BLET Engineer killed in Pittsburgh

35-year veteran Andrew Monheim is survived by wife, son

BLET member Andrew Monheim was killed in the line of duty on March 16 following the collision of two Union Railroad freight trains in North Braddock, Pa. Monheim, 54, was a member of BLET Division 700 located in Braddock, Pa. He is survived by his wife of more than 30 years, Lydia, and 12 year-old-son, David. Brother Monheim was a member of the Brotherhood for 31 years, having joined Division 700 on August 1, 1978. He worked for the Union Railroad for 35 years.

“I extend deepest sympathies and heartfelt condolences to the Monheim family on behalf of the 56,000 men and women of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen,” BLET National President Paul Sorrow said. “Brother Monheim was a veteran locomotive engineer and an extremely safety conscious professional. This is a tragic loss for the family and for our Brothers and Sisters at the Union Railroad.”

Prior to working for the railroad, Brother Monheim earned an Associates Degree in physics and astronomy from CCAC and was pursuing a Bachelors Degree in astronomy at the University of Pittsburgh. He also developed a passion for golf later in life, which he enjoyed with friends and especially his son David. He and his wife were avid pet lovers and they have had various beloved pets over the years.

As this issue went to press, the Federal Railroad Administration was continuing its investigation into the collision. According to preliminary reports, Brother Monheim was operating a train of empties when it collided with a train carrying iron ore pellets to U.S. Steel’s Edgar Thompson Plant in North Braddock, Pa.

The trains were operated by Union Railroad, part of Transtar Inc., a transdock, Pa. Edgar Thompson Plant in North Braddock, Pa.

16 railroad deaths in 2009 renewed the call for commitment to safety

In a January 26 letter, FRA Administrator Joseph C. Szabo terms the 16 railroad worker deaths a “tragic toll” and he urges all workers to “think about rules compliance and consider its impact on ensuring a safe return home after each tour of duty.”

Among those killed in 2009 were two BLET members — Andrew R. Reed and Josh Osborn, both just 27 years old. They were working in the cab together for the Iowa, Chicago & Eastern Railroad (IC&E) when their train hit a misaligned switch near Bettendorf, Ill., on July 14, 2009. They were members of BLET Division 266 in Savanna, Ill.

“This tragic toll is more than just a number,” Szabo wrote. “It represents human lives, a father not there to walk his daughter down the aisle, a mother not there for her son’s first day of school, an employee nearing retirement who did not live to enjoy the fruits of his labor.”

In the letter, Szabo encourages all rail workers to avoid distractions and maintain complete situational awareness while on duty. Continued on page 2

Obama allocates $8 billion for high-speed rail

In late January, President Barack Obama announced that 13 rail corridors in 31 states throughout America will split $13 billion in government subsidies to help build high-speed passenger train service.

“There’s no reason Europe or China should have the fastest trains,” President Obama said in his State of the Union speech on January 27. “There are projects like that across this country that will create jobs and help move our nation’s goods, services and information.”

Congress set aside the $8 billion as part of the economic recovery plan enacted last year. The $8 billion is just a start. Last year, President Obama asked Congress in his budget request for an additional $1 billion a year for five years.

BLET National President Paul Sorrow praised the allocation high-speed rail funds, noting the potential for new union jobs for locomotive engineers and trainmen along the high-speed routes.

“The Obama administration is making a monumental investment in America’s rail infrastructure and in America’s future,” President Sorrow said. “It will give a boost to the economy and will provide more job opportunities for all rail workers — including members of the BLET now and in the future.” Continued on page 4

Cincinnati welcomes BLET

Registration now open for 2010 SMA, June 13-17, in Cincinnati, Ohio pg 3

President Sorrow’s message

Solidarity remains key to continued success pg 2

Mobilization matters

BLET re-energizes its grass roots mobilization network. pg 7

Register for News Flash email alerts at: www.ble-t.org
n today’s society trends are established and many thoughts, both good and bad, are cultivated by the news and other media such as television and the Internet. We are told what to eat, what to drink and basically what to think. Celebrities retain high profile public relations firms to create positive images so we will, in turn, buy the products they endorse. It is a brilliant scheme created by brilliant people to influence how we think. Various studies have demonstrated that when we hear the same message over and over, we tend to uncritically accept that message as fact, and this same scheme has come to dominate politics and news. In the end, these messages dramatically shape what we buy, how we vote and the beliefs we embrace. It is not by accident that those who control the largest corporate-owned media do little, if anything, to advance the agenda of the working class people our country. In this same vein, pundits either totally ignore or spew class people our country. In this same vein, pundits either totally ignore or spew class people our country. In this same vein, pundits either totally ignore or spew class people our country. In this same vein, pundits either totally ignore or spew class people our country.

