

DECEMBER 2001

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ATU

LOCAL 587

News Review



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VOL. XXIV, NO. 12

The President's Report

Contract 2001

by Lance F. Norton



Lance F. Norton

As the definition goes, that's where we are in negotiations. However, this is no surprise. I anticipated it would happen just as it has. For this very reason both the mediator and arbitrator were selected well in advance of the expiration of our contract. As reported in the last issue of the *News Review*, arbitration has been scheduled for two weeks in January and, if needed, one week in February. Much has been accomplished in as far as changes that both sides have agreed to, and those issues have been TA'd and will not be affected by arbitration.

As required by bylaw, informational meetings were held on November 1st. At that time a synopsis was handed out to all members listing all sections within all articles that have had changes, both major and minor, as well as the sections that will remain current language. For those with

Much has been accomplished in as far as changes that both sides have agreed to, and those issues have been TA'd and will not be affected by arbitration.

computer access, the synopsis is posted on the Web site at www.atu587.com. A few other areas have been agreed to since then, but the major issues that were open at the time remain so.

Both sides have been instructed by mediator Fred Rosenberry to prepare their list

of issues to be presented to the arbitrator. The union and management have been advised to keep our list of issues as reasonably short as possible. Long lists from both sides seem to make arbitrators grumpy. The list from each side is presented to the

continued on page 6

Impasse?!

WEBSTER'S (NEW WORLD) Dictionary defines the word impasse as follows:

impasse (im'pas',im pas') n. [Fr] a situation offering no escape or resolution, as a deadlocked argument

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The Month at a Glance

Business of the Membership

At the November 2001 cycle of membership meetings, the following business was conducted:

- Motion to overturn the Executive Board decision to hold a retreat in November was approved.
- Motion to endorse the statement by the San Francisco Labor Council was not approved.

The following members were November pot draw winners: Randy Stevenson at the Charter meeting, John Moore at the morning meeting, Michael Pollock at JTA. CTS pot draw winner was Marylyn McKeon. Rolling CTS pot draw of \$350.00 was won by Linda Stern. Congratulations Linda! Next month's pot draw will be \$25.00

IN LOVING MEMORY...

As long as I can I will look at this world for both of us. As long as I can I will laugh with the birds, I will sing with the flowers, I will pray to the stars, for both of us.

—Sascha

Donald Eugene Hintz, lost his battle with cancer on September 8, 2001. Donald was an active member at the time of his passing. He came to Local 587 in June of 1976, and retired last December. He returned as a Part-time Operator in February of this year and was last out of Central Base.

William F. Linkem passed away September 29, 2001. Bill came to Local 587 as a busdriver in February of 1973. He was an active member working out of South Base at the time of his passing.

Orris Wesley Thompson Jr., passed away September 29, 2001. Brother Thompson was a 50 year member, having joined us as a Transit Operator in 1949. He was a Supervisor at the time of his retirement.

Reinhold Nicklaus, passed away October 24, 2001. Brother Nicklaus was a 50 year

member, having joined us as a Transit Operator in July of 1946. He was 84 at the time of his passing.

James D. Wade, passed away October 24, 2001. Jim had a long, history of active participation in Local 587. He joined us in August of 1968 and over the years served his fellow members as Executive Board Officer, acting Vice President, and, having retired in 1985, served as Chairman of the ATU Retirees Chapter for many years. Jim also served as CEO of the Metro Credit Union for a number of years. He will be most fondly remembered as the Master of Ceremonies at the Retiree Christmas dinners. Jim was 83 at the time of his passing.

Wayne P. Burrage passed away November 2, 2001, after a long illness. Wayne was a Stores Driver, having joined us in November of 1986. He was an active member at the time of his passing.

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

Executive Board Report

November 27, 2001

Officers present: President Lance Norton, Vice President Glen Travis, Financial Secretary Paul Griffin, Recording Secretary Jennie Gil, Linda Anderson, Paul Bachtel, John Bellinger, Lisa Carter, Chris Daniels, Katherine Eckhardt, John Farrell, Ninus Hopkins, Garth MacCoy, David Magidman, Brian Sherlock, Dee Wakenight, Shirley Walker, Mike Whitehead.

Dan Linville was on vacation, Joe Mangiameli was in JTA negotiations, Mike Rochon was out ill.

The following business was conducted:

- Motion by Shirley Walker to recommend taking Michael Campbell's grievance to arbitration.

- Motion by Linda Anderson to donate \$1000 to Rail Transit Now and write a letter of support for full funding of Sound Transit addressed to Norman Maneta and our congressional delegation with copies to Rail Transit Now and Sound Transit.

- Motion by Paul Griffin to send two officers to the Northwest Conference Executive Board meeting January 17 through 20 in Spokane, WA., paying per diem, travel and lodging.

- Motion by Dee Wakenight to set the budget for the Northwest Conference in June of 2002 at \$15,000.

