

ATU Local 587 News Review

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The President's Report

by Lance F. Norton



Overview of Interest Arbitration

Last month I explained the mediation process that we're currently going through. Since I've received a number of questions regarding Arbitration, should we end up there, I thought I'd devote this column to a brief overview of Interest Arbitration. I've taken most of this information from my files labeled Contract Arbitration and responses to frequently asked questions.

Some members have asked "Why don't we just go to interest arbitration and let the Arbitrator decide the contract?" This question has several levels all of which I'll try to address. First of all, our Union fought very hard to win the right to interest arbitration. In 1992 we took the case all the way to the Washington State Supreme Court, where we won. After that, we lobbied the State Legislature to get a specific statute setting forth our right to interest arbitration. Our primary argument was since we're public employers without the right to strike we should have the right to binding interest arbitration. Finally statute RCW 41.56 provides the criteria by which an arbitrator decides interest arbitration.

Interest Arbitration is a tool to be used only when one party or the other is so unreasonable that a negotiated settlement cannot be reached.

It is the responsibility of the Union's negotiating team to do everything it possibly can to negotiate a settlement. Interest arbitration is, and should be, only a last resort. That is not just the view of the negotiating teams; rather, it is the opinion and philosophy of arbitration itself, and interest arbitrators in particular.

Interest arbitrators do not "reward" one side or the other. They do not view it as their responsibility to "make up for lost time", or punish one side or the other for bad faith bargaining. Arbitrators see their job as putting the parties in the same position they would have been in had they negotiated a contract in good faith. It is extremely rare when a union or an employer achieves a result in arbitration that significantly exceeds the results they could have achieved had they bargained in good faith from the beginning.

Arbitrators tend to be conservative and it is extremely rare when big gains are attained. Big gains occur when there are obvious disparities between the union and comparable properties. For example, our current proposed three percent (3%) wage increase back to October 20, 2007 and our COLA language places us solidly in the upper percentile of comparable properties, and well above the average hourly rates. While we

would have worked hard to argue our case, it is unlikely an arbitrator would have pushed beyond what we have negotiated.

One of the most important things gained from a negotiated settlement is the element of certainty. In negotiating our contract we have not taken the process out of our hands and given it to someone who could have done any number of things with it.

As I write my article this morning (Sunday, February 24th) our negotiating team has met in mediation on February 4th, 11th, and 12th. We are scheduled to meet with Metro on February 28th, at the request of the Mediator, to continue negotiations with Metro and both parties will meet with the Mediator on Monday, March 3rd.

We brought back to the table a number of issues that we heard from our membership had caused much concern. I believe we've made progress in those areas.

I wish to say in closing your entire negotiating team and your Executive Board are determined to bring back a contract offer that the majority of our membership will accept and ratify.

Regards to all...
Be Safe...

Lance F. Norton
President/Business Representative
Local 587



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The Month at a Glance

Executive Board Report

February 26, 2007

All officers were present.

The following business was conducted:

- Motion by Judy Young to merge the Union Barbeque with the MERA cookout for a one-year trail.
- Motion by Mike Whitehead to recommend pursuing the grievance of Fred Witham for the membership's consideration for arbitration.

- Motion by Chris Daniels to approve the budget as amended by the Executive Board.
- Motion by Paul Neal to approve the purchase of 75 \$23.00 tickets to the September 07, 2008 Mariners vs. Yankees game for resale at cost to members.
- Motion by Kenny McCormick that we not allow guests in our Union meetings while in negotiations except minor children of our members.

Tentative Agenda
Membership Meetings:

CHARTER MEETING
Thursday, March 6, 2008
8:00 p.m.
The Labor Temple, Hall #8
2800 1st Ave., Seattle, WA

JEFFERSON TRANSIT
Monday, March 10, 2008
7:00 p.m.
Port Townsend Rec Center
Port Townsend, WA

MORNING MEETING
Friday, March 7, 2008
10:30 a.m.
The Labor Temple, Hall #6
2800 1st Ave., Seattle, WA

CLALLAM TRANSIT
Tuesday, March 11, 2008
7:00 p.m.
Vern Burton Memorial Building
Port Angeles, WA

Among Topics to be Discussed:

- Grievance and arbitration update
- Resolution to the King County Labor Council
- King County Metro and Solid Ground negotiations

Unfinished Business: None

CORRECTION

The February News Review incorrectly reported the author of the article "The Logo and the Dream" as Michael Moore. The author's actual title is "Michael Moore, Executive Board Officer."

Business of the Membership

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

The following members were February pot draw winners: Judy Young at the Charter meeting, Rich-

ard Yount at the Morning meeting, Paul Hausmann at the JTA meeting, Bob Eash at the CTS meeting. CTS rolling pot draw of \$50.00 was lost by Jack Durrwachter. Next month's rolling pot will be \$75.00.

In Loving Memory...

*Knowing what
Thou knowest not
Is in a sense
Omniscience*

— Piet Hein
poet and scientist (1905-1996)

Don Licht: Retired member passed away February 12, 2008. Brother Licht was 1995 Operator of the Year. Brother Licht joined Local 587 June 01, 1959 and retired October 01, 1998.

Joe Daniels: Retired member passed away January 27, 2008. Brother Daniels joined Local 587 November 01, 1971 and retired from First Line Supervision July 01, 1998.

Roger Helgerson: Retired member passed away January 27, 2008. Brother Helgerson joined Local 587 in 1956 and retired from First Line Supervision in 1996.

Clarence Meyer: Retired member passed away January 30, 2008. Brother Meyer was awarded Vehicle Maintenance Employee of the Year in 2005. Brother Meyer joined Local 587 August 01, 1973 and retired from service as a South base mechanic July 01, 2005.

Michael McGraw Sr.: Former member passed away January 07, 2008. Brother McGraw joined Local 587 December 19, 1973 and retired May 29, 2003.

David A. Gil: Active member passed away January 28, 2008. Brother Gil began his career as a Part-time Transit Operator January 31, 2003 and promoted to Full-time Transit Operator December 16, 2005.

Michael J. Murray: Retired member passed away January 27, 2008. Brother Murray began his career as a Part-time Transit Operator May 26, 2000, was promoted to Full-time Transit Operator December 21, 2001 and retired July 01, 2007.

Christian Jensen: Retired member passed away January 26, 2008. Brother Jensen joined Local 587 May 01, 1962 and retired June 01, 2001.

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

ATU Local 587

News Review

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

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

OFFICERS OF THE AMALGAMATED TRANSIT UNION, LOCAL 587:

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

KENNY McCORMICK Vice President/Assistant Business Representative
email - kmccormickvp@atu587.com

PAUL B. NEIL Financial Secretary
email - pneilfinsec@atu587.com

PAUL J. BACHTEL Recording Secretary/
Editor 587 News Review
email - pbachtelrecsec@atu587.com

Minority Affairs Officer
Transit Operator Position No. 1
Transit Operator Position No. 2
Transit Operator Position No. 3
Transit Operator Position No. 4
Transit Operator Position No. 5
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KERMIT C. GIPSON JR.
THOMAS A. WOOLLEY
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MICHAEL SHEA
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

What You Don't Know About "Light Duty" Work Can Hurt You

By Meade Brown Jr. - Attorney at Law

Washington's Industrial Insurance Act entitles you to a wage replacement benefit called "time loss", if you suffer an on-the-job injury or occupational disease which temporarily disables you from employment. If you are a full-time Metro employee, your Collective Bargaining Agreement also entitles you to a supplemental benefit, which pays the difference between your time loss benefit, and the net earnings you had before the injury or disease. If you collect time loss and supplemental benefits, you will soon discover that King County has a very aggressive "light duty" work program. You will probably be asked by your supervisor, or King County Safety and Claims, to participate in light duty work, and you will be threatened with the suspension of your time loss and supplemental benefits if you decline such work. Needless to say, at such a time it is important for you to know what your legal rights and responsibilities are in regard to light duty work.

"Light duty" work is simply temporary work which is different from the regular work you were performing at the time of your on-the-job injury or occupational disease. This temporary work is called "light duty", because it is supposed to be less physically demanding than the regular work your injury or disease prevents you from performing. If you are offered and decline properly

approved light duty work, King County may legally suspend your time loss and supplemental benefits. However, there are other reasons for participating in properly approved light duty work, besides avoiding the suspension of your benefits. Your participation in this temporary work will likely benefit both your medical recovery, and your personal finances. Increasing your physical activities, within the limits set by your doctor, may aid your medical recovery. Getting out of the house and back to a work routine, will likely improve your mental state as well. Finally, you will receive more money in wages and the partial time loss benefits you will be entitled to (called "loss of earning power" benefits), than you would receive in time loss benefits alone.

However, if "light duty" work is not properly designed to accommodate your physical limitations, the work may aggravate your physical condition and set back your medical recovery. Your knowledge of your legal rights and responsibilities may ultimately determine whether your light duty work is properly designed, and whether you have a positive or negative experience with this temporary work.

