News & Notes

Member killed in crash
NORTH BERGEN, N.J. – CSXT conductor James P. McMahon, 48, a member of UTU Local 394 in Albany, N.Y., was killed and three others were injured November 6, 2002, in an early-morning traffic accident.

The accident occurred when the driver of the van carrying McMahon and others turned into the path of another motorist, according to the Jersey Journal.

Brother McMahon was riding with locomotive engineer J.E. Moore, 51, of Selkirk, N.Y. Moore is a member of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers. Moore survived the accident but was hospitalized in serious condition.

The van driver was taking McMahon and Moore to the railroad’s Selkirk Yard in Selkirk, N.Y.

UTU General Chairperson Richard C. McVeen said Brothers McMahon and Moore were heading to the yard office from their away-from-home lodging when the accident occurred.

McMahon was married to Deborah. He had two grown children.

Time books, calendars out
CLEVELAND, Ohio – The 2003 edition of the UTU’s time books are now available. The books, one for railroad members, a second for bus and transit workers, are great for keeping track of time worked, runs completed, money earned and taxes withheld. Time books have been sent via UPS to all local secretaries and treasurers so they can be distributed to individual members at upcoming local meetings and at crew change points. Contact your local secretary or treasurer if you do not receive your copy. Additionally, the 2003 edition of the colorful UTU calendar is being mailed to all current members of the UTU Retiree Program.

Watch for scholarship form
CLEVELAND, Ohio – The official application form used to apply for a United Transportation Union Insurance Association (UTUIA) college scholarship will be printed in the January 2003 UTU News. Completed applications must be received by March 31, 2003. The UTUIA awards fifty (50) continuing $500 scholarships each year to qualified students drawn at random.

UTU News

The Official Publication of the United Transportation Union

The Voice of Transportation Labor

“We will use every ounce of our influence to preserve a national intercity rail passenger network and protect the jobs of the operating crew.”

– UTU International President Byron A. Boyd Jr.

UTU begins lobbying campaign to save Amtrak
WASHINGTON, D.C. – The UTU has begun an intensive lobbying campaign on Capitol Hill to assure continuation of a national intercity rail passenger network and to protect the jobs of operating crews.

The future of Amtrak will be debated by the 108th Congress when it convenes in January.

“Our bi-partisan approach to politics provides the UTU with unique access to the Republican leadership in the House, Senate and the Bush administration,” UTU International President Byron A. Boyd Jr. said.

During the November lame-duck session of Congress, Boyd and UTU National Legislative Director James Brunkenhoefer met with congressional Democratic and Republican leaders to discuss UTU’s pro-Amtrak and commuter rail positions.

Boyd also has been meeting with Bush administration officials to explain the importance of Amtrak to America’s security and economic well-being.

One of the first Capitol Hill meetings held by Brunkenhoefer was with Cong. Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.), just hours after she was elected House Democratic leader to succeed Cong. Dick Gephardt (D-Mo.).

Boyd also has held several meetings with former Amtrak President Paul Reistrup, now vice president for passenger integration at CSX Transportation. “CSX hosts more Amtrak intercity trains than any other railroad” and is working with commuter agencies to improve the quality of transit service over CSX lines, Reistrup told Boyd.

“In each of my meetings, I am stressing how important conductors are to the operation of the train and, especially, to the security of passengers,” Boyd said. “No one questions the importance of adequate numbers of well-trained flight attendants on passenger aircraft. They are essential to passenger safety during times of emergency.

“Conductors have a similar safety role on passenger trains – a role made even more important

Death benefits go unclaimed
CLEVELAND, Ohio – Families of deceased UTU members may be eligible to collect $2,000 in unclaimed death benefits, according to MetLife. The death benefit is included as a group policy under contracts between railroads and various labor unions.

“Many families are unaware of the death benefit and may not have filed to claim it,” said UTU International President Byron A. Boyd Jr. “The UTU Retiree Program is working with MetLife to ensure UTU families are aware of the benefit and the possibility that they may be eligible for $2,000 in unclaimed death benefits.”

To determine if you are eligible to collect the

For the latest information on Amtrak funding and continuing negotiations, visit the UTU Website: www.utu.org
Around the UTU
News from around the U.S. and Canada

Locals 48 & 854, Norfolk, Va.
Members in these Norfolk Southern locals raised $1,300 at the Third Annual Oyster Roast and Golf Tournament for the late Ben Boyle’s family, said Chairperson Thomas R. Adams (L-48). He thanked Designated Legal Counsel Wilson, Hajek & Shapiro, P.C., and Moody, Stropfel, Kloeppe, Inc., for their support.

Local 1374, Newcastle, Pa.
Several hundred CSX employees are expected to attend the holiday party set for December 9 at the New Englander banquet facility in New Castle arranged by Sam Marino, with support from Designated Legal Counsel Albertini & Darby, said Local Chairperson (E) Art Rayner.

