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The ATU is pleased to announce a new schedule of ATU training, conferences and caucuses to take place in 2011. Check back with www.atu.org for more information and further announcements as they become available:

March 5, 2011
ATU Northern Pennsylvania
Grievance Seminar
Four Points by Sheraton Allentown Airport
Allentown, PA

March 6 – 12, 2011
ATU Financial Secretary Training
National Labor College
10000 New Hampshire Avenue
Silver Spring, MD 20903

March 7 – 10, 2011
ATU New President’s Training
National Labor College
10000 New Hampshire Avenue
Silver Spring, MD 20903

March 11 – 13, 2011
ATU Boot Camp Training
National Labor College
10000 New Hampshire Avenue
Silver Spring, MD 20903

April 3 – 7, 2011
ATU New President’s Training
National Labor College
10000 New Hampshire Avenue
Silver Spring, MD 20903

April 3 – 9, 2011
ATU Financial Secretary Training
National Labor College
10000 New Hampshire Avenue
Silver Spring, MD 20903

April 15 – 19, 2011
ATU Western Regional Conference
Hilton Seattle Airport
17620 International Blvd.
Seattle, Washington 98188

May 19 – 22, 2011
ATU Black Caucus
Westin Peachtree Plaza
210 Peachtree St. SW
Atlanta, GA 30303

June 2 – 5, 2011
ATU Women’s Caucus
Lowes New Orleans Hotel
300 Poydras Street
New Orleans, LA 70130

August 21 – 25, 2011
ATU Eastern Regional Conference
Hilton, located in Walt Disney World
Lake Buena Vista, FL 32830

September 9 – 11, 2011
ATU Latino Caucus
Kensington Park Hotel
450 Post Street
San Francisco, CA 94102

The ATU is also planning the following conferences for which details have yet to be announced:

April 3 – 5, 2011
ATU Maintenance Conference
Dallas, TX

ATU Midwest
Regional Conference
St. Louis, MO

ATU Canadian
Regional Conference
Toronto, ON

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In 1931, Florence Reece, the wife of a union organizer for the United Mine Workers in Harlan County, KY, wrote the song that defines the fight for workers today, not only in Canada and the United States, but all over the world: “Which side are you on, boys? Which side are you on?”

Some politicians are right out there. Naked. In Wisconsin, Ohio, Iowa, Florida and 15 other states, they are leading the battle against us to take away American workers’ salaries, pensions and benefits. Make no mistake about it, when they are done scapegoating public workers they will come for the unions in the private sector. Then they will come after Social Security. They are already saying it. Private sector working Americans are already reeling from decades of political deals that sold out the American industrial heartland.

Other political leaders, our “friends” are mysteriously silent or muted at best in defending workers. We must make them answer the question in Mrs. Reece’s song.

And from Cairo to Cleveland, from Detroit and Peterborough to Madison and New London throughout the United States and Canada working people, joined by students are saying enough is enough. In this issue you will read the stories of an ATU that is in the trenches and on the front lines of the struggle.

The economic depression we are now in can be resolved in many ways. Unlike the one in 1929, the bankers are trying to resolve today’s crisis by making average people, not the banks go broke. They are tearing up the fundamental social agreements that have held our countries together throughout the last 100 years.

And the layoffs of ATU members have continued over the last few months. In New York 500 paratransit workers faced layoffs as we went to press. In Pittsburgh 200 are slated to lose their jobs in March and in Cincinnati, the city raided the transit budget resulting in 40 or more layoffs there.

In the last six weeks we have engaged in battles in Chicago, Peterborough, Phoenix, Cincinnati, Pittsburgh and Toronto. In other cities we are fighting court battles, like in Washington, DC, where an arbitrator’s contract award has been tied up in court for more than a year.

All of these struggles have one common thread: They are part of a concerted effort to deprive working people of their livelihoods.

The ATU is Fighting Back!

We have created an entire new department in the ATU for Field Mobilization, the purpose of which is to help your local union get our members up and fighting. If you have a struggle in your city let me assure you that we will be there with you, as we are now in many cities.

We are fighting multi-national corporations like Veolia and First Group in both the U.S. and Canada.

Make no mistake about it, this is a fight for your right to earn a living and the fight against us is being sponsored by billionaires and multi-national corporations.

Many of the people including the politicians who support this economic war on North Americans are flag-waving phonies who use patriotism as a weapon to subdue us and to spend our blood and treasure on useless wars. Then, after squandering our national wealth, they tell us our way of life is “unsustainable.”

They Are the Traitors

They are the traitors who have shipped our jobs to other continents and someone needs to say it. There is no longer a way to argue as some Democrats do on cable news shows that “workers need to take a haircut.”

Not while they continue to cut taxes for billionaires who can well afford to pay them. One honest billionaire, Warren Buffett, among the world’s richest men said it best: “There is a class war in America, and my class is winning.”

The sleeping giant that is the working class is waking up. We will now fight back. Join us on the barricades, if you know the answer, which side are you on?
Washington, DC

First, we have Washington DC, and the state of the union address minus public transportation:

As I sat in my hotel room in St. John’s, NL, watching the president report on the state of the union (just after one of the worst elections we’ve seen in several decades) I was amazed – not once did he mention mass transit. Did his administration forget where he came from? I’d be willing to bet our laid-off members in Chicago would remind him.

Does anyone realize that if our public transit systems do not function with the needed personnel to run and maintain them, our cities are doomed?

Hasn’t it occurred to anyone in the administration that if we keep decent citizens working and make sure they can get to work, fewer and fewer will be able to pay taxes and keep the wheels of government running?

I’m not an Obama-basher, and I’m not opposed to high-speed rail, but I really have to wonder if anyone in government is paying any attention to the real mobility needs of the U.S. anymore.

The passengers we transport in the U.S. are the backbone of the nation. They deserve better. So, somebody please tell that to Washington…

Wait! That’s the article I wrote before the president’s budget was released. WOW, what a turnaround in such a short time. Due to the tremendous work our officers and members in Chicago, Cincinnati, Pittsburgh, Olympia, San Diego, Washington, DC, and other sites and communities have done in the last month the message is finally hitting our politicians. President Obama just released a good budget for transit in the United States, but now we have to continue to work very hard to drive it home.

These same cities and a lot of others including several states are under a strong attack concerning their collective bargaining rights and their very existence. Some very out-of-touch and anti-union governors are trying to destroy the labor movement.

We have to stop them now and make sure we carry on the fight for several months and, in fact, years to undo the damage in the last election. We have to do everything we can to defend our members, police officers, fire personnel and others who have spent their entire career SAVING LIVES, while these politicians want to take away their LIFE SAVINGS!

St. John’s, NL

Now, let’s talk about the other city, St. John’s, NL:

The city was determined to make some big changes in their contract and they did not care about the welfare of our members.

The local union committee, however, refused to give in. As long as the city wanted to take anything away, the fight would continue. Fortunately, the end result was that our members were well compensated and the city did not gut their contract.

I was so impressed with the resolve and solidarity of the St. John’s strikers. The sacrifices they made will result in immeasurable benefits for other cities that will come under attack in Canada and the United States.

The problem in St. John’s is the same as it has been in Washington, DC – no one in government seems to care about working men and women. The people who make the decisions so often appear to be blind to the mobility needs of our cities.

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The president’s state of the union address was an impressive demonstration of Barack Obama’s considerable oratorical skill. His unique, sweeping delivery lifted our spirits again, and directed our eyes to the future.

Of particular note was his emphasis on federal investment in infrastructure as a key to creating jobs, and increasing mobility – something which would improve the lives of all Americans.

Of course, here at the International, we were heartened to hear that the president has embraced much of our vision of transit for the future. His proposal for the next six-year transportation authorization bill is the most forward-looking plan we’ve seen from government for a long time.

