WASHINGTON, D.C. – On April 17, the United Transportation Union (UTU) joined with a major coalition of 11 rail unions and retiree organizations, representing more than three million members, to launch a national campaign to convince Congress to enact the best improvements to the Railroad Retirement system in a generation.

“We are proud to stand shoulder-to-shoulder with our brothers and sisters in 10 other unions to ask Congress to pass these major improvements to Railroad Retirement,” said Charles L. Little, UTU International president. “Altogether we represent more than three million persons, and we are asking Congress to make the best improvements to the Railroad Retirement system in a generation.

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See Editorial, Page 4

Campaign begins to enact improvements in Railroad Retirement

Unions ask Congress to improve pensions

For the second year in a row, Local 1421 in Franklin Park, Ill., was the top TPEL local in the U.S. in average donations per member. TPEL raised $1.55 million in 1999, making it more than four times bigger than the next-largest rail union PAC, the BLE.

“TPEL is the No. 1 rail union PAC in the U.S. and is more than one-and-half times as large as the next five rail union PACs combined,” said Byron A. Boyd, Jr., assistant president.

Rounding out the Top 5 were Locals 1293 in Altoona, Wisc., Local 1129 in Raleigh, N.C., Local 17 in Marshalltown, Iowa, and Local 1933 in Washington, D.C. New to the Top 10 were Locals 1468 in Walla Walla, Wash., and 1933 in Washington, D.C.
**Local 421, Conneaut, Ohio**

Much of Conrail may be history, but the annual Stoneboro Pensioners Party for Conrail retirees is going strong as it marks its 15th year, according to retired member Harvey G. Firester. The event includes dinner, is expected to draw 150 active and retired workers, and will be held Saturday, May 13, at the Hempfield Fire Company Station One, 20 E. Sixth St., Greenville, Pa. For information, contact Firester at (814) 425-2803, retired member Bill Murray at (724) 376-3594, or Terry Smith at (724) 376-3807.

**Local 445, Nioita, Ill.**

Designated Legal Counsel H. Oney, Farina & Downes will help members of the local, along with members of BLE Division 391, raise money through the Leeser-McIntyre Golf Outing to aid area rail families devastated by illness.

To be held June 6 at Deer Run Golf Course in Hamilton, Ill., the event began three years ago to help the families of Local 445 member Tim McIntyre and BLE member Tim Lesher, who suffer from Lou Gehrig’s disease. Beneficiaries can sponsor a hole for $50, said Local Chairperson Michael K. Ritchie, who noted the two- person scramble costs $75 per player, while the four-person scramble with all-you-can- eat dinner afterwards at Keosuk Yacht Club. For information, contact Ritchie at (319) 463-7449, BLE’s Jeff Kurtz at (319) 372-9067, or BLE’s Chuck Tanner at (319) 722-7353.

**Local 469, Madison, Ill.**

Retired switchman and field supervisor Earl Koder, 88, was honored at the local’s regular meeting last month and presented with a UTU Gavel, membership pin by Local President Tom Kennedy, said Secretary and Treasurer John I. Payer. Koder began his career with the Terminal Railroad in 1937 and joined Brotherhood of Railroad Trainmen (BRT) Lodge 943. He became BRT deputy president in 1953, organized the Midwest Regional Committees in 1960, and served as field supervisor until his retirement in 1977.

**Local 982, Rochester, N.Y.**

Officers and committee members congratulate and thank the membership for persevering in pursuit of claims against the Conrail/CSX system. According to Dave Murphy, the carman was substituting yard crews for road switchers to service various industries, failing to utilize the road lists. The recent decision of SBA 1121 in Award 5 provides for payments to involved train and engine service employees. Thanks are also offered to General Chairperson C.D. Winbrenner for his expertise in handling the cases.

**Local 1042, Oklahoma City, Okla.**

Members have overwhelmingly ratified a four-year agreement with Jefferson Bus Line, retroactive to March 1, 1999, that raises the top mileage rate and charter base rate, increases meal allowances, creates guaranteed vacation slot elections, improves language in grievance and arbitration provisions, and boosts the protection rate. International Vice President and Bus Department Director Bernie McNelis, who assisted the negotiators, commended Local Chairperson Fred Rayman and his committee, which includes Charlie Pollard and Bob George, for their hard work and dedication on behalf of their members.

**Local 1144, Melville, Sask.**

A monument to Canadian National workers who died on the job, funded by local members in cooperation with BLE Division 764, was to be unveiled April 28 in Melville, said Treasurer Keith H. Degerstedt, whose father is Keith H. Degerstedt, whose father is. Local President Harvey Degerstedt said the monuments were unveiled to honor the sacrifices made by the workers and their families.

**Local 1151, Emporio, Ont.**

The local will host a pair of meetings this month, with a special one for those working out of New Orleans slated for Saturday, May 20, at 3 p.m. at the Holiday Inn New Orleans/Metairie at I-10 and Causeway Boulevard, said Secretary and Treasurer M.E. Corbitt. Attendees will be representatives of Designated Legal Counsel Burge & Wettermark, as well as General Chairpersons Warner & Biedenharn (CN/IC) and M.E. Matheny (KCS). The following day, the local’s regular monthly meeting will be held at 3 p.m. at the Days Inn at 10254 Airline Highway, Baton Rouge, La.

**Local 1502, Wildwood, Fla.**

CSS recently served notice on the local to operate trains from Wildwood through Jacksonville to Waycross, where the carrier maintains a big bumpy yard, said Local Chairperson Gary Williams, who notes all are working long hours due to manpower shortage. The local, which runs interdivisional service from Jacksonville to Tampa, also represents workers on a former Atlantic Coast Line route who once belonged to a now-closed committee in Sanford, Fla. Regular meetings are held the first and third Mondays of the month at American Legion Post 18 en n.Hwy. 44.

