



# 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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Summer 2014

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](http://www.bletauxiliary.net)

## **Guadalupe Auxiliary No. 28 Hosts Springtime Happy Hour Gathering in Tucson, Arizona**



**Happy Hour Guests congregated in front of retired Southern Pacific Steam Engine #1673 for a group photo at the Southern Arizona Transportation Museum**

Guadalupe Auxiliary No. 28, in Tucson, Arizona, hosted a Springtime Happy Hour for the members of Division 28 and their spouses on May 12, 2014, at the Historic Train Depot in downtown Tucson. The event was sponsored by FELA Attorney Lloyd L. (Chip) Rabb. Approximately 45 guests gathered in the patio area behind the Southern Arizona Transportation Museum, near the historic steam locomotive No. 1673. As an occasional Union Pacific freight train zoomed by on the adjacent track, loudly blowing the whistle, guests waved to the crew members.

In addition to providing an evening of camaraderie with drinks and hors d'oeuvres, the auxiliary furthered its mission to educate BLET spouses by inviting guests to complete a questionnaire, glean the answers from posters on display with information about the Federal Employers Liability Act, the rights of rail employees when injured on duty, what steps to take in the event of an emergency, and the importance of uninsured/underinsured auto coverage for rail employees, as well as information about the Division 28 scholarships and the auxiliary in general. Those who completed the questionnaire received a gift when they turned it in. Handouts were made available with the contact information for the Division 28 officers, information about the auxiliary and the scholarship program, and credit card-size information cards provided by the Arizona State Legislative Board Chairman Nick Johnson explaining that the carrier is covered by FELA, not Workman's Compensation. All crew members are encouraged to carry these in their wallet next to



**Guests gathered around informational posters attached to the fence to find the answers to their contest questionnaires. See sample poster on Page 3. Full color versions of all four posters are available for download on the Auxiliary website at [www.bletauxiliary.net](http://www.bletauxiliary.net).**

their health insurance card in the event that they are transported to a hospital emergency room for an on-the-job injury.

Guests were also invited to visit the Arizona Transportation Museum, which was kept open late just for their enjoyment, thanks to Museum Chairman Dr. Ken Karrels. The museum provides this venue on the patio for private parties and events.

Many thanks to Chip Rabb, Ken Karrels, all the members of Auxiliary 28 who brought hors d'oeuvres, and all the members of Division 28 who attended, especially those who brought their spouses! A great time was had by all.

In April, Guadalupe Auxiliary conducted a bake sale and raffle at the annual "Old Timers Picnic," the luncheon for the retirees of Division 28. Auxiliary members were grateful for this opportunity to raise funds for the scholarships and hope to issue two or three \$500 scholarships this summer to children or grandchildren of Division 28 members who wish to further their education.



## Auxiliary President's Message - BY ANITA J. CARUSO

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I hope all my auxiliary sisters had a wonderful Mother's Day and that your husband and children were able to treat you like a "Queen" on this very special holiday, although I know this is certainly not always possible given a railroader's schedule.

This is one of those occasions that I am sorry that I don't live in my home state of Missouri, as I do not get to spend the day with my mom. Next year, if things work out as planned, I will be able to spend some quality time with my Mother Rose and give her a special day she will always remember. For those of you whose Mother has passed, I know you will hold her dearly in your heart as you remember her on this day.

We recently held our annual Executive Council Meeting the week of April 6-10, 2014, at my home in Omaha, Nebraska. It was nice having the members come to my house for the meetings this year. I must thank Sister Sereena, Sister Lawana, Sister Helen, and Sister Gina for presenting me with a beautiful watch bearing the BLET Auxiliary logo. I love this watch and will always think fondly of each of you whenever I wear it. We worked very hard with our usual workload and, in addition, had the responsibility of preparing for our upcoming Second Quadrennial Convention taking place in Las Vegas, Nevada, later this year.

I have been attending Executive Council meetings for the past 13 years and I must say that this group of sisters has been exceptional to work with. I would also like to thank our National Secretary Lawana Poss for working so diligently this past year learning her new job. I know how hard and demanding this position can be and Sister Lawana is doing a fantastic job. She came on board at an unusually busy time and has been a joy to work with. Thank you Sister Lawana for getting in there and hitting the job at full tilt! We all appreciate your work ethic and know you will do exemplary work for the remainder of your term.

I would like to thank the ladies of Auxiliary River City 12, for once again hosting a potluck supper for the members of the Executive Council. This is the third time we have been fortunate enough to meet with these lovely sisters and visit with them while enjoying fellowship and a great meal! A big thank you goes out to my auxiliary sisters, Darla Fent, Pam Dennis, Vickie Leaders, Connie Tippery, Annie Rangel, Gina Sequenzia, Michelle Keefer, Phyllis Eberl, and Jean Weatherill.

