

APRIL 2006

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ATU

LOCAL 587

News Review



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VOL. XXIX, NO. 4

ASE Certification and APTA Standards

By Executive Board Officer Jeff Stambaugh and Recording Secretary Jennie Gil

The American Public Transportation Association (APTA) has partnered with the ATU International to develop training materials geared to the ASE tests. Why, some ask, and how did this come about?

The Transportation Research Board of the National Academies, in its zeal to spend the vast funds they had to research something, found there were no maintenance standards for transit bus maintenance nationally. They decided they had a need to find out why. They approached APTA and the ATU for assistance.

The ATU's primary interest is a continuing effort to provide education to its membership. APTA's interest in this effort is to provide national standards for maintenance and training. Both parties agreed their mutual goal was to provide training materials geared to the ASE tests in order to establish standards and guidelines for appropriate training modules

for maintenance technicians preparing to take the proposed ASE maintenance certification tests. Currently national standards for light rail exist and have been instrumental in defeating liability suits involving light rail accidents. At this time no such national standards exist for bus maintenance.

Executive Board Officer Jeff Stambaugh got involved when he accompanied President Norton to a meeting held in Seattle by the Community Transportation Center to study the requirements for quality electronic mechanics. When APTA began the process of developing the national bus maintenance training standards, a committee was formed of approximately thirty Union and management personnel, selected nationwide. This is now known as the Mechanic's Working Group and is co-chaired by International Vice President Bob Hykaway and Chicago Transit Authority Bus Maintenance and Development Manager Dennis Christofaro. IVP

Training and testing materials to cover each area are being developed.

Hykaway approached President Norton for an appointee for Local 587, and President Norton assigned Executive Board Officer Jeff Stambaugh. Other committee members from Seattle include East Maintenance Mechanic Brother Larry Fitzpatrick, and Fleet Engineering Senior Program Administrators Todd Gibbs and Mark Dalton, from Local 17.

There are several different areas the Mechanic's Working Group is addressing. These include Bus Diesel Engines, Drive Train, Air Brakes, Suspension and Steering, Bus Electrical and Electronic components, HVAC systems, Preven-

tive Maintenance and Inspection, and Bus Body systems. Training and testing materials to cover each area are being developed.

Where is this going?

Our maintenance personnel may be asking what this means to them. At this point, nothing, other than participating in providing input on a national level for national standards. At this time no ASE certification is required at KCM. As it is a direct impact on working conditions, any requirement for certification would have to be negotiated.

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The Month at a Glance

Business of the Membership

At the March 2006 cycle of membership meetings the following business was conducted:

- Request for arbitration for Brother Ray Guyton was approved by the membership.

- Motion to purchase 4000 lapel pins at a cost of \$1.25 each was approved by the membership.

- Motion approved to send a letter of protest against the Taylor Law, the fines on the strikes, and other punishments related to

the Taylor Law and send it to the MTA, New York City Mayor, New York Governor and the New York State Attorney General, and send a copy to TWU Local 100.

The following members were March pot draw winners: Paul Bachtel at the Charter meeting, Justin Swanson at the Morning meeting, Troy McKelvey at the JTA meeting, Curt Register at the CTS meeting. \$50 Bushwhacker gift certificate winner was Linda Stern. Next month's rolling pot will be \$25.00.

Executive Board Report

March 28, 2006

The following officers were present: President Lance Norton, Vice President Glen Travis, Financial Secretary Paul Griffin, Recording Secretary Jennie Gil, Marc Auerbach, Paul Bachtel, Chris Daniels, Ninus Hopkins, Joe Mangiameli, Paul Neil, Neal Safrin, Rick Sepolen, Brian Sherlock, Jeff Stambaugh, Bruce Tiebout, Dee Wakenight, Mike Whitehead, Judy Young.

Ray Campbell was out sick, Alan Huston was serving on jury duty, and Deb Stenoien was attending a Vehicle Maintenance seminar.

The following business was conducted:

- Motion by Paul Bachtel that Local 587 donate \$500 to the Carl Owens Golf Tournament to sponsor the skills portion of the tournament.

- Motion by Paul Griffin to authorize the purchase of the annual calendars at a cost of up to \$10,000.

- Motion by Mike Whitehead to recommend taking Riley Jones' grievance to arbitration.

- Motion by Paul Bachtel to set the 2007 prime time vacation periods for Metro/King County as follows: periods 22 through 35, inclusive, and period 52.

- Motion by Ninus Hopkins that Local 587 purchase a BBQ grill for members at MV Transportation, for use during their safety meetings, at a cost not to exceed \$500.

Tentative Agenda

Membership Meetings:

CHARTER MEETING
Thursday, April 6, 2006
8:00 p.m.
The Labor Temple, Hall #8
2800 1st Ave., Seattle, WA

JEFFERSON TRANSIT
Monday, April 10, 2006
7:00 p.m.
Port Townsend Rec Center
Port Townsend, WA

MORNING MEETING
Friday, April 7, 2006
10:30 a.m.
The Labor Temple, Hall #6
2800 1st Ave., Seattle, WA

CLALLAM TRANSIT
Tuesday, April 11, 2006
7:00 p.m.
Vern Burton Memorial Building
Port Angeles, WA

Among topics to be discussed:

Among topics to be discussed: Grievance and arbitration update, update on the Paratransit "at-will" issue, update on bus wrap and sick leave mediations.

Nominations for the 2006 Officer Elections will be held at the April cycle of membership meetings. Please consult your Notice of Elections posted on the worksite Union bulletin boards for further information.

Unfinished business

- Motion by Kenny McCormick that Local 587 pay the attorneys to research recent separations due to noncompliance with federal DOT regulations was tabled at the March Charter meeting.

Seattle Chapter of the Latino Caucus

will meet

Thursday, April 6, 2006

7:00 p.m.

