



And so you asked

By Jon Hunt • ATU Local 757 President

I was going to say 2008 was a busy year, but who are we kidding? They're all busy years. Over 500 grievances were filed on behalf of the membership. We have also been occupied in mediating many of our scheduled arbitrations in-house. We entered into an agreement to do this in 2006, and so far Sam and the E-Board officers have reduced members' arbitration expenses by over \$200,000. They have been successful in winning a majority of these, and with everyone's support I believe we will continue to prevail. Even while tightening protections and oversight on the Child/Elder Care Fund, we managed to expand membership in the program.

Additionally in 2008, we negotiated contracts for your brothers and sisters in First Student, Wheels, Portland Public Schools, C-

TRAN, and First Transit, to name a few. We negotiated two first-time contracts for your brothers and sisters in Bend and Canby. Paratransit operators in Bend are now protected under a three-year contract, running until June 2011, and OHAS operators in Canby are working under a contract that ends in late 2009. Both employers will be paying 100 percent medical for their employees, as well as significantly increasing wage rates for operators, providing paid vacation, holidays, and bereavement leave. In Bend, the employer will reimburse the employees for the cost of their DOT medical exams for their CDLs, and in Canby they will now be providing a uniform allowance.

I've been conducting these negotiations on

(Turn to Page 12)



Secretary-Treasurer's Report

By Evette Farra • Financial Secretary-Treasurer

Since the month of January is the traditional time for new year's resolutions, I thought I'd address an issue that affects many of our members. Your CDL represents your life and your livelihood, as well as those of your loved ones. Most of us are aware of the ramifications DUIs and DWIs can have on a CDL-dependent career; but you may not know that keeping your car insurance current deserves just as much consideration. If you are driving without insurance and get in an auto accident – even one that isn't your fault – you will most likely lose your CDL for 12 months. As a result, your employment will be diminished or terminated, forcing you to fall on the mercy of your employer and beg for a one-year leave of absence. My resolution suggestion to you is to guard your CDL with a monthly check up.

I am very pleased to see an increase in the

number of TriMet employees who are using the Child/Elder care reimbursement program, which provides qualified employees with up to \$1,200 annually. TriMet employees who are considering taking advantage of this employer-funded program need only furnish receipts and proof of dependence. Please contact the union office if you have any questions or considerations.

In a recent article, I wrote about new regulations which affect employees who test positive during a urinalysis. Those new stipulations are being enforced through the FTA, which oversees, among other things, the drug testing of workers in safety-sensitive careers like public transportation. To offer clarification on November's article, an important distinction should be made between the employee who is

(Turn to Page 12)

Officer Reports

MV Transportation

As reported by
KATHLEEN BROWN

Happy New Year everyone! Let's start out the new year on the right foot and make a resolution to read our contract. It is the best way to avert problems and make sure that you receive every benefit negotiated for you. This will be the last year of our contract. We will need to prepare for contract negotiations. Your opinions and ideas are important to the ATU. You can now submit contract proposal forms on-line by going to our Web site — www.atu757.org — and clicking on the Forms link. A printable version of the form is available there as well.

Hopefully, everyone who qualified received a holiday bonus in accordance with Article 32 of our current contract. This has been posted on the union bulletin board.

Speaking of the bulletin board, because of the variance in our schedules, it is difficult for me to meet with the entire workforce, so please check the bulletin board in the office, which is updated as events occur.

And everyone, please make sure to take your rest and meal breaks. Safety and our health take priority over schedules that try to fill every single minute. Remember to send Message 29, and if needed, "running late" for affected rides. This makes it the responsibility of Dispatch. Also, document when this happens in the event you are later questioned by management.



TriMet Light Rail Transportation

As reported by
MICHAEL T. OLIVER

The last time we had this amount of new LROs was the summer of 2001, and it was a mess. If you are confused, call Control. If a signal does not do what you expect of it, call Control. Do not attempt to figure the system out, it is already figured, so call Control. You get the message. Rail is a whole new system, and only the things you were taught in Training are applicable. All other things, including logic, rubber tires and

air traffic control do not apply. When in doubt, call Control. It will save your job.