It even provides funds for emergency operating assistance in some circumstances. It is a very positive step forward.

Congress Has Its Say

As most of you know, the president can’t make this happen all by himself. Congress will have a lot to say about how the bill is structured, and that process starts in the House of Representatives.

The House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee will craft the long-delayed authorization bill which will be considered by Congress. Rep. John Mica, R-FL, the new Republican chair of committee is determined, in his words, “to get the thing done.”

And so we will soon know how much of the president’s proposal will be in the authorization bill introduced by the committee. The ATU, of course, will post the details about that bill on our website as soon as that information is available.

Then it will be incumbent upon all of us to let our representatives in Congress know where we stand. And so we urge every U.S. member of this Union to stay informed and be prepared to fight for legislation that will preserve jobs and extend mobility.

The time is now to make this happen.
International Officers & General Executive Board
2011 Upcoming Training, Conferences & Caucuses

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Transit and Smart Growth

NOTE: French Canadian and Spanish translations normally included with In Transit magazine can be found on the In Transit page at www.atu.org
President Obama proposed a new transportation authorization bill on February 14, which would dramatically increase U.S. investment in mass transit over the next six years.

The Department of Transportation budget includes a 127% increase – to $119 billion over six years – in funding for transit, and even more significantly, allows transit authorities (in urbanized areas of 200,000 or more in population) to temporarily use formula funds to cover operating costs in limited circumstances.

The budget also prioritizes projects that rebuild and rehabilitate existing transit systems, and includes an important new transit safety program.

We Moved the Ball Forward

Commenting on the president’s proposal, International President Larry Hanley told ATU members, “Thanks to the work that you are doing to raise the profile of the transit crisis, the president’s transit budget is reason to celebrate. The Obama Administration called for nearly doubling the size of the federal transit program, up to $22 billion in 2012.

“And most importantly, the president called for changes in the law that would allow federal transit funds to be used for operating assistance during the economic crisis. Our voices are being heard.

“Thanks to you,” he declared, “we moved the ball forward significantly.”

Consideration of the bill will begin in the House of Representatives where many in the new GOP majority will fight the administration’s forward-looking plan.

Letter to the President

The announcement came on the heels of a February 10 letter from International President Larry Hanley urging the president to greatly increase mass transit spending and to include operating assistance in his transportation authorization proposal. Hanley wrote, in part:

“…I am urging you to immediately call for funding to address the current mobility crisis that is spreading across America.

“We respectfully ask the Administration to provide operating assistance for U.S. transit systems as part of your Fiscal Year (FY) 2012 budget.

“The 10% of unemployed Americans includes a substantial number of transit-dependent individuals who simply cannot get to work …

“We are simply looking for flexibility with respect to the use of such funds, and we have built a large coalition consisting of transit advocates, community organizers, environmentalists, labor representatives, and others who are ready to fight to put critical service back on the streets. …”

AP Photo/Pablo Martinez Monsivais
The ATU mobilized its members in cities across the United States and Canada to do battle on two fronts in the war against workers and the middle class.

With the support of the newly-formed ATU Field Mobilization Department members in Chicago, IL; Peterborough, ON; Pittsburgh, PA; Cincinnati, OH; Phoenix, AZ; and New London, CT; took the initiative to bring together coalitions of Labor, transit advocacy, religious, and civil rights groups to fight proposals to cut transit jobs and service in their areas.

In Columbus, OH; and Madison, WI; members fortified the throngs of citizens protesting legislative attempts in their states to strip public service workers of their collective bargaining rights and bust their unions.

Above are just a few of the many photos which have been pouring in to international headquarters from these events. Check out www.atu.org for more information and photos.
What can members of a small local do when they learn through the media that there are going to be big cuts in their transit budget, and they have just two weeks to try and stop it? Actually, quite a lot.

This was the question facing Local 1320-Peterborough, ON, when they learned earlier this year that their newly-elected mayor planned to cut $422,000 out of the city’s transit appropriation, which would most likely cause job losses and service cuts.

“We had less than two weeks to react,” related Local 1320 President Gary Sager, “But we showed that when there’s a need for a fight, even a small local can be successful if it’s not afraid to have a scrap.”

Alternate Suggestions, Newspaper Ads, and a Coalition

The local held a special meeting and decided on a course of action. First, they tried to suggest other ways the transit department could save money, but the only thing the city council would consider was service cuts.

The local then took out half-page ads in the city newspapers outlining the announced service cuts and their impact on the public. The ads included the names, office phone numbers, and office email addresses of every member of the city council.

Next, a committee was formed to find allies in the community including Mothers Against Drunk Driving. MADD objected to a plan to cut off Saturday service in this university and community college town at 6:40 pm. MADD thought it was particularly dangerous to stop providing bus service for the students who would be returning home after a night of drinking. Strong and determined university and college students also took up the cause and voiced their support.

The local mobilized its members and its coalition to attend the meeting of the city council set to consider the budget cuts. Over 250 people showed up for the meeting in a room with no more than 40 seats. A second meeting took place in a larger auditorium, and that hall was filled to overflowing with 450 angry passengers.

What was most gratifying to Sager was the diversity of people who came to the council meetings. Seniors, disabled, students and many others as well as ATU members voiced their concerns.

Ultimately the council decided to increase taxes by $7.35 per household to provide full service throughout 2011.

“It was nice for the little guy to win one for a change,” said Sager. “It’s a victory for the public who swamped city council members with phone calls and emails. The public and the media vigilantly questioned and criticized the need for service cuts and the mayor’s initial refusal to declare a pecuniary self-interest despite owning a local cab company.”

‘Never Again!’

Nevertheless, the mayor has stated that he intends to make budget cuts in 2012. There will be a preliminary transit review in March, but this time, the local will be prepared.

The members voted to assess themselves to create a defense fund which will cover expenses related to fighting this next attempt to cut service.

“We won the first battle,” said Sager, “but it could be like a war with many battles for the next four years (the length of the new mayor’s term). We weren’t prepared the first time – never again!”

Backed by a formidable coalition, Local 1320 President Gary Sager addresses the Peterborough, ON, city council in the local’s successful campaign to stop planned transit cuts.
MASS TRANSIT BECOMES MAJOR ISSUE IN CHICAGO ELECTIONS

Mass transit became a major issue in the recently completed mayoral and aldermanic elections in Chicago, and the ATU played a big part in making that happen. As a result, the man who won the mayor’s race, Rahm Emanuel, and other candidates made their position known on an issue of vital importance to commuters in the Windy City, undoubtedly catching the attention of another Chicago native currently living in the White House.

Transit surfaced as an issue after the ATU released the results of a poll of 500 likely Chicago voters during a January 27 news conference in front of the Chicago Tribune offices where the candidates were having a debate. The news conference was sponsored by the “Keep Chicago Moving” coalition of Labor, transit, religious, civil rights and other groups brought together by the Union.

Most Think Bus Cuts a Bad Idea

The ATU poll revealed:

- Half of them lived in households in which people regularly rely on mass transit.
- Most thought transit job and service cuts taken in the past year were a bad idea even if they didn’t use transit.
- 78% agreed that it was foolish to appropriate money to buy new transit vehicles without providing any support for the wages of those who operate those vehicles.
- 68% agreed that it was patriotic and good for America to reduce its dependence on foreign oil by using as much mass transit as possible.

The Response

Candidates were forced to respond to the issue after the poll was picked up by media outlets. The publication In These Times outlined the coalition’s larger goal of focusing attention on the Chicago campaign in order to “leverage changes in federal policy and budgeting for mass transit nationwide.”

