

Voiture Nationale 40&8



# VOYAGEUR BRIEFS

[Send your Articles and photos with descriptions to VoyageurBriefs@gmail.com](mailto:VoyageurBriefs@gmail.com)

## Frank Campo- Chef de Chemin de Fer

Hello Voyageurs and Dames. I hope that everyone has had a nice Thanksgiving. My wife, Jodie and I would like to wish you a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. I have been enjoying the quietness of the past few months except for contracting Covid at Promenade Nationale since becoming Chef de Chemin de Fer. It looks like my dance card is starting to fill up. If you would like me to visit your Grand, please make a request to Nationale.

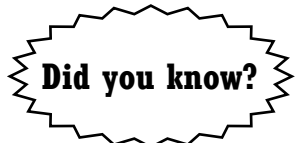
I have some exciting news to share. Many of you are aware of the friction between the American Legion national office and the 40&8. This is something that we normally don't experience at the local or state level. Anyway, my American Legion post in Springfield, Illinois, Post 32 has sponsored a wreath laying ceremony at the Tomb of President Abraham Lincoln since 1934. On February 12, 2024, the event will mark its 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The event is attended by the national commander of the American Legion, national president of the American Legion Auxiliary and the national commander of the

SAL. Besides the national guests, the department commanders of those states not in rebellion against the Union at the time of the Civil War also attend and lay wreaths. The Grand du Illinois has participated in the last several years. Well, this year, I have been invited to lay a wreath on behalf of Voiture Nationale as well as make a short speech. I feel very honored to be invited to this solemn event.

Lets not forget to wear our chapeaus or shirts identifying us as the 40/8. Recruit new members and retain those we have. As always, let us participate in our programs and grow this organization back to where it began in 1920. Remember, WE are the HONOR Society of American Veterans.



*Chef Frank with Illinois Dept Commander of the MOPH and Voyageur Militaire Joe Schaler from Logan County Voiture 985 at the annual Gold Star Christmas Tree lighting held at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum in Springfield. Frank and Joe must have been discussing strategy with Generals Grant and McClelland.*



The Chef officiated over the funeral service of a famous singer's family member???? Can you guess who???? Hint: there were no wardrobe malfunctions.

### Inside this issue:

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*Merry Christmas and Happy New Year  
from your Voiture Nationale Staff  
Be Safe, Be Well and Be Happy*

*Ron Rolfes, Terry Sims, Terri Taylor, Tammy Bennett, Becky Fancher*

**\*\*\*NOTICE: The National Office will be closed from December 25-January 2nd.\*\*\***

## Emblem Sales

The highlighted item for this edition in Emblem Sales is a Polypropylene Garment Bag. It features a 40/8 train logo and has a clear pouch for your own identification cards. Further, it is designed with a zippered front opening. This is the perfect size for your 40/8 blazers! (39 inches tall by 23 inches wide).

It can be found within our Emblem Sales site under the header "Blazers" or ordered using code 19GBAG. (<http://store.fortyandeight.org/>)

This item can be also be ordered by contacting **Terri Taylor** at Promenade Nationale or:

E-mail: [ttaylor@fortyandeight.org](mailto:ttaylor@fortyandeight.org)  
Ph. (317) 634-1804 Fax. (317) 632-9365.

Voiture National Emblem Sales  
250 E 38th Street  
Indianapolis, IN 46205

**ONLY  
\$20!**



## Correspondant National

(Ron Rolfes)

### \*\*\*Holiday Hacker Strikes Again!\*\*\*

Some "**Brainiac**" took the liberty of creating a fake Gmail account of the Chef de Chemin de Fer in the hopes of scamming our Voyageurs out of some gift cards. I don't have any reports of them being successful thankfully.

In order to rectify this problem, I have had the Officers Listings removed from the website. Any Voyageur can request a copy of the National Officers Listing or any of the other listings by contacting Voiture Nationale or myself.

That information can be found on the website under the contact us page. [www.fortyandeight.org/contact-us](http://www.fortyandeight.org/contact-us)



## Voyageur Briefs Concepts

Would you like some more publicity for your Locale, Grande, or Community? Submit an article in Microsoft Word with some clear photographs for inclusion into the Voyageur Briefs. You may email clear photos with a description of each photo including date, names of people, and location to [voyageurbriefs@gmail.com](mailto:voyageurbriefs@gmail.com).

