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Locomotive

ENGINEERS & TRAINMEN NEWS

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Contract Ratified

86% majority of Wisconsin Central engineers approve new six-year pact



Photo: Craig W. Williams, BLET Division 114

Members of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen who work on the former Wisconsin Central territory overwhelmingly ratified a new collective bargaining agreement with Canadian National on January 17.

The agreement covers nearly 300 members. The six-year agreement (which dates from April 1, 2005 through April 1, 2010) provides BLET members with overall wage increases of 21.24 percent.

An overwhelming majority of members voted to renew the hourly-rate agreement, in which BLET members are paid hourly wages and enjoy better job security in exchange for greater work rule flexibility for the company. Traditional agreements are mileage- and rule-based wage systems, which date back to the era of steam locomotives.

The BLET members at CN-WC were the first in the country to ratify an hourly-rate agreement back in 2002.

BLET General Chairman John Reyn-

olds said 94 percent of eligible members voted on the contract, which was by an 86 percent majority.

In addition to pay increases, the BLET secured improved job protections. A locomotive engineer will now be assigned to every job at Wisconsin Central, including remote control assignments. The union's "no furlough" clause has also been extended to cover approximately 30 additional members who were not protected under the old contract.

Improved work schedule assignments

are also part of the new contract. Under the old contract, members were forced to work six days in a row with only one day off. Now, the assignments alternate from week to week between five day and six day work weeks. The same applies to the engineers' extra board at CN-WC.

In terms of health care, BLET members at CN-WC opted to belong to the union's national health care plan. The benefit to members is that they are now eligible for bridge insurance, which provides health

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Teamsters Rail Conference, Airline Division propose re-focusing NMB

Shortly after the historic election of President Barack Obama last November, representatives of the Teamsters Rail Conference and the Teamsters Airline Division met with representatives of the Obama Transition Team to provide input concerning the performance of the National Mediation Board (NMB) over the past eight years and recommend-

ed that fundamental changes should be made in how the NMB exercises its statutory authority over the rail-road and aviation industry.

In addition to making an oral presentation to the NMB Transition Team, the Rail Conference and the Airline Division filed a comprehensive report detailing problems and recommendations for the future.

With regard to union organizing campaigns, the report recommended the following:

- Certification of employee representatives through a check of authorization cards.
- Increased "freedom of association" for employees in the workplace during an organizing campaign that

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BLET engineers pilot the Obama Express to historic inauguration. **pg.4**



Money Train

Carriers announce 2008 financial results **pg 2**

BLET Auxiliary News

Labor-friendly White House and Congress brings a new hope for the New Year. **pg 6**



Brotherly Love

Philadelphia hosts 2009 EUMA **pg 7**

Carriers report 2008 fourth quarter, full year results



Burlington Northern Santa Fe

Burlington Northern Santa Fe reported fourth quarter 2008 earnings that were 23 percent higher compared to fourth quarter 2007 earnings.

Revenues for the quarter rose to \$4.25 billion, a 3 percent increase over the 2007 quarter. Operating income for the quarter was \$1.12 billion, an increase of 17 percent. For the full year 2008, the railroad's operating revenues were \$18.0 billion, a 14 percent increase over full year 2007. In spite of the increases, the railroad saw a 7 percent decline in unit volumes.



Canadian National

Canadian National reported fourth quarter 2008 net income of \$573 million. Net income for the 2007 fourth quarter was \$833 million, but that included a \$284 million tax recovery and a \$64 million gain from the sale of the Central Station Complex in Montreal.

Net income for full year 2008 was \$1,895 million compared with net income of \$2,158 million for 2007.

The operating ratio for the full year was 65.9 percent in 2008, compared

with 63.6 percent in 2007, a 2.3-point increase. Operating ratio for the quarter was 62.7 percent.



Canadian Pacific

Canadian Pacific reported fourth quarter 2008 net income of \$201 million, down from \$342 million in the 2007 fourth quarter. The railroad said the decrease was due to a future tax benefit that was recorded in the 2007 fourth quarter. Four quarter 2008 operating income was \$305 million.

Quarterly revenues increased to \$1.3 billion for the quarter over \$1.2 billion in the same quarter of 2007. Net income for the full year was \$619 million, compared to \$946 million for the full year 2007.



CSX Corporation

CSX reported that its fourth quarter 2008 earnings took a hit from the write-down of its investment in The Greenbrier resort.

Revenues in the quarter were \$2.7 billion. Net earnings in the quarter were \$247 million compared with \$365

million in the fourth quarter of 2007. Earnings were 63 cents per share, but reported The Greenbrier charge was 27 cents per share, which would have made earnings 90 cents. Earnings were 86 cents a share in the 2007 fourth quarter.

The railroad's operating ratio was 74.1 percent.



Kansas City Southern

Kansas City Southern reported fourth quarter 2008 revenues of \$423.8 million, a decrease of 7.9 percent from the 2007 quarter. KCS attributed the decline to volume decreases resulting from weakening economies in the U.S. and Mexico. Operating income for the quarter was \$91.2 million.

Full year annual revenues were \$1.85 billion, an all-time record at the railroad. Revenues for the full year were \$1.85 billion, a 6.3 percent increase over 2007.

Operating ratio for the full year was 78.9 percent and 78.5 for the fourth quarter.



Norfolk Southern

Norfolk Southern reported record fourth quarter 2008 net income of

\$452 million, an increase of 13 percent over the fourth quarter of 2007. Operating revenues for the quarter were \$2.5 billion, an increase of 2 percent.

For the full year, the railroad's operating revenues were \$10.7 billion, an increase of 13 percent. Net income for the full year was \$1.7 billion — a record — an increase of 17 percent over the full year 2007.

The railroad's operating ratio for the year was 71.1 percent.



