Re-election of Obama, Biden a victory for working families

Working families realize that they cannot match the political contributions of corporations and other anti-worker forces. That is what made the re-election of Barack Obama and Joe Biden so special: it was the triumph of common sense over dollars and cents.

“In this election, corporations and special interests contributed hundreds of millions of dollars in support of conservative candidates who oppose collective bargaining rights and want to privatize Medicare and Social Security and Railroad Retirement benefits to the risks of the stock market so they might eliminate our defined benefit pensions,” UTU National Legislative Director James Stem said.

“Their massive contributions were for naught, because, in our democracy, it is the power of the ballot box that determines elections – and union members are the most loyal and hardworking of all those casting ballots for their candidates.”

“T he retirem ent of P aul Tibbit w ill be felt throughout the U T U , as his assistance to general committees in negotiating contracts and successfully pursuing grievances has earned him deep respect from all who have benefited from his expertise and advice,” Futhey said.

Thompson to retire as GS&T Dec. 31

Kim Thompson, general secretary & treasurer of the UTU International and the UTU Insurance Association since 2008, will retire Dec. 31.

The UTU Board of Directors has elected International Vice President Delbert Strunk to succeed Thompson Jan. 1. Strunk will retain his position as a UTU International vice president.

Also, International Vice President Paul Tibbit will retire Dec. 1, but the UTU board has not yet elected a successor.

UTU International President Mike Futhey praised Thompson as “one of the most dedicated union officers I have had the honor and privilege to work with. Kim’s stewardship of UTU and UTUIA finances is a principal reason both organizations have meaningfully improved their bottom lines in spite of this lengthy economic downturn.

“Delbert Strunk is one of the most loyal and hardworking of International officers,” Futhey said. “His experience at all levels and facets of this organization will ensure a seamless transition.

UTU Executive Board has two new members

Phil Craig, vice general chairperson of BNSF Railway GO 393 and a member of Local 331, Temple, Texas, was elected by the UTU Board of Directors to the position of alternate to the UTU Executive Board.

Chad Adams, general chairperson of BNSF Railway GO 393 and a member of Local 331, Temple, Texas, has been elevated by the UTU Board of Directors to the UTU Executive Board as a result of the retirement of George Millward. Craig formerly had served as an alternate to the board.

As the initial SMART Transportation Division convention will be held in 2014 – one year earlier than a UTU quadrennial convention that no longer will take place owing to the merger – plus a second SMART convention, UTU delegates are being asked to approve a $1 monthly UTU International dues increase to be deposited into the convention fund.

The increase, if approved, will become effective Feb. 1, 2013.

Delegates will be participating in two conventions in 2014: the SMART Transportation Division convention and the initial SMART convention.

In a letter to delegates, UTU International President Mike Futhey said: “Not only will the time between the 2011 UTU convention and these conventions be reduced from the usual four year period, delegates will be participating in two separate conventions in 2014.

“Obviously, the total expenses are expected to increase substantially and available funds will be insufficient due to the shortened time period.

“As a result, the UTU Board of Directors voted to present to the delegates the $1 dues increase to be placed in the convention fund. The UTU board said it is their recommendation to adopt the needed increase, assuring your voice will be heard.”

Delegates have until Nov. 30 to return their ballots.
Local 32, Glendale, Calif.

UTU-represented engineers from Local 1846 at West Point Colton, Calif., have transferred to Local 32 and have formed a new local committee of adjustment, Local Chairperson Tim Baccari reports. Baccari now serves as local chairperson of LCA 887A, and Ryan Williams serves as the secretary of the new local committee of adjustment.

Local 240, Los Angeles

The monthly meeting time and place for this local's December meeting has changed, according to Local Chairperson Harry J. Garvin Jr. The meeting will be held at Oritz's Diner at 7780 E. Slauson Ave. in Los Angeles off of 5 FWY between 710 FWY and 605 FWY, Dec. 12 at 7 p.m. The dinner's telephone number is (323) 726-0380. A new permanent meeting location will be discussed.

Local 243, Fort Worth, Texas

Member Steve Cline informs his fellow brothers and sisters that this Union Pacific local's website address has changed to www.utu243.org. Cline was recently appointed the local's new webmaster.

Local 587, Greenfield, Mass.

Families of the members represented by this local chartered a new lodge of the Auxiliary of the UTU last month at North Adams, Mass., named Mohawk Trails Lodge 587, according to Local Chairperson James Falandes. Dawn Falandes was elected president of the lodge, which will hold meetings on the second Saturday of the month. Contact Falandes for more information at jfalandes@roadrunner.com.

Local 653, Blue Island, Ill.

Family and friends of former member Ray Keane will be holding a benefit March 3, 2013, on his behalf, with proceeds going to offset his medical and long-term care expenses, according to Illinois Legislative Board Chairperson John O'Brien. Keane, a former Illinois Central and Metra conductor, has been diagnosed with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), also known as Lou Gehrig's disease. Since receiving his juris doctor in 2004, he has been working as an attorney with UTU-designated legal counsel in Chicago. Donations can be sent to Caring for Keane, c/o Archer Bank, 3415 W. 111th St., Chicago, IL 60655, or visit www.caringforkeane.com for online donations and further information.

Local 762, Montgomery, Ala.

