



BLET Auxiliary News

Working to bring about safer working conditions for Locomotive Engineers & Trainmen, educate spouses, and enhance the lifestyles of railroad employees and their families.

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Anita J. Caruso, President • Sereena Hogan, Vice President/National Legislative Representative • Lawana Poss, Secretary
Helen Brand, Treasurer • Gina Forman, 1st Vice President /National Outreach Coordinator • www.bletauxiliary.net

Auxiliary Executive Council Welcomes Newly Appointed National Officers

By Anita Caruso, National President

Please welcome our newest member to the Auxiliary Executive Council, National Secretary Lawana W. Poss. Sister Lawana is long-time member-at-large from Suwanee, Georgia. She has served as Alternate National Secretary since being elected at our National Auxiliary Convention on October 6, 2010. Sister Lawana is the Georgia State Legislative Representative and for the past two years has served as the Southeastern Meeting Association Auxiliary Secretary/Treasurer. Next year, she assumes the position of Southeastern Meeting Association Auxiliary Chairperson and we are thrilled to be able to work with her. Please drop her a line to give her your best wishes at lewp2007@bellsouth.net. The "Tidbits from Your Secretary" column will resume in our winter newsletter.



Lawana Poss



Susie Burrola

We are also pleased to welcome our new Alternate National Secretary Susie Burrola. Sister Susie originally joined the auxiliary as a member-at-large and was instrumental in planning and bringing to fruition our Nor Cal Auxiliary 39 in Stockton, California, in 2010. She has served as president of Auxiliary 39 since its inception. Susie was also a very important member of the planning and organizing committee for the 2013 IWC held in San Francisco, California, this summer (see story on Page 10). We welcome Sister Susie as a National Officer and know she will be a great help to Sister Lawana.

NEW FUNDRAISER - SEE DETAILS ON PAGE 5



Auxiliary President's Message - BY ANITA J. CARUSO

Much has transpired since our summer newsletter was published. I have been busy traveling around the country attending the four regional conventions. It might not seem like a hectic time, but these conventions were stacked starting June 23 and commencing August

29, 2013. Due to the fact that we are holding our National Auxiliary Convention in the fall of 2014, we held elections for Member-at-Large delegate at all four regional conventions during our open business meetings.

We had many guest speakers at our open afternoon business meetings and were able to educate, learn from, and visit with many members and guests from around the nation. For a gal who is used to sticking close to home, I put in quite a bit of airport time in 2013. I don't know how the BLET National Officers do it with their super busy traveling schedule, but I commend them for ALL the hard work they do on their members' behalf.

Sister Sereena Hogan and I helped organize another new auxiliary in Vancouver, Washington, on June 5, 2013 (article on opposite page). Our lead contact person was locomotive engineer Karla Black. Sister Karla and I had been communicating for approximately a year and a half and it was great to finally meet her and the charter members of our newest auxiliary, Fort Vancouver Auxiliary No. 72. Although it was a quick trip to Vancouver, we met a delightful group of new auxiliary members, sampled some delicious cheesecake and cupcakes made by Nicole Tiffany, and answered a lot of questions from the guests and new members.

Upon returning home from the Eastern Union Meeting (EUMA), I received a letter from Linda Maher resigning her position as National Secretary. I would like to thank Linda for giving almost three years of her time and service to the BLET Auxiliary. We wish her the best of luck in all her future endeavors.

Our Vice President/NLR Sereena Hogan's husband Ken Kroeger recently retired at the end of July. We are sad to see him retire, but are happy that we will continue to be able to see and visit with him at regional meetings with Sister Sereena! Brother Ken has been a tremendous help to me for the past three years and I am grateful for the guidance and knowledge he instilled in me, thus making my job a little bit easier.

Our next newsletter issue will be filled with information pertaining to our National Auxiliary Convention (NAC) to be

held next year in Las Vegas, Nevada, at the Rio Hotel. As mentioned above, member-at-large delegates have already been elected. Wanda Hawkins will represent the members who belong to the Southeastern Meeting Association, with Kimberly Bryant as alternate delegate. Cheryl Brown will represent the International Western Convention, with Jodi Wallace as alternate. Debbie Kertesz will represent the Eastern Union Meeting Association (no alternate). Rachel Grimes will represent the Southwestern Convention Meeting, with Becky Cain as alternate. If your local auxiliary has not already done so, please hold an election soon to elect a delegate to represent your auxiliary. Also, please start thinking about and making note of any proposed resolutions that you would like to submit for the NAC. This is the time to make changes to our Constitution & By-Laws and to elect the national officers for the next term.

We will soon be organizing another new auxiliary in Belen, New Mexico, in mid-September, and there is interest in starting new auxiliaries in Fort Madison, Iowa; St. Louis, Missouri; and Coffeyville, Kansas. We are grateful to Iowa State Legislative Board Chairman Jeff Kurtz for the interest in Iowa, and Southwestern Convention Meeting Standing Committee member David Grimes for helping to get these groups interested in joining the auxiliary!

I am hoping that things quiet down for the fall and winter months, but rest assured, if there is anything that needs to be addressed, I will be on top of it. If anyone ever needs to speak to me, please call. I am almost always at home when I am not traveling and I would love the opportunity to speak to you. If you prefer communicating through e-mail, I am always on top of that no matter where I am, so feel free to send an e-mail and we can "chat."

