LOCKED OUT IN SASKATOON
WORKERS KEEP STRONG RESOLVE
Bus driver pepper-sprayed while breaking up fight

Another day, another attack. This time it was in Winnipeg, MB, which has already seen it’s fair share of vicious attacks. The driver in this case was trying to break up a fight and ended up getting the worst of it. The fight broke out between passengers on his bus and when the driver stepped in, a man pepper sprayed him before taking off. Thankfully for the driver, citizens in the area came to his aid.

Canadian CEO-to-worker pay ratio among highest

The gap between CEO earnings and workers’ pay is wider in Canada than almost anywhere else in the world, according to recent data. Canadian CEOs on average earn 206 times as much as the average worker. That’s the second-largest gap among the 17 countries surveyed. Not surprisingly the United States ranks first. CEO pay in Canada jumped 11 percent in 2013, quadrupling income growth for the country as a whole. The median pay for a CEO of a publicly traded company in Canada was $5.6 million.

Vancouver to test bus driver shields

The beating of a Halifax bus driver trying to break up a fight, and a Washington DC bus operator getting slashed by a knife, are just two of the growing number of vicious attacks on transit workers. Vancouver’s TransLink has decided to take action to help stop and prevent these needless attacks. They will be launching a pilot project to install bus driver barrier shields on a number of buses toward the end of this year. ATU has been engaged in a campaign to stop these violent attacks on transit workers across North America including releasing the recent report, “Ripped from the Headlines: Bus Drivers Under Attack”.

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.
2  International Officers & General Executive Board NEWS Briefs
3  Index Page
6  Mississauga Mayoral Hopefuls Talk Transit Too Local 1505 Holds Winnipeg Mayoral Candidates’ Feet to the Fire on Transit
7  ATU, Unions Files Grievances Over New Regina Pension Proposal Poll Suggests BC Transit Referendum ‘Winnable’
8  Canadian Agenda: Bill to Protect Transit Operators Clears Senate
9  International President’s Message: The Solution to Your Problem is in the Power of Your Membership
10  International Executive Vice President’s Message: Ideas, Respect Makes Us One in Purpose
11  International Secretary-Treasurer’s Message: US Midterm, Canadian Provincial Elections are Upon Us
12  ATU Flag Flown at New York Climate March
13  ‘Bombshell’ Report Cites Mistrust As Main Problem in BART Strike
14  DC Members Pound the Pavement Against Privatization ATU Camel Helps Grand Rapids Members Register Voters Toledo Members Protest Service Cuts
15  Seattle Drivers Have Little or No Time for Bathroom Breaks Photo Correction
16  Transit A Factor in U.S. Mayors’ Races, Referendums
17  Bus Passengers ‘Packing Heat’ in Savannah
18  Cincinnati Members Honored for Heroism, Safety DC Train Operator Helps Stop Suicide
20  GOP Filibuster Kills Paycheck Fairness Act - Again Income Inequality Costing Middle-Class Workers
21  Mississauga Women Walk for Cancer New Health Study: Transit Workers Hurting Lawsuit Claims Exhaust in Depot Caused Cancer
22  ATU 2014-15 Scholarship Competition In Memory of Joe Welch
23  Ray Wallace Scholarship Awardees Laud Labor Movement
24  New Officers Receive ATU Training
26  Federal NDP Promises 15 - 20 Years of Stable Transit Funding LTC Execs Ask London for Greater Transit Investment
27  London Members Protest Suspensions, Firing of Assaulted Drivers Translink Chief Gets Big Raise During ‘Pay Freeze’ in BC
28  Translations (Spanish)
31  In Memoriam
32  So, Do You Now Think We Should Volunteer to Organize Our Passengers?
Saskatoon, SK transit workers, members of Local 615, have stood strong despite being locked out by the city over a contract dispute.

Workers took their case to the Saskatchewan Labour Board charging the city violated labour laws. The board told the union that they have an “arguable case” in their challenge of the legality of the city’s lockout of their members while the board was considering an earlier unfair labour practice complaint by the local. But the board says that it has not yet determined whether the municipality broke the law.

The delay in making a decision means that riders will have to fend for themselves and drivers will continue to endure long traffic jams for the foreseeable future.

The board did, however, rule favourably on the local’s previous complaint contesting the city council’s unilateral replacement of the transit workers’ defined benefit pension program with a defined contribution plan – a move the local was fighting during contract negotiations.

The board ordered the city to make no further changes to the pension. And Local President Jim Yakubowski is standing firm on the issue, asserting, “Our members are co-owners of this plan, and have, since it’s inception in 1965, put money into this plan.”

Low wages – Low offer

Saskatoon transit pay is so low that many of its workers qualify for public housing assistance, and the city’s latest
contract offer would still have left them at the bottom of the province’s wage scale.

Yakubowski suspects that the city was making offers they knew would be spurned to move the dispute to the labour board. And the board did decide to force a vote on the city’s contract proposal in August.

The Saskatchewan Federation of Labour (SFL) agreed with Yakubowski, accusing Saskatoon of refusing to bargain in good faith. SFL says the culture of the current government and their “legislative regime”, has caused needless conflict between the employer and its workers.

Management seemed confident that Local 615 could be persuaded to accept the contract because recently passed provincial legislation allowed them to bypass the union with direct mail to members’ homes, and to have meetings with their workers such as the pension meeting they held the day before the vote (reportedly attended by nine out of 400 employees).

**Attempt to force a settlement**

“The timing of the vote request, at the height of our vacation schedules, combined with their mail-outs and pension meetings for our members was a strategy the employer deployed to force a settlement,” says Local President Yakubowski – a settlement subsequently rejected by over 90% of the local.

According to Yakubowski, the city’s actions ‘poisoned’ their negotiations. “How can you trust an employer that attempts to insult your intelligence by directly contacting you, claiming you have not been given all the facts by the very executive you elected?” he asks.

**Troubled transit**

The Saskatoon lockout is only the latest of the troubles endured by the city’s transit riders.

At the end of August some Saskatoon Transit service was suspended because of a lack of mechanics to keep its buses maintained. At one point only 79 of the 95 buses needed were in service. Lack of proper maintenance was suspected as causing a problem in which one bus caught fire. No one was hurt.

Incredibly, the city blamed the union for the problem, saying that it was difficult to attract new mechanics to work at Saskatoon because they were forced to advertise job openings at 2012 wages rather than the wages offered in their contract proposal.

**The city knew about the problem**

That statement prompted a response from Yakubowski, who charged, “The city has known about this for a long time. We have had upwards of 50 buses parked daily in our garage that are waiting to be worked on. The current staff of journeyman mechanics that we have, have been working diligently, many of them working overtime, just to try and deal with the increased work load but it’s obvious that we are short staffed.”

The mechanics’ burden is even higher in Saskatoon than other cities because the average age of Saskatoon Transit buses is 14.5 years – well above the recommended average of six to nine years and above the national average of 11 years. None of this was mentioned in their statement blaming the union.

“This is not something that just cropped up out of the blue, the employer knew full well,” Yakubowski says, “The city was well aware of this and for them to blame the union and the fact that we haven’t ratified a collective agreement yet is just disappointing.”

**Standing strong**

Members of ATU Local 615 and riders have come together holding rallies and packing a city hall meeting. Yakubowski says the workers are committed to the long haul and their “resolve is stronger than ever.”
Toronto isn’t the only place where candidates for mayor are arguing public transit. It’s a major issue in Mississauga and transit workers are engaged. More than 50 members of Local 1572 made a strong showing at a Mayoral debate along with other unions from the area. Transit was the main topic of the debate and members made sure transit workers’ voices were heard.