After a very productive meeting with Don Allison, I can report that Rail Management and ATU are in agreement on a number of important items. First and foremost is the "burning in" of the Type 4 cars. According to the WWA: "Extra-work goes to the extra-board," and all burn-ins will be undertaken by the boards. Further, this work will be split between Ruby and Elmo as much as possible. I have had numerous LROs talk about the time span between training on the Type 4 and actual operation of them. The Training Department is once again ahead of us in that they have recognized this as a problem and come up with a solution. Prior to the summer of '09 we will all be re-trained in the Type 4, to include actual running time and classroom work to complement the training we received in the last few months (with thanks to Bob Lynch and his crew). September is the great day and I am certainly looking forward to a busy spring and summer.

Finally at PSC they have a TV that is watchable without straining your eyes. Due to their location, (under the 405 Freeway) reception is somewhat erratic, but we are working on that. Enjoy. Another LRO will transfer to PSC in January, and there will be a bunch of changes for the spring sign-up. Then, later in '09, PSC will ratchet-up and receive a number of new operators to prepare for another expansion. Way to go and enjoy. As usual, e-mail me at mt-gbo2002@msn.com

TriMet Center Transportation

As reported by
SANDY GUENGERICH

Hi. I just wanted to remind everyone that the weather is going to get cold and wet. Remember to dress warm. Also, be careful going over bridges, and in shaded spots keep an eye out for the ice. Give yourself lots of room on the road. Also give yourself plenty of time to go to work.

I want to remind people to watch for photo radar lights. TriMet does not have to pay for your ticket. Everyone may want to get a new CDL

(Turn to Page 11)

Amalgamated Transit Union - Division 757

Representing working men and women in Oregon and Washington at:

TriMet • Lane Transit District • Rogue Valley Transportation District • Portland Public Schools • Lamar Advertising Company (formerly Obie Media) • Valley Transit Association • Laidlaw Transit Services, Inc. (TriMet Lift, Portland) • American Medical Response Northwest (Josephine County) • Laidlaw Transit, Inc. (Portland Public Schools, Corvallis School District, Corvallis City Transit) • MV Transportation, Inc. • C-TRAN/C-VAN • Salem Area Transit • WHEELS • Northeast Coalition of Neighborhoods, Inc. • Tillamook County Transportation District • ATU Retired Member Chapter



What IS this?

The four outside pages are news from and about your Union. The other pages are produced by the Northwest Labor Press, and are about the labor movement as a whole.

January Meetings

Charter

Charter members meet 7:30 p.m. Monday, Jan. 12, at the Salvation Army, Rose Center for Seniors, 211 NE 18th Ave, Portland (NE 18th & Sandy Blvd, adjacent to the ATU office.) Charter day members meet 10 a.m. Tuesday, Jan. 13, at Schoppert Hall, 1801 NE Couch, Portland.

Salem Transit/WHEELS

Salem members meet 7:30 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 13, at the West Salem Branch Public Library 395 Glen Creek Road, Salem.

Lane Transit

Eugene members meet 7:30 p.m. Wednesday, Jan. 14, and Eugene day members meet 10 a.m. Thursday, Jan. 15, at the Woodworkers Local Lodge, 1124 South A St., Springfield.

Corvallis Laidlaw City Transit/Schools

Corvallis members meet 7:45 p.m. Thursday Jan. 15, at Woodstock Pizza, 1045 NW Kings Blvd, Corvallis

Rogue Valley Transportation

Medford members meet 7:30 p.m. Thurs-

day, Jan. 15,, at the Hampton Inn, 1122 Morrow Rd., Medford.

Portland and Laidlaw School Bus Drivers

Portland School Bus members meet 6 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 15, at Rigler School, 5401 NE Prescott, Portland.

C-TRAN/C-VAN

Vancouver members meet 7 p.m. Sunday, Jan. 18, at the Laborers Hall, 2121 NE Andresen, Vancouver, Washington.