Some quick guidelines....

First: Let's keep the Voyageur Briefs just that.... brief. Submit your short articles and photos (with names, dates, descriptions, and locations) and I'll get the quality photos into this format to enhance the effectivity of your harassment. Note: The photos cannot be blurry, must have appropriate zoom, and be of high enough resolution for print. I can help wordsmith some things for you if writing is not your strength.

Second: The Voyageur Briefs are published quarterly. This means articles for specific holidays may be best described for the next quarter. The next Voyageur Briefs will be published in late March, so articles for holidays in April through June would be most effective.

Third: Keep it fun! There is no formal requirement for photo or story submission but keep it brief. Chapeau's aren't required and reasonably PC photos will be published!

Lastly: Laugh a little. We are the "fun loving" veterans organization!



## SCAM ALERT!

**THERE ARE SO MANY  
SCAMS ON THE INTERNET**

**NOW A DAYS...**

**SEND ME \$19.95, I WILL  
TELL YOU HOW TO AVOID THEM**

THERE HAVE BEEN SOME EMAILS ASKING FOR GIFT CARDS FROM VARIOUS PROGRAMS. THESE ARE SCAMS. DO NOT SEND ANYTHING OR REPLY.

NATIONALE OFFICERS AND VOITURE NATIONALE STAFF WILL NEVER ASK YOU TO SEND US MONEY THROUGH EMAIL.

**IF YOU ARE UNSURE IF ITS A SCAM PLEASE CALL HEADQUARTERS AND ASK.**

## DIGITAL UPDATE! IT'S 2023, NOT Y2K!

This is the place to add links to important forms, communiques, etc. Links and descriptions only! That's the purpose of a digital presence... You can just click-and-go.

Nationale: <https://www.fortyandeight.org/>

Chef Campo (and Sous Chefs) Bios: <https://www.fortyandeight.org/biographies/>

NEW! Special Awards page: <https://www.fortyandeight.org/408-programs/>

See what you're officers are up to! Official Travel: <https://www.fortyandeight.org/official-travel/>

Voiture Locale 605 Flickr (Photos) page! <https://www.flickr.com/photos/125752713@N04/>

## SPECIAL AWARDS

(Wayne Sorrentino, Directeur Nationale)

Special Awards (SA) now has a new web page at Nationale. Under the PROGRAMS tab, locate Special Awards at the bottom of the list and you'll find our team for 2024. (<https://www.fortyandeight.org/408-programs/>) We are here to answer any of your questions regarding putting a nomination package (nom) together to showcase your selectee, and why they were chosen, for any of our four annual awards (Voyageur of the Year, City or Town of the Year, Hero of the Year and Law Officer of the Year) presented at Prom Nationale. At the bottom of the Special Awards page is the link to our four pages of instructions and forms detailing what is required to be included in the nom. The nom must be generated by the Locale, not by the Grande and certainly not by the Nationale SA Committee. Each Voiture can forward only one nom for each category to their Grande and each Grande can forward only one nom for each category to the appropriate Sous Directeur and Judge for that specific award.



Every VOITURE LOCALE should be able to generate a nom for their Voyageur, City/Town, Hero, or Law Officer of the Year to their Grande. Only one nom per category. And every Grande should be able to forward only one nom to the appropriate Judge for that category.

Respect all of our deadlines as these are determined by Nationale, not by our SA Committee members. If your Grande's Prom is after July 1st, be sure to judge your noms prior to the Grande Prom and submit them on time because a late submission will be disqualified.

## CHANGES TO ARDERY TRUST FUND

(John T. Digilio, Jr., Trustee Chair)

Voyageurs,

There's an expression that states the more things change, the more they remain the same. And so it goes with the Charles Arderly Fund for Child Welfare. As it has been in the past, and remains the same, the Fund will provide EMERGENCY funding for those children under the age of 18 that have suffered a traumatic loss due to fire, flood, etc. This is for emergency situations only.

Now the Fund will reimburse a Locale up to \$500 per child under the age of 18, and up to \$2,000 per family. If there are more than 4 (four) children in the family, the Fund trustees may take that into consideration. Of course the Locale must follow the procedure as outlined on the national website.