Tentative Agenda

Membership Meetings:

CHARTER MEETING
Thursday, December 6, 2001
8:00 p.m.
IBEW Hall Auditorium
2700 1st Ave., Seattle, WA

MORNING MEETING
Friday, December 7, 2001
10:30 a.m.
IBEW Hall Auditorium
2700 1st Ave., Seattle, WA

JEFFERSON TRANSIT
Monday, December 10, 2001
8:00 p.m.
Port Townsend Rec Center
Port Townsend, WA

CLALLAM TRANSIT
Tuesday, December 11, 2001
7:00 p.m.
Vern Burton Memorial Building, Port Angeles, WA

Among topics to be discussed:

King County/Metro and JTA negotiations, arbitration updates.

Unfinished Business:

- Motion made at the CTS membership meeting to take Brother Kenny McCormick's grievance to arbitration. Motion must be voted on at the December Charter, Morning and JTA membership meetings.

REMEMBER! DECEMBER IS TURKEY DRAW MONTH!

ATU LOCAL 587

News Review

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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
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Special Classifications Supervisor
Clallam/Jefferson County SPT

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GARTH MACCOY
LINDA R. ANDERSON
DEE WAKENIGHT
BRIAN SHERLOCK
DANIEL F. LINVILLE
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DAVID MAGIDMAN
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 signature, 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
2700 First Avenue, Rm 204
Seattle, WA 98121

Shop Steward Training

By Executive Board Officer Dee Wakenight

NOVEMBER 14, 2001 WAS the date for the latest training seminar for Shop Steward basics. The title of "New" does not apply to all those who participated in this event. Facilities, MVT, (formerly Laidlaw) and operators from around the system made up this group of enthusiastic union members willing to give of themselves and help other members by serving as Shop Steward.

Executive Board Officer Paul Bachtel and I were instructors for this session. We started out with a bang, and then we just kept on rolling. Even with their busy schedules all four of the full-time union officers were able to make at least a cameo appearance at this seminar.

Recording Secretary Jennie Gil was able to address the group at length on the finer points of FMLA (Family Medical Leave Act), KCFML (King County Family Medical Leave), short term disability, long term disability, and state industrial. It is crucial that you know where

to turn for correct answers. Once again Recording Secretary Gil encouraged all stewards to submit items to the Union's monthly news letter for publication.

Financial Secretary Paul Griffin was in rare form as he discussed the locals' financial aspects and rules regarding pay. Brother Griffin is the resource for any and all money questions. Also he is the person for all inquiries into pension credit.

Vice President Glen Travis is the person for grievance handling, writing, presenting; and time lines associated with the entire process. Brother Travis is the lead on the Shop Steward program.

President Lance Norton gave us a brief update on negotiations. President Norton expressed his thanks to all those present on their willingness to give of themselves to assist our brothers and sisters in need. We were updated on the mediation and arbitration schedule and assured that should we enter into arbitration we will go the

distance and get a settlement from the arbitrator rather than cut it short.

The future of Local 587 looks

bright indeed if these new Shop Stewards are any indication of what's to come. Welcome aboard, hang on and enjoy the ride.

**SHOP
STEWARDS'
CORNER**

ATU Women's Committee Report

By Suzanne Hebrank

THE WOMEN'S COMMITTEE had a very busy summer, planning and preparing for our first annual "Dancin' To Beat Cancer Bash." We had a wonderful DJ from KBSG, lots of food, and some pretty nice prizes. Safeway, the Seattle Sonics and Seattle Storm, Keg Restaurants, Red Robin, and Lewis and Clark Theatres donated prizes. Leslie Walker and Tiffany Rochon, our fantastic volunteer childcare providers, were ready to keep the little ones occupied while the parents and teens enjoyed the food and music. There were several contests, such as bubble gum blowing, hula-hoops, and the twist. The music ranged from the 50's to the 90's, there was something for everyone's taste. Requests were gladly taken. The dance was very successful; we raised \$1077.31, which was donated to the American Cancer Society. We would appreciate any

feedback from those of you who attended so we can make next year's event even better. Currently, we are planning for the second annual "Dancin' To Beat Cancer Bash" to be tentatively scheduled for October 12, 2002. Remember to mark that date on your calendar.

We are always looking for enthusiastic new members for our committee. We will be having a planning meeting in February. If you are interested in joining us, please plan to attend this meeting. Talk to one of the present committee members and we will give you the details. In the meantime, we will see you around, either at the bases or at the union meetings.

Current members are: Tonya Gildon and Kerrie Tapscott (CO); Suzanne Hebrank (RO); April Quiñonez (CM); Kim Rochon and Dee Wakenight (SO); and Shirley Walker (AO).

Upcoming in December/January...

December 1 — Seattle Chapter of the Latino Caucus meeting, 5:00 p.m., IBEW Executive Board room.

December 7 — Last day for Shop Steward nominations for Clallam Transit and Clallam Paratransit.

December 13 — Retiree Chapter Christmas Dinner, Red Lion Inn, Tukwila, 1:00 p.m.