Ryan Pullen retired after 40 years on Atlanta & West Point Railroad, a CSX subdivision. He was elected as general chairperson of GO 025 in November 1982, the only office he ever held in the UTU. “I would like to thank God for all that He has done for me and would also like to thank the International for all the help provided over the last 50 years. Also, I would like to thank all of my members for allowing me to be a part of their lives as general chairperson,” Pullen said.

Locals 807, 1800, Tucson, Ariz.

Members from UTU Locals 807 and 1800 in Tucson in honor of the former member Ray Keane. A new local lodge of the Auxiliary of the UTU was chartered last month at North Adams, Mass., named Mohawk Trails Lodge 587, according to Local Chairperson Tim Baccari reports. Baccari now serves as local chairperson of LCA 887A, and Ryan Williams serves as the secretary of the new local committee of adjustment. Members of the local held their second meeting Nov. 8 at Twelve Restaurant, located at 1224 N. Atlantic Blvd. in Alhambra. Baccari said the local has also established a new website at www.local32westandeast.com.

Awareness’ makes member the three million-mile man

Driving from New York City to Los Angeles (1,293 miles without a fender bender) is a pretty decent testimony to one’s driving ability. Doing it in a charter bus full of passengers, in all kinds of weather conditions, makes that record even more exceptional. But that is what Adirondack, Pine Hill and New York Trailways bus operator Chuck Pona has done. Sort of.

A member of Local 192 at Albany, N.Y., Pona was recognized by the company, his peers and others at a Trailways’ safety awards dinner this past summer. He was presented with a plaque in recognition of his three million miles on the road without a chargeable accident.

A UTU member and bus operator since 1984, Pona also received a plaque from Local 586, a commendation from New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo and numerous other mementos.

For all those years, he has operated a Trailways’ bus throughout the state of New York and in Canada. He drove a tour bus into Canada for 17 years, then over-the-road routes from Albany to Binghamton, N.Y., and Albany to New York City.

At the time of the presentation at the Century House in Latham, N.Y., Pona had 3,067,370 miles on the company books.

‘Chuck Pona personifies what everyone expects when they ride with Adirondack Trailways. He is neatly dressed, speaks to everyone with a courteous greeting and above all, he is an especially safe and considerate driver. We all hope that Chuck stays around for another million or two,” said Bill Dederick, Trailways executive assistant to the vice president.

While other drivers were honored at the event, Pona was the one to get the attention.

“I was really befuddled. I was not expecting this. I received a lot of articles of recognition, but the leather jacket from Motorcoach Industries really made my night,” Pona said.

“An awareness of what’s happening around him. In today’s world, with texting and cell phones and all the new technology, you really have to be aware. I have a better view of things and I see what’s going on. I see trucks on their computers, too. You have to be aware every second. I’m always learning something new, every day.”

His wife Karen’s illness is part of what keeps Pona going. “Unfortunately, without health insurance, we couldn’t make it,” he said. “As long as I can go on healthwise, I’ll keep going. But if there comes a time when I might jeopardize someone, it’ll be time to call it quits.”

This Amtrak local has commissioned a plaque to hang in the crew room at Track 7 commemorating the deceased members of the local, according to President Donald Stemp. The Railway Credit Union in Mandan has volunteered to be the collection point for cash and material goods. Donations can be made to the Bob Olson Family Fund, Railway Credit Union, 1006 E. Main St., Mandan, ND 58554.

“Please consider helping Bob and his family through this tumultuous time by donating what you can. One hundred percent of the donations will go immediately to help the family,” Davis said.

Local 1813, West Colton, Calif.

President Donald Stemp and his local officials are meeting to discuss insurance needs. “Everyone gained something from the experience and we look forward to running around the U.S. again,” Stemp said.

Local 199, Creston, Iowa

Local Chairperson Ryan Williams reports. Hoepker retired out as a brakeman in Creston with Burlington Northern in 1973 and was graduated from Iowa State University in 1976. “Keith stayed in Creston his whole career,” Vaara said. “He was dependable and always had a smile on his face.”

Benjamin L. Vaara has been elected to a new term as general chairperson of Local 243, Fort Worth, Texas. He was elected as general chairperson of GO 025 in November 1982, the only office he ever held in the UTU. “I would like to thank God for all that He has done for me and would also like to thank the International for all the help provided over the last 50 years. Also, I would like to thank all of my members for allowing me to be a part of their lives as general chairperson,” Pullen said.

Local 199, Creston, Iowa

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Open enrollment for RR GA-23111 health plans

During the months of November and December 2012, UnitedHealthcare will hold an open enrollment under Group Policy GA-23111. During this period, any individual who is eligible for coverage under one of the GA-23111 plans can enroll and will be accepted for coverage without evidence of underwriting or requirement of good health. There are no limitations for pre-existing conditions.

Enrollment in November and December 2012 will be for coverage effective Jan. 1, 2013. Only those applicants whose completed enrollment form is postmarked in November or December 2012 will be considered for open enrollment. This open enrollment is being held for former railroad employees (and their dependents) who:

• Were previously or presently covered under any railroad health plan and were represented by a railroad labor organization, or
• Were members in accordance with the constitution or bylaws of one of the participating railroad labor organizations, when coverage under their applicable group health plan ended.

If someone you know meets these GA-23111 eligibility provisions, open enrollment provides an opportunity for them to become covered. Other eligible members of your family may also enroll if they are not currently covered. In addition, open enrollment under Plan F is available for railroad employees’ parents or parents-law who are eligible under Medicare.

