BLET, RLBC seek NMB release

Bargaining coalition declares impasse

The Rail Labor Bargaining Coalition (RLBC) has asked to be released from federal mediation. The unions also categorically rejected rail management’s assertion that the tentative agreement between National Carriers Conference Committee/United Transportation Union (NCCC/UTU) sets a pattern for the rest of Rail Labor.

The RLBC is comprised of the Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees Division, the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen (both divisions of the Teamster Rail Conference), the Brotherhood of Railroad Signalmen, the National Conference of Firemen and Oilers (SEIU), the Sheet Metal Workers International Association, and the International Brotherhood of Boilermakers and Blacksmiths.

In a June 13 letter to the National Mediation Board (NMB), RLBC Chairman W. Dan Pickett requested that NMB terminate mediation and offer arbitration to the parties, pursuant to Section 5 of the Railway Labor Act. Chairman Pickett noted that the Mediation Board’s best efforts have not been successful in bringing about an amicable settlement of this dispute through mediation.

In a June 21 statement regarding the carrier assertion that the NCCC/UTU tentative agreement sets a pattern, the RLBC categorically rejected “the notion our members should accept a smaller wage package than we negotiated in the last bargaining round when the Carriers’ profits have more than doubled since then. We are even more troubled by the prospect of concessionary changes in our health plan.”

continued on page 4

San Luis Obispo hosts 2011 IWC

A tour of Hearst Castle, a wine-tasting dinner and golf tournament are on tap for the 2011 IWC.

Lots to see and do: A tour of Hearst Castle, a wine-tasting dinner and golf tournament are on tap for the 2011 IWC.

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Investment Trustee
Bill Walpert to serve Railroad Retirement Trust Fund pg 3

SMA Photo Album
Highlights of 84th SMA in Asheville, N.C. pg 5

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Senemek reelected to serve CP Rail-US pg 6

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Doing your civic duty

S
everal times over the past year I have written about the importance of every BLET member performing his or her duty to ward our Brotherhood. I have cited a number of examples of fulfilling your obligation to the Organization, from attending local division meetings, to participating in the election of officers and contract ratification votes, to becoming involved in mobilization activities such as lobbying to protect BLET wages, working conditions and legal rights. Such activity is critical in this time of unprecedented attacks upon workers by Corporate America and its political supporters.

Today I want to talk about a related duty: your duty as a citizen of the United States. Civic duty is an integral part of fulfilling your duty as a BLET member.

Participating in elections is the core of your obligation as a citizen, and that participation extends far beyond voting when there is a national election. For example, in the 2011 off-year elections, BLET members in Ohio can help overturn the actions by the Ohio Legislature and Governor John Kasich to deprive public sector workers such as police, firefighters and teachers of their collective bargaining rights when a state referendum on whether to retain S.B. 5 appears on this November’s ballot. Similarly, BLET members in Wisconsin will have a say in whether certain State Senate seats are won or lost, as well as in the anti-worker legislation that will keep their jobs in a series of upcoming recall elections.

Nineteenth Century labor leader Big Bill Haywood was known for the motto that “an injury to one is an injury to all.” This slogan has served as a core value for the American labor movement for over 125 years. In the present, it means that the BLET is weakened whenever another sector of the labor movement, such as public sector workers in Wisconsin and Ohio, is weakened. And BLET members must rise in defense of our brother and sister workers whenever and wherever they come under attack from the union of capital — Corporate America.

Next year’s national elections will be even more critical for the BLET’s future, and for the economic security of your family. For more than 30 years — and long before Wall Street’s casino capitalism put the U.S. economy in the tank — there has been a steadily increasing transfer of wealth from the workers who produce that wealth to the corporations. Wages have stagnated for decades, and things have gotten so out of hand that between the second quarter of 2009 and the fourth quarter of last year fully 80% of the growth in national income went to corporate profits, while only 3% went to aggregate wages and salaries. The Supreme Court decision in 2010 to permit unlimited corporate donations to influence elections is proving to be a tipping point in the War on Workers. Multi-million dollar corporate sponsored political propaganda campaigns helped elect anti-worker legislators and judges in record numbers, setting the stage for attacks on public workers in many states.

