The Voice of Transportation Labor

“We have gotten CSX to agree not to furlough anybody because of remote control, which protects everybody – including engineers – which I think is real good. In fact, we have even gotten some furloughed members recalled. We have got more people working now than before.” – CSXT General Chairperson Larry Moody

Rails test remote control; UTU monitoring projects

CLEVELAND, Ohio – Railroads nationwide have begun to test remote controlled locomotives in yard-switching operations. Remote control allows a locomotive to be controlled from outside the cab through use of a radio transmitter and receiver system.

These pilot projects are being conducted under the auspices of the National Wage and Rules Panel, which includes officials of the UTU and most of the nation’s major railroads. UTU general chairpersons and UTU local officials are involved in the decision making. Neither a single job nor pay are being lost as a result of the pilot projects.

The UTU would rather lead than follow on the issue of remote control, said UTU International President Byron A. Boyd, Jr., after the carriers signed a letter of intent giving the work of remote control to UTU represented members. “We want to avoid the steep price labor historically paid when it rejected, out of hand, all new technology,” Boyd said. “We are managing the result, not reacting to it. Our members are far better off with the UTU having agreed to the pilot projects and managing the implementation of remote control rather than the carriers unilaterally implementing it,” Boyd said.

As a condition of accepting the pilot projects, Boyd demanded and won from the carriers a guarantee that no train or engine service jobs will be lost, or compensation reduced, because of the implementation of remote control. Also, all employees who will operate remote-controlled equipment must receive adequate training before being allowed on the job. Training on remote controls typically involves one week of classroom instruction and a second week of on-the-job training with a qualified trainer.

“I’m not hearing a lot of anything that is negative,” Boyd said. “We must review all the safety and operational data and be satisfied that this is the best for all operating railroad personnel before we ask general chairpersons and local officials to take any further steps.”

Here is a rundown on pilot projects on the nation’s major rail carriers:

The Kansas City Southern has purchased 50 of Canac’s BeltPack II units and by mid-March the carrier had trained 44 workers who were using remotes at yards in Kansas City and Shreveport, La. About 16 of the Canac units have been installed, with the remainder expected to be

Continued on page 10

UTU experts at Amtrak crash

CRESSENT CITY, Fla. – Within hours of last month’s fatal derailment of Amtrak’s Auto-Train here, two UTU safety experts from the UTU Transportation Safety Team (TST) joined investigators from the National Transportation Safety Board at the accident scene.

UTU TST members – 10 individuals on call 24 hours a day – are selected for their knowledge of operating rules and understanding of general railroad operations, train movements and dispatching.

When accidents occur, TST Coordinator J.R. Cumby immediately assigns one or more TST members, who quickly depart for the scene. Cumby also notifies affected UTU general chairpersons and state directors and the NTSB investigator in charge. TST members assist the NTSB in ascertaining factual data on the incident.

Often, crewmembers say that TST participation eases the trauma and interview process.

UTU shapes regional rail plan

CHICAGO – Illinois State Legislative Director Joe Szabo participated April 8 in two separate transportation policy planning sessions aimed at preserving and enhancing intercity rail passenger service and reducing freight railroad congestion in the Chicago area.

Szabo served as the rail labor representative at the intercity rail passenger planning session hosted by Amtrak Chairman John Robert Smith and U.S. Sen. Dick Durbin (D-IL). Also present were Illinois Transportation Secretary Kirk Brown and Rep. Julie Hamos, vice chairperson of the Illinois House railroad subcommittee, Chicago Transportation Commissioner Miguel d’Escoto, two southern Illinois mayors, officials from Amtrak and senior staff from state and local transportation agencies.

Later, Szabo was the only transportation labor

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The Official Publication of the United Transportation Union

Volume 84
Number 5
May 2002

For the latest information on remote control pilot projects and contract negotiations, visit the UTU website: www.utu.org
Local 23, Santa Cruz, Cal.

Wage negotiations for Linite panarbar tramway conductor, said General Chairperson Bonnie Mor, but members working on the Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District recently overwhelmingly approved a new contract that includes the highest wage increase ever negotiated by the local. With compounding, the three-year package will include a 19% wage increase. The pact, concluded in record time, also helped save a number of jobs from layoffs. Meanwhile, members are mourning the loss of bus operator Virgilio Lo, who succumbed to a heart attack on his bus just before leaving the yard, despite the efforts of co-workers and EMS personnel to resuscitate him.

Local 313, Grand Rapids, Mich.

A newsletter detailing the latest efforts to preserve the SS City of Milwaukee, one of the last railcar ferries to work the Great Lakes, is online at http://www.carferry.com, said George P. Mick, Local 313, Grand Rapids, Mich. for his vital assistance at a Public Law Board hearing and Locomotive Review Board, which led to reinstatement of a member's engineer certificate. Certification was pulled by the manufacturer. Railroad when the member was represented by the Brotherhood of Locomotive Enginee which refused to represent that member or other engineers on the property, according to Secretary and Treasurer John G. Payer.

Library 471, Eugene, Ore.

The Sixth Annual J.C. Anderson Memorial Golf and BBQ Tour will be held August 5 at Diamond Golf Course in Monroe, Ore., according to Legislative Representative Greg Boam. Entry fee for the four-person scramble is $35 per player, sponsored in part by Deschutes Legal Counsel Yang, Jorgensen, Barcik & Vaccinovich, features door prizes and a raffle. For more information or to contribute to the fund supporting the event, write to Boam at 4742 Thunderbird Dr., Eugene, OR 97404; telephone him at (541) 461-5407.

Library 659, Leesville, La.

Friends of Kansas City Southern conductor Kenneth C. Wedgeworth have established a fund to aid him following his involvement in a switching accident last February, said Local Chairperson Mike Risher. Wedgeworth was run over by a train and lost his right foot, right arm and three fingers of his left hand. The 56-year-old father had been railroading for 31 years. Help for medical treatment to buy Kenneth C. Wedgeworth Special Account, Vernon Bank, P.O. Box 1271, Leesville, LA 71496.

Library 770, Heaven, Okla.