Liberal Party candidate Bonnie Crumbie pledged that she would build the Hurontario light rail transit (LRT) line by 2020, and that the Queens Park would pay for it. Not so fast says the provincial transportation ministry, which is not yet ready to spring for the entire bill.

The Local has endorsed another Liberal Steve Mahoney, who supports building the Hurontario LRT too. In addition, Mahoney would “focus on East-West congestion by expanding bus rapid transit and working with the province to bring the subway into Mississauga, deploy state of the art intelligent transportation technology to coordinate traffic lights based on real time traffic flows, and work with the province to expand express, two-way, all day service on all GO lines serving Mississauga.”

The Local plans to continue efforts to mobilize riders and the public to vote in the election.

Many residents of Winnipeg, MB, believe their city is desperately in need of new public transportation, but even if they agree, no candidate for mayor has come up with a credible way to fund it.

Nevertheless, Local 1505-Winnipeg, MB, has been holding candidates’ feet to the fire on transit by holding a forum on public transit, and 30 core volunteers have been “door knocking” for frontrunner Judy Wasylycia-Leis and union-endorsed council candidates. Here’s what the candidates have to say about transit:

Brian Bowman

Privacy lawyer Brian Bowman wants to complete “Phase 2” of Winnipeg’s ambitious bus rapid transit (BRT) system by 2030.

“Everyone needs to be able to access BRT, not just a portion of the city,” Bowman says. “By finalizing the BRT project, it will create opportunities for development, growth, and increased revenue for the city.”

Gord Steeves

“I completely, 100% disagree with that announcement,” says candidate Gord Steeves. “The money does not exist. Not even for the second phase.”

Former city councilor and attorney Gord Steeves wants to suspend building BRT and use whatever money is saved to fund “community clubs” in the city.

Judy Wasylycia-Leis

Former NDP MP Judy Wasylycia-Leis agrees with Bowman that “we are desperately in need of some form of rapid transit,” but she questions Bowman’s funding plan.

“I’m not sure how Brian Bowman can do everything he is doing, within his overall fiscal parameters, without cutting deeply into services people want and need,” she says.
ATU, unions file grievances over new Regina pension proposal

“It’s so frustrating when you’re negotiating with someone who changes direction on you,” says Kirby Benning, chair of Regina, SK, workers’ Pension and Benefits Committee. “It’s not an honourable way of negotiating.”

That’s what Local 588, and other city unions are dealing with in grievances they have filed to hold Regina to a previous letter-of-intent to maintain the fund according to an agreed-upon formula.

Unfortunately, the letter didn’t impress the Financial and Consumer Affairs Authority’s (FCAA) superintendent of pensions who has warned that the plan could be terminated if the sides are unable to agree on a proposal that would fix the pension’s $293 million deficit and bring it into compliance.

And so, the city has told the unions that there must be modifications. While there would be no changes to benefits for retirees or benefits earned to date, the city’s proposal would generally take more from employees’ future earnings, and pay out less to future retirees.

Stripping away defined benefits?

“Last year’s letter of intent was the basis for our solution, but we had to address major concerns put to us by the superintendent, and we think we’ve done that,” says City Manager Glen Davies.

Benning protests that the city has broken its contract with its workers by allowing the pension plan to become non-compliant with the Pension Benefits Act.

Local 588 and other unions are disappointed that the city is walking away from a deal signed in good faith just over a year ago. There are serious concerns that they are trying to keep the concessions agreed to while stripping away the defined benefit nature of the plan – the core aspect that both sides agreed to protect in the original deal.

The city has until the end of the year to satisfy the concerns of the FCAA.

Poll suggests BC transit referendum ‘winnable’

A new poll commissioned by Vancouver, BC’s transit agency, Translink, suggests that the referendum on an ATU-initiated transit plan is “winnable.”

The data indicate that, even though Translink, itself, is not popular with riders, the $7.5-billion expansion plan proposed by the area’s mayors could well pass.

57 percent of respondents in the first phase of the study were very or somewhat likely to vote “yes” in the referendum, followed by 56 percent in the second phase. About a third said they were unlikely to vote in favour. The survey also found that 58 percent of respondents are willing to pay higher taxes, fares or fees if the money raised is dedicated to new transportation and transit projects.

75 percent agreed that, “even if taxpayers don’t like new taxes and fees, they are necessary to build new transit and transportation infrastructure to deal with congestion.” A further 79 percent agreed public transit investments help ease congestion for vehicle drivers.

The referendum will take place in March 2015.
Bill to protect transit operators clears Senate

The bill to protect public transit operators, introduced in May by Senator Bob Runciman, PC, has been given unanimous support at Third Reading in the Senate.

The legislation is now headed to the House of Commons for debate. Senator Runciman says he is optimistic that S-221 will obtain broad support and become law before the end of the present session of Parliament.

ATU Canadian Director Mike Mahar says the Canadian Council is thrilled that Senator Runciman has successfully spearheaded the passage of the bill through the Senate and believes it will win “the support of all parties” when it is introduced in the House of Commons.

Bill affects sentencing

Bill S-221 would amend the Criminal Code to make it an aggravating circumstance that a judge must consider if the victim of an assault is a public transit operator, which is defined to include drivers of not just city buses and streetcars, but also school bus and taxi drivers.

“The passage of such a bill has been a priority of ATU Canada for close to a decade as over 2,000 of our members have been the victims of life-altering and career ending assaults each year,” says Mahar. “The impact on their families and industry as a whole is exacerbated by the light sentences the assailants have received in the past.”

Understanding the threat

“Senator Runciman and his Senate colleagues have shown a great deal of compassion and respect for these victims while understanding the threat to public safety when these operators are assaulted,” adds Mahar.

ATU Canada has previously met and discussed this serious issue with Members of Parliament (MPs) and Senators from all parties and has found that it has received major support.

ATU is pleased with Senator Runciman’s comments that, “the reaction to this legislation has been amazing, and heart-warming. I’ve heard from bus drivers, taxi drivers and their families from across Canada, letting me know how much this bill means to them. It’s been a gratifying experience.” Mahar indicated that MPs from coast to coast have had these same conversations and ATU members are grateful for their ongoing support in helping put this measure through Parliament.
The solution to your problem is in the power of your membership

The power of volunteers and members in general was on full display in St. Louis, MO, in September. With the assistance of International Union staff and officers, hundreds of members of Local 788 “manned the barricades” in the fight for justice.

In mid-August half the available staff of the International flew to St. Louis and helped organize a series of protests to call the question on a nasty boss. His pledge to ATU was that our members would not get out of negotiations without giving up their pensions. Six years of meetings – no contract. A year of “fact finding” – no contract. A strike threat – still no contract.

The Local was full of internal dissent and second-guessing, but no contract. But when the workers set aside their differences (many of which were created by the boss); when the members volunteered a few hours each reaching the public and picketing, after four weeks of protests and pressure, the Board of METRO reached an agreement with Local 788.

The Board then forced the agreement on an angry CEO. While the deal was not everything we wanted, it stopped the attack on our pension – DEAD. It provided wage increases where there had been none for six years. While some would argue it isn’t enough – it’s far better than what it was.

Behind this is a muddled story that includes, quite ironically, a long effort by the CEO to inject himself in union business. In other states, his actions would be illegal, but not in Missouri.

He personally tried to get our mechanics to leave ATU and had some members in maintenance confused enough to believe that they would be better off without the Union.

Oreo insult

Yes, this is also the place where the same management team called our union leaders “Oreo’s”. These are managerial perverts. Today they are defeated perverts.

