in railroad labor law and specializing in the Federal Employers' Liability Act (FELA). Brother Scott eventually served as National Director of Operations for Jaeger & Jungbauer Barristers PLC of St. Paul, Minn. He was also a licensed real estate broker in Iowa and Missouri.

Brother Scott was born November 19, 1940. He was a member of the Davis St. Christian Church, a 50 year member of Ottumwa Masonic Lodge #16 A.F. & A.M., a member of Clinton Chapter #9, Ottumwa Council #31, Malta Commandery #31, a member and past president of Ottumwa Shrine Club, and a member and Past Patron of Rose Chapter Order of Eastern Star.

He was the proud recipient of a 30-year BLET membership badge on June 18, 2004, and was approaching his 45-year anniversary this year.

"Many BLET members and their families first met Dick through his work with Bill Jungbauer, but Dick was a long time BLE/BLET member prior to that, and was in fact Local Chairman on the

BNSF/MRL General Committee of Adjustment for many years," BLET National President Dennis R. Pierce said. "Dick and I became friends at my first GCA meeting, and I fondly recall all of the great times we had together over the years. Countless BLE/BLET members benefitted from his hard work and dedication as a Local Chairman and as a friend to so many. On behalf of the entire BLET, I extend my deepest personal condolences to Brenda and the entire Scott family."

Funeral services were held on July 27 at Reece Funeral Home with Reverend James H. Wakelin officiating. A Masonic service was held on July 26. Memorials may be made to Ottumwa Lodge #16 A.F.&A.M. ☪

## BLET OBITUARIES:

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

### AS OF FEBRUARY 28, 2014

14 — E. G. Alston  
26 — A. L. Jones  
84 — L. H. Walser  
333 — D. C. Unglesbee  
357 — R. E. Thompson  
442 — C. D. Ullrick  
500 — J. D. Snelson  
527 — C. M. Black  
932 — D. W. Paul

### AS OF MARCH 31, 2014

3 — R. C. Pritshua  
144 — W. V. Ward  
217 — D. F. Pritt  
269 — C. J. Warburton  
391 — B. L. Troline  
430 — S. W. Berry  
430 — C. S. Gagliardi  
456 — W. E. Barton  
489 — E. W. Schreiber  
620 — L. B. Bridges Jr.  
659 — T. F. Flaherty  
762 — E. L. Hayden Jr.  
888 — L. M. Moynier

### AS OF APRIL 30, 2014

11 — J. A. Rivera  
33 — L. T. Wilkins Sr.  
121 — G. H. Brown  
169 — J. R. Hoener  
172 — J. D. Morrison  
255 — C. P. Keister  
335 — C. M. Crow  
542 — D. J. Horton  
758 — E. G. Prosch  
775 — H. S. Valderaz

### AS OF MAY 31, 2014

97 — R. M. Bly Jr.  
207 — W. W. Cater Jr.  
537 — E. N. Ferris Jr.  
682 — A. P. Jenkins  
692 — G. J. Boeve  
940 — R. L. Martinez

### AS OF JUNE 30, 2014

50 — D. E. Baker  
53 — W. R. Bahr  
232 — G. L. Strever  
622 — W. D. Cler  
622 — G. G. White

623 — T. D. Chitwood  
671 — T. E. Stark  
683 — E. A. Theiner  
717 — C. G. Boone

### AS OF JULY 31, 2014

301 — E. D. Sims  
303 — D. F. Maxwell  
383 — J. R. Hodge  
430 — J. D. Tutsch  
456 — L. M. Lee  
527 — T. E. Carter  
607 — W. T. McClung

### AS OF AUGUST 31, 2014

23 — T. R. McClarty Jr.  
75 — E. R. Bunch  
135 — R. E. Hammel  
153 — D. G. Hiers  
165 — V. E. Nicholson  
373 — R. Daniels  
502 — F. D. Hudson  
672 — W. G. Tapp

### AS OF SEPTEMBER 30, 2014

71 — A. McGill  
183 — E. L. Cushman  
186 — J. W. Fenton  
227 — R. L. Taylor Jr.  
232 — J. A. Tizono  
269 — J. S. Guardo  
269 — R. R. Thomas  
332 — D. O. Charlier  
497 — L. E. Skutt  
569 — H. M. Davenport  
766 — C. L. Ogden  
776 — B. G. Walker

### AS OF OCTOBER 31, 2014

73 — G. A. Bradberry  
88 — L. L. Allen  
95 — R. C. Jenner  
109 — D. V. Meyer  
332 — G. P. Morris  
497 — S. E. Krystopchuk  
778 — F. J. Holseid  
834 — P. L. Chain II