**Local 1558, Bergenfield, N.J.**

Members are mourning the loss of two well-regarded members, including former UTU President Samuel H. Hollands (see story on Page 10) and William “Bill” Marshall of Oradell, N.J., who died after a heart attack on April 3, according to General Chairperson Rich Deiser. Marshall, survived by his brother Joseph and George, was a bus operator for Rockland Coaches (Red and Tan) from 1976 until his death.

**Monthly winner**

This month’s lucky winner of her choice of any item bearing the UTU logo is Diana J. Lane of Pen Argyl, Pa. Sister Lane is an active member of Local 1161, Newark, N.J., which represents workers employed by New Jersey Transit. These items are awarded every month by random drawing as a show of appreciation to the many members who have supported the UTU throughout the years. Congratulations to Sister Lane!
Carrying the most important cargo

It is a very stressful part of a school bus driver's life. It is the part of their job that, should an accident occur, many times is fatal, and it's never forgotten. It is the time when children are crossing the street in front of the school bus. School bus companies have installed, as required, a stop arm on the side of the bus, which extends out when the bus is a braking or picking up children. At the same time, the lights on the school bus are flashing. It is the time when most school bus drivers become concerned about whether motorists will stop to honor the rights of the children to cross the street safely.

For you non-school-bus drivers: Think about it. You are responsible for young children crossing the street, and you see oncoming motorists. The kids are starting to cross the street, and you watch from your seat and hope that they will see and respect the school bus lights and stop arm. There is nothing you can do but hope the motorists will stop. You may blow your horn, but that may only scare the children even more. However, most times you sigh with relief because most motorists do stop. The children for whom the driver is responsible have made it safely to school and home that day.

Even with the stop arms and flashing lights, children are killed every time motorists, for one reason or another, fail to stop. Imagine, sitting in your driver's seat and watching a child get hit by a motorist. You will never forget it.

In my opinion, it is an awesome responsibility. My hat, and all of our hats, should be off to school bus drivers who are dedicated to the safe delivery of school children.

Interim agreement for yardmasters

An interim yardmaster agreement has been reached with the St. Lawrence and Hudson Railroad (former Delaware and Hudson Railway). On March 27, 2000, the initial conference was held with the StL&H on the committee's Section 6 notice. The committee was notified by StL&H labor relations that there would be a lengthy delay in continuing negotiations on the yardmaster contract due to dates scheduled for negotiations with the StL&H operating crafts. General Chairperson Joseph M. Mercuro was unwilling to accept the delays in securing wage increases for the yardmasters and pursued an interim agreement, with resumption of negotiations at a later date. On March 28, 2000, a 20-month agreement was reached. The agreement provides a 2% general wage increase retroactive to January 1, 2000, and a $.65 per hour wage increase effective January 1, 2001, with no rules changes. A signing bonus of $1,500 will be paid within six days and two $500 lump-sum payments will be made prior to resuming negotiations on December 1, 2001.

Brother Mercuro reported a unanimous ratification vote to accept the interim agreement.

General Chairpersons William B. Headrick, Jr., and R.J. Cooper were to have met in Atlanta, Ga., on March 3 and 4, with the Norfolk Southern on a system agreement for the yardmaster craft. General Chairperson Doyle K. Turner also has begun contract negotiations with the New Orleans Public Belt. Negotiating sessions on a yardmaster contract are scheduled to begin May 15 and 16.

Tri-State Boosters Association

Virginia Legislative Director Richard Jesky has announced that the Tri-State Boosters Association of Virginia, North Carolina and South Carolina will hold its 72nd annual meeting at the UTU's Regional Meeting in Birmingham, Ala.

The boosters will open their meeting on Monday, July 10, at 10:30 a.m. and hold their business meeting at 1:30 p.m. On that day, all events and meals will be covered by the $35 registration fee.

Those wishing to attend other UTU events are welcome to do so at the cost of $30 per day. Payment of the advanced registration fee of $125 will cover all three days, including Sunday's welcome reception.

The Tri-State Boosters Association promotes fellowship among members and raises funds to provide four-year college scholarships ($500 per year) to the children or grandchildren of UTU members in those states. This year, all scholarship applications must be received by Tri-State Boosters Scholarship Committee Secretary Margorie Jesky no later than June 10 at 3969 Honespen Dr., Vinton, VA 24479.

Requests for scholarship applications should be directed to Tri-State Scholarship Committee Chairperson John C. Hancock, 9350 Regency Square Blvd., Ste. 900, Jacksonville, FL 32217.

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We’re “cautiously optimistic”

What’s going on with national contract talks? Let me update you.

As chief contract negotiator, Charlie Little has given me one primary objective: to get a reasonable, feasible, and reasonable economic contract for UTU members, and get rid of the two-tiered wage structure that has afflicted all operating employees since 1985. We have recently concluded a substantive meeting with the carriers represented by the National Carriers’ Conference Committee and made progress in promoting the UTU agenda. It is fair to report to you that we remain cautiously optimistic at this time. One thing is certain: We do not want congressional intervention on this contract as happened seven times between 1982 and 1991.

No other union in this union is involved with right now – including our dispute with the BLE – is more important as the negotiating this contract. We are focused on our issues and our ultimate goal. UTU has one very simple and straight-ahead negotiating policy: we want to come out of the chute first. We are well prepared and we have told the carriers what we want to achieve. They know we plan to go all out to get it. It is also fair to say that the 2001 Presidential and Congressional elections – and who will control the White House and Congress next year – put pressure on all the parties for a quicker settlement.

The carriers know that this time we are damn serious about ending the two-tiered pay system once and for all. We plan to bring new hires – and post '85 hires – up to parity with their pre-'85 peers. We believe in being first in negotiating, because history has proven that when UTU doesn't lead, rail employees get bad contracts. Unlike some unions that are proud to trumpet inferior contracts as major breakthroughs, UTU is not looking to make trade-offs to get other inequities improved. Our goal is to be first in negotiations with a solid contract.

UTU's philosophy does not include taking away one piece of the pie from one group and giving it to the other. It's not a matter of taking from pre-'85 employees and giving to post-'85ers. We just believe in making the pie bigger for us all. Our research shows that we have earned the right to be one of the most productive rail workers in the world, and that we have substantially contributed to the economic health of the railroads.