I want all ATU members to know, if you are struggling with a vile management or some less than decent politicians, the solution to your problem is in the power of the membership – not a lawyer or a judge.

The real power is in mobilization of the rank and file and in reaching out to the riders of our systems. That has been the course we have been leading with, and we urge you to have this discussion at your union halls everywhere. I can tell you that it’s the only thing that will make the Union strong.

Saskatoon

We now turn our attention to Saskatoon, SK, where our members are locked out by the city. Again, this is an effort to eliminate retirement security also known as a pension. The ATU should be fighting to get pensions where we have none, but first we will have to defend them where they exist.

Thanks to the actions taken at ATU’s 2013 Convention, you will see much more action being taken by ATU International in these fights. We have resources to help you, but we need you to become more than members and be activists. Just come to a union meeting and tell your officers you want to volunteer.

Call your officers and offer to help. Send an email to them and let them know you are available. Join the ATU activists network by going to www.atu.org. You can sign up for electronic news that we send out every week! Now is our moment to come together as we did in St. Louis. Coming together equals victory.
Ideas, respect makes us one in purpose

This is an interesting story about the building of the suspension bridge across the Niagara River right next to Niagara Falls in 1848. It was the first bridge to link Canada and the U.S. over the falls.

The engineers knew that for them to build the suspension bridge, they had to find a way to string a huge steel cable across the chasm. But the water was treacherous. They could not do it by boat. This was 1848, so they couldn’t do it by airplane either. How could they get this huge cable across?

As the story goes, a 10-year-old boy solved their problem. The engineers heard that the little local boy was an excellent kite flier, and they had him fly a kite with a strong thin filament, actually a thread.

The boy was such a good a kite flier that he was able to stand on one side, fly the kite really high, and then direct the kite so it landed on the other side where other engineers were waiting.

Once they had the kite, they had the thread going across the water. They then tied a stronger string to the thread and pulled that across.

Stronger and stronger

Then the ropes came, stronger and stronger. They sent across the first steel cable, a thin one – then a stronger one, and a stronger one – until they were able to string the support cable across the water. Once that cable was across, they could begin building the bridge.

Now, which was more important: the strong steel cable, or the thin string?

Maybe the strong one did the heavy lifting, but that thin string was as important as every other string, rope or cable.

All too often, especially during difficult contract negotiations, we find that there is a lot of internal bickering and fighting and factions among officers and factions of members, rather than a focus on protecting all our wages and benefits.

Dialogue

Within our locals we can have constructive debate about our differences. However, we need to put all internal bickering that is not constructive and differences aside. We are only as strong as our weakest links.

Local leaders also need to listen to all members. In part it is the dialogue of different ideas and the respect shown one another that makes us one in purpose. Our predecessors were able to do so.

Together, similar to a boy, his kite and engineers, they wove their ideas together and created the ATU and paved a path to the benefits we all enjoy today.

Please visit www.atu.org for more information and the latest ATU news.

Javier Perez, Jr., International Exec. Vice President

Please visit www.facebook.com/ATUInternational
Every two years we say that the coming election is the most important one we’ve ever seen. And that’s really true! The next election is always much more important than the ones that are over and done with.

My point is: all elections are important. And this fall we have important elections taking place in both Canada and the United States.

**Canadian Labour under assault**

By now you are aware that the decades-long assault against unions in the United States has begun in Canada. The good news, however, is that many Canadian brothers and sisters are really having an impact by engaging in good old-fashioned retail politics on behalf of candidates that support Labour and transit.

The situation is the same in the United States. With the onslaught of conservative groups like ALEC working overtime to destroy unions and defund transit at the state, county and municipal levels, our local coalition building and political activism have become more important than ever.

With our natural allies we are fighting the lies and distortions pedaled by the enemies of working families and supporting candidates who will fight for us locally and nationally in both countries.

**Control of US Senate at stake**

Democratic party control of the U.S. Senate is at stake in this election. One has only to look at the record of the TEA Party partisans over the last several years to know what kind of nation we’d have if the GOP controlled both houses of Congress.

And, I don’t have to tell you how many times a handful of ballots have made the difference between the election of a local official who supports public transit and union rights, and one who doesn’t. And sometimes that is the difference between having a union job with good benefits and wage slavery.

So every member of this union – Canadian and American – has ample reason to get involved in these elections, and most important of all – **vote**.

**Vote!**

What I find incredible is the number of people who don’t vote and, in effect, hand the election over to a politician who will work against their interests.

If all union members joined in voting with all those who stand to lose by the election of anti-worker candidates it would be no contest – we’d win every time!

It’s particularly important for U.S. members to vote this year as regressive forces in state legislatures are currently doing everything they can to make it difficult if not impossible for minorities and the most vulnerable members of society to cast their ballots. We have to show that these new “Jim Crow” laws won’t work.

So, it’s up to you. Don’t sit on the sidelines and watch as your union rights and possibly your job is taken away from you.

Get involved! Fight back! I guarantee it will be one of the most worthwhile activities you’ve ever participated in. ✨

P.S. Many thanks to all the locals and participants who made the ATU 2014 MS Golf Tournament a great success.

Please visit [www.atu.org](http://www.atu.org) for more information and the latest ATU news.
ATU banners, flags, signs and leaflets had a high profile during the Peoples’ Climate March in New York City, as members were out in full force among the more than 300,000 marchers.

They were there to spread the word that riding public transit is one of the best and easiest ways to combat climate change.

The march was held as world leaders were meeting in New York for a UN summit on the climate crisis. Organizers want governments to agree to an ambitious global plan to dramatically reduce global warming pollution.
In what some call a “bombshell” – an independent analysis commissioned by BART – cites a “nearly universal lack of trust” as the main problem leading up to last year’s strike against the San Francisco area transit agency. *Bay Area Collective Bargaining Report and Recommendations* by Agreement Dynamics, Inc., does not solely blame either side for the strike, but maps out a course for the board to improve labor relations.

“At BART,” the report says, “a multitude of minor and significant mistakes, miscommunications, inaccurate assumptions, pervasive sense of mistrust, combative history, antagonistic tactics and feelings of victimization and futility all converged to poison the 2013 bargaining process.”

Lead negotiator choice a ‘mistake’

The report reveals that most board members believe hiring union-busting negotiator Tom Hock was a mistake:

“In retrospect, hiring Tom Hock as lead negotiator for BART was not in the best interests of the agency… little perspective was given to the board on how ATU or other unions would perceive his involvement. His style was rigid and disrespectful.”

But at least one board member said BART’s Grace Crunican and other management were to blame, thinking they could win the PR battle and the unions would cave. However that strategy backfired.

BART finally agreed to a settlement in the wake of a terrible accident in which two replacement track workers were killed by an oncoming train operated by another replacement worker with inadequate supervision.

Backing out of the deal

Local 1555 thought they had a deal. But, BART’s board refused to sign the contract because it included a family leave provision they said they hadn’t agreed to.

Hock claimed that he had signed the tentative agreement without reading it, setting up yet another confrontation between the parties. The report concluded:

“…while it is true that there were multiple opportunities for management to discover this mistake before the unions ratified [the contract], the responsibility lies with those who signed it without first reading it. The chief negotiator is, in our opinion, where the buck stops. Therefore, the person in that role is accountable.”

The local and BART eventually compromised on the issue, but the incident further alienated the agency and its workers.

Anatomy of a Strike?