The Labor Temple

Hall #8

2800 First Avenue

All members welcome!

ATU LOCAL 587

News Review

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Transit Operator Position No. 2
Transit Operator Position No. 3
Transit Operator Position No. 4
Transit Operator Position No. 5
Transit Operator Position No. 6
Transit Operator Position No. 7
Transit Operator Position No. 8
Vehicle Maintenance Position No. 1
Vehicle Maintenance Position No. 2
Vehicle Maintenance Position No. 3
Facilities Maintenance
Special Classifications
Supervisors
Clallam/Jefferson County
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RAY CAMPBELL
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NINUS HOPKINS

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

WEINGARTEN RIGHTS STATEMENT

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

Letters to the editor

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

Send letters to:

Jennie Gil, Editor

c/o ATU Local 587

News Review

2815 Second Avenue, Suite 230

Seattle, WA 98121

Accessible Services Advisory Committee

By Larry Showalter, Chair

ASAC is a citizen advisory committee whose members are appointed by King County Executive Ron Sims and confirmed by the King County Council. Our membership is made up of Metro Transit riders, both fixed route and Access, who have disabilities, are older adults, or are advocates for accessible transportation. ATU 587 Executive Board Officer Judy Young, and Atlantic Base Supervisor Sue Kattar work with us in liaison roles.

Our purpose is to advise the County Executive, the King County Council, and Metro management about concerns and issues that effect the ability of riders with disabilities and riders who are older adults to use the fixed-route and Access systems independently and effectively.

We get involved in many types of issues, some at our own initiative and some at the request of Metro management or the Council. During the past couple of years we have advised the Executive, Council or Metro on a number of issues: the transportation needs of people in King County who are not currently served by Metro; the impact of higher Metro and taxi fares on people with disabilities and older adults; contractual provisions

between Metro and Access providers; design elements of low-floor coaches that are problematic for riders with disabilities; the tunnel closure; stop announcements; and a number of other matters.

A major emphasis during the past year has been stop announcements on the fixed route system. We observed new operator training to see how the need for stop announcements is taught, watched the training video, attended a number of base ADA fairs where we could meet and talk with operators, attended a quarterly ADA meeting that included representatives from all bases, and met a number of times with President Lance Norton, Executive Board Officer Judy Young and Metro staff to better understand the background and status of stop announcements. We did all of this in order to provide an outside and independent perspective on how to better serve the needs of all Metro riders.

In February, we sent a recommendation to Metro Transit General Manager Kevin Desmond on several things that Metro could do in this area. In a future issue of this newsletter, we will share that recommendation with you, as well as information on how stop announcements improve the bus

trip for many riders every day.

Once again, we want to thank ATU Local 587 for working with us over the past year. The Offi-

cers' insight and perspective have been invaluable, and we could not be moving ahead without their support.

You Can Still Go for the Gold

By Executive Board Officer Dee Wakenight

For those who did not receive the "Global" e-mail from Metro King County regarding the Healthy Incentives Program and your benefits level for 2007, this is part of one that will be of interest to you.

"Due to the tremendous number of King County employees who took the wellness assessment, some employees have not been contacted by our wellness assessment vendor, Harris Health Trends, to be enrolled in the Healthy Incentives program. To accommodate the larger than expected volume, Harris Health Trends has hired additional coaches and has staffed the phone outside of regular business hours, as late as 9 p.m. PST."

For everyone who is concerned

about being eligible for the Gold level of benefits for calendar year 2007, it's not too late. Harris is responsible for contacting you, BUT if they have not done so yet, you may want to make the initial contact yourself at the following number: 1-877-279-0624. The King County Benefits and Retirement Operations Section is also wanting to hear from you if you have not been contacted by Harris yet, call Benefits directly at 206-684-1556.

If you have any general concerns about the program please call Benefits at the above number, or via e-mail, at kc.benefits@metrokc.gov

It's not too late, you can still get for the gold.

ARBITRATION UPDATE

- Kenny McCormick:** Grieved failure to follow FLSA requirements for travel time for board/report/ATL operators. Grievance being held in abeyance while issue finalized in court.
- Sandie Olosky:** Grieved termination for alleged gross misconduct. Arbitration held November 7 and 8, 2005. Arbitrator upheld grievance, ruled in favor of reinstatement with fullback pay. Grievance final. Welcome back Sister Olosky!
- Louise Gredig:** Grieved premature non-disciplinary medical termination. Schedule pending.
- Dobbie Boyington:** Grieved termination for four infractions. Arbitration held February 21 and 22, 2006. Decision pending.
- Jeff Durall:** Grieved termination for alleged gross misconduct. Arbitration withdrawn at the member's request. The Officers wish Brother Durall the best in all of his future endeavors.
- Dar-An Kung:** Grieved work done out of classification. Arbitration scheduled for April 25th, 2006.
- Mike Whitehead:** Grieved violation of Lead Transit Part Specialists MOA. Schedule pending.
- Clint DeVoss:** Grieved work out of classification. Schedule pending.
- Garold Rand:** Grieved elimination of progressive discipline as outlined in the CBA, and issuance of policy by employer that employees were "at-will employees". Schedule pending.
- Ray Guyton:** Grieved termination for alleged unverified sick leave. Arbitration approved by the membership at the March cycle of membership meetings. Schedule pending.

