An organization is born!

United Transportation Union members have ratified a merger with the Sheet Metal Workers International Association (SMWIA), establishing the 230,000-member International Association of Sheet Metal, Air, Rail and Transportation (SMART) Workers.

The merger, previously ratified by the SMWIA, becomes effective Jan. 1, creating the 21st largest (of 4,000) transportation political action committees (PACs), and the 7th largest PAC among labor unions, significantly increasing the effectiveness of UTU and SMWIA congressional and state-legislature lobbying.

The merger was almost three years in planning stage. It had strong support from the AFL-CIO.

The more than 71 percent of UTU-member ballots in favor of the merger reflected the agreement’s overwhelming support among UTU International officers, UTU general chairpersons and UTU state legislative directors.

The UTU Board of Directors called SMART “the right merger at the right time.” Other labor organizations have indicated an interest in joining SMART. They have asked not to be identified at this time.

UTU International President Paul Thompson said, “SMART will boost the UTU’s strength at the bargaining table and bolster substantially the UTU’s strength in fighting off attempts by other organizations and carriers to take our jobs.”

SMWIA General President Mike Sullivan – who will become general president of SMART – said, “Whether we are sheet metal, production, air, bus operator, bus mechanic, freight railroad, Amtrak, transit, commuter or shipyard workers, we are now one.”

Created within SMART will be a transportation division, whose senior officers were those elected at the UTU quadrennial convention the week of Aug. 13.

Rail safety update

For the latest developments in rail-safety legislation pending before Congress, including the Federal Railroad Safety Improvement Act of 2007 (H.R. 2095), and to learn how you can assist in the passage of these important measures, log onto www.utu.org.
Local 23, Santa Cruz, Calif.

Members of this CSX local have operated for the Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District recently marked a number of arbitration victories, said General Chairperson Bonnie Mour. A temporary charge filed in 2004 led to the local’s first victory. Meanwhile, members are mourning the death of Mike Delahanty, a 19-year member of the local.

Local 60, Newark, N.J.

Conductors and trainmen working on NJ Transit recently held a party to benefit Pete Mongiello, who is battling cancer, said Local President Mike Reilly. A total of $6,500 was raised for Brother Mongiello and his family, who expressed their heartfelt gratitude.

Local 84, Los Angeles, Calif.

Retired member Lawson Chadwick, a founding member of UTU Local 4 for Life Chapter 3 in Oceanside, Calif., is inviting all interested parties to attend a “no-guts” champagne reception marking his 70th birthday. The event will be held Sept. 9, from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m., in the Fountain Courtyard of the Rancho Valencia Resort in Rancho Santa Fe. RSVP by Sept. 4 to Brother Chadwick at (760) 945-5365 or sending e-mail to lchadwickcox.net.

Local 194, Elkhart, Ind.

Members of this Norfolk Southern and Canadian Pacific local enjoyed the annual family picnic held in late June, said Local Chairperson and Legislative Rep. Robert L. Hatfield. Special thanks go to Treasurer Jim Ball’s wife, Angie Ball, for making the event a great success.

Local 195, Galesburg, Ill.

Members of this BNSF local participated in the annual Galesburg Railroad Days in June, staffing an informational booth and distributing paper UTU hats and coloring books to children along the parade route, said Legisla- tive Rep. and Delegate E. W. “Bud” Linmeth.

Local 238, Ogden, Utah

This Union Pacific local commemorated a pair of retired local officers who recently passed away, said Local Chairperson Bob Phipps. Members of this Southern Pacific and Amtrak Conductor “Big” Harold Corry, a former local chairperson with a firm belief in the union way, died on June 1, Pearson said. Former local vice-chairperson (yard) John Andrews passed away on July 5. He had worked for the Southern Pacific and the Union Pacific.

Local 577, Northlake, Ill.

Union Pacific employees in this local are mourning the death of Mark J. Phillips, 56, a former Marine, who passed away May 27 (Memorial Day) after a long battle with cancer, Treasurer Warren Woshel said.

Local 904, Evansville, Ind.

A retired member of this CSX local, George A. Murray, passed away July 14 at age 81. Brother Murray, a Navy veteran with 38 years on the railroad, also worked for 16 years as a UTUIA field supervisor. He is survived by his wife, four children, 11 grandchildren and 10 great-grandchildren.

Local 933, Jefferson City, Mo.

The members of this Missouri Pacific local, along with members of UTU Auxiliary Lodge 933, will host their annual fish fry on Sept. 14. In addition, the local’s leg- islative Rep. Ken Menges. For information, contact Menges by calling (216) 372-6577 or send e-mail to him at kmenges@prodigy.net.

Local 1043, Sparks, Nev.

The recent death of retired conductor D.A.

Local 1607, Los Angeles

This LACMTA local is making plans for its first family picnic, said Vice Local Chairperson Mary Brender Reynolds, who served as local trustee. The event will be held Sept. 29 at the Santa Fe Dam Recreation Center in Irwindale, and will feature food, live music, games and a karaoke contest. Meanwhile, the local is mourning the recent deaths of Dave Haynes, Brother Steve Young.

Local 1697, Lubbock, Texas

Members of this TNM&O Coaches local are mourning the death of bus operator James H. “Andy” Anderson, a 19-year member who served as local trustee. Former Chairperson, Secretary & Treasurer and Delegate Dave Hayes. Brother Chrisman began his career on the Southern Pacific in Watsonville, Calif.

