May 23, 2008

As most of you know our Local represents members under six Labor Agreements. The largest of course is with King County Department of Transportation (Metro). Two other public agencies: Clallam Transit (Port Angeles) and Jefferson Transit (Port Townsend) and Three Paratransit Companies: Clallam Paratransit, Solid Ground, and MV Transportation.

Metro contracts out Paratransit Services to three companies, two of which we represent: Solid Ground and MV Transportation. The third company is Veolia.

Operators working Access or Paratransit Services have been, and in most cases continue to be, paid significantly lower wages than fixed route Operators. In many cases the work Paratransit Operators do can be very difficult. They transport elderly, disabled individuals who need special care. Well over 75% are in wheelchairs, many require assistance from their residence to the bus and from the bus to the door of their destination. As I’ve said the work is difficult and requires special people who are caring of our citizens needing very special attention. Certainly not everyone can do this work.

I’d like to give a brief overview of the three companies that were providing Metro’s Access Services: MV Transportation Employees more than 12,000 employees in over 100 locations in 29 states. They are a minority owned Company founded in 1975. Currently MV provides, in addition to Paratransit Services, Dial-A-Ride, Community bus service, shuttle bus, public transit (fixed route), flex-bus service, and call centers (dispatch). Locals within our Amalgamated Transit Union have many contracts representing members employed by MV throughout the U.S. In May 2007 MV Transportation was ranked 10th on Black Enterprise magazines list of 100 Top Black-Owned Businesses.

Seattle Personal Transit (SPT) is the Transportation Department of Solid Ground. Solid Ground is a not for profit agency founded in 1974 by community leaders and concerned citizens of one of Seattle’s then most economically devastated neighborhoods, Fremont. Originally called the Fremont Public Association, Solid Ground provides emergency food bank, clothing bank and an employment program. Over the years their over 30 programs help nearly 33,000 families each year to overcome poverty and build better futures throughout King County and beyond. Our 587 members employed by Solid Ground as SPT Paratransit Operators number approximately 140. Overall Labor

continued on page 7
Executive Board Report
May 27, 2008

All officers were present except Michael Moore who was attending a conference, Rick Sepolen who was on the sick list, Jeff Stambaugh who was absent, and Joe Mangiameli who was on personal business leave.

The following business was conducted:

• Motion by Brian Sherlock to send up to five members to the Washington State Labor Council Convention in Vancouver Washington August 04 – 07, 2008 paying hotel, travel, registration and per diem.

• Motion by Paul Neil to install a separate electrical circuit in the union office at a cost not to exceed $1,000.00.

Tentative Agenda
Membership Meetings:

CHARTER MEETING
Thursday, June 5, 2008
8:00 a.m.
The Labor Temple, Hall #8
2800 1st Ave., Seattle, WA

MORNING MEETING
Friday, June 6, 2008
10:30 a.m.
The Labor Temple, Hall #6
2800 1st Ave., Seattle, WA

JEFFERSON TRANSIT
Monday, June 9, 2008
7:00 p.m.
Port Townsend Rec Center
Port Townsend, WA

CLALLAM TRANSIT
Tuesday, June 10, 2008
7:00 p.m.
Vern Burton Memorial Building
Port Angeles, WA

Among Topics to be Discussed:

• Grievance and arbitration update
• Loss of MV Transportation contract
• Continuing Rail negotiations

Unfinished Business: None

At the May 2008 cycle of membership meetings the following business was addressed:

• The membership voted to not approve the bylaw proposal suggested by Executive Board Officers Jeff Stambaugh and Mike Whitehead to amend Article 6, Section 6 of the bylaws of Local 587 as published.

• The membership voted to forward the grievance of William Wallace to arbitration.

The following members were May pot draw winners: Priscilla Martin at the Charter meeting, John Wagner at the Morning meeting, Burt Langsea at the JTA meeting, Ed Stanard at the CTS meeting, CTS rolling pot draw of $125.00 was lost by Barbara Dixon. Next month’s rolling pot will be $150.00.

Editor’s Note* Brother John Wagener donated his Charter meeting pot draw winnings to COPE!!

Arbitration Update


4. Nancy Lambert: Grieved King County Metro hiring a retired member for a temporary assignment in violation of contract language requiring Metro to give bargaining unit employees first consideration. Schedule Pending.

5. Derek Harris: Grieved cross classification work in King County Metro Vehicle Maintenance. Schedule Pending.


7. Bill Wallace: Grieved Metro’s failure to observe the long-standing past practice of having a Local 587 member present when a vendor works on a Metro coach. Schedule pending.

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 to the News Review deemed unprintable by the Recording Secretary shall be forwarded to the Executive Board for final decision to publish. Send letters to:

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

Weingarten Rights Statement

I request to have a union representative present on 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 accusational questions and any I believe may lead to discipline.
An Open letter in defense of democracy within ATU 587

In the recent contract negotiations with Metro, there was no lack of willingness on the part of the membership to do our part and mobilize for fair wages and working conditions. This was evidenced in naming the contract to the several hundred members who signed petitions for picketing and an all-members meeting. This is a membership that is to be commended, applauded, appreciated and thanked.

The first contract proposal from our negotiating team featured several concessions to management, at a time we are working harder than ever. Many of us circulated a Vote No 37 leaflet to oppose these takeaways. A majority of the membership was also clearly dissatisfied because 56 percent voted it down. This healthy exercise of democracy resulted in gains on the second proposal, (though over 1,000 members still found it fell far short). The gains show how essential free speech and rank-and-file activism is to our union’s advancement. It should be cheered.

Unfortunately, members have instead been berated or subject to attack by officers for speaking up, organizing against the contract proposals, or even raising concerns about the two contracts that ATU officers supported. For the health and future of our union, we call on our elected officers to stop this disrespect for our democratic rights. It is time to stop the divisiveness and attacks, and to take a strong stand for union democracy and solidarity.

Here is a small sampling of how officers have undermined democracy and the right of members to have a voice in our contract negotiations:

- Rank-&-file petitions met with disregard. Officers publicly denounced members at union meetings and refused to accept rank-and-file petitions, signed by several hundred members that requested classification improvements, and an all-members meeting and picketing.
- Union meetings discouraged discussion and input. The union meeting before the April contract vote was adjourned early, despite protests by many members who came to the meeting to ask questions were deprived of this opportunity. Other meetings prior to contract ratification were packed with other agenda items, forcing members to stay late just to discuss their contract. The “special” meeting, required by ATU bylaws after the contract expires, was a regular union meeting — with little opportunity to discuss our contract. The officers’ failure to listen or act on our concerns was shown in the huge disconnect in the vote results: officers’ supporting and members’ opposing the contract.
- Vehicle Maintenance was ignored. Look at the vote.

- Officers undermined solidarity. Several times, officers publicly asserted that demands for improvements by one classification could be made only at the expense of another classification. They have also routinely pitted part and full-time drivers against each other.
- Union posts used as a system of rewards and punishment. Union activists who spoke out against the contract proposals faced retribution; this included pulling members from union posts they have faithfully filled.
- Members subject to public attacks. Several times during contract negotiations, officers visiting the shop floor attacked members. This included name-calling, challenging their right to circulate petitions, and spreading rumors and fear.
- Union resources used to attack FORWARD. A derogatory memo against FORWARD remains posted on the ATU website, disparaging FORWARD as “misleading” and “incompetent” for raising questions about contracting out, among other issues.