These changes were approved by the Trust Fund Trustees at the 2023 Promenade Nationale. All of the other requirements of the program remain the same. If you have any questions, please let us know.

**Charles W. Arderly Memorial Child Welfare Trust Fund** (<https://www.fortyandeight.org/ardery-trust-fund/>)

*The primary function of the Charles W. Arderly Trust Fund is to provide reimbursements of funds expended by a Voiture Locale or a Grande Voiture in meeting the emergent needs of children 17 years of age or younger. Emergent is defined as: A situation which has developed of a serious nature demanding prompt attention." This situation may arise out of natural disasters, i.e., floods, tornadoes, hurricane, fire, etc. Emergent cases are given prime consideration and are undertaken by the Local Voiture where established agencies, (Red Cross, churches, welfare, etc.), are unable to move rapidly or cannot act at all. However, this aid is not intended to replace or supplement that assistance which may be available through established agencies.*

## THE BLUE CHEVALIERS

(Mike Wood)



As many of you are aware the Public Relations Program announced a new project at Promenade Nationale during the 2021 year in Springfield, Missouri called The Blue Chevaliers. Its sole purpose is to support Law Enforcement and provide recognition and positive public relations for the Forty and Eight. The name, Blue Chevaliers is a mixture of English and French, as is the tradition if La Societe. Blue being the English term that commonly refers to law enforcement and Chevaliers is French for "Noble or Honored Knights."



We felt this was a most appropriate description of

our law enforcement personnel in America. We kicked off this project in January 2022 after a year of planning and organizing with offering memberships, soliciting donations, pin sales, and shirt sales to raise the funding to support law enforcement officers and their families and the Law Officer of the Year program that we offer through The Forty and Eight Special Awards Program. Every cent raised goes for those purposes and there was no financial commitment or participation from Voiture Nationale. All funding was done exclusively by the staff of The Blue Chevaliers selling memberships and collecting donations.

Now, what some of you may not be aware of is that at the Promenade Nationale, General Session at the 2022 Promenade Nationale in Green Bay, Wisconsin, The Blue Chevaliers project presented a check in the amount of \$2,000.00 to the Forty and Eight Law Officer of the Year recipient, in addition to the plaque he received from La Societe. We felt so honored to do this and it was made possible by the tremendous participation and support of the Voyagers and Dames in the inaugural year of this project. As it stands now, we plan to make this award annually at Promenade Nationale, just as we did again in 2023 in Sandusky, OH at Promenade Nationale this year. This can only be accomplished by the continued support of the Voyageurs of La Societe and Dames of La Cabane. The Project Manager is Bob Cearlock and Advisors are Mike Wood, Frank Campo and Greg Hall. Please contact any one of these Voyageurs to join The Blue Chevaliers Posse.

In addition to this award we were able to recognize many Officers, Deputies and Sheriffs all over the country with awards and honors, many that the membership of La Societe were not even aware of. We now offer a very attractive pin that is a one-time purchase, or included with your membership in The Blue Chevaliers, polo shirts, hats, patches and decals for your car. Achievement certificates are awarded for different levels of financial donations as well as memorial certificates. We have had an outstanding response to this the project and hope that we can match that participation in 2024. With all the support and hard work we have now proven to La Societe the benefit of making The Blue Chevaliers a full stand-alone program in The Forty and Eight. At Promenade Nationale 2023 in Sandusky, OH, the membership overwhelmingly voted to make The Blue Chevaliers a full stand alone **PROGRAM** as of 2025. The 2024 year was needed to create a Committee with a Nationale Directeur and Sous Directeurs and incorporate the funding and banking of the program to conform with the Forty and Eight Federal tax exempt status. Join us now and support this program and demonstrate the world that The Blue Chevaliers and The Forty and Eight make a great TEAM in supporting law and order in America.