Local 1814, Spartanburg, S.C.

Members of this CSX local offer best wishes to recent retiree Danny R. Kelly, who served as local chairperson for 19 years. Brother Kelly retired May 31 with 41 years of service, said Local Chairperson, Secretary & Treasurer and Delegate Jimmie Browning. Meanwhile, members are mourning the death of Michael Mitchem, 24, who died in a car accident June 23.

Local 1846, W. Colton, Calif.

This Union Pacific local will co-host its annual safety picnic with another organization on Aug. 25 at the Yucaipa Regional Park. The event will feature food, door prizes, music and activities for the kids, said Local Vice President and Delegate John Andrews. For information, contact Brown at (909) 289-9872.

Local 1869, Williamson, W.Va.

Members of this Norfolk Southern local and their families are invited to attend a picnic Sept. 8 at Grant’s Bench Park in McAn- drews, Ky., said Local Chairperson, Secretary & Treasurer and Delegate Jimmie Browning. The catered event will feature live music, games and a karaoke contest. Meanwhile, members are mourning the death of Bob Boatwright, 45, who died on July 14 in a car accident.

Conrail retirees meet for breakfast

Members are invited to join the Conrail retirees who meet for breakfast and camaraderie once a month inDearborn, Mich., said Leroy D. Hatfield of Local 1477 in Dearborn. Local 1477 and 45 retirees meet from 8:30 a.m. to about 10:30 a.m. on the first Tuesday of each month at UGM Family Dining, 2582 Michigan Avenue. Contact Hatfield at (734) 676-7884.
Arbitrator chooses CN last-best offer

OTTAWA – A Canadian government arbitrator on July 20 chose Canadian National’s last-best offer to impose on some 2,800 UTU-represented employees – a three-year agreement providing 1 percent annual wage increases, a $1,000 signing bonus, and a retroactive payment of an additional 3 percent of gross wages paid between Jan. 1 and July 22, 2007.

Under so-called baseball-style arbitration, the arbitrator could choose either the last-best offer of the UTU or CN in entirety. Baseball-style, or last-best offer, arbitration is intended to bring the sides closer.

The Canadian government ordered the binding arbitration following a 15-day strike last February and the subsequent rejection of a tentative one-year agreement that was voted down in April by UTU members on CN.

UTU Vice President John Armstrong said following the arbitrator’s decision that, “Obviously, we would have liked the arbitrator to have picked the union’s final offer. Although the arbitrator picked the carrier’s final offer, we are pleased to say that the collective bargaining agreement remains intact.

“That means,” Armstrong said, “that significant work rules changes CN was seeking were not included in their final offer. This victory can be attributed to the fact that the UTU held the line during this final-offer selection process. This was what the direction of our membership was from the outset of this round of bargaining.”

UTU obtains protections on FEC, Rail America

The UTU is securing income protection for members who may be adversely affected by the proposed acquisition of Florida East Coast Railway by Fortress Investment Group. Previously, the UTU secured income protection for members employed by RailAmerica, which Fortress acquired in February.

Labor protection, known generally as New York Dock conditions, is imposed by the U.S. Surface Transportation Board (STB) when railroads merge. Similar protections are imposed on line sales and leases and on line abandonments.

In securing labor protection imposed by the STB, UTU general chairpersons on affected railroads – with assistance from the UTU International – negotiate with management so-called implementing agreements that spell out the terms of labor protection.

At a minimum, under New York Dock conditions, such protections assure that no UTU-represented member will suffer a loss or reduction of pre-acquisition income resulting from furlough, displacement or demotion for up to six years following the acquisition.

Remaining intact are mileage limitations, personal leave days and time-off provisions. Additionally, the company did not pursue, in its final offer, an hourly-rated agreement, which was of major concern to the membership.

“In consideration of what was on the table in the final-offer selection process, and further considering we were in blackball-style arbitration, the UTU came out of this in pretty good shape,” said Bob Sharpe, also a UTU vice president in Canada. “The decision rendered by Arbitrator Andrew Sims is a fair one and one with which we can live.”

Armstrong and Sharpe praised the efforts of general chairpersons Daniel Joannette, John Holiday and Rolllie Barr, and thanked UTU International President Paul Thompson and UTU General Counsel Clint Miller for their support.

UTU’s Vincent Tessitore Jr. named to New York MTA board

Long Island Rail Road Local 645 (Babylon, N.Y.) Vice President and Chairperson Vincent Tessitore Jr., right, was recently named to the board of directors of the New York Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA). He was nominated by LIRR General Chairperson Anthony Simon, left. The MTA is governed by a 17-member board representing New York City and each of the counties in the transportation district, as well as representatives from labor and commuters. All board members are confirmed by the New York State Senate. “I have tremendous confidence that Vincent will represent this organization with respect and integrity as he accepts this MTA board seat,” Simon said.

UTU-represented bus drivers move N.J. commuters

Thousands of commuters from the bedroom communities in northern New Jersey depend on Community Transportation in Passaic, N.J., for transportation to and from their jobs in Manhattan and elsewhere. The Coach USA subsidiary also provides local transit and tour services throughout the Northeast. Community Coach drivers are members of Local 759.