These and numerous other incidents and examples are a serious departure from the democratic traditions that our union has established. Combined, they deprived members of the right to have any meaningful input into our contract. This goes against the most basic principles of union democracy. It also undermines the strength of the union, which is the rank-and-file of the union.

Clearly, we need measures in place that will give the membership a much greater voice in the process of negotiating our contract. This includes:
- Elected representation of all classifications at the bargaining table, and at every level of the union;
- Forging the spirit of our bylaws, by calling an all-members meeting after the contract expires;
- Allowing for full respectful debate before the contract vote;
- Providing for membership input on all Memorandums of Agreement that impact the bargaining unit.

continued on page 5
A response to the FORWARD article published in this News Review

By Paul J. Bachtel, Recording Secretary

1. Statement by FORWARD:

“In the recent contract negotiations with Metro, there was no lack of willing-ness. The union membership to do our part and mobilize for fair wages and working conditions. This was evidenced in numerous ways, such as the several hundred members who signed petitions for picketing and an all-members meeting. This is a membership that is to be commended, applauded, appreciated and thanked.”

What the members of FORWARD fail to mention is the fact that our membership voted NOT to picket or hold an all members meeting as negotiations were progressing. Nevertheless, FORWARD defied the will of the membership and picketed.

2. Statement by FORWARD:

“The first contract proposal from our negotiating team featured several concessions to management, at a time we are working harder than ever.”

The contract proposals of the Union bargaining team did not advocate takeaways. Perhaps the members of FORWARD are confusing some of the aspects of the proposed tentative agreement that were labeled by FORWARD as takeaways, were in reality, gains.

3. Statement by FORWARD:

“Unfortunately, members have instead been berated or subject to attack by officers for speaking up, organizing against the contract proposals, or even raising concerns about the two contracts that ATU officers supported. For the health and future of our union, we call on our elected officers to stop this disrespect for our democratic rights. It is time to stop the divisiveness and attacks, and to take a strong stand for union democracy and solidarity.”

This statement is simply not true. In truth, the members of FORWARD did an extreme disservice to our membership by spreading misinformation. Forty-five percent of our membership voted no on the recently ratified agreement. Most respectfully disagreed with the proposed tentative agreement and preferred arbitration as an alternative. Attempting to equate honest debate with FORWARD’s campaign of misinformation strains credibility.

4. Statement by FORWARD:

“Rank-&-file petitions met with disregard. Officers publicly de-nounced members at union meetings and refused to accept rank-and-file petitions, signed by several hundred members that requested classification improvements, and an all-members meeting and picketing.”

This statement goes beyond misinformation and the members of FORWARD know it! The petitions were received, I have them on file and once again, our membership voted not to follow the recommenda-tions of the FORWARD.

5. Statement by FORWARD:

“Union meetings discouraged discussion and input. The union meeting before the April contract vote was adjourned early, despite protest; many members who came to the meeting to ask questions were deprived of this opportunity. Other meetings prior to contract ratification were packed with other agenda items, forcing members to stay late just to discuss our contract. The “special” meeting, required by ATU bylaws after the contract expires, was a regular union meeting — with little opportunity to discuss our contract. The officers’ failure to listen or act on our concerns was shown in the huge disconnect in the vote results: officers’ supporting and members’ opposing the contract.”

Our Union meetings are run from the floor by the membership. If a member moves to adjourn and the majority of the membership votes “YES”, the meeting ends. When the will of the majority is not the liking of the minority it is not the Officers to blame. If you wish to attack blame, attack it where it belongs; to huge majority of our membership who disagree with the contents of FORWARD.

6. Statement by FORWARD:

“Vehicle Maintenance was ig-nored. Look at the vote.”

Vehicle Maintenance does indeed suffer from the poorest Union/Management relations among the five sections as defined by our bylaws. That said, the small gains achieved in Vehicle Maintenance are reflective of the small gains achieved in the other four sections.

7. Statement by FORWARD:

“Officers undermined solidar-ity. Several times, officers publicly asserted that demands for improve-ments by one classification could be made only at the expense of another classification. They have also rou-tinely pitted part and full-time drivers against each other.”

It is management and the reality of a free market economy that occa-sionally pit one classification against another. The Officers did all in their power to insure contract proposals were fair and balanced.

8. Statement by FORWARD:

“Union posts used as a system of rewards and punishment. Union activists who spoke out against the contract proposals faced retribution; this included pulling members from union posts they have faithfully filled.”

One current Local 587 member was removed from the position of delegate to the Martin Luther King County Labor Council. Removing an embarrasment from representing ATU interests is not retribution in its common sense. Many of her fellow delegates were quite pleased with her removal.

9. Statement by FORWARD:

“Members subject to public at-tacks. Several times during contract negotiations, officers visiting the shop floor attacked members. This included name-calling, challenging their right to circulate petitions, and spreading rumors and fear.”

Broad generalizations that are impossible to refute are a trademark of the FORWARD group.

10. Statement by FORWARD:

“Union resources used to at-tack FORWARD. A derogatory memo against FORWARD remains posted on the ATU website, disparag-ing FORWARD as “misleading” and “incompetent” for raising questions about contract out, among other issues.”

FORWARD members ARE guilty of spreading “misleading” and “incompetent” misinformation.

11. Statement by FORWARD:

“These and numerous other incidents and examples are a serious departure from the democratic traditions that our union has established. Combined, they deprived members of the right to have any meaningful input into our contract. This goes against the most basic principles of union democracy. It also undermines the strength of the union, which is the rank-and-file of the union.”

It’s ironic the membership of FORWARD is contending their democratic rights have been vio-lated when it was by the will of the membership through votes taken during the contract negotiations that their proposals were rejected. What could be more democratic?

12. Statement by FORWARD:

“Clearly, we need measures in place that will give the membership a much greater voice in the process of negotiat-ing our contract. This includes: • Elected representation of all classifi-cations at the bargaining table, and at every level of the union; • Following the spirit of our bylaws, by calling an all-members meeting after the contract expires; • Allowing for full respectful debate before the contract vote; • Providing for membership input on all Memorandums of Agreement that impact the bargaining unit.”

The processes utilized to nego-tiate our labor agreements are defined by the International Con-stitution and General Laws, Local 587 bylaws, and the collective will of the Full-Time Officers, Executive Board and membership. Although a small group like FORWARD can wreak great havoc, they do not represent the greater will of our membership.

13. Statement by FORWARD:

“The long-term survival of our Lo-cal union, which is the ability of members to speak freely and organize against management takeaways, and on all issues without fear or reprisal. Democ-racy and robust debate is the lifeblood of any labor organization. ATU 587 is no exception.”

On this point we agree.

June 2008
I have read the “Open Letter in defense of democracy within ATU 587” and have several thoughts and comments to share with you. Let’s start with the first sentence of the second paragraph.

“The first contract proposal from our negotiating team featured sever- al concessions to management” If they are referring to the tentative agreements voted on by the membership on January 10 and April 17 then they are very confused. What was voted on by the membership was what the Union and Metro manage- ment were able to negotiate.

