Healthcare page updated
The UTU has revamped the healthcare page at its website, www.utu.org, in a continuing effort to expand the effectiveness of the website. The webpage not only has a new look, but new features as well.

Important information regarding health insurance has been posted for rail industry members who are nearing retirement and for rail members who are currently not working due to disability.

There is also important information posted regarding open enrollment under UnitedHealthcare’s GA-23111 insurance plans. The web page includes a question-and-answer section to address concerns members may have in regard to those plans and to changes in Medicare.

Open enrollment for GA-23111 is only in May 2004 and enrollment forms must be in the mail this month for the application to be considered. Individuals eligible for coverage under one of the GA-23111 plans can enroll and be accepted without any medical underwriting or requirement of good health.

Persons eligible for Medicare interested in the GA-23111 plans should call (800) 809-0453; persons not eligible for Medicare should call (800) 842-5252.

Board declines charges
CLEVELAND, Ohio – Charges filed by former General Secretary and Treasurer Roger Griffeth against UTU International President Paul C. Thompson and International Vice President Carl M. Vahldick were brushed aside by the railroad official. He said neither they, nor any member of their firms, resigned and/or failed to attest to the fact that neither they, nor any member of their firms, from the “recommended” list after they held United Transportation Union designated legal counsel (DLC) status have been removed.

The decision to remove these DLC was made by Joshua M. Javits, chairperson of the UTU Board of Ethics, in response to a request by the UTU’s Board of Directors April 6.

The 10-member board elected Marceau on the first ballot. “There is no finer officer in the UTU than Rick Marceau,” Thompson said. “It is a compliment to this administration that an individual such as Rick will serve as assistant president.”

John W. Babler was elevated to Marceau’s now-vacant post as UTU International vice president, effective June 1. Babler is currently alternate vice president – west. Also, UTU International Vice President Carl M. Vahldick was elevated to the International Board of Directors.

Marceau began his train and engine service career in 1967 on the former Northern Pacific Railway (now part of Burlington Northern Santa Fe), following an education at the University of Montana and a three-year enlistment in the U.S. Army. Marceau was promoted to conductor in 1972 and to engineer in 1978.

He was elected a UTU vice local chairman for yardmen in 1972, local chairman for brakemen in 1973, local chairman for conductors and brakemen in 1975, and local chairperson to determine the impact of the Houston case and guilty pleas on the DLC program.

FRA hits NS injury reporting
Repeatedly, Norfolk Southern Railroad (NS) officials deny they intimidate and harass their employees and seek to prevent injured employees from receiving immediate and proper medical treatment.

Even when UTU officials serve up evidence in the form of signed employee statements and eyewitness accounts, NS officials frequently deny their own actions.

An NS official told a newspaper reporter the UTU was not telling the truth about how an NS official falsely posed as a clergyman to gain entry to a hospital emergency room to influence the treatment of an injured employee so that NS would not have to report the injury to the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA).

Signed statements and witness accounts were brushed aside by the railroad official. He denied their own actions.

19 DLC attest to compliance
CLEVELAND – Numerous attorneys who held United Transportation Union designated legal counsel (DLC) status have been removed from the “recommended” list after they resigned and/or failed to attest to the fact that neither they, nor any member of their firms, violated the UTU’s Rules of Conduct for DLC by making cash payments to any of four defendants who pled guilty in criminal proceedings in Houston, Texas.

The decision to remove these DLC was made by Joshua M. Javits, chairperson of the UTU Board of Ethics, in response to a request by UTU International President Paul C. Thompson to determine the impact of the Houston case and guilty pleas on the DLC program.

Nineteen other attorneys who did certify that neither they, nor any member of their firms, denied their own actions.

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Local 23, Santa Cruz, Calif.
The seniors of Santa Cruz County were recently treated to a dinner and entertainment by the Market Street Players courtesy of the bus operators in this local employed by the Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District, according to the Santa Cruz Sentinel.

Local 221, N. Little Rock, Ark.
The annual picnic and fish fry sponsored by this Union Pacific local will host its Fourth Annual Powell River Railroaders Informational Seminar from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on May 5 at the Gering Civic Center in Gering, Neb., according to Secretary & Treasurer Tom Jones. Speakers will include International Vice President Pat Drennan, Union Pacific General Chairperson John Bahler (GO-225) and State Legislative Director Ray Lineweber. All railroaders are invited.

Local 343, Hamilton, Ont.
Members of this Canadian National local in Canada went to bat for fellow members in the U.S. by contacting Cong. Michael Capuano (D-Mass.) and Cong. Robert E. Andrews to explain why proposed amendments to H.R. 3550 dealing with remote control operations would be detrimental, said Local President and Legislative Representative Scott Montani.

Local 597, Des Plaines, Ill.
Union Pacific engineers retiring from this local will receive complimentary memberships for one year in the UTU for Life organization, with the $9 membership fee paid by the local, according to Local Vice President Harry C. Lewis Jr.

