

SEPTEMBER 2005

Inside This Issue...

WAR ON LABOR EXPOSED  
BY MARC AUERBACH  
PAGE 6

A MESSAGE OF POWER,  
UNITY AND ACTION, PART II  
PAGE 7

VIEW FROM THE BUSES  
ASSORTED ANNOUNCEMENTS  
PAGE 8

ATU

LOCAL 587

# News Review



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VOL. XXVIII, NO. 9

# The President's Report

By Lance F. Norton

In a few short weeks our Bus Tunnel will close to begin the process of retrofitting for rail and bus. It promises to be controlled chaos. It will no doubt affect all of us, but primarily our transit operators with downtown routes, customer assistance representatives and rider information specialists, first line district

supervisors, coordinators, vehicle maintenance and facilities and of course our customers.

In the beginning there will be many questions asked of you from our riders until they get used to where to catch their bus. Metro is planning to have plenty of help out there on the streets. We truly have a system we can all be proud of thanks to all of our 587 members and most of our managers (sorry, I couldn't resist). Reach back for some extra patience during stressful times and we'll get through this together.

## TENTATIVE AGREEMENT

Our local has reached a tentative agreement with Seattle Personal Transit on a new Labor Agreement. I've sent a notice to our SPT Members informing them that our office is currently drafting the new and revised language. A complete draft of the new proposal as well as a synopsis will be available for their review in the very near future. I will



President Norton is pictured here with A.T.U. International President Warren George, who honored us with a visit to our Union office, while on a recent trip to the Pacific Northwest.

then schedule meetings to answer all questions and vote on the new proposal. I am extremely grateful to Executive Board Officer Ninus Hopkins, Shop Steward Roscoe

Seamon, and Member David Read who served on our negotiating committee for all their hard work over the past eight months.

*continued on page 6*



Lance F. Norton

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# The Month at a Glance

## Executive Board Report

August 23, 2005

The following officers were present: The following officers were present: President Lance Norton, Vice-president Glen Travis, Financial Secretary Paul Griffin, Paul Bachtel, Ray Campbell, Chris Daniels, Paul Neil, Rick Sepolen, Jeff Stambaugh, Deb Stenoien, Bruce Tiebout, Dee Wakenight, Judy Young

(Recording Secretary Jennie Gil on sick leave — Marc Auerbach and Neil Safrin were in the pick room — Mike Whitehead, Ninus Hopkins, Alan Huston and Brian Sherlock on vacation — Joe Mangiameli was on other side of Hood Cannel Bridge under construction).

The following business was conducted:

- Motion by Bruce Tiebout to recommend taking Tyler Shultz grievance to arbitration.

- Motion by Paul Bachtel to purchase a new refrigerator at a cost not to exceed \$599.00.

- Motion by Chris Daniels to sponsor a half page add and table of ten for Jobs With Justice honoree dinner Saturday, October 29, 2005.

- Motion by Rick Sepolen to sponsor a half page add and table of ten for the A. Phillip Randolph Institute annual awards banquet dinner Saturday, October 14, 2005.

- Motion by Dee Wakenight to donate \$250.00 to the Puget Sound Labor Agency food bank.

- Motion by Jeff Stambaugh to authorize a budget of up to \$20,000.00 to purchase C.O.P.E. incentive awards.

## Business of the Membership

At the August 2005 cycle of membership meetings the following business was conducted:

- Brother Jim Washburn's request for arbitration was denied by the membership.

- Motion to endorse Richard Conlin for Seattle City Council position 02 and contribute \$650.00 to his campaign from C.O.P.E. funds was approved.

- Motion to increase the amount of 587's C.O.P.E. contribution to the city council position # 4 campaign of Sister Linda Averill by an amount of

\$150.00 to bring the total to \$650.00 was approved.

- Motion for Local 587 to contribute \$500.00 to the A.T.U. Romanian Council was approved.

The following members were July pot draw winners: Dobbie Boyington at the Charter meeting, John Moore at the Morning meeting, Greg Prescott at the JTA meeting. CTS pot draw winner was Lind Stern. CTS rolling pot draw of \$50.00 was lost by Jerry Roberts. Next month's rolling pot will be \$75.00.

### COPE ENDORSEMENTS — AUGUST 2005

BETSY WHARTON . . . . . 300 Port Angeles City Council	SUE BLAZAK . . . . . 200 Burien City Council
LINDA AVERILL . . . . . 150 Seattle City Council	HANK THOMAS . . . . . 200 Mayor of Issaquah
RICHARD CONLIN . . . . . 650 Seattle City Council	MAUREEN McCARRY . . . . 200 Issaquah City Council
RICHARD McIVER . . . . . 650 Seattle City Council	Previous Endorsements
DWIGHT PELZ . . . . . 650 Seattle City Council	LARRY PHILLIPS . . . . . 300 KC Council
PETER COATES . . . . . 1000 Port of Seattle	TERRY JURADO . . . . . 300 Renton Municipal Judge
GREG NICKLES . . . . . 650 Mayor of Seattle	CHRIS WYTHE . . . . . 200 Seattle City Council
LARRY GOSSETT . . . . . ~ KC Council	PETER COATES . . . . . 1000 Port of Seattle
CINDY RYU . . . . . 500 Shoreline City Council	JULIA PATTERSON . . . . . 300 KC Council
JANET WAY . . . . . 500 Shoreline City Council	DOW CONSTANTINE . . . . 300 KC Council
ROSE CLARK . . . . . 200 Burien City Council	LINDA AVERILL . . . . . 500 Seattle City Council
JOAN McGILTON . . . . . 200 Burien City Council	CLEVELAND STOCKMEYER . Seattle Monorail Pos. 9 . . . . 300

