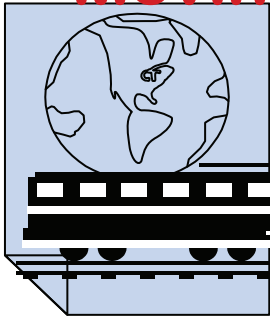


Moving the People who Move the World



ACRE

WINTER 2009

A Publication for the Members of ACRE

WE THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

On February 28, 2009 ACRE will be celebrating its 9th anniversary as an independent union. While we are extremely proud of the representation we have provided during these past nine years, it is important to recognize that nothing could have been accomplished without the support you have given us throughout those years. This unity of purpose has been the driving force behind all our dealings with the MTA and Metro-North so it is important that we take this opportunity to thank all of you for your continued trust and faith. Continued on page 2.....

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THANKS FOR YOUR SUPPORT

CONTINUED FROM FRONT COVER

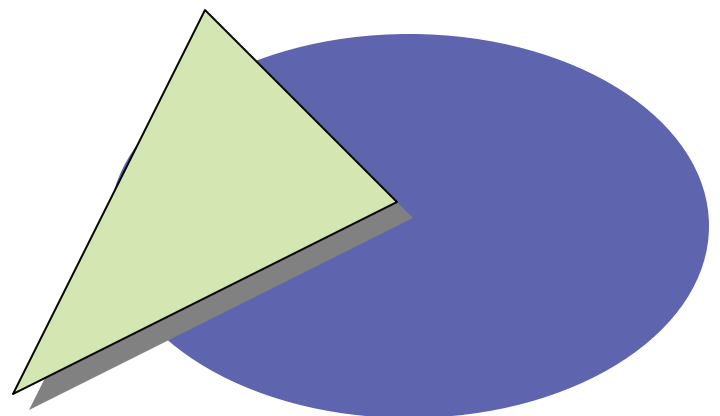
Now that the elections for all ACRE represented crafts have been concluded, we want to thank all the candidates for their participation and wish all the members who will be taking office the best of luck. The election season can be very stressful and contentious so now that the elections are over it is important to remember that we are very much like a family. While there may be times when we have our disagreements, there is no disagreement about our goals and purpose.

With the MTA in financial crisis and the national economy in the worst shape it has been in since the Great Depression, there will no doubt be tremendous pressure on management to take every conceivable means to find savings. The MTA has already taken actions on behalf of commuter rail that have put the Railway Labor Act, Railroad Retirement, and the Federal Employee Liability Act in jeopardy. Rest assured, we will continue to work closely with the other labor unions in preserving the RLA, RRB, and FELA. We may face challenges ahead but we have never been better positioned or more confident in our ability to handle whatever the future may bring.

On behalf of all the officers in all the Local Divisions of ACRE, we want to wish everyone and their families a happy and healthy new year. Please remember the door to the union office is always open. We welcome everyone to contact your local representatives about any questions or concerns you may have. Your elected representatives are here to work for your interests and help with your problems no matter how large or small. As always we remain,

Fraternally yours,

General Chairman, Anthony Bottlaico
General Chairman, Michael Doyle
General Chairman, James Fahey
General Chairman, Joseph Savio
General Chairman, Darren Burger



The Pension Front

“If you feel your service time is not properly reflected on your statement, contact a union officer right away. We will start the dispute process to adequately reflect your service time.”

Our long promised member annual statements from the MTA Defined Benefit Plan have finally been mailed out. For most of us, the news is what we expected in terms of service credits. However, there has been a glitch concerning gross earnings. The MTADB computer program the MTA uses imposed an "earnings restriction" of 10% on both the 36 consecutive months of the last 10 years and some years that may have been required to make the initial calculation. Because of this programming problem, inaccurate yearly wages have probably been generated somewhere in your statement. The problem with the software program has been identified by MTA programmers and is currently being fixed. We have been assured that future statements will reflect the proper calculations.

