STEADFAST
NYC SCHOOL BUS MEMBERS CONTINUE TO FIGHT TO PRESERVE EMPLOYEE PROTECTIONS
Iowa bus driver quits after threats
Fed up with rowdy behavior and threats from students, a Davenport, IA, bus driver has called it quits. The City offers its CitiBus transit service for free to all Davenport students. Drivers and riders say the problem with students has gotten worse. The mayor is urging the transit system to clamp down on problem riders by removing them from buses.

Detroit to hire 100 new bus drivers
In some good news out of Motown, Detroit says it wants to hire more than 100 bus drivers as part of its efforts to improve public transit service across the region. Local 26 welcomed the announcement saying it should “definitely take some of the stress off the existing manpower” and hopes it leads to restoring service that had been cut.

Enter First Annual ATU Photo Contest!
Have a great photo of ATU members on the job, at a protest, rally, or other event — showing what makes ATU the great union it is today? Then submit that photo to the First Annual ATU Photo Contest! If not — grab your camera or smart phone and start taking pictures that show why you’re proud to be ATU! Submit photos at http://www.atu.org/photo-contest

CORRECTION
In the last issue of In Transit we reported that the City of Saskatoon “has only given its transit employees half of the compensation the Local believes it owes, and it appears that issue will eventually be taken to court.”

We should have said that “the City says it will give its transit employees only half of the compensation the Local believes it owes, and it appears that issue will eventually be taken to court.”

And, from the “It doesn’t rain, it pours” department: We misidentified Saskatchewan Local 615’s local number in the same story! We regret the error.

International Officers Emeritus
International President Jim La Sala, ret.
International President Warren George, ret.
International Executive Vice President Ellis Franklin, ret.
International Executive Vice President Mike Siano, ret.
International Officers & General Executive Board

NEWS Briefs

Canadian cities lobby Ottawa for increase in public transit funding
Toronto Local fights random drug testing

Canadian Council Conference Call

Drivers have the right to be safe too

Canadian Agenda: Locals take anti-assault campaign to the streets

International President’s Message: NYC school bus Local fights on for employee protections

International Executive Vice President’s Message: Do protests matter?

International Secretary-Treasurer’s Message: Are we going backwards?

‘WE ARE AFRAID’ DC members tell Metro GM
Canadian cities lobby Ottawa for increase in public transit funding

In an effort to increase economic development and reduce time spent in traffic, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) is asking the federal government to budget at least $1 billion per year in predictable long-term funding for public transit over the next 20 – 25 years. Specifically the cities are asking for:

- New federal investments of at least $1 billion annually dedicated to municipal transit projects, to be matched by municipal, provincial, and territorial governments for a total program value of $3 billion per year.
- Improved predictability and maximization of investment value, by putting this funding on a long-term track with money committed for 15–20 years, on five-year planning cycles.
- Allocation of funding based on current and projected transit ridership.

The proposal will add to the discussion of the role of the federal government in transit funding, as the country prepares for its national elections in October.

Toronto Local fights random drug testing

We oppose any random testing,” says Local President Bob Kinnear, 113-Toronto, ON. “It’s very invasive and I don’t think our people should have to go through it.”

That’s all the motivation Toronto members need to continue their grievance against a 2011 Toronto Transit Commission (TTC) decision to add random drug and alcohol testing onto already existing rules requiring pre-employment, reasonable cause, and post-incident testing. Kinnear estimates that it will likely be two or three years before the grievance is resolved.

Kinnear argues that drug and alcohol abuse is not a big enough problem at TTC to warrant such a continuous invasive program. Indeed, TTC CEO Andy Byford says that post-incident testing has found “very few instances when you consider how many employees we have and how many miles they cover.”

The real problem, Kinnear insists, is driver fatigue: “We know within our industry that the most detrimental thing that detracts from safe operation is sleep deprivation. There are numerous tests out there that would test the individual for alertness, awareness, fatigue and things like that — they are much more relevant to our industry than actual drug testing.”
EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING
The Executive Board of the Canadian Council will meet on Monday, June 1st and Tuesday, June 2nd, 2015 beginning at 9:00 a.m. each day.

LOCAL REPORTS
Wednesday, June 3rd, 2015 will be set aside for the presentation of Local reports.
Please have a copy of your written report available for the Secretary to the Board for the purpose of the minutes.

RESOLUTIONS
As per Article 19.00 of the Canadian Council By-Laws, the cut-off date for the submission of Resolutions will be Saturday, April 4th, 2015.

BY-LAW CHANGES
As per Article 21.00 of the Canadian Council By-Laws, the cut-off date for the submission of By-Law changes will be Saturday, April 4th, 2015.

ELECTIONS
Elections will be held Friday, June 9th for all positions of the Canadian Council Executive Board.

DELEGATE REPRESENTATION
As per Article 6.02 of the Canadian Council By-Laws, delegate status will be based on Per Capita paid for the month of March 2015.

DELEGATE EXPENSES
As per Article 16.01 of the Canadian Council By-Laws, any Local submitting a claim for financial assistance to attend the Conference will have their claim reviewed by the Executive Board for a decision.

According to Article 16.01 of the Canadian Council By-Laws, which states in part;

Where a Local Union is unable to send a delegate due to financial constraints, upon written request to the Canadian Council with such proof, the Canadian Council will provide the lowest excursion air fare available or as per C.R.A. standards per kilometre for use of automobile (the total which will not exceed the total air fare) plus 4 nights’ accommodations and one hundred dollars ($100.00) per day per diem for four (4) days.

The proof that will be required shall be the most recent audited financial statement of the Local Union submitted to the International office and any other pertinent information that will assist the Executive Board in arriving at a fair decision.

HOTEL ACCOMMODATIONS
Room rates (plus applicable taxes) have been established at $154.00 per night, single or double occupancy. An additional $20.00 per person, per night will be charged for triple occupancy. Please call the hotel directly at 204-942-8251 or toll free at 1-800-665-8088 to make your reservations stating the hotel group code 10N76N. The cut-off date for the hotel is May 1st, 2015.

MAKE YOUR RESERVATION EARLY!

REGISTRATION FEES
Delegates $100.00
Alternate Delegates, Visitors, Spouses $50.00

The above amounts are to be paid to the Canadian Council office when registration forms are submitted, as per Article 6.03 and 6.04 of the Canadian Council By-Laws.

REGISTRATION DATE AND TIME
Conference registration will take place:
Tuesday, June 2nd from 5:30 p.m. - 6:30 p.m. Wednesday June 3rd from 8:00 a.m. - 9:00 a.m.

TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS
When making travel arrangements, please plan to arrive in time to attend a presentation on the labour history in Canada on Tuesday evening and remain for the full day’s session on Saturday. Sunday is the ideal travel day if your schedule allows it.

We have registered our conference for those travelling with Air Canada. When booking on line at aircanada.com enter this promotion code in the search panel R4CAG7W1 to receive 10% off of Tango Plus or better fares.

HISTORY NIGHT
On June 2nd there will be a special presentation on the rich labour history of Winnipeg and the rest of Canada from 6:30 p.m. -7:30 p.m. Refreshments will be served.

GOLF TOURNAMENT
Local 1505 will be hosting a Golf Tournament on Tuesday, June 2nd. Further details and registration forms will follow.

BANQUET
A banquet will take place on Thursday, June 4th at the Fort Garry Hotel. Details will be included in the Final Conference Call. An agenda will be included with the Second Conference Call. On behalf of the Executive Board, we look forward to seeing you all in Winnipeg in June.
Drivers have the right to be safe too.

There's a new law. Threatening or assaulting a transit operator could now result in more serious criminal charges and longer jail terms.
ATU Locals across Canada campaigned for over a decade for the just-passed Bill 221, allowing harsher sentences for those convicted of assaulting transit workers. More than 2,000 transit workers are attacked each year.

Now ATU Canada, the Canadian Urban Transportation Association (CUTA) and legislators are launching a public awareness campaign (opposite page) about the new law with ads and other media.

In Ottawa Local 279 President Craig Watson relates how the Local created publicity about the assault problem every time there was news about the bill or an assault, and handed out information cards on the streets during last year’s May transit month.

**Assaults down**

Consequently, he says, reported assaults decreased from a high of 73 in 2013, to 51 in 2014.