Speaking of our Second National Auxiliary Convention, each national officer, auxiliary delegate, and member-at-large delegate should have received our initial mailing by now with detailed information regarding the upcoming convention. If you have not

received your packet, please contact our National Secretary, Lawana Poss, and she will be sure to get that information to you. Please check our website at ([www.bletauxiliary.net](http://www.bletauxiliary.net)) for updated information as it becomes available. A second mailing will be sent in August, so be on the lookout for its arrival.

At the present time, I am preparing to attend the National Association of State Legislative Board Chairmen's Meeting in Indianapolis, Indiana, May 31 – June 2, 2014. Vice President/NLR Sereena Hogan and I will both attend this event, which is always informative, insightful, and fun. I would have to say that the State Legislative Board Chairmen have always been our biggest champions in promoting the Auxiliary. I have always appreciated how they bring our message to their legislative representatives, encouraging their spouses to join the BLET Auxiliary. Brother Tim Smith and Brother Ken Kertesz have always shown a great deal of respect for the Auxiliary and we want you to know it has not gone unnoticed!

On a sad note, I would like to let everyone know that one of our members, Sister Julia Carter of Clematis Auxiliary 169 in Birmingham, Alabama, fell at her home and broke her hip on April 1, 2014, and is now residing in an assisted living facility. I first met Sister Julia at a National Convention in 1996, as she was always the delegate for Auxiliary 169. She remained their delegate until 2010, when health issues kept her from attending. Please refer to the "Tidbits" column on page 5 for Sister Julia's new address as her son, Harry informed us that she would love to hear from her Auxiliary sisters around the country. If you have the time, please send her a card. Let's help cheer up this lovely lady and long time sister!

I hope I will see many of you during the summer at the four regional conventions. If you have never attended one, they are truly a great learning experience and something that everyone should attend at least once during their railroad life! The arrangement chairs of each region do a fabulous job of putting together these conventions and meetings, so please try to attend one if at all possible.

Here's wishing you a great Memorial Day and a Happy 4th of July. I hope to have the opportunity to visit with many of our members, friends, and BLET National Officers during this convention season. Have a wonderful, safe summer filled with family, friends, and fun!

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# If there's an emergency will you **Be Prepared?**

Railroading is a dangerous occupation and the chances of an employee sustaining a serious injury while on duty are high. Every year thousands of railroad workers are injured. It is imperative that the employee and the family be prepared ahead of time to deal with the situation. A common lament of many who end up in that situation is, "I didn't think this would happen to me, or to us." Spouses need to be familiar with the local division officers and how to get in touch with them.

If a spouse is notified that the employee is injured at work, the first call should be to the local chairman or another local union officer, who will give instructions on how to proceed. Division officers will often go to the scene of the accident to make sure important evidence is preserved. And one or more of them may go to the hospital to help protect the spouse from the company officers or claims agents whose only interest is to reduce the liability on the part of the company. Neither the spouse nor the injured employee is in the right frame of mind to make any kind of statement to company officials at that time and should refuse to speak to anyone other than the union officials or a FELA attorney. Be wary of doctors as well, as the railroad will send in their own doctors to try to intervene on behalf of the company.

Do your homework... be prepared in advance! Make sure you have the phone numbers of your local division officers and FELA attorney at your fingertips in the case of an emergency.

*This poster and others like it can be downloaded from the Auxiliary website at [www.bletauxiliary.net](http://www.bletauxiliary.net).*

# National Vice President/National Legislative Representative Sereena Hogan honored at Women's Day Celebration

By Kathy Hurst, National 2nd Vice President and President of  
Guadalupe Auxiliary 28, Tucson, Arizona

On March 6, 2014, the 4th Annual Celebration of International Women's Day, "Our Voices at Work, Union Women as Catalysts for Change," bestowed the Mother Jones Award of Excellence in Leadership on our own Sereena Hogan. She was nominated by Nick Johnson, Arizona State Legislative Board Chairman and Secretary/Treasurer of BLET Division 28, in Tucson, Arizona. Several members of Guadalupe Auxiliary 28 and BLET Division 28 attended the event. We are very proud of Sister Sereena and her dedication to the BLET. Below is the letter of nomination submitted by Nick Johnson:

## Mother Jones Award for Excellence in Leadership

Sereena became active in our Union in 1997 as a founding member and Secretary/Treasurer of the Guadalupe Chapter (Division 28) of the BLET Auxiliary; a post she still holds today. The Guadalupe Chapter has been a valuable partner to the active members and families of Division 28. Sereena and the BLET Auxiliary have worked tirelessly to make lives of BLET families better in so many ways, including but certainly not limited to: planning holiday and social events, conducting informational seminars for family members, keeping active and retired members informed of issues that affect their benefits and consoling and assisting families in need during times of illness or tragedy. Sereena was instrumental in the formation of a scholarship program at the Guadalupe Chapter and is on the committee that administers that program.

