



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.

Volume 9, Number 3

Autumn 2018

Sereena Hogan, President • Susie Burrola, 1st Vice President • Helen Brand, Secretary • Terri Fleming, Treasurer
Kathleen Bisbikis, 2nd Vice President/National Legislative Representative • www.bletauxiliary.net



*Submitted by Sarah Uerling, President
Red Willow Rails Auxiliary No. 623, McCook, Nebraska*

In June of this year, nine-year-old Calvin Corbett was diagnosed with Stage 4 Rhabdomyosarcoma, a rare type of cancer. Calvin is the son of Chris and Tiffany Corbett of McCook, Nebraska. Chris is a member of BLET Division 623 and Tiffany is a member of the Red Willow Rails Auxiliary No. 623 in McCook. Calvin has been in the hospital since his initial diagnosis at University of Nebraska Medical Center in Omaha in June of this year. He is currently undergoing a 66-week treatment plan at St. Jude's Children's Research Hospital in Memphis, Tennessee. His parents have been by his side since the diagnosis. Before his illness, Calvin was active in baseball, basketball, and football. He has three other siblings: Oliver, Finnegan, and Mariah.

Red Willow Rails Auxiliary and BLET Division 623, along with the McCook community, have been raising donations to help the Corbett family. A huge thank you to the National BLET Auxiliary and to the BLET National Division for your donations. "Words cannot express the deep appreciation for the generosity that has been shown for this family," said Sarah Uerling.

If you, or your auxiliary or division, would like to donate to help out the Corbett family, please send check or money order (payable to Tiffany Corbett) to:

Sarah Uerling, President,
Red Willow Rails Auxiliary No. 623
71810 Road 381
McCook, Nebraska, 69001

"Railroading... it's more than a job; it's a lifestyle. It's important to include the entire family... let's all work together to make things better for us all!"

— Jessica Keene, Member-at-Large



Three-year-old Charlie Keene helps her daddy, Portland Western Railroad Engineer and BLET Division 146 Local Chairman Matt Keene, put on his boots for work every time he gets called for his run from Tigard Yard in Western Oregon to the Union Pacific Albina Yard in Portland.



From the President - BY SEREENA HOGAN

Greetings Everyone! As I compose this, my last "From the President" article for this publication, I do so with mixed emotions. It's been a long ride as a national officer for the Auxiliary (2001 - 2018) and I'm sure I will miss many things about it; however, I am looking forward to having more time to spend with my husband, our two adult children, and our four grandchildren, and to spend time getting together and socializing with some of the great friends we've made within the BLET family, as well as reconnecting with friends from other circles in our lives. This job as National President takes an immense amount of time, energy, and focus, and I have learned much about myself in the process.

I will surely miss the day-to-day interaction with the four other national officers who make up the Executive Council - Susie Burrola, Kathleen Bisbikis, Helen Brand, and Terri Fleming. Most of our interaction is through texting, e-mails, and occasional phone conversations, and it's reassuring to know they are always there, willing to help and serve. The close connection and bond that has formed between the five of us during the last four years is something I will always cherish.

In her article on Page 11 of this publication, Susie does a great job of describing how awesome each of these ladies is and the wonderful gifts that each sister brings to the table... and I couldn't agree with her more! I would like to add some words about what a beautiful, wonderful sister Susie is. She is one of the most understanding, generous, and compassionate persons I have come across in my lifetime. Her dedication to the union movement and to the Auxiliary is something to be admired. She has a heart of gold and shares it openly and willingly with each member of her biological family as well as with every member of her auxiliary family and union family. And the thing I love most about Susie is that she is lighthearted, witty, and always fun to be around. We didn't know one another very well when we ventured out on our first organizing trip together in March of 2015, which took us to five BLET division meetings and two Auxiliary organizing meetings in Indiana and Illinois. We covered a lot of ground on those trips, traveling from place to place and walking into as many BLET gatherings and meetings as would open their doors to us. It was sometimes a bit stressful and intimidating, especially in the beginning; however, sharing those adventures together was always a good time with Susie and we quickly came to know and respect one another on a deep level. I will always

treasure her friendship and, who knows, maybe our "Thelma and Louise" alter egos will take us on another trip together sometime in the future... just for fun!

These last few months have been incredibly busy, as we tend to all the details involved with preparing for our Third Quadrennial Convention, which is just a couple of weeks away. As mentioned in my article in the Summer edition of this publication, we will hold the drawing for the winner of the quilt raffle, live on Facebook, on the last day of the our convention, Wednesday, October 3 (see story, page 9). If you have not seen the quilt that Helen lovingly crafted and donated for this fundraiser, please take a look at our Facebook page or our website to see the full color version. I'm pretty sure you'll want to purchase a few tickets for a chance to be the lucky winner!

A special thank-you goes out to Sarah Uerling, President of Auxiliary 623 in McCook, Nebraska, for all she and the members of her auxiliary are doing to help out the Corbett family during a difficult time in their lives (see cover story). The Auxiliary has helped the family through a donation from our Care & Assistance Program, and by raising funds at the Eastern Regional Meeting. We will continue in our efforts to do what we can to raise funds for the Corbetts at the National Convention next month in Las Vegas, and we send blessings of love and healing to Calvin and the entire family!