Local 1375, Philadelphia, Pa.
The local’s active and retired Norfolk Southern employees and their dates will gather for their annual holiday celebration at 7:30 p.m. December 7 at the Gladwyne VFW Post. Thanks to the company to take action was like taking a scream out of the building. We got anything done, said Coffey. “Getting the proper documentation and the threat of fines or a shutdown department to discuss the situation. “Only documents related to the fire department discovered the yard’s plan including the other Union Pacific employees at this local wishes all UTU members a happy holiday season.

Local 1584, Antelope Valley, Calif.
Agreements have been reached and ratified on all three properties this new local representatives, said International Vice President and Bus Department Director Percy Palmer led negotiations for a contract recently approved by members for the Santa Monica Municipal Bus Lines. Participating in the talks were General Chairperson Adhil Reddy, Vice Chairperson Martin Guerrero, Local Committee of Adjustment Secretary Frank Jones and Local President Sergio Lopez.

Two years of effort improve yard safety
When Steven B. Coffey meets with other legislative representatives, he urges them to check their local fire codes, have a drill on their property, and see what happens.

When Coffey did so at RNSP’s Mostob Yard in Phoenix, Ariz., in February 2000, he was astounded by what he discovered, and nearly as amazed to find it took more than two years to address the deficiencies. After that, it didn’t surprise him when the company took credit for the improvements.

Coffey, who chairs the UTU Arizona State Legislative Board, also serves Local 101 in Glendale, Ariz., and is a former legislative representative. A former aerospace engineer with business and engineering degrees, Coffey keeps one eye on safety contingencies. When the carrier barricaded access to the yard from a major artery, he piqued his curiosity.

“I called the fire department to get their take on the barricade,” said Coffey. “Then I asked the yard superintendent for an emergency-preparedness drill, but he wouldn’t cooperate. The fire marshal informed me that emergency crews had the right of eminent domain, and I asked them onto the property.”

The fire department discovered the yard’s plan relied on two old tank cars that were supposed to be filled with water but had been checked since 1979. “The fire crew found one tank car empty, with no capacity of holding water,” Coffey said. “The other tank car had threads on it that were incompatible with modern pumpkin trucks.

“This is a yard that’s less than half a mile from the state capitol,” said Coffey. “At any one time, we probably have 40 or 50 cars carrying haz-mat materials. I had a meeting with the assistant fire chief, and then began to document everything to protect the workers, including the roundhouse crew, the mechanics, and even the contractors who bring things in and out of the yard. This wasn’t just a UTU thing, it concerned everybody.”

Coffey attended about 15 meetings with the fire department to discuss the situation. “Only documentation, and the threat of fines or a shutdown department to discuss the situation. “Only documents related to the fire department discovered the yard’s plan including the other Union Pacific employees at this local wishes all UTU members a happy holiday season.

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Wyoming
In a staunchly Republican district, Democrat and former Wyoming State Legislative Director George Bagby was elected last month to the state’s House of Representatives.
“Tired for two weeks and decided, this is too boring,” said Bagby, who retired earlier this year. “I am a firm believer in Democratic Party politics and believe that if you want to get things done, you’ve got to get involved.” Bagby, who will represent the state’s 15th District, won the seat by 24 votes.

North Carolina
Following the retirement of Assistant Legislative Director Jim Valley in October, two positions on the state legislative board have been filled through elections, reported Director Richard Westbrook.

Legislative Board Secretary Glenn A. Lamm of UTU Local 1129 at Raleigh was elected, by acclamation, to the office of assistant state legislative director, and Ron E. Ingerick, legislative representative of Local 782 at Asheville, was elected secretary of the legislative board.

Wisconsin
The Wisconsin attorney general who successfully defended the state’s two-person train crew law when it was challenged by railroads which operate in the state was elected governor in last month’s general election, reports State Legislative Director Tom Dwyer.

Democratic gubernatorial candidate James E. Doyle Jr., who also defended the state’s conductor training law, was elected with 45.2% of the vote over Republican challenger Scott McCallum and Independent Ed Thompson.

Michigan
Michigan Legislative Director David Brickey reported that Attorney General Jennifer Granholm, a Democrat, was successful in her bid to become the state’s new governor.

“Too good of a friend of ours. We had supported her in her election for attorney general and, in fact, she attended our last state board reorganization meeting,” Brickey said.

Brickey added that “even though we try to maintain friends on both sides of the aisle, the state legislature is controlled by Republicans, so it’s absolutely ridiculous to the UTU to have Governor Granholm in office.”

Montana
Three investigations by State Legislative Director Fran Marceau have resulted in two recommendations for civil penalties and one recommendation for criminal prosecution by the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) against the Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) Railroad.

Two of the incidents in which the FRA cited BNSF involved violations of the Federal Hours of Service Act because the railroad failed to consider as time on duty the time spent performing company-required alcohol and drug tests and the time spent providing depositions to carrier officials.

Each of those violations of the Hours of Service Act resulted in recommendations of civil penalties.