In a January 17 article entitled “Poll: Transit is a Major Mayoral Issue” the website Progress Illinois declared, “...the candidate who offers solutions for the doomsday-riddled CTA may be able to garner significant votes for herself or himself. To date, the six remaining mayoral candidates have not even tried to do this.” The article included a link to the ATU website where readers could download the poll results.

The Tribune provided a similar critique the same day under the headline “Transit is a sleeper issue in race for Chicago mayor,” noting, “Transportation issues are not raised on the candidates’ campaign web pages, and no one has put together a position paper.”

Not Just a Chicago Problem

The paper quoted International President Larry Hanley saying, “This is not just a Chicago crisis. In the last few years nationally, we’ve seen a crush of new riders but also some of the deepest service cuts and highest increases in fares in the last 50 years.”

On January 23, front-runner Emanuel responded to the media attention by releasing the list of projects he would undertake to rebuild the ancient CTA system. But ATU’s Chicago locals rightly criticized the plan which would do nothing to solve the deficit in the system’s operating budget.

Nevertheless, the transit issue gained a much higher profile in the Chicago election and in the country at large than it would have without the “Keep Chicago Moving” campaign.

On February 14, the president proposed his six-year transportation authorization proposal which would more than double mass transit spending and allow federal money to be used for operating assistance in limited circumstances.
 Fifty-five years to the month after the start of the Montgomery bus boycott, people of color can sit wherever they want on the bus – when and if one arrives. Bus operators all over the country are slashing routes in response to deepening deficits. This loss of service denies people who depend on transit their civil rights in deep, daily, grinding, unmistakable ways.

Bus riders in Oakland, CA, and throughout western Alameda and Contra Costa Counties in California have lost nearly 15 percent of their AC Transit routes in 2010. Deeper cuts were forestalled by the drivers’ union, Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU) Local 192, which refused to agree to a new contract unless the agency postponed further service reductions for at least three months.

‘Heart throb of This City’

“We are the heart throb of this city,” AC Transit driver Lorenzo Jacobs said, speaking at a May 2010 public hearing against the cuts. “When you start cutting service, you’re cutting opportunities out there for people who are doing whatever they’re doing in their lives. When you cut lines, you’re affecting people’s lives, their everyday lives,” he said.

The service cuts directly impact Oakland youth, who need AC Transit to get to school because the district doesn’t run yellow school buses; they hurt seniors and people with disabilities who can’t drive, and low-income families who can’t afford cars. Lack of mobility cuts off opportunities for work and education, enforces inequality and persistent segregation. African-Americans and Latinos are far less likely than whites to own cars. Nationally, around 62 percent of city bus riders are African American and Latino. Nearly 80% of AC Transit riders are people of color.

Institutional Obstacles

Bus riders and their allies who take on this 21st century civil rights fight confront institutional obstacles at every turn. In their efforts to protect and expand service, they contend with financing policies and decision-making structures that are stacked against them, and they lack access to the courts to seek redress. And few political leaders champion the needs of transit riders in general and bus riders in particular.

Funding priorities from the federal government on down shortchange bus riders while favoring drivers and rail passengers. Eighty percent of federal transportation funding goes to highways, and only 20 percent goes to transit. Virtually all of the $500 billion in the Federal Surface Transportation Authorization goes to capital costs versus supporting day-to-day operations of buses.

On a regional level, the San Francisco Bay Area’s Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) privileges costly expansions over core urban operations. It consistently slights bus operators in favor of rail services such as CalTrain and BART that have a much higher proportion of white and wealthier riders. While AC Transit was looking at a $56 million deficit, the MTC was working hard to help BART find an additional $70 million to build the Oakland Airport Connector (OAC) tram project. That $70 million was needed to replace federal stimulus funds BART lost by failing to follow proper civil rights guidelines when they approved the OAC.

Structure Disenfranchises

The structure of the MTC itself disenfranchises city-dwellers and people of color. The 19-member commission controls transportation planning and funding for nine counties in the Bay Area. Because each county gets two seats at most, residents in large urban counties – like Santa Clara, which includes the 930,000-person city of San Jose – get far less representation than smaller
and less diverse counties like Napa, with its 135,000 people.

Challenging the unfair distribution of transportation resources in court has been much harder since a 2001 Supreme Court decision barred individuals from filing lawsuits over transportation policies that have discriminatory impacts on the basis of race, color or national origin. By taking away the “private right to action,” the Alexander v. Sandoval decision deprived transit activists of a legal tool that has played a key part in civil rights cases.

After more than a year, the movement centered in Montgomery won the legal end to Alabama’s segregation laws. Today’s transportation justice advocates are pushing for civil rights in transit on many levels. Riders and drivers have joined forces to try to save bus service in dozens of cities around the country, as they are doing in the East Bay. These efforts should gain fresh energy with the inauguration of the new national leadership of the ATU, which represents bus drivers in many U.S. cities.

Legal Challenges to Discriminatory Challenges

A Bay Area coalition of civil rights, faith-based, community and environmental groups is pursuing legal challenges to discriminatory funding. The non-profit law firm Public Advocates filed the administrative complaint on behalf of Urban Habitat, TransForm and Genesis that cost BART the stimulus funds for the OAC. In a follow-up complaint, they have charged MTC with failing to ensure that agencies and programs it funds are respecting civil rights. In addition, Public Advocates has filed a class action suit against MTC’s funding practices, which is pending before the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals.

Undaunted by the hostile climate in the new Congress, the new national coalition called “Transit Riders for Public Transportation” (TRPT) aims to flip federal transit funding priorities and secure legislation restoring individuals’ right to sue over discriminatory transit policies. TRPT draws together grassroots groups from all over the country who put transportation central to the fight for civil rights, recognizing that low-income communities and communities of color will remain trapped in second-class status until the transportation system serves everyone equally.

Bob Allen is the Transportation Justice Program Director at Urban Habitat. Marcy Rein is a freelance writer and frequent contributor to Race, Poverty & the Environment.

ATU Flashback

Popular Anti-Public Worker Tactic Used Against Twin Cities Local 6 Years Ago

Speaking at the ATU Legislative Conference last March, AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka predicted that public service workers were the next target of the anti-union movement. His prediction was “dead-on.” Since the November elections, GOP governors and state legislators have stoked the resentment of millions who no longer have adequate retirement, health care, vacations, or wages and directed it against state government employees.

Former Minnesota governor and presumed presidential candidate, Tim Pawlenty, deserves a lot of “credit” for this anti-union tactic. He used it in his unsuccessful attempt to bust Local 1005-Minneapolis-St. Paul, MN, during their 2004 strike in which health care was a big issue.

The governor had switched the funding source for public transportation from property taxes to the general fund causing a five percent drop the money available for transit. Nevertheless, he blamed the shortfall on ATU workers’ “Cadillac” health plan.

“How can we ask citizens to foot the bill for a health plan that is so much better than anything they, themselves, have?” he asked.

Local 1005 and the Twin Cities “Met Council” eventually arrived at a collective bargaining agreement, but the “greedy public union members have more than you have” narrative has gained traction ever since.

More than one commentator has seen the current tactic as a ploy to place the blame for state fiscal problems squarely on the shoulders of public employees. It has the added benefit of distracting attention from the real culprits of the Great Recession – big banks and Wall Street.

It is not surprising that Republican governors should do the bidding of the moneyed interests that paid for their campaigns, yet it is terribly discouraging that so many automatically accept the idea that public servants are to blame for the nation’s fiscal woes.

Bob Allen is the Transportation Justice Program Director at Urban Habitat. Marcy Rein is a freelance writer and frequent contributor to Race, Poverty & the Environment.
Local 1433 in Phoenix, AZ, is battling the French-based international company, Veolia, which among other things, wants to set up a two-tier wage system and cap sick day accruals. The contract expired in June, 2010.

