**UTU merger committee to review proposals**

A committee has been appointed by UTU International President Paul C. Thompson to review proposals to merge with other labor organizations.

Thompson made it clear that the Teamsters Union is not among the alternatives. No merger involving the UTU may go forward without approval of the UTU membership.

Move made to counter the growing power of merged carriers

Arguments postponed

Talks between the UTU and major railroad carriers over rates of pay, rules and working conditions are scheduled for August and September.

The allegations of wrongdoing were made against UTU International President Paul Thompson, General Secretary-Treasurer Dan Johnson, and designated legal counsel, and the manner in which UTU elections are financed.

The independent UTU Board of Ethics and Qualifications, following almost a year of investigation, has concluded that allegations against various current and former UTU officers and designated legal counsel are speculative and lacking in evidence.

Board of ethics clears officers

The independent UTU Board of Ethics and Qualifications, following almost a year of investigation, has concluded that allegations against various current and former UTU officers and designated legal counsel are speculative and lacking in evidence.

However, the independent board, established by delegates to the 2003 International Convention, used its authority to impose new safeguards on dealings between UTU members and designated legal counsel, and the manner in which UTU elections are financed.

The allegations of wrongdoing were made against UTU International President Paul Thompson, General Secretary-Treasurer Dan Johnson, vice presidents Mike Futhey and David Hakey, UTU Past President Tom DuBose, former general secretary Dan Johnson, and designated legal counsel, and the manner in which UTU elections are financed.

**Teamsters bolt AFL-CIO**

CHICAGO – The Teamsters Union on July 25 disaffiliated from the House of Labor, the AFL-CIO.

The decision was made by the truck-driver-dominated union’s General Executive Board, which has no representation from the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen (BLET) or the Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees (BMWE).

In disaffiliating, Teamster President James P. Hoffa said, “Taking workers, no matter what union they belong to, can always count on the Teamsters for support and assistance.”

What Hoffa did not say is that during the UTU strike against BNSF Railway in April, his Teamster drivers crossed UTU picket lines.

**Help a new hire**

Long-time UTU members know an understanding of the past brings the present into focus and aids in planning the future.

To help bring new hires up to speed, encourage them to read the booklet, “Progress Through Unity,” included in their new-member kits.

To want to learn more? Go to the UTU website at www.utu.org, click on “About UTU” on the left of the red area, and check out “The History of the UTU and the American Labor Movement.”

**Union chiefs praise UTU**

ORLANDO – Those BLET and Teamster raiders spewing false tidbits that the UTU somehow is on the fringe of organized labor must surely be looking in the mirror when they speak.

Three highly respected rail-labor chiefs set the record straight in July at the UTU’s regional meeting in Orlando. Brotherhood of Railroad Signalmen President Dan Pickert, Sheet Metal Workers International Association President Mike Sullivan and SMWIA Rail Division chief Dewey Garland all expressed solidarity with the UTU and praised the UTU for its leadership on Capitol Hill.

Sullivan was too polite to mention names, but his inference was clear: the Teamsters Union has “goals that clash” with the two rail unions it absorbed – the BLET and the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen or the Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees (both subsidiaries of the Teamsters) – as the Teamsters sit on that council. Now,” asked Thompson, “who do you think those truck drivers in charge of the Teamsters and its subsidiary rail unions will support when the issue is truck jobs versus rail jobs?”

Thompson used as an example a recent Teamster decision to quit the AFL-CIO. That decision was made by the truck drivers controlling the Teamsters, and the BLET and Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees – both of which have been absorbed into the Teamsters – had no say in the decision, Thompson observed.

The UTU merger oversight committee will include Thompson, Assistant President Rick Marceau, and General Secretary and Treasurer Dan Johnson.

Five subcommittees also were created by Thompson. They are:

- COLAs paid July 1
- Cost-of-living adjustments were paid effective July 1 to train and engine-service employees covered by the UTU national agreement. This follows a 3 percent wage increase that was applied Dec. 1, 2004, under the 2002 national agreement.
- Under the COLA, basic daily rates of pay increased by 15 cents per hour, or $1.20 per day, effective July 1. The COLA was rolled into the basic daily rates of pay under terms of the national agreement.
- Also, under the UTU health and welfare agreement, employee health care cost-sharing payments increased by $6.11 a month.
- For more information, contact your general chairperson or view the rate tables on the UTU web page at www.utu.org.

**The Voice of Transportation Labor**

“We must never forget that we exist as a union to serve one another in the contracts we negotiate, in the grievances we file and pursue, and in our efforts to improve workplace safety.”

– UTU International President Paul C. Thompson
Local 194, Elkhart, Ind.
This Norfolk Southern local held its family picnic June 25, said Local Chairperson R. L. Holbrook. Local Vice President Josh Jones arranged a dunk tank and giant blow-up toys for the children and Local President Dan Junghans provided entertainment. Among about 200 attending were members of Local 1620, also headquartered in Elkhart.

