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ATU

LOCAL 587

News Review

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VOL. XXVI, NO. 9

The President's Report

A SMOKING Arbitration

By Lance Norton



Lance F. Norton

STATISTICALLY SPEAKING, OF ALL the grievances this office handles involving the termination of a member, relatively few actually proceed to arbitration. Usually through the grievance steps resolution is accomplished and the employee/member goes back to work under a reinstatement agreement.

There are occasionally situations where management is not only being unreasonable, but seems to have personalized the issue. Through our last meeting cycle, those in attendance voted overwhelmingly to proceed to arbitration for a high seniority member at SPT (Seattle Personal Transit) who was terminated for violation of company policy on smoking. A complaint was received from a customer who claims "the driver was smoking *outside the vehicle* when she (the customer) went to board".

SPT claims this was a violation of Metro Accessible Services policy, which states "Smoking is

not permitted on Access Transportation vehicles by any person, including drivers and passengers. Drivers may smoke on their breaks but must be clear of the vehicles so that smoke does not enter the interior."

SPT maintains there has been no violation of progressive discipline and due process. But follow the history here. Back in March of 1998 our member was given a verbal warning for smoking. **Thirteen months later**, she received a written warning. **Sixteen months later** she was given a one day suspension. **Thirty-two months later** she got a three day suspension. The day after our member returned to work from this recent 3 days suspension, management sent out a supervisor with a camera to survey her, and *Viola!* This super-sleuth-supervisor (say that 3 times!) catches our member smoking a distance of **10 to 20 feet away** from the bus! Gotcha!!

I realize we are not dealing

with the Metro Contract which reads "A minor infraction which is one (1) year old shall be crossed off the employee's record," but for SPT to base their argument that progressive discipline and due process has been afforded an employee when we are talking about a period of over 5 years on a minor infraction, is hard for me to accept. Incidentally, this is the first case our local will be taking to arbitration in all the years our local has represented the operators at SPT. Management, by and large, has always treated the employees decently and very few grievances are generated from our members at SPT. Perhaps, as I stated earlier, management has personalized the issue, and if so, that is unfortunate.

Interesting thought, however, before closing. Last year in contract negotiations with SPT the members were told there was no money for a pay raise due to the huge increase in their vehicle insurance rates. Despite the no-

money plea we obtained a 2% raise each year for 3 years, with a wage re-opener both this year and next in the hopes that, should their financial condition improve, we could negotiate a little more than 2%. So this past May we sat down with management and requested an additional 1-Ω%. The response was, of course, negative. I then engaged our economist to review their financial records, which he is currently doing. And at the same time they are pleading poverty over a request for a small raise, SPT management has hired the prestigious law firm of Preston Gates and Ellis, one of the largest and most expensive law firms in Seattle representing management, to handle the arbitration of the member terminated for smoking! I wonder how much SPT, a non-profit agency, will pay in legal expenses to uphold this termination?

Regards to all, be safe
LFN

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The Month at a Glance

Executive Board Report

August 26, 2003

The following officers were present: President Norton, Financial Secretary Griffin, Recording Secretary Gil, Marc Auerbach, John Bellinger, Ray Campbell, Chris Daniels, Rick Gleason, Alan Huston, Joe Mangiameli, Paul Neil, Jeff Stambaugh, Bruce Tiebout.

Paul Bachtel and Dee Wakenight were working the full-time pick, Vice President Travis, Neal Safrin and Mike Whitehead were on vacation, Brian Sherlock and Rick Sepolen were attending a conference in Spokane. Ninus Hopkins was absent.

The following business was conducted:

- Motion by Paul Neil that based on the inadvertent lack of access of the posted polling location, that Local 587 rerun the election for Executive Board Officer Representative for the organized units within King County and outside the Metro bargaining unit (MV/SPT), and that this election take place on October 2nd, 2003, and the polling locations will be the MV and SPT worksites and the Union Hall. Polling locations will be open at the same times as during the primary and general elections. All appropriate notification will be made in accordance to Local 587 bylaws, the Constitution and General Laws and all applicable laws.

- Motion by Rick Gleason that Local 587 contribute \$1,000 to the No on 841 campaign, sponsored by the WSLC.

- Motion by Marc Auerbach to adopt the following resolution:

Whereas, the Seattle Popular Monorail Authority interim board voted in December 2002 to adopt the DBOM (Design-Build-Operate-Maintain) procurement method, under which operations and maintenance of the voter-approved Green Line could be contracted out to private companies; and

Whereas, mass transit service in Seattle has been provided by unionized public workers since 1919, when the private streetcar system was taken over by the City of Seattle due to poor service, lax safety standards, deferred investments, and poor labor relations; and,

Whereas, the construction of a city or region-wide monorail system could ultimately displace unionized public transit workers who currently provide transit service through the King County Metro bus system; and

Whereas, workers on the only other DBOM transit project in operation in the United States work for a consortium led by the Monorail bidder Wash-

ington Group International and receive wages and benefits far below their area standard; and

Whereas, contracting out operations and maintenance will force Seattle taxpayers to directly subsidize the profits of the multi-billion dollar corporations such as Washington Group International, Bombardier and Fluor, that have been qualified as bidders by the SPMA; and

Whereas, this unnecessary subsidy to for-profit corporations will reduce the resources available to provide superior service and safety, fair working conditions, and maximum benefits to the local economy; and

Whereas, contracting out a monopoly on a vital public service such as rapid transit leaves citizens and workers extremely vulnerable to the demands of profit-driven corporations; and

Whereas, the SPMA's preliminary decision to adopt the DBOM procurement method was heavily influenced by private sector representatives with a direct stake in the issue; and

Whereas, turning over operation and maintenance of the monorail to private contractors would undermine the SPMA's core principals of transparency and accountability to the public and staying true to its grassroots history,

Therefore be it resolved that ATU Local 587 calls upon the Seattle Popular Monorail Authority Board of Directors to mandate public operation and maintenance of the Green Line; and

Be it further resolved that ATU Local 587 calls upon the SPMA Board of Directors to investigate the preliminary decision to adopt the DBOM procurement method for conflicts of interest among staff and consultants; and

Be it finally resolved that ATU Local 587 will work to build a labor-community coalition dedicated to ensuring public operation of the Monorail based on policies that prioritize safe, efficient and quality service, fair working conditions and maximum economic benefit to the Seattle region.