In the third incident, a BNSF conductor was required to report for duty early and was then required to submit to a random federal drug and alcohol test. The FRA determined that the carrier was allowed to place the employee on duty early to perform the required test, but did not document the on-duty time, which resulted in a violation of the Federal Hours of Duty Record Keeping Regulation.

New Jersey
State Legislative Director Dan O’Connell attended the first meeting of the state’s transportation logistics council, which will meet periodically to discuss the movement of freight in and around the state and the Port of New York/New Jersey.

O’Connell was asked to serve as a labor representative to the council by Governor James McGreevey.

O’Connell said that, according to the deputy commissioner of transportation, freight moving through New Jersey will increase by 40% by the year 2014 and that an estimated $9 billion in infrastructure improvements will be required to meet that increase in traffic.

“We will study the problems that currently exist and how we can mitigate those problems. These problems not only affect our freight railroads, but also the commuter trains that operate on freight lines and vice versa,” O’Connell said.

The first meeting of the council was Friday, November 15.

Illinois
Metra conductor Eddie Washington, whose campaign for the Illinois House of Representative’s 63rd District seat was featured in the September issue of UTU News, was successful in his bid to win a seat in the House by 40% by the year 2014 and that an estimated $9 billion in infrastructure improvements will be required to meet that increase in traffic.

“I hope all UTU members will use my election as an example of what political involvement and union activism can accomplish,” Washington said. “It’s not enough to be comfortable and to collect a good paycheck and benefits. There’s still a lot of pain out there among our brothers and sisters. But when we’re politically active and organized, we can be painkillers.”

“Eddie Washington is exactly the kind of working people’s representative we need to see more of in our state legislatures,” Szabo said.

Make a resolution and stick to it
Brothers and Sisters, it is the holiday season once again. As bus operators we have to mind our p’s and q’s. We all know that at this time of year the traffic on the roads will increase but your schedule from point A to point B will remain the same. We also have motorist rushing to work to do their shopping. Some, if not most, of these folks will also be short tempered. We, as bus operators, must not let them dictate our behavior, with them or our passengers. We must keep the upper hand.

Avoid eating or smoking while on duty. Some of your passengers will be short tempered; stick to your schedule and keep to your work ethics.

We have gained much this past year
This year the UTU and its Yardmaster Department have brought wages and many new benefits to the members of the National Mediation Board that contained wage increases, enhanced sickness benefits, paid vacation and 1/2 vaca- tion computation. The Interest Based Bargaining (IBB) process delivered for the Railroads the overhaul of Railroad Retirement, which enhanced benefits for survivors and restored the full annuity at 60/30, effective January 1, 2002. A national contract was ratified that secures the strength of the UTU well into the 21st century. For yardmasters covered by the national contract, wage increases, enhanced sickness benefits, paid vacation time and 1/2 vacation computation. The Interest Based Bargaining (IBB) process delivered for the Railroads the overhaul of Railroad Retirement, which enhanced benefits for survivors and restored the full annuity at 60/30, effective January 1, 2002.

Members on the CP Rail (D&H) overwhelmingly ratified a contract that contained the assistance of the National Mediation Board that contained wage increases, enhanced sickness benefits, paid vacation and 1/2 vacation computation. The Interest Based Bargaining (IBB) process delivered for the Railroads the overhaul of Railroad Retirement, which enhanced benefits for survivors and restored the full annuity at 60/30, effective January 1, 2002.
Help fight breast cancer

By Paul Thompson
Assistant President

The holiday season is a time of reflection. The past year has seen some great accomplishments for our UTU family.

We also have seen sadness. Two very close friends of mine and members of our UTU family were taken from us. Betts Miller, wife of UTU General Counsel Clint Miller, passed away in October. In January, David Hotzel’s wife, Marcyle, passed away. David is the former secretary/treasurer and delegate from my home Local 94.

Both of these courageous women suffered from breast cancer. They both fought long, hard battles, never showing anything but courage.

Those of us who knew them were blessed by their caring ways toward others.

While they were taken from us at an early age, the fight they fought should not be forgotten. There probably is not a member in our organization that has not known a friend or loved one diagnosed with breast cancer.

My own wife, Roberta, was diagnosed with this disease in March. However, she was fortunate to be diagnosed at an early stage and is responding well to treatment. It is my desire this holiday season to create a lasting memory of Betts Miller and Marcyle Hotzel, as well as others in our UTU family who have been lost to, or diagnosed with, breast cancer.

There is no better means to honor our friends and loved ones than to join the fight against this horrible disease.

So I am asking each of our UTU members and their spouses to help with a special project.

Help us to prepare a book of your special recipes and helpful household hints.

Please remember to include your name and the name of the individual you are remembering. Roberta and I join in wishing each of you and your family the very best during this holiday season and may 2003 bring each of you and your family the very best in health.

WASHINGTON WATCH
By James Brunkenhoefer

Election results are being reported as a major accomplishment for the Republican Party. I am sure they will be locker-room clippings for the Democrats.

The UTU is a bipartisan union and not involved in the spin one way or the other. But it is important to have a realistic analysis of what to expect in the 108th Congress for the next two years and what the November congressional election results mean to UTU members and their families.

