The Voice of Transportation Labor

“The next federal railroad administrator must be qualified, unbiased and anxious to read, study, digest and enforce every safety law.” – UTU International President Paul C. Thompson

Negotiations update

The UTU and the National Carriers’ Conference Committee (NCCC) held an initial bargaining session Feb. 14 and 15. The two sides reviewed each other’s Section 6 notices. Both expressed a desire to reach an agreement expeditiously.

Section 6 refers to the section of the Railway Labor Act by which carriers and their unions exchange demands for contract changes. Under the Railway Labor Act, contracts between railroads and their unions do not expire, but rather continue in force until changes are negotiated.

However, carriers are required to pay employees cost-of-living allowances (COLA) while these negotiations progress. The first COLA is to be paid July 1 if no new agreement is reached before then.

A second bargaining session between the UTU and NCCC is scheduled for March 14 and 15. To stay current on negotiations, go to www.utu.org and click on “Rail Contract Negotiations” in the lower right-hand corner.

News & Notes

UTU, CN reach deal

MONTREAL – CN and the UTU announced Feb. 14 that they have signed a tentative labor contract covering approximately 2,600 conductors, assistant conductors, yard service employees and traffic coordinators in Canada.

Details of the three-year contract, retroactive to Jan. 1, 2004, are being withheld pending ratification by the UTU membership. In general, the agreement provides for wage, benefit and quality of work-life improvements.

UTU Vice President John Armstrong said: “We believe this tentative agreement successfully addresses a range of UTU issues, including work-life quality for our members. We’re eager to return our focus to what our members do best — moving trains — and ensuring CN remains the leading railroad in North America.”

Armstrong praised the efforts of UTU general chairpersons Rex Beatty, Bryan Boechler and Raymond Lebel in reaching the agreement.

Download S&T forms

UTU local secretaries/treasurers can now obtain the Labor Organization Annual Report, Form LM-2, LM-3, or LM-4 software quickly from the U.S. Department of Labor’s website: http://www.dol.gov/esa/regs/compliance/olms/dowload.htm. Keep in mind that the new Electronic Forms Package is 21 megabytes in size and a broadband internet connection (DSL, cable) is the preferred method for downloading. Those with a dial-up modem will likely experience considerably long download times. If you are unable to download the Electronic Forms Package, you may obtain the software on a CD by calling (202) 693-0123.

Heroic UTU crew members make life-and-death difference

The heroic actions of two railroad crews, one working for the BNSF Railway and the other for the Union Pacific (UP), made the difference between life and death for two people in the western U.S. in January.

On Jan. 9, an alert UP crew working on the Roseville Subdivision spotted and rescued an unconscious woman lying face down in the snow. The crew, which included conductor Gary Garrett of Local #92 in Sacramento, Calif., not only rescued her from snowy conditions and a wind-chill factor of minus three degrees, but they observed what they believe were fresh mountain lion prints in the snow around her.

Meanwhile, a 29-year-old Pasco, Wash., man whose legs were severed at the knees by a train on the morning of Jan. 23, may owe his life to a three-man BNSF crew that included engineer Mike Rett, conductor Xavier Valenzuela of UTU Local 324 in Seattle, Wash., and brakeman Mike Ayers, also a member of Local 324.

“The three of us were off the extra board and had never before worked together,” said Ayers, who has been a BNSF employee for four years. “It was amazing how everything fell into place and the three of us worked together so well to do what we had to do.”

Brother Ayers said his train had been waiting for a southbound to pass. Just as they began moving, they noticed someone on the ground who appeared to be waving. As they got closer, they saw blood everywhere and a severed leg lying between the rails.

“We stopped right there, scrambled down off the train, took a quick look, and immediately realized we had to do something fast or he wasn’t going to make it,” Ayers said.

UTU safety team ready to roll

UTU members know too well that the railroad environment is unforgiving. When accidents happen, they too often claim a life or result in serious injury.

It is the job of the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) to investigate serious accidents. And, when the NTSB rolls, so does the UTU’s Transportation Safety Team (TST).

As coordinator of the TST, J.R. (Jim) Cumby usually gets the first call from an NTSB official. Depending upon the location and nature of the accident, Cumby decides which members he will designate to assist the NTSB in its investigation.

Those dreaded calls come at any hour of the day and night. Like freshmen, TST members must always have bags packed and be ready to roll.

BLET loses suit; to pay damages

OTTAWA – The Canadian Supreme Court has rejected an appeal by the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen (BLET), thus affirming a lower court ruling that the BLET “breached its statutory duty of fair representation in negotiating three items of a collective bargaining agreement” with VIA Rail.

All avenues of appeal have now been exhausted by the BLET.

Thus, the BLET, now a division of the Teamsters Union, must pay as much as $230,000 each to as many as 230 former UTU-represented former VIA Rail conductors – a potential liability in the tens of millions of dollars.

Also, many of the adversely affected conductors and assistant conductors, who lost their jobs as a result of the BLET’s failure to represent them in a fair manner, could be

Continued on page 10
**Local 84, Los Angeles, Calif.**

Antrak employees working on Metrolink are among the dozens of Local 84 members who, on Jan. 26 in a commuter train derailment. (See separate story on cover of this issue.) Effective March 1, a control point was renamed in honor of the deceased member, said Local Chairperson Keith Moore and Secretary & Treasurer Richard Aliberte. Proceeds from a memorial fund will be presented to Brother Ormiston’s widow at the monthly meeting, set for 10 a.m. on April 18 at the Burbank Ramada Inn.

**Local 240, Los Angeles, Calif.**

Members of this Union Pacific local wish all the best for Eli Brown, Steve Carricosta, B.C. Curtis, Duane Nixon and Al Thompson, all recent retirees, said Secretary & Treasurer Fred G. Comeau.