The report, which might well be titled *Anatomy of a Strike*, is worthwhile reading for any ATU officer, as it provides a rare window into the internal thinking of management during a strike, as well as the misimpressions, and missteps that made a bad situation worse.

The full report can be found at: http://bit.ly/1nG4QSp
DC members pound the pavement against privatization

Local 689—Washington, DC, did something rather unique in their continuing campaign to put a halt to the creeping privatization that is growing like a vine throughout the nation’s capital. Instead of trying to get people to come to a rally – Local 689 members went to them, door-to-door, throughout Southeast Washington, DC.

The members warned residents about the growing problem of contracting out new lines to private companies, and proposals for new streetcar service that will lead to higher fares and service cuts for local commuters.

“We’re out here making the public aware that their tax dollars are being used to privatize the system and also to bring in a streetcar system that does nothing to enhance public transportation in the city of the District of Columbia,” said Local President Jackie Jeter.

ATU camel helps Grand Rapids members register voters

In Grand Rapids, MI, the ATU’s 15-foot inflatable camel attracted many to Local 836’s recent drive to register voters and encourage them to vote for candidates who support public transit.

“Transportation is vital to any and every community,” says Local President Richard Jackson. “It gets people to work, connects people with opportunity and provides upward mobility for people with no other options.”

The local commended the city on its recent launch of Michigan’s first rapid transit system – the Silver Line.

We’re here to invoke positive change,” says Jackson.

Toledo members protest service cuts

The ATU camel also made an appearance in Toledo, OH. Hundreds of transit workers, riders and advocates attended a “Fix It, Fund It, Make It Fair” rally in downtown Toledo calling for fully funded public transit for the Toledo Metro area. ATU members from across Ohio as well as Detroit and Washington DC attended the rally.

Protesting the slashing of more than 400 hours of bus service to communities that have pulled out of TARTA, attendees called for a sales tax to fund public transit rather than the current property tax. Making matters worse, most of the available employment in the Toledo area is located in areas with no TARTA service, leaving those who can’t afford a car no access to these jobs.

“This is a critical community issue to keep growing our region,” said Carly Allen, Local 697-Toledo, OH. “The current form of transit funding is standing in the way of improving Toledo public transit, it’s making it worse. It’s time to ‘Dump the Hump’,” she said, referring to the inflatable camel at the rally.
Seattle drivers have little or no time for bathroom breaks

After the April defeat of a King County sales tax ballot initiative to help pay for bus service, riders can expect to see more crowded buses and tighter schedules with the pending service cuts to help meet the reduced budget.

It’ll also leave Seattle bus drivers with shorter rest times, leaving many to cross their legs to refrain from using the bathroom. Some drivers will have less than five minutes for a break and at many stations there is only one bathroom.

Safety

One retired member from Local 587-Seattle, WA, summed up the dilemma drivers face. “If the bus is running even slightly behind schedule, you can either go to the bathroom and be late for your next trip — with the possibility of customers complaining or supervisors saying, ‘How come you left late for your last trip?’” he said. “It’s a safety thing. Do you want people driving a thousand pound vehicle through traffic and be constantly worried about emptying their bladders?”

This is a matter of human dignity that many transit workers face across North America and ATU is working to come up with solutions to deal with it.

Seattle voters in November will consider another ballot measure imposing an annual $60 vehicle fee and a 0.1 percent sales tax increase to help fund transit. Hopefully it’ll pass giving everyone some relief.

Photo correction

In Transit incorrectly identified Local 1591-Broward County, FL President April Williams in a picture published in the July-August 2014 issue in the article “ATU more than transit.” The correct picture is at left. We regret the error.

The article featured how Local 1591-Tampa, FL, and Local 1464-Tampa, FL, have successfully represented municipal employees in their cities for decades. Despite their members’ different occupations, the issues they face are essentially the same as those all ATU transit workers and members deal with – wages, benefits, retirement security, fair treatment – the concerns of most workers across the U.S. and Canada.

There’s a big wide world out there, and it’s tough to keep up with all the events which can affect your profession and your livelihood. One of the easiest ways to stay informed is by visiting: www.atu.org.

**Transit is rapidly becoming a major issue in American mayoral elections and referendums that will take place on Election Day, Tuesday, November 4:**

**Austin, TX**

A referendum will be held in Austin, TX, on Election Day, on whether voters wish to spend $600 million on a light rail transit (LRT) line, and $400 million on roads. “Proposition 1” deliberately bundles the two measures in order to entice residents who could care less about LRT to vote to reduce their traffic congestion.

Three mayoral candidates – Mike Martinez, Sheryl Cole and Steve Adler – favor the measure, while opponents Randall Stevens and Todd Phelps do not.

The anti-LRT candidates argue that the higher taxes will push residents out of the city, while proponents say that strong public transportation will actually make the city more affordable and do more to reduce congestion.

**San Jose, CA**

With massive population growth predicted over the next few decades, San Jose desperately needs to come up with a new transit plan that will integrate all the city’s transportation, reduce congestion, and improve air quality.
Two mayoral candidates – Councilmember Sam Liccardo and Supervisor Dave Cortese – support improving transportation and infrastructure, but there are differences between them. Liccardo strongly supports bringing the BART system south, while Cortese is more cautious.

Washington, DC
Streetcars are the issue in Washington, DC, and Local 689 has taken to the streets to fight them. At the crux of the dispute is the D.C. government’s plans to outsource bus service and force riders along the H Street corridor to take streetcars. They want the ability to use funds from Metro buses and trains to fund the streetcar.

The Democratic candidate for mayor, Muriel Bowser, voted against funding the entire 37-mile line proposed by the current Mayor Vincent Grey. Bowser has been vague on whether she wants to continue building the line beyond H Street after she takes office. In any event, it doesn’t seem like it will be one of her priorities.

Alameda County, CA
Alameda County is set to vote on a proposal to double the existing transportation sales tax and approve a $7.8 billion plan for the next 30 years. The plan reserves 30% of the increase for city and county streets, 20% for roads, and eight percent for bike and pedestrian projects.

Clayton County, GA
Clayton County will vote on a one-cent sales tax to raise about $46 million a year to pay for a mix of “local bus routes, paratransit, and either bus rapid transit or commuter rail” to connect with Atlanta’s MARTA system. ATU local 732 has been waging a campaign with community allies to get this passed.

Pinellas County, FL
A big fight is underway over the November referendum asking voters to pass a proposal to increase their sales tax by one-cent to fund the proposed Greenlight Pinellas project that will replace the Pinellas Suncoast Transit property tax.

Among other things, if passed, Greenlight would increase overall bus service by 65% throughout the county, create bus rapid transit lines on most major corridors, double the bus service in North County, and provide longer service hours to accommodate second shift workers and evening commuters.

Bus passengers ‘packing heat’ in Savannah
Bus drivers and commuters on Chatham Area Transit (CAT) in Savannah, GA, now have something more to worry about than getting to the bus on time. Officials recently announced that licensed gun owners will now be able to bring guns on CAT buses.

That’s because Georgia legislators passed legislation this year that expands gun owners’ rights to churches, schools, and government buildings.

Because CAT is run by the county, gun owners can bring their weapons on board. Not all riders are pleased.

CAT board members say that by following the law allowing passengers to carry guns their insurance might go up.
Cincinnati members honored for heroism, safety

The heroic actions of Metro bus operator Clay Chinn, 627-Cincinnati, OH, may well have saved the lives of residents of an apartment building in East Price Hill that recently caught fire.

Chinn was driving his route when he saw smoke coming from an apartment building. He stopped his bus and, with the help of another Good Samaritan on the scene, went door to door in the building to see if anyone needed help to escape the fire.