When entry rates were enacted, no one ever considered that the rate of promotion to conductor and engineer would have collapsed into such a small time frame. Today, the conductor, engine foreman, operator, and yardmaster should be subjected to entry rates. There is simply no room for paying these people less for doing the same work in the same position as their peers do. After 15 years, it's time to end the two-tiered "caste system" on the railroad.

As significant developments occur, we will keep you posted on the UTU website, in the UTU News, through your locals, and in special mailings. We will do everything possible to keep you informed.

Railroad Retirement reform deserves support

Rail management has approached UTU several times with schemes involving Railroad Retirement. In the past, they have complained about the unfairness of the Tier II tax structure because it requires them to pay most of the Tier II tax. Almost all of the proposals would have kept the benefit system approximately the same. Any savings derived would have benefited them on a three-to-one ratio. UTU always gave the same answer to such proposals and we can not repeat it here in our family friendly UTU News.

Management's proposals were such that we would get the same amount of money, we would take all of the risks, and they would reap any additional benefits. Eventually rail management recognized that no matter how many times they threw the bait on the table rail labor always saw the hook. About two years ago management began to move. President Little and Assistant President Boyd, along with the leaders of 10 other rail labor unions, began to negotiate a Railroad Retirement reform package that would benefit current and future retirees, workers and spouses. At the conclusion of the negotiation process, instead of a three-to-one benefit for the carriers, the package reflects a 50/50 split. In other words, we went from getting 25% of the pie to gaining 50%.

Initially the railroads wanted us to take all the risk, but President Little and Assistant President Boyd were able to obtain many assurances at the bargaining table. First, any investment board would be made up of an equal number of labor and management members. That board would come under the requirements of federal laws currently in place dealing with their responsibilities as they pertain to investments. These are the same criminal and civil penalties that apply to every person participating in similar activities. The money involved under this law alone would make it as safe as the retirement funds invested in the name of every other union member in the United States. Second, the legislation also requires that the railroads be responsible if the trust fund falls below a certain level. If this happens, a tax would automatically be placed solely on the carriers in order to replenish the fund. In order to add a final assurance to the integrity of the fund, it is still bound by the full faith and credit of the United States government. They would be required to pay the obligations of the fund if, for some reason, the other safety nets in place were insufficient.

While the rest of the world under Social Security is looking at a steady increase in the retirement age, the UTU and coalition negotiators were able to move the retirement age in the other direction. As an added benefit, they have thrown in medical care, too. I know that this was extremely difficult to achieve. Obviously, neither side in the negotiations got all that they wanted. Both labor and management felt that they were entitled to more. Fortunately, in order to get this package they, in turn, will take the support of labor and management, Democrats and Republicans.

If we are to make the improvements that the widows and widowers so desperately need, we must act now. If we are to make the improvements that will lower the retirement age and provide medical care for early retirees, we must act now. Please, write, call, fax, and e-mail your congressman and your two senators, and ask your friends to do the same. The message: "Please support the Railroad Retirement and Survivors’ Improvement Act of 2000."

Stand up for a better Railroad Retirement

It is now your turn to take action. It's now up to the three million people represented by a coalition of 11 unions to convince Congress to enact the most positive changes to the Railroad Retirement system in a generation. It is up to you to stand up for the widows and widowers of railroad workers who will be made financially whole by the passage of the “Railroad Retirement and Survivors’ Improvement Act of 2000.”

UTU is proud to stand arm-in-arm with 10 other unions urging Congress to pass this landmark legislation. We are proud to join with the visionary leaders of these other fine unions, who have chosen to stick to their guns and stand against the history to provide railroad workers and retirees increased retirement benefits and peace of mind.

Therefore, we are proud to honor the members of our coalition: Brotherhood of Railroad Signalmen, International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, Transport Workers Union, International Association of Machinists, Transportation Communications Union, American Train Dispatchers/BLE, International Brotherhood of Boilermakers and Blacksmiths, Sheet Metal Workers International Association, National Conference of Firemen & Oilers/Service Employees International Union, and the Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees union.

Unfortunately, two unions – BMWE and BLE – have bizarrely chosen to stand outside of the House of Rail Labor on this vitally important issue. In fact, they are doing everything they can to spread false and malicious information to try to stop this legislation in its tracks for some perverse political reasons. So we ask: What will they tell the widows if they succeed in killing this legislation?

The “Railroad Retirement and Survivors’ Improvement Act of 2000” represents a serious progressive improvement that will benefit all segments of the railroad industry and its unionized workers immediately. We urge all of you to stand up and be counted. Tell your senators and congressperson today that you stand with three million others who want improved Railroad Retirement benefits. Don’t delay. Take your retirement future in your hands!
Dear Brother Little:

I want to assure you that I agree with you 100% regarding your decision to disaffiliate from the AFL-CIO. You, the officers, and Board of Directors, have my full support if it is helpful in any manner.

The UTU, since its beginning, has been one of the most outstanding and successful labor organizations in the entire North American labor movement. The character and integrity of our union remains unblemished.

We have, through the years, been one of the greatest assets of the AFL-CIO. Two of our international presidents have served long tenures on the Executive Council of the AFL-CIO. We are not a “Johnny come lately” to membership in the AFL-CIO.

We have set an example for the AFL-CIO as one of the strongest labor unions in North America.

We have been one of the leaders among the AFL-CIO affiliates in securing better wages, excellent health and welfare benefits, working conditions, and educational opportunities for our members.

We have been one of the leaders in the field of legislation to protect workers’ lives, secure improved pensions, and to protect workers’ welfare in general.

We have asked for no trophies or accolades for our success as an affiliate of the AFL-CIO. Neither had we anticipated being sacrificed on the altar of labor by the officers of the AFL-CIO for an organization described by many as a small, scabby organization, the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers (BLE).

We can no longer be made to suffer the intended indignities and unjust treatment by the officers of the AFL-CIO.