**Local 286, North Platte, Neb.**

Union Pacific employees and their spouses in December helped sponsor and participated in the annual 3k Jingle Bell Run, raising more than $1,000 for the American Red Cross, said Secretary & Treasurer John R. Haensauar. Among those playing key roles were Local Chairperson Paul Finneick, who coordinated the run, and spouses Sherri Johnson, Linda Keith and Ronda Haensauar, who handled registration.

**Local 331, Temple, Texas**

Brass lanterns were presented to Local President Monte Sims and Secretary & Treasurer Robert Gilmore honoring their 20-plus years of service to the membership during this BNSF local’s fourth annual Christmas party, said Local Chairperson Curtis Wickliff. More than 200 attended the event, including retired General Chairperson G.R. Neal (GO-393), General Chairperson Paul Tibbit (GO-393) and State Legislative Director Connie English (GO-393), who handled registration.

**Local 528, Chicago, Ill.**

The fourth meeting of the Tri-State Rail Conference will be sponsored by this Union Pacific local on Sat., May 14. Organized by General Chairperson Jerry Kollowski and Local Chairperson Dave Wells, the meeting’s location had not been determined as this issue reached deadline. For information, contact Alan Schoo, president of Local 1433, Elmwood Park, Ill., at (815) 222-6159, or send e-mail to schoolgy@friendnet.com.

**Local 1138, Miami, Fla.**

CSXT and Florida East Coast Railway employees in this local recently approved the resolution, send e-mail to Hayes at Hayes@YvonneRose@aol.com, or call Local President Alan C. Watkins at (305) 278-7342.

**Local 1177, Willmar, Minn.**

Retired former State Legislative Director Willis Croomquist was among those attending the local’s 20th annual Oyster Feed and Christmas Party, said State Legislative Chairperson Bryce Gebhart. “They better catch up with the BLET,” Pinckney said, “they better wake up and realize if they don’t have the right people in their corner, they could be out of a job!”

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Decorated UTU member dies in Iraq

Sgt. Mark Warren, 44, a member of UTU Local 473 in La Grande, Ore., and the Oregon National Guard, was found dead on Jan. 31 in Kirkuk, Iraq, according to a report published by The Oregonian.

The Oregon National Guard told the newspaper it could not provide information on Brother Warren’s death until cleared by the Department of Defense. A family representative said the family had not been told how Warren died, and know only that it was a “noncombat” death. U.S. Army officials are investigating the circumstances behind his death, The Oregonian reported.

Warren’s unit was mobilized last summer and went to Iraq in late November, he said. “He was working over there as a liaison between the Army and civilian contractors that provided services to our military,” Vaughn said. “His job was to make sure that the infrastructure was in place and in working order at the post, and that the standard of living was up to par for fellow soldiers.”

Vaughn said Warren was a 25-year veteran on the Union Pacific and had worked as a conductor. “He was a real professional on the railroad and strong supporter of our union,” Vaughn said. “He voiced his opinion on many occasions.”

“He was a nice guy, a real decent character,” said Local Chairperson Steve Dreher, also a member of Local 473. “He worked the east pool out of La Grande. He definitely enjoyed the military and was geared up to go when he was activated.”

Brother Warren enlisted in the Marine Corps in 1981, and joined the National Guard in 1990. In 2002, he was assigned as the noncommissioned officer in charge of officer training at Eastern Oregon University in La Grande.

Among Brother Warren’s many awards were an Army Commendation Medal, Army Achievement Medal, Navy/Marine Corp Combat Action Ribbon, USMC Good Conduct Medal, Meritorious Unit Commendation Ribbon, Marine Corps Expeditionary Medal, Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal, National Defense Medal, Humanitarian Service Medal, Armed Forces Reserve Medal and Oregon Faithful Service Medal.

UTU donates $13,000 to fight breast cancer

CLEVELAND — Members of the United Transportation Union gave a gift of life Jan. 31.

A check in the amount of $13,000 was presented by the UTU to University Hospitals Health System in Cleveland to help fight breast cancer. The proceeds were generated through the sale of the cookbook, “Labor of Love for the Cure,” which was compiled from recipes submitted by UTU members, their spouses and friends.

The project was the brainchild of International President Paul Thompson’s wife, Roberta, who is a breast cancer survivor. Roberta was deeply affected by the deaths from breast cancer of Marcyle Hotzel, a friend and the wife of Dave Hotzel, retired secretary/treasurer and legislative representative of UTU Local 94 in Kansas City; and Betts Miller, wife of UTU’s chief legal counsel, Clint Miller.

Roberta Thompson suggested the creation and sale of a cookbook to raise funds for breast cancer research. Those sending in recipes and other household tips were encouraged to include dedications and other remembrances of breast cancer victims and survivors and words of encouragement to others in similar situations.

UTU International President Paul Thompson presented the $13,000 check to Oncologist Beth Overmoyer of the University Hospitals Health System in Cleveland, who had treated Betts Miller.

The donation also marked the three-year anniversary of Marcyle Hotzel’s death.

“This is a good day to celebrate the good that will come out of this,” Overmoyer said in accepting the check. “It’s a great legacy.”

William Mountcattle of the University Hospitals Health System said the donation will help fund research at Case Western University’s Comprehensive Cancer Center, which is one of only 36 institutions in the nation accredited by the National Institute of Health’s National Cancer Institute. “This is wonderful for the UTU to donate this funding,” he said.

UTU cookbooks are still available and additional proceeds also will be contributed to help fight breast cancer. The price of the cookbook is $25 each, which includes shipping. To order, send a check payable to “UTU Cookbook” to the UTU, 14600 Detroit Ave., Cleveland, OH 44107-4250. Be sure to include your name, mailing address and telephone number.