In an effort to provoke a strike, Veolia implemented the sick day accrual caps; the union filed a complaint with the NLRB.

‘Not Going to Be Steamrolled’

Bob Bean, president of the local, said the members were not going to be steamrolled by Veolia. “We are tired of their tactics. Rather than negotiate, they are trying to tie us up with frivolous court cases,” Bean said.

One of those cases involved a chilling restriction on free speech when a U.S. District Court judge signed an order allowing Veolia access to the union’s computer hard drives after Veolia’s lawyers claimed that union officers were the recipient of anonymous e-mails – allegedly sent by Veolia employees.

“It was a made up story just so they could look at our inner workings,” Bean added. “For all we know, they could have sent the emails to themselves.”

In a move that shocked protectors of privacy, the judge also signed an order allowing Veolia to subpoena the computers at a Marriott Hotel Business Center. The company claimed one of its employees used the Center to send the emails to the union.

“This means that no one’s privacy is safe at a Marriott,” said Local 1433 Vice President Michael Cornelius. “They should post a sign telling customers that their emails might be turned over to a French company.”

‘No Business Running a Transit System’

As contract talks drew near, Veolia gave away free rides to 70,000 passengers on January 24.

A computer glitch knocked out all the fare boxes and the city lost more than $300,000 a day in uncollected fares.

“This company has no business running a transit system,” Bean said. Standing next to an antique fare box, Bean said “They worked pretty well in 1905.”

Veolia has a knack for hiring powerful insiders around the country, including, according to published reports, the girlfriend of Phoenix Mayor Phil Gordon.

As investigations swirled around town, the mayor told police his computer was stolen from his home. The thief, however, left the mayor’s wallet and checkbook behind.

Bean said the local was planning to sponsor a contest, with a cash reward, asking the “perpetrator” to return the computer to the union which would then give it to the police.

“We promise not to look at the hard drive,” Bean added. The contest was titled “Ten Places Where the Mayor’s Laptop Might Be” (not including at his girl friend’s house).
Local 85-Pittsburgh, PA, is fighting to prevent an unnecessary reduction in transit service. On January 12, the Port Authority of Alleghany County gave final approval to a “temporary” 15% cut in transit service even though the governor has given the agency enough money in emergency funds to maintain full service until the end of the year.

On January 28, Local President Patrick McMahon appeared before the Port Authority board, asking it to delay the cuts until hearings could be held in the affected communities.

“This process has moved too quickly and the voice of the public has not been heard,” McMahon testified. “The action taken by the board is not necessary and places too great a hardship on riders who depend on transit to get to work and go about their daily business,” McMahon said.

‘Our Fight is Now!’

In a letter to Allegheny County Executive Dan Onorato, D, McMahon was even more direct: “The governor’s intention was to prevent cuts in transit services in 2011, giving the new governor and legislature six months to act on a transit funding formula that fairly and adequately provides for public transit at current levels.”
“We believe our fight is now,” asserted McMahon, “Do not impose further pain on transit riders and commuters by misusing the funding the governor has delivered.”

McMahon insists that the authority should “continue to operate (without reducing service) and leave the burden on Harrisburg (the state capital) to come up with a dedicated, reliable source of funding.

“If the authority has to shut down,” he declares, “it will be on the politicians in Harrisburg.”

Adding insult to injury the agency has also approved a fare hike and hundreds of layoffs, and plans another 10% service cut next year.
In 1968, 1,300 sanitation workers in Memphis went on strike. The Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr., came to support them. That was where he lost his life. Eventually Memphis heard the grievances of its sanitation workers. And in subsequent years millions of public employees across the nation have benefited from the job protections they’ve earned.

But now the right is going after public employees.

Public servants are convenient scapegoats. Republicans would rather deflect attention from corporate executive pay that continues to rise as corporate profits soar, even as corporations refuse to hire more workers. They don’t want stories about Wall Street bonuses, now higher than before taxpayers bailed out the Street. And they’d like to avoid a spotlight on the billions raked in by hedge-fund and private-equity managers whose income is treated as capital gains and subject to only a 15 percent tax, due to a loophole in the tax laws designed specifically for them.

It’s far more convenient to go after people who are doing the public’s work - sanitation workers, police officers, fire fighters, teachers, social workers, federal employees – to call them “faceless bureaucrats” and portray them as hooligans who are making off with your money and crippling federal and state budgets. The story fits better with the Republican’s Big Lie that our problems are due to a government that’s too big.

Above all, Republicans don’t want to have to justify continued tax cuts for the rich. As quietly as possible, they want to make them permanent.

But the right’s argument is shot-through with bad data, twisted evidence, and unsupported assertions.

They say public employees earn far more than private-sector workers. That’s untrue when you take account of level of education. Matched by education, public sector workers actually earn less than their private-sector counterparts.

Apples to Oranges

The Republican trick is to compare apples with oranges — the average wage of public employees with the average wage of all private-sector employees. But only 23 percent of private-sector employees have college degrees; 48 percent of government workers do. Teachers, social workers, public lawyers who bring companies to justice, government accountants who try to make sure money is spent as it should be - all need at least four years of college.
Compare apples to apples and you’d see that over the last 15 years the pay of public sector workers has dropped relative to private-sector employees with the same level of education. Public sector workers now earn 11 percent less than comparable workers in the private sector, and local workers 12 percent less. (Even if you include health and retirement benefits, government employees still earn less than their private-sector counterparts with similar educations.)

Here’s another whopper. Republicans say public-sector pensions are crippling the nation. They say politicians have given in to the demands of public unions who want only to fatten their members’ retirement benefits without the public noticing. They charge that public-employee pension obligations are out of control.

Some reforms do need to be made. Loopholes that allow public sector workers to “spike” their final salaries in order to get higher annuities must be closed. And no retired public employee should be allowed to “double dip,” collecting more than one public pension.

**Average Annual Public Employer Pension: $19,000**

But these are the exceptions. Most public employees don’t have generous pensions. After a career with annual pay averaging less than $45,000, the typical newly-retired public employee receives a pension of $19,000 a year. Few would call that overly generous.

And most of that $19,000 isn’t even on taxpayers’ shoulders. While they’re working, most public employees contribute a portion of their salaries into their pension plans. Taxpayers are directly responsible for only about 14 percent of public retirement benefits. Remember also that many public workers aren’t covered by Social Security, so the government isn’t contributing 6.25 of their pay into the Social Security fund as private employers would.

Yes, there’s cause for concern about unfunded pension liabilities in future years. They’re way too big. But it’s much the same in the private sector. The main reason for underfunded pensions in both public and private sectors is investment losses that occurred during the Great Recession. Before then, public pension funds had an average of 86 percent of all the assets they needed to pay future benefits — better than many private pension plans.

The solution is no less to slash public pensions than it is to slash private ones. It’s for all employers to fully fund their pension plans.

**No Relationship Between Bargaining and Deficits**

The final Republican canard is that bargaining rights for public employees have caused state deficits to explode. In fact there’s no relationship between states whose employees have bargaining rights and states with big deficits. Some states that deny their employees bargaining rights - Nevada, North Carolina, and Arizona, for example, are running giant deficits of over 30 percent of spending. Many that give employees bargaining rights — Massachusetts, New Mexico, and Montana — have small deficits of less than 10 percent.

Public employees should have the right to bargain for better wages and working conditions, just like all employees do. They shouldn’t have the right to strike if striking would imperil the public, but they should at least have a voice. They often know more about whether public programs are working, or how to make them work better, than political appointees who hold their offices for only a few years.

Don’t get me wrong. When times are tough, public employees should have to make the same sacrifices as everyone else. And they are right now. Pay has been frozen for federal workers, and for many state workers across the country as well.