For example, wages for working people in America, when adjusted for inflation, have basically been flat for 40 years. Over most of this period taxes for business and the wealthy have been slashed time and again. The average CEO’s compensation package has soared from being 30 times to over 300 times the average worker’s wage, yet the so-called “business media” chants over and over the lie that our economy isn’t competitive because labor costs are too high. We are inundated with this message from the chattering class 24/7, every day of the year.

It is for these reasons that I am compelled to continually reinforce the need for us — as individual BLET members and as an Organization — to realize how important it is that we support ourselves; that we believe in ourselves; and that we commit to one another that we will stand together as a team. This is extreme-ly important to remember as we conduct work together as a team. This is extreme-ly important to remember as we conduct work together as a team.

Continued from page 1

It is rare in America today that a work-er is on call 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and 365 days a year. But that is the case for our BLET Brothers and Sisters. No other American worker makes such per-sonal sacrifices for their jobs, and rail workers have sacrificed much for the health care benefits they earn as part of their compensation packages. Our abil-ity to maintain and improve those ben-efts lies in the strength that flows from our solidarity and the united front we present to the carriers.

As part of our strategy to move for-ward, we began to revitalize our mobi-lization network several months ago and we plan to be at full throttle as mom-en tum picks up in this round of bar-gaining. We must move beyond petty internal differences, and mobilize our members to fight against efforts of the carriers and their allies in big business and the media to deny us a fair contract settlement. In the end, we can prevail only if we come together and work to-gether. Solidarity is the essential tool to overcome the powerful forces that are arrayed against us. I ask that you commit to joining in that ef-fort, and to lending your voice and vote when called upon to do so.

Paul Sorrow

Electronic Communications Policy

The policy currently in effect is that official communications between BLET members and the National Division require a hard copy of the correspondence — with a signature — being received by the National President — to be considered an “official communication.” This is to provide that the actual question(s) are ad-dressed, and ensures that when official interpretations are made they have reference to a specific request and can be used in future correspondence.

Due to the volume of e-mails it would be impossible for the President to answer all unofficial communications. Therefore, it is the policy of the BLET National Division Office that e-mails addressed to the National President will be reviewed and forwarded to the appropriate officer or staff for a timely response. In other words, an e-mail message is not considered an “official communica-tion.”

This will allow the President to be aware of the opin-ion and suggestions of the membership, while at the same time providing a timely response to the member, if a response is necessary.

Joe Szabo

Paul Sorrow
Registration begins for 2010 SMA in Cincinnati, Ohio

Registration is now open for the 83rd annual BLET-BLET Auxiliary Southeastern Meeting Association convention, which will be held June 13-17, 2010, in Cincinnati, Ohio. The convention will be hosted by Jerry and Peggy Sturdivant and the members of BLET Division 110. Guests will stay at the Cincinnati Hilton Netherlands (35 W. 5th St) and reservations can be made by calling (513) 421-9100. Reservations can also be made online in the SMA 2010 area of the BLET website.

“Cincinnati is an exciting city and we have some events planned that are truly unique to our area,” Brother Sturdivant said. “Included in those events is a leisurely dinner cruise on the Ohio River with spectacular views of the Cincinnati skyline; Kings Island Amusement & Water Park; Golf on the premier “Grizzly” course at the Golf Center at Kings Island; Hollywood Casino gambling boat; and an all you can eat lunch with the Cincinnati Reds versus the Los Angeles Dodgers; and our banquet will be held in the Hilton Netherlands’ Pavilion Ballroom, where Doris Day made her debut!”

The BLET Education and Training Department will be on hand to conduct a day-long workshop for Secretary-Treasurers. Additional workshops will be held for BLET Legislative Representatives and Local Chairmen. Other workshops will focus on radiation training and electronic readout training. The Federal Railroad Administration will also be on hand to answer questions on Locomotive Engineer certification and other issues.

An annual tradition in recent years, the SMA motorcycle ride will take place on June 16. The annual SMA golf outing will take place at the Golf Center at Kings Island.

“We look forward to seeing everyone in Cincinnati for the 83rd SMA this June,” Brother Sturdivant said.

Members with questions can contact SMA Chairman Jerry Sturdivant by email: jpssturdivant@gmail.com. 