The contract proposal from the union contained not only no conces- sions but also proposed significant improvements in all areas of the contract for all members which meet or exceeded all of the “demands” from FORWARD such as a 10 and 15 percent shift differential for ALL members at KC METRO.

“It is time to stop the divisive- ness and attacks...” this is from the same people that attacked the equity pay raises for various clas- sifications? One of the individuals who have signed this “Open Letter” actually attacked your full time of- ficers because “None of you will ever drive under this contract.” Does he mean to say that only Opera- tors should be full time officers? I thought ALL members were equal brothers and sisters.

“Rank & File petitions met with disregard” It is difficult to take seri- ously petitions that “demand” less than what we are already asking for in the Unions’ proposal. Those signing have only heard part of the story and some of those collecting signatures were reported to me to be using intimidation. I have spoken with at least 2 members who signed petitions just to get the members of Forward to leave them alone. Interestingly I spoke with one of the purported signers of the open letter the day before the last vote on the contract and he told me he hoped the contract passed. I didn’t bother to ask him why his name was on all the “Vote No” literature.

I cannot in good conscience give much weight to petitions under these conditions.

“Union meeting discouraged discussion and input” This is an outright lie! Any member can come to any Union meeting and discuss any subject for 3 minutes under new business. Any member can also move to adjourn at any time. This is a non-debatable motion and subject to majority vote. This is in our by- laws, Roberts Rules of Order and it is in the 24 years I have been attending Union meetings. Strangely enough none of those complaining about not being able to show up at the 3 informational meetings we had prior to each vote.

Meeting agendas were not “packed” to any Union meeting and discuss any subject for 3 minutes under new business. Any member can also move to adjourn at any time. This is a non-debatable motion and subject to majority vote. This is in our by-laws, Roberts Rules of Order and it is how we have handled this issue for the 24 years I have been attending Union meetings. Strangely enough none of those complaining about not having enough time at the regular Union meetings could be bothered to show up at the 3 informational meetings we had prior to each vote.

Meeting agendas were not “packed” in any way.

Response to FORWARD Article

By Paul Neil, Financial Secretary

Defense, continued

The long-term survival of our Local depends on the ability of mem- bers to speak freely and organize against management takeaways, and on all issues without fear or re- prisal. Democracy and robust debate is the lifeblood of any labor organiza- tion. ATU 587 is no exception.

FOR Workers’ Activism and Rank & File Democracy (FOR-WARD!)

Go to: www.forward587.com or email forward@forward587.com

In Solidarity,

Tom Allaire ID #3518; Willie Arm- strong, ID #11828; Linda Averill ID #8816; Ken Barnett ID #12094; Greg Beiter ID #20710; Leslie Biddle ID #20065; Nathaneal Chappelle, ID #1719; Robert Charles ID #11426; Victor Cobb #12860; Ricardo Cymph ID #3953; Ramy Khalil ID #11498; Rachel Kniestedt ID #2165; Chuck Lare ID #12497; Vince Lee ID #12497; Paul Margolis ID #21065; Dan Mc- Chung, ID #2821; Kaile Narinderjit, ID #11498; Everett Stewart, ID #12859; Shahab Yazdani ID #2074.

Dan Flynn VM Employee of the year

Dan Flynn VM Employee of the year

President Norton presents a plaque from Local 587 recognizing Brother Dan Flynn as Vehicle Maintenance 2008 Employee of the year
Just the Facts

By Paul Griffin

Washington State Department of Labor and Industries

April 2008

Leave for spouses of deployed military personnel

The new law allows:

- Spouses of military personnel deployed or on leave from deployment during times of military conflict to take 15 days unpaid leave from work.
- Leave is without pay, but accrued leave may be substituted.
- Leave for public employees who also serve in the reserves or national guard has been increased from 15 to 21 days.
- All employers, public and private, are covered, regardless of size.
- An employee is one who works on average 20 or more hours a week.
- Effective June 12, 2008

What is the new law?

A new law passed by the 2008 Legislature allows spouses of military personnel to take up to 15 days unpaid leave while their spouse is on leave from deployment, or before and up to deployment, during times of military conflict declared by the President or Congress.

An employee must provide his or her employer with notice of the employee's intention to take leave within five business days of receiving official notice that the employee's spouse will be on leave or of an impending call to active duty.

An employee may substitute accrued leave for any part of the family military leave.

An employee who takes family military leave is entitled to job protection and the same benefits as under the state Family Leave Act.

Who is covered?

An employee is defined as a person who works an average of 20 or more hours weekly, excluding independent contractors.

An employer is any person, firm, corporation, partnership or other business entity, state agencies and institutions, and local government.

What is L&I's role?

L&I's role is to inform employers and workers about the new law through outreach and education. Complaints filed by employees will be investigated, and L&I will enforce job protection for employees who need this leave.

Additional information may be obtained by calling Janis Kerns at 360-902-5552 or e-mail to kerj2535@Lni.wa.gov, or by calling the L&I Employment Standards Program toll-free at 1-866-219-7321.

Updates regarding this new law will be posted on www.Lni.wa.gov/WorkplaceRights/LeaveBenefits/FamilyCare

4/4/2008

The CPI-W category plus the rest of the "earners" who have income from other sources such as professional, self-employed and other sources. Each of these two calculations is presented for local and national "costs of living" represented by the price of items in a data base of goods and services. Unions have historically insisted on using the CPI-W to calculate "COLA" (Cost of Living Adjustment) as it best represents workers on an hourly pay basis. Now for some historical facts here at ATU Local 587. The following wages are Operator wages (see table below). The dollar amount is pre-settlement because we haven’t actually started collecting at the new rate.

This discussion is from 1991 to our latest COLA calculation which is based on 2006 data. The conclusion is very clear. Even with the language in the labor agreement that calls for 90% of the National CPI-W we are still 17% AHEAD of the cost of living even based on 100% of the CPI-W. We are, in fact, ahead of ALL the indexes even the local CPI. How can this be? And why would we want to take a cut in wages?

Time out for a brief historical note: On approximately 1999 the local president hired an economist to demonstrate with CPI statistics that "our" people were ahead of COLA. "Our" people are not keeping up with inflation..." The economist was unable to demonstrate that. He told the Executive Board that he had no explanation for why our wages were keeping up with inflation. (But I knew exactly why and told him. The reason is valid to this very day.) The president promptly fired him. Now back to our regular programming.

This table covers 15 years which is a statistically significant period of time. It is just factual information which you, dear reader, can get off the Internet for yourself. Ten years or less is not statistically significant because indexes increase and decrease sharply in the short term. To be fair one must look at data over a longer period of time to see which index is the long term winner to our advantage.

The management goal is to keep down the cost of the organization of our wages and to demonstrate their success to "elders and betters." They claim success when they report they continue to hear ranting and raving over "...loss of purchasing power..." and we should use the local CPI because it costs more to live in Seattle... we never get a raise. So if management knows about the indexes and still reports to the elders and betters "their" success reflected in the generally accepted verbiage then why haven’t they pushed for a change to make reality match the verbiage? There are four reasons.

First: Metro’s revenue is in front of inflation. The index is calculated a year later AFTER Metro collects money all year long and will continue to collect on that basis forever. Then we, the union, expect them to share in the following year. Meanwhile a new wave of inflation is being generated. Net impact on the agency is zero.