“Together, we are helping to fund the research necessary to eradicate this dreaded disease,” Paul Thompson said.

Hickman recalls activism in civil rights movement

Frank Hickman, a local chairperson with UTU Local 1175 in Duluth, Minn., as well as an assistant coordinator with the UTU Human Rights Committee, was 16 years old when Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated, but he was just old enough to do something constructive about it.

“I was living in South Carolina at the time,” said Hickman. “I talked about my reaction to the slaying of Dr. King, my interactions with that group, and I tied it together with something about the role of blacks in the rail labor movement, how we’ve progressed and where we stand today. I also pointed out that the UTU is the only labor organization with a human rights department.”

Hickman also touched on a number of related topics during the program.

“I talked about my experiences and what the 1960s were like in the South,” Hickman said. “I also spoke of my reaction to the slaying of Dr. King, my interactions with that group, and I tied it together with something about the role of blacks in the rail labor movement, how we’ve progressed and where we stand today. I also pointed out that the UTU is the only labor organization with a human rights department.”
It is time to regulate based on the law

New York Times articles exposing railroad safety problems and Union Pacific’s (UP) chummy relationship with a former Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) chief prompted the Department of Transportation’s inspector general to conclude the FRA “might be failing to fix the most persistent safety problems.”

UP isn’t the only carrier with chummy relationships. It just has more of them. Vice President Dick Cheney was on UP’s Board of Directors. White House Chief of Staff Andy Card owes his job to former UP Chairman Drew Lewis. A former UP economist advises Senate Republicans on rail issues. The former chairman of the Surface Transportation Board now is a UP attorney.

UP also turned newspaper reporters into rail fans, sponsoring lavish trips aboard business cars, where alcohol and chilled shrimp cement special relationships with carrier officials.

Were there fewer chummy relationships, maybe there would have been fewer disastrous rail mergers and more attention paid to rail safety.

The New York Times embarrassed other newspapers. Maybe those articles also will energize those with power in government – and not already beholden to railroads – to say, “It’s high time to regulate based on the law – not special friendships.”

Robert Jamison, FRA’s acting administrator – pending nomination and Senate confirmation of a permanent administrator – set a splendid example recently. He reportedly rejected BNSF’s attempt to shoehorn one of its own choices into FRA’s top safety job.

Tough cop needed

By Paul C. Thompson
International President

President Bush soon will nominate a new permanent administrator for the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA).

Currently in charge is Acting Administrator Robert Jamison, who followed Betty Moore, who retired Dec. 31 under an ethics cloud.

The Department of Transportation’s (DOT) inspector general (IG) confirmed a New York Times report that Moore was pretty chummy with Union Pacific’s chief lobbyist, and that relationship might have dampened the FRA’s enthusiasm to hold the railroad to the letter and spirit of laws ensuring employee and public safety.

DOT’s IG said the FRA “might be failing to fix the most persistent safety problems.”

Before a permanent administrator takes office, he or she must be confirmed by the Senate. That will permit senators an opportunity to ask tough questions about railroad safety and the federal agency responsible for enforcing safety laws – and to ensure a qualified, honest and tough cop is put in charge.

Until New York Times investigative reporters Walt Bogdanich and Jenny Nordberg focused sunlight on the nasty underbelly of railroad safety, influential newspapers read by lawmakers mostly ignored rail safety problems.

Perhaps that’s because most reporters covering railroads have their own chummy relationship with the carriers. They accept railroad invitations to hunting lodges and to ride business cars with CEOs, who have more than chit-chat in mind when they issue those invitations.

Bogdanich and Nordberg also told of problems with tank car maintenance and repair. The former DOT’s reluctance to investigate grade-crossing signal failures, and the railroads’ chummy relationship with Operation Lifesaver.

With railroad safety problems now in the public spotlight, the Senate should insist the next federal railroad administrator be qualified, unbiased and anxious to read, study, digest and enforce every safety law.

It’s time for an end to even the hint of an incestuous relationship between railroads and their safety regulators.

Bush’s Amtrak plan headed for derailment

The combination of a Republican president, a Republican House and Republican Senate has been most disappointing.

There are so many things that our membership needs to have improved. Unfortunately, they are just not on the president’s or Congress’ agenda.

Worse, the Republicans have the votes to stop most legislation they want stopped.

This leaves working men and women on the defensive as the Republican Party’s well-oiled and smoothly run machine – funded by corporate America – continues to churn out change after change that mostly hurts working men and women.

Now there appears to be a flaw in the Bush Administration’s plan. I’m talking about Amtrak. It looks like this administration has not planned well. This is an unusual occurrence.

Amtrak does not make money, has never made money and will never make money. But why should anybody be surprised if the Bush Administration would take the time to go back to the history books, they would find that was why for-profit freight railroads got out of the rail passenger business more than three decades ago. The private sector isn’t expected to – nor should it – provide all services. As the old saying goes, “If you don’t learn from history you are condemned to repeat it.”

Now the administration wants to bankrupt and eliminate Amtrak with the belief that states and the free-market system are sitting there waiting to grab hold of passenger operations. First, the freight railroads do not like Amtrak. Anyone who believes the freight railroads want several different passenger companies operating over their freight lines needs psychiatric help.

Also, something is very different about how the newly appointed (but not confirmed yet, by the Senate) Amtrak board of directors is dealing with the passenger railroad. Where various airlines faced bankruptcy, the most dangerous place to be was in the path of their boards of directors and the Department of Transportation, where the board members ran to beg for additional federal support such as tax cuts, grants and guaranteed loans to avoid bankruptcy.

The Amtrak board is doing just the opposite. They appear to be turning their backs on what has worked in other passenger railroads. They have become concerned about carrying out the administration’s policies than their own duties and responsibilities.