- Motion by Paul Neil to endorse Ron Sims for Governor and donate the maximum amount to his campaign out of COPE funds.

- Motion by Paul Griffin to make a \$1K donation to the King County Labor Council 11th Annual Last and Final Hogs for Hunger Ride.

- Motion by Paul Griffin to authorize the purchase of 2500 member lapel pins at an estimated cost of \$1.65 each.

Business of the Membership

At the August 2003 cycle of membership meetings the following business was conducted:

- Arbitration requests for Al McMillon, Janice Kennison and Kelly Venable were approved by the membership.

- Motion to invite Clev Stockmeyer, Cindi Laws and Brent McMillan to come to our next union meeting to give a two minute presentation on their vision for the monorail and answer

any questions from the membership, was approved by the KCM membership.

The following members were August pot draw winners: Frank Tanner at the Charter meeting, Steven Hankey at the morning meeting, Charlene Buckley at JTA. CTS pot draw winner was Jay Winters. Rolling CTS pot draw of \$150.00 was not drawn due to unavailability of the names' bucket. Next month's CTS rolling pot draw will be \$175.00.

Tentative Agenda

Membership Meetings:

CHARTER MEETING

Thursday, September 4, 2003
8:00 p.m.
IBEW Hall Auditorium
2700 1st Ave., Seattle, WA

JEFFERSON TRANSIT

Monday, September 8, 2003
8:00 p.m.
Port Townsend Rec Center
Port Townsend, WA

MORNING MEETING

Friday, September 5, 2003
10:30 a.m.
IBEW Hall Auditorium
2700 1st Ave., Seattle, WA

CLALLAM TRANSIT

Tuesday, September 9, 2003
7:00 p.m.
Vern Burton Memorial
Building, Port Angeles, WA

Among topics to be discussed:

Among topics to be discussed: Office relocation project, grievance and arbitration update, discussion on proposed policy at Metro/King County regarding leave without pay, changes in CDL regulations.

Unfinished Business:

There is no unfinished business for the month of September.

IN LOVING MEMORY...

*For death is no more than a turning over of us
from time unto eternity.*

—William Penn

Venice Connor, unexpectedly passed away August 13, 2003. Venice joined Local 587 in 1999 as an Office Custodian working in the Tunnel, and moved to Shop Custodian in 2001. She last worked on the East Side. Venice had many friends and family and was considered a tremendous asset to the workgroup. She will be greatly missed.

Lavonna (Sami) Mead, passed away August 21, 2003, after a valiant battle with a long term illness. Sami joined Local 587 in January of 1986 as a part-time Transit Operator, going full-time in March of 1990. She was most recently out of South Base. She was thought of fondly and well respected by her coworkers and leaves behind friends and family who will miss her greatly.

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

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WEINGARTEN RIGHTS STATEMENT

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

Letters to the editor

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

Send letters to:

Jennie Gil, Editor
c/o ATU Local 587

News Review

2700 First Avenue, Rm 204
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Our Changing Times 2003

By Ryerson Base Security Committee Member Morgan Michaels

WOW! WHAT AN EXPERIENCE this was for me. Little did I know when I opened my mouth the first time and asked [base chiefs] Abdul and Sandy "if it would be possible to ask, both, Central and Atlantic, what the possibility would be to join forces in this years' Security Fair", what was about to happen! Now, my perception of things have been know to be—well—just a bit different than it really is. Usually a bit with my head in a cloud. Well, I remember a big smile with a question mark attached, they both said "Go For It! Make your plans, decision, and, if you are having any difficulty—come find us, so we can help." Total control? OK—I can work with that. Not sure if they thought we could pull it off or not, but, working with them, I believe their support was pure and honest. I just hope we pleasantly surprised them (along with the other base chiefs), if just a teeny tiny bit.

Throughout my whole working career—most being in some level of management—I must say—I have never, ever worked with such an awesome group of members. We had our work cut out for us—3 meetings and 6–7 weeks to go. And we pulled it off! This team dug in and worked our little butts off, and some of us probably felt like we bit-off-a-little-more-than-we-could-chew. Each meeting we watched as our projects began to take form. We didn't have a moment for ourselves.

We also all found out what kind of athletes we were—we jumped through hoops, ran marathons, and (carefully) maneuvered through 'laid-out' land mines. We picked ourselves up, brushed off our knees, and bandaged our heads from all that banging and running into brick walls. Thanks, Metro, for a couple of things: First, (that after working a few years) we learn there is a right way to do things and why it's correct to follow the right routing to get things done. Second, we have learned to work by ourselves. We had 3 bases, a dozen or more members, and 24/7 shifts to work/coordinate around.

Finally, August 7th arrived and we all patted ourselves on our backs. So, thank you team members for the GREAT opportunity to work with you. And a huge THANK YOU base chiefs for giving us the chance to do this one on our own, and for helping us when asked, and making sure we didn't get hurt. But, most of all—Thank you a million times for letting US do it our way, and for trusting us!

Now remember the little yellow forms you were asked to fill out? Let me try and respond, as promised. And, please if these answers do not satisfy and/or address one of your concerns, feel free to contact myself or Nate Chappelle for a more desirable response.

We received 33 cards back.

#1) Was the fair beneficial?

WHEW!—33 Yes's.
Mission Accomplished !!

#2) What did you learn?

