Rushing to Judgement

On April 17, 2007, one of our members, a transit operator since 1994, was involved in a fatality accident. The resulting media fury was unprecedented and in one case sensationalistic to say the least. The sensationalistic reporting was based in part on the fact the operator had been terminated in 2005. Following the 2005 termination our member filed a grievance and the membership voted to pursue the grievance to arbitration. The Union resoundingly won her case. The operator was reinstated with full back pay having all record of discipline removed from her file. Although the investigation into last month’s fatal accident is nowhere near complete, and the facts and circumstances are still unknown, the media leapt at the opportunity to demonize both the operator and the Union.

The Seattle PI headline two days later read, “Driver in fatal bus crash fired in 2005, then rehired.” Radio broadcaster Dori Monson told his listeners that the “Union has blood on its hands.” The KIRO news radio website states that Mr. Monson considers himself “a government watchdog,” and “who approaches each story by judging its issues on it’s merit.” (the website obviously needs an editor) But Mr. Monson’s remarks indicate he’s more of a lapdog than a watchdog, and that he rushes to judgment well before examining the merits of any issue. In fact, had Mr. Monson and other members of the media chosen to research the facts, and to try to understand the Union’s obligations with respect to its membership, they would have had a very different story to tell. But that wouldn’t have been as sensational.

Just as Mr. Monson did, Metro management rushed to judgment in 2005 when it terminated this operator. She had been fired for stopping her bus on the West Seattle Bridge after two juveniles became angry and verbally assaulted her when she (following Metro policy) refused to allow them to deboard after the bus left the last stop before the Viaduct.

—William Shakespeare

continued on page 14
May 29, 2007

All officers were present except Kenny McCormick and Chris Daniels who were on vacation, and Brian Sherlock, Rick Sepolen and Kermit Gipson who were ill.

The following business was conducted:
- Motion by Judy Young to donate $250 to the Bruce Pittman Foster Scholarship Awards.
- Motion by Paul Neil to send all of our International Convention Delegates plus two alternates to the ATU International Convention in Las Vegas Sept. 15th through September 21, 2007 paying travel, lodging, registration, and per diem.
- Motion by Dee Wakenight to send up to four delegates from our Local 587 Latino Caucus to the ATU International Latino Caucus meeting September 13 through 16, 2007 paying airfare, lodging, registration and per diem.
- Motion by Neal Safrin to send up to six members to the Washington State Labor Council meeting in Seattle August 16 – 18, 2007 paying registration and $25 per Diem.
- Motion by Paul Bachtel to recommend pursuing the grievance of Edgardo Reyes for the membership’s consideration for arbitration.
- Motion by Neal Safrin that Local 587 purchase 75 Mariner Tickets for September 30th at a cost of $16.00 per ticket and purchase food that will be served in one of the hospitality areas two hours before the game at a cost of $14.50 per person for a total cost of $2,300.00. Members will purchase no more than 4-tickets per person at face value from the Financial Secretary, leaving the union with an expense of $1,100.00 for the food.
- Motion by Brian Sherlock to pay up to $600 for a sign along side highway 101 in memory of Brother Steve Biss who was killed by an intoxicated driver.

Attention All Local 587 Women

The Labor Education and Research Center for The Evergreen State College is gearing up for its 17th annual Summer School for Union Women and Community Activists. The summer school this year will be held on June 27 through July 1, at The Evergreen State College in Olympia.

Members interested in attending must send a memo to President Norton no later than Thursday, June 10, 2007. Local 587 will be sending up to three attendees, first come, first serve. Priority will be given to members who have not attended previously.

The following members were May pot draw winners: Dee Wakenight at the Charter meeting, Paul Tefft at the Morning meeting, Troy McKelvey at the JTA meeting, Robert Eash at the CTS meeting. CTS rolling pot draw of $225.00 was won by Terecia Acorn. Next month’s rolling pot will be $25.00.

Tentative Agenda

Membership Meetings:

CHARTER MEETING
Thursday, June 7, 2007
10:30 a.m.
The Labor Temple, Hall #6
2800 1st Ave., Seattle, WA

MORNING MEETING
Friday, June 8, 2007
10:30 a.m.
The Labor Temple, Hall #6
2800 1st Ave., Seattle, WA

Among Topics to be Discussed: Grievance and arbitration update, Sound Transit Phase 2 and RTID proposal, Upcoming International Convention, Organizing committee. Unfinished Business: None.

In Loving Memory...

What we have done for ourselves alone dies with us; what we have done for others and the world remains and is immortal.

— Albert Pike

Robert Hargreaves, Passed away March 29, 2007. Brother Hargreaves began his career as a Metro part-time transit operator August 03, 1989 and was assigned to Ryerson base at the time of his passing. Myron Welton. Passed away April 22, 2007. Brother Welton began his career May 05, 2006 as a part-time transit operator and was assigned to Bellevue base at the time of his passing. Neil O. Myren. Retired member passed away April 26, 2007. Brother Myren was a Full-time operator and shop steward working primarily out of East base at the time of his retirement.


Please notify the union office of any member’s passing so that this information may be shared with the rest of our union family.

Letters to the editor

Letters/Contributions must include printed names, signatures, work ID numbers, addresses and phone numbers that can be verified during working hours. Letters that cannot be validated will not be published. All articles/letters are subject to editing and should be limited to 1000 words or less. Not all letters can be published due to space limitations. Cut-off is the 15th of each month. Any submission from a member of Local 587 will have a four-decimal-unprintable by the Recording Secretary shall be forwarded to the Executive Board for final decision to publish. Send letters to:
Paul J. Bachtel, Editor
c/o ATU Local 587
News Review
2815 Second Avenue, Suite 230
Seattle, WA 98121

OFFICERS OF THE AMALGAMATED TRANSIT UNION, LOCAL 587:
LANCE F. NORTON – President Business Representative email – brett@norton007.com
KENNY M. SCHMIDT – Vice President/Assistant Business Representatives email – kmschmidt@norton007.com
PAUL R. NEIL – Financial Secretary email – prneil@norton007.com
PAUL J. BACHTEL – Recording Secretary/Editor 587 News Review email – pbachtel@norton007.com

Web site: http://www.atu587.com

WEINGARTEN RIGHTS STATEMENT

I request to have a union representative present at my behalf during this meeting because I believe it may lead to disciplinary action taken against me. If I am denied my right to have a union representative present, I will refuse to answer accusatory questions and any I believe may lead to discipline.

Letters to the editor

Letters/Contributions must include printed names, signatures, work ID numbers, addresses and phone numbers that can be verified during working hours. Letters that cannot be validated will not be published. All articles/letters are subject to editing and should be limited to 1000 words or less. Not all letters can be published due to space limitations. Cut-off is the 15th of each month. Any submission from a member of Local 587 will have a four-decimal-unprintable by the Recording Secretary shall be forwarded to the Executive Board for final decision to publish. Send letters to:
Paul J. Bachtel, Editor
June 2007

Published monthly in Seattle.

Official publication of Amalgamated Transit Union Local 587, AFL-CIO, representing employees of Metro/King County, Clallam Transit, Jefferson Transit, Seattle Personal Transit, Clallam/Metro, Port Townsend, WA.

Publication office: 2815 Second Avenue, Suite 230, Seattle, WA 98121
Telephone: 206-448-8588.


In Loving Memory...
Grieved—

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barring any other law violation, the

the police may ask if the passenger

on our buses (I’ve never seen one).

choices are conscious usually leaves

life. Even if we make the same

choices throughout our life.

I simply hope to lift the curtain a

bit on this illusion, and help drivers

understand their role within it. By exposer drivers to more informed choices

throughout life. Even if we make the same

choices as we did when the illusion

was unknown, the fact that those

choices are conscious usually leaves us

in a healthier state.

A surprising number of drivers are fa

iliar with is the law written at the

bottom of each farebox stating it is a

misdemeanor crime not to pay fare. This

law alone never gets enforced.