The BLET and its members have not been immune from that attack. Many of our members who work for Amtrak and various commuter railroads are feeling the squeeze that reduced operating subsidies produces. Our rights under the Railway Labor Act to majority-decided representation elections, union shop agreements and payroll deduction of dues also are under attack.

Make no mistake: if every BLET member votes, every railroad worker who has not been immune from the attack from the union of capital — Corporate America will be harmed. Every railroad worker who has retired is a loss to the BLET and its members and their families. Defeating this attack against our basic rights and entitlements will require fighting on a number of fronts. Past messages from me outlined various ways you can participate in the BLET’s fight-back. There are several other ways — all related to your civic duty — that you can help in fighting against the War on Workers.

You can commit yourself to greater participation in the election process in several ways. Stay abreast of the important issues by conducting your own research and drawing your own conclusions, instead of accepting an 8-second sound bite from some politician or pundit as the gospel. Resolve to participate in every election you are entitled to vote in, and not just the “big” ones. Absentee voting options are so widespread today that “I’ve been working on the railroad” no longer is a valid reason not to vote.

Make sure people who want to put your kids in the crossfire between teachers and politicians aren’t elected to school boards. Help defeat those who would deprive the police and firefighters who protect your community of their right to bargain workplace safety issues. Elect those who support the agenda of American workers and the middle class.

And get involved locally in your election process; I’ve done that and it can make a difference. The last several national elections experienced significant problems in many areas — particularly in college towns and larger cities — that were related to insufficient ballots, too few poll workers and technological glitches. Almost without exception, those problems occurred in areas where opposition to Corporate America’s agenda is the strongest.

As corporate money continues to distort the debate over our nation’s future and our families’ future, it is more important than ever before that we get out the word, get out the vote, and make sure that fair elections result in legislators and judges who support the agenda of those who do the work and generate the profits. Doing your civic duty also makes the BLET a stronger Union.

Fraternally,

Dennis R. Pierce
BLET National President

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**BLET National Division Electronic Communications Policy**

**Official communications between BLET members and the National Division require a hard copy of the correspondence, bearing a signature, approved by the National President to be considered an “official communication.” This is to provide that the actual question(s) are addressed, and ensures that when official interpretations are made they have reference to a specific request and can be used in future correspondence.**

The volume of e-mails received makes it impossible for the National President to answer all unofficial communications. Therefore, it is the policy of the BLET that e-mails addressed to the National President will be reviewed and forwarded to the appropriate officer or staff for a time-limited response; however, an e-mail message is not considered an official communication.

Moreover, anonymous e-mails and e-mail messages that do not provide sufficient information concerning the sender to enable National Division staff to confirm the sender’s membership status will not receive any reply or acknowledgement. This policy is intended to allow the National President and it’s staff to consider the opinions and suggestions of the membership, while at the same time providing a timely response to the member’s communication if a response is necessary, without needlessly expending limited BLET resources.

*Adopted at Cleveland, Ohio on July 22, 2010.*
Fighting for a Voice in the Democratic Process

Somehow it’s a threat to free enterprise when working people join together to protect their wages and benefits. In the last few months, politicians from Washington to Wisconsin have tried to limit working Americans’ right to band together to protect their interests.

I’m very proud of Teamsters who’ve been defending that right against the recent onslaught of attacks. Tens of thousands of Teamsters rallied against anti-worker legislation in hundreds of cities and towns over the past few months. BLET members have joined in, too, at rallies in Cleveland, Columbus, Madison, Indianapolis and others. Our union has recently fought against — and defeated — dozens of bills aimed at weakening unions.

Working people today are fighting unprecedented assaults on their economic well-being. The November election was the first in decades where corporations and Wall Street speculators were allowed to contribute unlimited amounts of secret money to political campaigns. They took full advantage of it to push their radical anti-worker agenda.

If CEOs have the right to outsource our jobs, then working people have the right to band together to stop them. If corporations can form political committees to lobby politicians, then working- and middle-class Americans can band together to make their voices heard.

Working people cannot afford to set corporate greed and corporate power unless they can form unions. And the need for unions has never been more evident than it is now. America is in danger of becoming a banana republic, a Third World country of havens and have-nots with nothing in between.

An unequal America is a weaker America. Inequality has caused too many booms and busts, too much instability and too little economic growth. More and more Americans feel trapped in low-wage jobs, unable to make their lives better. Forty-four million Americans are on food stamps, and two out of five of the families that require that assistance have a wage earner. There is something very wrong in a country where millions of hard-working people can’t feed their families.