Spacing requirements. Different parts of security. Central and Atlantic have great people (Ryerson needs help—I guess). Info about the new base parking. Who to contact about HazMat & Fire. Who does what. What other committees do. Security is up to you (Oops—let's talk some more). Expansion project. What other K.C. services are available. I learned nothing (keep an open mind). Safety IS important. I learned more than before (good learner). All kinds of stuff. We also got numerous, positive comments about the PSP team (Way to go PSP).

#3) Food?

Outstanding—1, Good—26, OK—2, didn't eat—2

#4) Would you like a repeat of this event?

Yes—25, Yes, Better than other—2, Fine—we will try to do this again... Chiefs?

A couple of questions I shall try to wrap up and answer in a comment. They are: How was fair beneficial to you? How could we have improved? What else would you have like to have seen?

We had quite a few other displays that were supposed to have been there, as they WERE sched-

uled. We had a SWAT team/bomb dog demo, a seize demo, bike patrol and lots more. Due to the recent loss within their work family, they had to make a priority call and that was to either attend our fair, OR attend the memorial service for their fallen officer. I am hoping that if the situation was different and they would have been able to attend, then the answers to these question would have been much fewer. I would also like to take the time to send our sincere, heartfelt condolences to our fellow members of this most demanding field of work. We are truly sorry for your loss. Please know our hearts and love are with you during your sad times.

Also, we will try to get that chief/supervisor table next year.

Some very well deserved thanks are in order. To all the planning team members:

- Atlantic: Nate, Tom, Mike
- Central: Mack, Reggie, Brenda, Vickie
- Ryerson: Tara, Scott Barb – PD arranged for all the PD related stuff
- Neil – Training
- Katherine – PSP
- Maggie & Karl Moshen Helicopter, Swat vehicle/staff, HazMat, ladder, CIS team, and all the Security Team members who helped.

Knowing me, I know I must have missed someone, for this I apologize. See You Next Year We Hope!

CDL and Diabetes

By Recording Secretary Jennie Gil

HAPPY BIRTHDAY! IT'S TIME to renew your license. Piece of cake, other than making the surreal trip to DOL, and waiting in line forever, and trying to guess what new procedure they have instituted since your last visit. Not to mention the lovely photo they will plaster on your license for everyone and their mother-in-law to snicker at.

At least it should be a piece of cake. Unless you shouldn't have cake. Because you're diabetic.

Brother Al Kendrick recently went an experience trying to renew his license early. Brother Kendrick is diabetic and has had no trouble with his renewals since his initial diagnosis. He went in for his regular physical and thought he would get his medical certificate renewed as it was getting to be time for that too. He picked up the form from the base and took it in to the doctor's office with him. Al noticed there was a section on the form that dealt with insulin-dependent diabetics. While he did read it, he discarding that section thinking there had to be a waiver for people like him.

He took this form to the doctor, and the doctor wouldn't sign it.

The form had a Web site direct-

ing a medical practitioner to the Federal Department of Licensing for explanation if the doctor could not sign the medical examiner form. Brother Kendrick went to that site to investigate the process for getting the waiver he was accustomed to getting (or knew from others that he could get). The Web site did not do much to answer the questions he had about diabetes but it had contact numbers. Al then called one of the numbers listed. He spoke with a representative of the Federal DOL and was told that there was no waiver, nor was there a grandfather clause.

Fortunately for Al Kendrick, he began his attempts to renew his license early, so when he contacted my office it was not a panic-ridden, crisis situation. Another point in his favor is that Al does not give up. He felt there was more to this story and he was determined to keep knocking on doors to get what he needed.

He called the local DOL and asked about the penalties for renewing his CDL late. If he put it off, since he is on L&I at the moment anyway and not going to drive bus for a few more months,

would he have to retake the CDL test? He was told no, and that the late-renewal penalty was not excessive. And that is when they told him about the waiver.

Washington State gives its residents some leeway on the diabetes question, but only on a state level.

These waivers are available at any DOL office. The state DOL rep was kind enough to mail one to Brother Kendrick. Al said the doctor still has to sign "no" on the medical examiner's form, that the employee is not cleared to drive due to insulin-dependent diabetes. But then the employee must go to any DOL office here in Washington State and get the second form, a medical waiver that the doctor signs off on stating that the diabetic does not have episodes due to the insulin intake and that the condition is stable and under control. At that point the employee can get their CDL.

The one caveat is that this waiver exists for transit employees only, if you get your CDL waiver here in Washington State, you cannot go interstate, or rather, drive commercially across state lines. So this waiver does not apply to trucking, it's an ex-

clusive state waiver for transit employees only.

Al contacted me and asked me to look into Metro's side of this problem. He was very concerned that his fellow coworkers know how to maneuver this maze and not lose their licenses without knowing that there was a way around the obstacle. I forwarded his query to Metro's Dave Jolly, who passed me on to Supervisor of Training Doug Johnson and Safety's Terry Compton. Both Doug and Terry sent back messages confirming Al's information on a state waiver, although neither went into the detail Al uncovered for me on the process itself. I'd be willing to bet that the process depends on who is handling it. It probably varies from one doctor to the next, from one employer to the next, and from one branch of the DOL to the next. Consistency in the process would be too easy.

Having researched all his options around the obstacle of CDL renewal, Brother Kendrick took a slightly different approach than what most of us might have taken. He decided he was going to work to

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Letters to the Editor...

Part of the Security Solution

To my fellow union members:

Some of you know me because of the work I have done on the issue of security and some of you probably wish you didn't know me. All this is irrelevant — I'm staying focused on the task before me.

In almost 2 years of working on the Security Issue, I've gained a lot of insight and I've wanted to say something for a long time ...that I feel is needed.

With the upcoming contract negotiations, responding to the flack about cameras and audio on the buses, new buses coming on line, moving the Union office and the ever time consuming grievances, our Union officers are overloaded most of the time.