Local 1166, Charlotte, N.C.
The local’s newsletter, The Meeting Point, reported that Secretary & Treasurer Pat Drennan and Assistant Secretary Don Patenaude received the award for his part in spearheading the design and construction of the Workers’ Memorial Monument on the grounds of the Macon County Courthouse in Decatur.

Local 23, Santa Cruz, Calif.
Brother Holman, a member of Local 453 in Clinton, Ill., which represents Illinois Central (IC) employees, received the award for his part in spearheading the design and construction of the Workers’ Memorial Monument on the grounds of the Macon County Courthouse in Decatur.

Workers’ memorial earns member honor

DECATOR, Ill. – Sen. Richard J. Durbin (D-III), Cong. Lane Evans (D-III), and Illinois Comptroller Dan Hynes were among the dignitaries present last December when the Decatur Trades & Labor Assembly conferred its James H. Ragan Award on UTU member Lloyd R. Holman.

Brother Holman, a member of Local 453 in Clinton, Ill., which represents Illinois Central (IC) employees, received the award for his part in spearheading the design and construction of the Workers’ Memorial Monument on the grounds of the Macon County Courthouse in Decatur.

Holman’s nomination cited a multitude of other union and civic efforts dating back more than two decades.

Hiring out as a switchman on the IC in 1970, the 53-year-old has been local chairperson since 1975 and legislative representative since 1983. He chairs the UTU Illinois Legislative Board Executive Committee, and is now instructing students on locomotive remote control operations in Mattoon, Ill.

The Workers’ Memorial Monument, hewn from a 10-ton block of Georgia granite, was dedicated on Workers Memorial Day, April 28, 2000, and commemorates Decatur workers who lost their lives in workplace accidents or as the result of diseases triggered by a poor work environment. On its pedestal are carved the names of Macon County workers killed in workplace accidents dating back to the 1960s, with blank spaces left for additional names volunteers researchers might find.

Work had proceeded on the project for about seven years before Holman joined the five-person committee that saw it through to completion. Using contacts he developed in his legislative work for the UTU, Holman secured a $10,000 grant from the Illinois Department of Labor, as well as additional private donations, including materials, transportation, equipment and labor worth about $13,000, to complete the project.

“The memorial was a good project,” Holman said. “We hope the community sees it’s not just for union people, but for all working people, and that all workers should be safer places and employers should be accountable.”

The above original architects of the Workers’ Memorial Monument in Decatur, Ill., pose with Lloyd R. Holman (far right) of Local 453, Clinton, Ill. Joining him are (from left) Paul Kendall (AFSCME), Jimmy Taylor (UAW) and Mike Griffeth (UPFU).

Local 257, Morrill, Neb.
This Union Pacific local will host its 55th Annual Old Timers’ Fish Fry on May 12 at 7 p.m. at the IAM&A W union hall at 2625 Win-
Local 1594 members ratify pact, maintain benefits

PHILADELPHIA – UTU Local 1594, which represents 311 employees of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority’s (SEPTA) suburban light rail and bus division, overwhelmingly ratified a one-year agreement April 4 by a margin of more than 12-to-1.

“General Chairperson Ron Koran’s primary goal, which was met, was to preserve health-care and prescription benefits for members in spite of a looming $70-million deficit for the carrier,” said UTU Vice President Tony Iannone, who assisted with negotiations. Koran’s negotiating team included Waverly Harris, Tom Bissignini, Stan Bernatowicz and Tom Toland.

“General Chairperson Koran made it clear to the members that while this round of negotiations ended successfully, the battle is not over,” Iannone said. “Ron and his negotiating team must now prepare for the next round, which is going to be even more difficult involving both private and public sector labor relations matters.

Order Labor of Love for the Cure cookbook

The UTU cookbook to raise funds for breast cancer research, Labor of Love for the Cure, continues to be in heavy demand.

The book is a compilation of recipes and helpful household hints submitted by UTU members and others, collected by volunteers at UTU Local 1594 members ratify pact, maintain benefits.

Big Sky Airlines seeking to expand service area

RIVERTON, Wyo. – Three airlines are competing to serve Freemont County’s only commercial airport, according to the Billings Gazette.

Big Sky, Mesa and Great Lakes airlines all promise lower fares and more flight options, with Cheyenne-based Great Lakes pledging to use a larger plane. A meeting on the three proposals was held last month.

“We will have air service,” Riverton Regional Airport manager Bill Urbigk said. “Now the question is what kind of air service, and from whom.”

The airport has struggled in recent years to meet federal passenger boarding requirements. Koran said. “Now the question is what kind of air service, and from whom.”

It has been nearly 30 years since residents have had much air travel variety. Three airlines once offered nine flights from Riverton every day on three planes, but those figures fell significantly following airline deregulation in the early 1980s.

Big Lakes currently serves the airport, but in May announced plans to abandon service under its old set up. The U.S. Department of Transportation, however, ordered the airline to continue current service until new proposals could be studied and approved.