Anyone interested in enrolling should call one of the following phone numbers to get additional information about these plans:

- For persons eligible for Medicare, call (800) 862-5678.
- For persons not eligible for Medicare, call (800) 842-5252.

You may also visit www.raildepot.com and click on “Retirement Center.”

Note: Each June 1 adjustments to the premium rates for all plans under GA-23111 may occur. Additionally, if you are enrolled in Plan B or C and a change in the premium amount you pay does occur, you will be allowed at that time to switch to a plan with a lower premium (Plan A or B).

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plan</th>
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<td>A</td>
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<td>B</td>
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<td>C</td>
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<td>E</td>
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<td>F</td>
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<td>Persons eligible for full Medicare coverage</td>
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Gary Railway members ratify six-year deal

UTU-represented yardmen, hostlers and yardmasters employed by Gary Railway, all members of Local 1383 at Gary, Ind., have ratified separate six-year agreements. The contracts provide for annual wage increases, lump-sum percentage back pay, improved bereavement leave, sickness/disability insurance and a reduced monthly health and welfare contribution.

Also included in enrollment is the Transrail insurance program. UTU International Vice President Dave Wier, who assisted with the negotiations, congratulated General Chairperson Cory Mayberry and Vice General Chairperson Kevin Wright and local officials for the agreement.

1200 EJ&E rail workers ratify new deals

UTU-represented yardmen and hosts employed by the Elgin, Joliet & Eastern Railroad have ratified separate six-year agreements by overwhelming majorities.

The new agreements provide for annual wage increases and back pay; established 401(k) retirement plans, disability insurance and prior rights; increase life insurance, and place those members under the national railroad health and welfare plan that includes dental and vision coverage and provides for early retirement major medical coverage.

UTU International Vice President Dave Wier, who assisted with the negotiations, congratulated General Chairperson Cory Mayberry and Vice General Chairpersons Kevin Wright and Tommy Collins (all GO 329) for “their dedication to the membership in negotiating and explaining contracts that provide for improvements in wages and benefits and deliver employee security and parity.”

In September, UTU-represented brakemen, conductors and yardmen employed by Elgin, Joliet & Eastern Railroad ratified a new agreement that also was negotiated with the assistance of Wier.

Metra conductors subdue would-be chief

BNSF Railway passenger conductor Anthony Davis, a member of Local 171, Aurora, Ill.,广播ed a would-be thief. As soon as the passenger touched him, Davis grabbed his arm. A fight ensued. The tussle was observed from several cars away by Dalberts, who rushed to Davis’ aid. With the assistance of two more BNSF employees who were working nearby, the attacker was held until police arrived.

The attacker faces “aggravated” charges because the victim was a transit employee on duty. Illinois law was recently amended, with the support of the UTU, to make any assault on an employee of a public transit system on public transit property a felony.

Illinois State Legislative Director Bob Guy told the Tribune that railroaders of different crafts and the UTU’s shortline outreach program.

2013 railroad paid holiday schedule

Rail employees working under the national agreement between the UTU and the National Carriers’ Conference Committee (NCCC) will receive 11 paid holidays in 2013. They are:

- New Year’s Day, Tuesday, Jan. 1
- President’s Day, Monday, Feb. 18
- Good Friday, Friday, March 29
- Memorial Day, Monday, May 27
- Independence Day, Thursday, July 4
- Labor Day, Monday, Sept. 2
- Thanksgiving Day, Thursday, Nov. 28
- Day after Thanksgiving, Friday, Nov. 29
- Christmas Eve, Tuesday, Dec. 24
- Christmas Day, Wednesday, Dec. 25
- New Year’s Eve, Tuesday, Dec. 31

www.utu.org / www.utuia.org
No place for drugs, alcohol in workplace

We all know that drug and alcohol use can have a negative impact on users, fellow employees and the transportation industry.

That said, it must be emphasized that SMART members are to be commended for setting a compliance standard that places our air-line, bus and rail members as leaders, second to none, in striving to achieve the drug- and alcohol-free workplace that is essential to the safe and effective operation of our nation’s trains, planes and buses.

Data show that our members take very seriously the responsibilities of their employment – the incident-free transport of passengers and freight and the safety of co-workers and the public with whom we interact on a daily basis.

Our members second to none in compliance with alcohol and drug regulations

We do, however, see occasional spikes that are cause for concern. Although infrequent, our attention is too often drawn to the needs of a member who has failed a drug or alcohol test or who is in need of assistance due to personal struggles with substance abuse.

Sometimes it is an experienced worker who made an error in judgment. Other times, it is a newly hired employee who may be coping with personal issues. Longer-term employees may remember a time, just like in society as a whole, that tolerances were different than they are today. But society has moved on, and so has our industry. There is no place in today’s transportation business for drug or alcohol use in violation of federal regulations or company policy.

We are all aware of the challenges we face daily – from unpredictable work requirements and unscheduled spikes that are cause for concern. We are all aware of the challenges we face daily – from unpredictable work requirements and unscheduled spikes that are cause for concern.

As OS&G, it is necessary to utilize general oversight in day-to-day operations of the UTU offices, and to counsel with the International president on matters of finance and policy. In this cooperative atmosphere, the goals of the organization are accomplished while also ensuring transparency of expenditures. The UTU has demonstrated the expertise and value of its information technology and accounting departments with knowledge and skills that can reap generous savings as operations are coordinated. It is expected that sharing existing resources will enable a more efficient and cost-effective operation for both.