Now the Local is moving into high gear, buying inside ads on all of Ottawa’s buses, and some exteriors (see picture, left) to make sure the entire city knows about the new consequences of this federal offense.

One unanticipated benefit of the new legislation – Ottawa operators are reporting more of the assaults than before. Many of these new reported assaults are of offenses such as spitting or cursing that many drivers wouldn’t have bothered reporting before. Now, with the new law, something might be done about these incidents.
ATU, progressive coalition shake Chicago establishment in mayor’s race

In a remarkable showing of political solidarity, a coalition of Chicago Labor and progressive groups did something that had never been done before – they forced a run-off in the city’s mayoral election, April 7. ATU was one of the leaders in the campaign supporting Cook County Commissioner Jesús “Chuy” García, against Mayor Rahm Emanuel, in which the challenger received 44.3 percent of the vote against the incumbent.

In the process the Union secured a temporary restraining order against the mayor’s managers at the Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) who attempted to muzzle ATU members by forbidding the distribution of pro-Garcia materials on the property. The court decision permitted Chicago members to continue leafleting CTA for the duration of the campaign.

Despite the lopsided funding advantage, Emanuel, a former congressman and Obama chief-of-staff, still struggled to maintain a lead in the polls. He was in the battle of his political life, having lost the support of some key Democratic Party constituencies with his “in your face” style and confrontations with progressive groups and unions such as ATU, and the Teachers.

Volunteers vs. money

Garcia ran a smart campaign countering the mayor’s money with thousands of volunteers – many of whom had never participated in a campaign – who took to the streets to bring Chuy’s message to the city’s marginalized residents who Emanuel had taken for granted.

ATU had volunteers on the ground from the very beginning of Garcia’s campaign. Eventually, other unions and groups like MoveOn, Daily Kos, Democracy for America, the Working Families Party, the Progressive Change Campaign Committee and National People’s Action Campaign mobilized volunteers from around the country to make calls for the challenger.

‘We didn’t lose today’

“To all the little boys and girls watching,” Garcia said, “we didn’t lose today. We tried today. We fought hard for what we believe in. You don’t succeed at this or anything else unless you try. So keep trying. Keep standing up for yourselves and what you believe in.”

For his part, the chastened mayor seemed to want to change the tone and the direction of his administration as a result of the punishing runoff battle he was forced into. Time will tell if Emanuel sincerely intends to act according to those sentiments.

No matter what the mayor does, however, he will have to work with those newly empowered voices who demonstrated that together they will be a very potent advocate for the poor and middle class in the Windy City’s future.

Mayor lost key support

Despite the best efforts of ATU and the progressive coalition, Emanuel won the election with the assistance of $23.6 million from his friends in corporate America who just barely succeeded in protecting the inside connection they enjoy with the city’s Democratic establishment. Comparatively, Garcia ran a shoestring campaign with a war chest of just $6 million.
The fights for transit workers are well known. Our school bus workers are struggling too.

The members of ATU’s largest local union, Local 1181 in New York City have been through a very rough time. As the billionaire mayor Michael Bloomberg was leaving office he stripped the members of a labor protection that existed since 1979, and dated back before that in other forms.

In this magazine we walk through the recent history of the struggle of school bus workers in one of the world’s richest cities. A place where globetrotting moguls buy $100 million condominiums, but women and men who work getting kids to school became the target of the envy of the rich. Overpaid! Cost too much! Grey Poupon?

Confronted with the full force of the city destroying their contracts and jobs, the Local went on strike.

During the strike in 2013, in 15-degree weather, I stood on a picket line in the Bronx and a member, a struggling worker who was on strike for weeks already, told me that our staff was welcome to come to her house for dinner. “We might only have Oodles of Noodles,” she said, but her home was open to us. What these workers have been through, just trying to hold on to their jobs and salaries is hard to fully explain.

A full year after the strike, after mass layoffs and disruptions, a new mayor was elected. He was full of promise and very different politics than Bloomberg. Mayor de Blasio offered his full support, but together we were not able to get legislation passed in Albany in the first year of the de Blasio Administration.

And it’s been a long hard struggle to put the Bloomberg Genie back in the bottle. Local President Michael Cordiello has been relentless in his efforts, working every day with high ranking city hall officials, city attorneys, the Department of Education, and even the state legislature.

Throughout the strike and its aftermath, alongside President Cordiello, was a remarkable union officer, Recording Secretary Tom Jemmott. Together at almost every meeting they withstood all the arguments against our members, and fought the holdover Bloomberg administration officials – who had not been replaced in city government. They strategized how to overcome huge resistance throughout the government. This attack had come at the very time that workers and unions were under attack throughout the U.S.

The Local Union was stressed. The legal bills alone were in the millions of dollars. The officers put in long hours. The local officers cut their own pay, moved the headquarters to a more economical location and cut expenses, even as their work became more difficult.

The strain this placed on the members was also placing strain on the officers. They carried with them the agony and outrage of the membership to every meeting. Eventually, it took a toll, and Tom Jemmott’s heart failed last summer. ATU and Local 1181 lost a great officer, and Michael Cordiello lost a very close friend and confidant. But Michael and the other officers have soldiered on.

The news is changing. The Local appears to have turned a corner. The city has extended the contracts of bus companies that employ our members and did pass a $42 million supplement to help restore wages. But, the solutions have been imperfect and delayed. An attempt to get state legislation to support the mayor in his effort to restore employee protection is on track in Albany as you read this.

It is impossible for our members to know the amount of work and energy that has gone into this within the Local Union. We have all suffered losses, financial and personal in the process and we can never be made whole for all of them.

But, Local 1181 will survive and will soon be able to restore the jobs, salaries and benefits our members lost and help those still suffering to rebuild their lives. Hats off to the members and officers of Local 1181 for sticking together, working hard and weathering the storm of the century in their industry.
Do protests matter?

A recent article in *Governing* magazine posed the question: “Do Protests Impact Whether and How People Vote?” Recent pages of the *In Transit* and *ATU Dispatch* are filled with stories about our activism all over the U.S. and Canada, complete with T-shirts, signs, and blow up camels.

But, have our efforts affected whether and how people vote on the things that really matter to us, to our riders and our communities?

*Governing* notes that, in Wisconsin, demonstrations against Governor Scott Walker’s anti-union bills failed to stop the legislation, and that he won re-election amidst the highest turnout Wisconsin had seen since the 1950s…

Activism creates awareness

However, the demonstrations focused attention on Walker’s war on unions which, now that he seeks the presidency, have come under increased scrutiny as promised improvements in the state’s economic condition have failed to materialize. And in April, Wisconsin Supreme Court Justice Ann Walsh Bradley, who consistently votes to protect worker rights, was re-elected with a 10-point margin.

Voter registration efforts following the shooting death of Michael Brown last year put no more voters on the rolls in Ferguson, MO, than in the rest of St. Louis County. But, voter turnout for the following election was 30% higher than usual, putting African-Americans on the Ferguson Council.

Our coalition campaign failed to oust Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel, but by forcing the city’s first mayoral runoff, the coalition communicated their dissatisfaction with his administration more powerfully than anything else they could have done.

In Saskatoon, SK, riders joined our members in protesting the lockout of transit workers there, which eventually led to the City bringing their employees back to work.

Lasting change takes time, courage, commitment

Political action taken against entrenched economic interests rarely produces quick results. And if it does, those results are usually short-lived. Lasting change usually requires persistence over time, courage, and commitment.

And that’s where your union comes in. Individually, few of us can afford to be full-time activists, but collectively, we accomplish a lot.

It takes time to convince voters of the righteousness of a cause. Nevertheless, we must act, now, if we want to retain and win back all that we have fought for.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., challenged our moral compass to do what we knew was right. Cesar Chavez challenged us to engage in a boycott of conscience on farmworker-harvested grapes. We need to do that too.

President Barack Obama says, “Change will not come if we wait for some other person or some other time. We are the ones we’ve been waiting for. We are the change that we seek.” Nothing can stop us when people recognize that we are standing up for what is right.

Please visit [www.atu.org](http://www.atu.org) for more information and the latest ATU news.
Are we going backwards?

Do you ever get the feeling we’re going backwards? Lately, American news is filled with awful stories of police shootings of unarmed African-Americans that bring back bad memories from the past.

