

The President's Report

by Lance F. Norton

What About Driver Safety?



Edwin Thomas 46 years old, father of two children—an 18-year-old son and a 16-year-old daughter—a Transit Operator of seven years employed by the Metropolitan Transit Authority (N.Y.C.), Member of Transport Workers Union Local 100, went to work on Monday, December 1, 2008 and never came home from work that day. Edwin was stabbed to death on his bus.

Edwin was working the extra board out of the Flatbush depot. On this day he was operating the B46 route which travels a 12 mile stretch through Crown Heights Bedford-Stuyvesant and Williamsburg sections of Brooklyn. Each one way trip takes approximately one hour

20 minutes. The bus he operated this day had no cameras.

A male passenger had boarded Edwin's bus at Malcolm X Boulevard at Gates Avenue in Bedford-Stuyvesant. The man ran a Metro Card through the fare box two or three times, each time the card was rejected as being invalid. The man then walked back into the bus and took a seat. Edwin, obeying rules to avoid confrontation, said nothing. The man then came up from his seat and asked for a transfer. Edwin refused saying he had not paid his fare, he wasn't entitled to a transfer but he could ride the bus to where he was going.

The passenger became enraged, demanded to get off the bus. Edwin

opened the door; the assailant then punched Edwin twice in the head and jumped off the bus. Edwin was about to close the door when the assailant suddenly turned, stepped back onto the bus, pulled out a knife and repeatedly stabbed Edwin in the chest and torso.

Passengers screamed and the assailant jumped back off the bus and ran. Despite two male passengers giving chase the man got away. Edwin was transported to Woodhull Medical Center and was pronounced dead at 1:11 P.M.

Rewards of \$12,000 each from the police, the Metropolitan Transportation Authority and Local 100 T.W.U. totaled \$36,000 were posted for information leading to the arrest and conviction of the killer. As of this writing I am unaware of an arrest.

When something as tragic as this happens one never quite knows what to say. One of his co-workers who knew Edwin well said "Out of 600 drivers (at the Flatbush depot) you couldn't find one who didn't like him. He always had a smile on his face. If there was overtime, he was working it. If they needed him, he'd never say no".

Our Local sent flowers to the funeral home, to the family, co-workers

continued on page 6



NO FARES!
PAYING FOR FREE TRANSIT

Page 3

BYLAW CHANGE PROPOSALS

Pages 4 - 7

UNITE 587 TO PROTECT YOUR JOB

Page 7

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Pages 8 & 9

TWISTER
IN HONOR OF MARK MCLAUGHLIN

Page 9

VM VACATION PICK AND NEW VP
BY MIKE WHITEHEAD

Page 10

ARE WE OUR OWN WORST ENEMY?
BY KERMIT GIPSON

Page 12

SIGN UP FOR
LOBBY DAY 2009

Page 16



The Storm of '08

I would like to hear from any of our 587 members in any classification, no matter where you work or what your job is, about your experiences during the difficult days of our storm. I am also interested in how you believe our Transit Agency performed both in being prepared and managing itself. Please provide your name

and where you work; know that **all names will be held strictly confidential**. You can write or fax me at the union office or email at lnortonpres@atu587.com.

Thank you,
Lance F. Norton
President/
Business Representative
Local 587

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The Month at a Glance

Executive Board Report

December 30, 2008

All officers were present except... Paul Bachtel and Ray Campbell were on vacation. Jeff Stambaugh was absent.

The following business was conducted:

At their meeting on December 30, 2008 the Executive Board conducted the following business:

Motion by Linda Anderson to recommend pursuing the grievance of Michael Egan for the membership's consideration for arbitration.

Motion by Dee Wakenight to recommend pursuing the grievance of Carol Leak for the membership's consideration for arbitration.

Motion by Joe Mangiamelia to recommend pursuing the grievance of Ehsanollah Zarghami for the membership's consideration for arbitration.

Motion by Paul Neil to increase the monthly dues in accordance with our bylaws for public transit employees from \$51.92 to \$55.58 per month.

Motion by Ninus Hopkins to recommend the membership amend

Article III, Sections 1 & 2; Article IV, Section 8; Article V, Section 1; and Article VI, Sections 3 & 5 of the bylaws of Local 587.

Motion by Paul Neil to approve Grievance Arbitration Assessment for \$32.36 per member.

Motion by Joe Mangiameli to donate \$500.00 each to the Sequim Food Bank, Port Angeles Food Bank and Salvation Army Soup Kitchen.

Executive Board decided to continue the present pay structure and formula of the four full-time officers with the addition of the 2nd Vice President @ 115% of the Senior Scheduler Salary.

Motion by Michael Shea to recommend the membership amend Article XIII, Sections 3 & 4 of the bylaws of Local 587.

Motion by Michael Shea to recommend the membership amend Article XI, Sections 5 & 6 of the bylaws of Local 587.

Motion by Michael to recommend the Membership amend Article XII, Sections 1 - 17 of the bylaws of Local 587.

Business of the Membership

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

The membership voted to approve a motion by Linda Averill to amend the COPE motion from the November Executive Board meeting to devote one hour at the January Charter Union meeting to discuss COPE Lobby Day.

The membership voted to pursue the grievance of Aaron Lewis to arbitration.

The membership voted to pursue the grievance of Mike Murphy to arbitration.

The membership voted to approve the amendment to Article XV, Section 01 of the bylaws of Local 587.

The membership voted to approve the amendment to Article XV, Section 04 of the bylaws of Local 587.

The following members were December pot draw winners: James Reese at the Charter meeting, Mike Murphy at the Morning meeting, Pam Thompson at the JTA meeting, Butch Sonnabend at the CTS meeting. CTS rolling pot draw of \$100.00 was lost by Linda Stern. Next month's rolling pot will be \$125.00.

Arbitration Update

- Derek Harris:** Grieved cross classification work in King County Metro Vehicle Maintenance. Schedule Pending.
- Bill Wallace:** Grieved Metro's failure to observe the long-standing past practice of having a Local 587 member present when a vendor works on a Metro coach. Scheduled December 16 & 17, 2008.
- John Ross:** Grieved improper benefits calculation at Seattle Personal Transit. Schedule Pending.
- Earl Mangold:** Grieved KC Metro discriminatory disability accommodation. Scheduled April 13 & 14, 2008.
- Iordan Tchernev:** Grieved termination for alleged gross misconduct. Scheduled February 25 & 26, 2009.
- Michael Murphy:** Grieved overtime not assigned pursuant to clear contract language. Schedule pending.
- Aaron Lewis:** Grieved Metro's failure to apply wage progression pursuant to clear contract language.

Tentative Agenda
Membership Meetings:

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

JEFFERSON TRANSIT
Monday, January 12, 2009
7:00 p.m.
Port Townsend Rec Center
Port Townsend, WA

MORNING MEETING
Friday, January 9, 2009
10:30 a.m.
The Labor Temple, Hall #6
2800 1st Ave., Seattle, WA

CLALLAM TRANSIT
Tuesday, January 13, 2009
7:00 p.m.
Vern Burton Memorial Building
Port Angeles, WA

Among Topics to be Discussed:
Grievance and arbitration update

Unfinished Business: None

In Loving Memory...

"A man who won't die for something is not fit to live."
— Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Cecil Graham: Retired member passed away November 21, 2008. Brother Graham joined Local 587 September 01, 1981 and retired November 01, 2003.

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

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Minority Affairs Officer
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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
NEAL SAFRIN
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JOE MANGIAMELI
NINUS HOPKINS

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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 printed names, signatures, work ID numbers, addresses and phone numbers that can be verified during working hours. Letters that cannot be validated will not be published. All articles/letters are subject to editing and should be limited to 1000 words or less. Not all letters can be published due to space limitations. Cut off is the 15th of each month. Any submission from a member of Local 587 to the News Review deemed unprintable by the Recording Secretary shall be forwarded to the Executive Board for final decision to publish.

Send letters to:

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

No Fares! Paying for Free Transit

By David Olsen, *The Tyee*, Submitted by Carl C. Jackson, O&M Supervisor - Streetcar

It's a matter of faith among most transit officials that if you remove the fare, the service becomes worthless.

"Be aware that when one moves the price of something to zero, in addition to challenging capacity, one is stating that the product or service is not an economic good — that is, that it has NO value," warned one transit official. "Pricing signals value. I would suggest you keep it non-zero."

Perhaps North America's transit planners need to switch jobs with builders of roads and bridges. Those transportation essentials are, after all, usually paid for through taxes or bonds, and we use them without being charged each time we roll over them.

Imagine if a government tried to put a fare box into every car in the province. Every time drivers wanted to make much of a trip, they would have to dig into their pockets to find \$4.50 (soon to be \$5!) in exact change.

And yet, we force the poorest among us to live this way. For those without well-paying jobs, a bus fare of any amount can be a barrier to finding work, making it to school, visiting friends and relatives or even getting food to eat.

In British Columbia's Lower Mainland, one of the most expensive places to live in North America, a family travelled from Coquitlam to Vancouver by public transit during spring break. It cost the mother and her three sons \$26 in day passes. Even with the higher cost of fuel today, taking the bus and SkyTrain is more expensive than driving for most families. In fact, Vancouver fares for kids and students are the highest in Canada — and slated to go up.

Henry Orsini, aged nine in 2004, has been leading a postcard campaign to raise awareness and lower kids' fares for the past three years. Vancouver's transit fare for kids is more than six times higher than Toronto's! And it's about to go up 25 per cent more on Jan. 1, 2008.

Let us remind ourselves of what really matters. We don't have much time left to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions before catastrophic climatic changes irreversibly occur. It seems absurd, therefore, to continue to make it more difficult than it already is for people to use the bus and SkyTrain.

Show me the money

Since we are now discussing priorities, let's address the big question most people have when asked to ponder switching to a fare-free transit system. Namely: sounds good, but how do we pay for it?

As we have seen, in Hasselt, Belgium, people actually enjoy giving one per cent of their municipal taxes to transit. But only because their transit service is free to use, very frequent, and saves people significant amounts of money overall.

In Island County in the state of Washington, people pay for their "free" ride on the bus whenever they buy locally. Of their 8.3 per cent sales tax, 6.5 per cent is for the state (like

our PST) and 0.6 of one per cent goes to fund their beautiful and friendly, fare-free bus services. That works out to 60¢ for every \$100 spent in Island County.

Could a region as large as Vancouver's afford such a bold approach, though? Well, in Seattle and surrounding King County, voters recently approved a sales tax initiative that increased their local sales tax from .8 per cent to .9 per cent. This is similar to Island County's tax ratio for transit.

For every \$100 people spend in King County, 90¢ is collected for the transit system. According to Jill Krecklow, finance and administrative services manager for King County Metro Transit, the projected annual sales tax in 2008 is \$456 million US (or \$528 million Canadian), which alone is more than five per cent higher than TransLink's current transit operating budget.

TransLink has created pass programs that mimic these fare-free systems for the lucky folks that have access to them. The U-Pass at UBC costs \$22 per month, the U-Pass at SFU costs \$24.50/month and the Community Pass at SFU (for half of the condo owners) costs \$28/month. (If all of the condo owners were included, it would only cost \$14/month.) These passes offer unlimited rides throughout the entire system, just like a fare-free transit system would. And everyone who is part of these communities must buy them, guaranteeing TransLink a monthly income.

But there are many other viable funding options for our transit systems.

Châteauroux, France adds about 0.6 of one percent to the payroll tax for employers to pay for their fare-free system. An easy-to-understand variation would be to charge employers here (businesses, government offices, universities, co-ops, etc.) \$1 per employee every day that he or she travels to the workplace. This works out to a one-time "wage increase" of 12.5¢ per hour, which would be an increase of about half of one per cent for the average wage (\$20.54) in B.C. In comparison, inflation last year was 2.79 per cent. The amount of money generated by this \$1 per day per employee formula would *double* TransLink's current operating budget.

A 'Community Pass' for all

Another option would be to apply TransLink's current Community Pass (which is only available to a select few condo owners living on Burnaby Mountain near SFU) to the entire GVRD. The cost per month (for those of us who could afford to pay) would be about \$12.50 and could be collected in any number of ways: it could be added to healthcare premiums, property taxes, hydro bills, etc. This number is based on the \$300 million TransLink currently collects from fares and a population of two million people in the GVRD. In effect, this replaces the inefficient method of using fare boxes and cash, and spreads the cost to everyone liv-

ing in our region. TransLink uses this approach in calculating the cost of the U-Passes and the Community Passes; they call it "revenue neutral" because, at least in theory, no new revenue is generated for the system.

But TransLink's transit operating budget doesn't include the cost of buying new buses and SkyTrain cars, which has become a critical problem over the past seven years since ridership has grown while the bus fleet size has stagnated. If the funding formula chosen for the operating budget also included funding for capital expenditures, we could build in a sustainable solution for transit's continual expansion.