Second: METRO has discovered that they must pay market or better to retain the workforce they already have a considerable investment in. Further, it is necessary to pay well to attract new employees and Metro has to compete in a shrinking, aging, labor market.

Third: Our unions political activism internally and externally. Smart political leadership knows that maintaining labor peace is in everybody’s best interest.

Fourth: Enlightened self interest. What ever the union membership receives in pay and benefits, the management gets also. And a little more. Even the management has to compete in a shrinking, aging, labor market.

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President’s Report, continued

Refusal to Bargain
Metro has refused to bargain by:
1. Failing to bargain over the terms of the RFP issued in March 2007
2. Failing to appeal over the award of the Paratransit work to Veolia in May 2008
3. Awarding the Paratransit work to Veolia in May, 2008.

Interference, Restraint and Coercion
1. Metro has interfered with, restrained and coerced employees of MV Transportation by transferring their work to Veolia in or about May, 2008.

Relief Requested
The Union requests that the Commission issue an order requiring Metro to:
1. Restore the status quo ante by restoring the Paratransit work to MV Transportation by requiring Metro to have MV recognize the Union as the exclusive representative of Paratransit drivers and trainers and to pay the wages and benefits they would have received but for the unlawful conduct described above.
2. Cease and desist from restraining or coercing its employees.
3. Reimburse the Union for its attorneys fees and costs incurred in this case.
4. Pay such other relief as the Commission deems just and proper.

Assuming all goes well, on schedule, through that process, …

Wages and Retro
Update on Metro revised Wages and Retro checks.
I wanted to give our membership an update on the process. Metro’s new Labor Agreement goes through and when the wage increases take effect and when you may expect to receive your retro check.

I have signed, as required, after many hours of proofing all the contract language, all contracts for the new Labor Agreement. Those copies are then sent to our County Executive for his signature. The contract is then submitted to the General Government Labor Relations Committee for their review and approval. This is then submitted to the Full County Council for their review and approval which is scheduled for June 29th.

Assuming all goes well, on schedule, through that process, I am being told all employees will see their new wages by July 10th. Total Retro checks received June 26th. Retro checks are scheduled to be distributed on July 10th.

Be Safe,
Lance F. Norton
President Local 587
Inappropriate Behavior

At approximately 10:00 a.m. Tuesday, May 20, 2008, a group of Local 587 members (Everett Stewart, Shahab Yazdani, Linda Averill and Charles Lare) arrived at the union office. Our receptionist Joan Carlton greeted them. Mr. Stewart asked her, “Do you like working here?” Sue answered, “Yes, of course I do.” Mr. Stewart responded, “Okay, we will take that into consideration.” Then Mr. Lare added, “Yeah, and I don’t like this carpet.” Mr. Stewart added, “Yeah, so when we get in office we will take it out.”

As a union member of OPEIU Local 8 and the office manager at Local 587’s union office, I am not only appalled but feel that I am obligated to address this to the entire membership. Like all of you, Local 587 staff members are union members. What would you do if a group of possible future management candidates over you made these same comments to you?

I interpreted Mr. Lare’s comment as the staff is just as replaceable as the carpet in our office. Not only was this disrespectful but extremely demeaning. This was a complete disgrace towards fellow union members. To be treated this way by 587 union members goes completely against the Union Brotherhood ethos. They claim to care for and be for 587 members. Do we not count because we aren’t 587 members? Where is the solidarity?

I saw no show of respect for the officers that you as members elected. They barged in and were rude and confrontational with President Lance Norton in front of staff. This is a place of business. Business union. Sue had to answer phone. This is a place of business. Union members are not 587 members? Where is the dignity and respect.

There was a lot of bantering and bickering so I asked them to please leave the office. Is this the type of business. Sue had to answer phone. This is a place of business. Union members aren’t 587 members? Where is the dignity and respect.

Respectfully,
Norma Appel
Office Manager
Local 587

Automated Stop Announcers

Dear Editor,

This is in response to Brother La Barba’s letter in the May News Review concerning “automated stop announcements.” It raises valid and well-informed points, and I will try to address each of them in turn.

The Enunciator System is one of 17 different but integrated technical upgrades being developed simultaneously for our fleet. They are based on a suite of systems from INFT (Innovations in Traffic Systems) located in Karlsruhe, Germany. Go to their Web site for an overview of our project with them: www.init-ka.de/en/index.php. Select “Projects”, and then “North America”. King County Metro is about two-thirds of the way down that list. All of the 17 projects are essentially internal – except for the Enunciator System. It will be noticeable to everyone, and will be one of the most significant changes in Metro’s technology and service ever made. As the schedule now stands, the initial rollout of the ES should occur in the fall of 2009. Installation of the on-board computer, the COPILOT- pc, will start at Atlantic/Central, so these two bases will have the ES first. Full fleet-wide installation should conclude in 2011.

The Voice – We have selected a voice font named “Kate” from NeoSpeech for the ES. To hear a sample, go to www.nextup.com/index.html; under NeoSpeech, select “Kate 16”. Bear in mind that unlike this sample, on the bus she will be making short, fragmentary announcements.

Genders – Last fall I made digital recordings of ambient noise on the busses, and then performed a spectrum analysis on them. The “quietest” (least-used) region of the sound spectrum was the upper end, which is where female voices fall. Male voices emit most of their acoustic energy in the same region as where busses emit most of theirs. So, considering this as well as cost (we couldn’t afford one voice), we chose “Kate” rather than she and “Paul”. Listen to him, too, though, he’s the new voice for Stephen Hawking.

Volume Control – This is an automatic function. Each speaker is retrofitted with a sensor and becomes an ambient-noise amplitude meter as well. It outputs the announce- ment at a ratio of 10 dB or more higher than the interior cabin noise. As that falls, so does the speaker volume; when the volume rises, the speaker volume increases too. Each speaker (2 for a 40’ coach, 3 for an artic) functions independently with respect to this capability.

Running Mode – The ES will operate as follows: upon reaching a predetermined offset distance from the end of the zone, sensed by both GPS and a gyrosopic odometer, (1) that stop will be displayed on the LED reader board by its cross-street name; (2) major stops – those in the CBD/RFA, all those on the ADA ARG’s, and some others – will be announced as well as displayed. [This is what you have called the “Night Mode”]. Our aims are to provide useful information for all passengers, to comply fully and consistently with the ADA law, and to keep everything within a “less is more” framework. [No tourist mode.]

Display – The color will be amber (~600 nm) rather than red – the same as our exterior destination displays. They will only face backwards. In addition to the stop location information, they will probably also display route/destinations (taken from the exterior signage) and current time. [Route/destinations will also be announced at stops over an external speaker for the sight-impaired.]

Speakers – Our parts stores still have an inventory of the present ES speakers to use up. After that it may be possible to upgrade to a better model. However, even with the present units the sound of the announcements before the ES is output will be much better than what we are now used to with either operator or coordinator PA’s, since it is coming directly from a 5kHz voice font via a 44kHz sample-rate MP3 file rather than through a low-quality microphone or oral radio. I am also using a digital editor, Sound Forge, for fine-tuning the overall sound quality.