They have chosen to interrupt our legal and rightful procedures under rail labor law. In doing so, they chose to protect a scab organization, the BLE, whose folk has been to order its members to cross legal picket lines in time of a legal strike.

They have chosen to protect an organization that finds joy in “selling jobs” of our brothers and sisters in order to gain a few pieces of silver for their members.

Never in all my years in the labor movement, as an officer of my union, and as a member of the AFL-CIO Executive Council for many years, has the house of labor protected an organization which violates the very fundamentals of the American labor movement, and in doing so attempts to admonish one of its best affiliates.

Our character and dignity is something we cannot and must not sacrifice. So, in order to protect our membership from such harsh and unjust action of the AFL-CIO officers, we must take the high road and disaffiliate with the AFL-CIO.

Yes, brother president, you said it correctly in the last paragraph of your letter to AFL-CIO President Sweeney, which, I quote, “In conclusion, UTU wishes the federation well in its efforts to instill new life in the labor movement. UTU has the same goal, to rationalize and revitalize the representation of operating employees on the nation’s railroads” end quote.

I extend my very best wishes to you, and your splendid and most successful administration of the UTU.

Fraternally yours,

Al H. Chesser
Past International President

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**Explanation of BlueCross BlueShield healthcare benefits**

If your healthcare benefits are administered by Regence Life and Health Insurance Company of Portland, Ore., an independent licensee of the BlueCross BlueShield (BCBS) Association, the following information is very important to you in order to obtain maximum benefits under both the Comprehensive Health Care Benefit (CHCB) and Managed Medical Care Program (MMCP) programs:

For MMCP participants, to obtain maximum “in-network” benefits you should select only preferred providers from the BCBS provider directories. Preferred providers are those which have the “PPO” designation following their name.

This will assure that you receive the “in-network” benefit for office visits and avoid any application of the “out-of-network” benefit level.

If you are covered under CHCB, your out-of-pocket expenses can be reduced by utilizing any physician from the provider directory. Those physicians have a contractual arrangement with BCBS so that the 85% benefit of the CHCB program is based upon the amount charged by that physician.

By utilizing a physician from the BCBS directory there is no dispute with regard to the “reasonable and customary charges” which may result in additional out-of-pocket expenses to you through physician balance billing. This is what BCBS refers to as “hold harmless.”

The Regence customer service team will answer any questions you may have with regard to benefits, status of claims or identification cards. Call toll-free 1-888-973-2583 or fax 1-503-276-1801. Also, all members are reminded to call the UTU International with any questions they may have regarding any of the plan options or benefit providers under the NRC/UTU Plan or the National Health and Welfare Plan (formerly GA-2300).

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**Organizing Report**

**Laidlaw, Alex drivers in representation vote**

Organizers for the United Transportation Union’s Bus Department are hopeful that their latest campaigns will bring nearly 500 new members into the organization.

As this issue of the UTU News went to press, an April 28 election was scheduled for approximately 190 school bus drivers and aides employed by Laidlaw Transit Inc., in Riverside, Cal., to choose either the UTU or another organization as their collective bargaining representative.

Prior to the election, the UTU had obtained a sufficient number of authorization cards to be placed on the ballot.

General Chairperson James Hartford, who represents Laidlaw Transit employees in San Francisco, and General Chairperson Karen Belcher, who works for the North County Transit District in Escondido, have been working closely with the Laidlaw employees who favor UTU.

The UTU also has filed a petition for election with the National Labor Relations Board on behalf of the van drivers for Alex’s Transportation, seeking to represent employees at all locations that are not already working under a union contract.

About 290 Alex’s Transportation drivers are eligible to vote at various locations in Washington, Oregon, California, Texas, Arizona and Oklahoma. No election date has yet been set.

In other news, the UTU has filed an unfair labor practice complaint against Milepost Inc., which has succeeded Renzenberger Inc., as the transportation provider for Burlington Northern Santa Fe’s rail crews in California.

Renzenberger employees had selected the UTU as their bargaining representative in an election last year and many of those drivers are now employed by Milepost, which refuses to recognize the UTU.

The UTU contends that Milepost now employs more than 50% of the former Renzenberger drivers and should be affirmed as their representative. A decision by the NLRB is pending.

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One Union with the Power of TPEL to Make a Difference in Your Life

UTU’s TPEL is the Number One railroad union PAC in the United States and is more influential than all other railroad union PACs. In the 21st Century, TPEL is leading the way to a stronger political voice for rail and transportation workers.

➢ TPEL, with $1.55 million raised in 1999, is more than one-and-a-half times bigger than the next five largest railroad union PACs combined (BLE, BMWE, TCU, BRS, ATDD = $965,982).

➢ TPEL is more than four times larger than the next-largest railroad union PAC. In fact, TPEL, at $1.55 million, dwarfs the BLE’s $384,723.

➢ TPEL average contributions per member are larger than those of all other railroad unions.

➢ TPEL ranks second to the 1.4-million Teamsters among all transportation PACs.

➢ TPEL helped elect 95% of all candidates it endorsed in the last U.S. elections.

➢ TPEL ranks among the top 10 PACs – we are No. 10 – with funds on hand, and we are ranked in the top 20 – No. 19 – in receipts among the more than 3,600 registered U.S. PACs, including big business PACs.

In the 21st Century, we need the Power of One – and the Power of TPEL – to make our voices heard even louder in Washington, D.C., and in your state capitol.

Special Unity Poster #7:
Display this poster to show your support for unity among UTU and BLE members
Pension reform

Continued from page 1

everyone to step up to the plate and tell your representatives and senators to support our Railroad Retirement Improvement Act."

The unions in the coalition include the UTU, Brotherhood of Railroad Signalmen, International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, Transport Workers Union, International Association of Machinists, Transportation Communications Union, American Train Dispatchers-BLE, International Brotherhood of Boilermakers and Blacksmiths, Sheet Metal Workers International Association, NPC&O Service Employees International Union, and the Hotel Employees & Restaurant Employees union.

The Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees and Locomotive Engineers are not part of the coalition. The BLE and UNM oppose the legislation. Ironically, the Americana Train Dispatchers Division of the BLE has split with its mother union and supports the legislation. A draft bill currently circulating in Congress, called the "Railroad Retirement and Survivors' Improvement Act of 2000," has been received favorably by key members. The union coalition is asking its three million members to contact their congressional representatives and senators immediately to request that they support the bill.

In a letter signed by all 11 unions (at right), the coalition urges its members to take charge of the political process and their Railroad Retirement futures.

When the Railroad Retirement Improve- ment Act of 2000 becomes law, it will:

• Increase benefits for surviving spouses of retired workers by stopping the bereaved from losing 50% of their Tier II annuity.
• Restore unreduced retirement benefits at age 60 with 30 years service.
• Expand the retiree health insurance plan to age 60 with increases in the lifetime benefit max- imum indexed to the medical inflation rate.
• Allow for the Tier II system to invest in equities and thereby achieve a higher rate of return on investments. This would make both benefit increases for employees and retirees and tax decreases for the carriers possible.
• Guarantee that the railroads will ensure future solvency of the fund by absorbing any necess- ary future tax increases.
• Reduce vesting from ten to five years.
• Repeal the retirement benefit cap for current and future retirees alike.

"Our major legislative effort this year is to pass this legislation to dramatically improve Railroad Retirement, which also fixes the inequity in the so-called "widow's benefit," said James Brunkenhoff, UTU national BLE represen- tative. "We need everyone to get involved and to lobby their elected official in Congress."

Union chiefs urge passage of reform measure

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Your retirement future is now in your hands.

As a major coalition of 11 rail unions and rail retiree organizations, representing more than three million members, we are now asking for your help to enact the best improvements to Rail- road Retirement in a generation. We need your help right now. We need to do it this year. We now have a bill before Congress. While the draft bill does not yet have a number, it does have a title. The bill is called the "Railroad Retirement and Survivors' Improvement Act of 2000" and it is now in the "discussion draft" stage. It has been received favorably by key members of Con- gress and is being reviewed by others. The bill has many more steps to go through in Congress before it becomes law, and now it's your turn to become actively involved in the process.

In order to be successful, we hope you will take immediate action this and every other time you are asked. Right now we need you to contact your congressperson and your senators to support and co-sponsor the "Railroad Retirement and Survivors' Improvement Act of 2000." Please visit them, write them, call them, fax them and e-mail them. The success of this legislation, and the future significant improvements to your Railroad Retirement, rests with you, the active and retired railroad workers, your families and friends. When it becomes law, the legislation will:

• Increase benefits for surviving spouses of retired workers by stopping the bereaved from losing 50% of their Tier II annuity.
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Missoula, the sources said. They also said that at least one yardman will be eliminated from every train, leaving only a locomotive engi- neer and one yardman. In addition, the loco- motive engineer will be required to leave the train to use the "belt pack."

A March 11 report to the Montana AFL- CIO Executive Board by Dave Morey, director of "Project Challenge," revealed the BLE's request for assistance to retain members laid off. Sources say the BLE's Dave Detzel made the request for help.

In a December 3 letter to employees, MRL President Daniel K. Watts revealed that its "labor organization" (BLE) was working with the carrier and Federal Railroad Administra- tion (FRA) to develop operating plans for remote-controlled operations.

"I realize," Watts wrote, "this decision is of great concern to MRL employees as it could eventually impact our current employment levels."

Neither the BLE nor Watts ever said at the time that 60 union workers would lose their jobs. The BLE represents all operating employees on the Montana Rail Link.
Voices:

Do you agree with the decision to withdraw from the AFL-CIO?

Willie Fulwiley
L-1563, El Monte, Cal.

“I'm an LACMTA bus operator with almost 24 years on the job. At first, I had some concerns about the withdrawal, but it's OK with me. Paying into something that we're not getting a return from doesn't make sense. I was concerned about strength and unity, but I feel we can grow and be strong enough that we can be the major player in transportation. Transportation being a major force in the economy, we need an organization that understands this industry and is willing to stand up for us. All brothers and sisters should be treated fairly, no matter where they are in this land.”

Robert W. Snow
L-1088, Jackson, Miss.

“I'm an engineer working for the Kansas City Southern, with about 27 years of railroading experience, and I agree with the decision 100%. I think the AFL-CIO does good things for other unions, but really don't think they've done anything much for the UTU. I think the UTU has great leadership and will stand on its own. The UTU is fighting for the workers out there, and we need that because the BLE is trying to put the UTU out of business, especially with the black box. I know BLE engineers, and they'll sell a trainman's job out for $5 a day. I'm glad Charlie Little pulled out.”

Curt Jones
L-5, Kansas City, Mo.

“I've been a rail worker since 1977 and went into engine service on BNSF the following year. I suspected our withdrawal from the federation would be coming, and I agree with the decision. I remember when we left the AFL-CIO over the coal strike thing. I have a problem with the AFL-CIO taking our money and giving it to the BLE so they can fight against us. I trust that what our organization is doing will lead to the unification of the UTU and BLE. That's what I'd like to see happen. We elect these people to do what's right for us, and at some point, you have to trust that's what they're doing.”

Mike Ritchie
L-445, Niota, Ill.

“I'm a BNSF engineer with about 27 years of railroading, and I have no problem with the UTU withdrawing. I'm not a big AFL-CIO lover, and never thought we should belong to it. There's so many other unions there whose interests are opposite of ours, including some of the coal people and the airlines. I don't think it's a big loss. I think we should have done it earlier. I'd still like to see the operating unions join together, as do a lot of my BLE counterparts. We should be working together to be sure we have two people in the cab. We need to protect the craft of conductor.”