One way to do this is to collect \$20 per month per GVRD resident to cover the entire transit budget, which would then allow the \$500 million plus currently collected by TransLink through other taxes, fees, and levies to be used exclusively for buying more full-size buses and SkyTrain cars. This could buy over 300 new articulated (60 ft) trolleys or over 100 new SkyTrain cars!

Shift priorities

We could also shift spending from auto- and corporate-centric to transit- and people-friendly projects. Examples:

TransLink spends well over \$100 million/year on roads and bridges (the equivalent of 215 new buses or 23 SkyTrain cars), as well as paying almost \$30 million (60 new buses) for its bloated bureaucracy (at least eight different boards and management staff for one transit system). The newly formed Transit Police adds another \$13 million per year (26 new buses)...guns, Tasers and other weapons do not come cheap.

The province's Gateway proposal is projected to cost at least \$7 billion. That's more than 14 times TransLink's current operating budget for

all transit services. This amount of money could provide superb bus service throughout the region, 24/7. This kind of frequency, combined with being fare-free, would empty the highways and bridges if one lane (each way) of the existing (2 lane) highways and bridges were dedicated to buses and vanpools, resulting in less or even no congestion for those drivers delivering goods and services.

B.C. Ferries' \$2.5 billion budget to build new giant car and truck ferries in Germany and retrofit their ramps to accommodate them could instead build (in B.C.!) a fleet of new passenger ferries, along with terminals in every downtown on the south coast. Vancouver, Victoria, Nanaimo, Ganges, Cowichan/Duncan, Parksville, Gibsons, and Sechelt could have hourly service between them, with fast ferries that carried people, bikes, personal baggage, and minimal freight.

The Sea-to-Sky Highway upgrade is destroying ecosystems and undermining a golden opportunity to upgrade an existing rail line with fast, frequent service between North Vancouver, Squamish, Whistler and beyond. The project cost of almost \$2 billion could instead have been used to create at least an hourly LRT-type service, which would have dramatically *decreased* motorized vehicle traffic on that highway, instead of increasing traffic and the resultant injuries and deaths.

Instead of tunneling under Cambie Street and using expensive SkyTrain technology, we could have reduced car capacity on Cambie (or any other street) by building LRT right on the street (where people live and walk) for one tenth or less of the cost of the RAV/Canada Line. And we'd have about \$2 billion left for more buses and better service.

[Article edited for content]

January Trivia Question

What color was the Metro Transit Time Table in September 1991?

E-mail your answer to
pbachtelrecsec@atu587.com

The first person to submit the correct answer will receive honorable mention in the next edition of the News Review.

December Trivia Question Winner

Harold Batson, South Base

December Trivia Question: What Metro operated Sound Transit routes are no longer in service?
Correct answer: Routes 546 and 570.

Brother Batson was the first person to correctly answer the December trivia question

To: All Members of Local 587
From: Recording Secretary Paul J. Bachtel

Proposal To Change Bylaws — Article XII Section 1–17

Submitted by Bruce Tiebout

accordance with Article XV, Section 2 pertaining to bylaw proposals, the following bylaw proposal will be published in the *News Review*, and will be voted upon at through the January cycle of Union meetings.

ARTICLE XII

GENERAL ELECTION - ELECTION OF OFFICERS

OLD:

Section 1. The election of officers for the Local shall be held in the month of June and three years thereafter on a payday on or before the 25th day of the month. The regular three-year election of officers for the Local shall be by the primary system. Nominations shall be held at the meetings of the Local in the month of April. The primary election shall be held on the first King County/Metro payday of the month in May and the final election on the first King County/Metro payday of the month in June. Ballots shall be counted as provided in Article XII, Sections 7, 8, 9 and 10.

(a) There shall be an Election Committee, consisting of three members plus two alternates, reporting to the Recording Secretary. Its duties would include election security, production and distribution of the voters pamphlet.

(b) Counting of ballots shall be supervised by the Recording Secretary and at least one member of the Elections Committee in the presence of the membership.

Section 2. If any officer fails to qualify within three successive meetings, unless prevented by illness, his/her office shall be declared vacant and his/her successor shall be elected.

Section 3. Members to be eligible for any office or for delegate shall have had at least two years continuous membership and must be a member in good standing having paid all initiation fees, dues and assessments in full.

Section 4. If under Section 3, no member is eligible then all members in good standing will be declared eligible.

Section 5. Members to be eligible to vote for officers at any regular or special election must be members in good standing.

Section 6. The Financial Secretary/Treasurer will keep a strict record of attendance at meetings.

Section 7. All elections shall be held in compliance with the Constitution and General Laws of the Amalgamated Transit Union, as amended, and in compliance with the Labor Management Reporting and Disclosure Act of 1959 (Landrum-Griffin Act of 1959), as amended.

Section 8. All ballots must be approved by the Executive Board.

Section 9. No officer of the Local shall hold office in any organization that is in conflict with the Constitu-

tion and General Laws of the Amalgamated Transit Union.

Section 10. No member's name shall be placed on the ballot unless the member was in attendance at the meeting in person when the member was nominated or has signified in writing willingness to accept the nomination for the position for which nominated

Section 11. No member can appear on the ballot for more than one position. The acceptance of any nomination declines all prior nominations. Once a candidate has accepted a nomination and subsequently declines that position, that candidate may not be nominated for that position in that election cycle.

Section 12. Members may self-nominate in person throughout the meeting cycle. All write-in nominations must be received by a date and time determined by the election committee. Written self-nominations are subject to verification by the election committee.

Section 13. The name of the member making the nomination shall be made a matter of record.

Section 14. Voting shall be by mail. The three envelope system shall be used. Ballots shall be sent by U.S. mail to each member's home address, and a post office box shall be rented in Seattle, Washington for the return of the ballots. To be valid, the ballots must be received by 9:00 am at the post office box on the day specified for the counting of ballots. Only those ballots returned by U.S. mail will be valid.

BOLD & STRUCK:

Section 1. The election of officers for the Local shall be held in the month of June and three years thereafter on a payday on or before the 25th day of the month. The regular three-year election of officers for the Local shall be by the primary system. Nominations shall be held at the meetings of the Local in the month of April. The primary election shall be held on the first King County/Metro payday of the month in May and the final election on the first ~~King County/Metro payday~~ **Thursday** of the month in June. **If a runoff is required, it shall be held on a weekday on or preceding the 25th of June. Ballots shall be counted as provided in Article XII, Sections 7, 8, 9 and 10.**

~~(a)~~ **Section 2.** There shall be an Election Committee, consisting of three members plus ~~two~~ **an** alternates, reporting to the Recording Secretary. Its duties would include election security, **plus** production and distribution of the **ballots, instructions, and** voters pamphlet.

~~(b)~~ **Section 16.** Counting of ballots shall be supervised by the Recording Secretary and at least one member of the Elections Committee in the presence of the membership.

~~Section 17.~~ If any officer fails to qualify within three successive meetings, unless prevented by ill-

ness, his/her office shall be declared vacant and his/her successor shall be elected.

Section 34. Members to be eligible for any office or for delegate shall have had at least two years continuous membership and must be a member in good standing having paid all initiation fees, dues, and assessments in full.

Section 45. If under Section 34, no member is eligible then all members in good standing will be declared eligible.

Section 513. Members to be eligible to vote for officers at any regular or special election must be members in good standing.

~~Section 6.~~ **The Financial Secretary/Treasurer will keep a strict record of attendance at meetings.**

Section 73. All elections shall be held in compliance with the Constitution and General Laws of the Amalgamated Transit Union, ~~as amended,~~ and in compliance with the Labor Management Reporting and Disclosure Act of 1959 (Landrum-Griffin Act of 1959), as amended.

Section 811. All ballots must be **submitted by the Recording Secretary and** approved by the Executive Board.

Section 96. No officer of the Local shall hold office in any organization that is in conflict with the Constitution and General Laws of the Amalgamated Transit Union.

Section 7. No member's name shall be placed on the ballot unless the member **is present and accepts the nomination** at the meeting when the member was nominated, or has signified in writing **a** willingness to accept the nomination for the position for which nominated. **All written acceptance of any nomination must be received by the Recording Secretary before nominations for that position are closed at the last meeting of the Local in April. Written acceptance of any nomination are subject to verification by the Election Committee.**

Section 8. Members may self-nominate **at any of the meetings of the Local in the month of April.** All **write-in/written** self-nominations must be received **by the Recording Secretary by the beginning of the last meeting of the Local in the month of April.** Written self-nominations are subject to verification by the Election Committee.

Section 9. No member can be **placed in nomination nor** appear on the ballot for more than one position. The acceptance of any nomination **automatically** declines all prior nominations. Once a candidate has accepted a nomination and subsequently declines that position, that candidate may not be nominated **again** for that position in that election cycle.

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Section 103. The name of the member making the nomination, who also must be a member in good standing, shall be made a matter of record.

Section 12. Submissions to the voters pamphlet shall be due in the Union office by the close of business, two days after the last of the meetings of the Local in the month of April.

Section 14. A ballot, instructions, a voters pamphlet, and double return envelopes shall be mailed to the last known home address for each member in good standing at least 15 days before the ballots are due back.

Section 15. A Post Office Box shall be rented in the city of Seattle. Balloting shall be by mail with ballots due back in the Post Office Box by the close of business at that Post Office on the day of the election. The ballots shall be picked up from the Post Office Box at the close of business on the day of the election by the Recording Secretary, in the presence of at least one member of the Election Committee and any observers, and returned immediately to be counted in the presence of the membership.

~~Section 14.~~ Voting shall be by mail. The three envelope system shall be used. Ballots shall be sent by U.S. mail to each member's home address, and a post office box shall be rented in Seattle, Washington for the return of the ballots. To be valid, the ballots must be received by 9:00 am at the post office box on the day specified for the counting of ballots. Only those ballots returned by U.S. mail will be valid.

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continued on next page

To: All Members of Local 587
From: Recording Secretary Paul J. Bachtel

Proposal To Change Bylaws — Article XII Section 1–17, continued

in May and the final election on the first ~~King County/Metro payday-Thursday~~ of the month in June. If a runoff is required, it shall be held on a weekday on or preceding the 25th of June. Ballots shall be counted as provided in Article XII, Sections 7, 8, 9 and 10.

~~(a)Section 2.~~ There shall be an Election Committee, consisting of three members plus ~~two~~ an alternates, reporting to the Recording Secretary. Its duties would include election security, plus production and distribution of the ballots, instructions, and voters pamphlet.

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~~Section 103.~~ The name of the member making the nomination, who also must be a member in good standing, shall be made a matter of record.

~~Section 811.~~ All ballots must be submitted by the Recording Secretary and approved by the Executive Board.

~~Section 12.~~ Submissions to the voters pamphlet shall be due in the Union office by the close of business, two days after the last of the meetings of the Local in the month of April.

~~Section 513.~~ Members to be eligible to vote for officers at any regular or special election must be members in good standing.

~~Section 14.~~ A ballot, instructions, a voters pamphlet, and double return envelopes shall be mailed to the last known home address for each member in good standing at least 15 days before the ballots are due back.

~~Section 15.~~ A Post Office Box shall be rented in the city of Seattle. Balloting shall be by mail with ballots due back in the Post Office Box by the close of business at that Post Office on the day of the election. The ballots shall be picked up from the Post Office Box at the close of business on the day of the election by the Recording Secretary, in the presence of at least one member of the Election Committee and any observers, and returned immediately to be counted in the presence of the membership.

~~(b)Section 16.~~ Counting of ballots shall be supervised by the Recording Secretary and at least one member of the Elections Committee in the presence of the membership.

~~Section 217.~~ If any officer fails to qualify within three successive meetings, unless prevented by illness, his/her office shall be declared vacant and his/her successor shall be elected.

~~Section 14.~~ Voting shall be by mail. The three envelope system shall be used. Ballots shall be sent by U.S. mail to each member's home address, and a post office box shall be rented in Seattle, Washington for the return of the ballots. To be valid, the ballots must be received by 9:00 am at the

post office box on the day specified for the counting of ballots. Only those ballots returned by U.S. mail will be valid.

NEW:

~~Section 1.~~ The election of officers for the Local shall be held in the month of June and three years thereafter on or before the 25th day of the month. The regular three-year election of officers for the Local shall be by the primary system. Nominations shall be held at the meetings of the Local in the month of April. The primary election shall be held on the first King County/Metro payday of the month in May and the final election on the first Thursday of the month in June. If a runoff is required, it shall be held on a weekday on or preceding the 25th of June.

~~Section 2.~~ There shall be an Election Committee, consisting of three members plus an alternate, reporting to the Recording Secretary. Its duties would include election security, plus production and distribution of the ballots, instructions, and voters pamphlet.