A new airline could be serving Riverton Regional within 60 days.

The Labor of Love for the Cure cookbook finally became available for distribution late last year,” said UTU International President Paul C. Thompson. “I would like to take this time to thank everyone who made this project possible and thank you in advance for purchasing this cookbook. Together, we can help fund the research necessary to eradicate this dread disease.”

The Labor of Love for the Cure cookbook is available for $25.00, which includes shipping and handling. The cost of each book is $25.00, which includes shipping and handling.

To order a cookbook and to help raise funds for breast cancer research, complete the order form at left. Be sure to include your name, complete mailing address and telephone number. On the order form, please indicate the number of books you wish to purchase. The cost of each book is $25.00, which includes shipping and handling. Write the total amount of your enclosed check in the appropriate space.

Checks and money orders, along with your order form, should be mailed to: UTU Cookbook, Attn: Cheryl Sneed, 14600 Detroit Ave., Cleveland, OH 44107-4250.

Remember that the proceeds from the sale of this book will be donated to breast cancer research.
Better security needed on our rail, bus lines

On Sept. 11, 2001, more than 3,000 people were killed after four civilian passenger aircraft were hijacked by terrorists. It was one of the greatest human tragedies in U.S. history. It may not be the last, or the worst.

We are being told terrorists are targeting U.S. railroads and even buses. We should not be surprised. Suicide attacks on buses have become regular incidents in Israel, and a deadly attack on innocent civilians aboard a train carrying passengers in Madrid, Spain, proves that deadly terrorist attacks may occur anywhere at any time.

Some lawmakers have been quick to make trains and buses safer is what is needed and effective solutions in a democratic way.

Although Congress followed a UTU recommendation and provided funds for bus operator training, not a single piece of congressional legislation actually doing something to make railroads safer has been passed by Congress since 9/11.

Legislation has been introduced, but every bill has died in committee. All we hear from Congress is tough talk — and concern for the financial health of the airline and railroad industries.

I recently attended a congressional hearing concerning rail and mass transit security. I heard an emotional speech about imposing the death penalty for acts of terrorism (even though most terrorists engage in suicide or other so-called ‘pernu- nal acts), but I heard little interest in spending money for more police or enhanced security technology.

UTU International President Paul Thompson said two-and-a-half years of talk is enough. He said a priority of his administration is to insist Congress act in a meaningful way to make trains and buses safer for our members and the public we serve.

There have been enough words. Meaningful action to make trains and buses safer is what is needed and needed now.

Congress, the Department of Defense, the Department of Homeland Security, the Transportation Security Administration and the Department of Transportation should and must drop the rhetoric and hunker down by consulting with the rail and bus industry, its unions and outside security experts to determine the appropriate course of action — and then make the dollars available.

It’s time for government to borrow a principle from organized labor’s playbook: “The most crucial obligation is to protect the people you serve.”

Our job is security

By Paul C. Thompson

Last month I had the opportunity to address the Labor Relations Association of Passenger Railroads, whose members include the chief labor relations officers of Amtrak, commuter railroads and rail transit agencies. Following are my comments:

“I want to share with you my thoughts on the security of passengers in these dangerous times in which we live — and the role of the passenger conductor and assistant conductor in assuring rail passenger safety.

“Since 9/11, Congress has not passed any meaningful security-related legislation aimed specifically at Amtrak, commuter and rail transit security. The UTU believes adequate funding for more police, new technology to detect explosives and other dangers, and continuous employee training are essential to maintaining passenger security.

“The UTU legislative department is eager to work with carriers and commuter authorities on this issue. The UTU has the largest rail-labor PAC in the U.S. The presence on Capitol Hill is substantial and effective, and we stand ready to work with you there to maintain passenger security.

“There is no question that with regard to passenger security, the conductor and assistant conductor are the front line of defense.

“Conductors screen passengers upon boarding and during the trip. Conductors are in charge of all train movements. No wheel turns without the authority of the conductor. Conductors are the only figures of authority in event of an accident or incident. Injured and confused passengers look to conductors for direction and assistance. Rapid, informed and decisive action by conductors will save countless lives.

“Our members performed heroically on 9/11 on PATH. More recently an Amtrak train in Arizona, our members responded quickly and without concern for their own safety when a fire broke out.

“With regard to the ever-present terrorist threat, conductors and assistant conductors require more training as to what to look for, how to act and respond, how to communicate, and how to execute an action plan in event of various scenarios. They also require in training in how to deal with irate and hostile passengers in the normal course of the workday.

“Conductors and assistant conductors also require more practice sessions and advanced first aid and lifesaving skills — not one-time training course, but continuous education and training.

“Also in important to understand that the security measures are not limited to freight operations.

“The UTU wants to work with you to make sure your conductors, who are our members, receive the training and rest they need to protect passengers in these times of heightened security.

“We make a better friend than enemy.”

The most crucial obligation is to protect the people you serve.