Local 221, N. Little Rock, Ark.
This Union Pacific local held its annual fish fry for active and retired members on Aug. 6 in Burns Park, according to Secretary & Treasurer Paul Lampton.

Local 240, Los Angeles, Calif.
Members of this Union Pacific local offer their congratulations to H. T. “Tom” Halen, who recently retired for 34 years of service, said Secretary & Treasurer Fred. G. Comeau.

Local 255, San Antonio, Texas
A party was held June 15 to honor Amtrak conductor and Vice Local Chairperson Arthur R. Anderson, who recently retired with 43 years of railroad service, said Local Chairperson Mike Doyle. A pioneer as the local chairperson for Amtrak Zone 7, he led the local from 1981 to 1992 and collected thousands of dollars in claims for those he represented, Doyle said.

Local 349, Kansas City, Mo.
Officemembers of this Union Pacific local recently pooled personal funds to sponsor a child living in the Philippines through the Christian Foundation for Children and Aging, said Local Chairperson Al Nowlin. For information on sponsoring a child, call (800) 877-6564.

Local 453, Clinton, Ill.
Canadian National/Illinois Central conductor Lloyd Holman was recently appointed to a two-year term as co-chairperson of the Decatur Area Labor/Management Committee. Besides serving as local chairperson, legis- lative rep. and delegate, he is chairperson of the state’s legislative department.

Local 471, Eugene, Ore.
This Union Pacific local cosponsored the ninth annual J. C. Anderson Memorial Golf Tournament on June 18 as a fundraiser for the American Cancer Society. The effort brought in 1,130 lbs. of food, up from the 961 lbs. collected last year. Proceeds from the event went to the American Cancer Society.

Local 614, Kansas City, Mo.
Chairperson Tu Phan and Ruben Ramirez placed third in the 13th annual International Rail Rodeo, held June 4 in Pittsburgh, Pa. Brother Ramirez serves as shop steward for the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority’s Gold Line Rail Division.

Local 839, Chicago, Ill.
Around the UTU
The newsletter put out by this CN local (formerly BC Rail) jointly with Local 1923 in Prince George, B.C., is now in electronic form only as an Adobe Portable Document File (PDF), said Secretary & Treasurer David Moorhouse. The summer issue is available via the locals’ website at www.utubc.com.

Local 1778, N. Vancouver, B.C.
The bus operators in the San Francisco yard have just opened negotiations with Laidlaw, while those working for First Student in the San Rafael yard have filed an unfair labor practices charge, said Local President Ange Bevel. Meanwhile, those working in the San Mateo School District continue to negotiate and hope to have a settlement soon.

Local 1846, W. Colton, Calif.
The bus mechanics in the San Francisco yard are mourning the death of former Local President Mike Doyle. A pioneer as the local from 1987 to 1992 and collected thousands of dollars in claims for those he represented, Doyle said.

Local 1923
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Local 2141, Charlotte, N.C.
Local Chairperson Tu Phan and Ruben Ramirez placed third in the 13th annual International Rail Rodeo, held June 4 in Pittsburgh, Pa. Brother Ramirez serves as shop steward for the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority’s Gold Line Rail Division.

Local 1399, Terre Haute, Ind.
A great success enjoyed by all, the picnic both seniority “and in our hearts.”

Local 1813, W. Colton, Calif.
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Local 1846, W. Colton, Calif.
Chairperson and Legislative Rep. Rod Nelms. He had 35 years of rail service and was a veteran of the U.S. Air Force.

Local 1596, Charlotte, N.C.
This local representing bus mechanics employed by Transit Management of Char- lotte on June 25 took a big step in civic lead- ership by participating in the Adopt-A-City Street Clean Up event in Carolina Beach. Proceeds from the event went to the American Cancer Society.

Local 1597, Charlotte, N.C.
The bus operators in the San Francisco yard have just opened negotiations with Laidlaw, while those working for First Student in the San Rafael yard have filed an unfair labor practices charge, said Local President Ange Bevel. Meanwhile, those working in the San Mateo School District continue to negotiate and hope to have a settlement soon.

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BNSF Railway fires labor executive for writing book

BNSF Railway would have you believe you don’t need a union; that the railroad will look out for your pay, benefits and working conditions. As the Woody Guthrie union solidarity song goes, “Put it on the ground, spread it all out for your pay, benefits and working conditions.”

The latest to learn the lesson is a U.S. Naval Academy grad and BNSF labor relations officer, Kem Parton, who was fired by BNSF for writing a novel. Parton’s novel, End of the Line, is about a terrorist who takes on the nation’s largest railroad.