On a personal note, we welcomed a new addition to our family this summer. Luca Romi Baggiani was born on July 5, 2013, to my daughter Paula and her husband Spencer. At birth, Luca was 10 lb. 5 ounces, 20.5 inches long, with a fair complexion and light hair. We are thrilled to have him join his two big brothers, Dominic (6) and Sam (4 1/2). The family is doing great and it is wonderful getting to cuddle a baby once again.

Have a blessed Thanksgiving. I hope you are able to spend time with your family and extended railroad family, friends, sisters and brothers. I wish you all a peaceful, beautiful, and delightful fall season.

Anita J. Caruso
National President - BLET Auxiliary
7660 S. 162nd Street
Omaha, NE 68136
(402) 330-6348 ~bunziegia@cox.net

Auxiliary 72 Organized in Vancouver, Washington

By Kramer Ragan, Auxiliary 72 Member

June 5th, 2013 saw the establishment of the new BLET auxiliary for Vancouver, Washington, which was welcomed into existence not only by national supporters, but also with homemade cheesecake and cupcakes.

BLET member Karla Black was the driving force behind getting the local BLET auxiliary up and running. She saw a need for an auxiliary in her area to support her brothers and sisters and worked tirelessly to advertise the need for a local auxiliary, as well as encourage family members of BLET members to join. Her hard work paid off on June 5, at the Pied Piper in Vancouver, when National President Anita Caruso and National Vice President Sereena Hogan attended the first official meeting of the new Fort Vancouver Auxiliary Number 72.

At this organizational meeting, seven new members – Karla Black, Julie Dunn, Janet Cordes, Nicole Tiffany, Amanda Miller, Kramer Ragan, and Suzie Campbell - took their oath, accepted their pins, and were inducted into the Fort Vancouver Auxiliary. The new members are all very motivated to do their part in making a difference for their loved ones and friends.



Suzie Campbell, Nicole Tiffany, Amanda Miller, Karla Black, Anita Caruso, Kramer Ragan, Sereena Hogan, and Julie Dunn (Janet Cordes, who was also in attendance, had to leave before the photo was taken)

The Fort Vancouver Auxiliary plans to meet every third Monday of the month and is already looking forward to finding ways to offer support and assistance to local railroaders and their families.

Karla Black, along with the other members of the Fort Vancouver Auxiliary, wish to offer a thank you to both Anita and Sereena for their help and support in getting the new auxiliary up and running.

The Leona A. Louis Memorial Scholarship

Jim Louis shared with us this information about how the Leona A. Louis Memorial Scholarship came into existence: While it was my father Arthur, who was a Conductor on the New York Central, and my brother Jerry, a Fireman on Conrail and UTU Local Chairman, who gave me my love of the railroad, it was my mother Leona who gave me the love of the union. My father passed away in 1968 when I was ten and my brother died at work in 1979.

My Mother was born in Flint, Michigan, in 1920, and followed her father and uncles into the trade as a baker at the age of 14. When she first attempted to join the bakers union she was denied membership due to her age and because she was female. After several attempts, she was finally allowed membership.

While my dad was at work, she would tell me stories about when she was baking bread during the sit-down strikes at GM in 1936-37. She would hide the loaves of bread and walk up by the fences and throw them to the workers in the plant. She would tell me how the police and guards would scream and run toward her in an attempt to stop the food from getting in. One of her favorite sayings was: "If you have an issue, take it to the union hall and not to the locker room." Mom went on to raise 5 children and 13 foster children. She would take in the children of an entire family because she never wanted to see a family split up. She received her first pacemaker at age 48. She had a total of 9 in a span of 32 years. She would visit area hospitals as a member of The Mended Hearts, to reassure patients awaiting surgery. Mom passed away in 2001 at the age of 80. Janet and I wanted to do something in her honor to continue her legacy, so when we hosted the EUMA in 2004, we thought of the BLET Auxiliary and quietly started the donation with Mom in mind. When I saw one of the recipients a couple of years ago residing in Michigan, we knew we did the right thing.



Aux. 3 Secretary Janet Louis and husband Jim Louis

THANK YOU JIM AND JANET FOR YOUR GENEROSITY THROUGHOUT THE YEARS!!!

Auxiliary member honored with Girl Scout Lifetime Achievement Award

By Becky Schneider, Past President, BLET Auxiliary



Martha Ruth Moreland, Member-at-Large, Amarillo, Texas

Martha Ruth Moreland, current member-at-large and previous member of the Yellow Rose Auxiliary #300 in Amarillo, Texas, was recently honored with a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Girl Scouts of the Texas Oklahoma Plains Regional Council. Her four-generation family of Girl Scouts, from her mother to her granddaughters, have been part of scouting in Amarillo from its beginning with Martha Ruth being a registered Girl Scout for 64 years.

The award was given for her lifetime of support of, and service to, the Girl Scouts, and for carrying out her promise "to serve others in ways that truly benefit her community and everyone who meets her." Over the years, she has been a troop leader, council cookie chairman (once a year there was no room for cars in the garage), trainer for troop leaders, Council Board member, Alumnae Board member, and currently volunteers three days a week at the Amarillo Council office.