This is no way to run a railroad. And I suspect that the Bush Administration is headed for its own derailment, it tries to push the plan through Congress. This is one issue that won’t attract many Republican votes in Congress.
North Dakota

A resolution declaring remote-control locomotive operations unsafe, promoted by the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen (BLET), has been defeated by the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen (BLET). "It was the first time I have appeared in opposition to something that others in the BLET consider a matter of principle," said Risch. "I don't like remote control locomotives. I wish they didn't exist; I wish they were not used; and I wish they had never come into being on America's railroads," Risch said. "I don't like them because they eliminate jobs. The RCL debate is an issue of jobs and has virtually nothing to do with safety."

"The BLET lost on the issue of remote control because their leadership made some poor decisions. Their leadership demanded all or nothing and in the end got nothing for their members."

"That being said, when the resolution was brought up we were compelled to tell the whole remote-control story and when reasonable people hear that story the UTU is vindicated."

"I got no joy in working against legislation supported by another labor union. I would much rather work on legislation that has a positive effect on working people," Risch said. "This is not a time to gloat, rather it is a time to work to mend fences with our railroad brothers in the BLET."

New York

UTU members in New York facing the loss of jobs will benefit from an agreement negotiated with the help of State Director Sam Nasca.

For months, Nasca has been fighting efforts by the Canadian Pacific (CP) to cut jobs in his state. In January, the Surface Transportation Board ruled that the CP could stop running trains on a competitor's tracks between Buffalo and Binghamton.

The action was part of a swap of operations between the CP and Norfolk Southern (NS), which owns the tracks. NS will deliver freight to CP customers on the line.

The CP's action will eliminate about 30 jobs in Buffalo's S&K yard, according to Nasca.

The ruling by the board came over union objections. "Our argument was this deal was a consolidation instead of a single transaction," Nasca said. "Only one commissioner agreed."

The operations to be dropped involve a CP subsidiary called the Delaware & Hudson Rail, or D&H.

The swap of operations will result in fewer yardmaster and maintenance jobs as well as engineers and conductors, Nasca said.

Nasca said the chairpersons of the eight locals affected by the loss of jobs had ratified an implementing agreement with the CP. The deal will give the affected members "a rather lucrative package for relocating to another location on the D&H," Nasca said.

He said the pact also will provide a number of economic benefits, including a lump-sum payment, to members who choose not to move.

The road to safety paved with training

It's no secret the road to safety and efficiency can be achieved through quality training.

Yet most of the nation's rail carriers treat yardmasters much like their infrastructure -- limited investment, but great expectations of increased returns.

Too often, yardmasters are not advised of changes in collective bargaining agreements of crafts they supervise. It also is common to discover that traffic flow and/or train composites were altered without appropriate notification -- yet the yardmaster is expected to handle duties, including safety issues, based on the new agreements of crafts they supervise. It also is common to discover that traffic flow and/or train composites were altered without appropriate notification -- yet the yardmaster is expected to handle duties, including safety issues, based on the new agreements of crafts they supervise.

Increased workloads because of additional business and fewer employees also have increased stress levels of yardmasters. While the carriers' short-term solution is anger management classes, simply walking away from a situation does not solve the root cause.

Now is the time for carriers to invest in what they call their human resources, and see exactly what your retirement clause is. We need to have more communication on this matter because our Social Security benefits may not be available in the future.

Some of us may be fortunate to have a nice retirement package built into our contract. But for the most part, that is not the case.

Many contracts I have assisted in negotiating do not have an elaborate retirement clause, and an employer will not put forth a great effort to make any major improvements on these.

As your vice president, it is my duty to recommend that when contracts are negotiated, we make a greater effort to improve our retirement benefits.

At your next union meeting, please take a few minutes to review your current contract and see exactly what your retirement clause is. We need to have more communication on this matter because our Social Security benefits may not be available in the future.

By Roy Arnold, vice president--director

By J.R. (Jim) Cumby, vice president

Here today, maybe gone tomorrow

Most of our union members have been with their companies for many years. We are seasoned employees.

We have the most experience and are often used to train new employees, provide expertise in union matters and ensure our employers' success through our skills and knowledge of the transportation business.

After years of dedication, loyalty and experience, we took home a paycheck that had a substantial portion going to Social Security. Now, with President Bush in office, we are being told these Social Security benefits are negotiated, we make a greater effort to improve our retirement benefits. Many contracts I have assisted in negotiating do not have an elaborate retirement clause, and an employer will not put forth a great effort to make any major improvements on these.

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Make plans now for 2005 Regional Meetings

The 2005 UTU Regional Meetings have been designed to provide a grand sense of fraternalism, lots of worthwhile education, and tons of fun for the whole family.

This year, each Regional Meeting will run for 2 1/2 days, ending early on the afternoon of the third day. The evening of the first day has been left unscheduled so you, your family and friends can be free to explore and enjoy the many offerings of the Regional Meeting cities.

Neither Anchorage nor Orlando has been designated the joint U.S.-Canadian Regional Meeting: Canadian members are free to choose the meeting that most interests them.

All those attending the Regional Meetings 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 by May 9, 2005, or as soon as all rooms being held for the UTU are reserved.

The registration fee covers the welcoming reception the night before the meeting, two lunches, one evening meal, a breakfast buffet and all workshop materials. Those wishing to attend only the workshops do not need to pay the registration fee. No one-day registrations will be offered this year.

You may cancel your Regional Meeting registration 10 days prior to the first day of the meeting at no cost. After that, the fee is non-refundable.

Anchorage, Alaska, June 13-15, 2005

Anchorage Hilton, 500 W. Third Ave., Anchorage, AK 99501; www.hiltonanchorage.com
ALL ROOMS AT THE ANCHORAGE HILTON HAVE BEEN RESERVED.