In the photo above left, from left, are Local 759 driver Nancy McCoy; former UTU Secretary/Treasurer Tony Ortiz; and Local 759’s long-time Secretary/Treasurer Tony Ortiz. In the photo above right, reviewing pending Local 759 grievances are, from left, UTU New Jersey State Legislative Director Dan O’Connell; Community Coach General Chairperson (GO-301) Calenli Studianni and Local 759 Chairperson John Bladde.

UTU members eligible for Union Plus benefits

Thanks to the UTU’s re-affiliation with the AFL-CIO, active and retired UTU members are now eligible for a variety of money-saving benefits administered by the Union Plus program.

Union Plus programs are designed specifically for working families. Their benefits have added features that are especially helpful in cases of disability or layoffs.

“The secret of Union Plus? Union power. Just as unions provide strength in the workplace, Union Plus provides strength in the market-place. It delivers the best benefits through the collective buying power of millions of union members. And they do so without using union member dues.

Benefits available to UTU members include discounts on car rentals; discounted tickets to popular theme parks such as Disneyland, Busch Gardens, Six Flags and Sea World; discounts on air fares, cruises, hotels and car rentals; online tax services; union-made checks; health-club discounts; Goodyear tire and service discounts; moving-company discounts; discounts on home heating oil; discounts on flowers; union-made clothing discounts; discounts at online book stores; discounts on Dell computers; discounts on AT&T wireless programs; discounts on Internet service, and discounts on broadband phone service.

To see the complete list of benefits available UTU members, go to www.utu.org, then click “Promotions.”
UTU jobs will not be traded for BLE benefit

By Paul Thompson
International President

Notwithstanding the substantial benefits to be realized from our merger creating SMART, the road ahead is as dangerous as the road our troops travel daily in Iraq.

Anti-union carriers, conservative lawmakers and regulators serving with the blessing of anti-union forces constantly have their weapons trained on us.

Sadly, there is another enemy with whom we must contend – a parasite that feeds off other crafts' jobs, yet calls itself a labor union.

I'm referring to that organization that first thumbed its nose at solidarity when the UTU was created in 1969, and again turned its back on solidarity when we sought again to merge a few years ago.

By Local 257 member Alan Nash.

It is the organization that once sold the fireman's job for $1.50 per year.

It is the organization that now has entered into contracts with BNSE CSX and NS to take trainmen jobs and eliminate others.

The Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and their Teamster handlers may tack the word "trainmen" to the end of their already scandalous name, but an organization that trades away trainmen jobs and signs a contract that ignores entry-level pay for newly hired trainmen is hardly one that ignores entry-level pay for newly hired trainmen is hardly one that ignores entry-level pay for newly hired trainmen.

President Bush has learned it is easier to start a war than end one.

The railroads seem to believe that the war they started against us – and fight for your jobs and better wages, benefits and working conditions we will.

In national handling, we will continue to fight for improved training and equal pay for equal work.

On Amtrak, we will continue our fight to preserve the assistant conductor as a matter of public safety and national security.

For bus members, we will pursue a just resolution of the commercial driver's license problem.

And SMWIA President Mike Sullivan will be assisting our bus department at the bargaining table and in grievance handling using his organization's expertise under the National Labor Relations Act.

SMART also will be increasing its organizing of the unorganized on shortlines, bus properties and airlines.

As Brother Debs said, the labor movement is "the most vital and potential power this planet has ever known."

In solidarity, SMART will represent its members with clarity of vision, honesty of intent, and oneness of purpose.

They started this war; we intend to end it

Washington Watch
By James M. Brunkenhoefer

President Bush has learned it is easier to start a war than end one.

The carriers declared war on UTU members out of anger that your union is demanding the railroads keep their promises to negotiate training and entry-level pay, and opposing carrier efforts to implement dangerous one-person crews and eliminate FELA.

CEOs get very angry when they don't get their way.

During this round of bargaining, the railroads have ratcheted up discipline, looking to terminate you and put your family on the street without health care and preventing you from qualifying for full Railroad Retirement benefits.

We've been slowing them down because we also have friends in Congress, and our general counsel, Clint Miller, has stopped them cold at the courthouse.

Railroads only hear through their pocketbooks. While they work to destroy the UTU, eliminate your job and put your family in the welfare line, we claim we are foiling our own nests by seeking passage of a tough new federal rail safety bill, by supporting captive-shippers legislation that could eventually include a provision to end the shortline sales and lease scam, and by opposing their grab for massive new subsidies from the government to help finance their stock buybacks.

It is you and your union who will decide when this war ends – and that will not be until we have a ratified contract.

To keep the pressure on the carriers, you must continue to tell your congressional representatives in the House to support H.R. 2095 (the Federal Railroad Safety Improvement Act of 2007) and H.R. 2125 (the Railroad Competition and Service Improvement Act of 2007), and to oppose H.R. 2116 (the Freight Rail Infrastructure Capacity Expansion Act of 2007).

Also, you must continue to tell your senators to support S. 953 (the Senate version of the Railroad Competition and Service Improvement Act of 2007).

The railroads seem to believe that the war they started against you and your family will end with a carrier-friendly Presidential Emergency Board.

They are as mistaken as President Bush is about Iraq.

We are in this for the long fight.

So when the carriers contact you and try to tell you what a mistake your union is making by opposing their legislative agenda, tell them that the only end to this war will come with a ratified contract that addresses entry level pay, adequate training and an end to their attacks on you and your family.