## Tentative Agenda

### Membership Meetings:

**CHARTER MEETING**  
**Thursday, September 1, 2005**  
8:00 p.m.  
The Labor Temple, Hall #8  
2800 1st Ave., Seattle, WA

**JEFFERSON TRANSIT**  
**Monday, September 12, 2005**  
7:00 p.m.  
Port Townsend Rec Center  
Port Townsend, WA

**MORNING MEETING**  
**Friday, September 2, 2005**  
10:30 a.m.  
The Labor Temple, Hall #6  
2800 1st Ave., Seattle, WA

**CLALLAM TRANSIT**  
**Tuesday, September 13, 2005**  
7:00 p.m.  
Vern Burton Memorial Building  
Port Angeles, WA

### Among topics to be discussed:

Possibility of on site drug testing, Smart Card installation, Travel pay lawsuit, Tentative settlement of Seattle Personal Transit labor agreement. Sister Ramona Davis, Brother Arnie Becker and Brother Tyler Shultz will be appearing before the membership to request their grievances be taken to arbitration.

### Unfinished business

There is no unfinished business for August.

### Correction:

*In last month's News Review we had Alvin Douglas's title wrong. Brother Douglas is actually Financial Secretary/Business Agent. Our apologies to the president of Local 425.*

## IN LOVING MEMORY...

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

### ATU LOCAL 587

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2815 Second Avenue, Suite 230  
Seattle, Washington 98121  
Telephone: 206-448-8588.

Affiliations: Washington State Labor Council, King County Labor Council, Northwest Joint Conference Board, ATU Legislative Council, Olympic Labor Council.

### OFFICERS OF THE AMALGAMATED TRANSIT UNION, LOCAL 587:

LANCE F. NORTON Pres/Business Representative  
email - lnortonpres@atu587.com

GLEN A. TRAVIS Vice President/Assistant  
Business Representative  
email - gtravisvp@atu587.com

PAUL L. GRIFFIN Financial Secretary  
email - fsgriffin@atu587.com

JENNIE L. GIL Recording Secretary/  
Editor 587 News Review  
email - recsec587@atu587.com

Minority Affairs Officer  
Transit Operator Position No. 1  
Transit Operator Position No. 2  
Transit Operator Position No. 3  
Transit Operator Position No. 4  
Transit Operator Position No. 5  
Transit Operator Position No. 6  
Transit Operator Position No. 7  
Transit Operator Position No. 8  
Vehicle Maintenance Position No. 1  
Vehicle Maintenance Position No. 2  
Vehicle Maintenance Position No. 3  
Facilities Maintenance  
Special Classifications  
Supervisors  
Clallam/Jefferson County  
SPT/MV

RAY CAMPBELL  
PAUL BACHTEL  
MARC AUERBACH  
DEE WAKENIGHT  
BRIAN SHERLOCK  
RICK SEPOLAN  
JUDY YOUNG  
NEAL SAFRIN  
BRUCE TIEBOUT  
MIKE WHITEHEAD  
DEB STENOEN  
JEFF STAMBAUGH  
ALAN HUSTON  
CHRIS DANIELS  
PAUL NEIL  
JOE MANGIAMELI  
NINUS HOPKINS

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

### WEINGARTEN RIGHTS STATEMENT

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

### Letters to the editor

Letters/contributions must include signatures, work ID number, addresses and telephone numbers that can be verified during office hours. Letters that cannot be validated will not be published. All articles/letters are subject to editing and should be limited to 350 words or less. Not all letters can be published due to space limitations. Cut off date is the 15th of each month.

Send letters to:

Jennie Gil, Editor

c/o ATU Local 587

News Review

2815 Second Avenue, Suite 230

Seattle, WA 98121

# Better Training is a Better Solution

By Carl C. Jackson, Street Team Specialist

It's finally come to this: speed through the trolley overhead has been reduced to a mandatory 5 mph. So now in the 21st Century, we have our trolley bus system moving slower than in the last century. Makes sense to me. Where do we go from here? Back to crank handle starters on our cars and busses? If I really thought that going slower would help, I would have recommended that quite some time ago. Instead, after I spent some time driving Metro's first trolleys equipped with Kiepe trolley poles, I suggested to the training department that the emphasis toward training new (and senior) trolley operators be aimed at not pushing the coach hard since I felt that it was an extremely easy bus to drive. Between the instant power response and the reduced effort power steering, I felt that the Gillig 4100-series was a dream on wheels. That being the case, newer operators jumped in the seat and started to drive it like a Gillig motor coach. Enough said on that point.