Upcoming at Local 587

- APRIL 6, 7, 10 and 11—Nominations for 2006 Officer Elections to occur at the April cycle of membership meetings. Please see your Union bulletin boards or the Notice of Elections mailed to members' last known address for further information.
- APRIL 8—First Line Supervisor new shakeup begins.
- APRIL 11—Close of nominations for shop steward for First Line Supervisors and Special Classifications.
- APRIL 15—Declination meeting. All candidates please refer to the election rules and regulations.
- APRIL 20—Shop steward elections for First Line Supervisors and Special Classifications, if needed.
- APRIL 21—PART-TIME RESTRICTION FORMS DUE, 7:45 p.m. Forms must be turned in at the window. No forms will be accepted at the union office or in the pick preview room. ABSOLUTELY NO LATE FORMS WILL BE ACCEPTED.
- APRIL 24 through 28—Part-time Pick Preview. Central/Atlantic Base upstairs quiet room, 8am-4pm. Check your Operations Bulletin for further information.
- APRIL 25 through 30—Full-time Pick Preview. Atlantic/Central Base upstairs classrooms, 8am-4pm. Check your Operations Bulletin for further information.
- APRIL 25—Pre-polling for the Local 587 Primary Election, at the Union office, 9am-5pm.
- APRIL 25—Executive Board Meeting.
- APRIL 29 and 30, May 6 and 7—Part-Time Operator Pick. Central/Atlantic Base. Please consult your seniority list for your pick time. **Please remember to allow enough time to walk to pick from the Central/Atlantic/Ryerson parking garage.**
- MAY 1 through 11—Full-Time Operator Pick. Atlantic/Central Base. Please consult your seniority list for your pick time. **Please remember to allow enough time to walk to pick from the Central/Atlantic/Ryerson parking garage.**
- MAY 4—Local 587 Primary Election. Please see your Union bulletin boards or the Notice of Elections mailed to members' last known address for further information.
- MAY 16 through 18—Vehicle Maintenance Pick. Please see your bulletin boards for posting and other pertinent information.
- MAY 18—Nominations open for Shop Stewards for Transit Operators and Vehicle Maintenance employees.
- MAY 23—Pre-polling for the Local 587 General Election, at the Union office, 9am-5pm.

April Showers Bring... Summer Pick

By Recording Secretary Jennie Gil

It's a good thing this term is coming to an end, because I am running out of catchy titles for this article. Veteran KCM Operators please scan this article for important dates and potential changes. KCM Operators new to pick, please read in its entirety. It may make the difference between a pleasant summer and the Pick From Hell.

TRANSIT OPERATOR PICK IS WHEN?

Part-time pick—April 29 and 30, and May 6 and 7.

Full-time pick—May 1 through 11.

Part-time preview — April 24 – 28.

Full-Time preview — April 25 – 30.

Please see your Operations Bulletin boards for the exact times. I never seem to get them right.

IMPORTANT DATES TO PAY ATTENTION TO

The Seattle Mariner's will have home games that may impact traffic during pick on May 6, 7 and 10. Part-time Operators picking May 6 late in the day (game starts at 6:05 pm), and after lunch on May 7 (game starts at 1:05 pm), **please factor in additional travel time.** The game on May 10, during Full-time pick, is an early afternoon game, starting at 1:35 pm. **Full-time Operators picking that day, please factor in additional travel time.**

On May 4, during Full-time pick, the Primary election for Union Officers is being held at all worksites. Please allow for additional chaos.

NOTICE TO ALL CANDIDATES AND SUPPORTERS

At no time will campaigning be allowed in either the Part- or Full-time pick rooms.

VACATION PICK

There is no vacation pick occurring for Full-time Operators during this pick. Part-time Operators can pick vacation periods in Summer shakeup. **Please bring your vacation dates with you.** Not only does it makes the process easier on everyone involved, but if you are Part-time and you pick a couple vacation periods with the intent to cancel one because you are unsure of your dates, it denies people below you a guaranteed slot they might have picked had you known your dates.

ABSENTEE FORMS (both Part- and Full-time)

There are many reasons one cannot make it to pick. For that we have absentee pick forms. Some members fill out an absentee form as backup insurance, just in case. If you choose to do so, you will **not** be bound by your absentee pick form if you do show up.

Absentee pick forms may be turned in at your base either by 7 a.m. on your pick day, or in the pick room during business hours (after preview starts), all the way up until two minutes prior to your pick time. Review the forms carefully

before you submit them. **Do not send them to the union office! We are not responsible for late or lost absentee or restriction forms!**

NO SHOW AND NO ABSENTEE FORM?

Operators who do not make it to pick and have not submitted an absentee form have their work picked for them by the following process: Ten minutes prior to your scheduled pick time, your pick sheet is handed off to the Union representative, who will look up your current assignment. If your current assignment is open, at your designated pick time it will be picked for you. If not, and you are Part-time, the Union representative will look for a tripper that reports on or after your current report time and quits on or before your current quit time. You will be placed at your current base as long as it is still open, and if not, at the base geographically closest, if at all possible. If you are Full-time, we try our best to match as close as we can to what you currently are working.

Occasionally, there is no current pick information available and often there are no similar assignments left, especially further on down the seniority list. If there is time and an open phone line, the Union representative may attempt to call you. If we do not have your current address/phone number, and no current assignment for you, the Union representative has little recourse other than to pick an assignment completely at random.

For Part-time Operators, the tripper picked for you by the Union is sometimes substantially shorter than the tripper you could have picked yourself. It is in your best interest to show up and pick for yourself, or **submit an absentee pick form.**

I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU PICKED THIS FOR ME, MY LIFE IS OVER!

Once the Union representative picks your assignment it might not be changed if you arrive late. If you arrive immediately after the Union has picked for you, AND, if the people who picked below you are still in the room, the pick may be stopped and your piece offered to those who picked behind you if you are so very opposed to working it. If this should occur, the pick still goes on around you and those with lesser seniority who did arrive on time will continue to pick. If, however, even one person below you that has already picked has left the room, your pick **will not be altered for any reason.** A second recourse for those who did not arrive in time to pick and find their union-picked work heinous is to hang tight till the next move up.

DON'T CALL US...