Union Pacific

Union Pacific reported fourth quarter 2008 net income of \$661 million, a 35 percent increase over the fourth quarter of 2007. Quarterly operating revenues were \$4.3 billion versus \$4.2 billion in the fourth quarter of 2007. Operating income was \$1.14 billion.

For the full year, the railroad's net income was \$2.3 billion, an increase of 26 percent over full year 2007. Yearly operating revenues were \$18.0 billion, an increase of 10 percent and yearly operating income was \$4.1 billion.

UP's operating ratio was 73.4 percent for the quarter and 77.3 percent for the full year. ©

FEDERAL EMPLOYERS' LIABILITY ACT (FELA)

Understanding the history and benefits of the FELA

“It is in your best interest to use this Law to see that you and your family are fairly compensated when injury occurs.”

This article gives a brief history of the Federal Employers' Liability Act (FELA), the Supreme Court's approval of the Designated Legal Counsel program, and a brief summary of the damages (money) that the railroad may be liable to pay the worker when injury or death occurs thru its negligence or violation of safety laws.

Congress, recognizing the extreme dangers of working in the rail industry, enacted the FELA in the early 1900s. This unique law provides monetary damages to workers who suffer injury or death due to the negligent or unlawful acts of the railroad that employs them. The FELA has been recognized and broadened

through rulings and interpretations of the Supreme Court and the lower courts throughout the country. Railroaders or their lawyers must prove their employer's fault caused their injury to collect anything under the FELA.

The FELA is important to all people employed in the railroad industry and their families. It provides the sole remedy for injury or death caused, in whole or in part, by the negligent or unlawful acts of their employer.

Because it is unrealistic to expect you to become an expert in the Law, the Supreme Court long ago approved the practice of rail labor unions designating and approving attorneys with expertise in the Law and of informing their membership of the availability of assistance by Designated Legal Counsel.

The FELA was enacted for your benefit but you must act in accordance with your own best interests and common sense in order to secure the benefits the Law was intended to provide you. Do not place yourself in the hands of your adversaries. When

you become injured, the claim agents, the officials, and the lawyers the railroad hired in anticipation of injuries are your adversaries. They will do all in their power to protect the carrier's interests and prevent you from receiving money damages you are entitled to recover.

Congress passed the FELA for 2 basic reasons:

1. To give employees a chance to recover damages when injured due to the employer's fault, and
2. To give the railroad a monetary incentive to provide its employees a safe place to work.

It is in your best interest to use this Law to see that you and your family are fairly compensated when injury occurs. You are not entitled to damages merely because you know the railroad failed to provide you a safe place to work — the evidence must be secured, preserved, investigated thoroughly, and presented properly to successfully prevail in a claim against the railroad.

Designated Legal Counsel can help you achieve these goals while working to eliminate or

diminish any claims of your contributory negligence by the railroad.

Damages you may be entitled to include: wage loss from all sources (past and future); medical expenses incurred and those likely to be incurred; pain you have suffered and what you are likely to experience in the future; and any disability you have and any you are likely to experience in the future.

I am honored to serve as Designated Legal Counsel for the Brotherhood and look forward to serving the membership for many years. Should you have any questions or need the advice of Designated Legal Counsel, please call "Dan" toll free at (800) 624-2121.

Submitted by:



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BLET FELA Directory

AS OF FEBRUARY 27, 2009

Our union has designated attorneys who are qualified to serve as counsel for BLET members in accordance with the Federal Employers' Liability Act (FELA) governing workplace accidents. In the event of an injury or death and before reaching any settlement with a railroad, members or surviving families should contact an attorney listed to get

competent advice concerning their legal rights under the FELA. In addition, if you or any members of your family have questions concerning medical malpractice, product liability or other types of injury cases, please don't hesitate to contact one of these law firms for a consultation concerning your rights and remedies. @



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BLET members pilot the Obama Express

Barack Obama became the 44th President of the United States on January 20, 2009. Approximately 2 million people watched his inauguration in person and countless millions more watched on television.

Instead of traveling to the nation's capitol by airplane, President Obama, Vice President Joseph Biden and their families traveled by train to Washington, D.C., for the inauguration. It was a symbolic gesture by the new president to show his support for passenger rail, and also to follow in the footsteps of Abraham Lincoln, who arrived in Washington, D.C., for his inaugural ceremonies by train in 1861.

And thanks to the efforts of three BLET members, the Obama and Biden families arrived safely in the nation's capitol.

The train began its trip in Philadelphia and made stops in Wilmington, Del. and Baltimore, Md. The train also made "slow roll" through Claymont, Del. and Edgewood, Md.

The Obamas and Bidens boarded the train in Wilmington and traveled in the last car of the train — a Pullman Georgia 300, built in 1939. The special train car is equipped with a kitchen, two living room areas and a small bedroom.

Also on the train were 41 "everyday Americans," many of whom met the Obamas and Bidens along the campaign trail. They traveled in separate guest cars.

BLET members Carlyle Smith, Ricky Stolnis and Greg Parmley were selected by Amtrak to run the special "Obama Express" trains to Washington on January 17. Brother Smith, a member of BLET Division 482 (Washington, D.C.), ran the train carrying the President. Brother Stolnis, a member of BLET Division 483 (Philadelphia) ran the lead train, and Brother Parmley, also a member of Division 483, ran the chase train.

Brother Smith heard about the train on the radio and decided that he would send an email to Amtrak's management to express his interest in running the train. About a week before the historic event, Brother Smith found out that he would be the locomotive engineer on the primary train.

"I was so excited," said Brother Smith.



Huge crowds camped out along the route from Philadelphia to Washington, D.C.

"I was jumping up and down when I found out."

Brother Smith joined the BLET in 1995, and said that, in spite of the huge security presence and Secret Service agents in the cab with him, the only thing different about this trip was "knowing who was on the train."

"I always try to do the best job possible," Brother Smith said. "But this time I knew that I had to be perfect. I was carrying the President and the Vice President."

"It was great to see all the people along the route. I felt like a little kid running the train — it was that exciting."