~~Section 3.~~ All elections shall be held in compliance with the Constitution and General Laws of the Amalgamated Transit Union, and in compliance with the Labor Management Reporting and Disclosure Act of 1959 (Landrum-Griffin Act of 1959), as amended.

~~Section 4.~~ Members to be eligible for any office or for delegate shall have had at least two years continuous membership and must be a member in good standing having paid all initiation fees, dues, and assessments in full.

~~Section 5.~~ If under Section 4, no member is eligible then all members in good standing will be declared eligible.

~~Section 6.~~ No officer of the Local shall hold office in any organization that is in conflict with the Constitution and General Laws of the Amalgamated Transit Union.

~~Section 7.~~ No member's name shall be placed on the ballot unless the member is present and accepts the nomination at the meeting when the member was nominated, or has signified in writing a willingness to accept the nomination for the position for which nominated. All written acceptance of any nomination must be received by the Recording Secretary before nominations for that position are closed at the last meeting of the Local in April. Written acceptance of any nomination are subject to verification by the Election Committee.

~~Section 8.~~ Members may self-nominate at any of the meetings of the Local in the month of April. All written self-nominations must be received by the Recording Secretary by the beginning of the last meeting of the Local in the month of April. Written self-nominations are subject to verification by the Election Committee.

~~Section 9.~~ No member can be placed in nomination nor appear on the ballot for more than one position. The acceptance of any nomination automatically declines all prior nominations. Once a candidate has accepted a nomination and subsequently declines that position, that candidate may not be nominated again for that position in that election cycle.

~~Section 10.~~ The name of the member making the nomination, who also must be a member in good standing, shall be made a matter of record.

~~Section 11.~~ All ballots must be submitted by the Recording Secretary and approved by the Executive Board.

~~Section 12.~~ Submissions to the voters pamphlet shall be due in the Union office by the close of business, two days after the last of the meetings of the Local in the month of April.

~~Section 13.~~ Members to be eligible to vote for officers at any regular or special election must be members in good standing.

~~Section 14.~~ A ballot, instructions, a voters pamphlet, and double return envelopes shall be mailed to the last known home address for each member in good standing at least 15 days before the ballots are due back.

~~Section 15.~~ A Post Office Box shall be rented in the city of Seattle. Balloting shall be by mail with ballots due back in the Post Office Box by the close of business at that Post Office on the day of the election. The ballots shall be picked up from the Post Office Box at the close of business on the day of the election by the Recording Secretary, in the presence of at least one member of the Election Committee and any observers, and returned immediately to be counted in the presence of the membership.

~~Section 16.~~ Counting of ballots shall be supervised by the Recording Secretary and at least one member of the Election Committee in the presence of the membership.

~~Section 17.~~ If any officer fails to qualify within three successive meetings, unless prevented by illness, his/her office shall be declared vacant and his/her successor shall be elected.

1. Upcoming at Local 587

JANUARY	08	Charter meeting
JANUARY	09	Morning meeting
JANUARY	12	Jefferson Transit Authority meeting
JANUARY	13	Clallam County meeting
JANUARY	19	MLK Day Celebration
JANUARY	27	Executive Board meeting
JANUARY	30	Lobby Day

To: All Members of Local 587
From: Recording Secretary Paul J. Bachtel

Proposal To Change Bylaws — Article III, Sections 1 & 2; Article IV, Section 8; Article V, Section 1; and Article VI, Sections 3 & 5

Submitted by the Bylaw Committee: Financial Secretary Paul Neil,
 Executive Board Officers Linda Anderson, Joe Mangiameli and Jeff Stambaugh

In accordance with Article XV, Section 2 pertaining to bylaw proposals, the following bylaw proposal will be published in the *News Review*, and will be voted upon at through the January cycle of Union meetings.

ARTICLE III

OFFICERS

Section 1. The regular officers of the Local shall be:

- (a) President/Business Representative
- (b) Vice President/Assistant Business Representative
- (c) 2nd Vice President/Assistant Business Representative - Maintenance**
- (ed) Financial Secretary/Treasurer
- (de) Recording Secretary/Correspondent to *In Transit*
- (f) Candidates for President/Business Representative, Vice President/Assistant Business Representative, Financial Secretary/Treasurer and Recording Secretary/Correspondent to In Transit shall be elected by the membership at large.**
- (g) Candidates for 2nd Vice President/Assistant Business Representative - Maintenance shall be nominated from and elected by all members within Vehicle Maintenance; Facilities Maintenance; Rail Vehicle Maintenance; Way, Power and Signals, and Streetcar Maintainers as listed in the current King County/Metro Labor Agreement.**

Section 2. Executive Board

(h) If a vacancy occurs for any reason in any of the following elected positions: President/Busi-

ness Representative, Vice President/Assistant Business Representative, **2nd Vice President/Assistant Business Representative-Maintenance** Financial Secretary/Treasurer or Recording Secretary, a special election will be held to fill the unexpired term. The special election will be held in compliance with Article XII of these Bylaws and Section 14 of the Constitution and General Laws.

If a vacancy occurs within ninety (90) days of the normal expiration of the term of office in the position of President/Business Representative, the Vice President/Assistant Business Representative shall preside and perform all duties pertaining to the office of the President until the regular general election is held.

If a vacancy occurs within ninety (90) days of the normal expiration of the term of office in the position of Vice President/Assistant Business Representative, Financial Secretary/Treasurer or Recording Secretary, the Executive Board shall meet prior to the next regular union meeting and select a member of the Executive Board to fill the unexpired term. The appointment must be approved by a majority vote of the members in attendance at the next regular meeting of the Local.

If a vacancy occurs within ninety (90) days of the normal expiration of the term of office in the position of 2nd Vice President/Assistant Business Representative-Maintenance, the Executive Board shall meet prior to the next regular union meeting and select a member from the Vehicle Maintenance/Facilities Maintenance Executive Board Officers to fill the unexpired term. The appointment must be approved by a majority of the members in attendance at the next regular meeting of the Local.

ARTICLE IV

COMMITTEES

Section 8. Wages and Conditions Committee

The members of the Wages and Conditions Committee shall consist of the President/Business Representative, Vice President/Assistant Business Representative, **2nd Vice President/Assistant Business Representative-Maintenance**, Financial Secretary/Treasurer, Recording Secretary and all Executive Board members. A selection shall be made by these members for the Local's negotiating committee. All full-time officers shall be members of the Local's negotiating committee by virtue of their office.

ARTICLE V

SALARIES AND COMPENSATIONS

Section 1. The Executive Board shall review and adjust the wages for the office of President/Business Representative, Vice President/Assistant Business Representative, **2nd Vice President/Assistant Business Representative-Maintenance**, Financial Secretary/Treasurer and Recording Secretary at the regular December Executive Board meeting. This review and adjustment shall take effect the 1st of January of each year.

ARTICLE VI

DUTIES OF OFFICERS

Section 3. 2nd Vice President/Assistant Business Representative-Maintenance

- (a) The 2nd Vice President/Assistant Business Representative shall assist the President/Business Representative and Vice President/Assistant Business Representative.**
- (b) He/she shall be a voting member of the Executive Board.**
- (c) By virtue of his/her office, he/she shall be a delegate to the Central Labor Council, State Labor Council and the International Convention.**
- (d) He/she shall be the primary officer responsible to assist the President/Business Representative and Vice President/Assistant Business Representative with management of grievances and arbitrations for members from the classifications in Article III, Section 1(g).**
- (e) He/she shall perform other duties as assigned by the President/Business Representative.**
- (f) This office shall become effective July 1, 2009.**

Section 5. President Pro-Tem

In the absence of the President/Business Representative, Vice President/Assistant Business Representative, **2nd Vice President/Assistant Business Representative-Maintenance**, or Financial Secretary/Treasurer, a chairperson shall be selected by the Executive Board members present.

President's Report, continued

and friends with condolences from our Officers and Membership.

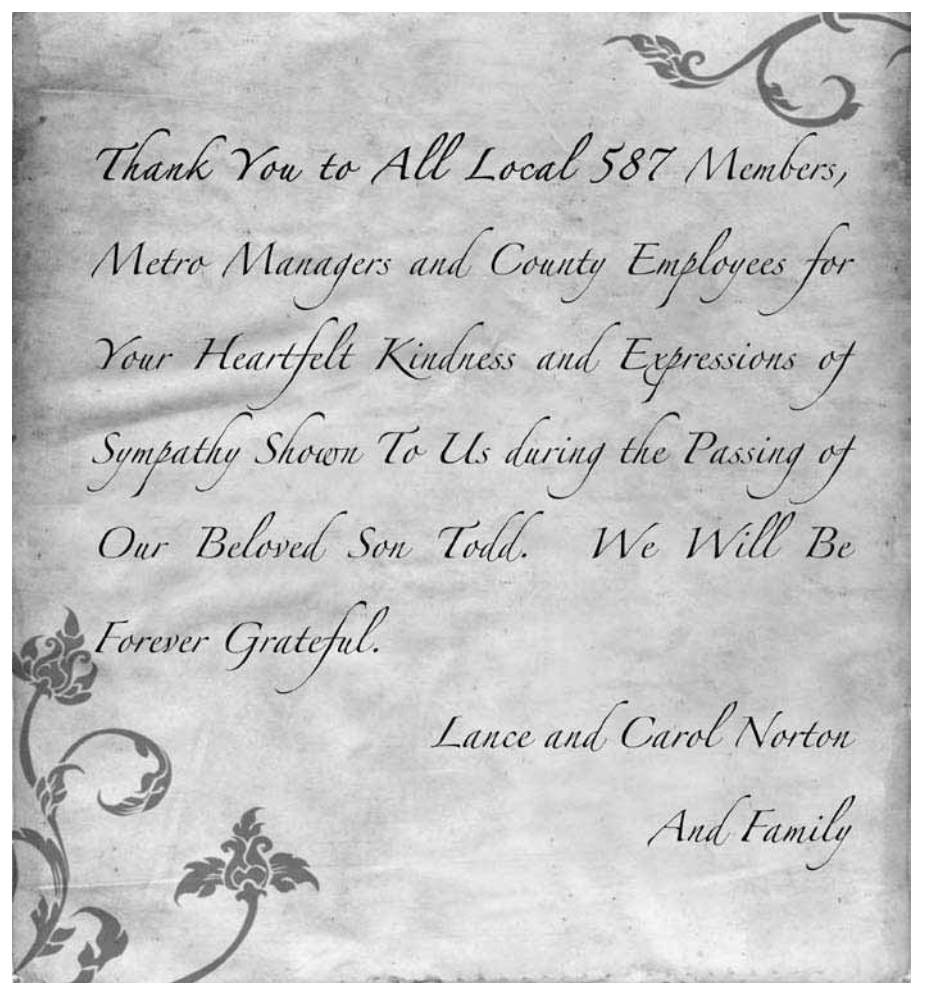
How does one make sense of such a horrific senseless crime such as this? Why attack a bus driver? It's certainly not for money; with exact fare drivers carry no money. The most common motivation for assaults on Transit Operators is the driver having the audacity to ask for the payment of the posted fare. Some believe that a bus is their own private transportation. No need to have a proper fare, a valid transfer or pass. How dare an Operator "dis them" by simply asking that they — like 99% of our riders — pay their fare?

Transit Operators everywhere from our largest cities to small cities in our Country, in Canada and probably in

other parts of our world are concerned for their own safety, as well as that of their passengers on a daily basis. Assaults on drivers are a too common occurrence. Probably nothing short of having a police officer on Edwin Thomas's bus that fateful day would have stopped this tragic event.

Here at K.C. Metro we now have a full time transit police force from our King County Sheriffs Department staffed by very dedicated officers and Deputies who take their jobs very seriously. Transit Security, response time to situations has improved immensely but they can't be everywhere when some nut case decides to misbehave.

Regards to all...
 Be Safe...
 LFN



Unite 587 to Protect Your Job

By Chuck Lare, Atlantic Base Shop Steward

Your job may not be on the line this round of County's cuts, but not only is "an injury to one, an injury to all"; in the next round of cuts, we may be looking to the public for support. Tuesday, November 10th, I testified at the last Martin Luther King County budget hearing. Over 100 testimonies were heard. In the interest of encouraging more ATU 587 members to join with the community, speaking-out in opposing the County Council's cuts, I would like to share the text of my speech.

"Councilmembers, thank you giving me the opportunity to speak with you.

March of 2007 was the last time I spoke to you. That was a historic time when we witnessed the final approval of changing our county's name to Martin Luther King County and passage of a job creating Ordinance (#2007-0146), that promotes the use of small contractors and suppliers.

Today these economic times require creative minds. I request you not add to the local economic downturn by cutting public services and layoffs. Your cut backs will force

more retail stores to close, creating blight in vacant store fronts; your cut backs will increase more home foreclosures, which destroy neighborhoods and make our streets dangerous for our children.