He was able to help a woman on the second floor of the building evacuate as her apartment was filling with smoke. He continued to look for and alert residents until the police and fire department arrived.

‘We have this ability’

A Metro operator since 2004, Chinn modestly described his actions that day, saying, “We have this ability – we see someone in danger and we act. I didn’t think. I just did it. I can’t usually move that fast, but I didn’t feel a thing.” He was later treated for smoke inhalation.

This wasn’t the first time he has helped others while driving the bus. Several years ago, he helped get a woman and her children out of a burning car.

Mayor John Cranley presented Chinn with a mayoral letter of appreciation for his actions at a subsequent Southwest Ohio Regional Transit Authority (SORTA) Board meeting. SORTA also presented the driver with Metro’s STAR award, which stands for “Service That Attracts Recognition” given to employees who demonstrate exemplary service to Metro and the community.

Driver recognized for 32 years of accident-free driving

Veteran Cincinnati Metro bus driver Ronald Combs, 627-Cincinnati, OH, is having quite the year and to top it all off he is the recipient of the Safe Driver Award of Honor from the National Safety Council. After 32 years as a Metro employee he will soon be retiring while holding its highest internal safety record – safely driving millions of miles throughout his career.

Those eligible to receive the Award of Honor must have met the criteria of not having a preventable incident within the past 15 years or the last 250,000 miles of driving. In 2012, Combs was inducted into the National Safety Council’s “Two Million Mile Club” for driving two million miles without having an accident.

DC train operator helps stop suicide

A 22-year-old is lucky to be alive after jumping onto DC Metro tracks, thanks to the quick thinking of a Metro train operator and transit police. The dramatic rescue was caught on video.

Transit police were called to the platform after receiving a report of a disorderly man who was harassing other riders. When approached, the man suddenly jumped off the platform onto the track while saying he wanted to die.

The transit police officers radioed for train traffic to be stopped, and along with others on the platform, they attempted to signal the train to stop by waving their arms. The train operator saw the activity and immediately activated the emergency braking system.

As the approaching train slowed down the distraught man made the last-second attempt to jump from the platform and was pulled out of the train’s path with no time to spare.

The ATU applauds the heroic action of the train operator and the transit police.
Utah Transit Authority dispenses millions in ‘sweetheart’ deals

Here we go again. A state audit of the Utah Transit Authority (UTA) has blasted the agency, alleging that the Salt Lake City system has spent millions in sweetheart deals, paid extravagant salaries and bonuses, and failed to plan well for $2.9 billion in maintenance costs from new rail projects. The audit also scores UTA for having a fare structure that may force the poor to subsidize the rich, and massive debt that might prevent restoring bus service that was cut to fund new train lines.

One incident that the audit reveals concerns $10 million the agency “prepaid” to a developer who was supposed to construct a parking garage. The contract was awarded just after the developer made a multimillion-dollar deal benefiting a UTA board member.

Parking garage never built

The parking garage was never built and UTA hasn’t gotten all of its money back.

UTA management has countered the audit with a report of its own, claiming that the questionable deals actually saved taxpayer money, that UTA executives are paid less than similar agencies, and that it has recently received an award as America’s best transit agency.

Transit workers and advocates are worried that the negative news about UTA may make voters less likely to support increasing taxes for new transit planned in the city.

New law creates transparency in Illinois transit agencies

A new law passed in Illinois will help prevent corruption in transit agencies by requiring them to post online information about public transit salaries as well as safety and budget information.

State Senator Daniel Biss, D, the primary senate sponsor of the bill, believes the law will help cut down on agency corrupt practices including patronage and fraudulent money handling.

“Mass transit in the Chicago area has struggled with governance, regional planning and transparency for many decades,” Biss says. “This world-class region deserves a world-class transportation network, not a scandal-plagued patchwork of agencies, and we can only get there by breaking down barriers that hamper coordination and allow unethical behavior to continue.”

“This is the first bill of many which will transform the way mass transit is managed in Northern Illinois,” says State Rep. Al Riley, D, the primary sponsor in the Illinois house. “It is critical that the public can trust the day-to-day operations of our publicly funded transit agencies and know they are ethical and transparent.”

The law passed nearly unanimously in both the Illinois house and senate.
GOP filibuster kills Paycheck Fairness Act – again

For the second time this year, a Senate Republican filibuster defeated the Paycheck Fairness Act (PFA). The legislation was designed to help women get equal pay for equal work by strengthening protections for workers who discuss their paychecks with each other and by requiring employers to prove their pay discrimination is based on a factor other than gender.

The AFL-CIO says the PFA would, “let wronged workers file class action suits,” and “strengthen the government’s ability to identify and remedy systematic wage discrimination.” Women’s groups calculate the median female worker loses $11,600 yearly to the discriminatory wage gap.

Fifty-one Senate Democrats and one Vermont Independent, Bernie Sanders, voted to halt the Republican talkathon, but failed to get the 60 votes needed to succeed.

The GOP Senators killed the bill two days before the Labor Department officially released proposed regulations to order federal contractors to provide pay data breakdowns by gender and race, among other factors. The proposals opened for public comment on September 17.

Income inequality costing middle-class workers $18,000 per year

American workers have seen little to no real wage growth in the past three-and-a-half decades, and 2014 is no different, according to a new study from the Economic Policy Institute’s Raising America’s Pay initiative. In “Why America’s Workers Need Faster Wage Growth—And What We Can Do About It,” economist Elise Gould finds that real (inflation adjusted) hourly wages fell for most Americans in the first half of 2014, compared with the same period in 2013.

Of course, this is nothing new. The poor performance of American workers’ wages in recent decades – particularly their failure to grow at anywhere near the pace of overall productivity – is the country’s central economic challenge.

The paper examines the policy changes that have helped spur these wage trends by shifting bargaining power from the vast majority of workers to corporations and CEOs.

Key findings include:

- The vast majority of Americans have experienced disappointing living standards growth in the last generation —largely due to rising inequality.
- Between 1979 and 2007, more than 90 percent of American households saw their incomes grow more slowly than average income growth (which was pulled up by extraordinarily fast growth at the top).
- By 2007, the growing wedge between economy-wide average income growth and income growth of the broad middle class (households between the 20th and 80th percentiles) reduced middle-class incomes by nearly $18,000 annually.
- The large increase in income inequality that has blocked living standards growth for the vast majority has been driven by the failure of hourly wages for the vast majority to rise in line with overall productivity after 1979.

“Despite a recovering economy and growing productivity, employers are not putting anything more in their employees’ paychecks. Over the past 40 years, corporations, and their CEOs and lobbyists, have used public policy to stack the deck in their favor,” says Gould. “The only way to strengthen the middle class is to grow wages, and for that we need policies that deal workers a stronger hand.”

Read more: http://bit.ly/1oriMcc
Mississauga members walk to raise money for women’s cancer research

Ten women – members of Local 1572-Mississauga, ON – recently participated in “A Weekend to End Women’s Cancer.” They pledged to walk 36 km as part of the event held annually in Toronto and Montreal.

Minister of Heritage Shelley Glover said, “I…commend your union for its patriotism and support of this worthy cause.” In the end, they raised in excess of $13,000. ATU salutes these members and their local for their commitment to this great cause.

New health study: transit workers hurting

How have you been feeling lately? If you’re a transit worker you may have a negative answer to that question more often than your friends in other occupations.

That’s because according to a recent report from the Transportation Research Board, transit sector employees, and bus operators in particular, are more likely to have certain serious and chronic health problems, compared to other workers. The research suggests that there is a connection between working in transit and many health issues such as diabetes, stroke, musculoskeletal disorders, digestive problems, fatigue, and sleep disorders.