Economic inequality under-mines people’s faith that America remains true to the principles upon which it was founded. We must restore the balance between the corporate billionaires and the working class in order to restore Americans’ faith in those principles.

The place to start is to make sure working people can join together and have a voice in the democratic process.

Fraternally,

James P. Hoffa

General President

Walpert to serve as Trustee of Railroad Retirement Investment Trust

Bill Walpert, National Secretary-Treasurer of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen, has been unanimously appointed to serve as a Trustee of the National Railroad Retirement Investment Trust (NRRIT).

All Rail Labor Presidents, representing the 13 labor organizations whose members are covered by the Railroad Retirement system, appointed him unanimously on May 13, 2011. NST Walpert will begin serving immediately as a shadow trustee, a non-voting member of the Trust. He will become a full Trustee when he assumes the vacancy created by current Trustee Walt Barrows, Secretary-Treasurer of the Brotherhood of Railroad Signalmen (BRS), who has been nominated by President Obama to serve as the Labor Member of the Railroad Retirement Board.

The NRRIT was established by the Railroad Retirement and Survivor’s Improvement Act of 2001, which was signed into law on December 21, 2001.

The purpose of the Trust is to manage and invest Railroad Retirement Assets. The Trust invests the assets of the Railroad Retirement Account into a diversified investment portfolio in the same manner as those of private sector retirement plans. Prior to the Act, investment of Railroad Retirement Account assets was limited to U.S. government securities.

The Trust oversees investments currently totaling approximately $25 billion. BLET National President Dennis Pierce congratulated NST Walpert on his appointment.

Nowest Trustee: The BLET’s Bill Walpert will help oversee investment of approximately $25 billion by the National Railroad Retirement Investment Trust.

“Only those individuals with experience and expertise in the management of financial investment and pension plans are eligible to hold Trustee positions, and Brother Walpert certainly fits the bill,” President Pierce said. “He has served our Brotherhood faithfully as chief financial officer for nearly a decade now, and I congratulate him on this prestigious appointment.”

NST Walpert was first elected to the organization’s top financial office in 2001, and was reelected by acclamation in 2006. He was elected a third time in 2010 by a wide majority of members in the first rank-and-file vote of BLET members in the 148-year history of the Organization.

Brother Walpert was first elected to the BLET’s Advisory Board as a National Vice President in 1996. He joined the BLET on November 1, 1973, and is a member of Division 604 in Sherman, Texas. As National Secretary-Treasurer of the BLET, he has custody of all funds of the National Division and has supervision over the financial and record department personnel of the National Division.

He is under direction of the Executive Committee in regard to matters pertaining to his duties.

The Board is comprised of seven Trustees, three selected by railroad labor unions and three by railroad companies. The seventh Trustee is an independent Trustee selected by the other six Trustees.

More information on the Trust is available on the Railroad Retirement Board website: www.rrb.gov/mep/nrrit.asp.

Register at www.ble-t.org to get Brotherhood news emailed to you.

Stay up-to-date with the latest Brotherhood news by going to the BLET website and signing up to receive BLET News Flash alerts via email.

The News Flash alerts are news articles from the BLET National Division website that are sent automatically emailed to you.

To register, just go to www.btle-t.org. In the lower right hand corner of the page, you will find an area to enter your email address to begin receiving the most current news from the BLET National Division.

It is a great way to keep informed on the most recent issues impacting your job, your contract and your Brotherhood.
Additionally, the RLBC pointed out that proposed changes to the UTU's separate health insurance plan that have tentatively been agreed to cannot be incorporated into the Railroad Employers' National Health and Welfare Plan, which covers RLBC-represented and other railroad workers. Moreover, the industry's position that significant economic elements of the tentative UTU agreement are inapplicable to RLBC-represented workers means that "the parties' differences are irreconcilable and further mediation is unwarranted."

On June 15, the NMB wrote the National Carriers' Conference Committee — the industry's bargaining arm — requesting the carriers' comments in response to this request. Relevant updated information will be provided when it becomes available. The Teamsters Rail Conference represents more than 70,000 men and women working in the railroad industry as locomotive engineers, conductors, trainmen and maintenance of way employees.