Additionally, in some instances a few members have not received any statements at all. The commonality among those members is that they have a craft transfer earlier in their career and/or more than one employer ID. The MTADB system recognizes that individual as two different employees under one name and does not produce a statement.

If you feel your service time is not properly reflected on your statement, contact a union officer right away. We will start the dispute process to adequately reflect your service time. As with any new process, there are always some hiccups at the onset. We appreciate your patience and expect to have the problems corrected very soon.

One of the recurring questions coming from our soon to retire members: I'm age 60 with 30 years of railroad time, but only 25 years under Metro North. Will I receive a reduced pension? The answer is no. During the 2007 round of negotiations it was agreed to by both parties to institute a "temporary retirement incentive & actuarial reductions". In the body of text participants who do not reach age 62 and have less than 30 years under Metro North, prior to or on June 15, 2010 will not receive the 6% age reduction for 61 and 6% for age 60. Simply put, you will not receive the 12% percent hit in your pension!! Additionally, members who are less than age 60, and less than 30 years of service will receive only a 3% reduction per year. Here is a checklist of items you will need to provide to Metro North, MTA and RRB if you are going to retire: Birth Certificates including your spouse (if applicable), continued on page 4.....

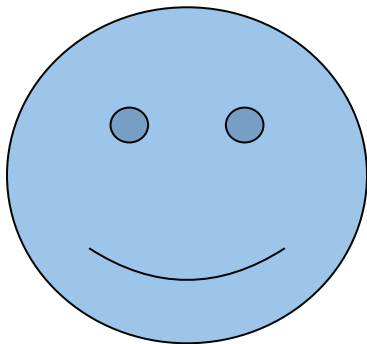
By Joe Lindenberg & Chris Faherty



The Pension Front continued from page 3.....

Marriage License (if applicable)
DD-214 Military Discharge (if applicable)
Divorce decree (if applicable)
Spouses death certificate (if applicable). Copies will not be accepted by these agencies. You can mail these items but be mindful; these documents have been lost in the mail. For your protection it is recommended that you supply these in person.

Provisions of the MTADB plan requires that members seeking to retire must notify the MTA, Metro-North and RRB no less than 30 days and no more than 90 days prior to retirement. Failure to do so may forfeit a month's pension earnings. Members who apply to retire will receive their pension checks the first day of the month after they retire. For example, one member retires December 1, and another member retires December 31. Both members will receive their first pension checks January first. This applies to your MTA pension as well as Railroad Retirement.



Recently, all ACRE General Chairmen petitioned the MTA Legal Department concerning an interpretation of the Tier II offset on our MTA pension for a widowed spouse. The member, who was receiving disability benefits from the MTA and Railroad Retirement, passed away after leaving a full MTA survivor pension to his wife. The MTA continued to reduce her pension by the deceased husband's eligible Tier II amount even though she was not receiving a railroad retirement benefit. ACRE felt the application of this offset was not proper and should be eliminated. The MTA legal department took our argument into consideration and, in a recent ruling, agreed with our position concerning the railroad retirement offset. The money that had been coming out of her pension was restored retroactively and her new pension number now reflects her full pension entitlement. It should be noted that this interpretation was not a pension change just a challenge to the application of the existing pension contract. Special thanks to all A.C.R.E. General Chairman for there help resolving this issue.

Congratulations to recent retirees:

Tom Wnek
Barry "Elvis" Shapiro
Vito Appolo
Robert Antunovich
Vinnie Cerchiara
Carl Walz
Richie Byers
Donnie Williams
Phil Bryant
Leo Drozdowycz
Dave Dugas

President Bush Signs Bill to Re-Authorize FRA

The final version of the bill to re-authorize the Federal Railroad Administration was signed into law on October 16, 2008 by President Bush. The Rail Safety Improvement Act of 2008 restructures the FRA to make safety and security its single highest priority.