Many times at South Base and at Union meetings I hear and listen to disgruntled drivers and how upset they are about many issues concerning management. Yet, when it comes time to go to the King County Council meetings or be active on Security Issues or other issues only 4 to 6 operators take the time to be part of the solution. We spend more time and effort with in-fighting than being the cohesive, united force that we could be.

Why do you suppose we got only \$6.3 million for Security last year (60% to the tunnel), but the churches got over 18 million for the homeless? Because I watched on TV how they were organized, cohesive and focused as a group lobbying before the County Council and City Council.

780 operators assaulted in the last 5 years and over 80 this year, yet only 4 to 6 show up to testify before the County Council. Does this indicate that we are serious about the issue or any issue to the Council members? Metro management on a regular basis has a better turn out at Council meetings than we do.

I question what we could accomplish as a Union, how we could help lighten the load of our Union officers, and how politicians would take us more seriously if we were to be more united and less divisive or apathetic among ourselves.

Alone I can accomplish only so much on one issue — that is why forming alliances for the good of the cause and all concerned works better. So I encourage each one of you to ask **"WHAT CAN I DO TO HELP?"** instead of deriding these elected officers who are overworked the way it is. To me, **BEING PART OF THE SOLUTION IS BEING PART OF A UNION.** If I didn't care about people, I would never have taken on the issue. We need to care about each other more & bitch less. [And for anyone interested], the next Council meeting is September 17, 2003, at 3pm.

Thank you,
Glenn Ruth, #3490
South Base

More on Stop Calling

Dear Editor:

This is another perspective on ADA compliance. My problem is with the seemingly non-random performance checks of drivers. I've been monitored on several occasions and EACH time passed just fine. Sample comments: March 29, 2002, *"The monitor report shows that you announced nearly 100% of the stops, intersections and landmarks...In addition, the report states that you called lots of additional streets and landmarks. Very professional—clear speaking voice."* December 16, 2002, *"...announced nearly 100% of the stops, intersections and landmarks listed..."* January 14, 2003, *"...announced 100% of the stops, intersections..."* On May 25, 2003, I passed yet another check.

If the purpose of monitoring is to ensure system-wide compliance with ADA standards (as it should be), why would so much time be

spent checking a driver who has proven time and again to be doing the job? I know there are many drivers who have yet to be monitored even ONE time. To me it shows a failure of (well-compensated) planning and is a waste of taxpayer money. I informed the acting base chief who called me in for the results of the last check that I preferred not to hear from them again unless I did something wrong. I'd like to know if any other drivers consider themselves "over-monitored."

John Sheirbon #3269
Central Base

I Don't Get It

Dear Editor:

Why does it seem that progress actually makes our lives more difficult? Recently the East Coast had a massive power outage; coincidentally parts of Renton had a similar event. The ever dreaded announcement came out on Channel 3 for all coaches in the Renton Transit Center area, due to the power outage the comfort station at the transit center would not function. Great, no bathroom, unable to wash your hands, or if you are desperate enough even get some lukewarm water to drink. Progress means that we are not intelligent enough to use a faucet or to manually flush a toilet.

As a Transit Operator I am entrusted with hundreds of people's lives every day. But I can't be trusted to turn off the water or

flush the toilet? My understanding of the highly complex proper method of how to wash your hands, and to GET CLEAN, includes HOT water. Currently at the newly, partially remodeled South Base this maneuver is impossible. Could someone please check with the health department to insure that my understanding of the process for washing hands does include HOT water?

It seems that Metro King County has found a way to get around a lot of things that we as employees expect: bathrooms, break time, time to eat. Now, thanks to technology, we can kiss the proper process for washing your hands good-bye. No ability to obtain HOT water for proper washing after who knows how many hours of being around who knows what germs and diseases.

Also at issue is the availability of drinking water. Due to the remodel at South Base we have very limited space and no drinking fountains. We have bottled water available with a sign directly over the cooler; please limit your use as the money comes out of the construction budget. We are happy to have inside flush toilets again. It must be too much to ask for the ability to turn on a faucet and get a glass of cold water to drink. Why can't we have at least one set of faucets available so we can choose either hot or cold water, also the old fashioned method does not preclude water during a power outage.

I don't get it.

Dee Wakenight, #2779
South Base

SEND IN YOUR OPINIONS

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Jennie Gil

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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

Upcoming at ATU 587

SEPTEMBER 2 – Open nominations for Shop Steward for MV Transit, SPT, and Metro/King County Facilities Maintenance members. Candidates must self-nominate and submit said nominations in writing to the Union Office.

SEPTEMBER 9 – Open nominations for Shop Steward for Metro/King County Transit Operators and Vehicle Maintenance members.

SEPTEMBER 9-11 Vehicle Maintenance pick. Please see your bulletin boards for more information.

SEPTEMBER 11 – Close nominations for Shop Steward for MV Transit and SPT, end of business day.

SEPTEMBER 12 – ATU Legislative Council Meeting, Seattle, WA.

SEPTEMBER 13 – Facilities Maintenance shakeup goes into effect.

SEPTEMBER 16 – Close nominations

for Shop Steward for Facilities Maintenance members.

SEPTEMBER 19 – Shop steward elections for MV Transit and SPT.

SEPTEMBER 23 – Executive Board meeting.

SEPTEMBER 25 – Shop Steward elections for Metro/King County Facilities Maintenance.

SEPTEMBER 26 – 28 ATU Latino Caucus, Dallas, Texas.

SEPTEMBER 27 – Fall Shakeup for Operations and Vehicle Maintenance goes into effect.

SEPTEMBER 30 – Close nominations for Shop Steward for Metro/King County Transit Operators and Vehicle Maintenance.

OCTOBER 9 – Shop Steward elections for Metro/King County Transit Operators and Vehicle Maintenance.