The RLBC letter to the NMB is at: www.ble-t.org/pr/pdf/RLBC_NMB_6-13-11.pdf

RLBC rejects notion that NCCC/UTU tentative agreement sets a pattern for the freight rail industry

The Rail Labor Bargaining Coalition ("RLBC") was created at the 2006 National Conference of Labor Organizations: Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen, IBT; Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees Division, IBT; Brotherhood of Railroad Signalmen, AFL-CIO; International Brotherhood of Boilermakers, AFL-CIO; National Conference of Firemen & Oilers, SEIU; and the Sheet Metal Workers International Association, AFL-CIO. The RLBC represents more than 70,000 men and women dedicated to transporting Chicago and its suburbs to and from the Rest of the Nation. The RLBC is a voluntary association on behalf of its member organizations with the National Carriers' Conference Committee, which represents the Class I rail carriers in negotiations for a modified national labor agreement. In the last bargaining round, true multi-union, multi-employer bargaining was very successful. The RLBC's agreement with the Carriers led to industry-wide wage and benefit agreements between all organizations with the NCCC. The wage and health benefit provisions of those agreements were both highly favorable for employees and realistic for the Carriers in light of the industry's financial and operating successes which continue to this day.

Recent developments in the current bargaining round, unfortunately, have demonstrated that a voluntary agreement with the NCCC cannot occur. Last week, therefore, the RLBC requested the National Mediation Board to end mediation and allow our dispute with the NCCC to enter the final dispute resolution process under the Railway Labor Act. An end to mediation was earlier requested by five other railroad organizations — the Transportation Communication Union (TCU), American Train Dispatchers Association (ATDA), International Association of Machinists (IAM), International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) and the Transport Workers Union — which bargain together as an informal coalition.

What has unified nearly all of rail labor is the Carriers' assertion that the NCCC's June 2 tentative agreement constitutes a "pattern." We say a union that represents only 25 percent of the workforce and has its own healthcare plan cannot and does not set a pattern for any other union. The RLBC and the TCU-led Coalition will continue to fight for a fair contract, one that gains for members a fair share of the immense profits the railroads continue to reap and one that protects those who fall ill or are injured from the economic burdens of their health conditions. If we do not stand together on this point, we can look forward to additional burdens being put on those of us who are least able to shoulder them, while the railroads continue to obtain record profits. Brothers and Sisters, the RLBC will resist that result. The Teamsters have no interest in a "pattern." We say a union that represents more than 70,000 men and women working in the railroad industry as locomotive engineers, conductors, trainmen and maintenance of way employees. The RLBC rejects notion that NCCC/UTU tentative agreement constitutes a "pattern." We say a union that represents only 25 percent of the workforce and has its own healthcare plan cannot and does not set a pattern for any other union. The RLBC and the TCU-led Coalition will continue to fight for a fair contract, one that gains for members a fair share of the immense profits the railroads continue to reap and one that protects those who fall ill or are injured from the economic burdens of their health conditions. If we do not stand together on this point, we can look forward to additional burdens being put on those of us who are least able to shoulder them, while the railroads continue to obtain record profits. Brothers and Sisters, the RLBC will resist that result. The Teamsters have no interest in a "pattern." We say a union that represents more than 70,000 men and women working in the railroad industry as locomotive engineers, conductors, trainmen and maintenance of way employees. The Teamsters have no interest in a "pattern." We say a union that represents more than 70,000 men and women working in the railroad industry as locomotive engineers, conductors, trainmen and maintenance of way employees.

BLET STATEMENT ON CANCELLATION OF METRA TRAINS

Dennis R. Pierce, National President of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen (BLET) issued the following statement on June 13 in connection with the cancellation of several Metra trains that operate over the UP West Line:

"Contrary to the claims of Metra and the Union Pacific Railroad, this morning's disruptions were in no way caused by the locomotive engineers represented by the BLET. There is an ongoing general crew shortage on the UP because of Midwest flooding, which has resulted in UP trains and crews in the Rochelle area being reassigned to BNSF lines. "This past weekend, there was a signal controverly on UP's Geneva Subdivision on Saturday and Sunday in connection with a new control point being placed into service just west of Elmhurst. Four of the five extra board engineers who were working on the Metra commuter service were required to work on Sunday in connection with this project. Of these, only one had the federally-requested extra board within the past couple of hours. Regarding UP's claim that this service disruption was the fault of engineers on vacation and being ill, the following should be noted. A total of six engineers are on vacation today. Those engineers on vacation for this entire week were assigned vacation that last year. Engineers on a single-day vacation today were granted vacation to be off by the railroad, which makes the sole determination how many single-day vacations may be taken. And our local representative has informed us that one engineer working in the UP West Line Metra commuter service marked off sick today. "It is unfortunate that UP and Metra have chosen to attempt to shift the blame for their own poor workforce management to the shoulders of the men and women dedicated to transporting Chicago commuters safely, consistently and on time." — DENNIS R. PIERCE, BLET NATIONAL PRESIDENT

"It is unfortunate that UP and Metra have chosen to attempt to shift the blame for their own poor workforce management to the shoulders of the men and women dedicated to transporting Chicago commuters safely, consistently and on time."

Denise R. Pierce, National President of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen (BLE)
Members took advantage of numerous educational opportunities throughout the week and enjoyed time with family while renewing acquaintances with friends.

Division 267 Local Chairman Dewey R. Brown hosted the 84th SMA, along with his wife Christie and the members of BLET Division 267 (Asheville, N.C.).

The 85th annual SMA will begin July 1, 2012, at Walt Disney World in Orlando, Fla.

Earl D. Karper Sr. (Division 35) and Michael L. Tanner (Division 769) are co-hosting the 85th annual Southeastern Meeting Association (SMA) at Walt Disney World in Orlando, Fla., beginning July 1, 2012.

Discounts are rare at Disney properties unless you are part of a group, and Brothers Karper and Tanner have secured substantial savings for BLET members who attend the 2012 SMA.

“Don’t miss the opportunity to join us at Walt Disney World at such an affordable rate,” they said. “Our committee is hard at work putting together an exciting, relaxing and fun family event for next year.”

The 2012 SMA is planning to offer exclusive opportunities, such as a tour of the Walt Disney Railroad steam trains at the Magic Kingdom and discounted admission tickets to all Disney parks (four theme parks and three water parks).

“And, as always, there are many other exciting possibilities that you and your family can partake of not only at Walt Disney World, but the greater Orlando area as well,” they said.

For more details, please visit the SMA website: www.BLET2012.com.

American Income Life increases free benefits to BLET members

The BLET National Division provides all active and retired members a group accidental death and dismemberment (AD&D) benefit through the American Income Life Insurance Company (AIL). All members are hereby advised that AIL has increased the accidental death and dismemberment benefit at no cost to you or the BLET.

American Income Life is a 100 percent union insurance company that gives members access to a program that will provide several benefits that are at no cost to the union or to the individual members.

The AD&D benefit was recently increased to $4,000 for every active and retired member. In late May, the National Division mailed a letter to all members to inform them of the increased AD&D benefit. Members who return the yellow post card that is enclosed with each letter will receive a certificate of coverage and will be contacted by AIL to designate a beneficiary. Instead of returning the yellow card, members can opt to respond online at www.ailife.com/benefits/SGJ5R.

Those who return the card will also receive a family health services discount card, which provides household discounts of 20% to 60% on prescriptions, vision care and related products, hearing care, chiropractic care and optional dental care.

American Income Life will contact BLET members who submit the yellow cards. Their representatives (union members of OPEIU Local 277) will call on BLET members to deliver the certificate of coverage and can witness your beneficiary designation.

If the member does not have an interest and does not want to fill out a card, no one will contact them. Regardless, all BLET members are covered under the “no cost” accidental death and dismemberment insurance policy, which is issued as a free benefit to BLET members.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding the benefits, please contact American Income Life at 1-800-495-1213. 

American Income Life increases free benefits to BLET members
In the Line of Duty

JAMES G. HADDEN

BROTHER JAMES GREGORY HADDEN was one of two crew members killed in the line of duty in Mineral Springs, N.C., on May 24, 2011.

Brother Hadden, just 35 years old, was a 10-year veteran with CSX. He was a member of BLET Division 498 in Abbeville, S.C. He joined the Brotherhood on March 1, 2007.