December 15 — Metro Employees Historic Vehicle Association's Seattle Holiday Light Tour, 7:00 p.m., S. Main Street and 3rd Avenue S. Special loading for employees will be at Airport Way S. and S. Massachusetts St (south side of Atlantic Maintenance), 6:30 p.m. Tickets are \$5 for adults, \$4 for seniors and \$4 for children 2 through 11.

December 18 — Executive Board Meeting.

December 20 — PART TIME RESTRICTION FORMS DUE AT THE WINDOW BY 7:45 P.M. LAST DAY TO TURN THEM IN. NO LATE RESTRICTION FORMS WILL BE ACCEPTED.

December 26 - 30 — (M/KC) Part-Time Operators pick preview, Central/Atlantic quiet room.

December 26 - 30 — (M/KC) Full-time Operators preview, Central/Atlantic classroom.

January 5, 6, 12 and 13 — (M/KC) Part time Operator pick, Central/Atlantic quiet room.

January 2 through 4; 7 through 11; and 14 — (M/KC) Full time Operator pick, Central/Atlantic classroom.

January 15 — Nominations open for Shop Steward for Operations and Vehicle Maintenance, Metro/King County.

ARBITRATION UPDATE

- Kenny McCormick:** Grieved failure to follow FLSA requirements for travel time for board/report/ATL operators. Schedule pending. Potential resolutions being discussed.
- Dean Landon:** Grieved improper assignment of overtime. Arbitration held July 24th, 2001. Arbitrator ruled in favor of the grievant. Grievance final.
- Bobby Wood:** (Laidlaw) Grieved termination for gross negligence. Schedule pending.
- Paul Queen:** Grieved termination due to gross misconduct and falsification of a Metro document. Arbitration scheduled for January 29 and 30.
- Liza Bateman:** Grieved termination due to gross misconduct and falsification of a Metro document. Arbitration scheduled for January 29 and 30, 2002.
- Shawn Howard:** Grieved separation. Arbitration scheduled for January 23 and 24, 2002.
- Mario Clack:** Grieved termination for attendance. Arbitration scheduled for February 25 and 26, 2002.
- Bill Clifford et.al.:** Grieved scheduled cancellation of work for Part-Time Operators on Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve without compensation. Arbitration schedule for December 13, 2001.

Letters to the Editor...

Fare and Loathing

Editor's note: The following letter was submitted by Brother Rick Gleason to the Seattle Weekly in response to their recent article "Fare and Loathing..."

Dear Editor,

As a Metro Transit driver for the past ten years I'd like to reply to Erica Barnett's recent article "Fare and Loathing — A commuter reveals the seamy underside of riding the bus" in which she shares her six diary entries of a month-long experience riding our transit system.

I see nothing new here relative to what I read in this paper regarding Metro Transit. Much of it can best be described as caricatures of fact. While there is so much here ripe for comment, since Ms. Barnett's descriptions are sometimes ridiculous exaggerations, half-truths, or simply falsehoods buried under the guise of "news," (give me a break!) I can only respond with just a few points.

It has been my experience that many of our regular passengers, as well as visitors to our city, often express their gratitude to us for the job that we do and the good system that Metro really is, despite Barnett's cynical ranting. I've even seen praise in this publication. I personally use Metro buses when shopping and taking my boys to Mariner games and other excursions in the city, although I own my own car and live in another community. This too despite the fact I spend the greatest part of my week inside this environment. It's convenient and certainly beats dealing with the traffic and parking problems despite the occasional negatives folks like to dwell on. It's noteworthy too that during my career Metro has twice been rated the top transit system on the continent by the North American Transit Association. So you see Ms. Barnett it's not just our local politicians that have praise for our transit system.

Despite what Ms. Barnett wrote, it is NOT a "violation ... of one of the most basic Metro rules" to refuse a ride to those best described as "problem passengers." I have done so on a number of occasions when a customer is verbally abusive or in other ways refuses to follow the simple rules. I know where to draw the line and when it becomes necessary to call police for assistance in these circumstances, the offender is often reminded that "riding the bus is a privilege, not a right." Let's not forget that. Yes it's public transportation, but on my bus with that privilege comes certain minimal expectations of behavior as defined in the "Code of Conduct" posted in most of our coaches. I practice this not just for my own sanity but for the comfort and safety of my passengers, who have thanked me on occasion for taking this initiative. I only wish it was practiced more often by my fellow drivers.

As Barnett points out, we transit drivers have to contend with a lot. Not only do we deal regularly with rude customers, and those with personal hygiene problems, but we have drivers and bicyclists who use our roadways with little regard for others around them or their own safety. Barnett rides the bus at best an hour or so a day. I drive them all day long, five days a week. Would she care to read my journal?

Of course the system could be better. And like every profession, including newspaper writers, we have our share of those who could do a better job. I make no excuse for drivers who have lost patience with our riding public, especially in their service to the disabled and the elderly who depend so much on us. Rudeness is simply inexcusable. But oft' times what is dismissed as rudeness is simply frank candor on the drivers part. We don't have the time or the working environment in which to negotiate. Abide by the rules, pay your fare, don't disturb others and there'll be no problem. It's a two-way street and simple for most of our riding public.