Registration forms are available on the BLET website at: 

Golf outing registration: 
High-speed rail
Continued from page 4
Jim Hoffa, General President of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, echoed President Sorrows’s sentiments. “The highly skilled Teamsters who build and maintain our nation’s railroad tracks and operate our freight and passenger rail network nationwide possess the skills, training and safety qualifications necessary to build, maintain and operate these new high-speed rail lines and to safely handle the trains along the routes.”

Along with Freddie Simpson, President of the Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees and Paul Sorrows, President of the BLET, look forward to continuing our work with the Obama administration to preserve rail jobs and expand work opportunities for members of the Teamster Rail Conference.”

High-speed rail

The death of BLET member Ron Langlois has been ruled a suicide by police in Eugene, Ore. Police originally investigated the death as a homicide due to a co-worker found Langlois, 44, dead of a gunshot wound outside of his locomotive on February 6.

Brother Langlois, 44, was a Portland & Western locomotive engineer and a member of BLET Division 416 in Salem, Ore. He is survived by his wife, Alicia Langlois, and three children — a 19-year-old Navy sailor, a 16-year-old varsity cheerleader, and a 9-year-old third grader.

Langlois, 44, became a railroad conductor in 2003, his wife said. He had been a member of the BLET since July 1, 2004. BLET Division 416 has established a memorial fund at Wells Fargo Bank for those wishing to make a financial contribution to the Langlois family. Checks should be made payable to the “Ronald L. Langlois Memorial,” and can be made at any Wells Fargo Bank facility.

A closer look at the 13 high-speed rail projects receiving federal funding

### WEST REGION
- **Cincinnati** — $942 million
- **Columbus** — $344 million

Purchasing right-of-way and constructing track, signals and stations. Also funding for San Diego-La San Luis Obispo (Surfliner) corridor and Oakland-Sacramento (Capitol) corridor.

### MIDWEST REGION
- **Chicago-St. Louis-Kansas City** — $1.133 billion

Track, signal and station upgrades to allow 110 mph passenger service between Chicago and St. Louis. Bridge improvements along St. Louis-Kansas City route.

### MINNEAPOLIS-MINNEAPOLIS-Chicago** — $823 million

Twin Cities planning study. Refurbish stations, 80 miles of track and install Positive Train Control on route from Madison to Milwaukee. Rehabilitation and infrastructure enhancements, Milwaukee to Chicago.

### CLEVELAND-COLUMBUS-CINCINNATI** — $400 million

New highway/track construction and maintenance facilities along Triple C route across Ohio.

### DETROIT-Chicago** — $244 million

Improve signal systems and stations. New station construction along route.

### SOUTHEAST REGION
- **$1.87 billion**

Tampa-Orlando-Miami — $1.25 billion

Construction of 84 miles of new high speed track, build and enhance stations and purchase equipment.

### CHARLOTTE-RICHMOND-WASHINGTON, D.C.**

$620 million

Purchase new locomotives, upgrade track and stations to increase top speeds to 90 mph on Raleigh to Charlotte route. Route improvements from Washington to Richmond and Raleigh to Richmond.

### NORTHEAST REGION**
- **$483 million**

New York-Albany-Buffalo-Montreal — $351 million

Upgrade existing track and signal improvements along route. Various station upgrades.

### NoRTHeaST ReGiOn
- **$27 million**

Buffalo-Montreal
- **151 million**

New York-Albany-Buffalo-Montreal
- **$1.87 billion**

Philadelphia-Harrisburg-Pittsburgh
- **$27 million**

Eliminate three remaining grade crossings on the route to boost top speed to 110 mph. Funds to improve service to Pittsburgh.

### NewHaven-Springfield-St. Albans — $160 million

Upgrades to Amtrak’s Vermont service. Add second main track on New Haven to Springfield route. Vermont New England Central route improvements.

### To download a PDF of this information, visit: www.ble-t.org/pr/pdf/ hsr2010.pdf

### Update from BLE Tax Compliance department

Internal Revenue Service regulations require the BLET National Division to inform its members that a certain portion of their National Division dues are not tax deductible as a miscellaneous itemized deduction on your personal tax returns. The Internal Revenue Service, which is the National Secretariat-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 13 percent for 2009.

The 13 percent reflects expenses associated with political lobbying efforts by the BLET, which are not tax deductible.

The non-chargeable expenses report is on the union’s Dues Objector Report and is available on the union’s website.