Elaine Locke, daughter of recently retired Kansas City Southern engineer John T. Locke and his wife, was recently named an American Collegiate Scholar by the United States Achievement Academy (USA). The USA program recognizes superior students with grade point averages (GPA) of 3.3 or above.

Library 867, Des Moines, Iowa

At a recent local meeting, a representative of U.S. Sen. Tom Harkin inspired members to contribute to the senator’s food fund, said State Legislative Director Patrick Hendricks. Contributors included Rex Amundson, Mike Wilson, Frank Martin, William Wiebe, Gary Mundel, Steve Linn, goat farmer Gene Bovery, and Robert and Mary LaBoarde.

Local 1074, Carnegie, Pa.

Employees of the McKeeport Connecting Railroad, a Transtar line, whose contract expired in June 2003, are being assisted in ongoing negotiations by Delegate J.J. Tierney of Local 1628 in Pittsburgh, Pa., who is employed on another Transtar property, the Union Railroad, said Local Chairperson T&D Ken Weidaw.

Local 1252, Fresno, Cal.

Retired member Fred Uriate, active in local affairs and president of the Santa Fe First Federal Credit Union, was chosen to serve as grand marshal for the 88th annual Clover Cal, rodeo, held April 26-28, according to retired member Don Heffernan.

Local 1433, Elmwood Park, Ill.

Members are mourning the passing of Local President and Vice Local Chairperson Bruce P. Tinkowski, 44, who succumbed to a heart attack at his home on March 23, according to General Chairperson D.E. Baker (GO-261).

Local 1462, Boston, Mass.

The First Steve Deluxe Hockey Game, set for 2 p.m. on May 19 at the Stoneham Arena, will pit Amtrak’s North Side employees against South Side employees in an event designed to raise funds to assist New England Division railroaders battling various illnesses, according to Local President Edward B. Radovich, who said the event is named after a recently deceased conductor from Boston. Those who can’t attend but want to help can send donations to BF Hockey, Unit #52, 6 Kennedy Lane, Milford, MA 01757. Please make checks payable to “BF Hockey.” For more information, contact Paul Torosian at (508) 528-3965 or Radovich at (617) 823-4407.

Local 1594, Upper Darby, Pa.

For the 13th consecutive year, members employed by SEPTA will participate in the American Cancer Society’s Bike-A-Thon. This year’s event will take place July 14, said Local Chairperson and President Ron Koran. For more information or to sign up, contact Thomas Brennato (610) 518-2185. Meanwhile, members are congratulating Jennie Jenkins, whose wife recently delivered him a five-pound baby girl.

Local 1813, W. Colton, Cal.

The 24th Annual Union Golf Tournament was held April 22 at El Rancho Verde Vista, said Local Chairperson Rick Renna. The full差点, two-man scramble drew nearly 150 golfers, including UTU Past International President G. Thomas DaBose, various designated legal counsel representatives, and members employed by the Union Pacific and BNSF Trophies, door prizes and a lottery will determine the eventual winner.

Local 1963, Louisville, Ky.

Members are mourning the death of Local Chairperson (yardmaster) Sam S. Kirkpatrick, who passed away April 1, Brother Kirkpatrick began his career as a switchman on the former Louisville & Nashville (now CSX) in November 1962, and was a member of Brotherhood of Railroad Trainmen Lodge 156 (now UTU Local 316). He had been on disability for several months but continued to serve as local chairperson.
Endorsements

UTU legislative boards from the states listed below recommend the following candidates to UTU members in their respective state primaries and general elections:

**Arkansas**
- Senate
  - Mark Pryor (D)
- House of Representatives
  - 1st Dist.: Marion Berry (D)*
  - 2nd Dist.: Vic Snyder (D)*
  - 4th Dist.: Mike Ross (D)*
- Governor
  - Jimmie Lou Fisher (D)

**North Dakota**
- House of Representatives
  - At Large: Earl Pomeroy (D)*
- Public Service Commissioner
  - Susan Wefald (R)

**Indiana**
- House of Representatives
  - 1st Dist.: Peter Visclosky (D)*
  - 7th Dist.: Julia Carson (D)
  - 9th Dist.: Baron Hill (D)*

* = Incumbent

**Colorado**
- The Colorado Legislative Board has announced its support for one of its own in the upcoming fall elections as Buffie McFadyen, wife of UTU Local 202 member Paul Bay, enters the race for the 47th district seat in the state’s House of Representatives. “When elected, Buffie will be a strong voice for the concerns of labor, families, seniors and the environment. TPEL will be there to support Buffie and her campaign for her victory in November,” said State Director Rick Johnson. Pictured above, left to right, are Assistant State Director Charlie Skladmore, State Rep. Abel Tafoya, Johnson, District 47 Candidate Buffie McFadyen and State Sen. Bill Thiebau.

**Texas**
- At a recent mini-regional meeting in San Antonio hosted by UTU Local 489, State Legislative Director Connie English challenged UTU members to raise their TPEL pledge status to the Dollar-a-Day club level. “With increases in costs everywhere, we can’t do as much with a Gold Club pledge as we used to. We need to concentrate on Dollar-a-Day pledges or greater to get the job done,” English told those in attendance.
- The challenge was accepted. UTU members from Locals 115, 489, 505, 756, 877, 953, 1205, 1254 and 1904 responded by increasing their pledge status and raising an additional $6,000 for TPEL.
- In a letter to UTU News, English said “thanks” to everyone he did not have the opportunity to personally thank.

**Maryland**
- The Maryland State Legislative Board has unanimously endorsed House of Delegates member Mark K. Shriver for the state’s 8th Congressional District seat in the upcoming fall elections.
- “Delegate Shriver has been a great friend of labor during his term in the House of Delegates and deserves the support of our organization in his bid for Congress,” Legislative Director Larry Kasecamp said.
- Shriver was presented with a contribution from the UTU’s Transportation Political Education League at a recent meeting of the state’s legislative board.
- “UTU is the first union to endorse my candidacy and I will not forget it,” Shriver said.