Her work with the Guadalupe Chapter, alone, would certainly be a yeoman's task for many people. In addition to her ongoing work locally, Sereena became active with the BLET Auxiliary at the national level and was elected to Third Vice President in 2001. She was subsequently elected to Vice President and is currently serving as Vice President and National Legislative Representative of the BLET Auxiliary. In addition to her national and local offices and responsibilities, Sereena is also the editor and publisher of the BLET Auxiliary News; a quarterly publication that goes not only to all active BLET Auxiliary members, but also to each state legislative chair and their respective boards. It is an outstanding publication and should be read by all union members, regardless of their industry or affiliation.

Sereena has furthered her involvement in the Labor Movement by assisting with training classes at the National Labor College for not only the BLET, but also the International Union of Operating Engineers (IUOE) and the International Association of Heat and Frost Insulators and Allied Workers (IAHFIAW). Sereena is also a member of the nationally acclaimed E.L.I.S.E. (Education, Leadership, Inspiration, Solidarity and Excellence) Consortium, which is a partnership focused on leadership training for labor and community activists.



Sereena Hogan center with Linda Hatfield, President of CWA Local 7000 and Chair of the AFLCIO Pima Area Labor Federation, Tucson, AZ, on her left, and Rebekah Friend, Secretary/Treasurer and Executive Director of the Arizona AFL-CIO (right), and two Pima College students who represented "Rosie the Riveter" at the event.

I have known Sereena for many years and I have always known her to be a tireless, hard working, informed, and active advocate for union members and their families. Through her many endeavors, she has touched and improved the lives of BLET and Union members across the country. She is an inspiring example of what we stand for in organized labor. I am proud to nominate Sereena Hogan for this award.

**Mother Jones** is the nickname given to Irish-American trade union activist Mary Harris Jones, born in Ireland in 1937. She was a social reformer and leader in the labor movement, and is known for bringing to the attention of the public issues such as forced child labor and worker safety in the U.S. She was strongly associated with the United Mine Workers and a cofounder of the Industrial Workers of the World organization. She died November 30, 1930. The publication *Mother Jones*, named after Mary Harris Jones, is an American magazine featuring investigative and breaking news reporting on politics, the environment, human rights, and culture.

**Rosie the Riveter** is a cultural icon of the United States, representing the wave of women who stepped up to work on assembly lines after the men went overseas to fight in World War II, many of whom produced munitions and war supplies. The Norman Rockwell image of Rosie the Riveter that first appeared on the cover of the *Saturday Evening Post* on May 29, 1943, is commonly used as a symbol of feminism and women's economic power. A song, "Rosie the Riveter," became very popular in 1942.

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## Tidbits from National Secretary Lawana Poss

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The warm weather has finally arrived and it ushers in a new season of Regional Meetings! Please see page 11, or check the BLET website <http://www.ble-t.org> for locations and dates. These conventions are very busy and exciting. We always learn something new and meet some new friends. Please stop by the Auxiliary table and say hello! And don't forget to purchase tickets for the scholarship fundraiser raffles and buy an Auxiliary Cookbook!! I do hope you plan to attend! I look forward to seeing you!

### **MAL REMINDER**

Thank you to the Members-at-Large who have sent in their dues. The Second Notice of Dues letters have been mailed. If you have not already done so, please mail your dues to me and I will send you a receipt.

### **SCHOLARSHIPS**

Congratulations to all of the BLET Auxiliary scholarship recipients! We are so very proud of all of the students who sent in applications. The recipients are listed in this publication on page 10.

### **NATIONAL DELEGATES**

The National Delegate information packet has been mailed to you. Please follow directions and return the credentials card to me by the due date. If you did not receive your envelope, please contact me as soon as possible.

### **IN OUR THOUGHTS AND PRAYERS**

We continue to send healing thoughts and prayers to Sam Caruso, husband of our National President Anita Caruso, as he recuperates from spine surgery on April 14. Hope you are back up to speed real soon, Sam!

Last month I got a call from Harry Carter about his mother, Julia Carter, long-time member of Clematis Auxiliary No. 169 in Birmingham, Alabama, informing us that Julia fell and broke her hip on April 1. After a stint in rehab, she has moved into an assisted living facility. Julia would love to hear from you! Please take a moment to send Sister Julia a card or note. Her new address is:

Room 504 – Fair Haven  
1424 Montclair Road  
Birmingham, AL 35210

We extend our deepest sympathies to the family of Sister Mary Ann Braidhill. Sister Mary Ann was a long time member of Emily Denny Auxiliary 189 in Birmingham, Alabama. She passed away on April 27, 2014.

### **CONGRATULATIONS!**



Congratulations to Auxiliary 3 (Buffalo, NY) Secretary Janet Louis and her husband Jim Louis who celebrated their 25th Wedding Anniversary on May 12, 2014. Happy Anniversary Janet and Jim!