Metro drivers learn quickly in their careers to have no expectations of hearing many positive comments rendered in our direction. We do learn however to get used to the nearly daily verbal abuses and assaults, that come with the process of simply trying to do our job. We're public servants, and representative of local government and bureaucracy. As such we're easy targets for those who desperately search to prove their relevance. I can handle it though! I get paid well, certainly far better than the

majority of our passengers, and I accept the hazards of the job.

Many Metro drivers work earnestly, each and every day, at making the system work in a timely and safe manner. We want the service to be as convenient to our passengers as best we can. We strive unceasingly to these ends despite all the distractions that come our way to make what is already a challenging job that much more difficult.

Rick Gleason, ID #3455
Central Operations

Holiday Lights

Dear Editor:

Enclosed is a flyer for our Holiday Lights tour we have scheduled for Saturday, December 15th, 2001...[**ed.note:** please see *Upcoming in December* for further information]

...Our group of Metro employee members and non-employee associates has been offering fan trip excursions for the last seventeen years. We are proud of the long history of transit in Seattle and King County we have been able to save for generations to come. We include 33 current or retired members of

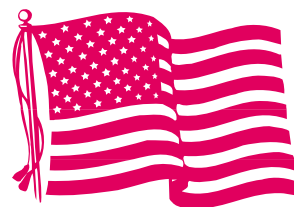
Local 587 (including myself), and also members of management who were union at one time during their career with Metro.

We are also looking for new members that are interested in keeping this part of King County history alive. We welcome all our union brothers and sisters to join, and to remember how truly lucky we are today as drivers, operating vehicles with power steering and brakes, and signs we don't have to crank forever with our hands.

Douglas Thomson, #2505
Secretary, MEHVA

Leaves of Absence and Continuation of Benefits for Uniformed Service

RECENTLY KING COUNTY Executive Ron Sims passed an Executive Order benefiting those employees who volunteer for, or are ordered to active duty as a result of the September 11th terrorist attacks. The Order provides for the following:



1. Continuation of benefits to provide medical, dental and life insurance benefits to benefit-eligible employees called or volunteering for active duty or active duty training in any branch of the uniformed services and their families.

2. Any benefit-eligible employee who was a member of the reserves of any branch of the uniformed services on or before the September 11th attack, who is ordered to involuntary active duty thus requiring a leave of absence from his/her County position, and who has exhausted annual military leave as provided by the King County Code or a collective bargaining agreement, will be granted a paid leave of absence from their County po-

sition at their regular base rate of pay, less the amount of military pay to which they are entitled.

If you fall into one of these two categories, please contact your base chief or OHRM for further information.

Additionally, the following Local 587 members have been called to service: Arthur Nelson, Stephen Flanagan, Eric A. Stewart and Daniel Nuner. Please keep them in your thoughts and prayers. If anyone knows of other members who have been called into the service of our country, please notify this office.

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:

Jennie Gil,
News Review Editor
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2700 First Avenue, Rm 204
Seattle, WA 98121

NOTICE TO ALL READERS

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

On observing transit – Toronto, Ontario

By Executive Board Officer Linda Anderson

THIS SEPTEMBER, I RODE transit in several major eastern cities. There are some interesting differences between the systems in New York, Toronto, Washington, D.C. and Seattle. I begin my story in Toronto, where I spent nearly a week at the ATU International Convention.

Toronto has streetcars, subways, commuter rail, buses, walkways and bike paths. I took my bicycle right on to the streetcars and subways during off-peak, and no one batted an eye. I also rode it through the city's underground walkways, which were wide, brightly lit, and lined with shops. I noticed a network of overhead walkways above the city, as well.

My husband Craig took a ferry out to a nearby group of islands. One of the islands had almost no cars. The houses were connected with paths, giving a feeling of community undivided by roads and cars. Craig rode our bicycle around the island on a beautiful marshland boardwalk.

Taking transit in Toronto was a real treat, because second only to New York, Toronto has the best transit system in North America. Because it is so outstanding, people in Toronto really support their transit system. According to Toronto Transit's Chief General Manager, Richard Ducharme, who spoke at the ATU convention, 90 percent of Toronto's 2.5 million inhabitants use transit, though not all ride regularly. These riders come from close to 200 different nationalities and speak scores of languages.

An amazing 85 percent of costs are recovered from the fare box,

at a rate that is the highest in North America. The remainder is funded by local property taxes. By comparison, Metro recovers about 25 percent of its operating costs from the fare box.

We had one free day before the Convention, and Craig and I used it to go on a bike ride along Toronto's lakefront bike/walking path. As we took in the sights, we noticed how the streets, housing and parks fit beautifully together. On one side of the street, our path ran through a park along the lake. On the other side were condos or apartments. The street in between had bike lanes on the right sides and a wide left lane each way shared by cars and the streetcar. In some parts of the waterfront the housing was glitzy modern glass buildings. But we also saw much more modest housing which appeared to be for low income or regular working people which was right by the park and the lake and only blocks from the center of town.