**Future of unionism is in our hands**

The future of the American labor movement is in our hands. We have come a long way and should not take our unions for granted. The labor movement has brought about bargaining agreements between employers and representatives of the employees. These agreements determine the rules that will govern their relationship for a specified period of time. In one sense, your bargaining agreement is a private lawmaking process resulting in laws regulating relationships between the parties. Read your agreements; they are your local laws.

At the beginning of the industrial revolution, employees had contracts with their employers that were mostly verbal. It was a basic system of “you work, I pay.” Employees could not unite and approach their employers in an attempt to improve their working conditions. Any form of concerted effort was considered a crime and the penalty could be the same as the penalty for robbery.

Then came the “yellow-dog contracts,” where employees, before getting hired, had to sign a contract that they would not participate in any concerted action during the time they work for that employer.

Then employers would pit workers against one another, with two employees doing the same job, one that paid 75 cents per day, the other that paid 50 cents per day. The one who accepted 50 cents needed the job more.

Thanks to our unions, today the laws have changed and employees now have the right to collectively bargain for wages, hours and other terms of employment. The law now provides that employees have the right to engage in concerted activities, including efforts towards securing union representation or a collective bargaining agreement.

**A backward look gives perspective**

We are continually challenged to push forward. We are continually challenged to look to the future and make progress.

While these are worthwhile endeavors, strength and determination can be drawn from a backward look, too.

Seeing where we have been, often times, will help us better understand where we are, what got us to our present point in time, and where we should go in the future.

Our present situation in life and history was purchased by sacrifices of those who have preceded us.

The last Monday of this month, May 27, has been designated as Memorial Day, a time to reflect on, and honor, the sacrifices of those who made possible our quality of life, as we know it, in the greatest democracy the world has known.

Many individuals have had a positive impact on each of our lives. Why wait until they are no longer among the living to honor them?

I urge each of you to take the time to express a heartfelt “thank you” to a veteran, teacher, relative, co-worker or friend whose sacrifice has had a positive impact on your life.

It has been written, “A rose to the living means more that a sumptuous wreath to the dead.”

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Preserving medical care

by Norman K. Brown, M.D.
Medical Consultant to the UTU

The improvements and breakthroughs in medical science since I began as a primary care physician 40 years ago are spectacular and even hard to believe. Many crucial, life-saving and life-extending procedures we currently take for granted are relatively new, such as mammograms, heart bypass surgery, fiber endoscopy (looking inside the body with a lighted, flexible tube), CT and MRI scans. There are other major areas that could benefit from further advances and I am very hopeful that medical science soon will provide them.

It has been exciting to be part of this rapidly evolving medical system, which serves Americans with the best medical science in the world.

The research, physician training and equipment purchases associated with these medical advances are very expensive and in a reason medical costs have been soaring. Research to develop new life-saving, life-extending and life-improving drugs also is very expensive and is reflected in the price of new medications.

Fortunately, the insurance plans negotiated by the UTU with carriers are among the best available. But, even the most recent revisions to those plans are now almost 10 years old and, understandably, are now coming under intensive review both by the UTU and the carriers, who pay for their costs.

It is no secret that physicians have struggled with the insurance/administrative side of medical insurance in an effort to obtain for patients the best care possible. Although the science of medicine today is amazingly powerful, some aspects of medical care as practiced years ago were better than today. I am talking about choice of physicians, access to physicians of your choice, the price of medication and patient/physician relationships.

I have been asked by UTU International President Byron A. Boyd, Jr., to serve as a medical consultant to help the UTU achieve the best possible plans for today and into the future. To my knowledge, no other large organization like the UTU involved in the purchasing of medical care for thousands of members has asked for input from a physician practitioner. President Boyd's request is truly progressive and I am very pleased to be in this unique position.

I am challenged to make a constructive contribution to the process. My goal is to improve the plan operations for members and physicians so that the final product will continue to be the best available.

Collectively, UTU members are the strength of the best transportation system in the world. You deserve nothing less than the best medical care plan in the world and I hope to be a part of reaching that end.

As railroad health-care negotiations move forward, I will be meeting regularly with President Boyd and other UTU national officers to ensure that patient and physician concerns never take a back seat to cost concerns as revisions are made to the health-care plan.

WASHINGTON WATCH
By James Brunkenhoefer

Hatred is not an American value

So, you turn on the car radio and hear a talk show featuring Rush Limbaugh, Michael Reagan, Oliver North or G. Gordon Liddy telling you what is wrong with America and who is at fault.

Newspapers frequently carry opinion columns by members of right-wing organizations.

And, even television talk shows, at all hours of the day and night, often feature guests whose positions are hard right.

Sometimes it seems that, no matter what radio or television station or newspaper you choose, the same material is repeated - day after day, hour after hour.

And, you know what? Nobody is saying a good word about labor unions or government.

The message is that unions and government workers are out to hurt the poor, hard-working taxpayer.

Well, let me tell you about some of those government workers in Washington, D.C.

When terrorists slammed a commercial jet aircraft into the Pentagon Sept. 11, they didn’t kill a bunch of big important generals. Killed in the Pentagon offices were mostly civilian workers, not military officers - people just like you and me who are working to support their families.

Yet it is people like the civilian clerks at the Pentagon and dedicated postal workers who are the targets of right-wing attacks on radio, television and in the newspapers.

Who gets hurt?

The fact is these government workers attacked by the right wing put their lives on the line every day in order to carry out their responsibilities, which in most cases are to improve the quality of life for themselves and their families - on the job, in their communities and in their homes.

I fully support freedom of expression, but rights carry responsibilities and many within the right wing are ignoring their responsibility to tell the whole truth.

Of course, our government is not without fault; and, yes, we would like to see government operate as efficiently as possible.

But, we make government no more efficient by spewing hate than carrier officials make employees more productive by spewing hate.

Our government, and the dedicated people who make it work, should not be the object of hate, and freedom of expression should not be used to divide our nation.

I am not suggesting that radio, television and newspapers shift to simply praising government or unions.

My point is - and I think you share this point of view - that it is disheartening that intelligent people whose politics are ultra conservative ignore their ability to make positive change and instead, choose to spew hatred.

