Why not bring Access In-House?

Outsourcing Para-Transit service to private for profit companies and awarding multi-million dollar contracts to these providers makes no sense! When transit agencies such as King County Metro, Pierce Transit, and Community Transit (Snohomish County) have the infrastructure such as operating bases, maintenance facilities, dispatch, scheduling, customer service, supervisors, managers yet still insist this work can't be done in-house because its more costly simply is not true.

Federal law requires transit agencies to provide Access service to Americans with Disabilities under the ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act). ADA eligibility basically covers anyone who can't use routed bus service because of a disability. ADA operating standards prohibit agencies from discriminating between types of trips within the ADA area (three fourths of a mile from a routed bus or ferry route) and the Access provider must respond to the transportation request within a certain period of time.

Let's take a look at Kitsap Transit's current Access program with all the Access work being "in house." Kitsap Transit serves a much larger geographical area with its Access program than its peers in King, Pierce, or Snohomish counties and, even with that, spends an average of $21.34 to transport each Access passenger compared to $39.92 for King County Metro; $36.00 for Pierce Transit; and $34.29 for Community Transit (Snohomish County). At those numbers Kitsap Transit "In-House" Access Service is about 58% more cost effective than Metro, Pierce, and C.T.!

The large majority of Kitsap Transit Access Service (98%) is provided by Kitsap Transit employees, with the remaining 2% provided by taxis. In King County 95% of this work is done by contractors and 5% by taxis. In Snohomish County 100% of Para-Transit Services are contracted out to vendors and 75% of Pierce's Para-Transit trips are provided by contractors.

Another comparison to look at is the number of passengers carried on average per hour each service day. Kitsap Transit's Access report three-plus passengers per hour, much higher than passengers per hour for those contracting out this service. King County Metro averages 1.74 passengers per hour, Community Transit 1.8 passengers per hour, and Pierce Transit 2.32 passengers per hour.

In addition to Kitsap Transit providing Access Service "In House" more efficiently and less costly Everett Transit and Jefferson County continued on page 10.
ATU Local 587

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 County, Clallam Transit, Jefferson Transit Union Local 587, AFL-CIO, Official publication of Amalgamated Transit Union, Local 587, Editor 587.
The question is not only will you listen, Can you see?

By Wes Moorehead Shop Steward South Base

A
fter reading the series of articles by Dee Wakenight, Executive Board Officer, and Darrel Riley, database administrator, concerning our current radio system I thought it was time to share not only my experience, but part of what I have collected. You see I am one of those who are not stepping up to the plate and logging in on time according to the letter I received in May from my chief. Because of that letter I have started recording information and taking pictures of the radio so I can prepare a proper grievance for the discipline that is to follow and if need be with Federal and State agencies if the grievance process fails.

It’s a matter of time; how many of you can complete all your required tasks in the 10 minutes allotted to you by Metro and pull out of the yard on time?

I for one cannot, and I choose not to, volunteer my time to Metro as I do to the Union. Metro is my employer and both State and Federal Law requires the employer to pay me for all required / assigned work, and 10 minutes doesn’t cut it.

But Wait There’s More:

According to our new overtime sheets you cannot start work early unless you have an EARLY DEPARTURE which has to be authorized by the Coordinator or the Dispatcher (window person), that’s it. No other “starting early” time can be put in for.

So your only choice is to volunteer your time and start early or at your assigned time and be disciplined because you log in or pullout late. Discipline based on faulty policies or management is faulty discipline.

We now have coaches that require us to wait in order to start, radios that have to power up, then upload, download, left load, right load, side-ways load and send messages to ET to call home. In addition we have the changes just recently made at south base where the reroute, ATL / Extra and vacation boards have been moved for the posting conveyance of one person at the inconvenience of all others requiring the operators to spend more time getting the information they need. I am not going to get into all the details since they have already been presented to Metro during negotiations for many contracts now and they have chosen not to address this issue.

I grew up around radios, my step father was an armature radio opera-
tor and regional director for MARS (Military Armature Radio Service) for many years and one of the few who could provide radio contact with Alaska during the devastating quake of 1964. As the oldest child in my family I got the privilege of helping install 75’ towers and repeater stations atop Cougar Mountain, in eastern Washington and Oregon. I have used radios for 20 years prior to Metro as station commander and medical officer for the fire depart-
ment and ambulance service. We were the first ambulance service in the Pacific Northwest to install and use the HEAR network (Hospital Emergency and Administrative Radio).

To have a system controlled on the end where the calls for help are to be received instead of where the emergencies take place is absolutely ridiculous, if not downright life threatening, along with the limit of only four channels for the amount of traffic handled during peak time.
The system is flawed and instead of filtering out the drivers, it is the radios and the system they are connected to that needs to be filtered out.