Although not included in the merger, the UTU is recognized as being a significant partner to the UTU in assuring quality insurance products are available to its members. The combined operations enhance the viability of both organizations, and it is intended that this relationship will continue.

We have come a long way in five years, and as we get to know our new partners, we have the opportunity to help each other fulfill the goal of improving our members’ lives. We have to understand that we are temporary caretakers of this institution and must make choices in the best interest of our members. To do otherwise is inviting failure, and that is unacceptable.

UTU and UTU IA: Stronger than ever

DIPP assets, which greatly exceed the current benefit liability.

United Transportation Union Insurance Association (UTU IA) assets continue to grow and the surplus remains strong.

UTU employs a skilled staff that accounts for every dollar received in the interest of representing our members. Additionally, experts are engaged to advise in the allocation of UTU and UTU IA funds, which seek the greatest return permitted from conservative investments. The current policies that have produced lucrative, yet secure, results will be continued.

Security for drug or alcohol use in violation of federal regulations or company policy. We are all aware of the challenges we face daily – from unpredictable work requirements and unscheduled spikes that are cause for concern.
News from UTU State Legislative Boards

North Carolina
Assistant State Legislative Director Glenn Lamn, a member of Local 1129 at Raleigh, has retired.

Lamn started railroading on Seaboard Coast Line (now part of CSX) in 1972. He was elected local chairperson for engineers in 1982 and held a variety of offices in his local. He was elected secretary of the state legislative board in 2000 and served three terms as assistant state legislative director.

“I just want to say one thing to the working men and women: Work efficiently, follow the rules and, above all else, don’t let anything or anyone jeopardize your safety,” Lamn said.

“The members in North Carolina have benefited from his service to the UTU,” State Legislative Director Dickie Westbrook said. “As director, Glenn has always been at my side. They say a good leader surrounds himself with people that make him look good. Glenn has been that for me. I wish him the very best in his retirement. The UTU will miss his leadership.”

Missouri
State Legislative Director Kenny Menges reports that State Rep. John Rizzo, a Democrat who represents part of Jackson County (District 40) in the Missouri House of Representatives, attended the meeting of Local 1780, Kansas City, where he discussed issues of interest to UTU members and their families.

“Rep. Rizzo represents the district that encompasses the KCS yards in Kansas City,” Menges said. “He is a huge supporter of Amtrak and has helped us with our van legislation in the past two legislative sessions. We have always supported him with UTU PAC donations, and it is paying off for UTU members in the area.”

Local union treasurers sharpen skills at workshop

The UTU International hosted a local treasurers’ workshop, and many took advantage of the educational opportunity.

The class was conducted by UTU International auditors Mike Araujo and Bobby Brantley, with the assistance of Steve Noyes.

The group learned how to work their local billings, their tax responsibilities, and how to utilize WinSTABS and iLink. Representatives from the U.S. Department of Labor were also lectured on the rules and regulations that govern the UTU treasury system.

“We want to make sure that all our treasurers are up to date on the latest changes in the law,” Noyes said. “We want to make sure they are able to do their jobs efficiently and accurately.”

Bus Department
By Bonnie Morr, vice president bonniemorr@sbcglobal.net

Looking back, but moving ahead
As we approach year end, I wish everyone happy holidays and a healthy and prosperous new year.

During 2012, we have had wonderful success negotiating 11 new contracts, and others are in the negotiating process.

I could not be more proud of the negotiating and educational skills demonstrated by general chairpersons who protected our members, and efforts of our alternate vice presidents who assisted in some of the negotiations.

As we prepare for 2013, we face seven agreements due to expire next year.

Also during 2012, we organized several new properties and look forward to organizing more bus and transit properties in 2013.

Also on the positive side, public transit ridership has risen substantially as gasoline prices have increased.

Agencies nationwide are planning for even more riders in 2013, which will mean more public transit jobs.

Our National Legislative Office, with assistance from state legislative directors, will be working to educate lawmakers at the national, state and local levels on obtaining necessary funding for new equipment and routes.

Many localities already are tackling the challenge of finding new sources of public transit revenue in their communities. We can also count on the MAP-21 (Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century), which passed Congress in 2012 and was signed into law by President Obama. That law provided a new two-year federal funding stream for mass transit and means more jobs.

As we move forward in 2013 under the new banner of SMART, we will benefit by having a stronger voice in Congress and access to the SMWIA’s numerous training facilities throughout the United States.

As you plan for 2013, keep in mind our regional meetings (July 1-3 in Boston; July 29-31 in Anaheim, Calif.) that will feature workshops for local officers and members seeking to improve negotiating, organizing and grievance-handling skills.
The photography of UTU member Stephen Noyes

BNSF 6935 at Valley Center, Kan.: “I was up early in the morning; it was rainy and cool, around dawn, and I caught this northbound grain train going by the old grain elevator.”

DM&E conductor on point: “I was standing by some tracks in Rapid City, S.D. I like to get rail workers doing their jobs because I work on trains. I happened to catch this local switcher.”

NS 9156 evening train at Berea, Ohio: “I was visiting the UTU International in Cleveland and after work I went out and found these tracks. You want to take photos at sunset or sunrise; that’s the best time.”

