



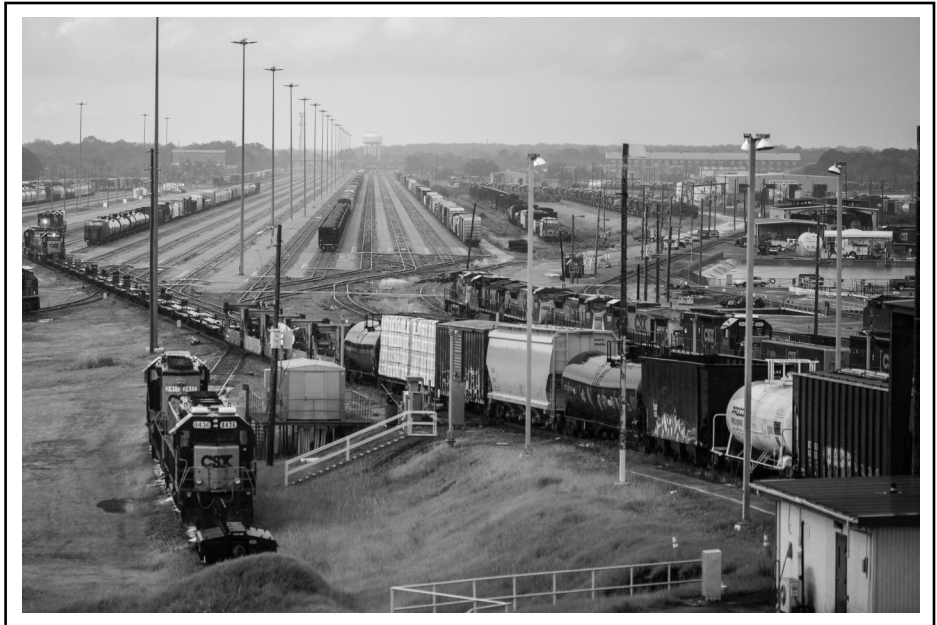
The Highball

Official Publication of
Railroad Workers United

CSX Malaise a Catastrophe for Workers, Shippers, and the Nation

In an effort to serve the short-term interests of company stockholders, Hunter Harrison - newly appointed CEO and President of CSX - has implemented a scorched earth policy at the nation's third largest railroad that has alienated just about everyone, including workers, middle management, contractors, customers, Amtrak and commuter operations. Within months of assuming office, the Harrison regime began eliminating work rules and safety rules, running roughshod over the workforce, eliminating countless positions and closing the majority of the railroad's hump yards (such as the one shown here to the right), drastically limiting the railroad's ability to classify and move freight.

As this issue of *The Highball* goes to press, there appears no end in sight to the debacle. See full story on Page 3, and Editorial on Page 7.



Cross-Craft Rail Workers Coalition Takes Root in Kansas City



Railroad workers from the various crafts rally for a good contract in Kansas City at Union Pacific's Neff yard during a company sponsored "Family Days" event to demonstrate the hypocrisy of a company that professes to support its employees and their families and yet refuses to negotiate a fair contract with them. The workers have taken action in recent months in hope of obtaining a new contract with the major rail carriers. Unfortunately, negotiations have stalled completely as the National Carriers' Conference Committee refuses to bargain in good faith with the myriad of unions that represent the various crafts who work on the nation's Class One carriers and a number of regional railroads. See article on Page 3.



RWU Happenings

RWU Builds for Sixth Biennial Convention in Chicago April 5th & 6th, 2018

Railroad Workers United will conduct our 6th Biennial Convention on April 5th & 6th, 2018, It will be our tenth anniversary! All RWU members in good standing are invited to attend the two-day event, planned at the Hyatt Regency O'Hare, a short drive west of Chicago and very close to the airport

In addition to standard business including bylaws amendments, nominations, and elections of the Steering Committee and discussion of resolutions and policies, the Convention will host numerous workshops, presentations and panel discussions. And when the Convention adjourns Friday evening, there will no doubt be plenty of time for socializing, as we join 2500 labor activists from across the country and around the world for the Labor Notes Conference. Traditionally, many of the RWU Convention participants stay on for this one-of-a-kind labor

education conference that features over 100 workshops on just about every imaginable subject of concern to working people and their labor organizations.