WASHINGTON WATCH

By James M. Brunkenhoefer

Contact the UTU:
via telephone at (216) 228-9400
via fax at (216) 228-5755
via e-mail at utunews@utu.org

The steps ahead

A feature of the U.S. Capitol Building is the 365 steps leading from the basement to the dome, symbolizing days of the year. On the back of the dollar bill is an unfinished pyramid. The symbolism is of unfinished tasks and the steps to their completion.

As International President Paul Thompson, Assistant President Rick Marceau and General Secretary and Treasurer Dan Johnson take inventory of tasks ahead, they encourage a dialogue with members. Their thoughts are posted above.

Assuring workplace safety in the face of terrorist threats, finding an effective solution to problems of fatigue without reducing member earnings, retaining affordable health-care insurance and preparing for a new round of wage negotiations with the major rail carriers are only a few of the urgent tasks that lie ahead.

One means of participating in the decision-making process is to attend a UTU regional meeting (see pages 9 and 11) and participate in the educational workshops, where ideas are exchanged with UTU members and officers from throughout North America.

Regional meetings help us to focus sunlight on every aspect of problems so that we might understand them from the diverse backgrounds of all our members. Those are the first steps to finding effective and efficient solutions in a democratic way.
A reorganization meeting of the Kentucky legislature was held last month, and Donald Minule was elected the new state director. He has been serving as assistant state director. Shown above are, seated (left to right) Vicky Deaton (ALR, Local 1145); Retired State Director Bobby Manwell; Susan Rice (LR, Local 3130); standing (left to right) are Rick May (LR, Local 1377); V.F. Roy Boling; Bill Oliver (LR, Local 1903); Andy Rolphsem (LR, Local 1190); State Director David Miracle (Local 573); Larry Addoms (LR, Local 1389); Chairperson Rodney Bevins (Local 630); Butch Loe (LR, Local 785); Assistant State Director Donna Head (Local 1567). Terry Twaddell (LR, Local 376); Alternate National Legislative Director James Strom; Joe Edelbroch (LR, Local 1315). Absent from photo: Donnie Farmer (LR, Local 1316) and Michael Downs (LR, Local 1328).

By Roy Arnold, vice president–director

UTU supports Conrail Shared Assets Areas

When CSX and Norfolk Southern carved up Conrail, these two giant railroads needed to preserve competition in certain regions where Conrail’s physical plant could not be easily divided. These regions were Northern New Jersey (and New York City), Southern New Jersey (and Philadelphia) and Detroit. Created were three Shared Asset Areas where Conrail still exists, but in the form of a terminal railroad owned jointly by CSX and NS.

Last month, I testified before the Surface Transportation Board (the UTU, which represents brakemen, conductors, engineers, firemen, yardmasters and others, was the only union called to testify) to provide rail labor’s perspective on how these areas are operating. Here are excerpts from my testimony:

“Conrail management has focused and delivered on keeping an open dialog with both local and International union officers. The UTU is optimistic that this partnership will continue for the foreseeable future. As a former working employee and now union officer, it’s important to know the Shared Asset employees still enjoy the same labor agreements that were in place pre-acquisition. Employees are also free to move from position to position within these geographical areas. Some crafts have the ability to flow to one of the owning carriers on an annual basis.

“Even though there has been a workforce reduction, it has been accomplished on an attrition basis so as not to create havoc with the workforce. It is the position of the UTU that the Shared Asset Areas not be disturbed and be allowed to operate in their current form.

Furthermore, it is the opinion of the UTU that CSX and Norfolk Southern look into expanding and adding additional Shared Asset Areas, such as the Delaware & Hudson Railway, which is currently for sale.”

By J.R. (Jim) Cumby, vice president
Voter registration guide for UTU members

By registering to vote and actually voting in November, you will affect jobs, health care, safety and pensions

Here are two four-letter words that everyone should know and hear more often: “Vote” and “Jobs.”

The two are linked more closely than many people realize. And there is even more at stake than when it comes to voting for candidates in federal and state elections.

When we elect labor-friendly candidates, we are more likely to protect our jobs. We protect our wages, our health-care insurance, our quality of life, our workplace safety and our retirement benefits.

In November, we will have an opportunity to help select the President of the United States, all 435 members of the House of Representatives, one-third of the Senate and many of our state lawmakers. We will have that opportunity only if we first register to vote and exercise our power at the ballot box.

You, your family and even your relatives and friends can register to vote by casting a ballot. All you need do is log on to the UTU website at www.utu.org, scroll down to the bottom right-hand corner of the page, and click on the red-lettered link “voter registration.” Then follow the instructions. Other family members, friends and neighbors may also register to vote at the UTU website.

When you go to www.utu.org and click on “voter registration,” you will see the page above. Follow the instructions. Spouses, same-age children, relatives and even friends and neighbors can register to vote using the UTU website. Every new voter you encourage means a greater opportunity for labor-friendly candidates to be elected in November.

Which candidates are labor-friendly?