## NAVAL VESSEL NAMED AFTER VOYAGEUR



WORLD U.S. POLITICS SPORTS ENTERTAINMENT BUSINESS SCIENCE FACT CHECK ODDITIES HEALTH VIDEO CLIMATE

Israel-Hamas war Kennedy Center Honors Oxford's Word of the Year Osprey crash remains Cyclone

U.S. NEWS

# Medal of Honor recipient watches as warship bearing his name is christened in Maine



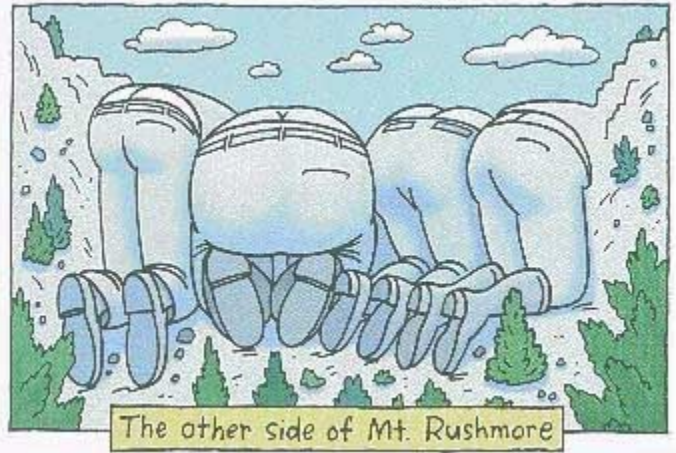
3 of 6 | Guests arrive for the christening ceremony of the Harvey C. Barnum, Jr. at Bath Iron Works on Saturday, July 29, 2023 in Bath, Maine. (Ben McCanna /Portland Press Herald via AP)

Harvey C. Barnum, Jr. is a member of Voiture Locale 976, Grande du Virginia, and has been a member of the 40/8 for 24 yrs.

Click [here](#) for a wonderful story about Voyageur Barnum!

## GRANDE du SOUTH DAKOTA

The Fall Cheminot in Grande du South Dakota proved to be a resounding success thanks to the implementation of various team building events. Under the leadership of Chef de Gare Sean Johnson and his project, the Blue Chevalier, participants engaged in a poker walk that added a unique twist to the event. Each establishment involved was provided with a Blue Chevalier lawn sign, and the objective was to enter these establishments, locate a veteran or law enforcement personnel, and treat them to a beverage. This activity not only fostered a sense of camaraderie among the participants but also honored those who have served their country or community.



During the Cheminot, the focus extended beyond just the team building activities. It also served as a training ground for new directeurs and officers, where they were introduced to the protocols and procedures of the event. Pronunciation of French words, an integral part of the Cheminot, was emphasized to ensure that participants paid proper respect to the rich cultural heritage of the event. Moreover, participants were taught how to effectively fill out reports and handle the regular business of La Société.

One notable aspect of the event was the mentorship provided to each officer or directeur from a Voiture Locale. They were paired with a Grande Directeur, who shared their expertise and knowledge, allowing the newcomers to gain valuable insights into the program. This mentoring relationship encouraged the development of leadership skills and provided a platform for continuous learning and growth.

The Pennington County Sheriff's office was donated a generous sum of \$750.00. This act of giving back to the community further solidified the events purpose and showcased the incredible impact that can be achieved through effective team building and collaboration.

*The Grand Chef de Gare du South Dakota, Sean Johnson, chooses **The Blue Chevaliers** as his program. He is seated next to Grand Correspondant Gena Keller and supported by the Voyageurs*



# GO BIG RED! (GRANDE du NEBRASKA NEWS)



(Left) Jillian Mellage, Student Tech here at CHI Health St. Mary's, was awarded a financial grant by Voiture Locale 1218 of Lincoln, Nebraska, to be used towards her training to be a Registered Nurse.

She also received the 2023 Nurse Training Pin, and the 75th Anniversary Boxcar Pin.

Pictured are Chef de Gare Carl Christensen, Ms. Mellage, and Roger L. Kopf, Nurses Training Coordinator.

(Right) At its September meeting of the 40 & 8 in Nebraska City, NE, Roger L. Kopf was presented with the 2023 George Boland State Award for being the Voiture Locale with the best Nurses Training Program.

Pictured is Virgil Blum of Omaha presenting the award. The 40 & 8 has as one of its two principle goals to provide monetary grants to students studying to become Registered Nurses.



(Above) At the September meeting, members of the local Voiture 1015 of the 40 & 8 in Nebraska City, NE, were presented with the J. Dudley State Award for being the first Voiture locale to reach the membership goal of 100%. Pictured are Charles Rivett, Roger Kopf, Virgil Blum of Omaha presenting the award, Dale Kopf, and Orville Oelke (president) Carl Christensen, who was absent.