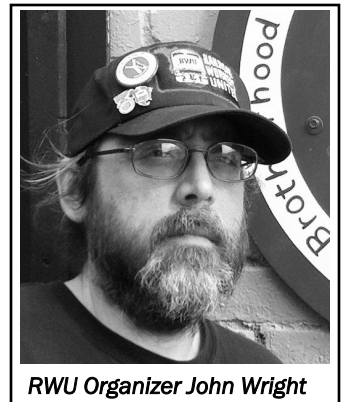
To register for the RWU Convention, see the RWU website. Register online or download and mail in a paper registration form. The cost of the registration is just \$50.00 and includes the cost of lunch both Thursday and Friday, coffee, light snacks, and all Convention materials. A banquet will be held Thursday night and there will be a reception Friday upon adjournment of the Convention. If you wish to stay for the *Labor Notes Conference*, see their website at www.labornotes.org. Hotel rooms generally sell out quick, so book yours asap. Otherwise there are numerous hotels and motels within a few mile radius of the Convention Center. See you in Chicago!

New Staff Position Created to Support the Work of RWU

At the September Steering Committee meeting, Railroad Workers United agreed to contract with long-term member and activist John Paul "J.P." Wright as a limited term employee to assist the organization with four basic areas of support – clerical, organizing, networking, and fundraising. As the organization has broadened and expanded in recent years, the need for staff support to augment the efforts of our volunteer activists has become more and more essential going forward. J.P. will assist the General Secretary and the Executive Committee with the day to day duties of maintaining and growing the organization as we approach our 10th anniversary.

Brother Wright first joined RWU not long after it was up and running, and has served in several capacities on the Steering Committee since 2010, including Co-Chair and Organizer. He

has also been the RWU Storekeeper and Facebook Page Coordinator in the past, has attended every Convention since becoming a member, and has been active in most facets of the organization. He recently voluntarily retired from engine service from CSX with 16 years of service. J.P.'s work experience, together with his years of activism and clear understand-



RWU Organizer John Wright

ing of our mission, goals, and objectives make him an asset to our organization. We are excited to have him on board!

Railroad Workers United

Railroad Workers United was organized in April 2008 at a Founding Convention in Dearborn, MI. RWU grew out of decades of struggle within the craft unions for unity, solidarity, and democracy. We are carrying on a tradition of rank & file activity which dates back to the 1890s and the time of Eugene V. Debs.

RWU is a cross-craft inter-union caucus of rail labor activists across North America. All rail workers of all crafts from all carriers who support our Statement of Principles are welcome to join in our efforts. Please write, call, or email. See the contact information below.

Statement of Principles

- Unity of All Rail Crafts**
- An End to Inter-Union Conflict**
- Rank-and-File Democracy**
- Membership Participation & Action**
- Solidarity Among All Railroaders**
- No to Concessionary Bargaining**

International Steering Committee

- Ross Grooters, BLET #778, UP, Des Moines, IA
- Ron Kaminkow, BLET #51, Amtrak, Reno, NV
- Paul Matchett, WSOR, Janesville, WI
- Hugh Sawyer, BLET #316, NS, Atlanta, GA
- Cameron Slick, UTU #911, CP, St Paul, MN
- Daniel Stroup, BLET #188, CN, Superior, WI
- Jim Thomason, UTU #1292, CN, Two Harbors, MN
- John Vitaska, NCFD #395, CP, Chicago, IL
- James Wallace, UTU #305, BNSF, Lincoln, NE
- Andrew Weir, TCRC-CTY #240, CN, Sarnia, ON
- John Wright, BLET #78, CSX, Louisville, KY

Alternates

- Brian Clark, TCU #3060, CN, Champaign, IL
- Robert Hill, UTU #556, BNSF, Tacoma, WA
- Alan Thompson, UTU #316, UP, Clinton, IA

www.railroadworkersunited.org ● info@railroadworkersunited.org ● 202-798-3327 or 202-RWU-DEBS
RWU P.O. Box 2131 Reno, NV 89505



CSX Meltdown a Crisis for Shippers, Passengers, Workers and the General Public

Once railroad boss Hunter Harrison had made a fortune for Canadian Pacific stockholders over the last few years, he has been in higher demand than ever. Despite failing health, the 72-year-old railroad CEO was named CEO and then President of CSX earlier this year by the Board of Directors, which took its cue from stockholders drooling at the prospects of short term super profits that they are all convinced he can and will deliver. They want his services so bad that they are paying him multiple salaries, a combined total of a whopping \$300 million!