We are excited to announce that we have two new auxiliaries in Oregon and one in Ohio ready to be formally organized following the National Convention. Hopefully all three can be organized by the officers of the new administration before the end of this year.

To all of you sisters and brothers who have recently joined the BLET Auxiliary, and to those of you who have steadfastly maintained your membership over many years, I say THANK YOU! Without all of you, we would not exist as an organization. Thank you also to the BLET officers who believe in and support the Auxiliary. And thank you so much to President Pierce and the rest of the BLET National officers and staff who have supported and helped us in the last four years. To those of you who step up to lead this organization in the next four years, I wish you much success! Sending best wishes to all of you... until we meet again!

Sereena Hogan, National President
8720 N. Myrtle Drive
Tucson, Arizona 85704
520-297-0944, vp3sereena@aol.com

Western Regional Meeting

Monterey California, June 18-22, 2018

By Sereena Hogan, National President

The Hyatt Regency Monterey was the setting for the 2018 BLET Western Regional Meeting. Approximately 200 BLET members and their families were in attendance at the meeting in the beautiful coastal city of Monterey. In BLET National President Dennis Pierce's remarks at Tuesday morning's opening ceremonies, he mentioned the many benefits that BLET members and their families enjoy and warned that these benefits are under attack due to the anti-worker, anti-union movement in our nation's capital. He challenged all BLET members to do their part to help end these attacks on working class Americans. Keynote speaker for the opening ceremonies was Rep. Grace F. Napolitano, who represents California's 32nd District and is a member of the U.S. House Committee on Transportation & Infrastructure. Her comments focused on railroad safety, specifically discussed long trains, two-person train crews, Positive Train Control (PTC), rail worker fatigue, and training standards. Rep. Napolitano is a co-sponsor of the BLET's two-person crew bill, H.R. 233. "The Safe Freight Act" which would mandate two-person train crews on all freight trains.

Attendees at the auxiliary meeting on Monday afternoon were presented with an overview of what to do and see while in the Monterey area by two representatives of the Monterey Visitor & Convention Bureau. A great lineup of guest speakers then shared information with us, including LECMPA State Manager for California and Nevada, Cameron Reeves; Richard Lyon, Investigator from Schlichter, Bogard & Denton; Jesse Taylor, President of BRCF, Pete Gilbertson from Cornerstone Assurance Group, John Herriman from NARVRE, Gerri Clark from Railroad Retirement Board; and Angie Pulekines from United Healthcare.

Wednesday was golf day for many, and for non-golfers it was an opportunity to enjoy the sights and sounds of Monterey County. Some enjoyed the "17-Mile Drive" along picturesque Pebble Beach, known as one of the most scenic drives in the world; others visited the Monterey Bay Aquarium and Cannery Row, the site of numerous now-defunct sardine canning factories and now known for its world-class restaurants, boutiques, galleries, spas, and premium wine tasting. Others drove down to the "storybook town" of Carmel by the Sea, known for its fairytale cottages and galleries, as well as its museums and library of the historic Carmel Mission. And those adventurous lovers of the outdoors were offered many choices of "take-your-breath-away" hiking trails along spectacular seaside cliffs. All-in-all, Monterey County is a fantastic place to visit! I hope to someday get back there to spend a few days enjoying it all.

Training workshops for Local Chairmen, Secretary-Treasurers and Legislative Representatives were held throughout the day on Thursday. The meeting concluded with the banquet on Thursday evening.



Photo Credit: Bill Joyce, Art Director & Associate Editor, BLET Publications Dept.

National Second Vice President Kathleen Bisbikis, our webmasters, Alternate National Treasurer Jodi Wallace and BLET Div. 362 Local Chairman Will Wallace, were all smiles and "raring to go" on Monday morning at the auxiliary table in the display area at the Western Regional Meeting in Monterey. Thank you Kathleen and 1st Vice President Susie Burrola for putting together a great table full of raffle prizes, and thank you also to those local auxiliaries and individuals who donated prizes. Our raffles and golf mulligan sales at this convention were very successful!



Photo Credit: Bill Joyce, Art Director & Associate Editor, BLET Publications Dept.

Members-at-Large Christine Palmer, Sunny Perkovich, and Naomi Muscha, listened intently to the lineup of speakers at the Auxiliary Meeting on Tuesday afternoon.



Photo Credit: John Bentley, Director & Editor, BLET Publications Dept.

Member-at-Large Debbie Massengale and husband Dwayne at the pre-banquet reception at the Western Regional Meeting in Monterey

Eastern Regional Meeting

Washington, D.C., August 13-17, 2018

By Kathleen Bisbikis, National 2nd Vice President

The Capital Hilton served as a beautiful hotel and meeting place for this year's Eastern Regional Meeting in Washington, D.C., due to its central location for restaurants and sightseeing while in the city.

Activities began Monday morning with registration. We enjoyed greeting visitors at our table where we had on display all of the items for our prize raffle fundraiser. Additionally, we were selling 50/50 raffle tickets and tickets for a chance to win the handmade quilt that will be going to some lucky person following the drawing at the National Convention in Las Vegas. Monday evening, everyone joined together in the Presidential Ballroom for the welcome reception.

Opening ceremonies kicked off Tuesday morning with more than 300 BLET members and their families in attendance. BLET National President Dennis R. Pierce called the meeting to order, and the DC National guard presented the flags. Brother Ken Hall, Chief Financial Officer of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, spoke passionately about the Janus decision and the impact it could have on organized labor, reminding everyone of the importance of getting out to vote in November. "We have a chance in November for change," Hall said. "There is an incredibly important election coming up. We have got to change the politics of this country."