Few fare evasion teams show up on our

buses (I’ve never seen one). However, if a
driver calls for police assistance in a

passenger, the police may ask if the passenger

has paid fare. If the answer is “no,”

be sure to tell the driver the police will use

fare evasion as an excuse to arrest the passenger

in question. Here we see that fare eva

sion laws aren’t used for revenue, but for behavior enforcement.

The collection of fare revenue

is filled with contradictions. Pas

sengers who pay almost $800 for a

yearly pass and lose it are required to

buy a new one (admittedly, ORCA is

supposed to change this). Meanwhile,

Metro sells Ticket Books at pennies on the dollar to homeless

shelters. Drivers of Metro’s Access

services are currently forced to pay

their own fare in full. Metro then turns around and arranges

partnerships with businesses, with a large discount per pass. The

cost of a sticker for a reduced-fare per

mission varies depending on the owner riding at 18 cents a day. For cash paying

riders, avoiding fare payment is a

trivial task. It seems that the only people who truly pay fare are those who

haven’t figured out a way around it. Yet, since Metro drivers

aren’t supposed to argue fare, for all practical purposes anyone can ride for free. Unless Metro Transit Police

needs an excuse to arrest someone, in which case they can’t. At least,

as long as our antiquated fareboxes are working that day.

With so many inconsistencies, with so many ways to avoid paying

fare, with such an overwhelming lack of enforcement that many riders feel

second nature not to pay fare, the message I get from Metro is that

fare collection is unimportant. We’re told in training that the fare system

is an honor system. It appears to me that it’s actually a donation system.

Pay if you feel like it, as long as you
don’t exhibit a pattern of abuse we can track.

I don’t mind it being a donation system. What I do mind is the il

lusion and that drivers are asked to be the public interface for that

illusion. Even though Metro policy

states drivers are not responsible for enforcement, some drivers

don’t have proper payment still have an

expectation that the driver has the

power to determine if a passenger can ride or not. What’s more, each individual has their own history of how they relate to people in a

position of power. Many people

know that I see them, without

triggering their “fight authority”

instincts. Combined with making eye contact and saying hello to ev

everone that boards, I have virtually no security incidents on my buses, and

none that are serious.

I know that some drivers and

passengers are concerned about

the moral standpoint of enabling people to ride for free. They feel that when some riders are paying

hard earned money for the fare in full, every rider should be held to the same standard. There is no

standard, only the illusion of one. At the management level Metro negotiates away nearly the entire cost of fare whenever it will increase

ridership. Why should the drivers

feel that they are being treated like

criminals when Metro is allowing

people to ride for free. They feel that riders just aren’t the power to determine if a person

has proper payment still have an

illusionMetro is trying to maintain. I find my interactions with passen

gers a lot less stressful under this

approach. I don’t get angry over passengers that try to sneak fare evasion by me. The joke is on them;

they’re playing those games over an

illusion. But each driver needs to find their own relationship with that illusion.

For those that may still disagree with me, I leave you with this. If all

drivers system wide stop trying to

collect on fare evasion, Metro will

see fare revenue fall. As full-pay

ng passengers notice the behavior, many will either start complaining to

Metro (or the newspapers) in increasing numbers, or stop pay

ng fare themselves in increasing numbers. This would lead to either

a serious revenue issue, or a serious public relations issue. Either way, Metro will then be forced to deal with the reality of their fare system, not the illusion.

SHOP STEWARD TRAINING FOR NEW STEWARDS

WHEN: TUESDAY & WEDNESDAY JUNE 12th & 13th 2007
WHERE: UNION OFFICE 2815 SECOND AVENUE #230 BAY VISTA OFFICE BLDG BETWEEN BROAD & CLAY
TIME: 9am to 5pm

New Steward training is a 2-day session

Please call the Union office if you would like to attend no later than 4pm on Wednesday, June 6, 2007

Casual attire

*Boxed lunches will be provided

Parking available in underground garage

Arbitration Update


2. Richard Padmond: Grieved management performance bargaining unit work. Arbitration began in February with additional dates scheduled in May and June.

Hello people. When I started driving for Metro I quickly realized that I could only communicate with a few people. I rapidly noticed that we have an incredible array of different cultures and saying hello to them in their original language is a pleasure. This is very fun and it puts people at ease. Try it, and see if they will understand you. If nothing else you will get a smile from them for your attempt. If you are close to matching their language and accent they might respond to you so just think, you made a connection to a vast knowledge base of a different language and culture. If they respond and you don’t know what they said, shrug your shoulders and say ‘that’s all I know.’ It will help them to feel included in our society. It is enjoyable to try and guess their original language based on their English accent. Try it and you will amaze yourself at how close you will be to the country where this person grew up. This gives the people on the bus a chance to overhear you, and then notice the excellent conversation that will ensue from the others. When given the chance people will share their excellent experiences and they will leave your bus happy.

I thought to myself: ‘What would happen if I learned how to say hello in different languages?’ This should be an easy task, but I swiftly found it out is not. Before you read further: I want to say that my spelling and words may be incorrect and there will be errors so please write in and correct my errors. ATU 587 administrators please follow up and correct my mistakes in a future News Review.

Here goes. In Germany they say ‘Guten tag’. How do they say hello in Somalia? In Bengali they say ‘Na-maskar’ and a kind man taught this to me at Starbucks. How did Chief Seattle say hello in his original language? In France they say ‘Bonjour’ or ‘Salut’ and my French wife taught me this. In Spain they say ‘Buenos Dias’ or ‘Ola’ and Mrs. Pierce taught me this in his Spanish class. In India they say ‘Namastay’ and Chand educated me with this phrase. In Vietnam they say ‘Chao’ and a young intelligent Vietnamese woman explained this to me on the bus when she was going to see someone in the hospital. What do they say in the Sudan? In Japan they say ‘Ohio’. In Russian they say ‘Zdrastvouite’. In China they say ‘Nehow’ and one of my Chinese colleagues taught me this. In Lithuania they say ‘Labadiena’. What do they say in Argentina? In Hawaii they say ‘Mahalia’ and a Hawaiian lady going to a doctor’s appointment shared this with me. In Romania they say ‘Bon Journo’ and my Romanian friend and Transit Operator, Dorel taught me this. There are many more ways to say ‘Hello’ in hundreds of different languages, so citizens of the world please say ‘Hello’ to the people.

Do you want to welcome different cultures, different languages to our beautiful city? If so, we must evolve into multilingual hello saying organization. If not, continue to grunt and sneer at them and you will create distance between you and the rich culture of this person. As transit operators we are the first people to welcome our tourists and immigrants. Let’s do it will class, elegance, a smile, and say ‘Hello’ to them. Do you want to ease their plight? If so, then look into their eyes, and with the look of compassion say ‘Hello’ to them. If you do this, here is what you will get in return. You will get their thanks, their love, and their respect, maybe not in words, but you will see it in them. If you do this, you will make a difference in the King County area because as you drive bus, you affect more than 2.5 million people daily. You will have a positive effect on people’s lives and maybe their lives reach all the way to Marysville, WA USA, Barcelona, Spain, India, the Philippines, Vietnam, Korea, Bengali, Germany, Hawaii, China, France, Romania, Italy, Lithuania, Japan, Cambodia, and Somalia. If you do this you will have a positive global effect.

I have been enriched by my interactions with the members of the ATU 587 union (Transit Operators and Supervisors) and the Metro organization. I want to thank each one of the people who were patient enough with me to teach me one part of their language and I want to say ‘Hello, people of the world!’
Lack of Information Leads to Angry Riders: Commuter Revolt Imminent!

By Carl C. Jackson, Atlantic Base Operations

NOTE: This article was previously published several years ago. The recent closure of the University Bridge due to a major bridge rehabilitation reminds some of theSound Transit meetings that have taken place in the past. The recent closure of the University Bridge due to a major bridge rehabilitation reminds some of theSound Transit meetings that have taken place in the past.