CSX 7754 at Waverly, Mo.: “I was out driving around and caught this train. It’s an eastbound from Kansas City, Mo., to St Louis on the River Subdivision at Waverly. This line follows the Missouri River from Kansas City to Jefferson City, Mo., where it combines with the Sedalia Subdivision.”

Sleepy Eye, Minn.: “These are DM&E gondolas on the siding in front of a grain elevator on a CP line. I liked the writing on the elevator with the colors of the cars.”

Tankers at Lashburn, Sask.: “I liked the colors and the style of these cars. They were getting loaded to be loaded at the elevator. I liked the contrast of the colors.”

Off to pick up grain cars: “This was an old SP engine rebadged as TP&W. The train was coming into Remington, Ind. I liked the composition with the elevator in the back.”

UTU member Stephen Noyes calls his photography hobby “ambush photography.” Now a full-time auditor and software developer for the UTU International, Noyes travels all over the nation and, when he’s not working, you can generally find him stalking out the best place in town to take a railroad photo.

Noyes was born in Kansas City, Mo., in 1948 and attended Kansas University from 1967 to 1971. He joined Santa Fe Railroad (now part of BNSF Railway) in 1967 as a brakeman. He joined Local 477 at Newton, Kan., where he served as local treasurer from 1981 to 1989.

He transferred to Amtrak in 1987 and worked as a conductor until 2004, when he became a full-time UTU International auditor.

His love of photography started in 1964, when he worked for a newspaper as a photojournalist and stringer for Associated Press.

Noyes now lives in Lee’s Summit, Mo., and has two daughters and a granddaughter. The captions below the photos are Stephen’s own words.

Herzog rock train: “I caught this westbound empty rock train outside of Edmonton, Alberta, headed for Jasper, Alberta. It was about 3 p.m. I was standing up on a bridge. I was driving ahead of the train so I pulled over.”

CP 5872 leaving Dubuque, Iowa: “This was a CP local running along the Mississippi River. It was entering the main track under throttle.”

Grain elevator on BNSF transcontinental line at Norborne, Mo.: “This was taken on the BNSF main line between Chicago and Los Angeles. I like old grain elevators. I like the older buildings, for the history.”

Number 3 arrives at Kansas City, Mo.: “This was an Amtrak train from Chicago, bound for Los Angeles. The engineer going off duty was talking with the relieving engineer. It was about 1 a.m.”

Passing train in Texas: “This was taken east of Amarillo, at a control point. The conductor was watching a passing train for defects. It was about 5:30 in the morning on a summer day.”

Passing Metro train: “This was taken as a Metro station in the District of Columbia. It was a slow exposure. I was trying to get the light and the motion. I liked the nice architectural detail and structure.”

Paris, Ill., grain switching: “I liked the colors and composition of this CSX train. Color is so important. And light. This photo had the right combination of both.”

Winter run Minnesota: “This is a Minneapolis-bound UP train, running on the northsouth main line that runs from Mason City, Iowa, to Minneapolis. It was taken near Albert Lea, Minn. It was about 8 a.m. I picked out a point on the curve and waited.”

Little red engine: “This engine is used by the grain elevator company to help load and build grain trains for the railroad to pick up. This was at the MFA elevator in Higginsville, Mo. Many elevators now have switch engines. I highlighted the red engine.”
Retiree works to keeps railroad history alive

He kept trains rolling while working, now John Hartmanstorfer keeps railroad history alive while retired.

Hartmanstorfer, of Local 322 in Milwaukee, volunteers at a local railroad museum in Caledonia, Wis.

He started railroadng in 1956 as a switchman on Chicago & North Western, now part of Union Pacific.

He served the members of his local for many years as secretary.

After retiring 12 years ago, Hartmanstorfer started helping out at the museum, which features a 1906 Milwaukee Road depot and cabooses, as well as a 1927 Lake Superior & Ishpeming caboose.

The museum also features uniforms from passenger-train conductors, pocket watches, switch keys, uniform buttons, railroad tools and timetables.

“THe depot was moved from Sturdivant, Wis., to the park years ago, and it needed a ton of work,” he said. “It was a unique depot because it served at a diamond, so it accommodated passengers from two different directions.

“I dress as an old-time conductor with bib overalls, striped shirt and kerchief, and talk about the old days on the railroad,” he said. “We also have a group of old railroaders who go to nursing homes, schools, wherever we can get 15 people or more, to talk about railroadng.”

“What else can you do when you’re my age, besides give blood every two months?” he said. “I have given 66 pints since I retired. It all keeps me kind of busy.”

Former ATS gc Merlyn Hicks dies

Retired UTU General Chairperson Merlyn Hicks, 85, died Sept. 15 in Arkansas City, Kan.

A U.S. Marine Corps veteran of World War II, Hicks was employed by the former Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railway (now BNSF) for almost 30 years before his election as secretary to Santa Fe General Committee of Adjustment 009 (Kansas City).

He was elected general chairperson in 1980 and retired in 1991. Hicks also served as a delegate, representing Local 464, Arkansas City.

Hicks was preceded in death by his wife, Charline, and is survived by two children and numerous grandchildren.

A memorial in his name has been established with St. Jude’s Children’s Hospital, 262 Danny Thomas Place, Memphis, TN 38105.

The UTU Alumni Association’s Travelers’ Club is offering a “Country Roads Tour of Ireland.”

Travelers will depart May 19 and return May 31, 2013.