Sure enough, once Harrison took the helm, the stock value shot up. The industry was all in a flurry about Hunter's soon-to-be next shining success story. By late Spring, it was apparent that something was amiss, and by summer, even the industry mouthpiece *Railway Age*, opined that in fact, all is not well at the railroad. Following the closure of most of CSX's hump yards, where much of CSX's traffic had traditionally been classified, the railroad went into a tailspin. By late summer, the NTSB had scheduled hearings to investigate service problems.

In an effort to offset the damage done to the decrease in train velocity, increase in dwell time, and overall transit delays, Harrison simply abolished a series of rules that had been in place for decades. Now - without training or experience - crews are kicking cars, performing flying switches, getting on and off moving equipment and taking other risks that until a few months ago, would have gotten them (and still will get most North American railroaders) severely disciplined and likely

fired. And when workers have had the audacity to speak out against unsafe practices, unwarranted layoffs, harsh discipline, and the general chaos and malaise extant on the property, in an unprecedented display of finger pointing and condescension, Hunter Harrison publicly chastised the CSX workforce, *blaming them for the failures and shortcomings that the railroad was experiencing!*

Workforce morale is at an all-time low amidst rumors that the worst is yet to come. Trainmen and engineers are concerned that they will be routed down a similar path that both CP and CN workers before them took under Harrison, whereby most work rules are eliminated and the workday expanded. Shop crafts await notice that their facility will be shuttered and their work eliminated. Maintenance forces brace for further contracting out of their work. Meantime, there is extraordinary talk of ripping up the second main track of the busy artery west of Albany, New York as a cost-saving measure, leaving most CSX employees in a state of incredulity.

Like the various debacles and meltdowns we have seen before throughout the years of endless railroad mismanagement (e.g., the Conrail carve-up, UP/SP merger), this debacle will come to an end as well. Yards will no longer be plugged, dwell time will decrease, train velocity will improve, and the railroad will recover. But at what cost? How many more times must we be subject to this irresponsible, short-sighted mismanagement of our nation's railroads?

Special Report from The Heartland

Rank & File Workers Build Cross-Craft Coalition of All Rails in Kansas City

William Young, Local Chairman IAM LL#27

I am privileged to report from Kansas City regarding *Unionism in Action*. I reference Unionism, because our groundswell of participation, action, and communication is nothing more than basic action taken that is part and parcel of organized labor. Far too many dues paying members in this day and age are not familiar with this form of active unionism.

In the Kansas City area, recent conversations between like-minded railroad workers regarding the sad state of contract negotiations has produced a fledgling organization called the All Rail Craft Coalition (ARCC). Using resources from multiple craft local lodges from various unions, we schedule meetings to discuss the issues and strategize future events. Our most recent action took place on September 23rd at Union Pacific's Neff yard here in Kansas City, during the carrier's employee "Family Day". What better time to educate families affected by proposed healthcare changes in the ongoing negotiations? Proud to say, participation was better than expected and we were able to disperse more than 700 informational flyers that outline the union's contract proposals in plain language.

Spreading factual information has become our greatest tool. It is very telling to observe the surprised and concerned look on the face of a rail worker's loved one reading the plain facts. All of a sudden 50-60 people with banners and signs at the entrance of a railyard during a company function doesn't seem so "radical".

A local news station came out to cover the rally, and the TV coverage brought our cause to a broader audience. It has been reported to me that this short video clip online is inspiring rail workers across the country to join in the action. I am also proud to say this rally was accomplished well within the laws, even under the supervision of three different departments of law enforcement.

Building on the momentum generated by this rally, ARCC has future meetings and actions planned. We now anticipate even greater attendance at these upcoming events due to the attention that we received from the September 23rd action.