Properly designed light duty work should accommodate the temporary physical limitations you have while you are undergoing medical treatment and recovering from your on-the-job injury or oc-

cupational disease. A provision of the Industrial Insurance Act, RCW 51.21.090 (4), spells out what steps King County is required to take in order to ensure that the light duty work it offers you properly accommodates your physical limitations. The law requires that King County obtain from your physician (and not their independent" medical examiner) approval of any light duty work it offers you. To obtain approval, **the Industrial Insurance Act requires King County to send your physician, with a copy to you, a written description of the light duty work King County desires you to perform.** The law requires the written light duty job description to include sufficient detail to permit your physician to have an adequate understanding of the physical demands of the work. **At the outset of your medical care, you should advise your physician to immediately contact you whenever your physician receives a light duty job description from King County, and to await your input regarding the physical demands of the work, before your physician completes a review of the written job description.** In other words, as soon as you, and / or your physician, receive a written light duty job description from King County, you should meet with your physician and discuss the appropriateness of the work being offered. The goal of such a meeting is not to avoid having the light duty work approved by your physician, but to make sure both you and your physician understand what the physical requirements of the job are, and to ensure these physical requirements will not aggravate your industrial injury or occupational disease.

If you and your physician have any doubts regarding the physical requirements of the light duty work being offered, your physician should ask King County to provide a more thorough written description of the work involved. **If your physician approves the light duty work being offered, you should obtain a copy of the approved light duty job description, and carry the description on your person to work. The law prohibits King County from asking you to perform any work not described in the approved written job description.** If your supervisor asks you to perform alternative work not reviewed and approved by your doctor, you should show your supervisor the approved written job description, and decline the alternative work. You should not make this a dispute between you and your supervisor. Simply advise your supervisor that you are willing to perform any new work after it is described in writing and approved by your doctor. If the approved light duty work aggravates your injury, you should stop the work and immediately make an appointment with your physician to determine

whether the light duty work should be modified. Your doctor should provide both you and King County a written description of any necessary job modifications.

King County may not require you to perform light duty work, which has not been described to you and your doctor in writing, and approved by your doctor. You are not required to accept light duty work your supervisor "thinks" you can perform simply because a doctor provided a summary of your physical limitations on a "physical capacities form". If your supervisor offers you light duty work which has not been described to you and your doctor in writing and approved by your doctor, **you should immediately notify King County Safety and Claims that you are declining light duty work only because you have not received, and your doctor has not approved, a written description of the light duty work being offered.** You should always follow up in writing to King County Safety and Claims that you will accept any light duty work offer that complies with the Industrial Insurance Act.

If you decline to accept a light duty job offer, because King County has failed to follow the steps required by the Industrial Insurance Act, King County is not authorized to suspend your time loss benefits. If King County disregards your legal rights and suspends your time loss benefits anyway, you should immediately report their actions to the Department of Labor and Industries, which has the authority to order the reinstatement of your benefits. You should make your report to the Department of Labor and Industries by telephoning 1-360-902-6890, and you should always follow up with a letter addressed to the Department of Labor and Industries, Self-Insurance Section, Post Office Box 44892, Olympia, WA 98504-4892. You should always reference your Industrial Insurance Claim Number when communicating with the Department of Labor and Industries.

Unfortunately, the Department of Labor and Industries may take weeks or months to order King County to reinstate your time loss benefits when King County has failed to comply with the Industrial Insurance Act. Therefore, it is in your best interest to assist King County to comply with the law. Whenever there is discussion on your Industrial Insurance Claim regarding light duty work, you should remind your supervisor and King County Safety and Claims what the law requires. Further, you should always assist your employer by asking your doctor to provide a timely response to any light duty job description sent to your physician for approval.

Arbitration Update

- 1. Edgardo Reyes:** Grieved one-day suspension for alleged inappropriate use of sick leave. King County Metro forfeited grievance by failing to schedule a grievance hearing within the contractual time limits. The issue before the arbitrator will be management's failure to implement the remedy sought following management's forfeiture of the grievance. Arbitration held October 16, 2007. Decision pending.
- 2. LaMarcus Ford:** Grieved termination for alleged gross misconduct. Arbitration held January 30 & 31, 2008. Decision pending.
- 3. Bart Harris:** Grieved termination for alleged gross misconduct. Arbitration held January 30, 2008. Decision pending.
- 4. Alofa Valaile:** Grieved termination for alleged inability to work regularly. Scheduled May 30 & June 02, 2008.
- 5. John Henry Jones:** Grieved termination for alleged gross misconduct. Schedule Pending.
- 6. Vince Lee:** Grieved King County Metro Maintenance Chief performing Local 587 bargaining unit work. Schedule pending.
- 7. Nancy Lambert:** Grieved King County Metro hiring a retired member for a temporary assignment in violation of contract language requiring Metro to give bargaining unit employees first consideration. Schedule Pending.
- 8. Derek Harris:** Grieved cross classification work in King County Metro Vehicle Maintenance. Schedule Pending.

ATU in Tanzania

Hey folks,

All of us need four things in order to live: Food, water, shelter and oxygen. Remove any of these and we cease to exist. Threaten anyone of these and we will not function well.

My name is Erik Christensen. I am a part time driver of six years at Ryerson base in Seattle Washington. In between my trips I work as a volunteer teacher five days a week at Gatewood elementary in West Seattle.

Earlier this year I met a couple from Poulsbo Washington. They had recently returned from Africa where they and several others pooled their money and built classrooms for Sakila Primary School in Tanzania, Africa.

http://www.friendsoftanzanian-schools.org/project_sakila.html

I was so inspired by what they had done I contacted the school in Africa and suggested that our two schools start writing to each other. Now my students have completed more than 50 journals. Some of the journals are in Africa and the rest were recently mailed in December.

As I wrote to Yona Andrews, the principal at Sakila, I realized he needed help. I wanted to send money. I knew that a one-time donation would not be enough...they need annual funds. While pondering the situation I came up with this idea: set up an endowment that will continue to help the school in the future. I then had a second thought: Ask all union brothers and sisters, associated with busses in Canada and the U.S. to give the teachers at Sakila what we have, a place to eat, rest and get clean...a base.

How many of you have gone to work with worries on your mind? Will I make my mortgage payment, how much will the car repair cost, will I get to work on time. These are some of the everyday things that can affect us. In Tanzania the thoughts are: Will I get malaria tonight, will there be water for me to drink, what will I eat today. The school is so isolated that the teachers stay on campus. If the teachers are thinking about these basic things it is hard for them to concentrate on their work. Each teacher can have 45 kids in the room and very few resources, books, pencils...etc...etc.

If we improve the quality of life for the teachers it will improve the quality of their teaching.

Here is what we can do as ATU brothers and sisters. We can create the ATU Sakila Endowment (ASE). An endowment will continue to work for the school long after we are all dead and buried. We could fund the following improvements: Build six classrooms (reduces class size to 22 students), dig a well, place water fountains outside of each classroom, build more sleeping quarters for the teachers, build shower facilities, a staff lunch/break room, provide the staff with mosquito nets, beds, and some electricity for their rooms, purchase computers for the teach-

ers lounge and set-up a program to provide three meals a day for the staff.

Think of the teachers as drivers. Their daily route is run at standing capacity all day and making all of the stops. The coach is a seventies issue articulated bus with a clutch. Your action on this idea would cut their passenger load and stops in half. It would also get them a more modern coach AND give them a base.

Plus leave enough money in the account to annually provide a dividend check to purchase ALL of the supplies needed for the school.

Now the big question...How much will it take to do this?

Two million.

Your part...ten bucks...one time.

Here is a short article from a local paper in Tanzania:

“122m/- raised to fund Phillip Marmo secondary school

by Musa Juma

Six classrooms are to be built at Philip Marmo secondary school in Maghang ward in Mbulu district, Manyara region by business companies and individuals on a voluntary basis.

Nyanga Mawala and Company Advocates of Arusha volunteered to build a classroom as well as awarding the best student a scholarship to study abroad.

Others who have pledged to fund construction of classrooms are Dr. Mark Bura of ECSA; a famous businessman and Hai CCM District Chairman, Oscar Them; and the Director of Mbulu Trading Company, Amarjit Dhillon.

The Tanzania National Parks (TANAPA) contributed Tsh.5 million; Ngorongoro Conservation Area Authority (NCAA) - Tsh.5 million; Mohamed Enterprises Tsh.5 million; Minjingu Phosphates Tsh.3 million; Cultural Heritage and Bush Buck Safaris Tsh.3 million each.

The Minister for Finance, Zakia Meghji, who led the fund raising event, and her friends contributed Tsh.7 million.

The Minister in the President's Office (Good Governance) who is also the Member of Parliament (MP) for Mbulu, Philip Marmo after whom the school is named, contributed Tsh.7 million.

Speaking soon after the ceremony, Minister Marmo called for more contributions, as the school still had no classrooms, teachers quarters, dormitories, a dining hall and an administrative block as well other infrastructures.

Those large organizations only raised 122 million Tanzanian Shilling (TZS)

122,000,000 Tanzanian Shilling = 107,489 US Dollar

Granted that is a large amount of money. One of the reasons that they only raised that amount is that each company was asked to give a large amount...I am not asking for

a large amount.