Hatred is not an American value.
Senate leader credits UTU for retirement reform

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Senate Majority Whip Harry Reid (D-Nev.) has singled out the UTU and National Legislative Director James Brunkenhoefer as the dynamic engine that caused Railroad Retirement reform to be passed by Congress.

Speaking at a press conference in Reno, Nev., Sen. Reid called the Railroad Retirement and Survivors' Improvement Act of 2001 "the most significant update of the country's Railroad Retirement system since 1974."

"Had Brokenrail not come to me and not worked as hard as he did, this legislation would not have passed," said Reid. Sen. Reid, in his third term, is the Senate's second-most powerful Democrat. As Majority Whip, he assists Majority Leader Tom Daschle (D-S.D.) guide legislation through the Senate by securing the votes to pass key measures. The National Journal said Sen. Reid has "quietly elevated a long dormant post."

"I would like to thank Brokenrail and the UTU on behalf of myself and for the over 600,000 retired railroad workers and their families who will benefit from this legislation," Reid said.

Also grateful for the UTU's efforts was recently retired member W.J. Lovett of Local 202 in Denver, Colo.

In a recent letter, Brother Lovett noted that if "there was ever a poster boy for this bill, it was me. I turned 60 in November 2001, and had 38.5 years in the rail industry."

"I have to honestly admit I did not think the bill would pass, and fully expected to serve another two years of what seemed like a never-ending session on the midnight shift in the rail yard here in Denver," Lovett continued.

Following the measure's progress was characterized by Lovett as a roller-coaster ride, but upon its passage, he said he rejoiced, said a prayer of thanks, and immediately served notice of his retirement.

"My wife and I now enjoy each day we have left," Lovett wrote. "We no longer worry about her trying to be quiet so I can sleep. I no longer miss family get-togethers because I have to go to work."

"It's great, and I want to thank you and all the men and women back there who never gave up and saw it through. I truly appreciate it – more than you could possibly know."

The widowed Mrs. Beryl Bourland of Schertz, Tex., also wrote to express her gratitude. "I wish to thank you so very much for your persistent efforts to get the benefit for widowed spouses of retired railroad men or women increased so greatly," she wrote. "You cannot imagine what a difference this makes in our lives. God bless you!"

Guest Editorial

Why don’t I join the BLE? I’ll tell you

by David Currence
Vice Local Chairperson, Local 1011, Hamlet, N.C.

“Why don’t you join the BLE? You’re an engineer now. The BLE holds your agreement.”

If I had a dollar for every time I have been asked that question, I could probably hang it up. Those of you who know me, or who have been around when I was asked that question, have probably heard my derogatory, humorous response. Perhaps I have done those of you who asked an injustice, because the question has merit, and deserves an answer.

Events of late have forced me to do a great deal of soul searching. Questions come to mind like, “Did I do the right thing by remaining in a conductors’ union?” After much deliberation I can honestly tell you that I believe I did.

I have to say that I was more upset than anyone when I first learned that remote control was coming our way. I was even more upset when I learned that the union I represent-ed was negotiating the agreement to implement it. Any of you that know me know I have a pretty hot temper. Gener-al Chairperson John Hancock will tell you, we had some pretty heated debates on the phone over the direction we were taking with this. I, like many of our younger members, am guilty of overreacting and not thinking of everything from every angle and past per-spective.

Historic precedence is the greatest indicator of what will happen in the future. I think most of you will agree with that. I am thankful for the guidance and support of the wiser, more experienced, leadership in this organization.

As I said before, I am vehemently opposed to remote control. Most of you know, however, that when the carrier gets in their minds that something will save them money or be more productive, there is no amount of explanation or negotiation that will sway them. I firmly believe that this time they are banking on another DWORS (a CSX program that gave laptop computers to trainmen for direct input of information to company computers; it was abandoned when it didn’t work – ed.)

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Important announcements on health insurance

UnitedHealthcare holds open enrollment this month for employees, dependents

During the month of May 2002, UnitedHealthcare will hold an open enrollment under GA-23111.

During this open enrollment, any individual eligible for coverage under one of the GA-23111 plans can enroll and will be accepted for coverage without any medical underwriting or requirement of good health.

There are no limitations on pre-existing conditions. Enrollment in May 2002 will be for coverage effective June 1, 2002. Only those applicants who mail their enrollment form in May 2002 will be considered for open enrollment.

This open enrollment is being held:
- For persons already enrolled in GA-23111 who want to change their coverage from Plan D to Plan F (which has no prescription drug coverage) or from Plan F to Plan D. The next opportunity to change plans will be May 2004.
- For any individual who was covered under any railroad health plan and was represented by a railway labor union. Previously, only individuals covered under the health and welfare plan, the NRC/UTU plan, GA-107300 or GA-46000 were eligible to enroll under GA-23111.

Q. Why do the premiums go up every year?
A. UnitedHealthcare examines the amount of benefits paid out each year for each plan under GA-23111 along with the estimated impact of health care inflation. The premium rates depend on the level of benefits paid out. As more benefits are paid out, the premium rate must also increase at a similar rate.

For all plans under GA-23111, the increased use of services and the inflation in medical care costs resulted in higher payment rates. For Plan D, the change is caused primarily by the cost of prescription drug coverage (see next question).

Q. Why is the premium for Plan D going up $35 while the premium for Plan F is increasing only $7?
A. Plan D and Plan F provide the same benefits, except that Plan D provides coverage for prescription drugs and Plan F does not. The difference in the rate increases under these two plans is caused, to a great extent, by the cost of the prescription drug benefit.

About 50% of the total amounts of benefits that are paid out under Plan D are for prescription drugs. In recent years, the benefits paid for Plan D prescription drugs have increased at a rate of about 20% per year. These increases are influenced by the number of people who get prescriptions, the number of prescriptions they fill and the cost of each prescription. We expect the prescription drug benefits to continue to increase 20% next year, which is the major factor impacting the Plan D payment rates.