As a friend of mine reminded

me: when we learned on trolleys back in the day, we were taught to "read" overhead ahead of us before our coach reached it, let alone our trolley pole shoes. Also, we all learned to look for "landmarks" like fireplugs to mark switches. No surprises. Technique goes a long way to making a better driver out of a good one. Ever notice the difference between a good airplane pilot, and one that might need a bit more practice. Consider that thought the next time you fly and that plane touches down a little hard on the tarmac. The main thing is that I always thought it took about a year until anyone was really good with a trolleycoach — most of it through a needlessly painful (to the passengers as well) learning experience. Always seemed to me that since ETB drivers have to know more and only really improve through time in the seat, they ought to be paid more. Having said that, be advised that light rail operators do get paid more and will commit to an extended tenure at the light rail base. Period.

And back to the lowering of

*ETB drivers have to know more and only really improve through time in the seat, they ought to be paid more.*

the speed limit through special work; another good friend told me about the last time he was driving trolleys and the speed limit was lowered to 5 mph through special work. At that time he was told, as a cost cutting measure, Metro wanted to eliminate one of the two line trucks. To accomplish this, the speed limit was lowered to 5 mph on the mistaken belief that lowering the speed limit would reduce damage to special work sufficiently to allow one line truck to make necessary repairs. Of course that ideology was supposed to carry through any expansion of the system - one line truck covering the entire city of Seattle. Kind of like the 9 snow plows that Seattle uses to cover the whole city in the event of a snow storm. Metro was also subcontracting line work during tunnel construction with plans to subcontract the wire installation for the route 70. Quantity instead of quality.

Anyway, the end result was first-line wrote so many P.R.'s that senior operators picked out of trolleys, junior operators were forced in to trolleys and damage to the overhead spiked. Once management realized the stupidity of their actions they raised the speed limit back to 10 mph and launched a PR (public relations campaign) to entice senior operators to return to trolleys. Will history repeat itself?

I have driven a 4100-series coach from the day they were functional (Mike you know what I'm saying) test mules. Never had a problem with any aspect of the coach, this includes the operation of the hillholder (you all remember THAT debacle). I've also chauffeured around a lot of supervisors and managers - again, no problem. I recently started driving 4200-series coaches — again, no problems. The only thing I can glean about all of this, is the operator's (most of the newer operators) are not paying attention to what they are doing.

Training has never been much help in any situation that I can remember, that being the case, I would NOT like to see potentially good operators become jaded towards the trolley system as well as Metro after encountering a situation that causes them to be written up and treated poorly by 1st line supervisors that don't have a clue on how to enforce policy, not to mention a lack of understanding about the equipment. True enough, the trolley overhead COULD use some tweaking because of it's age and design — money is always a factor. But let's not cause the system to suffer because of poor management, training, and maintenance. 5 Mph is just plain silly in this day and age. I don't do 5 Mph anywhere in the system — my speed varies with the situation — whether the switch is leading or trailing, whether it's set for me to switch or go straight through, whether there's a curve segment after the switch, etc. If that scenario works because of experience, wisdom, training or just plain common sense, then so be it. But something has to give. One thing I noticed on my recent trip to Portland's MAX system; everyone of those light rail operators that I talked to knew the system, their equipment and how things worked. I talked to several different operators and managers during two days of discussion and operational policy insight with both the union and TriMet supervisors. Our way of operating and training is totally inadequate and problem ridden. Let's work to find a better solution and make sure that the operators and the riding public don't have to continue to suffer because of the way Metro perceives reality. And remember, if any of us were employers, we could only get the best out of our employees if we make sure we let them know EXACTLY what we expect from them by teaching them what they need to know to achieve that end.

## ARBITRATION UPDATE

1. **Kenny McCormick:** Grieved failure to follow FLSA requirements for travel time for board/report/ATL operators. Grievance being held in abeyance while issue pursued in court.
2. **Vince Lee:** Grieved improper procedure for upgrade to temporary position. Arbitration scheduled for November 8, 2005.
3. **Roberson et.al.:** Body shop and Upholstery shop personnel grieved work done out of classification. Recent decision, grievance denied.
4. **Edward Young:** Grieved termination for severe preventable accident. Arbitration concluded, decision pending.
5. **Greg Mothersbaugh:** Grieved improper payment of administrative leave. Arbitration scheduled for September 15<sup>th</sup>, 2005.
6. **Francilla Freeman:** Grieved termination due to unverified sick leave. Settlement reached during arbitration. Grievant returned to work with full back pay and accruals.
7. **Jim Hermanson:** Grieved alleged ADA violation, being relieved of duty for six months more than required by state CDL regulations. Arbitration scheduled for September 22, 2005.
8. **Kayetta Richardson:** Grieved termination from MV for alleged failure to report an accident. Schedule pending.
9. **Sandie Olosky:** Grieved termination for alleged gross misconduct. Schedule pending.
10. **Louise Gredig:** Grieved premature non-disciplinary medical termination. Arbitration approved by the membership at the July cycle of meetings. Schedule pending.

# Letters to the Editor...

## Pick Time and Restriction Forms

Dear Editor:

Katherine Batey should be applauded for taking the time and effort for her August *News Review* article and for speaking at the union meeting. Unfortunately, her subjective portrayal of the P/T restriction procedure is unsubstantiated conjecture and her resulting solution of "Restriction Forms=No ATL, No Vacation" is unwarranted. There are improprieties occurring; however, the issue is to what extent. From my experience, the number of scofflaws are low and I suspect this would be substantiated if a random sample or a comprehensive review were to take place. In addition, Katherine's concern over the rise in summer shakeup restriction submissions, most likely, is due to summer child care obligations.