Martha Ruth, mother of Past National President Becky Schneider, has carried her volunteer work to the Auxiliary in the nine years she has been a member. She was active in Auxiliary 300 in Amarillo, a proxy delegate to the 2006 National Convention, and played a very important role behind

the scenes, helping her daughter with her sage advice and knowledge from years of experience dealing with various volunteer organizations. Those organizations include: Amarillo High School Class of 1947 Reunion Committee; Assistant to the Interim Executive Director (Dad) for the Texas State Rifle Association for six months in Dallas, and the move of headquarters to Austin; Secretary for the Texas Panhandle Railroad Historical Society, Sierra Bonita Homeowners Association, Camp Cactus, and Auxiliary 300, among others over the years.

Prior to her joining the Auxiliary, she played an active role in mobilizing railroaders in Amarillo during the fight for Railroad Retirement Reform when Becky would call from Washington, D.C., during critical votes. She has been invaluable in her knowledge of IRS non-profit rules and, along with the BLET's Director of Tax Compliance Elaine Reese, she helped Auxiliary 591, El Paso, Texas, re-establish their non-profit status.

Hailing from both a railroad family and girl scout family, Martha Ruth has certainly earned her Lifetime Achievement Award as a woman of distinction and I am proud to call her "Mom."



Phyllis Eberl (Auxiliary 12 member) and her husband Danny celebrated their 50th Wedding Anniversary on August 4, 2013 — Happy Anniversary Phyllis and Danny!

Happy News for Lindsay Loeb and Family!

By Sereena Hogan



Remember the “Lots of Love for Lindsay” article in the Spring edition of this publication? Lindsay is the two-year-old daughter of Sue and Dan Loeb, a New Jersey Transit engineer. Lindsay spent seven months waiting for a new heart after her own heart was severely damaged by a condition known as dilated cardiomyopathy. During that time she was kept alive through the use of a Berlin Heart Machine. I am very excited to share the news that Lindsay received a heart transplant on June 12 and is doing well. The heart came to her from another little princess who was in the same pediatric unit as Lindsay. They had become familiar with the Loeb family when they saw them strolling around the unit with Lindsay in a wagon pulled by Dan, accompanied by a nurse pushing the heart machine, and a third person pulling Lindsay's IV pole. These were Lindsay's only opportunities to leave her hospital room. When the little girl's parents learned that Lindsay had been waiting more than six month's for a donor heart, and then they learned that their little daughter was not going to make it, they decided to have her heart donated to Lindsay.

Following the transplant, Lindsay went to a rehab hospital where she received numerous therapy sessions every day to regain her strength and teach her how to talk, eat, walk, and function as a normal two-year old again. On the weekend of August 25, Lindsay was able to leave the hospital for a visit to her home to attend the birthday party of her twin sisters, Abigail and Emily, who turned 9 on August 27.

The Lindsay family is eternally grateful to all who have helped them along the way of their journey with Lindsay. Dan says, “The support we've gotten from our Brother and Sister Engineers has been incredible.” The numerous fundraisers and collections, and even a program for fellow engineers to donate sick leave days to Dan, have kept them afloat during this journey. Lindsay's projected discharge date from the rehab hospital is September 30. Please continue to keep Lindsay in your thoughts and prayers as she gets stronger and healthier. Many thanks to all the BLET and BLET Auxiliary family who helped this brother and his family!

FanCouture Fundraiser

FanCouture is a line of jewelry made from genuine faceted crystals that sparkle and shine in 21 colors. All of the genuine faceted crystals measure 12mm. The necklaces are approximately 20.5 inches long and bracelets are approximately 7.5 inches long. Each is hand knotted and finished with a Rhodium clasp. The earrings all come on .925 sterling silver hooks and feature a ½-inch long drop off the ear.

Orders can be placed on the FanCouture website (www.fancouture.com). Just remember you must add the BLET Auxiliary code “1003” at checkout.

Here's how you can help: Send an email to your friends and family with the FanCouture website and the BLET Auxiliary code 1003. Share the website information on Facebook. Print off a paper fundraiser form and share the SPARKLE with your friends and family. Have a few friends over for a girls night and share with them how you are raising money for the BLET Auxiliary. They will love the FanCouture SPARKLE!

Sharing the BLET Auxiliary fundraiser at church, sporting events, beauty salon, work, and with everyone you know will help raise \$100,000 or more before October 2014. The funds we raise through this fundraiser will be used to offset the expenses of our National Convention next year in Las Vegas.



LEGISLATIVE UPDATE - BY SEREENA HOGAN, NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE REP

"One of the most important keys to success is having the discipline to do what you know you should do, even when you don't feel like doing it." - Unknown

THUD Appropriations Bill Passed then Pulled

With support collapsing, a \$44.1 billion Transportation, Housing, and Urban Development (THUD) bill for 2014 funding that was passed by both the Senate and the House on June 27 was pulled abruptly from the House floor on July 31, with top Republicans conceding, it was a further sign that the party's budget strategy is unraveling.

Under the House bill, Amtrak funding would have been slashed by one-third and high performance rail grants eliminated, among other cuts. House Majority Leader Eric Cantor's office said the House will return to the bill in September, after the recess. But House Appropriations Committee Chairman Harold Rogers (R-KY) bluntly said the chances of resurrecting the measure are "bleak at best." He stated: "With this action, the House has declined to proceed on the implementation of the very budget it adopted three months ago. Thus I believe that the House has made its choice: sequestration—and its unrealistic and ill-conceived discretionary cuts—must be brought to an end." So, even if the Senate passes its bill, there won't be any clear path to make that bill into law.