### AS OF NOVEMBER 30, 2014

74 — A. R. Ziegler  
118 — D. E. Bean  
144 — R. G. Negrete  
158 — B. E. Adams  
450 — P. J. Linley  
482 — J. R. Neal Sr.  
692 — M. W. Burkett  
776 — C. E. Frost  
776 — A. P. Higgins  
776 — L. R. Workman  
779 — J. E. Heath Jr.  
782 — H. E. Lane

### AS OF DECEMBER 31, 2014

98 — S. J. Bratka  
165 — S. H. Lanham  
190 — J. E. Eves  
202 — W. E. Smith  
204 — D. C. Greene  
298 — M. L. Edwards  
391 — A. A. Sciumbato  
402 — D. R. Fogel  
698 — S. D. Salyers

### AS OF JANUARY 31, 2015

41 — J. D. Kilgore  
101 — F. Dorsey  
104 — M. D. Gelhaus  
222 — G. F. Bartlome  
269 — G. A. Combs

### AS OF FEBRUARY 28, 2015

98 — C. L. Roberts  
219 — T. Spikes  
222 — D. L. Harrison  
263 — D. C. Langdon

### AS OF MARCH 31, 2015

3 — M. D. White  
23 — C. E. Eoff  
354 — J. R. Martell  
387 — J. L. Hart  
499 — J. G. Teeple  
518 — E. W. Dahl  
692 — A. T. Sassman  
757 — R. E. Confer  
757 — F. T. Sinkovich

### AS OF APRIL 30, 2015

3 — W. R. Pringle  
26 — B. R. Melton Jr.  
29 — J. R. Pearce  
50 — F. Pucci  
74 — A. J. McElwee  
79 — D. R. Markley  
86 — J. L. Hill  
86 — K. C. Shumate Jr.  
97 — C. E. Lester Jr.  
101 — J. C. Presley  
104 — E. C. Anderson  
114 — K. U. Schonhoff  
158 — R. O. Pealer  
224 — D. W. Nelson  
238 — R. G. Canady  
269 — A. G. Rozycki  
362 — D. S. Horstman  
404 — M. O. Callahan  
409 — G. M. Henegar  
423 — C. A. Taylor  
475 — L. E. Yancey Jr.  
476 — L. H. Abarr  
565 — D. M. Senvisky  
641 — R. E. Jacoby  
765 — R. R. Hale  
811 — S. J. Baldwin  
861 — K. B. Hoffman

### AS OF MAY 31, 2015

2 — C. C. Tucker  
6 — R. R. Hover  
48 — R. L. Brewer  
153 — D. D. Yoder  
158 — D. W. Swanson  
183 — D. J. Eberl  
190 — W. R. Perry  
205 — T. A. Barr  
205 — G. W. Reeves  
281 — M. A. Dray  
476 — G. W. Fence  
520 — W. J. Enoch  
687 — R. R. Metzger  
740 — D. B. Johnson  
839 — C. L. Gutierrez

### AS OF JUNE 30, 2015

44 — K. E. Funk  
165 — C. M. McAllister  
175 — J. Schubert  
181 — D. L. Minnick  
231 — P. D. Brophy  
251 — W. H. Ohms  
348 — C. J. Siebert  
601 — J. W. Basara

620 — A. L. Scaife  
659 — R. E. Hagstrom  
757 — J. E. Mosley  
803 — J. C. Sowell  
863 — B. J. Pounds

### AS OF JULY 31, 2015

4 — M. D. Dunn  
125 — T. G. Kershner  
165 — P. N. Hoffmeister  
190 — D. A. Neil  
316 — K. D. Brown  
489 — R. G. Eads  
497 — A. T. Coppolino  
578 — D. W. Arnold  
598 — W. T. Henderson Jr.  
610 — R. L. Boyd  
769 — T. E. Odom  
910 — G. L. Underwood

### AS OF AUGUST 31, 2015

4 — T. L. Mayo  
79 — J. E. Peters  
133 — J. M. Fierro  
391 — G. R. Denning  
430 — J. C. Clendenen  
456 — G. O. Cobb  
569 — S. A. Tolbert  
644 — D. L. Scott  
742 — K. J. Carroll

### AS OF SEPTEMBER 30, 2015

48 — D. M. Schroeder  
60 — P. M. Rigg  
121 — T. E. Fitzwater  
197 — A. W. Botard  
269 — M. A. De sant  
660 — M. M. Sexton  
674 — J. M. Hannon  
721 — J. D. Jones  
934 — J. J. Cameron