I request you adopt the slogan, "Yes We Can". Whereas the leader Martin Luther King Jr. led marches for economic quality, now as Martin Luther King County, yes WE can lead in times of economic crisis. Last year you demonstrated leadership and foresight in passing the job creating Ordinance. I now encourage you to again demonstrate leadership by supporting the alternatives to cut backs. In addition to those examples already given I would suggest:

You, recognize, that despite the economic crisis; just a few days ago, the voters, overwhelmingly approved to further tax themselves for, transportation, parks and Pike Place Market. Adequately identify the need, and the voters will support you;

Expand your job creation ordinance that puts people to work locally with local contractors;

Innovate with projects like Germa-

ny's 100,000 Rooftops Solar Electricity Program. Like the German economic model; ready are our local banks; ready are our voters; ready is our utility; what we still need is your political will.

Yes, Martin Luther King County can lead the rest of the country by refusing to balance the County budget on the backs of workers.

No cut in services and no lay off of workers.

Thank you for your time. Let me know if I can be of assistance."

Many of those who provide services to the same disenfranchised populations we serve were wearing the sticker "Invest in People

FIRST". As you probably realize, as the County cuts services, those of special needs wind up on our buses without those needs being satisfied. Special concern is elimination of funding for tuberculosis prevention - untreated tuberculosis will increase the hazards of our work place.

It was good to see our ATU 587 Vice President and Chair of COPE observing from the balcony. Hopefully next time more members will take the time to let their voices be heard. It would be nice if our leadership would take a position and submit testimony.

Stay well, Atlantic Base Shop Steward, Chuck Lare

**To: All Members of Local 587
From: Recording Secretary Paul J. Bachtel**

Proposal To Change Bylaws Article XIII, Section 3 & 4

Submitted by Bruce Tiebout

In accordance with Article XV, Section 2 pertaining to bylaw proposals, the following bylaw proposal will be published in the News Review, and will be voted upon at through the January cycle of Union meetings.

ARTICLE XIII

GENERAL ELECTION - ELECTION OF DELEGATES

Current:

Section 3. Balloting shall be by mail with ballots due back in the Post Office Box by noon the third Thursday of the month. Ballots shall be mailed out with instructions and double return envelopes at least 15 days before they are due back.

Section 4. The election shall be supervised by the Recording Secretary. The ballots shall be picked up from the Post Office Box at 12:01 p.m. on the third Thursday of the month by the Recording Secretary, in the presence of any observers and returned immediately to be counted in the presence of the membership.

BOLD & STRUCK:

Section 3. Balloting shall be by mail with ballots due back in the Post Office Box by **noon the close of business at that Post Office** the third

Thursday of the month. Ballots shall be mailed out with instructions and double return envelopes at least 15 days before they are due back.

Section 4. The election shall be supervised by the Recording Secretary. The ballots shall be picked up from the Post Office Box at **12:01 p.m. the close of business at that Post Office** on the third Thursday of the month by the Recording Secretary, in the presence of any observers and returned immediately to be counted in the presence of the membership.

NEW:

Section 3. Balloting shall be by mail with ballots due back in the Post Office Box by the close of business at that Post Office the third Thursday of the month. Ballots shall be mailed out with instructions and double return envelopes at least 15 days before they are due back.

Section 4. The election shall be supervised by the Recording Secretary. The ballots shall be picked up from the Post Office Box at the close of business at that Post Office on the third Thursday of the month by the Recording Secretary, in the presence of any observers and returned immediately to be counted in the presence of the membership.

**To: All Members of Local 587
From: Recording Secretary Paul J. Bachtel**

Proposal To Change Bylaws Article XI, Sections 5 & 6

Submitted by Bruce Tiebout

In accordance with Article XV, Section 2 pertaining to bylaw proposals, the following bylaw proposal will be published in the News Review, and will be voted upon at through the January cycle of Union meetings.

ARTICLE XI — RULES OF ORDER

OLD:

Section 5. When a question is before the Local, no motion shall be received except the following, which take precedence in the order named:

- (a) To adjourn
- (b) To lay on the table
- (c) For the previous question
- (d) To postpone
- (e) To amend

Section 6. The following motions are not debatable:

- (a) To adjourn
- (b) To lay on the table
- (c) To reconsider when question to be reconsidered is not debatable
- (d) For the previous question

BOLD & STRUCK:

Section 5. When a question is before the Local, no motion shall be received except the following, which take precedence in the order named:

- (a) To adjourn
- (b) Questions of privilege**
- (c) Object to the consideration of the question**
- (d) To withdraw the motion**
- (be)** To lay on the table
- (ef)** For the previous question
- (dg)** To postpone **to a certain day**

- (h) To refer**
- (ei)** To amend
- (j) To postpone indefinitely**

Section 6. The following motions are not debatable:

- (a) To adjourn
- (b) To lay on the table
- (c) Object to the consideration of the question**
- (de)** To reconsider when question to be reconsidered is not debatable
- (ed)** For the previous question

NEW:

Section 5. When a question is before the Local, no motion shall be received except the following, which take precedence in the order named:

- (a) To adjourn
- (b) Questions of privilege
- (c) Object to the consideration of the question
- (d) To withdraw the motion
- (e) To lay on the table
- (f) For the previous question
- (g) Postpone to a certain day
- (h) To refer
- (i) To amend
- (j) To postpone indefinitely

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- (e) For the previous question

Letters to the Editor...

Enough is enough...Already!

I asked myself the other day after reading articles out of my November and December *News Review*, what exactly is the definition of Union. According to Webster's it is combining, joining and grouping together to name a few. Honestly, we should all be working together as one with the many issues that come our way with the County, such as grievance's, medical, contract's etc; not to mention the Federal CDL guidelines which constantly seem to change and of course, are enforced by Metro. But, as I said after reading the articles, it seem that it is not the way things are going lately, especially referring to November's where not one or two, but THREE articles were printed in response to the article written by Mike Rochon, Mike Whitehead, and Jeff Stambaugh.

In the 18 years plus I have worked for the County, I personally have heard our union referred to as a driver's union by two different people from the operations side. I have also engaged in conversation at a union meeting with a driver who had no idea that maintenance was even in the same union.

I can't remember there ever having been a union officer that came out of the maintenance ranks for any length of time (at all actually); correct me if I am wrong though.

If you asked around on the maintenance side, the average response would probably be that yes we are represented when and if we need the union but maybe not equally if you will. Operations outnumber us by approximately 5 to 1 and often it feels as though we can't get there from here.

Our issues are very different in many areas and although the officers have a general grasp of how things operate on our side of the fence, it is simply hard for either side to completely understand the other. Incidentally, it has long been said that what we really need is an operations and a maintenance contract ("A" and "B") and be negotiated separately.

Numerous times, maintenance has attempted to add another Vice President that would specifically come from the maintenance side, but could be voted in by maintenance OR all the members. Much time was spent

and even a plan of where the funding would come from, but each time thus far it seems the wording wasn't quite right or the majority from outside of maintenance just didn't think it best. Sorry, but I have to say it again, often it feels as though we can't get there from here!

The latest attempt to add a second Vice President for maintenance and Facilities (both bus and rail) in the proposed By-Law only members in Vehicle Maintenance and Facilities are eligible to be nominated for this position. Only members in Vehicle Maintenance and Facilities will be voting on their representative. This I feel is the way it should be.

A second Vice President would be helpful to the ENTIRE membership, but especially to maintenance. Hopefully it can be seen for just that; nothing more nothing less.

Dan Boetcher, South Base Mechanic

Red Light Camera Intersections

Dear Mr. Bachtel:

As a part-time employee, my current assignment takes me through three Red Light Camera (RLC) intersections daily, Monday through Friday. Each of them different in design which makes them equally difficult to navigate. One at Rainier Avenue South and South Orcas has a walk light with a countdown, which I use to judge my approach. The countdown only lasts for about six or seven seconds, not enough time for a bus to stop smoothly and safely. Then, at the end of the countdown, sometimes, but not always, the yellow light appears immediately. Other times, the yellow light does not appear until several seconds after the end of the countdown. I have found myself stopped at a green light waiting for the light to change to yellow and then to red on a number of occasions! How confusing can they make this for us?

My next intersection, Rainier Avenue South and South Massachusetts, does not have a countdown on the walk light, only a blinking hand, which is probably about five seconds before the yellow light and just not enough time to navigate that intersection safely and smoothly. Not to mention that the green light might not even change to yellow after the walk light stops blinking! The walk light comes back on and the green light continues. Again, I find myself stopped at a green light.

The third and probably the easiest intersection to navigate is Northwest Market Street and 15th Avenue North-

west. This intersection has a long walk light countdown of at least 12 seconds. That gives plenty of time to make a decision as to whether to proceed through or make the stop. However, the yellow light does not appear immediately after the end of the countdown, but several seconds later. If I knew the time delay, it would even make the intersection easier to navigate and I wouldn't be stopping at the green light at this intersection, too. The point is; there is not consistency.

It probably takes a 60 foot but between five to eight seconds to clean an intersection, longer if your are slowing to stop at a zone on the far side. We need all RLC Intersections to be designed exactly the same way with at least a 12 second countdown on the walk light. We can then use the countdown as a judging point for proceeding through safely without fear of getting a ticket or stopping smoothly. The yellow light needs to appear immediately at the end of the countdown so we don't find ourselves stopped at green lights.

The easy solution is consistency! If we all know the rules and all the rules are the same at every intersection, we won't be getting any tickets and we won't be injuring passengers with sudden stops or endangering ourselves by stopping at green lights! How hard is it to make it easy? Negotiations with the city to set a standard and implement it should not be that difficult. Then, publishing the newly set standards for all Metro and other transit operators should avoid any conflicts of interest, namely, the drivers need to choose between safety or infraction, thereby eliminating the need to haggle over specific instances in the future.

Duane F. Blenker, Central Base

Partial Holidays

Dear Editor,

At the December union meeting, we learned that ATU 587 members in rider information and customer service face ten days of forced unpaid leave. Operators, especially part-timers, face pay cuts with the expansion of "partial holidays" in 2009. While Metro/King County reduce service, the public is faced with more fare hikes - after just having agreed to a higher tax, and with their own jobs precarious in a time of economic meltdown.

The County and state are forecasting an even larger shortfall in 2010, and the possibility of steeper cuts. What, now, is our message to the state, the county, the public? This question was raised at the union meeting in response to an E-board proposal to spend \$1,500 on lobby day in Olympia. Before taking a trip to Olympia, nearly unanimously approved by the members present, is the plan to devote an hour to discussing the message we want our union to send to legislators.

Do we agree with furloughs, healthcare takeaways, speedups, service cutbacks, and higher bus fares as the solution to County/Metro

budget woes?

Do we support the County's idea of a "utility tax," (seems like another regressive tax). Would a steep progressive tax on millionaires be a better and fairer and more stable revenue source? (A great source of info on this is the Taxpayers for Justice Website.) And how should support for public transit fit into state spending priorities? Ahead - or behind of stadiums and tax breaks for Boeing and Microsoft?

This discussion will take place at **7pm, Thursday, Seattle Labor Temple, before the regular January union meeting.** Bring your ideas and concerns. Now is the time to build alliances with our passengers and other public-sector unions to defend crucial public services - schools, transit, health clinics, etc. - from the axe. Hope to see you at the union meeting.

Linda Averill, A.O. 8816

Access Seniority

Dear Editor,

I have been an Access driver and member of the local 587 since April of 1999. For the last year I have also been working part time for Metro. Even though Access drivers are paid substantially less compared to Metro drivers, the two jobs are eerily similar. With all the rules and regulations, the unrealistic schedules, difficult riders, working shifts without getting much of a break etc. And yes, don't forget the stinkers, they ride Access too.

It certainly takes a special type of person to be out on a daily basis meeting the needs of public service. We should all be proud. Too bad we don't have more of a voice about how to make things better.

What possessed me to write this letter was not our similarities but one glaring difference. That is the way the seniority works. Seniority rules in the union. In essence it's all we have. Over at Seattle Personal Transit one of two Metro Access providers, we have a one size fits all seniority list. The way the seniority works is the day of your hiring is the day you begin your journey on the seniority ladder. Being on the seniority ladder, anyone hired after you is below you and anyone hired before you is above you.