In response to Katherine's claim that she has observed people who have submitted restriction forms and have worked ATL and/or vacation relief: I have filled out restriction forms for child care, school and employment. Because none of the aforementioned were five days and per week nor every week in the shake-up, in each case, I was eligible for ATL and vacation relief work. Had Katherine or one of her "spies" observed me exercising this option, I would have been wrongfully accused of malfeasance. Could this same scenario have applied to others that Katherine has suspected of misconduct?

I sympathize with Katherine's medical predicament. When my wife needed me to accompany her for chemo treatments, a base chief told me this was not a valid reason to submit a restriction form.

Finally, in contrast to Katherine's perception: most of us legitimately utilize this practice and I propose broadening the scope of the restriction policy to include medical conditions and/or

a clause allowing for mitigating circumstances.

Joe Kadushin #12095  
Ryerson Base

## METRO MIRACLE MESH

In May of last year I submitted a safety report concerning the side sun screen/shade on the 3600 series buses (also found on other series.) It expressed the same concern that I had written in a December '03 safety report about the front-mounted screen/shade that was originally installed on the 3600's. The screen portion hindered the driver's view and did absolutely nothing to attenuate sunlight. (I think the Defense Department and NASA would be thrilled to have a material that effectively blocks sunlight and yet is easily seen through—maybe they should talk to METRO.) The front-mounted version was changed shortly thereafter with a solid shade; however, as many of you know, we're still dealing with the side-mounted two piece design on at least the 2300's and 3600's.

Safety's response to my concern with the side screen was, that it was installed according to procurement team specification, that the screen portion was intended to help keep the shade from being sucked out an open side window, and yet allow the driver to detect motion. What say you drivers—does it allow adequate vision for safe operation of a motor vehicle? Personally, every time I glance to the left and have to look through that screen, I want to rip it out. Instead, of course, we must lift it out of the way to get a clear view. The screen does NOTHING to attenuate sunlight and acts only as an obstruction to clear vision to the left. If the shade being sucked out of the window is a problem, then opening the trailing

window instead of the leading one for ventilation largely solves that problem. My guess is that, if the Washington State Patrol was to experience this contraption in actual use, they would immediately order them removed and replaced with a solid shade of limited length. Some bus series are so equipped (3400s?) The shade comes down far enough to block the sun, but not so far as to obscure the crucial area of the left quadrant.

The situation with 2300 series buses is even worse. They are equipped with a high-mounted left mirror that is largely obscured by the screen when it's been pulled down far enough to be effective against sunlight. When the sun strikes the screen at an oblique angle (often the case,) glare on the screen totally obscures that portion of the mirror. (I guess we could rely on the low-mounted convex mirror, but why then waste money on a large mirror in the first place?) The screen is superfluous and dangerous.

METRO proclaims to the public and we drivers that their No.1 priority is safety, but that's, as I've read (rightly) from others in this newsletter, as long as it doesn't cost them anything. It's easy to sit in a chair in an office and proclaim that the equipment is fine and pass the responsibility on to drivers for safe operation. But I wonder how many safety personnel, base supervisors, or base chiefs have ever gotten out of their chair to experience what we drivers are concerned with and write/complain about. I don't expect them to drive a bus in service, but there are always buses in the yard that they can experiment with to more clearly understand what operators have to deal with in the driving aspect of our work. Some are too far removed from the realities of the job.

John Sheirbon #3269  
Central

## Thank You!!

Saturday, August 6, 2005, Local 587 and King County Metro jointly participated in the Annual IMOJO Festival held in the Central district.

By participating in the IMOJO Festival parade, Transit employees were able to interact with people within our community.

A.T.U. Local 587 and King County Metro have greatly served the Central District, one of the Seattle's founding communities, in all aspects of transportation. Again, Thanks to all the wonderful children of employees of King County Metro who participated in the IMOJO Festival this year.



### SEND IN YOUR OPINIONS

Letters/contributions must include signatures, work ID number, addresses and telephone numbers that can be verified during office hours. Letters that cannot be validated will not be published. All articles/letters are subject to editing and should be limited to 350 words or less. Not all letters can be published due to space limitations. Cut off date is the 15th of each month. Send letters to:

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### NOTICE TO ALL READERS

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

# Justice Delayed is Justice Denied

By Paul J. Bachtel, Executive Board Officer

The grievance process in Article 5, Section 1 of our collective bargaining agreement is a method for a union member to assert that either the application or interpretation of our collective bargaining agreement (CBA) has been violated and request a remedy for the alleged violation. For grievances other than termination, there are three Steps to the grievance process. At Step 1 the grievance belongs to the union member filing the grievance, meaning any union member may file a Step 1 grievance regardless of merit. At Step 2 and Step 3 the grievance belongs to the Union, meaning only the Union President or Vice-president has the authority to forward the grievance beyond Step 1 to Steps 2 & 3 based on merit. If the grievance is pursued to Step 3 and denied, the grievant may request the grievance be arbitrated. The grievance then belongs to the membership, meaning the membership votes (at the union meeting) whether or not to pursue the grievance to arbitration.

