In an effort to: simply the process of issuing customer complaints; shorten the time required for processing; address incomplete or erroneous complaints; and improve Metro’s ability to hold problem Operators accountable, Metro has implemented a new policy to address customer complaints.

The new Metro Comment System contains a number of improvements and a few pitfalls Operators should be aware of.

For the majority of Operators, who receive less than one complaint per year, the Base Operations Chief will simply send the text of the complaint to the Operator through in-house mail. The Operator will not be required to see his/her Chief and may either respond in writing, respond in person, or choose to ignore the complaint. If an Operator chooses to respond, the response must be received within five calendar days after being notified of the complaint. If the Operator does not respond within five calendar days, the complaint will be deemed valid and placed “on the Operator’s record.”

For the significant minority of Operators, who receive more than one complaint per year, the Base Operations Chief will send the Operator a “see me” slip, meet with the Operator to discuss the complaint, and decide which of the following categories/functional groupings in which to assign the complaint. Complaints/commendations are placed into one of seven categories and assigned to one of four functional groupings.

Categories include:
1. Comment Sent to Operator
2. Investigation Conducted/ Complaint Confirmed/ Discipline Issued
3. Commendation
4. Unsupported
5. Counseling/Clarifying Discussion
6. Bad Information
7. Change to Service Request

Functional groupings include:
1. Customer Relations
2. Safety/Driving Skills
3. Commendations
4. Other

The Good News:
Category 1 - Comment sent to Operator: For the majority of Operators a single complaint in a functional group in the past rolling year will not result in the potential for discipline and will not be considered “on the Operator’s record.”

Category 3 - Commendations: Metro will maintain a record of commendations.

Category 4 - Unsupported: a complaint will not be considered valid “where the operator was simply enforcing a Metro policy with which the customer disagreed or if a witness report contradicted the complainant’s story.” Category 4 complaints will not be considered “on the Operator’s record.”

Category 6 - Bad Information: For years, the Union has argued incomplete or erroneous complaints should not be placed in an Operator’s record. Category 6 complaints will not be considered “on the Operator’s record.”

Category 7 - Change to Service Request: If the information in the comment was really a Service Request continued on page 12
At the August 2009 cycle of membership meetings the follow- ing business was addressed: The membership voted to support a motion by Linda Averill to support a resolution from WFSE Local 304, to protest state budget cuts and escalating job losses, etc. A motion by Randy Stevenson, to accept the original recommendation of the COPE committee failed. The bylaw amendment passed overwhel- mingly! Going to arbitration on the case of Scott Sloan did not pass.

The following members were June pot draw winners: Stephanie Ponder won at the Charter meeting, at the Morning meeting it was Chuck Lare, Perry Underdahl at the JTA meeting, Kyle Farrish at the CTS Meeting, CTS rolling pot draw of $175.00 was lost by Curt Register. Next month’s rolling pot will be $200.00.

**Tentative Agenda**

**Membership Meetings:**

**CHARTER MEETING**
Thursday, September 3, 2009
8:00 p.m.
The Labor Temple, Hall #8
2800 1st Ave., Seattle, WA

**JEFFERSON TRANSIT**
Monday, September 14, 2009
7:00 p.m.
Port Townsend Rec Center
Port Townsend, WA

**MORNING MEETING**
Friday, September 4, 2009
10:30 a.m.
The Labor Temple, Hall #6
2800 1st Ave., Seattle, WA

**CLALLAM TRANSIT**
Tuesday, September 15, 2009
7:00 p.m.
Vern Burton Memorial Building
Port Angeles, WA

Among Topics to be Discussed:
- Grievance and Arbitration Update, Unfair Labor Practice Issues, First Transit Organization, Delegate Nominations

Unfinished Business: None

**Upcoming at Local 587**

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**In Loving Memory…**

Ronald E Allen, a Mechanic at Metro, passed on 8/08/2009. He first hired on in August of 1994 and lived his motto; “Find something you love and do it.”

Matthew Matson of Auburn, an Operator who joined our ranks in 1991 and passed away in July.

Al Crampton, a Clallam Transit Operator who was in a severe traffic accident with his wife Terri and passed on in August.

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

OFFICERS OF THE AMALGAMATED TRANSIT UNION, LOCAL 587:

- **Paul J. Rachtel**, Free Business Agent - Email: president.587@atu587.com
- **J. Rick Sepolen**, 1st Vice President/Assistant Business Agent - Email: jris1130@polestar.net
- **Don MacAdam**, 2nd Vice President/Assistant Business Agent, Maintenance - Email: don.macadam@root.com
- **Paul B. Neil**, Recording Secretary/Editor - Email: paul.neil@atu587.com

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

**Letters to the editor**

Letters/contributions must include printed names, signatures, work ID numbers, address 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:

Brendan Sherlock, Editor
C/o ATU Local 587
2815 Second Avenue, Suite 230
Seattle, WA 98121
Sept 1 1884 -- Angus Macinvin (Canadian, d.1964) born. Founding member of the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation in Canada. Farmers, laborers and socialists formed the CCF in the ’30s in response to the Great Depression and found nearly immediate electoral success. They won the province of Saskatchewan in 1944 where they introduced North America’s first government-run health plan. Other provinces followed and this became Canada’s popular and successful national health plan. The CCF also inspired Grangers, cooperative groups and organized labor in Seattle to form Group Health Cooperative in 1945 to address the rising cost of health care. US Labor’s involvement in the cooperative movement was strongest during the general repression of unions following World War 1. With increasing success in negotiating benefits following World War 2, labor lost interest in the slow gains of the cooperatives.

1903 -- 30,000 working women from 26 trades march in Chicago Labor Day parade.

1921 -- The Battle of Blair Mountain; President Warren Harding sends in Federal troops to bust the strike; Coal company thugs drop bombs on the miners from planes on the 2nd of September. It takes the combined efforts of the US Army & the coal company thugs to quell the labor uprising.