The overflow hotel is the Howard Johnson Plaza, 239 W. Fourth Ave., Anchorage, AK 99501.
ROOMS AT THE HOWARD JOHNSON PLAZA ARE GOING FAST: DO NOT DELAY.

Make plans now for 2005 Regional Meetings

Anchorage Hilton reservations: (907) 793-5500, extension 2 (Guest Services). Members can also email clad@hak.net, refer to the UTU, give their names, check-in and check-out dates and credit card number to guarantee their reservation. Members will receive an email back with their confirmation number.

Other area hotels include the Days Inn (907-276-7226); Super 8 Motel (907-276-8884); Red Roof Inn (907-274-1650); HJ Inn Anchorage (907-272-7561) and Homewood Suites Anchorage (907-762-7000).

Room rate: $139 at Howard Johnson Plaza; rates good for three days before and after the meeting.

Reservation deadline: May 9, 2005, or as soon as all rooms being held for the UTU are reserved.

Parking: $7 per night self/14 valet at Hilton; free in Howard Johnson’s lot or $2.50/day next door.

The Sunday night welcome reception will be held at the Anchorage Hilton from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. All other meal functions and workshops will be held across the street at the Egan Convention Center.

The UTU has made arrangements at the Anchorage Regional Meeting for a spouse and guest lunch and dinner tour train tour on Tue., June 14, from 10:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. The trip will take spouses and guests aboard an Alaska Railroad train to Hunter, Alaska, and back, with lunch on the train included.

The cost of the trip is $25 per guest, and seating is limited; don’t be left behind.

The golf outing will be held Sun., June 12, at the Anchorage Golf Course, 3651 O’Malley Road, Anchorage; phone (907) 226-3425. The course is located at the base of the Chugach Mountains, overlook- ing the Anchorage-bowl area with breathtaking views of Cook Inlet and Mt. McKinley. There will be a 5:45 a.m. shotgun start. Rental clubs are available. The cost is $80 per golfer.

The Anchorage-bowl area will be held Sun., June 12, at the Anchorage Golf Course, 3651 O’Malley Road, Anchorage; phone (907) 522-3425. The course is located at the base of the Chugach Mountains, overlooking the Anchorage-bowl area with breathtaking views of Cook Inlet and Mt. McKinley. There will be a 5:45 a.m. shotgun start. Rental clubs are available. The cost is $80 per golfer.

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Colorado chapter gains momentum

As the UTU For Life organization continues to grow, retired switchman Art B. Kent is determined to make sure it has a presence in western Colorado.

“I’ve been going to local meetings and helping guys with their retirements, and a number of people asked me if I’d host a UTU For Life chapter,” said Brother Kent, who belongs to Local 500 in Grand Junction, Colo.

As this issue reached deadline, the Grand Junction chapter was set to meet at 10 a.m. on March 8 at the Mesa Mall Community Room in Grand Junction.

“I’ve come across some interesting information about the Railroad Retirement Retirement benefit,” Kent said. “I think I can help folks make sure they’re aware of it when we meet,” Kent said.

Kent began his career in 1966 on the Denver & Rio Grande Western (D&RGW). He served as local chairperson for 30 years with Local 200 in North Platte, Neb., and retired from the Union Pacific in 2000. Along the way, he married, and has two children and eight grandchildren.

“I was a safety representative for 25 years,” Kent said, “and have been involved with Operation Lifesaver for about five years.”

Helpful in organizing the Grand Junction chapter has been Pete A. Via, a retired conductor, member of Local 500 and another veteran of the D&RGW. “He’s getting the word out, and helps get the meeting room ready.”

Kent remains optimistic about the future of the Grand Junction chapter. “Two years down the road, I expect we’ll be well established and have our own picnics and other events.”

For information, call Kent at (970) 434-5806 or (920) 261-3840, or send e-mail to artk1234@aol.com. To learn how you can set up a UTU For Life chapter in your area, call the UTU International at (216) 228-9400.

RRB now charges fee for genealogical search

By V.M. “Butch” Speakman, Jr.

In the process of providing retirement benefits, the Railroad Retirement Board (RRB) maintains records that deal primarily with the administration and payment of these benefits. For the purpose of genealogical research, the RRB will provide information on deceased persons from these records for a fee.

Persons interested in obtaining copies of the Railroad Retirement Board’s records for use in their genealogical research should be aware that the RRB did not begin maintaining records of all covered rail service until 1937.

Therefore, if a person did not actually work in the rail industry after 1936, he or she would not be listed in these service records. Nor would the agency generally have any pertinent records of persons whose rail service was performed on a casual basis and/or was of short duration. Also, the RRB’s records are only on persons whose employers were covered under the Railroad Retirement Act. Employers such as street, interurban or suburban electric railways are not covered by Rail-Road Retirement.

The agency’s service records are kept by the railroad employees’ Social Security number; when requesting copies of these records, it is preferable to provide this number. In some cases, if a Social Security number is not available, having a name (including middle name or initial) and complete dates of birth and death may be of some help in determining whether we have any records of that person.

The fee for searching the RRB’s records is currently $27 for each employee on whom records are requested and is payable before any search is attempted. It is not refundable, even if the information requested cannot be located or if the file has been destroyed.

A check or money order made payable to the Railroad Retirement Board should be sent with the request for genealogical information to the Office of Public Affairs, Railroad Retirement Board, 344 North Rush St., Chicago, IL 60611.

Generally, the RRB requires 30 to 60 days to reply to genealogical inquiries.

Persons researching the genealogy of a railroad employee may also want to visit the RRB’s website, www.rrb.gov, which includes links to some other sources of genealogical information.