“Most of the health problems identified in bus operators,” the report found, “are affected by a combination of factors: lifestyle choices, genetics, and workplace and environmental conditions all contribute. Possible work factors include air pollution, sedentary work, schedule stress, and unhygienic and unsafe eating and restroom facilities. In addition, transit workers are often older and from groups that are at increased risk for cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and other health problems.”

The study evaluated substantive health and wellness programs throughout the transit industry and found that the majority of transit agencies’ health promotion programs consisted of a few isolated activities.

To be effective, the report says, “programs will address both health promotion and workplace health and safety concerns.” The report recommended many ways that transit agencies and unions can integrate health protection and promotion into their workplace.

How to fight exhaust fumes in bus depots

Diesel exhaust is a problem for thousands of transit workers who have worked in poorly ventilated garages throughout the U.S. and Canada.

Everyone can fight exhaust fumes

Two retired Staten Island ATU members found a way to fight back. They have sued Queens Structure Corp., who built the Yukon Avenue bus depot for unspecified monetary damages, alleging that inadequate ventilation in the structure caused them to get cancer. The civil complaint contends that their cancer was caused by exposure to diesel exhaust particles and fumes spewed by buses idling inside the massive depot.

The complaint says that the diesel buses were hard to start in cold weather, and that it was common practice to keep them idling for hours.

The retirees say that the company failed to install an adequate ventilation system.
The Amalgamated Transit Union
2014-2015 Scholarship Competition
In Memory of Joe Welch

The 2014 - 2015 scholarships are in remembrance of retired International Vice President Joseph Welch, who passed away on February 13, 2014.

After serving in the state National Guard and Marine Corps, Joe secured a job as a bus driver for the Syracuse Transit Corp., now known as CENTRO. Joe drove the bus until he was elected business agent for the union. In 1973, he was elected president of Local 580, and then in 1974, was elected business agent of that same Local.

In 1986, Joe reached the pinnacle of his career, where he stayed and flourished for 24 years, when he was elected as an international vice president for the ATU. He proudly served in this position, subsequently re-elected every three years, until he decided to finally retire in 2010, at the young age of 80.

Joe will be remembered for a profoundly generous and innately kind, smiling soul, always willing to give and to love, no matter what.

To download the scholarship rules and application, please visit: www.atu.org
Ray Wallace Scholarship awardees laud labor movement

The following received a 2014 ATU Ray Wallace Scholarship named in honor of the international secretary-treasurer who served the Union in that office from 1976 – 1989. Before becoming IST, Ray secured major gains for members throughout the South. He is remembered for his warmth, integrity, intelligence, and good sense.

**KYLE J. DEVINE**

Kyle J. Devine, the son of John Devine, 1056-Flushing, NY, began his studies at Harvard University this fall, majoring in Physics. He graduated from Deer Park High School in New York where he was valedictorian, and a member of the Math Team, the Student Council, and the Varsity Baseball team.

In his essay, Kyle wrote, “…the fight for workers’ rights does not belong in the by-gone era of robber barons and Standard Oil, but is a war that is central to the well-being of every worker…While states… fight an uphill battle to retain their rights as workers, we see the delicate scope of power between Labor and management swing in the balance.”

**NATHALEE EWERS**

Nathalee Ewers, the daughter of Garfield Ewers, 113-Toronto, ON, entered McMaster University this fall majoring in Life Sciences. A graduate of Pickering High School in Ontario, she excelled academically, and performed with the Concert and Jazz Bands, and played on the Girls’ Rugby and Basketball teams.

In her essay, Nathalee wrote, “…Another lasting effect organized labour has had on the nation is a rise in the number of female workers… This growth was a reflection of the increasing diversity of the organized workforce and attested to the fact that women’s concerns were being heard.”

**SOLOMON P. IP**

Solomon P. Ip, the son of Daniel Ip, 583-Calgary, AB, is majoring in Music, and Music Education at the University of Lethbridge. He graduated from Queen Elizabeth High School where he was an excellent student and member of the Choir Club, Drama Festival, Band, Musical Theatre and Yearbook Club.

In his essay, Solomon wrote, “Unions must still be a present force for the average worker to rally around to combat unsafe conditions, unfair wages and uncaring governments. Unions uphold human rights in today’s society by speaking out with a loud, collective voice against workplace injustices…”

**SAVANNAH F. MAY**

Savannah F. May, the daughter of Ronnie Hendrix, 1212-Chattanooga, TN, is attending the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga. A graduate of Soddy-Daisy High School, she was a member of the National Honor Society, and Student Council. She says she is “driven and very passionate about becoming a lawyer.”

In her essay, Savannah wrote, “Organized labor created the United States of America we know today… [without unions] America would not be the land of dreams and ambition that it is today. Because of organized labor, the U.S. is a haven for people of all races and genders to seek opportunity and live the American Dream.”
RAHUL SYAL

Rahul Syal, the son of Harish Syal, 824-New Brunswick, NJ, has entered the New Jersey Institute of Technology, majoring in Computer Science. Rahul graduated from the Marine Academy of Technology & Environmental Science where he was a member of the National Honor Society, Math League, and Debate Club.

In his essay, Rahul wrote, “When workers come together and negotiate together, progress can actually result in terms of fair compensation. Unions have led to the implementation of minimum wage, degradation of discrimination in the workplace, and fair compensation regardless of gender.”

ERICA J. YUEN

Erica J. Yuen, the daughter of Hong Ping Yuen, 589-Boston, MA, is studying at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology for a degree in Computer Science. Hong’s excellent academic record at Winchester High School was complemented by activities such as the Robotics and Math Teams, as well as Outdoor and Indoor Track.

In her essay, Erica wrote, “In the course of the fight for basic freedoms, organized laborers have demonstrated the basic fundamentals of American ideals – opportunity, freedom, and democracy – which ultimately allows the United States to be a highly respected nation.”

New officers receive ATU training

Newly elected local presidents and financial secretaries received ATU training to help them better fulfill their responsibilities to their members at the Maritime Institute Conference Center in August. Below, the officers stopped long enough for their “class picture” to be taken before they toured ATU international headquarters in Washington, DC. ♠
Contestants are dropping out and there is one late entry in the political dance marathon that is the mayoral race in Toronto, ON. And despite some candidates’ efforts to change the subject, public transit remains the central issue in the October 27 election.

Incumbent Mayor Rob Ford has dropped out of the race following the discovery that he has an abdominal tumor. Toronto Councilmember Doug Ford, subsequently threw his hat in the ring to carry on the mantle of his scandal plagued brother.

Three more drop out

With the polls showing that they had little chance of winning, candidates David Soknacki, Karen Stintz, and Sarah Thomson have also quit the race, whittling down the contest to three major candidates – the New Democratic Party’s (NDP) Olivia Chow, and her Progressive Conservative (PC) opponents, Doug Ford, and John Tory.

As of September 22, Tory (49%) enjoyed a wide lead over Ford (27%), and Chow (24%).

‘There will be hell to pay’

Public transit is still the biggest issue in the race.

Frontrunner Tory says that he will push the provincial and federal governments for one-third of the funding needed to build “SmartTrack” – a plan that calls for 22 new “surface subway” stations to be built along existing GO Train lines over seven years. Tory adds that “There will be hell to pay for those governments if I’m the mayor of Toronto and they start saying they’re not [paying].”

‘How can you possibly put heavy rail through homes?’