Some say this has been happening all along; that we’re just more aware of it today. But, it’s still painful to be confronted with the blatant disregard for the humanity of Black Americans murdered right before our eyes.

Why?

Now, I know that the vast majority of police and government officials are good people who strive to treat all people equally. But I wonder what has happened to us that we can view such raw injustice with what amounts to a collective shrug?

Have violent movies and video games glorified killing, and numbed us to its consequences? Has virulent hatred of the first African-American president been redirected toward persons of color?

No doubt these things have an effect, however, I can’t help but notice that heightened racial tension has resurfaced during a time of unprecedented wealth of the nation’s rich, and a sharp decline in the economic wellbeing of the poor and middle class.

Income inequality leads to violence

It’s just this sort of income inequality that has spurred violence between nations, religions, and ethnic groups throughout history.

Many think that’s why there has been such an upsurge in assaults on our drivers who show up at a bus stop wearing a uniform that some riders think represents everything that oppresses them. Others who are still trying to recover from the recession may be taking out their frustrations on immigrants and persons of color.

This, of course, is no excuse for racism, and certainly not for assaulting or killing innocent people, but it does help explain why racial violence is on the rise today.

Unions needed now more than ever

The ultra-rich must be watching the news at home with a great satisfaction, seeing that people are fighting and killing each other, rather than directing their anger at them – the ones who have legislatively orchestrated the transfer of wealth from the poor and middle class into their own deep pockets.

That’s why unions are needed now more than ever, and why the ultra-rich like the Koch brothers are doing everything they can to shut them down.

Labor elevates the social and economic condition of workers, and that is one of the most powerful ways we protect the civil rights of all people.

Let’s recommit ourselves to this noble work to hasten the day when racial prejudice and violence is no more. ❖

Please visit www.atu.org for more information and the latest ATU news.
‘WE ARE AFRAID’
DC MEMBERS TELL METRO GM

Creating a “safety culture” in the workplace has been a priority in many industries for some time. Perhaps, because of funding cuts and lack of training, accidents are happening in transit systems in the U.S. and Canada that many transit workers believe could have been prevented.

In the wake of a deadly event in Washington, DC, in which a stalled Metro train filled with smoke killing one, and sickening many others, Local 689 held a forum to openly express their safety concerns to Metro Interim General Manager Jack Requa.

Safety reports ignored

Transit workers expressed their frustration with having their safety reports ignored. Reports on issues that led to problems on the day smoke filled the subway tunnel were among them.

One member related reporting communication equipment problems long ago that stalled the rescue of the passengers in the smoke-filled cars.

Mechanic Greg Bowen, Jr., asserted, “…water leakage is a major problem within the tunnels. When water comes in and makes contact with third rail cables, it can pose extra high safety risk to all riders and workers.”

“I have serious concerns for my safety when I confront someone that doesn’t want to pay their fare,” says Station Manager Cynthia Gary. “I’ve been cussed out – threatened – even had weapons pulled on me just trying to do my job. We are afraid – I will say it again. We are afraid.”

Workers fear reprimand for reports

“More than anything, employees should not have to fear being reprimanded if they make a safety report,” said Train Operator Niya Banks. “This puts everyone in danger – from operators to the riders to the tax-paying public.”

Requa listened intently to all of the concerns, and responded, “We have to find ways to give you back information that we have as a result of a safety violation or recommendation that a person made. We need to get back to the front line employees to let them know that an action is being taken or will be taken.”

Station Manager Cynthia Gary: “I’ve been cussed out – threatened – even had weapons pulled on me just trying to do my job. We are afraid.”

Mechanic Greg Bowen, Jr.: “…water leakage is a major problem within the tunnels. When water comes in and makes contact with third rail cables, it can pose extra high safety risk to all riders and workers.”

Local President Jackie Jeter sits, left, with Metro Interim GM Jack Requa, who said: “We need to get back to the front line employees to let them know that an action is being taken or will be taken.”
Having abandoned getting legislation through the U.S. Congress, anti-union organizations have achieved success in recent years passing right-to-work (RTW) legislation in the nation’s statehouses.

Passage of a Wisconsin law in March pushed the number of RTW states to the halfway point of 25.

The architect of the Wisconsin RTW push was Governor Scott Walker, who took away the bargaining rights of Wisconsin public employees, sparking a major union uprising in Madison. Walker is now considering a run for the Republican Party’s 2016 presidential nomination.

Other RTW legislation has been introduced in Maine, Missouri, New Mexico, and West Virginia, and is being actively considered in other states.

ATU and the entire labor movement will be fighting RTW measures at all levels of government in the coming year.

ALEC

The success of new anti-union legislation can be attributed to the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC) that has been working long and hard to see this day come.

Billionaire Republican Governor Bruce Rauner has had less success in Illinois. He proposed allowing the state’s local governments to declare themselves RTW zones, and to opt-out of prevailing wage laws that require state contractors to pay living wages to their employees.

But, Attorney General Lisa Madigan has declared that both proposals violate state law. She also refused to carry out an order by the Rauner she says was illegal to seize and put into an escrow account the fees of union fair share fee objector members who pay union dues only for their local union’s representation work.

Madigan says that state and federal law only allow states to pass RTW measures. But that idea is not embraced in Warren County, KY, which in December 2014, became the first county in the nation to pass a local right-to-work law.

ACCE

Laws like these are being promoted by the American City County Exchange (ALEC offshoot).

The ultimate goal of both ALEC and ACCE is to destroy labor unions by defunding them. Supported, as they are, by the notorious Koch brothers, these anti-union organizations can be expected to press their case in state and local legislatures for some time to come.

Brendan Fischer, writing for the Center for Media & Democracy’s PR Watch describes their plans this way: “Right to work laws themselves cut off union funding by allowing workers to avoid paying for the costs of union representation – even as they benefit from union-negotiated wages and benefits.”

‘Death by a thousand cuts’

“RTW on the local level,” says Fischer, “additionally draws unions into dozens or possibly hundreds of costly battles, further depleting Labor's resources and with it, their influence.”

According to one speaker at a recent ACCE meeting, “There are literally thousands of targets for the [RTW] initiative… It is a death by a thousand cuts.”

It’s time to fight these attacks on organized labor and working families. The International and your local need your help. You can get started by volunteering to help your local in its political work, and signing up to receive ATU international training at training@atu.org.
With the May opening of Edmonton, AB’s Metro Line Light Rail Transit (LRT), and a 17 percent rise in attacks and other incidents, the city is seeking additional transit peace officers to stop criminal activity on the transit system.

The city’s report explains, “the activation of the Metro Line will bring additional security issues and Edmonton Transit will be further challenged to absorb the extra workload without impacting existing security operations.”

The city administration is asking for six more peace officers.

Edmonton’s Transit Riders’ Union, says improving safety on the city’s transit system is “huge” for increasing ridership.

The measure will go to the Edmonton City Council, which turned down a similar proposal by Edmonton’s police during the last round of budget debates.

‘Work shouldn’t hurt,’ says Rochester local president

No one would argue with Local President Jacques Chapman, 282-Rochester, NY, when he says, “Work shouldn’t hurt.” But for many, if not most ATU operators, that is a possibility they live with every day.

That unfortunate reality was illustrated yet again by a video of an attack by a male passenger on an eight-year veteran female driver that went viral on the Internet.

The video shows the passenger loudly trying to provoke the driver into an argument, and when that didn’t work, throwing punches, before running out of the bus.

Driver shield in place

A driver shield was in place during the incident, which didn’t prevent the assailant from reaching the driver, but did prevent him from doing any greater harm.

Chapman adds that shields do help, but he thinks the Rochester’s Regional Transit Service could be more supportive by not disciplining drivers when they defend themselves.

Police in Worcester, MA, are investigating an incident in which a passenger briefly hijacked a city bus at the end of a run, threatening its Local 22 operator with violence if he did not take him to another location.

Police say the passenger was told to get off the bus, but he insisted the driver continue driving or be punched.

The hijacker, police say, fled the scene after the driver took him where he wanted to go.

Local Business Agent/F.S. Kenneth K. Kephart says the driver went right back to work and other drivers are aware of what took place.