1936 -- Macbeth Mine explodes, killing 10 workers at the Hutchinson Coal Company mine in Logan County, West Virginia. Six months later it exploded again, killing 18 more.

Sept 4 Full Moon, be careful out there.

1945 -- Hundreds of miners assemble on Lens Creek in West Virginia in response to rumors women & children are being killed in Logan County by the anti-union mine owners & deputy sheriffs who are on their payroll. “They trudged on over the hills & by the roads. Many of them carried guns; 5,000 miners had gathered by nightfall. There were no leaders...” This was a prelude of the near civil war in the coalfields. Deputy sheriffs on company payrolls ran organizers out of town & arrested & beat up union sympathizers.

1921 -- Federal troops march up Hewitt Creek in Logan County after gaining a ceasefire the Battle of Herrick Creek in Logan County affected the arrival of the 10th US Infantry.

Sept 5 Labor Day, Take it easy, but take it.

1862 -- First American Labor Day observed, 30,000 workers march in a parade sponsored by the New York City Central Labor Union.

1887 -- Labor Day is observed as a legal holiday in NY for the first time.

Sept 6 1869 -- 100-200 miners killed, suffocating in the Avondale Colliery Fire. Leads to first mine safety law in Pennsylvania.

1916 -- Federal employees win the right to receive Worker’s Compensation insurance.

Sept 11 -- You can’t keep a good labor movement down.

1897 -- 19 unarmed striking coal miners & mine workers killed & 36 wounded near Lattimer, Pennsylvania, for refusing to disperse, by a posse organized by the Luzerne County sheriff. The strikers, most of whom were shot in the back, were originally brought in as strike-breakers, but later organized themselves.

1941 -- Canada: Trade union leaders shot by German firing squads in reprisal for workers’ strike.

1942 -- Norway: Underground Norwegian trade union newspapers arrange thousands of letters to the government rejecting Nazification.

Sept 13 1880 -- England passes the first Employers’ Liability Act, granting compensation to workers injured on the job.


Sept 15 1919 -- Massachusetts Governor and soon-to-be US President Calvin Coolidge breaks Boston police labor strike.

Sept 17 1890 -- United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) miners union issues a strike call to its 9,000 members. Within one week, 125,000 hard-coal coal miners are off their jobs & 96% of coalmine production ceases.

1900 -- 100,000 Pennsylvania anthracite coal miners go on strike.

1938 Washington State CIO founded

1989 -- Ninety-eight miners & a miner occupy the Pittston Coal Company’s 3 preparation plant in Carbo, Virginia, beginning a year long strike against Pitions Coal. (A delegation of Pittston miner Road Warriors visited the ATU 587 picnic the next summer.) UMWA President Richard Trumka’s creative thinking and tactics—such as the Road Warriors and pressure on Wall Street investors—made him a rising star in the AFL-CIO, where he is now the Secretary Treasurer. Because the coal industry is so entrenched in government at all levels, the UMWA learned long ago that it had to fight its battles at every level of society and government, from the coal pits to the White House. In the 1990s Trumka supported the short-lived US Labor Party (also supported by ATU 587) in an effort to put labor friendly legislators and laws in place, as well as in the industrialized countries. The recent between the Washington State Labor Council and the Washington State Democrats illustrates the difficulty of holding the Democrats to account when it matters most.

Sept 19 1885--Chinese coal miners driven out of Black Diamond, WA.

1949 -- John L. Lewis calls a strike of 480,000 US soft-coal miners (~Nov. 30).

Sept 20 1911 -- Australia: The Federal Minister for Home Affairs, King O’Malley, issues a directive that “absolute preference” in employment be given to trade unionists.

King O’Malley, an American L.W.W (Industrial Workers of the World) member was Minister for Home Affairs in the Labor government in power 1910-1913. During 1910 to 1913, union membership increased a staggering 44%. To circumvent this directive, employers set up “scab” unions.

1913 -- US: “Mother” Jones leads a march of miners’ children through the streets of Charleston, West Virginia.

1945 -- US: 200,000 coal miners strike to support the supervisory employees’ demand for collective bargaining. This is part of a strike wave following the end of the war. This month the number of man-days lost to strikes doubles & doubles again in October. All a prelude to the strikes of 1945-1946.

Sept 25 1989 Critical Mass bike ride in downtown Seattle, last Friday of each, 5-6:30PM.

September 30 1892 -- The first prosecution of strike leaders for the crime of treason. Henry C. Frick, chairman of the Carnegie Steel Company, swore out a warrant before the chief justice of the Pennsylvania Supreme Court for the arrest of the entire advisory board of the striking steel union at the Carnegie plant in Homestead for treason against the state. The 29 names yesterday show that the police are plotting, “to incite insurrection, rebellion & war against the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.”
Electronic Device Use policy

Warning: Below is the new Electronic Device Use policy. Metro is going to throw the “E-Book” at anyone caught using a cell phone or any other device with an on/off switch. We will see terminations over this whether that is reasonable or not. The fact that we are continually asked to pick-up a more hazardous handset with a chord will not stop this knee-jerk overkill.

Brian Sherlock
Recording Secretary

King County Department of Transportation

Metro Transit

Use of Electronic Devices while driving

Metro Transit Division policy

Issued: August 19, 2009

Purpose:
Create a Division wide-policy for King County Metro Transit (KCM) regarding the use of electronic devices while driving a KCM or Sound Transit (ST) vehicle (car, bus, or rail).

To the extent that sections have separate policies, these will be amended to conform to this policy.

Background:
KCM regards safety as its number one priority.

Distracted driving is the leading factor in many crashes and near-crashes, according to a landmark research report released by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) and the Virginia Tech Transportation Institute (VTTI). Nearly 80% of crashes and 65% of near-crashes involved some form of driver inattention within three seconds before the event; and the primary causes of driver inattention are distracting activities, such as cell phone use, and drowsiness.

Reducing driver distractions and improving safety is a shared responsibility of both the driver and the transit agency.