This is a deluxe, 40-seat motorcoach tour with stops in Dublin, Belfast, Carrickfergus, Londonderry, Belfort, Galway, Connemara, Limerick, Killarney, Dingle Peninsula, Galway and Killarney.

The package includes 11 full breakfasts, one celebration dinner and four three-course evening meals.

Participants will visit the Custom House in Dublin, the Belfast Toytery Center, the Titanic Museum, and a variety of castles, cathedrals and other attractions.

The cost is $2599.00 per person/double occupancy, plus air fare. If you pay in full by Dec. 1, 2012, you can save 10 percent.

All arrangements are being handled by Landfall Travel, the Alumni Association’s designated travel provider.

For more information call (800) 835-9233, or see the Alumni Association page at www.landfalltravel.com. You do not need to be a member of the Alumni Association to take advantage of this offer.
Term life insurance

Simple, affordable protection from UTUIA

Term insurance is the most straightforward form of protection. You generally pay premiums on a monthly or annual basis and your family is protected for that “term.” UTUIA offers a variety of term products to fit your needs, time frame and budget.

Term life insurance is sold to provide temporary protection. The benefit is payable only if the policyholder dies within a specified period of time.

People use temporary life insurance as a means of enhancing their permanent life insurance protection. It provides additional life insurance protection during their working years to ensure the lifestyle of their dependents in the event of their untimely death, to cover certain indebtedness, such as a home mortgage, or to provide funds for a college education for a dependent.

Term life insurance offers temporary protection and comes with a guaranteed conversion privilege that allows you to convert your term plan to a whole life plan without evidence of insurability. This offers you great flexibility should your insurance needs change over time.

UTUIA can provide the peace of mind you seek. Contact UTUIA via email at “sales@utui.org” or by telephone toll free at (800) 558-8842, or mail the coupon below.

Send me more information, please

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

Please print

Full name ______________________________ Date of birth ____

Address ____________________________ City __________ State ______ Zip ______

Telephone number with area code ______ Sex: □ Male □ Female

Complete and mail to: UTUIA Sales Dept., 24950 Country Club Blvd., Suite 340, North Olmsted, OH 44070-5333

Railroad Retirement benefits to rise in January

Most Railroad Retirement annuities, like Social Security benefits, are scheduled to increase in January 2013 on the basis of the rise in the Consumer Price Index (CPI) from the third quarter of 2011 to the corresponding period of the current year.

UTU establishes fund for hurricane victims

The UTU has established a fund to aid UTU members and their families who were victims of Hurricane Sandy.

“UTU members can collectively do our part by helping our brothers and sisters as we have in past disasters,” UTU International President Mike Futhey said. “We encourage all UTU members, locals, general committees, and state legislative boards to give generously to help our brothers and sisters in need.”

The UTU disaster relief account was established in 2005 to aid our brothers and sisters in the wake of Hurricane Katrina, and has retained that identity as a reminder that we can all do something to lessen the pain and suffering of others.

Contributions should be sent to: Hurricane Katrina Relief Fund, United Transportation Union, Attn: Cheryl Sneed, Suite 340, 24950 Country Club Blvd., North Olmsted, OH 44070-5333.

Cost-of-living increases are calculated in both the Tier I and Tier II benefits included in a Railroad Retirement annuity. Tier I benefits, like Social Security benefits, will increase by 1.7 percent, which is the percentage of the CPI rise. Tier II benefits will increase by 0.6 percent, which is 32.5 percent of the CPI rise. The vested dual benefit payments and supplemental annuities also paid by the Railroad Retirement Board (RRB) are not adjusted for the CPI rise.

In January 2013, the average regular Railroad Retirement employee annuity will increase $32 a month to $2,386 and the average of combined benefits for an employee and spouse will increase $49 a month to $5,417. For those aged widow(er)s eligible for an increase, the average annuity will increase $19 a month to $1,249.

However, widow(er)s whose annuities are being paid under the Railroad Retirement and Survivors’ Improvement Act of 2001 will not receive annual cost-of-living adjustments until their annuity amount is exceeded by the amount that would have been paid under prior law, counting all interim cost-of-living increases otherwise payable. About 35 percent of the widow(er)s on the RRB’s rolls are being paid under the 2001 law.

For most beneficiaries covered by Medicare, the standard Part B premium generally deducted from monthly benefits is likely to increase from the 2012 amount, with the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services expected to announce the 2013 premium amounts in the coming weeks.

AT&T offers discounts on cellphone service

Active and retired UTU members are entitled to a 15 percent discount on select cellphone rate plans and features from AT&T.

AT&T has business agreements with hundreds of unions, so it is able to offer substantial savings on their wireless service.

AT&T offers:

• 15 percent monthly service discount on qualified charges;

• Discounts on select wireless devices;

• You can keep your unused minutes month-to-month with Rollover®, only from AT&T;

• AT&T says it offers the best global coverage worldwide, with the most phones that work in the most countries;

• You can add a line for only $9.99.

Not only will you be saving, you’ll be supporting union workers and their families. AT&T is the only unionized major U.S. wireless provider with one of the largest full-time union workforces of any company in America. Communications Workers of America (CWA) represents some 40,000 AT&T Mobility employees.

Switching to AT&T is easy; you can even keep your current cellphone number.

Visit www.att.com/wireless/unionmembers to sign up. Or, to find the AT&T store closest to you, visit www.att.com/find-a-store. Mention code: 3508840.