Loyalty Rewarded: Credit Union Merger Good for All

(Guest contributor: Bob Simpson, Board Chair, MetroPacific Community Credit Union)

IN 1936, TWO BROTHERS FORMED the “shoebox” Seattle Street Railway Credit Union to make small, but important loans to their Brothers and Sisters when banks would not. Through the loyal support of the members and officers of ATU 587 over the ensuing years, that small beginning grew into an independent Metro Credit Union. A few years ago, we renamed ourselves MetroPacific Community CU (MPCCU) to reflect an expanded membership base. Throughout this evolution, we have truly appreciated the relationship that exists between ATU 587 and MPCCU and thank you for your long-standing loyalty.

Our goal has always been to try and meet your financial needs with convenient, low-cost, high-quality products and services. Now, we are proposing to take those financial services and opportunities to a whole new level by merging with Qualstar Credit Union (Qualstar). The MPCCU board (which, among others, includes Sister Dee Wakenight, Brother Willie Middleton and former ATU 587 member Dan Overgaard) determined that a merger was necessary and desirable. A merger was seen to serve the best interests of members if they were to continue receiving the kinds of financial services and products they expect.

Considerable thought was

given to the merger decision and to selecting a preferred merger partner. Our history with ATU 587 was not lost on us. The search and evaluation processes were thorough, with serving member interests being the number one criteria. Numerous credit unions expressed interest in having MPCCU as a merger partner—a flattering statement, in itself, about us. Some candidates were good, while others were not. Overwhelmingly, Qualstar Credit Union was selected as our preferred merger partner.

A nice bonus is that Qualstar has a strong history of labor-based fields of membership. For example, substantial segments of Qualstar’s membership derive from the District Council of Laborers (23%) and the Carpenters Union (18%). Many more members come from its “root” organization, Safeway (e.g., Retail Clerks, Teamsters, and others). Other union membership groups include the Asbestos Workers Local 7, Carpet Layers Local 1238, Glaziers Local 188, Plasterers Local 77 and Trades Unions Locals. Qualstar’s most recent merger partner was the Washington Trades Credit Union.

We see Qualstar as a financially strong institution, offering an expansive, full array of financial products and services, including excellent savings and lending rates. In addition to retaining our

current Seattle and Renton branches, the merger would make six additional branch locations available in Everett, Shoreline, Redmond, Kent, Tukwila and Tacoma. Following a merger, with combined assets of over \$290 million, a number of other desirable services and locations would be immediately available to members: Access to a “shared branching” network with over 1,000 locations in thirty seven states, including 54 locations in Washington, Home Mortgage Loans, Internet Banking, Financial Planning and Investment Services, a fully staffed telephone Call Center and a network of surcharge-free ATM’s. More information on Qualstar is available on their Website at <https://www.qualstar.com/index.php>.

While a name change would occur after a merger, things should still feel familiar to ATU 587 members who have accounts at MPCCU. In addition to the branches, Qualstar will also retain all MPCCU employees, actually offering them greater career opportunities, and current ATM locations. No adverse impacts on members or loss of services or products are anticipated.

Selecting a merger partner whose business philosophy and practices were compatible with ours was also an important consideration. Owned and operated by members, Qualstar has a long

history of quality member service and labor-based fields of membership. In short, a merger of MPCCU with Qualstar is a win-win situation for all. Selected members of the current MPCCU board will provide post-merger oversight, on behalf of our members.

If you’ve been a member of MetroPacific since June 24, 2003, you will soon be mailed a Notice of Special Meeting, to be held on September 24, 2003, and a Ballot for Merger Proposal (contact a MetroPacific branch if you do not receive the mailing and feel you should have). We respectfully request your support and vote to “APPROVE” the plan to merge with Qualstar. If you are not now a member of MetroPacific, consider making Qualstar your primary financial institution in the future. I think you will like what you see.

If you have any questions about our proposed merger with Qualstar, please contact Melody Muncy, Acting CEO/President, MPCCU, at (425) 228-2910 ext. 3024, (206) 623-6580 ext. 3024, or by E-mail at mmuncy@mpccu.org.

Thank you for the opportunity to share with you this exciting news of our proposed merger and to thank everyone at ATU 587 for your past and continued support. We look forward to making this unique opportunity to better serve your financial needs happen.

The 2003 W.S.L.C. Convention The Focus on Initiative 841

By Executive Board Officer Rick Gleason

LA TE LAST MONTH I HAD THE opportunity to participate as a delegate to the annual convention of the Washington State Labor Council in Wenatchee. Also in attendance were Recording Secretary Jennie Gil, former Executive Board Officer Shirley Walker, and part-time driver Linda Averill. The Council comprises more than 800 delegates representing some 430,000 rank-and-file members of various unions across the state. It is the largest labor organization in Washington and is considered one of the strongest and most effective in the country.

High on the agenda throughout the three-day event was the “No on I-841 Campaign.” Many Washington state employees are protected by the only comprehensive, prevention-based ergonomic rules in the nation. Designed to

protect workers from repetitive motion injuries the current rules fail to go nearly far enough. Unfortunately they don’t apply to our own industry which is currently not listed among the 12 highest for risk. However, what protections are in place need to be preserved and later built upon. Metro employees are all-too familiar with musculoskeletal injuries. These repetitive motion injuries include arthritis, tendonitis, and carpal tunnel syndrome, and are the #1 workplace safety problem with 50,000 cases reported statewide annually.

Ever since it became law these ergonomic rules have been under constant attack by business interests around the state. During the last legislative session an effort to repeal the rules failed. Since then, however, the Build-

ing Industry Association of Washington has spent \$400,000 on paid signature gatherers to attack this legislation once again, this time through the initiative process. Through the use of misinformation, and despite the discovery of an extraordinarily high number of invalid and potentially fraudulent signatures, Initiative 841 narrowly qualified for November’s ballot. The B.I.A.W. says it will spend up to a million dollars to kill for good these safety rules which took labor and the Legislature years to develop.