Arbitration is similar to a court hearing where both sides (Union and Metro) call witnesses to give testimony and present arguments as to whether or not the grievance should be upheld or denied. The arbitration panel making

the decision to uphold or deny the grievance consists of three members, a neutral arbitrator and two partisan arbitrators. The partisan arbitrators are Union and management representatives who assist the neutral arbitrator in understanding industry specific terminology and make their own arguments in panel discussions as to whether or not the grievance should be upheld or denied.

Often union members who don't take part in the process by attending union meetings and voting on arbitration requests are baffled by the outcome of arbitration votes. Managers also wonder why the Union membership votes to pursue, or not pursue, particular grievances. In my experience our membership votes to pursue a grievance to arbitration for the one or more of the following reasons,

1. The merits of the grievance (management has violated the collective bargaining agreement),
2. To avoid an unwanted precedent (even though we may understand managements actions in a given situation we cannot allow management to establish a precedent of collective bargaining agreement

violation or violation of just cause with respect to employee discipline),

3. Political (even though we may very well lose the arbitration managements actions are so outrageous we pursue on moral or ethical grounds),
4. Economic (even though we may very well lose, if we don't pursue a grievance we could be sued by our own union member).

Article 5, Section 4, "Expedited Arbitration" of our labor agreement details a process in which both sides of the grievance (Union and Metro) agree to expedite resolution to the grievance by laying out ground rules intended to expedite the hearing and subsequent decision. The ground rules in our labor agreement in part include, but are not limited to, no lawyers, no briefs (oral arguments only), hearing limited to one day with each side limited to one-half for their presentations and a decision from the arbitrator within two business days.

In June I attended a five-day arbitration training class in Portland Oregon sponsored by our A.T.U. International. The

course included a thorough review of case preparation, direct and cross-examination of witnesses, objections, brief writing and opening/closing arguments. The class participants then tried two cases in front of an actual arbitrator with the arbitrator stopping the proceedings along the way to point out errors in presentation. I truly enjoyed and learned a great deal from the class.

Inability or unwillingness to pay the cost of arbitration is not a legally permissible reason for a union to refuse pursuit of a grievance to arbitration. Many A.T.U. locals cannot afford the cost of a lawyer and therefore must represent their members without legal representation before the arbitrator. In our situation although cost is not a consideration in the decision to, or not to, pursue a grievance to arbitration it may be in the Union and managements best interest to expedite the process. To that end, I may find opportunity to exercise my newly acquired skills. Thank you to the International for sponsoring the class, President Norton for sending me and to the membership for paying my time loss and travel expenses.

# I'm Totally Disgusted!

By Paul J. Bachtel, Executive Board Officer

I represented a Part-time Operator who was suspended from work without notification on the whim of a Base Operations Chief. The Operator found on arriving to work that his work had been filled. He was instructed to see his Base Chief. The Base Chief told the Operator, in front of a First Line Supervisor, due to a perceived minor off the job injury he was being sent home without pay and was to return three working days later for an additional ride check.

The Operator, naturally upset, questioned why he was being sent home for two-days without pay. The Chief tried to console the Operator by saying, "Look, I know you're upset about losing the two days of pay but you'll have today and tomorrow off and you'll come on Monday morning for another ride check."

He responded by saying, "I don't need to be taken off my work, I'm fine to drive." These statements

were made with the First Line Supervisor who had given the Operator his ride check, present in the Base Chiefs office. The Operator contacted the union and I assisted in the filing of four grievances.

The first grievance for violating Article 4 Section 4.B3, suspension without committing an infraction and Article 4, Section 11, the remedy for being completely blameless; the second grievance for violating the Preamble requirement for just cause with respect to employee discipline and the operators Weingarten Right to Union representation; the third grievance for violating Article 4 Section 4.B, not issuing progressive discipline; and the fourth grievance for violating Article 4 Section 2.C, issuing discipline without written notice.

These grievances on a single event were issued separately to cause management to answer each violation. History has taught

me that if a grievant wants each alleged violation answered the grievant must file separate grievance. If not, management will pick and choose which violation to answer.

The four grievances were heard in the office of a Base Supervisor with the Base chief present. I wrote a number of questions for the Base Chief prior to the hearing. The questions were met with sarcastic remarks, direct refusal to answer legitimate questions and answering questions with questions rather than answering the question asked. The Base Chief denied telling the operator he was being sent home without pay even though the Operator and Base Chief had lengthy discussions in regard to his pay status and even though a First Line Supervisor witnessed the conversation. After the hearing I called the First Line Supervisor at home and he confirmed the Operators claim that

the Base Chief had told him he was being sent home without pay. After speaking with the First Line Supervisor and confirming the Operator's version of what was said, I challenged the Base Supervisor to address the discrepancy between the Base Chiefs and Operators version of events. The Base Supervisor answered my request by continuing to defend the Base Chief. As it turns out the Operator had been placed on sick leave without his knowledge. It is a long-standing practice at King County Metro that when management doesn't allow someone to drive because of a perceived injury they are placed on administrative leave, not sick leave, pending, a physical capacities evaluation (PCE). The Base Supervisor is a senior employee and quite well aware of this policy. Never the less, when I pointed out this irregularity he refused to correct the obvious violation of

*continued on page 6*

# Labor Convention: Professor Exposes War on Labor

By Marc Auerbach, ATU 587 Executive Board Officer

August 15, 2005 — “We are in the middle of a war on labor,” said Doug Orr, Eastern Washington University economics professor. He was speaking to hundreds of union members who had gathered in Spokane for the annual convention of the Washington State Labor Council, AFL-CIO. Over the past 25 years this war on labor has manifested itself in a concerted effort to drive down wages, eliminate laws requiring overtime pay, and destroy pensions. And, Orr said, the “endgame of that war is very close if we don’t fight back.”

