FRA seeks expanded safety partnerships with UTU

WASHINGTON, D.C. – A meeting between UTU International President Byron A. Boyd Jr. and Federal Railroad Administrator Allan Rutter prompted an FRA invitation that the FRA/UTU safety partnership be expanded.

Rutter said UTU’s demonstrated leadership at the national and state level has had a “positive impact in driving down the number of deaths and serious injuries among train and engine service employees.”

Additional UTU cooperation at the general committee and local level is now needed to make further progress in making the railroad environment less dangerous, Rutter said.

“There is no better example of UTU’s steadfast commitment to safety than the five years of unwavering support it has given to FRA’s Switching Operation Fatality Analysis (SOFA) working group to prevent fatal accidents,” Rutter said.

“We need the help of the entire UTU leadership to drive home the message of safe switching practices to the thousands of UTU members who work on our nation’s railroads every day.”

UTU News

The Official Publication of the United Transportation Union

Volume 36 Number 2

February 2004

www.utuia.org

The Voice of Transportation Labor

“You can’t scare me. I’m stickin’ with the union!”
– Assistant President Paul Thompson (See his column on page 4.)

News & Notes

College seeks conductors

WAYCROS, GA. — Okefenokee Technical College, Waycross, Ga., is seeking experienced railroad conductors with Class I railroad experience to be instructors for its railroad conductor training program.

Instructors will spend at least eight hours daily in classrooms or on railroad equipment teaching basic railroading, safety, operating rules, signals, equipment and other related topics.

For more information, telephone Sue Moore, freight conductor coordinator, at (912) 287-6569, or e-mail: smoore@okefenokee-tech.org. Other railroad conductor training schools that may have openings for instructors are: AMDG, Atlanta, Ga., (866) 100-5198 or Cincinnati, Ohio, (866) 173-2916, www.amdg.ws; Cincin­nati State College, Cincinnati, Ohio, (888) 569-1709, www.cincinnatistate.edu/training/rr.htm.; Marshall Community & Technical College, Huntington, W. Va., (800) 525-8033, www.mar­shall.edu.; University of North Florida, Jack­sonville, Fla., (888) UNF-RAIL, www.unf.edu.

Cookbook corrections

There are three minor corrections to the “Labor of Love for the Cure” cookbook published by the UTU to raise money for breast cancer research.

In Betts’ recipe section, the recipe for cheese puffs should include “One-half pound sharp cheddar cheese.”

On page 6, the recipe for the cheese ball should say “10 oz.” Sharp Cracker Barrel cheddar cheese, not “2 oz.”

On page 586, the recipe for Amish sugar cookies should include “Six cups flour.”

UTU regrets these omissions.

FRA warns BLET about bullying

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Federal Railroad Administrator Allan Rutter announced the FRA will not discuss locomotive remote control issues with the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen (BLET) so long as the BLET prefers confrontation to constructive discussions.

Rutter also reaffirmed the federal agency’s conclusion that remote control operations on the nation’s railroads “have not created an emergency situation involving a hazard of death or injury to persons.”

Recently, the BLET sponsored a sidewalk rally outside FRA offices in Washington, D.C., to protest remote control operations. BLET also brought legal action against the FRA in an attempt to halt remote control operations.

“Sometimes when you stand outside of some-
Local 48, Norfolk, Va.  
Members of this Norfolk Southern (NS) local joined last October with employees of the Norfolk & Portsmouth Beltline Railroad who belong to Local 854 in Portsmouth, Va., for an oyster roast and golf tournament that raised more than $1,900 that was divided between three rail families going through hard times, said Local Chairperson T.R. Adams. Meanwhile, $900 raised at a previous event was presented at the oyster roast by NS General Chairperson Jim Hoke (GO-679) to his predecessor, Walter R. Eubanks, who retired on disability last year following a stroke. Members of both locals thanked Malcolm “T-Bone” Morrison, the UTU International, the UTUIA and Designated Legal Counselors William J. Moody and Francis P. Hajek for supporting the events.

Local 78, Pocatello, Idaho  
Members of this Union Pacific local are mourning the death of engineer Lonnie Freeman, 57, who passed away Jan. 8, 2004, at his home, said retired former State Legislative Director Greg Farris. Freeman was on leave due to an on-duty injury. “Lonnie touched many lives during his years of work at St. Anthony Hospital,” Farris said.

Local 168, Chicago, Ill.  
Antrak employee Phillip J. Streby recently was called to active duty with the U.S. Army, said Secretary & Treasurer Lee Chan ning. Meanwhile, members are mourning the death of John Weyhe, who perished in a traf fic accident near his retirement home in Florida. Brother Weyhe had served as general chairperson on the Central Railroad of Indiana.

Local 298, Garrett, Ind.  
About 250 members and their families attended this CSXT local’s Christmas party in December, said Secretary Rick M itchener, who thanked Designated Legal Counsel James L. Farina for supporting the event.

Local 305, Lincoln, Neb.  
Members of this BNSF local are mourning the death of George D. Hitz, who passed away Jan. 26 at age 74, said BNSF General Chairperson (GO-245) Randall S. Knutson of Local 951, Sheridan, Wyo. Brother Hitz had served as GO-245 general chairperson from 1979 until his retirement in 1991.

Local 367, Omaha, Neb.  
This Union Pacific local raffled off a golf club to raise money late last year for its annual Christmas fund drive to help support less fortunate children, said Secretary & Treasurer Joe Brown. As a result, a check in the amount of $1,200 was presented on behalf of the membership to Pattie Fidone of Heart Ministries Charity by Local Chairperson Dick Casey, Legislative Representative Kevin Krezel and Brown.