This article is not intended to degrade or minimize the work our fellow 587 brothers and sisters do for our radio system for I know like the operators they can only work with the system they have been given, without their dedication I can only imagine what it would be like.

Now to the pictures:

#1 The coordinator is calling tell-
ing me to log in.

Where are the buttons on the display so you can long on?

#2 RCU failure won’t let you long in.

Over a 5 day work period I had “Pls use Voice” come up 11 differ-
ent times.

On another day I had the radio just drop out twice requiring me to log back on once in the tunnel the other while traveling down 1-5. These are a few that I have but you should get the picture.

TEN LITTLE WORKERS

Ten workers feeling fit and fine,
One smacked in a solvent room, then there were nine.

Nine little workers thought they would be late.
One cut through the railroad yards, then there were eight.

Eight little workers looking up to heaven.
One fell off the loading ramp, then there were seven.

Seven little workers putting in hard licks,
One mixed booze with gasoline, then there were six.

Six little workers, glad to be alive,
One forgot his goggles, then there were five.

Five little workers standing near the door,
One thought that a wire was dead, then there were four.

Four little workers, one cut his knee.
Didn’t go to get first aid, then there were three.

Three little workers with nothing much to do,
One indulged in horseplay, then there were two.

Two little workers took stairways on the run.
One missed her footing, then there was one.

One little worker thought of the other nine.
Began to practice safety, now he’s doing fine.

Author unknown

Arbitration Update

John Henry Jones: Grieved termination for alleged gross misconduct. Arbitration bi-
furcated due to Metro asser-
tion Union forfeited grievance timelines. Arbitrator ruled in favor of Metro. We wish Brother Jones all success in his future endeavors.

1. Nancy Lambert: Grieved King County Metro hiring a retired member for a tempo-
rary assignment in violation of contract language requiring Metro to give bargaining unit employees first consideration. Scheduled November 13 & 14, 2008.

2. Derek Harris: Grieved cross classification work in King County Metro Vehicle Mainte-
nance. Schedule Pending.

3. Fred Witham: Grieved cross classification work in King County Metro Vehicle Mainte-

4. Bill Wallace: Grieved Metro’s failure to observe the long-
standing practice of having a Local 587 member present when a vendor works on a Metro coach. Scheduled December 16 & 17, 2008.

5. Sandra Fangan-Ross: Grieved failure to assign work properly. Sched-
ule pending.

Metro Transit Safety
This speech was given by State Rep. Moeller, 49th District, at the recent Washington State Labor Council Convention. I thought it was very insightful about what has been happening to working people in America. Rep. Moeller was happy to trade a copy of his remarks for a copy of our News Review. Please note that I reformatted the speech for the News Review—Linda Anderson, Executive Board.

Recently, I think maybe as part of the bridge project, apparently somebody went up in a hot air balloon to take a look around. And I guess they got a little lost because the man in the balloon called down to someone below and said, “Excuse me— I am a little lost.” And a man on the ground replied, “Excuse me— you must be in management... you don’t know where you are; you don’t know how you got there, you don’t know where you are going.... and you expect someone down below to help you.” Nothing... nothing... could better describe where we are at this moment as a nation and as a people then the sense that the boys on top are flying blind, out of control, lost... and now, thank God, they are out of time. Now, at this point everyone here has heard about the so-called mortgage crisis. We have witnessed things we thought only to have been the memories of our parents and grandparents: bank runs, foreclosures, sinking home values—the worst slump in residential housing in seven years! And you may have heard that the crisis is being laid at the feet of binge borrowing, spendthrift consumers, or maybe greedy bankers.

Today I am here to tell you two things: first, there is no mortgage crisis. Second, there is nothing wrong in this country that the people right here in this room representing the labor movement cannot fix! No mortgage crisis? No. Folks, this is not a mortgage crisis. This is a pay crisis. America has a pay crisis. In the simplest terms, American workers— and that is everyone who lives off of a paycheck whether they sit at desk, drive a truck, or serve tables... the American worker is not being paid enough. One of the most simple ideas is that for our economy to be growing and stable, workers have to be paid enough to buy what they are producing. Yes, there needs to be some income put away in order to make improvements and to provide for the future. There needs to be a reasonable return to investors in order to attract future investment. But when the slice of the economic pie going to the people who actually produce the products (stops growing), the economy is put in peril. The pie itself stops growing— which is exactly where we are at this time.

Now in 1990s, the average income in this state grew by almost $10,000 over the course of eight years— a little over a thousand dollar increase each year— and that’s after inflation. Nationally we did almost as good, with pay going up an average of $9,000. Not only that, but job creation was vigorous during the decade. With many new jobs at good pay workers had options and power. Companies knew that they had to keep their pay line or lose their best employees. This is the Democratic approach: More is More! More pay for workers means a bigger economy for everyone— labor and business both prosper. At the very time that working people were enjoying pay increases, investors prospered too, with the largest boom on Wall Street ever. In simple terms— paying people right works! However— in the past seven years we had a new policy. This we can call the Less is More theory. Well— as Dr. Phil might ask— how’s that working for you? What does everyone think? Is less More? Or is Less ... Less!!! ???