“It’s a joint venture of everybody involved to make sure everybody’s safe,” Kephart says. “All the operators are aware of situations that arise. … Safety is a number one priority for us.”

Worcester police probe hijacking of city bus

Local Business Agent/F.S. Kenneth K. Kephart says the driver went right back to work and other drivers are aware of what took place.

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Operators **unfairly** blamed for accidents caused by bus design flaws

Across North America, hazardous bus designs are causing tragic pedestrian accidents, yet our members are often blamed. Nowhere is worse than in New York, where operators are being taken away in handcuffs, despite problems like the design pictured on the right - MTA Orion whose pillar and mirror are over a foot wide. An ATU safety specialist showed a video, demonstrating the scale of the problem, to the engineer responsible for this design. A redesign resulted, demonstrating that for under $300 per bus the blind area could be made smaller than the space between the eyes. (One eye or the other sees all angles.)

The scale is daunting; a photo below shows a nearby pedestrian copied 13 times across the pillar and mirror. In stark contrast, at right, a photo shows that the answer is as simple as designs from a half-century ago!

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**NY MTA Orion Bus**

**Mirror and pillar over one foot wide**

**A safe design from the 1960's**

**Bad design hides large numbers of pedestrians.**
NYC school bus Local struggles have long history

It started in 2012. The leadership of Local 1181, ATU’s New York City school bus Local, had been in negotiations with private school bus contractors in an attempt to reach agreements to replace their contracts, which were set to expire December 31.

The Local’s leadership asked then-mayor, Michael Bloomberg to join the negotiations to ensure that job protections would be maintained in the next contract. However, Bloomberg refused to meet with the Local, because, he insisted that they negotiate solely with their nominal employers – the city’s private school bus contractors.

In December 2012, Mayor Bloomberg announced that a recent court decision made the employee protection provisions (EPPs) in the city’s school bus contracts illegal, reversing a policy dating back to 1979 – the last time city’s school bus drivers went on strike. Bloomberg removed the EPPs.

The 1979 strike ended in an agreement mediated by Milton Mollen, chief justice of the state Supreme Court, which settled the matter for over three decades.

The Mollen agreement

The Mollen agreement created EPPs that guaranteed that if a contractor lost a route, its displaced drivers and matrons could transfer into open jobs at other school bus companies, based on seniority, and retain the same pay and benefits.

In December 2012, with state and municipal governments still using the Great Recession as an excuse to enact “austerity budgets,” Bloomberg let 1,100 of the city’s 7,700 school bus routes out for competitive bidding without requiring EPPs.

Local 1181 protested: Salaries for drivers and matrons were hardly “generous.” Drivers’ top pay was $43,000 per year; matrons averaged just $24,000.

Nevertheless, public reaction was scathing. How could the “greedy” drivers abandon school children so soon after they had just missed so much class time due to Hurricane Sandy? How could they withhold as much as $500 million in savings that could be put to good use in the classroom? The New York Post called it “extortion.”

Critics claimed New York was spending $1.1 billion each year for school transportation – $6,900 per student – and that, they claimed was more than any other school district in the country. And because the city would continue to maintain the same hiring standards, it charged that ATU was putting the children at risk.

However, the local leadership fought back, reaching out to parent groups, politicians and the public to build a strong coalition, countering that the forced exodus of the most experienced drivers and matrons would jeopardize children’s safety.
The 2013 Strike!

Close to 8,800 Local 1181 members walked off the job on Wednesday, January 16, 2013, leaving the parents of 150,000 school children scrambling to find a way to get their kids to school during some of the coldest weeks of the winter. Particularly affected were the city’s 54,000 special needs students who require skilled assistance.

Bloomberg called the job action “a strike against our children,” and blamed ATU for the ballooning cost of school transportation that had escalated from $100 million in 1979, to $1.1 billion in 2013.

Unfair

That wasn’t fair. First, when adjusted for inflation that $1 billion increase amounted to $275 million.

And, second, population increases, new seat belt requirements, providing door-to-door service for students with disabilities, an increase in routes from 2,000 in 1979, to 7,700 in 2013, and the emergence of “school choice” were chiefly responsible for increased costs.

“The best way for this strike to end is with Local 1181, Mayor Bloomberg and the city’s bus companies in one room, talking candidly and in good faith,” said Local President Michael Cordiello. But the mayor continued to maintain the charade that the city had nothing to do with school bus employment.

On January 29, 2013, some of the companies began employing replacement drivers. As the strike entered its third week, the contractors cut off health care, and suspended payments to their employees’ pension plans.
‘Heartless and ruthless’

On February 10, 2013, labor and community activists joined thousands supporting the strikers in a march over the Brooklyn Bridge that culminated at City Hall. “The mayor forced this,” said one marcher. “He’s heartless and ruthless.”

It was looking increasingly like Local 1181 members could lose their jobs.

With no ongoing negotiations, and jobs on the line, Local 1181 members decided to pursue another strategy. They secured a commitment from the five top Democratic candidates for mayor – including candidate Bill de Blasio – that, if elected, they would “revisit” the EPP decision.

The strike ends

With that promise in hand, they went back to work on February 16, 2013, and renewed contract negotiations.

But, a month later on March 22, 2013, the school bus contractors unilaterally declared an impasse. After that they imposed wage cuts of 7.5 percent on drivers and 3.5 percent on matrons and cut up to five weeks of accrued wage pay among others reductions.

Local 1181 and the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) went to court with 1181’s leadership vigorously charging that the companies were bargaining in bad faith, and asking for an injunction against the cuts.

On April 26, 2013, the city put another 3,100 contracts without EPPs out for bid. In May, the DOE hired companies for the first 1,100 routes without EPPs in their contracts. That meant that 2,000 school bus employees would lose their jobs by June, or be forced to accept decreased compensation.

“This is union busting at its absolute worst,” said Cordiello.

Good news arrived on September 3, 2013, when Brooklyn Federal Judge Kiyo Matsumoto ruled on the charges brought by the Local and the NLRB, affirming that federal labor law says that an impasse can only be declared when both sides agree – not when one side decides. Matsumoto ordered the companies to restore the wage and benefit cuts, and resume “good-faith bargaining.”

The companies said they would appeal. The parties returned to the bargaining table.

De Blasio elected

Bill de Blasio was elected mayor of New York on November 5, 2013, and Local 1181 waited anxiously for news about how he would restore the EPPs in their employers’ contracts.

On December 4, 2013, the Local voted down a concessionary contract proffered by Atlantic Express – one of the major suppliers of school bus transportation in New York. The company, claiming it could not afford anything more, filed for bankruptcy the following day.

Later, the Local leadership and the International worked with the new mayor to come up with a plan to restore the wages and benefits that were taken from the drivers and matrons as a result of the April 2013 bid contracts (without EPPs), that had gone into effect in September.

Subsequently, De Blasio proposed, and the City Council approved, appropriating $42 million in grants to the bus companies to restore the wages of experienced New York City school bus workers, which provided some security for the school year.

Dramatic change

Things have changed dramatically since then. While Bloomberg refused to negotiate with the union, the de Blasio administration worked with Local 1181 to create a new law that will protect the employees of New York’s school bus operators.

In fact the de Blasio administration rejected a recent round of non-EPP bids from a group of school bus companies, delaying the bidding process until the state legislature votes on the law that would reinstate Employee Protection Provisions for experienced bus drivers, matrons and mechanics.

For his part, Local President Cordiello says he remains committed to defend the employee protections of his members, and that he won’t stop until those protections are restored.
The Metropolitan Council of Minneapolis-St. Paul, MN, is searching for ways to reduce fare evasion in the wake of a recent audit that revealed that Twin Cities’ Metro Transit is losing $28,000 per week to fare evasion.

Currently, over 200 Metro Transit police officers conduct over one million fare checks per year. The agency plans to hire more police in addition to increasing “public awareness” of the problem.

It’s a difficult problem at all transit agencies. Research shows that increased enforcement, or even installing turnstiles does not reduce fair evasion.

Council members are trying to find ways to fix the problem short of a crackdown on transit scofflaws. One council member suggested offering passengers a free ride after a certain number of swipes of their transit pass.

Fare cheating up in Vancouver, BC

Vancouver public transit operators pressed a “fare not paid” button in their vehicles over 2.9 million times in 2014. That’s 200,000 more than the year before.