Brother Smith credits Vice President Biden's long history with the railroad as one of the reasons the trip happened.

"It was a great honor to be involved in history," Smith said. "Vice President Biden has always been such a huge Amtrak advocate, and I think that maybe this trip and all the attention it got, was his gift to us."

As the locomotive engineers on the lead and chase trains, Brothers Stolnis and Parmley also took part in history. Stolnis joined the BLET in 1973 and Parmley joined in 1991.

Parmley was the engineer on President



Photos: Luke Sharrett

Media focus was overwhelming for Vice President Joe Biden and President Obama.

Obama's train during a campaign swing earlier in 2008, and he and his entire crew were chosen for the chase train.

"It was a great day," Parmley said. "It was a wonderful thing to be a part of and I'll never forget it."

Stolnis was also honored to be a part of the train ride. He said his involvement in the Obama Express was the culmina-

tion of several big events he has worked over the course of his long career.

"It was an honor to help get the railroad back into the limelight and to help President Obama retrace the steps that Lincoln took," Brother Stolnis said. "It was exciting to see so many people along the route and it is a testament to President Obama's charisma." ©©

REFOCUSING THE NMB

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1 ←→

should ensure that (1) the employee organizations are given correct names and addresses of all employees in the bargaining unit at the outset of the election process so that the union may communicate directly with all prospective voters in the same manner as the carrier, and (2) the employee representatives are provided access to the carrier's facilities to hold voluntary meetings with the employees on the same terms as carriers.

- Certify unions on the basis of receiving a majority of votes cast in favor of representation.

- Eliminate the "derivative carrier" rule whereby employers with only tangential contact with air or rail operations are wrongly classified as "carriers" because they perform certain types of sub-

contracted work under the nominal "control" of a carrier.

- Allow accretions of employee classifications upon the NMB's finding that a classification is part of a craft or class, without need for the filing of authorization cards or other dilatory process.

- Conclude handling of the proposed changes to the NMB's Representation Manual consistent with the recommendations filed by various Teamster subordinate bodies.

Concerning mediation of collective bargaining disputes, the report stated that:

- The NMB must stress that mediation is the "last stop" in the collective bargaining process that will require frequent, intensive bargaining to reach an agreement.

- The NMB must acknowledge that parties bargaining in good faith may not reach agreement and a release from me-

diation is simply another part of the collective bargaining process designed by Congress.

- When Rail Labor Organizations express a formal desire to bargain as a coalition with one or more carriers, the Board's mediation efforts for all such Organizations should be included in a single docket.

Finally, as to the conduct of arbitration of contract grievances, the Report recommended that the NMB must acknowledge that the day-to-day administration of the grievance arbitration machinery created by Congress in the Railway Labor Act is reserved to labor and management and should, therefore, attempt to aid those parties in the implementation of labor and management's joint recommendations to the NMB in 2007 regarding efficient changes to that arbitration machinery. Additionally, the NMB should restore the position of Chief

of Staff to facilitate its administration of grievance arbitration and coordinate mediation and representation activities.

Teamster Rail Conference President and BLET National President Ed Rodzicz applauded the work by those who participated in discussions with the Obama Transition Team and in preparing the report. "We provided the new Administration with compelling evidence of how the NMB, under the Bush Presidency, operated as a tool of rail and air carriers for eight years. Our proposals would restore the NMB to its historic role as an impartial body that would protect the rights of railroad and airline workers and ensure stable rail and aviation transportation." ©©

THE REPORT (49 PAGES) IS AVAILABLE FOR DOWNLOAD AS A PDF FROM THE BLET WEBSITE AT: [HTTP://WWW.BLE-T.ORG/PR/PDF/IBTNMBTRANSITIONPAPER.PDF](http://www.ble-t.org/pr/pdf/IBTNMBTRANSITIONPAPER.PDF)



Education & Training travels



On
The Road
Again

2009 Workshops

1. January 13-16

Secretary Treasurer LM-2 Workshop,
Madison, WI

2. February 23-26

Secretary Treasurer Workshop, Vancouver,
WA

3. March 1-6

Legislative Representative Workshop,
Washington, D.C.

4. March 11-27

Advanced Local Chairman Workshop,
Champaign, IL

5. May 10-14

General Chairman Workshop,
St Louis, MO

6. August 23-27

Passenger Local Chairman Workshop,
National Labor College (NLC),
Silver Spring, MD

7. November 2009

Local Chairman Workshop, NLC,
Silver Spring, MD

8. December 2009

Secretary Treasurer Workshop,
Cleveland, OH

2009 Regional Meetings

9. June 7-11

SMA, Gatlinburg, TN

10. July 5-9

EUMA, Philadelphia, PA

11. August 9-14

IWC, Green Bay, WI

12. September 13-16

SWCM, Kansas City, MO

The BLET Education & Training Department

recently completed a successful workshop for Secretary-Treasurers at the University of Wisconsin in Madison, Wisc. The workshop was for S-Ts who file an LM-2 report as part of their duties, and was held January 13-16, 2009.

Front row, from left: Ken Kroeger, BLET National Coordinator Education and Training Dept.; Mark Whitchurch, GCA ST, CN/IC; and James Nelson, GCA ST, BNSF-MRL, and Alternate National Secretary-Treasurer.

Second row, from left: James Ussery, ST, Texas SLB; Diane Ellis, Executive Assistant, Texas SLB; Dr. Elaine Reese, BLET Office of Tax Compliance Director; Charles Lough Jr., GCA Alt ST, CN/IC; Jerry Elmore, GCA ST NS-Northern Lines; John Lund, Ph.D Professor, School for Workers U of W; Tom Preston, GCA ST, UP-Western Region; Walt Schmidt BLET Director of Online Services; and Jim Thompson, GCA ST, UP-Eastern Region



Third row, from left: Michael Mercier, GCA ST, UP-Northern Region; David Estes, GCA ST, Amtrak; Kevin Leyerle, GCA

ST, UP-Central Region; James Chappelle, GCA ST, NJ Transit; and David Welter GCA ST, CSX-NRL.