If you don’t feel that prosperous lately, I am here to tell you— it’s not an imagination— in the past seven years the average income went up— wait for it— less then one tenth of one percent! In 8 years a year and— those are the White House’s own numbers, if you are in the mind to take them seriously. And yes— that was before the arrival of $4 a gallon gas, high insurance, and hyper-inflation in health care.

By the time we close the financial books on 2008, it is likely that average pay fell below what it was in the fall of 2000. So what happened? First— almost all the economic growth, such as it was, went to less than one tenth of the country. And what of everyone else? Instead of paying US workers the improved productivity and output, over the course of the decade, we simply lent working families the difference. In simple terms you were offered credit instead of pay. How did that happen? First— it begins with an employer. When you set things up to deliberately depress wages— Guess what? YOU END UP DEPRESSING WAGES!!! When you run the entire federal government, the entire federal budget and all of the vast agencies that are supposed to protect the American worker in a deliberate manner so as to depress wages, bust unions and ignore every federal rule in that book— well, you end up with a decade of flat or even declining wages. It happened before and it is happening right now.

Now— what then happens? You have markets churning out more products and services because you have constant improvements in worker productivity, worker methods, and so on. How are you going to sell all that stuff to people who believe in savings? And you freeze? The solution? Lend them the money! What... No one really qualifies to buy a house, or buy a bigger house? Fine— lend the money anyways. And better yet— lend them someone else’s money. If the Chinese are willing to finance their own customers— well then, the policy went, let them!!

Franklin Roosevelt’s convention theme song was “I’ve been Working on the Railroad.” His policy was— get out there and build something. And what was his administration’s slogan? SHUT UP AND SHOP.

Folks, if it were not true, if you had not seen it with your own eyes, could you believe anyone— regardless of political opinion— could come up with such stupidity? And the not so funny part is this: you have to go back to 1919 for a year when labor’s slice of pie was this puny. Yes— you have to be a hundred years old in order to have had a job at a time when the share of national income going back to labor was this low.

So how surprising is it that if you distribute the income of the nation as though it were 1928, you end up getting 1929!! So now comes the crazy. The reason that Wall Street got drunk, and we are left to ask, “Who was the bartender?”

How? Now that we have seen that we are left with our man in the hot-air balloon, asking nervously what to do, and hoping that the folks down below will be Qualified anyways. And better yet— lend them someone else’s money. If the Chinese are willing to finance their own customers— well then, the policy went, let them!!

Less Is Not More

by Washington State Representative Jim Moeller

Upcoming at Local 587

KC Metro Vehicle Maintenance Pick - Sept. 2, 3, & 4
Effective September 20
KC Metro Facilities Maintenance Pick - September 4
Effective September 20

SEPTEMBER 04 Charter meeting
SEPTEMBER 05 Morning meeting
SEPTEMBER 08 Jefferson Transit Authority meeting
SEPTEMBER 09 Clallam County meeting
SEPTEMBER 23 Executive Board meeting
SEPTEMBER 20 First day of Fall shake-up for KC Metro Full-Time Operators
SEPTEMBER 22 First day of Fall shake-up for KC Metro Part-Time Operators
SEPTEMBER 22 KC Metro First-Line Supervisor Pick
Resources Available to Working Families
A Report from the Washington State Labor Council Convention

Linda Anderson, Executive Board

One of the best things about lending delegates the Washing-hton State Labor Convention is they can bring back all kinds of useful information. Here are summaries of some of the resources that are available to working people, followed by contact information. I thought you might appreciate knowing how some of the ways your union dues, COPE contributions and tax dollars are working for you.

Kids’ Chance of Washington

Here’s a terrific program for children and spouses of Washington workers who have suffered a fatal or seriously disabling injury. Kids’ Chance is a need-based program that helps with tuition, books, fees, room and general living expenses. Scholarship recipients can attend any accredited university, community, technical, or vocational college. The grants range from $500 to $5,000, based on greatest need.

How to hire a Contractor or Remodeler

Whatever you may think of Labor and Industries (L&I) you have to give them credit for this. The simple 4-page guide tells you where to look for contractors, how to check them out, what kind of a contract to draw up with them, and what to watch out for. It explains about permits and where to get them, how to avoid lien problems, and where to go for other consumer resources.

Help with Payday Lending Problems

If you have taken out a payday loan that hurt more than it helped, the Alliance to Prevent Predatory Lending wants to hear all about it. Did you know a typical payday loan has an interest rate of 400%? Did you know that 600,000 Washingtonians are paying on home loans where the mortgage market itself has no one to call if borrowers have trouble making payments. Some homeowners are making payments of 50 to 60% of their income, so that a job loss or medical emergency strike, they can’t possibly keep up. The good news is that the last State Legislature passed new regulation, SB 6271, funding outreach to consumers and making mortgage fraud a felony.