Local 469, Madison, Ill.  
More than 300 enjoyed the buffet refreshments and attendance drawings held at the annual Christmas party, said Secretary & Treasurer John L. Payer. Prices included color TVs, lawn mowers and fishing gear. Supporting the event was Designated Legal Counsel John T. Papa.

Local 590, Portage, Wisc.  
This Canadian Pacific local raised $911 to assist Tyson Foods employee Lonnie Jefferson in Jefferson, Wisc., who have been on strike since Feb. 28, 2003, said engineer Steven James. UTU members everywhere can help by sending donations to UFCW Local 590 c/o Steven James, 2228 Myrtle St., Madison, WI 53704. To learn more, visit www.tysonfamiliesstandup.org.

Local 1138, Miami, Fla.  
A local roadyard transfer agreement recently has been implemented for CSXT employees on the former Seaboard Coast Line at Hialeah, Fla., said Local Chairperson Yvonne Hayes. Under the agreement, members maintain separate road and yard guarantees and all the protections that go along with that separation, including short rest and holiday pay on the yard extra board and payment over and above the guarantees for working outside the jurisdiction of the respective boards. Also represented by this local are employees of the Florida East Coast Railroad.

Local 1397, Columbus, Ohio  
CSXT employees recently honored Tom Walker, who retired Dec. 19 after 37 years with the railroad, said Secretary & Treasurer Robert Smith. Over the years, Brother Walker served the local as president, vice president and road and yard trainman’s local chairperson.

Local 1594, Upper Darby, Pa.  
Members of this SEPTA local have formed a new committee, Club Victory, to organize special events, such as the successful Christmas party held Dec. 11, said General Chairperson Ron Konan. The panel, which includes Anthony Smith, Pat Greene, Esther Sacks, Doris Middleton, Kelly McGlone and Julius Major, thanks those who made the party a success and invites suggestions for other events. Meanwhile, with contract talks just around the corner, members are urged to attend the regular meetings, now being held at a new location at the Upper Darby Fire House, 7241 West Chester Pike, Upper Darby, PA 19082.

Local 1741, San Francisco, Calif.  
San Francisco Unified School District bus operators in this local recently held a winter break celebration, and began hosting informational breaks where members can learn about the issues to be discussed during upcoming contract negotiations, said Vice Chairperson and Legislative Representative Ange Belay.

Local 1778, N. Vancouver, B.C.  
BC Rail employees joined those from Local 1923 (Prince George, B.C.) in hosting a luncheon in December to honor Bob Sharpe, a member of Local 1278, for his many years of service to the union, said Secretary & Treasurer David Moorhouse. Brother Sharpe, now an International vice president, began his career in 1968 and has served multiple terms as a local and general chairperson, as well as chairperson of the seven-member Council of Trade Unions on BC Rail.

Local 1895, Chicago, Ill.  
Members of this Norfolk Southern local passed a resolution in December that will provide a first-year membership in the UTU For Life program for future retirees of that local, as well as retirees from 2003, said Secretary & Treasurer Larry T. Grutzius. The move came in response to a letter suggesting the action sent by UTU International Program Coordinator Jim Shelley of Local 556 in Tacoma, Wash.
**Arizona**

Members of UTU Local 807 at Tucson, Ariz., late last year attended a Democratic Party ceremony honoring four female legislators for their contributions and service to the party. During the affair, UTU members got the chance to meet and speak with Robert Reich, former secretary of labor for the Clinton Administration. Standing, left to right, are Jim Wollstein, Eddie Strom, Ed Smith, Local Treasurer Mike Bording, Reich, John Gallion, Cruz Huang, Assistant Arizona Legislative Director Dave Shafer and UTU Designated Legal Counsel Lloyd L. Ralph III. The honored legislators were Elaine Richardson, Ruth Solomon, Marian Pickens and Heather LaMear.

**North Dakota**

The UTU was a lead sponsor of a statewide banquet in Bismarck, N.D., in January to hear political candidates. Of some 100 tables set for the event, the UTU had table number one. Above, UTU North Dakota State Legislative Director John Reich visits with U.S. Sen. Kent Conrad (D-N.D.) and Democratic presidential candidate Gen. Wesley K. Clark. From left are Conrad; Reich, Clark; Local 529 Legislative Rep. Darrin Knode; seated; UTU Local 1344 officer Ken Clouston (front row in sweater); Local 1344 Legislative Rep. Jon Chace (behind Clouston); and retired Local 1344 officer Nick Zander. UTU members also served as the drivers for General Clark and his campaign staff during his Bismarck visit. The assistance provided Clark does not indicate UTU endorsement. UTU officers continue to meet with political candidates of every stripe to ensure they have knowledge of the UTU’s interests and the important jobs they perform.

**Ohio**

Terry Anderson, the former journalist who was held hostage in Lebanon for nearly seven years, has announced his candidacy for the 20th Ohio Senate District, according to Ohio Legislative Director Joseph A. Boda Jr., former hostage Terry Anderson, pictured from left to right are Ohio Legislative Director Joseph A. Boda Jr., former hostage Terry Anderson, Senate Minority Leader Greg DiDonato (D) and Ohio Assistant Legislative Director Luther G. Newsom.

**Utah**

The Yardmasters Department welcomes WC yardmasters.