Photo: BLET Education & Training Dept.

CN-WC CONTRACT

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

care benefits between ages 60 and 65 (when they become eligible for Medicare). Railroad Retirement allows employees to retire at the age of 60 provided they have 30 years of service, and the addition of the bridge insurance will make it easier for Wisconsin Central engineers to retire at age 60.

In addition, maximum coverage under the union's Short Term Disability plan was

extended from six months to a year.

General Chairman Reynolds was on the negotiating team, along with BLET Vice President Rick Radek, 1st Vice Chairman John Woyak and 2nd Vice Chairman Eric Hau. Characterizing the negotiations as intense, General Chairman Reynolds said contract talks with CN regarding the new agreement began in late fall 2004.

"I thank Rick Radek, John Woyak and Eric Hau for their hard work and dedication to the membership," Gen-

eral Chairman Reynolds said.

"Although the negotiations were protracted, requiring mediation during one phase of them, we are pleased that our membership so overwhelmingly approved the results," Vice President Radek said. "Given these troublesome economic times, probably the strongest feature of the agreement is the level of employment security it accords our membership through its crew consist and protective benefit provisions." @

2009

Calendar & Events

Railroad Retirement Board Informational Conferences

The U.S. Railroad Retirement Board holds free information conferences for railroaders. Conference registration begins at 8 a.m., with the programs beginning promptly at 8:30 a.m. and ending at 12:30 p.m.

April 3, 2009

St. Louis, Mo.

At the Holiday Inn-South Country Center,
6921 S. Lindbergh Blvd.

April 17, 2009

Romulus, Mich.

Crowne Plaza Hotel, 8000 Merriman Rd.

April 17, 2009

Birmingham, Ala.

Birmingham/Jefferson Convention Complex,
2101 Richard Arrington Jr. Blvd.-North,
East Meeting Rooms A-B

April 23, 2009

East Hanover, N.J.

Ramada Inn & Conference Center,
130 Route 10 West

April 24, 2009

New York, NY

Doubletree Metropolitan Hotel,
569 Lexington Ave. at East 51st St.

April 24, 2009

Eagan, Minn.

Best Western Dakota Ridge, 3450 Washington
Dr., I-35E & Yankee Doodle Rd.

June 7-12, 2009

82nd Annual Southeastern Meeting Association, Gatlinburg, Tenn.

Brother John Mason, Local Chairman of BLET Division 239 (Knoxville, Tenn.), is Chairman of the 2009 SMA in Gatlinburg, Tenn. It will be held at the Park Vista Hotel & Conference Center (705 Cherokee Orchard Road, Gatlinburg, TN 37738; Phone: (865) 436-9211). The room rate will be \$103 per night. To contact Brother Mason, call (865) 523-2684 email: scooterloco@comcast.net or LNM67@comcast.net.

July 28-August 1, 2009

Military Railway Service Reunion

Organizers are planning a large reunion of MRS veterans who served during WWII and Korea, which will be held at Ft. Eustis, Va., as part of the Army's Transportation Corps week. More details coming soon. Email Mark Metz for details: m-m-e@comcast.net.

August 9-14, 2009

69th Annual International Western Convention, Green Bay, Wisc.

Brother John Reynolds, Wisconsin Central General Chairman and member of BLET Division 209 (Green Bay, Wisc.), is Chairman of the 2009 IWC in Green Bay, Wisc. It will be held at Radisson Hotel & Conference Center Green Bay (2040 Airport Drive, Green Bay, WI 54313; Phone: (920) 494-7300). The room rate will be \$94 per night. To contact Brother Reynolds, call (920) 462-4509 or email: JReynoldsBLET@newbc.rr.com.

September 13-16, 2009

75th Annual Southwestern Convention Meeting, Kansas City, Mo.

Brother Mike Zenner, Secretary-Treasurer of BLET Division 130 (Kansas City, Kan.), is Hosting Chairman of the 2009 SWCM in Kansas City, Mo. It will be held at the Hyatt Regency Crown Center (2345 McGee St., Kansas City, MO 64108; Phone: (816) 421-1234). The room rate will be \$139 per night. To contact Brother Zenner, call (816) 804-9107 or email: zmike5@kc.rr.com.

BLET AUXILIARY

New hope for the New Year



By BECKY SCHNEIDER

PRESIDENT
BLET AUXILIARY

Hope for the country begins this year with a new administration. Gone are the days of anti-Labor Secretary Elaine Chao, and an administration that showed its lack of compassion for working families by catering to the interests of big business. Certainly, Vice President Joe Biden is a big improvement over his predecessor because he knows how hard Americans must work to survive in these times, much less real-

ize any kind of American dream.

The first ray of hope came as the Equal Pay Act was signed into law in January, and there is hope that the Employee Free Choice Act (EFCA) will be allowed to move forward, giving workers a much easier path to organize. Critics of the bill say that pressure from union organizers will force employees to form a union against their will, when in reality, by changing the process from secret ballots to a card check system, it will make the process more transparent, taking away the employers' ability to pressure employees into voting against forming a union. It will also make it easier to prove that an employee was fired for organizing. The short line railroads should benefit greatly from the law because there have been a number of employees fired for trying to organize, and even though that is currently against the law, it still seems hard to prove.

Times are tough right now even for railroad employees. With hundreds of railroaders either cut back or cut off, it's hard to see things getting better soon.

The carriers continue to make record profits in spite of the flagging economy, but perhaps they are saving for a rainy day? More likely is that the bean counters, in order to keep profits up, once again have seen labor as an easy fix for the bottom line.