### AS OF OCTOBER 31, 2015

60 — H. L. Henderson  
74 — S. H. McClurkin  
370 — G. Kovack  
517 — W. V. Chenoweth Jr.  
537 — G. L. English  
676 — R. E. Diehm  
779 — C. R. Meadows Jr.  
781 — R. D. Arrowood  
871 — J. C. Slater



# Amtrak engineer Joseph S. Theis retires at age 82 with 63 years of service

BY DOUG RIDDELL

RETIRED, BLET DIVISION 14

**S**ixty, thirty and out. For a majority of railroaders, especially those who've spent much of their lives away from home with their hand on a throttle, struggling to maintain vigilance peering into the darkness on an overnight run, or scanning the track ahead for kinked rails in the scorching summer heat, attaining 30 years of creditable Railroad Retirement service and living to the age of 60 in order to retire, comprises a formidable challenge. In an industry fraught with peril, where the possibility of injury or death lurks around every curve and at each road crossing, being met by family, friends and co-workers to celebrate your last run is a matter of great personal satisfaction and relief.

Amtrak General Chairman, Mark Kenny had this in mind when he contacted the Journal to note the retirement of Brother Joseph Theis, BLET Division 20 (Los Angeles). Brother Theis's Last Run was at the helm of Amtrak's Santa Barbara-Los Angeles Surfliner train 768 on November 30, 2014.

Kenny felt Brother Theis (whose name is pronounced *tice* and rhymes with *nice*) merited special attention. Brother Theis vehemently argued that he neither special nor remarkable, insisting that the *Journal* not include those terms. "I was just lucky to have a good job."

Well, while we may, or may not agree, no one can ignore his landmark accomplishment, which may be record-setting in the history of the BLET. Joe has been number one — the top man on the Amtrak Engineer Seniority Roster — forever, or so it seems. Thousands of engine service employees know the name, J.S. Theis, although they may have never met him. You see, upon marking off for the fi-



Joseph S. Theis

nal time, Joe Theis was age 82 and had 63 years of service. "I was only number one because many other engineers went back to freight rather than go to work for Amtrak," Joe said.

In a phone interview, Brother Theis said: "I actually didn't really have a regular engineer assignment until I was 50, in 1986. I hostled engines for many years, and got credit for the time I served in the Army. Even went to school on the GI Bill."

*School?* Yes, Joe Theis, in addition to being a tenured locomotive engineer, is a licensed optometrist. "I'd work Monday through Friday, then fly out to Catalina Island on weekends and do eye exams," Theis said. While many railroaders have worn two hats, due to furloughs resulting from the ebb and flow of their employers' freight or passenger traffic, most are knowledgeable mechanics, carpenters or painters. There are very few doctors.

You'd best believe Joe Theis earned his stripes the hard way though. He hired out on the former Atcheson, Topeka & Santa Fe Railroad in 1951.

While most of the Santa Fe's yard engines were diesel-powered, many of its road freight and passenger trains however, were *still powered by steam locomotives*. "Since diesels were new, the chief mechanical office (to whom engineers reported in those days) made us take the annual *steam engine examination* because they hadn't yet formulated one for diesels." He didn't shovel coal though. Like many western railroads, the AT&SF fueled their steamers with oil. "Went out there at Los Angeles Union Station (where he spent most of his career) to 'fire up' a steam locomotive one day, lit a rag, threw it in the fire box, and the darn thing caught fire."

Joe remembers the golden days when movie stars were met at Los Angeles Union station by an army of reporters and photographers, as they traveled to and from Hollywood aboard the famous Chicago-Los Angeles *Super Chief*. "Yes, number 28 would be sitting over there, waiting for us to couple her locomotives up." The *Chief* was diesel powered, but heating and steam injected air-cooling required the use of a steam generator, found in the rear engine compartment of Santa Fe's renown red, silver and yellow passenger diesels.

How will retirement affect Joseph Theis? "Well, right now, I've had to give up tennis because it's a bit hard on my shoulder, so I've taken up racket ball instead." At age 82, what enticed him to stay for a total of 63 years? "My wife (who, like Joe, is an avid swimmer) is a little younger than me, and we've got a son in high school." Taking good care of his health no doubt has been a key to his ability to enjoy the sunny Southern California life with his family.