“Management’s objection to my book is they believe it paints railroad management in a negative light (even though) I kept telling them that it was a work of fiction,” Parton said.

“They insisted they don’t screw our customers, they don’t work our train service employees to the point of fatigue and they don’t blame the train crews any time something goes wrong.”

“I said, ‘If you aren’t like that, why do you think the book is about you?’”

Actually, Parton thinks BNSF does understaff its railroad. “Anyone that has seen the carrier’s latest definitions of what a moratorium means is familiar with the concept of fiction,” Parton said.

He was referring to the railroad’s demand that various locally negotiated contracts with the UTU, providing for a moratorium on the number of crewmembers assigned to a train, be reopened for negotiation.

Parton had advice for the UTU membership. “The next time one of your members gripes about the cost of his union dues, I recommend you tell them my story. I live in an ‘at will’ employment state, and after 12 years of service, you tell them my story. I live in an ‘at will’ employment state, and after 12 years of service, I received exactly $3,700 severance pay.”

End of the Line is about a gigantic mega-merged railroad called Transcon that runs coast-to-coast. In the process of putting this huge railroad together, Transcon declared war on the unions, customers and anyone else who stood in their way. One of the many downsized officers holds a grudge and decides to destroy the railroad.


“Fortunately for the plot, there are heroes, including a courageous general chairperson who risks everything to try to stop the terrorist. The train service employees in Parton’s book – in spite of personal danger, fatigue and oppressive management – keep coming to work. “After all, just because a manicidal ter-

NJ Transit begins to search bags

CAMDEN, N.J. – NJ Transit officials have begun the random inspection of riders’ bags and containers.

Everyone boarding mass transit on property owned or governed by the state will be subject to the searches.

Checks will be conducted at all NJ Transit train and bus stations.

The decision by Acting Gov. Richard Codey will not affect passengers riding the PATCO Hi-Speedline between Lindenwold and Philadelphia, but it will affect people who ride the River Line light rail system between Camden and Trenton and the Atlantic City line from Philadelphia.

“At this point we have no plans to follow the governor’s lead,” said Danielle Scott, a spokeswoman for the Delaware River Port Authority, which operates the PATCO line.

Codey also stressed the inspections will be random and that racial or ethnic profiling will not be tolerated.

Dan Stessel, a spokesman for NJ Transit, said the searches will be done by NJ Transit police at any time, day or night.

“They will take place at any bus terminal, rail station or light rail stop in the state,” Stessel said. “If they (passengers) do not consent to the search, they will not be allowed to enter the system.”

Metro bus operators fail to reach agreement

SANTA CRUZ, Calif. – Mediation held in July between the Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District and UTU Local 23 failed to reach an agreement, and another session was scheduled for Aug. 2, according to Local Chairperson Bonnie Morton.

The UTU represents nearly 160 bus drivers on the property.

The biggest issues in the negotiations are medical benefits and working conditions, Morton said. “They are trying to take away our paid spread time and work us over a 13-hour day with multiple splits. They want to keep us here for 75 hours, pay us for 40 hours. We would not even know our families.

“We don’t want to negatively impact the riders,” Morton said. “Our ridership consists of folks who are dependent on the bus system, and we don’t want to hurt those folks. We want to keep driving the best we can, but it all depends on what the transit district does, what it tries to impose upon us.

“For us it’s safety first,” Morton said. “We are struggling to keep working-class people mobile and able to hold down jobs and support families. We’re willing to keep talking until we get this worked out,” Morton said.

Members of UTU and the Services Employees International Union Local 415 staged “informa- tional pickets” at transit centers in Santa Cruz and Watsonville to air their grievances.

N.Y. bus operators vote “yes” for UTU

ROCKLAND COUNTY, N.Y. – Some 370 school bus operators employed by Chestnut Ridge Transportation, Inc., voted by more than a 5-to-1 margin for United Transportation Union representation, the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) reported June 10.

These new UTU bus operators provide safe and efficient transportation for more than 20,000 Rockland County students who board some 350 buses daily. Contract negotiations will begin shortly, and the UTU hopes to have the operators’ first agreement in place before the start of a new school year.

Operators told the Journal News newspaper that they voted in favor of the UTU after promises made by the employer “failed to materialize.” Moreover, many of the bus operators were incensed over the firing of two operators for extraordinary efforts.

“Additionally, many of the bus operators were incensed over the firing of two operators for organizing activity. A grievance is pending before the NLRB.”

UTU New York State Legislative Director Sam Nasca, who helped lead the organizing effort, said another 150 assistant drivers, also known as bus monitors, are seeking UTU representation and that organizing efforts would move forward.