Distracted driving is a public safety and liability issue for KCM.

The State of Washington has enacted RCW 46.61.667 limiting the use of wireless (and wired) communication to “hands-free” in an effort to reduce distracted driving, and RCW 46.61.668 which prohibits texting while operating a motor vehicle.

Definitions:

Revenue Vehicle: Any coach, or light rail vehicle at any time, whether it is in actual revenue service at the time or not.

Non-revenue Vehicle (NRV): Any car, van, or truck used by KCM employees for purposes other than transporting the public for a fare.

Use of personal vehicle while on County Business:

Personal Electronic Device: Any device, whether personal or agency-issued, used for agency business at the request or authorization of the agency.

Use of a personal vehicle while on County Business:

Any time an employee uses their personal vehicle during work to drive between work locations, or any time the use of the personal vehicle qualifies for reimbursement under the County mileage policy.

Personal Electronic Devices:

Any device, whether personal or agency-issued, used for agency business at the request or authorization of the agency.

Discipline:

Failure to remove and stow personal electronic devices as required by this policy shall be considered a Serious Infraction with a suspension or discharge.

Use of a personal electronic device in violation of this policy shall be a Major Infraction (Gross Misconduct) the first time it is proven, and will result in discharge unless METRO determines that there are circumstances which cause a suspension to be appropriate.

Approved: Kevin Desmond, General Manager

Error Correction:

Last month The News Review published the wrong resolution with Sister Arevell’s article. The resolution she submitted is printed below and was passed by the membership at the August union meetings. My apologies Linda.

– The Editor

THE RESOLUTION

Protest deep cuts in public services and escalating job losses, and demand a solution—tax the wealthy and corporate profits!

WHEREAS in a time of economic crisis when public services are needed more than ever, the 2009 session of the Washington State legislature covered a $9 billion revenue shortfall by passing an all-cuts budget that slashed such vital services as healthcare, education, parks, and assistance for the needy; and

WHEREAS the wealthy can afford to pay more taxes, since over the last quarter century wealth has been hardest hit by the budget and economic crisis.

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Any time an employee uses their personal vehicle during work to drive between work locations, or any time the use of the personal vehicle qualifies for reimbursement under the County mileage policy.

Driving Revenue Vehicles: Drivers shall not use personal electronic devices while operating a revenue vehicle. Personal electronic devices shall be turned off and put out of sight and out of the driver’s person prior to entering the driving compartment. Drivers shall remove personal electronic devices from their person prior to signing in to demonstrate their preparedness for work and their compliance with this policy. Use of personal electronic devices is restricted to times when the vehicle is parked such as at a route terminal.

Driving Non-Revenue Vehicles: Drivers may have limited use of agency authorized cell phone, or 2-way radio while operating a NRV. Conversations are to be kept to an absolute minimum. Any lengthy conversation will require the driver to bring the vehicle to a stop at a safe location. Use is still limited by state law (RCW 46.61.667 and 46.61.668), which state that no texting shall occur while operating a motor vehicle and that cell phone use is limited to a hands-free method.

Exceptions:

EMERGENCY: Irregular radio service is unavailable, Transit Operators may use their personal electronic device, such as their personal cell phone, or agency issued 2-way radio and/or battery operated radio (capable of receiving AM/FM broadcasts) when responding to major emergencies such as snow storms, earthquakes, or homeland security events. However, such use is only permitted when the vehicle is parked and/or stopped in a bus zone.

The specific use of a laptop (e.g. Service Quality Information System) shall be limited to when the NRV is parked.

Discipline:

Failure to remove and stow personal electronic devices as required by this policy shall be considered a Serious Infraction with a suspension for the first occurrence. A second occurrence will constitute cause for discharge.

Use of a personal electronic device in violation of this policy shall be a Major Infraction (Gross Misconduct) the first time it is proven, and will result in discharge unless METRO determines that there are circumstances which cause a suspension to be appropriate.

Approved: Kevin Desmond, General Manager

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– The Editor

THE RESOLUTION

1. Rollback of state budget cuts to healthcare, human services, education, natural resources, other public services, and state pensions, as well as increases in services to meet previously unmet needs

2. Distribution of funds to city and county governments to restore and expand services slashed as a result of state shortfalls

3. Programs to provide jobs to the unemployed by pursuing socially beneficial projects, such as construction of public housing; and

be it finally

RESOLVED that this resolution be forwarded to the Washington State Labor Council for adoption, and that WSLEC be called upon to coordinate, facilitate, and lead on a statewide level a week of action that includes rallies (like the Healthcare for All March on May 30, 2009), as well as smaller actions such as press conferences and forums, and that they be urged to actively seek the participation of community groups that are able to contribute to the state budget cuts resistance.

September 2009
The View From The Westlake Platform

Mark Dublin, Former Full-Time Coach Operator 2495

Friday, July 17. The bell rang twice. The northbound train stopped and blocked the platform system, whatever their position, whatever agency. But the uniform I wore between 1982 and 1995 meant a lot to me— and the transit system I worked for did still stand. So many in spades for union I belonged to and the people I served alongside. I’m talking about the system the transit system the transit system you work for is especially yours.

Every time this paper’s reader takes hold of a steering wheel, a train control handle, a radio, a wrench, or any work connected with the通车 that is attached to, remember that on July 18, 2009, the first in-service train rolled south down the Westlake on an escalator. Green signal. The driver said: “you will be advisors to me. Credentialed people, and pertinent Metro staff: “you will be advisors to me. You will give me your best advice. I will make the decision.” Note he didn’t say: “your input will be considered.” For the next seven years, the Employee Advisory Committee on the Downtown Seattle Transit Project met regularly with Metro officials and the top railroad engineers. Our Committee was treated with respect and trusted for an advisory group— because the system under design was so far from ordinary.