Congratulations to Guadalupe Auxiliary 28 Associate Member Ken Kroeger, Tucson, Arizona. After his retirement last year from Union Pacific and the BLET National, Ken finished his Bachelor of Arts Degree and received his diploma in the last commencement ceremony of the National Labor College in Silver Spring, Maryland, on April 26. Good job, Ken!

Please let me know what is happening in your life!! Make this a summer full of fun and lasting memories!



*Lawana Poss can be reached at 770-497-8898, by e-mail at [Lewp2007@bellsouth.net](mailto:Lewp2007@bellsouth.net), or by mail at 1394 Bywood Court, Suwanee, Georgia 30024.*

## **BLET Testimony Regarding Rail Safety**

On February 26, BLET Vice President & National Legislative Representative John P. Tolman testified at a House subcommittee hearing, emphasizing the importance of timely implementation of Positive Train Control (PTC), and other measures to boost rail safety and improve the quality of life for BLET members. The hearing was called by the House Transportation & Infrastructure Committee's Subcommittee on Railroads, Pipelines, and Hazardous Materials.

Vice President Tolman's testimony touched on four main topics: Positive PTC, two-person train crews, fatigue reduction, and inward-facing cameras. He explained that the positions of the railroads and the labor unions differ significantly on many, if not all, of these issues. He went on to say that the vision of the labor unions comes directly from the members who actually work on the railroads and that their first-hand experience makes them far more "uniquely positioned" to provide the information necessary to implement changes that would serve to make the industry safer.

Vice President Tolman spoke out against the railroads' requested extension for implementation of PTC to 2020 rather than by the end of 2015, as mandated by the 2008 Rail Safety Improvement Act (RSIA). He also urged the committee members to consider co-sponsoring the Safe Freight Act, H.R. 3040, a BLET-backed bill that would require

a two-person train crew on all freight trains in U.S.

With regard to the issue of fatigue reduction, Tolman stated that the intent of the RSIA was to reduce fatigue in the industry and that this should have been accomplished by mandating the railroads to provide their operating employees with predictable schedules, calling windows, and train lineups they can rely on so that they can plan their sleep accordingly.

Lastly, with regard to inward-facing cameras, Vice President Tolman testified against requiring the installation of inward-facing cameras to monitor train crews, stating that it is the BLET's contention that the cameras are not a safety improvement; they would not prevent accidents and would likely have the opposite effect — providing a distraction that would make an engineer's work environment less safe. Although the FRA has not yet issued a final rule on the use of inward-facing cameras, the installation of such cameras has already begun on several railroads.

BLET National President Dennis Pierce thanked Brother Tolman for representing the Brotherhood at the hearing. For a more detailed review of Brother Tolman's testimony, please see the BLET News Release dated February 26, 2014, which can be found at <http://www.ble-t.org/pr/news/newsflash.asp?id=5528>.

## **Inward-Facing Camera Installation on UP**

Union Pacific (UP) has joined Kansas City Southern and

Metrolink in equipping locomotive cabs with inward-facing cameras. More than 5,000 UP locomotives will be equipped with inward-facing cab cameras, a process that is expected to continue through 2016. Initially, selected units also will be equipped with mobile device detectors.

Los Angeles commuter rail operator Metrolink was the first to install inward-facing cameras in 2009, following the 2008 collision of a Metrolink train and a Union Pacific train in southern California. Kansas City Southern began the installation of inward-facing cameras on its locomotives in the spring of 2013 and activated them in July after a judge ruled the dispute over their use to be a minor dispute rather than a major dispute under the Railway Labor Act.

According to UP, the decision to install the technology on their locomotives last month follows the National Transportation Safety Board recommendations made in 2008, involving the installation of inward- and outward-facing locomotive cab cameras. In January of this year, under pressure from Senators Richard Blumenthal (D-Conn.) and Chuck Schumer (D-NY), the FRA began a rule-making process that could make the cameras mandatory. Outward-facing cameras, called Track Image Recorders (TIRs), have been installed on UP locomotives since 2005, providing an image of the track, crossings, and signals directly in front of the locomotive.

UP Vice President of Safety, Security, and Environment

Bob Grimaila stated: "the use of recordings is restricted. It is intended to supplement, but not replace, other forms of existing security and safety measures, including individual employee and supervisor safety, safety training, and consistent application of the company's rules and programs." The railroad maintains that recordings will be used in the course of analysis, investigation, regulatory compliance and discovery related to safe work practices, and that the recordings will be treated as confidential, proprietary, and protected information.

UP claims that the recording cameras will not record audio at this time, but will be used for video only, and will not have any view into private spaces, such as restrooms. The chain of custody protocols that already exist for workplace recording systems, such as the TIR retrieval process, will continue to be used, according to UP.

Train crews are being advised that tampering with an inward-facing cab camera could result in discipline up to and including dismissal.