If only ten percent of you respond we will raise more than that. Me and one other driver are giving \$100.00 each. I am asking that you give one tenth of that, ten dollars. *If you give ten dollars one time...ONE TIME...* the endowment will exist. No fancy speeches, no need for an annual telethon and I won't be coming to you year after year. Ten bucks one time and you will be positively affecting the lives of about 1200 people for generations to come.

I am appealing to about 300,000 union brothers and sisters so a large amount from each of you is unnecessary...ten bucks will do nicely. Union members creating an endowment the ATU Sakila Endowment, ASE.... ever thought you would do something like that...me either. Yet here we are...ground zero for an endowment.

I know some of you will not join and that's cool. I am also certain that some of you will give more. The goal is two million. That will provide enough money for improvements while leaving money in the account to generate interest. The dividend check will be used to buy school supplies...*annually*.

Who will administer the money?

It would be easy to say, "Please send your money and help the kids" ...Its been done. You give your money to a worthwhile cause and yet you're not sure how the money is spent. Many charities use part of the donations to pay administration fees. Sometimes as little as one percent goes to the cause. This endowment will allow you to contact IEO or the school Sakila and ask for yourself how the money is being used. I have opened an email account where you can write for updates as well. If you want to contact Yona the principal of Sakila please write to me first and I will forward your e-mail. I do this because he has two schools to operate and he is a little busy.

I made contact with a man named Godwin Selembo. Godwin lives in Poulsbo Washington and used to be a student at Sakila. Currently he has a Safari tour business and goes to Tanzania several times a year. Because he is a gracious man he has agreed to carry over supplies that my students gather for Sakila as well as the journals they have made. He is part of an organization called International Evangelical Outreach, (IEO). <http://www.sakila.com/>. They will annually make sure that the dividend check purchases the proper school supplies. IEO wants ten percent of the endowment. At first I was hesitant that they wanted that much money so I asked how would the money be spent. Godwin told me that ALL of their staff are volunteer and that their ten percent WILL be spent on other schools. I know...this means that only 90% of the fund will go to Sakila directly. However the other ten percent will be spent on other schools in the area. This means that 100% percent of your

money WILL be helping schools for generations to come...100%! I don't know of any other charity that can give like that.

How to donate.

By mail. The address is at the end of this article. It would be easier if you were to pool your money with others and help reduce the checks sent to IEO. However they are ready for the possible volume of mail.

Is this tax deductible?

Yes. Judy Kinley is the treasurer for IEO and she will issue a receipt for each donation. She will do this over the course of the year. It is being done this way because she is only one person and there may be as many as 300,000 checks...please be patient.

This is not some faceless charity; this is something for all union members associated with busses, supervisors, maintenance, administration...union members only. It is an endowment that does not yet exist and will not until you...the person reading this right now does his or her part and gives ten dollars.

The group from Poulsbo did their part by pooling their money. They have created the route...Lets give the teachers a new bus and a base.

"I'd rather regret the things I have done than the things that I haven't."

—Lucille Ball

I want to state that this is not a union function nor will the union be handling anything involved with this endowment. I am using the fact that I am a union member to contact all of you.

If any of you that have read this want to help spread the word I would greatly appreciate the help. Send me an e-mail and let me know.

Please, take your time and check out all of the contacts I have given. I don't want anyone thinking this is a scam. Do it for your kids or do it for yourself do it for your pet or your dear old aunty...just do it and help another human...its only ten bucks one time!

Thanks folks.

Here is all of the contact info:
Erik Christensen: email: atusakila@live.com
Make checks payable to:
IEO - Sakila Fund
PO Box 173
Port Gamble, WA 98364

Contact person: Judy Kinley
253-238-5820 (IEO - Treasurer)
Godwin Selembo, Suite G,
PO Box 174
Port Gamble, WA 98364 USA
360-297-0053 – office
360-509-9008 – cell
Toll Free: 800-472-1792

Part Time Utilization of Brain Cells

By Dan Linville and Dick Verzani

With all due respect to Brother Andrew Jeromsky and anyone else who hopes for adoption of management's proposal regarding full utilization of Part-time drivers; you really don't understand management's goal.

Full-Time Utilization of Part-time Operators (F-U of PTO's) is bad for every current Union member. Yes, it takes overtime from Full-time Operators, but it is devastating to PTO's too. Under the "F-U of PTO's", PTO's would see their work reduced to nearly nothing. Any PTO wanting additional work would be forced to work nights and weekends and it would take forever to see a FTO position offered to PTO's. That's the reality of management's offer.

Don't Believe It?

Look it up. Prior to 1974 Metro and it's predecessor had plenty of part time operators. There were "Tripper Operators" and "Summer Hire Operators" and "E-Board" and "C-Board" Operators. None of whom were full time. Over decades of negotiations Local 587 finally made each category too expensive or unwieldy. Finally in 1974 every driver was guaranteed an eight hour day, but three short years later Metro came back with what is now our current category of "Part-time".

Each contract, driven by the needs of Part-time Operators the Union has negotiated improvements for PTO's since 1974:

- From 1 1/2 hour guarantee to 2:20 or more for the most senior.
- From being assigned trippers at random to a pick with restrictions

FTO's don't enjoy.

- From no sick leave to full sick leave.
- No vacation to full accruals.
- From zero holidays to four holidays.
- From no medical benefits to full medical for most PTO's.
- From no right to go full time to a guarantee of FTO positions.

So What?

What have you done for me lately, huh? Now in 2008 the cost savings of Part-time Operators only occurs with new hires, thus Metro saves millions with rampant turnover. The only other possible savings comes with changing the system and going to "F-U of PTO's". It's not a new concept.

Currently Pierce Transit has "F-U" of PTO's". The only overtime

available for FTO's is that which they can pick in a regular run. Report Operators are PTO's who get a two hour guarantee and then are sent home if no work is available. Pierce Transit's "B-Board" operators have two regularly scheduled days off, but must call in each day to see if they are needed. It takes years for them to get a full time position.

Solidarity

Giving management "F-U of PTO's" would put us back 40 years in our working conditions. We all need to stick together and see what improvements can be made for all Union members. Brother Jeromsky had a good list of suggestions. "F-U of PTO's" is only a boon to management. It is a short-sighted disaster for every operator- Part-time or Full-time.

Shake Hands with the Boss

John F. Wagner- Atlantic Base Operator

Do you know what I like about lions, monkeys, anteaters, and crows? They don't go to meetings. They find something to eat, and then they kill it or steal it. They go take a nap. No voting, no financial secretary, no union dues.

I am not an anteater. Like you, I have to organize if I am to survive the concrete jungle. First step— talk to people who have the same problems I do. Second step— choose a leader. Finally— raise hell when the boss doesn't deliver. Folks the boss is delivering.

Our union president is tough, he's smart, and he gets respect from the people that matter. He is the standard by which all other union leaders in this town are measured. I may work for Metro but I'm proud to say that my boss is Lance F. Norton. His Officers, his executive board, his rank and file — that is how we fight for better working conditions and more pay.

That from time to time a bunch of us should sub-organize to improve on this process should upset none of us. That a small group should claim to speak for the membership,

print misleading information, and then pack the vote for a misguided resolution down at the union hall — should bother all of us. To be sure, their recent effort to move the current negotiating process from the boardroom to the streets was not going to get by the boss. The man trades in good ideas not bombshells.

I have complete confidence that our elected leadership will deliver a good contract proposal. They are acting fairly, competently, and in good faith. I would be an anteater before I would follow the mindless mob. And what a drain on union resources to untangle the truth and unwind the damage done.

I would be an anteater before I would follow the mindless mob.

Increased attendance at regular union meetings is the best immediate action we can all take to assure an accurate balance of opinions and fair votes for union business. Right now it is disgustingly simple for ten or twenty people to show up and hijack the monthly Seattle evening and morning meetings.

Come to the meeting. Listen to all sides. Support the process, and shake hands with the boss.

Resolution to the Martin Luther King County Labor Council

Submitted by Amalgamated Transit Union Local 587

Whereas, on February 14th, 2008, Organized Workers for Labor Solidarity (OWLS) picketed the King County Metro management offices at the King Street Center, and handed out fliers to the public in Seattle's International District, in what they described as a "Valentine's Day Solidarity Action" with ATU 587 and other County workers, and

Whereas, while ATU Local 587 and the Martin Luther King Labor Council (MLKCLC) recognize the rights of citizens to free speech and protest, OWLS has neither been appointed by the officers nor elected by the members of Local 587 to speak on their behalf, and

Whereas, the action of OWLS did not have the sanction, support and even foreknowledge of the democratically elected leadership of ATU Local 587, and

Whereas, a motion for Local 587 to conduct an informational picket of the County was voted down at the ATU Local 587 January membership meetings, and

Whereas, the officers of Local 587 consider this unauthorized work

action to be in direct conflict with ongoing negotiations with the County and detrimental to the health and welfare of ATU 587, and

Whereas, according to the Collective Bargaining Agreement between ATU Local 587 and King County Metro Transit, ATU Local 587 is recognized as the sole bargaining agent for its members, and

Whereas, although ATU Local 587 appreciates offers of assistance directed to the 587 leadership from MLKCLC affiliates, OWLS is not such an affiliate.

