The Official Publication of the United Transportation Union

The Voice of Transportation Labor

“...is demonstrating that the ‘T’ in its name stands for ‘treachery.’” – UTU International President Paul Thompson (See column, page 4)

Aetna seeks dependent info

All employees covered under The Railroad Employees’ National Dental Plan will be receiving a request for verification of eligible dependents as defined by the plan so those eligible dependents will continue receiving benefits.

It is important to note that failure to provide the required proof will result in the termination of dependent benefits.

This dependent eligibility audit is being unilaterally imposed by the National Railway Labor Conference and without regard to the objections and concerns expressed by the rail labor organizations. Nonetheless, UTU members are urged to provide the dependent verification so as to avoid the potential discontinuation of dependent benefits. Should you have questions or concerns that cannot be answered by calling the toll-free number listed in the communication, you should call the NRTC at (202) 862-7244.

UTU gains on WC

Some 300 UTU-represented trainmen on CN-owned Wisconsin Central (WC) have ratified a new agreement containing wage increases through mid-2011.

It is the first renewal of the WC hourly rate agreement, which provides yardmen and conductors in road service with two guaranteed off-days weekly. Wage increases will be paid retroactively to Aug. 1, 2004.

The agreement also brings new hires up to parity upon completion of training and provides members with an improved healthcare package.

UTU Vice President Pat Drennan, who assisted in negotiations, praised the “patience and persistence” of former WC general chairperson John Larson and current General Chairperson Kenneth Flashberger. Locals affected are 581, 582 and 583.

Also, WC yardmasters have chosen to retain the UTU as their collective bargaining agent.

“A Militant for the Continuing Faith in the UTU,” said UTU International Vice President J.R. “Jim” Cumby, who serves as the director of the UTU Serveyardmaster Department.

BLET members ratify agreement with CSX that gives remote-control jobs to engineers

“...is demonstrating that the ‘T’ in its name stands for ‘treachery.’” – UTU International President Paul Thompson (See column, page 4)

UTU files suit as BLET, CSX deal to steal jobs

The UTU has asked a federal court to declare that a major dispute under the Railway Labor Act exists as a result of a labor contract negotiated by CSX Transportation (CSX) with the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen (BLET), which the BLET ratified April 15.

The lawsuit, filed in the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Ohio (Eastern Division), asserts that the April 15 ratified contract between CSXT and the BLET violates, and attempts to invalidate, an agreement currently in place between CSXT and the UTU covering operation of remote control technology (belt packs).

UTU International President Paul Thomp- son pointed out that before the UTU signed a remote control agreement with the carriers, the UTU offered half the remote control jobs to the BLET and job protection under the UTU agreement – both of which were rejected by the BLET.

In its court filing, the UTU said that an existing agreement between the UTU and most of the nation’s railroads (including CSXT) “unequivocally provides that UTU-represented employees will be the sole source of supply for remote control operator positions on CSXT, among other carriers. The UTU agreement has been violated by CSXT by mak- ing BLET the source for remote control opera- tor positions outside terminal limits.

“Defendant CSXT’s agreement with BLET is obviously invalid as to the UTU agreements regarding remote control,” the UTU said in its complaint.

“...is demonstrating that the ‘T’ in its name stands for ‘treachery.’” – UTU International President Paul Thompson (See column, page 4)

“...is demonstrating that the ‘T’ in its name stands for ‘treachery.’” – UTU International President Paul Thompson (See column, page 4)
Local 104, Sault Ste. Marie, Ont.  
Members of this local, including Algoma Central Railway and Sault Ste. Marie Transportation Commission employees, are mourning the death of Legislative Rep. Christopher Williams, 57, who served on the Ontarian Legislative Council (OLB) for more than 15 consecutive years. OLB Chairperson Glenn J. King said the City of Sault Ste. Marie lowered its flags to half mast in his honor.

Local 298, Garrett, Ind.  
Engineer and Local Chairperson (engineer) James C. Modesitt has begun a newsletter for members of this CSX local, available via e-mail or on paper for those without a computer, said Legislative Rep. Bruce A. Bahbitt. For information, contact Bahbitt at (219) 357-5050, or send e-mail to Modesitt@micmci.com.

Local 469, Madison, Ill.  
Members of this local, employed by the Terminal Railroad Association of St. Louis, are planning the 11th annual Memorial Golf & BBQ Tour, said Local Chairperson William D. “Billy” Lawrence. Entry forms and fees are due Aug. 1. For information, contact Lawrence at (511) 461-5401, or send e-mail to Boomerzrf@comcast.net, or call (705) 277-2995, or send e-mail to galeverett@georgia-broadband.com.

Local 1545, Monroe, La.  
Members of this Union Pacific local now have a Web site supplying contact information, frequently needed forms, copies of agreements and work rules, and a variety of links to other sites. Art Christian said, “Take a look at www.local1545.rwp.com.”

Local 1594, Upper Darby, Pa.  
The members of this local, who operate buses, trolleys and the Norristown high-speed line on SEPTA’s Suburban Division, are gearing up for the American Cancer Society’s Bike-a-thon, set for July 15, said General Chairperson Ron Koran. For information, contact Stan Bernatowicz at (610) 518-2185.

Local 1598, Manchester, Ga.  
This CSX local is pitching in to help George Amerson, who lost everything in a fire last month, said Local Vice President and Chairperson Bill Leverett. To learn how to help, call Leverett at (706) 577-2995, or send e-mail to galeverett@georgia-broadband.com.

Local 1620, Elkhart, Ind.  
Members of this Norfolk Southern local will hold their annual picnic on June 19, said Secretary Gerald G. Lawrence. Chili and doughnuts will be served, and strawberry shortcake to chase it down. Contact Lawrence at (574) 294-3294 or send e-mail to glawrence@prodigy.net.

Local 1741, San Francisco, Calif.  
April 23 was declared San Francisco School Bus Drivers’ Day by the San Francisco School Board Commissioners, who commended members of this local for their service to the community and the youth of the city, said Local President Anje Beloy. Cited in particular was Jose Perez, whose professional conduct likely saved two lives in the last 18 months. The board’s presentation can be accessed at www.sfschoollb.com/rcgrp.htm.