"... we are simply picking up the baton of action that has been set aside for far too long."

We focus on breaking down the barriers that are used against the guy with his "boots in the ballast" for a fair contract. Current company proposals regarding healthcare and wages are not only unacceptable, but insulting to the working men and women who enable the Carriers' record profits every quarter. This is our only objective, to make that collective voice heard and thereby inspire this kind of action across the country. We are not "radical" or "exceptional" in taking "union action". It is my opinion that we are simply picking up the baton of action that has been set aside for far too long.



Rail Worker Defense

Civil Charges Dropped Against Amtrak Engineer Brandon Bostian

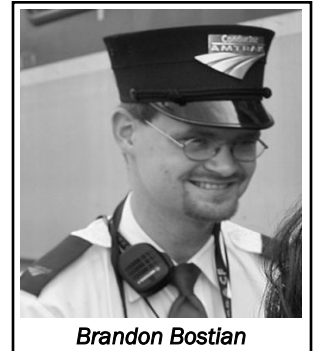
In what represents a victory for all railroad workers, on September 12th, Judge Thomas Gehret dismissed all charges against Amtrak engineer Brandon Bostian, stating that the evidence presented by the prosecution convinced him that the 2015 train wreck was “more likely an accident than criminal negligence.” Bostian had been indicted this past spring on charges of involuntary manslaughter, causing or risking a catastrophe, and reckless endangerment. He was at the throttle of Train #188 just east of Philadelphia on May 12th, 2015 when his train inexplicably accelerated to twice the maximum authorized speed on a section of trackage that unfortunately was not protected by *any form* of “train control,” let alone the much discussed Positive Train Control (PTC).

Amtrak’s internal investigation failed to turn up any evidence of wrongdoing on the engineer’s part, and the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) concluded in its comprehensive investigation that the mishap was due to a lack of PTC and a distracting sequence of events that caused Bostian to lose “situational awareness.” In addition, the Philadelphia District Attorney had declined to press charges, stating, “We cannot conclude that the evidence rises to the high level necessary to charge the engineer or anyone else with a criminal offense.” Nevertheless, the Pennsylvania DA served an indictment against the engineer at the 11th hour on May 12th, just hours before the statute of limitations expired, two years to the day of the accident (see *The Highball*, Summer 2017)

In Early September, Railroad Workers United adopted a *Resolution in Defense of the Amtrak engineer Brandon Bostian* in which the Steering Committee pointed out ten reasons why the actions of the Pennsylvania DA were uncalled for and un-just, condemning the indictment and calling for railroad workers to rally to the engineer’s defense. As with our fellow workers of the Montreal, Maine & Atlantic, Bostian was caught up in so-

cial, political, systemic and historical forces well beyond his control. These forces lurk behind the scene of most every train wreck, and must be brought into the light. Simply blaming the individual workers masks the underlying causes of train wrecks and does nothing to make for a safer railroad nor a safer society. Lack of proper and adequate funding, deferred maintenance, improper training, inadequate qualifying time, fatigue inducing schedules, insufficient staffing, failure to make use of available technology, and a safety culture that focuses on worker behavior rather than pinpointing and ameliorating hazards – all of these behind-the-scenes factors conspire to create an unsafe situation, a powder keg waiting to explode. And it did on May 12th, 2015.

We may never know what happened in the locomotive cab of Train #188 that fateful evening. But we do know - and so does Amtrak, the NTSB, the Philly DA, and Judge Gehret - that no evidence exists to send a railroad worker to prison.



Brandon Bostian

Lac Megantic Trial Gets Underway in Quebec

The jury has now been selected, and the trial of Canadian railroad workers indicted on charges that could result in life prison sentences if convicted has begun. Due to the dynamic nature of events as we go to press, *The Highball* will refrain from publishing an article at this time. Please see the RWU website and Facebook Page for breaking news as the trial goes forward. A verdict is expected sometime in December.

No Single Employee Crews Campaign Takes Off on CN former WC Property

As of this writing, Canadian National (CN) has made no formal attempts to negotiate on-property agreements that would allow for single employee mainline operations. However, we fully anticipate the carrier will eventually do so; we must be vigilant and prepared for the coming eventuality.