Therefore be it resolved, that the Martin Luther King County Labor Council call upon Organized Workers for Labor Solidarity to immediately cease and desist in any and all interference in the negotiations between Amalgamated Transit Union Local 587 and King County Metro Transit.

[Editor's note* this resolution was adopted by the Martin Luther King County Labor Council at the February 20, 2008 Executive Board and Delegates meetings]

Letters to the Editor...

A Letter to the Senator

Dear Senator Haugen:

On January 29th, I joined members of Amalgamated Transit Union Local 587 on a Transportation Lobby Day trip to Olympia. Our larger group was divided into smaller units to speak with various legislators. My group was able to meet with Representatives Eileen Cody and Sharon Nelson of the 34th district, but a scheduling conflict precluded our meeting with Senator McDermott. Unfortunately for us, none of these are members of a transportation committee.

Because it's not part of any currently proposed legislation, I'm now appealing directly to the leadership of the transportation committees because I fear that this issue will not be brought to your attention in time to enact any change during this session.

Following is a portion of an email (with some very minor editing) that I wrote to Sen. McDermott.

Dear Senator McDermott:

Although the union wanted us to discuss pending bills in the House and Senate, my main reason for being there was to try to get municipal transit drivers exempted from the requirement of wearing the shoulder harness of the safety belt assembly.

The layout of a bus driver's compartment and controls is much broader than that of a car, and many functions are not within easy reach; therefore, our duties require constant upper body movement. The shoulder harnesses on our buses either lock up too easily and stop our motion in mid task, or are so taut as to be otherwise restricting. When turning a corner, we must lean forward to reach the top of the steering wheel, which is oriented in a largely horizontal plane, to effect a continuous hand-over-hand turn. If the shoulder harness locks in this situation, we find ourselves unable to reach the top of the wheel to complete the action smoothly and find ourselves scrambling to finish the

turn by shuffling our hands along the bottom of the wheel. In addition, the buses have very wide front frame pillars that we must look around to scan for pedestrians. To accomplish this we are taught a technique called "rock and roll," whereby we lean forward and backward several times during a turn to check the blind spot created by the pillars. This movement usually results in a shoulder strap lock up and cuts short our scan.

We lean forward to scan the mirrors before entering a bus zone and again when reentering traffic. We lean forward to tear off transfers, reach the defroster controls, wiper and washer switches, PA microphone, radio handset and sunshade, and to enter info into the electronic farebox. Many drivers won't use the shoulder harness because it restricts their movement should they need to move quickly out of the way in an attempt to avoid an assault. The practical result of these factors is that, out of necessity, most bus drivers unlatch the shoulder harness and use only the lap belt. Some of us have been ticketed for it, and others have been written up by a supervisor and sent before the boss for a performance review.

Concerning safety belts:

RCW 46.37.510 (5) states: The state patrol SHALL EXCUSE specified types of motor vehicles or seating positions within ANY MOTOR VEHICLE...WHEN COMPLIANCE WOULD BE IMPRACTICAL (emphasis added.)

Ours is a situation where compliance is CLEARLY impractical.

I've taken the liberty to include possible language for an amendment to RCW 46.61.688, as follows:

"Municipal transit drivers are exempted from utilizing the shoulder harness of the safety belt assembly on transit vehicles. Nothing in this section shall operate to relieve the driver of a transit vehicle from the requirement to use the lap belt."

I understand that the state patrol is resistant to this change, but with all due respect, I don't think they grasp the physical requirements of our job. If you deem it reasonable and find enough support, would it be possible to somehow fast track this into law this session? Both Representatives Cody and Nelson seemed very receptive to a change.

Thanks so much for your time,

Sincerely,
John Sheirbon
ATU Local 587
Seattle

[Editor's note* To find out how to leave a phone message for your elected representatives' call 1-877-265-6553 toll free 24/7 to speak to a Washington State government help center rep.]

Have any good stories?

ALL DRIVERS

I would like to compile several short stories about our business and our passengers here at Metro. The more the better. They maybe used as a subject for a small book. Please keep them as short as possible. Stories must be true and to the point. Please no dates, times, bus numbers or names. Funny, Sexy, Smelly, Scary, anything you would like to get off your chest, just keep it simple.

Example:

Like the time I let a passenger off the bus and he started throwing beef neck bones at me. The bones were about 2 in. cubes with sharp edges. Before I could get the door closed he launched about 8 cubes at me and I was cut in 3 places. After the assault I wiped off the blood and drove off. After all I had to keep the bus on schedule. Now days, I would stop and call for medical assistance and take a couple of days off.

Mike Nelson,
North base
kingrolex2011@hotmail.com

Lobby Day

Hi Lance,

It was great meeting you. You asked that I put into an e-mail my thoughts about improving Lobby Day. But before my thoughts, I wish to say that the day was a great experience for me and I hope to do it again next year.

Here are my thoughts:

The information I received about the day said that it would go from 9AM-4PM. Somewhere along the way, I heard that we were to meet at Central Base at 8:30AM. I showed up a little after 8:30 (accident on the freeway but I wasn't too worried since I didn't expect the bus to leave until 9AM) to find no sign of anyone in the building that appeared to be a part of the group and no other way of knowing that the bus hadn't already left. I might have been saved the minor seizure I had if I had known ahead of time that the group would be leaving at 9:00AM from a bus parked on the

Atlantic side with "Special" in the destination sign. (Really, this is quite a minor issue, but I thought I would throw it in.)

As a person who has never experienced anything like this, I found it to be a bit overwhelming in that I didn't know what to expect. The bus ride was fun and a lot was going on. The moral was high and there was a great feeling of belonging to something worthwhile in the form of a strong brother/sisterhood union atmosphere. There were songs, lively chatter, and boisterous fun in general. Just before we departed, we were given the "Let's Talk Transit" folders. There was a lot of information in them that was very difficult to absorb with all that was going on around me. Whereas it contained information that could clue me in to the day, I was unable to utilize it. I think it would be a good thing to make this information available to the participants before Lobby Day so that a person could spend some study time with it. I don't know about the best way to make this happen, but I was thinking the more important items could be scanned into a PDF and made available on the Union website through a link on the Lobby Day Event page. In addition to allowing for its prior study, making this information available to the membership might increase interest and participation in the event since it would make the members aware of the importance of the issues that would be the point of the visits with the lawmakers.

The other main issue was that although the real focus of the day was to meet with our respective representatives, the appointments that were made for those in my district were somewhat mixed up. I could tell that it was not an easy thing on both sides to arrange the appointment times due to the hurried nature of this session, but it appeared to me that at least some of this could have been avoided. The first appointment we showed up for with Sen. Fairley was marked on our sheet as being at 1:00. Her aid thought our appointment was for 1:15 but we were lucky and she was able to see us right then. The next appointment we went to was to see Sen. Kagi who was in sessions all day so we left the note forms filled out for her with our issues listed. I was under the impression that we might have had an appointment with the other representative from our list at 1:00, but no one really knew if that appointment still stood.

These are just some observations from a new guy who's interested in the process. All in all, the day was informative and the speakers were great. The moral was high and I believe we did make a difference. I feel richer for the experience and thank you and all who organized the event, which obviously took a lot of work by the few for the many. I hope I'll be able to attend next year.

Sincerely,
Steve Sikora

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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

Are you ready?

By Dee Wakenight, Executive Board Officer

King County seems to be in a "panic" to insure that the baby boomer employees are actually prepared to retire. What seems to be the largest stumbling block is the rate of savings, by "boomers" for future medical insurance expense. Recently King County, at the JLMIC, stated that the amount of \$110,000.00 was approximately the amount necessary to insure the ability to continue to pay medical premiums in retirement for similar insurance compared to what you have enjoyed during your working years. This assumes that the premium is approximately \$1,000.00 per month. For many employees there will be a lag between an employee's age at the time of retirement to the age of Medicare eligibility. Medicare does not cover all expenses. The retired employee will have to pay for their own co-insurance (to cover expenses the basic health plan does not cover), stop-gap (which is what you need on Medicare), and prescription drug expense.

The main fear seems to be what we are seeing in transit RIGHT NOW. Retirees are rehiring as part-time transit operators to gain access to affordable health insurance. King County wants to do a survey to find out how educated employees are as to the actual amount necessary to be successful insured in retirement. That would mean you wouldn't have to go back to work after you retire because you didn't know how much medical insurance would really cost after retirement.

It's never too late or too early to start saving for your future. At Metro we have a wonderful opportunity to participate in "Deferred

Compensation". You decide how much, and what your deferred compensation is invested in. The money comes out of your check pre tax so it effectively lowers your taxable income while you are still employed. The deferred compensation money is only available after you are no longer employed. When you are no longer employed and are planning to receive payments there is a one time allocation of funds. BE CAREFUL. Once you decide that's it for the life of your fund. The decision is not reversible at a future date. When you receive the payments, they are taxable, hopefully at a lower tax rate than when you were working, and when expended for medical insurance it may be partially deductible for federal tax purposes.