Volume Control, pt. 2

As described before, volume control is automatic; no knob needed. Both the amplitude and the content of the verbal announcements are going to be adjusted like a speaker on the “ears”. And operators will have a defeat/override capability with the ES, though it is the consistent experience of other transit proper- ties we have consulted with that after an initial adjustment period operators like the ES and don’t “tune it off. [By the way, this techie has been a trolley driver for 14 years and knows what it’s actually like to drive a bus.]

The Enunciator will correlate 300+ landmarks, 1500 major stops, 229 routes, 1300 route patterns and 9000 stops, as well as data from ATIS and our new street signage. It will be built and maintained by both automated processes and human editorial control. It will be altered and tested. And it will work…well.

I hope this letter addresses the more important points you raised. Thanks for caring about this project!

Fraternally,
John Balmer, Operator #9043/AO
Acting Project & Program Manager

OBS/CCS Enunciator System

Volunteers Needed

Dear Lance,

I just volunteered with the Seattle VA hospital to drive a DAV van. In the process I learned that they are painfully short of volunteer drivers. Knowing the brethren and sisters of ATU 587 to be generous and big hearted, I’d like to put a request for volunteer ES’s (six hour shift/month or/week or whatever) in our ATU 587 Newsletter. The riders are vets going to medical appointments and back. There are all ambulatory but cannot drive or take public transit. For those ATU 587 members who may be reluctant to volunteer because they disagree with the Iraq War and/or the Bush administration, please remember that as citizens we sent these kids to war in our name.

Thanks,
Bill Durse

The contact person is Fran Schirman
E-mail: Frances.Schirman@va.gov
Phone: 206 764-2195

Northwest Accent

Dear Editor,

I read with interest how Alex La Barba wants a northwest ac-

Continued on page 9

Letters to the Editor…

NEWS REVIEW
June 2008

8

SEND IN YOUR OPINIONS
Letters/contributions must include print- ed 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 to The News Review is deemed unprintable by the Recording Secretary. The contact person is Fran Schirman.
Access Driver
By Diego, MV Transportation

My name is David, and I welcome you to meet three special people: Barbara, Fred, and Sam (last names withheld for anonymity). Barbara is a person with vision loss, Fred, a person with a wheelchair and weak cardiovascular system, and Sam is a person with severe hearing and vision loss. What do these three people have in common? All are passengers on Access. All depend on Access Para transit, a sub contracted service of Metro King County.

Access does what fixed bus routes can not, namely pick and drop its passengers from the curb or door to the curb or door of their destination. Access is a needed service for people like Barbara, Fred, and Sam and many more people with special mobility needs like them.

Access operators like Metro operators must wield the triple edged sword of Safety, Service, and Schedule. Like Metro drivers, they belong to a union. Like metro drivers they work under pressing conditions of Traffic, Weather, Time, and Customers service issues; sometimes even Life Threatening Emergencies like stroke and heart attacks, and Access operators are also CPR and First Aid certified.

Unlike Metro operators whether part time or full time, Access Para transit operators receive less compensation, less benefits, and less recognition. As one operator, Tim who has provided accident free Access Para transit service for over 9 years remarked: “it’s like we’re going back to slavery times”.

Access Para transit operators finally met abolition as of last year when the Seattle provider: MV Transportation in collaboration with the Amalgamated 587 Transit Union signed a 5 year contract putting MV Para transit operators as the highest paid professionals in the state placing them second at $21.9 per hour to Metro transit operators who comparably top off at $27 per hour.

If this all sounds too good to be true, well it is. Metro severed that ground breaking contract as of June 1st when they declined the subcontract with MV. Unlike Metro Operators whose top salary now reaches $27 per hour, Access operators now will take a pay cut reduced to $16 dollars top pay an hour, approximately. Much speculation and rumors are being sown, but one sad fact is certain people like Barbara, Fred, and Sam won’t be receiving the services from long time professionals like Tim, perhaps even me. Para transit operators find themselves feeling angry and forsaken but even more so as if our passion for Para transit service has been raped from us.

As both an Access driver and a community member, it would be an honor and privilege to receive feedback and support from my community so that this dark time for Para transit operators like myself might bekindled and enflamed by the love and support of our community such as letter and phone calls to King County Metro, the Mayor, even the Governor.

Sincerely,
Deeply Concerned in Seattle

Letters to the Editor, continued

Oh, darn. I forgot to sign in.

By Carey Watson, Chief Shop Steward, Bellevue Base

Take this short test. You come into the base in lots of time for your assignment. You ask the window man to put your name in the book, get some mail. You gather up transfers, schedules, and get your coach assignment. You go out to your coach and about 3 minutes after your sign in time, the report operator comes up to you and says “You forgot to sign in. Go see the window man.” When you get to the window, WHAT OPTIONS does the window man have in dealing with you? (Not just policy, ALL options).

Stop reading and answer the question.

There are 3 options the window man has.
1. The first is to say you forgot to sign in, don’t do it again. Lets you sign in and does not document it.
2. The second option is to give you a miss. Take you off your work and give it to a report operator.
3. The third option is one not widely known. It is by POLICY the correct one. You will be issued a PR (performance report) for failure to sign in unaccompanied by tardiness. This is NOT an attendance infraction. It is in the same category as taking out the wrong coach.

The following are the actual statements in the official documents about this policy.

Metro Policy

Transit Operations Procedures #13
Subject: Operator Sign-In & Missed Sign-In (Pg. 1 of 2)
Approval by Manager: Issue Date: 2/5/86 Effective Date: 2/5/86 Revision Date: 6/28/05

Missed Sign-In
If an operator fails to sign in on time, the operator will be issued a miss. If the operator is later discovered in the base or on his/her coach and the operator states that he/she was on time but forgot to sign in, the miss will not be issued. The dispatcher/planner will write a performance report for failing to sign in (classification 19, specific 14).

Contract language
ARTICLE 4: DISCIPLINE
SECTION 7 – MISSES – TRANSIT OPERATORS

C. The failure to sign in, when unaccompanied by tardiness, shall be treated as a minor infraction, as defined in Section 4.

THE BOOK
I. Carey Watson, could not find any mention of this policy in THE BOOK.
KC METRO Benefits Reminder

You still have until June 30, 2008 to Earn Silver

All benefit-eligible employees, except deputy sheriffs, and their covered spouse or domestic partner have the opportunity to take a wellness assessment through HealthMedia, a company independent of King County. Employees and spouse/domestic partners can take the wellness assessment anytime online before June 30 to earn the silver out-of-pocket expense level for their medical coverage in the following year; however, they must take the wellness assessment in January each year as the first step toward earning the gold out-of-pocket expense level.

Health Assessment Webpage
https://harrishalthtrends.health-media.com/index.html?b=ok

Out-of-pocket expense levels

Employees and their covered family members continue to receive the same high level of medical coverage they are used to receiving, but the participation of employees and their spouse/domestic partners in Healthy Incentives affects their level of out-of-pocket expenses. Healthy Incentives has three levels of out-of-pocket expense levels that are determined by participation: gold (lowest level), silver (moderate level) and bronze (highest level). Here are examples of the differences in out-of-pocket expense levels for KingCare and Group Health.