Let them know in no uncertain terms that those who are trying to take your job and destroy your family's economic security are not to be trusted for one New York minute.

Created exclusively for UTU News by Local 257 member Alan Nash.
New England

The UTU is working with the BLET in Massachusetts to resolve a myriad of problems on the Massachusetts Bay Commuter Rail (MBCR) system.

State Legislative Director George Casey and his counterpart from the BLET, George Newman, recently met with Massachusetts State Auditor Joe DeNucci (whose grandfather was a conductor) to try to bring heightened attention to the numerous issues.

The union officials convinced the auditor’s office to investigate the performance clauses of Massachusetts Bay Transit Authority’s contract with MBCR to operate the commuter-rail service in the greater Boston area.

UTU represents about 300 conductors and trainmen on the MBCR, all members of Local 898, Boston. BLET represents about 120 engineers on the carrier.

“We are trying to bring pressure on the MBCR because we are concerned about the railroad’s performance,” Casey said.

“’We want to bring attention to the myriad of service deficiencies of the MBTA,’ he added.

“And, Casey said, ‘obviously the Massachusetts state auditor agrees.’

“The MBTA continues to have problems with the training of employees, hiring sufficient numbers of operating personnel, supplying reliable equipment and maintaining their trackage and signals,” Casey said.

“We are concerned these many problems will impact the opening of the Greenbush line between Boston and Scituate, scheduled for next month,” Casey said.

Casey said he expects a report back from the auditor’s office within a few months.

Lose your temper? Lose your worth

Chuck Norris, remembered for his television role as, “Walker, Texas Ranger,” counseled, “Men are like steel. Remain tempered, but flexible. Chuck Norris had the right advice, use it wisely.

Brothers and sisters, remember that when you are in the role of a union representative, your worth to your members is invaluable. Use it wisely. Remain tempered, but flexible. Chuck Norris had the right advice, use it wisely. That’s how you win!”

UTU’s choice for congressman from the 4th District in California, Charlie Brown, came to a meeting of Local 1575 in Rossville recently to thank the members for their support. Meeting with Brown were, front row, left to right, Chris Chamness; Brown; Assistant State Legislative Director Mike Anderson; back row, left to right, Local Vice President Mike Rose; Local Chairperson Norm Gilliam III; Local 492 (Saratoga) member Paul Conness; Local President Bill Schoenbauer; Secretary-Treasurer; Delegate and Legislative Rep. Norm Lucas II; and retired former Local Legislative Rep. Craig Landis.

[Image of representatives from different states]

California

United States

Kansas

New England

“UTU state legislative directors have recently been spending a lot of of this leather working the halls of Congress on behalf of members to try to ensure the passage of H.R. 2955, the Federal Railroad Safety Act of 2007. After a long day of lobbying, five state legislative directors took time to attend a dinner at Washington, D.C.’s grand Union Station in honor of Democratic Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi, who is serving her 21st year in Congress. Shown at the event, from left to right, are Pennsylvania State Legislative Director Don Dunlevy; Maryland State Legislative Director Larry Kasscamp; South Carolina State Legislative Director Jack Ramsey; North Carolina State Legislative Director Dickie Westbrook, and New England States Legislative Director George Casey.

Pennsylvania

Members of the UTU Auxiliary in Kansas recently attended the state Democratic Party’s Washington Day event and fundraiser. Above, Suzanne Barbour and Ericka Hart (second and third from left), both members of Auxiliary Lodge 391 in Emporia, are photographed with former President Bill Clinton and Gov. Kathleen Sebelius. Barbour is the daughter of State Legislative Director Don Lindsey.

by Roy Arnold, vice president/director

Report close calls and improve safety

The FRA has introduced a pilot program for rail workers, CRS, which stands for Confidential Close Call Reporting System.

CRS allows railroaders who are involved in a close call or minor incident that meets certain criteria to self-report without fear of discipline. This is accomplished by negotiating what the FRA calls an Implementing Memorandum of Understanding (IMOU). The IMOU is a three-party agreement between labor, the FRA and the carriers.

The thought behind CRS is to gather information on these incidents and try to identify the causes. In doing so, this will enable the parties (labor, the FRA and the carriers) to make the necessary changes for a safer work-place.

FRA’s deputy administrator, Cliff Eby, spoke about this in his lunchcheon speech at the Kansas City Regional meeting, and indicated, in a response to a question, that he would work to ensure the confidentiality of all reports made by railroaders.

A similar close-call program has been in place in the airline industry for some 30 years. The airline program has had in excess of 500,000 reports, but does not contain protection from discipline as does our program.

As the recent FRA report on yardmasters confirmed, yard incidents are more than five times greater than the overall train-accident rating. CRS gives railroad employees the opportunity to help make the work environment safer for everyone.

By J.R. “Jim” Cumby, vice president
Regional Meeting Photo Scrapbook

Pittsburgh

Eluding the action in Pittsburgh are, left to right, Brionie More (L-22), Antonio Colon, Cadilley, Jim Cunningham (L-1933, Washington, D.C.), Frank Hickman (L-1175, Dakotah, Minn.), Lou Kelly (L-231) and William Bryan (L-1933).

UTU Assistant President Rick Marceau; AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Joe Nigro.