Brother Joe Theis says he's neither remarkable nor special. We'll let you be the judge of that. 🍷

# Kimble Jackson, Division 120 ST and STF Investigator, retires after 43 years

**B**rother Kimble L. Jackson of BLET Division 120 (Kansas City, Mo.) safely completed his Last Run for Norfolk Southern on January 2, 2015, concluding a railroad career that spanned 43 years.

Brother Jackson hired out as a fireman in Moberly, Mo., in 1972. He went firing later that same year and earned promotion to locomotive engineer on February 3, 1974. He has held continuous membership in the BLET since he joined Division 86 (Moberly, Mo.) in 1985, and transferred to Division 120 in 1993.

A committed and involved member of the BLET, Brother Jackson has served his Division as Legislative Representative since 1997. Beginning in 2007, he served as a Primary Investigator with the BLET Safety Task Force where his knowledge and experience brought valuable insight to numerous accident investigations. He also served the National Division as a member of the Arrangements Committee at the Third National Convention in 2014.

The members of BLET Division



Joyce and Kimble Jackson

120 recognized Brother Jackson and fellow retiree Kim Dunwoody at a retirement party in January 2015. Brother Jackson was honored and thanked for his many years of service as Legislative Representative.

He and his wife Joyce have been

married since 1972. They had two sons, Marvin (deceased) and Erick. The couple also has two grandchildren and one great-grandchild. Now that he is retired, Brother Jackson plans to spend time traveling with family and playing lots of golf. 🏌️

## Hibben served Division 121 as Local Chairman

**B**rother Fred Hibben, former Local Chairman of BLET Division 121 (Indianapolis, Ind.), safely completed his last run on March 13, 2014, and retired effective March 14, 2014. Brother Hibben hired out as a brakeman on the former Penn Central Railroad on April 23, 1973. He earned promotion to locomotive engineer on January 4, 1993, and became a member of the BLET on March 1, 1994. He served Division 121 as Local Chairman for approximately 10 years. According to Brian Farkas, Chairman of the Indiana State Legislative Board, Brother Hibben is enjoying retirement in Stayton, Oregon. 🏡





# Former LIRR General Chairman Mickey Quinn enjoying retirement

**F**ormer General Chairman Mickey Quinn retired from the Long Island Rail Road (LIRR) effective October 1, 2014, ending a railroad career that spanned 30 years and three months.

Brother Quinn hired out with the LIRR track department on July 30, 1984. He became a locomotive engineer trainee on March 9, 1987, and earned promotion to locomotive engineer on July 13, 1988. He joined BLET Division 269 (Long Island, N.Y.) shortly thereafter.

For more than 20 years, Brother Quinn was an active and involved member of the Brotherhood, holding elected office for 14 of those 20 years. In 1994, he was appointed Chairman of the Division 269 Entertainment Committee by then-Division President Doug Willox. He worked with Division 269 and the LIRR General Committee of Adjustment (GCA) for the next eight years before being elected First Vice Chairman of the LIRR GCA in 2001.

He took over as General Chairman on November 1, 2006, and was reelected to that position three times at triennial meetings in 2007, 2010 and 2013. He retired as General Chairman on October 1, 2014, and was replaced by Brother Kevin Sexton.

"I am proud to have served my union for those many years, and continue the friendships I have made to this day," Brother Quinn said. "I am very im-



pressed with our current leadership, and have had the fortune to work with National Vice Presidents Marcus Ruef and Steve Bruno. Both of these men have guided me in my work. National Vice President Cole Davis was also a positive influence during my career. I also wish to thank George Faulkner and Mike Wolly for their legal assistance when it was needed."

Brother Quinn comes from a large railroad family. His father Charles J. Quinn Sr. worked for the LIRR for 33 years as a conductor and Local Chairman for the BRT/UTU. Brother Quinn was preceded in retirement by two of his brothers, a conductor and a dispatcher. He has six cousins who are

retired railroaders in addition to two more cousins and two nephews who are still working at the LIRR.

Brother Quinn and his wife, Jean, have been married for 36 years. On his last day of work, officers and staff of the LIRR GCA threw a retirement party for him in their office. Later that same evening, his wife organized another party with many more friends and family. Brother Quinn was also honored at the 2014 Dinner Dance with a plaque from the LIRR GCA.

"I am enjoying my retirement, though not doing as much traveling as I wish, nor playing as much golf either," he said. "It is good to know there is plenty of time to catch up on those." 📖



## Former General Chairman Alva Beavers celebrates 51 years in the BLET

**L**ong-serving General Chairman Alva J. Beavers has reached Honor Roll status with 51 consecutive years of BLET membership.