ACRE is very pleased to announce that the final version of the bill signed into law contains the Hours of Service amendments that we supported as a more realistic approach to fatigue and railroad safety on commuter railroads. The Rail Safety Improvement Act of 2008 recognizes that freight and commuter employees work in very different environments. It makes allowances for the negotiation of regulations different than those imposed on the freight railroads as long as they provide an equivalent level of safety and protection against fatigue for commuter rail employees.

In addition, the Act also contains a three year moratorium on changes to Hours of Service regulations for commuter railroads to allow the FRA more time to study the commuter issue. The agencies operating commuter railroads and the unions representing employees working on those railroads are in the process of establishing a committee to address the issue of fatigue and Hours of Service Regulations on commuter railroads.

For years ACRE has stressed the importance of our independent status. The legislative process that brought the Rail Safety Improvement Act of 2008 Act into law clearly demonstrates the importance of our independent voice. When the legislation was first proposed, the international unions representing commuter employees made no distinctions between their freight members and those working for commuter agencies. Under the original Hours of Service proposals, this lack of distinction would have altered the structure of our runs, the functioning of our extra lists and the appropriation of our relief day work. These changes would have cost our members tens of thousand of dollars in earnings. We are happy to report that we have been instrumental in avoiding that unfortunate circumstance. ●

By John Gaines & Kenny Curry



AND TAXES

Railroad Retirement News

We are also very pleased to announce that ACRE Executive Board Treasurer, Mark Amorello, was elected to be the President of the National Reporting Officers Association (NRO) at the recent Railroad Retirement Board National Reporting Officers Conference in Chicago, IL held September 22-24. The NROA works as the liaison between rail labor and the Railroad Retirement Board. We know Mark will do a great job and we are really proud of his latest accomplishment.

2008 National Railroad Retirement Investment Trust Fund

As of September 30, 2008, the NRRIT had received a total of \$21.3 billion to use for investment. The Trust continues to transfer monies back to the Treasury to help fund benefit payments and administrative expenses of the Railroad Retirement Account. Since the Trust's inception, it has transferred a total of \$6.3 billion back to the Treasury.

Even with the challenges presented by the past fiscal year, the Trust has been able to increase the assets available to the Railroad Retirement System. On the date the Trust was established in 2002, the system had total assets of \$20.7

billion. With benefit payments and transfers considered, Railroad Retirement assets have grown to almost \$26.8 billion.

2009 RRB Taxes

The amounts of compensation subject to railroad retirement tier I and tier II payroll taxes will increase in 2009. However, the tier I tax rate on employees and employers remains unchanged. Under the Railroad Retirement and Survivors' Improvement Act of 2001, tier II tax rates are determined annually by an average account benefits ratio. Based on this ratio, the tier II tax rates on employees and employers will remain at their 2008 level in 2009. Railroad unemployment insurance tax rates paid by employers will continue to include a 1.5 percent surcharge in 2009.

Tier I and Medicare Tax — The railroad retirement tier I payroll tax rate on covered rail employees and employers for the year 2009 remains at 7.65 percent. The railroad retirement tier I tax rate is the same as the social security tax, and for withholding and reporting purposes is divided into 6.20 percent for retirement and 1.45 percent for Medicare hospital insurance. The maximum amount of an employee's earnings subject to the 6.20 percent rate will increase to

\$106,800 in 2009 from \$102,000 in 2008, but there is no maximum on earnings subject to the 1.45 percent Medicare rate. The increase in the amount of earnings subject to railroad retirement and social security taxes is based on indexing to increases in average national wages.

Tier II Tax — The railroad retirement tier II tax rate on employees will remain at 3.9 percent in 2009, and the rate on employers will remain at 12.1 percent. The maximum amount of earnings subject to railroad retirement tier II taxes, however, will increase to \$79,200 in 2009 from \$75,900 in 2008. Tier II tax rates under the 2001 Railroad Retirement and Survivors' Improvement Act are based on an average account benefits ratio reflecting railroad retirement fund levels. Depending on this ratio, the tier II tax rate for employers can range between 8.2 percent and 22.1 percent, while the tier II rate for employees can be between 0 percent and 4.9 percent. ●

By Mark Amorello

What's NEW on RRB.Gov

Online requests for mailed items such as tax statements, annuity estimates letters, Medicare cards, service and compensation history statements can all be accomplished online at RRB.GOV. You will be required to obtain a PIN/Password before they can be accessed. That is easily obtained by providing some information on the RRB.GOV website. They will mail your PIN within 10 days and you can track everything yourself without making any calls to the RRB. However, if you need to speak with anyone please call them at 212-264-9820. A Nationwide Toll-Free Service (NTFS) is also available at 877-772-5772.