**California**

The California State Legislative Board and the UTU Legislative Department recommend the following candidates in the state’s primary election on March 2, 2004:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Candidate Name</th>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Recommendation</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Mike Thompson</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>28 Howard L. Berman (D)</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>No recommendation</td>
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<td>29 Adam Schiff (D)</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Gabe Castello</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>30 Henry Waxman (D)</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>David Winters</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>31 Xavier Becerra (D)</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Robert T. Matsui</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>32 Scott Politzer (D)</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Lynn Wostosey</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>33 Brian Burton (D)</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>George Miller</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>34 LSDay-Hoyt-Alward (D)</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Nancy Pelosi</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>35 Sandra Bates (D)</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>Barbara Lee</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>36 Jane Harman (D)</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>Ellen O. Tauscher</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>37 J. Millender-McDonald (D)</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>Richard Pombo</td>
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<td>38 Grace Napolitano (D)</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>Tom Lantos</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>39 Millie Simitovich (D)</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>Jamie Rhee</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>Anna G. Eshoo</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>41 No recommendation</td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Mike Honda</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>42 No recommendation</td>
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<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Zoe Lofgren</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>43 Joe Baca (D)</td>
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<td>17</td>
<td>Sam Farr</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>44 Louis Vandenberg (D)</td>
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<td>18</td>
<td>No recommendation</td>
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<td>45 No recommendation</td>
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<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>James Lankford</td>
<td>D</td>
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<td>20</td>
<td>Jim Costa</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>47 Loretta Sanchez (D)</td>
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<td>21</td>
<td>Fred B. Davis</td>
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<td>48 No recommendation</td>
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<td>22</td>
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<td>23</td>
<td>Lee Otterman</td>
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<td>24</td>
<td>Brett Wagner</td>
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<td>51 Bob Filner (D)</td>
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<td>25</td>
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<td>52 No recommendation</td>
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<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Brian Sherman</td>
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<td>53 Susan A. Davis (D)</td>
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**Wyoming**

The Wyoming Legislative Board and UTU Local 465 at Gillette, Wyo., are sponsoring a bowl-a-thon on Feb. 28 to raise funds for the Muscular Dystrophy Association. The fundraiser will be held 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. at the Frontier Lanes in Gillette.

There will be various prizes for donations raised per bowler and team, with the grand prize being a chance to win a brand new Ford automobile.

Contact Local 465 President Billy Montgomery at (307) 666-2292 if you would like to bowl or sponsor a team, or for more information about this fundraiser.

**Bus Department**

**Yardmasters**

The Yardmasters Department welcomes new members and new members.

As I have traveled throughout the country, it has been a pleasure and an honor to meet many of my UTU brothers and sisters of UTU.

I am reminded of something said by former world heavyweight prizefighting champion Max Schmeling: “Why did I want to win? Because I did not want to lose!” Brothers and sisters, when we work together we not only fight for a union, we fight for the future of our union. Our union must be a fighting champion. As we move forward, we must be a fighting champion.

I am proud to lend our support to Mr. Anderson in his quest to become the state senator in the 20th Ohio Senate District located in Southeast Ohio,” Boda said.

**I am just one phone call away**

As I have traveled throughout the country, it has been a pleasure and an honor to meet many of my UTU brothers and sisters.

To bring you up to date on bus department news, Local 759 General Chairperson Nelson Mancuso, Local 172 General Chairperson Teresa Zeller and Alternate Vice President Carol Scaccella negotiated contracts for better benefits and wages. Alternate Vice President-Bus-West Robert Gonazles recently negotiated a wage increase for the Alex locals.

In the future, UTU Local 1166 (General Chairperson Craig Patch) and UTU Local 1721 (General Chairperson Craig Patch) Local 1697 (General Chairperson Marvin White) and Local 1670 (General Chairperson Victor Jasso) will be negotiating contracts.

We will be working closely with Local 1785 General Chairperson Adhis Reddy, and other officers on training needs.

Do you have training needs? Would you like assistance in improving your skills at handling grievances and improving two-way communication with members?

Do you have training needs? Would you like assistance in improving your skills at handling grievances and improving two-way communication with members? Do you want other answers or assistance? My office in Cleveland is just a telephone call away and that all is needed to request our services. We are here to serve you. With each contract we negotiate, each grievance we win and each new member we recruit, we owe it all to you – the members and sisters of UTU.

I am reminded of something said by former world heavyweight prizefighting champion Max Schmeling: “Why did I want to win? Because I did not want to lose!” Brothers and sisters, when we work together we not only make a difference – we all win!

Success at the bargaining table and in organizing new properties requires time, patience and involvement. When members are involved by attending meetings of their local and communicating suggestions to their local, general committee and International officers, we all benefit. I encourage each of you to be involved in your union to the greatest extent possible.

**Utah**

The Yardmasters Department continues to move forward in representing its members. We welcome yardmasters employed by Wisconsin Central, which is part of CN North America. The excellent efforts of General Chairperson John Larson (CNO-Milwaukee), along with Wayne Raschka, Andy Hauck, Chuck Bennett, Tony Macareo and Don Krejcarek, made it possible for these Wisconsin Central yardmasters to gain the protections they deserve. We already are in the process of negotiating a fair agreement on wages, work rules and benefits for these new members.

At Indiana Harbor Belt, we reached an agreement – ratified by members – that provides for wage increases, a lump-sum payment, improvements to a 401(k) plan, paid turnover time, a guaranteed extra hour, a single system roster with prior rights protected and an expanded training agreement. General Chairperson Richard Miller (CNO-256) deserves recognition for his efforts.