UTU’s alternate bus vice president for the East, Richard Deier, who also joined with Nasca in leading the organizing effort, singled out four bus operators for extraordinary efforts. They are Ruth Morgan, Domique Gilet, Gina Wehmann and Franz Fiala.
Breaking with the past; looking to the future

The unpleasantness of a year ago, which culminated in four individuals pleading guilty to federal crimes, and two former UTU presidents receiving prison sentences, is slowly receding as the UTU continues to cleanse the unfortunate stains left behind.

In the case of federal prisoner number 29120-179, Byron A. Boyd Jr., additional cleansing has been accomplished. In the months following Boyd’s departure from office, it was determined he engaged in massive improper spending of UTU funds.

Documentation was provided the UTU’s bonding company, which recently reimbursed almost $50,000 to the UTU. The bonding company has turned that information over to the Department of Labor, and additional criminal charges may be filed against Boyd.

The UTU has made changes to its internal accounting controls to assure there will not be a repeat of such improper spending.

Separately, Boyd was linked to a sordid effort by BNSF and Union Pacific to attack the Federal Employers’ Liability Act (FELA).

In a desperate act to avoid going to prison, Boyd, following his sentencing, made written and wholly unfounded allegations intended to impugn the credibility and integrity of esteemed labor leader Eugene V. Debs, who helped found a UTU predecessor organization, the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen and Enginemen.

Debs counseled: “When we are in partnership and have stopped clutching each other’s throats, when we have stopped enslaving each other, we will stand together, hands clasped, and be friends.

We will be comrades, we will be brothers, and we will begin the march to the greatest civilization the human race has ever known.”

For sure, Eugene V. Debs didn’t envision a rail labor organization led by truck drivers who compete with railroads.

But the Teamsters have negotiated agreements that limit how much traffic may move by rail. Eugene V. Debs didn’t envision a rail labor organization without a guarantee of craft autonomy and without a voice in policy determination.

But that is exactly the fate of BLET members since their union was absorbed by the Teamsters.

The BLET had no voice and no vote when the Teamsters chose to quit the AFL-CIO.

Only the UTU has craft autonomy written into its constitution.

Eugene V. Debs didn’t envision a rail labor organization selling out other crafts for the benefit of its own members, but that is what the BLE did on VIA Rail in Canada.

After winning control of the UTU contract on VIA Rail, the BLE negotiated an end to the conductor craft and institution of engineer-only operations.

And Eugene V. Debs certainly didn’t envision Teamster truck drivers crossing rail labor picket lines during a strike, but that is exactly what the Teamsters did when the UTU set up pickets on BNSF Railway in April.

Eugene V. Debs envisioned a single organization committed to craft autonomy and job protection.

Eugene V. Debs envisioned an organization like the UTU.
The right to work for less

Martin Luther King Jr. said, “In our glorious fight for civil rights, we must guard against being fooled by false slogans, as ‘right-to-work.’ It provides no ‘rights’ and no ‘work.’ Its purpose is to destroy labor unions and the freedom of collective bargaining... We demand that fraud be stopped.”

I live in Texas, a so-called right-to-work state. I really did not consider that term much until I joined the union. What was fair to me was the fact that I had a full-time job and was bringing home a paycheck.

Over the years and over the road, the biggest obstacle I have encountered is management’s notion that right-to-work means the right-to-work for less.

It can be frustrating to work hard for a good contract only to know that even those who are not members of the local will benefit. Many of these non-members complain about their benefits and even give advice to members concerning local activities and officers, but they always have an excuse for not joining, such as the dues are too high, too many bills, and sickness in the family.

Yes, each one of us could easily find a good use for the money we pay in union dues, but it is that dues money that supports the work of the union – for not joining, such as the dues are too high, too many bills, and sickness.

Both women officially retired from their respective offices in April, although both have indicated that they intend to remain active in party activities.

Craft autonomy: We got it, they don’t

Have you ever heard the old adage: “You don’t know what you’ve got ‘til it’s gone”?

Craft autonomy is a prize we don’t want to lose. But lose it we could if our members choose to hook up with the Teamsters as BLET raiders are hoping on Norfolk Southern.

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Craft autonomy is a prize we don’t want to lose. But lose it we could if our members choose to hook up with the Teamsters as BLET raiders are hoping on Norfolk Southern.

Article 80 of the UTU Constitution guarantees craft autonomy. No agreement may be changed without approval of each historical craft affected.

Craft autonomy gives smaller crafts, such as yardmasters, protection not available with any other union.

When the United Railway Supervisors’ Association sought a partner after the Conrail break-up, those members rejected the BLE and chose the UTU because of its guarantee of craft autonomy.