Many members are electing to phone the pick room at their designated pick time, which works fine if pick is running on schedule and the ONE phone line in the pick

room is not busy. But pick can be delayed for any number of reasons. If a delay occurs or the phone line is busy, picking by phone can be a nightmare.

PLEASE!! Don't try to pick by phone unless you absolutely have to. Come to the pick on time and in person, or submit an absentee pick form as mentioned above. We will not be responsible for the outcome if it is not favorable to you.

IMPORTANT!

The contract states: "*Selections made by the UNION will not be subject to the grievance/arbitration procedure.*" Your Union representatives are only human. In your absence they did the best they could given the circumstances they had to work with, and the Union will not be held liable for any picks made for someone who could not or did not show up to do their own pick.

FLEX GROUP D

The contract allows for a Flex-Group D option, in addition to the more familiar Tripper Group D. The Tripper Group D option allows a Full-time Operator to select a Part-time tripper in lieu of full-time work, but falling under the provisions and conditions of Part-time. Flex-Group D allows a Full-time Operator to select one of the following two options:

a) a Saturday combo at a base they designate (but had the seniority to pick in the last two shakeups) and a **minimum** of two peak time weekday periods to be assigned via the Extra Board, or,

b) a minimum of five peak time weekday periods to be assigned via the Extra Board.

The deadline to sign up **and obtain your chief's approval** for the Flex Group D option is fourteen days prior to the beginning of full-time pick, Friday, April 14th.

continued on page 5

2006 Shakeups and Bids

by Recording Secretary Jennie Gil

Following is the shakeup information this office has for the remainder of the year.

METRO/KING COUNTY

Transit Operators Summer

Full-time Transit Operators pick May 1 through 11

Part-time Transit Operators pick April 29, 30, May 6 and 7
Shakeup takes effect Saturday, June 3rd

Fall

Full-time Transit Operators pick August 21 through 31

Part-time Transit Operators pick August 19, 20, 26 and 27
Shakeup takes effect Saturday, September 23rd.

Vehicle Maintenance

Summer pick:

Regular pick is May 16, 17 and 18.

No lead pick unless required per contract

Fall pick:

Regular pick is September 5, 6, and 7.

No lead pick unless required per contract

Effective shakeup dates are the same as for Transit Operators

Facilities Maintenance

Fall pick date — Thursday, September 7, 2006
Effective date - Saturday, September 23, 2006

First Line Supervisors

Fall pick — September 26, repick (if necessary) on September 27. Shake-up to take effect on October 7.

Special Classifications

Customer Assistance Office management indicates the pick

for CARs will be in January and June of 2006. Specific dates are not set at this time.

Rider Information Specialists and RPC members will be picking in January, May, and September, according to the management in those departments. Specific dates are not set at this time.

MV Transportation

Article 12, Section 2 (a) of the MV Transportation labor agreement states "*The Company will offer a general bid for shifts two times per year: Spring (April or May) and Fall (October or November)...*" King County/Metro has required a change in the effective date of the implementation of their summer service hours. As a result, the Union and MV management have agreed to open the window for holding the Spring bid to extend into the first half of June, 2006. The current tentative schedule for the bids for MV is:

Spring Bid to be held on 6/3/06, go live on 6/11/06.

Fall Bid to be held on 9/9/06, go live on 9/17/06.

Seattle Personal Transit

Article 12, Section 1, Paragraph A., of the newly ratified SPT contract calls for three picks per year: midwinter, end of spring and beginning of fall.

Spring Bid to be held on 6/3/06, go live on 6/11/06.

Fall Bid to be held on 9/9/06, go live on 9/17/06.

Peninsula properties:

Please see your shop stewards for the schedule for picks for the upcoming year.



Lance F. Norton

Four times a year King County Metro honors its Operators of the Month from each operating base with a luncheon held at the Yankee Diner in Ballard. Each Operator being honored is detailed off their assignment for the day. The Base Supervisor introduces their Operators and, of course, has nice things to say about them while presenting a nice, framed certificate honoring the recipient. Other upper management personnel often attend and express their appreciation to those being honored, such as Manager of Operations Jim O'Rourke and Transit Division Director Kevin Desmond.

The Union Officers are invited (on our own dime, of course) and one of us, usually me, is asked to say a few words. Since I've never found a microphone I didn't like, I never hesitate to get up and brag

about what a tremendous group of Operators we have here at Metro Transit. I love to point out to the managers the fact that **every** Operator of the Month as well as **every** Operator of the Year has **always** been a 587 member. That always draws a laugh.

A Cost to the Honor

I recently received a call from a member that was recently honored as an Operator of the Month. He is a thirty-two year employee and a twice-recipient of this award. The letter of invitation to attend the luncheon states, "You will be detailed, with pay, *for your entire assignment*". This member's *entire assignment* happens to be a run and a tripper. But when he received his paycheck, pay for the overtime tripper was not included. I suggested he go in and speak to his Chief. Should that fail he could then file a grievance.

His Chief offered to detail him to the base and have him sit around for 2 hours and 29 minutes

(the length of his tripper) and pay him his overtime. Our Operator asked, "How does my putting in 2 hours and 29 minutes make up for the 2 hours and 29 minutes which was part of my *"Entire Assignment?"* He naturally turned down the offer.

I called the Manager of Operations and relayed this ridiculous offer, and mentioned the member's intention to file a grievance. Shortly after the grievance was filed, the Manager of Operations called to inform me that he authorized paying the member his *"Entire Assignment."* Good for him on deciding to do the right thing.

I hope I am wrong, but I suspect the wording in the invitations to the luncheon for future Operator of the Month recipients may be changed from "You will be detailed with pay, for your entire assignment" to "You will be detailed, with pay, for your daily guarantee."

When in Rome...

