

This is the official newsletter of **Utah Operation Lifesaver (Utah OL)**, a nonprofit public safety education and awareness organization dedicated to reducing collisions, fatalities and injuries at highway-rail grade crossings and trespassing on railroad tracks.

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## **Executive Director's Message – Utah Operation Lifesaver 2020 Awards**

This quarterly message is about the people and safety partners that made 2020 a successful year, even with COVID-19. Utah OL was not able to hold its Annual Appreciation and Awards Banquet again this year because of COVID-19, but we are still recognizing our outstanding volunteers. I would also like to recognize and thank our wonderful safety partners. Without their financial and in-kind support, we would not have a Utah rail safety education program. The following safety partners are recognized for their support during 2020.

### **2020 Utah Operation Lifesaver Safety Partners**

#### *Gold Spike Safety Partners (\$20,000 and above)*

- Utah Department of Transportation
- Utah Highway Safety Office
- Utah Transit Authority
- Utah State Board of Education

#### *Silver Spike Safety Partners (\$10,000 to \$19,999)*

- None

#### *Iron Spike Safety Partners (\$1,000 to \$9,999)*

- Genesee & Wyoming (Utah Railway and Salt Lake City Southern Railroad)
- Salt Lake, Garfield & Western Railway

#### *Laurelwood Tie Safety Partners (\$100 to \$999)*

- Hostlers Model Railroad Club
- Safety Awareness for Everyone (S.A.F.E.)
- Utah Trucking Association

The following is a list of awards recognizing the great work of our volunteers for Utah OL.

The **Safety Partner Presenter of the Year Awards** are given to presenters whose employers provide time for the presenters to participate in the Utah Operation Lifesaver program while on company time. Safety partner presenters demonstrate high activity in the program by the number of presentations given, booths worked, or other involvement with Utah Operation Lifesaver.

The Safety Partner Presenter of the Year is **Jim Golden**, Utah Department of Transportation. He gave 22 presentations to 613 people. Jim is also a member of the Utah OL Board of Directors and leads by example! Jim gives many of his presentations at American Fork, Cedar Valley, Pleasant Grove, and Westlake high schools.

The Safety Partner Presenter of the Year 1<sup>st</sup> Runner-up is **Sheldon Shaw**, Utah Transit Authority. He gave 9 presentations to 220 people. Sheldon is also a member of the Utah OL Board of Directors and leads by example! Sheldon gives many of his presentations to Ogden and Weber high schools.

The Safety Partner Presenters of the Year 2<sup>nd</sup> Runner-up is **Travis Shingleton**, Utah Transit Authority and **Bobbie Harris**, Granite School District. Travis gave 7 presentations to 190 people. Travis gives many of his presentations to Layton, Northridge, and Syracuse high schools. Bobbie gave 7 presentations to 153 people. Bobbie gives many of her presentations to school bus drivers.

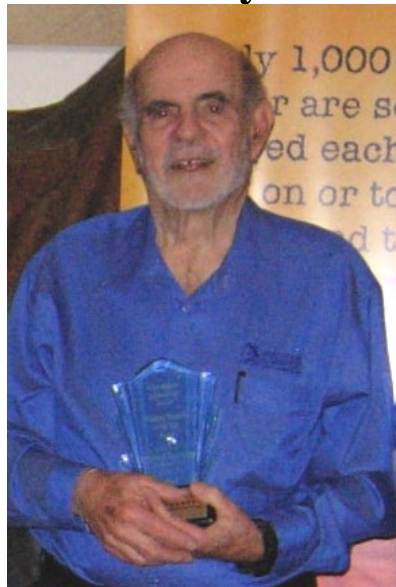
The **Volunteer Presenters of the Year Awards** are given to presenters who are true volunteers, not being compensated for their time, and have demonstrated high activity in the Utah Operation Lifesaver program. This high activity is demonstrated through one's activity in the number of presentations given, booths worked, or other involvement with the Utah Operation Lifesaver.

The Volunteer Presenter of the Year is **Vic Saunders**. He gave 26 presentations to 771 people. Vic gives many of his presentations at the Ogden Weber Applied Technology College. Vic retired from the Utah Department of Transportation in January 2020 and stayed with the program as a volunteer having previously won the Safety Partner Presenter of the Year Award the previous six years!

