

# ATU Local 758 News

Amalgamated Transit Union, Local 758

February 2010

atu758.org

Deborah Brown, Rec. Sec./Editor

## President's Report Isaac O Tate

### **Union Membership-The Value of Belonging**

I always ask newly hired members during the Union orientation the following question; how many of you have ever belonged to a Union? Very few answer that they have or had.

This started me to thinking. If they have never belonged to a Union, where does their perception of a Union come from? If they were in the military there is or was no talk of a Union. If they came from a job that **“did not”** offer **seniority rights, job security, shift preference and shift premiums, guaranteed wage increases, medical and dental plans, paid sick and vacation leave, holiday pay, long term disability benefits, 457 deferred compensation savings programs and a grievance procedure**, there was neither talk or thought of it, so were does their perception come from?

Some members know other individuals or friends that have or had Union jobs, and understand the positive benefits of belonging to a Union. Some have had and lost a Union job and understand the benefits of belonging to a Union. Unfortunately very little labor history is taught in schools unless it's a Labor studies institution, and usually attendance at these types of schools come later in life as post secondary education after exposure to a Union environment or Union activisms as an adult. Others only know of the stereotyped portrayal of Unions they have seen on television, which for some reason always seem to be negative. Even in the early days before the first electric street cars, or motorized busses there was the horse drawn street car. One of the most startling things about this was the fact that the horses were changed in freezing weather, but the Driver could freeze to death while holding the reins. A Union was needed to address these types of issues.

Another place where new members who have never belonged to a Union may develop a perception of the Union is; the Operator's lobby and Maintenance lunchroom. Ironically due to the protection(s) that the Union affords some members, they use these settings to rant and rave about the Union in front of management and are seven (7) to ten (10) minutes away from the Union office where a Union meeting is being held, that may take forty-five (45) minutes or an hour of their time. Unfortunately some members act as if there is some stigma attached to participation in Union meetings and they choose not to attend, but that is their prerogative, **not your excuse**. If you have never belonged to a Union before you owe it to yourself to attend Union meetings and Union sponsored events. You have a duty to insure that the expenditures of the Local are documented and accounted for. You have a right to attend Union sponsored training and seminars.

As a member you should attend and consider arbitration motions fairly. Motions to proceed to arbitration on behalf of a member are not taken lightly. There is a very strong likelihood that a grievance taken to arbitration could very well have an affect on the entire membership. That is why when a grievance is filed it becomes the Union's grievance. What this means is, nine (9) times out of ten (10) if a member **has not** attended a "motion to arbitrate" meeting which includes questioning of the grievant by the membership, the Executive Board's recommendation, and the Union's legal counsel's opinion/recommendation before a vote is taken to proceed, there is a very strong likelihood that the members(s) are voicing his/her own point of view or opinion based on hearsay or rumor, because the only place you would get the facts was by attending the meeting. As a matter of fact regarding the arbitrations that we have won, in listening to some of the stories coming from the "uninformed", the Union or grievant it seemed never had a chance at winning. **They were wrong**; they didn't get all the facts or understand the Union's position. Management understood the Union position.

The Union is **not** the elected Officers, the Union is you. There is no way that one full-time Officer and another part-time Officer can keep up with everything happening in the workplace. You as a Union members should report all perceived contract violations immediately, even if turns out not to be a violation. You as a member(s) when noticing another or other members having a problem or problems should contact an Executive Board Officer, Shop Steward or the Union office. The Union is there for more than representing someone at a disciplinary meeting. The Union negotiates everyday on your behalf, you just may not be aware of it. A lot of what the Union does on behalf of its membership is confidential. We balance the privacy of the members with the general membership's right to know.

Every benefit that I noted in the second paragraph was negotiated by the Union. I have heard some individuals state they don't need the Union, but they enjoy all the wages and benefits the Union has negotiated. What they seem to forget or don't understand is, the Union and benefits that both you and they now enjoy, came from many years of Labor and Management negotiations. The agency gave you the foot in the door; your Union negotiated the benefits. The old timers many years ago contributed a portion of their pay to acquire uniforms. Back in the 1940s' this Union was advocating for six (6) hour work days. The reason being more work to spread around for their Union brothers after the war, efficiency, and the reduction of accidents. In the 1970s' Drivers petitioned for eight (8) hours between runs and no double backs, which were common any day of the week. Some of our members who signed the petition are still active members, others active retirees.

Take time to read your contract, the entire contract. In discussion with an Operator the other day, they were surprised to find that per the contract they are able to switch runs with another Operator, a convenience they very well could have used in the past and is available to them in the future.

I will end this article with a definition of a Union that is gleaned from some of the documents from the 1940s' we have in the Union office. It defines a Union as; **A group of men and women who have joined together in order to attain as a group that which they as individuals could never hope to gain.**

Take care!