On July 31, Senator Harry filed a motion to invoke cloture in order to end debate and bring the bill to the floor for a vote. The cloture vote failed to garner the required 60 votes and subsequently the entire bill was pulled from the floor.

As Congress returns to work on September 9, the debates over U.S. military involvement in Syria and federal government spending are crowding an already-packed congressional calendar. With the new fiscal year start date of October 1 fast approaching, Congress will need to pass a continuing resolution by the end of September in order to keep

the U.S. Department of Transportation open and transportation dollars flowing.

The all-too-numerous attempts to eliminate Amtrak service have shown that our work is more necessary than ever. So let's continue to keep the pressure on until the passenger rail system our country so desperately needs is fully funded and fully functional.

BLET Testifies in Support of Amtrak and Positive Train Control

On June 27, at the same time that the House Appropriations Committee was voting on legislation for Fiscal Year 2014 that would slash Amtrak funding 29% from last year, BLET Vice President and National Legislative Representative John Tolman testified before Congress in support of long-term federal funding for Amtrak and the need to improve railroad safety through the implementation of Positive Train Control (PTC) and other safety measures. In his testimony before the House Subcommittee on Railroads, at a hearing entitled "National Rail Policy: Examining Goals, Objectives, and Responsibilities," Tolman reinforced the need for Amtrak's long-term funding and the continued need for cooperation between freight railroads and labor to provide stimulus to our industry and the economy. He further emphasized the need to do all this while making the critical strides necessary to enhance rail safety.

He also testified that the National Rail Plan should protect organized rail labor, stating that it is imperative for any National Rail Policy or Plan to protect the interests of the men and women who work on America's railroads.

With regard to PTC, Tolman stated that the implementation of this technology will save lives and the BLET strongly supports PTC on our nation's railroads. He chastised the rail industry for seeking an extension of the federally-mandated deadline of 2015 for installation of the life-saving technology. He stated: "This technology will prevent the most egregious and catastrophic accidents where hazardous materials or passenger trains are involved, protecting the public and railroad employees. PTC needs to move forward."

He further stressed the need for support of Amtrak and passenger rail, pointing

out the ridership records set by Amtrak in recent years in spite of being underfunded. Amtrak has moved ahead with providing a version of positive train control to help protect their employees and the public, some of which has been in place since 1996. He stated that, "Now is not the time to nickel and dime the system; now is the time to stimulate the economy and invest in jobs through the creation of a good rail passenger system throughout the nation. For every \$1 billion invested, such a program could create 47,000 good-paying, middle class jobs."

BLET National President Dennis Pierce thanked Brother Tolman for expertly and professionally representing the Brotherhood. A copy of Tolman's testimony can be viewed at the BLET National Division website:

http://www.ble-t.org/pr/pdf/Tolman_Testimony_062713.pdf

Senate Confirms President Obama's Recess Appointments

Richard Cordray Appointment to Consumer Financial Protection Bureau Confirmed: On July 17, the Senate finally confirmed the appointment of Richard Cordray as the Director of Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB). As you may remember Mr. Cordray's appointment was one of several made by President Obama on January 4, 2012, under the Recess Appointment Clause of the U.S. Constitution. The President also appointed three new members to the vacant positions on the National Labor Relations Board on that same date. Until last month, none of these appointments had been confirmed by the Senate. The vote to confirm Cordray's appointment had been blocked by Republicans for almost two years in an attempt to weaken the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act, which is the law that established the CFPB and charged the agency to regulate and protect consumers' financial products from student loans, to mortgages, to credit cards. GOP politicians contended that the CFPB had too much power and sought changes including yearly Congressional approval of the agency's budget and the replacement of its director with a board.

In explaining why 12 Republican senators finally joined 54 Democrats to approve

Mr. Cordray's appointment, Senator Bob Corker (R-TN), told *The Wall Street Journal* that some Republicans had realized that "maybe" it wasn't right to hold up a qualified nominee because you don't like the law.

The CFPB was first proposed by Massachusetts Senator Elizabeth Warren in 2007 in an article that appeared in *Democracy: A Journal of Ideas*. The Board was then created in 2011 following the passage of the Dodd-Frank Act, which was passed as a response to the financial crisis of 2007–08. The creation of this agency stands as one of the biggest and clearest victories yet won in the struggle for fundamental reform of the financial system. In its short life, the CFPB has already:

- Moved to rid the mortgage market of loans designed to self-destruct.
- Shielded military families against various financial scams.
- Warned auto lenders against practices that jack up the price of credit for African-Americans, Latinos, women, or seniors.
- Returned nearly half a billion dollars to consumers cheated by credit card companies.
- Begun to tackle a host of other problems, including predatory payday loans, excessive bank overdraft fees, abusive debt collection practices, and the plight of students and families trapped in high-cost private education loans.

Following Cordray's confirmation, Senator Warren stated: "The political stalemate is over; there is no doubt the consumer agency will survive beyond the crib."

National Labor Relations Board Appointments Confirmed

On July 30, the Senate voted to confirm all of the three appointments made by President Obama to the National Labor Relations Board on January 4, 2012. For the first time in nearly a decade, the NLRB will have five full members—three Democrats and two Republicans—all confirmed by the Senate. This vote removes the air of uncertainty that has plagued NLRB actions for some time. One effort that may particularly benefit from the confirmation of five full members is the rulemaking activity on the union election process, which the NLRB had previously left unfinished. The five NLRB members are Democrats Mark Pearce, Nancy Schiffer, and Kent

Hirozawa, and Republicans Harry Johnson and Phil Miscimarra.