In this, the later part of the 20th century, it is possible to predict, with fair accuracy, when the weather will be bad. Unlike an emergency, most cities will usually provide information well in advance when work is to be done that will close streets to transit service. In both cases, the transit riding public, as well as the operations department employees should be alerted to potential transit problems.

Bitter complaints are often registered about a distant lack of on-time performance. Nothing upsets transit patrons more than missed connections, especially if the connection has to be made during off-peak hours or at peak hour. Any transit agency that values its reputation should have objective on-time performance information readily at hand.

It should report publicly the on-time performance facts as a regular course of business and certainly at a meeting with the riding public that is likely to turn ugly.

Lack of information is certainly a major source of public complaints. There is nothing more disquieting than being stuck on a bus or on a train with no indication of why the delay has occurred or how long one is likely to be marooned. Most anyone will tell you that information is power, and power allows for control of almost any situation!

The best way to head off complaints is to provide as much up-front information as possible. Portland, Oregon has a system installed at select bus stops in the downtown area that displays current bus arrival information. If a patron knows the regular bus is late, or has developed operational problems that will prevent it from showing up at all, he/she might be able to revise their travel plans and use an alternate means to get home or get to work in a timely manner. Bus drivers and train crews should be specially trained to tell customers what is happening, the cause of any problems and how long it is likely to interfere with normal operations. Transit control centers MUST have faith in the ability of the operating staff to deliver timely information to patrons. If that two-way partnership does not exist, then such factors and inadequate training or a less-than-efficient communications link between on-scene personnel and system control should be immediately investigated. A routine policy review should be implemented at yearly intervals to stay current with changing trends and real-world scenarios.

With two-way radio communication common in transit today, there is no excuse for dispatchers to not tell drivers and operators what is going on. Conversely, in cases of extreme weather conditions, district supervisors should be stationed at relief points around the system to inform road relief drivers and train crews as to any changes in service routings. This can go a long way to ensure the best possible operations under adverse conditions. Managers should ensure that ALL transit department vehicles are equipped with radios to allow for the seamless flow of information in both directions. Operating department personnel must pass information concerning delays to passengers in an appropriate and sensitive manner.

The news media is also a good outlet for information; it can be used to facilitate public relations “damage control” in cases where the transit agency is not directly responsible for service interruptions and delays. It is, however, in light of neighborhood bad weather is going to delay bus operations, it should be announced in the newspapers and on radio and television broadcasts. It is impossible to keep all of the customers happy all of the time. But people who are well informed are usually much happier about transit than those who find themselves stuck without ANY forewarning.

As we enter the next century, transit managers and operations employees must be made aware of operating rules and practices that have been in place over much of the last century and then forward with creative, flexible thinking. This will ensure that a transit system that everyone can be proud of and rely on will exist in the new millennium.
The Organizing Committee Needs You!!

*Would you be interested in becoming more involved in YOUR Union, ATU587?*

Some ways to become more involved in YOUR Union, ATU587:

- Attend General Membership meetings;
- Become a Shop Steward;
- Join a committee, e.g. the Organizing Committee;
- Participate in social gatherings with your fellow Brothers and Sisters;
- Other Interest/Ideas?

Your Name:

How would you like to be contacted?

Email:

Phone:

Send to “Organizing Committee” at Mail Stop Local 587

News from the Organizing Committee Corner

S

eminar: Portland, OR. — April 27 & 28, 2007 —

hosted by ATU Local 757

Attending: Financial Secretary Paul Neil, Executive Board Offic-

er Neal Safrin, Committee Chair Lisa Nault & Shop Steward Chuck

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advantage of the new program and to

gain the necessary skills and tools

continued on page 16

Upcoming Training

Speaker: Verlene Jones, Union Cities Organizer

Subject: Training, including Common Sense Economics, talking

with members and communication strategies.

When: June 7, 2007, 10:00 a.m.

Where: Union Office, Local 587 Conference Room, 2155 4th AVE.

Suite 230, Seattle, WA.

Seating: Limited space available

In Solidarity,

Lisa Nault

Local 587 Organizing Committee Chair

Before November 1st, 2006, ATU International did not have an organizing depart-

ment nor an organizing director. Our first ever organizing director, Charles Lester, recounts how when he was interviewing for the job, he was told that the Union had won organizing elections in spite of themselves. Things have changed for our Union since Charles Lester came on board. Brother Lester vowed to put the model for organizing presented at the 2006 AFL-CIO Organizing Summit to work in ATU. Now that model has paid off for 400 transit drivers and office employees in several cities who have joined ATU and will now be able to bargain for better wages. Hundreds more driv-
er s are voting in the next few weeks on whether to better their lives by joining a union.

“What makes these victories es-

pecially important”, Lester says, “is that this is the first experience many of the locals involved have had with successfully helping workers join a union.” Local members are the backbone of a successful organizing campaign, ATU, with the active sup-
port of the AFL-CIO, is training local members in new techniques that the members will take back to their locals and go out and organize new properties. “We are building power from within”, Lester says.

The roughest organizing battle for

the ATU locals that are currently very active and success-
ful in organizing new properties is our sister local in Portland. Local 757. Local 757 is the only ATU local in the entire state of Oregon. They also represent workers in Southwest Washington. It was in Washing-

ton that they achieved the easiest of their successes. Local 757 achieved recognition for workers employed by the City of Bremerton. The new members will include all city employees including the police chief and city clerks. They were unable to bring the mayor and judge into the

bargaining unit although the mayor

and the judge were very supportive of the organizing efforts. It is inter-

esting to note that there are not any transportation employees among the new members from the City of Bonneville. Evidently, the city em-

ployees specifically requested that they become represented by ATU.

Another Northwest organizing victory took place in Camby, Oregon, where drivers from Camby Area Transit (CAT) voted by a two-to-one margin to join Local 757. The local successfully organized the drivers at CAT. Member organizer, Kevin Kinoshita from Local 757, worked his first campaign. He says that the most important lesson he learned was that the most successful orga-

nizing drives have the greatest em-

ployee participation. The employees at CAT were constantly talking with co-

workers and assessing the level of support for the Union. Paratransit employees in the Sandy area (also near Portland) are expected to vote to join ATU in the coming weeks. When taken together with the Camby members, this will add 100 new paratransit members to Local 757 in the Portland area.

This campaign was also a great example of how we can gain the sup-
pport of elected officials to “lean-on” a company to end its delaying tactics. After Paratransit Services filed its appeal with the NLRB, a few dozen employees of Paratransit Services and their supporters showed up at a Bend City Council meeting to ask City Hall to urge the city’s bus ser-

vice provider to honor the workers vote to join ATU Local 757. In re-

sponse to this request, the Mayor of Bend wrote, “On behalf of the Bend City Council, I am writing to encour-

age Paratransit Services to drop its efforts to appeal the decision of the NLRB regarding the establishment of a union among the Paratransit workers of Bend. A majority of the City Council encourages Paratransit Services to accept the ruling of the NLRB and terminate any efforts to appeal that decision.”

Next, Russ Evans, a Paratransit Services driver and activist was fired shortly after testifying in support of the bill that would restore a workers right to choose a union. ATU filed an unfair labor practice complaint over the termination. Eventually, Brother Evans was rehired and is now back at work. Paratransit Ser-

vices has dropped its challenge of the workers decision to join a union. Finally the workers are looking forward to negotiating their first ATU contract.

Local 757 was greatly assisted by members of the Central Oregon Labor Council and “Jobs with Jus-
tice” who saw this campaign as not only important for transit workers, but for all other non-union workers who need to be organized. This is an integral part of the plan of the new ATU Organizing Department. ATU intends to utilize allies such as Labor, community groups, religious orga-

nizations, and elected leaders. “The assistance we got from other Unions was amazing and greatly appreci-
ated”, reported ATU International Vice President Ron Heintzman, who assisted in the campaign.