Tillamook County Transportation District

Tillamook members meet 1 p.m. Sunday, Jan. 18, at 212 Main Street, next door to Beach Pancake House in Tillamook.

AMR Northwest Josephine County, LAMAR Advertising and Valley Transit

See your liaison officers.

PLEASE NOTE: ATU members are invited to attend any of the above-listed meetings.

ATU Local 757 Officers

President-Business Representative.....JONATHAN HUNT
 Vice President-Assistant Business Representative.....SAM SCHWARZ
 Financial Secretary-Treasurer/Recording Secretary.....EVETTE FARRA

Executive Board Officers

TriMet Center Maintenance.....CHAD MATHER
 TriMet Center Transportation.....SANDY GUENGERICH
 TriMet Powell MaintenanceDAVID KAY
 TriMet Powell TransportationROSE JORDAN
 TriMet Merlo Maintenance.....JEFF HUNT
 TriMet Merlo TransportationBRUCE HANSEN
 TriMet LRT MaintenanceMIKE CONNER
 TriMet LRT Transportation.....MICHAEL T. OLIVER
 TriMet Monthly Rated Employees.....JIM FOWLER
 Lane Transit District (LTD).....BRIAN PASQUALI
 Portland Public SchoolsRANDY SHAW
 First StudentANNA TOMPTE
 C-TRAN.....ROY JENNINGS
 Salem Area Mass Transit District.....KEN RICHINS

Liaison Officers

TriMet Merlo Extra BoardSTEVE ECKLES
 TriMet Center Extra BoardCHRIS DAY
 TriMet Powell Extra Board.....KHRIS ALEXANDER
 TriMet Ruby JunctionDOUG "SPUD" HENDERSON
 TriMet Ruby Junction MaintenanceJOE RUFFIN III
 TriMet ElmonicaC.J. HENDERSON
 TriMet Elmonica Maintenance.....VACANT
 SAT Maintenance.....DON ELZNIC
 LTD Chairman.....DEB BITTERLICH
 LTD SecretaryTOM SHACKELFORD
 LTD Maintenance.....LEE LASSE
 LTD Extra BoardOPEN POSITION
 Rogue Valley Transportation DistrictTHOMAS HENNEY
 Valley Transit.....NICK NOTARAS
 AMR Southern Oregon-Josephine CountyTRAVIS HAMLIN
 First Student (Portland School Bus)DANIEL OTTO
 First Transit (TriMet Lift)LES GREEN
 Laidlaw (Corvallis City Transit)BOB MCGUIRE
 Laidlaw Education Services (Corvallis Schools)CHRIS GROOMS
 MV Transportation, Inc.....DENNIS TONG
 C-TRAN.....SCOTT MILLER
 C-VANJIM COLLELL
 WHEELSJOHN HARVEY
 Tillamook Cnty. Trans. Dist.PATRICIA OSTRANDER-NICE



VP's Report

By Sam Schwarz • ATU Local 757 Vice President

I hope everyone had a great holiday and an even better start to the new year.

I would like to bring you all up to date on some of the changes at TriMet that affect the operators. Remember that when you sign for vacation and are receiving an additional week (from 1 to 2 or 2 to 3 or 4 to 5 to 6), you can use that week whenever your seniority allows. In the past you had to use it after your anniversary date. The 2009 summer vacation will start May 24 and run through the first week in September. There will be 55 weeks of summer vacation available to be signed for each week. During the week of Sept. 6, which is Labor Day, there will be 40 weeks available. Remember to turn in your request for floating vacation.

Starting May 24, there will be four 10s for full-time operators only at Center garage. Operators signing four 10s will receive 10 hours for a sick day, 10 hours for jury duty

and 10 hours funeral leave. Mini run operators signing three 10s will receive run pay for sick, up to 10 hours for jury duty and the same for funeral leave. (Pay out for sick leave is based on hours in sick bank. If hours are available, you get paid.)

We have had some serious safety issues at some of our other properties that are being ignored by management, and we are putting them on notice. If the members' concerns are being ignored by management, we will go directly to OSHA and we will not stop pursuing them until they are fixed and all our members feel safe in their work environment.