United HealthCare announces changes to GA-23111 policy

At recent meetings with the railway labor organizations constituting the policyholder under GA-23111, a detailed study of the premiums and benefit payments under the various plans was made. It was agreed that the following payment rate changes would be made for coverage effective June 1, 2000:

- **Plan A:** The monthly payment rate for Plan A will remain at $6 for employee coverage and $7 for dependent coverage effective June 1, 2000.
- **Plan B:** The monthly payment rate for Plan B will remain at $16 for coverage effective June 1, 2000.
- **Plan C:** Due to the rise in the cost of medical treatment caused by inflation plus the additional utilization of medical care services, changes in the monthly payment rates for coverage effective June 1, 2000, will be as follows:
  - Plan C for employees or dependents increases from $265 to $285.
  - Plan C for each student child decreases from $55 to $50.
  - Plan C for each incapacitated child increases from $110 to $130.
- **Plan D:** Revisions to Plan D were made effective June 1, 1999, and provide benefits equal to or greater than any standard Medigap plan. The amounts paid under Plan D for prescription drugs continue to increase at a rate of 21% from the previous year with similar levels expected in the next few years. Due to the continuing increase in the cost of medical services (particularly the cost for prescription drugs) covered under Plan D, the monthly payment rate for coverage will increase from $165 to $190 for coverage effective June 1, 2000.

Individuals participating in Plan D cannot change their coverage until the next open enrollment period.

- **Plan F:** A new Plan F was created effective June 1, 1999. Plan F has benefits identical to Plan D except that it does not cover prescription drugs. The medical benefits, other than prescription drugs, are equal to or greater than any standard Medigap plan. The monthly payment rate for Plan F will increase from $98 to $102 for coverage effective June 1, 2000.

Individuals participating in Plan F cannot change their coverage until the next open enrollment period.

- **Plan E:** The monthly payment rate for Plan E will remain at $103 for coverage effective June 1, 2000.

Complete details of GA-23111 eligibility and benefit provisions are contained in the GA-23111 benefits booklet which can be obtained by calling United HealthCare at 1-800-809-0453.

Moving? Wrong Address?

If you are moving, or if this newspaper is being delivered to the wrong address, please clip the address label from this paper, attach it below, note the correct address and send to Directory Dept., UTU, 14600 Detroit Ave., Cleveland, OH 44107-4250. Please allow six weeks for address changes to take effect.
Recently enacted Social Security Act amendments that ease the earnings restrictions affecting Social Security beneficiaries working after full retirement age also apply to annuitants covered by the Railroad Retirement Act, according to the U.S. Railroad Retirement Board (RRB).

About 2,500 Railroad Retirement beneficiaries are affected by the amendments, which are effective retroactive to January 1, 2000, the RRB said. Retroactive payments of benefits previously withheld for excess earnings, as well as the removal of any earnings deductions applied to those affected, should be completed by early July.

Elimination of the Depression-era “earnings test” also affects about 415,000 Social Security annuitants who lost benefits this year, the Social Security Administration (SSA) said. They should receive retroactive payments in May.

The amendments eliminate deductions of $1 in benefits for every $3 in earnings over $10,000 previously withheld until age 70 to those of full Social Security retirement age. Full retirement age ranges from age 65 for those born before 1938 to age 67 for those born in 1960 or later. These deductions, however, remain in effect for the months before the month of full retirement age during the calendar year of attainment, the RRB said.

In the years before the full year of retirement age, the earnings deduction of $1 in benefits for every $2 over the exempt amount, $10,080 in 2000, also remains in effect.

Under the two-tiered Railroad Retirement System, Tier I benefits and vested dual benefits paid to employees, spouses and survivors, as well as the Tier II benefits paid to survivors, are subject to earnings deductions just like Social Security benefits.

The legislation did not eliminate the Rail Retirement Act work restrictions which are not included in the Social Security Act. A Railroad Retirement annuity is still not payable for any month in which an annuitant works for a railroad or railroad labor organization, regardless of age.

Nor does the legislation affect the Tier II Railroad Retirement earnings deductions that apply to employees and spouses who work for their last pre-retirement nonrailroad employers. These additional deductions of $1 for every $3 in earnings up to a maximum reduction of 50% continue to apply to Tier II benefits, and supplemental employee annuities, regardless of age, associated with Tier II earnings.

The special restrictions that apply to disability annuitants also remain unchanged.

Three retired former general chairpersons die

Three retired former general chairpersons – Elmer L. Dirks, Arlon M. Blount and Samuel H. Hollands – have passed away.

Brother Dirks, 91, a retired former Milwaukee Road general chairperson, passed away February 28 in Lakeland, Fla. A member of Local 1382, Milwaukee, Wis., Dirks began his railroad career as a switchman on the Milwaukeee Road, and joined Brotherhood of Railroad Trainmen Lodge 982 in Milwaukee. He served as general chairperson from 1955 until his retirement in 1974.

Brother Blount, 85, a retired former Southern Pacific-Eastern Lines general chairperson, died in an automobile accident on April 14. A member of Local 569, Ennis, Texas, he began his career in 1943 on the former Texas & New Orleans Railroad and was a member of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen & Enginemen's Magnolia Lodge 226. He served as general chairperson for engineers from 1968 through 1977.

Brother Hollands, 83, a retired former general chairperson for Local 1588 members working at Rockland Coves in Bentgberg, N.J., passed away April 8 in Highland Falls, N.J. Hollands began his career as a bus operator with Rockland Coves in 1942, and represented workers there as general chairperson from 1964 until 1978. He retired in 1980.
Each Regional Meeting lasts a full three days, with the President’s Banquet on the evening of the third day. The $125 advance registration fee per member or guest includes: Sunday welcome reception; Monday lunch and evening buffet dinner and entertainment; Tuesday lunch and evening theme reception and entertainment; Wednesday lunch and evening Presidential reception and banquet, as well as all training workshop materials. On-site registration is $175 per member or guest. Your name badge will be your admission ticket to all events and festivities.

New this year are one-day registrations for those members who would like to attend the Regional Meetings but can’t spare the time away from work or family. The cost of a one-day registration for any day is $50. Payments for individual events, such as lunches and tours, can be made at each meeting. Also new this year are registration procedures, with separate registration forms for members and guests. Additionally, credit cards are now being accepted for payment of Regional Meeting fees. At this time registration is not available on the UTU website.