Also killed was conductor Phillip Crawford, 33, a five year employee with CSX. “I extend deepest sympathies to the family, friends and coworkers left behind by Brother Hadden and Phillip Crawford,” BLET National President Dennis Pierce said. “This is a particularly tragic accident because these two men were so young.”

The BLET’s Safety Task Force was deployed to the scene to assist the National Transportation Safety Board and Federal Railroad Administration with the accident investigation.

The accident occurred at approximately 3:38 a.m. on May 24. According to preliminary reports, both locomotives were traveling northbound when Brother Hadden’s train rear-ended the second train, which was stationary or moving very slowly. Several cars derailed and a large fire ensued. The crew of the stationary train sustained injuries.

Prior to his work with CSX, Brother Hadden served in the United States Navy.

He is survived by: parents James and Doris Brown Hadden of Abbeville, S.C., two sons, Gregory Tre’Shon Hadden of Abbeville, S.C., and Bianca; Gregory Hadden of Virginia Beach, Va.; sister Stephanie Lynn Farley of Columbus, S.C.; nephew, Andre’ Farley II of Columbus, S.C.; and maternal grandmother, Isabell B. Owens of Abbeville, S.C. 

Obituaries

Former BLET General Chairman John Mullen, 1954-2011

FORMER BLET GENERAL CHAIRMAN AND SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE JOHN D. MULLEN passed away on May 18 following complications arising from a heart transplant.

Brother Mullen, 57, served the Brotherhood as General Chairman of the Burlington Northern Santa Fe (former ATSF) General Committee of Adjustment for several years. He also served the National Division as a Special Representative and Director of Short Lines from 2003-2008.

Brother Mullen was in the intensive care unit at Baylor Hospital awaiting a heart transplant for about a month before finally finding a donor. He eventually found a match and underwent surgery on May 2.

As of May 23, 2011

1 – J. M. Lamont
103 – A. M. Jenkins
116 – L. Packard
122 – J. H. Thompson
134 – W. K. Hodgecock
195 – J. H. Puckett
196 – W. P. O’Keefe
223 – G. P. Finley
504 – G. D. Thompson
542 – G. D. Thompson

As of September 30, 2010

3 – K. J. Hall
13 – T. W. Breiske
45 – M. E. Livingston
60 – A. A. Langervin
87 – B. J. Rau
249 – W. B. Vining
249 – J. T. Pettit
428 – J. R. Livingston
498 – H. S. Hagen III
517 – E. B. Johnson
794 – H. E. Johnson
910 – D. J. Johnson Sr.

As of October 31, 2010

5 – B. C. Curtis
13 – R. M. Hannon
32 – L. McCahey
42 – L. N. Wilson
87 – J. H. Baiden
157 – W. B. More
169 – W. Mischel
205 – R. L. Hall
294 – S. L. Pulford
325 – G. T. Woodruff
357 – S. R. Smith
367 – E. H. Thompson
387 – E. E. Schiltz
459 – R. G. Christen
475 – C. T. Wright
483 – E. E. Wiggins
527 – L. L. Epling
621 – W. H. Highfield
660 – D. J. Bratow
728 – N. E. Jenkins

As of November 30, 2010

23 – E. T. Collins
28 – J. W. Turnbough
31 – C. G. Hughes
46 – D. L. O’Dunnell
56 – J. D. Stapke
124 – R. W. Willard
228 – R. L. McGee
345 – C. D. Miracle
435 – A. R. Campbell Sr.
494 – R. H. Gray
722 – W. H. Pugh
940 – K. H. Hayes

As of December 31, 2010

107 – A. W. Edin
107 – B. R. Wacker
125 – G. D. Bartels
153 – S. E. Werner
190 – D. E. Roll
239 – G. T. Wilkerson
269 – G. K. Ward
304 – W. F. Winnicki
348 – D. S. Thompson
457 – R. L. Lohm
518 – C. E. White
932 – J. W. Taylor Jr.

As of January 31, 2011

12 – C. J. Sales
14 – J. R. Pugh
15 – J. L. Coven
17 – L. M. Wolman
172 – W. L. Burton
176 – M. H. Coppy
177 – J. R. Attorney
202 – I. D. Bozenbahn
421 – D. A. Schiro
612 – J. T. Mihalek
542 – R. D. Demestri
549 – G. E. Scott
565 – R. R. Round
786 – R. B. Barron
827 – R. L. Huggs

Peter M. Semenek was reelected General Chairman of the CP Rail System-U.S. General Committee of Adjustment at the quadrennial meeting held in Las Vegas on June 20.