Twice we ventured away from the city center into some of Toronto's neighborhoods, where we found pedestrians, streetcars and cars nonchalantly sharing the same streets. It reminded me of San Francisco, where I noticed pedestrians and traffic meandering about the streetcars in a relaxed manner. There, I clung to the outside of the famous Powell Street cable car, whizzing past the oncoming car within easy touching distance. All of this would never get by the safety officers at Metro, but somehow these cities seem to make it work with convenience and charm.

Most of Toronto's 10,000 tran-

sit workers are represented by ATU Local 113, a local outstanding for its partnership-like cooperation with management and its commitment to raising a record \$840,000 for United Way, something which earns transit workers a lot of respect in the community. Local 113 has 8,000 members, making it about twice the size of Local 587. In addition to this are the members of the local that runs Toronto's commuter rail, called Go Transit, Local 1587. Delegates got to

ride the GO train, on a special run set up for the convention-goers to nearby Niagara Falls. The train was double-decked, with comfortable seats and a smooth fast ride.

I can't think of a better city to host transit workers than Toronto with all of its different transit options so easily accessible. It should be an example and an inspiration for us all. Next month I will continue this report with my experiences in Manhattan and Washington, D.C.



Craig Anderson stands in the bike lane. Streetcars share lanes with cars.



Housing, streetcars and bikeways border Toronto's miles-long waterfront park.

Capitol Layover: January 31, 2002

By Mia Segal

SAVE THIS DATE: THURSDAY, January 31, 2002. Mark your calendars, check your date books, scan your palm pilots, and get your name in the layoff book for a Local 587 meet and greet with state legislators in Olympia. This is a great op-

portunity for us to meet with state legislators to discuss transit and labor issues. This is the time when we can voice our concerns face to face with the people who represent us. It's a chance for us to get to know them and gives them a chance to get to

know us a little bit too.

This event is being organized by your C.O.P.E. committee; We'd like to fill a bus with Local 587 members and drive down to Olympia. The day will begin with a brief workshop conducted by Sherry Appleton, lobbyist for

the Amalgamated Transit Union Legislative Council. (The A.T.U.L.C. represents transit workers on a statewide basis and is comprised of all A.T.U. locals in Washington.) Then we will break up into twos and threes and visit with legislators representing the districts in which we ourselves live. At this time, we expect significant legislative issues to include: improving retirement, protecting wages, and approving and/or maintaining stable transit funding.

If you'd like to join your union sisters and brothers in a day of legislative visibility and union solidarity, then please fill out the form at left and return it to the Union Office care of C.O.P.E.

NAME: _____ ID: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY, STATE, ZIP _____

WORKSITE: _____ LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT: _____

PHONE: _____ EMAIL: _____

Send to: ATU Local 587 • c/o C.O.P.E. • 2700 First Avenue, Rm 204 • Seattle, WA 98121

Contract 2001, continued from page 1

mediator for certification, meaning the mediator certifies the parties have discussed these specific issues (in most cases, *ad nauseam*) and cannot reach agreement or resolution. The certified issues are then presented to the arbitrator, and those and *only* those will be decided by the arbitrator.

The deadline for submission of both side's impasse issues is Thursday, November 29th. Although our list, as of this writing, has not been finalized, most of the following issues will be on our list: wage increase, COLA, benefits equity adjustments, longevity pay, part-time holidays and vacation accrual. There may be a few others. We have rejected the COLA as offered by management because it is less than what we have now. Currently, our COLA has a 3% floor, or guarantee, and management is offering a 2% floor in keeping with the rest of the County labor agreements and non-represented

employee COLA's. We have also rejected, in lieu of our November 1st COLA, a sixty-six cent (\$.66) wage increase.

On the positive side, thanks to a concerted effort by both management and your Union, we have negotiated a *significant* improvement to our sick leave verification policy. As stated earlier, many other improvements have been negotiated as well.

So that's where we are right now. It certainly looks like we're headed for arbitration. We are prepared and confident. Should my phone ring and management wants to talk, of course I will listen. However, I don't intend to waste your officers' time until and unless management realizes that we are serious when it comes to the monetary issues.

A date not forgotten

Friday, November 23rd marked the third anniversary of the Aurora Bridge tragedy that took the life of Brother Mark

McLaughlin. At 10:00 a.m., day after Thanksgiving, I went to North Base and placed flowers at the memorial plaque honoring Mark. General Manager Rick Walsh also placed flowers on behalf of all County employees. Then, at 11:00 a.m. at Mt. Holyrood Cemetery, I met Rick Walsh, Bellevue Base Supervisor Bonnie Hansen, North Base Chief Jeff Wamsley, Executive Board Officer Paul Bachtel, and

a small group of members, to place a wreath on Mark's grave in remembrance, from all members of Local 587.