His railroad career began in 1946 with Brother Beavers hired out as a fireman on the Missouri Pacific Railroad in Mart, Texas. He earned promotion to locomotive engineer in March of 1952. After a few years serving as road foreman of engines and assistant trainmaster, Brother Beavers returned to engine service and joined BLET Division 620 (Fort Worth, Texas) on November 21, 1964.

Brother Beavers spent most of his railroad career in service to BLET members. In 1968, he was elected Local Chairman Division 620, and later that year was elected to the office of General Chairman. He served as General Chairman of the Gulf Coast Lines/Missouri Pacific General Committee of Adjustment for 17 years (1968-1985). His 39-year railroad career came to an end when retired in 1985.

A proud veteran of World War II, brother Beavers served in the United States Navy's Coastal Riverine Squad-

ron (CRS) in the United States and Guam from 1942-1946.

Born in 1924, Brother Beavers and his wife Wanda were married on June 20, 1946. They have two children, Janis and James David, five grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren. Brother Beavers followed in the footsteps of his father, who was a locomotive engineer and worked for the Missouri Pacific from 1903-1952.

Brother Beavers reports that he enjoys golf and serving the Lord. He is a Bible teacher at his local church. 📖

## Struck a proud BLET member for 52 years

**B**rother Robert E. Struck of BLET Division 171 (Hoboken, N.J.) achieved Honor Roll status by marking 52 consecutive years of BLET membership on April 1, 2015.

Brother Struck, who turned 84 years old in September of 2015, hired out on the New York, Susquehanna & Western Railroad in Patterson, N.J., in 1950. He went firing for the Erie Railroad on January 15, 1951, and earned promotion as an Erie locomotive engineer on November 1, 1959. He joined the Brotherhood on April 1, 1963, and has held continuous membership ever since. He also worked as a locomotive engineer for the Erie-Lackawanna Railroad and New Jersey Transit during his 40 years of railroading.

Through mergers and acquisitions Brother Struck eventually became a Conrail locomotive engineer. At Conrail he was the head of the engineers' safety committee, and helped form Conrail's first engineers training school. During America's bicentennial in 1976, Brother Struck suggested to Conrail that it paint three of its



Robert E. Struck and his wife Lois on their 50th wedding anniversary, September 27, 2008.

engines in a patriotic color scheme.

Brother Struck safely completed his last run in February of 1990 as a passenger engineer between Suffern, N.Y.

and Hoboken, N.J. His retirement became effective in March of 1990.

Brother Struck and his wife Lois have two children, Karen and Glenn and one grandchild. He enjoys boating, fishing and golf.

He comes from a proud railroad family, and they once appeared in a New York Daily News feature story.

His wife's grandfather, William Jacob Brown, was engineer for the Erie Railroad in the 1920s. His wife's father, William Henry Brown, was an Erie Lackawanna locomotive engineer from 1922 to 1967. His father John N. Struck was an Erie Lackawanna conductor from 1945-1975. His brother Kenneth was an Erie Lackawanna conductor from 1960-1990.

"At one time my father-in-law was an engineer," Brother Struck said. "I was the fireman, my father was the conductor and my brother was the brakeman on a passenger assignment from Waldwick, N.J. The New York Daily News did an article on us and the headline was, 'The Family That Railroads Together.'" 📖



# At 100 years of age, Division 269's Michael DeSant had 75 consecutive years of membership

**T**he BLET mourns the passing of Brother Michael Anthony DeSant, a retired member of BLET Division 269 (Long Island, N.Y.) who worked as a Locomotive Engineer for the LIRR. Just prior to his passing, Brother DeSant achieved a rare and significant milestone — he turned 100 years old and had 75 years of membership with the BLET.

Brother DeSant was born on April 23, 1915, and started in engine service as a fireman on December 19, 1940. He spent four years overseas while in the Army during World War II, including two years operating trains that were transporting refugees from Poland. He also spent time in Iran and Iraq while in the Army. He was attached with the British Rail Service during that time and luckily survived a train explosion while serving in Iran.

Brother DeSant worked through many major technological develop-

ments in the railroad industry over his long career, including the change over from steam engines. He worked as a fireman shoveling coal when he hired out, then moved to diesel locomotives, and eventually the electric trains similar to the ones LIRR still uses today.

A few years ago, at a union function with members of BLET Division 269, Brother DeSant remarked that it was nice to meet women engineers since in his day there were only men working as engineers. One other change was the transformation of the LIRR from a private company to a public authority. Brother DeSant said that although the same people worked there, the corporate culture changed.