Negotiations with Amtrak, Illinois Central (Glenwood Yard in Chicago), Soo Line and Union Pacific (a joint council agreement with the Transportation Communications Union) are moving forward. We have confidence that our Section 6 notices are fair as well as progressive and competitive.

The Yardmasters Department has become an industry leader in the use of interest-based bargaining, which is serving the members well.
A quiz

Which union's officers visit regulatory agency heads to discuss problems affecting members?

Which union has the most Democratic and Republican friends in Congress?

Which union gained from Congress $125 million for bus-operator safety training and led the battle for emergency Amtrak funding?

Which union negotiated trip-rates that put to rest forever carrier attempts to increase the basic day to 160 miles, and provide predictable paychecks and an end to grievances over how arbitraries are paid?

Which union negotiated a new national rail agreement providing wage increases exceeding those of every other organization?

Which union negotiated a dramatic boost in rates for dead-heading and brought post-'85 employees to wage parity (without diminishing the earnings capability of pre-'85 employees)?

Which union negotiated a new national rail health-care agreement that beats all others out there?

Which union gained membership of new technology and unprecedented job security for those affected by it — and gained a constitutionally ordered study into remote control safety?

Which union saved jobs in every operating craft by practicing craft inclusion rather than craft exclusion?

In each instance, the answer is: UTU. When the chips are down, your UTU takes a positive approach, delivering improved craft inclusion rather than craft exclusion? dented job security for those affected by it – and gained a congres- sions capability of pre-'85 employees)?

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Early detection of colon cancer can save lives

Mammograms and Pap tests have saved many lives by detecting early, curable cancers at a reasonable cost and minimal inconvenience. Many more lives could be saved if there were more testing for colon cancer, which is a fairly common disease, but one which can be cured with a high success rate if caught early through testing.

Although these tests often are uncomfortable or unpleasant, they could well save your life or the life of your spouse. Catching colon cancer early is the surest way of eliminating it completely.

A colonoscopy – looking up the length of the colon with a fiberoptic tube containing a light on the end – has been recommended by the American Cancer Society for all those 50 and older. You should ask your doctor if he/she recommends this test.

A less intrusive test is providing a physician with three small samples of your stool by using what is called a Hemoccult kit. This test, completed at a medical laboratory, detects microscopic amounts of blood in the stool, which is a warning sign of colon cancer. The test is inexpensive and the kit is available through your physician’s office. Many physicians recommend the simple test annually regardless of how well you feel.

You also can do a lot to help yourself to better health through better living habits such as an improved diet, regular exercise and by not smoking.

Additionally, you should always be alert for any suspicious symptoms – such as a change in bowel habits or visible blood in the stool – and report to your physician immediately. Your physician is best equipped to provide you with the tips and tools you need to stay healthy and, in any case, you should obtain a physical examination annually – especially if you are at least 50 years old.

FRA partners

Continued from page 1

Office in “championing the SOFA initiative among your membership. But in light of recent trends, we feel safety may be significantly improved if a greater number of people become involved in the SOFA effort,” Rutter said.

Rutter asked that UTU general and local committee leaders join the effort. “These dedicated men and women have the respect of their members and their prestige will further enhance the visibility and credibility of the SOFA initiative,” Rutter said.

Boyd pledged to continue the involvement of “both the legislative and protective departments in this worthwhile and productive effort.”

Safety tips for switching operations

SOFA Recommendation 1
Any crew member intending to foul track or equipment must notify the locomotive engineer before such action can take place. The locomotive engineer must then apply locomotive or train brakes, have the reverser centered, and then confirm this action with the individual on the ground. Additionally, any crewmember who intends to adjust knuckles/drawbars, or apply or remove the EOT device, must ensure that the cut of cars to be coupled into is separated by no less than 50 feet. Also, the person on the ground must physically inspect the cut of cars not attached to the locomotive to ensure that they are completely stopped and, if necessary, a sufficient number of handbrakes must be applied to ensure the cut of cars will not move.

SOFA Recommendation 2
When two or more train crews are simultaneously performing work in the same yard or industry tracks, extra precautions must be taken:

Same track: Two or more crews are prohibited from switching into the same track at the same time without establishing direct communication with all crewmembers involved;

Adjacent track: Protection must be afforded when there is the possibility of movement on adjacent track(s). Each crew will arrange positive protection for (an) adjacent track(s) through positive communication with yardmaster and/or other crewmembers.

SOFA Recommendation 3
At the beginning of each tour of duty, all crewmembers will meet and discuss all safety matters and work to be accomplished. Additional briefings will be held any time work changes are made and when necessary to protect their safety during their performance of service.

SOFA Recommendation 4
When using radio communications, locomotive engineers must not begin any shove move without a specified distance from the person controlling the move. Strict compliance with “distance to go” communication must be maintained.

When controlling train or engine movements, all crewmembers must communicate by hand signals or radio signals. A combination of hand and radio signals is prohibited. All crewmembers must confirm when the mode of communication changes.

SOFA Recommendation 5
Crewmembers with less than one year of service must have special attention paid to safety awareness, service qualifications, on-the-job training, physical plant familiarity, and overall ability to perform service safely and efficiently. Programs such as peer review, mentoring and supervisory observation must be utilized to insure employees are able to perform service in a safe manner.