## **Amtrak's Key Infrastructure Projects for 2014**

In a news release dated March 10, 2014, Amtrak outlined its infrastructure plans for 2014, which include continued installation of positive train control (PTC) safety technology, the start of major construction to upgrade Northeast Corridor high-speed rail, and expansion of station accessibility for passengers with disabilities.

This year, Amtrak will continue its “aggressive” program to install PTC on an additional 1,200 track miles beyond the 530 track miles where it is already in operation on some Amtrak-owned sections of the Northeast Corridor and all of its Michigan Line. Amtrak also is working to obtain the needed radio spectrum to transmit data critical to operating PTC systems in the new areas.

### **Ryan Budget Passed by Narrow Margin**

On April 10, the House passed Budget Committee Chairman Paul Ryan’s budget, which includes \$5.1 trillion in spending cuts over 10 years without closing tax loopholes. The measure passed 219 to 205, with 12 Republicans joining all Democrats in voting no. A swing of just seven Republican votes would have defeated the measure.

The plan would cut more than \$5 trillion over the coming decade to reach balance by 2024. The sharpest cuts would come to health care programs for the poor and uninsured, food stamps, and array of domestic programs, including Pell Grants, education, and community development grants. It calls for total repeal of the Affordable Care Act just as millions are reaping the benefits of the law, and Medicare would be converted into a “premium support” system, where people 65 and older could buy private insurance with federal subsidy vouchers instead of government-paid health care.

Not surprisingly, the plan includes increased military spending and provides large tax cuts for millionaires. Some see the passage of this bill, which rejects compromise in favor of appealing to hard-

core Republican values, as a message that Ryan has big ambitions, including running for President in 2016.

The action followed a series of House votes on alternatives, including defeats earlier Thursday of a House Democratic alternative and Wednesday of what Republicans offered as a version of President Obama’s proposed fiscal 2015 budget—a depiction Democrats disputed.

Democrats who lead the Senate do not plan to pass a budget at all for fiscal year 2015, which begins Oct. 1 of this year, saying that the two-year spending agreement that Senate Budget Committee Chairwoman Patty Murray reached in December with Ryan makes that unnecessary. The Murray-Ryan agreement set discretionary spending levels for the upcoming fiscal year at \$1.014 trillion.

Even some Republicans acknowledge that passage of the Ryan budget is more an aspirational declaration of their party’s priorities and vision of government spending; however, the April 10 vote showed that it is not necessarily a reflection of the vision of all House Republicans.

FRA Rulemaking re: Crew Size In a press release dated April 9, 2014, the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) announced its intention to issue a proposed rule requiring two-person train crews on crude oil trains and establishing minimum crew size standards for most mainline freight and passenger rail operations. The press release also stated the agency’s intention to advance a rulemaking on train securement, as well as movement of hazardous

materials.

Following the FRA announcement, the BLET received numerous requests for comments. Although it is not the BLET’s practice to publicly comment on a pending rule-making, and no substantive comment can be made on the FRA’s proposal, which has yet to be published, BLET National President Dennis Pierce stated that, based on recent attempts by the rail industry’s lobbying arm to change the debate, he felt compelled to respond.

In his response, President Pierce stated that it is undeniable that the 2013 runaway train catastrophe in Lac-Mégantic, Quebec, Canada, was facilitated, if not directly caused, by the railroad’s decision to operate that train with a single-person crew. Following that tragedy, the Safe Freight Act, H.R. 3040, was introduced. This legislation requires that “no freight train or light engine used in connection with the movement of freight may be operated unless it has a crew consisting of at least two individuals, one of whom is certified under regulations promulgated by the Federal Railroad Administration as a locomotive engineer pursuant to section 20135, and the other of whom is certified under regulations promulgated by the Federal Railroad Administration as a conductor pursuant to section 20163.” The BLET is working toward the passage of this important piece of legislation, which now has 70 cosponsors.

President Pierce stated that the BLET agrees with the FRA position that “safety is enhanced with the use of a multiple person crew,” and that “a second crew member provides safety redundancy and provides a method of



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*Our lives begin  
to end the day  
we become silent  
about things that  
matter.*

— Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

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checks and balances on train operations.” He then pointed out that the rail industry is determined to hijack this issue and convert it into a process to “further pad its already historic profit levels” by holding the issue hostage to the implementation of Positive Train Control (PTC) technology. Although PTC is an upgrade and overlay on existing signal and train control technology that will save lives and reduce accidents and property damage, it should never be the basis for a waiver of the two-person train crew requirement, which is exactly what rail management is hoping to achieve.

President Pierce emphasized that the BLET will continue to oppose the rail industry’s request for a five-year extension of the December 31, 2015 deadline for installation of PTC that was set forth by Congress. He said that the railroad’s response is reprehensible given that they are preying upon the legitimate safety concerns of rail workers and the general public to increase their profits. He went on to say that the BLET views the railroad’s response as “a thinly veiled threat against collective bargaining agreement provisions that address crew size, which would be unaffected by the proposed regulation, and which we will vigorously defend.” He

concluded by stating that the BLET will work with all its energy to ensure that the FRA develops a regulation that puts the safety of all railroad workers, and of the American public, first and foremost.