2008 EXCURSION SCHEDULE

For the twenty-third year the Metro Employees Historic Vehicle Association (MEHVA) is sponsoring excursions and special trips using our rare and unusual Metro transit vehicles. All trips will depart from the King County Metro Complex. Fares will be $4 for seniors 65 and over and $4 for children (1-11). Metro transfers, tickets, or passes are not accepted. Please, no food or beverages onboard the historic buses.

MEHVA Hotline: (206) 684-1816. MEHVA is a volunteer group of current and retired Metro employees, and others, who are dedicated to the preservation, restoration, and operation of historic transit vehicles, which includes special events in the Seattle-King County area. MEHVA is a non-profit exempt organization in the State of Washington.

Trackless Trolley Excursions

Sunday, June 8: SEATTLE TROLLEY TOUR

Enjoy an unlimited 4-hour tour of Seattle’s unique trolley system. The seven trackless trolley buses will take you from Seattle’s historic downtown to several fine city neighborhoods throughout the city. Stops for photos and lunch. Trackless trolley depart at 11 a.m.

Saturday, October 4: NIGHT TROLLEY TOUR

A special tour of Seattle’s downtown and several attractive neighborhoods: Pioneer Square, Belltown, Lower Queen Anne and the University District. Stops for photos and coffee. Trackless trolleys depart at 7 p.m.

Motor Bus Excursions

Sunday, July 13: SNOHOMISH TOUR

A short cruise stop in the historic town of Snohomish for lunch and antique shop browsing. Bus departs at 11 a.m.

Sunday, October 19: FALL FOLIAGE TOUR

A trip through historic downtown Seattle along the quiet back roads of east King County when the leaves are at their peak color. Stops for photos and lunch. Bus depart at 11 a.m.

Saturday, December 13: SANTA’S LIGHTS TOUR

Santas takes you on a tour from their schedule at the North Pole for a ‘Cruise’ out of Seattle’s best Christmas lights. Bus depart 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.

Motor Employees Historic Vehicle Association
1500 Metro Transit
1201 S. Jackson St. Mail Stop CMB-TR-0220
Seattle, WA 98104

www.mehva.org

MLK Labor Council Delegates

The following officers/members are delegates to the Martin Luther King County Labor Council:

President Lance Norton
Vice President Kenny McCormick
Recording secretary Paul J. Bachtel
Executive Board Officer Neal Safrin
Executive Board Officer Dee Wakenight
Executive Board Officer Rick Sepolen
Executive Board Officer Judy Young
Executive Board Officer Linda Anderson
Executive Board Officer Lisa Thompson
Shop Steward Ray Mason
Shop Steward Lisa Nault
Member Bruce Tiebout

KEEP YOUR ADDRESS CURRENT!!

(A request from our Local 8 Union office staff)

Throughout the year Local 587 mails letters to our membership. The most recent mailing contained the King County Metro contract survey. With each mailing sent, the union receives a small percentage of letters returned due to improper address.

Local 587 maintains a database that in part includes the names and addresses of our King County Metro members. The King County Metro section of the database is updated monthly from data provided by King County Metro.

If you are a King County Metro employee and your name and address is not current with King County Metro, you may not receive union mailings. Please keep your name and address current with King County Metro.

Take a Trip Back in Time!

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President Norton congratulates Brother Lee Garrett, 2007 4th Quarter, George Turner Award Recipient

Pictured from left to right: Brother Lee Garrett; Ernie Butler, Executive Director - Northwest Chapter, Paralyzed Veterans of America; Jim O’Rourke, Manager of Transit Operations; President Lance Norton; Jim Jacobson, Deputy General Manager; Abdul Alidina, Ryerson Base Supervisor

Notice

Members are reporting Verizon is offering discounts on cell phone bills and equipment to King County Employees, but only if King County Employees identify themselves and request a discount.

The Union office has also received reports that Sprint offers King County Employee discounts. Check with your provider.

It Never Hurts to Ask!!

SEATTLE CHAPTER OF THE LATINO CAUCUS

will meet
Thursday June 5, 2008 • 7:30 p.m.
The Labor Temple, F-Hall #8
2800 First Avenue

density Items:
1. Caesar Chavez National Holiday
2. SCLC Action Plan for 2008

All members welcome!
Locked out

By Kenny McCormick

B
other and sisters at MV Transpor-
tation are being given the op-
portunity to work for less doing
the same job they currently
are doing. In 2007 MV negotiated
a living wage contract for its employees
with ATU 587 to provide Paratransit
services inside of King County.

Imagine going to work and find-
ing out, you will be out of a job on
08/1/09. This is what happened to
our Brothers and Sister working at
MV Transportation. After being told
you’re out of a job, but you may have
a job operating the same routes for
new employer for less money. The
biggest surprise was the amount of
money MV Transportation is willing
to make adjustment and tighten our
belts due to the rising cost of goods
and services. It is hard to imagine that
King County would even consider
this change and then act on it.

Paratransit Service drivers trans-
port AMERICANS WITH DISABILI-
ties, our neighbors, family members
and our friends to their doctor
appointments, shopping and other
destinations. If these services were
to cease because there wasn’t anyone
willing to work for less, then King
County would hear a loud outcry
from the public.

The Ripple Effect
Just imagine someone who works
for the City of Seattle that could not
report to work because they must
transport their ADA dependent fam-
ily member to a doctor appointment
because no one wants to work for
less. The politician’s phones would
begin to ring off the hook from people
affected by this change. The fact that
these services exist affords many of
us the opportunity to work while our
loved ones with disabilities remain
independent. These services provide
a quality of life for its users that
otherwise would not be attainable.
My mother, before she passed, had a
stroke which resulted in partial pa-
ralysis and she relied on door to door
services provided by Paratransit.

Pride
These services generate pride and
dignity that is two fold, independence
for the people that use the services
and satisfaction of providing a valu-
able service for the drivers that do
the work. The two go together hand
in hand. While we are talking about
pride let’s look at the displaced,
locked out workers or whatever your
preference is to call the people out of
a job on August 1, 2008. Through no
fault of their own, but rather because
King County chose to not renew MV
Transportation’s contract, 140 plus of
our members and staff are without
jobs on 8/1/08.

Will the service be available on
8/2/08 or will the people that rely
on these services be left without an
alternative? Will the MV drivers say
enough of this and seek employment
elsewhere? The answers to these
questions are not currently available,
but the need for the service remains.
Oh yeah this has happened before,
about eight years ago when MV took
over from Laidlaw. There is another
dynamic to this problem, the pos-
sibility that you may be working
for a new employer every five years
because that is the length of the new
Paratransit contracts with Metro. It
makes finding people to do the work
a tougher job, and some Paratransit
employers advertise constantly.
Raise the standard of living and cre-
ate consistency and pride in a work
force. Instead the powers that be
would rather subcontract this work
out to private contractors and create
an ever-changing workforce. We
like to think this sort of thing only
happens in Right to Work states, but
Washington is not a right to work
state and we expect better
from our county government. We
must continue to work to provide a
living wage for these workers and
our community.

The members being displaced on
August 1 of this year are being asked
to commit by June 13, 2008 to have a
job on 8/2/08. I cannot help but ask
what commitment is King County
willing to make the workers and
their families on August 2, 2008?