Local 1846, W. Colton, Calif.  
To mark their many years of dedicated service and recent retirements, this Union Pacific local presented conductors Danny Curlee and Danny Johnson with custom watches and offered their warmest wishes for long lives in good health, said Local President Richard Escamilla.

Local 1857, Green River, Wyo.  
Members of this Union Pacific local have opened an account to aid 28-year member Kim Shape, who lost his house and possessions in a fire in April, said Legislative Rep. Stan Blake, who serves in the Wyoming House of Representatives and chairs the UTU state legislative board. Send donations to Green River Basin Federal Credit Union, 131 East Railroad Ave., Green River, WY 82935. Contact the credit union at (307) 875-3844, or call Blake at (307) 875-1779.

Lehigh Valley RR reunion planned  
The 26th Lehigh Valley Railroad reunion and dinner, open to all crafts, will be held Saturday, Sept. 15, at the Fullerton Fire Company in Fullerton, Pa., said Eugene K. Schuler, retired former secretary of the railroad’s general committee, and a member of Local 1008 in Allentown, Pa. Tickets are $18. For information, contact Schuler at 1359 N. Van Buren St., Allentown, PA 18109, or call him at (619) 432-0631, or send e-mail to Cheerupt80@enter.net.
One member killed, one injured, in separate accidents

One UTU member was killed and another seriously injured in separate accidents recently.

Stephen M. Parker, 50, a member of UTU Local 262 in Boston, died May 3 of an apparent heart attack following the crash of a rail equipment in Boston.

Michael David Lunsford, a CSX brakeman and member of Local 915 in Handley, Va., was seriously injured May 4 in a switching accident at the Union Carbon plant in South Charleston, W. Va. He suffered an amputated leg.

Parker, an Amtrak flagman, was working at a switching area near Boston's South Station about 2 a.m. when an Amtrak train hit a piece of equipment that was on the wrong track.

He collapsed at the site and was hospitalized in critical condition. He was pronounced dead at a nearby hospital at 3 a.m.

Parker was one of two Amtrak flagmen at the construction site. When the Amtrak train struck the piece of equipment, it was traveling slightly below the 30-mph speed limit.

The Albany-to-Boston train was near its final destination when the accident happened. Parker was working on MBTA-owned tracks.

The collision was the third in which a train crashed into construction equipment in the last six months in Massachusetts. In January in Woburn, two workers were killed when a train traveling on the wrong track hit a vehicle. In Franklin last October, a train struck a flatbed truck.

(Killed in the Woburn crash was Christofer Macaulay, 30, of Brentwood, N.H., who was the son of UTU member and MBTA conductor Alexander F. “Sandy” Macaulay, a member of Local 898 in Boston, Mass.)

Lunsford was apparently working on a rail car coupling when another rail car was bumped, setting off a chain reaction that eventually moved the rail cars on which he was working, knocking him to the ground and causing one of the cars to run over his leg, according to reports. He had only been railroading a short time, joining the UTU May 1, 2007.

FRA spokesman Warren Flatau said the federal agency is not conducting a full investigation “but because of the severity of this injury, we have been following up with the railroad and with rail labor representatives and are taking a very active interest in the cause of this event.”

CSX is required to submit a report no later than June 30, Flatau said. Shortly after the report is submitted, it will be posted on the federal agency’s Web site, he said.

Flatau said a significant number of railroad employee injuries happen in yards where there are switching operations and, “This is the very type of event that we want to prevent.”
UTU PAC contributions pay off in a big way

Save a little regularly and, with the magic of compound interest, you will, in time, accumulate a nest egg that permits a comfortable retirement.

Think of the UTU PAC as an equally important tool for economic security. Small contributions each month are compounded with contributions from tens of thousands of brothers and sisters – active and retired – and used to help fund election campaigns of labor-friendly lawmakers. Once elected, our friends never forget who helped elect them.

Our UTU PAC paid a special dividend last November, helping labor-friendly lawmakers regain control of Congress. One of their first orders of business was introduction of the strongest rail safety bill in three decades.

The labor-friendly majority is also one of our best defenses against having a pro-carrier Presidential Emergency Board issue devastating back-to-work legislation.

We also are looking to our friends in Congress to amend legislation that puts bus operator jobs in peril when bus drivers receive traffic tickets when operating their personal automobiles. UTU has been in the forefront to amend the law.

UTU PAC doesn’t ensure we will achieve all we desire from Congress and state legislatures. But UTU PAC pays immense dividends that would be unachievable if it did not exist.

Just a dollar a day contributed to the UTU PAC is an investment that pays a lifetime of meaningful dividends.

BLET’s ‘T’ for treachery

By Paul Thompson
International President

Solidarity is the core of organized labor. Without it, employers are emblazoned to engage in divide-and-conquer strategies that toss labor unions into the briar patch of a deadly race to the bottom.

As Eugene V. Debs counseled, “Only when labor embraces the power of solidarity, can it demand and command.”

To show solidarity and blunt the carriers’ divide-and-conquer strategy – which began with failed carrier attempts to open our crew consist agreements and destroy FELA – we invited the BLET to join with us at the bargaining table to show the carriers a united front.

While accepting our hospitality, the BLET engaged in a dashingly act of treachery, making clear what the “T” stands for in BLET.

While falsely professing solidarity with the UTU, BLET general chairpersons, with the concurrence of their leadership, secretly conspired with CSX and BNSF to cut the UTU’s throat.

The BLET has ratified an agreement with CSX, and negotiated a tentative agreement with BNSF, to make the BLET the sole source for remote control operator positions outside terminal limits in violation of our remote control agreements with the carriers.

And that’s not all. The BNSF agreement is ratified, we will fight that agreement’s job-stealing anti-UTU provisions in the federal courts, also.

To keep current on these actions, visit www.utu.org.

It is deplorable that the BLET would revert to its scab heritage, which points a dagger at the hearts of all rail labor.

This leopard cannot change its spots.