Following Brother Hall were speeches by Rep. Anthony G. Brown, U.S. Representative for Maryland's 4th congressional district; BLET National President Pierce; BLET National 2nd Vice President/National Legislative Rep. Kathleen Bisbikis; Attorney General for the District of Columbia Karl Racine; Dana Balter, Democratic candidate to represent New York's 24th District; and Mark Thomson, Assistant to Labor Member Walt Barrows of the U.S. Railroad Retirement Board. The final two speakers were BLET National Vice Presidents Cole Davis and Gil Gore, both of whom are retiring at the end of the year.

At Tuesday afternoon's Auxiliary meeting, we were fortunate to have speakers from the Railroad Retirement Board, United Healthcare and also Past Auxiliary National President Becky Schneider who shared information about the work that the auxiliary has done in the past and the critical role we have the opportunity to play in fighting for our spouses' safety and job security by being actively involved and aware of the issues affecting all of us.

Golfers were up early on Wednesday morning to head for the bus to the golf course. We are thankful to all of the golfers who supported the auxiliary by purchasing mulligans before heading out. For non-golfers, the BLET National Legislative team offered a tour of the Capitol Building, led by political interns and staffers. It was an excellent opportunity to hear some of their inside stories and thoughts as they showed us their favorite places.

BLET workshops were held throughout the day on Thursday. That afternoon, the auxiliary pulled names for the winners of the prize raffle and then sold an enormous amount of 50/50 tickets at the banquet that night. We are so grateful to this year's winner, Montana State Legislative Board Chairman DB Kenner, who donated a portion of his winnings back to the Auxiliary. Thanks, DB!!

Also during the banquet, a bowl was placed at the front of the room for donations to help out the Corbett family. Calvin Corbett is the son of BLET Division 623 member Chris Corbett and Red Willows Auxiliary Member Tiffany Corbett in McCook, Nebraska, whose son Calvin is undergoing an extended course of treatment for cancer. The auxiliary had been raising money all week for the Corbett family through the sale of "Calvin Strong" wristbands. In a very happy turn of events, the BLET National announced at the banquet that they would be adding an additional one thousand dollar donation to the fund. Thank you to everyone at the DC meeting who showed support by helping this union family.



Photo Credit: John Bentley, Director & Editor, BLET Publications Dept.

Kathleen Bisbikis and Helen Brand did a great job interacting with visitors and selling raffle tickets at the Auxiliary table in the vendor's area at the Eastern Regional Meeting in Washington, D.C.



Photo Credit: John Bentley, Director & Editor, BLET Publications Dept.

At the pre-banquet reception D.C. - BLET Member & Associate Auxiliary Member Mary Casella and her Auxiliary Member husband Michael Casella

Tidbits from National Secretary Helen Brand

It seems that summer just started and here it is the first of September already. The older I get, the more it seems that time passes faster.

In August, Charlie and I attended the Eastern Regional Convention in Washington, D.C. We worked the raffle table, sold 50/50 tickets, and attended the meetings.

On our free day, we took a two-hour segway tour around the area. It was a guided tour with a very informative tour guide, and we covered a large area in that two hours. It was great fun.

SCHOLARSHIPS

By now all scholarship winners have been notified, received their award checks, and have started their new school year. Congratulations to all of the winners. Keep up the good work and remember you can reapply for each year that you attend college.

CARE AND ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Established in 1921, the Care and Assistance Program (CAP) is our organization's way of saying thank you to long-time members. These members are usually elderly and their incomes are such that they are not able to obtain some of the basics for everyday living. The CAP provides financial assistance to qualifying members and helps them to maintain a little bit more of the dignity they deserve. Our recipients are very grateful for the help.

MAL DUES REMINDER

Second notices were mailed, and we are grateful to all of you who responded and paid your dues for this year. If you have not done so, please remit your 2018 dues as soon as possible.

You can pay by check or money order, or you can pay by credit or debit card through PayPal on our website, at bletauxiliary.net.

WELCOME TO OUR NEWEST MEMBERS

We welcome new Members-at-Large Tracie Schroeder, Council Grove, KS; Kreschendalyn Backus, New Braunfels, TX; Jessica Keene, Dallas, OR; Kimberly Jones, Birmingham, AL; Suzanne Carhart, Kirkville, NY; Carla Fuller, Kansas City, MO; Terri Walters, Billings, MT; Erica Hill, Williamstown, NJ; and Susan Garland, who became a member of Music City Auxiliary No. 431 in Nashville, TN.

Welcome sisters! Please feel free to contact any national officer if you have questions or concerns.

OUR THOUGHTS AND PRAYERS

Our heartfelt sympathies go out to Bettye Dollar in the loss of her husband, Everett, on March 14, 2018. She and Everett celebrated their 67th wedding anniversary this year. Bettye also lost her son, who died April 13, 2018.

Bettye has belonged to the BLET Auxiliary for 46 years and has served on the Executive Council as National Treasurer for nine years. Bettye, we thank you for all you have done for the BLET Auxiliary.