I want to welcome all our new members and congratulate our most recent retirees. For all of you who showed up at the retirees' Christmas dinner, it was a lot of fun, and as usual, the president of the retirees, Bill Wimmer — and the entire retirees' executive board — did a great job.

Retirees' Corner

The following retirees will celebrate birthdays in January: Harold L. Alt; Diana R. Anderson; Garry E. Babikoff; Frank R. Bernal; David L. Blowers; Betty J. Clark; Darryl W. Cruze; Paloma Czwpiwski; Kathy E. Danforth; Barbara D. Davis; Robert E. Deisner; John P. Drozda; Betty J. Edwards; Mark N. Eide; Jesse P. Exton; **Paul H. Floyd**; Larry D. Fraley; Lonny C. Fults; Rosella Halford; Frank A. Hamel; Sharon L. Hawkins; Paul W. Headley; Harley E. Heen; Charles A. Hoyt Jr.; Richard Hudson; George C. Hysmith; Thomas M. Inukai; Wallethe S. James; Dorothy L. Jones; Fred A. Keely; Walter M. Klem-

perer; Raymond S. Knauer; Chester C. Lanz; David W. Magnuson; Edouard M. Marrel; Arthur F. McKee; Merle G. Meyer; Dale F. Monroe; Paul D. Moore; John W. Moore Jr.; Douglas B. Muhler; Danna C. Osburn; Douglas K. Richards; Walter K. Robertson; Bruce H. Ruby; Virginia C. Schafer; Hardie M. Schoebel Jr.; Charles L. Scholl; Alfred E. Schultz; Ronald A. Scissom; Dean P. Shearer; Allan L. Shive; Barbara Sippy; Thomas E. Spears; David E. Stauffer; Steven W. Stinson; Richard J. Swensen; Jana Walker; Alice L. Webb; Sandie L. White; Jack D. Young. The name of the 50-year member is in bold type. Next month's regularly scheduled ATU 757 Retired Member Chapter meeting is Wednesday, Feb. 4, 2009, at 9:30 a.m. at Westmoreland's Union Manor, 6404 SE 23rd Ave. Coffee and doughnuts will be served at 9 a.m.

ATU Local 757 Officer Reports

(From Page 1)

book and read it to stay updated on any changes in the law.

The last thing I would like to mention is that Union meetings have been moved to the Rose Center, Salvation Army, so make sure you read your union board or check out the union's Web site for directions and updates. Also, if you need to check on your voluntary benefits with the Union, call 1-800-521-3535 for Allstate or 1-800-941-9714 for Complete Benefits Solution.



Merlo Transportation
As reported by
BRUCE HANSEN

I would like to wish all of you a happy new year. Please be safe and have a safe 2009. I would like to thank each and every member for the ongoing support they offer me. Sometimes I may not know how to take or acknowledge your encouraging words, but believe me, when the day is done I ask myself, "Did I make a difference today?" Most days I can answer, "Yes." These thoughts are then reinforced by you and the words I hear from you. I don't think I could ever really let you know what it does mean to me. I wish each and everyone a happy new year.

So with that said, what is going on here at Merlo? I have filed an ATU grievance over the meal break policy. If you are not getting your meal breaks, let your union rep know. Also, if you're not getting your regular breaks, please let us know. We have a commitment with TriMet to work together on making the schedules work. Please fill out the meal break card or the yellow card. Please make a copy for your officer and have it placed in the box so we will know too. This will only work if you tell your E-Board officer whether your schedule works or not.

Another grievance filed is against the CSI policy. They do not follow the policy. If you get a CSI and are asked to go in and talk about it, be sure to time-slip them for your time. Do not let them take your time away unless you are going to get paid for it. Do not talk to the manager or ASM on your break time either. You need that time to relax.

As for the few people who have gotten yearly reviews with discouraging remarks, I have spoken with Lyle, and he says he will stop adding the discouraging comments. This was pointed out to me by a couple of members as not motivating or supporting members who want to do a better job. Thank you for bringing this to our attention. If you have any concerns or have seen things that you feel may negatively impact the members, please call your union rep. With your help we can make this a better and stronger union.