The BLET has reverted to its infamous past, where they once sought to sell out UTU-represented firemen for $1.50 per day.

Past President Al Chessner once said that in a successful union, “Every member lights a fire in their belly and goes to work for each other and their union.”

Unfortunately, the BLET plays by scab rules. We will not allow the BLET to destroy our union, our jobs and our families.

WASHINGTON WATCH

By James M. Brunkenhoefer

Many in the party that finished second last November are walking around Capitol Hill with long faces.

Don’t get me wrong. Many Republicans are fine, decent human beings who are doing what they think is right, and I respect them, even where I don’t agree with them.

What is sad is that they were let down by their leader, George W. Bush. They stuck their necks out for their party leader by voting for his agenda, which the American people overwhelmingly now see as misguided and dangerous.

As a result, if the presidential election were held today, the Republicans would face a disaster. Hence, the long faces.

Recently, Republicans encountered a new disaster – the firing by the administration of numerous U.S. attorneys for political reasons.

Instead of prosecuting serious and violent crimes, the administration wanted them to spend scarce resources and valuable time pursuing election-fraud cases that simply did not exist.

The Justice Department spent an enormous amount of money to grab a handful of people who mostly just made minor mistakes on Election Day.

Yes, those who were indicted should not have done what they did, but there were much higher priorities within the Justice Department. The administration was wrong to be using our law enforcement for political reasons.

And now, Republicans have another scandal on their hands. They are facing a Democrat majority that is exercising congressional oversight that should have been exercised by the Republican majority regardless of who is in the White House.

Many years ago, I had the opportunity and honor of being selected to serve on a state grand jury. Grand juries grant immunity to witnesses on only the rarest of occasions.

What the grand jury is saying is, we are going to let you go no matter what you have done in order to get someone who is a bigger threat to our society.

Today, in Washington, many people are being granted immunity so that they may testify about scandals involving this administration. No longer is Congress blindly “rubber stamping” the administration’s agenda.

Yes, a lot of officials are looking over their shoulders. Many were so busy “rubber stamping” the administration’s agenda that they forgot there are laws and regulations they are required to uphold.

We are tired of Washington political scandals and arrogant politicians who think rules don’t apply to them.

Unfortunately, this administration has brought the house down on Republicans. But they should have known that laws and regulations are to be observed.
State Watch

South Dakota

State Legislative Director Rick Davids says the Dakota, Minnesota & Eastern (DM&E) Railroad is continuing to wage a union-busting crusade against the UTU and others.

The UTU represents nearly 130 locomotive engineers and conductors on the carrier. Davids said the DM&E is known for low pay, long hours, unsafe working conditions and abusive management.

Outrage swept across UTU last year when DM&E allegedly suspended without cause UTU Local Chairperson Tom Behsman of Local 64 in Huron, S.D.

The company later dismissed him for alleged insubordination, Davids said.

The termination centered on the company’s insistence that Behsman work on Oct. 30, 2006, even though he had asked in advance to have the day off to prepare for a claims conference the next day in Sioux Falls, S.D.

The Railway Labor Act mandates that railroads must allow employees time to conduct union business.

Behsman appealed his termination to the National Mediation Board, which referred his case to a Public Law Board. The case is still under review.

UTU representatives claim the railroad wrongly terminated Behsman as payback for his union activity and that Behsman’s dismissal is yet another example of the union-busting tactics used by DM&E.

Montana

Delegates at the Montana AFL-CIO’s recent convention elected UTU Montana State Legislative Director Fran Marceau to a two-year term on the state labor group’s board of directors.

Marceau also serves as delegate and legislative rep. of Local 891 in Kalispell.

The 100 labor delegates to the convention represent more than 32,000 union members.

New York

State Legislative Director Sam Nasca recently joined a small group of supporters and labor representatives to meet with Gov. Eliot Spitzer’s private residence in Pine Plains, N.Y., for dinner and the discussion of issues of importance to UTU members.

Nasca said he and the governor talked about support for Amtrak; proposals for funding rail projects in the state; the appointment of a new chairman for the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA); safety concerns about the CSX Railroad and the appointment of Long Island Rail Road general committee member and Local 645 (Babylon) Local Chairperson Vincent Testore as a member of the MTA’s Board of Directors. “The UTU has been a strong supporter of Gov. Spitzer since he first ran for attorney general and we have a good working relationship with him and his staff,” Nasca said.

North Dakota

North Dakota State Legislative Director John Reich, a member of Local 1344 at Mandan, joined the growing ranks of UTU officers and members who have completed the rail workers’ hazardous materials transportation/demolition emergency response training program at the National Labor College (NLC) in Silver Spring, Md. Other UTU members who took the course recently included, from left, Alexis Roberts (Local 1158, Miami, Fla.); Steve Washington (Local 924, Richmond, Va.); Andy Myers (Local 1468, Hermitage, Ohio); Rich Black (Jersey Central R.R. FRA; Garvey, Black & Associates, Ltd.) and Yvonne Haynes (NLC rail hazmat instructor and local chairperson, Local 1135, Mass.; Fla.). The NLC has scheduled hazmat classes for Aug. 5-10, Sept. 16-21 and Oct. 28-Nov. 2.

For more information log onto www.hazmat-gc.org. Training includes advanced classroom instruction, small-group activities, intensive hands-on drills and a simulated hazmat response in full safety gear. Participants who are unable to secure regular pay through the railroad to attend training are eligible for a stipend of $550.

Bus Department

By Roy Arnold, vice president/director

BLET climbs in bed with the carriers

Hoped-for unity among rail labor against the carriers is, again, sadly eroding. A leopard just can’t change its spots.

The BLET – now the BLET – which once sought to sell out UTU-represented firemen for $1.50 per day, is at it again.

The carriers have dropped more pocket change on the table, and guess who is trying to scoop it all up at the expense of brothers and sisters in the UTU? Yes, the BLET.