Naturally what ever you have or have not saved for your future is your personal business. However it seems we have a large number of individuals who have a problem looking ahead to their future well being. Think of this as a nudge. (Hint, Hint.) Hopefully to get you on your own track to a successful

retirement plan where you are able to remain retired and not have to work if that is your wish.

Choices abound; high deductible medical plans, one close to your current plan; dental or vision insurance; preexisting conditions; being able to see your own doctor? High deductible plans are desirable for those who have few medical problems. Normally high deductible plans cover operations, hospital stays, and transplants. The BIG stuff. Other options for coverage are called cafeteria plans; you pick those options that you want, like going through a cafeteria.

Then you have expenses to deduct on your taxes. It is also very important to know what you want/need for you. Some folks keep the medical plan they have had for years out of habit, not need. Difficult as it is there comes a time when you must sit down and take a good hard look at what you are doing and why you are doing it. Not to mention the need to review your options. Do you really need a new car every 3 years? Is it necessary to be the

first one to have all the newest toys? Could it be better to save for your future? Who else is going do it for you? My guess - no one.

There are a bunch of online tools available to assist you in determining how much you need to retire, successfully. Start by "Googling" retirement calculators. There are lots of options and considerations depending on your personal situation. Review several and you will soon get a "mental picture" of what actions you need to take now to achieve your goals in the future.

At the King County JLMIC meeting it was suggested that "we need to survey the employees to determine their level of education in regards to retirement/ medical benefit planning". Then it was suggested that "...then we can educate the employees...and then formulate a plan". At an estimated cost of \$74,000.00 for the formulation of the survey, proper questions, and final tabulations. What a waste of money. We know the need. I consider myself a retiree in training. WHY NOT offer the same medical plan to retirees that newly hired part time operators can opt into. When this was suggested at the meeting, a self described "bean counter" stated that the county would never subsidize benefit costs. In the course of conversation the unions were informed that "after the survey...they could still have \$50,000.00 in the budget for consulting...for other needed survey...education of members". Give us the tools necessary to make an informed decision.

King County actually asked the unions what we wanted for our retired members, WE TOLD THEM! ARE YOU READY?

...it seems we have a large number of individuals who have a problem looking ahead to their future well being.

**YOU WORK
FOR \$\$
PUT YOUR \$\$
TO WORK
DONATE TO
C.O.P.E.**

SEATTLE CHAPTER OF THE LATINO CAUCUS

Election of Officers will be conducted at the SCLC meeting prior to the Local 587 Charter meeting,

March 6, 2008, 7:30 pm

The Labor Temple – 2800 1st Ave., Seattle, WA.

Latino Caucus chapter members in good standing (eligible to vote) will be notified by mail.

All others welcome to observe.

In Solidarity,

Lisa Nault

*Treasurer/Recording Secretary
Seattle Chapter/Latino Caucus*

History of the membership of the Auxiliary 587

By Rebecca Binion

Membership eligibility rules for Auxiliary 587 have changed through years from those set by the Union Officers who founded the organization in 1921. The original concept in forming the Women's Auxiliary was education in unionism for union wives. Those first rules set down by the Officers of Local 587 limited membership in the Auxiliary to the wives of active 587 members.

Within a few years that limitation came into question. At the death of a member of Local 587, his widow was removed from membership in the Auxiliary. What a cruel, mean rule that was. Just at a time when she was most in need of the support and caring from her "sisters" in the Auxiliary, she was kicked out. Also, it had become evident to the Union officers that there were other potential members for the fledgling organization right in the union members' homes.

In the 1920's and 1930's women did not work outside the home. They were housewives. Social Security had not yet been established. A widow must rely on her children for support. Many families in America included a widowed mother living with her son or daughter.

The women in Auxiliary 587 wanted their by-laws amended to include mothers and mothers-in-law. The officers of Local 587 recognized that need and agreed to the change. They recognized another potential. The daughters of their members should be educated, also in what unionism could do for them. The changes were made. The wives, mothers, mother-in-laws and daughters over 15 years of age could become members of Auxiliary 587.

The Women's Auxiliary to 587 had caught the attention of the International Union. In 1936, the President of Auxiliary 587, Flo Longworth, was invited to accompany the officers of 587 when they attended the annual convention of the Street Electric Railway and Motor Coach Operators and to bring with her the Auxiliary's By-Laws. The intent was to organize a National Auxiliary.

Flo Longworth accepted the invitation and the Women's International Auxiliary was founded using our By-Laws as the model for the By-Laws of the International organization. We were Charter Number 1 of the International Auxiliary. Throughout the entire existence of the Women's International, a member of 587A was a Vice President of the International. Flo Longworth, Mona Elder, Elvina Fortney, and Linda Anguish served in that capacity, each in turn, filling the office for several years.

In 1946, we celebrated our 25th Anniversary. The founding fathers

of the Auxiliary, the union officers who had created the Auxiliary had moved on and a new panel of officers was leading Local 587. They were not particularly interested in the Auxiliary and had distanced themselves from the organization. Thus, the Auxiliary moved into a mode of independence no longer seeking permission from the Union to make changes in our by-laws or to get permission for our activities.

Of the original Charter Members, one was still in the Auxiliary in 1946. Mabel Russell was a quiet, dignified lady who accepted designation and honor of Charter Member. Her daughters were not so quiet.

Frances Russell Survell served for many years as our Financial Secretary. Her garage was the collection depot for our recycling venture and her front yard was the scene of our annual yard sale.

Betty Russell Parks captained our drill team for many years, held various offices including two terms as President of the order.

During World War II, Seattle Transit hired nine women as bus drivers. Of course, they became members of Local 587. The Auxiliary invited them to join the Auxiliary. Katherine Terhune accepted the invitation, joined the Auxiliary in 1948 and remained a member for the rest of her life. She died in 1991. Horace Hartz joined the Auxiliary after she had quit her job as a bus driver and had withdrawn from her membership in Local 587. She came into the auxiliary on her husband's sponsorship in 1945 and was an active member until her death in 1977. A third woman, a member of Local 587, who was a bus driver, joined the Auxiliary. Her name escapes me although I remember the young woman. She stayed a short time and dropped her membership.

We had collected uniforms worn by Seattle Transit bus driver's in

past decades, and held a fashion show to display them. Husbands of Auxiliary members modeled the uniforms in our collection. The young woman who was a current member of both Local 587 and 587-A modeled the brown uniform with yellow blouse that she wore to work daily. Tall, feminine and poised, she was the hit of the show as she walked the runway, pivoted and turned to display her uniform. The audience was delighted.

As more women had become bus drivers, we saw a membership potential in husbands of bus drivers. We petitioned the International Auxiliary to make that change. They refused. Our husbands had always been a part of the Auxiliary. They supported our activities and projects, did the lifting, hauling and carrying for our many efforts. While we were in meeting, the husbands gathered in the dining room outside our meeting hall. The coffee pot was on and there were snacks set out for them. As they completed their runs and checked out for the day, they came to the Auxiliary meeting hall and played cards in the dining room until our meeting closed. Thus they had a social time, and provided transportation home for their wives when the evening ended.

We wanted to include these loyal supporters into voting membership. Finally, someone thought of a way around the block created by the International. We designed a class of membership that we termed "Social Members." They would be members of our Local Auxiliary but were not members of the International. They had all the rights and privileges of Auxiliary membership and could hold any office except President and Delegate to the International Convention. The President of the Auxiliary was listed with the International. Other officers were not. Enthusiastically, the men moved

from the dining room into the meeting hall and took their places as full members and officers.

In the mid 1940's one of our members told us a member of her family would like to join the Auxiliary. However, the applicant's husband was a Greyhound driver, not a Seattle Transit driver. We asked the International Auxiliary about the possibility of such a membership. The reply came back that we could accept into membership the spouse of a member of another Transit Union if there was no auxiliary at the other local. Greyhound had no Auxiliary so the wife of a Greyhound driver joined our order. Later, we had a member whose husband worked for the Tacoma Transit.

In 1984, the International Auxiliary contacted us and asked if we would accept a transfer of membership. A widowed member of Auxiliary 580 in Syracuse, New York had recently moved to the Seattle area to be near her son who had located here. Would we accept her into our order as a transfer? Of course, we said, "Yes". Marion Haven's original initiation date in Syracuse was 1947. Her transfer date was Jan 1, 1985. We inducted her into our order and she remained a member the rest of her life.

A couple of members approached us with a request. They had a dear friend, recently widowed and having a difficult time with it. They wanted to bring her into the Auxiliary where she would get the support she needed. Again, we amended our by-laws to accept anyone into the Auxiliary who believed in our aims and goals and supported our union sponsor. She is still a member although physically unable to participate. Several other persons became social members after that change was made. When the International Auxiliary was dissolved we dropped the "Social Member" classification and they became full members.

Through the years, we have had several three generation family memberships. We have had only one four generation family. Gladys Peck joined in 1944 starting a dynasty that included her daughter, Shirley Peck LeVasseur, Shirley's daughter, Karen LeVasseur, and Karen's daughter, Amanda LeVasseur-Burke. The chain was broken with the death of Shirley Peck LeVasseur in 2006. Gladys, Karen, and Amada are still members.