NATIONAL CONVENTION

Our National Convention is scheduled to be held September 30 through October 3, 2018, along with the BLET National Convention, at the Rio Hotel and Convention Center in Las Vegas, Nevada.

This convention determines the new officers for the upcoming term, as well as updates or changes to the Constitution & Bylaws that govern our Auxiliary.

If you have concerns or recommendations that you would like addressed at this convention, please feel free to contact your delegate or any national officer.



Helen Brand can be reached by phone at 913-256-2741, by mail at 38768 Crescent Hill Road, Osawatomie, Kansas, 66064, or by e-mail at hybrand51@gmail.com.

If I can answer any questions for you, give me a call or send me an e-mail and I will get back to you as soon as I can!!

— Helen

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

BY KATHLEEN BISBIKIS, NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE REPRESENTATIVE



"Be bold enough to use your voice, brave enough to listen to your heart, and strong enough to live the life you've always imagined."

~ unknown

FRA Awards \$200 Million in Grant Money for PTC Completion

The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) announced Aug. 24 that it has awarded \$203,698,298 in grant funding for the implementation of Positive Train Control (PTC) for 28 projects in 15 states. FRA also released a status update of PTC for the second quarter.

The funds are part of the \$250 million that the FRA has available specifically for the implementation of PTC appropriated from the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2018.

A Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) for the \$250 million was published in May, and solicitations for the funds had to be received by July 2. The FRA expects to publish a second NOFO in the Federal Register for the remaining \$46,301,702 available.

As for the state of PTC, 15 railroads have installed 100 percent of the PTC system hardware on their locomotives and their

trackage, FRA said. BNSF and KCS are the only two Class I railroads listed as having 100 percent of their track segments installed with PTC, while Union Pacific is listed as having 98 percent of installation completed. BNSF, Metrolink, and Northstar Commuter Rail are all listed as having PTC in complete operation. FRA reports that 37,705 route miles, or 65 percent of the approximately 58,000 route miles have sufficient revenue service demonstration or are in operation. (Revenue service demonstration is one of the criteria needed to qualify for an extension of the deadline.)

The second quarter has also seen a 25 percent drop in the number of "at-risk" railroads — FRA considers any railroad that installed less than 90 percent of its PTC system hardware as of June 30, 2018, to be at risk. There are currently nine at-risk railroads: New Mexico Rail Runner Express, Capital Metropolitan Transportation Authority, New Jersey Transit, Altamont Corridor Express, MARC, Trinity Railway Express, TriRail, Caltrain, and Florida's SunRail. Of the nine deemed at risk, all but three (Altamont Corridor Express, New Jersey Transit, and TriRail) were awarded part of the \$250 million grant.

"The railroads have achieved some significant improvements over the past year implementing this safety technology," said FRA Administrator Ron Batory. "While we are seeing progress among a majority of railroads, we want to see everyone meet their requirements."

All Class I railroads and commuter railroads are required to

have PTC fully implemented by Dec. 31, 2018, unless the carrier qualifies for an alternative schedule under the Positive Train Control Enforcement and Implementation Act of 2015 (PTCEI Act). Railroads approved for an alternate schedule must contain a deadline that is as soon as practicable, but no later than Dec. 31, 2020.

(Railway Age, Aug 24, 2018)

Erhard Chorle Nominated for position of Railroad Retirement Board Chairman

Erhard Chorle was nominated July 27 by President Trump, to serve a five-year term as chairman of the Railroad Retirement Board (RRB).

Chorle's confirmation would fill a vacancy that was created in August 2015 by the retirement of Michael Schwartz after Schwartz's 12 years as RRB chairman.

"It's an honor to be nominated," Chorle said. According to his biography, Chorle served the Illinois state government as senior assistant to the director of labor, deputy secretary of state and as the state's securities commissioner. He served as executive assistant for financial and regulatory affairs in Gov. Jim Edgar's administration beginning in 1991 and had experience overseeing the state's major financial regulations department, including banks, trusts, and insurance, as well as the state's various financing authorities and pension funds.

Chorle also was chairman of the Illinois state Board of Investment, a \$10 billion fund

investing the assets of three Illinois state pension systems. He received his B.S. from DePaul University in 1978 and a juris doctorate from John Marshall Law School in 1984, and joined Pedersen & Houpt in July 2017. If confirmed by the U.S. Senate, Chorle's term would run through Aug. 28, 2022.

Operation Lifesaver, Inc. Awards \$205,525 for Public Awareness Campaigns

Operation Lifesaver, Inc. (OLI), in partnership with the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), announced that \$205,525 in grants have been awarded to 16 state Operation Lifesaver programs. The grants will fund a variety of rail crossing safety and trespass prevention public education projects in conjunction with the nonprofit safety group's upcoming Rail Safety Week (RSW), which will be observed in the U.S. and Canada from September 23-29, 2019.

Funded by FRA, the grants will be awarded to Operation Lifesaver organizations in Alabama, California, Georgia, Idaho, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Nevada, New Jersey, North Carolina, South Carolina, and South Dakota; individual grant awards will range from \$1,800 to \$20,000.

"We must continue to target grade-crossing and trespasser deaths with an unrelenting commitment toward zero tolerance," says FRA Administrator Ronald L. Batory. "Educating the motoring and pedestrian public about how to be safe near railroad tracks is a never-ending task that will help reduce risk while enhancing safety."