V.M. “Butch” Speakman Jr. serves as a member of the U.S. Railroad Retirement Board.

UTU For Life chapter meets in Arkansas

The first meeting of the UTU For Life chapter in the vicinity of Rogers, Ark., was slated to be held as this issue reached deadline.

Hosted by Eugene Anders of Local 1433 in Elmoopark, Ill., the event was to include a buffet brunch at the Clarion Hotel in Ben-tonville, Ark., and a guest speaker from the U.S. Railroad Retirement Board.

All retired UTU members, their spouses and guests are invited to join Brother Anders as he launches this chapter of UTU For Life. Members of the organization designed to help retired members stay in touch with each other, learn about current events that affect retired individuals.

For information about the UTU For Life chapter being hosted by Brother Anders, write to him at 601 S. 12th St., Rogers, AR 72766, call him at (479) 621-5651, or send him e-mail at eugeneanders@sbcglobal.net.

To learn how the UTU International can help you start a chapter in your town, write to UTU For Life, 14600 Detroit Ave., Cleveland, OH 44107-4250, or call (216) 228-9400 between 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. Eastern Time.

NOTE: Erroneously included in this listing recently were Kenneth Helenko and Michael Babcock, who resides in Bayley, Ala., and Bernice King of Local 439, who resides in Greenville, Texas.

The Final Call

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

Local Name 

City/State

Local Name 

City/State

Local Name 

City/State

6
King, Wayne H.

Indianapolis, Ind.

605
Auel, Carl W.

Washington, Pa.

1445
Grom, Frank C.

Naples, Fla.

212
Deaton, Robert L.

Ravena, N.Y.

610
Chop, John J.

Port Richey, Fla.

1455
Scislowski, Waclaw Y.

New Port Richey, Fla.

283
Burdens, Rudolph I.

Portland, Ore.

610
Harris, J.B.

Washington, Pa.

1473
Powers, John R.

Fr. Lauderdale, Fla.

292
Sherman Jr., John F.

E. Susquehanna, N.Y.

663
Gibbs, Robert H.

Whitefield, N.H.

1473
Wetzler, Edward M.

Brantire, Mass.

310
Carroll, Jack C.

Per Burch, Fla.

663
Goodwin, Ernest C.

Whitewood, N.D.

1518
Koby, John B.

Louisville, Ky.

369
Sim, David R.

St. Thomas, Ont.

706
Carter, John W.

Lynchburg, Va.

1524
McCarron, John W.

Huston, Texas

339
Donaldson, Clyde B.

Halevley, Ala.

769
Spencer, William W.

Martinsburg, W. Va.

1529
Tosper, William J.

Tetlock, Ohio

386
Stetten, William H.

Hacket Heights, N.J.

792
Tucker, Vernon J.

Brunswick, Ohio

1532
Creamer, James D.

Girard, Pa.

432
Williams, Robert A.

Marinemite, Wis.

1059
Karpenko, Deremer M.

Altona, Wis.

1548
Buchanan, Roy S.

Casselberry, Fla.

445
Fischer, Christian K.

Kansas City, Mo.

1129
Turbur, Melvin B.

Bridgeport, N.C.

1574
McVay, Mervin L.

Lincoln City, Ore.

446
Smith, Jr., Verla

Sands, Utah

1138
Vanarsdall Jr., Hugh O.

Fort Orange, Fla.

1581
Cowens, James B.

Melbourne, Fl.

473
Anderson, Charles O.

Wichita, Kan.

1235
Hagen, Gerald A.

Altona, Wis.

1681
Coile, Richard K.

Emmitsburg, Md.

506
Rowley, John Q.

Wichita, Kan.

1374
Shaffer, David P.

Struthers, Ohio

1707
Foster, Wendell E.

Lebanon, Ohio

512
Scott, Berth Albert

Manor, Ga.

1378
Colonna II, George A.

Fruitland, Md.

1918
Limon, Curtiss A.

El Paso, Texas

573
Strunk, Charles W.

Sumner, Ky.

1383
Lyon, Harold W.

Fruitland, Md.

1928
Huffman, Edwin M.

Boca Raton, N.M.

571
Nelson, Morris E.

DeKalb, Ill.

1393
Abdulapal, William H.

Savoy, Ill.

1971
Prince, Roger

Summerville, S.C.

602
Allbright, Joseph E.

Northumberland, Pa.

1488
Hollond, Charles E.

Detroit, Mich.

1445
Grom, Frank C.

Naples, Fla.

1473
Powers, John R.

Fr. Lauderdale, Fla.

1473
Wetzler, Edward M.

Brantire, Mass.

1518
Koby, John B.

Louisville, Ky.

1524
McCarron, John W.

Huston, Texas

1529
Tosper, William J.

Tetlock, Ohio

1532
Creamer, James D.

Girard, Pa.

1548
Buchanan, Roy S.

Casselberry, Fla.

1574
McVay, Mervin L.

Lincoln City, Ore.

1581
Cowens, James B.

Melbourne, Fl.

1681
Coile, Richard K.

Emmitsburg, Md.

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Foster, Wendell E.

Lebanon, Ohio

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Limon, Curtiss A.

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Summerville, S.C.
Article 9 of the UTUIA Constitution was amended by mail referendum on Nov. 18, 2004, to read as follows:

“The Officers of the UTUIA shall be an International President, who shall be Chairman of the Board of Directors, an Assistant President, a General Secretary and Treasurer, a Comptroller and a National Legislative Director.

“The Board of Directors shall consist of the above-named Officers, plus three other insured members of the UTUIA, who shall be elected by the Grand Convention. Officers and Board Members shall be elected for terms of four years. Vacancies between sessions of the Grand Convention shall be filled by the Board of Directors.

