May 26, 2006

In the spring of 1983, shortly after Metro-North Railroad was formed, the predecessor unions to ACRE; the BLE and UTU, called a strike and picket lines were put up around the property.

It wasn't our fight then, but my union (TCU formally BRAC) and other unions on the railroad honored those picket lines. The trains didn't run for six weeks. Many others and I lost six weeks' pay. In so doing, we helped to eventually get a settlement that was acceptable to the train and engine employees.

The Metro-North Labor Coalition, representing 70% of Metro-North Railroad's unionized labor force, is now in its 4th year without a contract. There have been rumblings about a job action due to the Labor Relations Department's inflexible position.

It has been reported that one of the ACRE union's more vociferous officials has stated, on more than one occasion, that he, "Would be the first to cross a picket line if the coalition set one up." This type of self-serving statement is inconsistent with the esprit de corps of a union member, *much less* a union official. It can only be hoped that this statement has, somehow, been taken out of context. Otherwise, it begs the question - is this an isolated individual's opinion (if so, why is he a union official?) or is it just another demonstration of ACRE's stated position i.e., to work with management in a so-called spirit of cooperation? *Even* if it means violating another union's picket line??

This is not the first time that the ACRE union has attempted to interfere, either directly or by innuendo, with the coalition's attempts to secure a fair contract. Ask yourself the question, why?

Starting on May 10th ,in a supposed test, ACRE train persons now SELL tickets on-board trains using ticket issuing machines. (I thought ticket agents sold tickets!)

Little by little, just like the creeping ivy in a backyard, at first it looks nice, but the tentacles continue to grow and spread until they envelop and choke everything in their path. Where will this encroachment (or, should I say spirit of cooperation) end?

ACRE can then stand for ALL CRAFTS RAILROAD EMPLOYEES.

But don't worry ACRE members. Eventually you'll get an extra 20 minutes allowance for changing out of your overalls into your uniforms in preparation to sell those tickets! The overalls? Those are to be worn so your uniform doesn't get dirty while you're cleaning the bathroom and emptying the garbage before your run, or during what used to be called "swing time." Don't laugh engineers. They'll find something for you to do. After all, you're already wearing dungarees!

Then, everyone will have an excuse why they didn't have the time to make out their Hours of Service Reports!

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