The professor went on to illustrate his point with a sharp analysis of the attack on Social Security and the destruction of the private pension system. While the Bush Administration is working overtime to convince the public that there is a crisis in the Social Security System (not true, according to Orr), it has looked the other way while huge corporations like United Airlines use the illegal maneuver of “strategic bankruptcy” in order to avoid their pension obligations.

Unions fought hard for pensions with a guaranteed, defined benefit because our forerunners believed that people who became too old or sick to work should not be left to the wolves after a lifetime of toil. Over the years, employers have worked hard to reduce or avoid their pension costs. The most effective employer strategy has been the elimination of defined benefit plans (such as PERS I and II) in favor of defined contribution plans such as 401Ks (PERS III is a half and half hybrid). Under a defined contribution plan, the employer puts a defined amount of money into the plan and that money is invested in some way. The worker is entitled only to the amount of money that is in the retirement account at the time of retirement, rather than to a lifetime guaran-

teed retirement benefit.

In 1975, thirty-nine percent of pensions were in the safer, defined benefit plans, and only 6 percent were in the defined contribution category. But things have changed drastically. As of 1998, thirty-eight percent of private pension plans were defined contribution and only 18 percent provided a defined benefit. The result has been a major reduction in income security for retirees. Orr says that 401Ks were sold to workers with the promise of “mobility,” (you could keep it as you move from job to job.) but they are really a way of “screwing you out of your pension.”

In addition to the shift away from defined benefit plans, employers tried a whole array of underhanded methods for avoiding pensions costs. Organized labor fought for legislative reforms to protect workers from these abuses. In 1974, Congress passed ERISA (the Employee Retirement Income Security Act). ERISA outlawed employer abuses aimed at avoiding promised pension payments and set up the PBGC (Pension Benefits Guarantee Corporation), a government sanctioned insurance company that insures private pension plans. All the private companies that provide pension plans pay premiums to PBGC. If a company goes bankrupt, PBGC becomes responsible for paying out the company’s pension obligations.

Orr said the PBGC was not intended by Congress to be a “parachute” for companies that want to dump their pension obligations by going into a “strategic bankruptcy” and then returning to business at a later date. When TWA attempted such a move during the presidency of George W.’s father, the government did not allow it. Now, with Bush II in power, the government is looking the other way. In 2003, Bethlehem steel declared bankruptcy, dumped its pension obligations on the PBGC

*In addition to the shift away from defined benefit plans, employers tried a whole array of underhanded methods for avoiding pensions costs.*

and re-emerged as a profitable company. Now, United Airlines is out to do the same.

And what will happen if United gets its way? First, United’s workers will have their retirement benefits significantly reduced. Second, United’s competitors in the airline industry will be forced to do the same thing, because United will emerge from bankruptcy with a significantly lower cost structure as a result of dumping its pension obligations. Third, private companies throughout the United States will engage in copycat strategic bankruptcies. And finally, the taxpayers will be forced to bail

out the PBGC because it does not have sufficient funds to cover all the pension obligations it will be forced to take over.

Can anything be done about this mess? United Airlines workers are fighting back with a strategy they call CHAOS. It will start with rolling one-day strikes and escalate from there. And many Labor activists say they will avoid flying on United Airlines until the company gives up on its strategic bankruptcy ploy. This is a critical fight for all working people. As United goes, so may go the rest of us.



EXECUTIVE BOARD OFFICERS ALAN HUSTON AND MARC AUERBACH

## President’s Report, continued from page 1

Local 587 represents members under six separate labor agreements with King County Metro being our largest contract covering 3500 members. The others are Clallam Transit System, Jefferson Transit Authority, ParaTransit Services of Port Angeles, MV Transportation, and Seattle Personal Transit (SPT). All of labor agreements expire at different times. It seems we’re always getting ready for another contract negotiation. Gosh... that sounds

like I am wallowing in self-pity. I am not I can assure you. I’m always mindful of the overwhelming responsibility I have to our members who have shown their confidence and support to me. Each day I strive to live up to that.

Regards to all...

Be Safe

Lance F. Norton

President/Business Rep

Local 587

## Totally Disgusted, continued from page 5

policy. The discrepancy between Base Chief and Operators version of events is inexplicable.

The refusal of the Base Supervisor to address the discrepancy and correct the pay status of the injured operator is inexcusable. This at a time when management is holding our feet to the fire in regard to sick leave use and policy violation. If anyone of you had committed the same act as this Base Chief you would certainly be subject to discipline. The grievances, if

not upheld at first step, will most likely be forwarded on through the grievance process. If management expects and requires truthful accurate reporting of facts from our members, they should also adhere to the same standards. Double standards break down the trust and respect. Will this injustice be addressed? It needs to be! ALL employees need to be accountable, not just 587 members.