The Operators at MV Transpor-
tation, Seattle Personal Transit and
Veolia operate King County vehicles
and the public believes these are
county employees. The truth is
they are not; they are employed by
King County. If they were
employed by King County they
would not have to wonder if they
will have a job every five years and
they would get better benefits. The
truth is a lot of us in ATU 587 will
have to seriously consider bring
this work in house!!!
The Financial Secretary’s Report

Our Audit Committee

When I was first elected Financial Secretary of Local 587 I went to the George Meany Labor College in Silver Springs Maryland for a Financial Secretaries class put on by the A.T.U. International. One of the important items I did hear about was a local union Audit Committee.

I decided that an Audit Committee, in addition to the regular audit done by our C.P.A. Herman Lindsey, would be a positive move for our local. I believe that sunshine is a healthy thing for any organization and I do not fear anyone looking over our books. I wanted a committee that would not only check up on me to make sure the money is there but also to find any errors I would make. If you do not know about your mistakes you can not correct them. Also want a group I could discuss things with about the finances and how to handle various aspects of the job. I requested President Norton to appoint a committee and last August he did.

The members of our Audit Committee are Executive Board members Ray Campbell, Chris Daniels and Judy Young. They are also the members of our Budget Committee and they have twice done 6 month audits. The International requires an audit every six months and has a few basic steps they want taken by a local Audit Committee. One of the most important is verification of funds.

The members of the committee actually go to all of the financial institutions where we have funds and asked for written verification of how much money we have in each of those institutions. The reason they actually go to the banks is they can not just take my word that the money is there. With today’s technologies you can do a pretty good job of forking bank statements, etc. so you can not just take documents at face value presented to you by the individual you are auditing.

Hot Under the Collar

By Dee Wakenight, Executive Board officer

Unless you live in a cave, by now you have heard about the new HOT lanes on State Route 167, SR167. This has a devastating impact on some of the routes at South Base.

Evidently, Washington State Department of Transportation, WSDOT, was unaware of any negative impact on Public Transit, or at least we hope this is the case, as the WSDOT folk prior to the HOT Lanes happening forgot to contact Metro or Sound Transit. Insert expletive. South end Sound Transit service has routes which use SR 167 to connect the cities of Renton, to Kent, and Auburn. Prior to the HOT lanes this service was the fastest way to get from city to city.

For those unfamiliar with some of the routes in question a southbound trip will illustrate the point best. Bus enters southbound SR167 after crossing Rainier Ave. in Renton, makes the best/fastest possible route to the Central/64th Ave exit for service to the Kent Rail Station. Worked great, people were happy to get where they needed to go quickly.

Now we have the HOT lanes. Premise #1 PAY to use the FAST LANE, it’s still the HOV lane, free to those who have 2 or more in the vehicle, and buses, but with limited access. The closest entrance/exit for the HOT lane to access the Central Ave. /64th Ave. exit is prior to the 212th Street exit, about 2 miles prior to the exit used by Transit. Washington State Patrol has assured the planet that they will give a huge ticket to any/everyone who dares to cross the line in the wrong place.

Now we have what was very good express bus service, exiting the HOV lane 2 miles before the exit they need, fighting their way through “regular lanes of traffic” to be able to access the proper exit. Remember the regular lanes of traffic are those chosen by WSDOT to allow folks the option of using them or PAYING, on an adjusting scale, to get out of them. But wait there’s more; in a typical knee jerk reaction Metro and Sound Transit circled the wagons and decided that they might just re-route the bus routes to another exit, change the routing and stops, and FIX what was not broken, until WSDOT had a big money making idea that is.

Some of us at South Base had other ideas for a simpler more effective remedy to this situation. Why not exempt transit from the restrictions of entry and exit of the HOV lanes? Perhaps the proposal is too simple, and would maintain Rely reliably? Probably not too many elected officials, or this would never have gotten off the drawing board. Time will tell if anyone in a position of authority is actually listening or if we at South Base will remain, hot under the collar.

WORK SITE VISITS

**Kenny McCormick, Vice President will be visiting various work sites during the month of June. Below is a list of times, dates and locations.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Site</th>
<th>Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>June 10th</td>
<td>Central/Atlantic Operations</td>
<td>5:00 am – 7:00 am</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Central Maintenance</td>
<td>7:15 am – 9:15 am</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Atlantic Maintenance</td>
<td>9:30 am – 11:30 am</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 24th</td>
<td>Ryerson Operations</td>
<td>5:00 am – 7:00 am</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ryerson Maintenance</td>
<td>7:15 am – 9:15 am</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Service Communications</td>
<td>9:30 am – 11:30 am</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

WORK SITE VISITS

**Paul Bachtel, Recording Secretary, will be visiting various work sites during the month of June. Below is a list of times, dates and locations.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Site</th>
<th>Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>June 12th</td>
<td>South Facilities</td>
<td>5:00 am – 7:00 am</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 13th</td>
<td>Lake Union Facilities</td>
<td>5:00 am – 7:00 am</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 16th</td>
<td>MV Transportation</td>
<td>5:00 am – 7:00 am</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 17th</td>
<td>Seattle Personal Transit</td>
<td>5:00 am – 7:00 am</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Short-Term Disability Insurance

Members of Local 587 who are King County Metro Full-Time Employees are provided short-term disability insurance through a plan purchased by the Union and administered by King County Metro. Recently, one of our members found she didn’t have coverage due to an active work requirement. The insurance plan has requirements, limitations and exclusions. Plan provisions for the insurance policies provided by King County Metro and Local 587 (including requirements, limitations and exclusions) are available for review on our respective websites:

- Benefits provided by King County are published on King County’s website at http://metrokc.gov/employees/benefits/health_insurance/default.aspx.
- The one policy provided by Local 587 (short-term disability insurance) is published on the Union’s website at http://www.atu587.com/membership-benefits.html.

The member cited above was on industrial injury leave. When she became ill she found she was not entitled to short-term disability insurance payments because she had not been actively working on the day before her illness. Our short-term disability policy requires an employee to have been actively working or on an RDO, holiday or vacation the day before the illness, injury or pregnancy that caused the employee to become disabled to be eligible for short-term disability payments. She also became ineligible for state industrial leave time because payments were no longer payable due to industrial injury. When her sick leave ran out she had no income.

Being caught by requirements, limitations and exclusions of insurance policies has become commonplace. Bookkeeping detailing insurance provisions (including requirements, limitations and exclusions) are no longer distributed in favor of website publications as a result our members are becoming less familiar with the terms and conditions of their benefits. Our insurance plans are based on King County data and are changing continually with the advance of medical science. An evening spent reviewing the terms and conditions of your particular insurance plans is highly recommended.

Special Work Threatened

King County Metro contracts to perform charter bus service. Our labor agreement refers to charter bus service as Special Work. Examples of charter bus service include Seahawk Football, Husky Football, Mariners Baseball, SeaFair and Fireworks. In total, Metro routinely contracts to perform charter bus service for over 20 civic events annually. Recent changes in federal law are threatening Metro’s ability to contract to perform charter bus service.

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Charter Service Rule, 49 CFR Part 604.9, has been amended to include new requirements prohibiting public transit agencies from providing charter bus service in competition with private charter bus operators. For private charter bus operators to have exclusive rights to charter bus contracts, new provisions by public transit agencies, private charter bus operators must register to become a Register Charter Provider (RCP). An internet search revealed 38 RCP’s registered in the Seattle area.