At our meeting on October 23, 2007, we initiated into our order a new member, Cheryl Tribbey. Her sponsor is her father, Local 587 retired member Lloyd Roberts.

We welcome any 587 member or family member to join our organization.

From Seattle To Palm Beach

Single Mom Tracks Teen through the ATU

By Sherry Malone, Bellevue base

Raising children from the wheel of a bus has taken its toll on my family. I received that phone call every parent fears the most, my 15 year old daughter had run away. She was attending a Teen Challenge Boarding School in Lakeland, Florida for behavioral problems. She and another girl had slipped out a side door at 3:00 a.m. disappearing into the night. My God, I live in Seattle, Washington on the other side of the country! I died a thousand deaths as I paced and grieved and imagined every horrific scenario that came to mind.

They ran away on January 20, 2008. It fell on a Sunday, Monday was a Holiday, and by Tuesday afternoon the Polk County Sheriffs office still had the paper work sitting on their desks not yet assigned to a detective. I frantically asked what they were doing to find my daughter. Nothing yet they said, the office had been closed due to the Holiday. I asked if they had sent out an inter-county bulletin with the photos the school had provided. They were working on it they said and I should be hearing from a detective in the next couple of days. A COUPLE OF DAYS? Panicstricken, I immediately called the school and made contact with the other girl's mother.

We took matters into our own hands and started making a lot of phone calls. We turned to The Center for Missing and Exploited Children, The Runaway Switchboard, The Runaway Hotline and registered the girls. We made our own posters and called the Sheriff's department asking them to send them out. "No they said, we like to do our own," I asked if they would be sending them to the Transit Agencies and Greyhound etc. No, again they replied, they only do that when there's been an abduction or there's cause to believe they were in imminent danger. But my daughter was in imminent danger, she was 2,500 miles away from home! By Wednesday the girls had been gone 4 days and nothing was being done and no one was looking for them. Four days is an eternity when your child is missing and clear across the country!

We were getting nowhere with the Sheriff's department so I turned to the one place I knew I'd get the help we needed. The Transit Agencies and my Union brothers and sisters. I'm a Transit driver for King County/Metro in Seattle, Washington and a member of the Amalgamated Transit Union, ATU Local 587. Transit Drivers are the eyes and the ears of the city, and the more people I had looking for my daughter the better. My daughter grew up riding busses with me and I knew she wouldn't hesitate boarding one.

I did a quick search on the internet for Transit lines in Florida and contacted (HART) Hillsborough Area Regional Transit Authorities in Tampa. I spoke with their customer



Transit Operator Bob Prainito Badge #277, ATU 1577 Palm Tran, West Palm Beach, Florida

service department explaining my situation and they patched me through to their Safety and Security Officer, Joe Diaz. I asked him if he would e-mail our posters to the Transit Agencies throughout Florida and have them placed where all the city bus drivers could see them. I needed our 'Missing' posters at the employee 'Sign In' windows, the lunch rooms and lounges etc. Officer Diaz took my cry for help seriously and distributed them to every Transit Agency, Law Enforcement, and Train Station throughout the entire state of Florida within 6 hours. The man was a Saint.

I then made arrangements to fly to Tampa from Seattle that evening catching the red eye. As I was rolling my suitcase towards the front door I nearly collapsed, overwhelmed with a sick foreboding feeling in the pit of my stomach that something horrible had happened. There is no other explanation for that kind of feeling except mother's intuition. My child was in danger and I felt it with every fiber of my being. I quietly said a prayer through the tears and the fear urgently asking the Lord to lead me to my daughter. I had no idea where I was going I just knew I had to go. I prayed that He would go before me, guide my footsteps and lead me by His Spirit directly to her. That was my prayer as I walked out the door and headed for my car.

The ATU Officers and staff at my Local 587 Xeroxed 500 color copies of our 'Missing' posters and met me on the freeway handing them off on my way to the airport. I had called the office at 3:00 p.m. and they had them done in under an hour. I was so grateful by their generosity I was choking back the tears as I pulled away. I needed team work and support and I was getting it from everyone I asked, except the police.

I dropped off a few of the fliers to a friend to be taken to church with her that night and we prayed together before I left. I also called

another friend and told her to place an ad on Craigslist for a Tour Guide in Tampa. Maybe someone would step up to the plate and guide me where I needed to go. I turned my phone off and boarded the plane.

I Arrived in Tampa at 10:30 a.m.; it was my daughters 16th birthday. I rented a car and drove straight to Lakeland, Florida where the girls had runaway from to begin my search. I checked into a room at the Holiday Inn and checked my phone messages and e-mail. My God in Heaven, I had over twenty messages from Craigslist Volunteers and over 30 e-mails from people wanting to help. Again, I was choking back the tears, I was so touched.

Within an hour of arriving in Lakeland I received a phone call at 1:45 p.m. from Transit Operator Bob Prainito of Palm Tran in West Palm Beach. He told me he was certain he had these girls on his coach at noon and just now saw the poster when he got back to the base. Bob told me he dropped the girls off at Military Trail and Bellevedere on the route 3 in West Palm Beach. The information Bob provided was invaluable not only in leading me to the right area of the state to search for my daughter, but to the right neighborhood. I received Bob's call within 24 hours of the mailing Joe Diaz had sent out. Bob Prainito is also a Saint, my daughter's Guardian Angel.

I checked right back out of that hotel and drove straight to West Palm Beach. Bob's sighting was the only solid lead I had to go on and I knew I had to act quickly. It took hours to get there and I wondered how on earth could the girls have traveled so far? They must have had help; someone must have come to pick them up. I resumed my prayer, my mantra, go before me Lord and lead me to her, guide my footsteps, as I continued driving the Turnpike well into the night.

I pulled off the freeway at West Palm Beach at around 1:30 a.m. I tried to get a room at a couple of the hotels there. One was completely

booked, one was \$200.00 a night and then I saw the Best Western. As I pulled under the awning at the front office my aunt called at that very moment and I stopped the car to talk with her. Out of the shadows, a very large Security Guard walked right up to my window and started harassing me to move my car. I said I needed a room and had just gotten a call I had to take; I'd only been stopped for two minutes. He said, "You are not a guest here... move your car, move your car!" He made me so angry after driving all that way I burned rubber out of the parking lot shaking my fist at him! I thought Geez Loweez, my first encounter with a Floridian, these people are rude!

The Days Inn hotel was right off of 45th and I-95 in West Palm Beach, so I pulled in there. I needed something inexpensive; I might be there a few days. There were plenty of rooms available and it was centrally located from the intersection where Operator Prainito had dropped the girls off. I replaced my ad on Craigslist with an ad for a Tour Guide in the Palm Beach area, and again, I was inundated with calls and e-mail from good honest people wanting to help. My phone was ringing off the hook from retired sheriff deputies, police officers, investigators, and youth pastors etc. I was in awe how well this was going so far.

The next morning I met a few of the volunteers at my hotel room and we fanned out distributing the posters. We went to the malls, the Transit centers, the beaches, teen hangouts. I clocked off the intersection of Military Trail & Bellevedere from my hotel. It was just 3 miles from where Operator Prainito dropped them the day before. I was definitely in the right neighborhood, I could feel it. And that sick foreboding feeling in the pit of my stomach was still with me. I knew something awful had happened to them.

Ironically, the one place I had completely overlooked and not handed out a 'Missing' poster was the very hotel I was staying in. We distributed those posters everywhere but there. When I showed the desk clerk the 'Missing' poster he immediately recognized them and said the girls had stayed there the night before. They were in room 175 when I checked into room 302. Unbelievable! I nearly fainted; I was lead right to her and missed them by footsteps.

To my absolute disbelief and astonishment, those girls walked right into that hotel lobby the very next evening. Someone had rented a room for them; they had been drugged, abused and assaulted two nights before in North Palm Beach, 'The Riviera District.' Without anywhere to stay they were 'dumped' at a drug dealer's house and abandoned by a newly acquired friend. Dear God,

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WSLC Legislative Update

Bills Swap Sides-The Debates Continue

The total eclipse of the moon coincided with the final cut off for House of Origin bills last week but Labor did see a few rays of light peeking through. We had several bills pass out of both the House and Senate and now they are on the way to the opposite house for hearings and hopefully final passage.

From the Senate:

The CWA was able to get their **High Speed Internet bill (6438)** passed through the Senate with a vote of 49 to zero. This bill lays the groundwork for the expansion of high-speed internet service throughout the state. It is a great opportunity to create jobs in both urban and rural areas and begins to bridge the digital divide. It now moves on to the House with a hearing scheduled in the House Communication, Technology and Energy Committee on February 26 at 10 a.m.

The Building Trades and Laborers won victory in the Senate with the **Underground Economy bill (SB 6732)** which will bring labor and business together to start the process of going after individuals who are not abiding by the state employment laws. It is a win/win that will help stabilize wages and boost revenues from employment taxes. The House had its first public hearing in Commerce & Labor this week.