Some think the increase in fare cheating could be the result of better reporting. Others say that the number of employees responsible for fare enforcement – transit police and security – has not kept pace with the growth in ridership.

Toronto Transit to drivers: Don’t confront fare cheats

All transit operators know that the most assaults on drivers begin with a fare dispute. In an effort to avoid violence on public transit, Mayor John Tory has approved Toronto Transit Commission (TTC) CEO Andy Byford’s instruction to drivers not to confront riders who refuse to pay the proper fare.

Tory says that he hopes most people will adopt the “honourable approach,” but, he adds, “If people had a choice between saying they would rather see their drivers involved in shouting, pushing and shoving matches with people not paying their fare, or getting on with driving the bus to its destination and calling the fare inspectors to deal with these matters, I think they’d pick get on with driving the bus.”

New technology

Tory doesn’t believe that most passengers will avoid paying fares. TTC is going to hire more inspectors, he says, and new technology will make it tougher for fare cheats.

Local President Bob Kinnear, 113, isn’t so sure this is a good idea. He believes that more people will decide to ride for free, and that will cost the TTC millions.

“For some riders, it’s a game and our people encourage them to pay up,” he said. “Ensuring that people do pay the fare is part of their job and they do it well.”


Las Vegas members rally for unity, fairness

You know they’re getting desperate when they arrest your camel.

Calling for fair treatment, a fair contract and economic justice for all working people in Las Vegas, NV, Local 1637 members working for the Regional Transportation Commission (RTC) held a unity rally in which the 15-foot inflatable ATU camel was arrested.

RTC workers have been working without a contract for more than two years. Meanwhile RTC General Manager Tina Quigley got a pay increase and bonus package valued in excess of $17,400. Her salary now exceeds $222,000, which with her retirement makes her one of the highest compensated transit managers in the United States.

Disrespect

“RTC and their private contractors continue to pay poverty wages and treat us with disrespect,” says Local President Jose Mendoza.

RTC workers have launched a public awareness campaign with various activities including leafleting riders, rallies, social media campaigns and more. Stay tuned for updates.

Seattle Local, coalition question Veolia/Transdev contract

Members of the King County (WA) Council have asked County Executive Dow Constantine to reconsider the county’s contract with Veolia (now called Transdev) for operation of its Metro Access paratransit bus service.

Council Chair Larry Phillips sent a letter to Constantine signed by the five Democrats on the nine-person council, urging the executive to investigate “serious concerns for many aspects of Access service, including rider experience, labor protections, wages, and potential cost overruns to our government.”

Accused of human rights abuses

The letter follows a resolution introduced last year by Local 587-Seattle, WA, and passed by the local AFL-CIO Labor Council that urges the county to end its contract with Veolia, to preclude Veolia from bidding on future contracts, and to bring Metro Access in-house. Veolia is under attack internationally for anti-labor practices and flagrant human rights abuses.
Savings?

Metro said signing with Veolia was supposed to save King County $1 million annually. But changes to the contract three years later added an additional $7 million in annual costs. In addition, Access users report that the service has deteriorated since the French multinational took over the service in 2008.

Lafayette members urge riders to lobby IN legislature

When the last recession hit the U.S. and Canada in 2008, many local, state, and provincial legislatures used it as an opportunity to impose “austerity budgets” which put the greatest burden for solving the government revenue crunch on the poor and middle class. This lead to deep cuts, and fare increases in public transit.

But, since the recession has been officially declared “over,” funding for public transit has remained at austerity levels. And so public transit service in many areas continues to spiral downward as expenses and demand increase.

However, Local 1741-Lafayette, IN, decided to do something about it, taking to bus terminals to urge riders to support Indiana House Bill 1215, which would increase state transportation funding from $42.5 million to $60 million for the next three years.

Outsourced DC-area paratransit workers rally for respect, living wage

Focusing attention on poor service and sweatshop-level wages and working conditions, Washington, DC area transit workers, riders and supporters held rallies across the metro area.

On April 4, to honor the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. on the anniversary of his assassination, a “Rally for Respect” was held at the Metro Access (paratransit) Call Center for the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) in Hyattsville, MD. The paratransit workers rallied again with riders – this time at WMATA’s Washington, DC headquarters, on May Day.

ATU members have endured poor treatment as a result of the agency’s outsourcing of public paratransit service to private management companies.
There aren’t many unions in Aspen, CO, but the employees at Roaring Fork Transportation Authority (RFTA) just organized an ATU Local there that is already making strides in labor-management cooperation.

Local President Ed Cortez, 1774, casts the election in a broad context: “We’re a union now. It feels very, very good to me. We worked very hard. And the results of that were reflected in the vote. As of this vote Labor has changed in the Roaring Fork Valley.”

Far from typical

The reaction of RFTA management to the organizing win was far from typical. CEO Dan Blankenship responded to the vote, saying, “I want to compliment the proponents of the union, the people who were leading the effort. I think overall they did a good job and I believe the process was not really disruptive to ongoing RFTA operations, everybody’s been performing in a professional manner.”

ATU is glad to welcome these new members to the ATU family.

New members – Where?

ATU has some new members in Indiana – but they’re not where you think they are. The employees of Indiana County Transportation Authority (IndiGo) in Indiana, Pennsylvania, have chosen ATU as their collective bargaining representative. Indiana, PA, is located in the north central part of the Keystone State.

ATU also extends a warm welcome to these new members.

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ATU caucuses meeting from May through September

**Black Caucus:**
**48th Annual Conference**
May 28 -31, 2015
Sheraton Pittsburgh Hotel at Station Sq.
300 W Station Square Dr.
Pittsburgh, PA 15219

*For more information contact:*
Kenneth Day, President (Local 1338)
(214) 828-1641

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**Women Caucus:**
**29th Annual Conference**
June 25 -28, 2015
Radisson Hotel Edmonton South
4440 Gateway Boulevard
Edmonton, AB, T6H5C2 Canada

*For more information contact:*
Jackie Jeter, President (Local 689)
(301) 568-6899

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**Latino Caucus:**
**26th Annual Conference**
September 25 - 27, 2015
Los Angeles, CA

*For more information contact:*
Wilson M. Rios, President (Local 308)
(773) 263-2654

ATU calls on Baton Rouge transit chief to resign

Baton Rouge, LA, Capital Area Transit (CATS) CEO Bob Mirabito should resign for saying that he wished he had fewer African-American bus drivers, says International President Larry Hanley.

“This racially charged insult to the hard working CATS employees who safely transport the people of Baton Rouge every day can not go unchallenged,” says Hanley. “We call on Mirabito to step down.”

Protest

A month earlier, CATS employees took to the streets to make the public aware of safety concerns, contract violations, and poor maintenance at the agency. “We have the qualified mechanics to do the [maintenance] but they don’t have the equipment to work with,” says Local President Naomi Guy, 1546-Baton Rouge, LA.

Drivers say they have driven buses with poor maintenance, causing them to be late for arrivals and nearly causing vehicle accidents due to bad brakes. Guy also charges that the transit agency is not honoring their contract. “They are suspending a lot of our operators and not giving them [or the union] the reason why they’re suspended,” she says.

Local 1546 members are expected to keep up the pressure in the coming months.

DC Streetcar fires 7 workers involved in ATU organizing campaign

In addition to the many woes and missteps that have led to questions about its viability, Washington, DC’s new streetcar project (DC Streetcar) now stands accused of illegally firing almost a third of its employees in retaliation for union organizing.

ATU had just reached an agreement with DC Streetcar management to hold an election.

“One on the very next day...,” said International President Larry Hanley, “they start firing workers. All of a sudden they started to review videos of the workplace, and they claim they saw safety violations.... It’s obvious there’s a connection between the agreement to have an election and their sudden decision to start firing large groups of the workforce.”

The terminated Streetcar employees assert that they did nothing that they hadn’t done for the previous year.

ATU has filed a complaint with the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) charging that DC Streetcar interfered with its workers’ legal rights by firing employees involved in an organizing campaign.

‘Managers should be fired’

“Not only have Streetcar managers failed in almost every aspect of the development of this new system, but they want to muzzle any criticism by their employees,” said Hanley. “The managers should be fired – not the workers who are trying to make an impossible project work.”