## **Legislative Update**

As of this writing there are two very important pieces of Legislature that are pertinent to us as both a Union and Pierce Transit as an agency. The first bill is SHB2986. This particular bill has been in the works for the last two legislative sessions and this is the third. The bill relates to the establishment of a "Union" position on the Transit Board of Commissioners where a Public Transportation Benefit Area (PTBA) has been established, which is what Pierce Transit is. The bill contains a "voice but no vote" clause, but a Union position is critical. It is common to hear the buzz words collaboration, cooperation, mutual agreement, shared vision, team etc.; these words pretty much ring hollow when it comes to the Union and the Pierce Transit Board of Commissioners. The passage of this legislation is vital to a healthy relationship between Pierce Transit Executive Staff, Pierce Transit Board of Commissioners and the Union during these tough economic times..

The second bill is HB 2855. This bill as written would impose a twenty-dollar (\$20.00) tax fee on license tabs. This measure is being supported by just about every transit agency in Washington state whether they are at the maximum nine-tenths of a per cent per the taxing authority or trying to make a decision about whether to take a tax vote to the voters in certain geographic areas. Certainly this legislatively imposed fee is more palatable than a tax vote to the transit agencies and their Boards, as they seek a funding source for operating expenses which stimulus money did not provide. (Wages represented and non-represented, increased service, fuel cost etc.) Your Union will keep you apprised of the status of these bills as the Legislative session continues.

On another note the International Union will be holding its Legislative Conference in March in Washington DC. Per notification from the International I will be attending the Conference with the International picking up the expenses. I will be meeting with Washington state Legislators to include Patty Murray who sits on the Transportation committee where I have already informed her of the International Union backed HR 2746 which would divert some of the federally distributed money for capital projects to fund operations also. There is no doubt a need for a dedicated funding source for public transportation, and the present state of the economy is a glaring example. Ridership is at an all time high, but agencies are forced to cut services due to a shortage of operating funds. How does an economy recover when the most efficient and least costly means of transportation is being reduced or eliminated that can get people to jobs? Maybe a light beam will strike those in power and they'll understand.

## **Vice President's Report-Lane Chase**

**SHORT TERM DISABILITY INSURANCE:** What is it? Why have it? Who needs it?

Short term disability insurance is an insurance that helps fill the gap in pay when you go out sick or injured. It can replace a portion of your income and help you with those expenses that keep coming working or not. The question you need to ask is can you afford or manage if you had to go with little or no money coming in for two or three months or even a month for that matter. The representative was recently in the lobby to explain this coverage. If you were unable to talk with him contact the Union office, (253-474-3123) to get his number and email address or you can visit our web page at, [atu758.org](http://atu758.org).

*Vice President's Report continued.....*

**16<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL GOLF TOURNAMENT:** Jerry Hardeman (253.405.7086) is the person to contact if you have any questions about the tournament. This will be the 16<sup>th</sup> year and he is working hard to make it the best ever. We are trying to keep the cost the same as the last two years, but as you know costs go up and the price point varies from course to course. There should be more details following soon. So, start getting your teams together, dust off those clubs. If any golfers have suggestions for the tournament, now is the time to get them in, as many of the details have to finalize in the next month or so.

**OJI'S AND REDEPLOYMENT MEETINGS:** If you find yourself with an OJI and you receive one of those notices to come in and meet for a "Redeployment Meeting," you should have representation. This is an important meeting and you should be aware of the consequences that the meeting can have for you. Transit will provide you with a pretty detailed explanation letter. However, the agency is now taking a new track and is pushing these meetings forward and meeting much earlier than has been done in the past. In the past your first meeting would typically take place around six months after your first day of absence. Now they are meeting with you as soon as ninety days. As an example "Redeployment Meeting" can mean everything from, "How are you doing and what is your return to work date," to you receiving a "Redeployment Termination" for non availability for your job of hire. The other major concern that happens consistently is when our member does go in for the meeting they have no information, no records, no notes, no dates, basically nothing. Your notes and dates and who you talked to and what was said make a huge difference when the Union is trying to represent you. Transit and their third party administrator will have all their notes etc. and it isn't because they are looking out for you. These records and notes etc. are vitally important if your case reaches the point where you have to hire an attorney or whatever, you will need them. If you have not kept them from the beginning you will have to go from memory and try to put something together, which will cause delay and very likely affect your representation and your case along with any possible settlement. Lastly, keep copies of everything you send, ask for copies of everything and keep them, and keep a log of names, dates, times, topics of discussion, and supporting paperwork. And, if there is a timeline or deadline get it date stamped or send it certified with return receipt.

### The Human Touch

If you are an 'Old Timer' at your job , lend a helping hand to a new member.

Talk about your union proudly and urge new members to attend union meetings.

Lead by example.

Union workers cannot afford to be impersonal. Never treat anyone indifferently. Everyone, expert and beginner, should be treated with personal dignity.

Real union members are helpful and easy to talk to. They never forget they were once beginners.