Court Case on Recess Appointments Still Pending

The confirmation of these appointments, however, does not change the fact that the issue of President Obama's recess appointments is still moving through the court system. Earlier this year, a three-judge panel of the U.S. Court of Appeals in Washington, D.C., struck down those appointments, saying the U.S. Senate was not in recess at the time of the appointments. Similar rulings have followed, and the U.S. Supreme Court has announced it will hear arguments in the case.

BLET Denounces One-Person Train Operations

On July 6, a runaway train on the Montreal, Maine and Atlantic Railway plowed through a small Quebec town, killing an estimated 50 people. That train was operated by a one-person crew—an engineer. Montreal, Maine and Atlantic Railway owns 510 miles of track in Maine, Vermont, and Quebec. It has a fleet of 26 locomotives and runs 15 trains daily, according to its website. This railroad has a long history of accidents in Canada, according to the Canadian Transportation Safety Board, which shows 129 accidents, including 77 derailments—some of them minor—since 2003. The BLET represents train and engine service employees on the Montreal, Maine & Atlantic Short Line Railroad in the United States and has unsuccessfully fought the practice of using a one-person crew on this railroad since it began several years ago. Following this tragic accident, the BLET National issued a statement on July 19, 2013, in which BLET National President Dennis Pierce denounces one-person train operations and calls on "the White House, the Congress, and any regulatory body of the federal government with the authority to do so to take action to protect the safety of railroad operating crews and the public by putting an end, once and for all, to the inherently unsafe single-person operation of freight trains."

In August, the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen (BLET) and the Transportation Division of the Sheet Metal, Air, Rail and Transportation International Association (SMART) jointly filed legislation in Congress to require at least two crew members on all freight trains in the United States. Initial sponsors for the legislation, entitled the "Safe Freight Act,"

are Representatives Michael Michaud (D-ME) and Chellie Pingree (D-ME), and the bill is expected to be assigned to the House Transportation and Infrastructure ("T&I") Committee for consideration. BLET National President Dennis R. Pierce called on the House to take up the bill at its earliest opportunity. "We thank Representatives Michael Michaud (D-ME) and Chellie Pingree (D-ME) and urge more Representatives to join in support."

Please encourage your members of Congress to take action to protect the safety of railroad operating crews and the public by putting an end to the unsafe practice of single-person operation of freight trains.

Court Ruling on Inward Facing Cameras in Locomotive Cabs

On July 25, the United States District Court in Shreveport, Louisiana, ruled that the decision by Kansas City Southern Railway (KCSR) to install two inward-facing cameras in the cabs of its locomotives (see May 2013 update at <http://www.bletauxiliary.net/Legislative%20Update%20May%2013.htm>) presents a "minor" dispute under the Railway Labor Act, thereby paving the way for the railroad to install the cameras immediately. Under the provisions of the Railway Labor Act, Unions are prevented from exercising self-help over minor disputes.

The court ruled that the Carrier had an arguable contractual justification for its actions based on: (1) the Carrier's existing use of stationary surveillance cameras in train yards and other locations, (2) inward-facing cameras in crew vans, and (3) procedures for monitoring and recording phone calls between train crew employees and crew management regarding reporting to work. The judge who authored the Opinion also held that it was "not frivolous to argue that the safety challenges posed by employees using personal electronic devices on the job necessitate the camera and review system proposed by KCSR."

Following the determination that the case was a "minor" dispute, the Unions argued for a "status quo" injunction pending resolution of the dispute before an arbitrator, but the judge denied that argument. She did, however, explain that "at the end of the day, the Unions may prevail regarding interpretation of the [Collective Bargaining Agreement]."

BLET National President Dennis Pierce expressed disappointment over both decisions and vowed that the Union would keep

up the fight and will continue to assist the KCSR General Chairmen in their struggle. He stated that the Union will do its utmost "to prove to an arbitrator that this outrageous intrusion in the lives of locomotive engineers and trainmen is well beyond what the contract allows KCSR to do."

Union Pacific (UP) is planning to join Kansas City Southern (KCS) in installing inward-facing cameras in its locomotives. The rail company asked a federal court last month to clarify its authority to install the cameras under existing agreements with labor unions. Although the cameras have audio recording capabilities, UP has stated that the audio will not be activated at this time. A federal court in Louisiana ruled in KCS's favor earlier this year that cameras can be installed without the possibility of a legal strike. The BLET continues to oppose this action, stating that it is an invasion of privacy.

New Website for Health & Welfare Benefits Information

A new website is available to eligible railroad employees and their dependents. This website, www.yourtracktohealth.com, replaces the Railroad Information Depot website. The information on this new website gives members information from key providers, such as Aetna, Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield, United Healthcare, Express-Scripts, MetLife, and EyeMed. When you see the "Your Track to Health" brand used on communications and in materials, please pay attention as the information being provided is important in helping you and your dependents better understand and optimize your health and welfare benefits.

The "Your Track to Health" provides several new features, including: (1) Secure sign on, which allows eligible employees and their dependents who are enrolled in the health and welfare benefits to securely access and manage personal benefits information online; and (2) an e-mail registration and subscription center, which allows eligible employees and their dependents to opt-in to receive important benefits, enrollment and health/wellness information, alerts and updates via email. The subscription center is where you can update and manage your email communications preferences.