This system will consist of the following; Interactive Voice Response (IVR) Automatic Call Distribution (ACD) Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) Telephones. The RRB will be adding electronic imaging of all documents, which means all field employees will have the ability to view electronic copies of your documents when speaking to you on the phone. These features will provide you with easier and more accurate information when you contact the RRB. •

30 day restriction when putting in single day vacations is eliminated

Train and engine service employees can request single day vacations at any time. In the past a request for a sdv could only be entered into the system within 30 days of the date requested. Now for example, you can request an sdv in January for July or December. SDV's still have to be requested no less than five days in advance of the day.

This new practice will begin with all requests in 2009. Should you have any questions please don't hesitate to call the union office. •

By Mark Amorello

Special Thanks

On behalf of yardmaster John Bourke's widow Jen, and their two young children, we want to thank everyone for their generosity in our recent fundraiser. The level of contributions from ACRE members was overwhelming and Jen wanted to make sure she thanked everyone for their kindness, caring and support since John passed away.

In addition, on behalf of all the Officers, we also want to thank all those who donated sick days during the year to those members who suffered from catastrophic illness. The good will demonstrated cannot be overstated, and is a testament to the character of the people in our great organization. We especially want to thank Local 1 President Michael Shaw, without his tireless efforts in organizing fund drives none of this could happen.

Sincerely
Anthony Bottalico

List Employees/Once per Crew

Book Bid into Overtime

Extra list employees can now claim sixth and seventh starts when awarded a vacation preference once in between crew book picks. This is an option for List employees who can use this method of claiming the once per overtime bid into overtime. Please use claim code 204. This is effective immediately.

We would like to remind our members to reread Bulletin Order;

Hudson 4-149
Harlem 4-101
New Haven 4-205

This Bulletin Order amends Rule D in regard to the use of electronic devices.

**It states in part that:
personal electronic or electrical devices must be powered off prior to boarding the train.**

The only exceptions are that railroad issued radios may be used and mobile telephones may be used in event of an emergency involving the operation of the railroad.

Operating Rules, page 7 has been changed to reflect this Bulletin Order.

The use of electronic devices will be policed by Regional FRA Inspectors as well as Metro North officials. Fines are up to \$25,000 for the individual.

ACRE Scholarship Update

The deadline for ACRE scholarship applications for students enrolling in the 2009-2010 school year is June 5, 2009. The application must be hand delivered or postmarked no later than the above date. ACRE will not be responsible for applications lost in the mail. We suggest you contact the union office to verify the application has been received. Applications can be downloaded at our web site, www.GoAcre.com or picked up at our union office. To date, our organization has granted 160 scholarships to the children of ACRE members. We are extremely thankful to our membership for attending the functions and participating in the fund raisers that support this worthy program. Please remember, the ACRE scholarship fund is reserved for the children of ACRE members going into their first year of undergraduate study for September 2009. Should you have any questions, please contact Kenny Curry (212) 599-5856 ext. 30

By Kenny Curry

SIGNAL VIOLATION PREVENTIION

On November 18 and 19, 2008, ACRE 9 Local Chairman John Potthast, attended the signal violation prevention meeting in Stamford, CT. This two day event was hosted by Metro-North and was attended by all the area commuter railroads consisting of NJ Transit, LIRR, SEPTA, PATH, AMTRAK and MBCR (Boston). The purpose of this meeting was to analyze each of the attending railroad's hiring and training practices for locomotive engineers with the ultimate goal of standardizing and putting in practice the best procedures.