I know that we don't hear this enough, but: We do a heck of a job. I would like to see management teams recognize this too. Merlo did meet the 92 percent attendance goal set by the District. The operators received donuts and pizza from management. It is nice to see that they can recognize the drivers. Let's all set our goals higher and continue the great job.

Please be safe and please remember to drive the schedule and don't let the schedule drive you. Please also remember to take your breaks.



TriMet Powell
As reported by
ROSE JORDAN-FAIRLEY

Holiday greetings to you all. Now that 2009 has rolled in, hope all of you had a great New Year's. Happy to see all of you. We completed the holiday sign-up, and things went very smoothly. This new year is going to bring great challenges to each and every one of you. The Union is going to try to keep you informed on all aspects. Please take note that my contact phone number is 503-933-2108. I am still covering the Center Street garage along with my obligation to the Powell Garage.

Congratulations to Mary Hill, Kevin Raymond, and Abel Robelo, who were promoted to station agents. They all represented the Powell Garage. Great job!

I'm proud to offer my appreciation to all who have attended the Saturday caucus meetings. The membership voted to name the group 757 ATU Members' Caucus. I've heard some positive things about the Saturday meetings, and that inspires me to continue to focus on my purpose and objectives in pushing for greater attendance. On our last meeting, held on Dec. 7, 2008, thanks to Bruce from Merlo and Sandra from Center for their support with the Saturday Caucus meeting. Additionally, I'm looking forward to Jon Hunt, President and Sam Schwarz, Vice President, assisting me on some Saturdays. I look forward to working with all of you in 2009.



TriMet Merlo Maintenance
As reported by
JEFF HUNT

In December, I filed two pre-filings but as of the time of this writing I have yet to receive a response from the garage manager at Powell regarding them. The pre-filings are about body shop type work being done by floor mechanics. That work should be offered to them first. In short, it is a working-out-of-classification grievance.

Snow and ice events, such as those we experienced in December, are one of the worst times of the year for us. There are however some who do thrive on it, and some who even shine like bright stars. One instance is mechanic J.K. Hong. For those who don't know him, J.K. is the West Side mechanic and has worked at TriMet for 30 years. As I was putting chains on buses at BTC one day, I watched J.K. help operators with their buses. English is not his first language, but despite that he not only did his job cheerfully under the worst conditions, but he would also look out for people that were lost and would help them find the right bus to their destination. J.K. truly performed above and beyond the scope of his job, and made all of us look good.

I would also like to spotlight the graveyard crew at Merlo for their work during the weeks of snow. For those of you who don't know, this is the shift that puts on most of the chains. They may be told to chain the fleet, then de-chain them, and then put them back on again and get all work line buses done. You may say "yeah, but

all graveyard shifts do that," and that would be true, but at Merlo the graveyard supervisor gave no overtime when all the other shifts were getting it, cancelled their Christmas dinner, and in general, rode them relentlessly. Do they get anything out of it? No. They deserve not just my thanks but thanks from all of us. Because of their hard work, our days were made much easier.



Portland Public Schools
As reported by
RANDY SHAW

Happy New Year! I hope everyone had a safe and happy holiday season. My New Year's resolution is that I hope 2009 starts better than the last of 2008. I am so sick of doctors and therapy.

I was asked about the drivers' sick bank since I have been off work. I am off work on Workers' Comp. I have used up all of my own sick leave but have not asked for any hours from the sick bank. Nor do I plan to.

If you have not received a copy of our contract along with the new Accident Review and Appeal Policy by the time this comes out in print, you will receive yours soon.

I talked to the chairperson of the Driver Committee, Kim Jackman, and she wanted to thank everyone who helped over the holiday season with work or donations. But the drivers fund is still low on money. We know times are tight, and to make a donation just after the holidays may seem hard to do, but every little bit helps. Remember, 100 percent of the money collected goes back to the drivers, not in some corporation's pocket, so give what you can.