Sereena Hogan can be reached by phone at (520) 297-0944; by mail at 8720 N. Myrtle Dr., Tucson, Arizona 85704, or by e-mail at vp3sereena@aol.com.



Member-at-Large Kimberly Bryant getting ready for the flag ceremony at the SMA.



Donna Milford won the Cooper Hurley drawing for the iPad mini at the SMA.



National Auxiliary President Anita Caruso, BLET Vice President/Auxiliary Associate Member-at-Large Mike Twombly, and National Auxiliary 1st Vice President/National Outreach Coordinator Gina Forman at the EUMA.



Member-at-Large Jackie Monroe and her husband Joe attending their 25th SWCM



Associate Member-at-Large/Host-Chair of SWCM Arlin Todd and wife Jo Ann



Kat Bisbikis, Sereena Hogan, Pres. Anita Caruso, and Susie Burrola at the IWC



Auxiliary Meeting at the IWC

2013-2014 BLET Auxiliary Scholarship Awards

by National Secretary Lawana W. Poss

Melanie Wilmesher, daughter of James and Kay Wilmesher. Kay is a member-at-large and James is Chairman of Colorado State Legislative Board and a member of Division 256. Melanie is attending Colorado State University, Fort Collins, Colorado.

Rachel McWilliams, daughter of Rob and Kathy McWilliams. Kathy is a member-at-large, and Rob belongs to BLET Division 126. Rachel is attending Fresno State University in California.

Allyson Booth, daughter of James and Anne Booth. James is retired and a former member of Division 28, and Anne is a member-at-large. Allyson is attending the University of Colorado Denver, Anschutz Medical Campus.

John O. & Brenda Casteel Scholarship:

Ariel Johnson, daughter of Owen and Beate Johnson. Owen is a member of Division 212 and Beate is member of Crossroads Auxiliary 212. Ariel is attending University of Houston.

Leona A. Louis Memorial Scholarship:

Kyle Willard, son of Kenneth and Kathy Willard. Kenneth is a member of Division 122 and Kathy is a member-at-large. Kyle is attending Michigan State University.

Mariah Burrola, daughter of Oscar and Susie Burrola. Oscar is Local Chairman of Division 839, and Susie is President of Nor-Cal Auxiliary 39. Mariah is attending Seattle Pacific University.

Kyle Radtke, son of James and Marme Radtke. James is a member of BLET Division 548, and Marme is a member of Pride of 548, Auxiliary 48. Kyle is attending Trine University.

Alexander Evans, son of James and Nancy Evans. Alexander is a member of Division 527 and Nancy is a member of Helen Gould Auxiliary 235. Kyle is attending Pittsburg State University.

Mark Willard, son of Kenneth and Kathy Willard. Kenneth is a member of Division 122 and Kathy is a member-at-large. Mark is attending Calvin College.

Morgan Rossow, daughter of Peter and Beth Rossow. Peter is a member of Division 421 and Beth is a member of Niagara Auxiliary 3. Morgan is attending Niagara County Community College.

IWC Scholarship Recipients:

Melanie Wilmesher, daughter of James and Kay Wilmesher. Kay is a member-at-large and James is Chairman of the Colorado State Legislative Board and a member of Division 256. Melanie is attending Colorado State University, Fort Collins, Colorado.

Rachel McWilliams, daughter of Rob and Kathy McWilliams. Kathy is a member-at-large and Rob belongs to BLET Division 126. Rachel is attending Fresno State University in California.

Allyson Booth, daughter of James and Anne Booth. James is retired, and a former member of Division 28 and Anne is a member-at-large. Allyson is attending University of Colorado Denver, Anschutz Medical Campus.

Lane Quick, son of Michael and Steffiney Quick. Michael is a member of Division 133. Lane is attending University of Minnesota, Morris.

Remick Kawawaki, child of Keith and Nicole Kawawaki. Keith belongs to BLET Division 758 in Vancouver, Washington. Remick is attending Yale University.

Ashlee Riehl, daughter of Eric and Jennifer Riehl. Eric is a member of Division 28. Ashlee is attending the University of Arizona.

Ha Fai Tang, son of Clarence and Wai Logan. Clarence is a member of Division 727. Ha Fai is attending Pennsylvania State University.

Austin Scharff, son of Gerald and Rita Scharff. Gerald is a member of BLET Division 104. Austin is attending University of Puget Sound.

Jessica Smith, daughter of Samuel and Nicole Smith. Samuel is a member of Division 94. Jessica is attending Sheridan College.

Brandon Mooer, son of Alan and Mary Mooer. Alan is a member of Division 180. Brandon is attending Creighton University.

Taylor Archuleta, son of Mitchell and Lori Archuleta. Mitchell is a member of Division 676. Taylor is attending Southwestern Oregon Community College.

Recap of the 2013 Regional Conventions

Southeastern Meeting Association, June 23-28

*By Lawana Poss,
SMA Auxiliary Chairperson*

The 86th Annual Southeastern Meeting Association (SMA) was held in beautiful, historic Richmond, Virginia. The weather was excellent and smiling faces were everywhere. Short Pump, Virginia, was a perfect location for this convention. If you needed a break in the excitement, there were many attractions, restaurants, and shopping so very close.

The SMA Opening Ceremonies began with the presentation of the flags for each state that is represented in the SMA. Everyone in attendance greeted their state flag with cheers and applause.