UTU International officers and state legislative directors constantly monitor voting records, affiliations, past speeches, newspaper stories and other information to determine which candidates are friendly to labor.

This means that when issues affecting jobs, wages, health care, workplace safety and retirement are being debated in Congress and state legislatures, we can count on these lawmakers to vote as each of us would want them to vote.

Prior to the November election, the UTU will publish a list of recommended candidates for the House and Senate who have passed the labor-friendly screening process.

When union families vote, labor-friendly candidates are elected and labor-friendly legislation is passed. You may even wish to encourage your labor-friendly neighbors and friends to vote using the UTU website. They need not be UTU members.

Reasons why you should register to vote

If you don’t register, you can’t vote! Registering to vote gives your name and current address in the poll book for your local polling place. You can’t vote if your name’s not on the list. And if you don’t vote, you don’t have a voice.

What will President X do while in office?

By appointing officials who write regulations affecting our jobs, health care, workplace safety and pensions, the President controls even rights of union membership.

The President is in a leadership position to influence new legislation affecting job security, availability and quality of health care, future of Medicare, the cost of prescription drugs and who receives and doesn’t receive tax breaks.

By appointing federal judges who decide cases affecting our labor agreements with the railroads, airlines and bus companies.

By appointing Supreme Court justices who interpret the Constitution.

Shouldn’t each of us – by registering to vote and voting – have a say in who is elected president in November? Our votes can put a labor-friendly president in the White House.

The numbers are on our side

Voting is how we have a voice in the government that represents us.

Voting is also how we level the playing field with big corporations and the wealthy who make massive contributions to political campaigns to help anti-labor candidates win elections. For every dollar working-family advocates contribute to political campaigns, big business contributes $15. Big corporate proposals and the wealth have only one vote to cast, and here is where the numbers are on the side of working families.

UTU has friends in both parties

The UTU prides itself on having friends in both the Democratic and Republican parties. We are a bipartisan organization constantly fighting to improve the wages, benefits and working conditions of our members.

Although organized labor traditionally has more friends in the Democratic Party, we also have many friends who are elected as Republicans. Where the UTU recommends certain candidates for election, our decision is based solely upon that candidate’s voting record and/ or likelihood that they will support legislation beneficial to our members.

In the 1980 presidential election, one candidate was elected by a margin of only 87 votes when he defeated his opponent in the Democratic Party primary by that slim margin. The UTU endorsed the latter for the presidency and put Richard M. Nixon into office eight years later.

More...

Approximately 2.6 million private-sector jobs have disappeared since President George W. Bush took office in January 2001…

The share of the economic pie going toward wages in the United States has plummeted to just over 50% – in the past 50 years.

44 million Americans have no health-care insurance.

When it comes to supporting political candidates, big business outspends advocates of working families by a margin of 15 to 1…

Working families can make a difference at the ballot box by using their own power of numbers. In 2000, voters from union households comprised only 12 percent of the total voters even though only about 12 percent of employees belong to unions. By encouraging family and friends to register and vote, we can elect more labor-friendly lawmakers.

In 1988, Lesniak, R. John- son, the 36th United States senator by a margin of only 87 votes when he defeated his opponent in the Democratic Party primary, later became a U.S. Senator by a margin of only 15 to 1…

In the 1960 presidential election, one candidate was elected by a margin of only 15 to 1…

In the State of Florida, John F. Kennedy won by a margin of only 15 to 1 in the presidential election, 2000…

In 1932, Hoover, the 36th United States President, beat his opponent in the Democratic Party primary by that slim margin. He went on to defeat his opponent in the general election by that slim margin. He went on to defeat his opponent in the general election by that slim margin.
UTU for Life

UTU for Life chapter takes root in Indiana

Retirees in north-central Indiana have an ideal opportunity to reunite with workplace friends, answer questions about pension, insurance and health-care questions, influence public policy and enjoy entertaining social events.

Thanks to retired Norfolk Southern conductor Max Starkey, all of this and more will take place through the UTU for Life chapter in Indiana is inaugurated.

The event, set for May 17, will start with an inexpensive Dutch-treat breakfast at 9 a.m., followed by a "meeting" at 10 a.m. featuring U.S. Railroad Retirement Board District Manager Robert Braimtain as guest speaker. The event will take place at the Moose Lodge Family Center, 113 N. Broadway, Peru, IN 46970. Phone the facility at (765) 473-3413.

Starkey said he anticipates a lot of fun, but sees a practical side to starting the chapter.

"I'm arranging to have speakers from places like our railroad hospital associations, the RRB, the UTUA and Medicare who can help us inform and answer our questions," he said. "I found that once you retire, there's not too many people to help you with health insurance or pension matters."

Starkey, who served as local secretary and treasurer for 18 years and as a delegate for 16 years before retiring in July 2003, expects a healthy attendance. "There were three railroads right here in Peru, and there must be hundreds of retired railroaders in the area," he said. "I'm sure all of them are welcome and are especially encouraged to attend."