I want to thank everyone who called to check on my recovery. It is nice to know you are missed and appreciated for the work you do, so thank you. Again, thank you to my shop stewards and management for keeping me updated by phone. Do not forget, I am here if you need me.



C-TRAN/C-VAN
As reported by
ROY JENNINGS

I hope each and every member received what they wished for on Christmas and that 2009 is an even better year for you than 2008 was! The Union filed one grievance last month. This grievance was due to a C-TRAN supervisor disciplining a fixed route operator because she was wearing a hat that she had already had prior approval from C-TRAN to wear.

During the course of the last fixed route operator signup, a problem came up after the signup had begun. It was found that a run's travel was listed wrong; 48 minutes had to be added due to correcting the travel event which was listed. If you were in the trailer park on Dec. 11, 2008, you may have noticed (or heard) that there was a passionate discussion on this issue. As always, when possible I like to hear everyone's (union officers' and members') concerns and positions, as well as read the contract, before I make a decision. I based this decision on the principle of seniority, fairness and the contract. As the Executive

Board officer, I don't have the right or the ability to violate anyone's rights. I have to look out for each and everyone single member's rights. It's my New Year's wish that we have learned from this signup and we make sure this doesn't happen again. As always, I want to thank Scott and Marge (and everyone else who participated in the discussion) for speaking their minds and not just being a yes person.

Mark your calendar, as our next Union meeting will be January 18.

Bend Area Transit
As reported by
VICTOR GILARDIN

I have been busy with grievances, taking them from Step 3 to Step 4. We are having a real problem with Paratransit dragging their feet with the grievances. At the last Council meeting on Tuesday, the City of Bend awarded Paratransit the contact for the next three years.

We have our four new buses on line, and the buses are doing well. Two of our brothers' wives were in the hospital for surgery. They're both doing fine and are resting at home.

We have been doing everything we can to keep this transit system alive. At the last City Council meeting, our transportation manager gave the City Council three options for our transit situation. One was to leave everything as is. Two was to drop service one hour at lunch time, and end Saturday and Sunday service altogether, and three was to end the transit program completely. This would consist of giving everything back to where it came from, including all grants, buses, and monies for the new transit building being built. The decision will be made in January or February. The City Council is in transition with newly elected members.

To all Brothers and Sisters, I wish you the happiest of new years. May our new year be stronger than ever!



TriMet Salaried Employees
As reported by
JIM FOWLER

I hope you all had an enjoyable holiday season despite the pre-Christmas Arctic blast we received. I know everyone did a great job during this hectic period. Speaking of the holidays, I would like to point out that the rail supervisors did not sign up for Christmas until Dec. 17, just eight days before the holiday. The dispatchers were in the same boat, but there was a reason for that: They were waiting for three new dispatchers to come on board. But there is no reason why the rail supervisors had to wait so long. This is an important family holiday, and people need more than eight days to make their plans. Come on, management. Quit talking about employee appreciation and start showing in the details that you care about the welfare of your employees.

As I'm writing this, management has suspended the static fare missions at Kings Hill Station and the 82nd Ave. MAX platforms. For those of you not familiar with these, every day

(Turn to Page 12)

ATU Local 757 Officer Reports

(From Page 11)

between 6:30 and 9:30 a.m., fare inspectors and supervisors would hold trains while they boarded to check fares, and then release the trains after all fares had been checked. The operators, supervisors, inspectors and even the passengers were getting really tired of this. Finally, after weeks of this, management has heard our complaints and we now have rolling missions. That means the same group boards the train and rides until a specific destination, then hops on a train in the opposite direction to check fares. What a novel concept.

We heard a Customer Service grievance at the December Step 3 hearing involving overtime for people doing trip planning. The grievant, a customer service specialist, felt that since she is scheduled each day to do some trip planning, that any overtime that is trip planning specific should be offered strictly by seniority since they all do trip planning daily. Management feels the overtime should only be offered to trip planners, which is a lower paid position within Customer Service, where all they do is trip planning. Management feels that trip planners are a separate classification and say it's not fair that those from another group can snatch up their overtime. If these managers really think this is unfair, then they should immediately stop using the specialists and reps for trip planning duties.