When the BLE merged with the Teamsters, the BLE was quick to change its name by adding “Trainmen.” But the trainmen craft has no protection under BLE merger agreements with the Teamsters. Only the UTU has a written guarantee of craft autonomy. Craft autonomy serves us well. We should be communicating this to our brothers and sisters in all crafts.
Brett Brown, also of Local 1626, age, who has 40 years of railroading experience, crossed the generational divide to Ninety-four-year-old retired conductor Claude Douglas of Local 1626, Anchor-McDermott, engineer John Westfall and brakeman Elizabeth Ruff. Alaska, employed on the White Pass & Yukon Railroad, including (from left) conductor John Anchorage with their dad, Local Chairperson John A. Dunn of Local 796, San Antonio, Texas.

Members of the Regional Meeting Local Committee who passed the way for a successful and memorable event included (from left) Vice Chairperson George Hedges, Vice Chairperson Ben Brown, Vice President Jefferson "Ear" Davis and State Legislative Director Connie Ridgeway (all of Local 1626 in Anchorage) and Alternate Delegate Brian Donald (of Local 161 in Seattle, Wash.).

Many guests of the 172 members at the Orlando regional meeting gathered in remote control technology and workshop presented by the Auxiliary of the UTU. Auxiliary officers discussed issues pertinent to UTU families and a guest speaker from the Magic Kingdom spoke about some of Disney's "behind the scenes" magic.

Members attending a bus workshop take a break between workshops. Conklin was at the meeting to chat during a UTU Vice President Tony Jankowski, right, and the Federal Railroad Administration's John Conklin, left during a break between workshops. Conklin was at the meeting to attend the Bus Department's workshop to hone their representation skills.

Alaska Railroad employees who poured into the train station to keep the member of UTU Local 573 at Denali, Alaska, employed on the Coastal Alaskan Railroad, including (from left) Ayre Hughes and Tony Allen of Local 1596, Anchorage; and Director of Outreach (N.C.), were instrumental in turning back a "willing firm" against a BLET membership raid.

A photo opportunity for members attending a workshop on remote control technology.

Ray Summings (right), UTU Human Rights Committee director and Local Chairperson John A. Dunn of Local 1626 in Anchorage.

Alaska Railroad President Patrick Cowles (left) accepts an informational packet from Terminal Representative Lindsay Grimes of Local 1725, Prince George, B.C., that outlines the case to end the overroad in Prince George.

Member with the UTU Transportation Department face the near-100ºF heat outside the Coronado Springs Resort Convention Center following the yardmasters' workshop. The workshop was presented by UTU Assistant President Rick Marceau, General Chairperson Dennis Dorr (573) and the Federal Railroad Administration. Vice President J.R. Cumby and Dan Norris of the Federal Railroad Administration.

Amanda Griffin, Jackie Boud (1245) and Local Chairperson Wilkes Griffin (1790) share a light moment at the welcome reception. At a theme reception on Tuesday evening, the Griffins face off in a non-competitive hula hoop competition, with Amanda emerging as champion.

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Robert Milbourn (1366), was the winner of a week's stay at a plush cabin in the Smoky Mountains for her purchase of a UTU Plush Cuddle in the Love for the Cure campaign.

Ray Summings (right), UTU Human Rights Committee director and Local Chairperson John A. Dunn of Local 1626 in Anchorage.

A member of the UTU Transportation Department face the near-100ºF heat outside the Coronado Springs Resort Convention Center following the yardmasters’ workshop. The workshop was presented by Vice President J.R. Cumby and Dan Norris of the Federal Railroad Administration.

Ken Blanchard, a conductor in the Magic Kingdom Railroad and a Disney tour guide, addressed the Auxiliary of the UTU workshop.

Executive Director Richard McGhee (right), BLET, and Alternate Delegate Martin Guerrero of Local 1785, Santa Monica, Calif. (left), address the Auxiliary of the UTU as champion.

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From left, UTU Assistant President Rick Marceau, General Chairperson Robert Kerley (532) and the Federal Railroad Administration's John Conklin, left during a break between workshops. Conklin was at the meeting to attend the Bus Department's workshop to hone their representation skills.

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Retired former VP J.L. Thornton dies

LINCOLN, Calif. – Retired former UTU International Vice President J.L. Thornton, 79, died of natural causes July 11, 2005, in Roseville, Calif.

Brother Thornton, a member of Local 238 in Ogden, Utah, began his rail career as a brakeman in 1946 for the Southern Pacific Railroad (SP). He was promoted to conductor in 1953.

As a member of Brotherhood of Railroad Trainmen Lodge 68, Thornton was elected local chairperson in 1963, vice chairperson of the general grievance committee on the SP in 1969 and general chairperson of that committee in 1973. He was elected alternative vice president of the UTU by delegates at the 1975 convention and was re-elected to that post in 1979.


Rail Retirement, Soc. Sec. benefits compared by RRB

By V.M. “Butch” Speakman Jr.

While the Railroad Retirement System and the Social Security system are closely coordinated, a comparison reveals differences in the benefits payable and the age requirements for entitlement.