### L EcMPA

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### Transportation Workers protecting each other since 1910

### M. Trickler has advised that donations can be mailed to her and she will then deposit the donations in the account. Her address is: P.O. Box 3413, Albright, OR 97321.

Additionally, remembrances to the Ronald Langlois Memorial Fund for his children can be made at Pacific Cascade Federal Credit Union, 1190 Mohawk, Springfield, OR 97477, (541) 747-6125.

Ron Langlois — Division 416; skyline — courtesy of the Cincinnati USA Regional Tourism Network
you 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 the scene of the accident, contact your BLET Local Office. BLET Office: 560 South Gates Street, Suite 700, Chicago, Illinois 60605. Fax: (312) 245-3124 or (800) 998-9776. Email: BLET Directory at Bentley@ble-t.org.

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Brother Kevin Cottrell, Secretary-Treasurer of BLET Division 25 (Terre Haute, Ind.), brought a significant piece of Brotherhood history along with him to a recent Education & Training Department workshop.

On behalf of his members, he donated the Division’s original 145-year-old charter to the BLET National Division. He gave the charter to BLET National President Paul Sorrow and National Secretary-Treasurer Bill Walpert at a Secretary-Treasurer workshop in Cleveland on December 15, 2009.

The charter is now one of the oldest in the BLET archives. It is dated December 27, 1864, and bears the signature of Grand Chief Engineer Charles Wilson. The BLET was founded in 1863, and Wilson was the Brotherhood’s second president. He served from 1864-1874.

Brother Cottrell said the charter had been passed down from one Secretary-Treasurer to the next over the past 145 years. When he won election to the office during the recent Triennial Elections, he wanted to make sure the valuable artifact was given a safe home.

“I am pleased to accept this priceless artifact from Brother Cottrell and the members of BLET Division 25,” National President Paul Sorrow said. “The Brotherhood was in existence for 19 months when the Division 25 charter was signed. It is a significant piece of history and I am proud to display it at BLET headquarters.”

National Secretary-Treasurer Walpert, who is charged with the duty of preserving the archives and records of the National Division under the BLET Bylaws, said the charter is in excellent shape considering its age. However, it has been sent to an archivist to better protect it for display using UV-resistant glass and an acid-free matte.

“With proper care there is no reason why this charter shouldn’t be around for another 145 years,” Walpert said.

A historical charter
Division 25 donates 145-year-old artifact to BLET National Division

Brotherhood history: Paul Sorrow, left, and Bill Walpert, right, accepting a 145-year-old charter from Division 25 Secretary-Treasurer Kevin Cottrell (center).
Robert D. Broka, long-time Director of Records for the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen, is retiring after nearly 40 years of employment at BLET National Division headquarters. And in recognition of his years of dedicated service, the BLET Advisory Board has unanimously voted to honor him with the coveted title of Honorary Member.

Brother Broka becomes the 16th Honorary Member in the 147-year history of the BLET and its predecessor organizations. During a retirement ceremony at National Division headquarters on February 12, Brother Broka was presented with a plaque by BLET National Secretary-Treasurer Bill Walpert thanking him for his "40 years of outstanding dedication and commitment to the Brotherhood."

Additionally, he was presented with a Proclamation signed by BLET National President Paul Sorrow. In the Proclamation, President Sorrow said: "The life and work of Bob Broka has served as an inspiration for thousands of members of the BLET. In nearly 40 years Bob has dedicated his career to helping Secretary-Treasurers of all levels of the Organization in his capacity as Director of the Records Department."

Broka was hired on June 10, 1979, during the administration of International President C.J. Coughlin. His 40 years of service spanned the administration of 11 different International and National Presidents and eight different International and National Division conventions.

In recent years, he has helped lead the transition into the modern-era of online dues reporting. BLET Secretary-Treasurers now file their monthly dues remittance reports using cutting edge Internet-based technology instead of archaic paper filing methods.

Brother Broka is a 1969 graduate of Defiance College, Defiance, Ohio. As a freshman he attended DePauw University in Greencastle, Ind., where he roomed with future U.S. Vice President Dan Quayle.

"We will never be able to replace Bob's outgoing personality and knowledge of the Brotherhood's history and bylaws," said BLET National Secretary-Treasurer Bill Walpert. "His one-of-a-kind personality boosted office morale and helped make coming into the office an enjoyable experience for me over the years. His professionalism and dedication are beyond reproach."

President Sorrow welcomed Brother Broka to the BLET as an Honorary Member.