Q. Why is there a deductible on my prescription drug purchases from the pharmacy?
A. In spite of the advantages of using the mail order pharmacy benefit, many members continue to purchase drugs at the local pharmacy that could be obtained through the mail. This activity increases the cost of the prescription drug benefit because it costs less to provide drugs through the mail than it does to provide them through a local pharmacy. A deductible and co-insurance was added to discourage this and encourage the use of the mail order pharmacy benefit.

Q. Can I change from Plan D to Plan F or from Plan F to Plan D?
A. You can only change plans during the open enrollment period. The next open enrollment period is May 2002, with changes effective on June 1, 2002.

Q. Will GA-23111 benefits change?
A. At this time, no benefit changes are planned. However, if costs continue to rise, changes in plan benefits may be needed to help control the cost of the plans. We will continue to strive to find the right balance between benefits and premiums for the majority of railroad retirees.
This year, the UTU/UTUIA Regional Meetings have been planned with families in mind. Read below for more information about the many workshops, presentations and tours being offered to UTU members and their families at the upcoming Regional Meetings.

This year, the three UTU/UTUIA Regional Meetings have been designed to offer something for every member of the family.

In fact, the UTU and UTUIA have revised and re-arranged the content of the Regional Meetings with families in mind.

This year, UTU members and their families will be able to enjoy the beauty and excitement of Reno, Nevada; the history and grandeur of Washington, D.C.; and the charm and vitality of New Orleans, with Reno and New Orleans offering the best bang for your buck.

The registration fee for the Regional Meetings is a great economic value because it covers the cost of a welcoming reception, three lunches and three dinners (including the grand cocktail Reception and President’s Banquet), all meeting materials and much more.

While union members will be able to attend a number of informative and interesting workshops, a wide variety of subjects, from the handling of grievances to the implementation of remote control pilot projects, a number of workshops and other activities have been included so that there is never a dull moment for any member of the family.

The first day of the Regional Meetings is especially geared to spouses and other family members, and they are strongly urged to attend each session:

• All members and their families will be interested to hear International President Byron A. Boyd, Jr., “State of the Union Address” at 8:30 a.m.;

• The next presentation, “Crossing the Line,” hosted by UTU Human Rights Committee Director Ray Cunningham, will provide information on how to fight prejudice and embrace diversity and family values;

• Family members will be interested to hear Assistant President Paul Thompson and Chief Legal Counsel Clint Miller III discuss contract negotiations in today’s political and legal climate in “The Real World;”

• “Remembering Our Roots,” with Vice President Bruce Wigent, Clint Miller and railroad historian Dr. James McDonnell, will enlighten UTU members and their families about how the wages and benefits we enjoy today were earned through the sacrifices of those union brothers and sisters who went before us;

• Finally on the first day, National Legislative Director James Brunkenhoefer, Assistant National Legislative Director James Stem, Michigan State Legislative Director David Brickey and Designated Legal Counsel Larry Mann will present a workshop on “Your Paycheck and Politics,” which will address legislative and political issues, such as Railroad Retirement and Amtrak funding, that directly affect UTU members and their families.

Other workshops that family members will find interesting include:

• “Asleep at the Switch,” an important presentation on fatigue, the number one danger facing transportation employees, will be presented by University of Denver Associate Professor of Counseling and Psychology Patrick Sherry and a panel of experts from the Federal Railroad Administration, National Transportation Safety Board, and other industry representatives;

• “Your Best Defense,” presented by a panel of UTU Designated Legal Counsellor, offering advice to UTU members and their families on what should be done if the member is injured on the job.

Family members also will enjoy the tour in Reno and the interesting presentations in Washington, D.C., and New Orleans sponsored by the UTU Auxiliary (see information below).

UTU members and their families will enjoy all aspects of the UTU/UTUIA Regional Meetings. Plan to attend!

UTU Auxiliary to host Regional Meeting programs

The Auxiliary of the United Transportation Union will once again be hosting a program for the spouses and relatives of UTU members attending the Regional Meetings.

“The seminars will focus on what we do and what we can do to support the UTU,” said Auxiliary International President Edythe Walter. “We also hope to recruit new members into the Auxiliary and to explain how to go about starting an Auxiliary lodge.”

Besides its educational program, the Auxiliary will also host a special activity at each of this year’s meetings.

At the Reno Regional Meeting, the Auxiliary is sponsoring a tour of the famous Ponderosa Ranch, the home of TV’s “Bonanza” and the Cartwright family. Pre-registration is required to guarantee space on this tour.

In Washington, D.C., Auxiliary meeting attendees can enjoy a presentation on floral design by Tom Powell, president of the Flower Gallery and coordinator of some of the industry’s biggest events.

In New Orleans, the Auxiliary will present a cooking demonstration by world-renowned chef Kevin Belton.

Auxiliary members and guests will hear remarks from UTU International President Byron A. Boyd, Jr., and Assistant President Paul Thompson; U.S. National Legislative Director James Brunkenhoefer and Alternative U.S. National Legislative President James A. Stem, Jr., and UTU designated legal counsel, a select group of attorneys specializing in rail-labor law. The attorneys will discuss what every UTU family should know about the dangers of the transportation industry, and how to protect themselves and their families in the event of a work-related accident or injury.

“Being the spouse of a railroader is not the easiest job in the world,” Walter said. “The Auxiliary provides a form of camaraderie for spouses and family members whose husbands or wives are away from home for much of the day or for extended periods of time,” she said.

Regional Meetings feature program for UTU retirees

At this year’s Regional Meetings, the UTU and UTUIA will present a program especially for retired union members and their families.

Called “Age Has its Privileges,” the program will be moderated by retired UTU Vice President Larry Davis, who now serves the union, along with former UTUIA regional representative Billy Packer, as co-chairperson of the UTU Retiree Program.

The seminar will open with greetings from International President Byron A. Boyd, Jr., who will talk on the importance of the Retiree Program. Next, National Legislative Director James Brunkenhoefer will talk about the role of retirees in the passage of legislation important to the UTU, such as the recent passage of the Railroad Retirement Survivors and Improvement Act of 2001.

Davis then will talk on the many benefits of membership in the Retiree Program and its ties to UTUIA field supervisors. Ralph Dennis, director of insurance for the UTUIA, will also speak on the value of UTUIA insurance and investment products to retirees.