In an unprovoked attack on the UTU, certain BLET general chairpersons have chosen to be lapdogs to, and federal travelers of, some of the most ruthless and anti-labor CEOs in railroad history. They have signed system-wide sick leave agreements which would take work from UTU-represented trainmen, imitating the infamous rant of 19th century robber baron Jay Gould: “I can hire one half the working class to kill the other half.”

As UTU International President Paul Thompson said, CEOs are selling the same house twice, as we might expect.

What we shouldn’t expect is another labor union to scab on the UTU, as the BLET is attempting to do – yet again. This is especially disturbing in that when the carriers first offered remote control work to the UTU, the BLET offered one-half the RCL positions to the BLET, which they rejected.

The UTU has filed a lawsuit in federal court to invalidate the CSXT agreement. Monitor www.utu.org for the latest on that lawsuit.

Taking a page from 19th century railroad robber baron Jay Gould, today’s CEOs constantly are on the hunt for weak-minded union leaders who prefer a race to the bottom than the strength of labor solidarity. They keep finding them at the BLET.

Yardmasters

By J.R. “Jim” Cumbey, vice president/director

Much to learn at regional meetings

It is said, “Nobody can be successful unless he loves his work.” To love your work, it must have meaning and purpose, it must be fulfilling, and it must be an extension of yourself because our work defines who we are.

Our regional meeting programs in Kansas City and Pittsburgh are designed for our members in mind. At our regional meeting workshops, we are honored to have seasoned labor arbitrator Frank Quinn leading our classes.

Dr. Quinn is a well-known presenter, armed with facts and entertaining examples to help us hone our grievance skills. Dr. Quinn has promised to bring us new information and the opportunity to exercise our newly acquired knowledge.

If you did not sign up for the Kansas City meeting, please make an attempt to attend the Pittsburgh regional meeting, which will be July 16-18.

For UTU local officers – and those aspiring to become local officers – it is essential to take advantage of every training opportunity. It not only is important to cultivate new support, but it is important to our members who depend on our skills at negotiating and arbitrations. It is my firm belief that it is crucial that every UTU officer be able to represent our members in every aspect of labor relations. When a local has strong and educated officers, our members have a strong counter to the sometimes cruel and unfair measures served on them by tough employers often motivated by greed and a burning desire to cut costs regardless of the impact on safety, employees and their families.

I look forward to seeing you at these meetings.
When the wheels of the bus go round and round in Los Angeles County, UTU-represented drivers likely are at the wheel.

Sprawling Los Angeles County – 4,700 square miles – is the largest county in America, with 88 incorporated cities and a population exceeding 10 million. Its City of Los Angeles has the second-largest municipal population in the nation – almost 4 million.

That spells a need for reliable and flexible transportation – local bus routes as well as commuter routes – some, almost 73 miles long, reaching bedroom communities such as Palmdale and Lancaster, on the edge of the Mojave Desert.

UTU-represented bus operators – some 6,000 in Los Angeles County – drive on streets and freeways notorious for severe traffic congestion, causing even the wealthy to leave the automobile at home in favor of public transportation.

During rush hour, the largest of the county’s bus lines – the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (LACMTA) – has 2,000 buses plying almost 200 routes with some 19,000 passengers pick-up and drop-off stops.

Los Angeles boasts the nation’s most diverse population, with a Hispanic plurality, the nation’s largest Asian community, and dozens of other cultures, putting additional stress on bus operators, who must deal with different customs and a multitude of spoken languages.

Earlier this year, UTU-represented Los Angeles County bus operators saw one of their own – Vic Baffoni – appointed by Transportation Secretary Mary Peters to a congressionally created federal panel of experts who will make recommendations for legislative changes to make bus transportation safer.

Baffoni, with 33 years seniority on LACMTA, is UTU Local 1608 chairperson and legislative representative, vice general chairperson of GO-875, and a member of the UTU California Legislative Board.

“LACMTA local chairpersons meet with General Chairperson James Williams (GO-875). Sitting, from left, are Benjamin Cooper, Local 1564; Tim Delambre, Local 1565; and, standing, from left, are Victor Baffoni, Local 1608; Williams; Lisa Arredondo, Local 1607; and Robert Gonzalez, Local 1563.

Arredondo, with 19 years seniority, was elected in January as the first female local chairperson in the history of the general committee.

“She is a tiger,” said her vice local chairperson, Ernie Martinez. “She never rests. She is constantly educating members on their contract and state and federal laws.”

Said Arredondo, “When someone tells me ‘no,’ it is not good enough. I must figure out how the answer is to be changed to ‘yes.’”

“The recommendations will have long-lasting impact” on bus operators nationwide, Baffoni said. The panel is considering establishing uniform mandatory training of new drivers, requiring drivers to possess English proficiency, and a UTU-supported change to legislation that currently puts an operator’s commercial driver’s license in jeopardy as a result of traffic violations.

UTU-represented bus operators – some 6,000 in Los Angeles County – drive on streets and freeways notorious for severe traffic congestion, causing even the wealthy to leave the automobile at home in favor of public transportation.

During rush hour, the largest of the county’s bus lines – the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (LACMTA) – has 2,000 buses plying almost 200 routes with some 19,000 passengers pick-up and drop-off stops.

Los Angeles boasts the nation’s most diverse population, with a Hispanic plurality, the nation’s largest Asian community, and dozens of other cultures, putting additional stress on bus operators, who must deal with different customs and a multitude of spoken languages.

Earlier this year, UTU-represented Los Angeles County bus operators saw one of their own – Vic Baffoni – appointed by Transportation Secretary Mary Peters to a congressionally created federal panel of experts who will make recommendations for legislative changes to make bus transportation safer.

Baffoni, with 33 years seniority on LACMTA, is UTU Local 1608 chairperson and legislative representative, vice general chairperson of GO-875, and a member of the UTU California Legislative Board.

“The recommendations will have long-lasting impact” on bus operators nationwide, Baffoni said. The panel is considering establishing uniform mandatory training of new drivers, requiring drivers to possess English proficiency, and a UTU-supported change to legislation that currently puts an operator’s commercial driver’s license in jeopardy as a result of traffic violations.
Work after retirement may affect RR benefits

Retired rail employees and rail workers planning retirement should be aware that Railroad Retirement law places restrictions on working after retirement that can affect benefit payments.