Governor Christine Gregoire has been very active on this front as well. She set up the Homeowner Task Force, made up of credit unions, builders, mortgage lenders, and consumer advocates to stabilize the mortgage mortgage market.

Gregoire and the Legislature have provided $1.5 million for counseling and outreach to help families with foreclosures. So far this program has helped 1,000 Washington families. There are all kinds of consumer education and information now available through the state DFI. This has helped put Washington in the top 5 of states with lowest foreclosure rates.

Emergency Preparedness

I could have a list, but I figured it would take a bunch of space and wasn’t sure what all to put in it, not to mention where to put it. If my house is destroyed, how would I get to it anyway? All these questions and more were answered in a workshop I attended on emergency preparedness.

It turns out you can have a very simple kit consisting of a couple candy bars, a couple liter bottles of water, and the phone number of a family or friend that lives outside the area that all your family has agreed on to contact. Keep these three items in your car, because you will probably be where it is. Then, for your house add a couple of things like a battery operated radio and a few cans of protein drink, maybe

your prescriptions, some pamphlets and formula, pet food, maybe a blanket… but don’t get too carried away with the year’s supply of canned food. Put the stuff near a window you can break into. Keep the kit small enough to fit into a bag that can be carried onto a bus, in case they evacuate you to a shelter—and have a carrier for your pet, cause the shelters won’t take loose pets.

Healthy Washington Coalition

Tired of King County crying about healthcare costs? Tired of waiting for a national health plan? Dreaming of how much better we could do in negotiations if health benefit costs were either minimal or off the table? Did you know that 600,000 Washingtonians are uninsured, and that medical debt is the biggest cause of bankruptcy in the nation? Here’s a chance to do something about it. Healthy Washington Coalition is trying to get quality affordable healthcare on the state level.

They have already gotten the Legislature to study five different serious plans: 1) the “private insurance deregulation” plan, 2) the “Massachusetts” plan, 3) the “Washington health partnership” plan, 4) the “single payer” plan, and 5) the “guaranteed health benefits” plan. For bullet points and/or details of each plan, check out the website or pick up one of their brochures.

Something simple you can do to support this effort is to sign the Healthy Washington petition “Qual-ity, Affordable Health Care Now”. Look for a petition at the union meeting or download one and get a couple friends to sign it and send it in. HWC is a coalition of the WA. State Medical Association, religious organizations, business CEOs, community organizations, and a slew of labor unions, including the Washington State Labor Council, Pierce County and Snohomish County Labor Councils and ATU.

How to find out more:

Kids’ Chance of Washington

(800) 572-5762
www.kidschancewa.com
legsec@wscff.org

How to Hire a Contractor

(800) 647-0982
www.Contractors.LNI.wa.gov

Alliance to Prevent Predatory Lending

1-888-769-7726
www.noloansharks.org
danielle@noloansharks.org

Help with Mortgage Problems

1-877-RINCDF
(1-887-746-4334)
www.dfi.wa.gov

Emergency Preparedness

www.metrokc.gov/prepare
www.emd.wa.gov
www.fema.gov
www.redcross.org

Healthy Washington Coalition

www.healthywashingtoncoalition.org

314 First Avenue West
Seattle, WA 98119

SEATTLE CHAPTER OF THE LATINO CAUCUS

will meet
Thursday September 4, 2008, 7:30 pm
The Labor Temple – Hall #8
2800 1st Ave, Seattle, WA.

Agenda Items: Recommendation to Executive Board to fund a pre-meeting feed for the 2009 May Charter meeting. (Siete de Mayo)

All members welcome

September 2008
Suggestions to Reduce the Deficit

As the County announces it financial problems and asks its employee’s for help. It occurs to me that there are some obvious solutions staring us all in the face. But first, I must realize that not all solutions are free, and there is no quick fix to a 70 Million dollar deficit. And second, most of the bus drivers have no much idea where the money comes from or goes to, so we just drive the bus.

My first suggestion is that we ‘Go Green’, we should have Solar and Wind Generators on the tops of our buildings. This would not only make a wind turbine that is a Helical design. It is quiet and will work in light winds no matter the direction they blow. We have solar collectors on the top of some of the bus shelters, to power lights inside so we can do this and we have some really great electricians and carpenters to help build these items. Cost to the County: mostly parts and time. Savings to the County: lower electric-bills for the bases and other buildings, and if enough power is generated we may be able to ‘sell’ it back to the power company. Plus any Grants or other monies for ‘Going Green’ and the prestige of saying ‘King County Metro cares about the environment’ or ‘insert Earth friendly logo here’.