Your Washington State Labor Council has committed to leading the fight against this latest challenge. With a budget of \$400,000, which it needs to raise within the next few weeks, the W.S.L.C. will work to vigorously defend one of the country’s most important

worker safety rules. The only way we’ll defeat this latest assault on labor is through a grassroots educational effort. For more information about the fight against this initiative and how you can help, as well as details regarding this year’s convention, visit www.wslc.org.

Being part of the 2003 convention was a great opportunity to see first-hand the depth, breadth, scope and diversity of the labor movement in our state. In addition we learned of the many services the W.S.L.C. offers in educating and supporting its affiliates and individual members. To say the least it’s an experience I wish all our members could enjoy as it was informative, inspiring and even invigorating. More on that in the months to come. Until then, be safe out there!



Paul Griffin

The Financial Secretary's Report

A Transit "System" that Works

By Financial Secretary Paul L. Griffin

THE CITY OF PRAGUE, CZECHOSLOVAKIA has a transit system that works so well neither visitors nor residents need an automobile. There is no place in the central city that is not within two or three blocks from a bus, tram, or underground train station or platform. Additionally,

visitors (tourists) can read which Metro line (underground train) to take and where to get off to reach their destination. The signage in the stations is clear and unmistakable as to which side of the platforms to be on, or at transfer points, where to go (up or down) to the other train. Then one gets off the train and goes above ground to catch a tram. Trams operate in loops or bi-directional, so you cannot go wrong. Then, still following one's guidebook, one



Trams in position to go. Note the single overhead contact. The vehicles are grounded in the steel rails.

the signage is so good even foreign visitors have no problem getting around.

In guidebooks and literature advertising various sites, new

can find the name of the stop where they want to get off. Quick, frequent, clean, and cheap. However, pick pocketing is an honorable trade, so one must take some



Escalator access to the heavy rail underground trains are steep and long. Don't lean too far forward!



Outlying station with tram loading. Note the overhead walkway to get to the platforms.

minimum precautions.

The best deal is either the all-day or three-day pass. They cost so little that after taking a taxi one will think of the pass as a gift from the city. They do, however, have inspectors checking passes or tickets (if bought individually) and the fine is VERY steep. The

ing such a great transit system.

We in Seattle have lots of leadership but little follower-ship. Follower-ship that agrees on a plan and then puts full energy in implementing the plan. We waste lots of time and money arguing about "not in my backyard", or it "costs too much", or just lawsuits all



Some things never change. If a transit vehicle sits still too it falls victim to graffiti.

inspectors will collect the fine on the spot and issue a receipt or you can get an additional ride to someplace you will not like. The advice is to not try to ride for free because the fare is a bargain anyway.

Transit workers are considered essential public service providers and are almost all union, and well paid. We do share some of the same basic attitudes however, such as they don't like someone to sit in the tram at the turn-around layover. That's what shelters are for. One significant difference is that the Prague drivers don't mess with fares. Upon boarding it is your responsibility to stick your ticket in the time puncher and show it upon demand to inspectors.

Seattle can only dream of hav-

around. Meanwhile, traffic is stalled, freight is delayed, businesses are moving away, and the economy is suffering.

There are leaders in our community who are aware of transit systems elsewhere in the world and are trying to bring that insight and knowledge to Seattle. The leadership of Sound Transit is participating in this process and has visited other cities to see their transit systems at work. Perhaps the leadership of ATU Local 587 should visit too, so we can learn how other systems coordinate their operations with their labor force. There is a lot going on elsewhere in the world and while our economy is down other's economies are on the rise, partly due to transit systems that work and work well.



Jennie Gil

SOME LAWS COME INTO BEING with much fanfare or raucous objection. Others sneak in as if under cover of dark. These latter are only a problem if they affect one directly as they have a tendency to blindsides. There are three key pieces of legislation that have passed recently that could have serious potential impact for all Local 587 members.

CDL Changes Requiring Medical Certification

HB1597 was a wolf in sheep's clothing. The initial purpose was to eliminate the requirement of the DOT medical certification at the time of application for or renewal of a CDL. The reason for this was so that drivers who might be unemployed would not have to pay for a physical examination in order to keep their CDL. If there was no intent to drive a commercial vehicle, then the law would not require current DOT certification. One only had to certify when they went in to get or renew their license that they meet the federal physical and medical standards for interstate operation of a commercial vehicle.

The downside of this is twofold. First, those of us in transit who believed we were exempt from having to renew our medical cer-

tification every two years, are no longer exempt. It will now be **required**, if one is operating a commercial vehicle, to have a DOT physical every two years. The medical certification must be kept current in order to legally drive a commercial vehicle.

The second downside is that we will all be required to carry that DOT card with us every time we operate a commercial vehicle.

If you are driving your personal vehicle and you are stopped you are not required to have the DOT card on your person. However, if you are operating a commercial vehicle such as a bus, wrecker or commercial truck, and you are stopped, and you do not have a valid DOT certificate, the penalty is pretty steep, at \$528 per incident. If you can prove in court that you had a valid DOT at the time the ticket was issued, you simply did not have it on you, the fine may be reduced to \$128.

This legislative change caught everyone by surprise. It was the hot topic of discussion among the ATU locals attending the Washington State Legislative Council convention in Wenatchee last weekend. Many transit agencies and their union counterparts are hurrying to work out implementation details. When I called sources at Metro to see what they knew, they themselves had only just found out about this new law that passed in April and took effect July 27th of this year. Discussions are underway between the

union and the various transit agencies we represent to figure out how it will be handled to ensure compliance. Please stay tuned for further information.

SB 6097

While most of us do not think we need to worry about unemployment insurance, in today's economy that sense of security is not as strong as it once was. SB 6097 passed in the final hours of the 2003 legislative session and it makes dramatic changes in our Unemployment Insurance system that affect eligibility and benefits.