**Richest Not Asked to Sacrifice**

But isn’t it curious that when it comes to sacrifice, Republicans don’t include the richest people in America? To the contrary, they insist the rich should sacrifice even less, enjoying even larger tax cuts that expand public-sector deficits. That means fewer public services, and even more pressure on the wages and benefits of public employees.

It’s only average workers – both in the public and the private sectors – who are being called upon to sacrifice.

This is what the current Republican attack on public-sector workers is really all about. Their version of class warfare is to pit private-sector workers against public servants.

They’d rather set average working people against one another – comparing one group’s modest incomes and benefits with another group’s modest incomes and benefits – than have Americans see that the top one percent is now raking in a bigger share of national income than at any time since 1928, and paying at a lower tax rate. And Republicans would rather you didn’t know they want to cut taxes on the rich even more.

Robert Reich served as the Secretary of Labor during the Clinton administration. His latest book, AFTERSHOCK, is now available, and he blogs at www.robertreich.org. His column is published here by permission.
Hanley Names
Outspoken Local President International Representative

International President Larry Hanley has appointed Oakland, CA, Local 192 President Claudia Hudson to serve as an ATU international representative. Hudson, who was hired as a bus operator for AC Transit in 1979, says that she has always been a “fighter for justice” who has never hesitated to speak out about any matter that concerned her.

She made that quite clear shortly after joining the local when she asked a question about a proposed contract and got an answer that didn’t match the actual language she was holding in her hand. “That’s not what it says here!” she insisted, and she decided then and there to go to union meetings and find out what was really going on.

Outspoken

Her outspokenness caught the attention of fellow members who asked her to run for shop steward for their garage in 1989. She was elected and served two terms in that office.

In 1992, the local president put her on the local’s negotiating committee where she gained valuable experience at the bargaining table.

In 1996, then-Local 192 President Christine Zook, asked Hudson to join her ticket as a candidate for local vice president. Hudson served as vice president for nine years.

Hudson was elected president of the local in January 2009. During her term as president she struggled with AC Transit which imposed a contract on her local that would have effectively stripped the members of their bargaining rights and bust the union.

But, in typical style Hudson sued and won every decision up to and including the appellate court, overturning the imposed contract. An arbitrator finally crafted an agreement that imposed some wage concessions on the local, but which fully preserved their collective bargaining rights.

Putting the ‘U’ Back in Union

When asked what she’s looking forward to, Hudson enthusiastically responds, “I am literally looking forward to putting the ‘U’ back in Union.” Too many union members, she explains, let their officers do all the work even though the members should be “our army.”

Hudson believes that if more members were active they would be better informed, and that the labor movement would be “way ahead” of where it is today.

For herself, Hudson, who grew up poor and had two children by the time she was 21, is grateful that the ATU gave her the opportunity to raise her children and “afford them the opportunities” she didn’t have.

She also believes that the Union allowed her to have a “voice” and that it protected that voice, which she says, “gave me even greater strength.”

She is looking forward to her work as international representative. “Anything I’m asked to do, I’m willing to do,” she declares. Hearing her, there is no doubt that this outspoken woman means what she says.

Hanley Appoints
International Rep from Boston Carmen’s Union

International President Larry Hanley has appointed the former president of Local 589 (the Boston Carmen’s Union) Stephan MacDougall as an international representative. Having started his career at the age of 24 as a bus operator and a streetcar “motorperson” for the Massachusetts Bay Transit Authority in 1986, MacDougall realized that he enjoyed the job which he saw as a public service.

MacDougall’s involvement in the Carmen’s Union stepped up in the 1990’s, when the MBTA attempted to privatize the system. He became a willing soldier in the many battles the local fought in its successful campaign to protect and preserve public transit in Boston.
In 1995, MacDougall was elected barn captain (shop steward). Three years later he was elected vice president and served as a full time union officer in that capacity for the next three years.

In 2001, MacDougall was elected president of the Carmen’s Union. He was re-elected for two more three-year terms.

‘Called’ to the Work

Like most local presidents, MacDougall faced many challenges during his nine-years at the wheel of the local. Many of his battles, he says, were fought over pensions, health care, and changing technology.

And when he’s asked why would anybody want a to be a union president in a tough town like Boston, or an international rep for that matter, he says he thinks that, like people in other vocations, local officers are willing to endure lots of criticism from all sides because they feel “called” to do the work.

‘Ask not…’

In spite of all of the former local president’s accomplishments, he may be best remembered by ATU local officers for the remarkable speech he delivered in his classic Boston accent from the floor of the 2004 International Convention during which he quoted much of John F. Kennedy’s inaugural address verbatim.

A Real Career

For MacDougall, ATU membership has meant economic security in an occupation in which he has been able to have a real career. It has also allowed him to have sick leave, vacation time, and other benefits which have given him and his family a better quality-of-life. And all of this, he reminds you, is made possible by a collective bargaining agreement.

This is the message he’ll bring to his work as an international representative, and maybe, if you’re lucky, he’ll let you hear some of that Kennedy speech.

MacDougall currently lives in Brookline, MA, with his wife Mai, their nine-year-old twin boys, Matthew and Michael, and six-year-old Stephan, Jr.

WHAT’S HAPPENING?

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 to go to your union’s website: **www.atu.org.** There you’ll find the latest news about the ATU, mass transit, and Labor which will put you ahead of the curve in your knowledge of the issues which are most important to you, your family, and your co-workers.

Don’t stay in the dark! Find out what’s going on. Check in with **www.atu.org,** often.
Members of Local 627-Cincinnati, OH, are fighting to get the Southwest Ohio Regional Transit Authority (SORTA) to accept a fact-finder’s report that would increase their wages and limit hikes in their health insurance premiums. But, SORTA says the fact-finder’s plan costs too much.

Local President Mark Bennett counters that the fact-finder’s recommendation “costs too much” because city council politicians recently took $2.4 million from their dedicated transit fund, and used it for other purposes.

SORTA responded by creating the usual panic in the press—claiming that Metro would be forced to eliminate Sunday service, cut Saturday service by 38%, and layoff 44 drivers and 13 mechanics to pay for the fact-finder’s contract. Bennett challenges the agency’s assumptions, and asks why, in a period of fiscal austerity, Metro has employed eight new managers, and plans to hire 10 more.

Health Care

No one denies that health care is a big part of the problem. But, Local 627 has already saved the agency 27% in premiums by switching to an HSA plan this year. Nevertheless, the agency still wants workers to pay $234 more per month for family coverage.

Planning for coalition activities in Pittsburgh and Cincinnati got underway at international headquarters in Washington, DC, on February 7. Sitting around the table from back left are Cincinnati Local 627 activist Tyrone Patrick, Field Representative Marvin Bing, Assistant to the Director of Training and Field Mobilization Cassady Fendley, Pittsburgh Local 85 President Pat McMahon, International President Larry Hanley, Local 85 Steward Bryon Shane; Local 85 Recording Secretary Mike Harms, International Executive Vice President Bob Baker, Cincinnati Local 627 activist April Cruse, Director of Training & Field Mobilization Chris Zook, Cincinnati Local 627 President Mark Bennett, Director of Government Affairs Jeff Rosenberg (back to camera), and (not pictured) International Secretary-Treasurer Oscar Owens.
Union members have all heard fired-up speeches about having unionism in their veins. Anne Feeney, also known as “the Union Maid,” really does. Her grandfather William Patrick Feeney started working in the Pennsylvania coal mines as a 14-year-old Irish immigrant late in the 1800s. As an adult, he became an accomplished violin player, a miner, and union organizer.