My second ‘Green’ suggestion is to make our own Bio-diesel, for use in our buses and other vehicles. Our organization is so vast that there must be some way we can do this, even if it is only on a small scale for now it’s a start, if we can manage to get it going, we could even sell this to others.

My next suggestion is to ‘actually collect’ the fare. Many of our drivers give out transfers that are way too long or just let people ride without paying, because they don’t want any problems and you really can’t blame them. We have absolutely no back up when we say “the fare is...”. Nothing happens to a majority of people that don’t pay, and yes we can fill out SIR’s but if they are a one time rider that doesn’t help. Perhaps a flat fare of $5 for an all day pass would help? $5 all day, everyday. No ride free, no peak and off peak, no fare zones and pay as you enter all the time. And we have the Police randomly board the bus at the last instant, I can keep my eyes on the mirror for the rear door and rely on peripheral vision for the front door, slam the handle all the way forward or backward in an instant, and know that both doors will be in the opened position. With switches, I can’t just hit them again and know that they will be in the opened position.

And with switches, I much more likely to inadvertently bump the rear door switch while intending to turn off the 4-ways. This sometimes results in the bus slamming to a halt when the rear doors open unintentionally.

I hope that Metro will at least conduct a survey of operators, asking if they prefer the door switches or the traditional door handle before they order any new buses. Count me firmly in the handle column.

John Sheridan
Central

One good thing about difficult, punishing jobs is that it makes your beer taste just that much better. Lance Norton must have the taste of brew in town. He has fought the good fight for our Union and has been a true labor warrior. Just consider our healthcare premiums—wait, I forgot we don’t pay any.

And, oh, if you plan on getting fired any time soon, do it now. It might be harder to get that job back when the boss steps down. Who can fill his shoes when Lance F. Norton steps down as President and Business Representative of ATU 587?

Right now I wouldn’t blame Lance if he doesn’t give a rat’s ass who takes over this cummy union. Town on First Avenue he is being called a liar, a sell-out and a short-timer. The Union Hall has become a mock courthouse and the union business has turned into a witch hunt. Regulations and By-laws are introduced to deliberately wreck business relationships, interrupt written correspondence, and hamstring the president and union officers with unnecessary meetings and supports. These distortions are no comedy they are farce, not funny but hurtful and perhaps lasting.

Lance, you help them up because it makes you feel good inside. You don’t help them up just to have every one in the back put up the “Out To Lunch” sign and leave it. Empty the safe and get out of town. Screw ’em. Lance, go find a place that needs a warrior. What we need around here is more resolutions and By-laws.

Sincerely, Carmen Harding

My personal experience with the “button” door controls on the 2600’s has been entirely negative. With a traditional handle the driver can “feel” the position of the doors, but with the buttons you can’t be sure whether it is in the opened or closed position without looking to check the lighted switch. The situation can become confused, and when you punch the button (hopefully) reopen a door, you may be closing it on someone. The driver can’t keep their eye on the door and the switches at the same time. With a handle, if I see someone trying to board at the last instant, I can keep my eyes on the mirror for the rear door and rely on peripheral vision for the front door, slam the handle all the way forward or backward in an instant, and know that both doors will be in the opened position. With switches, I can’t just hit them again and know that they will be in the opened position.

Save the Deficit

My second suggestion is that we ‘Go Green’ and we should have Solar and Wind Generators on the tops of our buildings. This would not only make a wind turbine that is a Helical design. It is quiet and will work in light winds no matter the direction they blow. We have solar collectors on the top of some of the bus shelters, to power lights inside so we can do this and we have some really great electricians and carpenters to help build these items. Cost to the County: mostly parts and time. Savings to the County: lower electric-bills for the bases and other buildings, and if enough power is generated we may be able to ‘sell’ it back to the power company. Plus any Grants or other monies for ‘Going Green’ and the prestige of saying ‘King County Metro cares about the environment’ or ‘insert Earth friendly logo here’.

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And my last suggestion, only print one copy of “The Book” per year. We are always getting revisions, it would be more practical to have “The Book” be some kind of binder that is issued to each employee, and with revisions ‘we can pop out the old page and replace it with the new, and again this is more earth friendly, plus it saves all the extra printing costs for 3000+ books every four months.

I am sure that the County has reasons as to why none of these things are possible, but they asked the Drivers for suggestions and these are mine however naive they may be.

Sincerely, Angela Wick #10169
Central Part-Time Operator

BBQ Thanks

Many thanks for allowing Carmen and I the opportunity to attend the annual picnic. We really enjoyed it. I was able to see several folks I’ve not seen since retiring. Once again, many thanks.