IBEW and the Pipefitters were fighting hard to pass the **HVAC bill (SB 5831)** which, in its original form, would have required certification for mechanics performing heating, ventilating, air condition, refrigeration and gas piping work. The Senate passed a version setting up another task force to study the problem more. The hope is that a version will emerge from the House that will not be a study but actual implementation of this necessary safety and consumer protection issue.

An important correction to legislation passed in 2003 will restore **unemployment benefits** to workers who have left a job to enter an apprenticeship program. The Senate passed **SB 6751** to ensure these workers who are taking a risk to better their skills still get necessary compensation while they are in training. The House should follow suit as it is a good way to level the playing field and open up apprenticeships to more workers.

WFSE battled and won in the Senate to expand **whistle-blower protection (SB 6776)**. This bill is about government accountability and protection for any employee who finds themselves in the unfortunate position of having to expose any kind of corruption or illegal behavior in the workplace. The House has scheduled a hearing in the Committee on State Government and Tribal Affairs at 10 a.m. on February 26th.

From the House:

IBEW had a win in the House with **HB 2203** which ensures that operating and maintenance **employees**

working at nuclear power plants who are covered under collective bargaining have rights to **binding arbitration**. The Senate will now consider after hearings that were held this week in Labor, Commerce and Research & Development.

The House voted to **add labor members to two boards: the Transit Board (HB 2216) and the Forest Protection Board (HB 2893)**. The Amalgamated Transit Union testified in support of ensuring that the transit system has at least a voice for workers who run the day to day operations of the system. While it is a non-voting member this bill at least gives the workers a chance to speak to issues that will help increase the efficiency of the system.

The fight to add a labor member on the Forest Protection Board has been long and hard. The Board has operated since 1974 without a voice from the ground floor. The House vote recognizes that it is about time to include worker representation; let's hope this sentiment prevails in the Senate. A hearing is scheduled in the Committee on Natural Resources and Ocean & Recreation at 8 a.m. on February 27th.

The earth and its inhabitants won with the House passage of the **Climate Action and Green Jobs bill (2815)**. It is a comprehensive bill that will set emissions standards and reporting but more importantly for labor, it will create jobs and develop workforce training for clean energy jobs. There is sure to be a lot of interest as the Senate considers this bill.

Foster parents who take care of children with physical and mental challenges will get the right to collective bargaining according to **HB 3145**. The bill creates structure, standards and accountability within the system.

HB 2963 extends the same **collective bargaining rights** granted to University of Washington teaching assistants to those at **Washington State University**. It has worked at UW and now the House agrees that WSU academic student employees deserve the same. The Senate Labor, Commerce and Research & Development committee will hear the bill on February 25th at 10 a.m.

Low Wage Working Families Win a Break

The Senate passed the Working Families Credit by a vote of 32-16 a tax cut for lower wage working families who pay a disproportionate share of household income in taxes based on the federal Earned Income Tax Credit. Now your help is needed to put this program over the top. SSB 6809 has been assigned to House Finance Committee, where the House version was reported out as a study-only bill the last time around. (We don't need to study a program that 23 other states already have that is associated with a long-standing and successful federal EITC -- we need help for working families, economic stimulus and a fairer tax system!)

Monday March 3 is the cutoff date for fiscal committees to move opposite house bills. The Washington Tax Fairness Coalition is asking you to call Democratic members of the Finance Committee (Hunter-Chair, Hasegawa-Vice Chair, Conway, Ericks, Santos and McIntire) as well as Speaker Chopp and Majority Leader Lynn Kessler -- and urge them to report out the version of the Working Families Credit passed by every Democratic member of the Senate -- which actually creates the Working Families Credit program.

Health Care in Feverish Battle

Prescription Privacy came out of the Senate with a vote of 26 to 22. The grass-roots lobbying of the Healthy Washington Coalition paid off but the battle was pitched to the end. The sheer numbers of pharmaceutical lobbyists dwarfed the coalition's efforts but the argument to protect the doctor/patient relationship and shore up consumer protections prevailed; pharmaceutical profit-making for once, took a backseat.

The battle begins today in the House. Prescription Privacy will be heard in the Health Care & Wellness Committee at 3:30 p.m.

At that same time the committee will hear SB 6333, the bill to create a working group to study specific health care plans to create quality, affordable coverage for all Washingtonians and creates a public process through which Washington residents can discuss the kind of health care system we want to create.

The Health Insurance Partnership bill (HB 2537) will be heard in the Senate Health Care committee tomorrow. This is a bill that is critical

to employees of small businesses in our state as it gives them a vehicle for getting health care coverage.

Benefits for injured workers survive

In the face of hollow sounding arguments from the state's largest corporations, the House overwhelmingly approved (62/32) the Benefits on Appeal bill (HB 3139) safeguarding an injured worker's benefits during a disputed claim by a self insured employer. Morally this was the right thing to do. Any delay in benefits while a worker is injured not only complicates the treatment process but it puts the worker in an untenable situation not being able to work and not being able to pay bills.

It is important to understand that these are not new or additional benefits but merely benefits that the Department of Labor and Industries has determined is warranted by the facts of the claim. The bill allows for an expedited review at the Board of Appeals which, should the decision be reversed, would lower the exposure to both worker and self-insured company. Bear in mind, a self-insured company's exposure is miniscule relative to an injured worker not being paid the time-loss owed them or being given the medical treatment needed.

The Senate Committee on Labor, Commerce, and Research & Development will hear the bill on February 26th at 1:30 p.m.

Don't forget to check out the latest news for working families on WSLC's Reports Today...updated almost every day...

visit: www.wslc.org

**TRANSIT WORKERS
VOTE PRO TRANSIT**

**Upcoming at
Local 587**

MARCH 06 Charter meeting

MARCH 07 Morning meeting

MARCH 10 Jefferson Transit Authority meeting

MARCH 11 Clallam County meeting

MARCH 25 Executive Board meeting

The Recording Secretary's Report

By Paul J. Bachtel



A True Disservice to Our Membership

I had to think long and hard about whether to vote 'Yes' or 'No' to accept the January 10, 2008 proposed labor agreement. Having served as a Union officer I had intimate knowledge of the wage proposal, wages at comparable transit properties, and proposed changes in terms and conditions of employment. In the end my decision was based on a risk assessment. Was Metro's settlement offer better than what the Union might gain through interest arbitration? Was it probable Metro might gain some of its more onerous demands through interest arbitration? Just what were the possible risks and possible rewards? After careful consideration I voted 'Yes' to recommend the membership approve the proposed agreement and then again voted 'Yes' at the polls. I understand others may have a greater tolerance for risk verses reward, based on a whole host of reasons, and respect their decision to vote 'No'. What I don't understand is why a small group of members took it upon themselves to present misinformation to the membership as a rationale to vote against the proposed agreement. After all, there were very good reasons to vote 'Yes' or 'No' based simply on the facts presented by the Union leadership.

A careful examination of the documents being distributed by a coalition of members from "Transit Workers for Solidarity", "Solidarity587", and "(FORWARD) FOR Workers Activism and Rank and File Democracy" reveal gross inaccuracies. I can't help but wonder why members of these groups are spreading misinformation. Whatever the reasons for spreading misinformation, the end result is a true disservice to our membership.

Had the members of these groups taken the time to bring their documents by the Union office I would have been happy to correct the errors regardless of whether the particular group is supporting the proposed labor agreement. The Union officers are your allies not your enemies regardless of your political opinions. Again, I can't help but wonder if the spreading of misinformation was intentional? I have been out visiting worksites and whenever I cross paths with a member of one the above groups the individual member immediately leaves? I do shower, use deodorant and have an intimate knowledge of contract language. Why not talk to me or bring your documents by for proofing. Again, I respect your right to

support or reject any proposed labor agreement.

As recording secretary it is my responsibility to provide our membership with all the information needed to make an informed decision when deciding to vote 'Yes' or 'No' on proposed labor agreements. Although the officers cast a vote of recommendation we all have great respect for the rights of our members to approve or reject a proposed labor agreement.

I suggest if you cross paths with a fellow union member handing out literature, take it with knowledge that the information contained therein might very well be misinformation. Ask if the purported facts have been proofed by a member of Union bargaining team and then consider the opinions and conclusions contained therein based on your personal life experience and the opinions and conclusions of those you respect. Please don't hesitate to call or e-mail a member of your bargaining team to verify alleged facts.

Strike, Walkout, Picket, Slowdown

In any contract negotiation where immediate resolution isn't achieved inevitably some members begin to call for some sort of work action to pressure the employer to offer what the particular union members consider a reasonable settlement. Such is the case in the present negotiation with KC Metro. In considering whether to take such action the first question to ask is, are the parties making reasonable progress towards settlement? I believe Local 587 and KC Metro are making a steady and reasonable progress towards settlement. I believe I share in the majority opinion of our union membership in not supporting a work action at this point in time. Perhaps we may need to reconsider if success isn't shortcoming.

I respect the rights of the few who disagree and are calling for work action. What I don't respect is the actions of these few members who have taken it upon themselves to picket the King Street Center and other locations in Seattle while active negotiations are in progress. The membership of Local 587 elected the full-time officers and executive board to lead this union in contract negotiations: not a few malcontents with absolutely no respect for the will of the greater membership.