From left, SMWIA Government Affairs Director Vince Panvini; Virginia State Legislative Director Walter Yeatts; William Bates (L-1933).

Bonnie Morr (L-23, Santa Cruz, Calif.); Ray Cun

Washington, D.C.) and James Chapman (L-924).

Enjoying the activities in Pittsburgh are, left to right, Bus Department members.

New York State Legislative Director Sam Nauss, left, and Michigan State Legislative Director Jerry Gishen, right, welcome AMTRA General Secretary-Treasurer Joe Nigro.

UTU International President Paul Thompson, second from left, joins (from left) Tim Baccaro, Anthony Brown and John Barbee, all members of Local 969, in West Columbia, S.C., during the Sunday night welcome reception at the Hyatt Regency Crown Center.

Local Chairperson Brenda Bregg of Local 217 in Merrill, N.H., proudly shows that his son Randall is the “No. 1 union man” in America.

The members of the UTU Local Planning Committee prepare to attend International staff in preparing for the meeting. They include, from left, Amanda Davis, Paul Emerick, Karen Blakes, John Blakes, Missouri State Legislative Director Larry Foster, Linda Foster, Gerald "Bucky" Wilrogowie and International staff member Myra Grady.

The Keystone Staters made sure the Pittsburgh regional meeting was a memorable. They are, from left, Charlie Wole (L-498, Altoona), Sam Martnes (L-174), Ken Cardona (State Legislative Director Don Danley), Richard Balaban (L-658, Philadelphia) and Ron Koons (L-1934, Upper Darby).

The members of Local 1280 work for the Casper, Wyo., arrive at the regional meeting host.

BNSF General Committee GO-127 Secretary Daniel Young (L-1265), Arizona State Legislative Director Scott Shock (L-1626) and Legislative Researcher Greg Flannery (L-1265) stop to chat between workshop sessions in the lobby of the Hyatt Regency Crown Center.

Local Chairperson Eric Prado, left, and Legal Secretary and Treasurer Joel Arquilla, both of Local 1280 at Cooper, W.Va., arrive at the regional meeting host.

The number of Local 1280 work for the BNSF.

BNSF General Committee GO-127 Secretary Daniel Young (L-1265), Arizona State Legislative Director Scott Shock (L-1626) and Legislative Researcher Greg Flannery (L-1265) stop to chat between workshop sessions in the lobby of the Hyatt Regency Crown Center.

International President Paul Thompson, left, speaks with Federal Railroad Administration Deputy Administrator Clifford Ely following Ely’s address to UTU members and guests at the regional meeting banquet.

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Under the Railroad Retirement Act, a “current connection with the railroad industry” is one of the eligibility requirements for occupational disability annuities and supplemental annuities. It is also one of the criteria for determining whether the Railroad Retirement Board (RRB) or the Social Security Administration has jurisdiction over the payment of monthly benefits to survivors of a railroad employee.

To meet the current connection requirement, an employee must generally have been credited with railroad service in at least 12 of the 30 months immediately preceding the month his or her railroad retirement annuity begins.

However, if an employee does not qualify on this basis, but has 12 months’ service in an earlier 30-month period, he or she may still meet the current-connection requirement.

A current connection established at the time the railroad retirement annuity begins is permanent. An employee never loses it no matter what kind of work is performed thereafter.

A current connection can be broken by full or part-time work for a non-railroad employer in an interval between the end of the last 30-month period including 12 months of railroad service and the beginning date of an employee’s annuity, or the date of death if earlier.

But certain types of work will not break a current connection. For example, self-employment in an uncompensated business will not break a current connection, nor will federal employment with certain agencies or state employment with the Alaska Railroad. Also, non-creditable railroad service in Canada for a Canadian railroad will neither break nor preserve a current connection.

For more information, contact your nearest RRB office or visit www.rrb.gov.

Retired member surfaces with undersea memories

By V.M. “Butch” Speakman Jr.

If most Americans failed to celebrate on April 11, it’s likely the event flew under their radar, or more properly, slipped past their sonar.

The date marks the traditional birthday of the U.S. Submarine Force, which just passed its 107th milestone. Retired former Lehigh Valley Railroad general chairperson James M. Reilly Jr. is among those who appreciate its significance.

Brother Reilly, 92, who also served as Conrail vice general chairperson until his retirement in 1980, is one of about 30 former submariners who belong to the Lehigh Valley Chapter of the U.S. Submarine Veterans of World War II. Members of the group surface once a month at the City View Diner to bring up memories of what they call “the silent service.”

A member of Local 498 in Allentown, Pa., Reilly began his rail career as a clerk on the LVRR, and became a trainman shortly afterward, joining Lodge 85 of the Brotherhood of Railroad Trainmen in September 1941. In short order, he got married, got drafted, and volunteered for service aboard the USS Anle (SS-403).

“We had a chief who had done sub service prior to the war,” Reilly said. “I was fascinated by his stories and decided that’s what I wanted to do.”

Reilly was in the service a little over three years, then returned to the railroad, where he became a freight conductor, passenger conductor, ticket collector and baggage master.

Reilly will meet with fellow LVRR veterans at their 26th reunion on Sept. 15. For information, contact Eugene K. Schuler at (619) 432-0631 through 1997, passed away July 30, after a long battle with cancer. He was 70.