It's all about paying your dues. The one size fits all means that whether you are a part time or a full time employee, you get to pick your work based on your hire date. Everyone pays his or her dues. Just like Metro there is a part time pick and a full time pick. Although unlike Metro, people are not confined to one or the other. Full time drivers may want to go part time. Whether it's to play golf or to go boating. They can do so and not lose out on all the years and dues they put in. The same is true of the part timers wanting to go full time. Whether it is because they have more time to work or because they are nervous about their financial situation. They can go full time without starting all over. There are no rifts or divisions. Just one group of union members, working side by side with only one seniority list.

continued on page 9

SEND IN YOUR OPINIONS

Letters/contributions must include printed names, signatures, work ID numbers, addresses and phone numbers that can be verified during working hours. Letters that cannot be validated will not be published. All articles/letters are subject to editing and should be limited to 1000 words or less. Not all letters can be published due to space limitations. Cut off is the 15th of each month. Any submission from a member of Local 587 to the *News Review* deemed unprintable by the Recording Secretary shall be forwarded to the Executive Board for final decision to publish. Send letters to:

Paul J. Bachtel
News Review Editor
 c/o ATU Local 587
 2815 Second Avenue, Suite 230
 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

Thank God We Voted Yes!!!!

By Ken Brix, Ryerson Base Operator

Dear members, as Lance Norton said to me recently, "LET'S APPRECIATE WHAT WE HAVE!!!" Here we are in another bad economy with an EXCELLENT guaranteed contract! Thanks to our YES vote, we are the third highest paid transit workers in the nation!!! As millions of Americans are unemployed, our jobs are secure. It's scary to think where we would be had we voted NO. Unions trying to negotiate in this economy are finding it very hard to get even a 2% raise. We recently got a nearly 5% raise on top of a 3% (retroactive) for a total of nearly 8%!!!! For those of you who would say "Yeah, but it's just C.O.L.A.," Well, as a former steelworker at Bethlehem Steel (1974-1991) I was in on one of the first C.O.L.A. contracts. The United Steel Workers of America Union I belonged to negotiated for C.O.L.A. because inflation was wiping out our raises. To get it we gave up our right to strike. This shows how important C.O.L.A. is and why you never hear about steel strikes!!! Also, keep in mind, our C.O.L.A. is even better because we have a 3% floor. That floor is the reason our wages have gone up and why our union was in favor of a 4 year contract.

To those of you that voted NO, I would like to say you are entitled to your opinion. Some of you have been in this business longer than me (since 91) and fought hard for some of our gains. You chose to go against the advice of our union for many reasons. One operator told me we should be the highest paid transit workers in the nation. Well, that would be nice, but it would also make us a target for a cut. It could serve as ammunition for the likes of Tim Eyman and his anti transit initiatives. Another operator told me recently, "Look at what the Boeing

Machinist got!" Well O.K., they got a nice contract and a 58 day strike, that cost them about \$10,000 each!!! It also cost Boeing and its shareholders Billions of dollars. Make no mistake, if Boeing leaves this area it will be devastating to us all. Also, most have been laid off for in some cases years!!! As a steelworker, I was laid off MANY TIMES!!! In my 18 years with Metro, I have not been laid off ONE SINGLE MINUTE. I also know what it's like to be PRICED OUT OF A JOB, and I don't want to see that happen to us.

I also heard from some operators that they always vote NO on the first contract because the second one is always better. Well, it is true that the second contract offer contains some improvements in a few areas. It's ALSO for only 3 years instead of 4. If we don't retain our 3% floor on the next contract, we could lose thousands of dollars over the years!!! Metro wanted the 4th year because so many of our negotiations get extended with a NO vote. This costs Metro and the union a lot of money and does not promote stability. It's also VERY STRESSFUL for our members!!! We had to wait a year and a half for a C.O.L.A. raise!!! If we'd gone to arbitration we'd STILL BE WAITING!!! (AND MAKING 8% LESS!!!!)

It's been said that everybody's entitled to their own opinion, but NOT to their own facts. The FACTS of this contract negotiation seemed clear to most of us. Our union leadership, led by the very intelligent open minded and fair Lance Norton urged a YES VOTE on this contract. While it was by their own admission more of a status quo contract, it reflected the ECONOMIC REALITY of the county and the economy. In addition, they WARNED OF THE RISK of turn-

ing this contract down. Arbitration could easily result in CUTS. For those that voted NO you IGNORED THE FACTS. Make no mistake, your NO vote put at risk our raise, and even our future. Arbitration at a time like this would make us appear VERY ARROGANT. It would put our business in a bad light with both the county and the public. We are after all paid by the tax paying public. Without their support we'll be GONE!!!! As Lance Norton puts it "WE'D BE IN A WORLD OF HURT" if we were in arbitration now!!! We could easily be looking at CUTS!!!!!!

The way the economy and the world are going now, it's likely we will have even tougher choices to make in the future. As Governor Gregoire said recently when talking about the states budget deficit (Now projected to be 5 Billion!!!!) "It may come down to raises or jobs". The message seems clear; the age of LESS may be coming. We are starting to hear words like DEFLATION

AND EVEN DEPRESSION! Even president Obama has said an auto bailout should be conditioned on a SUSTAINABLE AUTO INDUSTRY (CANYOUSAY CUTS?). If that is the case, I think we should all be glad we have the excellent professional union we have. The lesson to be learned from this contract is to LISTEN TO THEM!! THEY GOT US THE BEST CONTRACT THEY COULD!!!!

I can only hope that our next president (Lance retires in 8 months!!!) understands our union's needs as well as Lance Norton. Our work is BOTH HIGHLY PAID AND STABLE. We are after all a municipal company that needs the public's support. WITHOUT IT WE WILL BE GONE. Our contracts will continue to be based on the county's revenue. WE NEED A UNION LIKE OURS THAT CAN DEAL IN REALITIES. One that can balance the expectations of our members with the reality of the county's revenue, AND GET US THE BEST CONTRACT WE CAN!!!!!!

Twister

By John Farrell



Brother John Farrell reading his poem "Twister" at the North base ceremony on November 28th, 2008 marking the 10th anniversary of the murder of Brother Mark McLaughlin - Lost but never Forgotten

To All Bus Drivers Everywhere in Honor of Mark McLaughlin

The twister, we know is a terrible storm
Where frenzy and panic is always the norm.
Which way will it go? Oh, how will it end?
It's a similar feeling when fate takes a friend.
Yes our Mark was gunned down the day after Thanksgiving.
This tore through our lives. We felt guilty for living.
With our minds deep in shock and our sanity reeling,
We tried to assess just what we were feeling.
We thought he'd be pleased if we had a parade
And not let it be just a hopeless charade.

We tried to look strong as the day started out.
Though our faces were stone, we could feel our hearts shout.
From the storms deep inside as they ripped and mangled
The core of our souls. Oh, our minds were all tangled
With anger and pain; with confusion - self pity.
But, we found some relief when we passed through the city.
As we rode through downtown in our tearful procession,
We wondered about our poor choice of profession;
A trade that we knew to be not highly rated,
Bus drivers among those most certainly hated.

We looked out the windows and saw in the faces
Of people who came from all backgrounds and races
Such caring and love that our sadness felt lightened.
In that silent acclaim our self image was heightened.
As they stood on the curb and also shed tears,
They thanked us for serving them over the years.
The police worked so hard and helped clear the way
For us and those drivers from towns far away.
Firefighters stood in salute as we passed
With their engine pulled out as if at half-mast.

Mechanics and Clerks left their tools and their jobs
To share in sorrow, our sighs and our sobs.
Then, we gathered together in a hall built for sports
With a crowd of good people made up of all sorts;
The rich and the poor, the blind, deaf, and lame,
The unknown and the weak- some with power and fame
Like "Senator", "Executive", and "Chief of Police".
We all prayed and we cheered and we hugged and found peace.
We said, "It's for Mark that we're making this fuss."
But he turned it around. Yes, he gave it to us.

Letters to the Editor, continued

There are a lot of legitimate reasons to want to move from a full time to a part time or from a part time to a full time situation. There is no need to be judgmental and there is no need to put unnecessary restrictions to keep from doing so.

Another benefit of the one-size fits all seniority list is weekends and holiday work or to put it in a different light, working the least desirable hours. Naturally the person with the most seniority has the most choice and can pick whatever they want so the least desirable work would be what ever is left over. That would end up in the hands of the people with the least amount of seniority. On holidays if a senior driver wants to work they can. If there aren't enough senior drivers to fill the holiday routes then a reverse seniority takes effect and the drivers with the least amount of time has to step up.

I'm sure there must be a good reason for having two separate seniority lists as there are at Metro. I just can't think of any. The idea of people working more hours as full time drivers not wanting part timers who haven't put in as much time to have the same amount of seniority did cross my mind but aren't the union dues the same for both? In the one size fits all

seniority system, a year of service is a year of service. After all, does the year go by any faster for the part time driver? If we were so intent on punishing our own members for working part time, why not require them to work two or three years before they get a one-year safe driving award? Isn't it a form of punishment moving from one list to another and having to start at the bottom? Why are we willing to discount every year of service and every dollar paid in union dues just because someone has a change in their life? What happens in the event of a layoff when a person who put 30 years in and now has switched to another list? Does that person get laid off first?

We can elect to tear down this wall between ourselves. Management will always be there to divide and conquer. It is up to the union to stand up for one another in a way that makes us all stronger. Why not choose to honor our senior drivers and give them the respect that they have earned by giving them more freedom to do what is important in their own lives? In turn, we will all get that freedom.

Peace
Tom Murphy, 5050

VM Management Picking Your Vacation for You, Yea Right...

Mike Whitehead VM Executive Officer

By now, you should have seen a copy of Jim Boon's memo dated 12/04/08 regarding the 2009 vacation pick. There are changes taking place you need to be prepared for. We will start with the pick process itself, it now will be on a database. The database primarily was created with one feature that was been the "point of contention" in the V.M. vacation process for the past few years—the "carry over." At the 2009 vacation pick, you will now be made aware of how many hours/days you can carry over at the end of the year per the Labor Agreement. Carryover vacation has two definitions in the Labor Agreement, the first talks of the limits you can Carryover in the current year, the second talks of the Carryover total limit you can carry year to year. The problem started surfacing a few years back when around 1 in 6 VM employees were in violation of one or both Carryover limits. As this problem continued to resurface yearly, management took drastic steps and last year deleted the time from 20+ members. This move by management was challenged by the Union in the grievance process and this is where the story gets interesting...

Around October 7 there was a meeting at King Street to discuss the vacation pick. The Unions Business Reps were there as well as your 3 VM E-Board officers. V.M. management had HR person, a rep from the Business system group, a VM supervisor and the VM the manager. We were shown a beta version of the new vacation database. We were told how the vacation pick has become

unmanageable and changes were needed, and then came the crazy stuff. VM management expressed that at the 2009 vacation pick they wanted VM members to select all their vacation at the pick, yes... I said all of it, except for the days that you wish to declare as carry over. So, basically if you showed up, phoned to pick or were a no-show, at the end of the pick process all your vacation was to be picked whether you wanted that time or not, you were too happy and life was too good, *yea right*.

As a VM Board officer I have been conducting the vacation pick for 12 years. In the first two or three years, there was a management person who was known to all VM members, her name was Rosalie, and she managed all the Picks. This woman would bring smiles to the face of some and anger to others in VM; there was no doubt she ran the pick process. I admit I was angered with her at first, her ways appeared harsh and she was relentless and always won but I will admit I did grow to respect her. She was there to manage the vacation pick and she did, but when she retired the management of the vacation stopped, no one was sent in her place. Therefore, over the years members carried over and added to their vacation balance at rates above what the labor agreement allowed to the point that management stepped in and eliminated some members' time.

There have been two meetings after the October 7 meeting to discuss the 2009 vacation pick. At the second meeting, management was still insistent on having all VM members

pick all their vacation at the pick with the exception of the time they wanted to carry over. We replied this would violate the vacation language in Article 17 of the labor agreement where we VM members can use our vacation time in one-hour increments. If we were to pick all our time at the February vacation pick, we would not have time to use our vacation throughout the remainder of the year. We also discussed some of the concerns members have expressed to us when their request to take time off were denied. Denies like "too many BO's" or "too many off on J.I." or "no people allowed off weekends," and one of my favorites "you can only request time off if it is an emergency."

At the third meeting management backed down on the *pick all vacation* and talked about putting another data base together that all bases will use and that will show all the classifications at the base, what time is taken and what time is available to have off based on staffing levels to be determined at each base. This process has been used at South Base over the year; it has worked well and has been a fair way of managing time. This process was called *Discretionary Time* and was posted over the prime time of June, July and August. This process appeared to work well and eliminated all the games that some chiefs and supervisors played with members who requested time off. Metro committed at the third meeting that they would implement this discretionary time posting at all bases starting in early 2009 and an all intensive purposes, it should be a good thing.

The draft "Boon Vacation Memo 12/04/08" was discussed at the VMLMRC the week before it was distributed and we asked that some words be dropped, words like *Require* and the sentence *no more than 3 weeks remaining in his/her vacation balance*. Well as you have seen, *Designate* replaced *Require*, *3 week remained* and *management will assign vacation weeks to employees* was added, so much for a collaborative process.