“The Board of Directors shall meet annually on a date fixed by the International President, upon call of the International President or upon call of a majority of all Board Members.

“A Committee of the Board of Directors to be known as the Executive Committee, consisting of the International President, the Assistant President and the General Secretary and Treasurer, shall be vested with authority to handle administrative and interim matters, issue new policies, declare dividends and, from time to time, issue rules, regulations and premium rates.

“All actions of the Executive Committee shall remain in full force and effect unless disapproved by the Board of Directors.

“For just cause Officers of the UTUIA may be removed from office by at least a 75% vote of all Board Members.”

Tania Pietrangelo, an administrative assistant in UTU’s Washington, D.C., national legislative office, is living proof of the American dream. Born in Brazil, Tania recently became a U.S. citizen after scoring a perfect grade on her examination in American history and government. She is shown above receiving her certificate of citizenship from an official of the Immigration and Naturalization Service.

Tania met her husband, Tony – an American-born nuclear engineer – near her home town after earning a degree in public relations from a Brazilian college. Marriage followed and Tania emigrated to the U.S. in 1981. After four years of college, during which she traveled three hours each way, teaching herself English seemed a snap. It was. Not only is Tania now fluent in English, she considers English her first language.

The Pietrangelo’s eldest daughter, Thais, is studying journalism at Columbia College in Chicago, and daughter, Tiara, is a high school student in Northern Virginia.

Tania is coming up on her fifth anniversary with the UTU, a job she cherishes because of her ability to assist in legislative initiatives that help members. “I became an American citizen because I want to be part of the decision-making process in this country,” Tania said. “I love America. My life is here. This is home.”
UTU heroes
Continued from page 1

Luckily for the injured man, Ayers had spent 21 years in the Navy and Reitz, formerly a member of Local 324, had been in the Air Force during Operation Desert Storm. “We both had some first-aid training,” said Ayers, “but until you see something like this, no amount of training can properly prepare you.”

“Mike got a nylon drawer strap and cut it in half to make a pair of tourniquets while I talked to the victim,” said Ayers. “He told me he had hitched a ride aboard the train and fell under the wheels when he tried to jump off.”

Several aid units were dispatched, and three firefighters with medic training arrived first and started running down the tracks. The train crew unhitched the lead locomotive to meet them partway. The firefighters stabilized the man and loaded him onto the lead locomotive’s rear platform.

Their presence made a difference. The man’s injuries were treated before he left the train. He was breathing.”

Garrett. “From the prints left in the snow, we theorize the mountain lion had taken a swipe at her just as the train came out of the tunnel, spooking the cat and probably saving her life.

While Garrett and Smith tended to the woman, Johnson had called the train dispatcher and requested emergency assistance. After paramedics from the forestry department arrived, the crew helped get the medical personnel and the woman back to the road crossing about five miles away.

“I understand where the media is coming from, but I personally don’t like being in the limelight,” said Garrett. “We didn’t do anything someone else wouldn’t have done.”

The UTU’s TST includes – in addition to the UTU’s TST coordinator Cumbey – David A. Brooks, Local 147; Stephen T. Dawson, Local 811; John England, Local 1674; Thomas P. Dwyer II, Local 311; Steve Fritter, Local 1933; James P. Hernandez, Local 324; Steve Reveley, Local 117; Robert Strazelez, Local 489, and Curtis A. Wall, Local 1035.

The UTU’s TST often provides crucial assistance to the NTSB investigators. Team members also assist NTSB investigators in locating crew members and others familiar with the territory where the accident occurred as well as the motive power, equipment and signal systems in use and characteristics of track and rail operation, as well as railroad rules in force. TST members also have special knowledge of hazardous materials that are hauled by railroads.

As requested by NTSB investigators, TST members offer their own knowledge. The TST form then carried him to a waiting ambulance.

“It was like something out of a horror story, but I guess he’s doing okay,” Ayers said. “It took all three of us to do this.”

The vote turned, in part, on BLET promises to provide craft autonomy, separate committees of adjustment for former conductors and assistant conductors, equal access to engineer training, and assurances that those who become engineers and conductors who don’t move to position of locomotive engineer on VIA Rail could flow back to prior positions with UTU’s ranks at Canadian National Railway.

Following the representation election, a new contract was negotiated between the BLET and VIA Rail covering the new craft of locomotive engineer.

The result of this contract was that all conductor positions at VIA Rail were immediately eliminated with the concurrence of the BLET.

UTU safety team
Continued from page 1

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UTU officer wins praise for aiding family of member

Too often the extra effort put forth by UTU officers and members is overlooked. That is not the case with Local 500’s Chairperson Tom Holley.

Holley, of Grand Junction, Colo., recently won praise from Audrey C. Woodward, president of the local, for the work she did after the unfortunate accident that claimed the life of BNSF Railway conductor Mike Crouse in December 2004.

Crouse, 44, the married father of a six-year-old daughter and two stepsons, was killed as he prepared to do a roll-by inspection of a UP train. He was struck by the train and killed.

Woodward’s letter to Holley praises and thanks him for his efforts to aid the family following the incident.

“All of us in the UTU extend our sympathy to Brother Crouse’s family, to you and all members of the BNSF committee who knew and worked with Mike,” Woodward said.

It has come to my attention and made mention by several people how your leadership and caring made a positive influence on the Crouse family. Your help with locating insurance benefits, and in general, being there for many details will be remembered by Mike’s family for a good long time. Your efforts went above and beyond the call of duty.

“You actions under the most difficult of circumstances have brought credit to the UTU at the local level and to the entire UTU. All of us in Local 500 are aware of your leadership,” Woodward wrote.