**40 & 8 distributes American flags**  
The local post of the veterans group known as the 40 & 8 recently distributed over 120 small American Flags to both Northside Public and Saint Benedict's Catholic Schools for their first-grade students. This 40 & 8 Program is known as the Flags for First Graders Program, and its purpose is to help the first-grade teachers instill knowledge of the flag and patriotism into the schooling of the first graders. The program is responsible for educating thousands of American youth in the flag's history, respect and protocol. The flags were donated to the 40 & 8 by the American Legion Post No. 8 of Nebraska City. Submitted by 40 & 8 Secretary Roger L. Kopf



# GRANDE du TEXAS

September 25, 2023, V-605, Grande du Texas kicked off its 8th FFFGs season with the largest school we do each year, Milam Elementary on West Fort Bliss Texas (Home of the 1st Armored Division) - all military kids! This year we have expanded our program to include more flags, a bit more history and as always flag etiquette. Looks like about 14 or 15 more schools to go and a big thanks to Dale Thompson for all of his hard work in scheduling. Thanks to our volunteers! 155 students got to take home their own flag and a Legion book on "Our Country's Flag". Appreciation to the school - and as always, 40/8 Americanism pins to the staff.



## VOITURE 90 du WENATCHEE GRANDE du WASHINGTON

On November 2, 2023, Voiture 90 held a Nurses Scholarship Dinner at the American Legion Post 10 in Wenatchee WA.

There were seven \$750 Nurses Scholarships given out.



*(From Left):  
“Presenter” V90 Chef de Train Ralph Olson,  
“Presenter” Legion Post 10 Commander Skip Atkerson,  
Student Nurse recipient Amy Defoe,  
Student Nurse recipient Brigitta Luevano,  
Student Nurse recipient Sara Love,  
“Presenter” Bonnie Komoro,  
Student Nurse recipient Itzahiana Luna-Munoz,  
Chef de Gar V90 Fred Willsey,  
“Presenter” Legion Post 64 Commander Ken Komoro,  
Student Nurse recipient Adriana Rios,  
Student Nurse recipient Avery Sha,  
“Presenter” 8/40 Shapeau, Salon 246 JoAnne Palmer,  
Student Nurse recipient Layan Watchtel*



## VOITURE 1637 du KENMORE GRANDE du NEW YORK

Voiture 1637 Formal Wreck Ceremony was conducted on Saturday, October 21st at the Milton J. Brounshidle Post #205, American Legion, in Kenmore, NY to bring in NINE NEW Voyageurs Militaire into La Société.

Everyone in attendance was allowed time to introduce themselves to the group before the festivities started. The Formal Wreck was performed by Chef de Gare Wayne Sorrentino with the assistance of VM Arnie Tuchow and 98-year young VM Ron Zabrok. Several members above arrived from Canada where our Voiture meets monthly. Fig Newton, Ron Zabrok, Arnie Tuchow; Rob Williams all drove down from points north in Niagara Falls, Ontario and Burlington, Ontario, Canada to attend and participate in this Wreck event.



*(From Left)*

*Seated: New VM Robert Koza, New VM Ron “Fig” Newton, VM Ron Zabrok, VM Arnie Tuchow, New VM Minerva “Bella” Cook, New VM John Radens, New VM Abe Zino.*

*Standing: New VM Jason Richards, New VM Rob Williams, New VM Ted Balbierz, Chef de Gare Wayne Sorrentino; New VM Jim De Lair.*

*Photo courtesy of Legionnaire Kenneth Burzynski.*



# VOITURE 36 du SAN BERNARDINO GRANDE du CALIFORNIA



(Left) Voiture 36 POW/MIA Directeur Norma Martinez presents a donation check for \$1000.00 to Voiture Nationale POW/MIA Scholarship Fund. Norma is a U. S. Marine, Msgt Ret'd, and a POW (6 Months) Survivor of Afghanistan, 2006. She sold 100 POW/MIA Pins in 2023 and is on track to beat that this year. Her super-supporting husband Philip (Highland SON's Sqn 421) and Commissaire Intendant Lee Lombard accompany her.