In spite of all the changes he had witnessed, Brother DeSant said the one constant over all the years is the professional way that railroad workers go about their jobs. He said everybody knew and followed the rules and regu-

lations.

Brother DeSant retired in 1975 from the LIRR after over 38 years of service. He came from a railroad family with two uncles, his father-in-law and brother-in-law all working as railroaders. Until the time of his passing in mid-2015, Brother DeSant would attend the Division 269 summer picnic and the Christmas party every year, along with his neighbor and current LIRR Engineer Rich MacDonald.

On behalf of all Division 269 members, Rick Jordan, Secretary-Treasurer and Legislative Representative of Division 269, presented Brother DeSant with a plaque congratulating him on his 100th birthday and thanking him for his 75 years of continuous BLET membership.

Brother DeSant is survived by his wife Jennie, 94. The couple married in 1950 and they have one daughter, Michaelyn Read. 📷



Brother DeSant just prior to his 100th birthday.



A newspaper clipping regarding Brother DeSant's retirement in 1975.



Brother DeSant as a young engineer for the LIRR.

# Scallorn a third-generation engineer on former MKT


**B**rother J.R. Scallorn Jr. has been a proud member of the BLET for 47 years, having joined Division 475 (Smithville, Texas) on June 1, 1968.

Brother Scallorn hired out on the Missouri Kansas Texas Railroad (MKT) in 1960. He went firing in September of 1960 and earned his promotion to locomotive engineer in 1968. During his years of membership in the BLET, Brother Scallorn

served Division 475 as Local Chairman and twice represented his Division at the Southwestern Convention Meeting. He is the proud owner of a 40-year BLET membership pin.

He safely completed his Last Run in November of 1997, working as a Union Pacific locomotive engineer on a run between Smithville and Houston. Brother Scallorn's retirement after a 37-year railroad career became effective in February of 1998.

Brother Scallorn served his country in the United States Air Force in various locations across the globe from 1956 to 1960.

He and his wife Ellen were married on September 13, 1998. Brother Scallorn has one son, John, and two grandchildren. He is a third generation locomotive engineer, following in the footsteps of his grandfather, R.L. Sinigson, and father, J.R. Scallorn Sr., who were both MKT engineers. 

**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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## PRESIDENT PIERCE MESSAGE

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But they won't stop there; Social Security and Medicare, counted on by generations of Americans like my parents and yours, are also under attack. Jeb Bush's solution to keep Social Security solvent is to make you work longer to get to it. Countless Americans with demanding jobs will die on the job having never tasted the retirement fruits of their labor if politicians like these are allowed to set the direction for this country.

And Jeb Bush upped his attack by suggesting that Medicare should be eliminated, and I am personally offended — as you should be. I turned 57 this year, and although I work hard to stay young at heart, my birthday gave me pause to reflect on where my family and I are situated when it comes to Medicare.

I consider myself lucky to still have two living parents, and even though they may not always vote for politicians that truly care about their wellbeing, they count on Medicare for their medical needs in their later years. I myself was born at the tail end of the baby boom, and in eight short years, I will be Medicare eligible.

Here is where Medicare comes home to roost for all railroad employees. For those of you under the National Health and Welfare Plan, your union negotiated benefits include coverage under the GA 23000 Plan for you and your family while you are working. That plan also includes coverage from age 60 to age 65 under the GA 46000 Plan, with the only cost to you being the cost of any supplemental plans you voluntarily purchase.

Here is where Jeb Bush's plan destroys your plan. The GA 46000 is only available until you are Medicare eligible at age 65. It is the insurance bridge that lets you enjoy your hard earned retirement at age 60, by providing you with coverage until you reach Medicare.

Our health care plan was written that way because, much like Railroad Retirement and Social Security, Medicare is part of the social compact created between our great nation and the working class many decades ago. We all pay into Medicare when we are working, and it should be there for you when you retire. Even in the era of the Affordable Care Act, the idea that retirees at age 65 can find affordable insurance that does not throw them at the mercy of the marketplace is beyond

belief. Yet certain politicians think that our great nation cannot afford to take care of its retirees.

As those of us Baby Boomers approach retirement age, this directly affects all of us. And if you are a younger railroader, don't think that you are not impacted. Politicians like Jeb Bush and Scott Walker want us all to work harder, work longer, and reduce government spending by doing so, but they do not push that agenda to help you. They push that agenda to help their corporate benefactors like the Koch Brothers, a duo that has been pushing for the elimination of Social Security and Medicare for decades.