We now have one party – Republican – that controls the executive branch, the House and the Senate. But the rules of the Senate have not changed. Republicans, in spite of their narrow majority, will still need 60 votes to advance their goals or face filibuster.

Obviously, filibusters (not possible under House rules) will be used by Democrats only on the most major issues. So, many of the big items will get stopped in the Senate, but many of the smaller items sought by Republicans will become law.

Among the major legislative issues we expect to see in the new Congress is a reform plan that does not have some negative impact on our union members.

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Among the major legislative issues we expect to see in the new Congress is a reform plan that does not have some negative impact on our union members.

Every reform proposal either discontinues trains or privatizes routes. You cannot filibuster to increase spending. We will have to handle the Amtrak issue quite carefully and the legislative office will be working very closely with President Boyd to protect members’ interests.

Preserving a national intercity rail passenger network is among the highest priorities of the UTU.

As for safety, we do not expect the Republican leadership to pressure fellow Republicans heading federal agencies such as the Federal Railroad Administration to tighten safety rules.

Much of the safety debate on Capitol Hill likely will focus on dilution of existing safety laws and rules – unless there is a major accident that dominates news coverage.

Of course, that is an event neither carriers nor this union wants, as the result all too likely will be hasty third-party intervention. That is why we continue to impress upon carriers the need to negotiate a solution to our safety differences – especially a means to ensure every employee in a safety-sensitive position has adequate rest.

The reason UTU does not support candidates from just one political party is we would be on the outside looking in if the “other” party wins. We focus on supporting the “best” candidate and that is why we encourage contributions to the bi-partisan Transportation Political Education League to help our friends in Congress.
PHILADELPHIA, Pa. – The Amtrak Operation RedBlock Committee held its 13th annual conference at the Warwick Hotel in Philadelphia, Pa., recently.

Participating in the conference were more than 200 Amtrak Operation RedBlock team captains, Amtrak management officials, Operation RedBlock volunteers, and elected union officers.

Amtrak President David Gunn participated in the conference to show his continuing support for the Operation RedBlock program. Gunn delivered a very encouraging message that was well received by the participants.

Gunn stated: "Operation RedBlock represents the spirit of partnership and cooperation that Amtrak must have to prosper." Gunn also stated he was impressed with the effectiveness of the Operation RedBlock Program.

Cong. Charles Rangel (D-N.Y.) delivered the keynote address to the awards banquet the last evening of the conference.

Rangel's entire political career has been based on helping workers and disadvantaged people in our society. Operation RedBlock is a labor-developed, company-adopted drug and alcohol prevention and intervention program. The program emphasizes awareness, education, and prevention of drug use through union-led prevention committees. Operation RedBlock aims to change attitudes, reduce the tolerance of nonusers to job-related drug and alcohol use, and to encourage users to seek assistance.
What does Christmas mean to you as an American?

Jay Seegmiller
Legislative representative
Assistant Utah State Legislative Director
Local 166
Salt Lake City, Utah

An Amtrak conductor, I think the year, I will actually be off for Christmas Day. Quite often in the past, my wife has joined me somewhere in a hotel room. I have four children, three of whom are at home and one is on vacation somewhere in a hotel room. I have a big breakfast.

Joseph Resendez
Local Chairperson
Local 1442
Los Angeles, Calif.

The holiday season is a time for families. If you get lemons, you turn them into lemonade. That's what the holiday season is all about.

Daniel J. O’Connell
New Jersey State Legislative Director
Local 800
Jersey City, N.J.

My wife is Jewish and I am Christian and I think it makes the holiday season more fun because we celebrate twice in our home. We have Hannukah and Christmas.

Robert Rosendrez
Local Chairperson
Local 1442
Los Angeles, Calif.

The holiday season means getting together with family members and celebrating. I am married with two children; a son, 24, and a daughter, 29, and have two grandchildren. Since we became grandparents, the thrill of the holidays is starting all over again. Our family goes together Christmas Eve around 10 p.m. to open gifts. My parents are here and my sister comes in from Michigan.

Ronald J. McGovern
Local 1422
Los Angeles

The holidays are a good time to socialize with friends and family and to open up new pages and cultivate our relationships and gather together.

Charles Mack
Local Legislative Representative
Local 1442
Los Angeles, Calif.

I am an Amtrak conductor. I have three children, an 18-year-old boy in college and boy-girl twins who are six.

What does the holiday season mean to you as an American? Free. The night to do and say what I please. A time for family gathering.

When my two children were young, we would take them out on Christmas Eve to look at the lights and maybe do some last-minute shopping. When we got home, Santa Claus had been there, and they opened a few presents. That morning the kids would wake us up because Santa Claus had come back. I plan the day putting things together and preparing time with the family.