Employee and employee supplemental annuities are not payable for any month during which an annuitant works for employers, including labor organizations, covered under the Railroad Retirement Act. This is true even if only one day’s work is performed during the month and includes local lodging compensation totaling $25 or more for any calendar month.

While an annuitant may work for employers not covered under the act, Railroad Retirement benefits, like Social Security benefits, are subject to deductions if an annuitant’s earnings exceed certain amounts.

All earnings received for services rendered, plus any net earnings from self-employment, are considered when assessing deductions for excess earnings. Interest, dividends, certain rental income or income from stocks, bonds, or other investments are not considered earnings for this purpose.

These deductions affect only the Tier I and vested dual benefit portions of an employee’s annuity. Additional deductions are assessed for retired employees who work for their last pre-retirement non-railroad employer. Such employment will reduce Tier II benefits and supplemental annuity payments, which are not otherwise subject to earnings deductions.

For more information about working after retirement, including restrictions applied to spouse, survivor, and disability annuities, contact your nearest Railroad Retirement Board office by visiting www.rrb.gov, or by calling the automated toll-free RR Help Line at (800) 808-0772.

V. M. "Butch" Spekanam Jr. serves as labor member of the U.S. Railroad Retirement Board.

UTU for Life

New UTU for Life chapter holds meeting in Atlanta

Retired member C. E. Marlow recently received a letter from UTU International President Paul Thompson congratulating him on attaining 65 years of continuous union membership, and he found the perfect place to share it: the inaugural meeting of the twelfth local UTU for Life unit.

A member of Local 1033 in Atlanta, Ga., Marlow had been among those who met on March 29 to re-establish ties with workplace friends and get involved with issues affecting retirees from the transportation industry.

The new Atlanta-area unit was organized by Larry C. Tatum, also of Local 1033, who serves as his local’s legislative representative before retiring in June 2005. A retired CSX switchman, Tatum said the new unit will meet on a quarterly basis, starting with the next meeting set for June 28 at 11:30 a.m. at the Quality Inn Motel in Cartersville, Ga.

Everyone enjoyed socializing at the first meeting,” Tatum said. “We shared a buffet lunch, and heard from Assistant Georgia State Legislative Director Howell Keown, UTUIA Field Supervisor Donald Dysart and UTU for Life Coordinator Carl Cochran, who was UTU’s Florida state legislative director,” said Tatum.

“When you retire, you hardly have time to do anything,” Tatum joked. In fact, Tatum learned how to juggle a busy life during a rail career that began in October 1970 on the old Louisville & Nashville Railroad as a brakeman. Along the way, he held such posts as local chairperson, vice local president, and member of the board of trustees.

To learn more about the meeting set for June 28, call Tatum at (770) 924-7147 or send him e-mail at gospenmom@bellsouth.net.

Information about the UTU for Life program and its benefits can be found by visiting the UTU’s Web site at www.utu.org and clicking on “UTU FOR LIFE.” While there, retirees can register their e-mail addresses to receive the latest political action alerts and news on program benefits and chapter meetings. Or contact Carl Cochran at (305) 821-7015, send him e-mail at cochrnaru@aol.com, or call the UTU Interna-

tional at (800) 228-9400.

Complete and return to UTU for Life, 14600 Detroit Ave., Cleveland, OH 44107-4250.

UTU for Life Membership Form

(please print legibly)

Name __________________________________________ Local ______

Address ____________________________________________________________________________

City __________________ State or Province ______ Postal Code ______

Phone __________ E-Mail __________________________

I wish to join the UTU for Life program. Enclosed is a check or money order payable to “UTU for Life” in the amount of $9 (U.S.) for one year’s dues.

Complete and return to UTU for Life, 14600 Detroit Ave., Cleveland, OH 44107-4250.

The Final Call

Following are the names of recently deceased retirees who maintained annual membership in the UTU For Life program (formerly known as the UTU Retiree Program), according to reports received at UTU International Headquarters. These brothers and sisters will be missed by their many friends and by fellow UTU for Life members.

UTU for Life program and its benefits can be found by visiting the UTU’s Web site at www.utu.org and clicking on “UTU FOR LIFE.” While there, retirees can register their e-mail addresses to receive the latest political action alerts and news on program benefits and chapter meetings. Or contact Carl Cochran at (305) 821-7015, send him e-mail at cochrnaru@aol.com, or call the UTU Interna-

tional at (800) 228-9400.

Complete and return to UTU for Life, 14600 Detroit Ave., Cleveland, OH 44107-4250.

The Final Call

Following are the names of recently deceased retirees who maintained annual membership in the UTU For Life program (formerly known as the UTU Retiree Program), according to reports received at UTU International Headquarters. These brothers and sisters will be missed by their many friends and by fellow UTU for Life members.