Employers and employees covered by the Railroad Retirement Act pay higher retirement taxes than those covered by the Social Security Act.

While rail employees and employers pay Tier I taxes at the same rate as Social Security taxes, they also pay Tier II taxes used to finance Rail-Road Retirement benefit payments substantially above Social Security levels.

The average age annuity paid by the Railroad Retirement Board at the end of fiscal year 2004 to career rail employees was $2,075 a month, and for all retired rail employees the average was $1,610. The average retirement benefit being paid under Social Security was just over $925 a month. Spouse benefits averaged $620 a month under Railroad Retirement; $450 under Social Security.

In addition, the Railroad Retirement Act provides supplemental annuities of between $524 and $431 a month, payable to employees who retire directly from the rail industry with 25 or more years of service and have some rail service before October 1981.

All benefits awarded recent railroad retirees are generally greater than the benefits to those who retired years ago because recent awards are based on higher average earnings.

For career railroad employees retiring at the end of fiscal year 2004, regular annuity awards averaged over $2,710 a month, while monthly benefits awarded to workers retiring at full retirement age under Social Security averaged about $1,245.

If spouse benefits are added, the combined benefits for the employee and spouse would approximate $3,820 under Railroad Retirement coverage, compared to $1,865 under Social Security. Adding a supplemental annuity to the railroad family’s benefit increases average total benefits for current career rail retirees to nearly $3,960 a month.

Railloaders can also retire at earlier ages than workers under Social Security. 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.

For more information, contact the nearest field office of the Railroad Retirement Board by calling (800) 808-0772, or going to the board’s website at www.rrb.gov.

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

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.
You buy, you die, we pay
Simplicity is a beautiful thing, and whole life insurance is simple.
You buy. You die. We pay.
Once you receive your policy and pay your premiums, you can sleep easy knowing that your family will be provided for when you die. That will be the case in a bull market…or a bear market.
You buy. You die. We pay.
You don’t ever have to check the financial section of the newspaper to see how much you will be paid.
Nobody will argue against putting some of your money to work in the investment arena. What we will argue against is putting all of your money there. Taking care of your basic needs involves permanent life insurance and the guarantees that come with it.
For complete details on whole life insurance for you and your family, return the coupon below or call us toll-free at 1-800-558-8842.
Board of ethics
Continued from page 1

The UTU Board of Ethics and Qualifications found the affidavits to “suffer from a variety of defects” including the fact they “consist largely of allegations lacking specificity, unreliable hearsay and pure speculation...and there exist legal issues concerning the credibility of the affiants who are convicted felons....”

Miller, general counsel of the UTU, was primarily responsible for the docketing of complaints.

Upon receiving the affidavits of Little and Boyd, Javits instructed Guerrieri to investigate the allegations through interviews with those mentioned in the affidavits. Griffith was the former United States senator. Javits is chairperson of the UTU Board of Ethics and Qualifications and wrote the decision.

Guerrieri is a former assistant United States prosecutor for the District of Columbia. He provided legal advice to the chairperson and conducted investigations.

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The epilogue of this article should recognize the effort of maintenance of Way Employees. Sullivan echoed what UTU International President Paul C. Thompson said at UTU’s regional meeting in Anchorage in June: “Having a truck drivers’ union control railroad labor begins long-term disaster because trucks and rails compete. The Teamsters have demanded and won from trucking companies a limit on how much traffic can move by rail.”

Garland said “some unions need to go to the organization by providing truthful information...”

The unfortunate reality of the 'second victims' of railroad accidents, has on the conductors, who are in charge of the trains involved in these fatal accidents. I suggest there is another group of victims to recognize.

“The epilogue of this article should recognize the fact that after the events contained in the opening paragraph of your article, the conductor of Train #577 had to get down on the ground and look for the victims, and if necessary, provide first-aid and comfort.”

“If an accident of this type occurred on a freight train, the conductor would be sitting on the locomotive on the opposite side of the rail from the engineer, yelling ‘NOOOOOO’ as well. In many of these accidents, the conductors have actually saved the lives of the victims by providing triage at the scene while awaiting the arrival of the emergency responders.”

“The men and women who work as conductors on Amtrak, commuter and freight trains deserve the same post-accident treatment provided to engineers. The rail labor organizations that represent the train crews, the UTU and BLET, have a measure before the Massachusetts legislature that would mandate such critical incident debriefing. That measure is S-1965, and we would appreciate your support.”

Merger
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Constitution Subcommittee: Vice President Carl Vohldick, chairperson; staff members John Fink and General Counsel Clint Miller.

Finance Subcommittee: Vice President David Hakey, chairperson; staff members Matt Dolin, Stu Collins and Sherry Pates.

Legislative Subcommittee: National Legislative Director James Brunkenhofer, chairperson; Canadian Legislative Director Tim Secord and Illinois State Legislative Director Joe Stabo.