I live in Johnstown, but work in Charleston, Tenn., about 70 miles south. I drive by this house on my way to work and I have seen four little children playing outside, and they never have any toys. This year I decided to hand them a bundle of toys for Christmas. I have put aside $200 to buy toys, and around Christmas Eve I am going to stop by and drop them off. I will leave them anonymously. I’ll just put the presents down, back on the door and run like heck, and hope they don’t get hit by a dog or shot. Some people are too proud to ask for assistance, and I certainly don’t want to embarrass the parents, who, I am sure, are good, hard-working people.

It will make me feel good, that I’ve prevailed enough to do this. That’s what the holiday season is all about.
Hikers gather to express wishes to retired members

When John M. "Jim" Mullins Jr., 70, retired as a utility clerk from CSXT in August 2002 with 50 years of service, the event became nothing short of an extravaganza.

Hundreds of friends, family members and co-workers, including top CSXT officials, gathered at a local ballpark for a cookout with live music and to make several special presentations to Mullins, a member of Local 1327 in Peach Creek, W.Va.

Local President Roger "Zack" McComas presented Mullins with a gift on behalf of the local, and co-workers from Danville Yard gave him a replica of the watch his father had received when he retired from the railroad.

"This is some special guys," Al Crown, CSXT executive vice president-transportation, told the Coal Valley News. "You can be in Detroit or Jacksonville, and you will run into someone who knows Jim."

Crown presented a book of letters written by some friends of Mullins, who happen to be among the railroad's top brass, with the first letter from CSXT Chairman and CEO John Snow. In addition, he gave Mullins a poster featuring photographs of many of the people Mullins had touched with his generosity and unique personality.

And CSXT sent a private train so it could host a dinner for Mullins.

The hoopla, in part, can be traced to a half-joking promise Crown made to Mullins several years ago, but for the most part, the festivities grew from genuine feelings of affection.

"I worked for four years as chairman of the company's safety program," Mullins said. "I traveled all over the system conducting safety audits and making friends. Also, I got to know a lot of the officers when they were just regular railroaders."

Mullins also gave away a lot of hand-crafted models of cabooses. "Back in 1988, I had an extra piece of quarter-inch plywood, and just decided to make a caboose," he said. "It came out pretty well, and I've been making them and giving them away ever since. I made a red-white-and-blue one called 'Spirit of 76' for CSXT President Michael Ward that's sitting in his office."

One of 13 children from a railroad family, Mullins and five siblings ended up railroaders. "I started as a member of the Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees working on the Chesapeake & Ohio Railroad, then went into the Army," Mullins said. "When I got back, there were no maintenance jobs. From 1963 until late 1980, I was a yardmaster. I joined the UTU at the end of 1980."

Throughout his rail career, he remained busy. While a yardmaster, he worked on the railroad from 11 p.m. to 7 a.m., then went to work from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. in the service department of a car dealership.

"For 34 years, I've been president and a coach for Buddy League and VFW basketball," he said, "and my wife of 43 years, Donna, and I were active in scouting, the PTA, and everything our two kids were involved with. I never missed one of their games."

"Friends are your riches as you travel through life," Donna Mullins said, "and my husband is rich! He really enjoys his friends and family."

During his years, Mullins said he wasn't ready to retire, "but figured it was time to go," he said. "I enjoyed my career, and miss being out there with the men."
Statistics indicate these months most dangerous

CLEVELAND, Ohio – The two-month period of November and December is the worst time of year for severe injuries and fatalities in rail switching operations, based on statistics obtained by the Switching Operations Fatality Analysis (SOFA) working group, according to Michigan State Legislative Director David Brickey.

The group, which is composed of members from labor, management and the Federal Railroad Administration, states that the onset of winter has been shown to be particularly dangerous for employees engaged in switching operations.

In an effort to reduce injuries and fatalities, the group recommends that employees practice the following five life-savers: secure all equipment before action is taken; protect employees against moving equipment; discuss safety at the beginning of a job or when work changes; communicate before action is taken; and mentor less-experienced employees to perform service safely.

Possible contributing factors in determining the causes of fatalities include poor intra-crew communication about the work in progress, failure to apply handbrakes, improperly lined switches, insufficient training and failure to comply with restricted speeds.

For more information about the Switching Operations Fatality Analysis group and its findings, visit <www.fra.dot.gov/safety/sofa/index.htm>.

On a more positive note, Brickey said that the year 2002, through August, “is the lowest, historically, for SOFA-defined severe injuries and amputations going back to January 1997,” the year these types of severe injuries were identified by the group.

Brickey, who serves as the chairperson of the UTU’s National Association of State Directors, represents the UTU on the SOFA committee, along with Georgia Legislative Director Danny Boyles and Minnesota Legislative Director John Smullen.