In current law, the weekly benefit is based on the average wages earned in the two quarters of the preceding year in which the wages were highest. Under the new bill, wages will be based first on the three highest quarters for the year of 2004, and thereafter simply on the entire previous year. The effect here will be hardest felt by seasonal or sporadic workers, such as those in construction and agriculture. The maximum weekly benefits are \$496, and can go for a maximum period of 30 weeks. The new law freezes that weekly maximum at \$496 and cuts the benefit period to 26 weeks.

The eligibility criteria under the current law also gave the state some discretion as to what "good cause quits" meant. Spousal relocation, domestic violence and a drastic wage cut included current definitions of quitting one's job for good cause. The new law takes such discretion away from the state and

defines good-cause quits as part of the law. Spousal relocation is no longer considered "good cause", and a 25% reduction in wages is now required to define good cause, whereas the previous rule of thumb was 10 to 12%. One other gray-area change is that currently if a case involved unique circumstances, the benefit of the doubt went to the unemployed worker, and that language has now been deleted.

For further information on these changes, contact the state Employment Security Department, or visit www.wa.gov/esd.

SB 5271

As a result of this bill, workers suffering occupational hearing loss will receive NO permanent partial disability awards unless they file their claims within two years of the last injurious exposure. Workers filing after the two year mark are still eligible for hearing aids.

There is a one year window in the legislation. If the worker files their claim within one year of the effective date of legislation (9/10/03), and their claim is accepted, they will be eligible to receive a permanent partial disability award along with the appropriate hearing aids. Any member who believes they have suffered work-related hearing loss should file their claims before September 4, 2004. After that date, a permanent partial disability award will not be granted unless the member can prove the last injurious exposure occurred within two years of the filing date.

Beating Cancer Renewed Top Bus Driver's Joy for Job

By John Marshall, Seattle Post-Intelligencer Reporter

The following article appeared in the Friday, June 13th issue of the P.I. For those who missed it, I felt it was worth reprinting in our newsletter. My appreciation to P.I. Reporter John Marshall.

—Lance Norton

FRIDAY, JUNE 13, 2003. BLARING horns, gaping potholes and weaving bicyclists do little to keep the smile off Judi Fisher's face. She personally greets passengers boarding her bus, acting as if she couldn't be happier to see them, which is true, because she knows a secret they don't.

She knows she might not have seen this day, that she very well might be dead by now four years after the breast cancer diagnosis and the mastectomy changed her life — and her outlook — forever.

All those frustrations on city

streets now seem petty. "I hardly ever have a lousy day anymore," Fisher says, "because it's a day, and I'm still here."

To Fisher, 55, every day is a wonder — especially these recent days since she was selected as Metro's Operator of the Year for 2002.

It means her picture will be displayed inside all of Metro's fleet, and there's also a gold ring with the Metro insignia and a diamond chip that she flashes on her finger.

"It's an incredible honor," Fisher says. "There are very few walks of life where you can get a reward for just doing your job."

Fisher never anticipated being a bus driver, would have laughed out loud at anyone who made such a suggestion.

The Seattle native, who grew up in Lake City, went on to study at

the University of Washington. A bachelor's degree in French and a master's in Romance linguistics were to be her tickets to the classroom, but teaching jobs were scarce in 1973.

There were also huge lines of cars waiting at the gas pumps and mass transit seemed a promising Plan B. She told herself she would work for Metro "for a while," but even after her first decade she conceded that the job seemed "kind of serious."

She had been a union shop steward by then, had weathered the uncertainty of being on strike, grown to enjoy her fellow drivers and also the satisfaction in having a positive effect on the daily lives of passengers.

"Not a day goes by without being able to help someone by getting them where they're going, making

their day a little lighter and maybe sharing a good laugh," Fisher says.

Over the years, she has been tested again and again, driving more than 2 million miles amid Seattle's ever-worsening traffic and the resulting frustration of drivers, the bane of her existence.

She's had several minor accidents, always a jarring and embarrassing occurrence for a driver in a bus with passengers, although she has now gone 16 separate years without a collision. She's had her share of medical emergencies on her buses, with a passenger going into an epileptic seizure not uncommon.

She has dealt face to face with, as fellow veteran driver Richard Jensen jokes during a layover, "every Freudian type known."

Then there was the passenger

continued on page 8

The View From the Buses

By John D. Love

I HAD A PLEASANT SURPRISE ONE day while shopping at the Fred Meyer in Burien. I was waiting in line to get checked out and I turned to see **Bill Jacobson** was in the same line. I had not seen Bill since I retired in 1987. It is always fun to see someone after so many years. Bill looked great and we may see him at the breakfast in Burien on the third Saturday of the month.

I received a nice note and picture from **Pete** and **Anne Cameron**. Pete and Anne are living in Depoe Bay, Oregon. They reported that **Dan** and **Jenny Sheppard** spent a couple of days with them before they traveled up the coast to Seattle. The picture included Pete, Anne, Jenny and Dan with the Newport harbor and waterfront in the background. Pete and Anne's E-Mail address is eaglenest@harbor-side.com. They say they have plenty of room with two guest rooms, the pot is always on, and the beer is cold.

I was pleased to see so many retirees at the luncheon at Andy's Diner in June, several in attendance for the first time since winter. To drop a name or two, **Al French** and **Dan Sheppard**.

I had the honor of attending the retiree picnic at Lower Woodlawn Park on the 26th of June. It was fun for all. There

were fellows there that I had not seen since 1987 when I retired. Besides having some great food to eat they held a drawing and several of us won a \$10.00 or a \$20.00 bill. I won \$10.00. Thanks to **Al Ramey** and **Dave Carter** everything was great. Al Ramey came to the picnic in one of the historical buses, coach #724, that his organization operates on special occasions. **Del Larson** celebrated his eightieth birthday in eastern Washington in July.