ATU supports the DC government’s current re-evaluation of the entire project, and urges it to put the actual needs of area transit users ahead of a “boutique” streetcar project that duplicates better service already in place.
Operators save wandering senior in Calgary

Sandra Kunzel, 583-Calgary, AB, helped save a wandering senior who had lost his way in the city.

Two hawk-eyed bus operators recently helped save the day by finding a missing elderly man wandering six hours outside in the cold.

Operator Sandra Kunzel, 583-Calgary, AB, didn’t think anything was wrong with the man when he asked her for directions to downtown Calgary at about 7:30 p.m. But, later, when she spotted him not far from his original location at 10:30 p.m., she suspected something was wrong.

Just then, Calgary Transit received an emergency bulletin from Calgary Police about a missing man suffering from dementia. Kunzel realized the man she was looking at matched the description issued by the police.

“I immediately called the controller and hoped the police would get there very soon,” she said.

Meanwhile, another driver, Marius Udeh, 583, recalled dropping the passenger at the exact stop, making it easy for police to locate him.

“I’m an observer, I’m pretty detail-oriented,” says Kunzel, who has been a bus operator since 1978. “I probably see up to 900 people a day.”

Police found the man in good condition and took him home. “I’m just glad that he’s back with people who know him or can help him,” says Kunzel. “It’s a positive outcome and that’s nice to hear.”

Information about Traveling to Canada

An international destination of choice, Toronto is easily accessed by land, water and air. Don’t forget to ensure you have a valid passport at all times. American citizens returning home should also be aware that there are new customs requirements in effect.

For more information, visit the websites of:

- Citizenship and Immigration Canada

- U.S. Department of State (Passport Information)
  http://www.travel.state.gov/content/travel/english.html
Toronto Local: Don’t give Bechtel a no-bid contract for subway project

Local 113-Toronto, ON, is warning that the decision by TTC CEO Andy Byford to give U.S. engineering giant Bechtel an $80 million sole-source, no-bid contract to take over management of the troubled Spadina Subway Expansion project is short circuiting public procurement policies in a misguided attempt to gain a few months on a critical segment of infrastructure that will likely last more than a hundred years.

Saviour?

“We’re not disputing that TTC management needs to be saved from its incompetence,” says Local President Bob Kinnear. “We’re troubled, however, that a company with an apparently sketchy record like Bechtel is being cast as the saviour in this civic drama of taxpayer fleecing.”

Kinnear said it was disappointing that only two of eleven TTC Commissioners wanted to subject the project management “reset” contract to a bidding process in accordance with long-standing city procurement policies.

“We don’t know if Bechtel is better or worse than others in this industry, but the history of issues surrounding them should compel us to take a little more time to check out who we’re getting into bed with,” Kinnear says. “Especially when it comes to transit.”

Winnipeg members to City: ‘Fix it, fund it, make it fair’

Local 1505-Winnipeg, MB, is calling on the City to expand its bus service and adopt a “safer, saner approach” to providing transit service.

“Our message to the City is simple: fix it, fund it, and make it fair,” says Local President John Callahan. “Winnipeggers deserve a safer and more reliable transit service. But when the City compensates transit workers below the national average, refuses to hire enough drivers to deliver the service our communities need, and works those that they do employ 13 hours per day, they are jeopardizing their obligation to provide that safe and reliable service to the citizens of Winnipeg.”

A first year Winnipeg Transit operator is paid $18.42 per hour while working a three-part shift just to earn a standard eight hours’ worth of pay. “That means a bus operator who is devoted to his riders can spend up to 15 hours per day in uniform and only be paid for half of that,” Callahan says. “It’s not right for the workers, and is it safe for our riders?” The Local has been working tirelessly to reach a contract settlement with the City and the agency over the last several months.

No movement

In the last two meetings with the City and Winnipeg Transit, there has been no movement toward reaching a fair contract for Transit employees. This prompted the Local to call on members to stop working voluntary overtime, effective April 27, until they are willing to meet and negotiate a fair and competitive deal.

“It is the goal of ATU to deliver a safer, more reliable service, and we expect the City to get back to the table and talk with us in a meaningful way about making our system stronger.”

The contract between Local 1505 and the City of Winnipeg expired January 17, 2015. At the request of the City, the Local has agreed to enter into conciliation.
ATU members join Québec City ‘Act on Climate’ March

The ATU Canadian Council lent its official support to the “Act on Climate Change” March in Québec City, QC, in April. ATU members were among the thousands of Canadians who took to the streets to call on Canada to curb tar sands growth and take action to address the threat of climate change.

About 100 buses were driven to the rally with many passengers from different parts of Québec. Once there, they marched for about three kilometres to the National Assembly.

Protesters wore red and arranged themselves so that from the sky it looked like a bursting thermometer.

25,000 marchers

The march, which was organized by “Act on Climate,” drew 25,000 participants from across Canada, including representatives from First Nations, environmental groups, unions, and student groups. The protesters’ march came a few days before Canada hosted a provincial summit on climate change in Québec City, during which the country’s premiers discussed their plans in the lead-up to the U.N. climate talks this November in Paris.

One of the messages the protesters wanted to send to the premiers was their opposition to proposed tar sands pipelines like Northern Gateway and Energy East. Those projects, opponents say, would endanger Canada’s land and water and accelerate the fossil fuel production that drives climate change.

Halifax Husky hails bus home, doesn’t pay fare

The fare evasion problem is so pervasive now it has spread to the animal kingdom.

“Keiko,” a two-year old Husky residing in Dartmouth, NS, has a bad habit of jumping over her backyard fence, but she always returns home.

After a recent jump, however, she went wandering too far and found herself dodging cars on a busy street. An alert pedestrian, who was waiting for a bus managed to corral the dog.

That’s when driver Gerry O’Donnell, 508-Halifax, NS, arrived at the bus stop. Keiko was fortunate that O’Donnell, a dog lover involved with dog sledding, dog fostering and dog rescue, was willing to bend the rules a little and give the dog a ride home. Keiko took a seat at the back of the bus, happily looking out the window during the trip.

Keiko’s owner was quickly found at the end of the line, and O’Donnell arranged for the dog to be picked up at her home. O’Donnell said that Keiko was “good as gold,” but, “she still owes me $2.50 for a bus ride.”
Passenger gets 6 months for threatening to kill Toronto driver, robbery

A man has been sent to jail for six months for threatening a TTC operator as well as robbing a woman of money in a separate incident.

A Toronto, ON, bus operator was involved in a fare dispute in December with a man who threatened the operator with death, and then fled the bus. Toronto Police arrived at the scene of the incident and arrested the suspect a short distance away. Police also charged the suspect with robbing a woman two days earlier.

Wayne McLaren, 48, pleaded guilty to the two charges and was sentenced to six months in jail and two years' probation. He may be the first to be convicted after passage of Bill S-221, (see page 7) which requires judges to consider assault on a transit operator an aggravating factor when passing sentence, and covers operators of buses, streetcars and subways, as well as taxicab drivers.

On average, one TTC employee is assaulted every day, ranging from punching, slapping and spitting, to threats of physical harm or death.

Regina president puzzled by bus lane elimination

Local President Don Baker, 588-Regina, SK, is puzzled by a recent City Council action eliminating bus lanes on two downtown streets during non-peak hours.

“The whole idea behind it is to provide better traffic flow and reduce overall delays for vehicles,” says Regina Traffic Manager Ravi Seera.

But, Baker explains, “Drivers have been scrambling to stick to transit schedules that haven't kept pace with the City's increasingly busy roads and growing number of transit users.” He says getting stuck behind cars “will back us up even more.”

Tired and stressed

Losing bus lanes in downtown Regina might mean commuters won’t get picked up on time, the local president says. “Some of the operators are getting a little bit tired and stressed.”

Baker only found out about the proposal after it passed. “I wish we’d had a chance to raise our concerns about it. The operators are the ones out there driving all day; they have a good idea of what works and what doesn’t,” he says.

The bus lane changes will be monitored over the next year at the request of City Councillor Shawn Fraser who says, he’s “not convinced that it’s going to make the traffic situation downtown better for anyone.”
La section locale des conducteurs d’autobus scolaires de la ville de New York lutte pour la protection des employés


Les membres de la plus grande section locale du SUT, Local 1181 de la ville de New York, ont traversé une période très difficile. Alors que le maire milliardaire Michael Bloomberg quittait ses fonctions, il a dépouillé nos membres d’une protection du travail qui existait depuis 1979, et même avant selon d’autres documents.