Mark your 2003 calendar with these meeting dates

Here is preliminary information for the 2003 UTU/UTUIA Regional Meetings and the UTU Quadrennial Convention. Additional details will be announced as they become available. Check the UTU and UTUIA websites for the latest information:

WESTERN REGIONAL MEETING
DoubleTree Hotel, Seattle Airport
18740 Pacific Highway South, Seattle, WA 98188
Reservation code: UTU
Reservation telephone numbers: (800) 222-8733 toll free; (206) 246-8600 hotel direct
Room rate: $129/night single/double; $139/night triple; $149/night quad
Parking: $12/day self parking
Reservation deadline: May 6, 2003

UTU QUADRENNIAL CONVENTION
Mon., July 28, to Fri., August 1, 2003
Hilton Anaheim, 777 Convention Way, Anaheim, CA 92802-3497
Reservation procedures will be announced in the near future

EASTERN REGIONAL MEETING
Wyndham Philadelphia at Franklin Plaza
17th and Race Streets, Philadelphia, PA 19103
Reservation code: UTU
Reservation telephone numbers: (800) WYNDHAM or (215) 446-2000 hotel direct
Room rate: $99/night single, double, triple, quad
Parking: $13/day self parking
Reservation deadline: 5 p.m. EST Tue., July 29, 2003
SAFER VANS
Continued from page 1

More than 400 people died between 1991 and 2000 in 15-passenger van rollover accidents, according to data obtained by The Washington Post.

"Current 15-passenger vans are too large to be subject to most passenger-vehicle standards and too small to trigger other safety measures, such as the standards that apply to school buses and the commercial licenses required for drivers of vehicles carrying 16 or more passengers," according to The Washington Post.

Now NHTSA has advised Ford and General Motors that improved braking systems be installed on 15-passenger vans and that more extensive safety testing be done.

Daimler-Chrysler no longer manufactures such vans.

The Washington Post also reported that the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) suggested NHTSA include passenger vans in its

SAFER VANS
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rating system, which tests the rollover resistance of passenger vehicles.

"A new 15-passenger van costs about $28,000, compared with about $35,000 for a similarly sized school bus that meets more stringent safety standards," said The Washington Post.

NHTSA also is weighing a recommendation that 15-passenger vans be required to have an additional set of rear wheels to make them more stable and that the vans contain other safety features.

"Our position has been that regulations can be put in place more quickly than legislation," said UTU International President Byron A. Boyd Jr. "The NHTSA and NTSB actions validate our position. But the UTU will continue to work with lawmakers on Capitol Hill to ensure that a combination of safety laws and regulations are in place to assure the safety of train crews."

Boyd said legislation introduced in Congress earlier this year to require additional inspections of such vans did not go far enough to cure the rollover problem. That legislation failed to gain passage.

SAVE AMTRAK
Continued from page 1

now that the federal government has become aware that terrorists may attempt to target railroads," Boyd said.

"The role of conductors is important beyond safety," Boyd said. "Conductors interact with every member of the train crew. For example, orders to start and stop the train come from conductors, who have responsibility for safe-train operations.

"It is essential that policy makers understand the role of conductors as they search for means of assuring adequate funding for Amtrak."

Amtrak has lost money every year since it was created in 1970 and reentered on insolvency earlier this year before Congress provided an emergency appropriation of $205 million.

But, Amtrak President David Gunn has told Congress that he cannot sustain operations unless Congress provides another $1.2 billion. Some in Congress would prefer to kill Amtrak – or, at a minimum, scrap its long-distance routes.

"We agree with Amtrak President Gunn that the federal government must treat passenger rail service the same way it treats highways, transit, waterways and airlines," Boyd said. "And, that is to provide Amtrak with capital. Amtrak was important to the nation's transportation system even before 9/11.

"Now it is absolutely crucial. We will continue to deliver that message to Congress. We will continue to meet with lawmakers. We will use every ounce of our influence to preserve a national intercity rail passenger network and protect the jobs of the operating crew," Boyd said.

UTUIA SEeks 2003 Volunteer of the Year

The United Transportation Union Insurance Association is looking for a special person to honor as its 2003 Volunteer of the Year.

Do you regularly volunteer at a hospital or nursing home? Do you lead a Boy Scout or Girl Scout troop or work with the handicapped? Are you involved in some other activity that benefits those in your community?

A panel of judges at the UTU International will review all submissions and select the 2003 Volunteer of the Year.

UNITED TRANSPORTATION UNION INSURANCE ASSOCIATION

2003 Volunteer of the Year Nomination Form

Name

Local

Address

City State ZIP

Telephone Number

Dates of Volunteer Activity

Weekly $

Monthly $ Value of Contribution (if applicable)

Total Volunteer Time (hours, minutes)

Please attach separate sheet of paper describing volunteer activity.

The more documentation you can provide, the better.

1202

Proof of eligibility and location of activity in your community must be submitted. Applicants must be members of the UTU International.

Deadline for submission of nominations is Friday, February 28, 2003.

Decisions of the UTUIA judges are final. Previous nominees may be nominated again; however, former Volunteers of the Year are ineligible to receive awards.

The Volunteer of the Year program is designed to accomplish many things, not the least of which is the opportunity for UTUIA to let its fraternal light shine. It also provides an opportunity for UTUIA to recognize its volunteers for their outstanding contributions to others.