### **Proposed State Laws to Mandate Two-Person Crew**

The BLET and the Transportation Division of the International Association of Sheet Metal, Air, Rail and Transportation Workers (SMART-TD) have started a campaign to get state laws passed mandating a two-person crew on all freight trains. The two unions have developed language that both minimizes the potential for a federal preemption challenge and maximizes the likelihood that the legislation will survive any challenge. The model legislation has been provided to members of all State Legislative Boards in both unions with instructions not to deviate from the model when proposing legislation on the subject. Among other items, the legislation stipulates that any person who willfully violates the two-person crew law would be subject to financial penalties.

BLET National President Dennis Pierce and SMART-TD President John Previsich both urged their officers to work with their counterparts to move this legislation

forward in their states. On the national level, all members of the BLET and the BLET Auxiliary, and their family members, are strongly encouraged to contact their representatives in the House to ask for their support of H.R. 3040, the Safe Freight Act, which would require a two-person crew on virtually all freight trains, and is currently pending before the U.S. House of Representatives.

### **Another Whistleblower Case**

Federal regulators have ordered Union Pacific to reinstate an injured Nebraska worker and pay \$85,000 in damages. On April 23, The U.S. Department of Labor’s Occupational Safety and Health Administration stated that the railroad improperly terminated the North Platte employee after he reported an injury. Union Pacific spokesman Mark Davis said the railroad is reviewing OSHA’s decision and hasn’t decided whether to appeal.

The worker hurt his back in October 2012 after a chair he was sitting on collapsed. Following the injury, regulators say the worker was removed from duty and accused of violating several railroad policies, including workplace violence rules. Regulators say the firing was done in retaliation for reporting the injury.

## ***NASLBC Meeting held May 31 - June 2 in Indianapolis, Indiana***

Engine crew size legislation (HR 3040), inward facing cameras, Positive Train Control, two-person crew laws on the state level, and attacks on the Federal Employers Liability Act and the Railway Labor Act were the major topics discussed at the National Association of State Legislative Board Chairmen’s (NASLBC) Meeting in Indianapolis, Indiana, May 31 - June 3. President Anita Caruso and Vice President/NLR Sereena Hogan were honored to be in attendance with this great group of legislative chairmen and representatives from around the country, as well the national officers of the BLET and other guests. Tim Smith put together an impressive agenda of interesting and informative speakers, including Nancy Lessin of the United Steel Workers Union, who gave a presentation on the Impact of Work Schedules and Fatigue on Workers’ Health and Safety and Blame-the-Worker Safety Programs.

President Caruso gave an update on the Auxiliary and Sereena Hogan made a presentation about the negative impact of Walmart on the nation’s economy, encouraging those in attendance to vote with their dollars by spending them at retailers other than Walmart and Sam’s Club and to check out the website [www.changewalmart.com](http://www.changewalmart.com) to see how they can help the workers at these institutions that

promote welfare for multi-billionaires at the expense of their employees and the American taxpayers.

Many thanks to Indiana State Legislative Board Chairman Emeritus Bill Verdeyen, new Chairman Ray Ford, and NASLBC S/T Ken Kertesz for making the hotel arrangements. The Crowne Plaza Downtown Indianapolis Union Station Hotel is a unique historic railroad-themed venue adjacent to an active Amtrak station, featuring Pullman car guest rooms resting on original track inside the hotel. Thank you also to the attendees who dug into their pockets and donated funds to help out the Auxiliary - we so appreciate your generosity!

A special tribute honoring recently retired Bill Verdeyen was held at the dinner event on Sunday evening. We wish Bill the best for a long and happy retirement and many years of fulfilling his passion on the golf course.

We are most grateful to be included in this annual meeting and very thankful that everyone made it home safely, especially those like Anita and Sam Caruso who drove into the 100 mph wind, baseball-size hail, torrential downpours, and tornados that ravaged the Omaha and Kansas City areas.



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# Retirement Rocks!

***Onita and Tony Wayland relish their time together in retirement, enjoying the good life that Tony's 38-1/2 years in engine service earned for them.***

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On May 31, 1984, Tony Wayland boarded the engine for the last time, and on June 1, after 38-1/2 years working as a locomotive engineer, he and Onita set off on another journey... one of relaxation... spending time with children, grandchildren, great grandchildren, and friends; fishing; farming; and traveling... basically doing whatever they wanted to, and best of all, whenever they want to do it!