As this is our last issue before the Holiday Season, I wish to extend my best wishes to all members of Local 587 and their families for a joyous Holiday Season, and a healthy, happy 2002.

Be safe.
LFN

...most of the following issues will be on our list:

wage increase, COLA, benefits equity adjustments, longevity pay, part-time holidays and vacation accrual.

In Memory...

Mark McLaughlin

June 13, 1954

to

November 27, 1998



Glen A. Travis

The Vice President's Report

By Glen A. Travis

Debate and different ideas are important and add to the diverse culture of our Union.

contract to vote on, and be able to determine our future by vote instead of directive. Thanks to all of you for your support and understanding during this stressful period. Have a peaceful and enjoyable Holiday Season and keep the faith. We are prepared to see this challenge through to the end.

Duties and Responsibilities of Shop Stewards

Over the last year, many new shop stewards have been through steward training. When one receives the basic training, they leave thinking they are now going to really help make things better. It is our hope that does indeed happen. However, I offer these words of caution: take things one step at a time, one day at a time. The issues and challenges of our work place and contract are such that one must take care to develop one's skills, and full understanding of a sometimes complex and adversarial work environment. Do not make the mistake of thinking that now that you have had basic steward's

training, you know all there is to know. Take your time learning through experience. Learn from those that have been there before. I am not saying that you will or should agree with everything your Union leadership professes. Debate and different ideas are important and add to the diverse culture of our Union.

Processing Of Grievances

Part of your elected officers' unpleasant responsibility is to make decisions regarding the processing of grievances that may not set well with members or grievants. Our responsibility is to uphold our labor agreement. If the merits of a grievance are lacking with regards to contract violation, and the likelihood of

prevailing with argument before an arbitrator seems unlikely, we do not pursue a grievance. This is part of our obligation to not spend the membership's hard-earned dues dollars chasing after no-win situations. While this is upsetting to both members and stewards, it is important to recognize that being an officer or steward has its political pressures. It is not always easy to stand before a member or group of members and tell them they do not have a valid grievance. However, being upfront and informing them of what is a valid grievance, not just a gripe or complaint, will earn respect in the long run. Hang in there stewards, know your contract and work together in solidarity.

Contract Negotiations

CONTRACT TALKS HAVE reached a point of being close to impasse. The possibility of taking this negotiation effort to arbitration seems very likely. However, your officers are still working to find the way to bring about an agreement that this membership can review and vote on. I believe that an agreement is what this membership wants. The wages and benefits that the County is offering at this time miss the mark. We are still trying to negotiate the package we believe this membership rightfully deserves.

We will know by mid-December if the scheduled arbitration will occur. I hope we will have a



Jennie Gil

The Recording Secretary's Report

Part time Shakeup 101

By Recording Secretary Jennie Gil

IT IS TIME ONCE AGAIN FOR THAT phenomenon we call the shakeup. Regardless of seniority or classification, shakeup time is greeted by all participants with a gamut of reactions, from anticipation and eagerness to get off a torturous run or shift, to the dread of not being able to pick a run or shift that will suit or fold into one's personal life. At Metro/King County, Local 587 is responsible for the part-time shakeup. This is unique to all other classifications and has an interesting history behind it, which could well be fodder for a future article. But for the purposes of this month's report, it is those processes involved in the part-time pick that I want to review, especially for the benefit of new members who have never experienced this phenomenon.

It is your time to pick.

What does that mean? What do you mean I have to show up? What happens if I don't show up? But I have to have an a.m. piece of work! After all, I hired on to be an a.m. driver! But its my time to pick right now, what do you mean I have to wait? These and other questions have come up time and time again. I hope to pass on basic information to answer some of those questions and ease shakeup stress.

The first and foremost thing a new part time Operator needs to know is that your work for each shakeup is picked by seniority. If you do not show up, it is the Union's responsibility to pick a piece of work for you. It is crucial to your livelihood and the structure of your daily life for the next three or four months to show up on time for pick. Seniority lists will be out at the worksites by the middle of December. Check for your pick day and time. If you do not find yourself on the list, please call the Union office and ask for me. If you do not find me, leave me a voice mail with your name, ID, and qualification date. I will straighten it out.

Part-time pick is conducted at Central/Atlantic base, upstairs in the "quiet room" at the back of the building. You are allowed into the pick room twenty minutes ahead of your pick time to look around. When you arrive, do not wait to be called into the room, check in at the front door. If things are not going well, or there is some problem with the pick, you may be asked to wait outside, possibly even after your pick time. Just be patient.

Restriction forms

One of the biggest problems we have with part time pick is over restrictions forms. As a part-time Operator, you have the right to restrict yourself to either a.m. or p.m. work. You do not get to restrict to base, route or report times. Restrictions amount to usurping the seniority of those ahead of you who did not have the need to restrict, so the Union takes these forms very seriously.