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Most UTU members take voting pretty seriously. Some more than others.
The officers and members of Local 202 in Denver fall into the latter group, and by Colorado State Legislative Director and Local Legislative Rep. Carl Smith’s measure, the local’s voter registration drive was a resounding success. Using iPads on loan from the Colorado AFL-CIO, the officers and local leaders reached out to more than 200 UP and BNSF employees from all crafts in their respective railyards.

“We gave them access to iPads so they could check their status,” Smith said. “If you did not vote in the 2010 election, you were automatically made inactive, so this was an opportunity for these people to change their status,” Smith said.

“By my figures, almost 100 railroaders were registered to vote, but had voter status changed from inactive to active. Through the website, they were able to change their status and request permanent absentee ballots.”

“We reached across union and craft lines by offering the use of the iPads to members of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen, the railroad carmen, maintenance-of-way employees, clerks and yardmasters, as well as the contract crew transport employees.”

“We were also able to help our UTU brothers from Local’s 201, 204 and 945, as Denver is the away-from-home terminal for these members,” Smith said.

Smith said this was also an opportunity to collect email addresses to contact members about union business, local meetings and Colorado State Legislative Board news.

“I thank all the officers of Local 202 and all the local chairpersons from the UP and BNSF for their hard work, dedication and sacrifice to make this event successful.”

“I also thank the members of Local 202 who passed the motion to make this event possible and supported it financially. The officers include President Michael Seliquini, Vice President Kevin Feller, Secretary Jeff Maxfield, Treasurer Don Wood and Local Chairpersons Brent Conlin, Michael Pierce, Scott DeAngelis, Tom Mason, Michael Harbin, Marlin Milligan and Cullen Kemper,” Smith said.

Local 311’s PAC-Man

Wisconsin State Legislative Director Craig Peachy reports that Hauser has been working tirelessly over the past year signing up new contributors to UTU PAC, the union’s political action committee.

“Personally, I like to call Rick ‘PAC-Man,’” Peachy said. “He is the real thing when it comes to speaking on behalf of UTU PAC and our union. Just take a look at Local 311’s PAC pledges over the last few months,” Peachy wrote in a memo to the National Legislative Director John Rice.

But it is not just Local 311 members that are 20-year Navy veteran Hauser is signing up.

Peachy said he recently invited Hauser to speak to employees at Local 1293’s new hiring meeting because he talks to people and gets his message across directly to the importance of UTU PAC pledges.

Hauer has had his double its UTU PAC contributions over the last few months.

“Union members are becoming an endangered species. As an individual, I can’t give the amounts to election campaigns as Matt Rose or a Hunter Harrison can give. But if we band together, if we play the game by the rules, we can make a difference.”

“When we give to our UTU PAC fund, we are giving to people who protect our paychecks, our pensions, FELA. I’m grateful to our members. They are the ones stepping up to the plate.”

“I wish I could clone this guy,” Peachy said, “and I plan to request his presence at future UTU PAC drives. I am very proud to have Brother Hauser as my Smart Brother.”

By using a provider where a special discount arrangement exists, the amount of the eligible expense that is your responsibility will generally be less than if a non-preferred provider is used. This is because the eligible expense will not be subject to a usual, customary and reasonable charge determination for a particular service in a particular ZIP code area. The covered charge will be based on the discounted charge, after your calendar year deductible is satisfied, leaving you with a lower out-of-pocket expense. Your medical ID card shows if you are entitled to these discounts. If you are, you must make sure the provider sees your ID card and knows that you are covered under one of these discount programs.

For more information, you do not even need the online capability, call the phone number located on the back of your member ID card for assistance, or see www.utu.org for complete details.

Use of in-network providers important for care

The national railroad plans (“plan”) allow you to see any doctor in your plan administrator’s network, including specialists, without a referral. This means that you have the freedom to choose a physician or specialist with whom you agree to discount their charges.

“In Florida, the Republican governor and conservatives in the legislature cut the early voting period in half, resulting in tens of thousands of workers not being able to cast a vote.”

“We will also advance the application of new technology that helped us register hundreds of thousands of new voters, educate all registered voters as to the issues, and encourage them to go to the polls in battleground states,” Stem said.

“We brought a level of professionalism to our election communications with our members that had not previously been seen, and much credit goes to UTU Director of Political Action Don Mitchell, who coordinated our efforts with UTU state legislative directors, local meetings with officers, other unions, and other interest groups focused on the concerns of working families.”

“Considerable credit goes to UTU International President Mike Futyhy for actively participating in this process in addition to making the resources available for this effort,” Stem said.

“The effort included focusing on assuring our members and their families registered to vote, sharing absentee and early voting procedures, and using telephones and direct mail to deliver our message.”

“In Ohio, which was a key battleground state, 42 percent of voters cast early ballots, and the number of voters increased by almost 10 percent.”

“The bottom line is that we have broken the back of efforts to reduce access to care by privatize Medicare, turn Social Security into a bet on the stock market, and reduce Railroad Retirement benefits to the level of Social Security benefits,” Stem said.

“Our great country has many problems that need the full attention of our leaders, not just for our leaders immediately, including our national debt. The unfortunate attempt to lower the wages and benefits of workers by the wealthy conservatives failed.”

“Let’s hope that the words ‘cooperation’ and ‘compromise’ will no longer be considered dirty words.”