Vehicle Maintenance honors it's

Employees of the Shake-up usually by presenting a certificate, and sometimes coffee and cake, and then back to work. It would be nice to have a luncheon and a day off as recognition to the V.M. Employee of the Shake-up. It would only be three times a year.

While on the subject, what about Facilities, Supervision, and those working in Special Classifications, Rider information, Customer Service, the Schedule Section, Revenue Coordinators, being recognized for the outstanding work they do on a day-to-day basis? Some of these classifications only pick twice a year, so how much of a cost would it be? We could even combine the luncheon to include recipients from various classifications. Just a thought! After all, it isn't just Operators making us the great Transit System we are...

Be safe...
Regards...
LFN



Glen Travis

No good deed goes unpunished. That's a descriptive phrase that really hits the mark regarding what two members have recently experienced after being forthcoming and truthful. It's funny how there is an expectation from employers that their employees tell the truth and be good examples. Just this week the Union has assisted two members with situations resulting in discipline because of the fact that they informed their employer of incidents where policy and procedures were not followed to the letter.

In one case the member, an Access Service employee, called his dispatcher to inform them that he had forgotten to complete a safety procedure while in service. A near accident almost occurred, but fortunately, the incident ended without serious results. The member called his dispatcher and a road supervisor was sent to the scene. The road supervisor instructed the driver to fill out a report. The member filed his report and soon thereafter was terminated

for failure to follow policies and procedures.

His crime? He had not secured one of four tie downs on a wheelchair. He has filed a grievance and we are in the process of appealing for his job.

Instead of recognizing that this employee followed policy and procedure to the letter regarding integrity, honesty, and properly notifying the employer of the incident, the employer could only focus on the mistake that had been made regarding operational procedures. So for calling in and notifying his employer of his procedural error, per policy, he was soon rewarded with termination. While the mistake was serious in nature, no one was injured or impacted. Retraining would have been sufficient to correct this mistake.

The second situation comes from a King County Metro member. This member had forgotten to renew his drivers' license when his birthday rolled around. Sometimes life throws significant distractions and events our way that take our focus off of things like birthdays and license renewals. This was the case for this operator. He was at risk of losing his home to mud

slides and flooding.

When he realized his oversight, this driver notified his chief by phone and presented Metro with a truthful, complete disclosure of why and how the oversight had occurred. Well, no good deed goes unpunished, remember? This member, because of driving a week

on an expired license, will be suspended. Prior to the newsletter going to print, Metro had told the member he would be suspended for SIX days. Does the punishment fit the crime?

Lesson for all... don't make mistakes. Remember your birthday, and everything that is attached to it.

The Vice President's Report

No Good Deed Goes Unpunished

By Glen A. Travis

April Showers — Summer Pick, continued

RESTRICTION FORMS (Part-Time Operators)

Restriction forms went to the bases last week of March. The deadline for turning in restriction forms is April 21st. **ABSOLUTELY NO RESTRICTION FORMS WILL BE ACCEPTED PAST THIS DATE.** Restrictions amount to usurping the seniority of those ahead of you who did not have the need to restrict, the Union takes the deadline very seriously. Also know that if you submitted a restriction form and we reach lockout, you will be required to honor that restriction.

Lockout is when the number of restriction forms equals the num-

ber of available slots for either a.m. or p.m. system-wide. For example, 100 a.m. slots are available system-wide, 100 restriction forms on file, equals a.m. lockout. At that point, unless you had a restriction form submitted for that shakeup, **you may not pick a.m. work, regardless of your seniority.**

If something comes up after you submit your form that frees you from the need to be restricted, please contact the pick coordinator or call the Recording Secretary at the Union office and rescind your restriction form. You may rescind a form all the way up to that point where we go into lockout.

Letters to the Editor...

Transit Only Lane for I-5

Dear Editor:

For several years I've been telling anyone and everyone who will listen to me about the idea of making a transit only lane on the N/S I-5 express lanes. When the route 377 still existed, I could deadhead from Lynnwood to the CBD in only 20 minutes when traffic was light. If we had a *transit only* lane on I-5 during rush hour, this could be a reality every day. I realize that this proposal would increase traffic congestion in the remaining lanes, but once commuters in slower traffic began seeing how fast the bus was moving, ridership would skyrocket.

While some of the biggest advantages to riding the bus include saving money on gas, parking and maintenance, it never included *saving time*. If the bus could actually bypass traffic, trip times to the CBD during rush hour might be reduced by twenty minutes or more each way. That's faster than a passenger car commute. When the tunnel re-opens and there is a faster way through the CBD, the time savings could be still further increased. If Metro Transit could significantly reduce trip times for commuters time every day, ridership would greatly increase. That means more revenues, longer runs and more work for all of us at Metro; Management, Maintenance and Operations, both Part and Full time.

I mention this proposal now because there are currently two precedents for it. One is Third Avenue becoming transit-only during rush hour and the other is the SR-167 proposal.

Third Avenue is restricted to buses only during rush except for traffic exiting at the next block and the city is taking steps to enforce this. Why not try a bus-only lane on the local freeways?

The State Highway 167 proposal involves getting interested commuters to pay to use the HOV lane. The amount they would pay will be determined by traffic sensors and a transponder on the car that relays information about lane speeds and charges you according

to how much faster your commute is. The charge is expected to be from \$1.00 to \$1.75 one way. Reader boards over the lane would flash to indicate who had the transponder and who didn't, allowing police to enforce lane usage. This pay as you go proposal is also scheduled to be tried on I-405. In a TV editorial Ken Schram felt that rather than spending money (\$18 million) to try and study this proposal, (SR 167), a better idea would be to sell a sticker that allows anyone to travel in the HOV lane by paying for it monthly. Both proposals show that the state is willing to sell access to the HOV lane. Opponents charge that selling traffic rights favors the wealthy. If the local bus agencies had their own lanes, that would favor transit riders who come from every economic rung of society. Our passengers, who are already helping to reduce traffic, deserve to be rewarded.