For more information or to reserve a spot at the meeting, contact Starkey at 1635 W. Old Stone Rd., Peru, IN 46970, call (765) 473-6344, or send an e-mail to maxstarkey@bglobal.net.

To learn how easy it is to start a UTU for Life chapter in your area, contact National Coordinator Jim Shelley at 21 E. Johnson Dr., Sequim, WA 98382-8549, or call him at (253) 691-6576 or (360) 683-5805.

Rail Retirement vs. Social Security

Employers and employees covered by the Railroad Retirement Act pay higher retirement taxes than those covered by the Social Security Act, so that Railroad Retirement benefit remain substantially higher than Social Security benefits. The following questions and answers show some of the differences in Railroad Retirement and Social Security benefits payable at the close of the fiscal year ending September 30, 2003.

How do the average monthly Railroad Retirement and Social Security benefits paid to retired employees and spouses compare?

The average age annuity being paid by the Railroad Retirement Board (RRB) at the end of fiscal year 2003 to career rail employees was $2,000 a month, and for all retired rail employees the average was $1,555. The average age retirement benefit being paid under Social Security was $902 a month, benefits averaged $600 a month under Railroad Retirement compared to $440 under Social Security.

The Railroad Retirement Act also provides supplemental Railroad Retirement annuities of between $23 and $43 a month, which are payable to employees who retire directly from the rail industry with 25 or more years of service.

Are the benefits awarded to recent retirees generally greater than the benefits payable to those who retired years ago?

Yes, because recent awards are based on higher average earnings. For career railroad employees retiring at the end of fiscal year 2003, regular annuity awards averaged over $2,625 a month while monthly benefits awarded to workers retiring at full retirement age under Social Security averaged about $1,205. If spouse benefits are added, the combined benefits for the employee and spouse would approximate $3,700 under Railroad Retirement coverage, compared to $1,805 under Social Security. Adding a supplemental annuity to the railroad family's benefit increases average total benefits for current career rail retirees to over $3,735 a month.

Can railroaders retire at earlier ages than workers under Social Security?

Railroad employees with 30 or more years of creditable service are eligible for regular annuities based on age and service the first full month they are age 60, and rail employees with less than 30 years of creditable service are eligible for regular annuities based on age and service the first full month they are age 62. No early retirement reduction applies if a rail employee retires at age 60 or older with 30 years of service and his or her retirement is after 2001, or if the employee retired before 2002 at age 62 or older with 30 years of service.

Early retirement reductions are otherwise applied to annuities awarded before full retirement age — the age at which an employee can receive full benefits with no reduction for early retirement. This ranges from age 65 for those born before 1938 to age 67 for those born in 1960 or later, the same as under Social Security.

Under Social Security, a worker cannot begin receiving retirement benefits based on age until age 62, regardless of how long he or she worked, and Social Security retirement benefits are reduced for retirement prior to full retirement age regardless of years of coverage.

Does Social Security offer any benefits that are not available under Railroad Retirement?

Social Security does pay certain types of benefits that are not available under Railroad Retirement. For example, Social Security provides children's benefits when an employee is disabled, retired or deceased. Under current law, the Railroad Retirement Act only provides children's benefits if the employee is deceased.

However, the Railroad Retirement Act includes a special minimum guaranty provision which ensures that railroad families will not receive less in monthly benefits than they would have if railroad earnings were covered by Social Security rather than Railroad Retirement laws.

For more information about Railroad Retirement benefits or to find the address and phone number of the board's nearest field office, check the RRB's website at www.rrb.gov, or call the automated toll-free RRB Help-Line at (800) 808-0772.
Information, please

I would like more information on UTUIA's Ultimate Term Insurance. Please print

Full name of member

Sex

Date of birth

Address

City State

Telephone number with area code

UTU local number

Complete and mail to: UTUIA Sales Dept., 14600 Detroit Ave., Cleveland, OH 44107-4250. 05/04

Protection for your loved ones

Peace of mind for you

Young families have very little discretionary cash. In fact, most young families rely on the income of both spouses to make ends meet.

You've thought about how your family would carry on if something happened to you. But you put the thought out of your mind because, after all, you're young. Nothing's going to happen to you. Right!

What if something were to happen to you? Would there be enough money to provide for even the barest of necessities, especially since it takes both incomes to make ends meet?

If you could protect the financial well-being of your loved ones for just a few dollars a month, wouldn't you do whatever it takes to set aside those few dollars to ensure the financial well-being of your family? Of course you would!

The answer is life insurance. Life insurance – especially term insurance – is very inexpensive at young ages and, while you're young and insurable, you stand the best chance of getting the best rate possible.

We can provide the peace of mind you're looking for. Contact us toll-free at (800) 558-8842.