Local Name City/State

55 Murolo, Adam C. Middletown, N.Y.

145 Little, Jerney Worthington, Ohio

202 Marks, John V. San Antonio, Tex.

239 Kast, William N. Decatur, Ill.

320 Martell, John J. Springfield, N.J.

369 McCullough, James E. Franklin, Tenn.

440 Marker, James L. Okeechobee, Fla.

496 Pfeiffer, James C. Hesperia, Calif.

598 Childs, William L. Mobile, Ala.

594 Johnson, Eugene T. Longview, Texas

626 Fuller, Neal R. McCook, Neb.

645 Kueffner, Karen New Hyde Park, N.Y.

685 Addleman, Louis B. Lafayette, Ind.

713 Fidler, Neal R. McCook, Neb.

768 Finney, Jack W. Weaverville, N.C.

807 Allen, Lyndol D. Deridder, La.

857 Thomas, Leroy San Antonio, Texas

886 Engman, Glenn E. Marquette, Mich.

908 St. Peters, Anthony J. Forest Park, Ill.

982 Perrone, George F. Whitesboro, N.Y.

1028 Lallier, Joseph H. Newberry, S.C.

1058 Woollen, Enos W. Meridian, Idaho

1066 Mason, Neda L. Hattiesburg, Miss.

1074 Bradly, Harry A. Pittsburgh, Pa.

1074 Frick, Albert M. Beaver, Pa.

1084 Tatum, Larry C. New Haven, Conn.

1254 Filer, James C. Hesperia, Calif.

1321 Whelan, Frank J. Phoenix, Ariz.

1366 Hochleitner, Stacy D. San Antonio, Tex.

1384 Loeber, Floyd E. Jamestown, N.D.

1393 Selvaggio, Dominick P. San Antonio, Texas

1420 Burch, Doyle W. Cactus, Tex.

1425 Olsen, Jacob W. New Braintree, N.J.

1479 Malino, Fred E. Lancaster, Pa.

1529 Zelinka, Frank M. Tahoe City, Calif.

1545 Marker, John J. St. Thomas, Ontario, Can.

1598 Childs Sr., William L. Mobile, Ala.

1645 Kueffner, Karen New Hyde Park, N.Y.

1678 Finney, Jack W. Weaverville, N.C.

1699 Daniels, George K. Okeechobee, Fla.

1729 Marcus, Jacob Rockville, Md.

1768 Finney, Jack W. Weaverville, N.C.

1807 Allen, Lyndol D. Deridder, La.

1877 Thomas, Leroy San Antonio, Texas

1919 Malino, Fred E. Lancaster, Pa.

1929 Malino, Fred E. Lancaster, Pa.
Each of the following students has been selected to receive a $500 continuing scholarship from the United Transportation Union Insurance Association. Congratulations to all these scholars:

**District 1**
Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York, Rhode Island, Vermont

**District 2**
Delaware, District of Columbia, Maryland, New Jersey, Pennsylvania
- Thomas Leskin, grandson of George J. Koval, member of Local 300, Philadelphia, Pa.; Anne Marie Episcopo, daughter of Thomas Episcopo of Local 1006, Brownsville, Pa.; Jennifer M. Merle, daughter of George T. Merle of Local 800, Jersey City, N.J.; Richard J. Enright, son of James Enright of Local 1379, Pittsburgh, Pa.; Daniel Mikola, son of Steve Mikola of Local 60, Newark, N.J.

**District 3**
Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, West Virginia

**District 4**
Indiana, Michigan, Ohio

**District 5**
Illinois, Wisconsin

**District 6**
Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, Texas

**District 7**
Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota

**District 8**
Arizona, California, Colorado, Nevada, New Mexico, Utah
- Kevin M. Thorne, son of Jerry D. Thorne of Local 238, Ogden, Utah; Casey C. Yost, granddaughter of Richard L. Morgan of Local 1200, Portola, Calif.; Lauren A. Brown, daughter of Donald T. Brown of Local 1732, San Jose, Calif.; Jennifer L. Staley, granddaughter of Irvin L. Staley of Local 238, Ogden, Utah; Harrison S. Stanford, son of Edison S. Stanford of Local 1565, West Hollywood, Calif.; Victoria K. Ayala, daughter of Gracie M. Ayala of Local 1163, El Monte, Calif.; Nicole M. DeLoach, son of Roger G. DeLoach of Local 113, Winslow, Ariz.; Kristen S. Stubblefield, daughter of Phil G. Stubblefield of Local 1732, San Jose, Calif.

**District 9**
Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, Washington, Wyoming
BLET steals jobs
Continued from page 1
The federal district court is being asked by the UTU to issue a declaratory judgment that CSXT
has entered into an invalid agreement with the BLET regarding remote control and in violation of
the Railway Labor Act.

The UTU also asked the court to enjoin CSXT from implementing the unlawful provi-
sions of that April 15 ratified agreement, and to
award the UTU its costs and attorney’s fees incurred in this proceeding, and to “grant such
other and further relief as the court deems just and proper.”

To stay current on this story and other devel-
opments, go to www.utu.org.

Bargaining
Continued from page 1
the agreement pledging that, “at the earliest
opportunity in the [current] national bargaining
round, the matter of the relating the existing service scales [entry rates] in effect on each participat-
ning road to training and experience will be
addressed.”

Instead, the carriers have declined to discuss
the issues, and, in January 2007, insisted the
UTU withdraw its request to address entry rates,
deferring to a national wage and rules panel the
matter of training.

UTU International President Paul Thomp-
son said, “Our lawsuit is only one of many
aggressive tools we intend to use in the courts, in
Congress and elsewhere to stop this runaway
gravy train before it destroys more lives in its
quest for a sharp boost in short-term profits at
any human cost.”

The UTU lawsuit lays out the carriers’ dis-
honesty since the carriers signed the August
2002 side letter pledging to address entry rates
of pay related to training and experience. As
recently as February 2007, the UTU made
another attempt to address these issues at the
bargaining table.

When the NCCC said it would subsequently
address the issues – but then declined to set a
date to do so – the UTU filed a lawsuit similar
to this one, but withdrew it following a commit-
mament by NCCC chief labor negotiator Bob
Allen to set dates for addressing the issues.

Yet at subsequent bargaining sessions in June
and October 2006, and January 2007, the
NCCC reneged yet again.

In fact, at a January 2007 negotiating session,
the NCCC insisted the UTU withdraw from the
table its entry-pay proposal and defer its training
and rules agreement proposal to a ‘wage rules panel’
actions that violate the Railway Labor Act’s require-
ment that carriers “exert every reasonable
effort to make and maintain agreements concern-
ing rates of pay, rules and working conditions.”

The entry-rates proposal would boost new-
hire pay to 90 percent of parity following com-
pletion of the probationary period, and hike
that pay to 100 percent of parity upon comple-
tion of one year’s service. The new hires also
would receive, as a bonus following their first
year, the 10 percent of parity not paid them dur-
ing their first year of employment.

The UTU also presented the carriers with a
detailed proposal for improved training, which
the carriers declined even to discuss — much less
address — at the bargaining table.

Safety bill
Continued from back cover
continued improvement in safety performance
throughout the chain of stakeholders respon-
sible for transporting these critical materials.”