The new requirements:

- If a public transit agency receives a request for charter bus service and wishes to provide that service, the agency must notify all RCP’s via e-mail, to all RCP’s in the area by the close of business on the day the request is received, unless the request is received after 2:00 p.m., in which case the notice must be sent by close of business the next business day.

- The notice shall include:
  - customer name, address, phone number and e-mail address (if available);
  - requested date of service;
  - approximate number of passengers;
  - whether the type of equipment requested is (are) bus(es) or van(s);
  - trip itinerary and approximate duration; and
  - in certain circumstances, the fare the transit agency intends to charge for the service.

If no RCP responds within the 60 day exemption to the new FTA rule specifically for Seattle Mariners service. One service provider of a year’s volume was listed that Local 587 members stand to lose over $1,000,000 in overtime paid.

Our ATU International is unlikely to be of assistance as our International also represents charter bus employees across America. Congress is unlikely to be sympathetic as Metro is unusual in the high level of charter bus service provided. The fact that the public will be poorly served and the service will no doubt be more costly was factored in the logic of forcing public agencies out of what the current administration in Washington D.C. views as the province of private providers. I suggest you make your unhappiness known at the polls this November.

Throw the Bums Out

Union Officer elections are a lather over a year away and Local 587 bylaws governing Union elections were recently amended removing the union’s freedom to have an annual employeeballot. Those members interested in serving in our Union office should review our bylaws. The best place to see a copy of our bylaws is on our website available at http://www.atu587.com/membership-bargaining.html or you may request a paper copy from the Union office. Members contemplating serving in the Union office should also consider brushing up on their software application skills. The Union office utilizes Microsoft Windows based programs such as Word, Excel, Access and Outlook, Adobe Acrobat and contribute; and several custom database programs. Being familiar with the Microsoft Windows and Adobe based programming environment would certainly make transition easier.

Transitioning from a service occupation to an office environment can...
Working the Full-Time Operator pick as one of the two person team on site for the Union is always gratifying. Sister Judy Young and I had this privilege at the most recent pick at King County Metro. Aside from the opportunity to see all the current Full-Time Operators is the ability to interact and gather information from all the participants, regardless of current work site. Removing the insulation from each base and giving a system wide view.

Among the current points of concern that were brought to our attention is the troubling “threat” of discipline for failure to log onto the radio. The most obvious reason given by management to the operators is that the control center would be unable to react properly in case of emergency. O.K.

Even with only this aspect for concern, it begs the question, how does the operator KNOW if the log onto the system really took. It turns into a he said she said, unless and until there is a mechanism to inform the operators that the “log on” took it seems unreasonable to threaten discipline.

We all know that there are dead spots, where the radio does not work under any circumstances, add in the limitations for the system to accept the log on, only so many per minute, and the no feedback to operators and we have a problem. Most operators have no idea they are not logged on until they receive a call from the control center asking them to log on.

Perhaps if we were using one radio system, instead of the cobbled together mish-mash we have the results would be satisfactory. Correct me if I am wrong but there are some components from the OLD DAYS, Wisman Becker, and other previous failed attempts to get out of our system results it was never designed for. Once again we are attempting to do the impossible with the inadequate for the ungrateful.

The newest, latest, greatest, radio system is once again proving that it is daunted by the task before it, of providing reliable communication to the second largest radio user in the state of Washington. Have we gone for a full week without the system needing to re-boot and all operators re log on?

Before attempting to lay the fault at the feet of the operator we need to get a system that is actually designed for the task instead of making what we have, do what it was never designed for.

Remember the TV commercial with the guy and the cell phone? Can you hear me now?

Presented by MERRA and ATU Local 587

10th Annual MERRA - ATU Local 587
Carl Owens Memorial Golf Tournament

Saturday, July 12th, 2008
1:30pm Shotgun Start at Carnation Golf Course

$500 Closest to the Pin
Sponsored by Qualstar Credit Union
One lucky participant will walk away with $500 cash for hitting it Closest to the Hole on #11!

Men’s and Ladies Prizes for Long Drive Holes #7 and #12
Closest to Pin Holes #6 and #13
Honey Pot Hole #17
Prize for Low Putts

Limited to 144 Participants
Sign up early to reserve your spot! Entry Forms received by June 5th will receive preferred foursomes
Don’t Forget - Golf Carts are limited and must be reserved!

Stick around for the Live Auction on Fabulous Golf Packages to benefit the Carl Owens Scholarship Fund!

Entry Fee: $65
Includes Round of Golf, Tee Prizes, Raffle Prizes and Steak Dinner

*Entry Deadline - July 1st at 5:00pm*
If you have any questions or concerns, or would like to donate an item to be auctioned
Please contact Dave White at (360) 794-6968 or david2251@msn.com

By Dee Wakenight, Executive Board officer
Upcoming at Local 587

JUNE 05 Charter meeting
JUNE 06 Morning meeting
JUNE 08 Metro Employees Historical Vehicle Association Seattle Trolley Tour
JUNE 09 Jefferson Transit Authority meeting (Annual shop steward election conducted under new business)
JUNE 10 Clallam County meeting
JUNE 21 20th Annual King County Employees Car Show and 32nd Annual Metro Road Show
JULY 01 Executive Board meeting
JULY 12 ATU Local 587 / MERAA Carl Owens Memorial Golf Tournament
JULY 13 Metro Employees Historical Vehicle Association Snohomish Motor Bus Tour
JULY 20 ATU Local 587 / MERAA Summer Barbeque

RETIREES’ BARBEQUE

The annual ATU Local 587 Retirees’ Barbeque will be held on Thursday, June 26, 2008 at:

Woodland Park/ Greenlake
Stove #6
11:00a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Hot dogs, drinks and condiments will be provided. Please bring a side dish if you are able.

Reminder: We have one north end Retiree Chapter meeting on the first Saturday of each month at 7:30 a.m at Barbie’s on 205th Street, 3 blocks east of Aurora. We also have a south end meeting at the Burien Elks on 140th 1st Ave. S. in Burien. That meeting takes place the third Saturday of each month at 8:30 a.m.

The barbeque and meetings are a chance to meet with old friends. Mark your calendars and come join us!

Dave Carter
Retiree Chapter Financial Secretary
Local 587

Recording Secretary’s Report, continued

be a daunting task regardless of educational background. Writing classes are available through local parks and recreation departments. The classes are inexpensive and taught by professional writers. Software application classes are available through university extension, local community college and private vendors. Some classes are free!

Unfortunately, the ATU Constitution and General Laws mandate a short period of time between election of officers and inauguration. A few weeks simply isn’t enough time to acquire all the skills needed to serve effectively. The Union office will attempt to schedule software application training immediately following elections but not know who will require training or what training will be required making scheduling training difficult at best.

At the last ATU International Convention, I approached one of our ATU International Officers and suggested that to facilitate training, the ATU Constitution and General Laws be amended to allow more time between election and inauguration of officers. I believe my words fell on deaf ears. Suggesting change in something as archaic as the ATU International Constitution and General Laws isn’t always looked upon in favor even if the change makes sense in the modern world. Nevertheless, such a change is certainly in order and when the ATU International brings on younger officers the change will happen. The question that remains is what will we do in the present to facilitate the transition of full-time Officers effectively?