Seattle was a point of potential for a modern cutthroat of way, suitable for transit. Portland, San Francisco, San Diego, Pittsburgh, Cleveland…virtually every city to install modern light rail had miles of old freight spur or streetcar boulevard running exactly where transit required. Seattle’s legacy was a city center a few streets wide, bounded by a cliff and a hill, and a freeway system that missed population centers entirely. But that population was growing explosively, but still lacked the numbers to generate the full workethrough the valley any other transit agency could.

We knew we’d need electric rail eventually, which in Seattle’s constrained space meant subway. We also knew it had to be electric on every track outside Downtown, we’d have to work with buses for years to come. So when the River City Transit Project began, the department determined to design a rail system to be run with buses until the trains arrived- and whose buses would work alongside the trains for years after that. Nobody knew it would be nineteen years from the day the Tunnel opened for service.

The trains for years after that. The first train through those cuts and tubes at operating speed settled one thing: whatever the covering on the wheels, bus operating people can build a railroad. But still...

Our Railroad Deserved a Better Busline All Those Years

Watching a hundred eighty feet of railcar move out with so much authority, I was frankly jealous. A complete technical analysis of our public transport system in the official system’s report that for the first time in nineteen years, the Downtown Seattle Transit Tunnel finally has to be operated as its designers intended.

When You Made The Bredas Work- You Earned the Right to Make The Tunnel Work

The arrival of the trains means that one long misconception will now do serious damage if they’re not corrected to the transit system, the people who run it, and ATU Local 587.

The first is that the whole idea of buses in the Tunnel was either terrible mistake in the first place, or a nuisance so temporary that anything above minimum performance could just as well be left to the trains. The second is the belief that rail and bus operations are separate and incompatible institutions foolishly forced to share a mile and a third of right of way that either could run much better without the other in the way.

The first bad idea did terrible damage to the system over the better part of twenty years— wasting billions on a project that in the end only cost a billion dollars worth of capital, and missing one priceless opportunity another. That’s as we went about trying to take the tool that should be the union’s greatest source of unity and legitimate strength, and instead wreck your organization at the time your livelihoods depend on it most.

Frankly, I would have fought any move to cancel the order. If we’d sent back the Bredas' train, we would have spent a decade and a half operating the Tunnel with the diesel engines of the 1980’s, leaving LINK’s trains behind. Anyone can say better, anyone who knows both vehicles knows exactly what I mean.

I’m not talking about recriminations. We know one thing: the first train on the Breda Tunnel fleet is that in the mid-1980’s, the world’s bus-building industry didn’t feel like building the machine we needed for the money we were offering. If this country had been willing to pay as much per bus as per battle tank all those years, we would have had a fleet with platinum wheels. And fewer combat operations to secure the fuel. As I watched that train take off, though, I couldn’t blame anybody for the machine I had to drive the last time I left that platform in service. I was on the design team too.

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Letters to the Editor

About Fares

I would like to comment on the two articles in the paper about fares. With the ridership going up, what will it take to get King County, Metro, Sound Transit or Link Light Rail to publish an article in the paper that would explain the fares? There are Metro fares for peak and non peak, uncertainty about transfers times and how a transfer is valued on Sound Transit or Link Light Rail. Further confusion is caused by the locations where the fare increases due to zone fees. Capping it off are the Adult, Youth, Senior, and Disabled fares.

Sound Transit should explain the fares, the zones and also their transfers, from one zone to another and between King County, Community and Pierce County. Also needed are explanations of the locations where the zone changes. Example if you cross the 250 you are in another zone so the fare goes up. Link Light Rail need to be completely explained. How their passes are good for all day or for 2 hours and do they cover peak and all zones. Also what are their Adult, Youth, Senior, and Disabled Fares?

I feel that the public needs to know exactly, how this works, and the consequences of not paying. If you chip away at your values and morals you will end up with no self respect and low self esteem.

Frances Aragon

More About Fares

Dear Editor,

Regarding fare collection Metro appears to have two policies: (1) drivers are responsible for collecting appropriate fares (the official policy); (2) drivers are NOT responsible for collecting appropriate fares (the unofficial policy). In line with Metro’s official policy, we receive hours of training on how to cut and punch transfers, how to set the fare box, when/where to flip the signs on the fare box, and how to properly set and re-set the ORCA system (a device with the sole purpose of collecting fares). The Book has several pages devoted to passes and which are and are not valid for use in riding, complete with photos. Gee. You would almost think we were actually supposed to pay attention to what people pay to ride.

The struggle that most of us face in dealing with collection of passenger fares is less about “moral upbringings” and the impulse to project our moral upbringings onto our passengers than the basic contradiction in those three little words “no fare disputes”. The August issue included an article about driver assaults and fare disputes offered some excellent advice on considering communication styles in dealing with customers. While the article did offer some great advice — it also voiced the contrary expectation “The issue of the fares.” A) You should only ask a passenger for a fare if you feel safe. B) You are never safe. Why not just say that Metro’s drivers should NEVER ASK for a fare? Because of course then the unofficial policy becomes the official policy. Can’t have that.

Metro’s official policy regarding fare collection should not be ignored. OF COURSE drivers are expected to collect appropriate fares. This is the expectation of the County, of taxpayers, and most importantly of regular transit riders who responsibly pay their fare. Many fare paying passengers, when a fare request is made, are either so confused they do not understand the exchange or so afraid they will be evaded. I let fare evaders skip without so much as a word and asked “Why didn’t you at least say something to them?” Generally when I don’t bother to even remind a passenger that a fare is required it has less to do with fear for my personal safety (I’m a 350 pound male capable of a genuinely grouchy facial expression) than my fear that I’ll be in front of my chief who will lecture me about “no fare disputes” when a reminded passenger calls in a complaint that I was “discourteous” to them.