The Auxiliary meeting was held after lunch on Monday. Thanks to Ron Enos, from LECMPA, who took the time to speak to our group about job insurance, followed by a question-and-answer session. We enjoyed every minute.

Thanks also to Mr. Michael Collins, from the Railroad Retirement Board, who talked about steps that should be taken for retirement and maintaining a "current connection" with the railroad, followed by a very informative question-and-answer session.

An election was held for SMA Auxiliary Secretary/Treasurer. I am very happy to announce the new Secretary/Treasurer is Wanda Hawkins from South Carolina. I know Sister Wanda will be wonderful in this position and I look forward to working with her for the next two years. Sister Wanda was

also elected to be a delegate, representing the Southeast Members at Large, at the National Convention in 2014. Congratulations Sister Wanda!

While the golfers enjoyed the beautiful weather out at the golf tournament, others enjoyed the unbelievably fun and educational History/Maymont Extrava-ganza Tour, and still others enjoyed the Kings Dominion Park. There was something fun for everyone!

There were workshops and meeting to attend, including Local Chairman, Secretary/Treasurer, Legislative Representatives, FRA/Safety Task Force, Health and Wellness, Mobilization, and Business Meetings.

A Ladies Tea and Jewelry Show was held in the Spa. There was quite a collection of unique jewelry to try on and purchase. You could even purchase mini spa deals while you tried the tea and special treats. Everyone loves to be pampered and this was a perfect activity for that!

The food and music were perfect for the banquet on the final evening. Dancing, door prizes, and socializing kept everyone busy as we prepared to say our goodbyes. Raffle tickets were drawn and winners were called. Congratulations to the winners and thank you to everyone who purchased tickets!

Outgoing SMA Auxiliary Chairperson Sister Jewell Graben said her goodbyes to everyone. Thank you Sister Jewell for all of your time and hard work for so many years. I will do my best to carry on as SMA Auxiliary Chairperson.

Brother Frankie Milford presented the SMA Auxiliary with the money that was collected from the meetings. It was presented in memory and in honor of Brother James Warren Hinely who passed away in 2012.

A big thank you goes out to Troy Bryant, SMA Arrangements Committee Chairman, David Powers, SMA Arrangements Committee Co-Chairman, and BLET Division 532. You did a wonderful job and it did not go unnoticed. Thank you to Kim Bryant; you were the perfect hostess! Thank you to all the "behind-the-scenes" people. You made it look effortless and that is quite impressive. Thank you for sharing your beautiful city!

International Western Convention, July 14-17

*By Susie Burrola, President,
NorCal Auxiliary 39*

This year's IWC in San Francisco, co-chaired by Oscar Burrola and Louie Chavez, was a good time for all. Brian Carr did a great job running the golf tournament on Monday, at which he raised over \$500 selling mulligans with the help of Jarred and Jason Bisbikis and our daughter Alissa. Brian also raised \$120 for Nor-Cal 39 by doing a putting tournament.

We are grateful to the National BLET officers who attended our convention and to Tim and Sue Smith's beautiful daughter Emily who sang the National Anthem at the opening ceremonies on Tuesday morning. Many thanks to BRCF and LECMPA for sponsoring the lunches on Tuesday and Wednesday. And

thank you so very much to the FELA attorneys Lloyd Rabb and Anthony Petru for your very generous contributions to the convention, as well as Paul Bovarnick and Randy LeNeave.

Our NorCal 39 auxiliary sister Kat Bisbikis and her family took their vacation time to come up and help and we could not have done it without them. Kat did all the name tags, agenda, and helped with the registration and selling of shirts and tickets. Her husband Jason, who is quite the entertainer, kept us laughing, and it and would not have been as much fun without him. Travis Noyes and his family also took their vacation time to help out. Thank you Travis for an outstanding job as IWC Treasurer.

Louie's wife Erika and their two daughters were also very helpful, selling raffle tickets and pitching in wherever needed. We are hoping that Erika will join our auxiliary soon!

We not only learned a lot at our auxiliary meeting on Tuesday afternoon, but also had some fun playing the Chinese gift exchange game with the door prizes. Thank you to our sisters from the National Auxiliary, Anita Caruso and Sereena Hogan, who are always so supportive. We appreciate all their help. Thank you to Ed Haley from Cornerstone Assurance Group who donated money for all the refreshments for our auxiliary meeting. And thanks also to Woody Taylor from Railroad Marketing, who donated money for our kids movie night, hosted by Mariah and Alissa Burrola.

During the week, we sold raffle tickets for the National

Auxiliary Scholarship Fund as well as a 50/50 raffle to raise money for Nor-Cal 39's scholarship fund. The winning numbers were drawn at the closing banquet on Wednesday night. The 50/50 pot reached \$750 and the winner, Mr. & Mrs. Cummins, donated their winnings back to us. DJ Ray Acosta donated his time and equipment to create a fun night of music, fun, and dancing at the closing banquet.

Thank you all for coming and we look forward to seeing you next year in Minneapolis, Minnesota!

Eastern Union Meeting Association, July 28 - August 1

*By Gina Forman, National 1st VP/
National Outreach Coordinator*

The Eastern Union Meeting Association (EUMA) celebrated its 75th Anniversary in style at the beautiful Hyatt Regency Baltimore on the Inner Harbor. Fred Cox, Local Chairman of Division 52, did a fantastic job as Chairman this year. Brother Cox and his committee worked hard to provide a great environment for all attendees. Special thanks to his wife and daughter who went the extra mile as well.