Anne has carried on her grandfather’s tradition. As a labor folksinger on the frontlines of labor disputes in 42 states, Canada, Mexico, Ireland, Sweden and Denmark, she has been a lifelong advocate of labor culture.

Raised Money for ATU Greyhound Strikers

When asked if she had ever been involved with any ATU struggles, Anne laughed, and recounted a memory from the 1990 Greyhound strike. She remembers driving her old station wagon along a narrow, winding, stretch of the Pennsylvania Turnpike.

“I was quickly approaching a heavily loaded coal truck driving 30 MPH with emergency flashers in the right lane,” she said, “when I saw a Greyhound bus with a scab driver in my rearview mirror. I pulled into the left lane and slowed down to 30 MPH too. And I stayed there for nearly forty miles.”

She also supported the strike on a professional level, organizing a fundraising concert for the striking drivers, and writing a song for the strike:

“CEO Fred Currey makes 600 grand a year.
Now he’s crying poverty, but one thing sure is clear.
He’s out to bust our union, but that can never be.
Now’s the time for us to show some solidarity!”

She is an accomplished performer and award-winning songwriter. Several of her classic labor anthems have been recorded by well-known artists including the legendary Peter, Paul, and Mary.

‘Sidelined’

Last summer Anne’s hectic tour schedule came to a sudden halt when her newsletter announced, “On August 10, 2010, I was diagnosed with small cell lung cancer. I have a 20% chance of surviving this.

“In the meantime, I’m sidelined at home and unable to work. I’ve got some health insurance, so many of my medical expenses are covered. Still, if you’re in a position to send some $$ my way, I could sure use it. It’s scary being out of work.”

Folks from around the world who have been touched by her talent and generosity have responded. “It is so gratifying to see my life’s work validated by the generosity of so many people. I have received thousands of cards, emails, and phone calls...,” she says.

Good News/Bad News

Recent good news came from her oncologist; Anne is cancer-free – for now. If she stays that way for two years, there is a good chance that she will live out her normal life span.

The bad news, she will not be able to work during that time. The chemotherapy and radiation treatments, as well as a series of related complications, have left this union maid weak and short of breath for the indefinite future.

Send a check directly to:
Anne Feeney, 2240 Milligan Ave.
Pittsburgh, PA 15218

Visit her website and donate via Pay Pal at:
www.annefeeney.com/

Buy her CDs at:
www.cdbaby.com/cd/annefeeney
Solidarity Sustains Members During St. John’s Strike

The members of Local 1462 ratified a new contract with the city of St. John’s, NL, January 27, ending a three-month strike.

About 100 ATU Metrobus workers went on strike November 4, 2010, over the city’s demand that new employees pay half of the cost of their benefit package – dramatically more than current workers pay.

“We had very strong membership support,” said Local President Paul Churchill. “97% voted to go on strike and stuck with it for almost 13 weeks.”

“Solidarity,” he declared, “was the victor” in this strike.

Reacting to the public discussion of his members’ work benefits during the strike, Churchill, on December 9, challenged transit managers to reveal their own.

“I’d like for them to put in public their benefit package at this time,” Churchill said, “They got no problems talking about ours.”

War of Words

The war of words continued over several weeks as the transit commission remained inflexible in the face of new proposals from the ATU.

One of the reasons for the city’s intransigence was a $5 million deficit which it was facing in 2011. Churchill confronted that issue directly insisting, “…the $5 million, they can’t settle that on the backs of 100 people.”

The strike dragged on through December, and as the holidays approached, impatient commuters started holding demonstrations to put pressure on both sides to come to an agreement.

Hopes were dashed just before Christmas when a new round of talks moderated by a conciliator broke off with no agreement. ATU continued to offer new proposals which the transit commission refused to take seriously.

As the strike entered its 11th week Churchill publicly addressed a common criticism hurled at unions by transit agencies during strikes: “We’re not being greedy or selfish - we’re just trying to continue to hang on to what we have. We want to get back on the road. As far as I’m concerned, the last offer we gave them was a fair offer.”

Finally, the negotiators came to an agreement which was ratified by St. John’s members on January 27. No details of the agreement were available at press time.

The St. John’s strikers are just the latest example of the courage and solidarity that is so often shown when our members are involved in strikes or job actions. Their example is an inspiration to the entire Union.
A
t the December special meeting of the ATU General Executive Board, the GEB, after full discussion and debate, took action to strengthen our locals, protect our Union and most significantly broaden support for transit in the cities in which we live and work.

Motions were approved to:

1. Develop strong community-based coalitions uniting our locals and members with our riders, community-based transit advocates, faith-based supporters and other labor allies to protect services, oppose layoffs, stop destructive privatization and contracting-out, and fight for increased transit funding.

2. Implement special funding measures at the international and local level to support these activities by:

   • Returning and matching 100% of a local’s ATU-COPE dollars raised in 2011 above its 2010 levels (while continuing the policy of returning up to 50% in COPE funds for state and local races) to support enhanced coalition building and community-based campaigns.

   • Providing staff support, training, communications, contacts, research, polling, membership outreach assistance and other technical assistance to advance the COPE fundraising and the formation and expansion of community coalitions.

3. To strengthen our locals’ ability to respond to funding cuts, privatization threats, job loss, and to enhance our organizing, political and legislative goals we are moving to:

   • Redirect resources to aggressively pursue community-based campaigns with advocates and activists who share our goals.

   • Establish a new Department of Field Mobilization Training program and work directly with local unions (in coordination with the ATU’s Department of Strategic Campaigns and Research) to strengthen local organizing, legislative and political activities and community support.

   • Roll out an aggressive communications program to get our message – “the ATU story” – out, and to reseat and reposition our Union’s image in the media as a fighter for better, safer, and more secure services, improved mobility and access for low wage workers, seniors, the disabled, and as advocates for good jobs, employment training and the environment.

   • Provide advanced training on coalition building and leadership as part of our international and regional education programs in both Canada and the United States, and through our constituency group conferences – the Latino, Black, and Women’s caucuses.

   • Ensure greater accountability and reporting by our officers and staff.

   • Eliminate wasteful, unnecessary and ineffective spending.
The 2011 legislative session has begun in most states, and it did not take long for the hammer to be dropped on organized labor. New governors and state legislators, using the endless recession as an excuse, are targeting public employees’ rights and benefits like never before.

Gutting Long-Standing Labor Laws

The new Republican governor of Ohio, John Kasich, wasted no time. “If they want to strike, they should be fired,” he said. “I really don’t favor the right to strike by any public employee. They’ve got good jobs, they’ve got high pay; they get good benefits, a great retirement. What are they striking for?”

— Ohio Governor John Kasich

“Gutting long-standing labor laws is a big mistake,” said the new governor of Wisconsin. “If they want to strike, they should be fired.”

So-called right to work legislation is circulating in almost every state. These bills weaken unions and collective bargaining by allowing workers to pay nothing and get all the benefits of union membership. Right to work laws say unions must represent all eligible employees, whether they pay dues or not. This forces unions to use their time and members’ dues money to provide union benefits to free riders who are not willing to pay their fair share. Other states are considering “paycheck protection” bills, prohibiting public employees from having a payroll deduction to a political action committee or for dues for membership organizations that use funds for political activities.
While it is not uncommon to see hundreds of bills introduced across the states to weaken unions and workers’ rights, the 2010 elections opened the door to the real possibility of some of these bills becoming law. Many states, such as Florida, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin are now overwhelmingly controlled by conservative elected officials in both the governor’s mansion as well as the statehouse. Even workers in union-dense Michigan are feeling the heat.