My father-in-law worked for the railroad, and when employed, it was a good job – giving him the ability to raise his five kids. There were some lean times though. As a machinist, he would often have to travel and be away from his family for weeks at a time because he was forced to work wherever there was an open machine shop. For 14 years, he was completely cut off and the family made ends meet by raising chickens and rabbits which they used for food and sold to local markets. He got started in that enterprise by accepting animals from area farmers in partial trade for the cost of repairing irrigation equipment. Because railroad employment was more lucrative than just about any other blue collar job at the time, when they reopened the roundhouse here in El Paso and he was called back to work, he gladly returned,

retiring after 30 years.

The world is a very different place now, and when one of our younger members get cut off, they cannot afford to wait for a decade for a call back to service like my father-in-law, and the market for selling rabbit meat and chicken eggs just isn't what it used to be.

During these tough times, those who are still working need to remember our brothers and sisters in the BLET who are not. We hope they will be called back to work soon, but in the interim, we can all do little things to help them and their families get through the tough times. Even if we cannot afford to provide monetary help, making a simple phone call to check on them is usually greatly appreciated.

The Brotherhood is about watching over each other, and as Americans we pride ourselves on our charity to one another. So, until the country can get back on its feet, we should all take some time to reflect and remember that we are all in this together and together we will get through these economic hard times. Yes we can! And yes we will! @@@

Goodbye, dear friend!

By ANITA CARUSO

NATIONAL SECRETARY
BLET AUXILIARY

My dear friend Cooksey Humphrey, husband of long-time Auxiliary member Martha Humphrey, passed away December 11, 2008, at the age of 85. Cooksey joined the Brotherhood in 1948 and was presented with a 60-year pin and a Brass Bell at the Southwestern Convention Meeting in Shreveport, Louisiana, in 2007. Cooksey and Martha were familiar faces at the regional conventions throughout the years, even after his retirement in 1983. His presence and smile could light up a room and he had a way of always making you feel special. He always had a stubby cigar in his mouth (though I never saw it lit) and loved to pass out cigars to his pals.

Cooksey and Martha hosted a very well attended SWCM in Bossier City, Louisiana, in 1995, 12 years after his retirement. The Mardi Gras themed banquet at that convention is still remembered by many as a fun and festive event.

Cooksey started his career in 1941 as a



The late Cooksey Humphrey and Anita Caruso at the 2007 SWCM in Shreveport, La.

fireman for the Illinois Central Railroad in Bossier City and was promoted to engineer on December 22, 1943. He served in the Army during World War II as a member of the Railroad Operating Battalion from 1943-1946 and received a Good Conduct Medal and a European Ribbon with two stars.

Cooksey loved sports. He played professional baseball in the Boston Braves system from 1946-1950. He also liked to box.

Cooksey married his lovely wife, Martha, on January 30, 1947. They have four children as well as several grandchildren and great grandchildren. Two of his sons, Buster and Bruce, both worked at the railroad for a time.

My husband Sam and I visited their home following the banquet at the 2007 SWCM. He shared stories about his younger days, his hobbies, his family, and his life outside of the railroad. We were also his honored guests on a guid-

ed tour of his hometown. He was so proud of Bossier City and this personal tour was quite a treat for us. He drove us around in his huge Cadillac and pointed out all the points of interest. He was very much a Southern gentleman. Whenever I saw him, he would say "come over here and give me a little sugar," which meant a kiss on the cheek. I had never heard this expression before I met Cooksey and it always made me smile and eager to please!

When I would return from a convention that the Humphreys had attended, I would tell my Mother all about my new friend, Cooksey. There was always some funny story for me to relay to Mom and she would frequently ask me about him. I swear, she

would ask me more about my friends from Louisiana than she asked about her own grandchildren, and that's the honest truth! She was very upset to hear about Cooksey's illness and subsequent death. She had taken such a liking to him just through my colorful stories. Mom felt as if she knew him and thought that they would have really liked each other. Cooksey had that kind of effect on people — so kind, friendly, joking, and charismatic — all rolled into one beautiful person.

Cooksey, I will never forget you. You have made quite an impression on Sam and me. I will miss you always and "sugar" will be waiting for you when I see you in Heaven. Goodbye for now, dear friend. @@@

Five percent of BLET dues not tax deductible

Internal Revenue Service regulations require that the BLET National Division inform its members that a certain portion of your National Division dues are not tax deductible as a miscella-

neous itemized deduction on your personal tax returns.

According to the National Secretary-Treasurer's office, the portion of the National Division dues that is not subject to deduction

as an Itemized Deduction on a Form 1040 tax return is 5 percent for 2008.

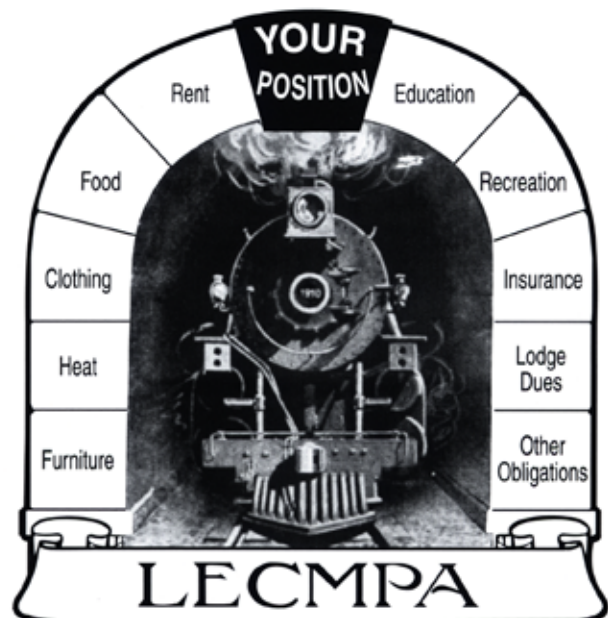
The 5 percent reflects expenses associated with political lobbying efforts by the union, which is not tax deductible.

Locomotive Engineers & Conductors Mutual Protective Association

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City of Brotherly Love hosts EUMA

What better place for the Brotherhood to meet than the city of Brotherly Love?