Installation of Positive Train Control (PTC)-ready signaling, communication systems and other components is well under way across the Canadian National-owned Wisconsin Central system (WC). CN has announced they expect PTC to be fully operational over their entire U.S. network, which also includes the Illinois Central and Grand Trunk Western, by the current FRA deadline of Dec. 31, 2018.

All major railroad carriers have made no secret of their intentions to utilize PTC as a means to advance their agenda of ‘efficiency’ and ‘cost control’. These industry buzzwords and phrases are nothing more than thinly veiled code for manpower reductions. But remember, the original intent of PTC was to make railroads safer, not to reduce labor costs.

With that in my mind, we have begun an informal campaign to raise awareness of this critical issue. Although our efforts are in their infancy, we have purchased hundreds of ‘No Single

Employee Crews’ stickers and bumper stickers, and have been gradually building a distribution network across the WC. The campaign has been met with enthusiasm by the rank & file. At terminals where stickers have been made available, the supply has not lasted more than a few days.

This type of grassroots workplace action is one of many ways we can build solidarity and rally our co-workers around major issues. Given the current anti-worker political and regulatory environment, we cannot afford to simply do nothing. We stand to be crushed unless we stand up and make our voices heard loud and clear - NO SINGLE EMPLOYEE CREWS!

www.no1persontraincrews.com

No Single Employee Train Crews

Protect Your Family Protect Your Community



Rail Crew Van Drivers Rally for Better Wages, Benefits and a Union

On September 17th, crew van drivers employed by both PTI and Hallcon (formerly Renzenberger) held a spirited rally near the Norfolk Southern (NS) Haselton Yard in Youngstown Ohio. Drivers came from the NS/PTI yards in Youngstown and Bellevue Ohio, as well as from the Rockport NS/PTI/Pusey Yard in West Cleveland and the CSX /Hallcon/Collinwood Yard in Cleveland. The Ohio drivers are represented by the United Electrical (UE) Local #716 throughout the country. UE also has drivers under contract in places like Chicago, New Jersey and California.

The rally was designed to draw attention to the poverty wages being paid to crew haul drivers, to demand a living wage, and pressure the company to conduct a regular and more frequent schedule of contract negotiations with the union in order that a contract can be reached as soon as possible. UE believes the company is stalling the negotiations process in an attempt to bust the union. In negotiations, the company has claimed that it feels no pressure to negotiate more often, so the union decided it was time to take it to the streets and get the company's attention.

The event garnered positive attention from local Youngstown news channels 21 WFMJ and 27 WKBM. Turnout was diminished due to PTI management putting out the word that drivers would be fired by the railroad if they participated in such an event. So far, no workers have experienced any disciplinary action. The company did send one of its top management officials to surveil the drivers and



Crew haul drivers work long hours for low pay and few benefits. Their attempts to organize and fight back deserve the support of every union railroad worker.

take photographs of the event and its participants, in what was an obvious attempt to intimidate the workers. So in turn, participants decided to take pictures of him sitting in his car, camera in hand. The message: "You cannot intimidate us!"

The union is scheduling an additional rally in Bellevue, Ohio on October 14th at 3 PM in front of PTI's office, adjacent to the Norfolk Southern dorm, and is inviting all trade unionists to come out and support the drivers' fight for livable wages. It is imperative that all railroad workers – particularly those in train and engine service who are regularly driven around in vans owned by Halcon, PTI (and others) – encourage and support the drivers' efforts to organize and win better wages, benefits, and working conditions.

Railroad Workers Labor History Calendar for 2018 Now Available!

Don't forget to order your copy of RWU's 2018 Rail Workers Labor History Calendar. RWU's slogan is "the rank & file in action", and as such, each month of the Calendar is graced with a different photo from rail labor history, depicting a strike, picket, rally or other activity selected from among hundreds of such actions over the course of the last 150 years of struggle. Nearly 175 dates of historic significance to railroad workers and their unions are indicated throughout the calendar year.

This unique calendar includes more than a dozen photographs of rail labor actions, both from the past and modern times, like that of engineers and trainmen, on strike in 2014 against Midwest regional rail carrier Wheeling & Lake Erie, which graces the cover of the calendar (see photo at right).