OLI Interim President Wende Corcoran said, "These grants, which fund innovative community outreach and education projects, are an important part of Operation Lifesaver's ongoing rail safety efforts in 16 states across the U.S., in support of our mission to eliminate collisions, injuries, and deaths at crossings and along rail property. We are grateful to our safety partners at the Federal Railroad Administration for their assistance, which will help raise public awareness of the need for safe behavior around tracks and trains."

(Operation Lifesaver 7-24-18)

Senate passes "minibus" Spending Package

The U.S. Senate passed a second "minibus" spending package on August 1, which includes increased funding for passenger rail and transit, as well as preserves funding for grant programs utilized by the rail industry.

The \$154.2 billion spending package addresses funding during fiscal year 2019 for the Departments of Interior, Treasury, Agriculture, Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, as well as the Environmental Protection Agency.

The bill includes the following:

- \$2.769 billion for the Federal Railroad Administration
- \$13.514 billion for transit-related activities, which includes \$2.55 billion for the Capital Investment Grant (CIG) program and reflects an \$800 million general fund increase to FAST Act formula programs.
- \$1.94 billion for Amtrak, \$650 million of which is for the Northeast Corridor

- \$1 billion for Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) grants program
- \$255 million for Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) Grants
- \$10 million for oversight of Positive Train Control implementation at FRA

Paul Skoutelas, President and CEO of the American Public Transportation Association, praised the Senate's increase in transit-related spending, saying it will help public transportation address a \$90 billion infrastructure backlog.

Mark Gaston Pearce Nominated for Another Term on NLRB

Late on August 28, 2018, President Trump nominated Mark Gaston Pearce to serve another term on the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB or Board). Pearce was appointed to the Board in 2010 by then-President Barack Obama for a partial term. He then served a full five-year term from 2013 until this week. Due to the expiration of Pearce's term on August 27, 2018, the Board currently sits at four members, rather than the full five-member contingent.

As with all Board nominations, the Senate must vote to approve Pearce's nomination before he may begin to serve a new five-year term. As a former union attorney, Pearce may face some opposition from management groups that see him as too pro-union. But the make-up of the five-member Board is traditionally comprised of three members who align with the president's political party, in the current case, Republican, with the re-

maining two members aligning with the minority party. Currently, the three Republican members are Chairman John Ring, William Emanuel, and Marvin Kaplan. The lone Democrat, at least until Pearce or another person is confirmed, is Lauren McFerran whose term expires on December 16, 2019.

With the Board revisiting many hot button issues, such as joint-employer status and the use of an employer's e-mail system for union activities, the Board members wield significant influence on workplace policies and potential employer liability for both union and non-union employers alike. We will keep you informed on Pearce's confirmation as well as any other Board developments.

(Employerslawyersblog - Aug 30, 2018)

Former Iowa State Legislative Board Chairman Jeff Kurtz Advances to November Election

Using the campaign slogan "Get Iowa Back on Track," former BLET Iowa State Legislative Chairman Jeff Kurtz is headed to the November general election. Kurtz is in the running for a seat in the House, representing district 83, after winning the primary election with 56.6 percent of the votes.

In an interview with the Tri States Public Radio, Kurtz noted that during his BNSF career he was a member of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen, serving as president of the local for nearly a decade and as the State Legislative Board Chairman for ten years. Kurtz touted his legislative experience with the BLET, saying it prepared him to serve in Des Moines.

Kurtz said one of his top priorities if elected would be to reverse the 2017 changes to

Iowa's public employee bargaining law, which allowed local governments to only negotiate wages each year.

Kurtz said another priority for him would be to promote trade programs in junior high and high school and technical schools. He said not every student in Iowa is looking to attend a four-year college after graduation.

Missouri Blocks Right to Work Law

Voters in Missouri have overwhelmingly rejected a right-to-work law passed by the state's Republican-controlled Legislature that would have banned compulsory union fees — a resounding victory for organized labor.

With about 98 percent of the precincts reporting, the "no" vote on Missouri's Proposition A, which supported the law, was running about 67 percent, with nearly 33 percent voting "yes." In 2017, the right-to-work law passed Missouri's Republican Legislature and was signed by then-Gov. Eric Greitens. However, union organizers gathered enough signatures to keep it from going into effect pending the results of a statewide referendum. The rejection of Proposition A effectively kills the law.

"It's a truly historic moment," said Mike Louis, president of the Missouri AFL-CIO. "Tonight we celebrate, but tomorrow we're getting back to work. We're going to take this energy and momentum and build more power for working people across Missouri."

(NPR, August 8 2018)

Kathleen Bisbikis can be reached by phone at 209-786-7367; by mail at 7367 Stabulis Rd., Valley Springs, California, 95252; or by e-mail at biz4413@gmail.com.



BLET Auxiliary Scholarship Awards for School Year 2018-2019

Congratulations to all of our scholarship winners. We wish you all the best in the year ahead as you pursue your goals for a successful future!

RECIPIENTS OF \$1000 AUXILIARY AWARDS



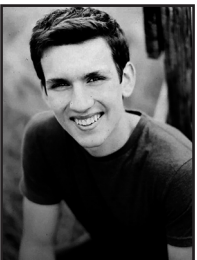
ADRIANA CARLSON

Will be attending Concordia College in Moorhead, Minnesota, as a Freshman. Her father, Allan Carlson, is a member of BLET Div. 163, in Proctor, Minnesota, and works for Canadian National Railway. Her mother, Sonja Carlson, is a member of Auxiliary 6388 in Superior, Wisconsin.