Included in this discussion was a banner testing program involving both conductors and engineers. This testing has been prompted due to an unusually high number of signal violations in the last two years. In addition, changes to the federal regulations concerning train crews were discussed at length. While ACRE is very interested in other railroads' hiring and training practices, it was the banner testing program that dominated the discussion.

Banner testing is a program intended to raise the awareness level and focus T&E personnel to the track conditions ahead. Testing takes the form of safety sensitive barriers or banners placed in the gauge of a track of oncoming trains. These tests which include back up moves are conducted exclusively in yards or on secondary tracks where trains are operating at restricted speed. According to the railroads, these unannounced tests have been very effective in improving train crew performance. ACRE is working closely with Metro-North as they set up their banner testing program which they expect to implement in the first months of 2009. ●

By John Potthast

HEALTH CARE COSTS

As you are aware, there is no cost for our Empire Plan health insurance coverage. Our members also have the option every December of picking from several different providers. Your weekly contribution for the non-Empire Plan coverage depends on the plan chosen as well as your choice of individual or family coverage.

For further information on these plans, please contact Employee Benefits at extension 2217.

The chart for the individual healthcare costs are on the page 10.

By Paul Holland

2009
AGREEMENT EMPLOYEES
WEEKLY HEALTH INSURANCE CONTRIBUTIONS*

	Individual	Family
NYS EMPIRE PLAN 1 (All States)	\$0.00	\$0.00
Aetna 210 (NYC, NJ, Nassau, Suffolk, Rockland, Sullivan & Westchester)	\$26.82	\$117.22
Capital District Physicians - Capital 063 (Columbia, Greene, Rensselaer, Schenectady & Warren)	\$0.00	\$0.00
Capital District Physicians - 300 (Broome, Delaware, Essex & Hamilton)	\$1.00	\$27.55
Capital District Physicians - 310 (Dutchess, Orange & Ulster)	\$3.66	\$24.38
Empire BlueCross BlueShield HMO Upstate – 280 (Columbia, Greene, Rensselaer, Schenectady & Warren)	\$18.08	\$77.12
Empire BlueCross BlueShield HMO Downstate – 290 (NYC, Rockland, Suffolk & Westchester)	\$30.03	\$108.31
Empire BlueCross BlueShield HMO Mid Hudson - 320 (Dutchess, Orange, Putnam & Ulster)	\$41.84	\$139.16
GHI HMO Select -220 (Columbia, Delaware, Greene, Rensselaer, Schenectady & Warren)	\$3.72	\$41.97
GHI HMO Select - 350 (Dutchess, Orange, Putnam, Rockland, Sullivan & Ulster)	\$12.42	\$68.68
HIP of New York - 050 (NYC, Nassau, Suffolk & Westchester)	\$1.76	\$15.60
MVP Health Plan East - 060 (Columbia, Greene, Rensselaer & Schenectady)	\$0.00	\$0.00
MVP Health Plan Central - 330 (Broome & Delaware)	\$0.00	\$11.30
MVP Health Plan Mid Hudson - 340 (Dutchess, Orange, Putnam, Rockland, Sullivan & Ulster)	\$4.48	\$38.89
HealthNet - 222 (CT, NJ & NY)	\$12.73	\$39.28
ConnectiCare - 333 (Connecticut only)	\$0.70	\$2.00

*The Deductions start with the 3rd paycheck of the payroll year

To: All ACRE Local 1 Members
From: Paul Holland, Sec. Local 1

The ballots for our local election were tabulated at our November 5, 2008 union meeting. Local 1 expresses its thanks to our election committee, Rebecca Rourke, Kevin Healy and Mark Wurtmann for the time they dedicated to ensuring the integrity of our vote count. Thank you to our 613 members who cast their ballots and congratulations to all our candidates regardless of their vote total for having taken the initiative and exhibited the courage to run for office in an effort to better our union.