In particular I'm angered by the group calling itself "**Organized Workers For Labor Solidarity (OWLS)**". The leadership of OWLS took it upon themselves to picket KC Metro, on behalf of Local 587, without the knowledge of Local 587. This after OWLS sought funds from local 587 for its political actions. The arrogance demonstrated by OWLS in picketing our employer, supposedly on our behalf, without contacting Local 587 is inexcusable. Is it any wonder that some of the members of OWLS are the same Local 587 members distributing misinformation in our workplace? These

same Local 587 members attempted to pass a resolution through the February cycle of union meetings calling for a work action.

The membership rejected their motion. Nevertheless, these same individuals have shown a complete disrespect for the will of the greater membership of Local 587 by picketing KC Metro and have committed a true disservice to our membership by distributing misinformation. Should this group again come before our executive board or membership seeking funds I can assure you I will do all in my capacity to block any such request.

Letters to the Editor, continued

Transit Lobby Day

Hi Everybody,

I'd say Let's Talk Transit Lobby Day was a resounding success. And fun, too! My thanks to all of you for working together to make it such a success. We easily met our goals of lobbying the Legislature on issues of importance to our union, and providing our members a positive and unifying experience of union activity and political participation.

It exceeded my expectations in every way with many memorable high points. From the feedback that I have gotten, people really enjoyed it, and plan to attend again next year. Hopefully they'll tell their friends about it so we can build on our success in the future.

Hopefully with Ray Mason next time. We missed you Ray, and hope you recover soon. We look forward to using your talents next year.

A few specific expressions of appreciation:

First, to Sue and Mary (Local 587 office staff), thank you for collecting and holding on to the registrations. Darryl Estes, I really appreciated your getting the packets together, and Neal Safrin, for getting our Labor Council speakers, and coherently relating to Rep. Ruth Kagi. Paul Neil, with your booming voice, you did a great job with the raffles and thanks to Lance Norton for approving the prizes. Lisa Thompson, you really came through with

a super photographer, and I know the pictures will add a lot to the event. I enjoyed Dee Wakenight's great spirits sporting her flashy lei and bus driving, and Theresa Tobin, thanks for coming through with snacks, and especially, insisting that we make the event fun. Linda Anderson, your dependability and willingness to pitch in whenever and where ever it's needed is something I count on, and very much appreciate. The Labor Chorus definitely started us off on the right note. Chris Daniels, your perseverance in getting people into their correct districts was invaluable, and obviously much needed. Rick Sepolen, thank you for making Lobby Day a priority, and being our MC. You are a natural at it!

Thanks also to Paul Fitzgerald for professional design, and a sensible slogan, and to Paul Bachtel for putting them to good use in the News Review. And Pam Crone (Local 587 lobbyist), you did so much in helping us prepare that you didn't even need to address the crowd! I thank you for your ongoing moral support and organization.

A personal delight for me was seeing the star decorations fluttering on the bus, and listening to Craig Anderson and friend work out the entire crossword puzzle on the trip home. So, great job, everybody. Let's finish up, and do it again next year!

*Thanks again,
Claudia Meadows
COPE committee member
North base*

Successful COPE Lobby Day!

By Darryl Estes, COPE committee (Committee On Political Education)

On January 22, about 40 members of Local 587 took time out of their busy lives to travel to Olympia to lobby their State Legislators, creating a very successful COPE Lobby Day 2008. The day was filled with fun and camaraderie, as well as the serious business of conveying the issues affecting our membership to our elected officials. The group was comprised of members experienced in lobbying, as well as those who were completely new to the process. Laughter and learning, new friendships and reunions of old, and making our voices heard, those are just some of what the day accomplished.

The bus was decked out in Red, White and Blue garb, and we looked like we were on the campaign trail as we drove out of Central-Atlantic yard. Once in Olympia, the group was addressed by several dignitaries, including Representative Sherry Appleton, Representative Fred Jarrett, Rick Bender (President of the Washington State Labor Council) and Robbie Stern (Assistant to the President of the WSLC). This was a great way to get briefed on the most current issues being dis-

cussed. Then, after discussion about our specific issues, we broke into groups by legislative districts, and we all set out to meet and educate our representatives in their offices. Each of us had pre-scheduled meetings set up by the COPE Committee.

At the end of the day, members of the COPE committee agreed that Lobby Day 2008 was very successful for a number of reasons. We got our message heard, we showed a presence to those who make decisions in Olympia, and we learned how easy and fun it is to access our lawmakers, especially when we move as a unified group. One attendee mentioned that it was "good to see how the (legislative) system really works!" That speaks a great deal about the purpose of the Lobby Day event.



We only grow more powerful as our members learn that they can access their government and truly have a voice in shaping the future.

Our COPE wishes to express our gratitude to Washington State ATULC Lobbyist Pamela Crone for her valuable assistance and support.

Also, COPE wishes to thank all the members of ATU587 who attended and made Lobby Day 2008 the great success that it was!

For updates on the status of the bills in the legislature that affect our membership, go to <http://www.atu587.com/>

Seattle to Palm Beach, continued

they could have been killed. I had prayed that I would be lead directly to her. And I was.

My prayer was answered in a huge miraculous unexplainable way. I had traveled 2,500 miles from Seattle to Palm Beach, and found my daughter within 30 hours of landing in Florida. What are the chances of that happening? There is no other explanation than the obvious. This is a miracle of unprecedented proportions and this story needs to be told. The networking in Florida between the Transit Agencies and the ATU was incredible and will never be forgotten. We came together as one and accomplished the impossible.

My friends and family had initially told me not to fly down there, that it would be like looking for a needle in a haystack. I ignored their advice to sit back, wait for her to call, and not do anything. That was my baby they were talking about. They didn't understand the depth of my love for her, my complete faith in God and my steadfast determination. And ultimately, it boiled down to this one question. If I did nothing, and something happened to her, would I be able to live with myself? The answer was no, I could not. I had to give it my all and trust in Him.

Three million teens run away each year, and half of those parents are still out there searching for their children. I cannot even fathom the anguish and grief they must be suffering. The police and sheriff's department do not have the manpower to look for them. They routinely wait 15 days before they even launch an investigation because many of them come home within the first two weeks. 15 days can put a lot of miles between a parent

and their child. Ours had travelled 300 miles in just two days time.

On my way back to the Tampa airport, I spent one last night in Lakeland to pick up my daughters belongings from the boarding school. I had the pleasure of being pulled over by a Lakeland police officer for not having my lights on. We got to chatting on the side of the road about the school and I showed him one of the 'Missing' posters of the girls. He had not seen any bulletins, postings, or notifications that these girls' had even run away from there. That was 9 days after the fact and I was pulled over just 3 blocks from the boarding school. Had we waited for the sheriff's office to get on the ball our girls may have been lost to us forever.

My daughter is now in a safe place back in Washington and I hope and pray that the horrible experience she's been through will be the catalyst that turns her life around. I am happy to report that she has accepted an offer from her older sister to travel the world in the Peace Corp and be home schooled by her and her husband. My oldest daughter has her graduate degree in education and can help her get her high school diploma while visiting other cultures. They are currently on a Llama Trek somewhere in the Himalayan Mountains visiting remote villages in India. Kyla has agreed to meet them in Cape Town, South Africa. It sounds like an opportunity of a lifetime if you ask me, and just might be that miracle I've been hoping for. And I do believe in Miracles!

It is with heartfelt gratitude I want to publicly thank everyone involved in helping me locate my daughter. The HART RTA Administration,



Joe Diaz, Safety and Security Officer, Hillsborough Area Regional Transit Authorities, Tampa, Florida.

Safety and Security Officer Joe Diaz, who contacted every Transit Agency, Law Enforcement, and Train Station in the entire state of Florida in record time. You moved mountains for me Joe!

Operator Bob Prainito Badge #277, ATU 1577 of Palm Tran, West Palm Beach, Florida, who's watchful eye and assistance was invaluable, not only in leading me to the right area of the state to search for my daughter, but to the right neighborhood. You're an Angel Bob, and a Hero in Seattle! You saved those young girl's lives.

The office and staff at my local 587 who rushed to produce 500 color copies of the 'Missing' posters with very little notice and then met me on the freeway going to the airport! Words cannot express what that meant to me. You guys have never let me down, not once!

My Craigslist volunteers who stepped out of nowhere, retired Officers Rick and Terry Marcus and Sheriff Dave Carhart of Broward

County and the countless others who contacted me. Who would have known?

The Nasty Security Guard at the Best Western Hotel that harassed me right out of their parking lot and into the right one. Thank you, I now understand your job!

And a very special thank you to that Big Guy up above who rode shot gun with me the whole way, orchestrating the most frightening and miraculous event of my life. I never doubted You for a minute.

Thank you, everyone, from the bottom of my heart for helping me find my daughter. We were able to do what the police could not with the help of the Transit Agencies and my Union brothers and sisters. God Bless you and your families.

In Solidarity,
Sherry Malone,
Operator #3308
ATU Local 587
King County/Metro
Seattle, Washington