Structure Subcommittee: Vice President Mike Furhey, chairperson; Vice President J.R. (Jim) Cummy, Vice President Roy Arnold and general chairpersons John Hancock and Dave Snyder.

Media Subcommittee: Vice President John Bubler, chairperson; staff member Frank Wilmer.
Suggestions by UTU members help make the passenger carrier safer

Proactive UTU input helps secure Amtrak

Due to UTU leadership in addressing security concerns on Amtrak, the national rail passenger carrier had a jump on the situation when it responded to the July 7 terrorist attack on London’s transit system.

Immediately following the 2001 attack on New York City and Washington, D.C., the UTU brought its security concerns to the forefront as Amtrak formulated its Homeland Security Plan.

Among the items of concern to the UTU addressed by Amtrak prior to July 7 were unsecured crew rooms; control of passenger access to platforms; unauthorized use of employee courtesy vans; identification of vendors and Amtrak police officers with access to facilities; information displayed on photo identification cards and Amtrak Rail Travel Privilege cards; motor vehicle access to critical areas of facilities; and rules for taxi operators to follow in dropping off and picking up passengers.

Because UTU leaders had worked to address these matters, Amtrak’s efforts on July 7 to increase its security level could be concentrated on other areas, such as deployment of more officers and K-9 teams in stations, aboard trains and along the carrier’s routes.

In at least one instance, the involvement of UTU International President Paul C. Thompson made the difference. When conductor and Local Chairperson Ray Cunningham of Local 1933 in Washington, D.C., pointed out the security risks associated with use of an employee’s Social Security number on identification cards, President Thompson took the matter directly to Amtrak President David Gunn.

As a result, Amtrak developed and implemented an employee identification system omitting the Social Security number.

Brother Cunningham, working with General Chairperson Al Sueczo and International Vice President Tony Iannone, also brought to the attention of Amtrak Mid-Atlantic Division General Superintendent D.K. Pesce a safety issue related to the display of IDs. “We have three different items hanging around our necks...safety glasses, necktie and ID holder,” Cunningham told Pesce.

Working cooperatively with the UTU to give employees different options, the carrier made four styles of lanyards and ID display holders available to employees, Cunningham said.

Due to the UTU’s input and leadership, the door to the crew room at the Richmond, Va., crew base can only be accessed electronically with a special card issued to employees. Similar changes have taken place or will soon be in place systemwide, Cunningham said.

“Passengers are not allowed to occupy plat- forms at D.C.’s Union Station until after the train has arrived,” Cunningham said, “and Amtrak police officers, as well as all vendors in the station, must wear IDs. All employees in the UTU will wear IDs or they are not permitted to ride. Taxi drivers in Richmond are allowed access to the station just 15 minutes prior to a train’s arrival and are given five minutes for drop-offs.”

UTU leadership well before July 7 also resulted in numerous other changes, small and large, to create a more secure Amtrak on a systemwide basis, from requiring passengers to present photo IDs when purchasing tickets from conductors and assistant conductors, to procedures to secure unattended equipment.

“I think we can be proud of what the UTU has accomplished so far, and we all need to keep thinking about improvements we can bring about by working together.”

Members ratify pact on Tacoma Belt Line

TACOMA, Wash. - The exception that proves the rule that “the third time’s the charm,” a new contract representing the fourth proposal offered to the membership was recently ratified by UTU members employed by the Tacoma Municipal Belt Line Railway.

“I’ve got to give credit to General Chairperson John Pace and Vice General Chairperson Joe Lochridge,” said International Vice President Art Martin, who helped negotiate the pact. “They were on top of the issues all the way and did a fantastic job.”

Negotiations lasted just over a year. Seventy-two percent of those voting approved the contract, which covers about 40 members of UTU Local 356 in Tacoma employed as “switch supervisors” and “switch helpers.”

Pace said the expanding operation, which connects with the BNSF Railway and the

Two trips offered for UTU for Life members

Two great trips have been arranged for members of the UTU for Life program. The first is a fall foliage tour of New England; the second is a visit to Opryland and Nashville during Christmas.

The six-day New England tour aboard an escorted, air-conditioned motorcoach begins Saturday, Oct. 15, in Boston.

After a welcoming reception at the host hotel the first night, travelers will visit Deerfield, Mass., where they will enjoy lunch at the historic Deering Inn and a visit to Norman Rockwell’s studio and museum in Stockbridge.

The third day includes a visit to Stowe, Vt., then travel to Montpelier, Vermont’s capital, and a ride through the beautiful White Mountains. The fourth day includes visits to the Finkham Notch and the Wildcat Mountain gondola, then travel to Kennebunkport, with its quaint shops and galleries.