Since ATU has decided to place a strong emphasis on organizing, the ATU Organizing Department worked with the AFL-CIO Organizing Insti-
tute to create an organizing training program designed to address the par-
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the weekend of April 27-29 to take

advantage of the new program and to

gain the necessary skills and tools

For more information and or to assist

with the AFL-CIO Organizing Insti-
tute, please contact the following:

Charles Lester: ATU Interna-

tional organizer & Sarah Mackers-

zie; AFL/CIO Organizing Institute

led an informative & empowering

weekend. It started with a rally

Friday night supporting Employee

Free Choice Act http://www.gov-

track.us/congress/bill.xpd?bill=h110-

809, followed by a full evening

Friday & full day Saturday.

We’re excited about ORGANIZ-

Local 757 was greatly assisted

by members of the Central Oregon Labor Council and “Jobs with Justice” who saw this campaign as not only important for transit workers, but for all other non-union workers who need to be organized. This is an integral part of the plan of the new ATU Organizing Department. ATU intends to utilize allies such as Labor, community groups, religious organizations, and elected leaders. “The assistance we got from other Unions was amazing and greatly appreciated”, reported ATU International Vice President Ron Heintzman, who assisted in the campaign.

Since ATU has decided to place a strong emphasis on organizing, the ATU Organizing Department worked with the AFL-CIO Organizing Institute to create an organizing training program designed to address the particular needs of our union. In addition, the organizing efforts in the Northwest, ATU Locals757-Portland, 587-Seattle, and 1015-Spokane, sent about 50 ATU activists to Portland on the weekend of April 27-29 to take advantage of the new program and to gain the necessary skills and tools.

News from the Organizing Committee Corner

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hosted by ATU Local 757

Attending: Financial Secretary Paul Neil, Executive Board Offi-

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are essential to our future. Yes,

ESSENTIAL. Do you like your

benefits & compensation? We want

to maintain & better our working

conditions. To do this we need to

keep what we have, negotiate more

& ORGANIZE new members.

Yes, new members. New mem-

bers help protect our industry &

bring up the standard of living for

low-wage workers (doing the same/

similar work as we do). Who’s
gonna do this? ACTIVISTS! I am

calling out all activists / volunteers;

we need your help. We need partici-

pants to be organizers / activists. Got

experience? If not we will train; If

so, come offer your expertise.

Upcoming Training

Speaker: Verlene Jones, Union Cities Organizer

Subject: Training, including Common Sense Economics, talking

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When: June 7, 2007, 10:00 a.m.

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Suite 230, Seattle, WA.

Seating: Limited space available

In Solidarity,

Lisa Nault

Local 587 Organizing Committee Chair

News Review

June 2007
May Day is the historical workers day around the world. Sorry I never un- derstood or participated in the May Pole stuff. Workers had an even better event this year, in Seattle.

This year it was quite a different affair: a new AFL-CIO sponsored town hall meet- ing with Presidential hopeful John Edwards. Machinist hall in South Park was the chosen location, and the event was the scheduled start time.

The Martin Luther King Jr. County Labor Council organized the event with less than a month lead time. It’s difficult getting over 800 people to show up for an event on a Tuesday at Noon when you are not serving lunch. They did an admirable job.

Thank You Very Much.

Tickets were necessary for admittance to the event.

Some of our Executive Board Of- ficers, who were not involved in the pick at the time, were in attendance, along with the ATU’s lobbyist Pam Crane who had come from Olympia to take part in this historic event.

How often does the opportunity come along for “just people” to have a chance to ask a Presidential Can- didate a question? Upon arrival, there was for all to see a table set up where attendees were able to write out questions for consideration to ask John Edwards. There is this question that has been bothering me for a long time, long enough that I had actually sent it to the AFL-CIO asking for an answer. The answer received was not acceptable so a second opinion was necessary.

Major Television, TWU, (public access) and the PI were in attendance. Unfortunately we were not the only appearance in the area so he arrived a bit late. When he did arrive we knew that it was worth the wait. The Headline in the Seattle Post-Intelligencer, May 2, 2007 “Ed- wards met with raucous applause at Seattle stop” the war was addressed, personal history about his labor background, both parents had been in unions, and yes he does walk the line, the picket line that is. We were also reminded how 4 years prior, on this very day, George Bush had declared “Mission accomplished” onboard the famous aircraft carrier. Also addressed were many Labor issues, the right to join a union, strikes and negotiations, his health care plan, what was needed to restore the trust between the president of the United States and the rest of the world.

Now we come to the last ques- tion, to quote the Seattle PI: “One question flummoxed the otherwise smooth-talking candidate, when a woman identifying herself as a bus driver bluntly asked: “Are you will- ing once you’re elected to repeal all right-to-work laws nationally?””

Unfortunately the PI semi miss quoted me.

The right to work is a misnomer. It sounds good but is the death of most unions. What it seems to re- ally mean is the right to work for less. Unions are in place for the benefit of the workers but they do not have to join. Everyone has to try to get the best benefits, wages and working conditions with out the assistance of the entire workforce. The union represents the interests of ALL the workers not just the bosses, brothers or those suck- ups who we have all seen at other work places, who get ahead for the wrong reasons, that do not enjoy the benefits and protection of union membership.

Does anyone really believe that the BOSS is their good buddy, and will go against the grain just to save your sorry skin? Some of us understand this better than others do because we ruffle the feathers of those in authority, because we can. Does anyone really believe that this would be possible without union membership? If you believe unions aren’t necessary just consider that at least in transit at King County the “bosses” are union members also, IFPTE Local 17.

The definition of the word flum- moxed; perplexed seems to cover it the best.

By James E. Reese

How can Seattle and King County Metro Transit become truly efficient?

I’m a true bus enthusiast who has lived here in Seattle; Cincinnati, Ohio (my hometown); Columbus, Ohio; San Diego, CA; and Philadelphia, PA. I have ridden on a lot of bus systems and must say Seattle is a good one to ride, and can get better. Take SEPTA in Philadelphia, the bus fare is $2 all day, transfer are $.60 cents, and zone fares are $1.50 cents.

And the people here think they are paying too much money? We won’t use the word it’d like to use to describe that attitude because it’s not appro- priate for this publication. However, in Philadelphia they have all modes of transit running, the bus system is on a grid plan, the subway runs throughout the city, county and out- lining areas; commuter rail service runs from Trenton, NJ to Wilming- ton, DE. Very reliable indeed, but how do Seattle and King County get like that? Good question.

That right-of-way King Coun- ty is in need of an open road. Instead of building a bike and run- ning train on the right-of-way King County could possibly get a line from Snohomish County through Woodinville, Redmond, Kirkland, Bellevue, Renton into downtown Seattle during rush hour, and at all other times the train could run be- tween Snohomish and Renton. Rail system running on the right-or-way could ease the massive traffic jam on I-405 and the State of Washington could use the money they are plan- ning to use to widen the interstate somewhere else.

We all know how the monorail went down in a blaze of glory because it was done the wrong way and no one will admit it. If the supporters of the monorail measure had come to the public and said we want to build the monorail running it from downtown to Northgate via Ballard (a much shorter route) it could have been started by now. Is it too late to get the public back-on-board the monorail project? One thing we can try to do is get the private sector to help fund the expansion. (How do we that you ask?) Simple, by selling naming rights and advertising to the cars to generate enough money to get it started again. When it is time to ask the public for financial sup- port the public will react positively to the fundraising already done and might be willing to fork over money to finish the project. The people of Ballard would have true express service to Downtown and to North- gate. They could connect to the light rail at Northgate to go north into Snohomish County or Downtown to go to the airport.

2007 EXCURSION SCHEDULE
For the twenty-third year the Metro Employes Historic Vehicle Association (MEHVA) is sponsoring excursions and special trips using our fleet of historic trolley and trolleybuses. All trips will depart from 118th Ave. S. and S. Main St., across from the Seattle Department Headquarters. Fares are $5 for adults, $4 for seniors (65 and over) and $4 for children (2-11). Metro transfers, tickets, or passes are not accepted. Please, no food or beverages onboard the historic buses.