Philadelphia will play host to the BLET's 71st annual Eastern Union Meeting Association (EUMA) from July 5-9, 2009.

Brother Sean Simon, Vice President of BLET Division 226 (Newark, N.J.), is Arrangements Chairman of the 2009 EUMA. The 2009 EUMA will be held at the Hyatt Regency Philadelphia at Penn's Landing (201 S. Columbus Blvd., Philadelphia, PA 19106; Phone: (215) 928-1234. Website: <http://pennslanding.hyatt.com>).

The convention rate (\$169 per night single or double occupancy, additional for triple or quadruple occupancy) is also available for the three days following EUMA.

Those who get to town early for the July 4 weekend (July 2, 3, 4) will enjoy Philadelphia's "Welcome America" celebration, which includes free concerts and fireworks on the waterfront, imme-



Robert Indiana's iconic Love sculpture is located in at JFK Plaza across from City Hall. It was installed in 1976, and its location, JFK Plaza, is now better known as Love Park.

diately adjacent to the hotel. Deadline for these extended stays is March 28.

Brother Simon reports that the "Old City" section of Philadelphia (including Independence Hall and the Liberty Bell

complex) is within walking distance of the Hyatt, as is the Philadelphia Maritime Museum.

One of the tours planned will include the Camden Adventure Aquarium (which



A dramatic evening sky view of Philadelphia highlights the contrast of new and old living side by side.

has one of only two hammerhead sharks in captivity), and the Battleship USS New Jersey museum (the Navy's most decorated warship), which can be accessed via a water taxi that docks right outside the Hyatt.

An abundant array of educational opportunities will also be available with workshops geared specifically to BLET Secretary-Treasurers, Local Chairmen and Legislative Representatives.

To contact Brother Simon, call (609) 558-6405 or email: EUMA2009@aol.com. ©

Love photo: J. Smith for GPTMC; Skyline photo: by B. Krist for GPTMC

LETTERS to the EDITOR

Where would you be right now without the Union?

(BLET EDITOR'S NOTE: BROTHER R.E. YOUNG, LOCAL CHAIRMAN OF BLET DIVISION 256, RECENTLY RECEIVED AN ANONYMOUS EMAIL FROM A MEMBER UPSET OVER A NUMBER OF WORK-RELATED ISSUES AT THE BNSF RAILWAY. WHAT FOLLOWS ARE THE ANONYMOUS MESSAGE AS WELL AS BROTHER YOUNG'S RESPONSE.)

Mr. Young:

BNSF saw its earnings rise 23 percent in the fourth quarter of 2008, as freight revenue increased 3 percent. BNSF recorded a record profit of \$615 million and saw freight revenue hit \$4.25 billion in the fourth quarter. The company's full year earnings increased 19 percent per share.

How come I have to work away from home to keep a job if profits are so good?

How come my union isn't bringing this to the attention of Congress?

How come I am so close to being laid off from my job and thousands of my co-workers already are?

How come management is trying to cheat me out of every dime at every turn out here when they don't want to put enough people on the boards to do the job?

These are questions I would like answers to if BNSF is doing so well and is so successful.

I also would like someone, anyone, to explain to me what the hell I pay union dues for.

Signed,

ANONYMOUS

Dear Member:

I know how you feel when the carrier is raking in the bucks while you are making huge sacrifices to feed your family. I have been there and done that. The difference between when I

was in your shoes and now is that you have the opportunity to chase your seniority. We couldn't do that when it would have helped me. That said, the expanded seniority is a double-edged sword. It takes you away from the ones you are living for and working to provide for. I know that is a tough row to how.

I am not about to try to tell you that the corporations have your best interest at heart. We both know that is not true. It's all about the almighty dollar to them. I understand that you are bitter toward the unions as well but I honestly believe that the anger you feel toward the union is misguided. I would ask you to ask yourself where you would be right now without the unions. I would go so far as to say that you would probably not be drawing a check from BNSF at all right now. It is certain that your paycheck would be a mere fraction of the size that it is, and it is also very unlikely that you would have the health care benefits that you have.

I know for a fact that the unions don't have the power to force the carrier to put you back to work at home. All the unions can do for you is to hold the carrier to the agreements they have signed with the unions — agreements that would not exist without the unions. I won't try to tell you that there have never been any corrupt union bosses any more than I would say that there have never been any corrupt corporate bosses. I do believe that at this point in history the union bosses are probably as clean as they have ever been. I would also say that you get out of the union what you put into it. If all you do is pay your dues, then you are missing out on a lot of opportunity to effect changes and protect what our predecessors have fought so hard for.

I can tell you that on a personal level, I put a hell of a lot of work into my job as a local chairman and receive little in the form of tangible rewards.

I represent individuals against the monster that is corporate America. I have helped save several men's jobs when the carrier wanted nothing less than to throw them away. I have recouped untold thou-

sands of dollars in claims that the carrier refused to pay for my members. In fact, just yesterday at a claim conference, I walked away with over \$20,000 in pay for my members. I am not telling you this to brag or pat myself on the back. There are many, many more folks like me out there doing the best they can to protect you and the thousands of other working men like you. I am telling you this in hopes that you will recognize who the enemy is. I am telling you this in the hope that when the dust settles you might become a part of the solution instead of just another malcontent who hates his job and anything related to it.

I like my job, both as a locomotive engineer and as a local chairman. What I mean by that is that I like what I do and I am proud of who I am, in spite of the fact that I work for a faceless corporation who couldn't care less who I am or how much of my life I have given to them. I can look myself in the mirror and see someone who I don't hate. I see someone who can hold his head high and know that I live my life by principles that my employer will never know or understand.

Hang in there, Brother. Times are tough all across America, not just at the BNSF Railway. This too shall pass, and you will have stories for your grand kids about how tough times were back in the day.