The secret of the Human Touch is simple... A sincere liking for and interest in people——**all kinds of people.**

**Please let this office know of any name, address or telephone number changes so we can contact you if necessary**

**Sign up for electronic newsletter at [atu758.org](http://atu758.org) Look for the newsletter link and subscribe. Remember to accept the subscription within 7 days then your newsletter will be sent to your email address .**

**Come out to Union meetings every second Thursday of each month at 7:30pm  
Clover Park Technical College  
Meetings usually last 1-1/2 –2hrs. Get Involved**



**The 2009 ATU758 Attendance winner of \$300.00 is  
Marguarita Marion  
Congratulations!!!**

**Come to Union meetings in 2010 & the next winner might be YOU!**

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★  
★ ATU Local 758 Women’s Caucus is starting a walking club for all members  
★ and their families pets etc. We will meet on Saturday mornings at **7am** and  
★ walk for an hour (or more if you wish) . The first walk will be **March 6,**  
★ 2010. Come on out with strollers, leashes (and pooper scoopers if  
★ necessary), water and comfy walking shoes. We’ll meet at Wapato Park on  
★ 72nd and Sheridan in Tacoma , by the flower garden, for the inaugural walk.  
★ I hope to see you there to walk talk, laugh etc.  
★  
★ Questions call Deborah E. Brown ATU-758 Women's Caucus Chair  
★ 253-297-7161  
★  
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## **Recording Secretary's Report-Deborah E Brown**

There was an incident with some members that really disturbed me last week. Because there was an honest oversight in the seniority driven shake up signing a 'back up' process was implemented to correct the oversight. Once the back up took place several Operators chose (according to seniority) assignments different from the ones they originally had chosen (also by seniority).

As disruptive to each families plan/schedule, and no matter how frustrating this was to the operators involved, what happened next was extremely infuriating and disappointing to me. Harassment and vandalism was reported as a direct result of a person or persons being angered by the fact that rules and contract agreements were followed resulting in the unwanted and unexpected change for the shake up. Let me advise all the members of this Local, this kind of behavior is and will not be tolerated by this Union or Pierce Transit. As aggravating as this situation was to those involved, there is NEVER a justification for any aggressive, illegal or hostile actions to be taken against another Member of this Local or any other PT employee for that matter.

Things/ mistakes happen often during the shake up and no one is to blame! You know why, because we are all human beings less than perfect and prone to make mistakes, forgetfulness, misunderstandings etc. Before you point a finger at some one else's perceived shortcomings /mistakes or whatever LOOK IN THE MIRROR.

We should be looking out for one another all the time. In these hard economic times it would be very unfortunate for someone to lose his/her job due to a few minutes of anger and frustration not handled well. When you have a problem or concern talk to ONE OF THE Union Officers or Shop Stewards . DO NOT TAKE MATTERS INTO YOUR OWN HANDS IN THE FORM OF REVENGE, HARASSMENT, THREATS, VANDALISM OR VIOLENCE. It's not worth potentially losing your job because of an inconvenience.

Peace

**Next ATU-758 WOMEN'S CAUCUS MEETING**

**APRIL 5, 2010**

**6PM**

**Union Office 6923 Lakewood Dr W Suite B-1**

**Deborah E Brown 253-297-7161**

**Executive Board Officer-Relief Operator— Gerald Hardeman**

All Operators please do a complete PRE and POST TRIP INSPECTION every time you prepare to drive a bus off the lot and after you bring it back. Use a flashlight to see in the dark if necessary.

Don't be an Operator receiving a Preventable Accident for damage that was not properly reported.

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# **ATU 758 Annual Picnic**

## **Saturday, July 17, 2010**

**12pm to 5pm**

**At**

**Tacoma Sportsman Club**

**16409 Canyon Rd E, Puyallup, WA**

**253-537-6151**

**More Details Coming Soon!**

**16th Annual ATU 758  
Golf Tournament**



**Start planning your teams,  
space is limited!**

**WEINGARTEN RIGHTS**

If this decision could in any way lead to my being disciplined or terminated, I respectfully request that my Union Representative, Officer or Steward be present at this meeting. Without representation present, I choose not to answer any questions.



**Amalgamated Transit Union, Local #758**  
6923 Lakewood DR W B1  
Tacoma, WA 98467-3221  
(253)474-3123  
atu758.org

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

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Tacoma, WA  
Permit 734

**UNION MEMBERSHIP MEETING NOTICE**

**Thursday, March 11, 2010, at 7:30PM**  
4500 Steilacoom Blvd, CPTC Building 3 Rotunda

**Friday, March 12, 2010, at 10:00AM**  
6923 Lakewood DR. W B-1

**Tuesday, March 16, 2010, at 7:30 PM**  
Longshoreman's Hall, 627 14TH AVE (Longview)

**Executive Board**

**Thursday, March 4, 2010 at 3:30PM** (Union Office)

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**EMAIL ADDRESSES AND CONTACT NUMBERS**

- Isaac Tate** President B.A:                      president@atu758.org      253-640-9111
- Lane Chase V.** President A.B.A:      v.president@atu758.org      253-297-9110
- Don McKnight** Financial Sec/Trea:      finsec@atu758.org      253-970-2912
- Deborah E. Brown** Recording Sec:      recsec@atu758.org      253-297-7161
- Pattie Clark** Office Admin:              unionoffice@atu758.org      253-474-3123