If we accept that the official policy of Metro is that drivers are responsible for fare collection, then at the minimum Operators have a responsibility to tell passengers that a fare is expected to ride. A request that a passenger pay their fare is not a fare DISPUTE. It is the basic responsibility of drivers to remind passengers that if you want to ride, there are rules - and the number one rule is that appropriate payment is expected. But I agree that - agree with being non-confrontational, with not escalating a situation if someone is determined not to pay their fare, and with keeping ourselves out of danger. But let’s not pretend that a fare REQUEST is the same as a fare DISPUTE. Something to think about as we see articles about some Base Chief responding to an anonymous customer complaint that we “embro- rassed” or “humiliated” someone by asking them to remove a pass from their wallet, that we pointed out that their transfer was the right color but the wrong letter (for transfer collectors), that two people can’t ride on the same transfer or pass, that the photo on the pass isn’t of the person holding the pass, that the ORCA reader indicates that their e-purse is empty, or that we had the audacity to say “The fare is two dollars, sir,” to someone as they bolted out the door.

If we expect to be treated like professionals — by the system, by supervisors, and by passengers — we need to acknowledge the expectation that drivers do have responsibilities. The most basic of these is to remind passengers that there are rules for riding the bus. While for safety and practical sake we don’t have responsibility for enforcing the rules (the Code of Conduct says that there is a “network of professionals” that can be called upon for that which presumably doesn’t include drivers), we ARE responsible for INFORMING customers about the rules. To suggest otherwise – even to go so far as to offer the suggestion that drivers should NOT approach people when a passenger has forgotten their pass, or asks questions about fraudulent passes, invalid transfers, underpaid fares or attempts to skip on fares — is to acknowledge that we don’t have even the most basic authority aboard our own buses. Either we are professionals to be respected – or drivers and are NOT professionals to be respected. Not every fare request is a fare dispute. We — and our supervisors — should appreciate this, and acknowledge our responsibilities not only to prevent security issues on the bus, but that part of that responsibility involves occasionally reminding passengers that there are rules for riding.

About Fares

Jeff Welch
Atlantic Bae #113004
Cell: (206) 349-6182
e-mail: jeffw66seattle@gmail.com

Complaint System for Managers

August 18, 2009

In response to your proposal in News Review regarding a compli- ant system for managers ... I like the idea!

Now, overall my experience of management has been very satisfac- tory. 98% of the time the treatment I received from chiefs, base supervi- sors, and others have ranged from good to excellent. At times managers have gone above and beyond the call of duty to be helpful. However, on occasion, I’ve been treated in a manner that left a sour taste in my mouth, where the manager’s attitude seemed to be something like, “I don’t know or care about you as a person.” To me you’re just another operator trying to get one over on Metro and I’m here to stop you!” As I recall this incident, my hurt wasn’t about the decision they made but about the demoralizing attitude they seemed to have towards me. My morale did suffer on those occasions. I felt that to go to their boss with a complaint was not advisable for the fear of retaliation.

I’d like to offer a friendly addi- tion to your system, assuming you didn’t already think of this: those commendations for good service from managers also are tracked.

In closing, I want to say, “I love my job! Being a Part time operator for Metro is the best job in the world for me.” I think a feedback system for performance of managers could potentially help keep it a very good place to work.

By T Cannon

Operator run Board of Oversight for Management

By Executive Board officer Andrew Jeromsky

I would like to thank everyone who supports my idea for an Operator run Board of Oversight for Management. I have been asked by the Recording Secretary to bring my proposal before the Executive Board. Our next meeting will have occurred by the time this is in print so if you have any questions about its status, I can be reached at jeromskyatu587@gmail.com.
September 2009

Operator of the Year

Our latest Operator of the Year, Ineke Deboer, is another in a long list of wonderful Operators receiving this honor by a vote of the Operators of the Month. Ineke joined our ranks in 1979 and has been gracing us with her wit and warmth ever since. Born in the Netherlands, she has led a fascinating life of globe-trotting and the exploration of one new hobby after another, a sign of her diverse intellectual skills. For example, she speaks half a dozen languages and balanced that with belly dancing! The photo, according to her husband, our irrepressible Dick Jenson, seen peering around the child’s head, is like all the others of her — accompanied by a child. Few of us are so alive and engaged; she makes the lives of everyone around her far better for her presence. Many thanks and WELL-DESERVED!

Real Change for Women!

Labor and Community Organizing for Economic and Political Justice

By LaTonya Plummer and “D” Jackson

Thanks to our Union Local 587 for a powerful and uplifting experience to attend the Summer School for Union Women and Community Activists. Without our Union’s Support as women we would never know the unity we sister’s share together in unity, with other unions.

September 1986, a group of labor organizers and Evergreen students watched a video of working women gathering at a college back east in 1921. The video showed how “women of summer” organized into small groups, listened to lectures on topics ranging from astronomy to political economy; debated each other on topics of social concerns; put on skits for each other and demonstrated off campus in support of working people’s struggles.

The summer school that begins today did not just happen. it took a love of history, leadership, self-respect, organizing skills, argument, resources, hard work and a belief that working women have always been and continue to be a critical element in organized labor’s ability to protect and promote the interest of working people.

The different workshops for the summer union school help enhance the art of empowerment:

- Mask-making / street theatre
- Women Chorus
- “She said” Sign and Banner-making
- Collective Bargaining
- Mentoring
- Media Campaigns

The workshops were effective and most powerful. Thanks to all the instructor’s and organizers. The workshops were a success.

To all of my Union Sisters: I feel we all must look, learn, listen, and execute. Unite together to arise above our capabilities to achieve the highest economic equality that we can. Each day I write uplifting meanings for our Union sisters and today is no different, both “D” Jackson and myself felt empowered and moved by this experience.

I hope we can leave you with some powerful uplifting words. As women we must stand up and no longer sit down and let our fears keep us from moving forward, but let our minds look, learn, listen to our everyday lives and pull strength from our fears to move ahead and stand together as one body to fight for what we have died for, cried for, struggled for as one unit for economical equality.

In Solidarity

Real Change for Women!

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Assaults on the rise?