UTUIA field supervisors will then explain their role as the “anchor” to the retiree “local chapters” of the UTUIA local units. Packer also will explain the benefits of the medical emergency data card, one of the benefits of membership in the Retiree Program. (The other benefits are a yearly calendar; membership in the UTU Retiree Travelers Club; discounts on National Car Rentals; two booklets on managing finances and health care, and a custom-made folder for important papers like stock certificates, wills and insurance policies.)

Davis also will introduce representatives from Medicare and Palmetto, who will outline Medicare and claim handling procedures, and take questions.
Track work keeps centenarian young

Everett W. Hosack holds 52 senior world track and field records, set at various ages during the past 22 years, and plans to compete in about a dozen events this year. So when he missed another significant milestone on February 28, marking his 100th birthday, he simply took it in stride.

“The whole reason to exercise is to increase your quality of life, and the byproduct is longevity,” Brother Hosack said. “But, the best part is picking up a gold medal. I’ve got about two shoeboxes full of them. If I didn’t come in first or second, I don’t believe I’d have enough desire to compete.”

A native of Youngstown, Ohio, Hosack moved to Cleveland when he was 14 and began acquiring experience from a long string of jobs, including work with a diamond broker and on a Great Lakes pleasure ship. He attended the University of Floridas for about a year, but then ran short of funds.

He first competed in track events for the NYC, which “had a team right up through the Depression,” Hosack said, and once was a top hurdler, an event he no longer pursues in deference to his age.

Today, Brother Hosack is a member of a group of senior athletes that calls itself the Over the Hill Track Club, and he and his wife of 66 years, Elsa, have been active volunteers involved in fund-raising activities for the City Mission in Cleveland for 50 years. Hosack attributes his longevity to hard, clean living, and his wife’s good Swedish cooking.

Medicare, Social Security funds show improvement

WASHINGTON, D.C. — While the recession apparently caused no damage to the health of the Medicare and Social Security trust funds, Congress should act quickly to bolster the two programs before baby boomers reach retirement age, the programs’ trustees reported.

The projected insolvency date of the Medicare trust fund was extended to 2030, barring changes, a year later than previous estimates, according to the annual report. Social Security is expected to run out of cash by 2041, three years later than estimated earlier, the trustees reported.

The trustees warned that their report didn’t significantly change the time frame when many of the funds are projected to start spending more than they take in.

The trustees projected Social Security will begin to dip into its trust funds a year later than they predicted a year ago — in 2017 — when it would be paying out more in benefits than it would be collecting in payroll taxes. The date when Medicare is expected to start dipping into its trust fund stayed at 2016, the trustees reported.

Social Security and Medicare are currently bringing in much more every year than they spend to prepare for the onslaught of retirees that begins in 2010 as members of the post-World War II baby boom generation start to retire.

The trustees’ forecasts are the mid-range projections of three separate estimates made in the report. Under the most pessimistic estimate, the Social Security fund would run dry in 2029, while under the most optimistic it would remain solvent for at least another 75 years.

By 2030, the number of older people is expected to double.

Drug companies offer discount card

Seven big drug makers said they will make available a single discount card that uninsured seniors can use to buy medicines, the industry’s latest effort to make prescriptions more affordable.

The new Tocket Rx card, which will become available in June, will offer savings of between 20% and 40% on about 130 drugs. Up to 11 million people who lack insurance coverage for prescription drugs are expected to be eligible to participate. According to estimates, some 40 million seniors and disabled people lack prescription drug insurance coverage.

Medicare coverage expanded

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Within the next six months, Medicare will begin paying for any image-guided biopsy to determine if a breast lump is malignant, the government announced.

The decision means that female Medicare beneficiaries who want to avoid surgical biopsy will be reimbursed for the relatively new image-guided procedure.

Since early 2000, Medicare has paid for image-guided biopsies of lumps that can’t be felt by hand and are judged by a radiologist to be suspicious or highly suggestive of cancer.

According to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, there are about one million breast biopsies performed in the U.S. each year.

Breast cancer is the most common form of cancer in American women, and the most common cause of cancer deaths in women age 65 and older.

Meanwhile, Medicare patients can no longer automatically be denied reimbursement for therapy treatments if they suffer from Alzheimer’s disease, according to a policy that was quietly put into effect several months ago.

The change could have at least “some impact” on as many as one-quarter of the 4 million Americans who suffer from the brain disorder, according to Tom Scully, administrator of the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services.

THE FINAL CALL

Following are the names of members of the UTU Retiree Program who have died recently, according to reports received at UTU International Headquarters. These brothers and sisters will be missed by their many friends and by fellow UTU Retiree Program members.
Brian Donald
L-324, Seattle, Wash.

“I’ve been a bus operator for 16 years. I’m employed by Grayline of Seattle, and I also operate Membership L-1. I would hope the events of September 11 bring the meaning of the day home to a lot of Americans. We have taken for granted for too many years that we are safe and secure. We shouldn’t rely so much on others for this, but we should be grateful for the freedoms we’ve been given through other people’s sacrifices. For me, the day is a remembrance of the sacrifices our country has made and given themselves for my safety, security and freedom. I don’t plan anything special because there’s a good chance I’ll be working.”

H. F. Upton
L-1972, Birmingham, Ala.

“I’m a local chairperson, and I work as a yardmaster for Norfolk Southern. I’ve done that for 15 years, and I’ve been a railroador for 31 years. I’m a Vietnam veteran, and the day means a whole lot to me. A lot of us feel we didn’t get the respect or appreciation we deserved. I have a lot of respect for anybody who served in any branch of the military. I’ll raise the flag that day, and I’ll probably attend the parade they have in Chattanooga. Then I’ll probably go visit with my fellow Vietnam veterans. Her name was in the Navy. Because of what happened last September, the day will have a lot more meaning to most Americans.”

Rick Renna
L-1813, W. Colton, Calif.