General Secretary

Andrew Steimle 482 Elected
Jose Fleming 115

Local Treasurer

Mark Amorello 335 Elected
Steven Considine 242
Jeff Segal 24

CT Legislative Representative

William O'Brien 191 Elected
Joseph Dobbins 38

NY Legislative Representative

Kenneth Curry 300 Elected
Michael Joyce 75

Local Chairperson/Stamford

Kirk Thomas 68 Elected
Dean Macchio 15

Local Chairperson/Hudson

Bob Felicetta 90 Elected
Kyle Conklin 36

Local Trustee

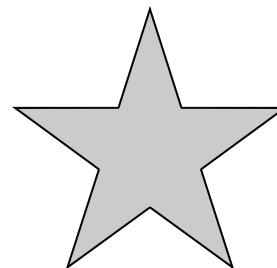
Denis Beyer 379 Elected
Anthony Aprea 324 Elected
Michael Bernard 297 Elected
Dennis Richardson 259
Corinne Wahlstrom 238
Heather Fisher 218

Board of Appeals (3)

Thomas Serraino 480 Elected
Doug Mullen 440 Elected
Peter Delvecchio 384 Elected
Pete Whyte 367

The following offices were uncontested and were declared elected at today's meeting:

General Chairman Anthony Bottalico
Local Chairman/New Haven Ralph Sanzari
Local Chairman/Yardmasters Bill Quinn
Local Chairman/GCT Dennis Perri
Local Chairman/Harlem John Scalabrini
Local President Mike Shaw
Vice-President John Mancinelli
Local Secretary Paul Holland
Executive Trustees Pete Paglia & Tim Gerstner



**Association of Commuter Rail Employees
Local Division 9**

Locomotive Engineers

Here are the official results for the 2009 Election of Officers held at the December 8, 2008 regular meeting:

General Chairman & GCT Local Chairman

Michael Doyle-elected Steve Donnelly-elected

Brian Palmer Lenny Carpenter

Hudson Local Chairman New Haven Local Chairman

John Potthast-elected Chris Lundy-elected

Joe Porcelli Joe Traca

Steve Marcell

Harlem Local Chairman & President

Tommy Cooper -elected

Dennis O'Keefe -elected

John Alderucci Steve Jiminez

Vice President

Legislative Rep

Mike Bellucco-elected

John McBride-elected

Les Zilokowski Ed Boni

Pat Byrne

Secretary/Treasurer

Alt Secretary/Treasurer

Joe Lindenberg -elected

Lori Morrirt

Mike Seger **Brian Hopkins -elected**

Lisa Weigel

Executive Board Trustee

Local Trustee

Van Desisto -elected Jon Melarczik

Mike King **Richie LaPorte -elected**

Matt Hager-elected Anthony Hughes

Steve Hatcher **Tommy Potthast -elected**

John Collins

Board of Appeals

Sherwin Edwards **Steve Keindl -elected**

Ramon Figueroa-elected Annie Mahoney

Steve Zumpano -elected Dennis Murphy -elected

Lisa Morgan

Alt Leg Rep

Glenn Scanlon unopposed-elected

Alt Board of Appeals

James Fahey unopposed-elected

Guide

Matt Mitchell unopposed -elected



SIGNALMAN ELECTIONS

Here are our election results:

General Chairman-----Darren Berger
Vice General Chairman-----Andy Marussich
Local Chairman NH-----Kevin Eaton
Local Chairman GCT-----Mathew Byrns
Local Chairman ET's/Spec's--- -----Arnold Barron
Local Chairman Construction-----James Joyce
Secretary Treasurer-----Bill Zettergren
President-----Steven Fonseca
Vice President----- Steven Donovan
Legislative Rep-----Mike Dabrowski
Trustee-----Robert Villano
Trustee-----Jeff Santorelli
Local Chairman H/H-----Matt Florio (if unopposed) This position

was vacated by Wayne Thompsett.

Now Available to ACRE Members!

We are please to announce a new benefit offered through the W.J. Valone Agency where members can now purchase **life insurance with no medical exam needed!**

Learn how to protect your family and your pension benefits with permanent life insurance that also build cash value!