I was always dismayed by how we as an agency didn't stand up to light rail and declare that we are the solution to gridlock, not a train line costing billions. The cost of freeway signage, advertisement and enforcement for a *transit only lane* might have run into the low millions instead of the billions of dollars being funneled into light rail.

I thought that we, as Metro Transit, were the solution to traffic and gridlock. We were once the number one transit agency in North America. Maybe by taking advantage of the current trends and spearheading a bus-only lane for rush hour, we, as an agency, can grow and become all those things once again.

In Solidarity,
Andrew Jeromsky, #8707
North Base Shop Steward

Graffiti

Dear Editor,

I was pleasantly surprised when I learned that the regular Ryerson Base AM hostler willingly and quickly removes graffiti when pulling in for lane assignments.

As an employee it was inspiring to observe a non-driver taking the initiative to work as a team player in the pursuit of graffiti abatement.

From a driver's perspective, driving a clean and graffiti free bus enhances my pride in the service Metro provides.

As a regular bus passenger, riding a non-tagged bus demonstrates that public transportation and its riders are valued.

Immediately removing graffiti is an effective deterrent therefore, I would encourage other drivers to utilize this opportunity so collectively we can work together in combating this pervasive eyesore.

Sincerely,
Joe Kadushin
Ryerson Base

A Good Time for Metro to Get It Right

The last newsletter told us of the upcoming new type of bus pass. This pass will actually be the same as a debit card, the customer will put money in their account and when they swipe it the fare will come out of that account.

I maintain that this would be a great time for management to have the guts to admit that their policy regarding fare evaders is wrong. If they don't we all know what is going to happen. They, the fare evader, will figure out in a New York minute that all they have to do is get a new card, put five dollars on it, and when the five bucks is gone, guess what? They will continue to use the empty pass knowing that when it makes a bad beep the driver will do nothing. If Metro ran their business the same as everyone else in the world they would have a system that not only would not return the empty card to the fare evader but also put the information on a database for future action by the police.

Also the new pass is going to give the honest passenger a new attitude. How would you feel if just that morning you transferred a hundred dollars of your hard-earned money to your Metro pass, then the person in front of you swipes their card, you hear the sound telling you that that person has no money on their card but they get on the bus with no action taken by the bus driver. When you swipe your card and the \$1.50 is taken out of your account, you will feel that you are being screwed. How long will it be before you do not load your pass and become another fare evader!

John Kling, #3587
Atlantic Base

High School Riders

Dear editor:

Have the Managers at Metro really lost their minds? Are they really inviting hundreds of high school students to board our all ready crowded buses?

I have emailed the school board and my County Council representa-

tive to try to show them the reality of this decision. The school board, in spite of numerous testimony from some of our own, voted to allow two more high schools to use Metro instead of the yellow school buses. The absurdity of this is beyond belief. Metro cannot even keep up with their number one priority of providing public transportation to our community and they are going to fill the bus with students that should be riding the yellow school bus? I have been begging for an extra trip on the 66 route because my passengers, faithfully trying to use Metro to commute from their jobs, are crammed in like sardines. I am told we don't have the money for extra trips.

This policy of hauling school kids is absurd. Here is how absurd...I drive a 75 route that is about half full when I pull up to the stop at Lake City Way and NE 113, to a huge crowd of pushing, shoving, yelling students from Nathan Hale. I cannot even get to the zone because they are all jumping off the curb to get first in line. As they get on the bus, screaming and talking dirty, they fill the bus seats paying only 50 cents. The noise level is disturbing to all those passengers on the bus that paid the FULL fare of \$1.50. Now I have a full bus with some standing. As I proceed to Northgate I watch the look of dejection on the face of commuters as they board my bus, pay the premium fare of \$1.50, hear the noise, and realize they have to stand on my bus. What a great commute!

If Metro is trying to promote workers to commute by bus this is NOT the way to do it. Who wants to listen to all this screaming and nasty talk after a hard day at work? I challenge all the Metro Managers making this decision to ride one of these buses full of school kids and see if you want to commute this way. This policy of having Metro take over the work of the school bus companies to save (?) the Seattle Schools money is a bad idea.

Ruth Wilson, 3927
North Base

Ghosts

Do you believe in Ghosts?

I drive the new Waterfront Streetcar Line bus. In early March, we used a reroute because a crane fell across the railroad tracks along the waterfront north of Broad St (no injuries). It fell where the old terminal for the Waterfront Streetcar Line trolley station USED to be. It was torn down to make way for the Olympic Sculpture Park. Some of my passengers said the area is haunted by spirits. The story I'm sticking with as to which spirits pushed over the crane—Eldo Kanik-keberg and George Benson!

Bruce Tiebout, #6477
Ryerson Base

SEND IN YOUR OPINIONS

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

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Guest Editorial ...

California Workers Defeat the Governor

By Greg Beiter, Central Base Full-Time Operator, #20710

A tall, muscular man stands behind a podium and thunders in a thick, Austrian accent: "Message received."

Is this a line from the latest *Terminator* movie? No. It was California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger admitting defeat at the hands of that state's nurses, teachers, firefighters, and other unionized workers during his "State of the State" address at the beginning of January.

Schwarzenegger continued, "I have absorbed my defeat, I have learned my lesson. And the people, who always have the last word, sent a clear message..."

Not only did the Governor back off from his budget cuts and attacks on workers, but he also proposed a sizeable public works program. This marked a major departure from his cocky rhetoric early last year, when he vowed to beat down nurses, teachers, firefighters, and other public-sector workers.

Schwarzenegger was elected in a special recall election in the fall of 2003. Early in his term, he had approval ratings hovering above 60%. So what went wrong for the Governor?