“I’m a switchman for Union Pacific and a local chairperson, and I’ve been in the industry for 24 years. I usually have to work on the holiday, but I think it will have greater meaning emotionally for all Americans because of the 9/11 tragedies in New York, Washington, D.C., and Pennsylvania. Our local donated more than $1,000 to the firemen’s fund, and we have a lot of Vietnam veterans here, so I know a lot of us will be thinking about those who risked their lives or lost their lives to protect what we have here. We’ll also be thinking about our fellow Americans who are overseas now protecting our freedom and our standard of living.”

Ken Weidaw
L-1074, Carnegie, Pa.

“I’ve been working on the McKeeps-Connectng Railroad for 33 years. I’m an engineer and chairperson for engineers and trainmen, and I served three years in the Army and in Vietnam. It’s a day of remembrance for the people who served our country. This year will have more importance in light of what happened in September. It will remind us of what the veterans have done for our safety and well-being. It’s good to remember, and should be done more. A lot of people paid the price, and we tend to become forgetful of them until times of crisis. I usually get the day off and spend time with my family at home or at a picnic.”

What does Memorial Day mean to you?

Voices:

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Remote control

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installed on locomotives by September.
KCS General Chairperson Curtis Roughton said the railroad is preparing to implement additional remote control pilot projects at Beaumonde/Pt. Arthur, Tex., following the rollout at KCS’s Newton, Kan., yard. “The railroad is preparing to make it fit. These are good UTU jobs and the biggest problem has been getting all those people trained. We need to get some craft employees qualified to train so, down the road, our people train our own people.”

Local 477 Chairperson Jake Sacks, representing members working for the BNSF at Newton, Kan., said implementation of remote control at the yard has gone better than expected.

“As far as the caboose goes, I am happy about it. You know, the new technology. They were apprehensive,” Sacks said.

“Since we’ve received training, in the last month or a half, they are becoming more comfortable with remote control operations. But, productivity isn’t what it was when we had an engineer, but that may change,” Sacks said.

“I am working closely with them on the elimination of cabooses. They have a lot of guys who want to get trained quick- ly and we are working to get that accomplished,”

It “takes our guys some getting used to, but, once they do, they can operate pretty well,” Roughton said. “As time goes on, you get quicker with it, depending on your abilities. For the most part, our guys like it. The carrier is not pressuring them now for not working fast enough. The KCS is giving them as much latitude as possible and that goes a long way. If the guy likes it, he has the opportunity to bid the job. If he doesn’t, he can bid another job.”

CSXT using AccuSpeed units

At CSXT, the carrier is using Catron-Theming AccuSpeed remote control technology at Miami, Lakeland, Tampa and Jacksonville in Florida; at Wilmington and Rocky Mount in North Carolina, and shortly in Savannah, Augusta and Waycross, Ga., and Montgomery, Ala., and Evansville, Ind. The units are designed to apply the proper amount of throttle or brake to maintain pre-set direction and speed, regardless of weight or grade.

“It is here,” CSXT General Chairperson John Hancock said of remote control. “We have instituted several pilot projects and the guys seem to be fine with it. The breakthrough was when we put in these pilot projects an understanding that there would be joint safety committees and any recommendations from these committees would be immediately forwarded to the general chairpersons for immediate handling.”

General Chairperson Larry Moody said of the pilot projects, “We have gotten CSXT to agree not to furlough anybody because of remote control, which protects everybody – including engineers – which I think is real good. In fact, we have even gotten some furloughed members recalled. We have got more people working now than before.” Moody said the railroad had experienced “a few growing pains, but it is nothing we can’t work through. We are getting enough people trained, and when a vacancy comes along, the carrier can’t fill it. But, that will come around in time,” Moody said.

CSXT General Chairperson Jim Townsend is frank about the possibility of remote control operations. In correspondence with his members, Townsend states, “Remote control technology has been in use in New Zealand and Europe for many years. It has been implemented in Canada since 1989. It has operated in the United States since the 1980s in steel mills and private operations. Saying it will not work will not make it go away.

“Look at cabooses. The carrier asked us to work with them on the elimination of cabooses. They had new technology that could replace it. They even offered us so much per mile to eliminate the caboose. We said, ‘No, this is where the caboose is. Where the extra money that was offered? Man, we showed them.

“We now have remote control technology operating in our operations. Did it go just as smooth as the path that we have been down with zero results? I surely hope not.


Buy local for pilot projects

The Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) is preparing an aggressive roll-out campaign of up to 500 remote control locomotives, with pilot projects in Newton, Kan.; Mandan, N.D.; Galesburg, Ill.; Ft. Worth, Tex.; Clovis, N.M.; Great Falls, Mont.; Barstow and Stockton in California, and Spokane and Everett in Washington State. There have been some teething problems at the BNSF, GCT General Chairperson Robert Kerley said. “Our people have handled the pilot projects professionally and have been very patient with the carrier,” he said. “Problems arose when the carrier did not recognize the need to use the remote control equipment. If they had listened to it, they would have gone much more smoothly.” Kerley said. “It’s amazing what they can do when they apply the proper amount of throttle or brake to maintain pre-set direction and speed, regardless of weight or grade.

Remote control

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Rail planning

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union official to meet with Federal Railroad Administrator Allan Rutter and area transporta- tion officials to discuss the impact of Chicago Chicagoland congestion and the region. Chicago has long been a crucial rail hub. The explosive growth of trailers and containers on railroad flatcars, coupled with relatively slow and inefficient direct rail interchange in Chicago, fueled a similarly explosive growth in local highway truck traffic. Locomotive switchers and yard workers who train are interchanged between eastern and western railroads via highway. The increased truck traffic clogs roads, increases air and noise pollution and reduces the quality of life.

“The question is,” Sacco said, “can railroads look globally and endorse what it takes to solve this congestion rather than protect individual compet- itive interests. To that end, Sacco is a co-founder of the Association of American Railroads (AAR) President Ed Hambenger to Chicago to discuss the planning process and the AAR’s involvement.”

“It is said that it takes rail traffic two days from New York to Chicago, respectively through Chicago and two days from Chicago to California,” Sacco said. “We must find ways of coordinating yard operations and moving rail traffic more rapidly through this area so to become more competitive with trucks.”