Canadian running trades choose TCRC

OTTAWA, Ont. – Running trades employees on Canadian lines of Canadian Pacific (CP) Railway voted for single representation by the Teamsters Canada Rail Conference (TCRC).

These running trades employees (equivalent to train and engine service employees in the U.S.) are currently represented by the Canadian Council of Railway Operating Unions (CCROU).

“I applaud the Canadian Industrial Relations Board for consolidating the representation of operating employees,” said UTU International President Byron A. Boyd Jr. “The UTU always has had two goals – a single representative for operating employees and employee choice. Those goals were served here. They should be served everywhere in the U.S. and Canada,” Boyd said.

For further information see the website of UTU Canada at www.utu-canada.com.

A message to UTU members from UTU Medical Consultant Dr. Norman Brown:

Early detection of colon cancer can save lives

Mammograms and Pap tests have saved many lives by detecting early, curable cancers at a reasonable cost and minimal inconvenience. Many more lives could be saved if there were more testing for colon cancer, which is a fairly common disease, but one which can be cured with a high success rate if caught early through testing.

Although these tests often are uncomfortable or unpleasant, they could well save your life or the life of your spouse. Catching colon cancer early is the surest way of eliminating it completely.

A colonoscopy – looking up the length of the colon with a fiberoptic tube containing a light on the end – has been recommended by the American Cancer Society for all those 50 and older. You should ask your doctor if he/she recommends this test.

A less intrusive test is providing a physician with three small samples of your stool by using what is called a Hemoccult kit. This test, completed at a medical laboratory, detects microscopic amounts of blood in the stool, which is a warning sign of colon cancer. The test is inexpensive and the kit is available through your physician’s office. Many physicians recommend this simple test annually regardless of how well you feel.

You also can do a lot to help yourself to better health through better living habits such as an improved diet, regular exercise and by not smoking.

Additionally, you should always be alert for any suspicious symptoms – such as a change in bowel habits or visible blood in the stool – and report to your physician immediately. Your physician is best equipped to provide you with the tips and tools you need to stay healthy and, in any case, you should obtain a physical examination annually – especially if you are at least 50 years old.
Carrier policies assume passenger complaints legit, employees face discipline for public’s rude behavior

This is a dog-eat-dog world. UTU members in inﬁnite, fed, and rail companies say to service it every day: stand-on-the-rails, tightly coiled by frustration and anger, and ready to unload at the slightest provocation. Fortunately, some of them do, and others don’t. UTU members are on the receiving end of the lash-out.

The vast majority of times, those members react with calumny and understanding. They empathize with the frustrations of their fellow travelers and, after a heated outburst, they try to remain calm and understanding. Unfortunately, this bad behavior cannot be reported to the riders’ employee, but a snarling rider can react with calmness and understanding. They empathize with the frustrations of their fellow travelers and, after a heated outburst, they try to remain calm and understanding. Unfortunately, this bad behavior cannot be reported to the riders’ employee, but a snarling rider can react with calmness and understanding. They empathize with the frustrations of their fellow travelers and, after a heated outburst, they try to remain calm and understanding.

Long-held cultural policies often assume that passenger complaints are legitimate, that the UTU member is partly to blame, not innocent. This has often led to harsh discipline of employees who are often victims of their own bad behavior and the behavior of others. The vast majority of travelers say they have enough rude encounters to last a lifetime. This is often due to lack of adequate training and resources as a major source of rudeness, and not just rudeness. We have seen cases where crews and long lines lead people to lose their cool. Some 53% of travel personnel say that things are so hectic and people so rushed that they forget to be polite.

Employees may not want to hear this, but top-ranking passenger lines of rude behavior is “uncontrolled children” (82%). Another 80% point to passengers who leave the back of the train in ﬂow, followed by screaming (67%), loud talking (66%) and littering (57%).

Good for the travel business

The Public Agenda and Travelocity research project is designed to move beyond hot words and high blood pressure. The ofﬁces that respond to Travelocity, 58% say that they have stopped doing business with a carrier where they have encountered rude personnel. Some 80% say they have complained to management and 37% say they have written a letter. And, 72% say they have told their story to friends.

Although a serious issue for the travel industry, fewer than half (46%) of travel employees responding to Public Agenda report that they have received training in how to deal with rude or disrespectful passengers. Of those who have received special training, only 9% call it very effective, 44% say it has been somewhat effective, and 45% say it has either been not too effective or not effective at all.

Rudeness – It’s contagious

According to Ruth Wooden, “This is a national study that has documented the role of mile in the workplace on techniques for dealing with rude or disrespectful passengers. Of those who have received special training, only 9% call it very effective, 44% say it has been somewhat effective, and 45% say it has either been not too effective or not effective at all.

About the travel

The Public Agenda Feedback Poll of travel industry workers represents the views of 875 airline, bus, train and highway workers who decided to answer the survey and cannot be assumed to represent the views of the general population of people who work in the travel industry. The sample was a random and self-selected pool of employees who chose to complete the questionnaire.

This Feedback Poll represents the responses of 1,009 Travelocity members who have traveled in the last 12 months. Without the help of a large organization dedicated to promoting public policy research, founded in 1973 by former U.S. Secretary of State Cyrus Vance and Daniel Yankelovich, the social scientist and author, Public Agenda has become a respected source of national and international public opinion polls and balanced civic education materials. Its mission is to inform leaders about the public’s views and to educate citizens about government policy.