In early 2005, Schwarzenegger targeted the California Nurses Association (CNA). He tried to block a law that mandated reducing hospitals' nurse-to-patient ratio to 5-to-1. He derided the nurses,

saying "I am always kicking their butts." Rather than running from Schwarzenegger's attacks or relying on Democrats to defend them, the CNA - a small but rapidly-growing, left-wing union of 65,000 members - mounted a bold public campaign of defense.

As Schwarzenegger brought down the axe on wider sections of workers, public-sector unions and a broader coalition of community and progressive organizations organized rowdy demonstrations every time the Governor made a public appearance.

As these unions battled on, Schwarzenegger's approval ratings began to sink. By April of last year, only 40% supported him. The following month, 10,000 people in Sacramento and 6,000 in Los Angeles protested his budget cuts and plans for a special election in November to implement them.

The centerpiece of the special election was the Governor's four ballot initiatives, which prevented unions from spending dues on politics, extended the probation period for teachers, allowed the governor to go over the heads of the legislature in cutting the budget, and redistricted legislative districts to benefit Republicans. Another referendum, introduced by right-wing Republicans and supported by Schwarzenegger, required parental notification for minors seeking an abortion. With

CNA and public-sector unions in the lead, a major campaign was waged against these measures, all of which went down in flames.

This titanic defeat at the hands of workers forced Schwarzenegger to rethink his strategy. In a major reversal, his new 10-year, \$222 billion budget calls for 600 miles of mass transit, 140,000 classrooms to be modernized, 40,000 new classrooms to be built, along with the building of 2,000 new schools.

The events in California show that when working people fight back, they can defeat the corporate-friendly programs of politicians. To further solidify their gains and continue building a powerful movement, California labor, community, and antiwar groups should run independent candidates against both parties of big business on an anti-budget cut, antiwar, working-class program. This would parallel previous political initiatives of the CNA, which supported Ralph Nader's run for president in 2000 and affiliated with the Labor Party during the '90s.

The California example points the way forward for a successful strategy to beat back Bush. The Democrats have done nothing effective to stop Bush. The leaders of the labor and antiwar movements should focus on conducting a mass campaign across the country aimed at a broad mobilization of workers and young people, including

protests, pickets, public education, and mass direct action. It is also an excellent illustration of how we, the members of ATU Local 587 can force Ron Sims and King County managers to back off from their attacks on our healthcare ("Healthy Incentives"), cuts in part-time hours, and any other assaults to workers in our union or other unions.

A key factor at work in California that has been lacking nationally was the existence of a determined leadership to galvanize the latent mood of anger into an active movement. The CNA played this vital role in initiating the wider struggle. The role of the CNA also demonstrated the decisive role a section of the organized working class can play in leading powerful social movements. This stands in contrast to the ineffectual role many of the AFL-CIO's leaders have played.

The situation in California, along with the NY transit strike and the struggles in the auto industry, show that when under attack, workers are willing to fight back. Through a class appeal against cuts in social programs and attacks on workers, union leaders could mobilize workers by the millions to defeat Bush and his right-wing backers.

Policy 22 = Catch 22

By Paul J. Bachtel, Executive Board Officer

King County/Metro's Policy 22 in Transit Operations Procedures is the procedure for evaluating whether or not a Part-Time Operator is eligible to promote to Full-Time Operator. For many years the Union has sought to have contractual input on what criteria will be used for promotion. Thus far we have gained language in Article 16, Section 2, Paragraph "A" which states, "Metro shall offer all new Full-Time Operator positions to qualified Part-Time Operators, provided there are sufficient qualified applicants. Seniority shall determine the order of selection, provided the Part-Time Operator's most recent twelve-month record does not exceed Metro's probationary standards for Part-Time Operators..."

Unfortunately management still maintains the right to determine what the probationary (promotional) standards will be. Even though all Operators were presented with a copy at the time they were hired on, and signed for said copy, most are unfamiliar with the standards which ultimately determine if and when they can go full-time. Those standards currently include sick leave use, attendance, performance reports (PR's), accident points and personal driving record.

- Sick leave use is evaluated by assigning 3 points for each DAY (not incident) of sick leave use in excess of 4 days.

- PR's are assigned 3 points for each minor PR, and any operator

with a major PR in the previous 24 months is automatically disqualified.

- Accidents points are assigned using the same points assigned at the time of notification of preventability, ie, 5 points for a minor and 7 points for a major accident.

- Personal driving record is more subjective. Hit and run, manslaughter, driving under the influence, and reckless driving convictions constitute automatic disqualification. Negligent driving may disqualify an operator unless management determines otherwise. This policy also includes the following sentence, "Records will be reviewed for frequency and severity of moving violations, at fault accidents".

The last quoted sentence under Personal Driving Record is the Catch 22. This language leaves itself open for arbitrary and capricious interpretation. One recent example is a Part-Time Operator being denied the right to promote to Full-Time Operator because of an off-duty ticket for unsafe lane change, which resulted in a minor accident. The accident was more than 12-months prior to the record review and, notwithstanding Article 16, Section 2, Paragraph "A", the Operator was denied the right to promote.

The above is a brief synopsis of Policy 22. Any Part-time Operator considering promotion to Full-time should make themselves aware of the probationary (promotional) standards. Copies of Policy 22 are available from your chief.

Reaching the Big Three-0

By Lori McInnis

Hats off to two great Atlantic Base drivers who left our ranks last month for horizons not viewed from a bus windshield. Ted Grandpre and David Miller both started at Metro in 1976 and finished up 30 years in the seat with the well-earned opportunities of full retirement through PERS 1.