Make all checks (U.S. funds only, please) payable to “UTU Regional Meeting.” Send your completed forms to UTU Meeting Registration, 14600 Detroit Ave., Cleveland, OH 44107-4250. You may cancel seven full days prior to arrival, with no penalty. Please fax any changes or cancellations immediately to the UTU International at (216) 228-5755.

**June 12-14, 2000**
**Reno Hilton**
2500 East Second St., Reno, NV 89595
Hotel direct reservations: (775) 789-2126
Toll-free reservations: (800) 648-5080
Reservation code: UTU Regional Meeting
Room rate: $99 single/double; $109 triple; $119 quad
Reservation deadline: extended to May 21, 2000
Self parking: free; valet parking: tip only

**July 10-12, 2000**
**Sheraton Hotel**
2101 Civic Center Blvd., Birmingham, AL 35203
Hotel direct reservations: (205) 324-5000
Toll-free reservations: (800) 325-3535
Reservation code: UTU Regional Meeting
Room rate: $99 single/double; $105 triple/quad
Reservation deadline: June 1, 2000
Parking: self $7 per day; valet $12 per day, both with in/out privileges

**August 28-30, 2000**
**Minneapolis Hilton and Towers**
1001 Marquette Ave., Minneapolis, MN 55403
Hotel direct reservations: (612) 397-4999
Toll-free reservations: (800) 445-8667
Reservation code: UTU Regional Meeting
Room rate: $119 single/double; additional person $20
Reservation deadline: July 20, 2000
Parking: self $12.50 per day; valet $20 per day both with in/out privileges

**Golf at Regional Meetings**
Arrangements have been made for golf outings in each of the UTU/UTUIA Regional Meeting cities. They are held the Sunday before the start of each meeting at challenging local golf courses. A registration form is printed at right. Please make a note of the registration deadline for each golf outing. The registration fee, $80 per golfer for each outing, includes the greens fee and golf carts, lunch and round-trip transportation to the course from the host hotel.

**Reno, Nev., golf outing**
Date: Sunday, June 11, 2000; registration deadline June 1
Place: The Golf Club at Genoa Lakes, Genoa, Nev.
Tee-off: 8 a.m. shotgun start

**Birmingham, Ala., golf outing**
Date: Monday, July 9, 2000; registration deadline June 30
Place: Oxmoor Valley, Birmingham, Ala.
Tee-off: 8 a.m. shotgun start

**Minneapolis, Minn., golf outing**
Date: Sunday, Aug. 27, 2000; registration deadline Aug. 17
Place: Majestic Oaks Golf Club, Ham Lake, Minn.
Tee-off: 7:30 a.m. shotgun start
The three surviving members of a five-man Norfolk & Western rail crew knew their deed was enshrined in the Guinness Book of World Records. Details on this record-setting feat on page 10.

Former UTU International President Al H. Chesser has come out in support of the UTU’s disaffiliation from the AFL-CIO. His letter to International President Charles L. Little is printed on page 5.

Luck comes in many forms, and sometimes in unsuspected ways. Local 61 member Phil Libertofound that out recently when he was involved in a car accident and luck intervened. Details on page 2.

When was the last time you said, “I really should look into some life insurance for the kids?”

How many times have you thought, “I really should look into some life insurance for the kids,” and the next thing you know, a year or more has gone by and you haven’t found the time to do so?

It’s never too early to start thinking about life insurance for children and grandchildren. Permanent life insurance provides living benefits and is a wonderful way to provide a legacy for your youngsters. What better way to show them you care?

Permanent life insurance is very inexpensive at young ages, and premium-paying choices are endless. Premiums can be paid in one lump-sum payment, over a five- or ten-year period, over one’s lifetime, or anything in between.

For more information, please contact your UTUIA representative, or complete and return the coupon below.

I would like more information on UTUIA’s ULTIMATE PAR policy. Please Print:

Full Name ___________________________ Sex ___________________________ Date of Birth ___________________________

Address ___________________________ City ___________________________ State ___________________________ Zip ___________________________

Telephone Number with Area Code ___________________________ UTU Local Number ___________________________

If the information is for someone other than yourself, please provide full name, sex, date of birth, and relationship of the person for whom the information is requested on the line below.

Full Name ___________________________ Sex ___________________________ Date of Birth ___________________________ Relationship ___________________________

Complete and mail to: UTUIA Sales Dept., 14600 Detroit Ave., Cleveland, OH 44107-4250.
This is your vote as a union member means to your country. Had union families in Michigan, Ohio, and Wisconsin not voted in the 1996 presidential election, Bob Dole would be in the White House today, according to exit polls.

Many of those union families were UTU families. Many of you made a difference, and we know you will make a big difference this year as we move deeper into the 2000 Presidential and congressional elections.

As the most politically influential rail and transportation union in Washington, D.C., the 30,000 UTU members who contribute to our political action committee, the Transportation Political Education League, or TPEL, have the loudest voice at the White House and on Capitol Hill. And there's a very good reason for that.

You have turned TPEL into the dominant PAC in our industry. TPEL is more than one-and-a-half times bigger than the PACs of the next five rail unions combined: BLE, BME, TCU, BRS and ATDE. In fact, when stacked up against the BLE, the UTU’s TPEL is more than four times larger.

In politics, money talks. And because nearly 30,000 of you believe in funding the political process through your union’s TPEL, the UTU has been at the head of the table in Washington, D.C., and in many state capitals around the nation.

This annual special section honors all active and retired UTU members, and others, who have contributed or pledged $300 or more to TPEL in the last year.

We urge all of our members who do not contribute to TPEL to sign up immediately and help us raise the funds we need so that the UTU’s voice – and the voice of union families – can be heard loud and clear at the polls in November 2000.

You can begin contributions at any time, and they can be deducted automatically from your paycheck. Contributions can also be made on a one-time basis.