Ce magazine nous relate l’histoire récente du combat des conducteurs d’autobus scolaires dans l’une des villes les plus riches du monde. Un endroit où les magnats globe-trotters achètent des condos à 100 millions de dollars, mais où les femmes et les hommes qui travaillent pour payer la scolarisation de leurs enfants deviennent la cible de l’envie des riches. Trop payé! Coûte trop cher! Grey Poupon?

Confrontés à toute la force de la ville qui anéantit leurs contrats et leurs postes, les membres de la section locale ont débrayé.

Durant la grève de 2013, dans une température de 15 degrés, j’étais sur le piquet de grève, dans le Bronx, lorsqu’une manifestante, qui était déjà en grève depuis quelques semaines, me dit que notre personnel était le bienvenu chez elle pour le souper. « Nous n’avons peut-être que des tonnes de nouilles », dit-elle, mais elle nous ouvrait sa maison. Ce que ces travailleurs ont vécu, en essayant simplement de conserver leur emploi et leur salaire, est difficile à expliquer.

Un an après la grève, après les mises à pied massives, après les perturbations, un nouveau maire a été élu. Il était rempli de promesses et de politiques très différentes de celles de Bloomberg. Le maire de Blasio offrait tout son soutien; malgré tout, nous avons été incapables de faire adopter une mesure législative à Albany durant le premier mandat de l’administration de Blasio.

Et la lutte fut longue et ardue pour remettre le génie Bloomberg dans sa bouteille. Le président de la section locale, Michael Cordiello, n’a pas ménagé ses efforts, travaillant chaque jour avec les hauts dirigeants de l’hôtel de ville, les avocats de la ville, le département de l’Éducation et même la législation de l’État.

Durant la grève, et après, aux côtés du président Cordiello, se tenait un dirigeant syndical remarquable : le rédacteur de procès-verbal, Tom Jemmott. Ensemble à presque toutes les rencontres, ils ont réfuté tous les arguments contre nos membres et ont combattu les membres restants de l’administration Bloomberg – ceux qui n’ont pas été remplacés au sein de l’administration municipale. Ils ont mis au point des stratégies pour contrer l’énorme résistance à travers toute l’administration. Cette attaque survenait alors que les travailleurs et les syndicats étaient la cible d’attaques à travers tous les É.-U.

La Section locale sous le stress Les frais juridiques, à eux seuls, s’élèvent à des millions de dollars. Les dirigeants ont investi de longues heures. Les dirigeants locaux ont réduit leur propre salaire, ont démélangé les quartiers généraux dans un emplacement plus économique, ont réduit les dépenses même si leur travail devenait plus difficile.

La pression que subissaient les membres était également subie par les dirigeants. Ils portaient sur leurs épaules l’agonie et l’indignation des membres à chacune des rencontres. Finalement, cela n’a pas été sans conséquence : le coeur le Tom Jemmot a cessé de battre l’été dernier. La SUT et la section locale 1181 ont perdu un grand dirigeant; Michael Cordiello a perdu un ami proche et un confident. Mais, Micheal et les autres dirigeants ont tenu le coup.

Les nouvelles changent. Il semble que la section locale ait franchi un nouveau tournant. La ville a prolongé les contrats des compagnies d’autobus qui emploient nos membres et ont adopté un supplément de 42 millions de dollars afin de rétablir les salaires. Mais les solutions ont été imparfaites et différées. Une tentative d’obtenir la législation de l’État pour soutenir le maire dans son effort visant à rétablir la protection des employés est sur la bonne voie à Albany, au moment où vous lisez ceci.

Il est impossible pour nos membres de connaître l’ampleur du travail et de l’énergie qui a été déployée au sein de la section locale. Nous avons tous subi des pertes, financières et personnelles, dans ce processus et nous ne pourrions jamais les récupérer entièrement.

Mais, la section locale 1181 survivra et sera bientôt en mesure de rétablir les postes, les salaires et les avantages que nos membres ont perdus, et aider ceux qui en souffrent encore à reconstruire leurs vies. Chapeau aux membres et aux dirigeants de la section locale 1181 pour s’être tenus debout ensemble, pour avoir travaillé fort et affronté la tempête du siècle au cœur de leur industrie.

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Les manifestations sont-elles importantes?


Mais nos efforts ont-ils un effet sur l’incidence et le choix du vote de la population sur les sujets qui sont vraiment importants pour nous, pour nos usagés et pour nos communautés?

Governing remarque qu’au Wisconsin, les manifestations contre les projets de loi anti-syndicats du gouverneur Scott Walker n’ont pas réussi à le bloquer; il a été réélu avec le taux de participation au scrutin le plus élevé que le Wisconsin ait vu depuis les années 1950...

L’activisme sensibilise

Toutefois, les manifestations ont attiré l’attention sur la volonté de Walker de faire la guerre aux syndicats ce qui, maintenant qu’il convoite la présidence, est de plus en plus examiné alors que les promesses d’améliorer la santé économique de l’État ne se sont pas concrétisées. De plus, en avril, la juge de la Cour suprême du Wisconsin, Ann Walsh Bradley qui vote constamment en faveur de la protection des droits des travailleurs, a été réélue avec une majorité de 10 points.

Les efforts déployés pour inscrire les électeurs suite à la fusillade de Michael Brown l’an dernier n’ont pas inscrit davantage d’électeurs sur la liste de Ferguson, au Missouri, que dans le reste de St Louis County. Par contre, le taux de participation à l’élection suivante fut 30 % plus élevé que d’habitude et des Afro-Américains siègent désormais au Conseil de Ferguson.

Notre campagne de coalition n’a pas réussi à évincer le maire de Chicago, Rahm Emanuel; mais, en provoquant pour la première fois une course à la mairie de cette ville, la coalition a réussi à manifester son mécontentement face à l’administration plus que tout autre moyen ne lui aurait permis.

À Saskatoon, SK, les usagers se sont joints à nos membres pour manifester contre le lockout des employés du transport en commun, ce qui s’est finalement conclu par un rappel au travail des employés de la Ville.

Des changements durables exigent temps, courage et engagement

Les actions politiques contre des intérêts économiques bien installés produisent rarement des résultats rapides. Et si on réussit, ces résultats sont habituellement éphémères. Des changements durables requièrent normalement de la persistance, du courage et de l’engagement.

Et c’est justement le rôle de votre syndicat. Individuellement, peu d’entre nous peuvent se permettre d’être militants à temps plein, mais collectivement, nous accomplissons de grandes choses.

Il faut du temps pour convaincre les électeurs de la vertu d’une cause. Néanmoins, nous devons agir, maintenant, si nous voulons conserver et reprendre ces avantages pour lesquels nous avons lutté.

Le docteur Martin Luther King, Jr. a sollicité notre sens moral profond pour que nous fussions ce que nous savions être juste. César Chavez a éveillé notre conscience en sollicitant notre engagement au boycottage des raisins récoltés par des ouvriers agricoles. Nous aussi avons besoin de le faire.

Le président Barack Obama dit : « Les changements ne se produiront pas si l’on attend pour quelqu’un d’autre ou pour un moment plus propice. Nous sommes ceux et celles que nous attendions. Nous sommes le changement que nous souhaitons. » Rien ne peut nous arrêter lorsque la population reconnaît que nous représentons une cause juste. ❖

Veuillez visiter le www.atu.org pour de plus amples renseignements et les plus récentes nouvelles du SUT.

Reculons-nous?

Avez-vous parfois l’impression que nous régressons? Dernièrement, les nouvelles américaines, remplies d’histoires d’horreur à propos de policiers tirant sur des Afro-Américains non armés, font ressurgir de mauvais souvenirs du passé.

Certains disent que ce genre d’événement s’est toujours produit; nous en sommes simplement plus conscients aujourd’hui. Mais, il est toujours douloureux d’être confrontés au mépris flagrant contre l’humanité des Afro-Américains assassinés sous nos yeux.

Pourquoi?