So why the 12/04/08 Boon Memo and this new need to now have management pick vacation for members who keep over three week unpicked vacation time. This is the same V.M. management that found 4/10 is too hard to manage and eliminated them and now wants to pick our vacation. Maybe there is some guilt and remorse, maybe management wants to make up to V.M. members and go the extra mile by picking vacation for us. Maybe they will also make Airlines and Hotel reservations for us and if we are just staying around the state camping maybe they will make campground reservations, maybe even pitch our tents, lever our trailers, and plan our meals, *yea right*.

This "three week management pick for you" statement that management alludes to is a violation of the contract and will not fly. There are grievances filed and it will be resolved before the 2009 vacation pick.

One other change is an MOA Lance on his authority signed 11/20/08 that now gives management the right to "Use it or Lose it" on all vacation time that exceeds

continued on page 11

EDITOR'S NOTE:

The MOA signed by President Norton on 11-20-08 restored over three hundred ninety hours (390 hours) of excess vacation hours that were taken away from seventeen VM members at the end of 2007. President Norton represented these members through the grievance process and after second step, President Norton negotiated a settlement restoring those 390 hours to our members allowing them to use those hours that were taken away in their 2009 vacation entitlement. In the settlement agreement the following language was added to Article 9, Section 4, between existing paragraphs B and C:

"Any vacation that is accrued in excess of the allowable carryover amounts in Article 9, Sections 1(G), 4(A) and 4(B) shall be considered "use it or lose it." This means that any vacation hours in excess of the allowable carryover, at the end of the payroll year, shall be forfeited and removed from the Employee's vacation balance."

This simply means vacation hours allowed to be carried over each

year according to the chart Article 9, Section 4, paragraph A and B will be strictly adhered to and the existing 480 hour maximum also will be adhered to. This applies not only in our contract but throughout the county. The only classification where any members exceeded the allowed carry-over in our contract was in Vehicle Maintenance. This was primarily because Management was not properly monitoring vacation carry-over days. The new process, with an improved data base informing members of their balances what they're allowed to carry over and each member's responsibility to monitor their balances and allotted carry-over, will eliminate what happened in 2007.

The grievances filed over the Management statement "three week management pick for you" memo has been settled. The new language from the revised memo reads as follows:

"From February 2-6, 2009 we will conduct the 2009 vacation pick.

This is the opportunity for L587 employees to lock in and secure their vacation for 2009. It is imperative that each of you participates in the vacation pick.

To help you prepare to pick your vacation, in January we will provide each employee with the following:

An accounting of his/her vacation balances for 2009.

The maximum amount of vacation leave that an employee can designate to carry over into 2010 (based on the L587 contract).

The maximum amount of vacation that an employee can designate to cash out to receive in either February and/or November 2009 in accordance with Article 9, Section 4A of the labor agreement. You must pick a minimum of 80 hours vacation before you designate cash out.

Please remember that your pay advice that comes with each paycheck reflects your vacation balances. Also, you can refer to your L587 contract for language on allowable vacation cash out and carry over.

To help Vehicle Maintenance better manage vacation leaves, we will undertake the following activities in 2009:

We will automate the vacation pick process. This will result in more complete and timely information for everyone.

We will provide the work locations with a consistent format and process for determining and communicating

discretionary time available.

We will recommend that all L587 employees do the following during the 2009 vacation pick process:

Review the vacation pick sheets which will be posted by January 21, 2009, and will reflect the number of vacation spots per classification, per vacation period, for all of 2009.

Pick their vacation for 2009 during the vacation pick – February 2–6, 2009.

Designate cash out at the pick. Employees who have picked 80 hours of vacation may elect to cash out 8–60 hours of vacation, and elect to receive the cash out either immediately following the pick and/or after November 1, 2009.

Designate carry over hours into 2010 per the limits specified in the L587 contract Article 9, Section 1G.

All vacation requests after the 2009 vacation pick will continue to be subject to the discretion of your supervisor based on his/her assessment of work needs of the base. It is your responsibility to manage your vacation. All vacation in excess of your contractually allowed carry over amount will be lost if not used by January 8, 2010."

Down Wind from a Beached Whale

By Brian Sherlock, Executive Board Officer

I just took the Orca training today and have yet to meet someone who is not concerned that this system does not fit our needs and, as an unnamed supervisor said, "It shows how far you can get from the realities of transit." A stunning amount of time and money has gone into this project and it is hard to imagine how it could be so badly engineered. However, the fact that it was never thought through does not mean that we should not examine where we are today and do the kind of assessment of applicability that was needed a decade ago.

If we ignore the remarkably poor operator controls, there seem to be two basic problems with this system that will cost the agency a mint on an ongoing basis, greatly anger our riders and further deteriorate on-time performance. First, this system fails to use our coach location data to know which zone it is in. Op-

erators are already overwhelmed with issues far more important than this annoying machine, yet it depends on them to remember as they enter the free-ride zone, our busiest service area, to tell it to not charge any hilariously named "smart" card whose owner passes close to its scanner. This will never become an infrequent problem. The inscrutable screens and icons, the fare information quickly flashing and disappearing, when we have many other things to watch, will all guarantee chaos in figuring what fare was charged and of whom. The problems will only get worse as we try to make the refunds, fare corrections and transaction reversals when the actual charges are unclear and the interface is idiotic. Second, the "smart" system does not keep track of where anyone gets on or off the coach. This guarantees more chaos with a large percentage of our trips

having three fares in one trip and the rest having two. If the coach location data we already collect was coupled with reading the cards as the passenger enters and then exits, we could eliminate the overwhelming majority of overcharges and undercharges. Just collecting the undercharges on the 358 and 174 would pay for the engineering change and yield profits until the system is perfected, which just might be a very long time. All that is needed is to increase the scan range to the width of the doors and read the cards as passengers enter and leave and make this a smart system focused on our actual needs. Without these changes, the Ivory Tower may need another floor or two to house the Orca Complaint Department.

The gee-whiz technology of smart cards was a solution in search of a problem. Unfortunately, the current design ignores our real-world

operating environment. No good engineering could come from this foundation. I suggest that we delay implementing this system until the coach location information is integrated and the zones traversed by the card are used to determine the charges. Otherwise, what we get from this system will be the need for more report time, increased manpower for handling the complaints and significant schedule maintenance budget increases to cover the additional delays; all of these are pointless drains on a budget facing epic shortfalls. The bottom line is that the tiny benefits from this system don't come close to balancing the operational problems and our budget needs these additional drains like we need beached orcas stinking up our buses.

An Opportunity to Repeat History

By Paul L. Griffin

In 1980 our Local 587 leadership made commitments to do too much for too many people without sufficient resources. By the time the 1980 negotiations were over the local was nearly bankrupt with only a couple of thousand dollars left. In another words, we were in a financial crisis. The membership had to approve a negotiation assessment to put a few dollars back in the local. Consequently the next three financial secretaries resolved to grow sufficient reserves and control costs so that would never happen again. Good thing too. In our 1990-92 negotiations the local spent \$485,000. But that time it was not necessary to do a negotiation assessment. As a matter of fact, we have not, to this day, had to do a negotiation assessment.

As of three years ago Local 587 had a little over \$900,000 in reserves. Don't worry-management already know this. It's public knowledge found on the LM2 reports filed with the federal Department of Labor. That sounds like a lot of money.

And it is. However, Local 587 goes through approximately \$2.5 million dollars a year. In the event a major employer (METRO) turned off the dues checkoff the union would be able to function for about six months and then we would be again in a financial crisis facing bankruptcy.

We hear a lot about "financial crisis." Big corporations have theirs. The federal government has theirs. Even King County Government has their financial crisis. King County attempted to do too much for too many people without sufficient resources. We, Local 587, are at the cusp of a financial crisis. Local 587 may soon have an opportunity to do too much for too many people without sufficient resources. We learned at the last Charter Meeting that with a little luck the local will break even in 2008. That means we will have spent virtually all of our income. The blame was being cast as the fact that the dues did not go up much this year because the METRO negotiations had not been

ratified. Fair enough. This coming January 2009 the dues will go up approximately \$2.00 per member per month. So where is the pending financial crisis?

In January 2009 we will have the opportunity to self inflict a future financial crisis by voting for another vice president. The by-law to be voted on is for another vice president who would represent only the maintenance department membership. Each full time union officer costs the membership the neighborhood of \$150,000 per year. That's wages, benefits, employer taxes, expense account, and auto allowance. In another words, about \$4.00 per member per month. So if the dues go up by \$2.00 per member and the monthly nut goes up by \$4.00 per month where is the money going to come from?

There was a suggestion that with another full time officer the local would detail fewer members to the local. But if the new VP is for maintenance only and we already have three

Executive Board Officers handling the majority of maintenance issues and the new VP would not be available for other departments' issues then...Would the "other" full time officers "volunteer" their weekends to run the part time pick replacing the shop stewards who already do most of the work? Or maybe run other picks in lieu of Executive Board Officers? We tried that once and it went over like a floater in the punch bowl.

Assuming the membership approves another VP and the International blesses the by-law where will the additional funding come from? Reserves! We have the reserves to fund such a position for quite awhile but the seeds of a future financial crisis will be sown. That's assuming there isn't some unanticipated emergency that requires a great deal of money. Emergency or not, the reserves will diminish. Then for sure and for certain we will be repeating history by having created our own self-inflicted financial crisis.

VM...Yea Right, continued

the carry over amounts allowed in the Labor Agreement. You can bet this language will be used against members who exceed the limits so please at the vacation pick:

Monitor your vacation time, it is your time you earned it "USE IT—DO NOT—LOSE IT"

On now to another important subject in Maintenance

The bylaw to add assistant *vice president business agent maintenance* has been rewritten and is currently posted. It will be discussed and voted on at the January Mem-

bership meeting. This bylaw has been sent to the International for a cursory review and if passed by the local will be approved by the International. If you feel that this will be an asset to this local, that will add vital resource as well as adding more representation, please attend the January meeting, voice your opinion and vote. As you all recall the Executive Board supported this bylaw as well as the President and the Vice President.

Again please come to the January Membership Meeting and show your support...

"Keep your sticks sharp and your fires burning while on vacation"

Partial Holidays in 2009

The Union office has received notice of an increase in the number of partial holidays in calendar year 2009. The increase in the number of partial holidays follows a Fall 2008 increase in the number of trippers affected by partial holiday. To remain on fully paid status Part-time Operators may pick vacation during the affected time periods. Please take this change into consideration when picking part-time vacation.

Partial Holidays for 2009:

- Jan 02, Friday
- MLK Day, Monday
- President's Day, Monday
- Veterans' Day, Wednesday
- Day after Thanksgiving, Friday
- Christmas Eve, Thursday
- Dec. 28, Monday
- Dec. 29, Tuesday
- Dec. 30, Wednesday
- Dec. 31, Thursday

Are We Our Own Worst Enemy?

Kermit Gipson, Vehicle Maintenance Executive Board Officer

It is almost two years since I was selected to fill a vacated executive board position and to represent you as one of your union officers. My experiences during this time frame have been across the board. But from what I have seen, for the most part, we seem to be our own worst enemy. So this article is going to consist of a little rant and a little rave, so please bear with me.

Let's start with the union

The union's sole existence, to my understanding, is to ensure that the rights, equality, and fairness are applied to our union members while at work.

Given all that I have been exposed to, there is still a wide range of issues to become knowledgeable on to be an effective representative for you. Let me be clear, there is a LOT to know and learn! Being an *effective* representative for you is what this position is all about. This is not a paid position. You do get reimbursed for "time loss" from your METRO job. You don't get anything extra. Being a representative is also not about having something to do in your spare time or doing it because no one else really wants to step up and bother with doing it. It seems, more times than not, it is a thankless job. You really have to love people! And you have to have a love for people no matter what they do!

This job mainly consists of taking care of people. Not just any people, it is about taking care of people when they get hit with an overwhelming need. We are those people! Whether some of us bring problems on ourselves or we get hit with something straight out of left field, help is what we need; help is what we asked for; and somehow, help is what we are going to get!

Sometimes the only help we end up needing is a sympathetic ear to listen as we voice our troubles out loud and then we end up 'hearing' our own solutions. But it is the majority of all those other times when we need more than just an ear, and when we do, our union is here, ready to stand by our side and advocate on our behalf.

Saying all that, the person who stands with us is the person who was chosen at the last union election. This is where our participation in union business comes to fruition... or not! Involvement or, lack thereof, is the main aspect of this article. The question I want to ask is what kind of person do we want to stand with us when we need a union representative most?