Underwritten by one of the worlds top insurance companies, ACRE members can now get the coverage they might need to maximize their retirement income benefits. These plans are flexible and portable.

Members can take these plans with them even after retirement or separation of service with out a rate increase.

For more information please contact Bill Valone at 631-425-4661 to learn more.

ACRE's Entertainment Director Mike Shaw has announced an action packed calendar of events for 2009!

ACRE Rail Open Golf Tournament

Saturday, May 16, 2009

Monroe CT Golf Club

1:00 p.m. Shotgun Start

Our Rail Open has set the standard for railroad golf tournaments for many years. Whitney Farms is always in excellent condition and conveniently located off major highways. Join our members who range from near pro to first-timers for a great time of laughs, great food and camaraderie. The entry fee includes greens fees, lunch at the turn, beer, soda, snacks, fantastic freebies, a raffle prize ticket and a great dinner after the round.

Summer Picnic

Date and location to be announced

We're looking forward to seeing everyone at our summer picnic. Our picnic is made even more enjoyable by the attendance of many of our retirees. Join us for swimming, softball and more. Our picnic will be catered by the always popular Mancinelli Catering.

ACRE Rail Classic Golf Tournament

Saturday, September 12, 2009

Casperkill Golf Club


Poughkeepsie, NY

12:00 Registration

Join us for a great time at our ACRE Rail Classic. Our New York Golf Tournament will be held once again at Casperkill Golf Club, in Poughkeepsie, New York. Casperkill was formerly the IBM Country Club and is located just minutes up Route 9 off I84 Exit 13N. This beautiful course provides an enjoyable and challenging round for both experienced and beginner players. A great dinner will be provided as well as many prizes, giveaways and refreshments. Whether you have played golf for years or are just starting out, you are welcome to join us for a great time at our Rail Classic Golf Tournament.

Stay tuned to www.GoACRE.com for details.

By Paul Holland



On October 20, 2008, Special Board of Adjustment 1154 met to adjudicate two disciplinary cases before Arbitrator Josef Sirefman. We have received decisions in both cases and they are summarized below.

By Andrew Steimle

CASE No. 15

The claimant was assessed a 10 day actual and 20 day deferred suspension for falsely reporting the details of an occupational injury that occurred while working on a train. Claimant was onboard M7 equipment and attempted to pass from one car to another. As he pushed against the heavy barrel-end door with his body weight it opened without resistance, causing him to fall into a cabinet next to the door, resulting in an injury to his shoulder. The carrier inspected the equipment and found nothing wrong with the door. This led to the charge of falsely reporting an injury.

The Organization presented procedural and substantive arguments. First, it was argued that claimant's right to a fair and impartial investigation was prejudiced when the carrier introduced his past safety record as an exhibit. A past record may only be considered in assessing the level of discipline but not in determining an employee's guilt. Second, we argued that the carrier failed to prove the charges because it inspected the equipment while it was stationary and therefore not under the exact conditions present when the injury occurred.

Arbitrator Sirefman ruled that claimant was partially at fault since, "experienced employees, such as claimant, can be expected to anticipate such variations and take reasonable steps to safeguard themselves from injury, as well as the onus of contributing, even in part, to the occurrence of an injury." However, he also ruled that Metro-North must also be fully cognizant of the need for full attention to safety issues. To that end, he reduced claimant's discipline to five days actual suspension.