Chow, however, says Tory’s plan is unworkable; pointing out that his SmartTrack would be built through areas where there are recently built houses, and ongoing new home construction. “How could you possibly put heavy rail through homes?” she asks, adding that Tory has promised not to tunnel, buy land or build transit on the road.

Tory also agrees with the mayor’s plan to build a Scarborough subway extension, rather than creating a light rail transit (LRT) line. Chow endorses the more quickly built and less expensive LRT.

The NDP candidate would also increase the number of buses on critical lines to provide immediate relief from the growing problem of overcrowding on the city’s buses during rush hours.

Doug Ford is expected to continue to campaign for subway construction as his brother did.

Meanwhile, voters who have been looking forward to some relief from Mayor Rob Ford’s carnival ride in office, will probably be disappointed to learn that Rob Ford has just decided to run for brother Doug’s old seat on the city council.
Federal NDP promises 15 – 20 years of stable transit funding

Federal New Democratic Party MPs took to a Vancouver, BC, transit station recently to announce that, if elected to a majority in Parliament, the NDP would create a 15 to 20 year window of predictable, accountable transit funding for municipalities, provinces and the First Nations.

MP Fin Donnelly, NDP-BC, said the goal of the long-term support was to provide the certainty needed for regions to plan for the transit required to move goods and people in their areas.

Donnelly argued that this funding plan would work much better than the “one-year, lottery-type” regime of the Conservative government.

As to where the money will come from, the MP explained, “That is something we work on through the gas tax. We want to look at how we can improve that gas tax commitment.”

LTC execs ask London for greater transit investment

Time’s a-wastin’, as far as London, ON, transit executives are concerned. They recently told city hall that they fear there will a real decline in future service without significant new investment.

Referring to the London Transit Commission’s (LTC) recent annual report, General Manager Larry Ducharme explained, “When you look at performance graphs of every organization, you like to see that upward trend. When the graph starts to level off, that leveling off is a precursor to decline. That decline for us, should it occur, will be attributed to the fact that we have a service deficit.”

Ducharme says that LTC has to do more than simply adding more and better busses. The whole system needs to be restructured.

The transit heads told the London Council that they needed to review their contribution to LTC, as it is lower than similarly sized cities.

Service overburdened by demand

The problem that London faces is that current service is being overburdened by increasing demand, leading to commuters abandoning public transit.
London members protest suspensions, firing of assaulted drivers

Calling for end to violence against bus drivers, members of Local 741-London, ON, held a rally to highlight this disturbing trend.

Recent incidents involving several local members have resulted in disciplinary actions against operators for the sole reason of defending themselves against a passenger attack – including suspension and termination. The local is bringing attention to the fact that self-defense is a right – not a violation of rights.

Local President Brian Tansy says that the rally was a call-to-action to get support from the public in order to eliminate bus driver assaults that compromise the safety of everyone on-board.

‘We are not part of the equipment’

“We’re here to show the London Transit Commission that we want to be seen as employees, as workers. We are not a part of the equipment. What is happening to our drivers is not acceptable,” Tansy told the rally. “Our employer is quick to have a damaged bus repaired and ready for the road; we want the same consideration for their employees, they are far more valuable than the equipment.”

The local is searching deep for methods to stop assaults on bus drivers, and is promoting public awareness of the dangers drivers and passengers face when an assault occurs.

Another initiative supported by Local 741 is Senator Bob Runciman’s Bill S-221 which, if made law would amend the Criminal Code to make it an aggravating circumstance that must be considered by the judge when sentencing a person convicted of assaulting transit, school bus, and taxi drivers.

Translink chief gets big raise during ‘pay freeze’ in BC

Top transit executives continue to get huge increases in compensation while agencies freeze and cut employee wages and benefits. The latest example in Canada comes from Vancouver, BC, where Translink CEO Ian Jarvis received an effective 7% raise in 2013 in the form of $83,700 in bonuses bringing his total compensation to $468,000. Other top executives received bonuses in 2013, as well.

Translink maintains that the bonuses are part of a 2012 program that required executives to meet performance targets in which they earned up to an additional 15% of their income, and a 2.5% raise.

Jordan Bateman, director of the Canadian Taxpayers Federation was appalled by the increases, particularly because Translink had said that salaries would not go up in 2013. Bateman noted that Jarvis’s bonus alone equals the average household income in Vancouver.
La solution à votre problème réside dans le pouvoir de votre statut de membre

Le pouvoir des bénévoles et des membres généraux s’est manifesté pleinement à St. Louis, MO, en septembre. Aidés du personnel et des cadres du syndicat national et international, des centaines de membres du local 788 « sont montés sur les barricades » afin de lutter pour la justice.

A la mi-août, la moitié du personnel disponible de l’International s’est rendu à St. Louis pour aider à organiser une série de manifestations afin de résoudre le problème d’un patron odieux. Il avait promis à l’ATU que nos membres ne sortiraient pas des négociations sans abandonner leurs droits à leurs prestations de retraite. Six ans de réunions – pas de contrat. Un an de « recherche des faits » – pas de contrat. Une menace de grève – toujours pas de contrat.

Le LOcal était rempli de dissensions internes et de remises en question, mais pas de contrat. Mais quand les travailleurs mirent leurs divergences de côté (dont plusieurs venaient du patron); quand les membres se portèrent bénévoles pendant quelques heures afin d’informer le public et de manifester, alors au bout de quatre semaines de protestations et de pression, le conseil d’administration de METRO conclut un accord avec le Local 788.

Le conseil d’administration força ensuite le PDG furieux à accepter l’accord. Bien que l’accord n’était pas exactement ce que nous voulions, il a fait cesser l’attaque sur nos prestation de retraite – D’UN SEUL COUP. Il nous a procuré des augmentations de salaire alors que nous n’en avions pas eu depuis six ans. Bien que certains se plaignent que ce n’est pas suffisant – c’est bien mieux que ce que nous avions.

On trouve dans les coulisses une histoire embrouillée comprenant, très ironiquement, des efforts de longue haleine par le PDG pour s’infiltrer dans les affaires syndicales. Dans d’autres états, ses actions auraient été illégales, mais pas au Missouri.

Il a personnellement tenté de persuader nos mécaniciens de quitter l’ATU et a réussi à créer de la confusion chez certains membres de l’équipe de maintenance au point de les persuader qu’ils s’en sortiraient mieux sans le syndicat.

L’insulte Oreo

Oui, c’est aussi le lieu où cette même équipe dirigeante a traité nos leaders syndicaux « d’Oreos ». Ce sont des pervers de la gestion. Aujourd’hui ce sont des pervers vaincus.

J’aimerais que tous les membres d’ATU le sachent, si vous lutez contre des dirigeants méprisables ou des politiciens ignobles, la solution à votre problème c’est le pouvoir collectif du syndicat – pas celui d’un avocat ou d’un juge.

Le véritable pouvoir se trouve dans la mobilisation de tous et dans la sensibilisation des usagers de nos systèmes. C’est la direction que nous avons suivie et nous vous encourageons à en discuter dans tous vos bureaux syndicaux. Ça commence par votre bénévolat pour aider vos cadres à déployer notre pouvoir. J’entends souvent dire par les cadres que les membres ne veulent faire don de leur temps au syndicat. Je vous affirme que c’est la seule chose qui fait la force du syndicat.

Saskatoon

Nous nous tournons à présent vers Saskatoon, SK, où nos membres ont été mis en lock out par la ville. Là encore, il s’agit un effort pour éliminer la sécurité des prestations de retraite qu’on appelle aussi des pensions. L’ATU doit lutter pour obtenir des pensions quand il n’y en a pas; mais nous devons d’abord les défendre là où elles existent.