MEHVA Hotline: (206) 881-1816.

MEHVA is a volunteer group of present and retired Metro employees, and others who are dedicated to the preservation, restoration and operation of historic transit vehicles, which have operated in the Seattle-King County area. MEHVA is a non-profit, non-profit corporation in the State of Washington.

Trackless Trolley Excursions

Sunday, June 10: SEATTLE TROLLEY TOUR

S sponsored walk thru Seattle’s unique trackless trolley system. Our restored trackless trolley buses will take you from Seattle’s iconic downtown to some of our most historical neighborhoods! Steps for photos and lunch. Tramcar tours depart at 11 a.m.

Saturday, August 11: NIGHT TROLLEY TOUR

A walk thru Seattle’s downtown and varied nightlife neighborhoods; Pioneer Square, Broadway, lower Queen Anne and the University District. Steps for photos and coffee. Tramcar tours depart at 7 p.m.

Take a Trip Back in Time!

Motor Bus Excursions

Sunday, July 22: SNOHOMISH TOUR

A 4-hour trip through the Century Sattles along the quiet back roads of unit King County when the summer school vacation takes. Steps for photos and lunch. Bus departs at 11 a.m.

Sunday, October 7: FALL FOLIAGE TOUR

A 4-hour trip through the Century Sattles along the quiet back roads of unit King County when the summer school vacation takes. Steps for photos and lunch. Bus departs at 11 a.m.

Saturday, December 8: SANTA’S LIGHTS TOUR

A 1-hour tour through the Century Sattles along the quiet back roads of unit King County when the summer school vacation takes. Steps for photos and lunch. Bus departs at 7 p.m.

MEHVA memberships are available to anyone interested in the continued preservation, restoration and operation of historic transit vehicles in the Seattle-King County area.

Metro Employes Historic Vehicle Association
1345 12th Ave. S.
Seattle, WA 98104

www.mehva.org

Flummoxed

By Dee Wakenight, Executive Board Officer

Does anyone really believe that this would be possible without union membership? If you believe unions aren’t necessary just consider that at least in transit at King County the "bosses" are union members also, IFPTE Local 17.
Passenger Data Base

Dear Editor,

A passenger told me the substitute driver had difficulty convincing a regular rider who happens to be deaf and blind to board his bus. A second passenger told me of a separate incident where the operator took another deaf and blind rider to the terminal because the driver was unaware of this special needs rider’s stop.

One of these concerned passengers cited having witnessed similar encounters at the shake-up rider’s stop.

“I wonder why doesn’t Metro have a database of the special needs passengers who have special needs?” she asked.

She has a valid point. If I had been able to convey to the substitute driver that I have regular special needs passengers, where they board and where they exit, this may have prevented the unfortunate confusion.

Why don’t we have a database informing operators of peculiarities of particular trips or of riders who have unique circumstances?

Sincerely, Joe Kadashin

Ryerson Base

Careless Driver?

Dear Editor,

Recently on Saturday May 12 the #10 on the front page of the newspapers was a passenger told me the substitute driver had difficulty convincing a regular rider who happens to be deaf and blind to board his bus. A second passenger told me of a separate incident where the operator took another deaf and blind rider to the terminal because the driver was unaware of this special needs rider’s stop.

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Ryerson Base

SEND IN YOUR OPINIONS

Letters/contributions must include printed names, signatures, work ID numbers, addresses and phone numbers that can be verified during working hours. Letters that cannot be validated will not be published. All letters/ articles/letters are subject to editing of the Executive Board for final decision to publish. Send letters to:

Paul J. Bachtel
News Review Editor
c/o ATU Local 587
2815 Second Avenue, Suite 230
Seattle, WA 98121

NOTICE TO ALL READERS

Views and opinions expressed in News Review articles are those of the authors and not necessarily the official position of Local 587

“Roads and Transit” package coming this November for you to vote - Part One – the ST2 Plan (the transit side)

By Warren Yee, South Base

On April 26th, the Sound Transit Board of Directors adopted the ST2 plan as part of the “Roads and Transit” package that most residents of the King, Pierce and Snohomish Counties will be voting on this November’s general election.

The ST2 plan is a 20 year plan and builds on “Sound Move”, which is the plan that Sound Transit is currently building and operating with ST Express Buses, Sounder Commuter Rail and Link Light Rail. The ST2 plan consists of the following:

- LINK Light rail - 49.5 miles of new light rail
- North Corridor Extension from University of Washington - Husky Stadium to Mill Creek/ Ash Way P&R
- South Corridor Extension from Sea-Tac Airport to Tacoma Dome Station.
- New East Corridor from Internationa

ional District Station to Overlake Transit Center, with a possible extension to Redmond.
- New Streetcar between Internationa

ional District Station and Capitol Hill via First Hill/Broadway.
- Contribution to system maintenance capacity, fleet and annual operations.
- ST Express Bus
- New Bothell Transit Center and Parking Garage.
- New North Renton Parking Garage
- Funding Contribution to Burien Parking Garage
- Contribution to bus maintenance capacity and bus fleet
- 77,000-96,000 additional on-going annual service hours by the end of ST2.
- Operational savings from service reinvestment in response to rail.
- Sounder Commuter Rail
- Permanent stations in Edmonds and Tukwila
- Parking expansion at Mukilteo, Auburn, Sumner and Puyallup
- Track and structure upgrades in the Tacoma area.

The cost of the ST2 (transit) portion of the “Roads and Transit” package in 2006 Dollars is $7.4 billion (this is just the sales tax revenue, federal grants and other sources make a grand total of the ST2 package of $13.4 billion). The ST2 portion would require an additional 0.5% sales tax. However, there is the “Roads” portion of the package that has not yet been formally approved by the Regional Transportation Investment District (RTID). That approval will be coming on June 8th and will be part 2 of this article in July’s News Review. Stay tuned.

For more information on the “Roads and Transit” package, go to http://www.roadsandtransit.org/index.htm.

From there, you can get the web links to both the transit side (Sound Transit 2) and roads side (Regional Transportation Investment District) of the ballot issue.
Proposal To Change Bylaws
— Article VI, Section 6

Submitted by Executive Board Officers
Mike Whitehead and Jeff Stambaugh

In accordance with Article XV, Section 2 pertaining to bylaw proposals, the following bylaw proposal will be published in the News Review, and will be voted upon at the July cycle of meetings.

ARTICLE VI, Section 6 – Duties of Officers

Current Language
Section 6. The Executive Board shall create an annual budget in the month of February. The budget shall include, but shall not be limited to, projected income, projected fixed expenses, projected variable expenses, and projected savings. The budget shall be presented to the membership at the March meetings for comment and review.

Proposed New Language:
Section 6. Executive Board
(a) It shall be the duty of the Executive Board to supervise and direct the management of the local.
(b) The Executive Board shall have the authority and will review and discuss any results of negotiations on agreements or other matters of importance prior to entering into any agreement between the local and the companies.
(c) The Executive Board shall have the authority to submit the results of negotiations on agreements or other matters of importance to the entire membership for a referendum vote of the members to be conducted under conditions and at times to be determined by the Executive Board.
(d) The Executive Board shall create an annual budget in the month of February. The budget shall include, but shall not be limited to, projected income, projected fixed expenses, projected variable expenses, and projected savings. The budget shall be presented to the membership at the March meetings for comment and review.

Comedy—Not sick leave abuse

Negotiations between the union members and their employer were at impasse. The union denied that their workers were flagrantly abusing their contract’s sick-leave provisions.

One morning at the bargaining table, the company’s chief negotiator held aloft the morning edition of the newspaper. “This man,” he announced “called in sick yesterday!”

There on the sports page, was a photo of the supposedly ill employee, who had just won a local golf tournament with an excellent score.