JONATHAN CHENCHAR

Will be attending the University of Wyoming as a Senior. His father, Mark Francis Chenchar, is a retired member of BLET Div. 115, in Cheyenne, Wyoming, and is retired from Union Pacific Railroad. His mother, Marta Chenchar, is a BLET Auxiliary Member-at-Large.



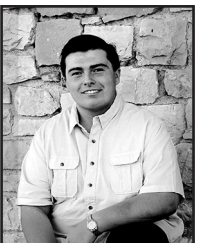
MICHAEL CORDES

Will be attending the University of Washington as a Junior. His father, Scott Cordes, is a member of BLET Div. 758, in Vancouver, Washington, and works for BNSF Railroad. His mother, Janet Cordes, is a BLET Auxiliary Member-at-Large.



DILLON MARTIN

Will be attending the University of Colorado-Pueblo as a Senior. His father, Troy Martin, is a member of BLET Div. 430 in Trinidad, Colorado, and works for BNSF Railroad. His mother, Lisa Martin, is a BLET Auxiliary Member-at-Large.



BRENDEN RUNION

Will be attending the University of Wyoming as a Sophomore. His father, Cory Runion, is a member of BLET Div. 115 in Cheyenne, Wyoming, and works for Union Pacific Railroad. His mother, Jacqueline Runion, is a BLET Auxiliary Member-at-Large.

RECIPIENT OF \$1000 AUXILIARY AWARD IN MEMORY OF LEONA A. LOUIS

ELESA McDONALD

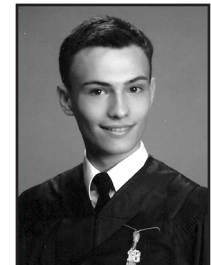
Will be attending Indiana State University in Terre Haute, Indiana, as a Freshman. Her father, Chris McDonald, is a member of BLET Division 577, in Effingham, Illinois, and is employed by Canadian National Railway. Elesa is a BLET Auxiliary Member-at-Large.



RECIPIENTS OF \$1000 AUXILIARY AWARD PLUS \$500 LECMPA AWARD

JACOB HOLDEN

Will be attending Sacramento State University as a Freshman. His father, Michael Bencivengo, is a member of BLET Div. 839, in Stockton, California, and works for BNSF Railroad. His Mother, Lori Bencivengo, is a member of Auxiliary 39 in Stockton.



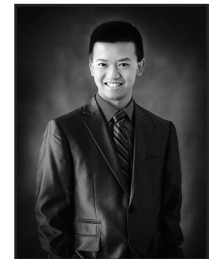
SAMANTHA KING-SHAW

Will be attending Washington State University as a Sophomore. Her father, James F. King-Shaw, is a member of BLET Div. 158, in Sparks, Nevada, and works for Union Pacific Railroad. Her mother, Linda King-Shaw, is a BLET Auxiliary Member-at-Large.



KEVIN LOGAN

Will be attending Pennsylvania State University as a Sophomore. His father, Clarence Logan, is a member of BLET Div. 207, in Casper, Wyoming, and works for BNSF Railroad. His mother, Wai Logan, is a BLET Auxiliary Member-at-Large.



CAMI PRICE

Will be attending Lake Erie College in Painesville, Ohio, as a Sophomore. Her father, Tim Price, is a member of BLET Division 607, in Cleveland, Ohio, and works for Norfolk Southern Railroad. Her mother, Tetiana Ruggles-Price, is a BLET Auxiliary Member-at-Large.



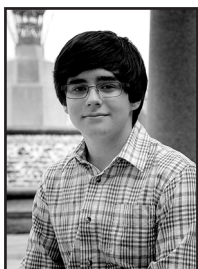
BLET Auxiliary/LECMPA Scholarship Awards for School Year 2018-2019

RECIPIENTS OF LECMPA \$2500 AWARDS



MARIAH BURROLA

Will be working toward a double Masters Degree in Social Work at Arizona State University, and in Teaching at CityU in Vancouver, Washington. Her father, Oscar Burrola, is a member of BLET Div. 839, in Stockton, California, and works for BNSF Railroad. Her mother, Susie Burrola, is a member of Auxiliary No. 39 in Stockton.



DUNCAN MCCOLLOUGH

Will be attending the University of Nebraska at Omaha as a Freshman. His father, Matthew McCollough, is a member of BLET Div. 183, in Omaha, Nebraska, and his mother, Mindy McCollough, is a member of Auxiliary 12 in Omaha.

RECIPIENTS OF LECMPA \$500 AWARDS



ALISON ANDERSON

Will be attending Utah State University in Logan, Utah. Her father, Mark Anderson, is a member of BLET Div. 333, in ST. Paul, Minnesota, and works for Union Pacific Railroad. Her mother, Nancy Anderson, is a BLET Auxiliary Member-at-Large.

RECIPIENTS OF LECMPA \$500 AWARDS,cont'd

ALISSA BURROLA

Will be attending Carrington College in Sacramento, California, to earn her Licensed Vocational Nurse to Registered Nurse Degree. Her father, Oscar Burrola, is a member of BLET Div. 839 in Stockton, California, and works for BNSF Railroad. Her mother, Susie Burrola, is a member of Auxiliary No. 39 in Stockton.