The study was completed in March 2000. The sample was a nonrandom and self-selected pool of people who choose to travel in the U.S. and abroad, and who work in the travel industry. The sample was a nonrandom and self-selected pool of people who choose to travel in the U.S. and abroad, and who work in the travel industry.

This question was asked of 179 UTU members employed in transit.

How often are you treated with courtesy and respect by passengers?

Not serious at all 1% Very serious 45%

Not too serious 10% Somewhat serious 32%

Not serious at all 1% Never 1%

Not too serious 10% Somewhat serious 32%

Not serious at all 1% Somewhat serious 32%

Not too serious 10% Somewhat serious 32%

Not serious at all 1% Never 1%

Not too serious 10% Somewhat serious 32%

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Not too serious 10% Not sure 57%
The bookkeeper of the UTU Retirement Program, according to reports received at UTU International Headquarters. These brothers and sisters will be missed by their many friends and by fellow UTU members. Following are the names of recently deceased retirees who maintained annual membership in the UTU For Life.

Retired member Lawson Chadwick (center), a member of the Railroad Police and Fire Commission, recently attended the graduation of 38 firefighters from Palomar College. With Chadwick is Commission Chairperson C. C. Sanders (left) and newly named firefighter Jennifer Pankey of the Oceanide Fire Dept.

The complete plan is available on the board's website at www.rrb.gov.

V.M. “Butch” Speakman Jr. serves as labor trustee to the board of governors for Palomar Retirement and Survivors' Improvement Operations, and effectively carry out the responsibilities of the agency under the Railroad Retirement and Survivors' Improvement Act of 2001 with respect to the activities of the National Railroad Retirement Investment Trust (NRRIT).

The complete plan is available on the board's website at www.rrb.gov.

The Railroad Retirement Board (RRB) is required by the Government Performance and Results Act to submit every three years a strategic plan to Congress outlining the board’s mission, general goals and objectives, and how the agency will meet those goals and objectives.

The strategic plan for 2003-2008 has two strategic goals, with several strategic objectives for achieving those goals.

The first strategic goal is to provide excellent customer service. To satisfy customer expectations for quality service, our strategic objectives are to pay benefits accurately and timely; provide relevant, timely and accurate information that is easy to understand; provide a range of choices in service delivery methods; and ensure effective and efficient business interactions with railroad employees.

The second goal is to serve as responsible stewards for the Railroad Retirement fund and RRB resources. We are committed to ensure that fund assets are projected, collected, recorded and reported appropriately; ensure the integrity of benefit programs; ensure effectiveness, efficiency and security of operations, and effectively carry out the responsibilities of the agency under theRailroad Retirement and Survivors' Improvement Act of 2001 with respect to the activities of the National Railroad Retirement Investment Trust (NRRIT).

Today, Chadwick said, his wife Nancy is a trustee to the board of governors for Palomar College and vice chair of the Oceanide Plan.

Retired railroader from all crafts, their spouses, companions and friends are invited to join the fun in St. Petersburg, Fla., at the annual picnic begun in 1991 by Indianapolis-based New Central and Central railroaders, said UTU For Life member Joe Alenduff of Local 1963, Louisville, Ky. This year's retired railroaders' picnic will be held on Sat., March 20, in St. Petersburg's Fr. DeSota Park at shelter no. 11. The event runs from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., Alenduff said. Coffee and iced tea will be furnished, and participants are urged to bring their own place settings and a dish or two to share.

For information, call Alenduff at (813) 522-6808, or send him e-mail at joe.pat@verizon.net.
UTUIA recognizes your need to replace disability with the ability to meet never-ending obligations when an accident or illness strikes. Our unfailing commitment to provide the best Disability Income Replacement insurance has made UTUIA the association to rely upon for affordable disability income insurance.

For more information, please complete and return the coupon at right or telephone toll-free (800) 558-8842 for assistance from your UTUIA representative.

**INSUFFICIENT FUNDS**

I would like more information on UTUIA’s Disability Income Replacement Insurance.

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I would like to receive:

[ ] Information on UTUIA's Disability Income Replacement Insurance.

[ ] Information on UTUIA's Disability Income Replacement Insurance and be considered for membership in the UTU Honor Roll.

Name of member

City

State

ZIP

[ ] UTUIA's Sales Department, 14600 Detroit Ave., Cleveland, OH 44107-4250

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

With UTUIA's DISABILITY INCOME REPLACEMENT Insurance, You Won’t Have to Worry About This!
WASHINGTON, D.C. – The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) has announced publication of a rule to allow local communities to quiet train horns at some 150,000 railroad crossings nationwide if important safety requirements are met.

The interim final rule may be viewed, along with agency history, background and FAQs, by clicking: http://www.fra.dot.gov/Content3.asp?P=1318.

The agency’s “Interim Final Rule” describes specific standards local decision-makers can use to silence locomotive horns, while improving safety at public highway-rail grade crossings, and allowing many communities with existing whistle bans to maintain those prohibitions.

Under the rule, local governments will have the opportunity to establish quiet zones in certain areas where there is a low risk of collision, or to make specific upgrades meant to lessen the risk where the hazards are greater.

The upgrade options include the installation of crossing gates that block both lanes of traffic in both directions or some type of approved median divider to prevent drivers from crossing lanes to go around a lowered gate, the temporary closure of a crossing, or a one-way street with gates and lights.

The rule also allows use of an automated horn system to be installed at the crossing as a substitute for the train horn.