“The silence in the room was broken by the union negotiator. “Wow,” he said, “just think of what kind of score he could have had if he hadn’t been sick!”

Brother Ken Montgomery

On Friday April 27, 2007 President Norton, Vice President McCormick and Recording Secretary Bachtel attended the Vehicle Maintenance Employee of the Year ceremony at South Base. Brother Ken Montgomery was named Vehicle Maintenance Employee of the Year having been selected by a vote of his peers. On behalf of the officers and membership of Local 587 President Norton presented a plaque honoring Brother Montgomery as Vehicle Maintenance Employee of the Year for 2007.
How Metro Creates Your Run Card

By Linda Anderson, ATU 587 Executive Board

How many of us understand how the Metro Transit Operations Planning Department determines whether a piece of work will be long, short, part time or full time? Here’s what I learned from Ms. Barreca.

The Run Cutting Process

This process starts with the nature of the service itself. Where does each route go? When does it start running in the morning and stop at the end of the day? Does the service operate through a series of peak-only routes, and not much or any work in between? Does the service operate in downtown Seattle, picks up passengers, and then must go all the way to south King County? By the time one trip is completed, the rush hour is pretty well over, so it doesn’t make sense to add another trip to that piece of work. This leaves lots of trips that are about 2.50 to 3.00 hours long. These are not very efficient for making into combos, and not very efficient as part time work. This is why South Base has a lot of Part Timers working 3-hour trips and dual spinners. On the other hand, Atlantic has the same number of trips operating 6 hours long, all day long. There is very little extra service at rush hour, and most of that is farmed out to Central base on dual spinners. At Atlantic, it is very easy to cut efficient combos with 6 hours on each half, and 3 and 4. When Metro needs to create more combos and straight through 8 hour work, they can do this very easily by Atlantic. This is one reason there aren’t very many Part Timers at Atlantic.

In general, Metro tries first for the maximum use of Full Time. A combo can be made of a 5 hour tripper and a 2.5 hour tripper until the contractually "legal" combinations have been used up all. The remaining goes to Part Timers.

Do Full Benefits for Part Timers Affect the Run Cuts?

Although about two thirds of Part Timers want straight-through work that is 4 hours or more, Metro tries to avoid cutting it. This is the most expensive work to cut, because those working it receive full benefits and yet work less hours than Full Timers, and they only work one rush hour instead of two, as in the case of dual spinners. The run cutting program has the costs of benefits factored into it. It will try to figure out the most cost effective way to cut the work.

If there is a choice between a piece of work that is 3.50 long and pays no benefits and one that is 4.05 long and pays benefits, obviously the shorter piece is more efficient. If Metro is going to have to pay benefits anyway because the stand alone tripper is just over 4 hours, the Scheduler may decide to add a two hour tripper in the afternoon to make it a dual tripper. In the end, however, the most important thing is to get the work out.

What’s Happening to the Long Pieces of Part Time Work?

Part Timers who have been here over 10 years and who used to pick up over 4 or 5 hours straight through are now picking dual spinners to get those hours. What’s happening here? First of all, part-time work has been reduced by 95 pieces of work and full-time has increased by 126. Over the last three years, part-time work has been absorbed into combos. In June of 2004, there were 386 pieces of work over four hours, including dual spinners. In June of ‘05 it was 300; in June of ‘06 it was 320; and now, in June of 2007, the number is 342. (Note: in the summer, there is less long work, because school work goes away. The number of over four hour pieces goes up in the fall.)

At the same time, the number of dual spinners (DTAs) has stayed the same: in June of 2004, there were 154 DTAs; in June of 2007, there were 153 DTAs. The number of dual spinners has not increased, so the loss in longer spinners has all been from straight through work.

Ms. Barreca believes that the longer part time spinners come and go based mainly on the economy and how many Operators are on the property. The long, straight-through spinners are the most subject to fluctuations of the Contract. Good, Part Timers are harder to hire, and with less operators, long spinners get put into combos. When unemployment rises, and there are more Part Timers, the high seniority Part Timers see their straight through hours return.

The Bottom Line

Our goal as Operators is to get the best quality of work, hours, and days off that we can. But, as you can see, Metro’s primary goal is to fill the service, and to maximize efficiency. Metro gives very little consideration is given to how this affects the Operator, outside the provisions of the Contract.

The nature of the service, manpower, equipment and many other factors must be balanced together in a sophisticted process to make the run cuts. We Operators always want the quality of our work to improve, but influencing the run cuts, even through changes to the Contract, is a complex proposition. Understanding the run cutting process a little better is a good place to start.

Upcoming at Local 587

**JUNE 07**  Charter meeting
**JUNE 08**  Morning meeting
**JUNE 09**  2007 Access Rodeo
**JUNE 11**  Jefferson Transit Authority meeting
**JUNE 11**  Shop steward Election at JTA meeting
**JUNE 16**  Clallam County meeting
**JUNE 16**  Metro Bus Rodeo
**JUNE 26**  Executive Board meeting
I am delighted to be able to bring good news. It seems we have our General Manager, Kevin Desmond, to thank for finally getting top VM management to honor many years of broken promises that the tall Gillig mirrors will be changed.

and airfoils installed on our trolleys as well as the 30- and 35-foot diesels. This action will certainly save accidents, careers, grief and lives. Many thanks! More good news has followed from exposing another VM management practice — throwing away work orders. We used to get a print-out listing work orders and actions taken, but for many years VM leadership has told us that it was impossible for their new and improved computer system to report this basic information. It has always begged credibility that mega-dollar maintenance tracking software could not track maintenance! However, North Base Operations Supervisor Dave Jolly has recently managed to obtain just such a report! This will help eliminate the disappointing practice of throwing away work orders or otherwise losing track of needed repairs. More importantly, it will improve communication between Operators and Mechanics, a longstanding weak point in maintaining the fleet. Once a problem gets to one of our remarkably good mechanics, we can count on an excellent outcome unless a work order is unclear or a test drive does not reveal a problem. Now, if that occurs, we can communicate and cooperate. I want to offer another hearty “thank you” to Operations management for providing what VM management has long called impossible.

Part Two… Spin and Sit?

For many years, a sore point has been the lack of prescribed driver’s seat maintenance in our coaches. This is yet another area where the top of VM management has been a roadblock ignoring many years of pleading from Operators, Base Chiefs, Base Supervisors and the Safety Department. In a recent survey, half of all Operators report pain, numbness or injury due to the seats and there is no mystery about the cause of this unnecessary suffering and its costs. The seat manufacturer says that the foam needs replacement every six months. The management of VM knows better and is failing to perform this prescribed maintenance.

More than disregarding even the manufacturer of the seats, the Operator work orders for defective seats are being ignored. This has been proven many times but never so clearly as in a recent demonstration of the culture of VM management which recently arrived in the form of a seat which had not been overhauled since 2004 and was as hard as a brick. I wrote a work order for the needed seat overhaul. The next time I got this coach, the seat had changed; it no longer had the overhaul date painted on the base as before. Although I was concerned that the date label, which a cynical person might not track to solve the problem by hiding the date through swapping the frame rails side to side. There are only a couple inches of room between the wall of the bus and the frame rail on the hidden side so I took my little digital camera and threaded it into the narrow space. You see in the accompanying photo what I discovered: “a date that will live in infamy!” I just about fell out of the seat laughing; at least if I had, landing on the floor would not be much harder than the seat or the attitude directing such an ignorant managerial culture.

It is not a matter of ignoring necessary maintenance for a short time. We are only managing to complete this scheduled maintenance after 800% of the required interval! The problem is not our excellent Upholsterers or Mechanics. The problem is not that the specifications, need, injuries or costs are unclear. It is not Operations management. The problem is not Risk Management and it is not the Safety Department. They all see the problem and its obvious solution. Most significantly for the agency, it is not a lack of money being spent; many millions in L&I funds are being wasted when the seat manufacturers prescribed maintenance would be far less costly. It boils down to the top of VM Manager proving, one of our members be treated if one of our members be treated if only they were held to the same criteria. At least in their sick leave accounts. How would they ever wonder what the “cracker crumbs” are on the top of our seat backs? It is the headrest foam becoming brittle and falling out.