Deering, a member of Local 312 in Madison, Wisc., started his rail career as a fireman on the Chicago & North Western Railway in 1942. He was elected general chairperson on the C&NW in 1955, he served in that capacity until his election as vice president in 1963. He retained that position when the UWW was formed and was re-elected at succeeding conventions until his retirement in 1981.

Deering began his railroad career as a brakeman on the Southern Railway in 1965. He retired from Norfolk Southern Railway in 1998 with 33 years of service. The last 11 years of service was spent as general chairperson for OGC.

Deering was a member of Local 750 in Knoxville, Tenn.
Why buy life insurance?

Because your children are still ‘your children,’ even after you’ve passed away.

Life insurance is not just for funeral costs anymore. Life insurance is for those you leave behind.

Life insurance can assure that your children will continue to live the life you diligently worked so hard to provide.

Life insurance is so no one is left asking, “How will we pay the mortgage? How will we keep up with these monthly bills? How can we afford school tuition? Where will we live?”

Contact your UTUIA agent today to discuss why YOU need life insurance.

Call toll-free: 1-800-558-8842

Information, please

I would like more information on UTUIA’s life insurance plans.

Please print

Full name

Date of birth

UTU local number

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City

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UTU, FRA team up for passenger-car safety

Acting, in part, on advice from the UTU, the FRA has proposed new federal standards to enhance the strength of key structural components of rail passenger cars to make them more crashworthy.

FRA Administrator Joseph Boardman said Aug. 1 that FRA’s new standards will “better protect” rail passengers and train crewmembers.

“Mitigating the potentially damaging forces involved in train accidents is critical to preventing injury to passengers and crew,” Boardman said, explaining that crashworthiness can be “significantly enhanced when the structure of a rail passenger car is engineered to absorb more energy and crush in a controlled manner.”

Boardman said the proposed rule “is designed to preserve more space in the nation’s rail safety.”

UTU passenger safety representatives – Amtrak employees David Brooks Sr. (Local 1470) and Steve Fritter (Local 1933, who also is UTU District of Columbia legislative director), along with UTU Illinois State Legislative Director Joe Stabos and UTU Alternate National Legislative Director James Stem – have been working with the FRA on writing these new crashworthiness standards.

Boardman said the proposed rule “is designed to preserve more space in the nation’s rail safety.”

UTU International President Paul Thompson said, “Administrator Boardman consistently has ensured that the UTU has a seat at the table, recognizing the importance of labor as a crucial stakeholder in improving the nation’s rail safety.”

Under the FRAs proposed rule, forward corner posts would have to withstand 300,000 pounds of force before failing, doubling the current federal requirement.

In addition, forward corner and collision posts would have to satisfy new federal standards to absorb a minimum level of energy and bend a specific distance without breaking to maximize the full potential strength of these structural components.

Harry Bates Jr. named UTUIA volunteer of the year

Harry Bates Jr. has been selected as the 2007 UTUIA Volunteer of the Year and was honored at this year’s UTU/UTUIA Regional Meeting in Pittsburgh, Pa.

He is employed by Norfolk Southern Railway and is a member of Local 1053 in Selma, Ala.

Bates was selected for this award as a result of his work with the Selma Disability Advocacy Center, a foundation he co-founded with his wife, Carolyn Calhoun-Bates. It is the only multi-needs program of its kind in the state of Alabama.

The center assists children who have a variety of disabilities with academic, alternative and employment programs. The center keeps in regular contact with the city and county school systems and tries whenever possible to help children before they get into serious legal or academic trouble.

Bates and his wife founded and seek annual funding for the program, which has received local and national recognition from renamed individuals, agencies and television news media for serving the communities and teaching disabilities awareness and diversity in Alabama’s 7th District.

Job training at the center includes teaching students how to use computers, perform clerical duties and complete landscaping projects. Next year, the center will add sewing, cosmetology and general contracting to its offerings.

“Any type of job skills that they need, or placement that they need, we do it (at the center),” said Carolyn. “This is a one-stop center for children with learning disabilities.”

For the past nine years, Bates has diligently spent his vacation and time off attending workshops and conferences to obtain his certificate of training in disabilities and social work. He has also spent many hours prior to work tutoring and transporting special needs and at-risk students.

Students with learning disabilities and students who had failing grades are now honor-roll students getting grades of As and Bs.

It has been reported that Bates even made improvements to his truck and decorated it so that students with physical limitations could ride in it to participate in the local Christmas parade.

For his selfless commitment to helping the children of his community, Bates was selected as the UTUIA’s Volunteer of the Year.

Bates received a $1,000 U.S. Savings Bond and a plaque of appreciation from the UTUIA.

www.utu.org / www.utuia.org
BNSF Railway’s exposure in FELA and other lawsuits arising from accidents, derailments and other incidents may rise dramatically after the FRA on May 30 booted the carrier out of a voluntary joint labor/management safety program.

BNSF, the second-largest U.S. railroad, was ousted from the federal safety project because the carrier won’t meet a Sept. 30 deadline for a statute whereby employees can share otherwise not be captured as well as provide railroad carriers and the FRA with opportunities to MORE

Close-Call Reporting System Demonstration Project -- employers are reluctant to discuss so-called close calls out of fear the carrier will dismiss or otherwise discipline them.