There seems to be a wide range of topics (benefits, discipline, hiring, termination, state and federal laws, etc., etc., etc.) as well as, knowing the contract inside and out that an officer needs to be conversant on almost instantly. Not only that, but they need to be able to critically consider all of what the "rules and policies" state along with analyzing any particular issue at hand to be able to come up with a solution. In short, the person who represents us needs to have depth, maturity, and a large amount of compassion as well as knowledge. And there are a few of you out there. Please, step up to the plate, throw your name in the hat to

be a representative; there are people who need you. If not as a representative, come down to the meetings (as regularly as possible) and let's hear your voice.

So, let us now talk about you.

Before we started negotiations on our current contract, the first thing we did was to send surveys to every member. These surveys would tell us the things most important to you in regards to our working life. On the VM side, I am told that the percentage of responses received versus what was sent exceeded those received in the past by a large margin. Thank you! Really! However, I think we can do better. We made it as easy and as cost effective as we thought possible. So, I ask you, why couldn't we get 100% of them completed and returned? They were for our benefit. Please forgive me, I digress.

I hear a lot of criticism from you of your four full-time (FT) officers, of your executive board officers, of the staff at the union office, and even of the effectiveness (or lack thereof) of the union as a whole. I also see and hear a lot of nitpicking, backbiting, conniving, posturing, and self-aggrandizing, and, your typical, good-old fashion, back stabbing being conducted by your full-time officers, your executive board officers, as well as, us, the membership.

I can recognize the nature of some people. I know our membership is made up of people from all walks of life with different agendas, hopes, ideas, needs, and wants. And some of those people pursue those agendas differently than others. But, despite all of our individual characteristics and (above all) the animosity among one another, what I can say, unequivocally, is that your union officers and staff consistently works hard for you on a daily basis! Can they do better? Everyone can; but that doesn't detract from their efforts.

Unlike our government, our union holds monthly charter meetings to directly inform our members of the business it has conducted on their behalf.

During these charter meetings, the membership has an inherent right to not only ask questions about business the union has conducted, it gets to direct, by voting, the actual business of the local for the future. The conduct and atmosphere of the meeting should be one that provides the members a secure environment to voice their ideas and opinions without being ridiculed or put down no matter how far fetched, and/or conflicting they might be. Stating that fact, let me say this – an Argument is a *constructive tool* to discuss an issue; it is not verbal fight where you have to out shout your opponent to win.

There are members of our Local who are also members of other groups, one is named FORWARD and the other calls themselves OWLS (sorry, I don't know what the acronyms stand for). Whether you believe their politics or not, the one thing that I have to applaud them on is their commitment and their tenacity. They know whether you like them or not, they will get time to voice their concerns, ask questions, and try and make a good argument

on union issues, however they may pertain to their agendas. All they have to do to exercise their rights is to show up at any charter meeting. It is that simple.

Now, there are a number of issues that may or may not contribute to a definitive problem. On the other hand, there probably won't be a singular solution that will solve a number of our problems. So, I am not saying that simply showing up for the charter meetings will solve all of our problems. But, out of almost four thousand members there probably are a few people out there who could come up with that one solution that escapes everyone else. What is just increasingly frustrating to me, is out of almost four thousand members, how can there only be 20 to 30 people who show up at any given monthly charter meeting?

During contract negotiations I had opportunities to talk with many of you. Some of you that I talked with not only had a wealth of knowledge and experience to tap into, you also displayed a profound and comprehensive understanding of the issues concerning our members. Many of you showed a tremendous amount of ingenuity by articulating possible solutions for some of the issues we were facing at the negotiations table. Why can't you attend the charter meetings?

I understand that the meeting times are the main factor for not attending because we, the members, live in so many distant and far away lands. The meeting times and locations were established for the majority of us. The union is not able to easily accommodate everyone, but there is room for a compromise. I am not saying that each of us should attend every meeting; I am asking that we each find some way of attending as many of them as we are able to. Come to the meetings and propose some suggestions.

There are a number of us, who complained about what the full-time and executive board officers do or don't do, should or should not do; just so many things. Yet, we don't take the time to show up at the meetings to share this with them directly!

And another thing — time and time again I hear many of those in the Maintenance Section complaining that because of their sheer numbers,

this is a Driver's union; that we in Maintenance are not being heard by the officers and anything Maintenance tries to propose at a charter meeting gets voted down because of the Driver's overwhelming numbers; that being in this "Driver's Union" holds us back from attaining what should rightfully be ours, and that we should secede from it. To let you know, I have seen nothing from the other, so called, "Driver" officers but their full support on any number of our issues. The way I see it, whether you believe that or not, your involvement makes it more or less so. It is your vote, or lack of it, that will determine the outcome of any issue. Again, there are not that many people who attend the meetings, so if you have anything that you have a stake in, simply gather as many people that you can, attend the meeting, and make an argument for your cause! More than that; run for one of those positions! Look at what President-elect Obama did. Grassroots and a lot of hard work is the key; Yes you can! (No, I am not sorry; I had to put that in here somewhere!)

Solidarity — harmony of interests and responsibilities among individuals in a group, especially as manifested in unanimous support and collective action for something.

From what I was told, we achieve that level of solidarity back in '90 or '91, when a "walk out" was called. That was an extreme action to what I understand was an extreme situation. But why can't we have that level unity without having the need to resort to those extremes? Don't get me wrong, I don't want you to think that solidarity is going to happen just by showing up at a meeting. It is about coming together and standing together for a common cause, despite the different needs, wants, ideas, and agendas. That makes for us being the "strong union" that I heard we could be so many times during the charter meetings leading up to the ratification of our last contract.

There are two groups of people that make up the membership of our local: the involved and the uninvolved. Brothers and Sisters, we need more members in the former group to move over into the latter group. Let us start there. Then and only then can we build and have a better, stronger, solidified union that we all seek.



Dick "Santa" Amos and his Elf, Al Ramey, call the names of Christmas Turkey Draw winners at the Retirees Christmas Luncheon

Holiday Turkey Draw winners: Retirees Christmas Luncheon – Bob Barker, Emi Perez, Angelina Knight, Tom McDaniel, Elke Heinz, C. P. Larsen, Robert Colvin, Charles Zigler, A. Louise Delaney and Chuck Allen; Charter meeting – Verita Alexander, Aaron Lewis, Stephanie J. Ponder, Paul Griffin, Paul A. Considine, David Wick, Alan Huston, Judy Young, Lisa Thompson and Lisa Carter; Morning – Paul Tefft, Sam Miller, David Earle, Elaine Monzon, Richard Hansen, John Ross and W.W. Reid; JTA meeting – Paul Hausmann, John Maiden and Troy McKelvey; Clallam County meeting – Ed Stanard, Mike Rampenthal, Ken Milliser, Joe Mangiameli, Marty Borleau, Sandy Fangen-Ross and Claudia Girard.

The Financial Secretary's Report

By Paul Neil



Annual Grievance Arbitration Assessment

Each grievance that the Union pursues to arbitration (the last step of the appeal process) must be approved by the membership at our monthly union meetings. The membership decides whether each grievance should go to arbitration or not. The membership also pays the costs of those approved arbitrations annually, on a per capita basis, as required by Section 21.15 of the International Constitution and General Laws. In addition, assessments for Workers Compensation attorney fees are provided for in our Bylaws, Article VIII, section 5.

During 2008 Local 587 paid a total of \$211,773.33 to our attorneys. Of this \$127,919.08 were assessable costs of \$110,339.69 for grievance arbitrations and \$17,579.39 workers compensation cases. The remaining \$83,991.26 was for non-assessable legal costs such as \$23,263.82 to fight the awarding of the paratransit services contract to Veolia, \$16,822.83 on METRO contract negotiations, \$8,727.42 for consultations on grievances and \$3,740.00 on the issue of furloughs at METRO Transit. Included in the assessment is \$2,063.79 in detail wages. For a grand total of assessable costs of \$129,982.87 which is a decrease of approximately 2% from last years assessment.

As of the December 2008 membership report to the A.T.U. International Local 587 had an active membership of 4017. Dividing the total assessable costs by active members yields an assessment of \$32.36 per member to be paid in 2009 for 2008 costs. The assessments in recent years were:

- \$64.40
- \$42.84
- \$33.38
- \$32.36

The decline in arbitration costs the last few years is to a great extent due to the fine job President Norton and Vice President McCormick have done to resolve grievances prior to them going to arbitration.

As we have done in the past, we will be splitting it in two - taking \$16.18 out of the checks members employed by METRO Transit will receive on June 11, 2009 and on November 12, 2009. These are the "free" paydays" (according to Metro) and are normally dues free. For members not working for METRO Transit, separate bulletins will be issued explaining when the assessment will be paid.

Grievance Arbitration Expenses:

Total Payroll	\$2063.79	Workers Compensation:
Legal Expenses:		Bouie, John. \$ 799.12
Grievance Arbitrations:		Brown, Claude. \$ 140.00
Beatty, Chrystie \$ 8021.85		Christophe, Diane \$ 434.00
Fangen-Ross, Sandra. 5110.00		Corsey, Gary \$ 126.00
Ford, LaMarcus 22536.53		Davis, Lillete \$ 2192.48
Harris, Bart 34481.93		Fetui, Lia \$ 485.70
Harris, Derek 1032.50		Gilge, Charlene \$ 1489.81
Jones, John Henry 15385.06		Gimenez, Diane \$ 131.44
Lambert, Nancy. 3540.00		Grace, Tyrone. \$ 1548.86
Lee, Vince. 1382.50		Gredig, Louise. \$ 149.48
Mangold, Earl 52.55		Kendrick, Al. \$ 294.39
Reyes, Edgardo 2094.46		Klasen, Greg \$ 2597.50
Ross, John. 962.50		Lomuntad, Angel \$ 439.18
Tchernev, Iordan 70.00		MacFarland, Joyce. \$ 43.98
Valaile, Alofa 12257.31		MacLeod, Trenton \$ 1364.66
Wallace, Bill 1575.00		Mathis, Porter \$ 1613.22
Witham, Fred. 1837.50		Murphy, John. \$ 506.25
TOTAL Grievance Arbitrations	\$110339.69	Rowe, Cheryl. \$ 1252.87
		Schultz, Tyler. \$ 1273.97
		Stanley, Vicki. \$ 612.48
		Walker, Dennis. \$ 84.00
		TOTAL Workers Compensation
	 \$ 17579.39
		Total Expense. \$129982.87
		Divided by 4017 Active Members
	 \$ 32.36

Costs of adding a 2nd Vice President

By Paul Neil

Although I agree with former Financial Secretary Griffin that the addition of another fulltime officer is a very serious financial commitment by the membership of this local and that we will need to adjust the way we do business, I must disagree with the hysterical nature of the remainder of his article. ATU Local 587 is not currently in or anywhere near a financial crisis. The surplus for 2008 will be smaller than the last few years, primarily because the increase in the monthly dues voted on by the membership in January did not reflect any increase in the wages of the highest paid classification. This was due to the King Co. METRO Transit contract not being settled until later in the year. There was discussion of retroactively increasing dues back to the beginning of the year once the contract was settled, but the leadership of Local 587 chose not to do this. If we had retroactively applied a dues increase, then the surplus for this year would be in the area of \$70,000.00 instead of \$15,000.00. As far as our reserves, Local 587 has more than adequate

reserves in cash and CD's; over five months of regular expenses. This does not include our \$100,000.00 in Union Labor Life stock, which can not be sold due to a bad decision by my predecessor.

The cost of having a 2nd V.P. will depend on the salary the Executive Board sets, but let's use the figure of \$150,000.00 that Brother Griffin mentions in his article. One way to pay for a 2nd V.P. would be to increase the membership by about 250; this is just about the number of members we would add when the A.T.U. International finishes organizing the Veolia Paratransit property here in King County. Another way would be to just increase monthly dues by \$3.00 per member, which is something I could not support along with many others until we make every effort to reduce or eliminate non-essential costs in other areas.

What can we eliminate or reduce? We can start with the budget committee and me going through our current budget and carefully examining our expenditures. Certainly with an additional fulltime officer there should be less detailing needed of Executive

Board members, as well as rank and file members. Some of the areas I would want to look at are:

We currently send a Fulltime Officer plus an Executive Board Officer to attend the Joint Labor Management Insurance Committee. My understanding is that each Union is entitled to send one representative, but because we want to keep close tabs on this important committee, we send two. Eliminating sending an Executive Board Officer to this committee would have saved the local about \$5500.00 last year.

With the use of an all mail ballot for officer elections this year costs for that should be reduced from \$100,000.00 in the last officer election in 2006 to under \$50,000.00 this year.

Continuing to reduce I.T. expenses: Since 2005 these expenses have been reduced from \$51,729.11 to \$41,362.15 or about 20%.

Reduce the number of members we send to various classes, seminars and conferences. Not detailing a member for one day to the Union would save on average about \$250.00 depending on their

wage rate.