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Extending The Ride Free Zone
Efren M. Villanueva

How Was Your Pick?
By Lisa Thompson, Executive Board Officer

Well, if you’ve been working at Metro a long time, you know what to do. But, if you happen to be a new hire, it can be difficult to know how to prepare yourself for a successful pick. Your first clue that pick is getting close is when the seniority list comes out. Look up your ID number and what day and time you will be picking. Next to that will be your pick number. Pay attention to your pick number as it is important if you are going to be submitting an absentee or restriction form.

Don’t know what an absentee form is? It is an insurance policy. Even if you intend to pick in person you may want to fill out an absentee pick form as an insurance policy just in case you run late for the pick. The Union will be able to make a better selection for you if you have told us what you want. Submitting an absentee pick form doesn’t mean you can’t pick in person; you can still come to the pick yourself, and no harm done.

A restriction form may be necessary for part-time operators if there is an important reason, like another job, school schedule or child care. A restriction will ensure you can continue working your needed m. or p. restricted schedule. The union will verify other employers, school schedules or childcare claims. You must include information to allow the union to verify your restriction for the restriction to be honored.

Many of our new members do not know that we run a preview the week before pick. This can really help you! Even if you are not able to get your first choice, you can get a good idea of what’s available in an unassigned setting. The run information is now available online at ATU587.com! So, just take your time to look it all over. We may even have the run card information online next time too!

We don’t encourage people to call the pick room during the pick process as we have only one phone line and often receive many calls. If you can’t fill out an absentee pick form at the base it is much better to call the pick room during preview week and fill out an absentee pick form over the phone. If you have forgotten to submit an absentee call form as soon as you know you can’t make it. The sooner we hear from you, the more likely we will be able to provide you the best pick selection possible.

Say What?
The following sentence comes directly out of a letter of Oral Reminder regarding sick leave usage issued to a Rider Information Specialist:

“It is important that you discontinue your pattern of sick leave usage due to illness.”
The Scarlet Letter (of complaint)

By Brian Sherlock, Executive Board Officer

I recently accompanied one of our members as he spoke to a chief about a complaint. This senior Operator is among our most courteous and dedicated and someone who also takes Metro’s policies to heart. His crime was having adhered to policy by asking for a fare. The complaint was from a third party who decided that another passenger did not need to pay. There was an additional accusation that the request for a fare was racial; apparently the complainer had forgotten that both driver and non-paying passenger were people of color! Our member had a good laugh over that.

and provided an excellent explication of the rest of the non-event. I recommended that he never pay any attention to the fares since, if he does, this will inevitably happen and he will be chastised again. The chief disagreed, pointing out that he could get a PR for that.

Next he was told of serious concern regarding a pattern of complaints about asking for the fare; there were two others since last November. If you try to do the job right, in that time, asking for the correct fare, pass or zone fee only once or twice an hour, would mean asking literally thousands of times.

For only three to complain about violation of their special entitlement is grounds for praise, not chiding.

To put the shoe on the other foot, I suggested to the Chief that although we knew that he was only doing what policy demanded, both the Operator and I were displeased by what he was saying. Furthermore, no one who received this kind of complaint for doing their job liked what he had to say. Most importantly, “this was a serious pattern” and that, as he had said, we were “concerned” and that perhaps “he should think about how he was saying it.” Lastly, I noted that this complaint arose far more often in this office than on any coach in the fleet.

Policy and reality should be brought into agreement. Requesting the correct fare, from only the significant percentage of passengers paying for one zone and going two will quickly have you up to your ears in complaints. Fares are optional and Operators should no longer be forced into a no-win situation, following policy and inevitably getting complaints, or ignoring fares, as most of us do, and receiving this kind of clear threat of discipline.

Cover Your A**

By Dee Wakenight, Executive Board Officer

Does King County Metro take the Joint Labor Management Insurance Committee (JLMIC) seriously? It certainly seems they don’t. Here are some facts, you decide.

On March 2, 2007 an e-mail was sent to the JLMIC Union participants, (unions at the county who had agreed to abide by the decisions of the committee regarding benefit levels for most county employees) informing the unions that the powers that be, the county, had decided there was no need for meetings in the month of March. Meetings are normally scheduled twice a month to enable those needing to report to the council or the executive an opportunity to do so in a timely manner.

Here is part of the canceling e-mail, “The forces of nature are making it clear that March of 2007 is not a good time for the JLMIC to meet.” We had to drop 3 agenda items from the meeting because of technical issues and illness, which leaves us with a really “tight agenda of items that are not critical to discuss immediately. We were already thinking about canceling the meeting because of the LERA (Labor and Employment Relations Association) conference March 19 & 20 at the Washington State Convention Center. So given all of that, both the March 6 and March 20 JLMIC are cancelled. Our next meeting will be April 4.”

On April 12 we were informed that there would be no meeting for the 17th of April but there would be a meeting on May 1. Alas, on April 27 we were again notified via e-mail that there would be no meeting in the month of May.

Finally this one got quite a bit of outrage from the union participants. By Thursday May 10 everything was in high gear, here is part of the e-mails going back and forth. “My sincere apologies for Management members of the JLMIC not contacting with the Union members before deciding to cancel the May meetings. The concern was that there were no substantive issues for the agenda—just status reports—and the recognition that most people can use every minute that can be freed up when non-essential meetings are cancelled. In the future we will always send a notice polling the entire JLMIC about canceling a meeting.” Following this was an answer to the 2 questions raised at the April 3 meeting. Not bad, only took more than a month to answer questions raised at a non-essential meeting affecting all employees at King County.

Some of the non-essential items and information requested have to do with the age old practice of bait and switch. You know when a vendor wants to improve their bottom line and puts the onus on the participants. The participants in the JLMIC use the meetings as an opportunity to get to the folks who are in charge of various aspects of our health care plan from the county. At the non-essential meetings it’s even possible to find out how the rest of the county employees are dealing with the same problems as we are experiencing.

Everyone in Transit should remember the age old advice, cover your a** (CYA) we should all take lessons from the pros.

Incidents And Accidents

By Michael Egan

I am calling on all Union members to support me in addressing the Health and Safety concerns of our membership. We need more Public and Media awareness. We need decisive action to present a motion and plan to the Union, that the Union will bring forward to the “Powers that Be”, whether it is City Hall, Legislators or Metro Management. The health but more importantly the safety of the “Driver” has been treated like “Dirty Laundry” for far too long. The time has come for the Union to step up and do what is badly needed and what is right for its members.

If you are interested in following up on the issues, please contact me – Michael Egan at Central Base # 20683 or call me at home 206-352-5758, 206-853-5548 cell.

Gates Sr. and others to hold Tax Forum at Labor Temple

Submitted by Dee Wakenight

Bill Gates Sr. and leaders from both Management and the Union will gather on June 20, 2007 at 5:30 PM in Hall 8 Seattle Labor Temple to discuss progressive ways to address our respective concerns in support of Washington State. Now is the time to raise your voice on the issue of tax reform. This Tax Forum will provide a way for your union to get active in the Washington Fair Tax Coalition and begin the process of creating legislation that will be fair to all of us. Everyone is welcome to join us in this discussion!

For more information contact Verlene Jones—Union Cities Organizer at (206) 441-7102.
The Financial Secretary’s Report

Duty of Fair Representation

By Paul Neil

The union must deal with the merits of your case.

Most of us have heard about the tragic accident on the Auburn-Enumclaw road where a METRO coach collided with a pick-up truck and the driver of the pick-up died.

Many of us have also heard some METRO managers as well as at least one of our local talk radio demagogues pointing a finger at the union because two years ago METRO had terminated the Operator of the coach involved in this accident and the union had gotten the Operator’s job back through the arbitration process. The phrase “The Union has blood on its’ hands” has been thrown around because some do not want to be confused with facts. What are the facts?