CASE No. 20

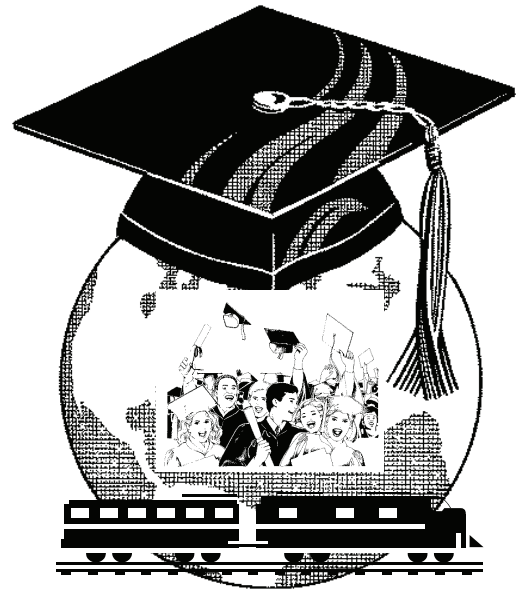
The claimant in this case was charged with conduct unbecoming in that he engaged in inappropriate, non-consensual sexual contact with a female customer while on duty. The organization argued that the claimant was deprived of his due process right to a fair and impartial investigation when the carrier failed to call the complainant as a witness. This denied the claimant the opportunity to confront and cross-examine his accuser.

Arbitrator Sirefman denied claimant's appeal for reinstatement. In his ruling Sirefman held, "railroad employees owe a duty to passengers to respect their physical integrity as a matter of common sense and decency, even without explicit rules and directions." This, coupled with the fact that claimant was arrested and pled guilty to other charges made additional witnesses unnecessary and resulted in his dismissal being upheld.

Scholarship Fundraising Dinner Dance

Saturday, February 28, 2009
7:00 p.m. till Midnight
Whitney Farms Country Club
Monroe, CT

The greatest minds were faced with a dilemma. Request that our members stop having kids or throw a party as a fundraiser for our Scholarship Fund. After very little debate, the party is on for February 28th! Join us in the reception hall at Whitney Farms Golf Club for what promises to be another great get-together. Easily accessible to New York and Connecticut. Great food, excellent drinks and unbeatable camaraderie.
Contact the union office for tickets; 212 599-5856.



CHANGES ON THE DANBURY LINE

On Friday, the state Bond Commission released \$2.5 million, as authorized by state lawmakers two years ago, to design the centralized traffic control signal system for the Metro-North Danbury Line.

The Danbury Line is the only commuter rail line where manual block exists that requires train crews to actually throw switches that control the routing of trains on the main line.

The \$2.5 million released by the Bond Commission Friday will go toward design of the centralized traffic control signal system. The DOT has the overall signalization project budgeted at \$75 million. The system will begin being constructed in 2009 and finished in 2011.

The system will like the rest of the Metro-North system be controlled remotely from Metro-North Railroad's control center in Grand Central Terminal in New York City.

Special thanks to Gov. M. Jodi Rell, and the DOT for finally addressing the call for improved service of the Danbury-to-Norwalk area..

State Rep. Toni Boucher, R-143, welcomed the action and described the signalization project as a major milestone toward revitalizing rail service, reducing traffic congestion and improving the environment and quality of life for a "very large part of lower Fairfield County."

By Bill O'Brien

New Product Available through Payroll Deduction for Acre Employees



For any employee who has applied for the AFLAC Disability Policy which provides for accident injury, sickness and illness and maternity leave, and has been declined for a pre-existing condition, there is a new option for all employees.

Now available, the AFLAC Accident Plan which you can get with an Accidental Disability Rider. The Rider which will include the Base Accident Plan provides the following coverage:

Monthly Benefits:	\$100 to \$2,000, subject to income requirements;
Benefit Period:	6 or 12 months; and
Elimination Period:	0 or 7 days

The plan will only pay benefits for any accident or injury on or off the job. It will not pay benefits for any sickness.

Income replacement is very important and the AFLAC Accidental Disability Rider can give you that ability.

This is recommended for those who do not qualify for AFLAC Disability.

The disability product, cancer product, and new long term health care are all AFLAC products.

Please contact either

Matt Parr at (845) 399-4869

Jack Kohen at (917) 751-4373.

For life insurance needs, please contact **Matt Parr at (845) 399-4869**. Matt can provide brokerage services with an access to over 40 insurance companies.

For pension needs and income replacement available for spouse and children -these are highly rated insurance companies who compete for your business creating savings and security.