All deadlines for restriction forms are strictly followed. The pick crew verifies the information on the forms. An a.m. restriction form is for those who **MUST** have a.m. work, and a p.m. restriction form is for those who **MUST** have p.m. work. Please make sure you use the correct form. If you submit a restriction form and we reach lock-out, you will be required to honor that restriction.

Lockout is when there is the exact number of slots for either a.m. or p.m. as there are restriction forms. For example, if we have 100 a.m. slots available system-wide, and 100 restriction forms on file, we go into a.m. lockout. This means that unless you have a restriction form submitted for that shakeup, **you may not pick a.m. work, regardless of your seniority.** If something comes up after you submit your form that frees you from needing to be restricted, you need to contact the pick coordinator or the Recording Secretary and rescind your restriction form. You may rescind a form all the way up to that point where we go into lockout. Usually it's a.m. goes first, but we have had occasion where we hit p.m. lockout, or don't get to a.m. lockout until almost the very end of pick. But one never knows. If you must have a.m. or must have p.m., PLEASE, fill out and submit a form.

How to do a no-show pick

There are many, many reasons people do not make it to pick on time, most are unforeseen circumstances beyond our control. Traffic is often a culprit. Central/Atlantic Base is located just down the street from the baseball stadium. Soon there will be a football stadium there as well. Pick often runs concurrently with other civic events. Factor in any special events occurring at the stadium and plan to arrive early.

If there is even the slightest doubt you may not arrive in time

If you must have a.m. or must have p.m., PLEASE, fill out and submit a form.

for your pick, submit an absentee pick form prior to pick. The absentee form will only be used if you do not report to the pick room in person. If you do not make it in person, and you have not turned in an absentee pick form, and you're not lucky enough to reach the pick room by telephone just prior to your pick occurring, a union representative will pick for you.

The union has a long-standing policy to make a no-show pick based on your current assignment. If you do not arrive by ten minutes prior to your scheduled pick time, your pick sheet is handed off to the union representative, who will look up your current assignment. We use the ten minute mark because it can take time to research an assignment, and we do keep pick going on schedule. If your current as-

signment is open, it will be picked for you. If it is not open there are certain guidelines and restrictions used to pick for a no-show with no absentee pick form on file. As the union rep does not know why you picked the assignment you currently have and/or whether you may have a conflict with a second job or a daycare issue, the union representative will usually select work that reports on or after your current report time and quits on or before your current quit time. You will be placed at your current base as long as it is still open, and if not, at the base closest, if at all possible. Due to these guidelines and restrictions, often the tripper picked for you by the Union is substantially shorter than the tripper you could have picked yourself. Oc-

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Part-time Pick—Don't Call Us And We Won't Call You!

By Executive Board Officer Paul Bachtel

A NEW TREND SEEMS TO BE DEVELOPING in the part-time pick room. More operators are electing to phone the pick room at their designated pick time rather than attending the pick in person. Telephone picking works fine as long as the pick is running on schedule and the phone line is not busy. The pick can be delayed for any number of reasons, and if a delay occurs your designated pick time will change to whenever your name is reached on the seniority list. If the pick is delayed or if the phone line is busy, telephone picking can be a nightmare.

During the Spring 2001 part-time pick a significant delay occurred and the phone line became clogged with operators

trying to phone the pick room to determine their pick time. There was no way for the pick crew to give a definitive answer as to when a particular scheduled pick would actually occur. All that could be done was to suggest the operator call back in ten or fifteen minutes. Cell phones have exacerbated the problem with broken scratchy calls that further jam the single phone line available in the pick room.

PLEASE!! Don't try to pick by phone unless you absolutely have to. Come to part-time pick on time and in person. If there is any possibility you may not arrive on time, it is in your best interest to submit an absentee pick form prior to the start of pick.

We're Getting Older

Compiled by Carl C. Jackson

WELL, LET'S FACE IT, OUR AGE group (I'm 52) will be the largest group of senior citizens in United States history! Recently, the U.S. Census Bureau announced that between 1990 and 1998 the national median age grew from 32.8 to 35.2 years old. That change, and the increased proportion of people age 65 and older, is creating a demographic revolution in the larger U.S. cities and metropolitan areas that may provide a new market for transit to serve. But, will transit REALLY serve our needs?

Most of you, as transit operators, have noticed how hard it is for a lot of our older passengers (I HATE the word "customers" when referring to the riding public) to climb aboard the New Flyer artics. The steps are steep, and slippery when wet. Those coaches were originally specced out to be "low-floor" units. As you can imagine, politics got its ugly head into the procurement process, and the rest is history. Imagine just how much easier it would be to load many of our passengers that use walkers and canes aboard a Metro bus that has no stairs! On routes that serve areas where there are local shopping districts near rest homes, it's always a consideration when the Social Security

checks arrive in the mail because we notice that there are many more senior citizens at the bus stops during mid-day. Again, is our transit system really serving our needs?