Union Pacific and Canadian Pacific remain engaged in the program. UP was the first participant, agreeing in February to involve workers in its biggest rail yard, in North Platte, Neb. The CP participates in the program at its Portage, Wis. yard. BNSPs program would have been at its yard in Lincoln, Neb.

Feds boot BNSF from close-call reporting program

The FRA reportedly told BNSF that its lack of commitment to work cooperatively with its employees is the reason for the FRA action.

The voluntary project was inaugurated by the FRA in February to create a cooperative environment among railroads and their operating employees whereby employees can share

State of the union

Continued from page 1

with the perfect prize at the bottom. It means we have more friends in Congress than we had; it means we can get legislation to the House and Senate floors for a vote we couldn’t previously obtain. And that is where we come in.

“Brothers and sisters, as your vote was important last Election Day, your PAC contributions and your telephone calls and e-mails to Congress are especially important now,” Thompson said. “We may not get all we want in a rail-safety bill, but we will do much better than we could have when our enemies controlled Congress.”

“And if this bargaining round with the railroads goes to a PEB, we are better prepared politically – and the carriers know it. We also have on our side this time many rail captive shippers who are supporting our safety concerns over limbo time,” Thompson said.

“Another important issue we are pursuing in Congress is protections for the holder of a commercial driver’s license (CDL),” Thompson said. “The jobs of our members are threatened by an existing law that could cause them to lose their CDL because of a minor infraction when driving their personal vehicle. We must get that law changed.”

As for Amtrak, Thompson related how the UTU has been negotiating almost eight years in an attempt to secure an equitable new contract, reasonable pay and preservation of the assistant conductor position that Amtrak seeks to eliminate.

“The safety and security of Amtrak passengers demands that there be no elimination of the assistant conductor,” Thompson said. “We will continue the fight to get Amtrak to do what is right.”

As for UTU finances, Thompson said the UTU has cut its debt free as a result of cost controls and the $2 dues increase. But because the quadrennial convention will cost some $7 million, “all our gains of the recent past will be spent before September,” Thompson said. “So we will have to start rebuilding again after the convention.”

As for SMART, Thompson said it had been “turned around” and that the SMART merger would open a vast new pool of potential policyholders, assuring financial security for UTU IA “well into the future.”

Thompson warned that because of carrier harassment and intimidation of employees, and the imposition of longer and more harsh discipline, the UTU’s Discipline Income Protection Plan has suffered significant increases in claims. DIP’s competitors are also struggling because of labor’s success in getting better deals. “Unions are going to have to be made and we are considering options.”

SMART merger

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The UTUIA will remain autonomous within SMART, and have opened to it a vast new pool of potential policyholders, allowing the UTUIA to expand.

UTU Assistant President Rick Mareau said that UTU members “will benefit from the SMWIAs organizing expertise and strength.”

The UTUIA traditionally spends some 40 percent of its receipts on organizing, and intends to commence organizing unorganized shortline railroads, bus properties and airlines.

Sullivan says his special bond with the UTUIA, as he is also president of the Eugene V. Debs Foundation. Debs helped to organize one UTU predecessor union and was an officer of another.

Debs first advanced the theory of union solidarity, craft autonomy and job protection – objectives that continue to be the UTU’s guiding principles. Debs counseled that when labor embraces the power of solidarity, “it can demand and command.”

The SMWIAs, representing members of the nation’s building trades, production workers and rail and shipyard employees, traces its roots to 1887, with rail shop workers having affiliated with the SMWIA early in the 20th century.

In solidarity, SMWIAs will represent its members with clarity of vision, honesty of intent, and oneness of purpose,” Thompson said.

The UTU is aimed at having four pilot projects in place by Sept. 30.

“As a result of the BNSFs being booted from this program for its lack of commitment to safety, it is now at greater risk for damage awards in accidents,” Thompson said. “And this demonstrates that they have greater priorities beyond safe operation,” UTU International President Paul Thompson said.

Mistakes reported to the FRA may be as major as misaligned rail switches or as minor as requiring workers to lift too much weight.

The reporting program is modeled on successful efforts in aviation and in other industries overseas, the FRA spokesperson Warren Plateau told Bloomberg that the agency has received an average of one to two tips daily since the program began Feb. 1.

UTU International President Paul Thompson said the UTU has attended every meeting initiated by the FRA on the close-call project and is saddened by BNSFs lack of commitment to the program.

SMWIAs Sullivan thanks UTU members for helping Debs’ dream come true

All of us at the Sheet Metal Workers International Association (SMWIA) are encouraged by your decision to ratify our merger, creating the International Association of Sheet Metal, Air, Rail and Transportation (SMART) Workers.

Whether we are sheet metal, production, air, bus operator, bus mechanic, freight railroad, Amtrak, transit, commuter or shipyard workers, we are now one. Our number-one task is to move to an integrated union in which there is a shared future, shared responsibilities, shared prosperity, and, most importantly, shared values – a partnership that builds on our common interests.

Let me commend your officers, particularly your International President Paul Thompson, for their dedication and cooperation in negotiating a merger that paid due diligence to the interests of all of our respective members. That effort, now successfully endorsed by your ratification vote, will accrue significant benefits to our new union as we work to assure job security, fair wages, improved benefits, proper work rules and workplace safety.

On the legislative front, I see no equal to the team that will take our causes and issues to the Congress, state legislatures, local governments, and federal and state agencies.