Shipper groups CURE and the Alliance for
Rail Competition said, “Our members recognize
that only a safe national rail system that is not
plagued by frequent derailments, collisions and
catastrophic accidents will result in reliable rail
service.”

CURE and the Alliance for Rail Competition
specifically cited a concern over rail-employee
fatigue, writing, “We strongly support the provi-
sion of H.R. 2095 that ensure proper rest for
railroad employees and treat employees fairly
with respect to the down time [limbo time]
when they are being transported to and from
their work assignments…The Congress must
enact H.R. 2095 to ensure a safe and reliable
national rail system.

The bill would reauthorize the Federal Rail-
road Administration (FRA) as the Federal Rail-
road Safety Administration (FRSA), whose goal
would be to reduce accidents, injuries and fatal-
ities, and with safety as its “highest priority.”

The FRSA would also be required to double the
number of safety inspectors from 400 to 800 by
Dec. 31, 2011.

As an added direct relief from fatigue, the
legislation would significantly
increase the number of safety inspectors from 400 to 800 by
Dec. 31, 2011.

The FRSA would be prohibited from communi-
cating with their workers
during their rest time.

Second, they would
have to have one period
of at least 24 consecutive
hours off duty every seven
days.

The legislation would significantly
strength training existing whistleblower protections to rail workers who report unsafe or hazardous
conditions.

A worker may refuse to authorize the use of equipment that the employee reasonably
believes to be unsafe or hazardous to operate or
work with, and this bill would protect those who
do so.

Class I railroads would have 12 months after
enactment of the legislation to submit concrete plans for the implementation of positive train
control.

The bill would also require railroads to install
warning devices in non-signalized territory that
would warn train crews of misaligned switches,
thereby addressing the greatest risks of dark ter-

nary operations.

The secretary of trans-
portation would also be
required to
regulate and train
railroad
rates and rail-
road safety laws and regu-
lations and railroad carrier
rates.

The secretary of trans-
portation would also be
required to
prescribe regulations and issue orders to estab-
lish a program requiring the certification of
employees. Under such regula-
tions, the secretary would require that conduc-
tors on passenger trains be trained in security,
first aid and emergency preparedness.

In addition, this proposed legislation, rail-
roads would not be allowed to discipline, or
threaten discipline to, an employee for request-
ing medical or first aid treatment, or for follow-
ing orders or a treatment plan of a treating
physician.

To stay current on this legislation, log onto

Unions and shippers agree: Rail safety needs to be addressed

Amtrak rally
Continued from page 1
Thompson encouraged UTU negotiators to
hold firm in demands for improved wages, a cap
on healthcare insurance costs, protection of
work rules, increased training in security, and
preservation of the assistant conductor job.

UTU Vice President Tony Iannone said that if
Amtrak succeeds in sacking 400 assistant con-
ductors, “it will be the passengers and the public
who lose.”

Repealed, the National Transportation
Safety Board has singled out the efforts of Amtrak conductors and assistant conductors in
saving lives and reducing injuries following Amtrak accidents.

“This with all threat of terrorism hanging over
Amtrak and its passengers, the conductor and assistant conductor are the first line of defense
checking tickets and passenger IDs, being alert
for suspicious activity, observing passenger
actions and demeanors and handling instances of unattended luggage and packages,” Iannone
said.

“The safety of passengers is the top priority of
the conductor and assistant conductor, and Amtrak’s chief labor negotiator, Joe Bress,
should not be trading passenger lives for brag-
ging rights that he fired 400 assistant conduc-
tors,” Iannone said.

Thompson and Iannone also criticized Amtrak’s aggressive discipline aimed at conduc-
tors. Amtrak currently is trying to fire almost 70
conductors for relatively minor infractions.
Sign up to attend regional meeting in Pittsburgh!

The 2007 UTU/UTUIA regional meetings are designed to provide education and fellowship for the whole family. All those attending the regional meeting must be registered in order to attend any planned social function. Children ages 11 and under who are pre-registered are complimentary. A completed registration form listing each attendee, regardless of age, and complete payment in U.S. funds must be received at the UTU International Headquarters, 14600 Detroit Ave., Cleveland, OH 44107, 30 days prior to the scheduled start of the Pittsburgh meeting or the registrant will be charged an on-site registration fee of $200.

The pre-registration fee for the 2007 regional meetings is $150 per member, spouse or child over age 11. Additional fees apply for the golf outings. You must make your own room reservations. The $150 registration fee covers the welcoming reception the night before the meeting, two lunches, one evening meal, a breakfast buffet and all workshop materials. Those wishing to attend only the workshops do not need to pay the registration fee. No one-day registrations are offered.

Pittsburgh, Pa. July 16-18

Hilton Pittsburgh, Gateway Center, 600 Commonwealth Plaza, Pittsburgh, PA 15222

www.hiltonindirect.com

Hotel reservations: All rooms allotted for UTU members at the Hilton Pittsburgh Gateway Center have been reserved. The UTU has made arrangements for members to get discounted room rates at the nearby DoubleTree Pittsburgh-City Center. The rate is $129 per night. The DoubleTree is a ten-minute walk or two-minute free subway ride from the Hilton Pittsburgh. The telephone numbers for reservations are (412) 281-5800 or (800) 222-TREE (8733). To get the lower rate refer to rooms reserved for the “United Transportation Union.”

Golf outing: The UTU Regional Meeting golf outing will be held Sunday, July 15, at 8 a.m. at the Grand View Golf Course, 1000 Clubhouse Dr., N. Braddock. The cost is $80 per golfer, which includes transportation, golf, lunch and prizes.

UTU Regional Meeting Registration Form

Registering before the regional meeting speeds sign-in procedures at the meeting site, helps organizers plan more accurately and saves on meeting costs. These savings are passed on to each pre-registered attendee. Each person attending the regional meeting, including family members and guests, MUST be registered in order to attend any planned event. Please note that the meeting lasts 2 1/2 days and concludes on the afternoon of the third day. Registration fees are $150 per person; children 11 years of age and under are complimentary. On-site registration will be $200 per person. All fees must be paid in U.S. funds. Canadian funds will be returned, possibly delaying your registration. If you have questions, consult your bank. Registration forms with payment must be received 30 days prior to the start of the meeting.