Je sais que la grande majorité des policiers et des dirigeants
gouvernementaux sont de bonnes personnes qui aspirent à traiter les gens de façon équitable. Mais je me demande ce qui nous est arrivé pour voir de telles injustices et n’y réagir qu’avec l’équivalent d’un haussement d’épaules collectif?

Les films et les jeux vidéo violents ont-ils réussi à glorifier le meurtre et à nous engourdir à ses conséquences? Une haine virulente pour le premier président afro-américain a-t-elle été redirigée vers les gens de couleur?

Ces éléments ont sans doute un impact; toutefois, je ne peux m’empêcher de remarquer que la hausse des tensions raciales refait surface au moment où les riches du pays sont plus fortunés que jamais, et que le bien-être économique des pauvres et de la classe moyenne est en forte baisse.

L’inégalité des revenus mène à la violence

C’est justement ce genre d’inégalité de revenu qui a déclenché la violence entre les nations, les religions et les groupes ethniques à travers l’histoire.

Beaucoup pensent que c’est la raison d’une telle recrudescence des agressions sur nos chauffeurs se présentant en uniforme à un arrêt de bus, ce qui représente pour certains usagers tout ce qui les opprime. D’autres qui essaient toujours de se remettre de la récession pourraient faire subir leurs frustrations aux immigrants ou aux personnes de couleur.

Bien entendu, ce n’est pas une excuse pour justifier le racisme et certainement pas pour attaquer ou tuer des personnes innocentes, mais cela aide à expliquer pourquoi les violences raciales sont en hausse.

Les syndicats plus nécessaires que jamais

Les richissimes doivent regarder avec une grande satisfaction les bulletins de nouvelles où l’on voit les gens se battre et s’entre-tuer au lieu de diriger leur colère vers eux – ceux qui ont législativement orchestré le transfert de la richesse des pauvres et de la classe moyenne vers leurs propres poches sans fond.

Voilà pourquoi les syndicats sont nécessaires maintenant plus que jamais et pourquoi les richissimes comme les frères Koch font tout en leur pouvoir pour les faire disparaître.

Le travail améliore la condition sociale et économique des travailleurs et c’est l’un des moyens les plus puissants avec lequel nous protégeons les droits civils pour tous.

Réitérons notre engagement à cette noble tâche pour que bientôt, les préjugés et la violence raciale soient à jamais relégués au passé.

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Death Benefits Awarded January 1, 2015 - February 28, 2015

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DOUGLAS C ANDERSON
ELMER E HENDERSON
ROBERT J MARSHALL
RUSSELL M MATHES
ROBERT W STALEY
ROBERT J TERRY
CHARLES C TITUS
JAMES R TOMLINSON
PAT WHITCOMB

26- DETROIT, MI
ROBERT W KELLY

85- PITTSBURGH, PA
JOHN R CAVANAUGH
CHARLES W CROSBY
TILFORD FRANCIS DIZE
DAVID A FULLER
RAYMOND ADAM GLASER
PAUL J JIMORF
WALTER KENNETH KOYSE
SAMUEL P MANZO
GEOFFREY L MC CALL
STEVEN A MINNAJI
PAUL M ROSENBERGER
PAUL W SCHEMM
PAUL M ROSENBERGER
STEVEN A MINNAJI
SAMUEL P MANZO
WALTER KENNETH KOSKY
PAUL J IMHOFF
RAYMOND ADAM GLASER
DAVID A FULLER
CHARLES W CROSBY
JOHN R CAVANAUGH
ROBERT W KELLY

113- TORONTO, ON
LOUIS ANTONIADIS
EDGAR L BARBER
ALBERT MANNA
JAAK IIR
PATRICK M HOSANNAH
JERRY GRILLO
STEFANO GERONIMO
EMILE J DOUCETTE

580- SYRACUSE, NY
SHARON A MORGAN
ALBERT PARKER

583- CALGARY, AB
EDWARD G ASTALNOK
BRUCE BIEBER
JOSEPH F BLAKEMORE
RICHARD L BLENFIELD
CHESLEY R HALL
NANCY D KILBURN

587- SEATTLE, WA
CHARLES DION
JOHN F GATER
RICHARD J RIES
MICHAEL S ROSSNER
ELMER TURNER

588- REGINA, SK
JOSEPH HARLAN PERRY

590- BOSTON, MA
HERBERT W BURGESS
FRANK L CAVARETTA
BRUCE CHAN
GARRETT J COLLINS
ROBERT E GARDNER
PATRICK J HYNES
JOHN K KELLY
SHERO S PAPPAS
FRANCIS W PAQUETTE
JOHN W RITCHART
STUART J RICKMAN
JOHN J SULLIVAN

591- HOLL, NC
GEORGES CHARETTE

616- WINDSOR, ON
GIOVANNI COSTA
JAMES A SIMPSON

627- CINCINNATI, OH
JAMES A SIMPSON
GEORGES CHARETTE

699- MILWAUKEE, WI
WALTER R CIECZKA
JONATHAN C KELLEY

726- STATEN ISLAND, NY
JOSEPH ANATRA
ALEX COPPOLA

741- LONDON, ON
ROYDEN M BECKETT
RICHARD JAMES BOAM
JOHN BOLUS
GORDON R DOBBS
JAMES H DRINKWATER
RODERICK T HAGGERTY
NORMA L HOWARD
LEONARD MC FARLAND
DAVID A RACEY
MARTIN J VAN BRUG

757- PORTLAND, OR
DANIEL KYOM
SAM A PIRO
ROLLYN M TURNER

786- ST. LOUIS, MO
JOHNNY BARNES
BROWELL BLACKMON
THOMAS J INGRAM
GLORIA J JONES
BEVERLY A LOVAN
KATHRYN NOONAN
CHARLES L THOMAS
WANDA J WILKE
RUDOLPH E WOLF
MARSHALL A WRIGHT

819- NEWARK, NJ
JEAN LESPERANCE

820- UNION CITY, NJ
ROBERT J CALTON

824- NEW BRUNSWICK, NJ
OSCAR FENTON

895- DECATURE, IL
LAURA C DOYLE

880- CAMDEN, NJ
EMIL ECKERT
WILLIAM D FORCHION
JOHN E HAMLER III

956- THUNDER BAY, ON
ROBERT MAYER

998- MILWAUKEE, WI
WALTER R CIECZKA
TERRENCE L MULLINS
ZIMMOND A RACINOWSKI
CRIGE RILEY
ROBERT J WILSON

1001- DENVER, CO
ROGER B HAAS
JEREMY L FRANK

1005- MINNEAPOLIS, MN
WILLIAM F JOHNSON

1010- SPOKANE, WA
RICHARD JAMES BOAM
JOHN BOLUS
GORDON R DOBBS
JAMES H DRINKWATER
RODERICK T HAGGERTY
NORMA L HOWARD
LEONARD MC FARLAND
DAVID A RACEY
MARTIN J VAN BRUG

1015- SPOKANE, WA
HARRY L PARKER
ROGER B HAAS

1225- NASHVILLE, TN
JAMES E ABERNATHY

1277- LOS ANGELES, CA
GUILLERMO HERNANDEZ
GORDON R OBLANDER

1300- BALTIMORE, MD
JOHN K JONAITIS

1321- ALBANY & TROY, NY
JAMES J RODNEY

1342- BUFFALO, NY
GERARD J KRZEMINSKI
JOHN D SEDGWICK
ROBERT GEORGE

1374- CALGARY, AB
EULALIO V BIHIS
WALTER GARVIN KENT
STEPHAN J JOSKOZHYN
WILLIAM MATWY

1384- BREMERTON, WA
ELTON J LEVINGSTON

1395- PENSACOLA, FL
ERNEST J BURNS

1462- ST. JOHN’S, NL
LEWIS D SMITH

1505- WINNIPEG, MB
HAROLD C HINKS

1548- PLYMOUTH, MA
THOMAS MURPHY

1573- BRAMPTON, ON
JOSEF KONYARI

1575- SAN RAFAEL, CA
BAILEY L SHIPLEY

1700- CHICAGO, IL
JERRY L FRY

1753- VENETIA, PA
ALLEN MOWRY

IN MEMORIAM
...but it was all right, everything was all right, the struggle was finished. He had won the victory over himself. He loved Big Brother.

GEORGE ORWELL

UNLESS WE RESIST