UTU/UTUIA Regional Meeting
Program Highlights

Secretary and treasurer workshops:

Secretary and Treasurer Workshop

Working With UTU’s Computerized Accounting Systems (WINSTABS)

Manual Secretary and Treasurer Accounting

Individualized Training in UTU’s Computerized Accounting System

Bus Department workshops:

Tools of the Trade

FMCS and the Grievance Procedure

Overcoming Collective Bargaining Challenges

Contract Costing and Financial Models

Local chairpersons’ workshop:

Duties of the Local Chairperson in the Grievance Process

Yardmasters’ workshop:

Remote Control

How UTU is Making a Difference

Remote Control: Why it Came About, How it Works and Safety Aspects

All Organizing is Local

UTU Auxiliary Meeting

UTU Legal Counsel Presentation

Interest-Based Bargaining

UTU for Life presentation

Power Brake and Other FRA Safety Issues

Using our Resources

State Legislative Meetings

Legislative Workshop

History of the Labor Movement

National Mediation Board Overview

Accident and Incident Reporting (CFR Part 225)

High Times: Drug and Alcohol Issues

General Committee Meetings
person for conductors, brakemen, yardmen and enginemen in 1978.

In other action taken April 6, the UTU Board of Directors adopted a new policy direct-
ing that any International officer indicted for a felony be required to take an immediate leave of absence until resolution of the charges. The policy change was introduced by Thompson. Other personnel changes were approved by the board.

Donald J. Anderson was elected alternate Canadian national legislative representa-
tive to fill a vacancy created by the death of Don Tennant.

Richard Deser was elected alternate Interna-
tional vice president – Bus Department, east, to fill a vacancy created by the resignation of Carolyn Scarsella.

Jacques Gagne was elected to the Canadian Board of Appeals to fill a vacancy created due to Barry McLafferty’s departure following a change in representation on Canadian Pacific Railway.

Roland A. Hackl was elected to the Execu-
tive Board to fill a vacancy created due to Craig Good’s departure following a change in representation on CP.

Little, or former UTU/UTUIA employees Ralph Dennis or John Bookard. All four have pleaded guilty in Houston, Texas, to various federal criminal charges.

In my judgment, the UTU cannot contin-
ue to recommend” to its members attorneys who have “engaged in the conduct alleged,” Javits said. Following the issuance of Javits’ let-
ter demanding that DLC attest to the fact that neither they, nor any member of their firms, made unlawful payments, “a substantial number of DLC resigned from the program for various stated reasons and others acknow-
edged being referenced in the indictment but argued extenuating circumstances,” Javits said.

“It is not necessary at this time to determine the underlying reason or reasons certain DLC declined to submit a declaration or resigned,” Javits said. “Suffice it to say that 19 DLC ex-
cuted and timely returned the required decla-
rations. Accordingly, it is my judgment that at this time it is only appropriate that the 19 DLC who executed the required declarations remain as UTU designated legal counsel.

“My investigation is ongoing. Should further relevant information be forthcoming, this deci-
sion will be amended accordingly,” Javits said.

Thompson said, “I believe it is important for a union to recommend counsel to its mem-
ers who are both competent and ethical.” Thompson is also considering other changes in the relationship between officers of the UTU and DLC.

“Strong medicine may be needed to heal this union, and I intend to do whatever is nec-
essary to achieve that end,” Thompson said. “Our members deserve no less.”

DLC compliance

Continued from page 1

Denied that winning an annual safety award –
by keeping reportable injuries low – is more
important to NS than its employees’ physical
and mental well-being.

Now, NS officials are going to have to take
on the FRA because the UTU has embarked
on a policy of documenting and reporting each
instance of NS employee intimidation, misdanc-
ing, and withholding of immediate and prop-
er medical treatment.

NS shameful incident No. 1:

After a UTU member was injured while on
Duty in an NS yard at Moberly, Mo., a train-
master took the injured employee to a medical
clinic where the trainmaster, according to the
FRA, “explained to the doctor the criteria for
reportability, requesting the physician, if possi-
ble, make the treatment meet the non-reporta-
bility criteria.” This is a violation of federal
regulations because the behavior of the UTU
official, said the FRA, “was calculated to dis-
courage or prevent” the injured employee
“from receiving proper medical treatment.”

NS shameful incident No. 2:

After a UTU member was injured in the col-
apse of a railroad-owned wooden walkway
bridge at an NS yard, at Cleveland, Ohio, an NS
trainmaster cancelled the ambulance call then
took it upon himself – and without emergency
medical assistance – to free the trapped and
injured employee. The trainmaster then trans-
ported the injured employee to crew quarters,
where the injured employee was left unattended
in a company vehicle. The trainmaster subse-
quently took the injured employee to a more
distant hospital than one closer to the accident
site as had been requested by the injured
employee, who said he was in extreme pain.

NS reporting

Continued from page 1

The primary concern of anyone with a family is protecting their financial well-being. This is especially difficult for young families that have very little discretionary cash. An economical way for young families to protect their loved ones is through low-cost term life insurance.

Changing needs

(One of a series to help you better understand the role of
insurance and annuities in planning your future.)