Merci pour les mesures prises à la Convention de l’ATU de 2013, vous remarquerez que l’ATU International sera bien plus active dans ces luttes. Nous avons des ressources pour vous aider, mais il faut que vous soyez plus que des membres, il est temps que vous deveniez activistes. Venez à une réunion et dites à vos cadres que vous voulez vous porter bénévole.


Visitez le site www.atu.org pour de plus amples renseignements et les dernières nouvelles concernant le SUT.
Les idées et le respect nous unissent pour atteindre notre but

Il y a une histoire intéressante à propos de la construction du pont de suspension sur la rivière Niagara tout près des chutes du Niagara en 1848. C’est le premier pont qui a relié le Canada aux États-Unis sur les chutes.

Les ingénieurs savaient que pour construire le pont de suspension, ils devaient trouver un moyen de suspendre un énorme câble d’acier au-dessus du gouffre. Mais l’eau était perfide. Ils ne pouvaient pas le faire par bateau. C’était en 1848, ils ne pouvaient donc pas le faire par avion non plus. Comment faire passer cet énorme câble de l’autre côté ?

Selon la tradition, un garçon de 10 ans a résolu leur problème. Les ingénieurs ont entendu dire que ce petit garçon du coin était un excellent pilote à cerf-volant et ils lui ont donc fait lancer un cerf-volant doté d’un filament robuste et très fin, en fait ce n’était qu’un fil.

Ce garçon était un si bon pilote de cerf-volant qu’il a pu se mettre d’un côté, faire voler le cerf-volant très haut, puis le diriger pour qu’il atterrisse de l’autre côté où attendaient les ingénieurs.

Quand ils ont saisi le cerf-volant, ils l’ont tendu au-dessus des eaux. Ils ont alors attaché une ficelle plus robuste au fil et ils l’ont fait traverser.

De plus en plus fort

Puis les cordes sont venues, de plus en plus fortes. Ils ont lancé le premier câble en acier, très mince – puis un plus robuste et un plus robuste encore - jusqu’à ce qu’ils puissent tendre le câble de soutien au-dessus des eaux. Une fois le câble à l’autre bout, ils ont pu commencer à construire le pont.

Qu’est-ce qui était le plus important : Le solide câble en acier ou la ficelle toute mince ?

Peu-être que le câble robuste a fait le gros du travail, mais cette mince ficelle s’est avérée aussi importante que tous les autres cordons, cordes ou câbles.

Bien trop souvent, surtout pendant les difficiles négociations de contrats, nous constatons de nombreuses petites querelles internes, des conflits et des factions chez les cadres et les membres, plutôt qu’une mise en œuvre pour protéger nos salaires et nos avantages sociaux.

Dialogue

Dans nos locaux nous pouvons mener des débats constructifs au sujet de nos divergences. Mais nous devons mettre de côté nos divergences et toutes ces querelles internes qui ne sont pas constructives. Nous ne sommes pas plus forts que notre maillon le plus faible.

Les leaders locaux doivent aussi écouter tous les membres. C’est en partie le dialogue nourri d’idées différentes et le respect mutuel qui nous unit pour atteindre ce but que nous partageons. Nos prédécesseurs ont pu le faire.

Ensemble, comme l’ont fait ce garçon, son cerf-volant et les ingénieurs, ils ont mis leurs idées en commun pour créer l’ATU et ont ainsi tracé la voie des avantages dont nous profitons tous aujourd’hui.

Visitez le site www.atu.org pour de plus amples renseignements et les dernières nouvelles concernant le SUT.

Les États-Unis en sont à mi-parcours, les élections provinciales canadiennes approchent

Tous les deux ans nous disons que l’élection à venir est la plus importante que nous ayons jamais vue. Et c’est absolument vrai! La prochaine élection est toujours bien plus importante que celles qui sont terminées.

Je veux en venir au fait que toutes les élections sont importantes. Cet automne, des élections importantes ont lieu au Canada et aux États-Unis.

Les syndicats canadiens pris d’assaut

Vous devez savoir maintenant que l’attaque contre les syndicats qui dure depuis des décennies aux États-Unis a
commencé au Canada. La bonne nouvelle, c’est que de nombreux frères et sœurs canadiens produisent vraiment un impact par le jeu de la bonne vieille politique de vitrine au nom de candidats qui soutiennent les syndicats et les transports en commun.

La situation est la même aux États-Unis. Avec l’assaut de groupes conservateurs comme ALEC qui travaillent avec acharnement pour détruire les syndicats et annuler les subventions des transports en commun au niveau de l’état, du comté et des municipalités, la mise sur pied d’une coalition locale et l’activisme politique sont devenus plus importants que jamais.

Aidés de nos alliés naturels, nous luttions contre les mensonges et les déformations lancés par les ennemis des familles de travailleurs et nous soutenons les candidats qui combattront pour nous au niveau local et national dans les deux pays.

Le contrôle du sénat américain est en jeu

Le contrôle du sénat américain par le parti démocratique est en jeu dans cette élection. Il suffit de voir le bilan des partisans du TEA Party au cours des dernières années pour savoir le genre de pays que nous aurions si les Républicains contrôlaient les deux chambres du Congrès.

Je n’ai pas besoin de vous rappeler combien de fois quelques bulletins de vote ont fait la différence entre l’élection d’un fonctionnaire local qui soutient les transports en commun et les droits des syndicats, et un fonctionnaire qui ne les soutient pas. Il arrive que ce soit la différence entre un emploi syndiqué doté d’avantages sociaux et un salaire d’esclavage.

Donc chaque membre de ce syndicat – canadien et américain – a d’ample raisons de s’impliquer dans ces élections, et par-dessus tout – de voter.

Votez!

Ce que je trouve incroyable c’est le nombre de gens qui ne votent pas et qui en fait permettent l’élection d’un politicien qui s’opposera à leurs intérêts.

Si tous les membres du syndicat votaient dans le sens de tous ceux qui ont beaucoup à perdre en éлиssant des candidats antitravailleurs - nous serions gagnants chaque fois!

C’est surtout important pour les membres américains de voter cette année étant donné qu’il existe des forces régressives dans les législatures de l’état qui font actuellement tout ce qu’elles peuvent pour que ce soit difficile sinon impossible pour les minorités et les membres les plus vulnérables de la société de voter. Nous devons démontrer que ces nouvelles lois d’exclusion raciale ne fonctionneront pas.

Voilà, ça dépend de vous. Ne restez pas en retrait à regarder en spectateur tandis que vos droits syndicaux et même peut-être votre emploi vous sont retirés.

Participez! Contre-attaquez! Je vous garantis que cette activité en vaudra vraiment la peine. ✰

Visitez le site www.atu.org pour de plus amples renseignements et les dernières nouvelles concernant le SUT.

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In Memoriam
WHAT RIDERS CARE ABOUT?

- Safe Equipment
- Good Schedules
- Heat in Winter
- Air Conditioning in Summer
- Bug Free Bus / Train
- Short Headways
- Reasonable Fares
- & Funding

WHAT TRANSIT WORKERS CARE ABOUT?

- Safe Equipment
- Good Schedules
- Heat in Winter
- Air Conditioning in Summer
- Bug Free Bus / Train
- Short Headways
- Reasonable Fares
- & Funding

WHAT THE BOSS CARES ABOUT?

- Few or None of the Above

SO, DO YOU NOW THINK WE SHOULD VOLUNTEER TO ORGANIZE OUR PASSENGERS?