Everybody: Please have a safe and prosperous 2009.



TriMet Light Rail Maintenance
As reported by
MICHAEL CONNER

As we enter the New Year, we look forward to a busy one. We will be addressing an ever-growing backlog of arbitrations, contract talks with TriMet, and elections. Major issues are coming at us and continue to be a problem: apprentices being used more and more for production; fare machines that the public sees first and foremost as being a problem and management not willing to fix the problem; contracting out our jobs as the District's resources become scarcer and management thinking that is the only fix; and growing ridership with no increase in resources, causing more wear on equipment and safety issues for employees.

As the problems with Wilsonville become more evident, it will take resources from other areas to cover up the mistakes made by management with the equipment and the problems that will arise with the operator of the shared railroad. We have seen the gutting before of operations' budgets to cover the engineering mistakes made on large scale new projects. Those who have been around a while probably remember the West side tunnel projects' issues and where the money to fix the problems came from.

Needless to say, with contract talks coming, I think we can expect the District to come after us and our families' needs to continue to fund their grandiose schemes. That is why we need to make sure that we show support to the fundamentals of union solidarity. Because divide and conquer is number one in the management playbook, we stay strongest by sticking together.

I hope everyone had a great holiday season, and even though tough challenges lie ahead, hopefully 2009 will be our best year yet!



TriMet Powell Maintenance
As reported by
DAVID KAY

Happy new year everyone! This year has the appearance of being a very busy one. As we know, our working and wage agreement will expire this coming November. Already, discussions are taking place between the officers and the Executive Board to begin the first stages of the process. In a month or two, the requests for contract suggestions will go out. Many of you have offered suggestions over the course of the last few years, and I hope you filed them away to bring forward.

I have been working with stores' management to finish up an agreement to get stores' personnel training pay when they are actively involved in training new people. This seems to be progressing well.

I am also meeting with the Safety Department concerning the accident reviews and appeals process as it applies to maintenance personnel. One issue has been the six- to seven-month period between the incident, the review board and the member notification. Also under discussion is the fact we as maintenance workers are required to do tasks with buses other folks do not. Talks continue.

By the time this hits print, our driveway at Powell should be finished. It has been a bit of a challenge, with large chunks of it removed and re-poured. I am told an upgrade was also made to the sensors for tripping the stop lights, so egress may be a little easier.



First Transit TriMet Lift
As reported by
LES GREEN

First I would like to start my article with congratulations to Kathleen Brown of MV Transportation for taking over the huge task of liaison officer. Remember, Kathleen, this position is not a popularity contest, and we must be fair and impartial in all that we do. As I have worked with Kathleen in the past, I am sure we can work together to enhance the benefits and working conditions of all paratransit drivers in both our companies. Of course with ATU officers and staff behind us.

Now I have been asked to write something about the miserable condition of our current bus fleet, if you could call them that. Except for the 9500 and some 9400s, the majority of our fleet will never see 250,000 miles again, and many are over 300,000. The stress alone has taken a great toll along with the sub-par parts bought to put them back together when they fail. Maybe TriMet can buy up a rail car company so the new heavy rail will come on-line but encourage subcontracting to buy cheap in order for the subcontractor to make a profit.

But this is January of a new uncertain year and we must all at ATU work for a better and more sane year than last.

Again, I may sound like a broken hard drive, but take your breaks and be as safe as you can be because you, the driver, must make the decisions that will protect your job. Dispatch couldn't care

less, as their job is to get the ride moved in order to get the income TriMet requires and to save their job even if in some cases it jeopardizes yours. Take care and be safe.



First Student PPS
As reported by
ANNA TOMPTE

Hello my sisters and brothers. Happy New Year to you and yours! It is my hope for each of us to enjoy this New Year and all the changes that are coming with it. At this time we have two people going into arbitration and possibly a third.

Stay alert to what is happening to you and your job! Remember to keep your stewards and me informed of any issues, especially issues that address discipline. If you feel or think you have any "points" against you, ask Peter or Laura. If you have been asked to sign a letter informing you of an accumulation of "points", talk to me. Always remember your Weingarten rights, and know that you have the right to representation! Be aware and help out all our brothers and sisters, especially in this winter time.