"It is an honor to present him with Honorary Membership in the Brotherhood, and it is a pleasure to call him Brother Broka," President Sorrow said.

Brother Broka is close friends with the Brotherhood's 13th Honorary Member, long-time BLET employee Ra Tully, and 15th Honorary Member Harold Ross. Other Honorary Members include J. Edgar Hoover, Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation; Hollywood producer Jay Sommers; Railroad artist Howard Fogg; Railroad photographer and BLET Public Relations Director Richard J. Cook; 35-year Washington D.C. office employee Betty Child; and 50-year BLET Building Associate Employee André H. "Add" Balogh.

"On behalf of all men and women of the Brotherhood, I extend best wishes to Brother Broka for a healthy and happy retirement," President Sorrow said.

BLET honors Bob Broka with Honorary Membership

Reenergizing mobilization

The BLET is re-energizing its mobilization network to increase membership involvement on key issues of importance to the Brotherhood.

In recent years, BLET Mobilization has been used in a military sense to describe the act of assembling troops and supplies and making them ready for war. In today's union terminology, mobilization is a communications network to disseminate information as quickly as possible throughout the organization. It is a grassroots effort to involve the membership in ongoing campaigns.

The types of campaigns may differ, but the goal always remains the same: to get the membership involved.

"The mobilization process strengthens unity among the membership and is a powerful communication and information sharing tool," BLET National President Paul Sorrow said. "The National Division stands behind Mobilization. Communication is the cornerstone of my administration. With the strong support of First Vice President Dennis Pierce and National Secretary-Treasurer Bill Walpert, we are re-energizing the BLET's mobilization network to improve the flow of communcations throughout our organization."

NST Walpert heads the BLET's Department of Internal Mobilizing, Organizing and Strategic Planning.

"Whether it's a campaign to lobby Congress or a get out the vote drive, mobilization makes a remarkable difference," he said. "Mobilization makes a measurable difference and is proven effective."

Dusting off the network

In December of 2009, President Sorrow decided to re-energize the Mobilization Network and test its effectiveness with a get out the vote campaign on the Burlington Northern Santa Fe. Approximately 6,000 BLET engineers on the property were getting ready to cast their votes on a new contract. Instead of targeting a few divisions where the Network was not in place.

"The results were very plain to see," National President Sorrow said. "We did not attempt to sway the vote one way or the other. We just wanted to make sure members exercised their right to cast their vote on the contract. The rate of return for Divisions where the Mobilization Network was in place was much higher than Divisions where the Network was not in place."

More than 3,500 members cast ballots in the election with 75 percent voting in favor. In announcing the election results, BLET Vice President Steve Speagle said, "I am very proud of the high level of participation by the BNSF engineers."

Mobilization's second test

In January, the mobilization network was given another test — this time on a larger scale.

Congress was considering health care legislation that would be harmful to BLET members. Instead of targeting a few divisions on a single property, the Mobilization Network was activated system-wide on the entire BNSF and CSXT properties.

"The Network was not yet fully operational, the results were successful. The BLET was part of a large union coalition that successfully convinced the congressional leaders to rework the harmful proposals," Walpert said.

Additional updates will be provided periodically as the National Division works to expand the Mobilization Network.
Quality jobs for Americans

Job Creation

The message from Massachusetts is clear: Voters want their elected representatives to find ways to create more jobs. I believe Scott Brown won the Senate seat because the voters of Massachusetts, like others across the country, are looking for meaningful change in Washington. Now, more than ever, our country needs strong leaders who are committed to finding practical solutions to work together to create jobs or prevent layoffs. This means working with employers to keep existing jobs and secure new jobs. I know exactly how to put the American people back to work.

Support for Working Families

In the long run, though, lawmakers need to tackle several major tasks to get our economy moving. They have to restore our international competitiveness and protect pensions to save jobs. It isn’t just the assembly line workers thrown out of work when a factory shuts down. It’s the plant manager’s accountant, the workers’ kids’ teachers, the rail engineers, and the service carriers. They all need to be supported.

In the long run, though, lawmakers need to tackle several major tasks to get our economy moving. They have to restore our international competitiveness and protect pensions to save jobs. It isn’t just the assembly line workers thrown out of work when a factory shuts down. It’s the plant manager’s accountant, the workers’ kids’ teachers, the rail engineers, and the service carriers. They all need to be supported. We must put an end to policies that encourage job creation overseas at the expense of working families here. Tax breaks to encourage industries such as clean energy should be restricted to U.S. companies when possible.

A message from Teamsters General President James P. Hoffa