Bill Harding

Dear Sirs:

Just a little note of thanks for the magnificent picnic that you guys displayed last Sunday. The people that helped to make or contributed to make this happen are magnificent! Certainly they have in mind children, old people etc. The lady that called Bingo was admired from all of us that participated in the game for the sense of fun and patience that she gave us all (don’t know her name). The food was wonderful and plenty.

Hoping and thinking that next year will be the same with the grace of god.

Sincerely,

Carmen Harding

MLKCLC Thanks

Dear Lance:

Thank you for your generous contribution to the M.L. King County Labor Council Labor Day Celebration. All contributions made to us are split evenly between the Labor Council and the Puget Sound Labor Agency to help defray costs and provide prizes for the raffle.

We could not put on this event without your assistance. We hope that you and your members will be able to join us.

Thanks again for your support.

In Solidarity,

David Freiboth
Executive Secretary MLKCLC

Attempts to Deliberately Wreck Business Relationships

One good thing about difficult, punishing jobs is that it makes your beer taste just that much better. Lance Norton must have the taste of brew in town. He has fought the good fight for our Union and has been a true labor warrior. Just consider our healthcare premiums—wait, I forgot we don’t pay any.

And, oh, if you plan on getting fired any time soon, do it now. It might be harder to get that job back when the boss steps down. Who can fill his shoes when Lance F. Norton steps down as President and Business Representative of ATU 587?

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Sincerely,

John F. Wagner #20064
Atlantic Base Operator

Button Door Controls

My personal experience with the “button” door controls on the 2600’s has been entirely negative. With a traditional handle the driver can “feel” the position of the doors, but with the buttons you can’t be sure whether it is in the opened or closed position without looking to check the lighted switch. The situation can become confused, and when you punch the button (hopefully) reopen a door, you may be closing it on someone. The driver can’t keep their eye on the door and the switches at the same time. With a handle, if I see someone trying to board at the last instant, I can keep my eyes on the mirror for the rear door and rely on peripheral vision for the front door, slam the handle all the way forward or backward in an instant, and know that both doors will be in the opened position. With switches, I can’t just hit them again and know that they will be in the opened position.
Double Nickel

By John Sheirbon, Central

The route 5 may be unique in this, but I can't say for sure. It serves two distinctly different destinations, but with the same number signed on the display; there is a “5 Northgate” and a “5 Shoreline.” Anyone who has driven, or drives these routes knows that there is rather frequent (ever more so with all of the new riders we’re getting,) confusion with intending and onboard passengers about the difference. Many times I’ve reached the terminal at Shoreline Community College, shut down the engine, and had someone come forward to ask if I didn’t go to Northgate. In one instance, a woman got a little panicky and said that she had been on her way to a job interview at Northgate and would now be late. She frantically called the business on her cell phone and told them that she was on the wrong #. I only hope that they showed her mercy and didn’t let this incident affect her job prospects with the company.

I first submitted a service report about this many years ago and asked if we couldn’t fix it. I was told that there weren’t enough route numbers available to add another one to distinguish the destinations, and was told that the general consensus in the office was that it would be more confusing to people to have different numbers for the different destinations. I failed to see the logic, but just dropped the issue.

Several years later I started driving the 5 again, and in the first week, after shutting down the engine at Shoreline College, was approached by someone asking if I didn’t go to Northgate.

So I then wrote another report about this situation, only this time with a solution that would require a minor change at minimal expense to the county, no new numbers, and came with a great benefit—it would solve the problem. To wit: create a route 355 “local” (currently express only,) to replace and follow exactly the current “5 Shoreline” scheduling and routing. Henceforth, the 5 would be exclusively a Northgate (city) route, and the 355 a county route to Shoreline, consistent with current signage policy.

As yet, I haven’t received any response to that report, which was submitted several months ago, and am admittedly frustrated by the apparent inaction on something that would accomplish so much for so little. Double Nickel takes pride in their customer-friendly attitude, but they seem to come up short here. If anyone of any influence is reading this, I would appreciate it if you would talk to the people in Service Planning and discuss the issue. Ask any route 5 driver if this is something that should be fixed. I think I know what their answer will be.

Letters to the Editor, continued

Thanks for ATU Contributions

Dear Mr. Norton:

Thank you! We received your wonderful gift of $1,000.00. Because of gifts like yours, we are able to help other members. I can, and do, appreciate your attempt at humor, but it apparently hit a nerve in enough people of all races to be worthy of discussion at the e-board meeting.

Your claims against the e-board are apparently based on incomplete information. So John, (Bic?), I am looking forward to my apology.

J. Rick Sepolen
Executive Board Member

Some Access Drivers Less Than Happy - 29 Aye, 28 Nay

Dear Editor,

Readers may recall the August ’08 News Review front page President’s Report wherein an unnamed SPT (Access) Shop Steward who was on the Contract Negotiating Committee was reported to have voted against the proposed contract because “I just hate the bastards.” Please advise readers that the Shop Steward in question was me. The conversation did take place in front of several witnesses, but the language I used was somewhat stronger.