I cannot emphasize this enough to you: Do not lie on your hours. Giving or taking five minutes here or there will create a moral hazard and an environment of dishonesty. This climate gives you the incentive to do the wrong thing! Fill out your time card correctly and get all the time that is due to you, including the time it takes to fill out any justifying documents. Just do the right thing, as you were trained to do. We can change and we can adapt and we can do the job, but we will not lie.

Again from your representative, liaison and shop stewards to each of you and yours, hoping you all had happy holidays and a happy new year!

The stewards and I are here to serve you. Just ask!



Lane Transit District
As reported by
BRIAN PASQUALI

Welcome to winter, brothers and sisters. Remember that it is you, and you alone, who decides what is safe terrain to traverse when it comes to driving your 40-foot-long, 33,000-pound Gillig in adverse weather conditions. As you all have seen, our monthly union meetings were canceled in December due to dangerous road conditions, and that was a wise move in this EBO's opinion. Why risk it? It is so much easier to sit in front of a fire with your favorite beverage, stay warm, and watch the snow fall. Well of course, that is, unless you have to work, as I did.

Nice. Instead of our usual holiday banquet this year, Santa brought us a nice shiny new audit, hopefully at a reasonable cost, given the current state of our funding. I have heard from many of you and attempted to convey your frustrations to those who called for this project. But it was all in vain, as I was told that I was exaggerating when I said I believed I spoke for the beliefs of the majority of operators and their ill feelings regarding the whole audit and its findings.

I thought that for years the policy has not only

been conveyed to new hires, but reinforced when seasoned operators attempt to hold the line on fare collections, that a "hands off" approach is what is expected. It seems to me that every time an operator calls in to report a fare evader, the instruction to "let-em ride" is the transmitted answer from dispatching supervisors. I remembered in a previous fall training session an administration employee stating that fare collection is too small of an issue to be of any concern. For some time now, the operators have wanted to collect fares in a business-minded fashion, yet have not gotten the back-up on many levels from the District. I remember operators asking for automatic change counters to enhance accuracy. It seemed the District's overall attitude regarding fares was lax, up until the audit started. Maybe I was just exaggerating?

It was stated in the memo attached to the audit results that further audits will be conducted with the objective of "identifying" drivers who may fail to ask for a fare (as perceived by an outside auditor) and correcting them (probably by way of discipline). If this is enacted, if you are disciplined due to observations of a contracted auditor, please notify your union immediately. I can't even begin to go into how many things are wrong about both the first audit and the suggestion of a more punitive second audit.

What better way to say happy holidays to you employees than by canceling the annual banquet, a long standing event, and instead, hiring a team of rent-a-spies to report on their every perceived shortcomings?

Hunt

(From Page 1)

nearly a weekly basis for the past three years, and my number one priority has been, and will remain, health insurance. I am constantly made aware of the valuable, yet tenuous nature of this benefit, as both father of a young family and son of parents on a fixed income. TriMet members currently enjoy a generous health insurance package. Your union is dedicated to preserving this. As we get closer to negotiations, I will be forming focus groups to discuss the issue and will be looking for members to contribute to those groups. As speculation and rumours start to circulate, I would ask only that you restrict your conversation about them to union meetings and focus groups. Management may ask you questions about what you would like to do about your contract. It's tempting to talk about it, but when you do, it's called "communication between labor and management outside of the negotiation process," and you hurt your fellow union members. Let's work together on this and prove our unity.

Farra

(From Page 1)

being tested, technically considered the "donor" (as opposed to the "tестee" which is how I referenced them in my prior article,) and the actual tester, technically considered the "collector" as opposed to the "tester." Just wanted to clear things up a little and make sure we're all using the same terms.

I really want to start seeing some new faces at the union meetings. You are the union. These meetings are your best opportunity to hook up with officers and kindred spirits. Maybe we could add that to our new year's resolutions?

See you soon.