“In Mike Futyhy observed after viewing election results, ‘In football terms, we moved the chains forward. We will, together, continue to make forward progress.’”
Thompson retires

Continued from page 1

Thompson’s Executive Board in 1987, and served as board chairperson for eight years. 

In 1995, he was elected UTU International first alternate vice president for the South, and

NATIONAL'S EXECUTIVE BOARD. HE SERVED AS BOARD CHAIRPERSON FOR EIGHT YEARS.

elected to UTU International vice president in 1997.

He served as vice president until he was elected


“My impending retirement comes with mixed feelings,” Thompson said. “There is always another task to do. There is always someone in need of help. But I have learned that there is someone to step up as I once did and the time comes for them, just as it did for me.”

“I am indebted to Jim Oliver of Local 881, Monpellier, Ohio, a vice general chairperson who taught me that preparation fosters success. I am also thankful for Tom Dukerow, who taught me to take care of business and the rest will take care of itself. And I will forever be thankful to Mike Futhey for his leadership through the most challenging time faced by this organization.

“I am thankful for the love and support of my wife, Connie, and her sacrifices in following my dream and I look forward to our time being ours.”

Thompson and his wife, Connie, have five children and five grandchildren.

BNSF RAILWAY

BNSF reported a 22 percent increase in profit for the third quarter 2012 versus third quarter 2011, citing improved intermodal (trailers and containers on flat cars) and automotive traffic.

BNSF’s third quarter 2012 operating ratio of 68.3 percent was a significant improvement over the 71.7 percent for third quarter 2011. BNSF operates in 28 states and two Canadian provinces.

KANSAS CITY SOUTHERN

Kansas City Southern reported a 9.8 percent drop in profit for the third quarter 2012 versus third quarter 2011, even as carloads rose and operating ratio improved. The railroad cited as the reason an almost 70 percent higher tax bill in Mexico stemming from a rise in the value of the peso against the dollar and continuing rebuilding expenses two years after Hurricane Alex damaged rail facilities south of the border.

About half the railroads revenue flows from its operations in Mexico. KCSo’s third quarter 2012 operating ratio of 68.7 was a 2.6 percentage point improvement from third quarter 2011, and the best in company history. KCSo operates some 3,500 route miles in 10 states in the Central and South-Central U.S., as well as Kansas City Southern de Mexico, a primary Mexican rail line.

NORFOLK SOUTHERN

Norfolk Southern reported a 27 percent decline in profit for third quarter 2012 versus third quarter 2011, citing reductions in coal and merchandise volume. The slump in coal shipments has resulted in employee furloughs.

NSo’s third quarter 2012 operating ratio of 72.9 was a more than five percentage point increase over the third quarter 2011 operating ratio of 67.5.

Norfolk Southern operates some 20,200 route miles in 23 states and the District of Columbia.

UNION PACIFIC

Union Pacific profit rose 15 percent in third quarter 2012 compared with third quarter 2011. The railroad said price increases and more automotive and chemical shipments overcame a drop in coal loadings.

Union Pacific’s third quarter 2012 operating ratio of 66.6 percent was 2.5 percentage points better than third quarter 2011, and a 0.4 percent point improvement from the previous record set in the second quarter 2012.

Union Pacific operates some 32,000 route miles in 23 states in the western two-thirds of the U.S.

Operating ratio is a railroad’s operating expenses expressed as a percentage of operating revenue, and is considered by economists to be the basic measure of carrier profitability. The lower the operating ratio, the more efficient the railroad.

UTU needs your photos

The UTU International is seeking good railroad, bus and airline photos, taken by its members, for the annual calendar and other uses. High-resolution digital photographs should be emailed to "utunews@utu.org." Printed photographs should be mailed to UTU News, 24950 Country Club Blvd., Suite 340, North Olmsted, OH 44070.

Include the photographer’s name and local number, the name(s) of the person(s) in the photo (left to right) and any other information.

All photographs submitted become property of the UTU.
Photo of the month

This photo was taken by Norfolk Southern conductor Christopher Rinker, a member of Local 744, Lafayette, Ind. “These are two Norfolk Southern engines painted in the livery of Reading Railroad and Lehigh Valley Railroad, to commemorate NS’s 30th anniversary. They are pulling an empty coal train at Oakwood, Ohio,” Rinker said.

The Official Publication of the United Transportation Union

Obama win offers brighter future

By UTU International President Mike Futhey

For UTU members employed in the airline, rail and transit industries, the Obama/Biden victory and U.S. Senate election results translate to:

• More, and more secure, transportation jobs;
• More support to increase funding for public transit, Amtrak, and high-speed and higher-speed rail;
• Strengthened protections of collective bargaining rights and the right to organize the unorganized;
• Assurance of a safer workplace;
• Protection of Social Security, Railroad Retirement and Medicare programs as we know them;
• Retention of the Affordable Care Act’s provisions that allow children to remain on your health insurance policy until age 26, prohibit insurers from limiting maximum patient care payments to those with serious chronic illnesses, prohibit denial of coverage for pre-existing conditions, prohibit copays for certain preventive care procedures, and require insurance carriers to spend at least 80 percent of premiums on patient care.

Moreover, continued control of the U.S. Senate by labor-friendly Democrats better ensures that presidential nominations to federal regulatory agencies are more likely to be approved, and that anti-labor legislation exiting the House of Representa-