Thank you,
John Ross, SPT Shop Steward

KEEP YOUR ADDRESS CURRENT!!

(A request from our Local 8 and 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.

ATU 587 Day at Safeco Field Sunday September 7, 2008

On September 7, 2008, ATU Local 587 has reserved 75 tickets to the Mariners vs. Those Damn Yankees.

The cost of the tickets is $23.00 each per member. The seats are located in Section 342.

To order tickets please fill out the form below and attach a check payable to “ATU Local 587”. Send the form and check to:

ATU 587
C/O Financial Secretary Paul Neil
2815 - 2nd Avenue Suite 230
Seattle, WA 98121

Your Tickets will be mailed to you upon payment.

PLEASE PRINT

Name: ____________________________
Address: __________________________
City: __________________________ State: ________ Zip: ________________

Number of Tickets: ________________

KEEP YOUR ADDRESS CURRENT!!

You have ten days to notify Washington State Department of Licensing of change of address. It’s recommended you maintain a copy of such notification.

MOVING???

Letters to the Editor, continued

Thank you, for your generous donation.

Thank you very much for your generous donation! We do our best for union members.

Sincerely,
Marc Lampson Director
Unemployment Law Project

Apologies

To John and Bic,

Having known each other for all of these years I know I will receive my apology when next we meet.

Let me set the record straight. The e-board officers who called my apology when next we meet.

Executive Board Member

J. Rick Sepolen

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MOVING???
In Protest of 140 Local 587 Members Losing Their Jobs!!

Union members demonstrate their unhappiness with King County Metro’s “Union Busting Decision” to subcontract union work to a nonunion subcontractor.

587 members Everett Stewart and Tammy Gorbatenko

Access rider Irene Hull turns up in an Access van to show her support.

An interesting question from an Access driver to Kevin Desmond.

Dillard Craven Sr.

Everett Stewart

Executive Board Officer Linda Anderson and Financial Secretary Paul Neil.
The crowd included 587 Officers and activists, Carpenters Union members, and many others...

John Farrell, Glen Travis, Nathaniel Chappelle and Michael Egan

Linda Averill

Vice President Kenny McCormick (left rear) and Michael Egan (center)

Glen Travis and David Raud

Lori Mcinnis

Recording Secretary Paul Bachtel

Driver? Do you know how long till Metro gets this fixed?

Don’t ask me! I just got this job through a temp agency. I don’t work for Metro!

metro Access

Lori Mcinnis
Transit operate Access Service with their employees.

In an article in the Seattle Times July 30, 2008 Metro’s General Manager Kevin Desmond estimated there would be a $1 million annual savings by going with just two providers; referencing eliminated MV Transportation as a provider and having Seattle Personal Transit (SPT) and Veolia doing the Access work.

Then in an article in the Seattle PI on August 13, 2008 Mr. Desmond is quoted as saying MV no longer had “a competitive product,” partly because of its labor costs and profit margins, and the new contracts will save Metro about $2 million annually. I almost can’t wait for his next quote. If cost savings and efficiency are really what the priorities are than it’s time to begin the process to bring this important work “IN HOUSE”!

Regards to All…
Be Safe…
Lance F. Norton-President

When I began working for Metro in 1981 we had what was known as peak hour service. We have evolved to all day service still using peak hour schedules. Ridership is up mostly due to the current state of our economy. It is cheaper to use public transportation than to operate our personal cars in many cases.

The increased cost of fuel is one of the reasons being used by Metro to suggest making cuts in the service. The problem is we need more buses on the road now, instead of fewer. A greater demand for our service is being generated by families who can not afford to pay the increased price of fuel. This happened once before during my career and George H. W. Bush was President, another oil man in the white house. During this time the oil companies also experienced record profits and the country had a high unemployment rate. I remember working families wondering how to make ends meet. Now, Metro is faced with the problem of how to pay for the increased cost of fuel. Metro has a budget shortfall and is looking to cut cost. Where will the cuts come from?

One area Metro managers are looking at is decreasing service by putting fewer buses on the road. At a time when the public needs our service most, cutting service now would be devastating.

When initiative 695 passed, ridership began to drop. Ridership is down 8% by June 2008. We had already planned for 4% ridership reduction. Riders are complaining because service is not getting better in fact in some cases it is getting worse. We have more standing loads, more riders missing their connections due to increased recovery time at terminals or fewer buses on a particular line. Now with the increase in ridership we have a serious problem compounded and no signs of relief. The Operators are being blamed for being late and whose fault is it? It definitely isn’t the drivers fault. It may be time to look at the budget and where the money is going. The taxpayers have agreed to a tax increase to fund a better transit. As taxpayers and as employees we can see the public is not getting what they agreed to pay for! WHERE IS THE MONEY? It is just a matter of time before the finger is pointed at us as being the reason service cuts maybe necessary.