Unlike the poor Americans that have been talked into thinking they need the Tea Party, these two billionaires are the real Tea Party and their motivation is strictly self-serving. Less in wages and benefits for the American work force means more money for them — even though they already have too much money to ever spend it all.

But there are things that we can do to stem this tide of attacks on the working class. We must hold the politicians of our country accountable for how they treat the working class, which again, is the backbone of America. We, as par-

ty of the working class, must also resist the temptation to view ourselves as temporarily disadvantaged millionaires. Your needs and causes are not those of the so-called "one percent" of wealthy Americans, and if they have their way, they never will be.

We protect our needs and causes when we go to the polls and when we participate and vote in elections like the one next year.

We must look past the campaign promises and rhetoric. We must look past the talk of only the social issues of the day, and instead, let's look at how the candidates actually voted on the issues that affect us as working class Americans. Where does it hit your pocket book? We are not looking for handouts — we are looking for a fair share of the corporate profits that our labor makes possible, and we need politicians who will work with us to make that possible, not politicians who are bought and paid for by Corporate America.

Join me next year and let's elect politicians who do support the working class, and most importantly for us, let's elect politicians who will work to protect the legal and contractual protections that we count on in the railroad industry. Together we can accomplish that. 🗳️

## S-T BRUNO MESSAGE

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cycle. Trustees are elected for the specific purpose of reviewing, verifying and reporting on the financial records of the local divisions on a monthly basis. The creation of the Trustee position frees up time for the officers who previous-

ly had the added responsibility of reviewing and reporting on the financial records to their other duties. This new Division Trustee office will undoubtedly establish even greater transparency and credibility for our union.

I urge everyone to participate in the local election process and attend your division meetings. I also urge you to

make sure you are registered to vote in local, state and national elections. Better yet, please investigate how to vote by absentee ballot, because you can't cast your vote while you're behind the throttle. Increased participation in the Triennial election process increases the credibility and the confidence of the local officers you elect. Increased par-

ticipation in your division meetings will inform you of the efforts your elected officers are making on your behalf. And your participation at the ballot box will ensure that we elect candidates who support our position on legislative, political and regulatory issues — issues that are vital to your safety, your family, and your future. 🗳️



# Made in America

MORE THAN JUST A NICE SLOGAN



**BY KATHLEEN BISBIKIS**  
BLET AUXILIARY NATIONAL  
2ND VICE PRESIDENT/  
NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE  
REPRESENTATIVE

**R**ecently, I was working in my office when my son came in and asked me for new track shoes. I asked him what kind he wanted this year, and he replied, "Nike," and with a big smile said, "They're made in America!" I was taken aback for a second because I was proud of him that he was thinking "made in America," and shocked by the proof that teenagers do listen to their parents. Unfortunately, I had to let him know that Nikes are not made in America. He replied, "yes they are they are based out of Oregon." I appreciated his attempt to sell me on the idea but had to show him that, while Nike's corporate offices are located here in America, their products are made overseas. This whole conversation got me thinking. Who is teaching our youth the importance of buying American-made products and explaining to them how supporting American companies keeps more jobs in America — the jobs that this young generation are going to be counting on when the time comes for them to be productive members of society?

I was fortunate to have grown up in a strong union family, so it was common in my home to hear the phrase "buy American-made" every time we left the house, and it made an impression. I knew the importance early on. Today's youth are not thinking, or in many cases, not being taught the importance of supporting their U.S. economy. They are far more concerned with the newest, latest, and greatest technology gadgets like phones, tablets, and game systems, most of which are made overseas. So how do we educate future



**2015 Executive Council Meeting:** The BLET Auxiliary held its 2015 Executive Council met at the home of National President Sereena Hogan in Tucson, Ariz., on April 27-29. Executive Council Members (clockwise, from far left): National 2nd Vice President/National Legislative Representative Kathleen Bisbikis; National Secretary Lawana Poss; National 1st Vice President Susie Burrola; National President Sereena Hogan; and National Treasurer Terri Fleming.

generations that, in order to increase the number of jobs and grow our economy, we have to support the companies that are right here making quality products for us?