Some Insight:

The suburban explosion of the past 40 years occurred for many reasons; one of which is the fact that many people wanted a safer place to raise their children and many American cities, particularly bigger, older ones, were deemed unsafe in many ways. Center city public schools were deemed inferior to the newer schools in the suburban fringe. However, attitudes of the suburban residents are apt to change after the children are raised and then living in the suburbs becomes increasingly inconvenient, mainly because constant driving becomes a necessity to get almost anywhere. I'm sure many of you can relate to falling in behind a white-haired senior citizen that's driving 10-mph below posted speed limit and appears unsure of how to deal with being in traffic...that driver will be ANY of us in just a quarter of the current century!

Suburban driving was an easy task 30 or 40 years ago when many of us now reaching 55-60 were still living in those very

same households. In many places around Puget Sound, today's traffic congestion is worse in the suburbs than in cities. Older people do not drive as much as younger people, for a variety of reasons. While that statement might seem an obvious fact, it would appear to have been overlooked by quite a few of our suburban planners and politicians. The American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) reports that the typical 60+ year old drives only about half as many miles as someone 30 years of age or younger. If that's true, then with today's active lifestyle for so many seniors, how are they (or us in our later years) supposed to get around in a safe, timely and non-obstructive manner? Public transit, that's how!

A Potential Rise In Ridership:

Older people driving less have the potential to create more riders. But, the transit system has to be responsive on many levels to make that ridership feel that it can depend on getting around in an efficient manner. I'm from New York City. I never owned a car in all of my formative youth. In fact, my grandparents, who came to the U.S. from the West Indies in 1919, never owned cars or had drivers' licenses! They didn't need to because the transit system was, and is more than capable of being depended on to get them around. We never needed schedules in order to catch a bus or subway train; if you missed one, another showed up in just a few minutes. A New York City resident (as with many larger cities) need not drive a car to see the Yankees at Yankee Stadium, go to a good restaurant, go to a movie or play, or attend an event at a museum or an ethnic festival. A simple subway/bus ride will do. That has the additional effect of keeping DWI problems down to a minimum because the transit system runs 24 hours and is always available in all corners of the city.

The downside of all this potential ridership is if older people decide to remain in the suburbs, it is extremely difficult to provide quality transit service to those living in cul-de-sacs of remote subdivisions. Recently, the director of Senior Citizen East, a senior rights advocacy group in Washington, D.C., has pointed out that, "Suburbia is not a good place to grow old

because once you retire from driving, you're stuck."

It appears that some older people are beginning to move back into the downtown areas of many cities. The trend is not huge at present because of the high rents for most in-city locations that might qualify as "desirable neighborhoods" for many seniors. In recent decades many cities have invested heavily in downtown areas to make them more attractive, not only for work and shopping, but also for living. There are many activities available to older patrons in the form of recreational and community events that are sponsored by the cities themselves to support this trend.

Where Will We Be:

There are many trends in land use that will support this reverse "urban flight" back to the cities. To make living downtown engaging obviously takes more than just good transit service. The various city services such as police, community outreach, and neighborhood centers must be more responsive and timely to older citizens. Attractive housing, shops and stores, entertainment and recreational activities are appealing features that must be handy to older citizens by means of a brief walk or short bus/train ride. Having to stand on a street corner when you're 65 years old and be jostled by errant youths, pushy suburbanite commuters, and uncaring tourists (along with a half hour wait for the next bus) will have a negative effect on this trend. Then, where will we be?

Part time Shakeup, continued from page 7

asionally there is no information available as to what you are currently working and often there are no similar assignments left, especially as we get on down the seniority list. If there is time and an open phone line, the union rep may attempt to call you, but if the pick sheets do not list your current address/phone number, and the current assignment sheets do not list your current assignment, the union representative has little recourse other than to pick an assignment completely at random.

Once the union rep picks your assignment it may not be changed if you arrive late. On occasion, if you arrive immediately after the union has picked for you, AND, if the people who have picked below you are still in the room, the pick may be stopped and your piece offered to those who picked behind you if you are so very opposed to working it. But this slows down the pick and is not a popular option with those behind you. And while you may be allowed to give up your piece and choose something else, the pick still goes on around you and those with lesser seniority who did arrive on time will continue making their selections. If, however, even one person below you that

has already picked has left the room, your pick will not be altered for any reason. A second recourse for those who did not arrive in time to pick and find their union-picked work heinous is to hang tight till the next move up.

Last but not least, Article 16, Section 5, Paragraph "E", on page 96 of the Labor Agreement, states in part: "Selections made by the UNION will not be subject to the grievance/arbitration procedure." Your union representatives are only human. In your absence they did the best they could given the circumstances they had to work with, and the union will not be held liable for any picks made for someone who could not or did not show up to do their own pick.

If you still have questions, please contact the pick room during preview week, or go down there and ask. Preview week for spring shakeup is December 26 through 30, in the Central/Atlantic quiet room, and the number is (206) 684-2697. If there is no one available, you may also contact me at (206) 448-8588, or send me your question through email at gil@atu587.com. Pick commences January 5th. Hope to see you there...on time.