To order yours, see the RWU website STORE, or call 202-798-3327. For those interested in purchasing multiple copies for co-workers, friends and family members, big discounts are available on orders of more than five (5) copies. Help spread the word of our heroic history, and help to inspire rail workers' confidence to wage the battles that lie ahead.

Order your Rail Workers Labor History Calendar Today!



Opinion & Commentary

Our Lives are at Risk When Stockholders Demand to Get Rich Quick

In my commentary in the Summer 2017 issue of *The Highball*, I summed up the sordid story of CP's effortless slaughter of the operating crafts that escalated under the reign of former CEO Hunter Harrison (HH), and continues under his handpicked successor, while HH has moved on to bigger and better worlds to conquer at CSX. In the last few months there have been numerous "What the @#\$\$ is going on at CSX?" themed articles in various industry trade publications and the mainstream press. While most of these articles are predominantly from the perspective of various business interests, shippers, investors and so forth, on a few occasions the workers' experiences and perspective have found their way into this discussion. As I read about the resulting chaos from HH's scorched earth, gut-the-railroad-to-remodel-it on-the-fly approach, not only have I seen this movie before, but I have lived it and experienced it from my vantage point at the Canadian Pacific (CP) Bensenville, IL. yard.

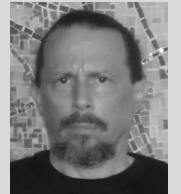
One story in particular was a real kick-in-the-gut and got my blood boiling. As this goes to press, I haven't been able to assemble all the facts, but recently there was a serious injury to a conductor at the CSX Radnor Yard in Nashville. According to an article in Trains.com/newswire, the SMART-TD wrote a letter to CSX management alleging that recent changes to the switching operations were a significant contributing factor. Radnor had been a major hump yard until HH shut that down, waved his magic wand, and instantly transformed the hump into a flat switching operation. For those of you unfamiliar with this terminology, I'll attempt a brief explanation so that the potential hazards posed for workers and the surrounding communities can be better understood. The basic operation of a standard rail yard can be summed up as: 1) switching out inbound trains in order to 2) assemble new outbound trains. The cars from an inbound train are distributed to various tracks in a classification yard, according to their ultimate destination. Based upon what is headed where, various tracks are then coupled up by a pullback job, doubled, tripled, quadrupled, etc. ultimately constituting an outbound train for departure. Switching out cars per a hump operation involves shoving a train up an incline at a slow, constant speed. The cars are separated at the top of the "hump" - usually by a human "pin puller", walking with the pace of the shove - to then roll freely downhill into the various classification tracks. In this modern era, the switches for each destination track are usually thrown automatically by a computer. Various mechanical retarders adjust the speed of the cars as they descend, so the resulting impact of the free rolling freight cars does not exceed the industry standard of 4 mph - in theory. Flat switching requires a switchperson to 1) manually throw the various switches, then 2) direct the engine to start an accelerated shove, pull the pin that will separate the cars from those coupled to the engine when it is then directed to stop. Most hump and flat switching engineers have been replaced by switchpersons with a remote control pack.

Painting a picture of what went down in Bensenville may provide some insight into possible contributing factors in this recent incident at Radnor. HH's disdain for hump operations - due to the overhead and maintenance required for a smooth, reasonably safe operation - is well documented. So one of the first things he did at CP was to kill the hump operation, turning Bensenville into a big flat switching operation. One problem is

that uniquely specific logistics are required for either respective mode of switching. Critical factors such as the grade of the switching lead, the configuration of the switches and the grade of the classification yard, to name but a few, can make the difference between a half-way smooth and safe operation vs. a catastrophe waiting to happen. When he took out the retarders and started flat switching in the hump yard, cars were flying down the lead, into the tracks with impacts of at least 10-15 mph at times. This resulted in derailments, wreaked havoc on shiftable loads, and cars sometimes ran out the other end into the side of pullback jobs. To compensate for killing the hump, we started flat switching in what had been a receiving/departure yard with fairly long tracks. This gave the free rolling cars a longer distance in which to pick up speed, resulting in the same high impact and run-out issues. If this wasn't insane enough, HH implemented flat switching from *both* ends of each yard. So at that end not designed for flat switching, we were switching uphill, flagrantly defying the laws of gravity and physics. In the union's letter to CSX, they cited the inherent hazards of attempting to switch uphill as one of the contributing factors to this incident at Radnor.