Glen A. Travis

*The Vice President's Report*

# As The Transit World Turns

By Glen A. Travis

Lately things seem to have a soap opera dynamic around here. I think "As The Transit World Turns" would fit for a good descriptive title. Not only do we have the day-to-day workings of meetings, negotiations, and issues in need of solutions, we also have policy and procedure change attempts. Oh yea, I must not forget past practices and attempts to change those practices. With new managers at almost every level of the organization we have indeed been challenged on many fronts. As you were informed months ago, many of Metros' seasoned and senior managers have retired and moved to greener pastures.

The folks that have filled these vacancies all seem to be intelligent and capable individuals. That being said, however, some give the impression that they intend to

shake things up and put their own personalized stamp on things and change transit as we know it. In some cases without regard to contract agreements or long standing past practices. It seems to me, if I were one of the "new guys" on the block I would take some time to get acquainted with how the system and culture of the agency works. What makes it tick, learn why it works the way it does. How did it develop and who helped guide and lead the organization over the years.

I was at a meeting a few weeks ago where some of the "new leaders" talked recklessly regarding their predecessors and basically said things are going to be different now that they are gone. Comments that implied that various departed individuals lacked the right stuff to make tough calls.

I've been in the office of Vice President for 11 years now, I've

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***Take time to understand the history and culture of this very dynamic, diverse and unique organization.***

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seen a lot of managers come and go and I believe most of them tried to make positive contributions. Most of them respected the hard work of their employees and the need for respectful management / labor relations. I offer up for consideration to those that are new on the block, take time to ride the bike. Take time to understand the history and culture of this very dynamic, diverse and unique organization. To merely arrive on the scene with guns drawn, firing off rounds of criticism, change and challenge, know, this will only bring about

a negative response and reaction from all on the receiving end. Specifically, employees, co-managers, labor leaders and heads of government in King County.

Well I am hopeful that things will improve and relations will get back on a productive and positive track. So, with that hope in mind, let's see how things go over the next few weeks. Perhaps the next article I write will report on that improvement and how everything is good and problem free..... What a day for a day dream!

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## A Message of Power, Unity and Action

*From Sister Lori McInnis (9694 Central Base)*

**(Editors note: Last month the News Review printed part one of "A Message of Power, Unity and Action", below is part two)**

### **The Spirited Heart, Solidarity is Strength**

**W**e are members of a very strong Union. This is a gift bestowed upon us by a century of others who fought life and limb to build this strength. Not a single privilege we enjoy today was freely given by management to labor. Liveable wages, eight hour days, childhoods devoted to innocence and education, ethnic, race and gender equalities, safe and healthy work environments, medical and retirement benefits were all fought for with the strength of unions. Unity is the best defense we have against any undermining of our positions. Unity is the best show of gratitude we have to those who went before us. Unity is the best weapon we have to expand and preserve these rights for unprotected workers of today and tomorrow.

While collecting signatures for the part-time petition it was brought to my attention that we have internal solidarity issues. We

have many different work groups in our bargaining unit, full-time drivers, part-time drivers, maintenance workers, supervisors etc. It is easy to be unaware of another group's problems. It is also easy to assume that the problems of one group will not affect yours. I had many fellow employees tell me that they were not affected by the reduction of wage hours on part-time workers and therefore did not need to sign the petition. I had supervisors tell me that they could not sign it because they were supervisors.

I also heard a lot of judgments being passed on fellow union members. Full-time drivers believing part-time drivers should "get a real job." Part-time drivers believing full-time drivers getting over-time should "get a life." No one is in a position to judge the choices another person has made to organize their personal life.

I also want to remind you that we are one workforce. Aside from the daily grind we share friendships, get to know each other's families, golf together, have coffee together, room together, attend each other's weddings and sometimes even marry each other.

And we are one union. The problems that face one group belong to the whole, just as in a marriage. We have obligations to support and uphold the other. Divisions exist only when we allow them and serve only one group: Metro management.

Together we are stronger and smarter. Together we need to stay educated, stay concerned for each other and stay ready to defend our wages and working conditions. Let's show management our strength.

### **The Active Feet Organizing one step at a time**

The actions of others have given us our legally protected rights. Knowledge of those rights gives us our power. Solidarity gives us our strength. But what is action? Simply put, action is using our knowledge and power.

We are called to action as individuals with different skills, time frames, personalities and goals. Some of us may feel inspired to read the contract, that's one step. Others may come to their first meeting, another step. Some may

choose not to fly on Alaska airlines or shop at Wall-Mart all action.

Action begins when an individual takes the initial baby steps, and puts one foot in front of the other. First you exercise your intellect and ask a question. Then you look around and find others who are asking the same thing, and you have gathered strength. Maybe a committee is born. This is collective action, learning together and walking hand in hand for one cause.

I don't know how to talk about solidarity and collective action without sounding like the old hippie that I am. But I do know that the labor movement has been in decline since it's height in the 1960's. Unbridled corporatism is eroding worker's wages and benefits and driving up profits by breaking unions or moving offshore. Government agencies, like public education and mass transit, are facing budget shortfalls due to tax revolts and dwindling federal support.