“Peter M. Semenek is a member of BLET Division 790 (Chicago) and he joined the Brotherhood on March 10, 1995. This will be his first full term of office. He was elevated to the General Chairman’s position following former General Chairman Mike Priester’s election to the office of National Vice President.”

The 17 delegates in session also elected the following officers to four year terms: Chuck Vesely (Division 253, Por- thumb., Wisc.), 1st Vice Chairman; Ken Vesely (Division 160, Harvey, N.D.) was elected Sec- retary-Treasurer and Paul Dinauer (Divi- sion 882, Milwaukee, Wisc.) was elected Alternate Secretary-Treasurer.

“We have several new Local Chair- man that have recently come into office and I am pleased to include them and participate in the work of the General Committee during this session as well as benefit from the experience of the older members who were in attendance,” Brother Semenek said.

Representing the BLET National Di- vision were: National President Dennis R. Pierce; National Secretary-Treasurer William C. Walpert; Vice President and National Legislative Representative John P. Tolman; Vice President Cole W. Davis, who is assigned to the General Commit- tee; Vice President Michael D. Priester, the immediate past General Chairman of the Commit- tee; and Vice President Stephen J. Bruno. All spoke to the group, with Pres- ident Pierce giving a detailed update on national wage negotiations and a report on other current issues before the BLET.

“I congratulate Brother Semenek and all officers of the General Committee on their election and thanks for serving our Brotherhood,” President Pierce said.

“I have every confidence these dedicated Brothers will do an excellent job of repre- senting the membership and meeting the many challenges that lie ahead.”

Following the close of the general ses- sion, the BLET Education and Training Department conducted a three-day Local Chairman workshop. Instructors were: NST Walpert; Kent Kroeger, Special Rep- resentative and Coordinator of the Edu- cation and Training Department; and Doug Davidson, BLET Assistant Director of the Arbitration Department. The de- tailed program included sessions on the Railway Labor Act, writing skills, repre- sentative duties in disciplinary hearings, interviewing, and a module on discip- linary hearings and settlement of claims.

The attendees also completed a grievance claim exercise and participated in a mock arbitration hearing.

“Tell the inclusion of the training class in our meeting was of real benefit to our group and will help our Local Chairman better represent the membership in their local areas,” Brother Semenek said.

The Committee honored retiring office secretary Debbie Priester for her years of service.”

“I surely want to thank Debbie for the help she gave me during the tran- sition into the position of General Chair- man,” Brother Semenek said.

The Committee represents train and engine service employees on the Cana- dian Pacific-U.S., Metra North, Indiana Southern Railroad and the former Da- kota, Minnesota & Eastern Railroad.

A VICTORY FOR RAIL WORKERS
Continued from page 1

For writing a 5–4 majority, Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg held that the jury instruction “proper in FERA cases … simply tracks the language Congress employed, informing juries that a defen- dent railroad caused or contributed to a plaintiff employee’s injury if the railroad’s negligence played any part in bringing about the injury.” The Court also noted that the jury instruction “sought by CSX would mislead” a jury in the proper ap- plication of the law.

“The Supreme Court has vindicated an

Semenek reelected General Chairman CP Rail System-U.S.

June 20, 2011: Officers, delegates and guests at the CP Rail System-U.S. GCA meeting in Las Vegas.

right for BLET members and all railroad workers,” said BLET National President Dennis R. Pierce. “Our congratula- tions go out to Broth McBride and his family, whose 7-year struggle for justice concluded successfully.

“I also want to congratulate BLET Designated Legal Counsel John Kowalski and the team be assembled to fight for Brother McBride’s rights,” Pierce add- ed, “and to thank retired BLET Gen- eral Counsel Harold Ross for coordi- nating Rail Labor’s friend of the court brief, which demonstrated the continu- ing need for the protections afforded by the FELA.”
**Calendar & Events**

**August 2-7, 2011**

73rd annual Eastern Union Meeting Association
LONG ISLAND, N.Y.
Hyatt Regency Long Island, Hauppauge, N.Y.
Contact host chairman Jim Brown by email: loco542@optonline.net
Website: www.euma2011.org

**August 21-27, 2011**

71st annual International Western Convention
SAN LUIS OBISPO, CALIF.
Embassy Suites Hotel-San Luis Obispo
Contact host chairman Mike Galvani by phone or email: (805) 927-2967 or SLOBLE664@wildblue.net

**August 26-28, 2011**

Teamsters Women’s Conference

Join Teamsters General President Jim Hoffa and General Secretary-Treasurer Tom Keegel for the 2011 Teamsters Women’s Conference at the Sheraton New York Hotel and Towers.