Keep Your Hand on Your Wallet

Public employee pensions are being targeted everywhere. Even in states where unions have historically been strong – like California, New York, and New Jersey – liberal political leaders are demanding concessions, threatening to take away rights and benefits that workers have spent a lifetime working toward. Rahm Emanuel, the winning Democratic candidate for Mayor of Chicago, has told labor leaders that he favors reducing pension benefits for the city’s existing work force and not just for new hires. Governor Andrew Cuomo, D-NY, is reportedly considering reducing the state workforce by up to 15,000 workers in his budget, the largest cut to the government payroll in recent years. Business and real estate executives intend to raise $10 million in the coming weeks in support of the new governor’s coming battle with unions over wages and pensions. Remarkably, the business leaders have found an ally from organized labor – the Building and Construction Trades Council of Greater New York. So yes, we are getting hit from all sides.

Bankrupt States?

The new governors are also attempting to come up with a new weapon on the pension issue that is frightening to say the least. Some are working behind the scenes to find a way to let states declare bankruptcy to get out from under crushing debts, including the pensions they have promised to retired public workers.

It is “all hands on deck” time across America for working families. Are you ready to fight for what you and your predecessors have earned? If so, contact your local union leadership today and see how you can help your state AFL-CIO federation convince elected officials that while states certainly have financial issues, public employees and their benefits were not the cause.

BOB BAKER, INTERNATIONAL EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT

Continued from page 4

What was the real cost of this strike to this small city and who’s making the decisions?

Whether the decisions are made in Washington DC, for 300 million people, or in St. Johns, NL, for several hundred thousand, there should be someone in government who appreciates the contributions ATU members make to their community and who understands the mobility needs of our nations.

It’s a good thing ATU members have the vision and the guts to stand up for the passengers and the future of mass transit. Now we have to get the politicians to stand up with us.

By the way, the folks at the St. John’s local wanted me to express their gratitude for all of the expressions of support that were sent to them during their strike. They were greatly appreciated.

Also, I’d like to take this opportunity to note the passing of my life-long friend, Jerry Parker, 627-Cincinnati, OH, who left us in January. Jerry was employed by the transit authority after he lost his railroad job years ago. He was a hard worker who never lost sight of how important his union was in providing job security and protecting his wages and benefits.

Teresa and I offer our sincere condolences to Jerry’s wife, Shirley, and his children Gary and Heather.
Most union members understand Wal-Mart threatens the livelihoods of Food & Commercial Workers. Some would say that big-box retail and suburban sprawl are bad for transit workers and riders because they take jobs far away from transit routes.

But the truth is, suburban sprawl is bad news for union members, across the board. If you map union jobs, you will see that as jobs thin out, they deunionize. And when jobs sprawl out, the loss of tax base hurts neighborhoods where most union members live.

What is sprawl? It’s the opposite of transit: it forces everyone to do everything by car. It means low density and a lack of mixed use (for example, no apartments above stores). It means job growth in newer suburbs but job loss in inner cities and older suburbs.

Forcing people to drive everywhere means more traffic congestion and air pollution and the rapid loss of farms and open space. It bleeds the urban tax base for infrastructure and services, including transit. Since many suburbs lack affordable housing and many new jobs are far beyond transit, sprawl traps urban workers with unemployment and poverty.

The Solution? Smart Growth!

It doesn’t have to be this way. Sprawl is caused by public policies that can
be reversed, and a large, diverse movement for smart growth has taken root. Groups like Smart Growth America and Transportation for America include hundreds of environmental, pro-transit, bicyclist, pedestrian, senior citizen, public health, and pro-city groups. More recently, dozens of civil rights, environmental justice and minority development groups have also joined.

The need for good public transportation unites all of these groups. Environmentalists want commuters to have transportation choice because getting people out of their cars is the only way U.S. tailpipe emissions will ever decline. Groups like the AARP want seniors to be able to age in place with safe mobility options like walking and transit. The American Public Health Association cites studies linking sprawl to obesity and diabetes and says Americans should use cars less. National security experts say the United States is far too dependent on imported oil. Anti-poverty advocates say families who can’t afford to own a car—disproportionately people of color—can only compete for jobs if transit links them to job sites.

**Urban Density: Good for Union Density**

Organized labor shares a self-interest in smart growth. In 2000 in Chicago and in 2004 in Philadelphia, Good Jobs First mapped the geography of major unionized industries. In both cases, we found that as jobs thin out—in groceries, manufacturing, health care, hospitality, and building services—the rate of unionization declines, often sharply. Interviews with public-sector and Building Trades leaders revealed similar patterns.

We also found that sprawl harms union members as homeowners, undermining the tax base and schools of older areas where most union members live. Finally, we showed the anti-working families voting records of suburban elected officials, and how they gain more seats every 10 years as sprawl marches on. In 2001, the national AFL-CIO passed a convention resolution denouncing sprawl.

By strengthening transit, we create good union jobs. We bring jobs back to downtowns where hotels and janitorial jobs are unionized. We strengthen unionized hospitals and factories. We clean up brownfields and create more work for the Building Trades and the factory workers who build transit vehicles. We strengthen the tax base for schools, transit and other public services.

Transit benefits the environment, public health, seniors, national security and working families. As advocates for transit, ATU members are truly coalition-building for the angels.

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**Local President to Be Honored as DC’s Outstanding Trade Unionist of 2010**

The AFL-CIO Metro (DC) Washington Council will honor Local 689 President Jackie Jeter, as the 2010 JC Turner Outstanding Trade Unionist of the Year at this year’s “Evening with Labor,” on March 12. “In addition to visibly and vocally leading her own local union during very tough times,” says Metro Council President Josh Williams, “Jackie’s been a strong supporter of the political, legislative and community services activities of the Metro Washington Council and Community Services Agency, supporting all of the CSA fundraisers as well as the Emergency Assistance Fund.”
By 2014, the new health care reform law will mean thousands of dollars in health insurance premium savings and out-of-pocket health care costs for working families and small businesses, finds a new report from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).

Higher Premiums, Fewer Choices Without Health Care Law

Says HHS Secretary Kathleen Sebelius:

“For too long, skyrocketing health care costs have made it hard for businesses to provide coverage for employees and have made it difficult for families to afford coverage…. The report shows that the health care law will bring major savings for families as it begins to take shape. Without the Affordable Care Act, consumers and businesses would face higher premiums, fewer insurance choices, and rapidly rising health care costs.”

From 1999 to 2009, premiums more than doubled, rising by more than $7,500 for the average family that gets insurance through an employer. The high cost of health care made it difficult for many small businesses to offer insurance to their workers. The percentage of small employers offering health insurance dropped from 65 percent to 59 percent between 1999 and 2009.

Middle-Class Families Could Save $2,300 per Year

The report finds that, compared to what they would have paid without the law:

Middle-class families purchasing private insurance in the new state-based Health Insurance Exchanges could save as much as $2,300 per year in 2014.

Tax credits provided by the Affordable Care Act will lead to even greater savings. For example, in 2014, a family of four with an income of $33,525 could save as much as $14,900 per year since they also will qualify for tax credits and reduced cost sharing.

In 2014, small businesses, on average, could save up to $350 per family policy and many may be eligible for tax credits of up to 50 percent of their premiums.

The tax credits are already available to small businesses and cover 35 percent of their premiums. For example, a firm with 10 workers who earn an average of $20,000 annually could currently receive credits of $35,000 annually. These tax credits could save small businesses $6 billion in 2010 and 2011.

All businesses will likely see lower premiums of $2,000 per family by 2019, which could generate millions of dollars in savings.

Families, Small Businesses Hard Hit Without Law

Congressional and state Republican lawmakers have vowed to repeal the Affordable Care Act. Earlier this month, the new House majority passed a repeal bill and several states attorneys general have filed suits against the new health care reform law. If those attempts are successful, Sebelius says, families and small business owners will be hard hit in the pocketbook by higher premiums and other health care costs.