The railroad industry poses numerous hazards to the workforce and surrounding communities on a good day, under the most ideal and favorable conditions. A one second lapse in judgement or loss of situational awareness by a conductor or engineer, that is exacerbated by whip-cracking speed-up, can result in a serious incident that poses injury and/or death to workers and surrounding communities. Deferred maintenance to the rolling stock and infrastructure, due to reduced staffing and speed-up in the mechanical crafts, can yield the same deadly consequences. Factor in fatigue from being overworked, along with the now standard two-mile long trains and the probable odds for tragic incidents continues to multiply exponentially. In my last few years at CP, there were numerous close calls that could easily have resulted in a serious injury, fatality or worse. I had never witnessed as much metal on metal carnage in all of my previous years of railroading combined. When a Godless heathen (so I've been called) is reduced to desperately praying that an ammonia, chlorine or LP gas car doesn't get sliced open on my watch, that's not a pretty picture. All rail bosses are evil, greedy and ruthless. Now HH simply has raised the bar for them to emulate. In the face of this degenerating scenario, do we rely on the FRA and the union leadership as presently constituted to defend us? The reality on the ground says all that needs to be said about counting on them for assistance. Only an educated, mobilized, organized, energized rank & file, determined to fight for our safety and dignity, in alliance with our natural allies in the community, can effectively challenge Hunter Harrison and all of his kindred spirits throughout the industrial and political landscape.

Mark Burrows has served as Organizer and Co-Chair for Railroad Workers United. He recently retired after hiring out in 1974, working as an engineer for a combined total of 37 years for Chicago North Western and the Soo Line/Canadian Pacific in Chicago, Illinois. He continues to be an active member of RWU .





Editorial

The Hunter Harrison "Magic": Good for Stockholders, Bad for Everyone Else

Corporate America has inculcated us with the idea that everyone benefits when corporations are making fat profits. This perspective is best epitomized in former General Motors CEO Charles Erwin Wilson's memorable statement, "What is good for General Motors is good for the country". Corporations, and that includes rail corporations, want us all to believe that when the company is generating big profits for its shareholders, then it necessarily follows that everyone else – workers, customers, consumers, the general public and the nation as a whole – will likewise benefit.

But a quick glance at history shows that this is simply not the case. A number of examples: 1 – All through the 1920s, record profits were made by corporations. The slogan in 1928 was "a chicken in every pot and a car in every garage." But in 1929 the bottom fell out and millions of workers were left penniless and hungry for a decade. 2 – Various industries, including steel, meatpacking, textile and rail, have at various times been extremely profitable, but their workers were largely impoverished, exploited, and subject to dangerous working conditions. 3 – the recent collapse of the U.S. economy, causing millions to lose their jobs and homes, came on the heels of an orgy of profiteering by banks, savings and loans, and other financial institutions that were riding a wave of super profits.

We live under a capitalist order of course, and the quest for profits is the motor of this society and always has been. In recent years, however, that quest for profit has gone into overdrive, as stockholders and investors are increasingly demanding them to be immediate and substantial. This drive for short-term profit to meet the whims of stockholders has been driving Class One rail carriers to make bad decisions.

In 2012, when Canadian Pacific was the "poor man" of the big Class One railroads, there was a stockholder revolt of sorts. Investors demanded a lower operating ratio and they wanted it now. Enter Hunter Harrison, the man with the plan. Billionaire Bill Ackman's Pershing Square Capital Management was a major force behind this transition, this pressure to deliver these short-term profits. Ackman won a shareholder proxy campaign and installed Hunter Harrison, a veteran of the railroad industry who had a straight forward plan: cut jobs, consolidate facilities, play hardball with the unions, furlough some employees, apply harsh discipline to others, longer hours, more work; i.e. extract more value from less workers = more profits. Simple. The operating ratio did in fact fall, dramatically, from 83% in 2012 to 59% in 2016. In January 2012, the price per share of CP stock was \$67.12. By October 2014, that price would jump to a peak of \$203.01, in effect tripling in value in less than three years!