The nomination form should be mailed to: UTUIA Volunteer of the Year, Attn.: Sandra Kranick, UTU/UTUIA Fraternal Coordinator, 14600 Detroit Ave., Cleveland, OH 44107-4250. Don't forget to include a separate sheet of paper describing your volunteer activities.

Death Benefits

Continued from page 1

$2,000 in unclaimed death benefits, it will be necessary to provide MetLife (not UTU) with certain information.

"If you know of a UTU family with a deceased spouse, father, grandfather or other close deceased relative who retired from railroad service, that family may be eligible to collect the death benefit," said UTU Retiree Program Coordinator Larry R. Davis.

An individual can initiate a claim inquiry by calling MetLife toll-free at 1-800-310-7770 or by contacting MetLife in writing. If contacting MetLife in writing, a copy of the death certificate, along with the deceased employee's Social Security number, final address and any available information should be sent to:

MetLife, P.O. Box 6112, Utica, NY 13504

A cover letter should be included indicating you are seeking to determine if you are eligible to collect an unclaimed death benefit from MetLife. MetLife will then conduct an investigation and advise whether it is a valid claim, said Davis.
Yes, Virginia, there is a Santa Claus

From the editorial page of The New York Sun, 1897

"We take pleasure in answering thus prominently the communication below, expressing at the same time our great gratification that its faithful author is numbered among the friends of The Sun:

I am eight years old. Some of my little friends say there is no Santa Claus. Papa says, 'If you see it in The Sun, it's so,' and that settled the matter.

Virginia O'Hanlon

Virginia, your little friends are wrong. They have been affected by the skepticism of a skeptical age. They do not believe except what they see. They think that nothing can be which is not comprehensible by their little minds. All minds, Virginia, whether they be men's or children's, are little. In this great universe of ours, man is a mere insect, an ant, in his intellect as compared with the boundless world about him, as measured by the intelligence capable of grasping the whole of truth and knowledge.

Yes, Virginia, there is a Santa Claus. He exists as certainly as love and generosity and devotion exist, and you know that they abound and give to your life its highest beauty and joy. Alas! How dreary would be the world if there were no Santa Claus! It would be as dreary as if there were no Virginias. There would be no childlike faith then, no poetry, no romance to make tolerable this existence.

Yes, Virginia, there is a Santa Claus. He exists as certainly as love and generosity and devotion exist, and you know that they abound and give to your life its highest beauty and joy. Alas! How dreary would be the world if there were no Santa Claus! It would be as dreary as if there were no Virginias. There would be no childlike faith then, no poetry, no romance to make tolerable this existence.

The most real things in the world are those that neither children nor men can see. Did you ever see fairies dancing on the lawn? Of course not, but that's no proof that they are not there. Nobody can conceive or imagine all the wonders there are unseen and unseeable in this world.

You tear apart the baby's rattle and see what makes the noise inside, but there is a veil covering the unseen world which not the strongest man, nor even the united strength of all the strongest men that ever lived could tear apart. Only faith, poetry, love, romance can push aside that curtain and view and picture the supernal beauty and glory beyond. Is it all real? Ah, Virginia, in all this world there is nothing else real and abiding.

No Santa Claus! Thank God he lives and lives forever. A thousand years from now, Virginia, nay 10 times 10,000 years from now, he will continue to make glad the heart of childhood.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!!!!"

Francis P. Church’s editorial, “Yes, Virginia, There is a Santa Claus” was an immediate sensation, and became one of the most famous editorials ever written.

It first appeared in the The New York Sun in 1897, almost a hundred years ago, and was reprinted annually until 1949 when the paper went out of business.

Thirty-six years after her letter was printed, Virginia O’Hanlon recalled the events that prompted her letter:

“Quite naturally I believed in Santa Claus, for he had never disappointed me. But when less fortunate little boys and girls said there wasn’t any Santa Claus, I was filled with doubt. I asked my father, and he was a little evasive on the subject.

“It was a habit in our family that whenever any doubts came up as to how to pronounce a word or some question of historical fact was in doubt, we wrote to the Question and Answer column in The Sun. Father would always say, ‘If you see it in the The Sun, it’s so,’ and that settled the matter.

And so Virginia sat down and wrote her parents’ favorite newspaper.

Her letter found its way into the hands of a veteran editor, Francis P. Church, Son of a Baptist minister, Church had covered the Civil War for The New York Times and had worked on The New York Sun for 20 years, more recently as an anonymous editorial writer.

Church, a sardonic man, had, for his personal motto, “Endeavor to clear your mind of cant.” When controversial subjects had to be tackled on the editorial page, especially those dealing with theology, the assignments were usually given to Church.

Now, he had his hands a little girl’s letter on a most controversial matter, and he was hardnosed and not the least fazed by the responsibility of answering it.

“Yes there is a Santa Claus!” the childish scrawl in the letter asked. At once, Church knew that there was no avoiding the question. He must answer, and he must answer truthfully. And so he turned to his desk, and he began his reply which was to become one of the most memorable editorials in newspaper history.

Distinguished retired members pass away

CLEVELAND, Ohio – Two retired former general chairpersons and a retired former member of the UTU International Executive Board recently passed away, as reports were received at UTU International Headquarters.