There are many issues this union will face in the near future. Our best defense is to stay smart and fight together.

# The View from the Buses

By John D. Love

We had a pleasant surprise at the Andy's lunch for June. **Arlene Tupper** showed-up. Also present was **Al French**. We had a nice turn out. I counted fifteen retirees. **Arlene** had bragging rights as her Granddaughter was graduating from high school in a class of 600 students. **Arlene's** granddaughter was the only student to have a 4.0 grade point average and is the class valedictorian. That is what I call a very smart person and **Arlene** has the right to brag. It was great seeing **Larry and LaVaunne Bark** at Andy's in June.

We had a record crowd show up for the July Luncheon at Andy's. I counted 17 in attendance. It was great seeing **Jess Dawson, Jim Shoemaker, Lou Torres, Dan Maher and Dan Sheppard. Don Cook** showed up all the way from Mt. Vernon.

At the July gathering in Burien I was pleasantly surprised when

several fellows showed up that I had not seen for at least 15 to 20 years. **Roger Hafferkamp, John Senear and Terry Lorenzo** all showed up. Roger at one time drove the West Seattle shuttle at night and would carve things out of a plain block of wood. John Senear was very active in Local 587 affairs. He was president of 587 when I was on the executive board. Terry use to work anything that was given to him. All three of these individuals looked well and able. Terry is still driving part time.

## Binnacle List

I received a note from **LaVaunne Bark** informing me that Larry is having an angiogram and will be having an operation on his heart valve. I understand that a faulty valve will be replaced.

## TAPS

I have received some sad news of the passing of **Dennis Joram**.

Dennis passed away 4/15/05. I also have received news of the passing of **Walt Beutlich, Helen Nichols and Don Murray**. **Walt** passed away 12/26/04, **Helen** passed away 11/27/04 and **Don** passed away 11/25/04. **Dennis** was 61 years old, **Don** was 85 years old, **Helen** was 89 and **Walt** was 85. I had reported all of the above but received several queries about the passing of several and I thought I would mention those that have passed away in the last part of 2004. The International "In Transit" has listed two death benefit awards in March and April 2005. They were **Loren Bach and Harry L. Winston**. **Doug Hinton's** passed on June 19th. **Doug** was a full time operator and came back as a part time operator after he retired. I have received a note informing me that **Dick Phillips** lost his wife. Her memorial service was held on Wednesday August 3, 2005 in Mt. Vernon,

Washington. **Dick** requested that everyone leave their black clothes at home. **Ann** belonged to the Red Hatter chapter and they will be present in their Red Hatter regalia.

Our sympathies go out to those families that have lost loved ones. We should remember that the survivors need support in their time of sorrow and we should extend that support to the best of our ability.

Keep in mind, if you have news you want to share with others call me after 10:00AM at (206) 242-8665, or drop me a note at 3227 S. 184th St., SeaTac, Wa. 98188-4955 or E-Mail me at, [Dennerle1@juno.com](mailto:Dennerle1@juno.com)

That's all for now,  
John

## Attention ATU Members

*At the September Charter Meeting  
Latino Caucus Latino Month  
Celebration of Latin America  
Food served at 7:30*

## A.T.L. Restriction Reminder

*If you received a P/T assignment for Fall 2005 based upon your restriction, you will not be able to change your availability such that you would be available on the A.T.L. for more than three days per week without Union approval. Each Base Planner will be getting a list of those P/T Operators who are subject to this restriction. Thank you for your cooperation.*

## UPCOMING AT LOCAL 587

SEPT. 2 – Nominations close for Facilities Maintenance Shop Steward.

SEPT. 6 – 8 – Vehicle Maintenance pick. Please watch your bulletin boards for postings and more information.

SEPT. 8 – Nominations close for Shop Steward positions for MV and SPT.

SEPT. 8 – Nominations open for Shop Steward positions for Metro Operations and Vehicle Maintenance.

SEPT 10 – New shake-up for Facilities Maintenance begins.

## TUNNEL CLOSING

### BIG CHANGES FOR FALL SHAKEUP FOR ALL KING COUNTY METRO MEMBERS

The last day of operation for the downtown Seattle Transit Tunnel will be Friday, September 23, 2005. On the first day of the Fall Operator/Vehicle Maintenance shakeup, the tunnel will be closed. It is expected to remain closed for two years so that Sound Transit can do the retrofit necessary for use by both buses and light rail.

There will be big impacts on Transit Operators, First Line Supervisors and Facilities Maintenance folks. It also means big changes for the ridership, which

will affect not only Transit Operators, but our Rider Information and other Customer Service members as well.

Watch your base bulletins for potential adjustments in routing or service, or other important information related to the tunnel closure. To see what the general public is getting in terms of information, visit [www.seattletunnel.org](http://www.seattletunnel.org) or [www.metrotransit.gov](http://www.metrotransit.gov).

And remember, folks, it impacts all of us together. Be kind to each other.

## Scholarship Awarded

*Congratulations to Transit Operator Brother Carl Jackson and his daughter Kathryn who has been selected to receive a \$2000.00 A.T.U. Clare Davidson Memorial Scholarship Award. Kathryn graduated with honors from Auburn Riverside High School and will be attending Central Washington University this fall. Best wishes to Kathryn and kudos to her proud dad.*