PERS 1 employees can receive full retirement after 30 years service, regardless of age; at age 55 with 25 years of service; or at age 60 with 5 years of service. Ted, at age 51, says retirement for him is an opportunity to "...see what fate has in store, I'm just a happy camper." David, at age 55, claims that he has planned for retirement since 1980. He and his wife will be moving to their farm in Sequim, "...living the baby boomer's dream, moving onto the land, out in the woods. That's what we all fantasized about when we were 21. I'm doing it."

Full retirement for PERS 2 employees is available at age 65 with 5 or more years of service, or at age 55 with reductions. Full retirement benefits for PERS 3 is a bit more complicated. Full retirement is earned if you are 65 and have 10 service years, or 5 service years including 12 months earned after the age of 54, or 5 service years earned in PERS 2 prior to June 1, 2003.

Under PERS 1 an employee's average final compensation (AFC) is based on the highest consecutive 24 credit months. Under PERS 2 and 3 the average final compensation is based on 60 consecutive months. So Ted and David, both being PERS 1, have been camped at the base for the past two years putting in 60 to 80 hours a week. Could they keep it up under PERS 2 and 3? Ted says



30 Year Members Ted Grandpre and David Miller wave good-bye with good memories, advice and knowledge

"I could do ten more years if I had to, easy, but why would I?" David says he'd never make it to the age of 65. Tired as they both are they have some great memories and advice to share.

Ted started driving when he was 21, and his son was born the following year. "This job became a lifestyle, you have to let it be your lifestyle and you have to be a good person to make it" Memories of his career are mostly about the people he's worked with. "I've known them since we were all kids. It's been a privilege to know and work with the people here, that sounds corny, but it's true. I knew all the base chiefs when they were driving. When I have to go in to talk to them I'm not worried about the discipline, I'm embarrassed because I've let them down." In his career did he have any favorite routes? "None of them," he said, laughing.

David started when he was 25 and says that his job allowed his wife to quit an office job she hated

to follow her dream of refinishing antiques. Bus driving was not an accident for David as it is for so many of us. "During the recession (in the early 70's) they didn't lay off one single bus driver, it's a real stable job." At one point in his career "...feeling like I should be doing more..." he took the supervisor training test and role play, and though he was doing well and encouraged to continue, he decided one day that he enjoyed driving more and walked out of the classroom.

He made his days enjoyable by creating theme jokes or the re-occurring situations a bus driver encounters. When a female passenger thanked him for waiting, his common response was "...that's OK, it's the only way I can get women to run after me." His mantra to Thursdays was, "So Happy it's Thursday!" Why? "Because you have to go through it to get to Friday." If you don't get it, make the acronym.

On planning retirement both have lots of advice. Ted styled himself into a self-made expert on the ins and outs of the state pension fund using the internet. He claims there are only 16,000 PERS 1 employees left in the entire state. Probably only a handful at Metro. PERS 2 and 3 employees need to plan differently than their fellow employees on PERS 1.

All three plans have different options that need to be understood as early in an employee's career as possible. Ted highly recommends the Washington State DRS website, where all the plans are thoroughly explained. He also advises putting as much money as possible into a separate plan, many offered through the state, as soon as possible.

All three plans have cash-outs for accrued vacation, sick leave and AC, but PERS 2 and 3 don't allow what Ted calls "the spike". The spike is the addition of vacation, sick leave and comp time to the average final compensation, which for PERS 1 retirees can be a substantial boost to the final calculations.

David recommends the exit classes offered through Metro and King County and suggest taking them before you are in the final years. David also thinks other retirees are a good source, and says he got a lot of tips from Charlie Tiebout.

So, what are their immediate plans as retirees? Both said the same thing, rest, sleep, exercise, eat healthy, and spend time with their wives. Visiting friends is high on the list as well. "I told my friends that I was going to be working pretty hard for a couple of years and they wouldn't be seeing me much," David, said, and added, "and now I'm moving away."

IN LOVING MEMORY...

*In the democracy of the dead all men at last are equal.
There is neither rank nor station nor prerogative in the republic of the grave.*

— John J. Ingalls

Leonard O. Wilson, retired Transit Operator, passed away February 22, 2005, after a lengthy battle with Alzheimer's.

Brother Wilson joined Local 587 in May of 1945 as a Transit Operator. He retired in January of 1975, and was a fifty year member. He was 87 at the time of his passing.

Earl Wilmot, retired Transit Operator, passed away February 16, 2006. Brother Wilmot was a fifty-year member, having joined Local 587 in November of 1942.

Brother Wilmot retired in April of 1976. He was 94 at the time of his passing. No further information available.



Retiree Chapter President Al Ramey and former President/Business Agent John Senear at a recent Retiree Chapter function.

John Senear, retired Transit Operator and former Local 587 President/Business Agent, passed away February 16, 2006. Brother Senear joined Local 587 in September of 1949, and retired at the end of his third term in July of 1979. He was a fifty-year member. Brother

Senear was elected to the position of Business Agent in 1973, when the terms for officers were two years in length, and the positions of President and Business Agent were separate positions. He served two terms as Business Agent, and then served as President from 1977 to 1979. Many of the working conditions we take for granted today were fought for and won under Brother Senear's administration. His work will forever live on.

T. Roy Clarke, Transit Operator #3174, passed away March 1, 2006, after a long illness. Brother Clarke joined Local 587 as a Part-time Operator in November of 1989. He went full-time in April of 1992. Brother Clarke was an active member out of Ryerson Base and his passing

was has left his coworkers sad and grieving. He was sixty-one at the time of his passing, and will be greatly missed.

Todd J. Hansen, Transit Operator #1673, passed away March 19, 2006, following a long illness. Brother Hansen joined Local 587

in June of 1978 as a Full-time Transit Operator. He worked many of his years as a driver at Ryerson and North Base and leaves behind many fond memories. He was fifty-nine years old at the time of his passing.



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