For communities with whistle bans, the rule outlines specific steps local jurisdictions can take to maintain those restrictions, provided they notify FRA of their plan to create a “pre-rule quiet zone” and take the steps required to qualify them as such.

By law, the final rule will take effect Dec. 18, 2004, one year following the date of its publication, but communities with existing whistle bans will have at least five years to implement the requirements.

The rule will pre-empt existing state and local laws governing the sounding of locomotive horns.

FRA will not require that locomotive horns be sounded at private highway-rail crossings, instead leaving those decisions to the states.

FRA Administrator Rutter said that “based on current safety data available, there is nothing that would indicate that RCL operations are any less safe than conventional operations.

“Further, FRA has developed accident/injury reporting codes for RCL operations to ensure that any future safety hazards related to such operations can be easily identified, inventoried and analyzed for the purpose of discovering any potential safety risks associated with this evolving technology.

“Responding to a BLET assertion that 40 ‘incidents’ involving death, injury or accidents have resulted from remote control operations, Rutter said, ‘To date, none of the FRA reportable accidents or incidents concerning RCL operations have been the result of RCL technology (although a few have been the result of non-RCL equipment failures...).”

More specifically, Rutter said that a tragic death of an RCL operator in Dewitt Yard in Syracuse, N.Y., last February, did not appear to be RCL related. “Although FRA has not yet issued its final report regarding the investigation of this accident, at this point there is no indication the operation of the RCL caused the incident.”

Boyd and other UTU officers continue to meet with Rutter and other FRA officials in constructive discussions on remote control safety.

Shutout from discussions, the BLET has been lobbying local communities symbolically to ban remote control operations in rail yards. It is symbolic because under federal law, only the FRA has authority to regulate remote control operations. Locally passed bans have no legal effect.

BLET warned

one's office and shout for an answer with a bullhorn, you may not get the answer you like,” said UTU National Legislative Director James Brunkenhofer after reading Rutter's six-page, single-spaced letter.

The Rutter letter was sent to Edward Wykink, a lobbyist for the Transportation Trades Department of the AFL-CIO. Wykink earlier had written Rutter on behalf of the BLET, urging the FRA to act favorably on a BLET petition to limit remote control operations.

The BLET has taken dual positions on remote control operations. Where the BLET has a contract to operate remote control — such as on Montana Rail Link — the BLET is comfortable with remote control. But where the UTU has a contract to operate remote control operations, the BLET has sought either to halt those operations or gain the work for its own members without an interest in protecting UTU-member jobs.

By contrast, the UTU’s agreement on remote control provides labor protection for operating employees.

Recently, a BLET engineer who operates remote control on MRL, told a journalist, “Personally, I don’t miss being in the cab. If I’m in the cab, I’m somewhat disconnected to the whole mission of the day... And with the remote, I’m not as concerned about harming someone.”

BLET allows remote-controlled locomotives where it holds the contract

Two killed

was assigned to assist the NTSB in its investigation. The FRA also was investigating Hall’s death.

Hall, 41, was a four-year employee of NS. According to the Associated Press, Kankakee County Deputy Coroner Bob Gesner said Hall died while switching cars on a 13-car train. Gesner said Hall was found between two cars of the train. Gesner said he had apparently been hit by one of the train car’s wheels.

“At this time, nobody knows exactly what took place,” said General Chairperson Delbert Strunk.

Hall is survived by a wife and four children. A trust fund has been established for Hall’s family. Those wishing to donate should send checks to Steve Hall Trust, Municipal Trust & Savings, Grafton, 228 N. Dixie Hwy., Momence, IL 60954.

UTU International President Byron A. Boyd Jr. said he was “extremely concerned about these fatalities,” and pledged to promote the involvement of the legislative and protective departments in order to boost the effectiveness of the Switching Operation Fatality Analysis (SOFa) working group.

“SOFa’s educational efforts have shown to have value in reducing yard and switching accidents, injuries and fatalities,” Boyd said.

Standards give guidelines to cities that want to create “quiet zones”

The rule also allows use of an automated horn system to be installed at the crossing as a substitute for the train horn.

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(See related yard-safety stories on page 5 of this issue of the UTU News.)
UTUIA seeks 2004 Volunteer of the Year

Los Angeles County MTA

Bus drivers and rail operators of the MTA voted overwhelmingly on Dec. 28 to ratify a three-year labor agreement that would help preserve their existing health-care benefits while providing pay increases.

The employees had worked without a contract since July 1. Of the UTU members who voted, 87% favored the deal.

“Right now, throughout California, it seems all the employers are taking away health benefits ... treating people like robots rather than people,” bus driver Peter Bueras Jr., (L-1563, El Monte, Cal.) who voted for ratification, told the Los Angeles Times. “We feel the union provided us with the best contract they could muster for us. Because of the economy, we can’t be too greedy.”

The new agreement will freeze hourly wages until July but permit pay raises totaling 5% in the following years. The top hourly rate for an experienced bus driver or train operator, now $22.45, would increase to $23.59 by July 2005.

Medical benefits, a key sticking point during negotiations, would be safeguarded. The MTA also has agreed to shore up the union’s health-care fund by increasing its contributions by 38% in the first year of the contract.

UTUIA members employed on the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA), the Northern Indiana Commuter Transportation District (NICTD), the South Florida Tri-County Commuter Rail Authority (Tri-Rail) and the Union Railroad have ratified new contracts.

N. Indiana Commuter

UTU-represented engineers and conductors employed by the NICTD overwhelmingly ratified a new six-year agreement Dec. 22.