We also stand ready to share our expertise in training resources and our experience in organizing the unorganized. In turn, we will learn much from your vast experience at the national level in industry negotiations. It is a win/win situation for both of our organizations.

I speak for every member of this great International when we say, “Welcome and all aboard for the ride of our lives as believers in the principles and passion of Eugene V. Debs.”

SMART, and have opened to it a vast new pool of potential policyholders, allowing the UTUIA to expand.

The UTUIA will remain autonomous within SMART, and have opened to it a vast new pool of potential policyholders, allowing the UTUIA to expand.

Trumka

Continued from back cover

Washington. We have momentum on our side. We are organizing 30,000 new workers every week because they want a voice.

“The average CEO in America earns more before noon on Jan. 1 than the lowest paid workers earn all year working 40-hour weeks,” Trumka said. Meanwhile, “45 million people, or 15 percent of all American families, have no health insurance.”

The way for working families to fight their way out of that box “is through increased membership recruitment and political action,” Trumka said.

“George Bush showed us how to reward suppliers by putting hard-nosed business executives and conservative government-wreckers top to bottom in every federal agency,” Trumka said. “We need a new president who will do exactly the opposite, and replace the Bush appointees with trade unionists and our progressive allies – women and men who will repair the damage, rebuild our government and restore our international reputation.

“We need a new President of the United States who is just as liberal, just as compassionate, just as hard-working and just as unleashful as members of our unions,” Trumka said. “We can do it – and we must do it, because we value our love of our country and because of our solidarity and our loyalty to each other.”
UTU policy concerning fees objects


Members on T&M&O ratify new contract

Laidlaw to equip school buses with GPS

August/September 2007 UTU News

1. Any person covered by a UTU union shop or agency shop agreement in the United States who elects to be a non-member has the right to withdraw his or her consent to collective bargaining, contract administration, activities of the other activities governed by collective bargaining. Each non-member who objects shall pay the reduced fees. The reduced fees must be paid by the objector. Such appeal must be made by sending a letter to the International General Secretary/Treasurer postmarked no later than thirty (30) days after issuance of the independent referee's report. 7. After the close of the appeals period, the International General Secretary/Treasurer shall provide a list of appellants to the American Arbitration Association (AAA). All appeals shall be consolidated. The AAA shall appoint an arbitrator from a special panel maintained by the AAA for the purpose of these arbitrations. The AAA shall inform the International General Secretary/Treasurer and the appellant of the arbitrator selected. 8. The arbitration shall commence by October 1 or as soon thereafter as the AAA can schedule the arbitration. The arbitrator shall have complete and exclusive procedural powers affecting the arbitration in order to fulfill the need for an independent and expedited arbitrator.
This Month’s Winning Photo:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

This month’s winning photograph was taken by Adam Vester, a CSX conductor and member of Local 1363 in Buffalo, N.Y. “This 15-second time exposure reveals two brand new BNSF locomotives slowly clearing CP 421 in Depew, N.Y., as a fast intermodal train thunders by on track 2. All we see of the passing locomotive is its brilliant high-beam lights,” Vester said.

Trumka: Solidarity SMART

PITTSBURGH – Attention Teamsters and your locally owned BLET subsidiary: Stop your raiding of UTU jobs because the AFL-CIO and its 55 member unions representing 10 million working families are watching and growing increasingly displeased.

That was the thrust of a simple, pointed and up-front message delivered July 16 by AFL-CIO Secretary/Treasurer Rich Trumka as he spoke to some 900 UTU members attending their eastern regional meeting here.

Trumka also urged ratification of the proposed UTU-SMWIA merger creating the International Association of Sheet Metal, Air, Rail and Transportation (SMART) Workers.

Said Trumka to the roar of sustained applause: “I’ve been involved, President (John) Sweeney has been involved, and we think this merger is the key to defeating what is nothing more than common raiding of UTU jobs by organizations outside the AFL-CIO who apparently don’t have the capability or the inclination to get out and organize workers who don’t already have a union.

“We guarantee,” Trumka said, speaking of the AFL-CIO, “that we will be there today, tomorrow and the next day to stop all this nonsense.

“Combining memberships for more power in the yards and in the streets is SMART,” Trumka said. “Combining financial resources so you can fight harder in the courts and corporate suites is SMART.

“And creating new bonds of brotherhood and sisterhood so you can stand up against greedy forces that are ripping at our labor movement is more than ordinary SMART – it is solidarity SMART – and every union in the AFL-CIO is standing with you in that solidarity,” Trumka said.

Trumka also urged continued political activism on the part of trade unionists. “On Election Day 2006, we were one of every four voters at the polls, and union member voters went 75 percent for our endorsed candidates,” Trumka said.

“Because union members refused to stay on the sidelines, we took back control of the House of Representatives and the Senate. We also took back important governorships and state legislatures, and we passed minimum wage ballot initiatives in six states,” he said.

“Now, for the first time in seven years, working families and their unions have some real influence again in

Continued on page 10

Inside this issue of the UTU News:

Conductor Mike Delahunty helps train Amtrak workers. See page 2.

Local 759’s Tony Ortiz keeps N.J. commuters rolling. See page 3.

Photos from the Kansas City, Pittsburgh regionals. Pages 6 and 7.

James Reilly Jr. remembers the “silent service.” See page 8.