Pittsburgh regional meeting registration

Arrival date: ___________________ Departure date: ___________________

Transportation type: ☐ Car ☐ Air ☐ Other

Member Registration

Name ___________________________ Local ___________________ Title (if any) ______________________

City/State/ZIP _______________________

Phone number ( ) ___________________ Email ______________________

Meals: Day 1: ☐ Lunch ☐ No meal ☐ Both ☐ No meals
Day 2: ☐ Lunch ☐ Dinner ☐ Both ☐ No meals
Day 3: ☐ Buffet breakfast ☐ No meal

Spouse Registration

Spouse name ________________________ Title (if any) ______________________

Meals: Day 1: ☐ Lunch ☐ No meal ☐ Both ☐ No meals
Day 2: ☐ Lunch ☐ Dinner ☐ Both ☐ No meals
Day 3: ☐ Buffet breakfast ☐ No meal

Child Registration

Child name ________________________ Age ______

Meals: Day 1: ☐ Lunch ☐ No meal ☐ Both ☐ No meals
Day 2: ☐ Lunch ☐ Dinner ☐ Both ☐ No meals
Day 3: ☐ Buffet breakfast ☐ No meal

Guest Registration

Guest name ________________________ Relationship to member ______________________

City/State/ZIP _______________________

Meals: Day 1: ☐ Lunch ☐ No meal ☐ Both ☐ No meals
Day 2: ☐ Lunch ☐ Dinner ☐ Both ☐ No meals
Day 3: ☐ Buffet breakfast ☐ No meal

Golf Registration

Name ___________________________ Handicap ______

Name ___________________________ Handicap ______

(Golf fees are $80 per golfer; include in total payment.)

Payment Options

Check/money order (U.S. funds only) $ ____________

Credit card ☐ VISA ☐ MasterCard ☐ American Express

Card number ________________________ Exp. date ________ Total charged $ ____________

Signature ________________________

Should additional space be needed, make copies of this form and attach to the original. This form and payment of $150 per person over the age of 11, plus golf registration fees of $80 per golfer (if applicable), must be received at the UTU International Headquarters, 14600 Detroit Ave., Cleveland, OH 44107-4250, 30 days prior to the regional meeting. Make checks or money orders payable in U.S. funds to “UTU Regional Meeting.” Those who do not pre-register for the regional meeting but instead choose to register at the meeting site will be charged a $50 penalty fee. UTU arranges discount airfares, car rentals

Continental Airlines is offering discounted airfares to the regional meeting cities. Avis is offering discounted rental-car rates to those attending either regional meeting. Go to the “Meetings” page of www.utu.org for details.
This month’s winning photo:

The UTU Public Relations Department awards UTU gear to the union member who submits the best photograph during the previous month.

The winning photo will be published in the UTU News. Exceptional photographs will be included on the UTU website.

The UTU would like to see photographs or digital photographs of work-related scenes, such as railroad, bus or mass transit operations, new equipment photos, scenic shots, activities of your local, or photos of your brothers and sisters keeping America rolling.

Printed photographs should be mailed to UTU News, 14600 Detroit Ave., Cleveland, OH 44107-4250. High-resolution digital photographs should be in the JPEG format and sendability “atutuion@utu.org”.

With each photograph, please include your name and UTU local number, the name of the person in the photo (left to right), where the photo was taken, and all other pertinent information.

All photographs submitted become property of the UTU. Remember to review your employer’s policies regarding use of cameras on the property or during work hours.

This month’s winning photograph was taken by David Horner, a New Jersey Transit employee and member of Local 60 in Newark, N.J. This photograph shows a CSX locomotive consist traveling westbound at the beginning of the Delair Bridge on the New Jersey side of the Delaware River. The Pennsylvania Railroad (PRR) constructed this bridge in 1895; it was the first bridge of any sort from Philadelphia into New Jersey.

Rail labor united in support of safety improvement act

Rail labor and a powerful coalition of shippers are united in support of the Federal Railroad Safety Improvement Act of 2007, a bill that would provide sweeping reforms to railroad safety regulations and vastly improve the quality of life for all railroad workers.

The bill, H.R. 2095, was introduced May 1 by Rep. James Oberstar (D-Minn.), chairman of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, following lengthy consultation with supportive rail unions.

Among the bill’s many provisions are:
• A restructuring of the FRA, placing greater emphasis on its safety role and increasing substantially the number of qualified inspectors;
• Elimination of limbo time for operating crews;
• Creation of fatigue management programs, a guarantee of 10-hour undisturbed rest, and a guarantee of one 24-hour off-duty period every seven days;
• Strengthened whistleblower protections (and a worker may refuse to authorize the use of equipment the employee reasonably believes to be unsafe or hazardous to operate or work);
• Implementation of positive train control;
• Vast improvement in safety for operations in dark territory;
• Establishment of training standards for all railroad workers;
• Certification of train conductors;
• A study of locomotive cab ergonomics;
• A requirement for emergency breathing apparatus in all locomotive cabs; and;
• New regulations that would put an end to the harassment and intimidation of rail workers who report personal injuries.

UTU International President Paul Thompson said, “For years the carriers have made promises to address and solve these issues during national handling, and at each opportunity they reneged on their promises. This legislation loudly tells the carriers that their shell game has come to an end. It is the strongest rail safety legislation introduced in Congress in more than three decades, and rail labor and shippers are going to work collectively and constructively to see it is passed into law with a veto-proof majority.”

Among other rail unions in support of this rail safety measure are the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen, Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees Division, Brotherhood of Railroad Signalmen, and the American Train Dispatchers Association.

Consumers United for Rail Equity (CURE) and the Alliance for Rail Competition recently joined The American Chemistry Council in support of H.R. 2095. In a letter to lawmakers, American Chemistry Council CEO Jack Gerard said his members “are committed to the safe movement of our products, and we believe H.R. 2095 provides an important framework to spur

Continued on page 10