The vote turned, in part, on BLET promises to provide craft autonomy, separate committees of adjustment for former conductors and assistant conductors, equal access to engineer training, and assurances that those who become engineers and conductors who don’t move to position of locomotive engineer on VIA Rail could flow back to prior positions with UTU’s ranks at Canadian National Railway.

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**Official travel agency offers exciting getaway packages**

The UTU For Life program has officially designated Gone With The Wind Travel of Cleveland, Ohio, as its new travel agency and the company has already announced two great travel opportunities for program members.

**Gone With The Wind Travel** is a full-service agency that opened in 1991. The agency prides itself on customer service and will attend to each and every detail to ensure you a worry-free vacation.

**Discount room rates at many North American hotel chains**

UTU For Life program members can now take advantage of special discounts of from 10 to 20 percent off the standard room rates at a number of North America’s most popular hotel chains.

Advanced reservations are required and the offer is subject to availability. Some blackout dates may apply. The discount is off the regular room rate and cannot be combined with any other discounts, offers or special promotions. Discounts may vary by location and time of year.

Members can get a 13% discount on standard rooms at Red Roof Inns throughout the country. Reservations can be made by calling 1-800-RED-ROOF (800) 733-7663 and providing the CP number CP530011.

Members can save from 10 to 20 percent at each of the other hotel chains listed below by calling (887) 670-2088 and providing ID number 64816.

**Alaskan Cruise**

Gone With The Wind Travel is currently offering the perfect trip to take before the UTU Regional Meeting in Anchorage, Alaska, June 13-15, 2005: an Alaskan Cruise. The cruise departs Vancouver, B.C., on June 5 and arrives in Anchorage on June 12, just in time for the Regional Meeting.

The Holland America Line (right) is grandly proportioned and designed to carry fewer passengers than other ships in its class to offer guests an extra measure of space. Enjoy the two-tiered Rotterdam Dining Room, with a grand sweeping staircase, and suites with private verandas for airy, outdoor relaxing and sunning. Multiple lounges provide choices for leisurely evenings. A wide teak deck affords ample room for strolling and deck chairs for those who wish to sit and watch the sea roll by.

**Rocky Mountaineer**

“Spectacular,” “Fantastic,” “A journey we will always remember.” That’s what everyone says about a trip on the Rocky Mountainer.

Now, you too can experience this phenomenal journey. Gone With The Wind Travel invites its members to visit the Canadian Rockies.

**Highlights of Your Vacation:**

- Two days aboard the spectacular Rocky Mountaineer in your choice of RedLeaf Service or GoldLeaf Service.
- Motorcoach tour of Banff townsite, including a ride on the Banff Gondola. Then on to Calgary.
- **Day 1: Vancouver Arrival** – Arrive in Vancouver and spend time exploring this scenic city on your own. Admission to The Lookout atop Vancouver Harbour Centre with spectacular views of the city, mountains and ocean is included. Overnight in Vancouver.
- **Day 2: Vancouver to Kamloops** – Travel aboard the Rocky Mountaineer from Vancouver to Kamloops in the interior of British Columbia. Enroute, you will pass through the fertile Fraser Valley and the scenic Fraser Canyon.
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.

This month’s winning photograph was taken by George Landrock, a member of Local 117 in Vancouver, Wash. The photo shows a BNSF grain train in the Columbia River Gorge near Skamania, Wash.

Two UTU members killed in separate railroad accidents

Two UTU members, Thomas M. Ormiston and Conce P. Campbell, were killed last month in separate accidents.

UTU member and conductor Ormiston was among the 11 people killed Wed., Jan. 26, when two Metrolink commuter trains collided in the Los Angeles suburb of Glendale. Some 200 were injured, five critically.

Later that afternoon, Campbell, a member of UTU Local 811 in San Bernardino, Calif., was killed in a switching accident after he reportedly slipped under a BNSF train at Terminal Island, a container-transfer area.

Los Angeles police said Campbell, 52, the father of seven adopted children, died at the scene. A UTU member, Campbell was working under a BLET contract with a private switching company.

Ormiston, 58, was a member of UTU Local 84 in Los Angeles. He previously was a Southern Pacific conductor. A second UTU member, conductor Reginald B. Taplin, also a member of UTU Local 84, was not physically injured. Metrolink crews are employed by Amtrak, which operates Metrolink under contract.

Prosecutors have filed multiple murder charges against Juan Manuel Alvarez, 25, of Compton, Calif., who is alleged to have parked the automobile on the Metrolink tracks in a suicide attempt that he subsequently abandoned. Alvarez told police he had left the vehicle and watched the derailment. The murder charges as filed make Alvarez eligible for the death penalty, said the Los Angeles Times.

Members of UTU’s Transportation Safety Team (TST) were sent to the accident to assist investigators from the National Transportation Safety Board.

Metrolink officials said a southbound Metrolink commuter train, pushed by a locomotive and heading to downtown Los Angeles, hit the Jeep Grand Cherokee parked on the tracks near the Glendale station.

The front cab-car of the commuter train was vaulted into the air after hitting the automobile and crashed into a stationary Union Pacific maintenance-of-way train and then into a northbound Metrolink commuter train.

Ormiston was in the final car of the northbound train.

A memorial fund has been established for Brother Ormiston. The fund is held at the Bank of America. Any person or local wishing to make a contribution may do so at any Bank of America branch. Signify the Thomas M. Ormiston Memorial Fund, account number 04113-05922. (If you are making the donation outside of California, please inform the teller that the account is a special savings account set up in California, branch #431.) Donations (made payable to the Thomas M. Ormiston Memorial Fund) also can be sent to Local 84 Secretary/Treasurer Richard Albright, 2570 Cardinal Dr., #37, San Diego, CA 92113. The last day donations may be deposited will be April 11, 2005.