I received an interesting phone call from—**Mildred Navratil**, widow of **Frank**. Mildred had some interesting items and gave them to **Bert Marriott** years ago. Now that Bert is gone she is wondering where they are now. Mildred is eighty-eight and enjoys reading the ARSCE News. **Zaider Quimby** is getting to be a regular at the luncheon at Andy's Diner. She would like to see some more ladies attend. We use to have several ladies attend, but over the years their attendance has fallen off to one or two.

I had another pleasant surprise in July while shopping at the Fred Meyer store in Burien. While trying to keep up with my wife I looked up and was face to face with **John P. Atkinson**, better known within Transit as Ack-Ack. I keep a list of retirees and when **Ack-Ack** retired about six years

ago I did not get his address, so I now have his address and phone number. John looked hale and hearty and is enjoying retirement. It is always fun to run into fellow retirees that you have not seen in years. I have met two retirees in the Burien Fred Meyer store since my last article.

I received a note from **Harry Gordon**. Harry has moved to Wilsonville, Oregon. Before Harry moved to Oregon, he was a regular attendee at the Pension Board meetings. Harry is doing fine in his new place and if any one wants to contact him give me a jingle and I can give you his number.

I was pleasantly surprised at the July breakfast in Burien when **Elmer Turner** showed up. Elmer has had some medical problems, but is doing fine now. He was a picture of health. We had 17 in attendance on the 19th of July. I received a note from **Pete DeLeyser** informing me that the hybrid coach was not available for the July breakfast. I believe that he will have a coach sometime in October. I will try to keep all informed. **Vic** and **Ann Kaufman** are going to spend a week in Mexico.

Binnacle List

Harley Jones has fallen from his ladder and has broken bones. He is recuperating at home. I

Retirees' Corner

heard over the 4th of July weekend that **Presley Slough** fell and broke his hipbones. He will be in a rehab center for several weeks. Presley is a regular at the breakfast in Burien. I hope that he will have a fast recovery and wish him well.

TAPS

In my "In Transit" magazine I see that Local 587 lost several members. They were **Robert E. Jackson**, **Sally A. Lauridsen**, **Ned B. Lewis** and **Frank C. Williams**. I only knew one of these members, **Frank Williams**. I was informed of the passing of **Warren Gibson**. I use to catch Warren's coach in the Green Lake area. Warren retired on 3/2/76 and was 89 when he passed away on 6/2/03. I used to see Warren at the Group Health clinic at Northgate.

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

Keep in mind, if you have news you want to share with others, leave me a message at the union office or E-Mail me at—Dennerle1@juno.com

That's all for now.

Beating Cancer . . . , continued from page 7

with a knife. That was 17 years ago, but the frightening image is still fresh. She was on Pike Street with a bus crowded with passengers, and there was a man smoking toward the back of the bus. She asked him to stop, and the next thing she knew he was striding toward her with a knife. He made his way forward, focused solely on the driver.

Quick thinking was required on Fisher's part, and she decided to open the door and get off the bus, reducing any threat of violence to passengers.

"I got out," Fisher recalls, "and he walked out, too, and then disappeared into the crowd. I was shook up ... it was the only time in 29 years that I felt threatened as a bus driver."

Breast cancer was a far more trying challenge for Fisher.

There was no history of it in her family, so the diagnosis was a jolt. But Fisher soon discovered that all those years of providing support and help to others was repaid in ways she never could have anticipated.

"The response from my fellow drivers was amazing," Fisher says. "They donated their sick leave and vacation time to cover me. I had two surgeries, chemotherapy, ra-

diation treatments and I was out of a job for eight months, but I had no money worries because of them.

"It was physically hard to come back to work, since the mastectomy made arm movement more difficult. But my attitude was so changed — I felt incredibly lucky to be alive and so supported.

"People really came through. I am just so fortunate to be where I am, with colleagues and friends who cared."

Much of the support continues to come from Fisher's longtime partner, **Becky Royer**, who works as a physician's assistant at Harborview Medical Center. The two women have been together for 16 years now, and they draw strength from their house at Green Lake, their shared interest in travel and gardening, their new boat and, of course, what they faced during the trial of Fisher's cancer.

Fisher participated in a program of the Focus on Healing Society (www.focusonhealing.net), a group that has physical exercise and dance classes for breast cancer survivors. It helped her recover her stamina and arm movement, and Fisher is intent on helping other breast cancer survivors receive the same benefits, even though the time commitment can be draining. As

she concedes, "Doing a little too much — that would be me."

People do recognize Fisher's selfless contributions. Her personnel file includes passenger commendations, including a "thank you" last year from the staff of Nathan Hale High School that praised her "significant impact" on students riding her bus.

Fisher is driving a new route these days, Route No. 31, but with her characteristic cheeriness unchanged. She makes three daily round trips between the University District and Magnolia on this

CDL and Diabetes, continued from page 3

get off the insulin instead of going the easy route of just getting the state waiver. He figured if he could get off the insulin and stabilize his condition so as not to require it, he could then renew his license without the need of a waiver. Al encouraged all members who suffer from diabetes to consider this option, it is the surest way to beat all this administrative hassle. Not to mention how much good this is for the body. But it does take some serious change in Attitude and Lifestyle and it is a serious commitment. But then any life-altering change is.

Diabetes seems to be on the

"pleasant" route she chose and got through her seniority.

Judith Logan is one of Fisher's frequent passengers, taking the bus from her job in Magnolia Village to her home on Magnolia's east slope. It is a short commute, but not so short that the bus driver's positive approach has gone unnoticed.

"People like her," Logan tells a new passenger, "because she is so perky all the time."

Fisher beams at the compliment, although her gaze remains fixed on the road ahead.

rise. The numbers keep growing, and with all the latest reports on child obesity and the decrease in children's physical activities, it will only continue to rise. At some point this is going to have a serious impact on the workforce. Al did all the research to lay out his options and then made the personal decision to make changes to his life to address the problem. He then made sure that we talked, so that he could pass this information on to others who might trip over the same obstacles.

And he said to ask all of his fellow coworkers: "How are YOU going to deal with this?"