O ur Manager of Transit Operations was so offended by the publication of an article by Alex Lalakba that he sent some data to refute the assertion that assaults are up. Mr. O’Rourke, in his sometimes bristly fashion, tossed them on our web site so that they can be examined in a clearer format. As a side note, we often have discussions about whether to publish editorial or slanted pieces. In general, we have published them and let our very acute readers sort out the biases or inaccuracies and reply. That is why we have multiple disclaimers about such submissions; “views and opinions expressed in News Review articles are those of the authors…”

Mr. O’Rourke’s data is below:
Have You The Political Will Not to Cut Service and Hike Fares?

By Atlantic Base Shop Steward Chuck Lare

Cut short on my presentation to the Seattle City Council Transportation Committee meeting this August — per requests from others — I would like to share with Sisters & Brothers my presentation in its entirety if I had been given adequate time.

Thank you for the time to speak to you this afternoon. As a Project Engineer for the Port of Seattle, King County and several other municipalities, providing consulting services on identifying cost savings, I found many savings you have yet to identify. Or as the previous speaker stated this is really a political issue. Do you have the political will to implement cost savings in place of cutting service and raising fares?

When I first came to Seattle, working at the Boeing Space Center, their experimental Morgan Town bus ran 24 by 7. We have since granted billions of tax credits to Boeing who is now laying-off skilled manufacturers of transportation equipment and threatening to leave town. As part of the economic impact from the Boeing down-turn, I found many savings you have yet to identify. Or as the previous speaker stated this is really a political issue. Do you have the political will to implement cost savings in place of cutting service and raising fares?

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In 1949, ATU Local 268’s Membership voted to elect an African American for the first time in their history. Brother William Foster was the first African-American local union president in the ATU. He was elected in 1949. He was the first African American union president elected to that post by Local 268 in 1948. Thereafter, Brother Foster was elected as an International Vice President in 1971 which was the recent method of updates, sending out a new list whenever change occurred, sometimes re-
What happens when a non-represented person gets laid off?

By Don Mac Adam, V.P. #2 local 587

Every decade or so this issue comes up when managers are worried about their jobs. We know Metro is top heavy. Metro and the auditors know it as well. So they turn to the labor agreement, Article 6, section 2, A., page 37: “Unless otherwise specified in this agreement, an Employee who is promoted or transferred to a position in Metro outside of the bargaining unit shall retain his/her Bargaining Unit seniority for one year from the date of promotion or transfer; however such employee shall retain his/her Bargaining Unit seniority for purpose of layoff.

What this means is this: any promotion out of the bargaining unit for a period exceeding one year means that employee loses their seniority rights in the classification they came from. However if they are laid off they can return to their previous classification, but are placed on the bottom of the seniority list in that classification. And most importantly they can not displace any bargaining unit employee. There must be an open posted position for the laid off employee to assume. Also Pg. 39 section A. reads “Seniority shall be under the jurisdiction of the UNION. All Questions or grievances pertaining to seniority shall be settled by the UNION.”

I hope this explanation will put many of your minds at ease as much as possible and help you to feel more secure in your job.
**The 1st Vice President’s Report**

**What in the World?!!?**

King County is a bazillion dollars in the hole.

Metro is half a bazillion. Only part-time operators will be laid off. No one is being laid off. Some senior Full-Time operators are being laid off. Now!!! No, later!!! All mechanics are no mechanics. Half the Special classification folks are out the door. Tomorrow!!! Today! Soon!

Those blasted union officers are letting our members suffer furloughs without doing a thing. And, of course, they aren’t going to do a thing to stop layoffs. Whatcha want to bet?

So what is the truth?

It is true that tax revenue is down and that has a major impact on Metro’s revenue stream. Limited income means limiting the things that you can spend money on.

It is true that with Metro’s budget is under strain, reducing and/or eliminating employees will become necessary.

It is true that some of our members are currently being forced to take furlough days even though the officers believe there isn’t contract language that allows for furloughs. To that end the union has filed a PERC (Public Employment Relations Commission) claim and there is an expedited arbitration in process. Unfortunately until these are settled, those affected by management’s actions will continue to suffer.

It is true that General Manager Kevin Desmond has projected that 310,000 bus service hours will be suspended (about 9%) by the end of 2011. By the end of 2013 as many as 585,000 service hours will have been suspended.

It is true that the first budgetary cuts will be in February 2010 and will be administrative. He has proposed proportional service reductions across the county with restoration occurring in the same manner. Looking at these numbers alone we have to believe that there is a strong possibility that there will be layoffs.

It is true there will be a previously approved $.25 fare increase in January 2010 followed by a recommended $0.25 fare increase in 2011. Suburban County Council members have proposed no service cuts with a one dollar fare increase over one year. They are looking at finding funds by cutting administrative positions first.

The truth is we just don’t know. What we do know is that we are most likely going to make it through the end of the year without layoffs. Most likely. Metro will have to deal with a predicted $45 million revenue gap in 2009 and projected gaps of $98 million and $115 million in 2010 and 2011 respectively.

It is true that your union officers are working towards mitigating the impact of such shortfalls. Eventually all of us will feel the sting.

It is true that our best guesses are just that guesses.

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**The 2nd Vice President’s Report**

**Sure! You can cut my benefits.**

Sure! You can cut my benefits. This is what King County Metro wants you to say. But, it is not going to happen as far as your Union is concerned. After I sat in on the budget crisis meeting three weeks ago about closing the parks, cutting seniors, mental health care, etc., and that they need everyone to vote for a tax increase, I wanted to jump up and say, “If you really want the new tax measure to pass, tell them you are going to close the schools, police and fire departments and no more 911!”

They say they don’t have any money, but the next morning on the news they said they’re spending 8 million of our tax dollars on a housing project. Have Metro Managers announced that their benefits will be cut? Or how many non-essential managers will be reassigned or laid off? Have any of their benefits been reduced? The answer to these questions is NO!