Onita was elected as 1st Vice President to the Grand International Auxiliary (GIA) in 1996. Because of the resignation of the Vice President during her term, Onita moved up into the Vice President position, and made many trips around the country organizing new auxiliaries. She was always on the go, and became known as "roadrunner" by her auxiliary sisters. In 2001, she was elected President of the GIA, and served in that position until 2006, just before the name change to BLET Auxiliary. She was also a member of Palestine Auxiliary 584 until it was dissolved due to declining membership a few years back. She maintains her involvement in the Auxiliary as a member of Auxiliary 37, in Little Rock, Arkansas.

Tony and Onita live in Mart, Texas, and own a ranch near Groesbeck, where, until recently, they raised cattle, checking on them and caring for them daily. Their cows were like their babies; they had named most of them and had certain favorites among the herd. During the drought of 2011, they were forced to sell their cattle... a move they still talk about today. Adjoining the property, is Onita's homestead, which they still own and maintain, and visit frequently.

Avid Baptists, they have been active in Mart's First Baptist Church since 1946, doing everything they are called upon to do, and then some. Onita works in the preschool class and Tony belongs to the men's class. They also take turns preparing breakfast for the Wednesday morning meet and greet.

At 10:30 every morning, you can find them at Mart's Dairy Queen having coffee with the locals. Nobody is a stranger when they come through that door; everyone is greeted with a smile and a "howdy."

Onita and Tony's pride and joy is their family. Their daughter Brenda and her husband Lee live in Waco, Texas.



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**Tony and Onita Wayland on their ranch near Groesbeck, Texas**

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Brenda's daughter Kristen lives in Round Rock and has two sons, Kai, 12, and Kade, 9. Daughter Toni is married to Roger and lives in Burnet. Toni's daughter Kori recently moved to Colorado.

After retirement, Tony took a class on small motor maintenance and enjoys working on small engines in his workshop at home. Onita enjoys being outside in her yard and garden, where there is seldom a leaf out of place. If someone is sick in town, you can bet there will be a bucket of potato soup delivered to them as soon as Onita hears about it.

It has not all been a "bed of roses" for the Waylands since Tony retired, however. On July 8, 2007, Tony suffered a massive heart attack. Thanks to the quick action of those around him, he was revived and given the opportunity to continue living a full and active lifestyle, getting thumbs up from his doctors at each and every visit.

On Tony's 90th birthday, a year and half ago, his daughters held a birthday reception for him at the church. Over 200 people showed up to wish him the best. Onita turned 86 this last February. They have been married for 67 years. Spending time apart while Tony worked the road, they are grateful for this time to be together in retirement and look forward to many more years enjoying the life that they have created with one another and their family and friends.

## Executive Council Convenes in Omaha for Annual Meeting



**Executive Council Members: Secretary Lawana Poss, Treasurer Helen Brand, President Anita Caruso, 1st Vice President Gina Forman, and Vice President/NLR Sereena Hogan**

### **By Helen Brand, National Treasurer**

The Executive Council met at the home of National President Anita Caruso, April 6 to April 10, 2014. All arrived on Sunday, April 6, and later enjoyed a welcome dinner prepared by Anita and Sam at their home. We welcomed Lawana to the council; it was her first meeting since taking the position as National Secretary.

The meetings began at 9:00 a.m. Monday morning, with three full days of business. We reviewed yearly reports from each officer, graded scholarship applications, reviewed the Care and Assistance (CAP) applications, discussed the upcoming regional convention schedule and which of us would be attending each. We had a conference call with Brian Moland, our financial adviser from ORBA Financial, and set a budget for the upcoming National Convention scheduled for September 28 to October 2, 2014, and we worked on a list of proposed resolution changes to our Constitution & Bylaws.

We were able to relax in the evenings, enjoying each other's company while sharing dinner together. On Tuesday evening, River City Auxiliary 12 prepared and shared a covered dish dinner at Anita's home. The evening was filled with good food and good friends. On Wednesday evening, we shared a "farewell dinner" and our last evening together before departing for our homes on Thursday morning.

### **2014-2015 BLET Auxiliary Scholarship Recipients**

**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 BLET Division 256. Melanie is attending Colorado State University, Fort Collins, Colorado.

**Allyson Booth**, daughter of James and Anne Booth. Anne is a member of Guadalupe Auxiliary 28 and James is a retired member of BLET Division 28. She is attending University of Colorado Denver, Anschutz Medical Campus.

**Ariel Johnson**, daughter of Owen and Beate Johnson. Owen is a member of BLET Division 212 and Beate is a member-at-large. Ariel is attending University of Houston College of Optometry.

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

**Jacob Wright**, son of Jason and Heidi Wright. Jason is a member of Division 502 and Special Rep/Coordinator of Education & Training for the BLET National. Heidi is a member-at-large. Jacob will be attending the University of North Texas.

**Lauren Sansone**, daughter of Gregory and Christine Sansone. Gregory is a member of Division 839 and Christine is a member of Auxiliary 39 in Stockton, California. Lauren will be attending California State University, East Bay.

**Sam Henry Dinauer**, son of Paul and Andrea Dinauer. Paul is a member of Division 882 and Andrea is a member-at-large. Sam will be attending Milwaukee School of Engineering.