Registration opened on Sunday, with a welcome reception held at the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad Museum. Many thanks to Mark Robb from BRCF, who provided us with appetizers and cocktails for the evening.

On Monday morning, at the opening ceremonies, President Caruso had the privilege of presenting The Empty Chair ceremony, in which we remember those who have made the ultimate sacrifice in the line of duty.

In addition to introductions of BLET national officers and address by President Dennis Pierce, we also heard from guests speakers Ernie Grecco, President of the Metropolitan Baltimore Council of the AFL-CIO, and Donna F. Edwards, U.S. Representative for Maryland's 4th Congressional District, a member of the House Transportation & Infrastructure Committee. The afternoon concluded with the closed-door meeting for the BLET and open meeting for the National Auxiliary.

Tuesday started off with our annual golf outing. Those who did not golf spent the day enjoying local shopping opportunities and took advantage of the time to take in all the Inner Harbor had to offer. The evening was spent at Oriole Park at Camden Yards where we enjoyed great weather while watching the Baltimore Orioles beat the Houston Astros.

Wednesday was a day of training workshops for BLET while the ladies enjoyed a Thirty-One™ purse and tote bag party. The evening ended with our formal banquet at which the EUMA scholarships were awarded by the EUMA Scholarship Committee.

Throughout the conference, President Caruso and I held the auxiliary information and raffle table open, greeting members and their families. Our raffle proceeds go to the Auxiliary Scholarship Fund. Many thanks to Jim and Janet Louis for the \$500 donation. It was a successful fundraiser and we want to thank all of those who donated to our cause. Many thanks also to Brother Cox and his committee and local division for allowing us to be part of another great convention this year. I hope that many of you

plan to attend next year's EUMA to be held in Cleveland, Ohio. These conventions provide invaluable opportunities for us to network and gain strength through new relationships and catching up with old friends. See you in Cleveland in 2014!

Southwestern Convention Meeting, August 26-29

By National Treasurer Helen Brand

Arlin Todd and the Louisiana State Legislative Board were the hosts for the 86th Annual Southwestern Convention Meeting (SWCM), which was attended by more than 370 BLET members and guests. Preceding the official beginning of the meeting, there was a presentation of the flags by the members of the New Orleans Firefighters Union. Arrangements Chairman Arlin Todd welcomed the members to the Opening Ceremony on Tuesday, August 27, 2013 and called the meeting to order.

Guest speakers included Nick Felton, President of the New Orleans Firefighters Local 632, and John Bel Edwards, Louisiana State Representative of House District 72. David Grimes, Local Chairman of Division 42 in St. Louis, Missouri, led a ceremony to

remember BLET members killed in the line of duty. Brother Grimes also paid respects to Brother Brian Wheeler, former President of Division 42, who passed away late last year. There will be a scholarship to honor Brother Wheeler's memory.

BLET President Dennis R. Pierce introduced the members of the BLET Advisory Board and National Division staff who were in attendance, spoke of the BLET's 150th anniversary (May 8, 2013) and introduced a special video commemorating the historic event.

BLET Auxiliary National President Anita J. Caruso also addressed the group, introducing our National Officers in attendance, giving a short update on the status of the auxiliary and thanking the members who supported the auxiliary by playing in the SWCM Golf Tournament and sponsoring golf holes for our yearly BLET Auxiliary Scholarship fundraiser.

That afternoon, the BLET Auxiliary held an open business meeting, greeting members, guests, and guest speakers. This was, by far, the biggest group to attend our SWCM business meeting in quite

We welcome your submissions for our publication. Please send your stories, articles, photos, poems, etc., to:

**Sereena Hogan, Editor & Publisher
BLET Auxiliary News
8720 N. Myrtle Drive
Tucson, Arizona 85704
520-297-0944 - vp3sereena@aol.com**

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Sereena Hogan, Publisher, BLET Auxiliary News
8720 N. Myrtle Drive
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Southwestern Convention Meeting, continued from page 11

some time! In our continual effort to bring new and important information to our members, we had a variety of guest speakers address the group.

A huge thanks to Charlene Payne from United Healthcare, Kevin Potts from Union Pacific Employees Healthcare Systems, and Michael Collins of the Railroad Retirement Board for giving their time to help educate our members and guests. Mark Robb, International President of BRCF and an associate member-at-large of the Auxiliary, also attended our meeting and spoke briefly to the group. Former National President Becky Schneider volunteered to give a short legislative report in the absence of our Vice President Sereena Hogan and we thank her for the legislative update.

Tuesday evening we were surprised in the hotel lobby by a marching band in splendor and colorful New Orleans style. We

marched in a parade toward our river boat cruise launch to the tune of "When the Saints Go Marching In." It was a wonderful evening to end a busy day.

Wednesday continued with a variety of workshops, including a healthcare presentation, conductors' certification class, Secretary/Treasurers and Local Chairman workshops and, as always, concluded with the evening banquet.

Many thanks go out to Brother Arlin Todd, his lovely wife Jo Ann, and the Louisiana State Legislative Board for their hard work and dedication to making sure their guests had a grand time in New Orleans! We would also like to thank Brother Todd for his help as "Golf Chairman" in making President Caruso and my work for the golf tournament go so smoothly. See you in St. Louis, Missouri, next year!