Also, for those who missed my vice president report at the Union meetings, I have had several meetings and discussions with management on the Bus-side and Light Rail. The following items have been keeping me busy: 1st step grievance on the Custodian “mini pick”; won, with an unfair labor practice still pending; Shannon Nale et al.—clerks’ grievances at the arbitration vote stage; M. Harris—Light Rail grievance has gone through the third step and is at arbitration vote stage; N. Caraway—3 rd. step grievance & investigation is on-going; Cluett—Light Rail grievance: done. He will return for the September pick; D. French—vacation pick grievance; Scott Sloan et al.—grievances on shift change for training; at arbitration and 3rd. steps; E. Mangold—shop work he is allowed to do: pre-arbitration settlement; J. Stambaugh and A. Hernandez—arbitration cases getting ready to go. I’m also addressing service workers speeding at the base while servicing coaches at night, and has anyone sat in a wet driver’s seat lately? Yuck!

Please remember to contact your chief, lead or supervisor if you are having difficulties at work with medications, or your training schedule. Most of our grievances involve overtime violations which seems odd after sooo many years.

**ALSO TAKE NOTE** that there is a JOB OPENING for a maintainer (mechanic) in Light Rail and there may also soon be OPENINGS for the Maintainer (mechanic) positions for the Street Car.

Please contact me with any questions regarding my report, my rant or the job openings.

Also I have to report on an ERR- ROR I made. As we were discussing with Metro how to save money, and they were talking about layoffs at the animal shelters and too many animals, well, what I thought was the committee sign-in sheet came around, so I signed it. It appears that I inadvertently signed an agreement whereby everyone in maintenance will have to take two dogs and a cat home from the animal shelter. Leads will have to take two cats and two dogs...Yes, Bob, I am kidding.

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**The New, Fully Functional Digital Wheel Block**

In past articles, many writers, particularly myself, have underestimated the utility of the Orca system and said in these pages that it would never work. However, when it fell off the dash, I finally realized that it is all a matter of what you ask it to do! For instance, this coach never rolled until I removed this new fully functional Digital Wheelblock.

By Brian Sherlock, Recording Secretary
The Financial Secretary’s Report

Per Capita Taxes…

By Paul Neil

Below you will find the report I gave at the August membership meeting. One of the largest ongoing expenses we have are what are called “Per Capita Taxes” and we pay over $55,000.00 per month on these. “What are they and why do we pay them?” you might ask.

Per Capita taxes are a per member charge we pay to the labor councils and organizations we belong to. We are required by the ATU International Constitution to join our local and state AFL-CIO central labor council. We pay by deducting from the pay of ATU International members since that is the body that issued our charter. In addition to these we also incur a per capitation charge to the ATU to the ATU Northwest Conference and the ATU Legislative Council. At over $45,000 the ATU International receives the lion’s share of the per capita taxes we pay.

We currently pay $10.80 per active member, per month to the ATU International. We also pay $2.00 or $4.00 per retired member also. The amount for retirees varies by when they retired. What do we get for all this money? We receive the backing of a large organization to assist us in training, research and negotiations. Right now at no additional cost with training, research and negotiations.

In the month of July 2009 we reported 14 new members to the ATU International. This brings our total active membership to 137 members compared this time last year when we had 3987 active members.

Bills:

- All financial figures are subject to the review of the Executive Board.
- In July total income was $241,246.51 which is an increase of $15,174.53 or 6.7% over last July. The increase is due to increased membership and the dues increase approved in January.
- Per Capita payments totaled $55,554.20 for the month of July which is a 6.0% increase over the same period last year.
- Other bills for payroll, rent, legal, etc. totaled $213,529.97 which is an increase of $39,102.09 or 22.4% over the previous July. The increase is due in part to continue costs involving setting up the new officers and higher legal bills compared to last July.

This amounts to a $27,837.66 deficit for the month compared to a deficit of $757,95 for July 2008.

Financial Secretary’s August 2009 Membership meeting report

New members:

In the month of July 2009 we reported 14 new members to the ATU International. All are PT Operators at King County METRO Transit. This brings our total active membership to 4124. This is an increase of 137 members compared this time last year when we had 3987 active members.

Rule One of Management: No Matter What Your Business, People are Your Business

By Brian Sherlock

About this year’s accomplishment from the record number of errors in the run cards and roadblocks in getting necessary information for our members, so that there would be certainty in knowing exactly what was being picked. This was not due to our excellent schedulers, who are members of our Union. Rather, it was a foreseeable manpower shortage in their department. The work to be picked has been another shock for our Operators. Reductions of service have begun, and to most, it looks like seniority running in reverse. Rail has been infinitely worse with poor planning leading to last-minute schedule overhauls and management being unable to meet the pick deadlines and unwilling to cooperate with our existing pick process.

Some Transit’s choice has been to try to have a separate pick, at a different time and place. Anyone familiar with the process would see that this is, at best, a poor choice. Not only does it require extra days of staff expense; more importantly, it makes manpower changes and recovery from the ever-present errors more difficult. It is an extremely poor business practice to go from one person, the OSS coordinator, managing the manpower for pick, to two people at different properties with a shared labor pool. That is exactly what is happening with our most demanding and chaotic planning position, where the shifting needs of thousands of employees and innumerable departments lead to last-minute changes. The new “Department of Redundancy Department” is bound to manage this with all the graceful coordination of a three-legged race. In exchange for this cost, management gets the soothing illusion of control in an always chaotic process that instead needs clear communication and cooperation.

At Metro, the process of solving each new problem with increasing discipline is continuing. The latest is the new cell phone policy, an extreme example of how the new policy actually goes so far as to specifically state that quickly answering a call about a loved one in the hospital is not understandable humanity; it is a reason for termination. This is pathological hypocrisy in a system that still continues calls to all coaches that request picking up far more dangerous handsets, with tangled chords draping over the steering wheel, just to hear that there is an escaped Alzheimer’s patient on a wheel, just to hear that there is an escaped Alzheimer’s patient on a

The Recording Secretary’s Report

By Brian Sherlock

Rule One of Management: No Matter What Your Business, People are Your Business
President’s Report, continued

Request and not an Operator complaint. Category 6 complaints will not be considered “on the Operator’s record.”