The ratification vote by train and engine service employees of UTU Local 1526 was 68-6 and followed two years of negotiations. The members gained improved wages and benefits, gave back no work rules, and gained a new supplemental pension plan and crew consist agreement.

“NMB Mediator Sam Cognota was able to keep both sides focused through these difficult negotiations,” said UTU Vice President Tony Iannone, who assisted Local 1526 with the negotiations. “With direct input from our UTU legal and legislative departments, we initialed a tentative agreement in Washington, D.C., and the ratification vote demonstrates this is an excellent agreement. Members gain so much when train and engine service employees bargain together in a positive manner.”

Iannone praised the work of General Chairperson Anthony Wojasinski, Vice General Chairperson Darwin Oaks and Legislative Representative Dennis Burke. Also assisting in the negotiations was UTU Vice President David Hakey. Iannone also thanked UTU International President Byron A. Boyd Jr. for assuring Local 1526 “had all the resources it considered necessary during the lengthy bargaining period to make this agreement happen.”

NICTD operates commuter service between South Bend, Ind., and Chicago, carrying more than 3,500 passengers daily in each direction.

UTUIA seeks 2004 Volunteer of the Year

The United Transportation Union Insurance Association is looking for a special person to honor as its 2004 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?

If so, we would like to know about it.

A panel of judges at the UTU International will review all submissions and select the 2004 Volunteer of the Year.

The individual selected as UTUIA Volunteer of the Year will receive a $1,000 U.S. Savings Bond and a plaque of appreciation from UTUIA.

Additionally, he or she will be honored at the 2004 UTUIA Regional Meeting nearest his or her home (all expenses paid by UTUIA).

Also, 20 runners-up will be selected to receive certificates of appreciation for their volunteer efforts.

Deadline for submission of nominations is Monday, March 15, 2004.

The outstanding individual will be notified by registered mail, and certificates of appreciation will be forwarded to runners-up as soon as possible.

Decision of UTUIA judges is 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, UTUIA/UTUIA Fraternal Coordinator, 14600 Detroit Ave., Cleveland, OH 44107-4250.

Don’t forget to include a separate sheet of paper describing your volunteer activities.

United Transportation Union Insurance Association, 14600 Detroit Ave., Cleveland, OH 44107-4250

www.utuia.org www.utu.org
This month’s winning photo:

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

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

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

Printed photographs should be mailed to UTU News, 14600 Detroit Ave., Cleveland, OH 44107-4250.

High-resolution digital photographs should be in the JPEG format and e-mailed to utunews@utu.org.

With each photograph, please include your name and UTU local number, the names of the persons in the photo, where the photo was taken, and all other pertinent information.

All photographs submitted become property of the UTU.

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

This month’s winning photo was taken by Dale Mowder, a conductor and member of Local 1344 at Mandan, N.D. Mowder’s photo is of a CP Rail grain train on the Newtown sub near Drake, N.D. “This is the only branch line that the CP Rail has left in North Dakota that is still manned by CP Rail crews,” he wrote.

UTU calls for probe of abuses by railroad police officers

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The United Transportation Union has successfully called upon Congress to investigate the role of railroad police and allegations of abuse of their police powers.

“Rather than acting as surrogate trainmasters and spying on operating employees, these armed officers, with extraordinary police powers, should be focusing on protecting railroads, their employees and the general public from terrorist activities,” UTU International President Byron A. Boyd Jr. said.

Sen. Frank Lautenberg (D-N.J.) assisted the UTU in convincing the leadership of the Senate Commerce Committee to demand an immediate federal investigation into the proper role of railroad police.

Railroad police officers “answer to private-sector employers and are not directly accountable to the public like most law enforcement officers,” Lautenberg told the Senate. “I am mindful that this could present potential for abuse – that under the guise of state law enforcement authority, these railroad police officers could engage in activities unrelated to law enforcement, such as enforcing railroad company policies or even labor agreements.”

Senate Commerce Committee Chairman John McCain (R-Ariz.) and the committee’s senior Democrat, Fritz Hollings of South Carolina, agreed the situation warrants immediate action.

McCain and Hollings wrote Department of Transportation Inspector General Kenneth Mead to begin an immediate assessment of the matter and to make “recommendations you may have about what steps the railroads, the Federal Railroad Administration or Congress should take to address any problems you identify during your analysis.” They asked that preliminary findings be provided by the end of February 2004, and that a final report be provided by late May.

“Instead of performing traditional law enforcement functions, railroad police too often investigate the railroads’ own employees, who have already gone through extensive background checks before being hired,” Boyd said. “Sometimes railroad police are taken off their law enforcement duties to deliver charge letters, monitor personal activities of injured employees, investigate alleged rules violations and even investigate why employees are late for work. Recently, on one eastern railroad, a manager admitted that railroad police performed illegal wiretaps,” Boyd said.

UTU Assistant President Paul Thompson and UTU National Legislative Director James Brunkenhoefer said the UTU would seek a legislative remedy if the inspector general’s investigation confirms railroad police have been abusing their state and federal police powers. “The role of railroad police is to supplement local, state and federal law enforcement – especially during these troubled national security times,” Brunkenhoefer said. “Railroad police should not be trainmasters in disguise.”

UTU member James Thornberry earns recognition. See page 2.

FRA chief Rutter urges expanded safety partnership. See page 5.

Commuter employees often victims of public’s rudeness. See page 6.

Lawson Chadwick hosts a UTU for Life chapter. See page 8.