Fraternally,

R.E. YOUNG
LOCAL CHAIRMAN
BLET DIVISION 256
DENVER, COLO.

(THE FOLLOWING LETTER IS FROM JOHN T. LITTLE, CHAIRMAN OF THE TENNESSEE STATE LEGISLATIVE BOARD, TO JOHN P. TOLMAN, VICE PRESIDENT AND NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE REPRESENTATIVE. IT WAS SENT ON INAUGURATION DAY — JANUARY 20, 2009.)

Brother John Tolman,

On behalf of the Tennessee State Legislative Board, we take this eventful time

and day to thank you for the outstanding support that you have given to this Board. On the really great days in life we think of great people and the joy, comfort and peace that they bring to us all. On this Inaugural Day of Barack Obama, our 44th President, we think of you and your BLET National Legislative Office staff. It goes without saying that hope should fill all working Americans this day. Your leadership throughout this election season and the days before has been a great benefit to our members.

As Chairman of the Tennessee State Legislative Board, I appreciate the support and brotherhood that you and your office has offered to me and my members. I am truly thankful for the personal and professional role you have played in leading by example, which embodies the American dream of hope. Your passion has been contagious and endless.

In closing, you have this Board's endless support and we wish you future health, safety and energy to continue to lead us so that we may lead others. The best as always, as I remain,

With deepest respect,

J.T. LITTLE IV
CHAIRMAN
TENNESSEE STATE
LEGISLATIVE BOARD

Dear Editor:

I don't know how to address this or who to address it to, but I just needed to send it.

My daughter, Debbie, died August 28, 2004, at 3:01 a.m. of suicide by train.

I am so very sorry for the pain her death likely caused the engineer. I don't know if there is any way you might know to contact him. She died in Knox, Ind., in Starke County.

If you can contact him, please ask him for his forgiveness and let him know I'm so very sorry.

Thank you,

TERESA KAWAGUCHI

A message from
Teamsters General President
James P. Hoffa

There Is Safety in Numbers

Corporate Campaign to Kill Card Check Shows It's Needed

Every day in the United States, dozens of workers who legally try to join a union are spied on, harassed, intimidated, and fired. Union-busting is a thriving industry for corporate thugs and lawyers throughout this country.



It didn't used to be this way. In the 1950s, only a handful of workers were illegally disciplined or fired for union activity, resulting in back-pay awards. In 2006, 32,000

workers were awarded back-pay by the National Labor Relations Board because employers illegally punished them for trying to join a union.

The Employee Free Choice Act would give back to workers a fair shot at joining a union. It is our No. 1 priority to see that Congress enacts it.

Now, I don't like to call people liars. But the multimillion-dollar corporate campaign to kill the legislation is making a lot of people say things that aren't true. One falsehood is that the act would eliminate the secret ballot in union elections. It would not. The Employee Free Choice Act would allow workers to choose a secret ballot or majority sign-up when deciding whether to join a union.

I think that's fair. If you can sign a card to join the Republican Party, you should be able to sign a card to join a union.

The way it works now, it's the employer, not the worker, who holds all the power and chooses how workers will make the decision to join a union.

Americans want their workplaces to be fair. That's why they support the Employee Free Choice Act by overwhelming margins. A January 8 Hart Research Associates poll showed 73 percent of American adults want the legislation to become law.

There's another false argument against the legislation—that strengthening unions will damage the economy. The fact is that America experienced its greatest economic growth when unions were strong. Union membership stood at 35 percent of the workforce in the 1950s, a time when America enjoyed unprecedented prosperity. Now, only 12 percent of the workforce belongs to unions, and we're in the deepest recession since the Great Depression.

Enacting the Employee Free Choice Act would strengthen unions and improve our economy. I urge Congress to pass it soon.

Fraternally,

James P. Hoffa
TEAMSTERS GENERAL PRESIDENT

PHOTO OF THE MONTH



On February 6, express train service between New York City and Atlantic City began with the debut of the Atlantic City Express Service — or ACES. It's a \$25 million effort backed by three casinos, as well as the Casino Reinvestment Development Authority. The service is operated by BLET members who work for New Jersey Transit. "We hope ACES will be a success and provide additional employment opportunities for our New Jersey Transit members," BLET National Vice President Marcus J. Ruef said. **Photo:** courtesy Atlantic City Express Service (www.acestrain.com)

Advisory Board January Activity

In accordance with the BLET Bylaws, summaries of BLET Advisory Board members' activities are published monthly:

National President Edward W. Rodzicz — National Division office: General supervision of BLET activities; General office duties; Various correspondence & phone calls; President, Teamsters Rail Conference.

First Vice-President and Alternate President Paul T. Sorrow — Performed various duties in Office Administrator capacity; Various duties assigned to First Vice President; Various correspondence and telephone communications; General supervision of Special Representatives; Reception for Senator Rockefeller; Rail Conference mtg.; Attended meeting of Rail Labor Chief's organization; Attended Presidential Inauguration, Washington, D.C.; National Handling Working Group, National Division Office, Cleveland, Ohio.

National Secretary-Treasurer William C. Walpert — General supervision of BLET financial, record depts.; ND office; BLET Education & Training Dept.; Internal Organizing, Mobilizing & Strategic Planning Dept.; Safety Task Force; Meetings with vendors and financial institutions; Standard Building operations oversight; Reception for Senator Jay Rockefeller, Washington, D.C.; Rail Conference mtg., Ft. Lauderdale, Fla.; Presidential inauguration, Washington, D.C.