The primary concern of anyone with a family is protecting their financial well-being. This is especially difficult for young families that have very little discretionary cash. An economical way for young families to protect their loved ones is through low-cost term life insurance.

During middle age, you may find it prudent to supplement your term life insurance with permanent life insurance. Attractive features of permanent insurance are its guaranteed premium and death benefit, as well as the cash value component that can be a source of funds for retirement.

As you approach retirement age, you can return your focus to your own needs because your children will undoubtedly be on their own. The death benefit in life insurance can provide an income stream for a spouse who may not be old enough to col-
clect retirement benefits or it can be used to supplement those benefits once retired. Life insurance can also be an important part of estate planning.

Your needs will change a great deal over time. It is prudent to review your insurance needs from time to time to ensure that they haven’t changed since purchasing your existing life insur-
ance policy(ies).
The 2004 UTU/UTUIA regional meetings are guaranteed to provide plenty of fraternalism, education and fun for the whole family. Each regional meeting lasts a full three days, with the president’s banquet on the evening of the third day. (The second night will be an unscheduled, free night.)

The Boston regional meeting has been designated the joint U.S./Canadian regional meeting.

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

A completed registration form listing each attendee, regardless of age, and complete payment in U.S. funds must be received at the UTU International Headquarters, 14600 Detroit Ave., Cleveland, OH 44107, 30 days prior to the scheduled start of the meetings or the registrant will be charged an on-site registration fee of $20.

Enjoy golf at the meetings

The UTU will hold golf outings at 8 a.m. the day before the start of the two regional meetings.

The dates are Sunday, June 20, in Reno, and Sunday, July 4, in Boston.

In Reno, golfers will play at the Northgate Golf Club in Reno.

In Boston, golfers will enjoy playing the Brookline Golf Club at Putterham, in Brookline, Mass.

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

Enjoying golf at the meetings will be an unscheduled, free night.)

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

Payment Options

Check/money order (U.S. funds only) $ ___
VISA MasterCard

Card number Exp. date Total charged $ ___

Signature

Should additional space be needed, make copies of this form and attach to the original. This form and payment must be received at the UTU International Headquarters, 14600 Detroit Ave., Cleveland, OH 44107-2450, 30 days prior to the scheduled start of the meetings. Make checks or money orders payable in U.S. funds to “UTU Regional Meeting.” Those who do not pre-register for the regional meeting but instead choose to register at the meeting site will be charged a $50 penalty fee.
**This month’s winning photo:**

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

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

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

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

High-resolution digital photographs should be in the JPEG format and 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 (left to right), where the photo was taken, and all other pertinent information.

All photographs submitted become property of the UTU.

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

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**This month’s winning photograph was taken by James Hawley, a member of Local 211 at Binghamton, N.Y.**

The photo is of two of the three remaining locomotives still sporting the Delaware & Hudson livery. The photo was taken at Afton, N.Y.

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**UTU member works to deliver safer walkways at railroads**

Local 1258 member Eddie Washington, an Illinois legislator, aids UTU members

**SPRINGFIELD, Ill.** – Train and engine service employees in Illinois made a giant leap toward improved walkway safety last month.

UTU Local 1258 (Elgin, Ill.) member and State Rep. Eddie Washington (D-North Chicago) convinced his House of Representatives colleagues and the Senate Transportation Committee to pass a walkway safety bill. The 117-0 House vote and Senate Transportation Committee approval set the stage for a positive vote on the state senate floor.

If the measure becomes law, Illinois will join numerous other states that mandate regulations assuring a reasonably flat, smooth walkway free of debris, obstacles and hazards for all railroad employees who work on the ground.

“Eddie Washington really hit in the clutch for walkway safety,” said UTU Illinois State Legislative Director Joe Szabo. “When another bill that included a walkway-safety provision became stranded in bickering over an unrelated issue, Eddie quickly stepped up to the plate and rescued the walkway-safety language by putting it into another piece of legislation.”

“First, you have to credit the initiative, determination and legislative savvy displayed by our own Eddie Washington,” Szabo said. “We were totally dedicated to walkway safety and knew exactly what to do.

“Second, you have to credit the increasing activism of our members with their contributions to UTU PAC,” Szabo said. “Their willingness to support the candidacy of pro-union legislators means the UTU has more friends than ever in Springfield and those friends respect the union’s political strength and professionalism.

“And finally, you have to credit the quick response our members showed when we asked them to blitz their state reps with phone calls supporting the bill,” Szabo said.

Norfolk Southern and Canadian National are opposed to this legislation and Szabo warned that those railroads would fight hard to derail the House measure when it reaches the Illinois Senate.

“We moved so fast in the House that NS and CN had little time to react,” Szabo said. “We won’t have that luxury in the Senate and will be looking for our members again to pick up the phone and call their state senators in support of the bill.”

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**Inside this issue of the UTU News:**

Marceau elected as International assistant president. See page 1.

Member Lloyd Holman has done a monumental job. See page 2.


Retiree Max Starkey is starting a UTU for Life chapter. See page 8.