To read the full report go to: http://www.healthcare.gov/center/reports/premiums01282011a.pdf
With December 31, 1910, there terminates a year in the life of the street and electric railway employes’ association that takes its place among the most progressive of her years of existence. Without fear of serious criticism, some may refer to 1910 as the year of the greatest progress.

However, that may be, it must be remembered that the organization is one that must progress or develop to maintain. It is not an institution that can stand still. Constant progressive energy must be applied, and every previous year has been, in its turn, equally important in a way in building a foundation upon which the gratifying history of 1910 has been built.

Without its previous well fortified position and without its magnitude and power and its well devised policies on January 1, 1910, the history for the year might otherwise be written and not so glow as a special tribute to the officers and members who have taken part in the year’s events.

The prime incentive that led to the institution of the street and electric railway employe’s association was the hope of progress inspired by a confidence in unity of effort. Improved wages and working conditions and an advanced standard of employment is what organization holds out as an appeal for existence.

Whether the year 1910 comprises a period of greater or less progress than any other year in the history of the organization or not, it abounds in many and most brilliant illustrations of the good that the movement has brought to the members and of its advantage in an industrial way and socially.

No one will contradict that a man is worth more to himself, to his family and to the commercial interests of the community in which he lives when he received 25 cents per hour for his work than when he receives a less rate of wage. Thus, no one will take issue with the assertion that improvement comes with and an advantage lies in the elevation of the wage standard and that the improvement and advantage is far reaching.

And, later in that same issue, Mahon wrote:

The Morning Press of the country on December 21st almost went into a conniption fit over what they termed the “foolish action” of the Milwaukee City Council. So important did this action seem that they gave it notice on the front page with glaring headlines: “Socialists pass a worthless law.” Then they went on to tell how the Socialist City Council of Milwaukee had passed a “silly and unconstitutional” measure allowing the washerwomen of that city to use city water free of charge, and they characterized it as an absolutely unconstitutional law.

If it had been the Congress of the General Government passing an act to indemnify the Pacific or some other railroad company to finance and build a railroad, it would have been considered strictly legal.

If it had been Congress passing a ship subsidy bill to indemnify the ship building and transportation barons of the country, that would have been worthy, and strictly lawful.

Had it been some city council granting free taxes and free water to some great manufacturing plant in order that they could get into the municipality and extort from Labor, that would have been perfectly constitutional.

But when it comes to relieving the poor and distressed washerwomen who have to struggle and labor early and late in order to support and feed a houseful of hungry orphan children, it is a silly and foolish act and absolutely “unconstitutional.”

In my opinion the Milwaukee City Council is to be congratulated.

In the name of humanity, will the time ever come when the intelligent people and the supposed intelligent press of the country will wake up and set aside that old musty and silly notion of constitutionality when it comes to the doing of that which is right and for improving and bettering the conditions of people?”
In Memoriam

Death Benefits Awarded November 1, 2010 - December 31, 2010

1 - MEMBERS AT LARGE
DONALD R BIL
LEON A KELLY
LENNIE E ERICKSON
JAMES T TANNER

581 - CHICAGO, IL
ALFRED H TAYLOR
ROSIE L STARKS
WILLIAM SMITH
EDDIE M RANDALL JR
ANGEL RAMIREZ
JOSEPH V PERNICE
LAUDELIANO PENA
KENNETH D MC DONALD
EDWARD R JOLLEY
RAY D HARDIN
DENNIS DUNAJ
JOHN W DOYLE JR
IRA L DAVIS
DONALD E CRANDALL
WILLIE F BURTON

2 - DETROIT, MI
RICHARD A GARDZINSKI

6 - PITTSBURGH, PA
MARY E HESTER
WILLIAM H JOHNSTON
EDWARD A KELLER
WILLIAM E LIND
CARL MARTINELLI
JOHN T O’CONNOR
GEORGE J OLGIVIE
BRUCE T WHITNER

85 - PITTSBURGH, PA
LEONARD F WOOLLACOTT
CARL CECIL WELCH
JOHN ROBINSON
MICHAEL S OAKLEY
CHARLIE EDMUND NORTH
KEITH A NEILSON
WILLIAM MC GUIGAN
HOWARD J KITCHEN
HAROLD WILLIAM JACK
ALBERT JOSEPH HOWARD
DIETER P GUSE
RAYMOND GRIFFIN
JOHN FERRIER
HAROLD CUTCHEON
BERTRAM C CHAMBERLAIN
BENJAMIN J BOOTH
JOSEPH BARKER
GEORGE ALLEN

113 - TORONTO, ON
GEORGE ALLEN
JOSEPH BARKER
BENJAMIN J BOOTH
BERTRAM C CHAMBERLAIN
HAROLD CUTCHEON
JOHN FERRIER
RAYMOND GRIFFIN
DIETER P GUSE
ALBERT JOSEPH HOWARD
HAROLD WILLIAM JACK
WILLIAM E LIND
KEITH A NEILSON
CARL CECIL WELCH
JOSEPH BARKER
GEORGE ALLEN

IN TRANSIT

Jan/Feb 2011   IN TRANSIT
Educational Workshops, Group Participation, Dynamic Speakers and First Time Attendee Class

44th Annual Black Caucus Conference “Moving Forward”
in Atlanta, Georgia

May 19-22, 2011

at the
The Westin Hotel at Peachtree
210 Peachtree Street, NW
Atlanta, GA 30303
(800) 228-3000

Registration Information

Reservations: 800-228-3000 Code: ATUBlackCaucus
Hotel rate: $129.00 single or double (+ 15% tax)
Conference Registration Fees are $100.00 per member
Guest Registration Fee is $100.00 per person
Reservation Cut-Off Date: April 19, 2011

No on-site registration

All information and forms pertaining to the Conference can be downloaded from the ATU Black Caucus website: www.atube.org

ATU Local 732 Officers and Members
Rodney Blackmon, President:
678.557.9202

ATU Black Caucus Officers:

Fred A. Westbrook
President:
313.310.6625

Bernita West
Vice President:
312.341.1733

Elain Vance
Financial Secretary:
216.561.3350

Antoinette Bryant
Recording Secretary:
925.565.8118
International President Larry Hanley and Executive Vice President Bob Baker convened a meeting in Ottawa, ON, of all Canadian local presidents on January 21 and 22, to discuss important issues in Canada as well as the new agenda in the ATU international office.

This was a historic occasion and an opportunity to bring Canadian locals together. The conference was joined by International President Emeritus Jim LaSala who urged the local officers to stick together and face the coming battles for organized labor as a united union.

There were some local officers who had concerns about Canadian Council internal governance issues. Those issues were aired fully and addressed.

Getting Our Message Out

Primary issues raised included making the ATU more effective in getting its message out and establishing a “brand” throughout Canada so that it can organize more members into the Union.

Local officers voiced concerns about the need for more training and IP Hanley stressed his intention to develop a more coherent legislative program in Canada, including an annual legislative conference for Canadian local unions.

André Cornellier Remembered

The conference was honored to be joined by the family of late Ottawa Local 279 President André Cornellier. During the meeting IPE Jim LaSala, a longtime close friend of André presented his wife Lisette, and the Cornellier family with the many donations received from ATU locals and officers to ease their financial burden.

In September, André had traveled to the International Convention in Orlando, FL, despite his terminal illness, and unfortunately had to be hospitalized before the proceedings adjourned.

An outpouring of support, both moral and financial came when newly-elected International President Hanley asked the delegates for permission to assist in transporting André to a Canadian hospital. Many delegates rose to pledge funds.

Hanley thanked André’s family, not only for joining the ATU family at the conference but also for sharing him with us for so many years while he led Local 279.

André Cornellier died on January 15.