(Above) Voiture 36 Box Car Directeur Lee Lombard presents a donation check for \$500.00 to Loma Linda Veterans Hospital VAVS. Besides Commissaire Intendant, Lee is also the Voiture 36 Veterans Affairs Voluntary Services (VAVS) Representative on the VAVS Committee at Loma Linda, CA.



(Left) Voiture 36 Conducteur Gil Marquez gladly interrupted his Raiders game to assist the photo shoot.

For the third year in a row Voiture 36 du San Bernardino CO Child Welfare Directeur Tom Giltner has presented a \$500.00 check to each of two San Bernardino County Children's Service Organizations. Accompanying Tom (red shirt) is Locale Box Car Directeur Lee Lombard (blue shirt)

(Below-Left) Accepting the check for "Children's Fund" of San Bernardino County, CA is Caesar Navarret, CEO.

(Below-Right) Accepting for "Youth Hope" of Redlands, CA is Heidi Meyer, Director.



Photo's by Aneta Giltner

## BOXCAR SHIELDS RETURN HOME FOR 75TH ANNIVERSARY AND ONE LAST WISH GRANTED

(By David J Knutson / [mercitrain.org](http://mercitrain.org))

The Massachusetts Merci Boxcar is one of the handful of the 49 treasured boxcars that fell into disrepair in the 1960s. The cost of repair was determined to be too much so it was scrapped! The photo below was provided by Grand Correspondant du Massachusetts Joseph Gracia of their boxcar when it was still in good shape. Voyageurs Militaire and PG's (New members are referred to as PGs for Prisonnier de Guerre or Poor Goof during their initiation period) are all together for this historic photo.



Today, not much is known about the gifts that were aboard the boxcar and the Coat of Arms shields were also nowhere to be found.

The story told is that the shields were kept and displayed at an American Legion Post in Massachusetts. As they were deteriorating the decision was made to have the shields copied and discard the originals. Joseph J Kais was the person charged with this task but he never disposed of the original shields. Joe lived in Florida when he passed away in 2006 and his personal possessions, including the coat of arms shields, were passed to his wife, Fifi. Stored safely away and forgotten about the shields patiently waited for their day.

Fifi recently ran across the shields and wanted to find a new home for them in honor of her late husband Joseph. Communications went from Fifi in Florida to her cousin Eric in California. Then on to Texas where [mercitrain.org](http://mercitrain.org) Associate David Knutson was contacted and helped locate a new home for the shields with Grand Correspondant du Massachusetts Joe Gracia. Getting home was another challenge as Fifi is unable to travel or arrange for the shipment of the shields.

## BOXCAR SHIELDS RETURN HOME FOR 75TH ANNIVERSARY AND ONE LAST WISH GRANTED (Continued from Page 13)

(By David J Knutson / [mercitrain.org](http://mercitrain.org))



*Grand Chef de Gare du Florida Binion Williams, Francoise "Fifi" Kais and Pat Cavalieri*

Of course, the call to Aidez-moi was answered by Grand Chef de Gare du Florida Binion Williams who volunteered to make the journey from Jacksonville to Orlando, take possession of the shields and get them shipped off to their new home. Now carefully packaged the shields made their trip to Monsieur Joseph Gracia who received them in the name of the Grande Voiture du Massachusetts and plans to arrange for them to be put on display at the Memorial Hall in Plymouth, Massachusetts.

Grand du Massachusetts is very pleased to have the 25 shields rescued by Joe Kais returned home. Although not the complete set of 40 and some in rough shape, they are strongly believed to be the original shields from the Massachusetts Merci Boxcar. Hopefully their return will spark interest for people to

learn about the Gratitude Train and keep alive the memory of this unique show of gratitude from the people of France.

On a final note, it was learned that Fifi Kais passed away just a few days after the shields were delivered to Massachusetts. A final wish granted to Fifi was that the shields found a proper home which in the end makes everyone appreciate more the recovery of these treasures. May Fifi and Joseph both Rest in Peace!

## MERCI TRAIN



Visit <http://mercitrain.org> for even more Merci Train knowledge!

## 75th Anniversary of the Gratitude Train

In 2024 we will celebrate the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Gratitude Train. There are 43 of the 49 Merci Box Cars remaining and almost every state has gifts from their respective boxcar on display in a variety of locations.