Having gotten exactly what he wanted out of the railroad, Ackerman then sold Pershing Square's entire stake of 9.8 million shares of Canadian Pacific Railway stock in a series of trades arranged by three Wall Street banks. For Pershing Square, Canadian Pacific has been one of the fund's biggest-ever winners, generating \$2.6 billion in total gains, or an almost fourfold gain, according to public filings. It is worth pondering for a moment – just where exactly did this tremendous sum of money come from? Part of the answer to this question can be found in the preceding commentary on Page 6.

Earlier this year, Harrison took the helm at CSX, where investors at that railroad – just as at CP – are demanding better performance; i.e., a better return on investment ...now! So, Harrison has proceeded to wreak havoc on that property with a similar – but more intense – slash and burn program, utilizing the procedure as outlined above at CP. Thumbing his nose at operating practices, safety and work rules that have existed for decades, Harrison's drive for what he calls "precision railroading" knows no bounds. The quest for short-term returns is not only putting lives at risk, alienating shippers and trackside communities, it is endangering the long-term health of the railroad. We need more tracks, more infrastructure, and more trains, not fewer. This irresponsible attitude towards the future is epitomized by Harrison's outrageous plan to single track the former Conrail CSX mainline west of Albany, NY.!

This short-term drive for profits may be in the interest of impatient stockholders, – those desiring to get rich quick without working – but it can hardly be conceived of as being in the interests of rail employees, shippers, passengers, consumers, the long-term interests of the railroad industry, nor of society. The Robber Barons of the rails in the days of old ripped off this country and its citizens to the tune of billions of dollars. Now,



The current debacle at CSX is just the latest in a long string of corporate failures on the railroad, including the Penn Central, Rock Island and Milwaukee Road bankruptcies in the 1970s and 80s, the UP meltdown in 1996 - 97; and the NS fiasco of 1999 - 2000. Each calamity caused hardship for workers, shippers, passengers, and the nation as a whole.

more than a century later, very little has changed, as they have risen like a Phoenix and are at it again, plundering the workers' and the nations' wealth for their own self-aggrandizement.

Rail workers must lead the fight against this travesty. But we cannot possibly take on these behemoths alone. But together with our allies – shippers, passengers, consumers, environmentalists, community groups, and the rest of the labor movement and the working class – we can reign in this reckless short-sighted profit system and build a national transportation system that truly serves the interests of all the people, not just a handful of wealthy and short-sighted stockholders.

Order Your RWU T-Shirt Now!

Our union made in the USA 100% BLACK cotton T-shirt is available in all sizes – S thru 4 XL. The 4-color RWU logo is on the back while the letters RWU are prominently displayed on the front left breast. Designed by RWU members with assistance from the premier labor cartoonist in the United States, Mike Konopacki.

Price: \$20.00 each (for RWU members just \$15.00)

Order your at the RWU online Store
www.railworkersunited.storenvy.com

OR

Mail a check made payable to RWU, specify the size you want, and mail to
 RWU P.O. Box 2131 Reno, NV 89505



“Shorter hours for all workers presents the most effective course open to us, which, first of all, goes to the real cause of our problem and affords immediate relief from the conditions from which our entire society is suffering.”

Alexander F. Whitney, President of the Brotherhood of Railroad Trainmen - May, 1932

Railroad Workers United

Membership Application

Railroad Workers United needs you! Please keep your membership dues current. If your membership is about to expire or has already expired, please renew today and remain in good standing. And if you are not already a member of RWU, please consider joining; then fill out the application below and mail it in with your dues. Thanks!

Name _____ Date _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Cell Phone _____

Email Address _____

Union _____ Local # _____ Employer _____

Terminal _____ Craft _____ Years of Service _____

Union Position (if any) _____

I'd like to join for (check one): 1 year \$50.00 2 Years \$90.00 3 Years \$120.00

Clip and mail together with your dues to: **Railroad Workers United P.O. Box 2131 Reno, NV. 89505**

OR join on-line at www.railroadworkersunited.org