1. Michael Dahlquist is dead. Our first concern should be with his friends and family not with trying to assign blame or using this tragedy to boost ratings.

2. The accident is still under investigation. The Washington State Patrol is carefully investigating this accident just as it has thousands of other fatality accidents. We need to let them do their job and then take appropriate action.

3. The Union fought to get this operators job back previously because it was fulfilling its “Duty of Fair Representation”.

What is the “Duty of Fair Representation”?

In 1944 the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in Steele v. Louisville & Nashville Railroad that the union had to represent all employees in the bargaining unit fairly. Under the Railroad Labor Act that as the exclusive bargaining representative for all employees in the bargaining unit the duty of fair representation was imposed on the union. The Court has also ruled that this holds true for unions subject to Labor Management Relations Act (such as A.T.U. 587).

In 1962 the court also ruled that a union’s violation of its duty of fair representation constitutes an act to labor practice. The Court has stated that if a union represents an employee arbitrarily, discriminatorily or in bad faith it has failed to meet its duty of fair representation. The court has also emphasized that a union can meet a very high standard of complete good faith in representing the bargaining unit, similar to the duty owed by fiduciaries (trust fund trustees) to fund participants or beneficiaries or the duty owed by an attorney to a client.

What this comes down to is the union must represent you and all other union members regardless of how good or bad an employee’s record is. In the situation where the operator in this accident had been previously terminated she had a strong enough case that an arbitrator not only had her reinstated to her job but also gave her full back pay. When and if the operator involved in this tragic accident goes beyond a first step hearing but if there is some merit then the union is duty bound to pursue the grievance. The union can not allow the company to contract or the principle of just cause regardless of how good or bad an employee’s record is.

The union must deal with the merits of your case.
Irene Hull holding her world famous photo

Every so often the Union office is blessed with a visit from one of the most senior labor leaders in our area. Irene Hull stops by to deliver the most recent edition of the “Peoples Weekly WORLD,” a newspaper espousing communist ideology. Recently, Irene stopped by carrying a photo of her taking four of Seattle’s finest into custody. The photo became famous after being broadcast across the world. I snapped a photo of Irene and her photo and asked Executive Board Officer Wakenight to obtain a bio of Irene’s life experiences. Above is the picture of Irene holding her photo and below is the bio Irene submitted. If you’d like to meet Irene just attend a labor function such as a Martin Luther King County Labor Council, A. Philip Randolph or Jobs With Justice meeting and you’re sure to cross paths with Irene.

Irene’s Bio

My mother insisted that I “must make something of myself”. My father said, “Those carpenters won $1.00 a day wage!” He was so pleased, even though he never got to join a union. My parents helped form a Coop during the “Great Depression. I couldn’t get a teaching job because they wouldn’t hire married women. I did go to work as a Carpenter and Joiner putting insulation on the deck-heads and the bulk-heads on the C-3s and the Liberty ships. We worked on a permit—the union didn’t let us join their union. I didn’t worry, I got the same $1.20 an hour that every one in that shipyard got.

I became a union activist out of the bindery in the printing industry, helped found the Coalition of Union Women, was affirmative action chair for years. My father-in-law taught me that women had rights but didn’t like it when I used those rights on his son. (Cultural habits are pretty strong) I didn’t realize the destructive conditions of racism until the civil rights struggles took place. I’m sorry that we still haven’t eradicated that divisive and anti-commonwealth, and the continued barriers to women’s equality.

I am truly pleased I have lived to see progress, but I hope I live to see the end of this destructive war!!

Website Construction

Have you noticed the way people respond to a construction site with a hole in the ground? People just have to go look into that hole to see what’s down there. The same can be said for people’s reaction to website construction. Anyone interested in watching the new ATU 587 website under construction may view the entertainment at http://www.advenwebsites.com. Click on “Get Started” or “I want to learn more” to view our prospective hole in the internet.

Crises Management

For years Local 587 has warned KC Metro it is operating with a shortage of operators. We argued the primary reason operators may abuse sick leave is a direct result of the inability of operators to obtain an excused absence through the lay-off book. We argued the level of industrial injuries and valid sick leave use is a direct result of forced overtime. We argued the dramatic increase in cancelled service is a direct result of the shortage of operators and it seriously damages our credibility with the public. When the scheduled bus doesn’t run it often results in the following coach running behind schedule and the operator of the following coach facing angry customers who presume his/her bus is running late, not realizing KC Metro is canceling service. Recently we argued the shortage of operators would directly impact the ability of KC Metro to train a sufficient number of operators in new tunnel operations prior to the September opening of the Downtown Seattle Transit Tunnel. All of our arguments have fallen on deaf ears.

Presumably the reason for the shortage of operators is a result of KC Metro’s intent to be good stewards of the public treasury by limiting the number of employees receiving benefits and bonus or report time. Given it takes KC Metro months to respond to part-time conditions that of anti-communism, and the continued barriers to women’s equality.

I am truly pleased I have lived to see progress, but I hope I live to see the end of this destructive war!!
to help workers in their areas gain a voice at work. Lance Norton, President and Business Agent for our local, sent a delegation made up of Financial Secretary Paul Neil, Organizing Committee Chair Lisa Nault, Shop Steward Chuck Lane, and myself. All the members from the various locals were committed to learn and use the training on upcoming organizing drives.

After arriving in Portland late Friday afternoon, we joined with members of our sister local, 757, and with “Jobs with Justice” for a rally outside Oregon Senator Smith’s office asking that he support the Employee Free Choice Act that has passed the US House of Representatives and is being considered by the Senate. More than half of the people attending the rally were ATU members. Stewart Acuff, the Organizing Director of the AFL-CIO, joked that he did not know that he was attending an ATU rally. He talked about the importance of the Employee Free Choice Act and how organized labor supports the middle class in this country.

The following day our instructor was Sarah McKenzie from the AFL-CIO Organizing Institute, with Charles Lester assisting. They led us through the skills building two-day training program. We then broke up into small groups for role-plays. Sister McKenzie emphasized that when we are trying to organize non-represented workers, there is no substitute for visiting the workers at their homes. We trained in countering the inevitable anti-union campaign that will happen once we begin to sign up the workers. I was interested to discover that there were three retirees from Local 757 participating in the training. They pledged to recruit other retirees to help with organizing campaigns, home visits and phone calls.

Another sister local, Local 1015 from Spokane, is currently engaged in an organizing campaign of transportation workers in Moses Lake. Currently they have 55% of the employees signed up but they want 65% before they petition for an election. The members from that local who attended the conference will be able to immediately put their new skills to work in Moses Lake. All the delegates from Local 587 who attended the training are also hoping for an early opportunity to utilize their new skills in helping workers gain a voice at their workplace and better their lives by joining a union.

**SUMMER BARBECUE**

Join us on: Saturday, July 7, 2007
11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
At: Five Mile Lake Park
36429-44th Ave. S
Auburn, WA

Fun for All!
Food ◊ Bingo ◊ Prizes
Drawing at 4:00 PM.
Need Not Be Present To Win.
Bingo Games for the Kids and Surprises.
Come Join the Fun!

Directions from Southbound I-5:
Take S. 320th exit.
Turn Left onto eastbound S. 320th
Go for about ½ mile to Military Rd. S.
Turn right onto Southbound Military Road.
Five Mile Lake Park is approximately 3 miles on the right.

**Informational Speaker**

Speaker: Randy Stevenson, Chief Shop Steward, Central Base

Subject: Trek from part-time to full-time for KC Metro Transit Operators

When: Thursday June 07, 2007, 7:15 – 8:00 p.m. (just prior to the Charter meeting)
Friday June 08, 2007, 10:00 – 10:30 a.m. (just prior to the Morning meeting)

Where: The Labor Temple Hall #8
2800 First Ave., Seattle WA.