At the Amtrak meeting, Sen. Durbin and Amtrak Chairman Smith reviewed a nine-state proposal for a high-speed rail service, using Chicago as a hub. Sacco stressed that, as important as high-speed rail service is, federal, regional, state and local decision makers continue to argue over ways to use the money to preserve and enhance a national interstate rail passenger system. “The appearance of Chicago Mayor Daley’s transportation chief at the meeting validated that rail service will be a key component of high-speed corridors on the mayor’s radar screen,” Sacco said. “I am also pleased with the vision that Chairwoman Smith has articulated for Amtrak. I am particularly pleased at how he is building coalitions with the stakeholders and meeting with rank-and-file employees.”
Register now for the Regional Meetings!

The upcoming UTU/UTUIA Regional Meetings are guaranteed to provide plenty of fraternity, education and fun. Each Regional Meeting lasts a full three days, with the President’s Banquet on the evening of the third day.

The New Orleans Regional Meeting has been designated the joint U.S./Canadian Regional Meeting. Bus Department workshops will be offered at the Reno and Washington, D.C., meetings only, not at the New Orleans Regional Meeting.

All those attending must be registered in order to attend any planned function. Children age 11 and under who are pre-registered are complimentary. The registration form is printed on the right.

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, 10 days prior to the scheduled start of the meetings or the registrant will be charged an on-site registration fee of $175.

The registration fee for the 2002 Regional Meetings is $125 per member, spouse or child over 11. You must make your own room reservations at one of the hotels listed below, and certain deadlines apply. One-day registrations also are being offered for those who would like to attend the Regional Meetings but can’t spare the time away from work or family. One-day registrations are $60.

You may cancel your Regional Meeting registration 10 days prior to the first day of the meeting or the golf outing without penalty. Please fax any changes or cancellations immediately to the UTU International Headquarters at (216) 444-5241.

The online registration fee is $19 per person, with a credit card charge of $1 per person. Checks or money orders must be in U.S. funds only. Checks are payable to UTU Regional Meeting and must be received at the UTU International Headquarters, 14600 Detroit Ave., Cleveland, OH 44107-4250, 10 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.

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Registering before the Regional Meetings speeds sign-in procedures at the meeting site, helps organizers plan more accurately, and saves on meeting costs. These savings will be 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. Registration fees are $125 per person; children 11 years of age and under are complimentary. On-site registration will be $175 per person. All fees must be paid in U.S. funds. Canadian funds will be returned, possibly delaying your registration. If you have questions, contact your bank. Registration forms must be received 10 days prior to the start of the Regional Meeting.

Which Regional Meeting will you be attending?

- Reno, Wash. D.C.
- New Orleans

Member Registration

Name ____________________________
Local Title (if any) ____________________
Street address ____________________________
E-mail ____________________________
City/State/ZIP ____________________________
Daytime phone number ( ) ______________

Spouse Registration

- Reno
- Washington, D.C.
- New Orleans

Spouse name ____________________________
Title (if any) ____________________________
Will spouse/children attend the UTU Auxiliary tour in Reno? [ ] Yes [ ] No How many?

Child Registration

- Reno
- Washington, D.C.
- New Orleans

Child name ____________________________ Age ______
Child name ____________________________ Age ______
Child name ____________________________ Age ______

Guest Registration

- Reno
- Washington, D.C.
- New Orleans

Guest name ____________________________ Relationship to Member ____________________________

Home address ____________________________

City/State/ZIP ____________________________

Golf Registration

- Reno
- Washington, D.C.
- New Orleans

Name ____________________________ Handicap Name ____________________________ Handicap

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 (please indicate type) [ ] VISA [ ] MasterCard
Card number ____________________________ Expiration date ____________________________ Total charged $ ____________________________

Signature ____________________________________________

Should additional space be needed, make copies of this form and attach to the original. This form and payment of $125 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, 10 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.

Golf outings set

The UTU will hold golf outings the day before the start of the three Regional Meetings. The dates are Sunday, June 9, in Reno; Sunday, July 28, in Washington, D.C., and Wednesday, August 14, in New Orleans. In Reno, golfers will play at the Northgate Golf Club. In Washington, D.C., golfers will enjoy the Marlborough Golf Club. In New Orleans golfers will play the Bayou Oaks Golf Club.

The fees, $80 per golfer, includes transportation from the host hotel, greens fees, a golf cart for every two players, lunch and much more. Register for the golf outings in the space provided on the registration form printed on this page. Be sure to include your golf fee with your registration fee and your true handicap. There is a limit of 144 golfers per outing.

Auxiliary fun

In Reno, the UTU Auxiliary will host a tour of the famous Ponderosa Ranch, which was the home of TV’s “Bonanza” and the Cartwright family. This tour will take place on Wednesday, June 12, 2002, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. All persons planning on taking this tour must pre-register; space is limited. (See registration form)

In Washington, D.C., Auxiliary meeting attendees will enjoy a presentation on floral design by Tom Powell, president of the Flower Gallery and coordinator of some of the floral industry’s biggest events. This will take place on Tuesday, July 30, 2002, in the Hyatt Regency Hotel.

In New Orleans, Auxiliary meeting attendees will enjoy a cooking demonstration in the Fairmont Hotel’s renowned “Blue Room” by world-famous New Orleans chef Kevin Belton. This demonstration will take place on Friday, August 16, 2002, in the Fairmont Hotel.
This month’s winning photo:

This month’s winning photograph was taken by James C. Blackwell of Local 1674 at Los Angeles, Calif. This photo is of an eastbound Union Pacific manifest train in Echo Canyon, Utah, taken in August 2001 when Blackwell was on vacation, he said.

The UTU Public Relations Department is awarding UTU gear to the union member who submits the best photograph during the previous months. The winning photo will be published in the UTU News.

Exceptional photographs will be included on the new UTU website later this year.

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.

High-resolution digital photographs should be sent to utunews@utu.org. Each photograph, please include your name and UTU local number, the names of the persons in the photo (left to right), where the photo was taken, and all other pertinent information.

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.

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Sex Date of birth

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