The Bad News:

Category 2 - Investigation Conducted / Complaint Confirmed / Discipline Issued: Metro intends to properly investigate complaints assigned to the functional groupings "Customer Relations" and "Safety/ Driving Skills" (in excess of 1 complaint in the past rolling year) and is progressive discipline pursuant to Labor Agreement. Progressive discipline means five complaints within a twelve-month period will result in discharge.

The Union will, of course, represent members accused of wrongdoing utilizing the protections provided by the “…commitment to the concept of just cause with respect to employer discipline” (preamble to Labor Agreement) and a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) signed in conjunction with 2007 – 2010 Labor Agreement. The MOA requires the complainant to meet the Union President / designee and testify in arbitration should a grievance be filed and confirms the premise that “…Employee’s have a right to face their accuser.” Nevertheless, Operators with challenged customer relations skills should take note of Metro’s new found exuberance to issue discipline for what Metro deems to be inappropriate conduct. If a customer is willing to meet with the Union President / designee and testify in arbitration, the discipline issued could be sustained by an arbitrator. Category 5 Counseling / Clarifying Discussion – The Operator’s version of events and the customer’s version differ. Category 5 complaints will be considered “on the Operator’s record” but the category doesn’t call for the issuance of discipline.

In implementation of its new policy, Metro agreed the number of complaints on each Operator’s record will revert to zero as of June 30th, 2009. However, any Member with previous progressive discipline in force will still be disciplined at the next higher level. Metro may also order specialized refresher training, rides checks, monitoring by a Service Supervisor or Service Auditor, a discussion with the Base Safety Officer, or other measures, as the Chief deems appropriate. A violation of the MOA addressing customer complaints and just cause with respect to Employer discipline.

Metro’s new policy states in part, “Ask the complainant if s/he would be willing to talk a Union Representative about his/her statement if a grievance should arise. If the answer is ‘no’ you may still proceed with discipline if the operator has a large number of complaints spanning more than one shake-up.” If an Operator is disciplined simply for the number of complaints on his/her record without a proper just cause investigation, the Union will pursue Metro through an Unfair Labor Practice Complaint and the Grievance Process.

This isn’t a new issue. In years past, Metro attempted to issue discipline based solely on the number of complaints received. The Union filed a grievance and an Unfair Labor Practice Complaint. The Union prevailed in a pre-arbitration settlement where Metro agreed not to issue discipline based solely on the number of complaints received in a particular category. “Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.” — George Santayana

In Solidarity,
Paul J. Rachtel, President
Business Representative

WORK SITE VISITS

Paul Rachtel, President, will be visiting various work sites during the month of September. Below is a list of times, dates and locations.

September 11th
Link Operations
4:00 am – 6:00 am
6:00 am – 6:30 am

September 18th
Central Vehicle Maintenance
4:00 am – 4:30 am
6:30 am – 7:00 am
Central/Atlantic Operations
5:00 am – 6:30 am
Central Vehicle Maintenance
7:00 am – 7:30 am

September 25th
Ryerson Vehicle Maintenance
4:00 am – 4:30 am
Ryerson Operations
4:30 am – 6:30 am
Ryerson Vehicle Maintenance
6:30 am – 7:00 am

By Linda Averill, Atlantic Base

ATU 587 Help hold the line against fare hikes and bus service cuts

I n the July News Review, I reported on the ugly and regressive budget cuts passed by the state legislature in 2009. These cuts included slashing Basic Health, freezing the COLAs of state workers, and downsizing community colleges.

On August 6th, King County Exec. Kurt Triplett published his own nine-point action plan to trim Metro’s budget. His plan includes more fare hikes and 310,000 hours of bus service reductions over two years. This proposal, if approved, will be devastating to our public transit system and many riders who rely on bus service—especially those who are laid off, on fixed-incomes, or living paycheck to paycheck. The cuts will also impact our membership.

Metro is not unique. Democrats and Republicans at every level of government are slashing services in response to budget deficits, even though hard times make these services more necessary than ever. We are told “there is no money,” but when banks, CEOs, Wall Street financiers and other big campaign contributors call for help, money is miraculously found.

This disgusting state of screwed-up priorities was a motivating factor in the drafting and passage of the resolution below. At the August ATU 587 meeting cycle, members approved this resolution. So did delegates representing several-thousand union members in Washington State, who met June 6 – 8 for the annual convention of the WA. State Labor Council. The resolution charges the state Labor Council with failing/ organizing a week of action in the Fall/Spring before the 2010 legislative session. The resolution’s title expresses the intent of the actions.

This economic downturn shows how flawed is our current tax system. Even Exec. Triplett acknowledges that the longer term solution to Metro’s budget woes rests in addressing King County’s “volatile sales tax revenue base.” It is on sales taxes that the poorest people bear the biggest tax burden. And when the economy slumps so does spending — especially by people who can barely make ends meet in good times. That means tax revenues plummet.

With a population of about 120,000 millionaires and billionaires, Washington ranks 13th in the nation as home to wealthy people. A tax on their incomes could fix the budget gap at every level of government. Likewise, a profits tax on corporations (as opposed to the current regressive B&O tax on gross revenues) would compel wealthy corporations like Microsoft to pay its forces, build alliances with the community, and press for change that will enable government to fully fund the programs we cherish, and wages that enable public-sector employees to live in the communities where they work.

With the resolution given a green light, unions will need to work with the Washington State Labor Council to develop plans for a week of action. How should ATU 587 participate? Bring your ideas to the union meeting, talk to an ATU officer, or give me a call at 380-8371.

THE CORNER
by JAMES WELLS

From “The Corner” will return in October.
I’m on vacation.
Respectfully and in solidarity,
James Wells, Transit Operator

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