Reduce the number of members on committees and how often they meet.

These are just some of the ways we could reduce expenses without hurting our core business. The 2nd V.P. will not only be responsible for his/her area of King County Metro Vehicle and Facilities Maintenance but will also be assigned other duties by the President. Just as an historic note, in 1984 when Local 587 added its fourth fulltime officer (Recording Secretary), the active membership was about 2700, or one fulltime officer per 675 active members. If the 2nd V.P. is added, we will have five fulltime officers for the 4017 active members or about 800 members per fulltime officer. The final decision on whether to add the 2nd V.P. is up to the membership. My opinion as the Financial Secretary of this local is that an additional fulltime officer is affordable if we are willing to shift the resources to pay for it. I am more than willing to work with my fellow officers and the membership to do just that if the membership votes "YES" at the January membership meetings.

The Recording Secretary's Report

By Paul J. Bachtel



VEBA

Every three years we have opportunity to participate in the King County Voluntary Employee Beneficiary Association (VEBA) plan. The King County VEBA plan that was available three years ago allowed employees to roll sick leave cash out, available at the time of retirement, into a tax **Exempt** savings account to pay for retiree medical expenses. Three years ago Local 587 decided not to participate in the King County VEBA plan. The decision not to participate was based primarily on two factors. First, all VEBA plans require mandatory membership participation, meaning **ALL** employees in a work group or labor union must participate. Members, who may not want to participate in a VEBA plan preferring instead to receive their sick leave cash out paid in wages, wouldn't have an option to receive cash out paid in wages and would be required to participate in VEBA; and second, the King County VEBA came with an expense ratio of approximately 2 1/2% per annum. The Union didn't research the expense ratio to determine if it was competitive but

the expense ratio was nonetheless a contributory factor in deciding not to participate in VEBA.

Once again, the opportunity to join the King County VEBA is upon us. For the coming three year period King County is considering expanding its VEBA contributions to include cash out of vacation at retirement and/or a small percentage of wages.

So why would we want to join VEBA and why would King County be willing to expand its utilization?

VEBA, unlike our 457 deferred compensation plan, allows wages we earn to be invested completely tax exempt. Wages contributed to a VEBA plan are not taxed when **deposited OR withdrawn** as long as the wages are used to pay for qualified medical expenses. Deferred compensation plans, such as our 457 plan, allow employees to contribute pre-tax wages but the employee pays taxes on those wages when withdrawn from the plan.

[To illustrate how an average Local 587 member could benefit by participating in the King County

VEBA plan I'll use the following example throughout this article. The employee was born in 1960 (48 years old) earns \$50,000 per year, his/her upper income is taxed at 28% federal income tax and 7.5% FICA tax (FICA taxes are what employees pay for Social Security and Medicare) and will have worked for King County for 30 years by age 62. The example employee will earn a very conservative rate of return on his/her VEBA account 2 1/2% above the rate of inflation.]

So where are the savings for the employee and employer?

The employee doesn't pay federal income tax (28% in the example) or FICA tax (7.5%) on wages saved in his/her VEBA account. That's a 35.5% savings to the employee in taxes not paid!!

King County also saves money in not having to pay the employers portion of the FICA tax, approximately 7.5% of the wages contributed!

What is your Union doing to investigate the King County VEBA plan?

At a recent meeting of the Joint Labor Management Insurance Committee (JLMIC) I asked King County management to evaluate the possibility of adding a 1% employee wage contribution to King County's proposal of adding vacation cash out to the existing sick leave cash out VEBA plan. A 1% wage contribution would equate to the example employee above contributing \$500 per year (about \$20.80 per pay period) to the employee's tax free VEBA account.

The employee wouldn't see a \$20.80 reduction in his/her take home pay. The employee would take home \$13.52 less and would

be saving \$20.80 tax free each pay period. (The difference is in the fact the example employee isn't paying federal income and FICA taxes on the \$20.80)

At retirement the employee contributing 1000 hours of sick leave (paid out at 35%), 480 hours of vacation and having contributed \$500 per year for 30 years will have saved \$34,875 (tax free in today's dollars). At the current cost of \$570 per month for King Care Gold retiree medical and an additional cost of \$70.00 for retiree dental and optical (again in today's dollars) the employee could purchase medical, dental and optical for a 54 months or 4 1/2 years. Given the PERS II and III retirement plans allow for retirement at age 62 without benefit reduction, which is 5 years before the employee can collect full Social Security payments (at age 67), the wages saved could just about pay for medical, dental and vision for the employee until age 67.

In my humble opinion not participating in the King County VEBA plan is extremely short sighted. For years one of most often cited contract negotiation survey items has been retiree medical benefits. With VEBA, the employee could pay for retiree medical, dental and vision by simply taking advantage of the King County VEBA plan.

Will Local 587 again opt out of the King County VEBA plan in favor of a shorted sighted gain in wages? Come to a Union meeting or contact your Union officers and tell them to investigate King County's VEBA plan and let the membership have a vote on deciding whether to, or not to, participate in the King County VEBA plan.

2nd Vice President/ Assistant Business Representative—Maintenance

By Jeff Stambaugh,
Vehicle Maintenance Executive Board Officer

I am sure by now, most of you are aware that on more than one occasion, members have tried unsuccessfully to change our bylaws in an effort to bring a full time officer to this local, whose primary duties would be representation of Vehicle Maintenance & Facilities Maintenance employees. In the most recent effort, we learned quite a bit about the process the International uses to verify that a bylaw change conforms to all of the International Bylaws. Unfortunately, our last attempt did not conform to the International Bylaws.

Well, with a few new voices and a couple of old faces, we sat down and wrote a new bylaw proposal. Brothers Allen Houston, Mike Whitehead, and Mike Rochon spent considerable time researching and revamping the 2nd Vice President proposal and brought it before the Bylaw committee. After a few minor tweaks, the Bylaw committee was certain that not only would this proposal meet the needs of the members but that it would also pass the scrutiny of the International. Head of the bylaw committee Brother

Paul Neil contacted the International and in a rare move the International reviewed this proposal before it went to the membership and has given it the go ahead.

So what does all this mean to you?

Glad you asked; if this new bylaw is approved by the membership and you are a Vehicle Maintenance or Facilities Maintenance employee it means having a full time voice in the union office that understands your issues, knows the employees, the nuances of your day to day work, the management staff you work for and having the time to resolve your issues and better your working conditions. If you don't happen to be a Vehicle Maintenance or Facilities Maintenance member, you're probably asking yourself "What does do for me?" Since you brought it up, the short answer is it will free up time of the Vice President that can be dedicated to your issues.

I urge you to come out and let your voice be heard and vote in support of this bylaw proposal at the January meeting cycle.

I just wanted to CLUW you in

By Dee Wakenight, Executive Board Officer

There's an exciting new publication available produced by the Economic Policy Institute (EPI) - "A Plan to Revive the American Economy" as part of the Agenda for a Shared Prosperity project, a joint effort between EPI and the AFL-CIO.

The handbook is an extremely useful tool for helping activists understand the scope of the problems facing the nation and the solutions necessary for achieving the social and economic justice central to the labor movement's agenda of an economy that works for all. It is

a thoughtful, concise blueprint for achieving lasting growth to which every American can contribute and share.

A copy of the handbook is available on EPI's website, www.sharedprosperity.org, a site you may want to visit often as a useful resource of information.

Just in case you wondered what good is it to be involved in an outside organization, this information was made available by The Coalition of Labor Union Women, CLUW. I just wanted to CLUW you in.

2009 Elections coming!

What? Another election? Yes, in the spring of 2009 there will be an election for the new officers of ATU Local 587. Every member should take a vital interest in this election as, in these uncertain economic times, strong leadership for our Union will preserve our jobs.

The most important change in this upcoming election is that it will be conducted by mail-in ballot ONLY! Keep in mind that the ballot return dates below mean that the ballots must be MAILED in time to be received in our Election Post Office Box by the deadline – postmarks will not count.

There will be tight deadlines for the nominations, Voters' Pamphlet submissions and address changes. Your Election Committee will be working hard to keep *you*, our members, informed of these dates. Timeline postings will appear regularly in the News Review, posted on Union bulletin boards as well as the ATU587 web site.

It is important that every member have his or her correct mailing address on file with ATU587. The mailing list for the ballot mailing will be ATU587's membership database.

Here are the key election dates - mark your calendar!

Candidate instruction packets

will be available during the March cycle of Union meetings and also on the Union website.

Nominations for all positions will be accepted at the April cycle of Union meetings. Final date for nominations is the last member meeting on Tuesday, April 7th in Port Angeles.

Candidates' statements for Voter's Pamphlet are due on Thursday, April 9th in the Union office by the close of business. **NO EXCEPTIONS.** **Warning:** this is only two days after the close of nominations!

Ballots for Primary Election will be mailed to members on April 29th and must be mailed back in time to be RECEIVED at the Post Office Box before Thursday, May 14th.

Ballots for General Election will be mailed to members on May 19th and must be mailed back in time to be RECEIVED at the Post Office Box before Thursday, June 4th.

If a runoff election is needed after the General Election, it will be on or before June 25th.

Please note: *All of the above dates are subject to change, depending on the outcome of the bylaw change to be voted on in the January cycle of Union meetings.*

In summary, your Election Committee is working hard to inform members about these new changes

to our election by mail-in voting. Having the correct mailing address on file with ATU587 and returning your ballots promptly will ensure your vote is counted. Because of the difficult economic conditions we face, with layoffs and budget cuts, it is important for every member to participate in this election of the Union Officers. They will represent us all in our dealings with Management.

Your Election Committee

Theresa Tobin, Jim McKenzie, Paul Tefft, Ruth Wilson, and Russ Bates, Chair

You may contact us via email at electioncommittee@ATU587.com or phone the Local 587 office at (206) 448-8588

As your Election Committee, our goals for this election are summarized in our Mission Statement, below:

Mission Statement

ATU Local 587 Election Committee:

To conduct a fair, impartial, and secure election for our membership;

To provide an accurate and timely count of the results; and

To ensure that our election complies with the requirements of the US Department of Labor, our ATU International Constitution and Local 587 Bylaws.

Ready, Fun, Action! ... It's LOBBY DAY 2009 ... and You're Invited!

by Linda Anderson, COPE Committee

Let's Talk Transit

You are invited to join your Union Brothers and Sisters for ATU COPE Lobby Day, January 30, 2009

We're going to have a great time, as well as lobby about important transit union issues. Box lunches, games and prizes, and orientation are included.

Leaving Central Base at 8:30am, we'll drive Metro buses to Olympia to meet with our Washington State Legislators, and be back to the base at about 4:30pm.

Please register via US Mail or Metro in house mail using the form below. Registration forms can also be downloaded from: <http://www.atu587.com>

If you need to take time off to attend, put your name in the Lay Off Book at your work site. Unpaid courtesy detail can be arranged for a limited number of participants who are not guaranteed to get the day off. *See you at Lobby Day!*

Please fill out completely—we need your home address and contact information!!

NAME _____

E-MAIL _____

HOME ADDRESS (WHERE YOU'RE REGISTERED TO VOTE--NO P.O. BOXES)

STREET _____

CITY _____ ZIP _____ LEG. DIST. (if you know it) _____

METRO ID# _____ WORKSITE _____

PHONE _____ CELL PHONE _____

We Can Do It:

Who says an African American community organizer can't be President? And who says *you* can't be heard and make a real difference at the Legislature? As a matter of fact, you can, even if you've never done anything political before. This coming January 30, come aboard our Lobby Day bus and go to Olympia with your ATU 587 Brothers and sisters. It's user friendly and it's fun! Take a day off from the daily grind to join us!

How it Works:

We provide the games, the food, the bus. We give you an orientation on our issues, and how to lobby. Over lunch, Legislators will talk with us about the transit and working family laws they are working on. We team you up with someone experienced to help you talk to your Legislators. Then we have still more fun on the way back, and get you back by dinner.

It's Easy to Sign Up:

- Here's how:
- 1) Fill out the sign up form in this *News Review* issue and send it to the union office.
 - 2) Put your name in for the day off (in the book for Metro Operators).
 - 3) We will contact you in January with all the details! After you put your name in the book, if you still can't get the day off, we may be able to help. Please be aware, this is a volunteer effort, the union does not pay you. (You can use your AC time, if you have it).

We Do Make a Difference:

Lobby Day is an annual event put on by ATU 587 COPE (committee on political education). Because we have a very active COPE committee, Legislators know who we are, and they know our issues. You can help keep it that way. When it comes to getting real action on the bills we support, there is nothing more effective than a couple of busloads of union members showing up to remind them, they work for us. You can make a difference!

Send this form to: ATU COPE Lobby Day, 2815 Second Ave, Suite 230, Seattle, WA 98121