When they arrived, they received a grand welcome in New York Harbor. We expect to make a national press release about this historic occasion and coordinate with the incoming Chef de Chemin de Fer for a possible ceremony on or around that date.

As February weather is unpredictable for most everyone we are not planning any major events for that time. Some states may be able to celebrate as early as February 2024 but we encourage everyone to coordinate your 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary at a time that is convenient for your area, such as a Grand Cheminot or Grand Promenade, so you may make the most of this historical occasion.

If your boxcars are not looking their best - now is the time to update them. Please refer to the [Boxcar Restoration Guide](#) at [www.mercitrain.org](http://www.mercitrain.org).

A limited number of copies of the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Poster (11" x 17") will be available for purchase at Promenade Nationale to help raise funds for the National Box Car Association. They have space at the bottom for you to add information about your specific event. We are also planning to publicize event information via the Facebook pages for both the 40 & 8 National Box Car Association and The Mer-

ci Train. The QR codes at the bottom of the posters lead to these pages.

## Holiday Message from Voyager Keller and Daisy

The momentum of stories that have helped our veterans, children, and widows is truly inspiring this joyous Christmas Season. Yet, it is evident that there is still a lot of work to be done to ensure that this support continues throughout the year. As we enter 2024 with full gear, let us make a conscious effort to seek out opportunities to help and assist those in need. We must welcome the blessings that this new year brings and honor our military, as well as our widows, children, and veterans.

One way we can make a difference is by reaching out to widows who have lost their beloved ones. We must stand with them through their sorrow and provide ongoing support to keep them involved in our community. For instance, I recently sent out Christmas cards to all the 40&8 voyagers and their families through my Grande. To my surprise, I received notifications from a few spouses informing me that their husbands had passed away. However, they still expressed their desire to receive newsletters and stay connected. Taking this as an opportunity, I reached out to them and offered them a place in our La Femme group. They were happy to accept, and it has become a lifeline of information for them. Not only does it keep them informed about activities they may want to participate in, but it also provides them with a sense of belonging to a caring family. Because that's what we are – a united family. Go ahead, sing that song in your head, "We are Family".

Looking ahead, we have an upcoming event called "Keep the Wheelchairs Rolling," aimed at providing assistance to those in need. If you or anyone you know requires any support, please do not hesitate to reach out to me or our Nationale VAVS Director, or myself. Let's continue to welcome the blessings of 2024 with open arms and honor our military, widows, children, and veterans. Together, we can make a significant impact and ensure that their stories are heard and their needs are met.

Forward in 2024!!

Blessings to you all,

Gena & Daisy





**RANDO!!!** (Submit RANDOm photos with info to [VoyageurBriefs@gmail.com](mailto:VoyageurBriefs@gmail.com))

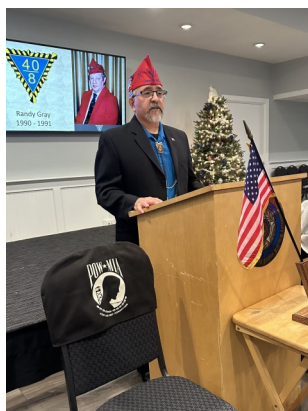
*(Right) Grand Chef de Gare North Carolina Bill Slater at first promenade back after Nationale with his Paul Bunyan gavel.*

*The Grand Chef graciously allowed Paul Yager to snap his picture although it did cost him \$5.00 to do it. Guess he's doing his fund raising even if it's at his own Locale.*



*On Saturday August 05, 2023 Grande Chef De Gare presented a plaque to Grand Commissaire Intendant Dave Kessling for all his hard work with The Grande Du PA from 1980 to 2013*

Voiture Locale 1510 (Kansas Tri-County) Voyageurs were forced to listen to Grande du Kansas Chef de Gare Nick Weyers pontificate on the current state of the Grande and thoughts for the New Year. American Legion Post 370 in Overland Park, KS were gracious hosts!



*(Above) Voiture Locale 1510 Chef de Gare Abe Revira standing preparing the crowd*



*(Below) 29 Voyageurs and guests enjoy a fellowship meal*



*(Above) Grande du Kansas Chef de Gare Nick Weyers pontificating*