The Volunteer Presenter of the Year 1<sup>st</sup> Runner-up is **Terri Fontaine**. She gave 11 presentations to 207 people. Terri gives many of her presentations at Highland and West High Schools.

The Volunteer Presenter of the Year 2<sup>nd</sup> Runner-up is **Ed Buchanan and Kent Holbrook**. Ed gave 9 presentations to 300 people. Ed gives his presentations at Brighton, Cottonwood, Mountain Ridge, and Olympus high schools. Kent gave 9 presentations to 217 people. Kent gives many of his presentations at Ben Lomond, Bonneville, and Freemont high schools.

## In Memory of Phillip A. Lavorgna



It is with sorrow that we announce the passing of long-time Utah OL volunteer and friend Phil Lavorgna. Phil was a dedicated volunteer for Utah OL for 18 years! He gave hundreds of presentations to tens of thousands of driver education students at five high schools in southwest Salt Lake County. He traveled to many regional and national rail safety conferences, many times paying his own way. Phil was either 1<sup>st</sup> Runner-up or 2<sup>nd</sup> Runner-up for the Volunteer of the Year Award six times before winning the Award in 2014.

Phil and I developed a friendship over the years, and he often would come to my office in Midvale to pick up key chains and pamphlets for the presentations that he gave to the five high schools where he presented. We often talked and he always had a great story to tell from either teaching classes, hot air balloon rides with his son, or travels to Florida on the rail car of the Promontory Chapter of the National Rail Historical Society. After Phil retired from giving rail safety education presentations to the driver education students, he would regularly call every month to talk about a reported incident, about his travels, or about a news article. I even spoke with Phil in December. I will miss his calls and stories. Below is Phil's obituary.

### Phil's Obituary

West Valley City, UT—April 1, 2021 this world lost a truly one-of-a-kind individual.

Born in Boston, MA on July 14, 1928 to Ralph and Josephine Loring Lavorgna. Phil spent his childhood in Concord, MA, and many summers with his Italian immigrant grandparents. The family was stationed in Panama when World War II broke out and travelled by ship to Louisiana where Phil attended boarding school in New Orleans. Phil graduated from high school at Mt. St. Charles Academy in Woonsocket, RI and enlisted in the Air Force in 1946. He was stationed in Alaska when he met his future wife, Betty Anderson; they married in 1949. While in the Air Force Phil was stationed in Southern California, with a deployment to Morocco during the Korean war, Logan, Utah at the ROTC office, Burtonwood Air Base in Lancashire, England; Athens, Greece; Luke AFB, AZ; Athens again; and Andrews AFB, Maryland, retiring as a Master Sergeant in 1970. Upon retiring the family moved to Salt Lake City where he started a second career in banking for Valley Bank and Trust, before permanently retiring.

After Betty's passing in 2001, Phil married Linda J. Tippie in 2003 and they enjoyed many more adventures together.

Phil had a wide variety of interests - he liked to garden, can and pickle, cook, hot air balloon and crew, hike, backpack, camp, raft, cross-country ski, usher at his parish, and volunteer at the soup kitchen. He loved model railroading, owning/ operating private rail cars with excursions to Cape Canaveral, teaching Operation Lifesaver to driver education students and his work with the National Railway Historical Society. He enjoyed the Utah Symphony, University of Utah sports, NCAA tournaments, NASCAR, and his coin and token groups.

Preceded in death by Betty, brother Loring, grandson Philip Catlin. Survived by his wife Linda, children Bruce Lavorgna (Terri), Terry Catlin (George Diwachak), grandchildren Danielle Coon (Walter) and Tony Lavorgna, great-grandsons Andrew, Aiden and William Coon - who adored their great grandfather, and his nephews Wayne Chandler and John Lavorgna.

An outdoor celebration will be planned for this summer. We think Phil would appreciate any donations made in his name to the charity of your choice – he was always as generous as he could be, and he led by example. He was loved by many and will be greatly missed. We know he will rest in peace.

## **Second Training Update to be Virtual**

For those that were unable to participate in the first two training sessions, we are looking at dates in April and May to have at least two different options for volunteers to attend a 60-minute training update about the new rail safety presentation, along with a program update, and questions and answers. Please look for an email invitation in the next two weeks. We will be mailing a new Utah OL shirt and USB drive containing the new presentation and existing videos for those that attend the virtual training update and register as a volunteer on the new Rail Safety Alliance website at [www.railsafetyalliance.org](http://www.railsafetyalliance.org)