One half of every TPEL contribution is used within the donor’s home state, and the other half is used for candidates running for federal office. So, the more money TPEL receives from, say, California, the more money TPEL can use inside California for our political purposes.

TPEL features different annual contribution clubs:

- PLATINUM: $1,200 or more
- DOUBLE DIAMOND: $600 to $1,199
- DIAMOND PLUS: $599 to $400
- DOLLAR-A-DAY: $365 to $399
- DIAMOND: $300 to $364
- GOLD: $100 to $299

All contributions of at least $10 per year receive a baseball-style hat, lapel pin and TPEL membership card.

You have almost 30,000 members who participate in TPEL. It is through their individual and joint efforts that this union has an impact on the legislative process at all levels.

The process by which we elect lawmakers in the United States has many problems. There is no doubt that the U.S. election process needs reforming, but I don’t expect reform will be coming anytime soon. As long as the process remains the same, it is imperative that UTU has as much impact as we can possibly muster. That impact is directly tied to the amount of involvement of our membership.

In this special section, there is a list of UTU members and others who have chosen to participate in higher levels of TPEL. I would like to express my personal appreciation to all of these people. I hope that if you are not a member of TPEL that you will become one, and if you are already a member that you will consider raising your contribution level. It is only through TPEL that our individual voices are collected and that collective voice is heard. If you see someone on the list that you work with, please take the time to thank them for helping us help you.

If you have any questions about how TPEL works, ask your local legislative representative, your state director or call me at (202) 943-7714.

J.M. Brunkenhoefer
UTU National Legislative Director
This limited edition commemorative lapel pin has been created to honor TPEL donors in the new millennium. It will be sent to all TPEL donors who, as of September 1, 2000, have contributed $25 or more. Contact your local legislative representative to begin your TPEL contribution before the September 1 deadline.
Alabama 622 Birmingham
Taylor St., James E.
847 Huntsville
Hogan, Barry A.
1053 Madison
811 San Bernardino

Arkansas 462 Pine Bluff
1554 Los Angeles
564 Cleburne
243 Fort Worth
83 Houston

California 771 Napa
835 Bakersfield
818 Redding

District of Columbia 1393 Washington
836 Virginia

District of Columbia 1933 Washington
Arlington, Va., Miles R.

Arizona 1503 Marysville
Daviess, Richard M.

Idaho 265 Post Falls
Correll Jr., Jack L.

Illinois 195 Galesburg
Lawrence, Charles F.

Indiana 490 Princeton
Fisher St., Thomas E.

Iowa 310 Clinton
Lutz, Jule E.

Missouri 1081 St. Louis
Wolf, James M.

Montana 430 Great Falls
Hicks, Joseph L.

Nebraska 395 Lincoln
Kluesner, Carl T.

North Carolina 477 Newton
Hogsett, David A.

Ohio 1290 Manchester
329 Wolfe, William A.

Tennessee 1785 Nashville
Ferrin, Don E.

Texas 838 Philadelphia
Kuhn, Donald D.

Washington 6531 Washington
Fitzgerald, John D.

Wisconsin 311 Eau Claire
Aubert, Gary J.

Wyoming 951 Sheridan
Kraus, Randall S.

DOLLAR-A-DAY CLUB

Alabama 622 Birmingham
Taylor St., James E.
847 Huntsville
Hogan, Barry A.
1053 Madison
811 San Bernardino

Arkansas 462 Pine Bluff
1554 Los Angeles
564 Cleburne
243 Fort Worth
83 Houston

California 771 Napa
835 Bakersfield
818 Redding

District of Columbia 1393 Washington
Arlington, Va., Miles R.

Arizona 1503 Marysville
Daviess, Richard M.

Idaho 265 Post Falls
Correll Jr., Jack L.

Illinois 195 Galesburg
Lawrence, Charles F.

Indiana 490 Princeton
Fisher St., Thomas E.

Iowa 310 Clinton
Lutz, Jule E.

Missouri 1081 St. Louis
Wolf, James M.

Montana 430 Great Falls
Hicks, Joseph L.

Nebraska 395 Lincoln
Kluesner, Carl T.

North Carolina 477 Newton
Hogsett, David A.

Ohio 1290 Manchester
329 Wolfe, William A.

Tennessee 1785 Nashville
Ferrin, Don E.

Texas 838 Philadelphia
Kuhn, Donald D.

Washington 6531 Washington
Fitzgerald, John D.

Wisconsin 311 Eau Claire
Aubert, Gary J.

Wyoming 951 Sheridan
Kraus, Randall S.

(Continued on Page 6)
### Top Ten UTU Locals

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Donation</th>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Altona, Wisc.</td>
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<td>Raleigh</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Marshalltown, Iowa</td>
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### Average donation per member for 1995, by state

<table>
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<th>State</th>
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<td>Washington</td>
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### How do the TPEL contributions in your UTU local compare?

The table above shows the average TPEL contributions per member for local in the state for the year 1995. The data is available for any state and can be used to compare the contributions of different local unions within the same state.

To use this table, simply find the state where your UTU local is located and compare its average donation per member to see how it compares to the state average. This can help you understand the relative contributions of your local union compared to others in the state.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>City</th>
<th>State</th>
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<td>Fetters, John M.</td>
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**Notes:**
- * = Retired Member

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I, _______________________, of Local ____________________________________________, proudly pledge to UTU/TPEL the amount indicated annually to be pro-rated monthly and collected with my union dues:

☐ $25 per year
☐ $50 per year
☐ $100 per year
☐ $300 per year

☐ $365 per year
☐ $400 per year
☐ $600 per year
☐ $1,200 per year

I wish to contribute $ ___________________________ per month, or I would like to make a one-time contribution of $ ___________________________. (Please enclose a check to “TPEL” with this form.)

I am a retired member of Local ________________________________________ and I still want to help. My $ ___________________________ contribution to TPEL is enclosed.

Signature

Effective Date

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Mail to UTU, 14600 Detroit Ave, Cleveland, OH 44107.

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