BAILEY GARCIA

Will be attending Central Community College in Kearney, Nebraska, as a Freshman. Her father, Gregory Scott Day, is a member of BLET Division 623 in McCook, Nebraska, and works for BNSF Railroad. Her mother, Crystal Day, is a member of Auxiliary 623 in McCook.



KARMA JADE UNDERWOOD

Will be attending Boise State University as a Junior. Her father, Jim Underwood, is a member of BLET Div. 228, in Pocatello, Idaho, and works for Union Pacific Railroad. Her mother, Lori Underwood, is a BLET Auxiliary Member-at-Large.



TUCKER WALLACE

Will be attending Eastern Oregon University as a Junior/Senior. His father, William Wallace, is a member of BLET Div. 362, in LaGrande, Oregon, and works for Union Pacific Railroad. His mother, Jodi Wallace, is a BLET Auxiliary Member-at-Large.



Quilt Raffle!

In our never-ending quest to raise funds for our Scholarship Program, the Auxiliary is selling raffle tickets for this beautiful Americana-style 90" x 90" quilt, hand-made and donated to us by our own National Secretary Helen Brand. The black and white photo here does not do justice to the vibrant red, white, and blue colors, and excellent craftsmanship, but you can see it in color on our website at www.bletauxiliary.net. Tickets are \$10.00 each and can be purchased online up until September 26, 2018. After that time, tickets will be sold at the National Convention in Las Vegas, where we will draw the winning ticket in a live Facebook drawing on October 3, 2018. If purchased online, your ticket, with your name, address, and telephone number, will be entered in the drawing and your ticket stub will be mailed to you prior to the convention. The quilt will be shipped to the lucky winner! Questions? Please contact National Secretary Helen Brand at hvbrand51@gmail.com.

Back to School Time!

A few tips to make your busy lifestyle more tolerable

By Member-at-Large Jessica Keene

It's that time of year again... the weather gets cooler, the kids are headed back to school, and your railroader is on the go like normal. With after-school activities and railroad work hours, schedules don't always match up and it can feel like you're alone. Well, my fellow auxiliary brothers and sisters, you are not alone! Part of what we do as auxiliary members is to support each other in this lifestyle we live. The following are some tips to keep sane.

Use that crock pot! Yes, it did start the fire that killed Jack on the popular television series "This is Us," but I promise, it won't happen to you. Crockpot manufacturers have assured us that was a far-fetched, fictional story. My family's favorite crockpot meal is throwing a pork roast into the pot with a can of undrained crushed pineapple and a packet of taco seasoning. Cook on low 6-8 hours. Serve in a tortilla or over a bed of rice with some cilantro and lime juice. My railroader loves this wrapped in foil the next day for his on-the-train dinner, so be sure to make enough for leftovers. Using a crockpot shows you are smart, not lazy.

A load a night - before cleaning up after dinner, toss a load of laundry into the washer. It will be done washing and ready for the dryer before you head to bed. Keeping up on the laundry can be difficult, so do one load a day throughout the week to keep it from piling up. Wash bedding and towels on the weekend.

Get your favorite liquid cleaner and make it into an easy-to-grab spray. I have small boys and so I mix three parts water with one part bleach to spray around the toilet whenever I smell something funky, which is pretty often. It makes a huge difference. Keep your dishwasher empty so you can load right away when you create dirty dishes in between meals. Lastly, plant little bits of mint next to windows and doors. Plant in small planters, not the ground as it is invasive and will spread quickly. Not only does it smell amazing, but it repels bugs from entering your home. God knows, with a railroader's schedule, that spider would live forever before my railroader could get him.

Take a short video with your phone of any kiddo event your railroader is missing. Make sure to send it right away so you can tell your little one that daddy will get to see him or her in their play, concert, hitting a home run, etc., as soon as your railroader is able to watch it and respond. Let your little one know how much daddy loved seeing it. This won't only mean the world to your little one, but will also help to make your railroader feel involved with your life and his family in this time-invasive career.

Don't sweat the small stuff. So what, you fed the kids fast food again tonight! Who cares if the dishes aren't done and the laundry is piled high! When your railroader is away, your life is like that of a single parent, and it's often difficult. Don't be so hard on yourself!

When your railroader is home, be in the moment. Order pizza and have a family movie night. Let the kids sleep on the floor and vacuum the popcorn in the morning. It's the little things that kiddos tend to remember... those little special touches that create great family traditions and memories.

Take deep breaths. Always remember, it's part of our human nature to get upset; it's a valid emotion. Give yourself the appropriate time to be



Member-at-Large Jessica Keene and her daughter Charlie at home in Dallas, Oregon.

upset, whether it be five minutes, an hour, an afternoon, or a whole day. Allow yourself to get in touch with and feel your feelings. Watch a movie that invites the tears, eat comfort food and stay in bed. But when the timeframe you have set aside for this self-indulgence runs out, that's it! Tomorrow is a new day and what's in the past can't be changed. So pick yourself up, wash your face, and carry on.

Lastly, take care of yourself. Find a weekly show and make the night it comes on your pamper night. Pour a glass of wine, light an aromatherapy candle, throw on a face mask, and gorge on a bowl of ice cream. Self-care is so important and easily forgotten.