John W. Price, 80, a member of Local 693 in Brewster, Ohio, passed away October 21 in Malone, Fla.

Born Feb. 20, 1922, Price began his career on the Pennsylvania Railroad (PRR) as a fireman and joined Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen and Enginemen (BL&EE) Lodge 630 in September 1941. He was elected general chairperson in 1964. He continued to serve as general chairperson when the PRR merged with the New York Central in 1968, becoming the Penn Central (PC), and held onto the post through the voluntary consolidation of general committees representing the PC(W) and the Akron and Barberton Belt. He retired in June 1976.

Richard E. Doan, a member of Local 1477 in Dearborn, Mich., passed away August 5 in Manistique, Mich., the day after his 75th birthday.

Doan served in the Army during the Korean Conflict, then began his rail career on the Michigan Central as a fireman, joining the BL&EE in July 1950. He served as local chairperson from 1964 through 1976, when he was elected a Conrail general chairperson. He retained that position until his retirement in July 1989.

Patrick A. Corcoran, 76, a member of Local 483 in Toronto, Ont., passed away October 29.

Born March 14, 1927, Corcoran served in a number of offices, including delegate and yard local chairperson. He joined Brotherhood of Railroad Trainmen Lodge 322 in November 1956, and served as vice general chairperson for the Canadian National central yard committee from 1975 to 1983.

In July 1980, he was elected to fill a vacancy that existed on the UTU International Executive Board when a former member retired and the alternate was unable to fill the vacancy. He served on the board through 1987, and retired in September 1990.

UTU offers protection to those facing discipline

CLEVELAND, Ohio – The United Transportation Union has introduced a new program to help members facing disciplinary action.

The UTU Discipline Income Protection Program, formerly known as the Job Benefit Fund/Income Security Program (JBFISP), provides monetary payments for a specified period of time to a participating member who suffers a loss in wages because he or she is suspended, dismissed or removed from service by the carrier for alleged violations of rules or operating procedures.

Payments are made provided that such violations do not come within the list of exceptions not covered by the program, such as missing calls or use of drugs while on or subject to duty.

Members who sign up for this protection choose the level of benefits they want, from $6 per day to $200 per day, having very affordable monthly assessments. The length of benefits, from 200 to 365 days, depends on how long the member has been enrolled in the program.

For example, a member who enrolls in the Discipline Income Protection Program and who pays a monthly assessment of $18 is eligible to receive $60 per day up to a maximum of $21,900 if he or she has been enrolled in the program more than two years.

Participants also may apply for temporary relief of monthly assessments if they are not required to pay dues under Article 49 of the UTU Constitution.

All UTU members in the United States and Canada in good standing are eligible to apply for this protection on a voluntary basis.

For more information, contact your field supervisor or local representative: telephone (216) 226-9400 ext. 207; log on to the UTU website at www.utu.org; e-mail dgrp@utu.org, or write Discipline Income Protection Program, UTU, 14600 Detroit Ave., Cleveland, OH 44107-4250.

In Canada, members should contact the UTU Ottawa office at (613) 747-7979.

Www.utuia.org www.utu.org
Have you ever stopped to think about what you could have done with the money you spent on Christmas gifts in the past? If you’re like most parents and grandparents, you go overboard. But what usually happens to those gifts? Do they end up in the corner, rarely played with— or worse yet, broken? Why not give your little ones a lasting gift this Christmas?

Permanent life insurance is a wonderful way to provide a lifetime benefit for your youngsters. What better way to show them you care? Permanent life insurance is very inexpensive at young ages, and premium-paying choices are endless, since premiums can be paid in one easy payment or over just about any period of time you select. Give a gift that keeps on giving by returning the coupon below, or by calling toll-free, 1-800-558-8842, for assistance from your UTUIA representative.

Retired UTU member Willis G. Croonquist and his wife, Rita, pose for their annual Christmas photograph with their seven grandchildren. The Croonquists gave each of their grandchildren a gift that will last a lifetime: a paid-up, $25,000 life insurance policy from the United Transportation Union Insurance Association.

“The best thing I gave each of them was a paid-up $25,000 life insurance policy.”
—Willis G. Croonquist
Local 1177, Willmar, Minn.

Best Wishes for a Happy Holiday Season

On Behalf of the Officers and Employees of the United Transportation Union,
We Wish You and Your Family the Most Joyous of Holiday Seasons.

Dan E. Johnson
General Secretary/Treasurer

Paul C. Thompson
Assistant President

Byron A. Boyd, Jr.
International President

Information, Please

I would like more information on UTUIA’s ULTIMATE PAR policy.

Full Name of Member
Sex
Date of Birth

Address
City State ZIP

Telephone Number with Area Code
UTU Local Number

Please provide full name, sex, date of birth, and relationship of the child for whom the information is requested on the line below:

Complete and mail to: UTUIA Sales Dept., 14600 Detroit Ave., Cleveland, OH 44107-4250