Vice-President Richard K. Radek — ND Office; BLET Decertification Helpline services; Director of Arbitration Dept; National Railroad Adjustment Board (NRAB); Illinois Central; Wisconsin Central; Indiana Harbor Belt; METRA; Belt Rwy. of Chicago; Chicago Central & Pacific; Duluth, Missabe & Iron Range; Routine office duties, Chicago and Cleveland; NRAB correspondence & admin.; FRSA committee report; CN/WC mtgs., Green Bay, Wisc.; E&T planning mtg., Milwaukee; CN/WC quarterly LM mtg., Kaukauna, Wisc.; BRC remote control case, BRC; FRA Part 240.409 dockets this month: EQAL 05-59 (CSX); 06-17 (KCS); 07-32 (UP); 07-11 (MBCR); 07-38 (UP); 07-14 (SEPTA); 07-44 (NS); 00-41 (NS).

Vice-President Merle W. Geiger Jr. — Assigned to: BLET Trainmen's Department; Kansas City Southern; Texas-Mexican Rwy.; Midsouth Rail; Southrail; Gateway Western; CP Rail System/U.S.; Portland & Western RR; Great Western RR; Division 221 mtg., Provo, Utah; Mtg. w/ GC Draper and Utah RR, Provo, Utah; Represent GC Draper, Provo, Utah; Implementing agreement negotiations w/ GC Clark and KCS, Forth Worth, Texas; Holiday; research, correspondence and general office duties.

Vice-President Stephen D. Speagle — Assigned to Burlington Northern Santa Fe, Montana Rail Link, Pacific Harbor Line, Missouri & Northern Arkansas (M&NA), National Wage/Rule Committee; General office duties; Division 430 mtg., Trinidad, Colo; Mtg. w/ BNSF VP of Operations, Fort Worth; Mtg. w/ BNSF AVP Labor Relations; Executive Session, PLB 7166; PLB 7092 with G.C. Gibbons, BNSF, Fort Worth.

Vice-President E.L. "Lee" Pruitt — Assisted general chairmen & members of: UP-Western Lines; UP-Western Region; UP-Central Region; UP-Southern Region; UP-Tacoma Belt; UPSRGCA-assisting GC Gore, Houston, Texas; UPWRGCA-assisting GC

Dayton, P&W Division 416 merger mtgs., Portland, Ore; Assisting all UPRR GCAs, re: Rail Safety Act mtgs. w/ UP, Houston; Vacation; Office duties, paper work, filing and calls.

Vice-President & National Legislative Representative John P. Tolman — Assigned to BLET Washington, DC office; BLET Security Officer; General Office Duties, telephone, correspondence; Coordinate content of NLO website; Continued coordination w/ IBT Government Affairs Dept.; Coordinated PAC contributions; Attended RSAC mtgs. in Washington, D.C.; RRB occupational disability conference call; Transportation Research Board mtg., Washington, D.C.; AAR Rail Labor mtg., Washington; Coordinated fundraiser for Senator Rockefeller (WV), Chair of Commerce, Science & Transportation; Rail Conference policy mtg., Ft. Lauderdale, Fla.; Inauguration of President Barack Obama; Various inaugural events (Ohio and Pennsylvania ball and event for Senate President Harry Reid); Heath Schuler event with special guest President Bill Clinton, Raleigh, N.C.; Mtg. w/ several local chairmen in N.C.; Attended various fundraisers for elected officials.

Vice-President Marcus J. Ruef — Assigned to Amtrak; Port Authority Trans Hudson (PATH); Long Island Railroad (LIRR); Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (SEPTA); New Jersey Transit (NJT); MNR; Norfolk Southern-All General Committees; Wheeling & Lake Erie; and NYAL; Holiday; Prepare summary letter for GC Darcy, NJT; PLB 7159 awards, NS-S; Letter for GC Dixon, re: Natural selection for SBA 933, Septa; Study proposed changes to Part 240 (73 FR 80349-80360); Various discipline cases, NS-S; PLB 6657, W&LE, preparation and arbitration, Cleveland; C-3 mtg. w/ FRA, NJT, UTU and ATDA, Newark, N.J.; Adopt awards 7159, NJT; Assist GC Nunziato, PATH; Write RLA major/minor dispute outline for E&T Dept.; Visit division 335, Brownsville & New Stanton, Pa.; Assist GC Davis w/ discipline case, NS-N; Assist GC Davis with investigation representation (Div. 54), NS-N, Newark, N.J.; Adopt awards for SBA 1063, PLB 7079, NS-N/NEC.

Vice-President Dennis R. Pierce — Assigned to all CSX General Committees — Eastern Lines, Western Lines, Northern Lines, Conrail (SAA/CSX-Northern District) — and Indiana Rail Road, Alabama State Docks; Special projects, BNSF GCofAs; General office duties; Arbitration/ Public Law Boards, CSX-N, CSX-W, CSX-E GCofAs; CSX SSA dispute resolution committee, Jacksonville, Fla.; Mtg., BLET and CSX Executive Vice President Tony Ingram, Jacksonville; Mtg., BLET and CSX management on rail safety bill impact, Jacksonville; BLET Christmas party, Kansas City, Mo.; Advisory Board mtg., Cleveland; Public Law Board 6936, CSX-N, Chicago.

Vice-President Mike Twombly — Assigned to Delaware & Hudson; Springfield Terminal; St. Lawrence & Atlantic; Montreal, Maine & Atlantic; Union Railroad; Birmingham Southern; New York, Susquehanna & Western; New England Central; South Buffalo Rwy.; Iowa, Chicago & Eastern; Indiana & Ohio; Indiana Southern; Louisville & Indiana; Meridian Southern; Talleyrand Terminal Railroad; Talleyrand Terminal contract negotiations, Jacksonville, Fla.; IC&E mtgs., Moline, Ill.; Mtgs. w/ crews at layover facility, Savanna, Ill, Mason City, Iowa, Marquette, Iowa; Mtg. w/ members of Div. 117, Mason City; Div. 200 mtg., IC&E, Bettendorf, Iowa; IC&E contract negotiations, Sioux Falls, S.D.; All day contract negotiations w/ IC&E, Sioux Falls, S.D. Mtgs. w/ members in Sioux Falls, S.D. & Independence, Mo.



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International Brotherhood Of Teamsters

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