For questions, contact the Teamsters Training and Development Department, (202) 624-8117, or visit www.bletswcm.org.

**September 18-22, 2011**

76th annual Southwestern Convention Meeting
EL PASO, TEXAS
Centro Real Hotel
Contact host chairman Larry Schneider by phone or email: (915) 581-1373 or schneiderman@elp.rr.com
Website: www.bletswcm.org

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**2011 IWC**

Continued from page 1

Early registration begins on August 21, and the IWC kicks off with the annual golf tournament on August 22 and concludes with a banquet the evening of August 26. Additional leisure activities will include a wine tasting dinner, a trip to the San Luis Obispo farmers market, and a tour of the world famous Hearst Castle. There is also a fishing trip planned for August 27, and interested parties should contact Brother Galvani for details.

“Please try to make your reservations early as we are expecting a big crowd this year and we would like to accommodate everyone,” Brother Galvani said. “We hope to make it a great IWC.”

Members can save $20 by registering for the IWC on or before August 7. To download registration forms, please visit the BLET National Division website: http://www.ble-t.org/info/meetings/iwc

For a tentative agenda and other details, please visit the IWC 2011 website: http://iwc2011slo.com

Members with specific questions should contact Brother Galvani at: (805) 305-3864 (cell); or sloble664@wildblue.net.

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**Some things get better with Time**

Brotherhood’s Relief & Compensation Fund
Providing protection to U.S. and Canadian transportation workers.

Enjoy low monthly dues.

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Contact:

Home: [Brotherhood’s Relief and Compensation Fund](http://www.brcf.org)

Cell: 1-800-233-7080

Since 1912
Amtrak privatization plan a bad idea for workers, passengers

In a June 20 letter to members of the U.S. House of Representatives, BLET National President Dennis R. Pierce expressed the organization’s complete opposition to a Republican plan to privatize and dismantle Amtrak.

Introduced by Reps. John Mica (R-Fla.) and Bill Shuster (R-Pa.), the Competition for Intercity Passenger Rail Act of 2011 (H.R. 1900) would dismantle Amtrak and privatize the Northeast Corridor. President Pierce wrote that the bill would jeopardize the jobs of 20,000 Amtrak employees and would undermine the stability of the Railroad Retirement system, thereby hurting all railroad workers — not just those at Amtrak.

“Contrary to Representative Mica’s assertions, the proposal does not have the support of labor and would be an unmitigated disaster for both railroad workers and the traveling public,” National President Dennis Pierce wrote. “It would jeopardize the jobs of 20,000 working men and women currently employed by Amtrak, undermine the Railroad Retirement system that provides pensions for over 25,000 adult annuitants, and imperil rail passenger service nationwide.”

The Mica proposal would also seek to eliminate labor protections under the privatized Northeast Corridor.

“The bill states that private entities providing rail service are considered rail carriers’ only ‘for profit’ title 49, United States Code. Thus, these pseudo-carriers would be exempt from important Title 45 requirements, including the Railroad Labor Act and the Railroad Retirement and Unemployment Insurance Acts.” Pierce wrote. He also said the traveling public would suffer severe reductions in service, and that long distance lines would “shred up and disappear.”

President Pierce concluded by pointing to Amtrak’s recent ridership increases as a sign of the national passenger rail system’s growing public support. He also called upon all members of the House to stand together in support of Amtrak and its workers.

“Instead of this job killing, ridership devastating plan, we ought to be looking at ways to help Amtrak achieve the goal of high-speed rail; not looking for ways to dismantle it. Please stand up for workers, communities and passengers and oppose this legislation,” Pierce wrote.

A PDF of his letter is on the BLET website: www.blet.org//pdf/Amtrak_Proposal.pdf