**Joseph P. Chenchar**, son of Mark and Marta Chenchar. Mark is a member of Division 115 and Marta is a member-at-large. Joseph is attending the University Of Wyoming College Of Law.

**Ann Margaret Chenchar**, daughter of Mark and Marta Chenchar. Mark is a member of Division 115 and Marta is a member-at-large. Ann will be attending University of Wyoming.

**James Edward Poss**, son of Mike and Lawana Poss. Mike is a member of Division 696 and the Georgia State Legislative Board Secretary Treasurer. Lawana is a member-at-large and the BLET Auxiliary National Secretary.



**Members of the Executive Council presented President Caruso with a BLET Auxiliary logo watch, the first of its kind.**

**June 29-July 3, 2014**

**74th Annual International Western Convention (IWC) - Minneapolis, Minneapolis**

Arrangements Chairman David K. Brown, Chairman of the Minnesota State Legislative Board and Legislative Representative of BLET Division 517, will host the 2014 IWC at the Hilton Minneapolis.

**August 4-8, 2014**

**76th Annual Eastern Union Meeting Association (EUMA) - Cleveland, Ohio**

Arrangements Chairman Patrick Redmond, Local Chairman of Division 607, and Co-Chair James R. Blum, Legislative Representative of Division 526, will host the 2014 EUMA at the newly-renovated Westin Downtown Cleveland, which is within walking distance of BLET National Division headquarters.

**September 7-11, 2014**

**79th Annual Southwestern Convention Meeting (SWCM) - St. Louis, Missouri**

Arrangements Chairman Dave W. Grimes, Local Chairman of Division 42, will host the 2014 SWCM at the Hilton St. Louis at the Ballpark Hotel. For more information, visit the SWCM website: [bletswcm.org](http://bletswcm.org).

**BLET Auxiliary Second Quadrennial National Convention**

September 29 - October 2, 2014, at the Rio Hotel and Casino in Las Vegas, Nevada.

**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**

**The next issue will be published in September 2014. Please have your submissions to Sereena by August 20.**

**Greetings from Editor Sereena Hogan**

This has been a very busy year already. We had a great Executive Council Meeting in Omaha at the home of President Caruso and put together a number of resolutions that will be voted on at the upcoming National Convention in October. For those of you who will attend the convention as a delegate on behalf of a local auxiliary, please review the packet of resolutions with your auxiliary members before attending the convention. Many thanks to Past President Becky Schneider for her hard work in drafting the majority of the resolutions for the Executive Council.

Our local auxiliary here in Tucson has had two events this year for the members of Division 28 and their spouses... the Informational Seminar in January, and the Happy Hour gathering on May 12 (see story on front cover). We also assisted with the annual "Old Timers Picnic" for the retirees of Division 28 in April where we held a bake sale and raffle to raise funds for our local scholarship program. Almost every time we have an event of this type, we pick up at least one new member. We welcome new member Helen Svob, who joined the Guadalupe Auxiliary in May.

I hope that you all got a chance to read the article about the Belen Auxiliary on pages 29-30 of the Spring edition of the Locomotive Engineers & Trainmen's Journal, which can be found online at <http://www.ble-t.org/pr/journal/spring2014/>. We are very proud of the Enchanted Echoes Auxiliary for the work they are doing and I am especially grateful to them for sharing their ideas, especially the one about creating educational posters for their picnic last year. I borrowed that idea to create the posters and activity for our Happy Hour here in Tucson and it worked out great. For anyone interested in using the posters for an event in your area, they are available for download on our website at [www.bletauxiliary.net](http://www.bletauxiliary.net). This, to me, is what our sisterhood is all about... sharing our ideas with one another to help promote our goals to educate and support the families of BLET members across the nation.

I very much enjoyed attending the Ohio State Legislative Board Quadrennial Convention in Columbus, Ohio, May 1-2, at the invitation of Ohio State Board Chairman Tim Hanely. Tim did a great job of lining up some lively and interesting speakers for the meeting and I am especially grateful for the opportunity to address the spouses and share some info about the Auxiliary at the spouses' meeting he arranged. Some of the ladies at that meeting are working to get the Toledo auxiliary back up and running. Congratulations Tim on your re-election!

It was also a pleasure to attend the annual National Association of State Legislative Board Chairmen's Meeting in Indianapolis, Indiana, May 31 - June 2. For more on that meeting, go to Page 8.

Finally, I was humbled and honored to receive the Mother Jones Award at the Women's Day event in Tucson on March 6 (story on Page 4). I knew nothing about it until I arrived at the event, so it came as a complete surprise to me. Thank you Brother Nick Johnson for nominating me for this celebrated award!

I look forward to seeing many of you at the upcoming conventions. Wishing all of you a safe, healthy, and happy summer season!



## **BLET Auxiliary**

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