That's where we, as parents, aunts, uncles, and grandparents can make a difference. Some things are not taught in school; educating the youth about some topics rests on our shoulders. Things like union pride or buying American have to be taught at home. These young people are all sponges ready to absorb knowledge, but the key is finding interesting and catchy ways to get their attention. Products like Crayola crayons, Wilson footballs, Little Tikes preschool toys, Louisville sluggers, and Gibson guitars are all American-made. When they get older, Harley Davidson motorcycles or, for little boys and girls who want to work on the railroad someday like dad or mom, there are the Autumn Creek and Red Ox grips that are also made in America.

We as the adults have to find opportunities where we can to point out items made here in the U.S. and use that opportunity to our best ability to explain to the children in our lives the importance of seeing that tag bearing the American flag and the words "Made in America" on products. Every shopping trip can become a game to find products made here in our homeland, but it can also show just how many of the goods we regularly purchase are from all over the globe. Also, educating ourselves about the labor practices and pay in other countries where these products are made can result in very personal and eye-opening "teaching moments" about the differences between the way American workers are treated and the deplorable conditions workers suffer in many of the countries that export their products to us.

Subconsciously, I guess I must have done a good job because now my son



makes it a point to show me when he finds a product that says "Made in America" on it. It's a small thing, and it only takes a few moments out of your day when the opportunity arises, but with America currently importing more than it is exporting, it is critical that we relate that information to the next generation. The economic future of our country depends on our children knowing what will help make them ready for college, work, and life.

I challenge each of you to spend some time teaching a little one the basics of Economics 101 in a way they can understand, and pointing out products made right here in the Great Ol' U.S.A. But don't forget about family and friends either. There is a large majority of adults as well who don't truly understand the correlation between our purchasing choices and the effect on the overall health of our economy. A relatively easy and non-confrontational way to get people to become more aware of products made in America is by carrying a simple slip of paper that has a list of the Made in America websites and perhaps some common products that are made here. I believe that, like me, they will be surprised by the diversity available.

One thing I can promise you is this — one day you will be pleasantly surprised to hear those words come back to you from an educated teenager ready to make a difference in the world because of the time you spent with him or her sharing your knowledge with them during their early formative years. 🇺🇸

## 2015-2016 BLET Auxiliary Scholarship recipients

### LEONA A. LOUIS MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP AWARDED TO:

**ALLYSON K. ROOF (NÉE BOOTH)**, daughter of James and Anne Booth.



James is a retired member of BLET Division 28, and Anne is a member of Guadalupe Auxiliary No. 28, in Tucson, Arizona. Allyson is attending University of Colorado Denver-Anschutz Medical Campus.

### JOHN O. AND BRENDA CASTEEL SCHOLARSHIP AWARDED TO:

**JACOB WRIGHT**, son of Jason and Heidi Wright. Jason is Director of Education and Training- National Division and a member of Division 502, and Heidi is a member of Auxiliary No. 422 in Olathe, Kansas. Jacob is attending Kansas State University.



### \$1,000 SCHOLARSHIPS AWARDED TO THE FOLLOWING:

**RACHEL MCWILLIAMS**, daughter



of Rob and Kathy McWilliams. Rob is a member of Division 126, and Kathy is a member-at-large. Rachel is attending California State University — Fresno.

**KARMA JADE UNDERWOOD**, daughter of Jim and Lori Underwood. Jim is a member of Division 228, and Lori is a member-at-large in Pocatello, Idaho. Karma is attending Boise State University.



**ARIEL JOHNSON**, daughter of Owen and Beate Johnson. Owen is a member of Division 212 and Beate is a member-at-large in Spring, Texas. Ariel is attending the University of Houston College of Optometry.



**DILLON TAYLOR**, son of Clay and Becky Taylor. Clay is a member of Division 28 and Becky is a member of Guadalupe Auxiliary No. 28 in Tucson, Arizona. Dillon is attending the University of Richmond School of Law in Virginia.



**JENNIFER ANDERSON**, daughter of Mark and Nancy Anderson. Mark is a member of Division 333 and Nancy is a member-at-large in St. Paul, Minnesota. Jennifer is attending Brigham Young University.



**JORDAN SAWYER**, daughter of Richard and Lynn Sawyer. Richard is a member of Division 134, and Lynne is a member of Auxiliary No. 134, in Winslow, Arizona. Jordan is attending Eastern Arizona College.



## 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 ba-

sis 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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# *A Brotherhood Tradition*

## 2016 BLET REGIONAL MEETINGS

### *Eastern*

JULY 11-14, 2016 • CHICAGO



### *Western*

AUGUST 22-25, 2016 • LONG BEACH



## Join Us Next Summer!

Mark your calendars and plan to attend one or both of the BLET's regional meetings in 2016. See Page 4 for details!