The following day includes a scenic drive along the coastline of Maine, and Salem, Mass., and a trip to Oyster Bay. On the fourth night, travelers will enjoy dinner at the historic Deering Inn and a visit to the beautiful White Mountains.

The trip is only $1,289 per person, which includes breakfast daily, one lunch, three diners and the services of a professional tour conductor. There is a $50 discount for AARP members. Airfare to Boston is additional.

Those who have seen Opryland at Christmas know what a thrill it is.

The price is only $1,289 per person, which includes breakfast daily, one lunch, three dinners and the services of a professional tour conductor. There is a $50 discount for AARP members. Airfare to Boston is additional.

Participants will arrive at Opryland on Saturday, Dec. 10, for a three-night stay at the luxurious Gaylord Opryland Hotel, which features majestic glass atriums, nine acres of lush indoor gardens, winding rivers and sparkling waterfalls.

The tour package includes a ticket to the Radio City Christmas Spectacular, featuring the Rockettes, a ticket to a spectacular ice show, a ticket to the Pami Tillis Christmas dinner party, a round-trip out to the Grand Ole Opry, a ticket to the Johnny Cash Theatre for either lunch cruise or a show and tour of the Country Music Hall of Fame and famous Ryman Auditorium; a lunch show at the Wildhorse Saloon; a Gaylord discount card valued at more than $250 and much more. Rates are only $675 per person based on double occupancy, $595 for triple occupancy. Airfare is additional (Amenities may vary slightly if fewer than 20 persons sign up for this trip.)

These trips are available only to UTU for Life program members; if the trips do not sell out, other UTU members will be permitted on a first-come, first-served basis. Also, all first-time travelers will receive a rebate of their annual UTU for Life dues ($95) plus an additional $9.

For complete details, for airline tickets or to make reservations, call the UTU’s designated travel agent, Gone With the Wind Travel, toll free at (800) 886-4989, or call (216) 221-2121, or e-mail marcia@gwtw.webmail.com.
This month’s winning photo:

Bob Schultz, a member of Local 1299 in Chicago, Ill. The photo shows a CN locomotive on track 2 and a Grand Trunk locomotive on track 8 at the railyard in Homewood, Ill.

Four UTU members die in separate accidents

Four UTU members – Shannon R. Purvis, Lee “Sam” Jones, Chris M. Jones and Franklin Duncan – were killed in separate rail accidents in July.

Chris Jones was killed July 5 after becoming pinned between two rail cars while switching at an agricultural plant in Emporia, Kan.

Purvis and Sam Jones were killed in the head-on collision of Illinois Central freight trains near Bentonia, Miss., July 10.

Franklin Duncan was killed July 19 in Memphis, Tenn., when the railcar on which he was riding was struck by a truck.

Chris Jones, 27, a member of Local 94 at Kansas City, Kan., was riding the point of a 10-car cut into a soybean processing plant when he became pinned between a grain hauler and a tank car. Unmarried, he had been working as a railroader since January 2005.

“He was very smart, did a great job and was a fantastic kid,” said Local 94 Chairperson Richard Lane.

Purvis, 21, of Puckett, Miss., a conductor and member of UTU Local 1334 at Hattiesburg, Miss., had been railroading on the IC since August 2002.

Sam Jones, 58, a conductor, was a member of Local 427 in McComb, Miss., and had been a UTU member since March 1972. He leaves behind a wife of 32 years, Amanda, and five children.

Also killed in the IC collision were BLET members A. L. Irby and Mark Cain.

Purvis “was an avid hunter and fisherman who loved his family,” Local 1334 Chairperson William Fairchild said. “He was a loyal and dedicated employee, very honest, who was well liked on the property. He was one of the sharpest 21-year-olds we have had in a long time.”

The Jackson, Miss., Clarion-Ledger quoted Jones’s family as saying that he declined to attend a family reunion banquet the night before the accident because “if he had a scheduled job, he wasn’t going to let anything interfere with him getting ready for the job.”

Franklin “Dible” Duncan, a member of Local 950 in West Memphis, Ark., was killed nine days before his 60th birthday. He was riding the lead of a small cut of cars into the Hunt-Wesson Foods plant in Memphis when a truck struck the lead car, crushing him upon impact, according to Local Chairperson Steve Evans.

Duncan was hired as a switchman in 1965 on the former Missouri Pacific. A U.S. Army veteran, Duncan is survived by his wife of 40 years, Donna K. Duncan, and two daughters, Tina and Missy.

“This has got us heartbroken,” Evans said. “You could not find anybody who could say anything bad about Frank Duncan.”

UTU International President Paul C. Thompson conveyed his sympathy to the families of those killed, pledging the UTU would continue to work with Congress, the Federal Railroad Administration, the NTSB and other agencies to improve railroad safety. “Every railroader has an absolute right to return home in one piece,” he said.