I have an idea to help with the budget crisis, start collecting the fares instead of just raising them! Every little bit will help.
The Joint Labor Management In-
urance Committee (JLMIC) is a
60 labor unions representing em-
ployees of King County (KC), non
represented employees and retirees.
The purpose of JLMIC is to com-
monly represent the interests of the
above employee groups. Unlike
many other committees that are char-
tered through local area labor councils or
international unions, JLMIC has no
charter, no bylaws, no method of collect-
ing per capita taxes from its
member unions, and thus, no ability
to finance negotiations. Each mem-
ber local must individually decide
to accept or reject JLMIC proposals
pursuant to their respective labor
agreements.
The labor agreement between Lo-
cal 587 and KC Metro states in part,"METHO agrees to maintain the level of
beneﬁts prescribed to retirees from age 55 to age 65 by paying the aggregate
premium. The aggregate premium
is the weighted average cost of bene-
ﬁts provided to current employees,
including retirees, and to non-represented
employees at the end of the fiscal year
through COBRA. KC is contending
it spends twice as much on beneﬁts
prescribed to retirees than the retirees
pay in premium. KC is contending
those retirees who chose to continue
KC’s beneﬁts up to age 65 are mak-
ing that decision selectively, based
on health at time of retirement. In
other words, if you retire at age 55 in
good health you might choose to
purchase beneﬁts at a lower cost
through an outside provider rather
than continue on KC’s beneﬁts plan.
On the other hand, if you retire at
age 55 in poor health you might
choose to stay on KC’s plan, thereby
causing KC to provide beneﬁts to a
higher proportion of retired employees
in poor health. If it truly costs KC
twice what a retiree pays for medical
beneﬁts to provide beneﬁts services
and retiree beneﬁts are chosen to stay on
KC’s beneﬁts plans selectively based
on their health, I’m happy to know
we’re working for a living!

Benefits Negotiation Update
By Paul J. Bachtel
I am embarrassed that in just a few months, we will be asking for a fare increase. It’s not because times are tight for so many people, and we’re trying to squeeze more money out of them. Yeah, that’s no great feeling, and listening to passengers griping every day is no fun, but that’s not the problem.

Let me tell you a story. I pulled into the Northgate Transit Center today driving a route 75, heading towards Ballard. One person gets on with 50 cents in his hand and shows me a Reduced Fare Permit (RFP). It’s a temporary RFP, and the temporary status expiration sticker was dated September, 2005. He presented it to me like he did this all the time. When I pointed out his RFP temporary status had expired and it no longer entitled him to pay a reduced fare, I think I really jarring his view of reality. The ensuing story that unfolded somehow involved his property being acquisitioned by Metro, his past history as a Part-Time driver at Ryerson, the military status somehow displayed by his permit, that I could call my supervisor to verify his story, and all of this justified why he had the permit he did. It became quite clear to me that he had been riding around for three years paying a reduced fare with this expired permit, and his head was on the verge of exploding now that someone was suggesting he need to pay full fare.

This is just one story. Fare evasion is rampant throughout the system. Abuse of RFP’s is just one means to fare evasion. (For thirty-five more please see my article from March 2007.) A significant percentage of Metro passengers expect, let me repeat, expect, to be able to ride for less than the full fare, if not for free, because Metro has a crazy confusing system that leaves people feeling it’s easier to just not pay full fare, and because Metro does nothing to enforce fare payment.

And a month from now, we’re going to ask the public to pay a fare increase, because we don’t have enough money. How embarrassing.

I’ll avoid my usual in-depth analysis of the situation. Despite our managers’ pleas for suggestions of how to address the budget shortfall, they have been happy to ignore countless articles in The News Review over the years which describe the problems with, and offer solutions for, our fare system. Instead, I’ll present a brief recap. Sing along if you know the words.

- Make transfers valid for only one additional ride, to be deposited into the fare box. (If you don’t like this, allow them to pay $1 to keep their transfer to allow another ride.) The “expiration” time confuses people, causing them to blow it off.
- Drop the two-zone system. It confuses people, causing them to blow it off.
- Drop peak/off-peak. It confuses people, causing them to blow it off. (Do you notice a theme here?)
- Eliminate the Ride Free Area. Giving something to someone for free means you’re not getting money for it.
- Overhaul the Reduced Fare Permit system. Giving something to someone for free means you’re not getting money for it. (Probably at least a quarter of the people displaying RFP’s are short changing Metro in one way or another.)
- Enforce fare payment. Giving something to someone for free means you’re not getting money for it.

For more details, grab a stack of past editions of The News Review, or search Google for “Local 587” and “fare evasion” (and make sure you click the resulting “More results from www.atu587.com” link). Because we drivers have been telling management this for years, and that’s pretty embarrassing, too.