My fellow auxiliarans, we are here for each other. Reach out to another railroad spouse if you need to because more than likely, those you reach out may need you just as much as you need them. No one better to understand the lifestyle we live than each other. Stay safe my brothers and sisters and enjoy the moments that make life worthwhile.



Greetings from your Editor, Susie Burrola

1st Vice President/National Outreach Coordinator

The last four years have taken me on an amazing ride. I have had the pleasure of meeting some wonderful people along the way and developed friendships and memories to last a lifetime. I am very proud to be an auxiliary member and an advocate for the union.

The last couple of years have been a little tough with all the political issues at hand. It has brought out the best and worst in some people. I hope that we can come together and forget our political differences and focus on our livelihood issues that make our union strong. The time has come for me to start a new chapter. I still look forward to being active with my local auxiliary and to helping whenever I am needed by the National Auxiliary.

I am very thankful to have worked with such beautiful sisters; each one of them has taught me something different along the way. I cannot thank our National Auxiliary President Sereena enough for all that she has done. I don't think she knew what to expect when I took office; she didn't know what she was in for... lol! Little did I know she would bring out the best in me and I believe I brought out some of the best in her. (When we took some of our whirlwind organizing trips together, the auxiliary version of Thelma and Louise was born.)

Sereena serves our organization above herself. Her work ethics, compassion for workers and their families, and dedication to our organization speaks volumes. During her term as President, not only did she have two total knee replacement surgeries, she was diagnosed with breast cancer, which she fought and won. Her unselfishness and generosity to our organization will always be remembered and appreciated.

The enemy of harmony is selfish ambition; it quickly divides us. Following are some wise words to live by, shared by Guadalupe Auxiliary No. 28 President Deona Christensen, Tucson, Arizona:

“Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.”

Philippians 2:3-4

Next I would like to thank the other members of our Executive Council. Helen Brand, one of the “matriarchs” of our Auxiliary, has given, and continues to give, selflessly to our organization. Helen has served as national treasurer, alternate national treasurer, and currently serves as national secretary. Helen's knowledge and grace are qualities to be admired. Terri Fleming, our current National Treasurer, has so much compassion and drive. She is always looking for ways to save or make money for the Auxiliary. Not only does she keep our finances in order, she is the true definition of a friend—never prying, but knows when something is just not quite right. Thank you, Terri, for always being our caretaker. I don't even know where to start when it comes to our National Second Vice President/National Legislative Representative Kathleen Bisbikis. She is a force to be reckoned with. Kat brings so much to the table. She not only works on and shares legislative information, she works tirelessly on ways to improve the auxiliary. Her commitment and determination are truly inspiring.

I would also like to thank our past presidents, Anita Caruso and Becky Schneider. Thank you for your continuous support and for sharing all your knowledge. You both have left a lasting footprint on our organization to be acknowledged and honored.

Special thanks to our National BLET President Dennis Pierce, First Vice President Lee Pruitt, and all the members of the BLET National Advisory Board for all your help and continued support of the Auxiliary. Last but not least, a BIG thank you to all our spouses: Ken, Oscar, Charlie, Chuck, and Jason. Thank you from the bottom of my heart for everything you have done for our organization!

I'm glad I was able to serve with all these beautiful ladies I now affectionately call my sisters.

Susie Burrola can be reached at 209-915-1512; efax: 1-855-806-7870; 1723 Rail Street, Manteca, CA 95337; or BletAuxiliaryvp@yahoo.com.

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

**Sereena Hogan, Publisher
BLET Auxiliary News
520-297-0944
vp3sereena@aol.com**

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BLET Auxiliary

Sereena Hogan, Publisher, BLET Auxiliary News
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Strengthening Our Democracy, One Student at a Time

By Calaveras High School Senior Jared Bisbikis

Talking about politics and the importance of voting, as well as its consequences, is an everyday occurrence in my family. My dad is a BLET member and my mom is the 2nd National Vice President/National Legislative Representative for the

"Each one of us can make a difference. Together we make change."

— Barbara Mikulski

BLET Auxiliary. Over the last four years, I have heard my mom repeat over and over again the importance of reaching the youth of our country. This year, as a senior at my high school, I decided I want to do something to inform my fellow seniors and help get them out to the voting polls as quickly as possible.

In our rural county of Calaveras, in northern California, only 24% of the voting age youth voted in the 2016 election. Voting is essential in becoming an informed citizen to society and in making your voice heard. Calaveras County's "Democracy In Action" group also recognized this issue and wanted to help bring the youth voting percentages up. As Associated Student Body President of Calaveras High School, a large part of my job is making sure students are involved, not only in school activities, but also ensuring they are made aware of their duties as community members in our area. Democracy In Action and I partnered together to help get the youth at Calaveras pre-registered to vote. Periodically throughout the school year, we will be setting up booths at school events to get people age 16 and older pre-registered to vote in hopes of making our students accounted for in the next election. We are the future voices of America, and voting is the first step to making our voices heard, not just here in California, but around the country, and around the world.



Inspired by his recent participation at Boys State in Sacramento this summer, where he learned how government works from the inside out, seventeen-year-old Jared Bisbikis has teamed up with "Democracy in Action" volunteers to get 18-year-old seniors at his high school in Calaveras County, California, registered to vote. Sixteen and seventeen-year old students, who will turn 18 before the next general election may also pre-register now.